

# Phenix City Comprehensive Plan

Adopted: November 14, 2023





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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### Columbus-Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization

### Citizen of East Alabama

### A very special thanks

to all of the residents and property and business owners who participated in meetings, filled out surveys and otherwise contributed their voices to preparing this plan

Adopted by the Phenix City Planning Commission  
November 14, 2023

Approved by the Phenix City City Council  
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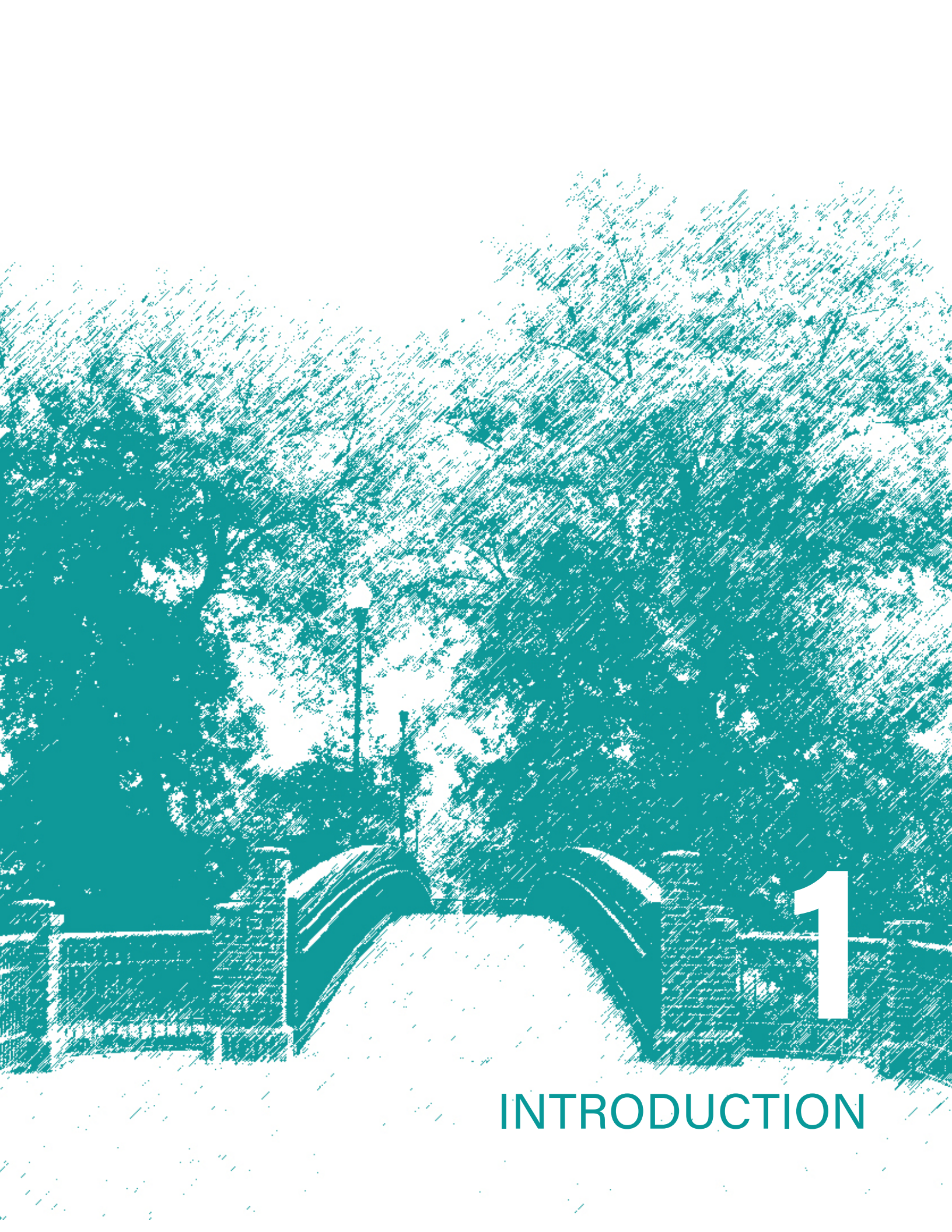


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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan describes the over-all strategy for how Phenix City will shape itself, through public and private investment over the next twenty years. The City prepared this plan as a guide to making decisions regarding capital improvements, annexation, City services, growth management and economic development.

The plan is long-range, general, and focused primarily on the physical and economic development of the community. The plan gives residents, property owners, and merchants a reasonable expectation of the city's future so that they may invest in the community with confidence. It gives developers a reasonable expectation of the future so that they may invest in ways that correspond with the City's plans for infrastructure and services.

Through the Comprehensive Plan, Phenix City intends to:

- Illustrate the ways in which the city intends to develop over time.
- Coordinate land use recommendations with those for transportation and other infrastructure improvements.
- Provide a guide to development decisions and a basis for making and revising zoning, subdivision and other regulations.
- Ensure that as development occurs, the city's most significant natural and historic features will be conserved and enhanced, while property values are protected.
- Provide a pattern for land use and development that strives for a sustainable community with a diversified tax base to support necessary and desired facilities and services.
- Foster efficiency, stability, entrepreneurial activity, a strong quality of life, and an attractive community image.

The Comprehensive Plan is a combination of vision, goals, maps, priority actions and policies. These form a framework to guide public and private decisions affecting new development and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and business areas.

The plan is based on the community's concerns and aspirations for the future of the city. It looks ahead, focusing on the physical form of the city, and strives to shape future development in a fiscally responsible pattern consistent with the way in which the community envisions the future of the city.

The Phenix City Comprehensive Plan recognizes the value of the city's underlying natural resources, history and community values. The plan will guide development to balance growth and conservation. Activity centers—where infrastructure is in place and private investment is already occurring—function as anchors for development. This reinforces existing businesses, optimizes use of existing infrastructure, while avoiding encroachment into neighborhoods and displacement of natural or historic features.



## Using the Plan

The plan is a guide to assist public officials and private citizens as they consider investments, some of which may have long-term impacts on the community. To do this, the plan must be continuously reviewed and updated as changes occur in physical, political and economic conditions.

The City of Phenix City will continually refer to this document to:

- Visualize what can reasonably be expected to occur in Phenix City—to provide some assurance and security regarding development investment decisions.
- Inform consideration of development proposals and rezoning requests.
- Provide guidance on improving and updating the City's development policies and regulations.
- Identify priorities and strategies for making infrastructure investments.

The plan will be implemented through actions by City staff, the City Council, the Planning Commission and other boards and commissions and by those of developers and private organizations and citizens. Major public actions in support of plan implementation will include adoption, revision and enforcement of the City's development regulations, capital improvement planning and budgeting, and decisions regarding development proposals and annexation.

## Role of The Plan Over Time

The Phenix City Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a living document, to evolve and grow in response to change. Only through continuing use, evaluation, detailing, and updating can the plan fully serve Phenix City. The preparation and adoption of subsequent plans for specific districts, neighborhoods or corridors will amend this plan. In the same way, preparation and adoption of more in-depth plans on transportation, city facilities, utilities or other elements in this plan will amend, update and supplement the comprehensive plan.

The role of this Comprehensive Plan and Phenix City's continuing planning process is to assure that growth and change are compatible with the vision the people have set for the community.





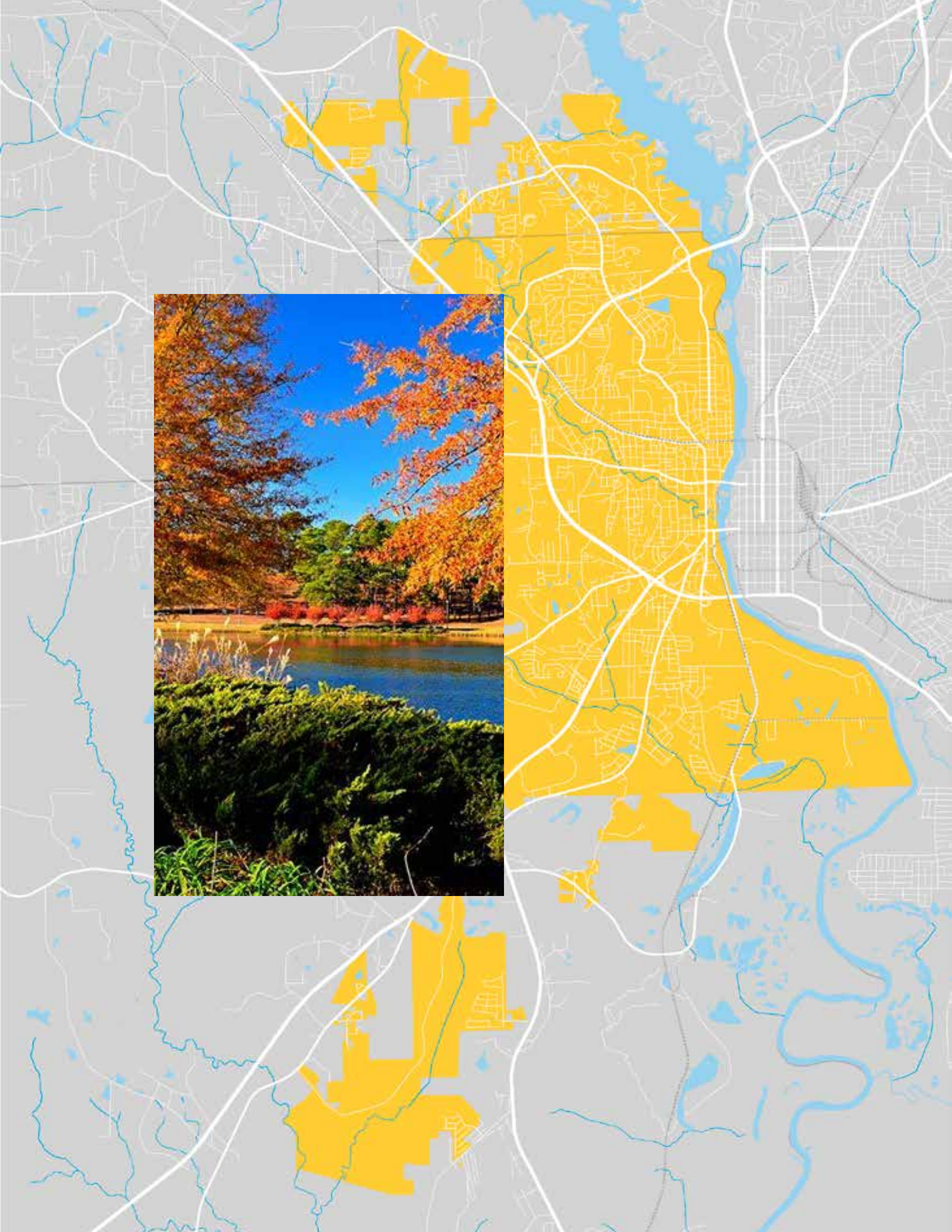




# 2

## VISION + GOALS







## VISION

As part of the Comprehensive Plan process a Visioning Workshop and survey were conducted to gauge how the community feels about Phenix City today and how it is changing and to understand the community's concerns for the future. The results of those efforts are documented here. The community's input describes a vision for Phenix City's next twenty years and highlights key issues the community must address to provide a safe, attractive and enjoyable environment for residents and businesses.

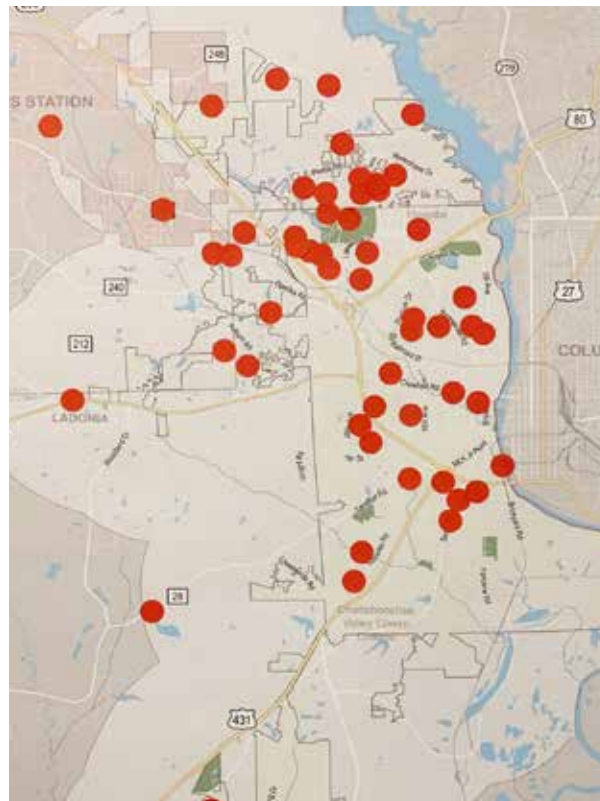


### Visioning Workshop

The Visioning Workshop was held at the Idle Hour Park Community Center on January 10, 2023. Over 70 residents, business and property owners, and city representatives attended the meeting in person. A few residents actively participated in the meeting remotely and others watched the meeting through an online broadcast.

As attendees arrived they were asked to think of one effort they would like to see accomplished over the next twenty years that would have the most positive, long-term impact on the community. Participants posted their ideas, which are included in this report.

The meeting began with a presentation by the planning consultant on the state of the city, including a comparative analysis with Columbus, Lee and Russell Counties and similarly situated communities in Alabama. Afterward participants identified positive aspects of the city, issues that concern them, and elements that are essential to Phenix City.



People from throughout the city attended the Visioning Workshop and engaged in discussions about the future of Phenix City.

### Assets

Participants were asked to identify those characteristics of Phenix City that meet their standards for the way the community should be and that make it unique.

- Downtown events
- Amphitheater
- Education, schools
- "Country" feel
- More space, not like Columbus
- Riverwalk
- Parks
- People
- Industrial park
- Hospital

### Issues

Participants were asked to name conditions that are not up to their standards and things that the city must work to improve.

- Post office, not big enough
- Property maintenance
- Riverwalk needs to be cleaned up, made safer
- Road conditions, potholes
- Crime
- Need better healthcare services
- Undeveloped land not being used, improved
- Recycling
- Traffic congestion, safety issues in some locations
- Lack of sidewalks
- Need more activities for families and children
- Lack of fine dining, restaurants
- Sanitary sewer

Assets noted in the survey added: Fort Moore, the river, schools, low cost of living, location, climate and easy commuting.





### Outside Forces

Participants were asked to identify national, regional or other conditions beyond Phenix City that are affecting or may affect the City in the future for better or worse.

- Spillover from Columbus
- Military, Fort Moore
- Human trafficking
- Film industry (in Columbus)
- Changing trends in recreation
- State lottery (in Georgia but not Alabama)
- Increasing popularity of bicycling
- Land/space available for development in Phenix City versus Lee County
- Cost of housing in Georgia
- Highway expansion, construction

### Sacred

Participants discussed elements of the community that are essential to the identity of Phenix City that should be protected and/or improved upon going forward.

- Sense of community, interaction
- Fort Moore
- High school football
- Barbecue
- Not too many apartment complexes
- Chattahoochee River
- Churches
- Highways
- Historic, brick buildings





## Visions

After discussing how the city is today, attendees were asked to think about how they would like Phenix City to be in the future. Once everyone had their images formed, they were asked to share one difference between the city today and the Phenix City of the future. The following is a summary of their responses:

- Redevelopment of downtown
- Cleanliness of city
- Riverfront development with bars and restaurants
- Large events center
- Expansion of the riverwalk toward Brickyard Road
- Whitewater development
- Phenix City becomes a gateway to the South
- Businesses and activities available locally (without the need to go to another city)
- Movie theater
- More small businesses
- A new shopping center
- Good senior living options
- More support of the Arts
- Social media presence
- Well-maintained public pools
- Pet-friendly parks and trails
- Better cable/wifi options
- Better or more golf courses
- Good education and recreation opportunities for youth so that families stay and others come to live in Phenix City.





Positive, Long-Term Impact

In considering what change they would make to have a meaningful impact on the community, meeting participants want Phenix City to grow into a city able to offer jobs, entertainment, cultural activities, healthcare, shopping and dining options that are only available across the river or other cities even further away. Other responses emphasized improving on existing parks, schools and other assets or making the community safer and cleaner.



## Visioning Survey

To optimize opportunities for the community to participate in the planning process, the City and consultant team created an online portal [fastforwardphenix.com](http://fastforwardphenix.com). Several community input activities were offered on the site including a Visioning Survey that was launched in December 2022. Over 370 individuals responded to the online survey. The survey was also made available in print form so that residents with limited internet access could participate.

The survey asked participants to rate city services and infrastructure, to gauge how their quality of life in the community is changing, and to identify their major concerns and hopes for the future of Phenix City. The results of the survey are summarized here:



## City Services

**Parks and Recreation.** Respondents had generally neutral to slightly favorable opinions of city parks and recreation offerings.

**Planning and Zoning.** Respondents indicated somewhat unfavorable sentiments regarding the city's management of development.

**Schools.** 45% of responses were favorable. Only 17% of responses were unfavorable toward city schools.

**Library.** Opinions regarding the library were split but leaned slightly favorable (35%) with a large number of respondents indicating a lack of familiarity with library services (18%).

**Fire Department.** Respondents indicated clearly favorable opinions regarding the city's fire protection services.

**Police Department.** Opinions regarding the police department were mostly positive despite concerns about public safety that emerged during community engagement.

**Garbage Collection.** Over 60% of responses were favorable. Only 12% of responses were unfavorable.

**Recycling.** Opinions regarding recycling in the city were mostly unfavorable. 26% of respondents were unfamiliar with recycling services.





Parks and Recreation



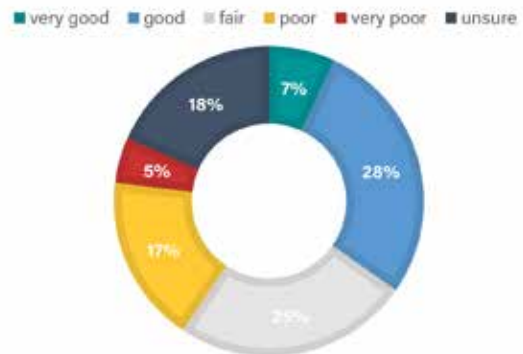
Planning and Zoning



City Schools



Library



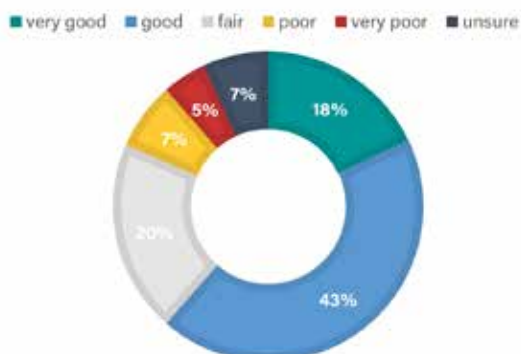
Fire Protection



Police Department



Garbage Collection



Recycling





### City Infrastructure

**Road Conditions.** Responses indicated that local roads are generally considered in “fair” condition though there are areas where residents are concerned about road conditions.

**Traffic Flow.** Respondents have a neutral to favorable view of traffic flow around the city.

**Pedestrian Facilities.** Rating of pedestrian facilities reveal residents are unhappy with the lack and/or condition of existing sidewalks and pedestrian facilities in the city.



**Bicycle Facilities.** Two out of three responses were unfavorable while 15% indicated a lack of familiarity with any bicycle facilities in the city.

**Water System.** Opinions regarding the water system were slightly favorable though nearly one out of four responses were negative.

**Sewer System.** Opinions on the sanitary sewer system were slightly favorable. As many responses indicated not enough familiarity to rate the system (15%) as there were unfavorable ratings.



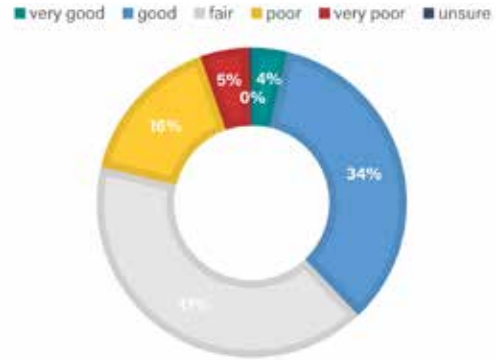
**Stormwater Drainage.** Respondents indicated that stormwater drainage is considered “fair” with a very slight margin of difference between favorable and unfavorable ratings.



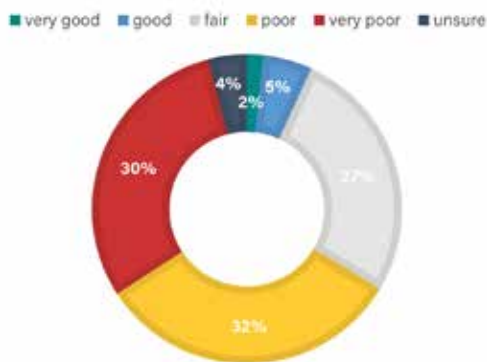
Road Conditions



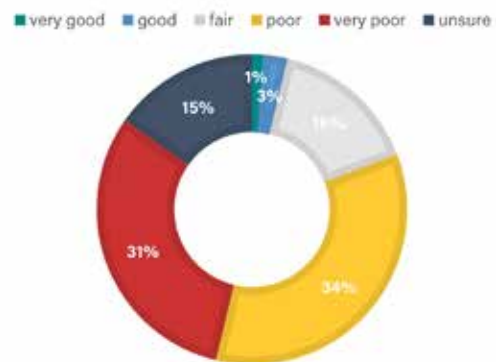
Traffic Flow



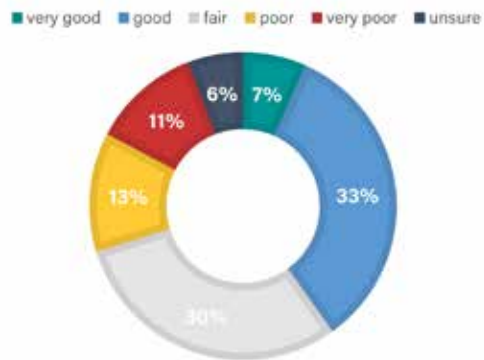
Pedestrian Facilities



Bicycle Facilities



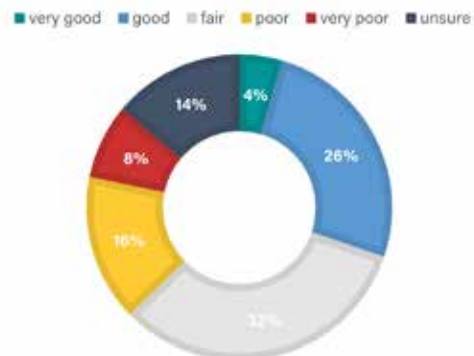
Water System



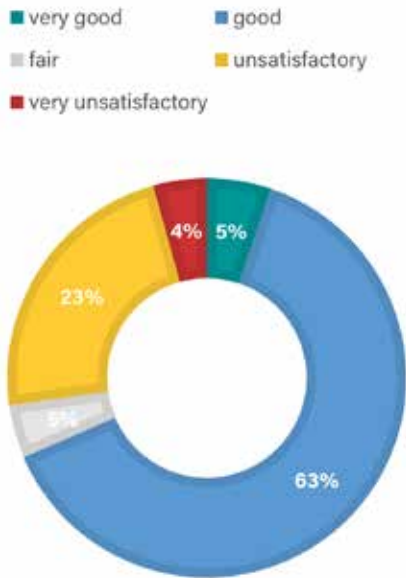
Sewer System



Stormwater Drainage



How is your quality of life in Phenix City today?



### Quality of Life

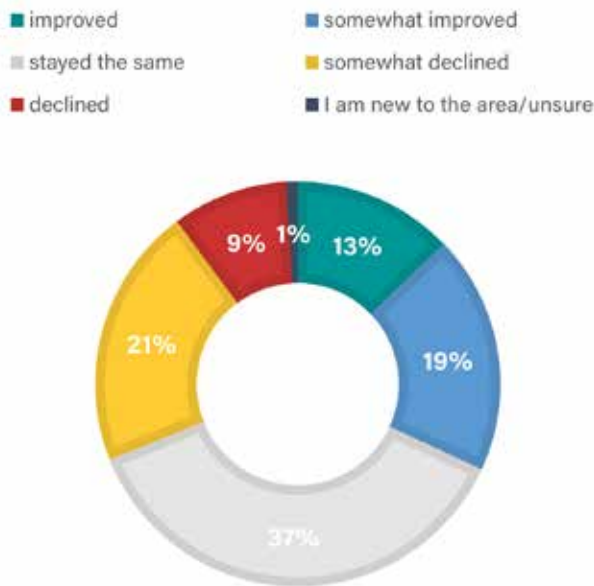
**Quality of life today.** Most residents feel they have a good life in Phenix City, though a little over a quarter of respondents are unsatisfied.

**How quality of life is changing.** Responses were roughly balanced between those who felt it has improved and those who believe it has declined.

**Contributors.** Residents appreciate that Phenix City is an affordable place to live. They also enjoy access to goods and services (some of which are in Columbus) and the sense of community in the city. And while there are concerns about crime, most appreciate that Phenix City feels safer than their larger neighbor Columbus.

**Limitors.** Responses were scattered among many different issues that limit or reduce their quality of life. This likely reflects that certain issues affect the lives of some more than it affects others. However, safety, infrastructure, economic opportunity and affordability issues each garnered more than 10% of responses.

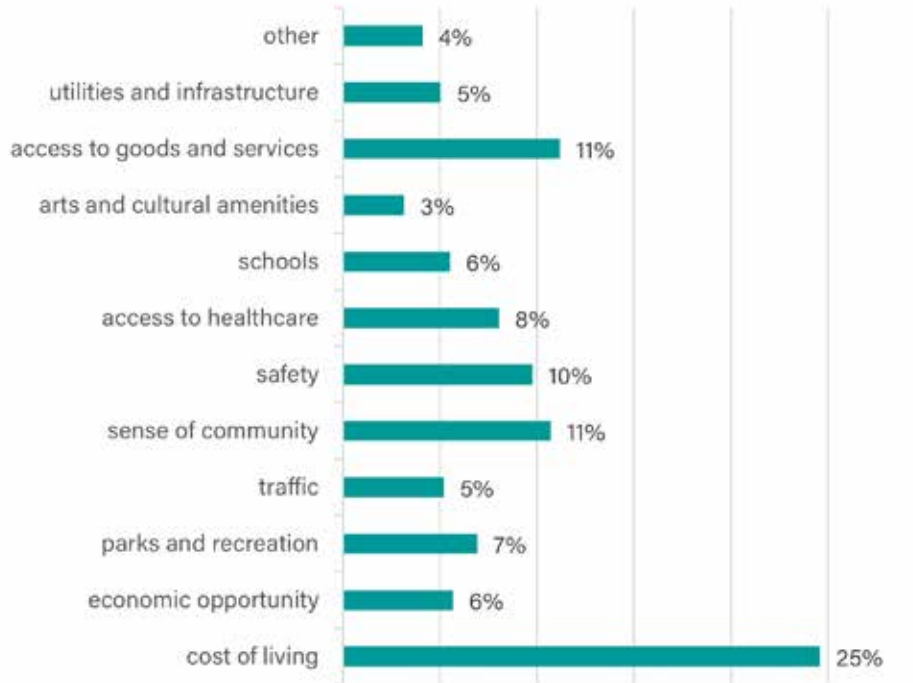
How has your quality of life changed in the last 5-10 years?



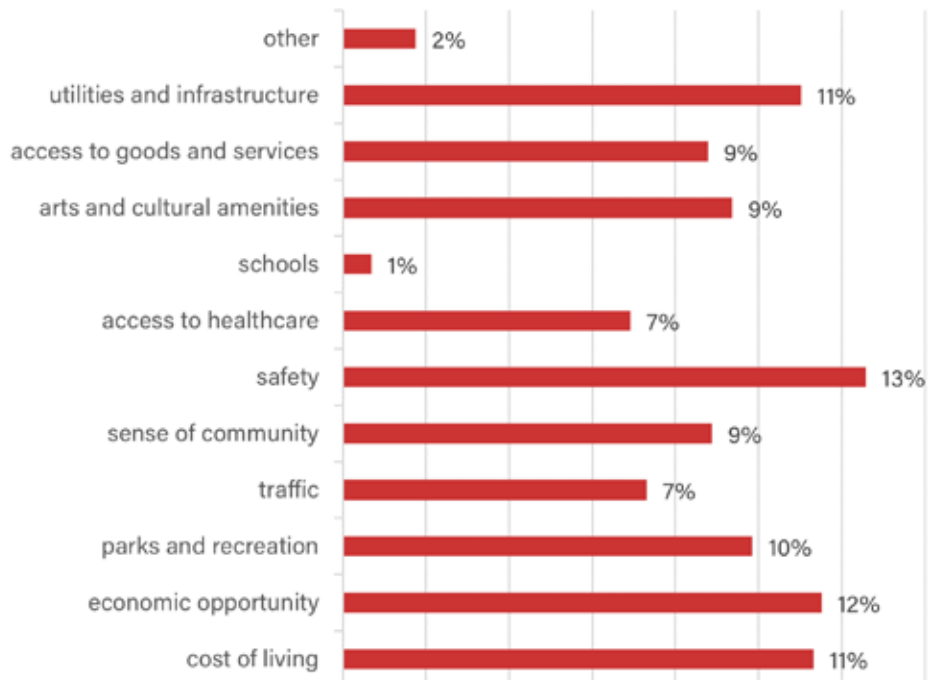
Phenix City's affordability was the most popular factor contributing to the city's quality of life.



What has contributed positively to your quality of life?



What has limited or reduced your quality of life?

