



# Shelby County

## Comprehensive Plan

### Appendix C: Two Future Growth Scenarios

Adopted March 6, 2023 by the Shelby County Planning Commission  
Ratified by the Shelby County Commission on April 10, 2023



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# appendix **C**

## Two Future Growth Scenarios



*Image Credit: Henrico County, VA  
Front Cover: Congress for the New Urbanism*



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# INTRODUCTION TO SCENARIO PLANNING

As a part of this Comprehensive Plan process, the County used the growth scenario modeling tool UrbanFootprint to project possible future impacts of land use and transportation decisions. This exercise is intended to illustrate the outcomes of different growth and development decisions to inform this Plan’s guiding principles and actions.

UrbanFootprint was customized for use in Shelby County and local data and information from several sources were utilized, including data provided by the Census, InfoGroup (employment data), the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB), and Shelby County. The UrbanFootprint software allowed planners to build two possible models of the County’s land use in the year 2040 and then compare them with a number of real-world “indicators” that can quantify land use decisions.

Growth scenario modeling begins by creating an existing “base scenario” model of land use, transportation, employment, development density, and other facets of the urban environment.

Using the base scenario model as the starting point, future scenarios are created by altering future land use, transportation, employment, and development density areas. Two countywide future growth scenarios were created for this Shelby County Comprehensive Plan process, both of which assumed the addition of approximately 59,222 people, 20,719 homes, and 25,064 employees in Shelby County by 2040.

Changes between the models in energy use, water use, fiscal impacts (for both the county and for residential households), transportation, emissions, health, and land consumption were analyzed. These quantitative measures are referred to as “indicators.” The impacts of future scenarios across the seven indicators were then compared to each other and to the existing 2021 base scenario. Analyzing these indicators was intended to spark a discussion about long-rang planning and the County’s future vision by analyzing the impacts of the two distinct land use scenarios. The two future scenarios are mapped, analyzed, and discussed on the following pages.



Image Credit: PlaceMakers

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE TWO FUTURE GROWTH SCENARIOS

Future growth is inevitable, and the choices Shelby County makes in terms of type and character of development will have a profound influence for decades to come. These choices are not about how much the County will grow, but about the degree to which the County accommodates this growth in a sustainable, fiscally responsible way while promoting a desirable quality of life.

Two future growth scenarios were developed that represent hypothetical growth for how the County will develop by the year 2040 – the Current Trends Scenario and the Alternative Growth Scenario. The difference between the scenarios is simple – they differ not on how much growth will occur, but on where that growth will be directed.

The Current Trends Scenario uses a “business as usual” approach and applies conventional planning practices to determine the locations of future growth. Common practices of conventional planning include:

- Non-contiguous outward expansion, or sprawl
- Low density development with little connectivity
- Spatial segregation of land uses, which creates auto dependency
- Development on environmentally sensitive land

The Alternative Growth Scenario applies planning best practices or “smart growth” to determine the location of future growth. Characteristics of smart growth include:

- Creating livable, compact communities with a range of housing types

- Promoting alternative modes of transportation
- Emphasis on quality-of-life improvements and economic development
- Preservation of open space, natural resources, and the environment

While growth could occur in almost any number of ways, these two distinct scenarios distill the two most likely paths for future growth in Shelby County. These scenarios should serve as a basis for comparing the impacts of the different land use choices. This modeling exercise is not intended to precisely predict where future growth will occur or how it will occur, but instead presents two possible futures and weighs the impacts of each.

## 2040 Projections

Both scenarios were developed using the same assumptions about county growth regarding population, housing, and employment between the present day and 2040. The projections prepared by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham were based on a combination of historical growth assumptions and other economic indicators. By 2040, population within Shelby County is expected to increase by approximately 59,222 people to 282,246 people. Current growth forecasts estimate that roughly an additional 113,390 homes will be built in Shelby County by 2040, which equates to a 27% increase compared to today. Over 25,064 jobs are expected to be added, which means more work trips will have to be accommodated and will impact both land use and the transportation system. The main difference between the two scenarios is where new population and employment growth locate between now and 2040.

# CURRENT TRENDS SCENARIO

The Current Trends Scenario illustrates how the County could develop if new growth were to follow past development patterns. Historically, Shelby County was developed with a more dispersed pattern of low-density, detached homes on large lots with non-contiguous growth located along the County's edges. In the past two decades, the County has experienced even more rapid population growth.

Under the Current Trends Scenario, growth is allocated in a pattern that projects forward the existing suburban and rural development pattern of moderate-density residential subdivisions, low-density rural development, and roadway-oriented commercial development. The Current Trends Scenario was modeled according to the following guidelines:

- It was assumed that 75% of the estimated additional population would locate in incorporated areas and 25% would locate in unincorporated areas.
- Housing preference was left unchanged, with 95% of all new housing units assumed to become detached single family housing types and the remaining five percent (5%) assumed to become multifamily development types, such as apartments, condos, duplexes, and townhomes.
- Additional employment uses are located along existing commercial corridors, and new office parks are developed.



Overall, the Current Trends Scenario lends itself toward more rural and suburban development, although some walkable and mixed-use areas are included. Under the Current Trends Scenario, comparatively little land is redeveloped. New developments consume existing undeveloped agricultural land, which require further expansion of water and sewer line systems. Characteristics of the Current Trends Scenario include:

- Predominantly single-family neighborhoods and areas.
- Increased low-density suburban and rural tract homes.
- A high segregation of land uses.
- Low connectivity between land uses.
- Large scale new development on previously undeveloped land.

*Image Credits: The Atlantic, Financial Times  
Opposite Page: Shelby County Reporter, Smart Growth Tulsa*



# ALTERNATIVE GROWTH SCENARIO

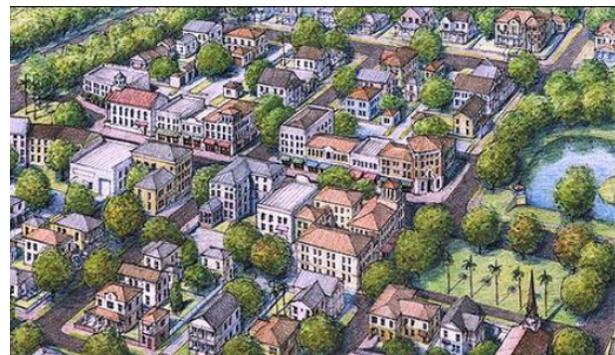
The Alternative Growth Scenario demonstrates how Shelby County could develop if principles of smart growth are implemented. It prioritizes reinvestment in downtown centers to produce walkable mixed-use areas. New development and infill redevelopment are concentrated near existing communities and amenities. A limited number of new small-scale mixed-use centers are created, surrounded by compact and walkable neighborhoods. This combination of infill redevelopment and new compact development allows for a significant amount of rural and sensitive land to remain undisturbed. The Alternative Growth Scenario was modeled according to the following guidelines:

- Population is concentrated near existing communities and near amenities such as schools, parks, libraries, mixed-use centers, and downtowns.
- Housing allocation is more diversified, with 85% of future housing assumed to become single-family development types and the remaining 15% assumed to become two-family (duplexes and townhouses) and multifamily units.
- Additional employment uses are distributed between existing downtown areas, commercial corridors, and office parks.



