



Shelby County

Comprehensive Plan

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

This project was supported by funding from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) and the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Building Communities Program. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the MPO or the RPCGB. For more information on this program, please visit <http://www.rpcgb.org> or call (205) 251-8139.

This plan was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), MPO and RPCGB as a requirement of Title 23 USC 134 and the current federal transportation bill. The contents of the plan do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the USDOT.

The contents of this Comprehensive Plan reflect the values of Shelby County. The Plan serves as a guide to interpreting citizen values into future land use decisions, capital investments and public policies. As such, this Comprehensive Plan is not legally binding upon the County.

Cover Image: King's Chair Overlook at Oak Mountain State Park



**RESOLUTION
OF THE
SHELBY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Adoption of the Shelby County Comprehensive Plan

WHEREAS, Shelby County has experienced a tremendous amount of change since the Planning Commission adopted the 2004 Shelby County Comprehensive Plan, *A Path to the Future*; and,

WHEREAS, many projects from the 2004 Plan have been implemented, partnerships have thrived, and Shelby County continues to experience growth pressure and new development trends—it is prudent to look forward and consider how the County might grow and change in the next 20 years; and,

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan assists in guiding future growth and development while addressing issues such as residential development, parks and recreation, land use, transportation, natural resources, economic development, quality of life, and public facilities; and,

WHEREAS, this Comprehensive Plan will serve as a blueprint to guide Shelby County in its decision-making to create lovable communities; and,

WHEREAS, development of a new comprehensive plan began in August 2021 and involved extensive input during the public involvement process over an 18-month period; and,

WHEREAS, Shelby County engaged the professional planning staff of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham to assist with the development of a new comprehensive plan; and,

WHEREAS, the policies and actions listed in this Comprehensive Plan were developed with public participation from residents, businesses, and key stakeholders; and,

WHEREAS, while everyone has their own unique vision for the future of the County, this Comprehensive Plan represents a balance between all the different priorities and ideas suggested by Shelby County residents; and,

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2023, a summary presentation detailing the planning process and the proposed Comprehensive Plan preceded the public comment period and Planning Commission consideration; and,

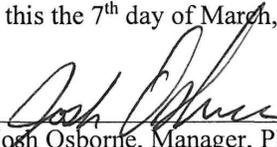
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the *Shelby County Comprehensive Plan* be and hereby is **adopted** as presented; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Development Services staff be and hereby is directed to advance the *Shelby County Comprehensive Plan* to the Shelby County Commission for ratification.

**STATE OF ALABAMA
SHELBY COUNTY**

I, Josh Osborne, technical advisor to the Shelby County Planning Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Shelby County Planning Commission at its meeting held on March 6, 2023.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND on this the 7th day of March, 2023.



Josh Osborne, Manager, Planning & Community Development
Department of Development Services

RESOLUTION 2023-04-10-12

Ratification of the Shelby County Comprehensive Plan

WHEREAS, Shelby County has experienced a tremendous amount of change since the adoption of the 2004 Shelby County Comprehensive Plan, *A Path to the Future*; and,

WHEREAS, many projects from the 2004 Plan have been implemented, partnerships have thrived, and Shelby County continues to experience growth pressure and new development trends—it is prudent to look forward and consider how the County might grow and change in the next 20 years; and,

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan assists in guiding future growth and development while addressing issues such as residential development, parks and recreation, land use, transportation, natural resources, economic development, quality of life, and public facilities; and,

WHEREAS, this Comprehensive Plan will serve as a blueprint to guide Shelby County in its decision-making to create lovable communities that have quality that make residents proud; and,

WHEREAS, Shelby County engaged the professional planning staff of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham to assist with the development of a new comprehensive plan with the process that began in August 2021 and involved extensive input during the public involvement process over an 18-month period; and,

WHEREAS, the policies and actions listed in this Comprehensive Plan were developed with public participation from residents, businesses, and key stakeholders; while everyone has their own unique vision for the future of the County, this Comprehensive Plan represents a balance among all the different priorities and ideas suggested by Shelby County residents; and,

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2023, a summary presentation detailing the planning process and the proposed Shelby County Comprehensive Plan preceded the public comment period and consideration by the Shelby County Planning Commission; and was adopted as presented by the Shelby County Planning Commission and on March 6, 2023; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Shelby County Commission be and hereby ratifies the *Shelby County Comprehensive Plan* as presented and retains the right to amend at any time deemed necessary; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Shelby County Planning Commission, County Manager, and applicable departments are directed to proceed with developing specific projects to implement the desires of Shelby County residents as described within *Shelby County Comprehensive Plan* to continue the grow of our quality communities and County.