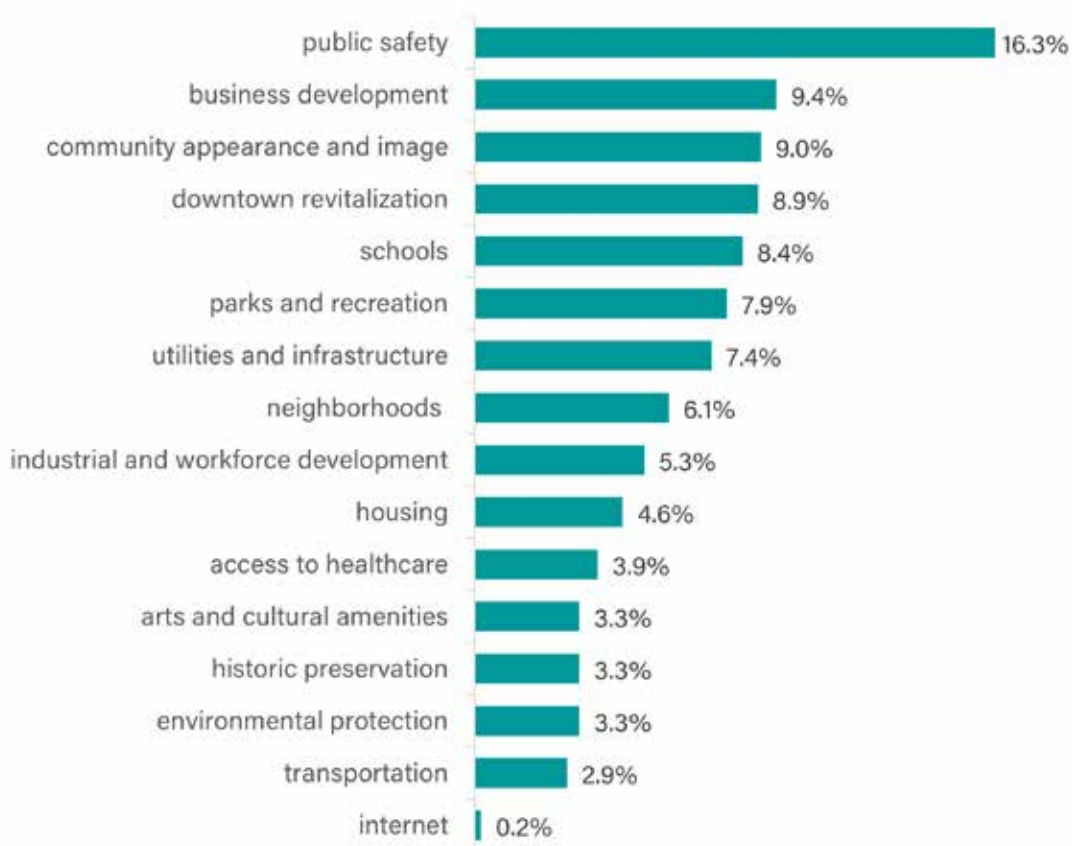


### Issues for the Future

Survey takers identified issues that they felt are the most important for the community to address to ensure a good future for residents. Public safety received most votes by a relatively wide margin, reflecting resident concerns as crime has increased in the Columbus metropolitan area and has spilled over into Phenix City. Other key issues selected by respondents included business growth—residents yearn for more varied shopping and dining

options—and improving the community's image and appearance. Revitalizing the downtown and taking greater advantage of the adjacent riverfront are recognized as having great potential for the community. In addition, responses emphasize the importance in maintaining and improving local schools to retain and attract families and support economic opportunity.

Top Issues for the Future







**Who Said That**

The following is a summary of those who provided input to the print and online Visioning Survey.

**How long in Phenix City**

60% of survey respondents have lived in Phenix City more than 20 years.

**Children in Household**

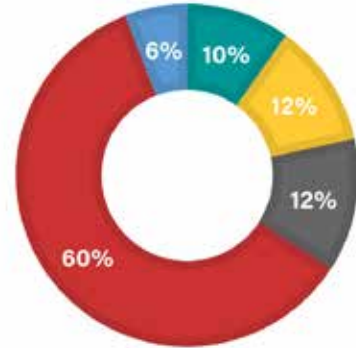
Only one-third of respondents have children in Phenix City Schools. Over half do not have school-aged children in their homes.

**Place of Work**

Over 40% of respondents have jobs in Phenix City. 29% work in Columbus. 12% of survey takers were retired.

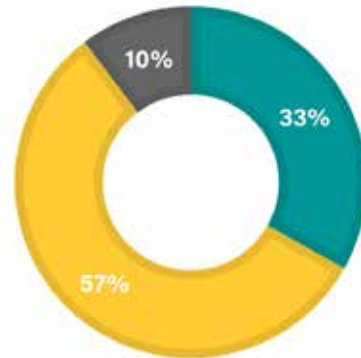
How long have you lived in Phenix City?

- 5 years or less
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- more than 20 years
- Do not live here



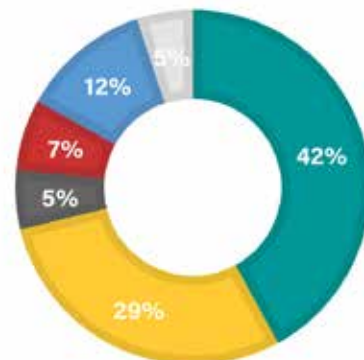
Do you have school-aged children in your home?

- Children in PC Schools
- No school-aged children
- Children attend elsewhere



Where do you work?

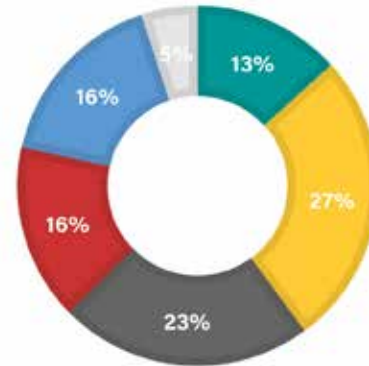
- Phenix City
- Columbus
- Ft Benning
- Auburn/Opelika
- Retired
- Other





What is your age?

■ 26-35 ■ 36-45 ■ 46-55 ■ 56-65 ■ 66-75 ■ Over 75



### Age

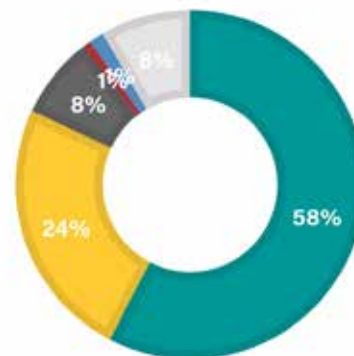
Different age groups were well represented among respondents. People 36-45 were the largest group represented, giving 27% of responses.

### Race / Ethnicity

Almost 60% of survey takers identified as "White." Only about one-quarter of respondents identified as "Black or African-American." This is much lower than the percentage of the resident population (about 48%) who identify as "Black or African-American."

What is your race/ethnicity?

■ White ■ Black or African-American  
 ■ Hispanic, Latino or Spanish ■ Asian  
 ■ Other ■ Prefer not to answer

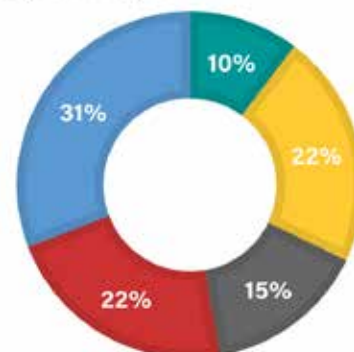


### Education

Over half of respondents earned a bachelor's or higher degree. This is a much higher percentage than present in the resident population.

What is your highest formal educational level?

■ High School ■ Some college  
 ■ Associate's degree ■ Bachelor's degree  
 ■ Graduate degree or higher



## GOALS

Based on the input from the community through the Visioning Workshop and survey, the following were identified as major goals for the Comprehensive Plan



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CITY



## Arts, Recreation and Culture

Phenix City has always prided itself on its parks and recreation system. In the coming years the City will focus on reinvestment in existing parks and prioritize quality over quantity. Building *new* should be multipurpose—expanding the Riverwalk and building other bicycle-pedestrian facilities for recreation *and* mobility. In the spirit of becoming more self-sufficient, Phenix City will support the expansion of arts and cultural programming and activities through public, nonprofit and forprofit partnerships.

## Revitalization

Phenix City will build an active, economically vibrant downtown taking every advantage of its river frontage to usher in sustainable private development. The City will reinvest strategically in major corridors like Crawford Road to bring new life and private investment to them. Nonprofit and for-profit investment in the central city's neighborhoods will be encouraged to preserve the city's historic fabric, reduce disinvestment and provide quality, affordable housing choices.

## Infrastructure

Phenix City is fortunate to have a strong highway system and an interconnected street network that disperses traffic and enables quicker emergency response times. That infrastructure must be maintained and improvements planned, prioritized and carried out incrementally. The City will improve transit, bicycle and pedestrian mobility to create a more equitable transportation system. Water and sewer systems will be upgraded for operational efficiency and to meet the needs of intentional growth.

## Safety

The City will pursue a holistic approach to create a safer community that is attractive to businesses and families. The police department will be well-staffed, well-trained and will build supportive relationships with neighborhoods. The City will encourage economic development and nonprofit partnerships to boost economic opportunity and reduce generational poverty. Safety will be a priority in the planning and design of capital projects. The Fire Department will improve station distribution to improve response times and the ISO rating.

## Economy

Phenix City will accelerate economic development to bring in businesses and industries that offer jobs with higher wages and benefits. The City will support local schools and post-secondary institutions in creating a cradle-to-career educational pipeline so that a skilled workforce is available. Downtown will become a hub for business growth encouraging reinvestment in adjacent neighborhoods. Upscale shopping, restaurants and entertainment venues will be attracted to Phenix City as household incomes improve, the population grows, and the community makes itself into a safe, attractive place for investment.







3

# DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY





The following citywide development strategy is intended to manage growth and improve quality of life in a manner reflecting the vision expressed by residents during the visioning process. It is built upon the city's natural landscape, transportation and utilities infrastructure, activity centers and prevailing patterns of development.

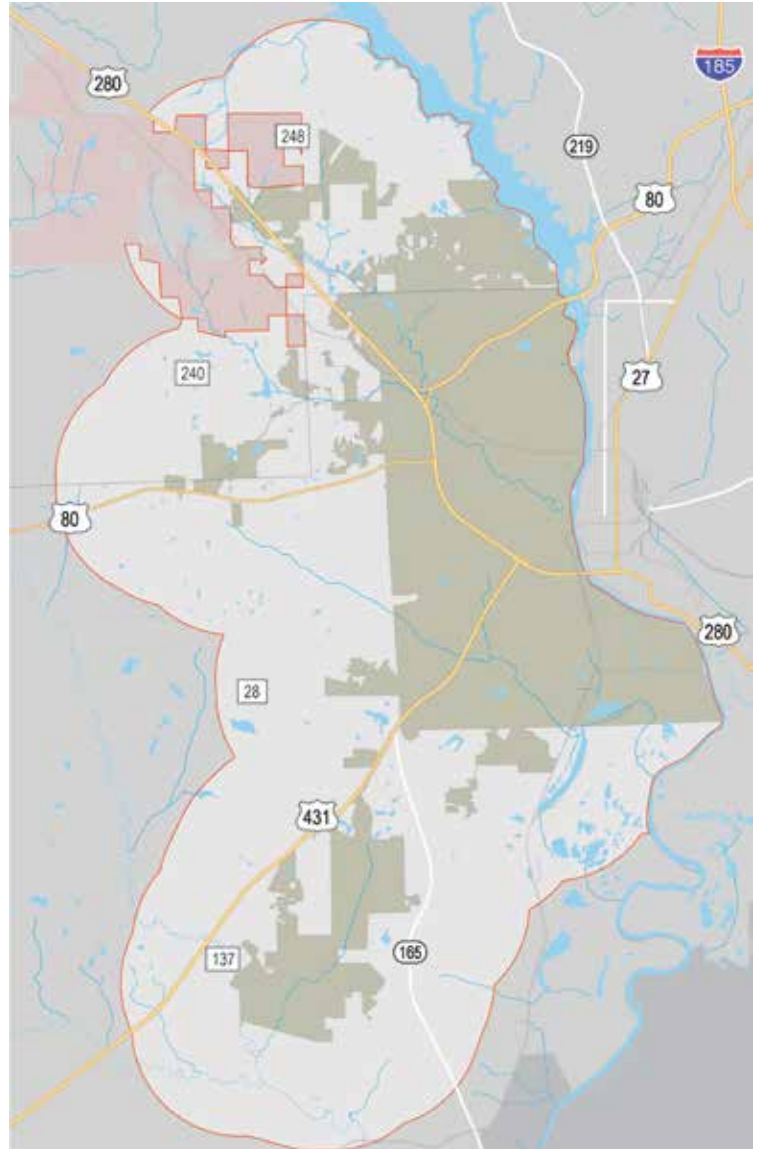
The strategy supports commerce, industry and recreation in locations that are highly accessible. It emphasizes patterns of growth that will optimize the use of existing infrastructure and investment in underdeveloped areas. It protects existing and future neighborhoods and streets while upgrading pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular networks.

This is a general, long-range plan. The locations of "future" activity centers and community facilities shown on the Development Strategy maps are not meant to be precise. Rather, they should be considered "placeholders" until more specific planning is undertaken to determine detailed needs and locations for each.



## MAJOR ELEMENTS

- The city's "green infrastructure" will be conserved and respected. Intensive development will be directed away from critical environmental features.
- Public and private investment along major roadways will create positive experiences for residents, investors and visitors. Phenix City's gateways will be well-defined and project a welcoming, attractive image to visitors.
- Commercial and other activity centers will be legible, compactly developed and accessible. Continuous strip development along major roads will be avoided.
- Phenix City will take greater advantage of its downtown and riverfront to leverage private investment and expand shopping, dining and entertainment options for residents.
- Industrial development will be directed toward the edges of the city with ready access to the highway system.
- Access to all arterial and collector streets will be managed carefully to conserve their capacity.
- The city's pedestrian and bicycle network will connect neighborhoods with schools, park and recreation facilities and other important destinations.
- Residential density and street connectivity will increase with proximity to activity centers.
- Investments in the parks system will assure an equitable distribution of quality, well-maintained facilities and programs throughout the city.



Throughout the plan a 1.5-mile area beyond the city limits is used in evaluating potential for future growth.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Phenix City's natural landscape is defined by the Chattahoochee River, rolling topography and several creeks. The natural environment performs "green infrastructure" functions, including storm-water drainage, flood protection, air quality, water quality, managing temperatures that result from land development and providing habitat for wildlife. In addition to their recreational enjoyment, parks and other man-made open spaces also act as part of the city's green infrastructure, contributing to many of the same environmental functions.

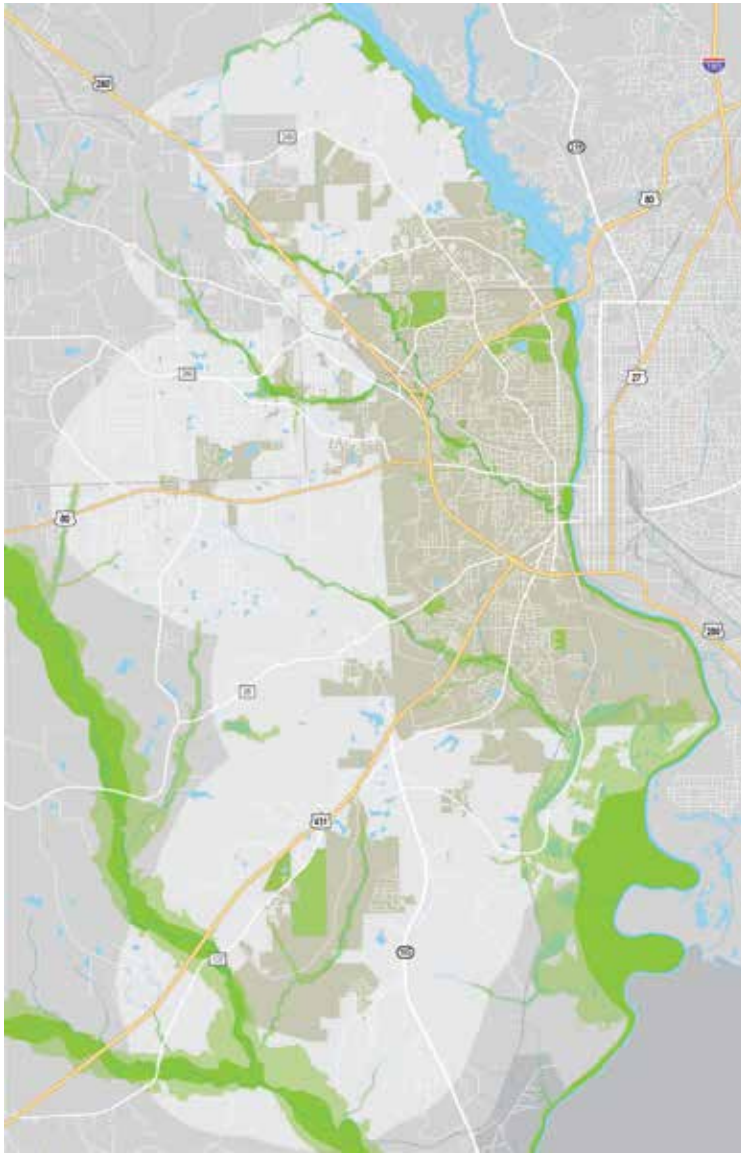


Figure 3-1 Green Infrastructure

Natural features should be conserved and incorporated into the design of new development so that they continue to serve these functions while also forming amenities that add value to neighborhoods and business areas.

Flood prone areas, steep slopes and other natural features are often viewed as obstacles to development, because they take up land area that might otherwise be built on. Grading to create flatter development sites or to elevate building sites above flood levels increases construction costs. Such changes alter drainage patterns, which also must be dealt with.

Conservation development can reduce costs while limiting disturbance of natural systems. This involves clustering buildings and streets into the most developable portions of a site. Clustered development can also reduce the amount of infrastructure needed for development, lowering up front costs for builders as well as the public's costs for the long-term maintenance of that infrastructure. Natural areas retained through conservation development can become amenities that add value and enjoyment to new neighborhoods and business areas.

### Waterways

The Chattahoochee River is likely the city's most important natural feature. In addition to its green infrastructure functions, the river is a source of drinking water and a recreational amenity. Its scenic value also is attractive to a variety of development types.

Area creeks function as drainageways for storm-water runoff and provide wildlife and fish habitat. Channelization of natural drainageways should generally be avoided as it increases the velocity of stormwater flows, which may then exacerbate erosion, sedimentation and downstream flooding.

Stream corridors are ideal for linear open spaces and greenway trails that add value to adjoining development.



## Floodplains

Floodplains along the river and other waterways fall into three categories: floodways, 100-year floodplains and 500-year floodplains. Because of the potential for flood damage to structures and exacerbating flooding in other areas, most types of development are prohibited in floodways. 100-year floodplains—areas with an annual 1% chance of flooding—straddle the floodway and are available for development, subject to some restrictions, including raising buildings above flood elevation and flood insurance requirements. 500-year floodplains—areas with an annual 0.2% chance of flooding—tend to be relatively small and are available for development with little or no restriction.

When development occurs in the 100-year floodplain, it should be planned and designed carefully to avoid increasing flood hazards, including limiting the amount of buildings, streets, pavement and other impervious surfaces and using “low-impact” development techniques. Where possible, these areas should be reserved for open space, including greenway trails, and planned and designed as part of Phenix City’s citywide green infrastructure.

## Wetlands

Delineated wetlands are required by the Wetland Protection Act to be preserved. Wetlands may be altered or developed only if adequate mitigation measures are taken, which may include constructing new wetlands nearby. Conserving wetlands can help ease flooding problems, support better water quality and protect fish and wildlife habitat.

## Steep Slopes

Some of the city’s steeper slopes occur along the river. When slopes are graded, natural drainage systems are altered, which can have impacts well beyond a construction site. Development on slopes of more than fifteen percent should be avoided or done with great care due to the potential for increased erosion and higher costs of construction, in addition to the loss of tree cover. Steep slope areas should be limited to very low density residential or other developments requiring only limited grading and clearing.

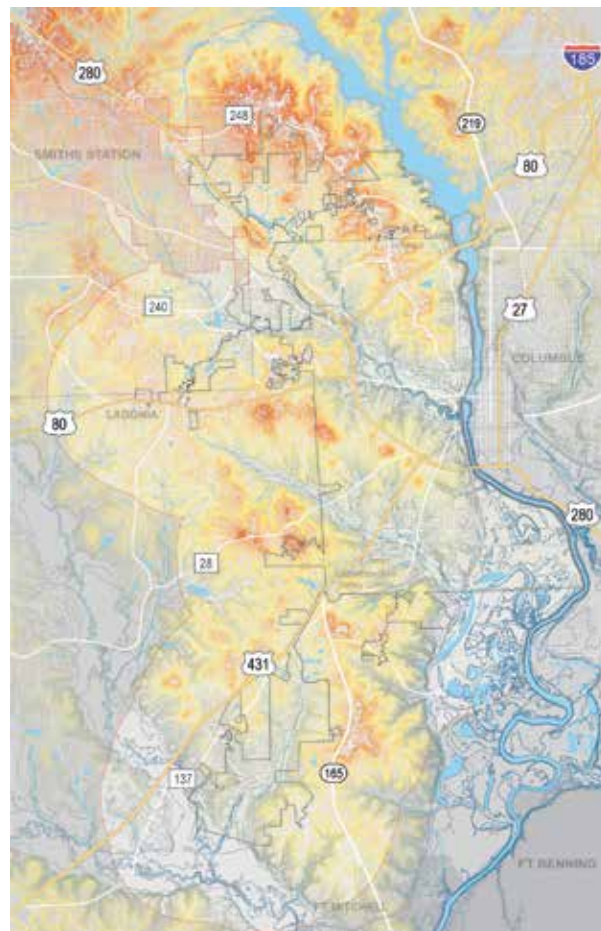


Figure 3-2 Topography



## INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure services the City provides should be used to guide the location, type and intensity of growth in accordance with the community's vision. By coordinating plans for infrastructure, land use and economic development, the City can maintain high levels of service and achieve a balance between the costs of public investment and the benefits of private development in desired new growth areas. But, if growth exceeds transportation, sewer, water and drainage infrastructure, the more difficult and costly it becomes to correct any deficiencies.

Infrastructure investments, in combination with appropriate land use and economic development policies, can encourage private reinvestment in aging or declining neighborhoods and business areas.

Standards for streets, sidewalks and stormwater drainage required as part of private development should be set to create physical environments commensurate with the city's vision for its neighborhoods and business and industrial activity centers.

### Street Network

Phenix City has a well developed local street network benefited by several highways providing regional access to the city. The primary goal will be maintaining and improving the existing street network, rather than building new roads or widening existing ones.

Residents have expressed concern over congestion on US 280. Congestion occurs primarily during morning, midday and evening peak periods where commuters along US 80 merge with those along US 280. Local traffic accessing businesses adds to the commuter traffic all within a relatively short distance. Traffic flow and capacity on US 280 and other highways can be improved by implementing access management policies and improvements and monitoring and adjusting signal timing.

The City intends to make significant improvements along the Crawford Rd/14th St corridor to improve bicycle and pedestrian access, create a more attractive entry into the city and encourage reinvestment along the corridor.

Two strategic intersection redesign projects are also envisioned to improve traffic flow and safety as well as enhance arrival into the downtown area. These include the intersection of 14th and 13th Streets and where Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy intersects Broad St.

Transportation concepts, including vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian systems, are addressed further in the **Transportation Plan**.

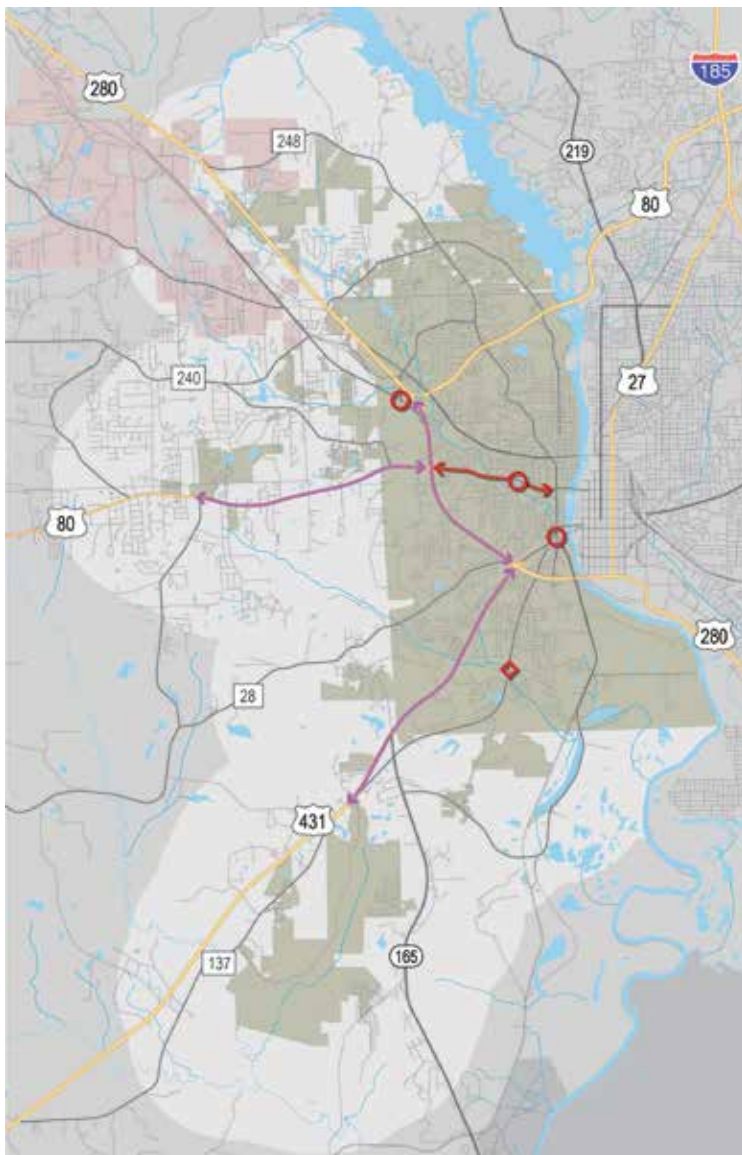


Figure 3-3 Transportation Concept

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Community input from the visioning survey made it clear that residents yearn for a more walkable community. Existing pedestrian infrastructure is somewhat limited, including the Riverwalk and sidewalks within the downtown area, along 4th Ave, Seale Rd, and portions of Summerville Rd.

Shown in Figure 3-4 are potential routes to improve bicycle and/or pedestrian mobility, especially to connect neighborhoods to parks, schools and other nearby destinations.

Key on-street improvements are recommended along Crawford Rd/14 St, Airport Rd, Riverchase Dr, and streets adjoining South Girard Junior High, Lakewood Primary and Elementary Schools, Westview and Ridgecrest Elementary Schools and Southside Park.

As an alternative to, or in combination with, adding sidewalks along existing streets, off-street paths can be used to connect neighborhoods with parks, schools and business areas. Such improvements



Shared paths can be built alongside street or along creeks, utility corridors and other off-street routes.

can be less expensive compared to street retrofits. Ideally, these would be “shared paths” wide enough to accommodate walking and bicycling. Land along streams and utility corridors are good targets because they require little or no retrofitting of existing infrastructure, grades are often mild and acquisition costs are less or can be arranged by easement.

Off-street paths shown in Figure 3-4 include extensions of the Riverwalk and paths along Cochgalchee Creek and Holland Creek.

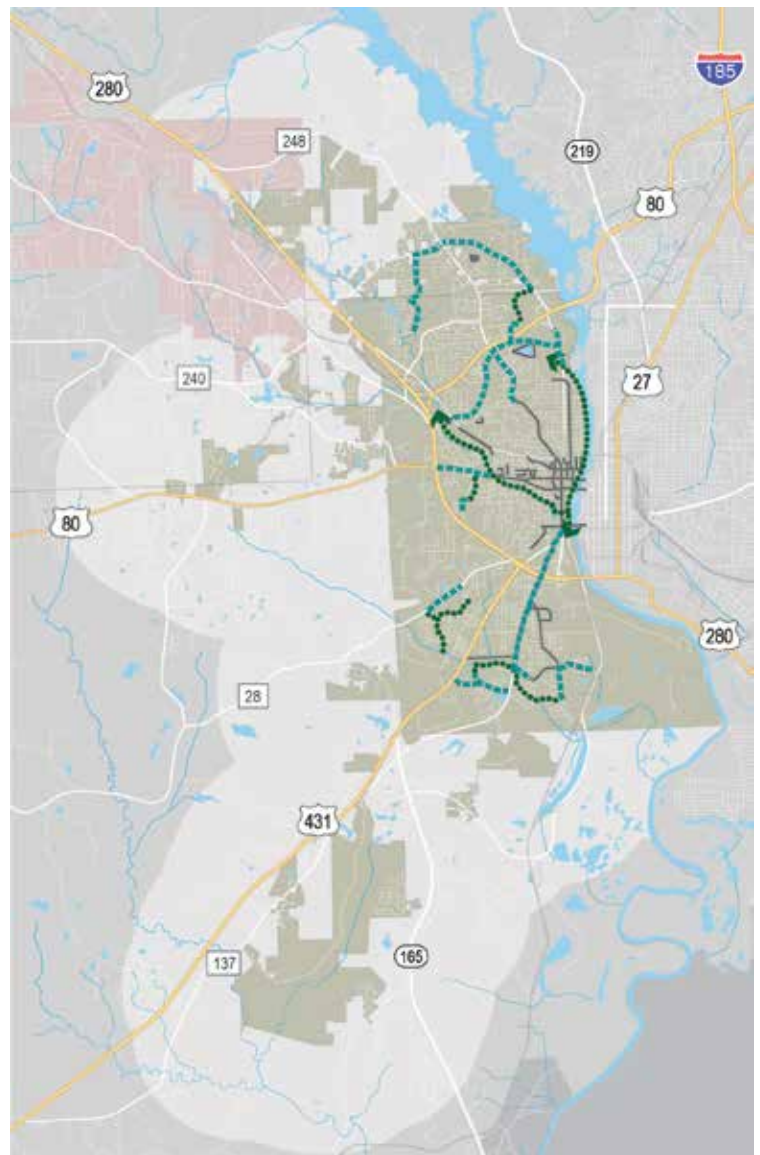


Figure 3-4 Bicycle-Pedestrian Concept



## Water and Sewer Systems

Phenix City has a well-developed water system with adequate capacity and strategically located storage tanks to accommodate city expansion.

The municipal sewer system is one of the most powerful tools the City has to shape growth. In areas without sewer access, residential densities and opportunities for commercial and industrial development are greatly limited. To facilitate develop-

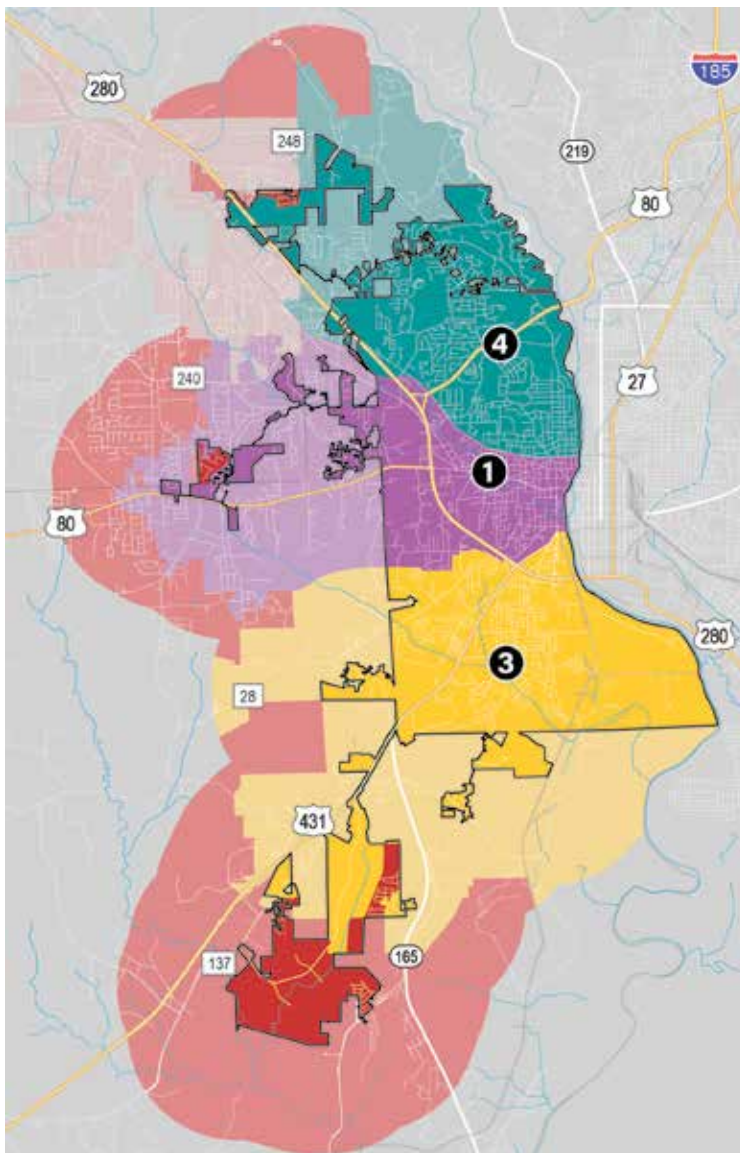


Figure 3-5 Fire Department coverage

ment in areas beyond the sewer coverage area, the City may opt to extend the system or assist financially in extending the system, where there are clear economic benefits of such an investment.