The Alternative Growth Scenario lends itself toward more compact and walkable development. Under the Alternative Growth Scenario, a wider range of housing types is assumed to be developed to ensure that Shelby County remains a desirable and practical place for people of all ages to live. The wide range of residential housing types can make the County more attractive to new residents while also increasing the likelihood that residents can age comfortably in place. Also under this scenario, the future redevelopment of underutilized and vacant sites places more homes and other land uses in closer proximity, thereby reducing the length and number of personal vehicle trips residents must make to other counties. Characteristics of the Alternative Growth Scenario include:

- Reinvesting in established communities and downtowns to create more vibrant and compact development.
- Accommodating infill development, which more efficiently utilizes existing water and sewer infrastructure.
- A lower segregation between land uses.
- Moderate to high connectivity between land uses.
- Limited development on previously undeveloped land, which preserves rural areas for agriculture and rural residential uses.



# EVALUATION OF THE SCENARIOS

No matter which path Shelby County chooses, by 2040 the county will look very different than it does today. These changes will become visible as market trends adapt to community preferences. This scenario planning exercise is intended to help both County decision makers and residents understand that all growth comes with tradeoffs. To understand these tradeoffs, each scenario was evaluated using the following indicators:

- Land Consumption
- Walk Accessibility Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Water Use
- Energy Use
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Household Costs
- Risk and Resiliency

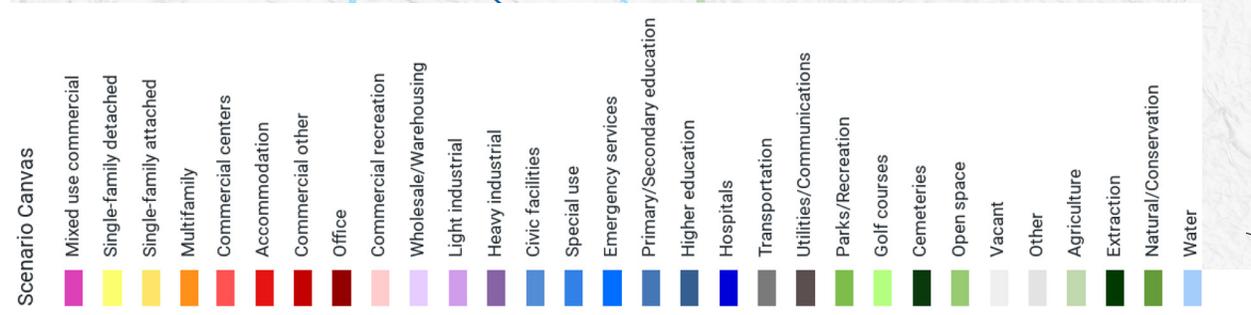
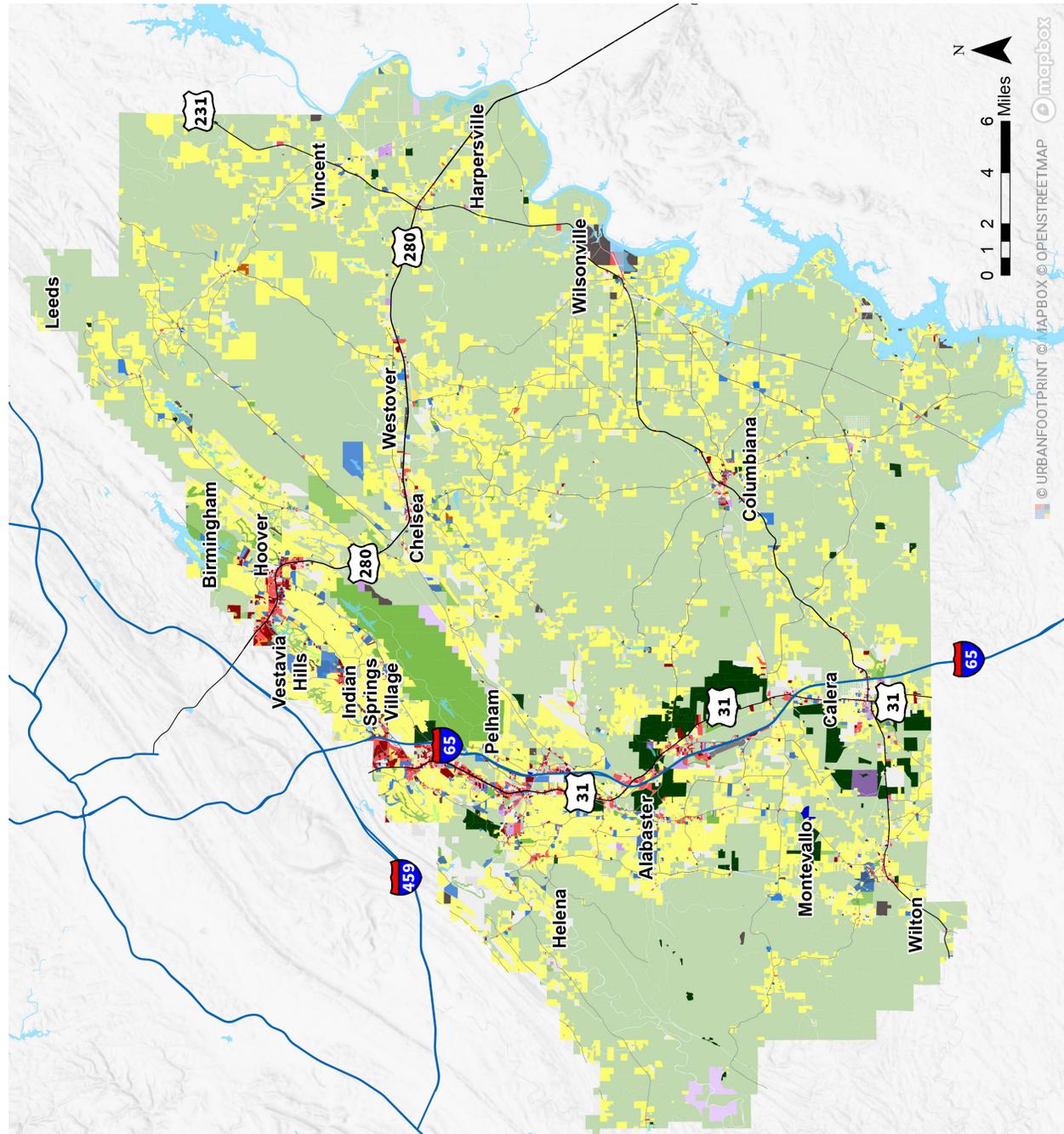
**Table 1.1** summarizes each scenario’s performance relative to the existing Base Scenario. The following sections contain detailed indicator results. Evaluation of these scenarios is intended to provide insight on the potential impacts of growth decisions in Shelby County over the next 23 years.