Acknowledgments

County Manager

- Chad Scroggins

Shelby County Commission

- District 1, Kevin Morris, Chairman
- District 2, Tommy Edwards
- District 3, Jon Parker
- District 4, Ward Williams
- District 5, Elwyn Bearden
- District 6, Jeff Brumlow
- District 7, Lindsey Allison
- District 8, Rick Shepherd
- District 9, Robbie Hayes (Vice Chairman)

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- Michael O'Kelley, Vice Chairman
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- Bill Norton
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Acknowledgments Continued

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- Randy Cole - retired Shelby County Engineer
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- Richard Fallin - Citizen
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- Amy Sturdivant - 58 Inc.
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- Ward Williams - Shelby County Commission
- David Willingham - Shelby County Engineer
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Other Contributors to the Comprehensive Plan

Special appreciation is extended to those individuals who participated in the Public Open House Meetings, Pop-up Events, and other activities designed to assist in the development of the Shelby County Comprehensive Plan.

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chapter one

Plan Overview



"I love the sense of community in Shelby County - the residential areas are so convenient to some of the best recreational spots in the state!"

- Shelby County Resident



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Plan Overview



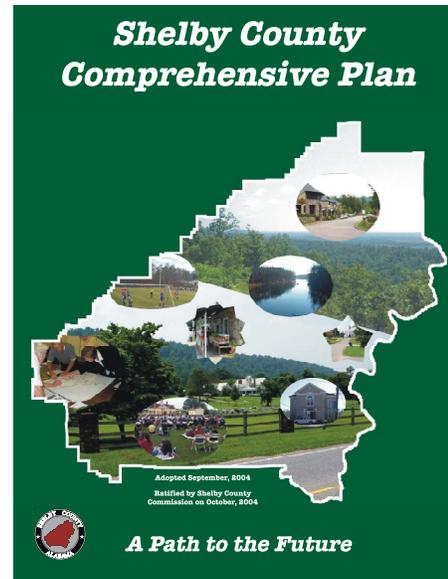
Since the last countywide planning effort in 2004, the population of Shelby County has increased from approximately 160,000 to 223,000 (+28%) and the local workforce has grown from approximately 77,000 to 93,000 employees (+17%). This population and employment growth has spurred demand for housing, public services, and employment centers that have been satisfied mostly by new development on previously vacant suburban or rural land.

As Shelby County is poised to continue growing over the coming decades, there are opportunities and challenges related to land use and development, public services and facilities, job growth, infrastructure and housing needs, and overall quality of life. By 2040, Shelby County is projected to add an additional 59,000 residents and 25,000 employees. The question of how the County should accommodate this projected population and employment growth is integral to this plan.

This Plan Overview chapter includes the five sections shown below:

- Purpose of the Plan
- Legal Basis for Planning in Shelby County
- Relationship of the Comprehensive Plan to the Zoning Ordinance
- Plan Organization
- User's Guide

The last Comprehensive Plan, *A Path to the Future*, was adopted in 2004. While many projects were implemented and partnerships thrived, the County is facing continued growth pressure and new development trends, and it is time to look forward and consider how Shelby County will grow in the next 20 years.



Source: Shelby County Alabama

Purpose of the Plan

Shelby County, located in central Alabama, has 808 square miles of diverse landscapes, consists of 17 municipalities and unincorporated areas that house approximately 223,000 people. The previous Shelby County Comprehensive Plan, *A Path to the Future*, was adopted in 2004. While many projects were implemented and partnerships thrived, the County is experiencing continued growth pressure and new development trends, and it is time to look forward and consider how Shelby County will grow in the next 20 years.