Major utilities initiatives will include increasing capacity at the wastewater treatment plant. The City may also extend the system to provide sewer services to neighborhoods in the Fort Mitchell area south of the city.

## Fire Department

Due to expansion of the city limits over time, the Fire Department is strained to provide desirable response times from its three stations to businesses and neighborhoods at the far west, south and north edges of the city. In addition to the safety concerns associated with delayed emergency response, this increases insurance costs for property owners in these areas. A primary goal for the Fire Department in the coming years, will be to build new fire stations strategically to improve coverage and response times. Portions of the planning area that are beyond five road-miles from the nearest fire station are shown in red in Figure 3-5.

Utilities systems and city services are discussed further in the **Infrastructure and Services Plan**.



## ACTIVITY CENTERS

Significant nodes or concentrations of commercial, industrial and mixed-use development are designated in this plan as activity centers. These include continued development and reinvestment in existing nodes—local and regional commercial centers, Downtown Phenix City, and industrial centers—as well as desired new development areas.

Business areas should be planned and designed to suit their target customers and their location within the community. Business areas tend to have a primary function or focus based on the size of the market area they serve. This greatly influences where they are located and how they are designed. Business areas serving regional and citywide markets will differ from those primarily targeted to surrounding neighborhoods. Nonetheless, each center should be accessible, have a relatively high concentration of business activity at their core and project a positive image for the community.

General locations for commercial and mixed-use focus areas are shown in Figure 3-6. Industrial activity centers are shown in Figure 3-7.

The size of the commercial and mixed-use activity center symbols in the illustration is intended to convey the scale and market area of each center. Larger symbols imply that the activity center takes up more land or that it serves a regional or citywide market. Smaller symbols imply that the center takes up less land or that it serves a smaller market area, such as surrounding neighborhoods. Elongated symbols indicate business areas that have been developed in a linear pattern along a corridor.

These areas are addressed further in the **Land Use Plan**.

### Highway Commerce

Highway commerce serves travelers and commuters, who make choices primarily based on convenience on their way to or from another destination. These businesses offer goods and services, such as gas stations, fast food restaurants and hotels. In Phenix City, businesses targeted toward travelers and commuters are primarily located along US 280 and on US 80 to the west. Similar businesses are beginning to emerge on US 431.

### Community Shopping

Community shopping areas are destinations—residents from throughout the community and beyond decide their visits to these areas in advance—and offer the greatest variety of goods and services. Phenix City's community shopping areas are intermingled with highway commercial businesses along US 280.

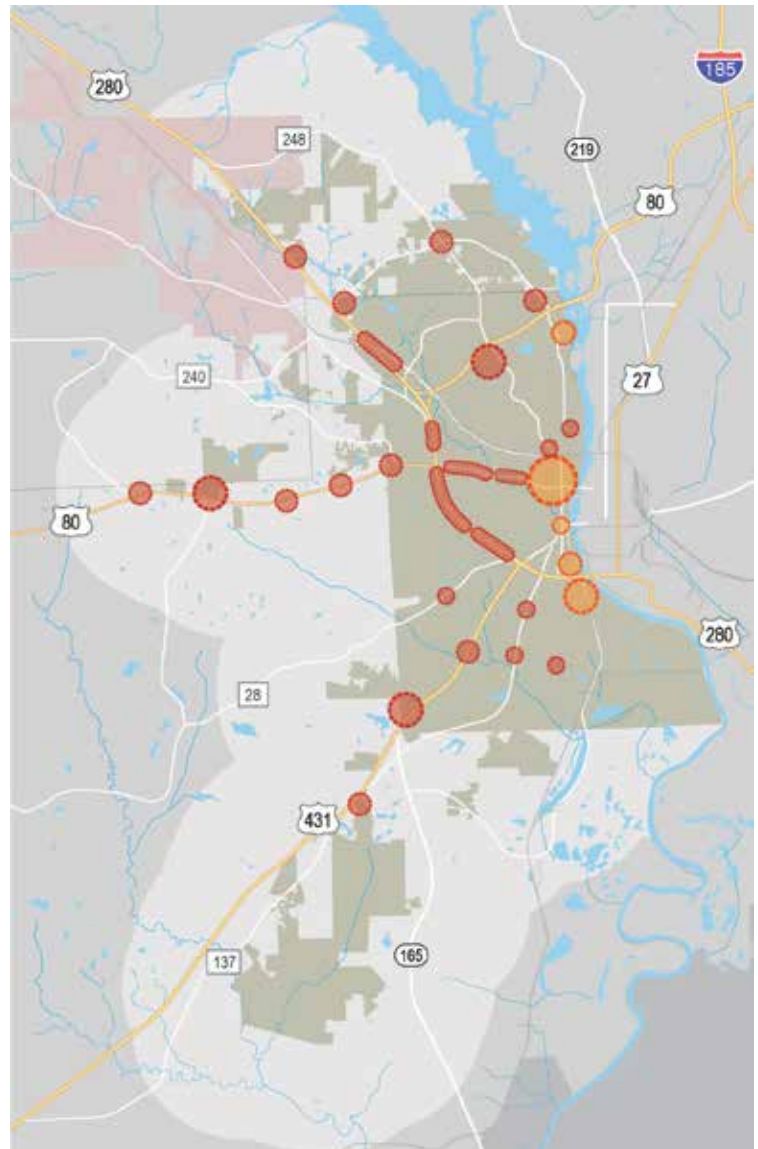
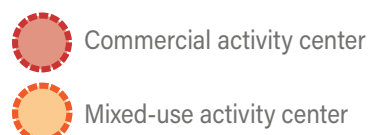


Figure 3-6 Commercial and mixed-use activity centers



Business area along US 280



These areas are externally accessible but should also be developed so that visitors can access adjoining businesses without re-entering the highway. This is afforded by service (or frontage) roads along some sections of the highway, but not others.

Stretching shopping areas linearly along major arterials, without internal accessibility afforded by side streets, cross streets and shared access, causes local shopping traffic to intermingle with through traffic, which then leads to delays and congestion.

As businesses develop along US 431 south, the City will encourage more concentrated development at the locations shown in Figure 3-6 and limit strip development along the corridor. Commercial and other uses should be developed so that blocks are formed with cross streets providing access from nearby neighborhoods.

The Crawford Road/14th Street corridor east of US 280 was initially developed with businesses serving the larger community. Over time, community shopping has moved to the highway, and the business areas along the corridor have changed. Today, the corridor is dominated by auto sales, supplies and



Intersection of 13th and 14th Streets

## Activity Center Principles

Activity centers vary in function and size, but most should display at least several of the following characteristics:

**Anchor or focus of activity** Regardless of its type, every center contains some activity or function with which it is primarily associated in the region, community or neighborhood.

**Intensively developed core** There should be a high concentration of uses toward the center and less toward the edges.

**Vehicular accessibility** Centers should be easily accessible by vehicle. This is accomplished in part by being located on major roads, but most importantly, by cross streets that connect them to nearby business areas and neighborhoods.

**Internal circulation** A motorist should be able to access other locations on the same side of a major street without having to re-enter that street.

**Pedestrian accessibility** With some exception, activity centers should be accessible by pedestrians from surrounding areas. Centers are planned and designed with pedestrian access in mind. Mixed-use and neighborhood activity centers should feature the highest level of internal walkability and pedestrian access from adjoining neighborhoods.

**Positive sense of place** Visitors should have a good feeling about the character of each center—the overall image of the place and its relation to its surroundings, feeling of safety, and sense of arrival and departure.

**Legibility** Things fit together—signage, landscaping, the locations of buildings and parking areas reinforce one another.

**Well-defined edges** The arrangement of uses and buildings and the design of the streetscape should make it clear where each center begins and ends.



Downtown Vision Plan

repair businesses. Revitalization is desired to create a stronger image for Phenix City along this central corridor, to increase the variety of businesses, to enhance walkability and to provide an attractive connection into the downtown area.

Businesses have emerged haphazardly along US 80 west of the city limits in an area not served by sewer. Some older businesses along this corridor have declined. If this portion of US 80 is annexed and sewer is made available, reinvestment in the area should concentrate business activity into nodes as shown in Figure 3-6.

### Mixed-Use Activity Centers

Several activity centers denoted in Figure 3-6 are intended for a more varied mix of commercial, residential and other uses. Within these mixed-use activity centers, multi-story development is desirable with housing and other uses possible in upper floors that support and generate traffic for ground floor retail and dining. Buildings engage the street rather than being set back from them. This, combined with a sidewalk-lined block pattern, makes these centers highly walkable. Each mixed-use activity center should feature a park, plaza or other open space feature.

### Downtown Phenix City

Downtown Phenix City, today, does not consistently reflect the compact, walkable environment that historic town centers are typically known for. This is a result of multiple factors but, principally, the changes that occurred over time took on a more suburban pattern. New buildings were separated from one another and from the sidewalk, mostly by parking. 13th Street and Broad Street were widened to accommodate increased traffic, further eroding the once pedestrian-friendly fabric of the downtown area.



Over the last twenty or more years, various efforts have been made to revitalize the downtown and reconnect the city to its riverfront. Recently, the City prepared a plan that would create five distinct districts along the river:

- an urban core around the intersection of 13th and Broad Streets
- Old Town Center along 16th Street and Whitewater Avenue
- River North along 17th Street and the river
- River South around the intersection of Dillingham and Broad Streets, and
- the Lively District, an entertainment-focused mixed-use district between Broad Street and the riverfront

### Brickyard Road

Two locations are identified on Brickyard Road near US 280 as mixed-use activity centers.

The activity center north of US 280 would span between Broad Street and Brickyard Road. The location features city-owned property that can be made available for private development. Reinvestment here can create a strong gateway into the city and take advantage of another opportunity to embrace the riverfront.

Example of mixed-use development with commercial uses on ground floor and living space above



South of US 280 a new mixed-use area is proposed from the Broad Street interchange to Brickyard Road. This area features undeveloped land, a former industrial site that may be redeveloped and river frontage.

### Riverchase and Airport Road

Undeveloped land available around the intersection of Riverchase Drive, 5th Avenue and Airport Road presents a desirable location for mixed-use development, not only because of the river frontage, but also the proximity to the recreational amenities at Idle Hour Park and the US 80 interchange.



Potential site for mixed-use development at the intersection of Airport Road and Riverchase/5th Avenue. Surround the intersection are properties owned by the City of Phenix City, Georgia Power and a private limited liability company.

## Neighborhood Business

Neighborhood business areas offer everyday goods and services near where people live. While much of the city's business activity occurs along US 280 and a few other major roads, there are several locations, often at prominent intersections of local streets, where businesses have been planted. Some of these are well-established, others should evolve into more intentional neighborhood-serving business areas.

Neighborhood activity centers should be limited in size, including only a handful of businesses, but can also include or be anchored by parks, schools or churches. Businesses should be limited in size and have limited hours (e.g., 7am to 9pm) so they do not create large amounts of traffic and pose other nuisances for nearby residents.

Sites should be configured so that they are easy to get to on foot, which reduces how much traffic they generate and helps integrate them into the fabric of the neighborhood. Locating parking to the side or rear of buildings improves pedestrian access and reduces the visual contrast with surrounding neighborhoods.

## Industrial Activity Centers

Historically, industries emerged along the railroad and along Opelika Road in the northern part of the city. Others took advantage of the proximity to the river and railroad south of the city, such as along Brickyard Road. More recently, a preference for highway access over rail access enabled the development of the industrial parking along Downing Drive at the city's southernmost edge.

Of the different types of activity centers, industrial areas will vary the most from the development principles in this section, particularly with respect to pedestrian access.

Continued industrial development will be an important part of increasing economic opportunities for residents. Several sites remain in the industrial park for future industries. And, while much of the industrial areas along Opelika Road (west of US 280) are outside Phenix City limits, reinvestment in these areas by new industries will nonetheless benefit the community.

Summerville Road, between the railroad and 19th Street, features several of the components of a neighborhood activity center.

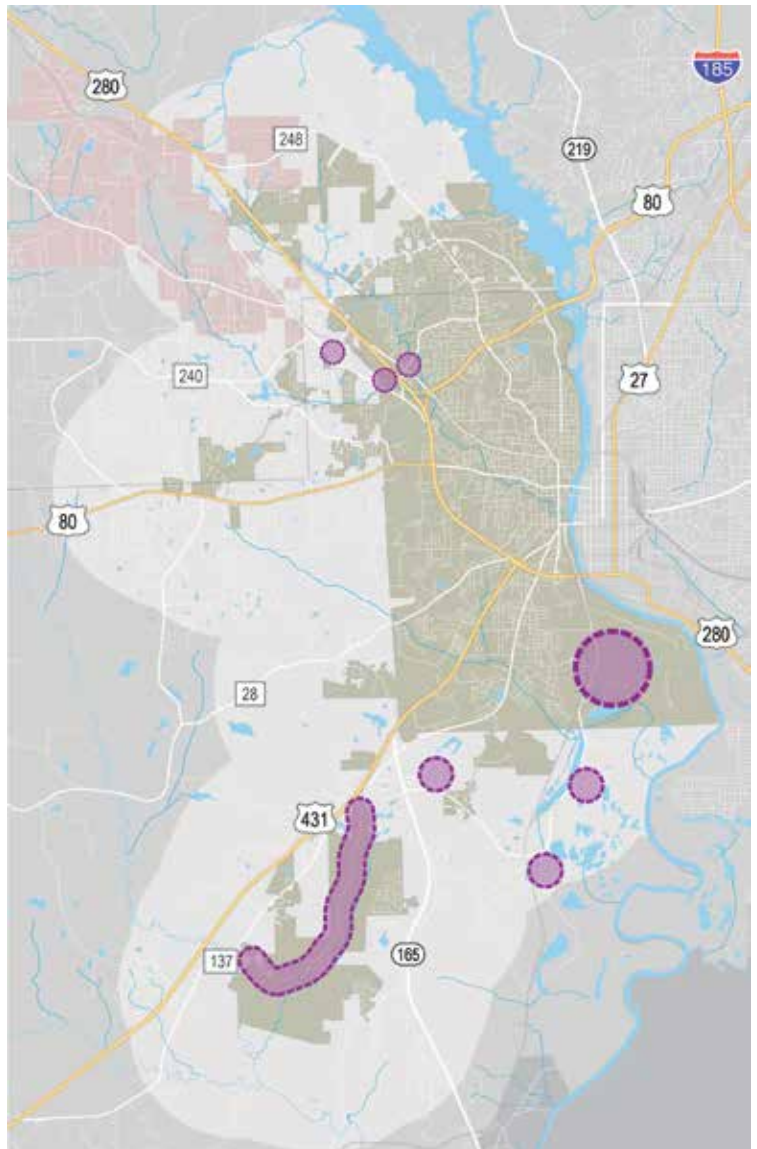


Figure 3-7 Industrial activity centers



## HOUSING

As residential development occurs in the future, two key strategies for Phenix City are focusing higher housing densities around commercial and mixed-use activity centers and encouraging residential reinvestment in the central city.

### Density and Location

The location of dense housing is critical to integrating it seamlessly into the community. Generally, higher density housing should be located so that it acts as a transition between activity centers (see Figure 3-8) and lower density neighborhoods. Also, the street network and other infrastructure near

activity centers is able to support the demands of higher density development. Further from these centers, density should dissipate. Higher density housing should be discouraged in locations where access to the street network is through lower density neighborhoods.

Infill development and other forms of residential reinvestment in the central city takes advantage of existing infrastructure and undeveloped land that has been skipped over. There are several large pockets of undeveloped land in the central city that would be appropriate for residential infill of varying densities. This will add vitality to existing residential and business areas nearby.

The desired pattern for housing density is addressed further in the **Land Use Plan**.

### Density and Design

The design of residential developments should be suited to their density. With increased density the following design principles should be applied:

- There should be a greater emphasis on street connectivity, so that traffic can be dispersed.
- Streets should be lined with sidewalks and trees. In addition to providing shade and greenery, street trees help create visual separation and privacy from the street.
- On-street parking can form a buffer between traffic and sidewalks. It also calms traffic and reduces the need for large parking areas. However, on-street parking may be impractical on streets lined with frequent front driveways.
- Off-street parking areas should be located away from local streets, either along the sides of buildings or internal to the development.
- Green space on individual lots tends to be smaller. This should be offset with more common open spaces or parks. This is another reason for maximizing the amount of “green” within the streetscape.

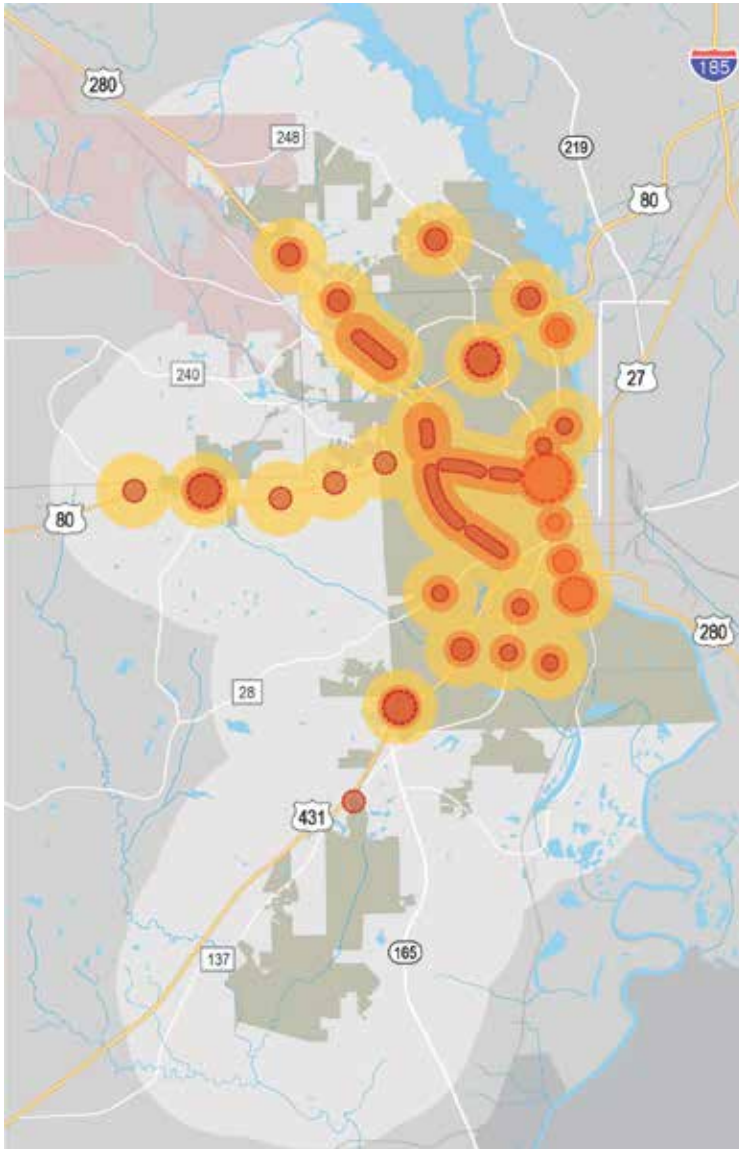


Figure 3-8 Housing density and relationship to activity centers

## COMMUNITY IMAGE

The economy and quality of life of the city are tightly linked to its physical character. Its image must be protected to provide a positive environment for businesses and residents. Gateways and image corridors should be treated as irreplaceable assets.

### Gateways and Image Corridors

Major entrances into the community create impressions to visitors about the city. Because of the number of highways entering Phenix City, the city has several gateways. The City has installed gateway signage at several of these locations. These gateways, which are located strategically to take advantage of scenic views or the character of adjacent development, include:

- US 280 southbound in advance of Pierce Road
- US 80 (JR Allen Pkwy) westbound between the river and Riverchase Drive
- 13th Street westbound between the river and Broad Street
- US 280 westbound at the Colin Powell Pkwy interchange
- US 431 northbound near the AL 165 intersection
- US 80 eastbound between Auburn Road and US 280

Phenix City's major streets are the most visible and frequently traveled areas of the city and form a large part of its outward image. These "image corridors" include US 280, US 80, US 431 and Crawford Road/14th Street and 13th Street.

At each gateway and along image corridors, the character and condition of private development and public investments in signage, the roadway, landscaping and lighting define the community's image. By managing development along image corridors and at gateways, encouraging reinvestment and maintenance, and making strategic public improvements, Phenix City will make itself more attractive to outside investment and residential growth.

Streetscape design elements help create a positive first impression at 13th Street at Whitewater Avenue



Figure 3-9 Gateways and image corridors



## ANNEXATION

Expansion of municipal limits is carried out for a variety of reasons. Sometimes annexation occurs on request by property owners who want to take advantage of city services or be able to enroll in the local school system. For municipalities, the two most common motives for annexation are capturing revenue and managing growth. Areas that should be explored by the City for future annexation are shown in Figure 3-10. Higher value annexation areas are indicated in red. Secondary and long-term annexation areas are shown in purple and yellow, respectively.

While most business areas in the planning area are already in the Phenix City municipal limits, there are some areas with businesses or potential for business development that should be prioritized. Unincorporated properties along US 280 in Lee County and along US 431 to the south are among the highest priority, to capture potential business growth and guide that development in accordance with city policies and goals. Additional business development can also be expected along US 80 west as residential development continues north of the highway, making the highway a target for annexation.

Annexation for growth management purposes is typically aimed at areas that are developing residentially or that are likely targets for housing construction. While Alabama cities are able to enforce subdivision rules in their extra-jurisdictional planning area, there are limits to those powers. Annexation allows the City to exercise zoning powers to influence both uses and density more directly. This level of control is important because it helps the municipality control infrastructure and service costs. Zoning authority also enables the City to protect residential areas from encroachment of undesirable uses. Properties along major roads will tend to be higher priorities for annexations sought for reasons of growth management.

Riverfront residential areas are also desirable for incorporation due their higher ad valorem values. To make incorporation more attractive, the City must be able to offer high quality services, particularly fire protection.

The recommended annexation areas in Russell County will not notably increase the size of police and fire department service areas. Further northern expansion into Lee County will add only a modest impact on municipal service areas since the city has already annexed land along Lee County Road 248.

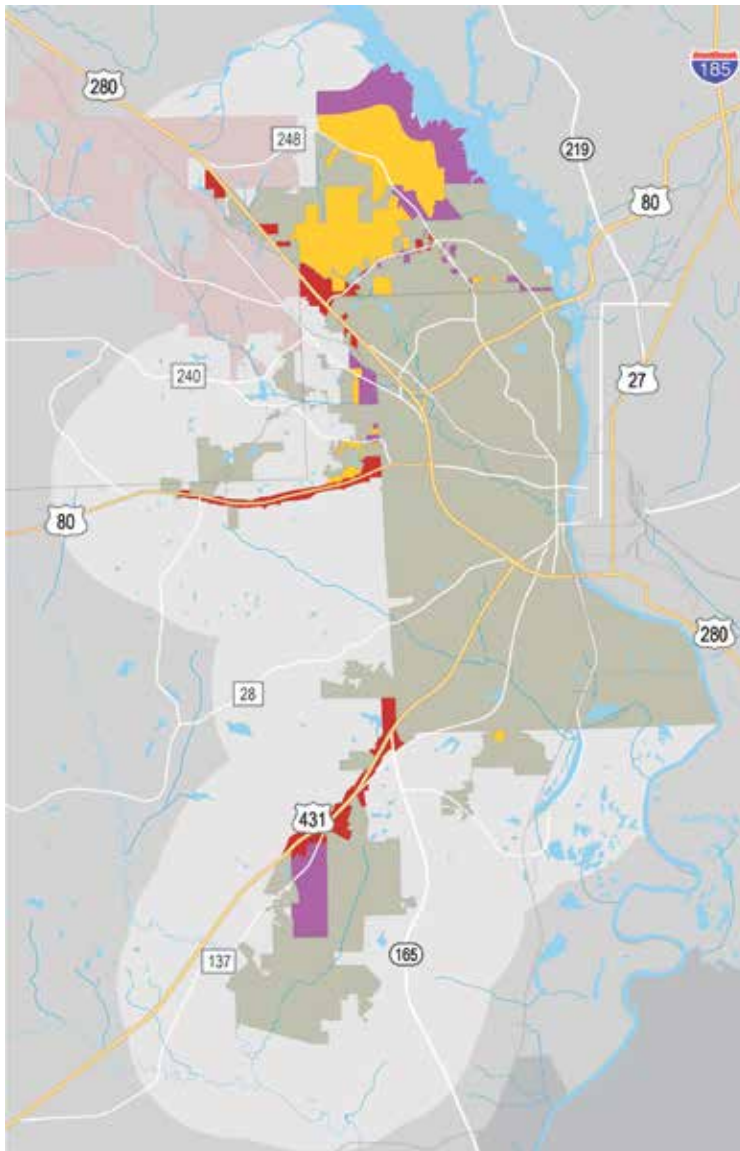
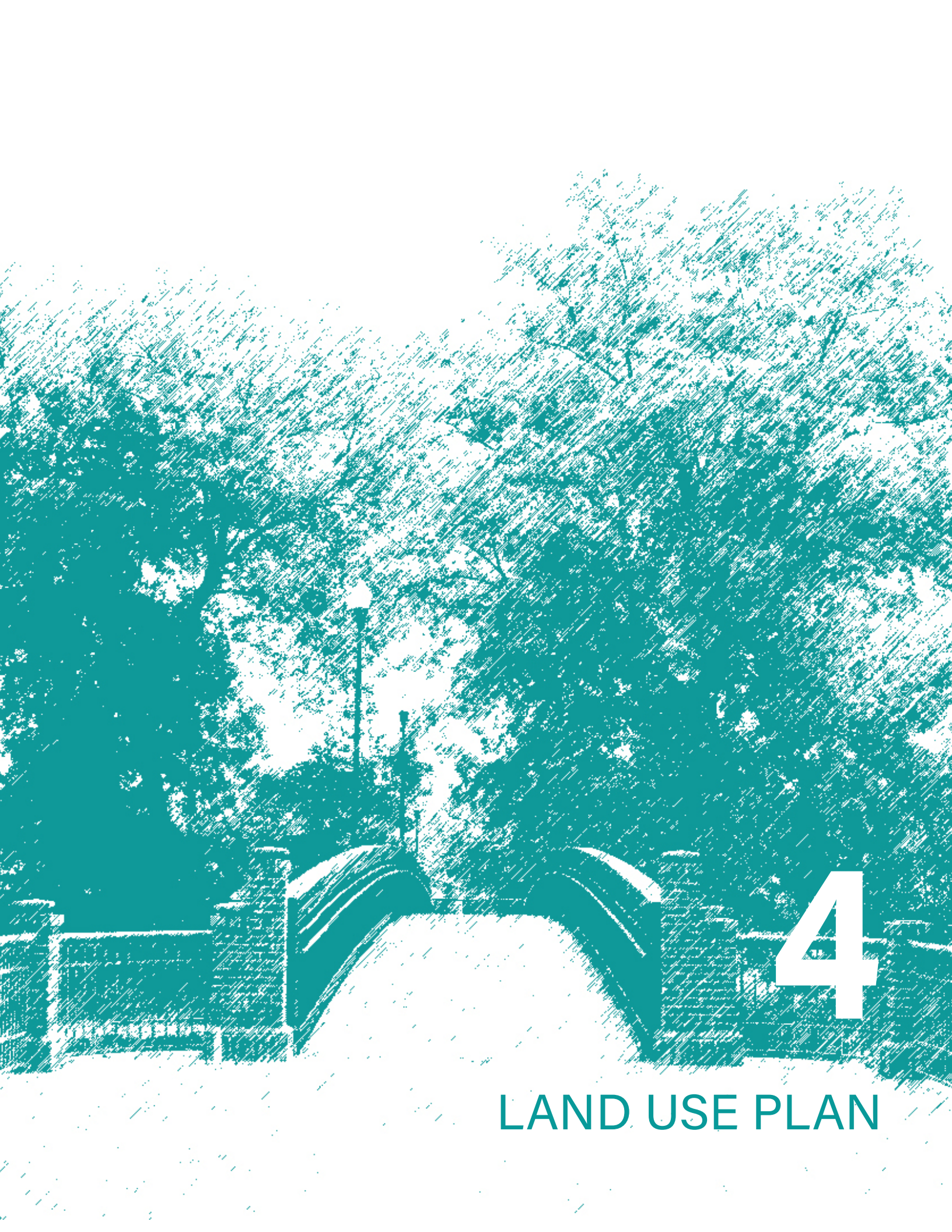


Figure 3-10 Annexation strategy

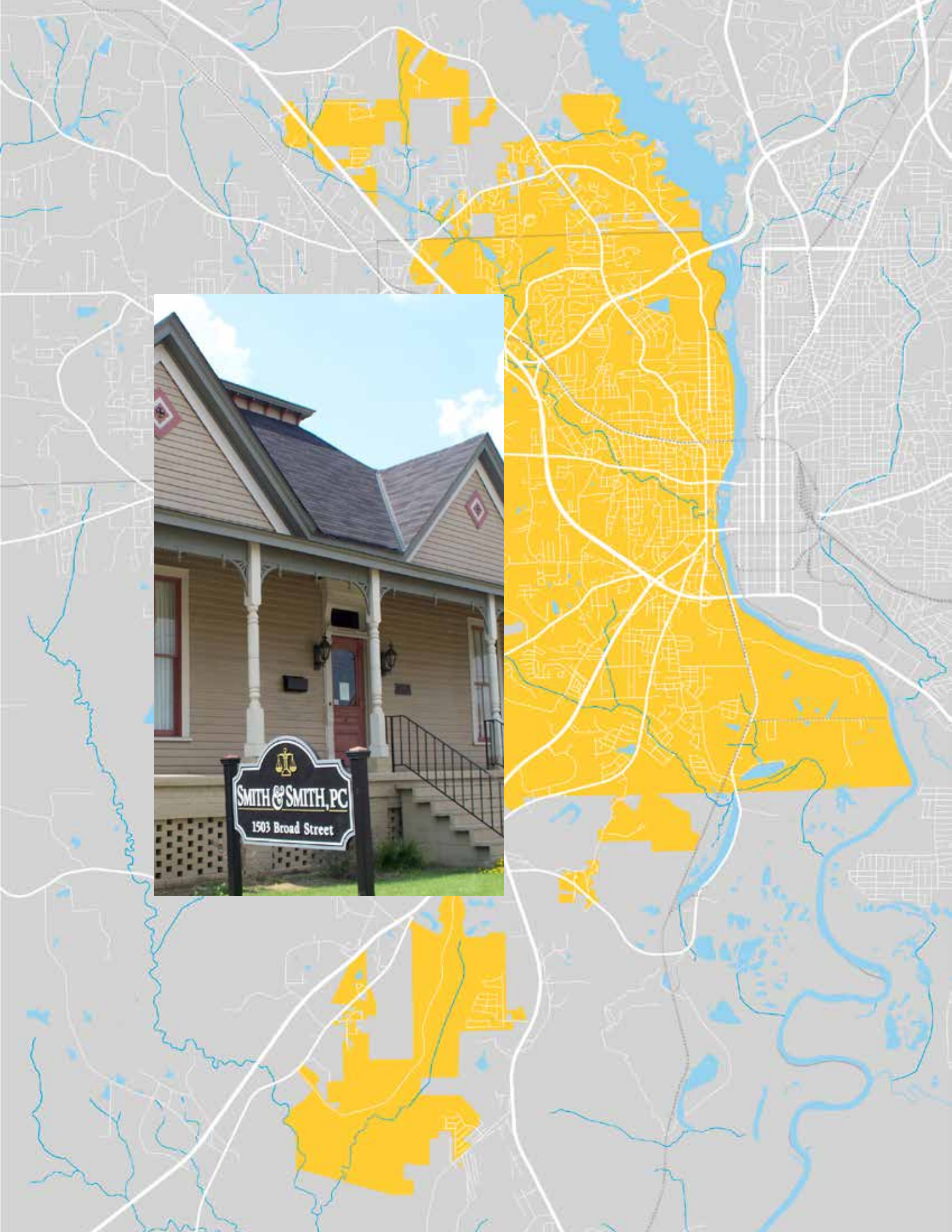




# 4

## LAND USE PLAN





## INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Plan identifies the types of land uses and range of densities and development patterns that may be allowed in a given area—should changes occur in the future. By implementing land use policies, the City can better plan for and upgrade infrastructure to accommodate future growth and limit potential incompatibilities of future development that can harm the value of existing development.