**Table 1.1: Evaluation of the Scenarios - Indicator Summary Table**

	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
<b>Total Land Consumed, square miles</b>			
<b>Total Land Consumed</b>	-	<b>26.2</b>	<b>14.4</b>
Urban Vacant Land Consumed	-	2.1	2.7
Urban Redevelopment Land Consumed	-	0.7	1.2
Agricultural Land Consumed	-	1.6	1.2
Woodland Land Consumed	-	17.5	7.4
Other Greenfield Land Consumed	-	4.3	1.9
<b>Walkability Access</b>			
Percent of residents within 10 minutes of a park	32%	30%	35%
Percent of residents within 15 minutes of a school	17%	15%	18%

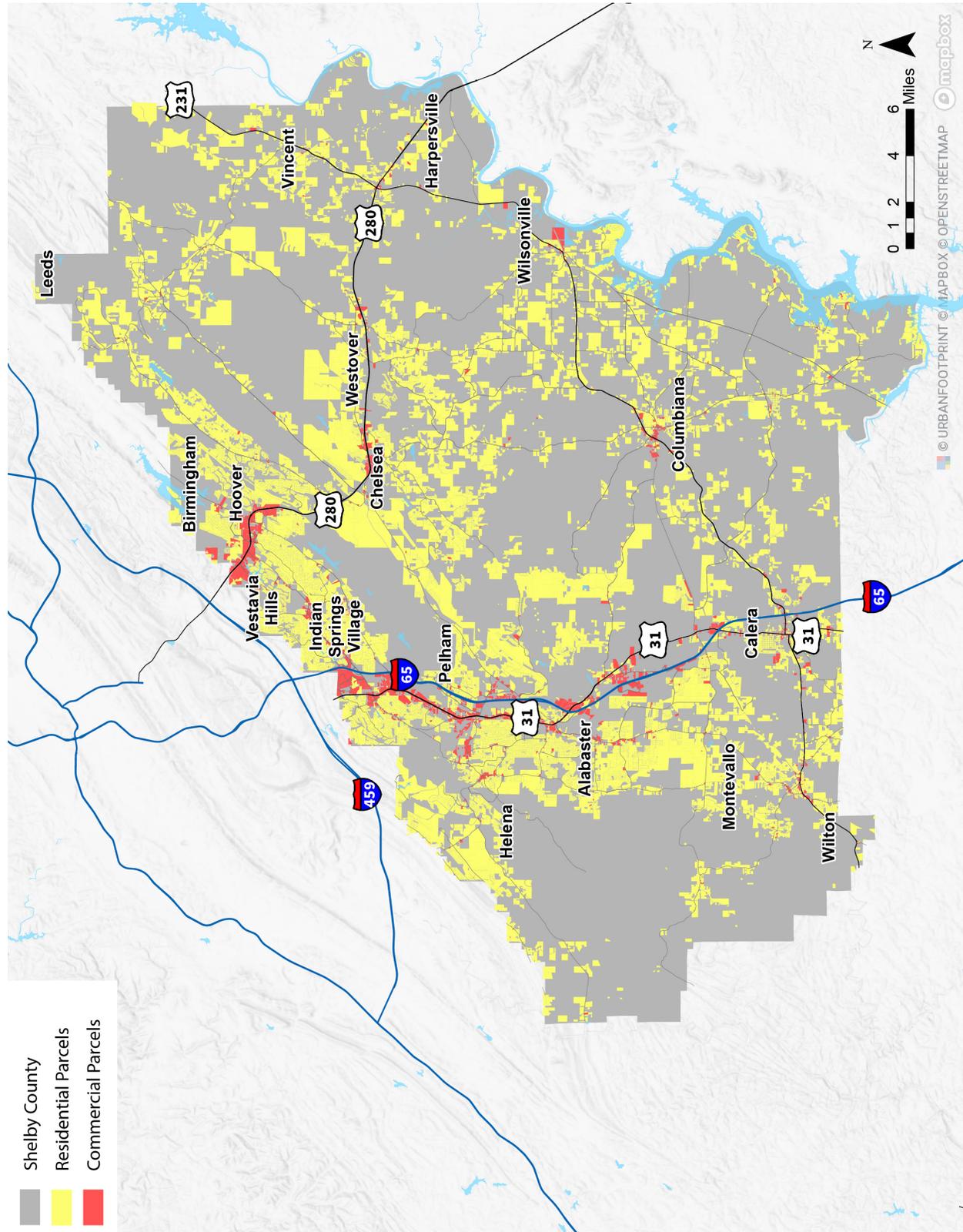
	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
<b>Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), miles / year</b>			
Per Household Annual Residential VMT, miles / year / household	17,484	18,462	17,221
<b>Total Annual Water Use, gallons / year (billions)</b>			
<b>Total Annual Water Use</b>	<b>18.25</b>	<b>25.45</b>	<b>22.21</b>
Residential Water Use	12.96	19.68	16.35
Commercial Water Use	5.29	5.77	5.86
<b>Per Household Annual Energy Use, British thermal units / household / year (millions)</b>			
Residential Energy Use per Household	97.48	98.05	97.37
<b>Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Source, metric ton / year (millions)</b>			
<b>Total Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>2.79</b>
Passenger Vehicle Emissions	0.94	1.27	1.20
Building Energy Greenhouse Gas Emissions	1.25	1.57	1.58
Water Greenhouse Gas Emissions	0.01	0.02	0.01
<b>Per Household Annual Auto and Utility Costs, dollars / household / year</b>			
<b>Total Annual Auto and Utility Costs</b>	<b>\$18,333.04</b>	<b>\$19,317.45</b>	<b>\$18,100.77</b>
Annual Passenger Vehicle Costs per Household	\$14,298.15	\$15,028.46	\$14,084.69
Annual Residential Building Energy Costs per Household	\$2,855.34	\$2,869.55	\$2,846.96
Annual Residential Water Costs per Household	\$1,179.55	\$1,419.44	\$1,169.11
<b>Per Household Annual Auto Costs by Type, dollars / household / year</b>			
<b>Total Annual Auto Costs</b>	<b>\$14,298.15</b>	<b>\$15,028.46</b>	<b>\$14,084.69</b>
Auto Fuel Costs per Household	\$2,208.57	\$2,321.38	\$2,175.60
Auto Ownership and Maintenance Costs per Household	\$12,089.58	\$12,707.08	\$11,909.09
<b>Housing in Hazard Zones, dwelling units</b>			
Dwelling Units in Special Flood Hazard Zones	3,004	3,602	3,410
<b>Population in Hazard Zones, population</b>			
Population in Special Flood Hazard Zones	6,666	8,387	7,848