As one of the fastest-growing counties in the State of Alabama, planning is essential to prepare for future growth and the inevitable changes in our communities, such as new development, increased traffic congestion, and increased strains on local infrastructure. To address these issues and prepare for the future, this Shelby County Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for the creation of sustainable places and communities that both residents and visitors love.

This Plan is not a legally binding document or zoning ordinance, but it is a policy document intended to serve as a guide for elected officials and county leaders with decision-making authority regarding land use, growth management, capital improvement decisions, development, and redevelopment. The Plan is also intended to provide a framework for guiding public and private decisions that will affect new development as well as reinvestment in existing residential and commercial areas. This Plan is based on residents' vision of how the County should grow and develop. It is a long-term vision that may extend beyond the lifetime of those participating in drafting the plan and is intended to be implemented across the tenure of elected officials and County leaders and staff.

More specifically, this Comprehensive Plan should be used as a guide for decision-making regarding location and intensity of growth, transportation system and other infrastructure investments, economic development strategies, addressing recreation needs, protecting agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas, and enhancing residents' safety and welfare.



Source: DPZ CoDesign

Legal Basis for Planning in Shelby County

There are 17 municipalities that are completely or partially within Shelby County, and 75 percent of the people living in Shelby County live within those incorporated areas. Sections 11-52-8 through 11-52-10 of the Code of Alabama empowers municipalities with the authority to develop and adopt comprehensive plans to manage their growth and development, and the timeline shown in **Table 1.16 of Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends** lists the latest planning efforts adopted by the incorporated cities and towns.

However, no such blanket legislation applies to counties within Alabama. In 1982, Shelby County successfully enacted special enabling legislation through the State Legislature (Act Number 82-693), which provided the County with some unique tools for managing growth. The legislation created the Shelby County Planning Commission and designated it as the decision-making body for implementation of subdivision and zoning regulations as adopted by the Shelby County Commission. This enabling legislation allows for the establishment of zoning regulation in unincorporated areas of Shelby

County by beat. The zoning regulation is enacted through an election initiated by residents of the zoning beat. Section 6 of Shelby County's Enabling Legislation also authorizes the Shelby County Planning Commission to develop, adopt and maintain an up-to-date Comprehensive Plan with the general purposes of "guiding and accomplishing coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development in the County, which will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, and should promote safety from fire, flood and other dangers, the healthful and convenient distribution of population, and the wise and efficient expenditure of public funds."

Planning in the State of Alabama is not compulsory and there is no specific requirement on the frequency of Comprehensive Plan updates. Shelby County Planning Commission and County Commission are strongly encouraged to regularly review and update the Comprehensive Plan. Periodic updates become even more important if there are large land use or jurisdiction changes, such as annexations or land swaps, or if a new study or plan has been completed that impacts this Comprehensive Plan. Frequent review and updates also will help safeguard the County from legal challenges and encourage proactive initiatives to steer the County toward its vision.

Relationship of the Comprehensive Plan to the Zoning Ordinance

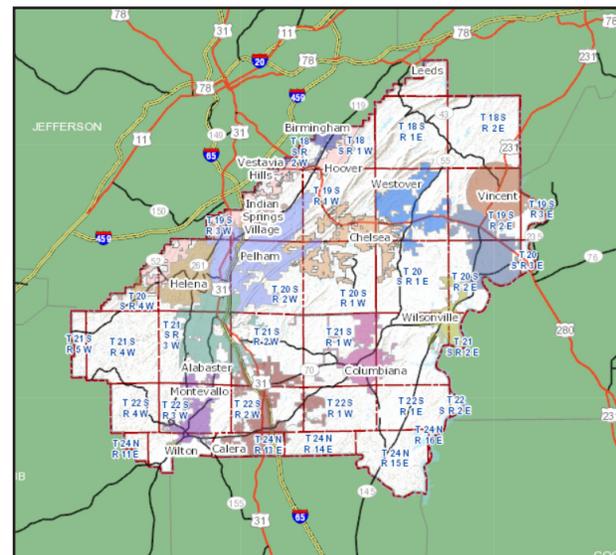
The Comprehensive Plan will become the adopted policy document that establishes actions and policies for the location, type and intensities/densities of land uses desired by residents of the County, based on existing land uses today and desired land uses in the future. The Future Development Map shown in **Chapter 4** of the Comprehensive Plan will become a guide for the Planning Commission when considering development proposals and rezoning cases.