The Plan represents a desired pattern of land uses. It is not intended that existing use must change if they are in conflict with the Land Use Plan. But, if such areas do change, then the changes should be consistent with the overall pattern established in the Land Use Plan.

The Land Use Plan is used by the City for a variety of purposes. One of the most common of these is in reviewing the appropriateness of zoning and subdivision applications. The Future Land Use map (Figure 4-1) is not a zoning map but a guide for the Planning Commission and City Council in considering changes to the zoning map as development proposals are made. It is to be consulted in planning for expansion and new development of public facilities and utilities to serve the growing community because it represents a reasonable picture of the future state of the community.

### Land Use Principles

The Land Use Plan is built around the following principles:

- Arrange uses to avoid incompatibility that can harm property values.
- Provide comfortable transitions between uses of different types, densities and intensities.
- Arrange uses so that traffic from industrial, commercial and other traffic generators is not funneled through residential areas.
- Treat commercial and mixed-use activity centers as hubs around which residential, institutional and other community activities are clustered.
- Avoid continuous, linear commercial development along major roads. Residential development can be appropriate along major roads. In such cases, single-family lots would face and be accessed from interior streets and an attractive landscaped buffer provided along the major road frontage.
- Locate higher density residential uses close to commercial and mixed-use nodes and major roads and lower density residential areas further out from commercial and mixed-use nodes and from major roads.
- Designate environmentally sensitive areas for recreational uses or development types that will limit impact on flood plains, steep slopes and drainage patterns.
- Face similar uses across streets. Arrange uses so that land use transitions occur mostly along rear lot lines and man-made and natural barriers (railroads, highways, streams, etc.). Land use transitions along side lot lines should be considered on a case by case basis and may require buffers between some uses.



### Future Land Use

- Parks and Open Space
- Agriculture and Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Multifamily Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Downtown Mixed-Use
- Highway Commercial/Mixed Use
- Light Industry
- General Industry
- Institutional
- Utilities
- Flood Zones A, AE (100-yr flood)

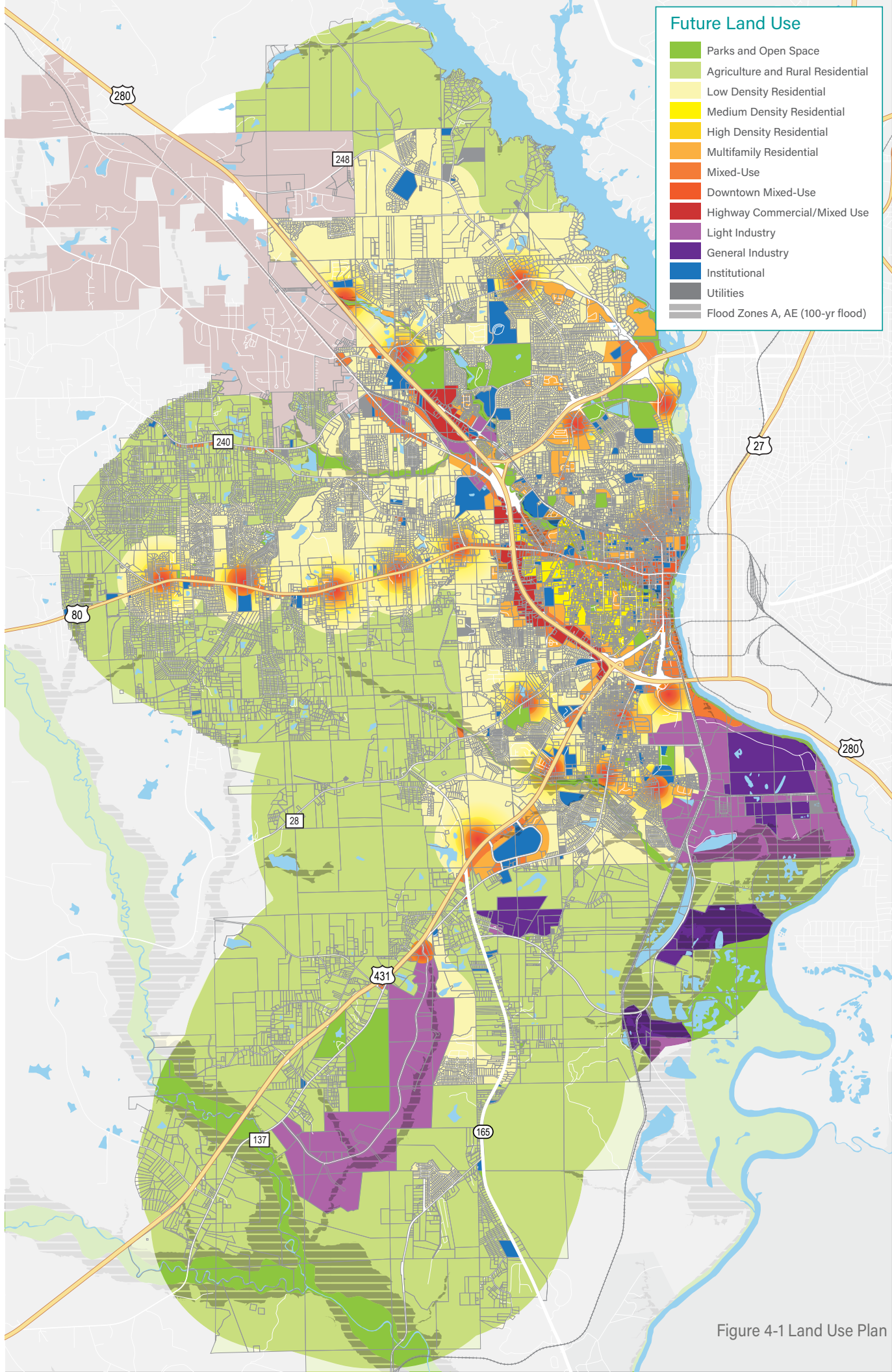


Figure 4-1 Land Use Plan

## LAND USE TYPES

The following land use types are depicted on the Future Land Use map. The land use types are described in terms of the range of uses that are intended for each. Development guidelines address street and subdivision design elements, including street connectivity, pedestrian facilities, street-side stormwater drainage improvements and provision of open space. Street connectivity guidelines are provided in the form of allowable block lengths. This is intended to support mobility and effective emergency response when developments involve changes to existing streets or construction of new streets. Where not specifically addressed, street connectivity, drainage and other design elements should be consistent with that of neighboring developments or as otherwise specified in City plans and standards.

### Parks and Open Space

This category includes land permanently reserved as open space and/or recreation including public parks and cemeteries. Floodways are also included to assure conservation of these areas and reduce development impacts on area waterways.

### Agriculture and Rural Residential

This category includes crop farming, timbering, raising of livestock, single-family housing, and some agriculturally-related business uses that produce little traffic, do not require access to the sanitary sewer system and involve a low ratio of building to land area. Lot sizes for residential development are at least one acre. Lot sizes for agricultural uses will tend to be much larger, comprising multiple acres.

- Street connectivity is limited. Most properties are served by existing roads.
- Street-side stormwater drainage on existing streets often includes swales. Where subdivisions occur, street-side stormwater drainage is handled by raised curb and gutter.
- Sidewalks are not provided but off-street paths may be desirable for pedestrian, bicycle, horse or all-terrain vehicle use.





## Residential

This category includes multiple subcategories with varying densities of residential uses. Low intensity institutional uses, parks and open spaces are also included in each residential subcategory.

### Low Density Residential

This subcategory includes single-family detached homes with moderate lot sizes and a density up to four dwellings per acre.

Low density residential areas are typically located where the street network is of moderate connectivity and where utilities infrastructure and public facilities are more limited.

- Block lengths are generally less than 900 feet.
- Green space is incorporated primarily through generously-sized yards.
- Sidewalks should be provided, at a minimum, along collector streets and should be set back from the road edge. Subdivisions should include sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities within one-quarter mile of schools or parks.
- Street-side stormwater drainage is handled by gutters with raised curbs.



### Medium Density Residential

This subcategory is made up primarily of single-family detached homes with moderate lot sizes. Residential developments may include duplexes and small-lot homes (e.g., patio and garden homes) though the majority of lots will be devoted to single-family homes on larger lots so that the overall density does not exceed six dwelling units per acre.

Medium density residential areas are typically located within one-half mile of activity centers and where the existing and planned street network and other infrastructure are more robust.

- Block lengths are generally less than 750 feet. Connections to adjacent subdivisions or other development may be necessary to achieve intended connectivity.
- Green space is provided through moderately sized yards, common open spaces in residential subdivisions and trees within the streetscape.
- Sidewalks are provided on at least one side of local streets and on both sides of collector streets. Sidewalks are set back from the curb by a buffer strip.
- Street-side stormwater drainage is handled by gutters with raised curbs.



Detached single-family homes on small lots



Cottage development



Attached single-family homes (townhouses)

### High Density Residential

This subcategory is made up of detached and attached single-family homes, cottage development and duplexes at densities that exceed six dwellings per acre. Triplexes and quadplexes may be appropriate in limited locations, such as on corners and where adjoining multifamily, mixed-use and non-residential areas.

High density residential areas are located within one-quarter mile of activity centers, where street connectivity and infrastructure are robust. They provide a transition between nonresidential development and lower density residential neighborhoods

- Block lengths are generally less than 600 feet. Street connections to adjacent development will be necessary to achieve intended connectivity.
- Green space is provided primarily through common open spaces in residential subdivisions and trees within the streetscape.
- Sidewalks are provided on both sides of streets and are set back from the curb by a buffer strip.
- Street-side stormwater drainage is handled by gutters with raised curbs.
- Utilities are underground or located within the interior of blocks.

Front driveways and garages can dominate the character of small lot homes, disrupt sidewalks and eliminate green space in front of homes. Clustered and on-street parking, alleys and other alternative designs are preferred.





### Multifamily Residential

This subcategory includes multifamily residential developments and other high density residential types.

Multifamily residential areas at the edges of commercial and mixed-use activity centers, where street and utilities infrastructure is optimal. Multifamily residential areas form a transition between nonresidential development areas and other residential subcategories.

Multifamily buildings should engage streets, rather than be turned inward, especially in and adjacent to activity centers. Off-street parking should be located toward the interior of blocks.

- Block lengths are generally less than 600 feet. Vehicular connections to adjacent development will be necessary to achieve intended connectivity.
- Green space is provided primarily through common open spaces and within the streetscape.
- Sidewalks are provided on both sides of local and collector streets. Sidewalks are set back from the curb by a buffer strip.
- Street-side stormwater drainage is handled by gutters with raised curbs.
- Utilities are underground or located within the interior of blocks.

## Commercial and Mixed-Use Areas

This category includes multiple subcategories with varying scales and mixes of commercial, institutional and other uses.

### Development Principles

- Shopping and dining uses should be concentrated at the heart of mixed-use activity centers (identified in the Development Strategy) with other business and commercial uses flanking the core uses or located in upper stories of buildings. High density residential uses may be appropriate at the edges of commercial and mixed-use areas and in upper floors of buildings.
- Block lengths should be less than 800 feet except where access management needs prevent shorter block lengths along major roads.
- Green space is provided in common open spaces and within the streetscape.
- Sidewalks should typically be provided on both sides of the street to facilitate pedestrian access throughout each district and to connect to adjoining neighborhoods. Sidewalks should be buffered from streets, as appropriate to the location, by a tree-lined buffer strip.
- With the exception of some highway segments, streets should generally have raised curb and gutter.
- Parking areas of adjacent businesses should be connected to one another and the number and size of curb cuts, particularly along major roads, carefully managed.
- Outdoor storage and other outdoor work or service areas should be located away from the street and screened, particularly from nearby residential uses.

## Highway Commercial Mixed-use

This subcategory includes a wide range of commercial activity—retail, business and personal services, dining, entertainment and lodging accommodations. Office and institutional uses are also appropriate in these areas. Commercial uses in this category typically serve regional, commuter and citywide markets and may involve large footprint buildings.

These areas are limited to portions of US 280 that have developed in a linear pattern with traveler and community-wide retail and service uses. There tends to be little cohesion between individual developments along the highway. As new development occurs, creating a stronger sense of place and more cohesiveness between uses and buildings should be stressed.

These areas should be designed to accommodate pedestrian access from nearby neighborhoods and from one development to the next, including on-street sidewalks or paths and interior walkways that connect uses to on-street facilities.

Block lengths along the highway frontage are determined by access management needs. On cross streets, block lengths should not exceed 800 feet. Shared driveway access and cross access between adjoining developments are encouraged.







### Mixed-Use

This subcategory includes commercial, recreational, institutional and high density residential uses and applies to most mixed-use activity centers identified in the Development Strategy. They serve commuter, citywide and smaller market areas. Allowing a range of uses is intended to expand reinvestment opportunities in already developed areas.

Multistory buildings are desirable, especially near the center of mixed-use areas. Uses may be mixed vertically or horizontally. Away from the core of and particularly at the edges of mixed-use areas, offices and other non-retail commercial uses, as well as higher density residential uses, are appropriate.

Some already developed areas exhibit a range of uses but with little physical cohesion. As new development occurs, creating a stronger sense of place and more cohesiveness between individual developments should be stressed.

These areas should have a high level of walkability through more compact development patterns, and generous pedestrian infrastructure. Parking lots should be located to the side of buildings or toward the interior of developments so that buildings line streets to create more visual cohesion and to support pedestrian access. To this end building setbacks from the street may be minimal.

Portions of development along highway frontages will vary from the intended patterns along other streets in terms of block length, parking location and pedestrian activity. Nonetheless, such developments should feature the intended patterns internally and along cross streets.

### Downtown Mixed-Use

This subcategory includes commercial, recreational, institutional and high density residential uses and applies exclusively to the downtown area.

Multistory buildings are desirable, especially along Broad Street and as otherwise described in the Downtown Vision Plan. Uses may be mixed vertically or horizontally. Allowing a mix of uses, in addition to other purposes, is intended to lend flexibility and encourage infill development, reuse and redevelopment in the downtown core and along 13th and 14th Streets. Bringing residential and entertainment uses to downtown will increase activity in the evenings and on the weekends to better support retail and dining.

As new infill and redevelopment occur, creating a stronger sense of place and cohesiveness between uses and buildings is critical. Parking should be located to the side of buildings or toward the interior of developments so that buildings line streets and create a more cohesive, walkable environment.



Conceptual Plan for the Lively District from the Downtown Vision Plan





## Industrial

For the purposes of the land use plan, industrial activities are classified into Light Industry and General Industry.

These subcategories are designated where industries are present today, along Opelika Road, Brickyard Road and in the industrial park along Downing Drive. These areas offer flat sites and a high level of transportation access, by highway, rail, river or a combination. The industrial areas on the south side of the city are mostly sequestered away from residential areas.

Industrial areas need not have sidewalks except as determined by context. For example, sidewalks may be desirable to connect industries to an adjacent commercial area so that employees can walk to nearby restaurants and other businesses.

### Light Industry

Light industry includes warehousing and distribution, large-scale commercial operations, clean manufacturing, research and technology-focused industries. Light industrial uses tend mostly to be enclosed and more compatible with non-industrial uses than “heavier” industries. However, they must still be located with consideration to how truck access would affect neighboring uses and buffered from residential and other less intensive uses.

Outdoor storage, work yards and loading/unloading areas should be located toward the interior of sites, away from street views and any adjoining residential areas. Such site elements should be screened along side and rear property lines when adjoining non-industrial uses.

### General Industry

This subcategory includes light and heavy industry. Heavy industry includes those that are more land intensive—where much of the activity takes place outside of buildings. Recycling plants, scrap yards and extraction uses are considered General Industry for this reason. Heavy industry also includes manufacturing and other industrial activities that produce noise, smoke, odors or other concerns. Because of these potential nuisances, such industries must be located, planned and designed to limit their impacts on business and residential areas nearby.

Light industrial uses can provide a transition between heavy industries and other uses, though buffering and screening may still be required between light industries and non-industrial uses.

If sufficiently separated from residential and commercial areas, screening of outdoor operations is less important for general industrial uses.

## Institutional

This category includes government facilities, schools, places of assembly and worship, medical, and community service uses and lands. NOTE: Only existing institutional uses are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Depending on the scale and intensity of institutional uses, they are appropriate in most areas of the city and therefore are included in other land use categories. Large churches and schools, and other higher intensity institutional uses, which tend to comprise larger buildings and draw larger amounts of traffic, should generally be located in high visibility places where access is suitable and adjacent land uses are compatible. Less-intense institutions, which range from small churches to elementary schools, may be appropriate in or adjacent to neighborhoods provided there is sufficient transportation access that does not interfere with the enjoyment of the neighborhood.

The development pattern—building heights, setbacks, parking location, street and sidewalk design—of institutional uses should be consistent with the pattern of the dominant use in the area (i.e., residential, commercial, etc.). However, internalized parking is encouraged.



## Utilities

This category includes water, sewer, gas, electrical, telecommunications and other existing utility facilities. NOTE: Only existing locations are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Like institutional uses, utility facilities are appropriate in most areas of the city, and in many cases, their location in a particular part of the city may be a necessity.

Sewer pump stations, water storage tanks, electrical substations and similar utility facilities are appropriate in any land use area. Depending on the type and design of the facility and its location on site, landscaping or other screening elements may be necessary for visual compatibility with surrounding development.

Treatment plants and other large scale facilities should be located away from residential areas when possible. Otherwise, screening, buffers and other design elements should be provided to maintain compatibility and avoid negative impacts on neighbors.





## FOCUS AREAS

The following recommendations expand on the citywide development strategy, the land use plan and other planning and design issues particular to each of four focus areas.

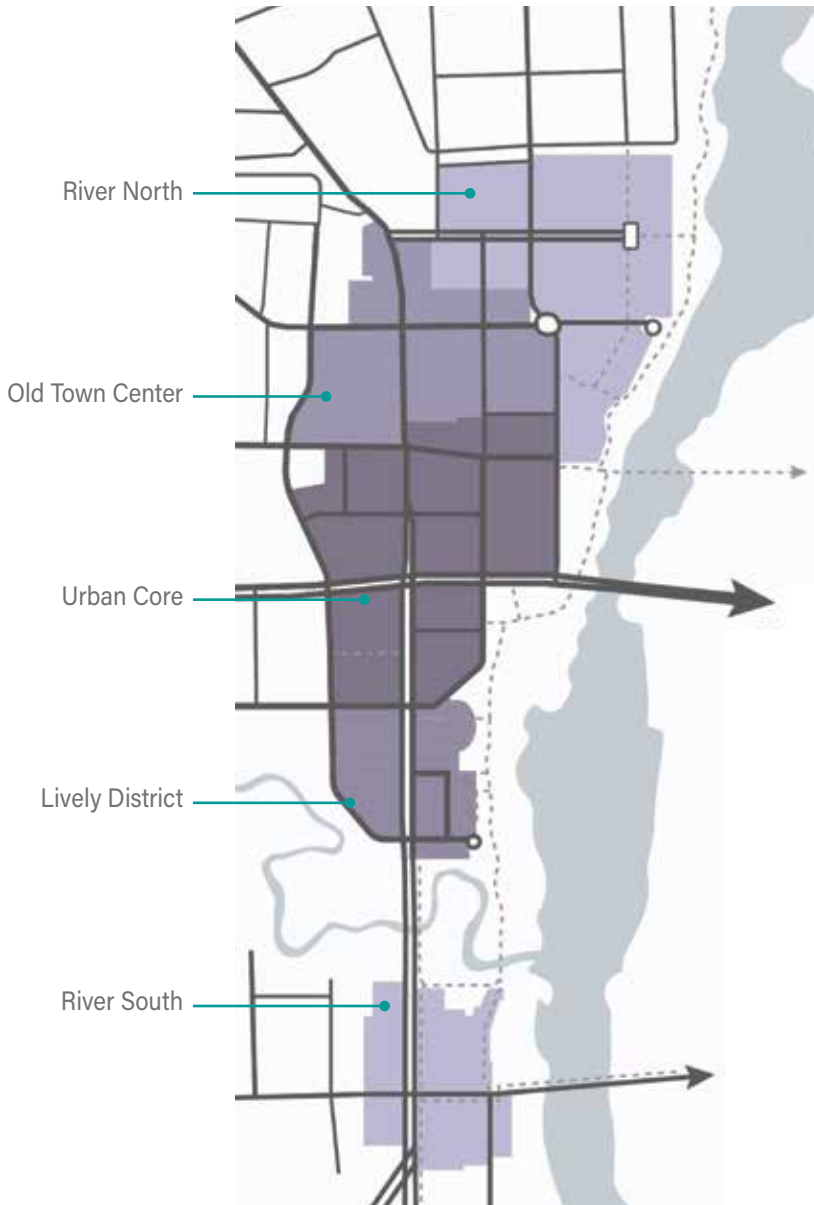


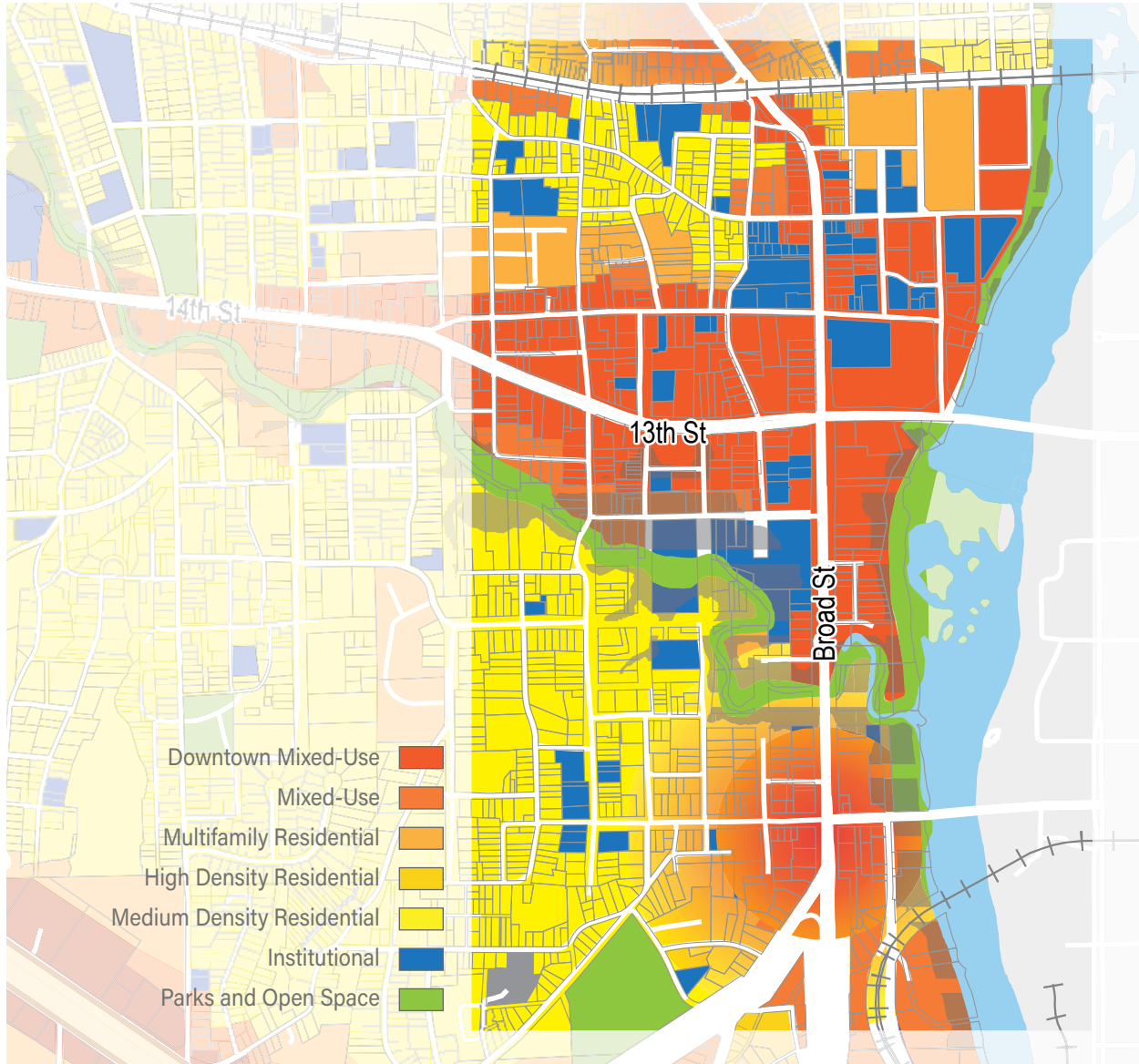
Figure 4-2 Downtown Districts from Vision Plan

### Downtown

The Downtown Vision Plan prepared for the City by Orchestra Partners illustrates essential land use and design elements that will be helpful in attracting and optimizing private investment and creating a vibrant, walkable downtown area. A key element of the vision plan is taking greater advantage of one of Phenix City's greatest assets—the Chattahoochee River.

- encourage a mix of uses in the downtown area that activate it during the day and at night, with ground-floor retail, dining and entertainment establishments focused along Broad Street and properties fronting on the river
- allow and encourage the greatest density in a future “urban core” focused around the intersection of 13th Street and Broad Street
- encourage housing in the upper floors of buildings in the urban core and along the riverfront; residential developments (without other uses at ground floor) are appropriate along the northern and west edges of downtown
- place buildings and public entrances at the back of the sidewalk to make downtown walkable
- preserve and reuse the historic buildings in the Old Town Center (along 16th Street)
- provide frequent pedestrian connections to the Riverwalk from east-west streets and riverfront development areas. This will make the Riverwalk easier and safer to see, access and use
- locate off-street parking in the interior of blocks as much as possible, not between sidewalks and the front of buildings
- pursue multiple strategies to reduce the total amount of land used for surface parking: waive minimum parking requirements downtown (except for residential uses); maximize on-street parking throughout downtown; and encourage shared and structured parking

Figure 4-3 Downtown Excerpt of Future Land Use Map



Conceptual Plan for the Urban Core from the Downtown Vision Plan



### **Crawford Road/14th/13th Street**

The following recommendations refer to the portion of Crawford Road east of US 280, including 14th and 13th Streets. Reinvestment and redevelopment are the primary goals for this aging commercial corridor. The City intends to redesign the road to enhance its image—it is a vital entryway into downtown and east-west connector to Columbus—through landscaping, lighting and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. This public project is also intended as a catalyst to encourage private reinvestment along the corridor.

As traffic patterns have changed around Phenix City, commercial investments along the roadway have dwindled. Today, there is a high concentration of auto parts and repair businesses, used car dealerships and other businesses that, by their nature, are not well-suited to creating an attractive image of the community. The corridor is primarily designated as “Mixed-Use” in the Land Use Plan, with the exception of those areas on the east end designated as “Downtown Mixed-Use.” The mixed-use designation is intended to give flexibility and increase opportunities for private investment. However, new development and any reuse or renovation of existing buildings and properties should meet higher standards than are present today.

- Encourage the relocation of auto service and sales and other businesses with outdoor storage and work areas to other locations with uses to which these businesses would be more compatible
- Develop an overlay district to require or incentivize existing businesses to improve existing buildings, parking and landscaping over time
- Allow suburban development types (e.g., buildings are set back from the front property line and parking is placed up front) on the western end of the corridor but require more urban development types (e.g., buildings are placed near the front of the property and are not separated from the road by driveways or parking) further east approaching downtown
- Parking areas, gas station aprons and other vehicular use areas, when permitted in front of buildings, should include landscaping along the front of the property
- Allow high-density residential development in any redevelopment of larger properties in the central and eastern portions of the corridor



Crawford Road/14th Street looking east

East of Holland Creek, development should be more urban in character—with buildings placed close to the sidewalk and parking located to the side or rear. West of Holland Creek, development may be more suburban in character—with parking in front of buildings but with landscaping between the parking and sidewalks.