Figure 1.1: Base Scenario Map



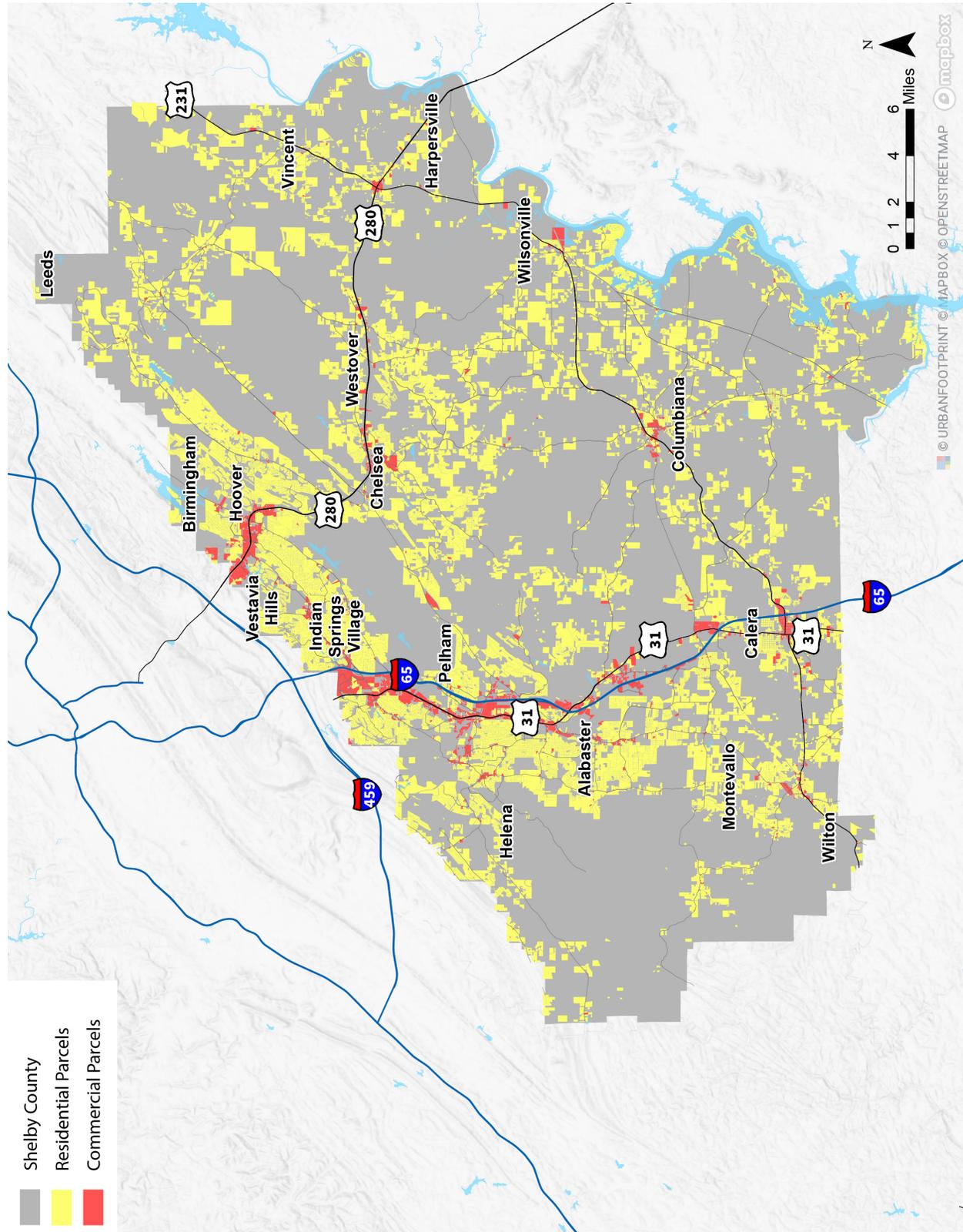
Sources: Urban Footprint, Shelby County and RPCGB

**Figure 1.2: Current Trends Scenario Map (Residential and Commercial Parcels)**



Sources: Urban Footprint, Shelby County and RPCGB

**Figure 1.3: Alternative Growth Scenario Map (Residential and Commercial Parcels)**



Sources: Urban Footprint, Shelby County and RPCGB

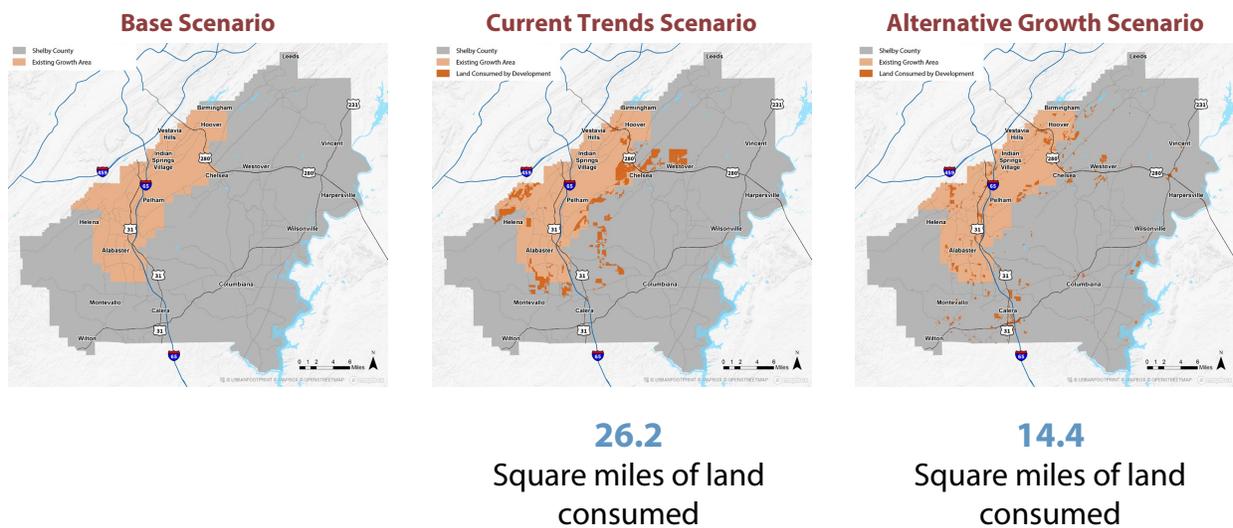
# Land Consumption

The land consumption indicator is intended to measure the impact on natural lands and undeveloped land being consumed by new development, and includes comparisons such as the amount of undeveloped (or “greenfield” land) being consumed by new development versus previously developed land being redeveloped. If Shelby County continues to develop how it has in the past, it is estimated that an additional 26.2 square miles of undeveloped land will be consumed, which primarily includes woodland. However, if the County’s growth patterns follow those under the Alternative Growth Scenario, only 14.4 square miles of additional land is estimated to be consumed. To put this into perspective, the difference in developed land between these two scenarios is almost the size of Oak Mountain State Park.