In contrast, the Shelby County Zoning Ordinance is a legally binding document that is adopted by the County Commission after review and approval by the Shelby County Planning Commission. Where the Comprehensive Plan is a guide for future growth and development, the Zoning Ordinance is the tool utilized by the County to influence and direct development so that it reflects the intensity, density and desired form envisioned within the Comprehensive Plan.

In short, the Comprehensive Plan neither changes the Zoning Ordinance nor the zoning on any specific property. Instead, it guides the Planning Commission as they make decisions about requested zoning changes on individual properties. Changing the Future Development Map category for a parcel of land requires a Future Development Map amendment but changing the zoning for a parcel of land requires a rezoning application, public hearing, and vote by the Planning Commission.

Table 1.1: Comprehensive Plan vs. Zoning Ordinance

Comprehensive Plan (Policy document)	Zoning Ordinance (Legally binding document)
Provides general policies as a guide. It is not legally binding.	Provides specific regulations. It is law and legally binding.
Describes what should happen in the long term, not necessarily the recommended land use for today.	Describes what is and is not allowed today, based on zoning district regulations.
Flexible to respond to changing conditions.	Predictable, fairly rigid, and requires formal text amendments and rezoning applications.
Includes Future Development Map categories, e.g., Walkable Neighborhood, Community Commercial	Includes Zoning Districts, e.g., E-1 Single Family Estate, B-1 Neighborhood Business District



Source: Shelby County Alabama

Learn more:

Visit www.maps.shelbyal.com/html5/ to look up the zoning of a piece of property.

Plan Organization

The Shelby County Comprehensive Plan contains **11 chapters and four appendices**. **Chapters 4-10** are organized by the following planning elements: Future Land Use & Development; Infill Development; Code Modifications; Transportation and Infrastructure; Parks, Recreation and Trails; Livability and Public Services; and Economic Development. Each chapter’s recommended actions are organized by topic and are also included in the implementation table found in **Chapter 11**.

Table 1.2: Plan Organization

Plan Chapter		Description
1	Plan Overview	This chapter includes the purpose of the plan, describes the legal foundation for planning in Shelby County, notes the difference between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, and includes a user’s guide.
2	Charting the Course	This chapter contains a high-level summary of the public involvement process, including topics that emerged from engaging the public. This chapter also describes the 10 guiding principles that govern this Plan’s recommended actions.
3	Shelby County Today	This chapter briefly highlights existing conditions and trends in Shelby County. Topics presented include socioeconomic data, housing data, transportation facilities, existing land use, zoning, and inventories of community facilities, assets, parks, and trails. The full existing conditions and trends document can be found in Appendix B.
4	Future Land Use & Development	This chapter includes the Future Development Map, which depicts the type of development and land uses desired for specific areas within the County, as well as recommended actions to guide future development and redevelopment in ways that promote sustainability and enhance quality of life.
5	Infill Development	This chapter includes strategies to encourage infill development and includes example concept illustrations for how infill development could be included in four selected areas of Shelby County.
6	Code Modifications	This chapter highlights recommended code modifications to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to help align the regulatory documents with the County’s land use vision for the future (as described in Chapter 4).
7	Transportation and Infrastructure	This chapter outlines recommendations to develop a safe, interconnected multi-modal transportation system that improves operational efficiency for motorists and non-motorists alike and enhances the quality of life for all travelers.