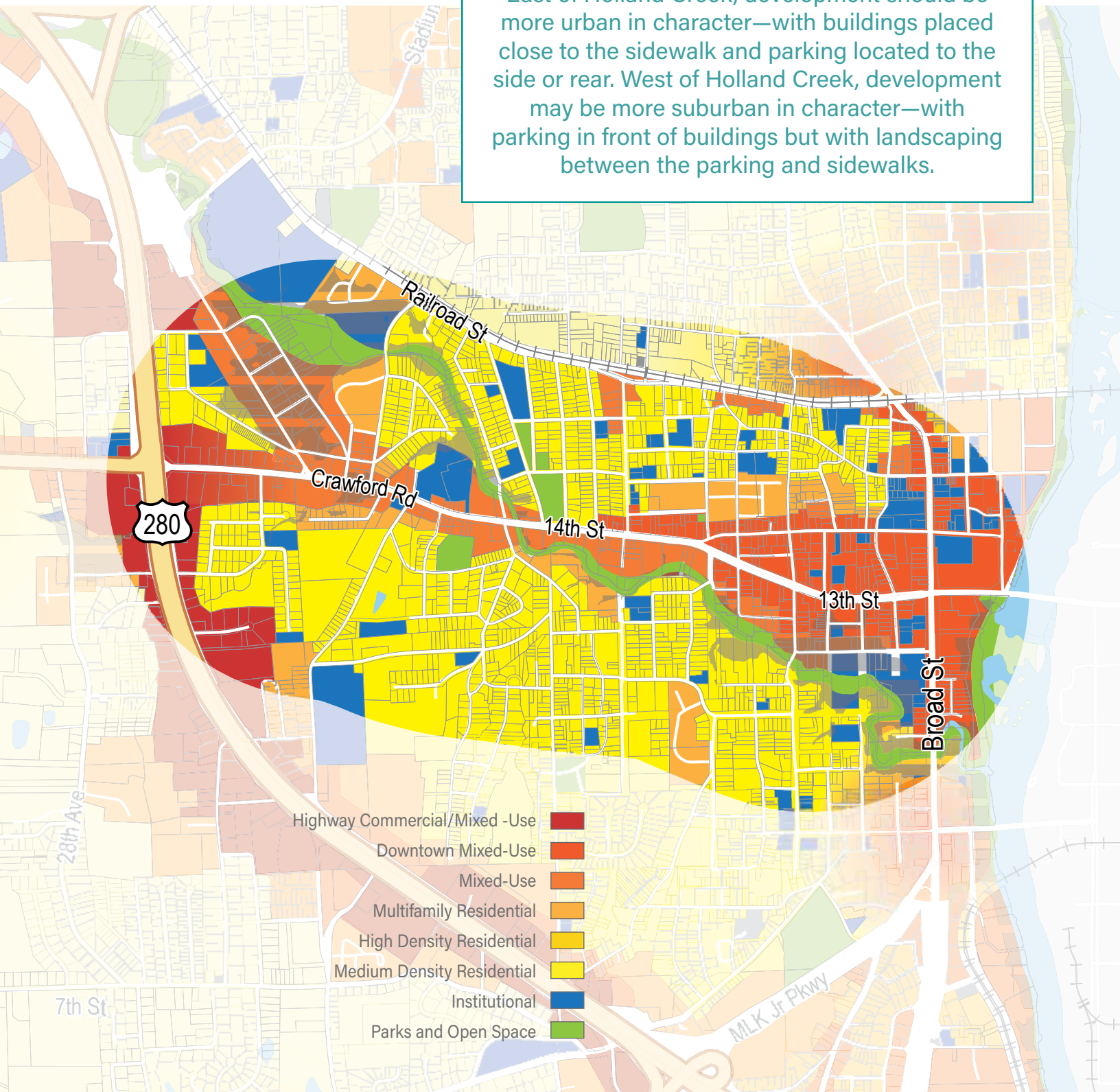


Figure 4-4 Crawford Road/14th St Excerpt of Future Land Use Map



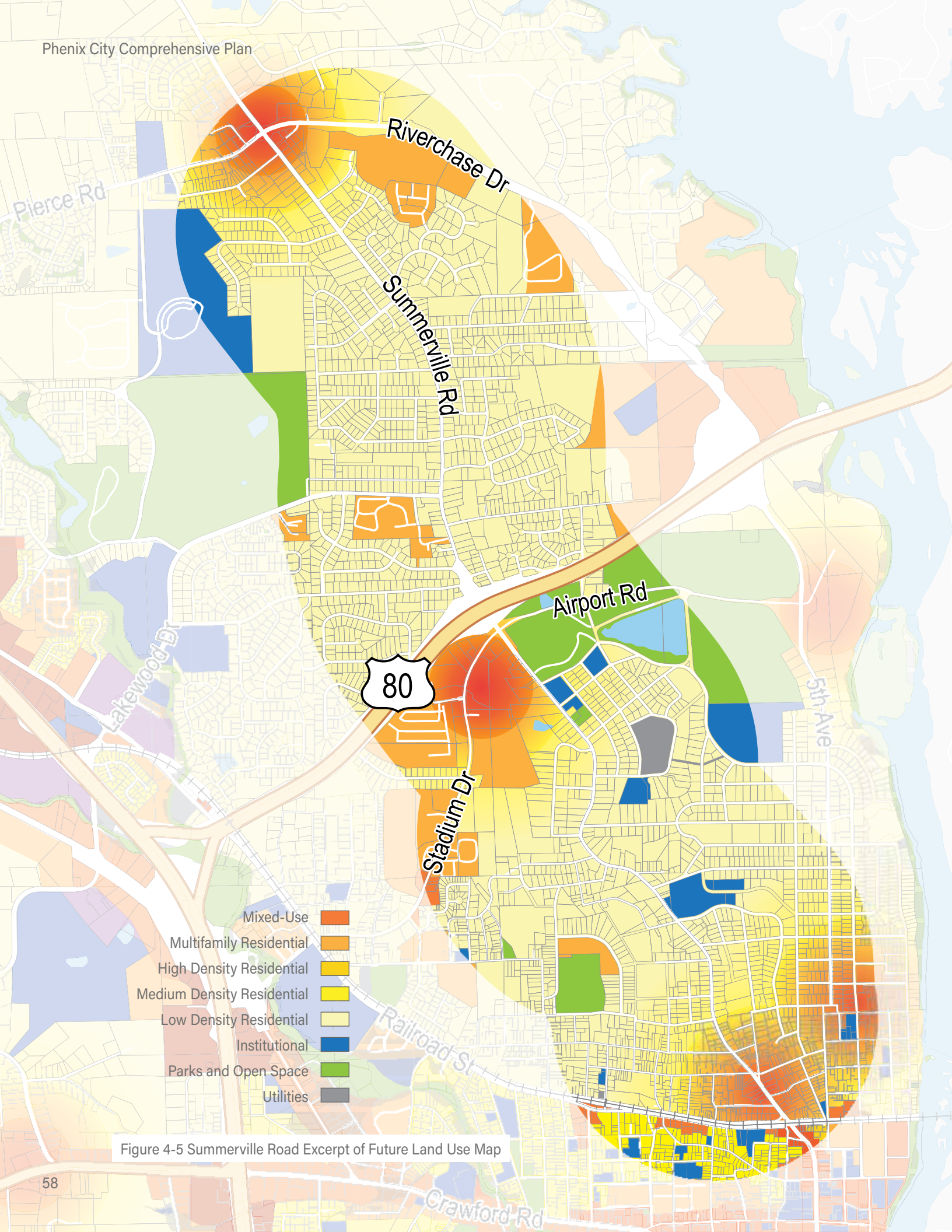


Figure 4-5 Summerville Road Excerpt of Future Land Use Map

## Summerville Road

Summerville Road is an important corridor that connects the north end of the city directly into the downtown area at Broad Street. It is mostly a two-lane roadway with additional lanes occurring at key intersections. On its southern end, adjacent to the railroad, is a small commercial activity center. Two other activity centers occur further north—one at the US-80 interchange and another at the Riverchase Drive intersection. Outside of these activity centers, land uses along Summerville Road are predominantly single-family residential. This pattern should be maintained.

Places of worship, schools, parks and public facilities exist along or near the Summerville Road corridor and are generally compatible with single-family housing. Their location along major streets like Summerville Road provides them with greater access. The presence of institutional uses in a particular location along Summerville Road is not a sufficient basis for introducing commercial uses nearby.

There are a few instances where businesses have developed in locations not contiguous to these activity centers. The presence of these businesses away from the activity centers designated in the Land Use Plan should be considered as exceptions and not precedents for expansion of commercial uses around them. Any future commercial development along Summerville Road should be within or contiguous to commercial development associated with the three activity centers. This will protect the residential character of the corridor and the investments of homeowners, encourage investment around the activity centers and avoid the addition of uses that can bog down traffic.

In the small commercial activity center adjacent to the railroad and any commercial properties outside of other designated activity centers—if existing business properties are redeveloped—parking should be placed to the side or rear of the buildings rather than in front. This will improve their compatibility with the residential properties around them.



Historic homes along Summerville Road near 32nd St



## Seale Road

Like Summerville, Seale Road is an important north-south corridor that is primarily residential. Seale Road provides access into the center city from the southern areas of the city. Along the corridor, south of US 280 there are two neighborhood-scale activity centers designated in the Development Strategy and incorporated in the Land Use Plan. These occur around the 5th Street South intersection and 1st Place intersections.



Vacant property at 5th Street and Seale Road would be an appropriate location for new neighborhood businesses, multifamily housing or a mixed-use development that includes both.

Outside of the neighborhood activity centers, US 280 overpass and Chattahoochee Valley campus, land uses along Seale Road are predominantly residential, mostly single-family. This pattern should be maintained. High density single-family and multifamily residential development is most appropriate within and around the neighborhood centers.

Properties north and south of the Seale Road overpass at US 280 are designated as mixed-use in the Land Use Plan. This is in part because of the existing cluster of business and other nonresidential uses but also because of the relationship to the highway. While neither area is intended to become a focus for retail activity, allowing a range of uses—particularly offices and higher density residential—expands opportunities for reinvestment.

Places of worship, schools, parks and public facilities exist along or near the Seale Road corridor and are generally compatible with single-family housing. Their location along major streets like Seale Road provides them with greater access. The presence of institutional uses in a particular location along Seale Road is not a sufficient basis for introducing commercial uses nearby.

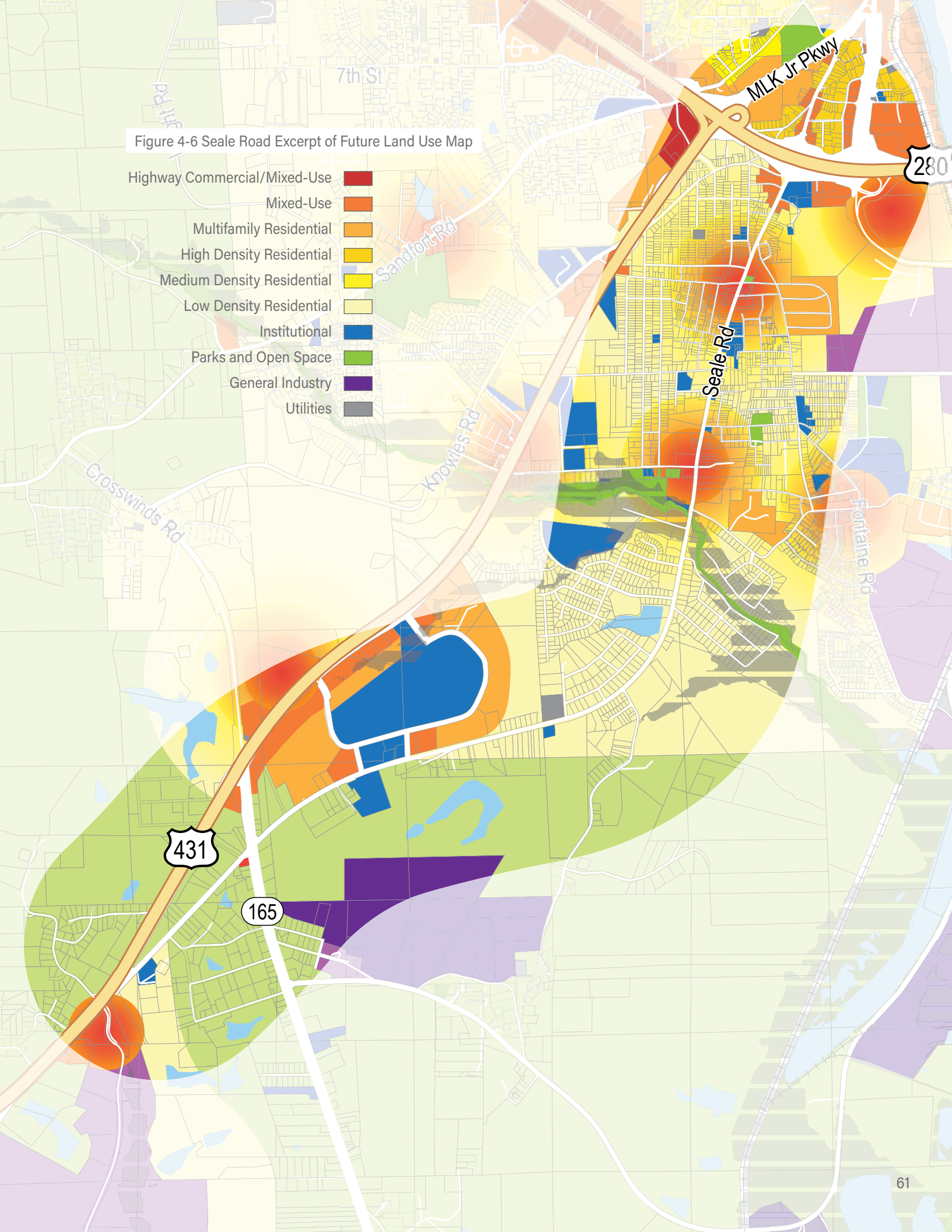
Chattahoochee Valley Community College is located near the southern end of the corridor. It is expected that multifamily residential for student housing will continue to develop around the school on the north side of Seale Road. Commercial development should generally be directed toward the north side of the campus along US 431 although some small-scale businesses may be appropriate on Seale Road at Engineer Drive and University Place. Businesses should be limited to the north side of the road here.

There are instances where businesses have developed outside of the neighborhood activity centers designated in this plan. These should be considered as exceptions, not precedents for expansion of commercial uses around them. Any future commercial development along Seale Road should be within the mixed-use areas shown in the Future Land Use plan. This will encourage reinvestment in the two neighborhood centers, some of which contain vacant or underutilized buildings. It will also prevent harmful land speculation and provide assurance to homeowners that existing residential areas will not be negatively affected by encroachment of incompatible business uses.

The two-lane sections of Seale Road north of 5th Street South are wide enough to accommodate a five-foot bicycle lane on each side of the roadway, although these are interrupted in a few cases by center turn lanes. Overall, Seale Road should be further studied for the addition of bicycle facilities, which may be some combination of designated bike lanes, sharrows (shared lanes) and a shared use path outside the travelway (replacing existing sidewalk on one side).

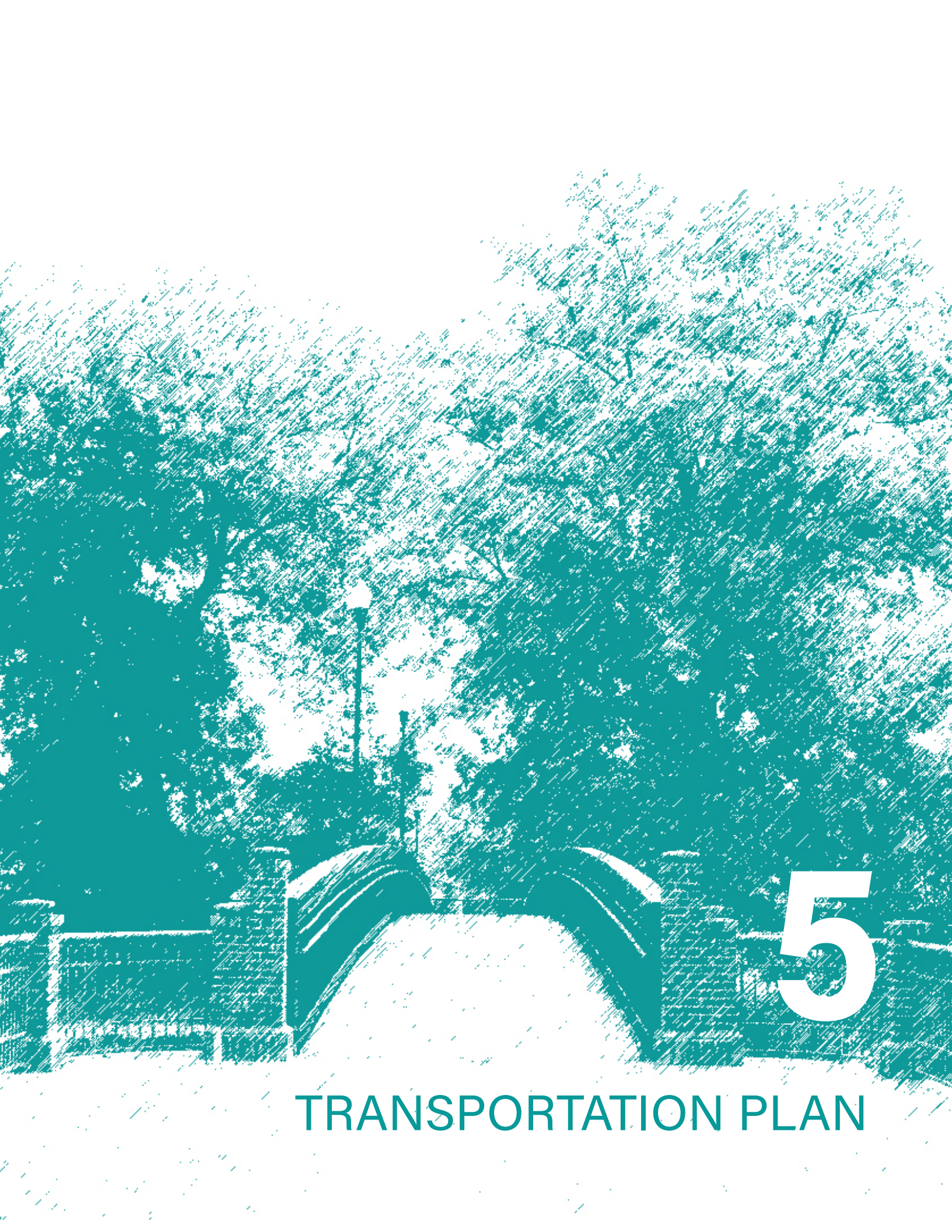
Figure 4-6 Seale Road Excerpt of Future Land Use Map

- Highway Commercial/Mixed-Use
- Mixed-Use
- Multifamily Residential
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- General Industry
- Utilities










# 5

## TRANSPORTATION PLAN





The following section is intended to guide investment and management of Phenix City's transportation systems—US and State highways, local streets, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transit services. It includes global strategies to optimize mobility and access. More detailed recommendations regarding known or expected deficiencies in the city's transportation network are provided. Also included in the discussion is a summary of anticipated future traffic conditions and levels of service on Phenix City's roadway and pedestrian facility network.



## VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

### Regional Accessibility

Regional vehicular access to Phenix City is provided by US 280 and US 80 which connect the city to Opelika and Tuskegee respectively, and US 431 which connects Phenix City south to Eufaula, Dothan and the Florida Panhandle.

The nearest interstate is I-185, which is approximately four miles east across the Chattahoochee River. The interstate connects the Phenix City/ Columbus area to Interstate-85 near LaGrange, Georgia.

In addition, US 280 provides access to nearby Fort Moore (formerly known as Fort Benning), which is an important contributor to the regional economy.

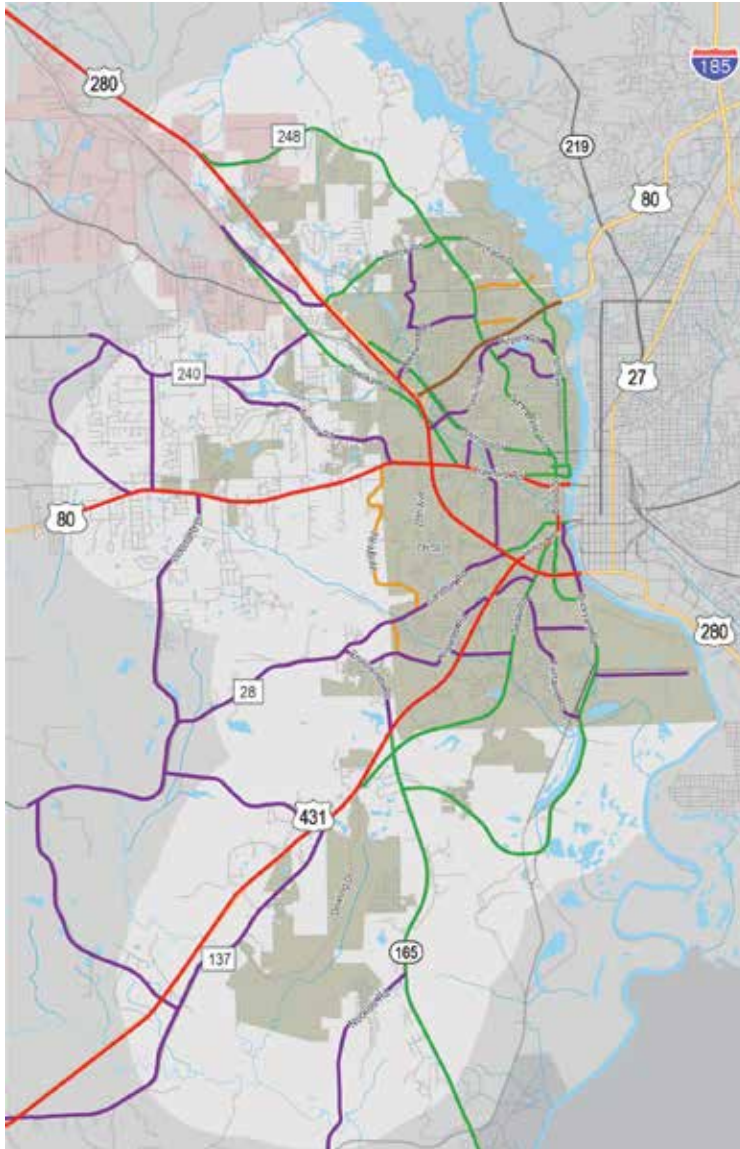


Figure 5-1 Functional Classification (ALDOT)

- Freeway
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector

### Transportation Network

Overall, Phenix City has a well-connected roadway system including major highways and several arterial and collector streets. Phenix City's arterial roads are described in Table 5-1. All functionally classified thoroughfares are shown in Figure 5-1.

Though separated by the Chattahoochee River, Phenix City and Columbus are connected by four vehicular bridges—US 80, US 280, 13th Street and Dillingham Street—and a pedestrian bridge at 14th Street.

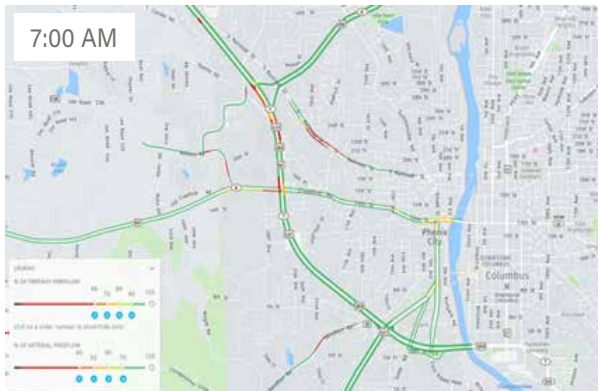


Table 5-1 Arterial Roadways and 2020 Traffic Volumes

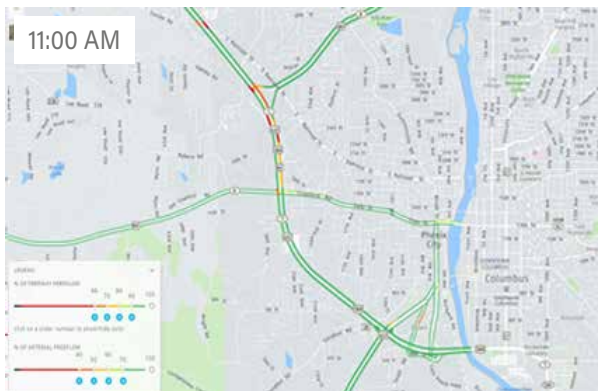
Street Name	Classification	2020 AADT
US 80 East - Phenix City North Bypass	Freeway	41,300-53,700
US 280 West / US 431 North	Principal Arterial	33,500-39,800
US 80 West - Crawford Road	Principal Arterial	27,800-28,600
13th/14th Street	Principal Arterial	16,600-21,200
US 431 - Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy South	Principal Arterial	29,900-35,900
Broad Street	Principal Arterial	13,100-19,400
General Colin Powell Pkwy	Minor Arterial	2,700-3,200
Opelika Road - CR 430 (Lee Co)	Minor Arterial	4,200-6,400
Opelika Road - CR 427 (Russell Co)	Minor Arterial	6,400-14,200
Summerville Road - CR 248 (Russell Co)	Minor Arterial	6,800-13,500
Seale Road	Minor Arterial	1,100-9,300
Brickyard Road	Minor Arterial	700-3,800
South Railroad Street	Minor Arterial	2,600-8,200
Riverchase Dr	Minor Arterial	4,800-12,500
Pierce Road - CR 427 (Lee Co)	Minor Arterial	6,200-8,400
14th Street	Minor Arterial	2,000-4,600
4th Avenue	Minor Arterial	4,700-5,200

## Existing Traffic Conditions

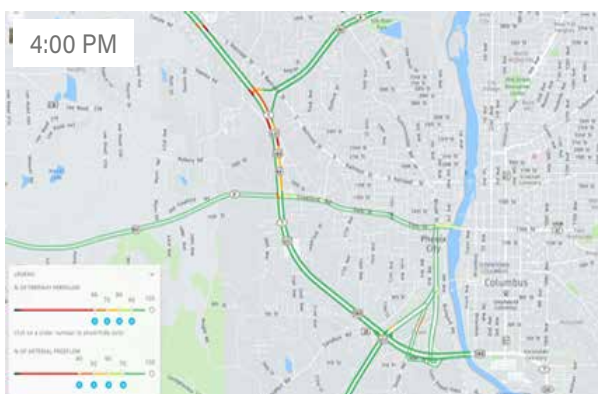
Traffic conditions were analyzed using Iteris Clear-Guide, a platform that uses speed data from GPS-enabled devices to evaluate and visualize traffic congestion. The analysis shows that congestion occurs primarily during peak periods: morning rush hour, lunchtime and evening rush hour.



In the morning, traffic delays occur mostly along US 80/Crawford Road as it approaches US 280 from the west and along US 280—both north and south bound—between US 80/Crawford Road and the North Bypass. Congestion is also seen on South Railroad Street adjacent to the elementary and intermediate schools. Delays are also experienced at the intersections of Auburn Road and Dobbs Drive and Opelika Road and Lakewood/Dobbs Drive near the high school.



During the mid-day peak, congestion occurs mostly along US 280 between US 80/Crawford Road. Some delays are also seen on US 280 at its intersection with South Railroad Street.

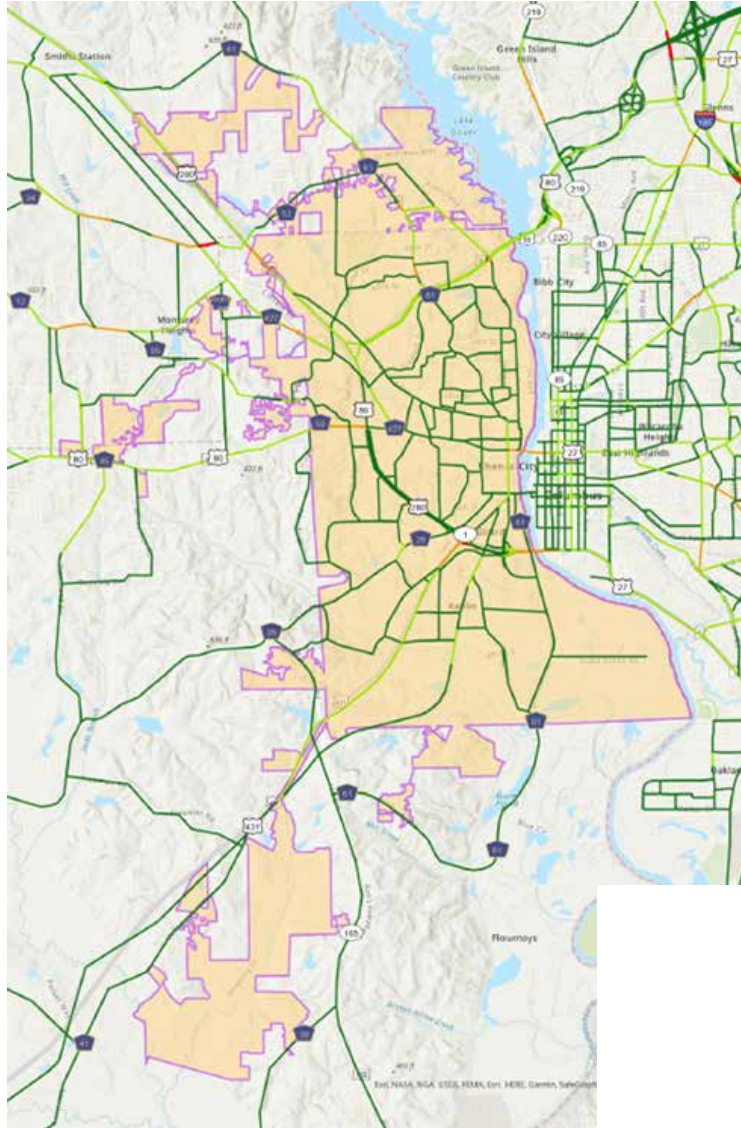


Afternoon rush hour congestion is limited mostly to the same areas that experience delays during the lunch peak period: US 280 between US 80 and the North Bypass and at the US 280 and South Railroad Street intersection.

Figure 5-2 Traffic flow during peak periods (Iteris Clear-Guide)



Figure 5-3 Current Roadway Congestion



<span style="color: green;">—</span> Low or no congestion	<span style="color: orange;">—</span> Heavy congestion
<span style="color: yellow;">—</span> Moderate congestion	<span style="color: red;">—</span> Severe congestion

The Columbus MPO regional travel demand model was used to identify congested roadways in Phenix City based on traffic volumes and the capacity of roadways. As shown in Figure 5-3, roadway segments exhibiting heavy to severe congestion based on 2020 base year model 24-hour volumes include:

- Crawford Road (US 80), west of US 280 to the city limits
- US 431 at the US 280 interchange
- 13th Street crossing the river
- US 280 south of Pierce Road
- US 280 crossing the river
- Summerville Road north of US 80
- CR 246 (Lee County)
- CR 240 (Lee County)

The roadways appearing to experience congestion here differ slightly from those identified in the Iteris Clearguide analysis. The reason for this is the results of the Iteris Clearguide analysis highlight areas experiencing traffic delays during specific time periods, whereas the travel demand model analysis calculates congestion based on traffic volumes throughout the day in relation to the design capacity of each roadway segment.

Comparing these results indicates that some of the roadways that experience heavy congestion during peak periods see much less traffic throughout the rest of the day. This is very much the case with US 280 between the North Bypass and Crawford Road/US 80.

In contrast, the roadways highlighted through modelling analysis may not be congested during peak periods, but—in comparison to their design capacity (e.g., the number of travel lanes, presence or length of turn lanes, etc.), they see a relatively high number of vehicles throughout the day and thus may experience varied degrees of congestion intermittently.