**Table 1.2: Land Consumption Comparison**

Land Consumption (sq mi)	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
<b>Total Land Consumed</b>	-	26.2	14.4
<b>Urban Vacant Land Consumed</b>	-	2.1	2.7
<b>Land Consumed by Redevelopment</b>	-	0.7	1.2
<b>Agricultural Land Consumed</b>	-	1.6	1.2
<b>Woodland Land Consumed</b>	-	17.5	7.4
<b>Other Undeveloped (or “Greenfield”) Land Consumed</b>	-	4.3	1.9

**Figure 1.4: Land Consumption**



# Walk Accessibility

The walk accessibility indicator measures and maps walk access to parks and schools. Currently, 32% of all residents are within a 10-minute walk of a park. If growth patterns under the Current Trends Scenario are implemented, only 30% of residents will be within a 10-minute walk of a park by the year 2040. Alternatively, if the County allows more compact new development such as that under the Alternative Growth Scenario, 35% of all residents will be within a 10-minute walk of a park. (Note: This indicator only considers the County’s existing parks.)

Today, 32% of residents are within a 10-minute walk of a school, while only 17% of residents are within a 15-minute walk of a school. If the County continues to grow how it has in the past, this number will decrease to 15%. In contrast, if development follows the patterns under the Alternative Growth Scenario, the number of residents living within a 15-minute walk of a school could increase to 18%. (Note: This indicator only considers the County’s existing schools.)

In both cases, the percentage of residents within walking distance of a park or school increases under the Alternative Growth Scenario because that scenario deliberately prioritizes new homes near existing public services and amenities.

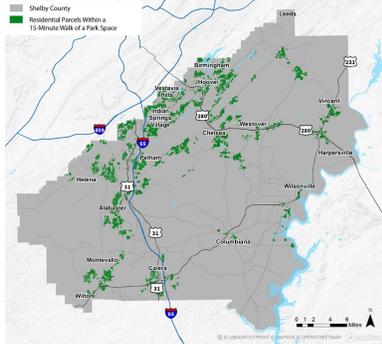
**Table 1.3: Walk Accessibility Comparison**

Walk Accessibility	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
% of residents within 10 minutes of a park	32%	30%	35%
% of residents within 15 minutes of a school	17%	15%	18%



Image Credit: Carlton Landing

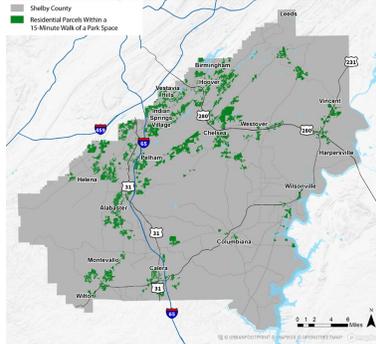
**Figure 1.5: Walk Accessibility to Parks**  
**Base Scenario**