Plan Chapter		Description
8	Parks, Recreation and Trails	This chapter provides recommendations for how the County should maintain, expand and connect its parks and recreational facilities, and expand the countywide trail network.
9	Livability and Public Services	This chapter provides recommendations for enhancing public services and facilities throughout the County, code enforcement strategies, and guidance for addressing the needs of senior adults, public safety, resiliency, and intergovernmental coordination.
10	Economic Development	This chapter provides recommendations pertaining to infrastructure improvements to facilitate economic development, along with ways to foster tourism, retain and attract businesses, and grow the County’s talent base.
11	Implementation	This chapter includes a detailed implementation matrix for all of the recommended actions in the Plan and assigns each action with a suggested timeframe for implementation and a list of potential lead partners.
A	Appendix A: Visioning Survey Results	This appendix includes a detailed documentation of the Visioning Survey results. The survey was open from August 17 through December 1, 2021, and resulted in 2,095 responses, with 51% of responses from unincorporated areas of the County.
B	Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends	This appendix includes an in-depth assessment of Shelby County's current conditions, including summary profiles of the following topics: demographics, housing, employment, transportation and infrastructure, land use and development, and detailed lists of existing trails and county assets.
C	Appendix C: Two Future Growth Scenarios	This appendix summarizes the development of two hypothetical future land use scenarios for absorbing the projected population and employment growth by 2040: the Current Trends Scenario and the Alternative Growth Scenario. The appendix includes a detailed evaluation of how each scenario could impact Shelby County's land and population.
D	Appendix D: Future Development Map Book	This appendix provides zoomed-in versions of the Future Development Map from Chapter 4.

User's Guide

This Plan includes a vision, **10** guiding principles, and **194** recommended actions that cover a range of topics.

- **The vision is far-reaching, aspirational, and designed to inspire.**
- The vision is expressed through the Plan's guiding principles. The guiding principles are intended to govern the recommended actions and were developed by thoroughly analyzing public input and priorities.
- The recommended actions provide the County and its partners a guide to implement the vision and guiding principles. Because the relationship between guiding principles and actions is more complex than one-to-one, the actions are not assigned to specific guiding principles. Some actions may be ongoing while others are new steps recommended for the County to take. Each action has one or more entities tasked with leading its implementation as identified in **Chapter 11: Implementation**. These actions are written to be as discrete, actionable, and as implementable as possible.
- Callout boxes and Did You Know? boxes highlight case studies or relevant County programs, but do not endorse a specific course of action. These are illustrative only.

This Comprehensive Plan document will be consulted by a range of users; therefore, a description of how it can be used by various users is provided on the following page.

Source: San Jose State University



For Use by the Shelby County Planning Commission

Members of the Shelby County Planning Commission should use this Plan to guide their decisions regarding rezoning requests, conditional use permits, variance requests, and subdivision requests, all of which should be consistent with the Future Development Map and categories with appropriate public input. All topical chapters contain actions that, although not necessarily immediately identifiable on the Future Development Map, are nonetheless best implemented through land use decisions. Other chapters and appendices, such as Infill Development and the Existing Conditions and Trends Report, contain valuable tools and information.

For Use by the Shelby County Commission

County Commissioners should utilize this Plan as a roadmap for capital investments, partnerships, and policies to ensure the long-term Guiding Principles are supported and are implemented.

For Use by Shelby County Staff

County staff will consult the Plan when reviewing and updating development ordinances, creating staff reports, and making recommendations for facilities, services, and capital improvement projects. Department heads and other leaders will use the Plan to inform the preparation of work plans, budgets, and capital improvement programs. Relevant decisions made by all levels of staff should be consistent with the aspirational guiding principles and concrete recommended actions.

For Use by the Public

Residents are encouraged to refer to the vision, guiding principles, actions, Future Development Map, and other maps and figures when presenting a proposal before the County Commission or other bodies. The Plan serves as a point of reference to stimulate productive conversations about growth, development, and the future of Shelby County.