Figure 5-4 2045 Projected Roadway Congestion

**Future Traffic Conditions**

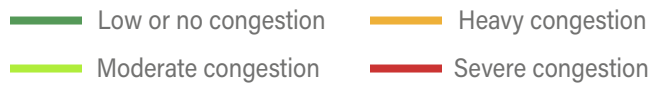
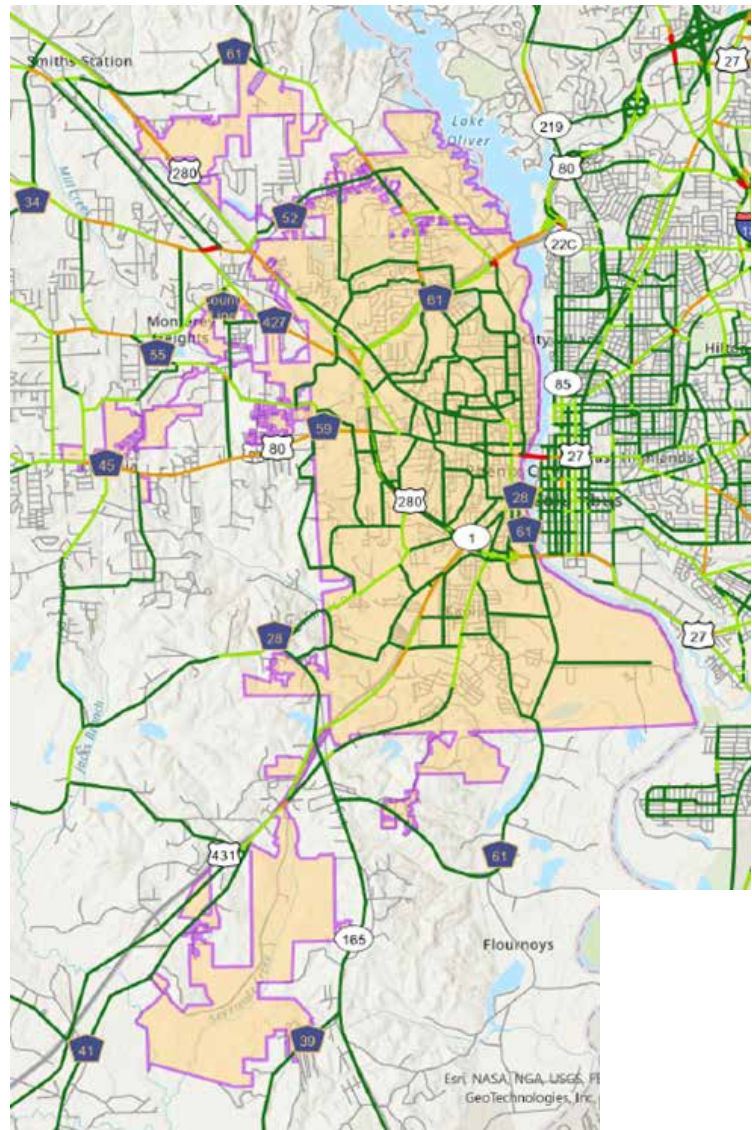
A future conditions assessment was conducted to evaluate the future transportation impacts of land use decisions made during the planning process and to develop recommendations that would support future growth and improve mobility and safety for all modes of transportation.

Overall congestion is forecasted to increase in the city as a function of future population and employment growth. The 2045 E&C Travel Model, which includes existing and committed projects, indicates that a few areas now experiencing “moderate congestion” will experience heavier congestion. Locations where congestion levels will increase are listed below and are shown in Figure 5-4:

- US 80 between Woodland Drive and US 280
- US 280 between the Broad Street extension and 10th Avenue
- US 431 between US 280 and 3rd Street South
- US 431 between 5th Street and Gateway Drive
- 13th Street between Broad Street and Whitewater Avenue

Because of Phenix City’s strong highway system and the high degree of mobility that the city’s street network provides, future traffic increases can be accommodated without much disruption. Only two segments will see volumes increase to the point of possible “severe” congestion: the 13th Street Bridge and the interchange at the North Bypass and Riverchase Drive.

As with the model of current congestion levels, this analysis represents the ratio of estimated 24-hour traffic volumes to design capacity. These locations are expected to see relatively high volumes throughout the day and are likely to be most stressed during peak periods. However, the severe congestion rating does not indicate that they will “fail” in the future without improvements.





## Recommendations

The overarching recommendation for the vehicular transportation system in Phenix City is to **maintain and improve** upon the existing roadway network. Expensive transportation projects to add lanes to existing highways or to construct new roadways to disperse traffic are not foreseen based on projected traffic conditions.

The following are policies and high-level strategies that are recommended to manage the city's transportation system holistically.



Southbound traffic on US 280 at 13th Street

## Global Transportation Strategies

The following are general strategies that should be implemented to address transportation deficiencies and position the City for future growth that take into account all modes of travel as well as land use planning and development patterns.

### Manage Access to Major Roads

Access management is the planning, design, and implementation of land use and transportation strategies to maintain traffic flow and safety along primary roadways, while considering access needs of various land uses and development types. Allowing unlimited or unrestricted access to roadside development eventually degrades the carrying capacity and safety of the roadway. By managing roadway access however, a governing agency can increase safety, extend the functional life of major roads, reduce congestion, support alternative modes of travel, and improve the built environment. It is recommended that the City designate several important roadways as "access management corridors" where the City would design and construct access improvements and/or enforce access management standards as properties are developed or re-developed over time.

### Support Alternative Modes of Travel

Despite having a fixed-route transit service, transportation in Phenix City is dominated by travel by personal vehicle. There is a modest network of sidewalks and no designated bicycle facilities other than the Riverwalk. Encouraging the design and construction of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities is an excellent way to support and encourage citizens to make alternative choices for their transportation. Establishment of park and ride lots for commuters to Columbus, Auburn, and Opelika would encourage carpooling. Within the next decade, it may even be feasible to expand the current fixed-route Phenix City Express (PEX) or rideshare initiative to provide service to the downtown Columbus area.

**Consider All Transportation Users**

It is recommended that Phenix City develop a Complete Streets resolution to guide developers on the appropriate typical sections (including number and width of vehicle lanes, bicycle facilities, buffer zones, sidewalks, and/or parking lanes) required for future development based on the magnitude, location, and land use of the proposed development. “Complete Streets” is a name adopted by the National Complete Streets Coalition to describe a process of planning and design that considers the entire roadway area (travelway, shoulders, and adjacent space) and all potential users.

**Maintain System Integrity**

System maintenance includes managing items associated with roadway performance such as pavement, drainage, markings, signage, and traffic signals. A regular assessment of operational performance on the major roadways helps identify low-cost improvements as well as higher-cost projects that may take years to plan and implement. Proactive pavement management and signal timing programs are excellent building blocks for a system preservation program.

**Be Sensitive to Roadside Contexts**

Throughout the planning process, citizens expressed concerns about improving Phenix City’s quality of life. Perceptions about quality of life and aesthetics are often heavily influenced by transportation. Throughout the United States one can find numerous examples of roadways that were “improved” to increase capacity and travel speed but did significant damage to the appearance and quality of the community. Mobility is not the only consideration—roadside context must be taken into account when making transportation decisions to protect, if not improve, the community’s character. Transportation decision-making should consider a wide range of issues: community values, environmental impacts, aesthetics, cost, and mobility for all modes. A collaborative public process enables broad consideration of the impacts and opportunities created by potential transportation projects.

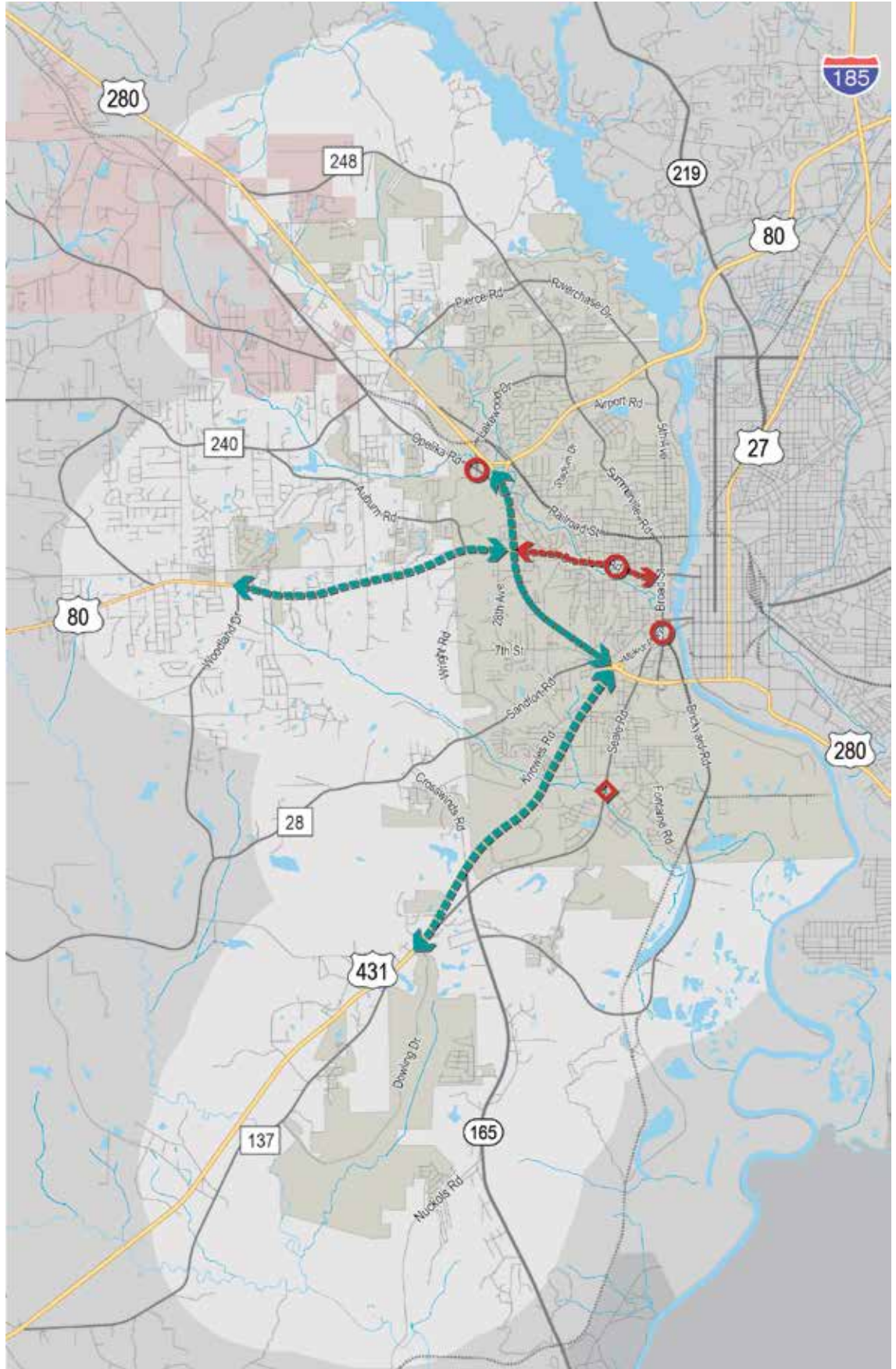
**Develop Street Networks in New Growth Areas**

The Comprehensive Plan identifies areas for future growth and revitalization. As development occurs in these areas, it will be important to plan for and construct a local street system to provide access as well as to disperse traffic in a balanced, less concentrated fashion. Plans for subdivisions and other large developments should designate a hierarchy of streets (alley, local, collector, and major collector) sufficient to support the vision for land use and density. Street connectivity should increase with the density of development.





Figure 5-5 Vehicular Transportation Concept



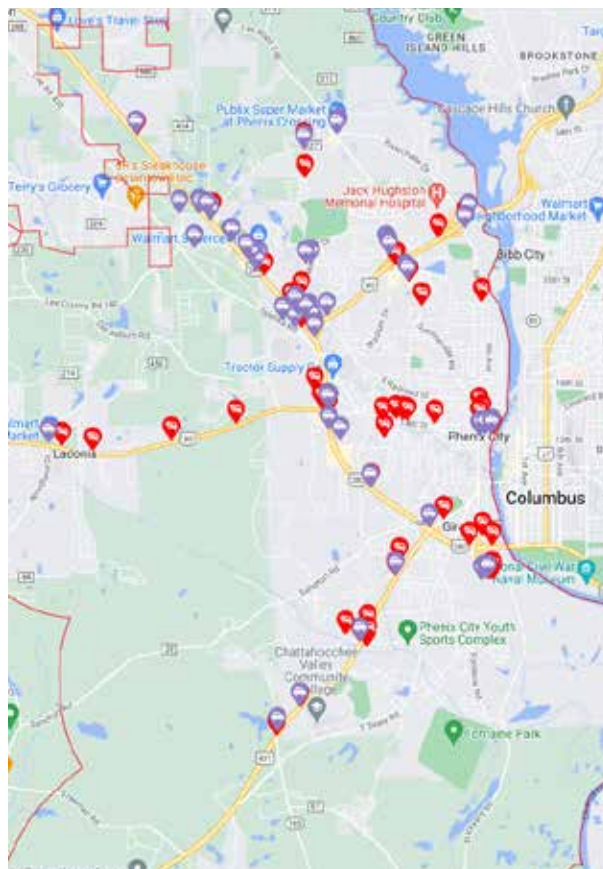
Shown in Figure 5-5 are the primary project recommendations for the vehicular transportation system. They include:

### US 431 Access Management

South of US 280, the US 431 corridor is expected to experience increased traffic and a mix of commercial and residential development. To accommodate increased regional traffic and additional local traffic arising from development along the corridor, it will be important to safeguard the capacity of the highway. This will be done in part by the Alabama Department of Transportation through its access management requirements. The City can contribute through land use planning along the corridor, directing commercial and higher density residential development to targeted nodes and limiting the intensity, mix of uses and highway access points between those nodes.

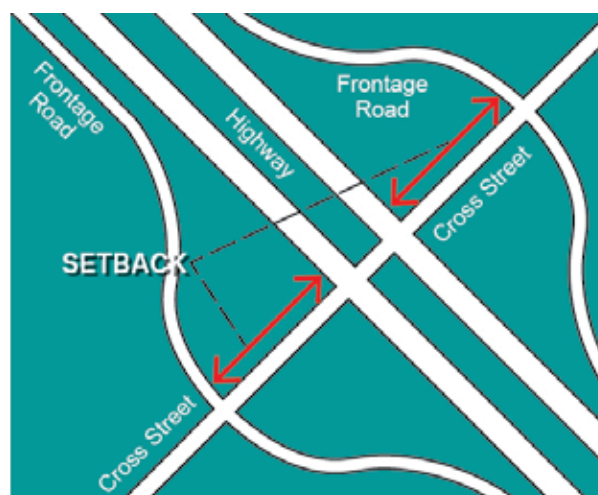
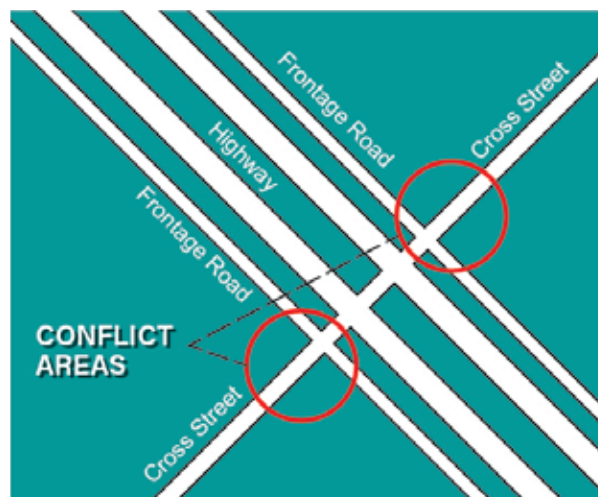
### US 280 Access Management

Much of the land fronting on the highway between the North Bypass and Crawford Road has been developed and frontage roads have been constructed. Most new development and redevelopment will have access by way of frontage roads, which limit conflicts between local and through traffic. However, because of the lack of separation between the frontage roads and the highway at intersections, safety and delay issues can arise on the local roads at these intersections. Frontage roads should be set back from the highway at intersections with a cross street or access drive (see illustration below) to allow queueing space for cars along the cross street or drive without blocking the frontage road. Property within the setback can be developed with access only from the frontage road.



Using the online engagement hub residents were asked to identify locations where they experienced traffic delays (purple icons) and road condition or safety issues (red icons).

Existing frontage road layout



Frontage layout with setback at intersection



### US 80/Crawford Road Access Management

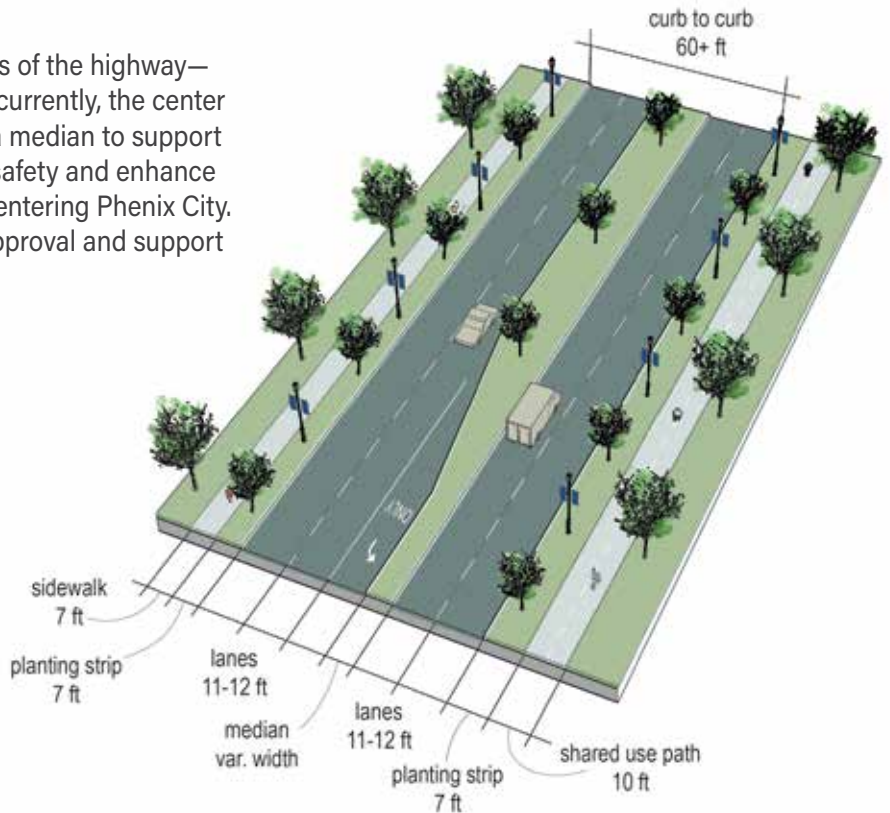
As indicated for US 431, access management is the primary strategy for managing traffic flow and safety on Crawford Road. There is a considerable amount of development that has arisen along the highway over time, most of this beyond the city limits. With the exception of more recent development in the Ladonia area, most business development along the highway has been sporadic and uncoordinated—most all businesses have individual driveways accessing the highway, and there are no frontage roads. In addition, there are several vacant buildings and properties, which still have driveway access to Crawford Road. Either through the course of private reinvestment in the corridor, through proactive public improvements or a combination of these, existing access points should be closed, relocated and otherwise consolidated to limit interference with traffic flow. In the event that development interests increase, commercial and higher density uses should occur in the nodal pattern indicated in the Land Use Plan and linear, strip development avoided to the extent possible.

In the least developed segments of the highway—where there are few driveways currently, the center turn lane could be changed to a median to support access management, improve safety and enhance the appearance of the corridor entering Phenix City. Such a project would require approval and support of ALDOT.

### 14th/13th Street Corridor

Prior to the completion of the highway system as it is laid out now, 14th Street was the primary east-west route in Phenix City, providing access to the downtown area and across the river to and from Columbus. While it is still an important route for crossing the river, its role as an east-west route for regional through traffic is much less than before. From Opelika Road to the Five Points intersection (at 12th Avenue), the roadway mostly has a six-lane, undivided cross-section. From 12th Avenue eastward, the roadway has a six-lane, median-divided cross section.

Based on the way traffic patterns have changed due to the modifications to the highway system, the corridor is now overbuilt in relationship to the amount of traffic it carries. This presents the opportunity to re-design the corridor to present a more attractive image, encourage private reinvestment, and improve bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.



Above is one alternative for the redesign of the 14th St/13th St corridor. In this concept, a shared use path is installed on one side and a sidewalk on the other. Trees, decorative street lights and banners are placed in a planting strip between the roadway and sidewalk/shared use path.



### Five Points Intersection

Where 14th Street splits at 12th Avenue in the center city is an awkward intersection where the many different potential turning movements create safety conflicts for motorists. To resolve this, the City has proposed replacing the intersection with a roundabout. A roundabout design would not only eliminate safety conflicts, it would enable improvements for pedestrian movement through the intersection and create an attractive gateway into the downtown area.

Whether this project is constructed on its own or as part of the overall effort to redesign the 14th/13th Street corridor, the design of the intersection improvements should be coordinated with the changes envisioned for the corridor.



The image at left illustrates the many potential movements where 12th Avenue crosses 13th and 14th Streets. Not shown are the additional movements that can be made coming from adjacent properties, which further compound traffic flow and safety conditions.



The image at left illustrates conceptually how a roundabout would function at the intersection (and assuming the "road diet" on 14th/13th Street).



### Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy and Broad Street

Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy intersects Broad Street at an angle that creates an awkward intersection. Converting this signalized intersection into a roundabout would improve the functionality of the intersection and create an attractive gateway into the downtown area for motorists arriving by way of US 431 and US 280. This would eliminate the need for the current traffic light and make it easier for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross from Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy to the east side of Broad Street and vice versa. The center of the roundabout would need to be positioned south of the current intersection and Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy realigned so that it approaches the roundabout at a better angle. This would open up an opportunity for a connection from Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy to Brickyard Road, possibly using 6th Avenue, which connects to Brickyard Road just north of the railroad.



Roundabouts eliminate the need for a traffic signal, which reduces long-term costs to maintain and upgrade the signal over time.

### Additional Projects

The City has identified the need to improve the intersection of Lakewood/Dobbs Drive and Opelika Road. The intersection can become congested during the morning and mid-afternoon due to high school traffic on Dobbs Drive. In addition to other alternatives, a roundabout solution should be evaluated as this would eliminate delays caused by left turn phases.



Southbound traffic backed up on Opelika Road at the intersection with Lakewood/Dobbs Drive

The bridge over Cochgalechee Creek on South Seale Road is planned to be replaced. The redesign of the bridge should include an improved sidewalk as this is an important connection between the neighborhoods south of the creek and the City recreational facilities to the north on 5th Street South.



Existing Cochgalechee Creek bridge on Seale Road with sidewalk on west side

## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION

### Existing Conditions

Phenix City's pedestrian infrastructure is mostly concentrated in the downtown commercial area, with a sidewalk extending south along Summerville Road, Broad Street, and Seale Road but pedestrian facilities are not present to connect neighborhoods near existing sidewalks along the following locations:

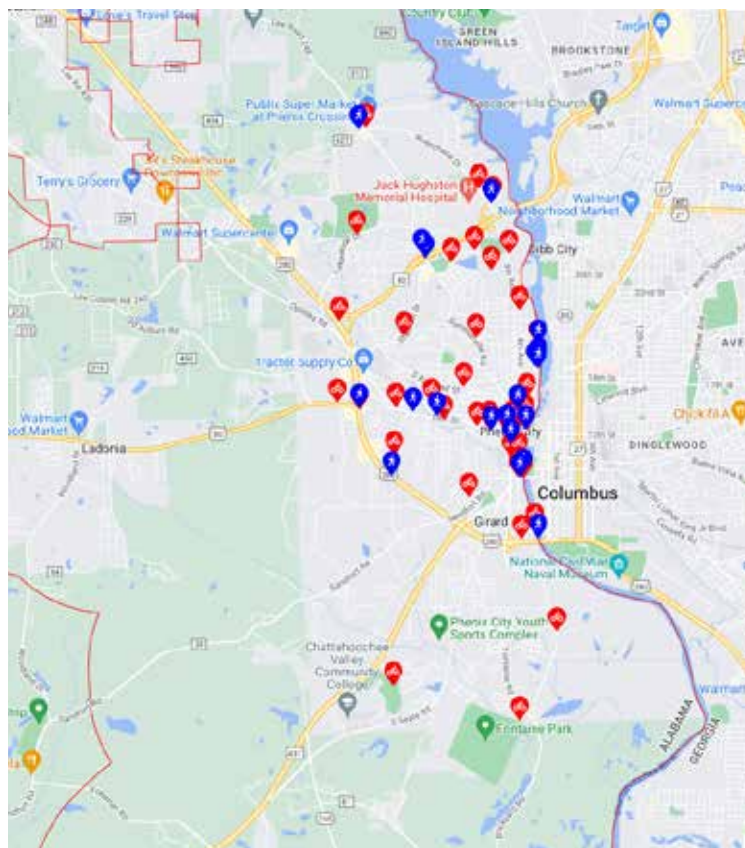
- 13th Street
- 14th Street
- 17th Avenue
- 4th Avenue
- 10th Avenue South
- 8th Court
- Stadium Drive between Opelika Road and South Railroad Street
- 24th Street between 19th Avenue and 18th Avenue.



Beyond the Riverwalk, there are no dedicated facilities for bicycling in Phenix City. However, during the development of this plan, the community indicated a strong interest in improving conditions for both walking and bicycling in the city.

**“I would love to be able to hop on my bike in downtown area and ride up towards Moon Lake/Lakewood area.”**

-comment from Bicycle-Pedestrian Survey

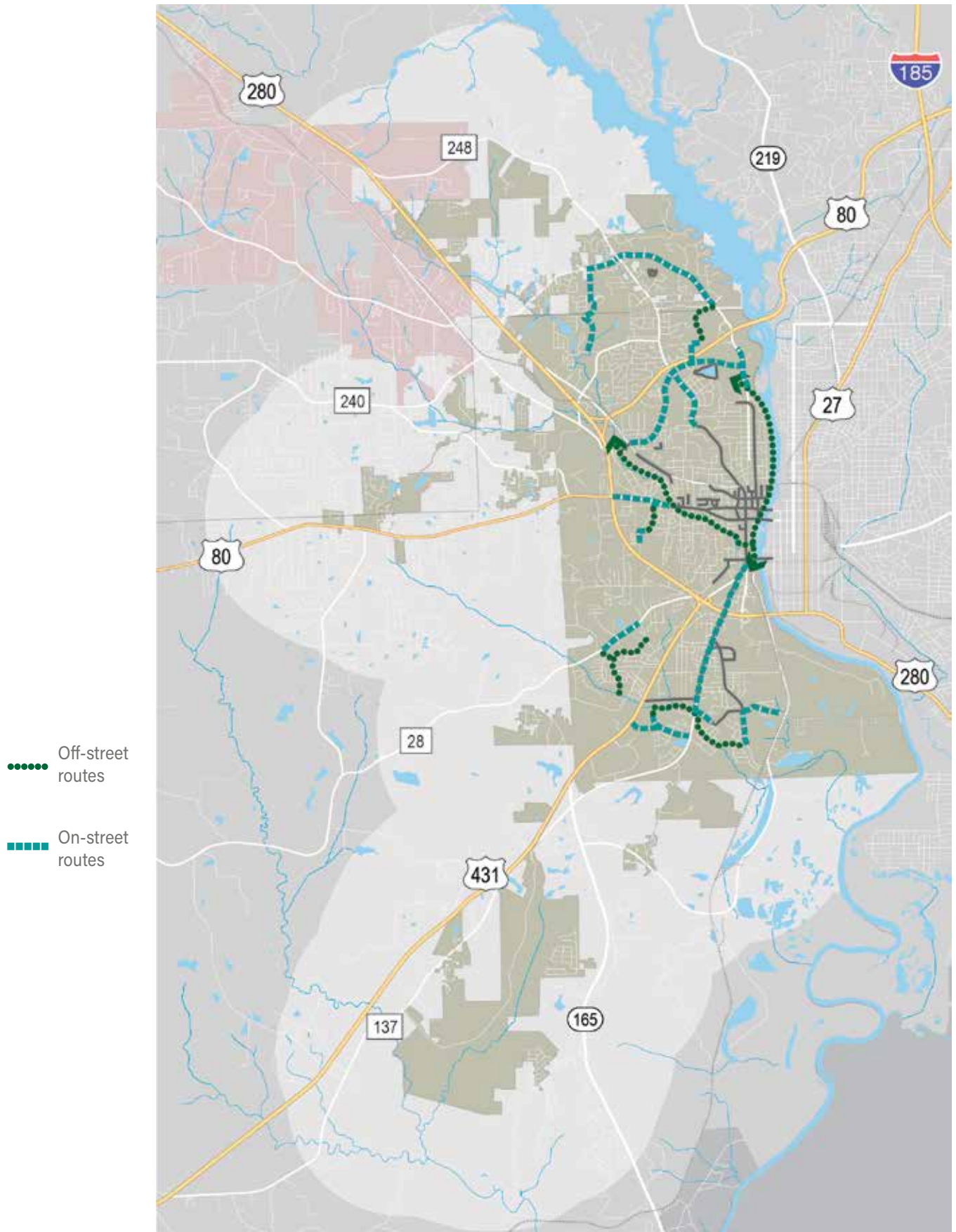


During the planning process, residents were invited to identify locations where they felt pedestrian or bicycle facilities were needed. Red icons indicate bicycle facilities. Blue icons indicate pedestrian facilities.

Comments reflected an interest in having bicycle facilities along the 14th/13th Street corridor, around Idle Hour Park, and near other parks and schools. Recommendations for pedestrian facilities also centered around parks, schools and the 14th/13th Street corridor. Participants also indicated a strong interest in expansion of the Riverwalk for both bicycle and pedestrian use.



Figure 5-6 Bicycle-Pedestrian Concept



## Recommendations

Improving pedestrian and bicycle access will help residents move about the community more safely. Bicycle-pedestrian links to downtown, the river and Riverwalk can also support economic development by providing recreational opportunities for visitors.

The following route recommendations are conceptual. They are intended to create a framework to which local sidewalk and bike-ped facilities in neighborhoods and business districts will ultimately connect. These recommendations were made with a priority on connecting neighborhoods to nearby schools, parks and other destinations.

The routes shown in Figure 5-6 will need to be studied further and priorities established, which may be done through preparation of a citywide bicycle and pedestrian master plan. The recommended routes are intended to include sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities at a minimum and bicycle accommodations to the extent feasible. Some routes may require a combination of interconnected segments of different facility types. Bicycle and pedestrian facility types are described in greater detail on the following page.