**32%**

of all residents are within  
a 10-minute walk of a  
park

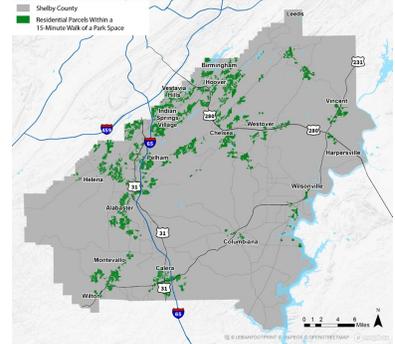
**Current Trends Scenario**



**30%**

of all residents are within  
a 10-minute walk of a  
park

**Alternative Growth Scenario**

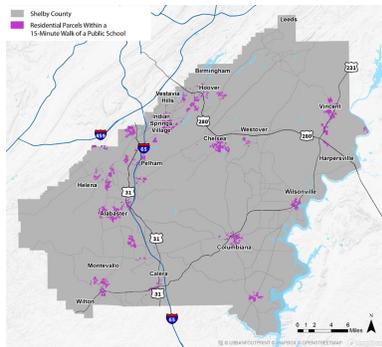


**35%**

of all residents are within  
a 10-minute walk of a  
park

**Figure 1.6: Walk Accessibility to Schools**

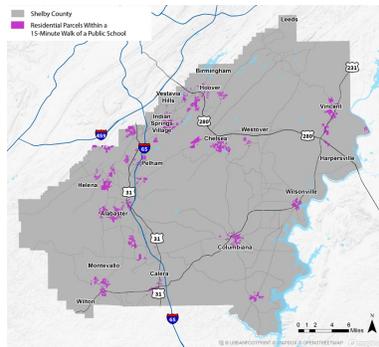
**Base Scenario**



**17%**

of all residents are within  
a 15-minute walk of a  
school

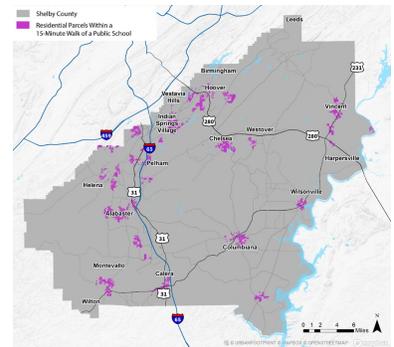
**Current Trends Scenario**



**15%**

of all residents are within  
a 15-minute walk of a  
school

**Alternative Growth Scenario**



**18%**

of all residents are within  
a 15-minute walk of a  
school

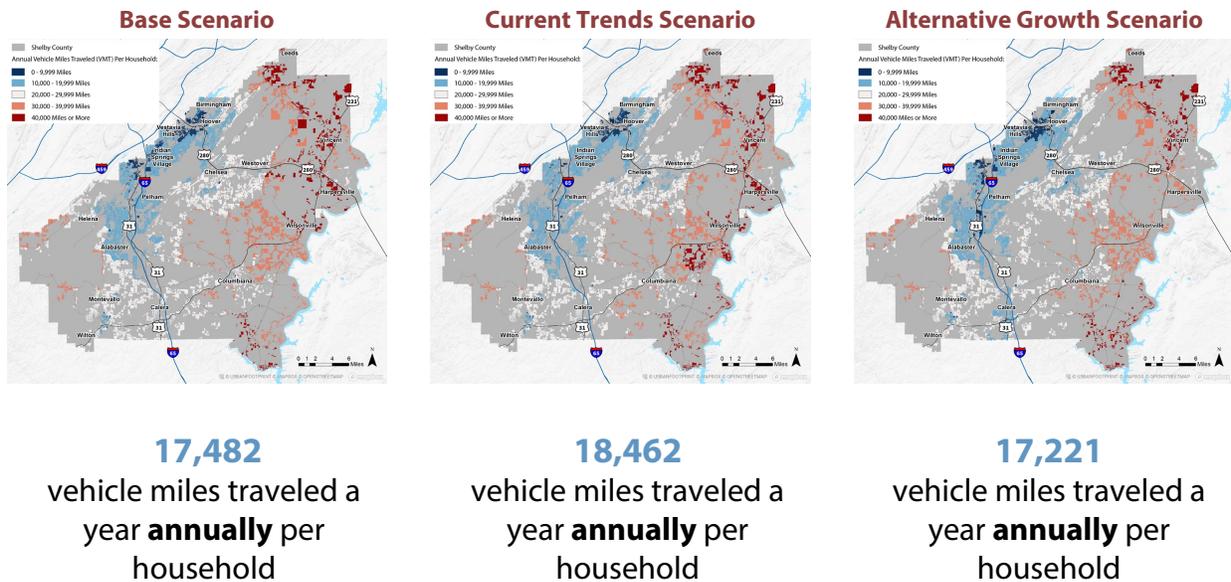
# Vehicle Miles Traveled

This transportation indicator assesses vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Currently under the Base Scenario, each household accounts for an average of 17,482 vehicle miles traveled per year. If growth patterns under the Current Trends Scenario are implemented, then the average VMT per household is expected to increase to 18,462 miles, while it is expected to decrease to 17,221 miles travelled annually under the Alternative Growth Scenario. (Note: This indicator does not consider remote or hybrid employment.)

**Table 1.4: Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Comparison**

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), miles / year	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
Per Household Annual Residential VMT, miles per year per household	17,484	18,462	17,221

**Figure 1.7: Vehicle Miles Traveled**



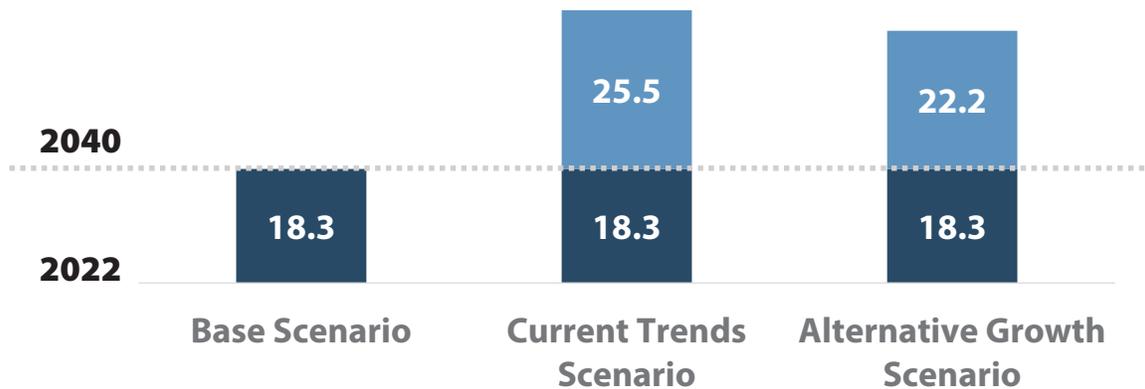
## Water Use

The water use indicator analyzes the current and future indoor and outdoor water consumption for both residential and commercial buildings. Water use is expected to increase as the County grows, but the nature of that growth will determine how much water is used and saved. Under the Current Trends Scenario, countywide water usage is expected to increase to 25.45 billion gallons, up from 18.25 billion gallons under the existing Base Scenario. If growth patterns under the Alternative Growth Scenario are implemented, this countywide water usage is expected to increase by 22.21 billion gallons. Growth patterns under the Alternative Growth Scenario would conserve approximately 3.2 billion gallons of water per year, which is enough to fill almost 5,000 Olympic s-zed swimming pools.

**Table 1.5: Water Use Comparison**

Water Use, gallons / year (billions)	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
<b>Total Annual Water Use</b>	18.25	25.45	22.21
<b>Residential Water Use</b>	12.96	19.68	16.35
<b>Commercial Water Use</b>	5.29	5.77	5.86

**Figure 1.8: Billion Gallons of Water used in the County per year**



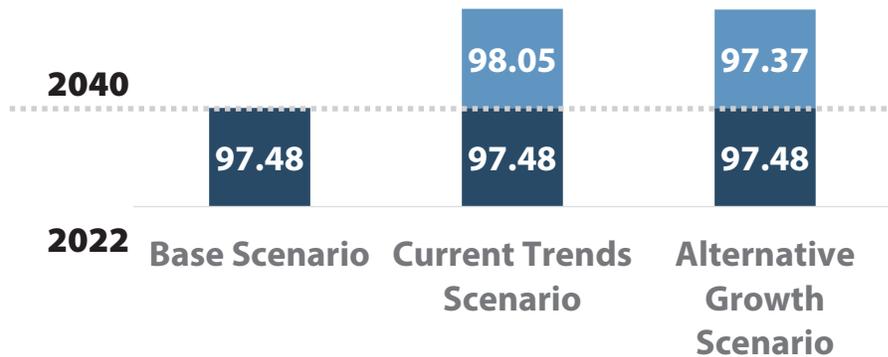
## Energy Use

The energy use indicator estimates electricity and natural gas use for residential and commercial buildings based on building size, type, and climate zone. Like water use, total energy use is expected to increase in the future as the County adds residents and jobs. However, this indicator does show a modest but noticeable decrease in energy consumption on a population-adjusted basis. The difference in energy use per household under the Alternative Growth Scenario and the Current Trends Scenario is slight, with each household under the Alternative Growth Scenario consuming approximately 0.68 million fewer BTUs annually, which is equivalent to brewing about 50 fewer pots of coffee.