### On-Street Routes

- Shared use path or sidewalks/bike lanes along Stadium Dr (from Opelika Rd) and Airport Rd (to Riverchase Dr)
- Sidewalk (or shared use path) along Summer-ville Rd from Airport Rd/Stadium Dr south to existing sidewalk at 29th St
- Sidewalk improvements and shared use path (or bike lanes) along Crawford Rd (from US 280), 14th St and 13th St (to Broad St)
- Sidewalk (or shared use path) along 5th Ave (from intersection with extended Riverwalk) and continuing to Riverchase Dr to northeast corner of Idle Hour Sports Complex
- Shared use path or sidewalks/bike lanes along Pierce Rd (from Explorer Dr) west to Summer-ville Rd and along Riverchase Dr to Melanie Ln
- Sidewalk and/or shared use path along Explorer Dr (from Silver Lake Dr) to Pierce Rd

- Shared use path along 13th Ave from Airport Rd (across US 80 bridge) to 43rd St then east to proposed off-street path
- Sidewalk (or shared use path) along Sandfort Rd from 23rd Ct south to Fairfield Dr
- Sidewalk (or shared use path) along Ingersoll Rd from Westview Elementary School to 12th Pl then east to proposed off-street path
- Sidewalks and sharrows on Gateway Dr (from US 431) east to 8th Pl South (with spur to Ridgecrest Elementary School) and along 8th Pl South east to Seale Rd
- Sidewalk and/or shared use path on Seale Rd (from 5th St South to 8th Pl South) and along 6th Pl South to Lockhart Circle
- Sidewalk and bicycle lanes along Fontaine Rd from Cochgalechee Creek to 6th Pl South then east Brickyard Rd
- Bike lanes, sharrows and/or shared use path on Seale Rd from 5th Street to Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy
- Extension of existing sidewalks on 1st Pl South west to Seale Rd

### Off-Street Routes

- Expansion of the Riverwalk north to Idle Hour Park/Moon Lake and south to Brickyard Road
- Shared use path along Holland Creek from the Riverwalk to Stadium Drive/intermediate school
- Shared use path along Cochgalechee Creek from Fontaine Road to Ridgecrest Elementary School
- Shared use path from 23rd Court to Southside Park (with a spur along the edge of the park to Fairfield Drive) and continuing south to Cochgalechee Creek
- Shared use path from 12th Place near Westview Elementary School to Crawford Road/14th Street
- Shared use path from 43rd Street (along back side of medical center) to Riverchase Drive





**Residential sidewalks** should be wide enough to allow two people to walk side by side or to pass one another without one having to give way to the other. Residential sidewalks should be set back from the curb by a “planting strip.” This separates pedestrians from traffic, which makes walking feel safer. In higher density development, the planting strip should be wide enough—at least five feet—for street trees, which offer shade and another buffer from traffic. Tree species must be selected appropriately and a root barrier provided to prevent damage to sidewalks, curbs and utilities.



**Urban sidewalks** in downtown and mixed-use environments vary in width and often extend to the curb, particularly when on-street parking is present. Trees (planted in tree wells), parking meters, waste receptacles, news stands, street lights and other street furnishings are located along the outer edge separating activity on the sidewalk from the street. If wide enough, these sidewalks can accommodate outdoor dining alongside building fronts and/or in the furnishing zone. They may be surfaced with concrete, decorative pavers or some combination of surface treatments.



**Shared-use paths** are paved paths wide enough for use by bicyclists and pedestrians—ten feet or more. They may be located alongside roads taking the place of conventional sidewalks, or they may be located in rights-of-way or easements away from streets. If located along a street, they should be separated from the street edge by a planting strip. Off-street routes are sometimes the best option to link areas without sidewalks to nearby destinations or other parts of the bicycle-pedestrian system. Shared-use paths can be concrete or asphalt and sometimes have a center line stripe.



**Bicycle lanes** are space within the roadway reserved for use by bicycles. They are located at the outer edge of the travelway and should have a horizontal clear space of about five feet (between the curb or edge of pavement and the outside vehicular travel lane). Bike lanes may be “protected” from vehicular traffic by bollards or raised curbs. They are typically designed with one lane on each side of the street though in some circumstances, they may need to be located together on one side of the street.



**Sharrows** or “shared lanes” are lanes within the roadway that are for use by motorized vehicles and bicycles. Sharrows are typically installed on existing streets where there is insufficient width to provide full-width bicycle lanes. They provide less protection for cyclists than bicycle lanes but can be appropriate on lower-speed (35 mph or less) streets in urban contexts and in residential areas.

## TRANSIT

Public transit is an important transportation service that benefits the city’s economic development efforts by assuring the mobility of individuals and households with limited access to personal vehicles. In short, transit allows people without their own cars to access jobs. In addition, transit allows residents to move about the community without adding to congestion on busy roadways.

Phenix City Express offers routes throughout the community, in particular, connecting neighborhoods, where access to personal vehicles is most limited, to the city’s business areas. PEX also provides access to Chattahoochee Valley Community College.

PEX is operated by Lee-Russell Council of Governments with funding from the City and the USDOT. PEX operates a north and a south route Monday-Friday from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm EST. ADA Paratransit services are available to disabled residents inside the city limits and for medical appointments in Columbus, Georgia.



Figure 5-7 Phenix City Express

Improving walkability in business and residential areas, especially around transit stops, and encouraging dense, mixed-use development in the business nodes depicted in the Land Use Plan will improve the convenience of using the bus service. This assures that transit riders are able to easily and safely make their way from transit stops to their homes, places of work, schools and other destinations. When transit stops are placed in densely developed, mixed-use areas, transit riders have access to a variety of community functions all in walking distance.

Other opportunities to improve transit service include:

- Expanding the Phenix City Express transit service to strategic locations such as the industrial park on Downing Drive.
- Evaluating and modifying hours of operation and schedules over time to address job access demands as the city and its employment centers change and grow
- Improving bus stops and shelters with seating, shade/rain cover and blue light emergency phones and cameras.



Transit stops should provide seating, shade and rain cover and be accessible from public sidewalks. Transparency, cameras and emergency phones support safety. Shelters are also highly visible public investments—their design and condition reflects on the image of the community.



## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### Carpooling and Shuttles

To better understand regional traffic patterns, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data was processed for Phenix City. This data illustrated that the vast majority (84.4%) of Phenix City's residents commute outside of the city to work. The City should consider implementing a carpool program and/or shuttle service between Phenix City and Columbus, GA in coordination with the Columbus Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Establishment of park and ride lots for commuters to surrounding areas such as Columbus, Auburn, and Opelika, would help to encourage carpooling, which would contribute to reducing congestion on major roadways. As with transit, walkable, mixed-use development patterns can make carpooling more attractive.

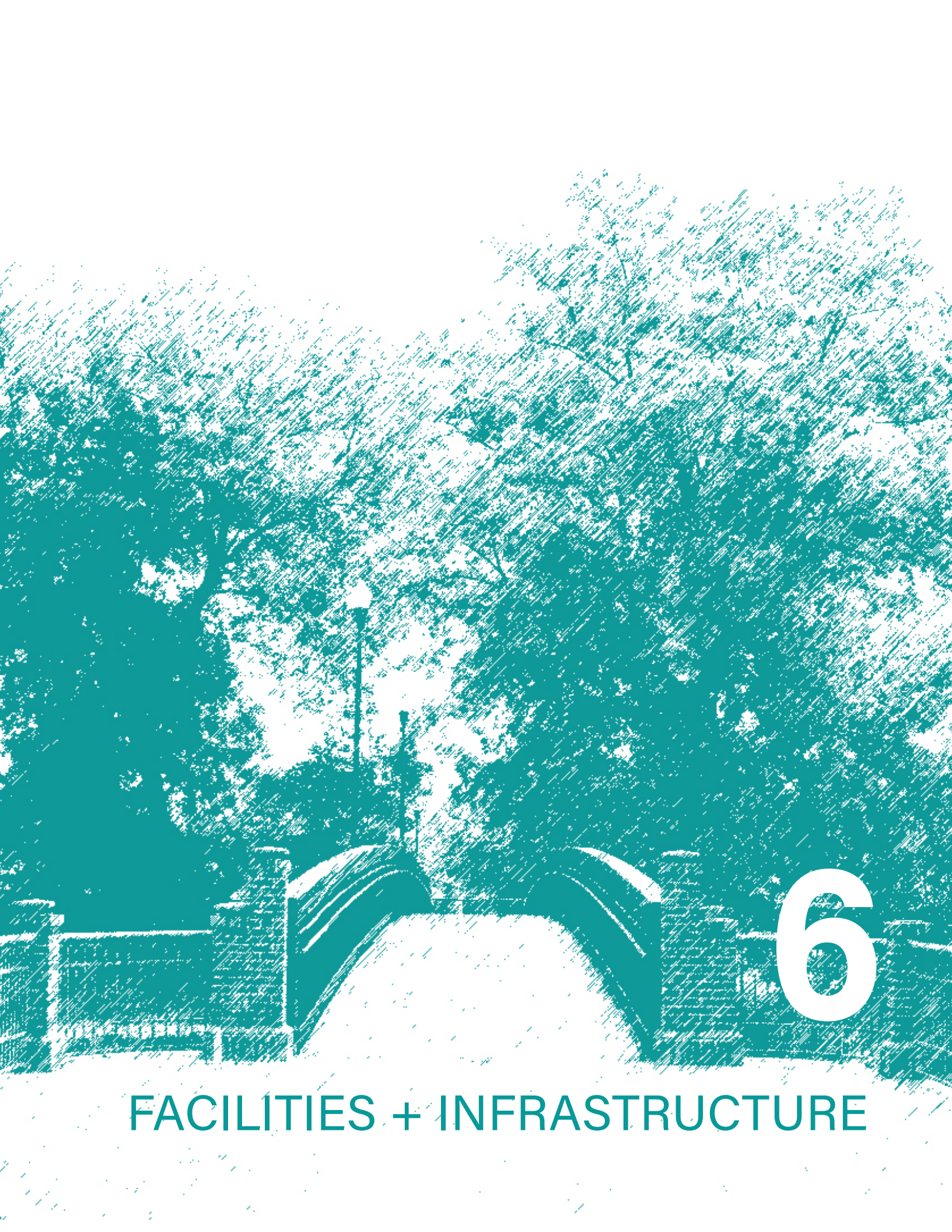
### Regional Transit

Within the next decade, it may be feasible to expand the current fixed-route Phenix City Express and/or rideshare initiative to provide service to the downtown Columbus area.

Given the City's reliance on non-residents for local employment, some consideration should be given to exploring transit service between Columbus and Auburn.



Over 6,000 commuters come to Phenix City for work each day.



6

FACILITIES + INFRASTRUCTURE





The following section of the plan identifies major initiatives the City will pursue to enhance its public facilities, services and infrastructure to improve quality of life in Phenix City and support continued growth and economic development.



**Table 6-1 City Parkland**

Idle Hour Park and Sports Complex*	173.7 ac
Austin Sumbry Park	72.5 ac
Lakewood Golf Course	138.0 ac
Lakewood Park	59.9 ac
Meadowlane Park and Spencer Recreation Center**	35.4 ac
Southside Park	34.5 ac
Sugar Town Park	0.4 ac
Youth Center and Sports Complex	24.6 ac
Poplar Springs Park	3.4 ac
Dixie Youth Ball Fields	7.3 ac
Riverwalk	28.0 ac
Central Activity Center	3.6 ac
C-Club Recreation Center	0.7 ac
Amphitheater	3.6 ac
Total City Parkland excluding Board of Education property	550.2 ac
Total City Parkland including Board of Education property	585.6 ac

\* Includes the Martin-Idle Hour Park Community Center, Garrett-Harris Stadium, Moon Lake, Roy E Martin Recreation Center, Cliff Farrar Tennis Center, Phenix City Arts Center and Idle Hour Park Sports Complex

\*\* Property owned by Phenix City Board of Education

## PARKS + RECREATION

### Parks

Phenix City has a strong parkland inventory (see Table 6-1). The City owns 550 acres of parkland. This amount includes City parks and recreation facilities and land acquired for the proposed expansion of the Riverwalk. In addition to City-owned parkland, Meadowlane Park and the Spencer Recreation Center are located on 35.4 acres owned by the Phenix City Board of Education.

Historically, the National Recreation and Parks Association has recommended that cities maintain between 6.25 and 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 population. Based on the city's population estimate from the 2020 Census, Phenix City has 14.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The City's parkland inventory is well above the range traditionally recommended by the NRPA.

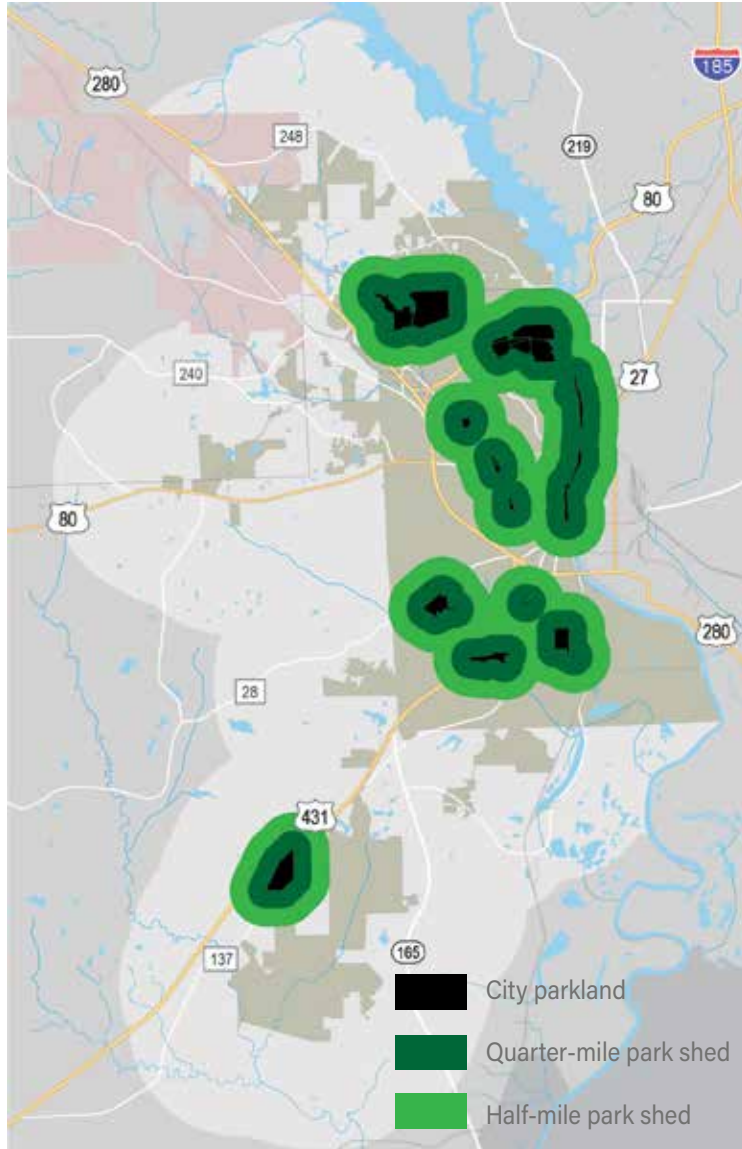


The City has enough parkland to remain comfortably within this range for several more decades as its population increases. The population is projected to reach 55,000 by 2080 at which point, Phenix City's existing parkland inventory would offer 10 acres per 1,000 residents, on the high end of the recommended range (see Table 6-2).

Some parks properties are only partly improved for recreational use. This means that there is space available within or adjacent to existing parks to add ball fields, courts, or other recreational amenities to them as needed.



Figure 6-1 Parkland and proximity



As shown in Figure 6-1, city parks are well distributed throughout the community. Many neighborhoods are within a quarter-mile of a city park, or about a five-minute walk. Most neighborhoods are within a half-mile of an existing park.

**Recreation Facilities**

There are several indoor recreational facilities throughout the community. These include the Martin-Idle Hour Community Center, Arts Center, Central Activity Center and four recreation centers. While some were purpose-built, the City has also acquired, preserved and adapted existing buildings for use as recreation centers. The Central Activity Center is housed in an historic city school building. The number of these facilities is well above average based on the city’s population size.

**Table 6-2 Existing Parkland by Population Size**

	Population	Acres per 1,000 residents	NRPA recommended range
2020	38,816	14.2	6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents
2030	41,485	13.3	
2040	44,258	12.4	
2050	47,005	11.7	
2060	49,730	11.1	
2070	52,433	10.5	
2080	55,115	10.0	



Auditorium in the Central Activity Center

The center column in the table above represents the ratio of existing parkland (550 acres) to the city’s population as it is projected to increase in the future. Without adding any parkland over the next 50 years—even as the population increases—Phenix City’s parkland inventory will continue to exceed NRPA’s traditional parkland metric.

## Recommendations

During the community engagement process, residents made it very clear that parks, recreation and cultural amenities are important to them and will have an impact on the future of the city. Participants stressed that they would like for Phenix City to offer more of the recreational and cultural activities that they otherwise travel to Columbus to enjoy. As the City explores ways to enhance recreation and cultural programming, maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities must be prioritized.

### Maintaining Existing Facilities

While many cities must focus on acquiring more parkland and constructing facilities to meet community needs, Phenix City's primary challenge is maintaining and improving on its existing parks and facilities. By reinvesting in existing parks and facilities, the Parks and Recreation Department can adapt them to fulfill the community's recreational interests.

For the foreseeable future, maintenance and improvement of existing parks and recreational buildings should be the highest priority for parks and recreation funding. Additional staff is needed in the Parks and Recreation Department to maintain existing facilities at a higher level.

Reinvestment in existing parks and recreation facilities will include:

- Convert lighting at sports fields to LED
- Install artificial turf on some fields to increase longevity and reduce maintenance costs
- Roof/building improvements to Roy Martin Recreation Center, C-Club gym, and Central Activity Center
- Improvements to Southside, Meadowlane and Austin Sumbry Parks

### Future Parks

If the city expands westward or farther north, new parks will be desirable to serve any neighborhoods in these areas. The parks system features several large "community" parks, which offer a combination of active recreational amenities (sports fields and courts) and passive ones (walking trails, playgrounds, picnic areas). If parks are added as the city expands outward, "neighborhood" parks in the range of 5-10 acres should be considered. Because neighborhood parks are smaller, it may be easier to obtain property where it is more convenient to the population the parks will serve. They also involve less intensive amenities, reducing their construction and maintenance costs.

### Recreational Trails

As described in the Transportation Plan, Phenix City has the opportunity to build on- and off-street routes for walking and bicycling. Both types of facilities will improve mobility and can be used for recreational purposes as well. Several proposed routes will improve access between neighborhoods and parks. Off-street trails will be part of the parks system and would be maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.

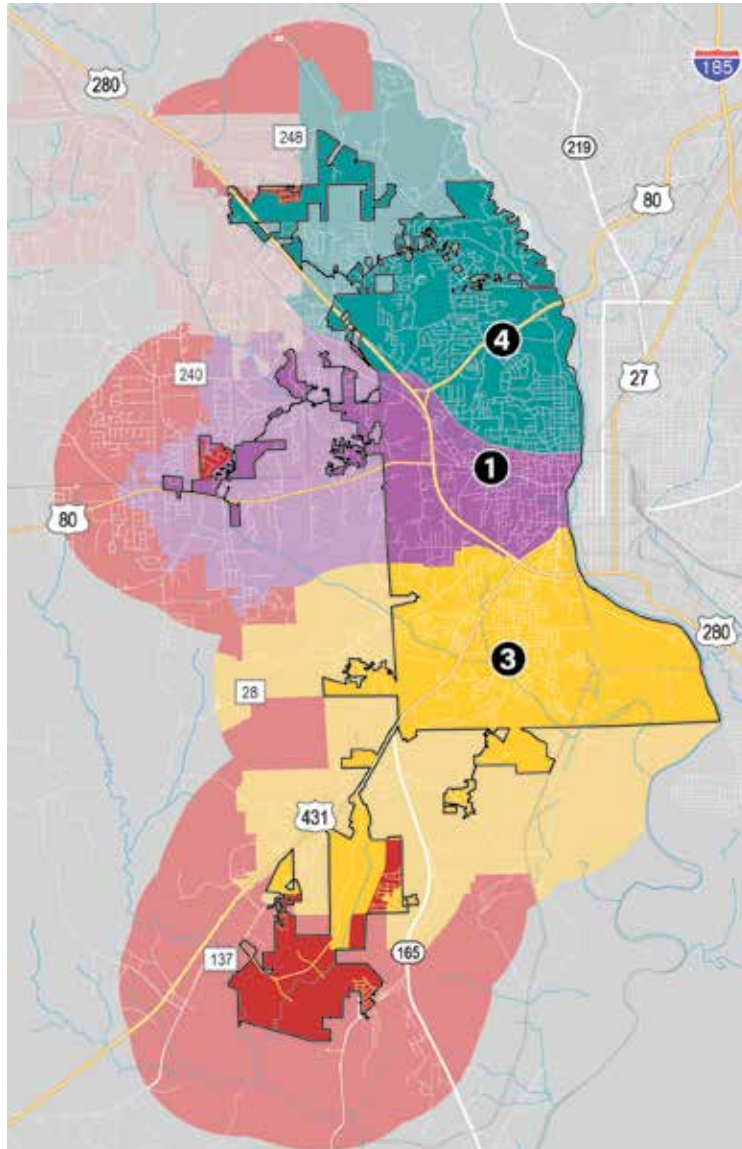
### Recreation and Cultural Facilities

Though the city's population is expected to increase, the construction of new recreation centers is not warranted. Rather, the City should consider a long-term goal of building a civic center—a facility which can host performing arts events and conventions. A location adjacent to downtown and the river would be ideal. This would help support dining and entertainment activity envisioned in the Downtown Vision Plan. The City should pursue partnerships with major institutions and corporations in the community to help fund such a project.

Maintenance and improvement of existing facilities should be the highest funding priority for the Parks and Recreation Department.



Figure 6-2 Existing Fire Department Coverage



This map highlights areas that are more than five road-miles from existing fire stations, including areas in the city limits and those within the planning jurisdiction. The lighter shaded areas, if annexed at some point in the future, would be within five road-miles of an existing station.

- Within 5 road-miles of FS 4 (inside/outside city)
- Within 5 road-miles of FS 1 (inside/outside city)
- Within 5 road-miles of FS 3 (inside/outside city)
- More than 5 road-miles from a fire station (inside/outside city)

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### Fire Department

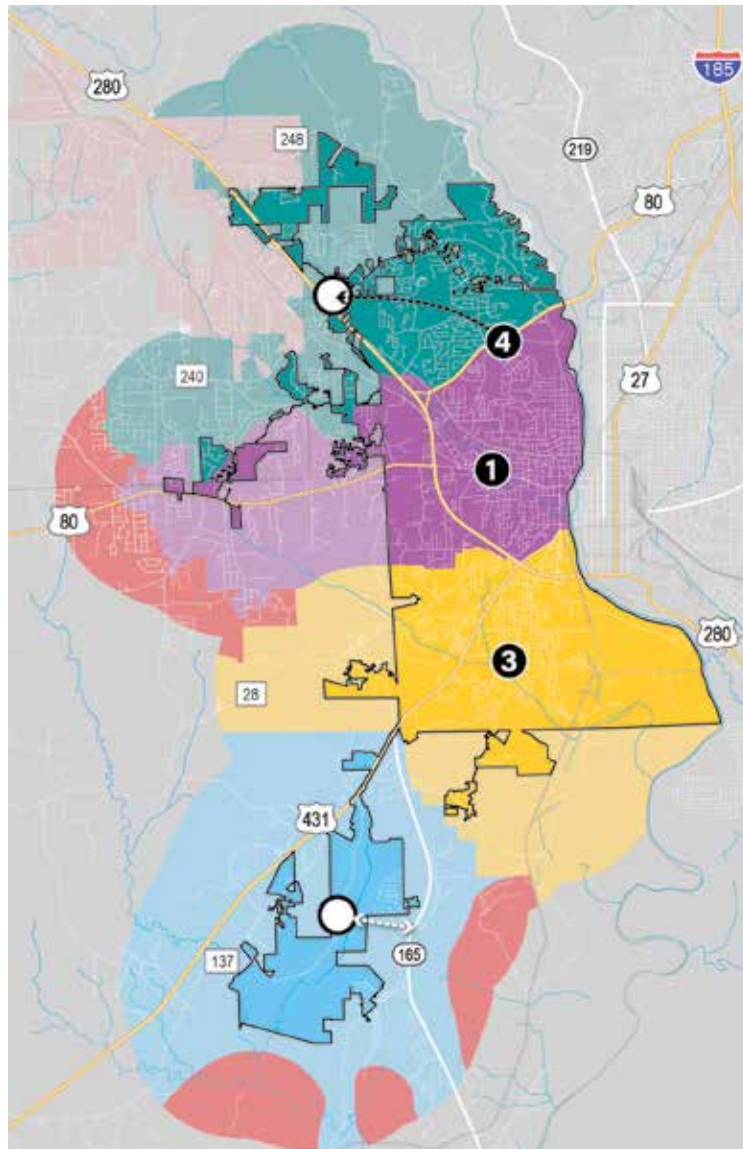
The service area of the Phenix City Fire Department expanded significantly with the annexation of areas west along US 80 and south along Downing Drive. As a result, it is more difficult to provide optimal response times from the city's three fire stations to the outermost areas of the fire service area.

The Fire Department maintains an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 2/2X. The ISO rates communities on their fire protection capabilities on a scale from one to ten, with one being the best possible score. While the city's score reflects well on the department—staffing, training, equipment, and vehicles—response time is a concern because of the location of existing stations relative to the expansive service area. Some portions of the fire service area have an ISO score of 9 due, in part, to their distance from the nearest fire station. Poor ISO ratings increase property owner insurance costs because those properties are considered to be at risk of more extensive damage if a fire occurs.



Figure 6-2 shows the areas of Phenix City's planning jurisdiction that are within five road miles of the city's three fire stations, one of the metrics in evaluating response times. The areas shown in red are beyond five miles. Some of these areas are served by fire departments in other communities. There are small areas to the north and west and a larger area to the south—all of which are in the city limits—that are beyond five road miles. City expansion in these directions will be limited by current fire coverage.

Figure 6-3 Potential Fire Department Coverage



This map shows improvements to coverage within the city limits if Station 4 were relocated and a new station were built on Downing Drive (and a road is built connecting to AL 165).

- Within 5 road-miles of FS 4, if relocated (inside/outside city)
- Within 5 road-miles of FS 1 (inside/outside city)
- Within 5 road-miles of FS 3 (inside/outside city)
- Within 5 road-miles of new south station (inside/outside city)
- More than 5 road-miles from a fire station

To resolve coverage issues the City must evaluate and plan for some combination of relocating existing stations and building completely new ones. The following are options the Fire Department should evaluate.

Building a new station or relocating Station 4 to the northwest along US 431 would cover the incorporated areas to the far north and those in Ladonia that are more than five miles from a station. If relocating Station 4, then the Station 1 district could be expanded north to JR Allen Parkway (see Figure 6-3).

While relocating Station 4 will improve coverage in the Ladonia area, the city will not be able to annex further west unless a new fire station were built along Crawford Road west of US 280.

More of the south end of the city can be covered by building a new station farther south or relocating Station 3. With either option, it will be difficult to cover all of the south end of the fire service area because of the lack of connecting roads between AL 165 and US 431.

If Station 3 were relocated further south, near AL 165, the area served by Station 1 could extend toward Cochgalechee Creek. However, the southernmost portions of the city limits would still be beyond five road miles of the new station.

If a street connection can be made between AL 165 and Downing Drive, then a new fire station on Downing Drive would be able to cover all of the city limits. In such a case, Station 3 should remain to assure optimal coverage of the industrial areas along and south of State Docks Road (see Figure 6-3).

The fire department is in need of additional staff today. With the addition of any new stations, staff needs will continue to increase.

### Emergency Medical Services

Emergency medical services (EMS) are currently provided by a private company. As the city continues to grow, Phenix City should continue to evaluate the costs, benefits and risks of providing these services “in-house” or through contract agreement with a for-profit provider.



Public Safety Building (photo: Citizen of East Alabama)



### Police Department

During the planning process the community indicated the importance of public safety as a pivotal issue for the future of Phenix City. The police department plays a central role in making Phenix City a safe place to live and do business. While crime rates have increased in the community over the last 15 years, residents have generally positive views of the department.

The department is adequately staffed today, with 2.5 officers per 1,000 residents, consistent with that of other cities in the Southeast. Over the next ten years, additional staff may be needed.

A new Public Safety Building was opened on Broad Street in 2023. In addition, the department has precinct offices in the northern and southern parts of the city—at Lakewood Park and at the Youth Sports Complex, respectively. The department is evaluating an additional precinct office. A location currently under consideration would improve coverage and response time for the western-most areas of the police jurisdiction.

Maintaining a positive relationship with residents throughout the community is essential to the department's ability to protect the public safety. The department has several community engagement programs and is evaluating community engagement software to improve communication with residents.

The department intends to develop in-house crime analytics capabilities to improve investigations and understand how best to deploy resources to control crime.

Phenix City's crime rate rose between 2008 and 2011, as seen in many communities following the Great Recession. However, crime rates have been on a gradual decline since then. To make Phenix City a safe place to live, work and invest, the community must approach community safety holistically—addressing crime and other issues from multiple angles, targeting the root causes of problems rather than the symptoms. In addition to efforts to maintain and improve police services, the City can reduce crime by increasing economic opportunity and making city environments less hospitable to crime.

## A More Prosperous and Safer Phenix City

Phenix City has worked hard to overcome the negative reputation it gained in the 1940s and 50s. In 2007 BusinessWeek named Phenix City the nation’s Best Affordable Suburb to raise a family. But in recent years, increased crime—some of that attributed to spillover from the much larger Columbus—has become a concern for residents.

Phenix City has a relatively high poverty rate, which has a strong correlation to crime. According to **Cityistics.com**:

*The lack of resources and opportunities available to people living in poverty can contribute to criminal behavior. People living in poverty are also more likely to be victims of crime. They may be targeted for crimes like robbery or assault because they are seen as easy targets. The stress of poverty can also lead to anger and frustration, which may contribute to criminal behavior.*

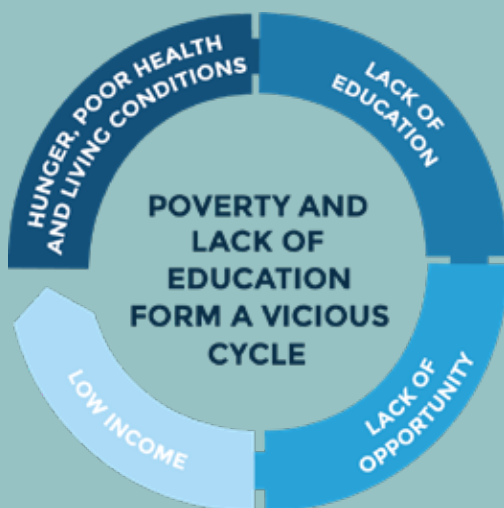
*Poverty also creates stress and instability in families. This can lead to increased levels of aggression and violence within households. Children who live in poverty are also more likely to have behavioral problems and to engage in criminal activity.*

*Poverty is also a major factor in the juvenile justice system. Young people who come from impoverished backgrounds are more likely to be arrested, charged with crimes, and placed in detention or correctional facilities.*

To reduce poverty and associated crime, the City will continue to focus on economic development to increase job opportunities for residents. This will include recruitment of industries and other businesses as well as promoting tourist-based economic development. Partnering with neighboring cities and counties will help to improve Phenix City’s prospects for industrial recruitment.