**Table 1.6: Energy Use Comparison**

Energy Use, British thermal units / household / year (millions)	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
Residential Energy Use per Household	97.48	98.05	97.37

**Figure 1.9: Million BTUs of Energy per Household per year**



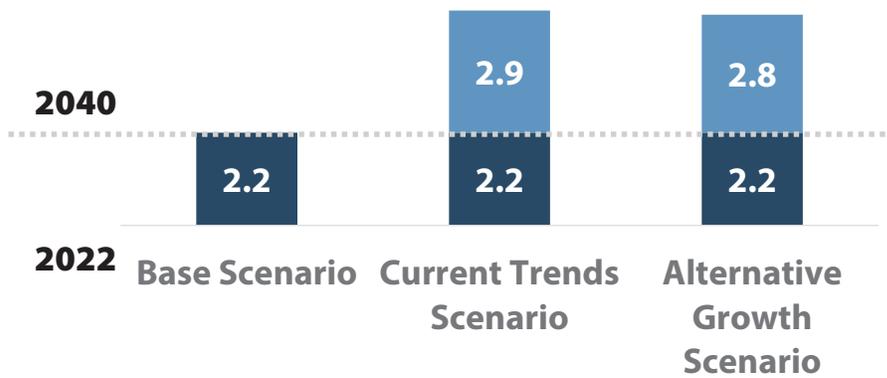
## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The greenhouse gas emissions indicator calculates greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions associated with energy use, water use, and transportation. Today, Shelby County produces approximately 2.2 million metric tons of emissions annually. It is anticipated that this number would increase to 2.9 million metric tons under the Current Trends Scenario or 2.8 million metric tons under the Alternative Growth Scenario. Compared to the Current Trends Scenario, the Alternative Growth Scenario would lower annual emissions by almost 70,000 metric tons, which is equivalent to taking over 15,000 cars off the roadway.

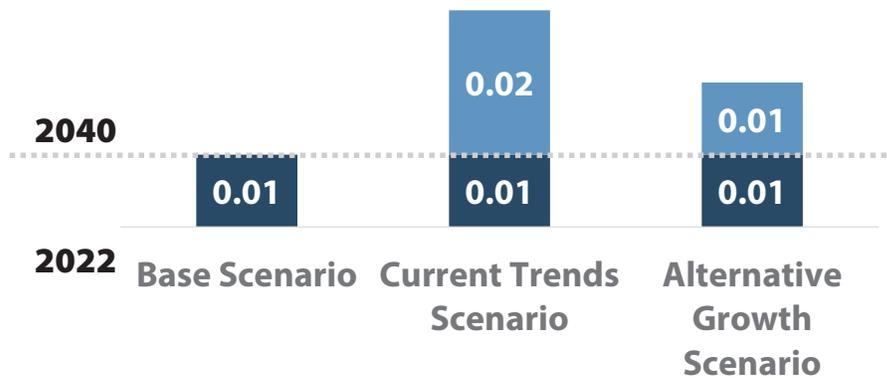
**Table 1.7: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Comparison**

Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Source, metric ton / year (millions)	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
Total Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions	2.21	2.86	2.79
Passenger Vehicle Emissions	0.94	1.27	1.20
Building Energy Greenhouse Gas Emissions	1.25	1.57	1.58
Water Greenhouse Gas Emissions	0.01	0.02	0.01

**Figure 1.10: Million Metric Tons of Annual Emissions**



**Figure 1.11: Million Metric Tons of Annual Emissions**



# Household Costs

The household annual auto and utility cost indicator analyzes annual household expenses associated with utilities (energy and water) and annual auto costs (vehicle ownership, maintenance, and fuel). Under the existing Base Scenario, Shelby County households spent an average of \$4,035 on utilities annually. By 2040, these costs are expected to increase to \$4,289 under the Current Trends Scenario and decrease to \$4,016 under the Alternative Trends Scenario. When compared to the Current Trends Scenario, the Alternative Growth Scenario is expected to save each household an annual average of \$273 in utility costs.

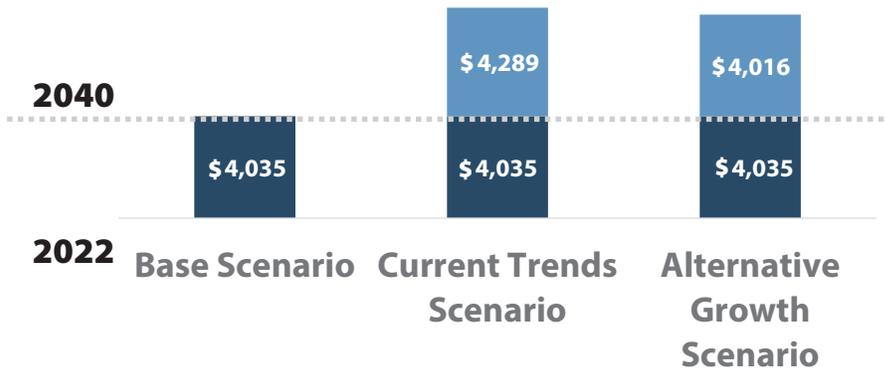
Under the existing Base Scenario, it is estimated that Shelby County households spend an average of \$14,298 on automobile costs annually. This figure includes ownership costs, maintenance, and fuel. By 2040, this number is expected to rise to \$15,028 under the Current Trends Scenario and decrease to \$14,084 under the Alternative Growth Scenario. If future development patterns prioritize mixed-use development that places people and jobs near each other and near existing amenities, as illustrated under the Alternative Growth Scenario, households could expect to save an average of \$944 annually. (Note: These figures are in 2022 inflation-adjusted dollars.)

**Table 1.8: Household Costs Comparison**

Household Costs, dollars / household / year	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
<b>Utility Costs per Household</b>	<b>\$4,034.89</b>	<b>\$4,288.99</b>	<b>\$4,016.07</b>
<b>Annual Residential Building Energy Costs per Household</b>	\$2,855.34	\$2,869.55	\$2,846.96
<b>Annual Residential Water Costs per Household</b>	\$1,179.55	\$1,419.44	\$1,169.11
<b>Total Annual Auto Costs per Household</b>	<b>\$14,298.15</b>	<b>\$15,028.46</b>	<b>\$14,084.69</b>
<b>Auto Fuel Costs per Household</b>	\$2,208.57	\$2,321.38	\$2,175.60
<b>Auto Ownership and Maintenance Costs per Household</b>	\$12,089.58	\$12,707.08	\$11,909.09

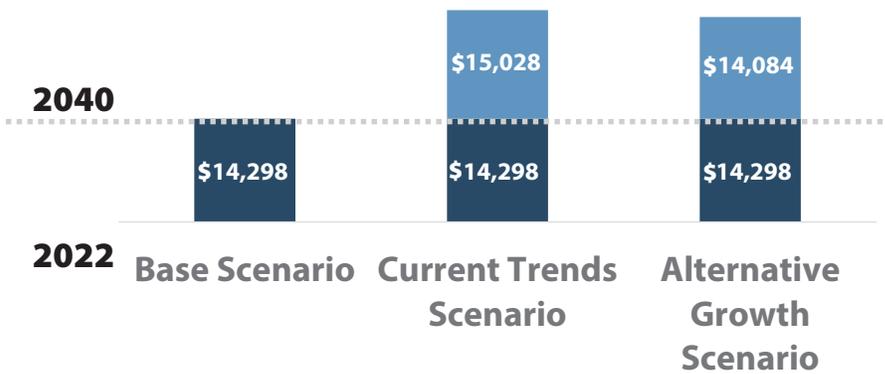


**Figure 1.12: Utility Costs per Household Annually**



**Note:** Utility costs are in 2022 dollars.

**Figure 1.13: Auto Costs per Household Annually**



**Note:** Auto costs includes ownership costs, maintenance, and fuel, and are in 2022 dollars.

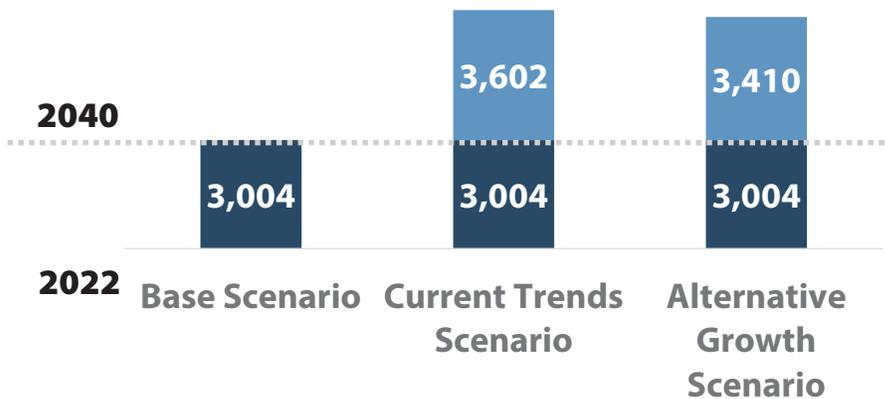
## Risk and Resiliency

The risk and resiliency indicator measures the projected impacts of flooding. Currently, approximately 6,666 people live in 3,004 dwelling units located in Special Flood Hazard Zones. It is estimated that these figures will increase to 8,387 people and 3,602 dwelling units under the Current Trends Scenario, while they would only rise to approximately 7,848 people and 3,410 dwelling units under the Alternative Growth Scenario. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that future development be directed away from Special Flood Hazard Zones.

**Table 1.9: Risk and Resiliency Comparison**

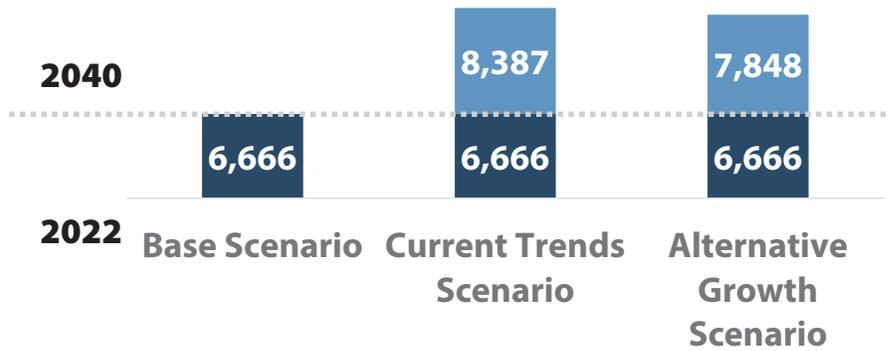
Risk and Resiliency	Base Scenario	Current Trends Scenario	Alternative Growth Scenario
Dwelling Units in Special Flood Hazard Zones	3,004	3,602	3,410
Population in Special Flood Hazard Zones	6,666	8,387	7,848

**Figure 1.14: Number of dwelling units in Special Flood Hazard Zones**





**Figure 1.15: Population in Special Flood Hazard Zones**



# KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SCENARIO PLANNING EXERCISE

This scenario planning exercise was conducted with three main objectives:

- Illustrate the impacts of growth
- Inform the Future Development Map (see Chapter 4)
- Inform the Plan’s 10 Guiding Principles and topical recommended actions

Future growth in Shelby County is inevitable, but the County’s decision-makers can help direct where growth should be located and how it is characterized. Just as current residents’ lives are influenced by land use decisions made years ago, land use decisions made today can lock in benefits—or impediments—for years to come.

Land use indicators under the Current Trends Scenario and the Alternative Growth Scenario have been evaluated as “apples-to-apples” comparisons. Since both scenarios assume the same increase in the number of people and jobs by 2040, a direct comparison between the two scenarios indicates the following key takeaways:

## Density yields efficiency

There is a need to allow and accommodate a wider range of housing types that includes townhomes, duplexes, and others, which are more compact than detached single-family homes. A variety of housing types also offer smaller building footprints, less impervious surface, and smaller lawns, all of which contribute to reduced energy use. Development density can also be achieved by promoting infill development and redevelopment in existing areas, such as highway corridors, neighborhoods, and downtowns. Diversifying the County’s housing stock will also give people a better chance of buying or renting a home that meets all their needs.



Image Credits: People for Bikes  
Opposite Page: Smart Growth America

## Promote the integration of land uses

Mixed-use developments and compact land uses place people and jobs closer to each other and to public services or amenities, which in turn reduces the number and length of vehicle trips people must take. These best practices work together to reduce the number and length of trips that must be made by automobile. This can be accomplished by investing in downtown areas, allowing growth in mixed-use centers, and revamping existing employment centers. New developments should also ensure high levels of internal and external connectivity, which allows for trips to be made using walking and bicycling means. Connectivity also distributes traffic across more streets, which can have the added bonus of reducing congestion.

Integrating multiple land uses can be challenging in Shelby County, which still suffers from the effects of sprawl. These effects can be minimized and even reversed through “sprawl repair,” which refers to a combination of infill development and design interventions. The image below shows a typical suburban shopping center before and after the implementation of sprawl repair. On the left, the anchor building is surrounded by a sea of parking. On the right, liner buildings are added along the street and much of the parking lot has been redeveloped. This site could support a variety of uses on a single revitalized site.

## Land use impacts quality of life

Land use choices have real effects on people’s daily lives. Some indicators may seem abstract, but many indicators under the Alternative Growth Scenario translate to noticeable real-world benefits. For example, the Alternative Growth Scenario resulted in cost savings for households, less required driving for many residents, more children within walking distance to school, and more residents located within walking distance to parks. Less tangible—but no less important—is the accompanying reinvestment in downtowns and civic areas, producing livelier areas with more activities and amenities. All of this can be made possible by implementing smart growth-inspired land use regulations, which in turn can result in the preservation of undeveloped agricultural land and forests.