Education will be a critical component in economic development and crime/poverty-reduction. For residents to benefit from local and regional economic growth, they must be prepared to participate in the economy. This is sometimes referred to as building a “cradle to career pipeline.” To increase chances for children from low-income households to complete school and thrive afterwards, communities should offer quality education from pre-school through secondary school and job-readiness curricula for those who intend to enter the workplace after high school.





### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

The design, management and maintenance of the physical environment can help make public and private environments feel safer and actually reduce crime by discouraging potential criminal activity. Key elements include:

**Territorial Reinforcement.** This practice involves clear delineations between public and private space and encouraging regular activity in public places. Frequently inhabited spaces are unattractive to would-be offenders because of the risk of being caught or seen.

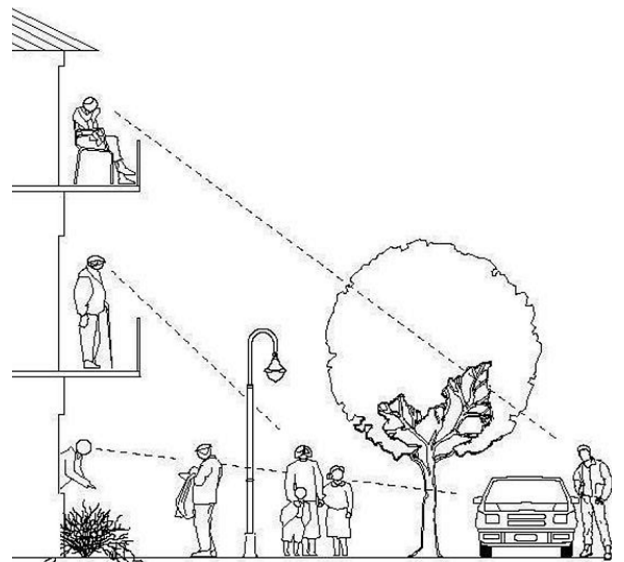
**Natural Surveillance.** Streets, sidewalks, trails, parks and other public spaces should be easily observable from adjoining properties and from within neighboring buildings. In some contexts, this is referred to “eyes on the street.” While natural surveillance can be supplemented technologically, attention should be given to the design of buildings, landscaping, fences, walls and other site elements to maximize the ability of neighbors, visitors and passersby to observe the spaces—whether those are streets, parking lots, sidewalks or other publicly-accessible areas—around them. Lighting improves the ability to observe activity and identify individuals.

**Image and Milieu.** The design and upkeep of buildings and open spaces give a sense of whether they are cared for and overseen. Places that are not well-maintained may give the impression that they are not frequently inhabited and thus pose less risk to would-be criminals. Graffiti removal, litter clean-up and similar beautification efforts on public and private properties can help to discourage criminal activity.

**Access Control.** The design of buildings and spaces offers clues to who belongs in them, at what times and what activities are appropriate. Barriers, gates, lighting, cameras and other features should be used to discourage non-legitimate users from spaces where they don’t belong or where crimes may be committed unobserved.

CPTED strategies should be implemented along the Riverwalk and other public spaces to increase the feeling of safety for legitimate users and increase risks for would-be criminals. For example, encouraging regular use of the Riverwalk for recreation, exercise, group activities and other functions will increase the number of people along the Riverwalk at any given time, making it less likely that inappropriate behavior can take place without observation or interference. There should also be frequent access points from adjoining streets and properties so that potential victims can get away from offenders. And, having buildings that overlook the Riverwalk and that have active ground floor uses facing the river will optimize opportunities for natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement.

These and other safety-oriented design techniques should be used in new development that is envisioned for Downtown Phenix City. Buildings should have windows and public entrances along sidewalks to enhance the feeling of safety and optimize visual connections between people inside buildings and those outside. Long stretches of blank walls along streets create a less comfortable environment for pedestrians. Not only does it increase the sense of isolation for passersby but it reduces risk of observation for would-be offenders. A wealth of information on design strategies to deter crime is available through the International CPTED Association, Department of Justice and other sources.



## UTILITIES

To evaluate the capability of municipal utilities to support growth over the plan horizon, population projections were prepared. Projections were based on the City’s growth trend since 1910. The projections, shown in Figure 6-5, indicate the city’s population is likely to increase to almost 45,000 by 2040.

### Water System

The municipal water system is estimated to have sufficient treatment and storage capacity to accommodate continued growth through 2040. Should population trends be higher than forecasted, the Utilities Department will need to evaluate what scale of water system improvements may be needed and on what timeline.

The Utilities Department has prepared a plan for improvements to the water system over the next five years. The department is currently evaluating future upgrades to the water filtration plant that could increase capacity to 20 million gallons per day (MGD). Planned improvements include:

- Improving water pressure in north end of the city
- Upgrading/replacing water mains on Brickyard Rd and Industrial, Downing, Bridgewater Drives
- Installation of transmission main from the water plant to Knowles Road storage tank
- Maintenance of water storage tanks
- Ongoing replacement of older/undersized lines
- Filtration upgrades at the water treatment plant
- Installation of fire hydrants

Figure 6-6 Water System

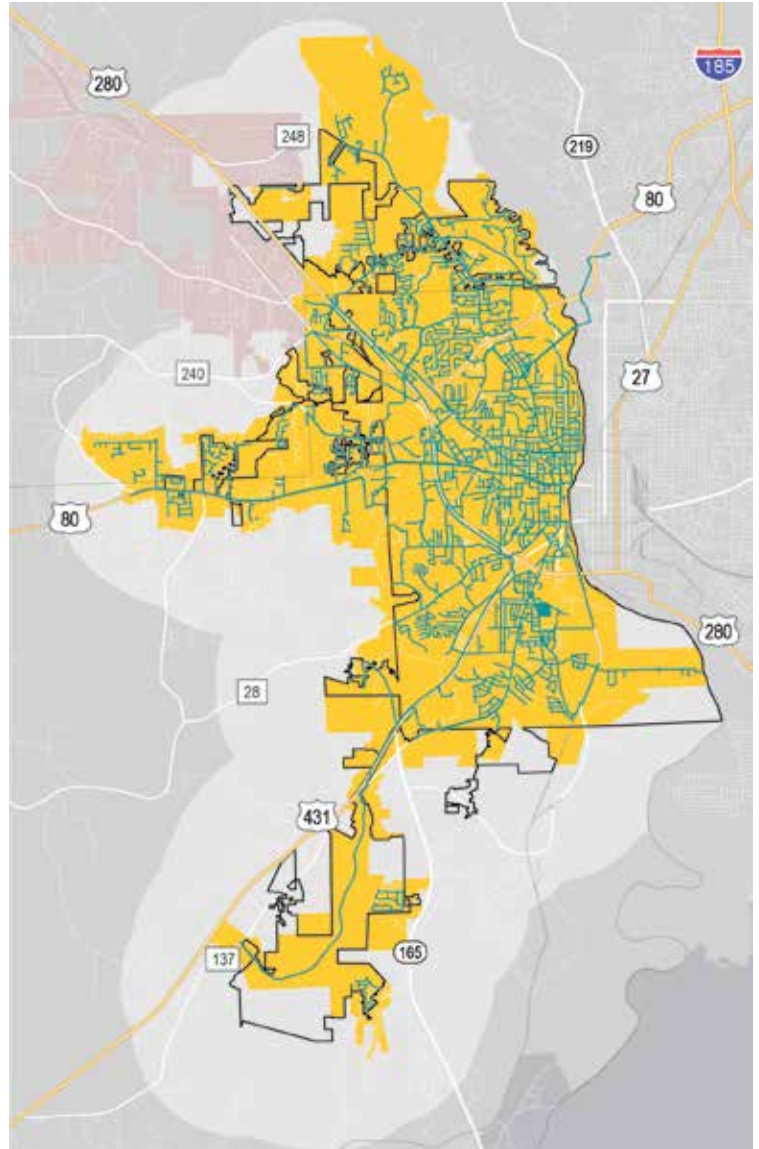


Figure 6-5 Population Projections

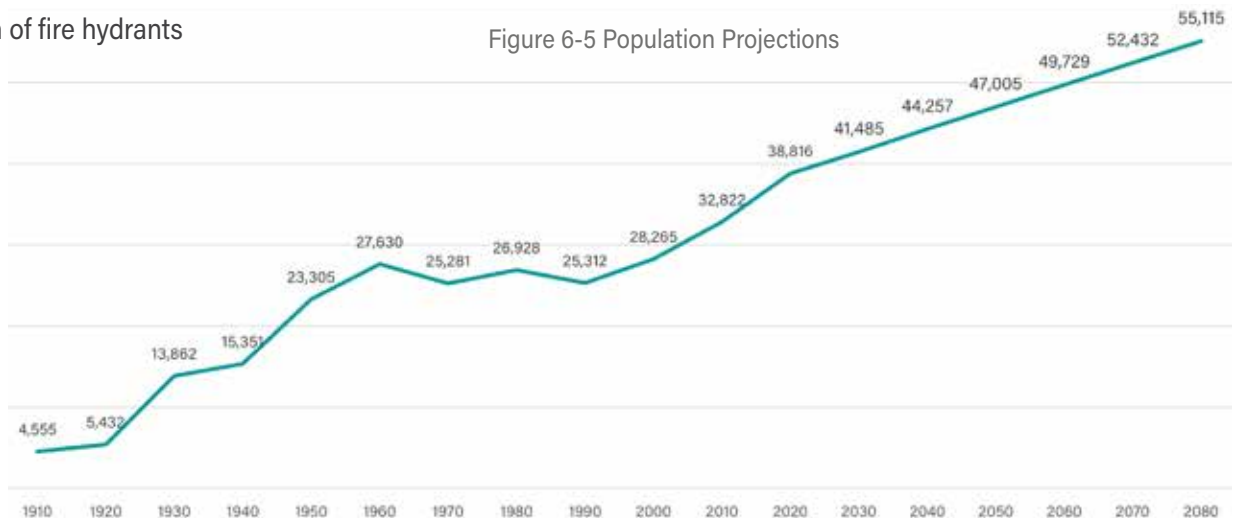
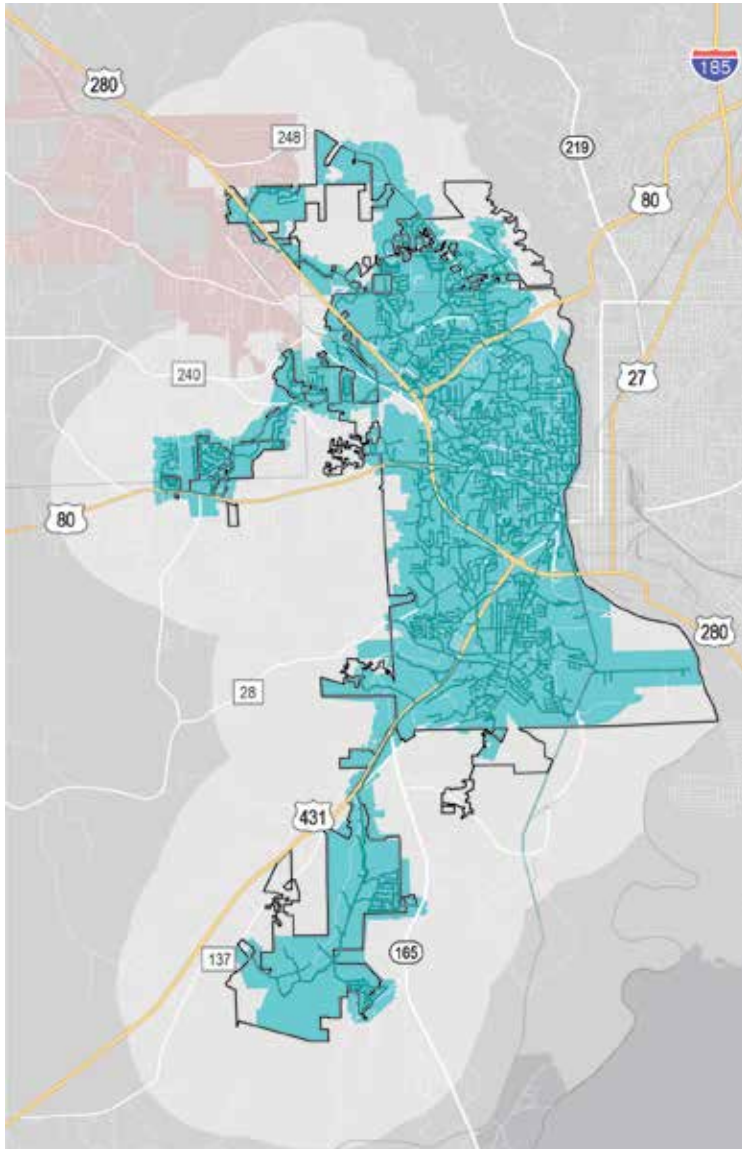




Figure 6-7 Sanitary Sewer System



### Sanitary Sewer System

The Utilities Department is currently increasing the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to 7.75 million gallons per day. The following projects are also included in the department's five-year plan:

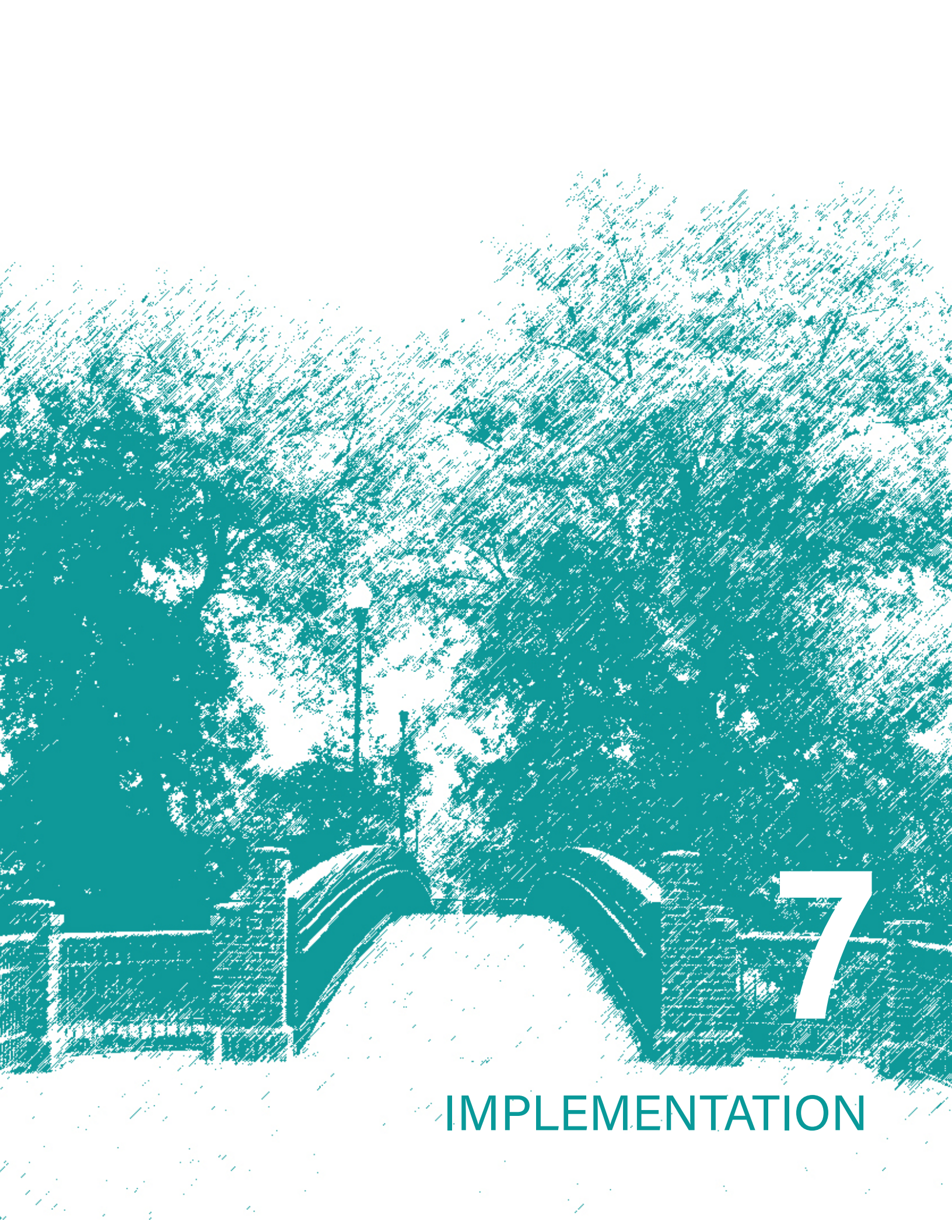
- Installation/replacement of sewer mains on 5th Avenue, Bridgewater Drive, Downing Drive
- Extension of sewer mains on 7th Street
- Relocation of sewer mains on Auburn Road, 8th Street, 14th Avenue
- Assessment and various improvements to lift stations
- Outfall improvements at South Railroad Street, Cedardale

The City has proposed extending the sanitary sewer system south to serve the Ft Mitchell area. This expansion would provide sewer access to existing and future residential development in the unincorporated areas south of Phenix City. To accommodate this expansion, the department is examining the potential of increasing treatment capacity to 10 MGD. Increasing capacity beyond 10 MGD will require additional land for the WWTP.

Residential development is occurring at the far north end of the city, including in unincorporated areas. Likewise, there is potential for more housing and other types of development to the west of the city. Bringing additional neighborhoods and businesses on to the sewer system in these areas—if the system also expands to Ft Mitchell—will accelerate the timetable for increasing treatment capacity to 10 MGD and possibly beyond.

The Utilities Department also intends to expand the use of System Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) in the water and sewer systems to improve monitoring and management.





# 7

## IMPLEMENTATION



The City has prepared this plan to guide decisions regarding land use, development and conservation, zoning and capital improvements. The plan is also intended to help residents, property owners, merchants, builders, and developers invest in the community by providing a reasonable expectation of its future physical layout and character.

The Comprehensive Plan is to be carried out through a combination of public and private investment, decisions by the City Council, Planning Commission and other public boards and commissions. The plan's recommendations will continue to be translated into action through:

- Revision and enforcement of the city's development regulations;
- Transportation improvements in cooperation with County roads and transportation departments (county roads) and the Alabama Department of Transportation (US and state highways);
- City budgeting and capital improvement programming; and
- Public and private decisions in support of planned, cost-effective annexation.

Phenix City is a municipal corporation with certain powers granted to it by the State of Alabama. The City uses its police power to enforce local ordinances and development regulations. The City uses its taxation power to plan for and make capital investments for infrastructure facilities and services, all of which help shape growth and development. All of these tools will continue to be used together to shape Phenix City in accord with the community's vision as embodied in this Comprehensive Plan.

## ACTION PLAN

The matrix on the following pages lists capital projects and other community efforts identified during the comprehensive planning process. Actions are organized according to the five major goals. Each action is assigned a phase based on its importance to the community, sense of urgency, cost considerations, expediency and other considerations.

"Low-hanging fruit"—projects that are inexpensive and relatively simple to accomplish—are typically assigned early timeframes. Accomplishing these tasks shows progress and helps build confidence. Major projects can be complicated, expensive and take considerable time to complete but they may have initial steps that need to be taken early on to avoid unnecessary delays.



### Timeframe

This represents a combination of the relative importance of the task to the community and the likely duration necessary to complete related actions: short (1-5 yrs), mid (6-10 yrs), and long (11+ yrs). Tasks referred to as "long-term" may be extraordinarily important to the community but will likely take a considerable amount of time to complete because of costs or other complicating factors. Initial steps for some mid- and long-term tasks may need to be taken relatively soon to assure they can ultimately be accomplished within the desired timeframe.

### Lead - Partners

These are local, state and other entities whose involvement—which may vary from political support to technical assistance—may be essential in pursuing and completing the task. The lead organization is listed first followed by potential partner organizations. Additional partners, such as private foundations, may also be available depending on the nature of the action.

### Potential Resources

These are organizations and programs that offer funding, technical assistance or other types of assistance relevant to the particular task.





### Arts, Recreation and Culture

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
Improvements to Idle Hour Park and Moon Lake trail, including pickleball addition and accessibility improvements	Short	City	ADECA, ORLP
Improvements to Southside Park	Short	City	ADECA, ORLP
Improvements to Austin Sumbry Park	Short	City	ADECA, ORLP
Improvements to Meadowlane Park	Short	City	ADECA, ORLP
Building improvements to C Club Activity Center	Short	City	ADECA/CDBG
Building improvements to Central Activity Center	Short	City	ADECA/CDBG
Building improvements to Roy Martin Center	Short	City	ADECA/CDBG
Building improvements to C Club Gym	Short	City	ADECA/CDBG
Convert sports field lighting to LED	Short	City	Dept. of Energy SCEP
Riverwalk extension to Idle Hour Park	Short	City	ADECA/RTP, Sweet Trails Alabama
Riverwalk extension toward Brickyard Road	Mid	City	ADECA/RTP, Sweet Trails Alabama
Increased staffing for Parks and Recreation Department	Short	City	
Shade/rain cover system at amphitheater	Short	City	
Planning, design and construction of Civic or Performing Arts Center	Long	City - County	State Council on the Arts, private donors

Funding for arts, recreation and cultural facilities and programs may also be available through grants from national, state and local private philanthropic organizations including the Russell County Area Community Foundation.

**Revitalization**

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
Adopt design guidelines, revise zoning for downtown plan area	Short	City	
Blight reduction, demolition of unsafe structures	Ongoing	City	
Redevelopment of Frederick Douglas Apartments	Mid	PCHA	HUD, AHFA
Evaluate potential for creating county or city land bank authority	Short	City - Russell County	
Acquire vacant, tax delinquent properties for redevelopment, sales to adjoining property owners	Ongoing	City - land bank	
Increase access to quality, affordable housing and homeownership	Short	City - PCHA	NeighborWorks
Streetscape improvements on Crawford Road/13th-14th Street	Short	City	RCN grant
Review and update overlay zoning standards for Crawford Road/13th-14th Street	Short	City	
Public improvements for Lively District (downtown plan implementation)	Mid	City	





Infrastructure			
Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
Street resurfacing	Ongoing	City	
Upgrade wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) capacity, acquire additional land as needed	Short	City	ADEM SRF
Upgrade water lines to accommodate growth on US 431 South	Mid	City	ADEM SRF
Water and sewer system improvements for downtown and Brickyard Road development	Short-Mid	City	ADEM SRF
Water and sewer line rehabilitation	Ongoing	City	ADEM SRF
Upgrades at the water filtration plant (WFP)	Short	City	
Installation of transmission main from WFP to Knowles Road storage tank	Short	City	
Water pressure improvements in northern portion of city	Short	City	
Upgrading/replacing water mains on Industrial, Downing, and Bridgewater Drives	Short	City	
Installation of fire hydrants (various locations)	Ongoing	City	
Streetscape improvements to Crawford Rd/13th-14th Street and "Five Points" intersection	Mid	City	RCN grant
Cochgalechee Creek bridge replacement (Seale Road)	Short	City	
Intersection improvements (Opelika Road at Lakewood/Dobbs Drive)	Short	City	
Intersection improvements (Broad Street and Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy)	Mid	City	
Prepare Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan	Short	City	
Riverwalk extension to Idle Hour Park	Short	City	ADECA/RTP, Sweet Trails Alabama

### Infrastructure (cont.)

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
Riverwalk extension toward Brickyard Road	Mid	City	ADECA/RTP, Sweet Trails Alabama
Holland Creek greenway shared path	Mid-Long	City	ADECA/RTP, Sweet Trails Alabama
Sidewalk installation (various locations, defined and prioritized by Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan)	Ongoing	City	
Off-street shared paths (various locations, defined and prioritized by Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan)	Mid-Long	City	ADECA/RTP, Sweet Trails Alabama
Phenix City Express service expansion	Short	Lee-Russell COG - City	
Improvements to bus stops	Ongoing	Lee-Russell COG - City	

### Safety

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
Safety improvements along Riverwalk (cameras, call boxes, etc.)	Short	City	
Create in-house crime analytics capabilities in police department	Short	City	
Build new north area fire station	Long	City	
Build new south area fire station	Mid	City	
Evaluate potential of City-provided EMS services	Ongoing	City	
Implement poverty reduction strategies with public and nonprofit partners to lower crime rates	Ongoing	City - various partners	NeighborWorks



Economy			
Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
Form partnership with education providers, employers and nonprofits to develop cradle-to-career "pipeline"	Ongoing	City - PCS, Troy Univ, CVCC	
Recruit industries offering high wage employment opportunities in regional partnership	Ongoing	City - City of Columbus	CHIPS fund
Create small business incubator, maker space or similar program to encourage entrepreneurial development	Mid	local college - City, Chamber	
Public improvements for Lively District (downtown plan implementation)	Mid	City	
Water and sewer system improvements for downtown and Brickyard Road development	Short-Mid	City	ADEM/SRF
Develop regional/national marketing strategy to promote river-based recreation	Short	City - Chamber	
Recruit hotels	Short	City - Chamber	
Downtown revitalization (Old Town Center, Urban Core, River North, River South districts)	Ongoing	City - private developers	

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The city's growth management system includes the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and flood damage prevention ordinance. These regulations address land use, density, the size and location of buildings and other structures, street standards and signage. They are intended to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community. Each must also respect the principles of due process, non-discriminatory application, profitable use of land, freedom of speech, and the balancing of individual costs against anticipated public benefits.

### Zoning Ordinance

Phenix City enforces a Zoning Ordinance to regulate the types of uses that may be permitted within various zoning districts, as well as, building heights and setbacks, residential densities, parking and other development characteristics. The Comprehensive Plan and its Future Land Use Map should not be confused with the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared as a guide to public and private investment in land development and infrastructure. In contrast, the Zoning Ordinance is a regulatory tool used by the city to influence and direct development in ways that reflect the desired direction and form of growth described in the Comprehensive Plan.

There is an important relationship between the land use plan and zoning ordinance. The following is a list of the land use categories in the land use plan together with the existing zoning districts to which they are most comparable. It should not be assumed that a property designated within a particular future land use category is automatically eligible for rezoning to one of the "comparable" zoning districts. Rather, the city, in reviewing development requests, will consider all other related policies and practices in this plan, together with the Future Land Use map and an evaluation of the particular site and its surroundings, to make decisions regarding rezoning and other types of permitting.

Future Land Use Category	Comparable Zoning District
Parks and Open Space	various
Agriculture and Rural Residential	A-1 Low Density and General Agricultural District
Low Density Residential	R-1 Low Density Residential District R-1A Low Density Residential District
Medium Density Residential	R-1B Low Density Residential District R-2 Medium Density Residential District
High Density Residential	R-2 Medium Density Residential District R-3 High Density Residential District
Multifamily Residential	R-3 High Density Residential District A-O Apartment and Office District
Mixed-Use	C-2 General Commercial District C-3 Neighborhood Commercial District
Downtown Mixed-Use	C-1 Core Commercial District
Highway Commercial/ Mixed-Use	C-4 Highway Commercial District
Light Industry	M-1 General Manufacturing District
General Industry	M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District
Institutional	MED District
Utilities	various



Phenix City intends to revise the Zoning Ordinance to better implement the policies of this plan and to support transformation and improvement of the downtown area and Crawford Road/13th Street corridor. The following recommended changes will improve the functionality of the Zoning Ordinance and better align it with this plan's land development policies:

- Update use regulations to address uses not identified in the current ordinance
- Update C-1 Core District to include form standards and streamline approval process
- Convert MED District into a comprehensive institutional district
- Modify Planned Development Districts to establish planning objectives and public benefits a proposal must meet to obtain the flexibility available through the designation
- Include a "conservation subdivision" option in residential districts to allow density-averaging to encourage preservation of steep slopes, flood-prone areas, etc.
- Include a "cottage subdivision" option in higher density residential districts
- Establish landscaping requirements for multi-family and nonresidential developments applicable in all districts
- Establish screening standards for waste containers and outdoor work and storage areas
- Establish buffer standards for separation between incompatible uses
- Update parking requirements; relax minimum requirements
- Create a stand-alone article addressing uses that pose specific impacts or that require specialized standards, i.e., townhouses, home occupations, bed and breakfast inns, short-term rentals, etc.
- Update sign regulations to comply with First Amendment case law

## **Subdivision Regulations**

The Land Use Plan recommends standards for public improvements suited to the land uses, densities and locations within the city – whether the development is centrally located and relatively "urban" like Downtown Phenix City or whether it is further out and relatively rural in character. For example, in the case of street networks, the right-of-way width, alignment, number and size of the travel lanes and edge treatments – including drainage improvements, lighting, sidewalks and planted buffers between the sidewalk and street – should vary according to differences in land use, intensity and location. Similarly, street connectivity may be assured in new development through standards calibrated to the type of development and its location within the community.

The following elements are recommended to enhance the Subdivision Regulations to better implement the land development policies of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Encourage street connectivity in new development to disperse traffic and assure adequate routes for emergency response
- Expand on density-based sidewalk requirements and include guidelines for development near parks and schools,
- Require subdividers install or contribute to the cost of bicycle and pedestrian facilities planned in areas embraced by subdivisions
- Incorporate traffic calming guidelines in street design requirements
- Address access management concerns to preserve street capacity and improve safety

## KEEPING THE PLAN UPDATE

Comprehensive planning is often viewed as an occasional activity overseen by the Planning Commission, while preparing the city budget is an annual responsibility of the City Council. As a result, the comprehensive plan can become less useful as a guide to city budgeting if not reviewed and updated over time. This can be avoided by coordinating plan updates with budgeting processes every year or so.

Coordinated updates may help the City Manager, Mayor and Council better determine capital budget priorities, consider plan and development regulation amendments, and coordinate public investments toward reaching the vision set out in the plan. To coordinate plan policies and their implementation, each city department, board and commission (and non-city groups that may be eligible for city funding assistance) should review the comprehensive plan and submit a report to the city that would include the following:

- All tasks essential for accomplishing elements of the comprehensive plan during the coming year that are or should be the responsibility of the respondent.
- Suggested changes in city programs – including but not limited to regulations, capital investments, operation and maintenance, and inter-governmental coordination – that the respondent feels to be in the best interests of overall plan implementation.
- Suggested changes in city policy toward growth and development as described in the comprehensive plan.
- Suggested changes in the respondent's responsibility or authority that would better enable implementation of any parts of the comprehensive plan.
- A preliminary budget proposal, including capital equipment and investments needed to deal with the above, and the portion of those costs it is requested that the city bear.

The City Manager's office would collect this information for consideration in drafting a capital budget and suggested plan amendments for the coming year. After discussions with department heads and others, the City Manager would forward a draft capital budget and suggested plan amendments to the Planning Commission, who would review it in light of the comprehensive plan. The Planning Commission would report to the City Manager the findings of its review of proposed capital investments, recommendations for plan amendments, and adjustments to development regulations.

The City Manager would prepare and present a proposed capital budget and revenue forecast to the City Council. The Planning Commission would take action regarding any recommended changes to the comprehensive plan and/or subdivision regulations and suggest zoning ordinance amendments, as needed, to the Council.







# FAST FORWARD