For Use by Other Agencies & Partners

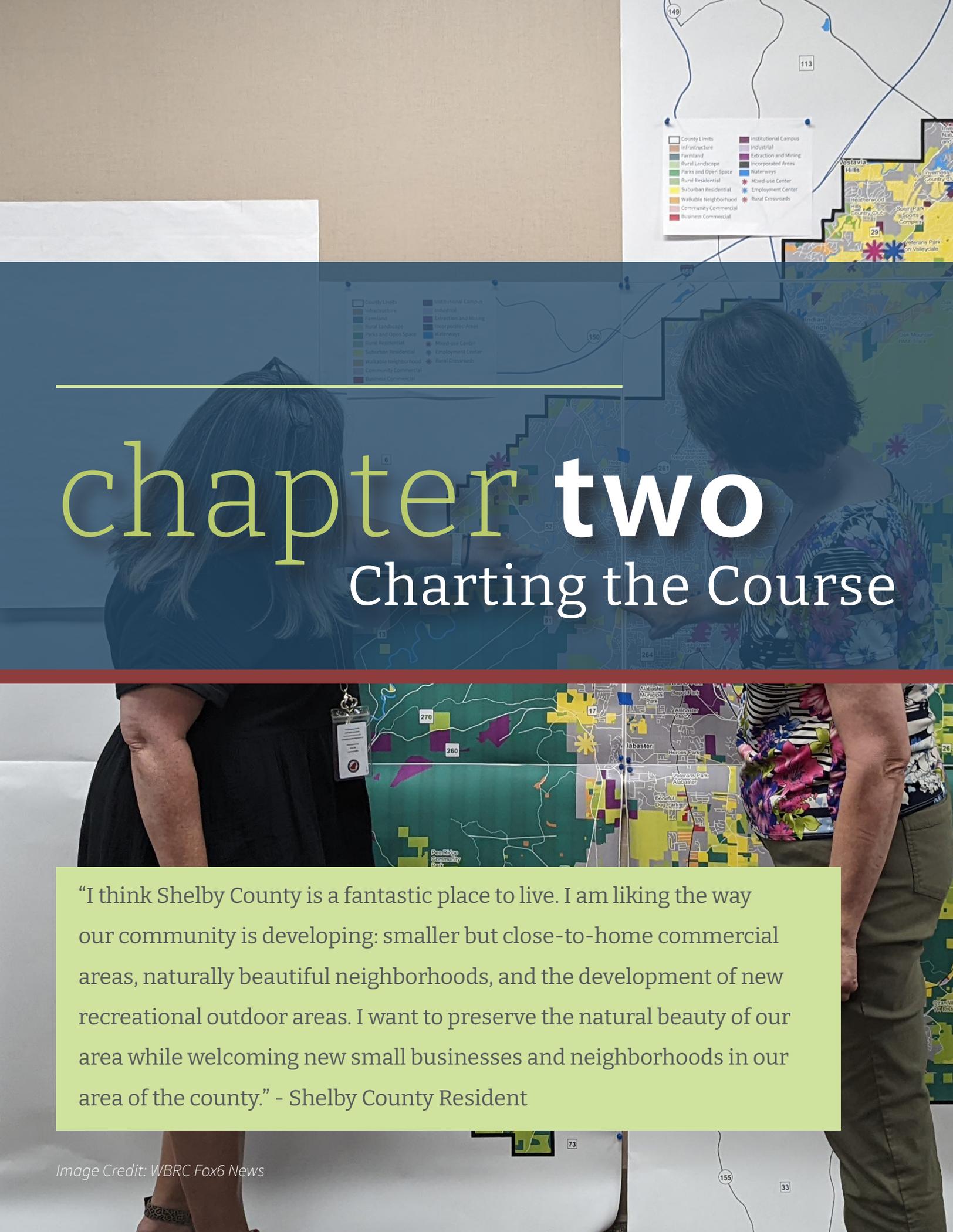
Shelby County's partners include nonprofits, businesses, and educational institutions. All these groups can use this Plan to identify and implement mutually beneficial actions.

For Use by Municipalities / Neighboring Jurisdictions

Seventeen municipalities are completely or partially within Shelby County, accounting for over one-third of the County's land area; and four counties share land boundaries. These jurisdictions are encouraged to consult this Plan's Future Development Map when making land use decisions that may affect both parties and are encouraged to consult other topical chapters where applicable.

For Use by Developers

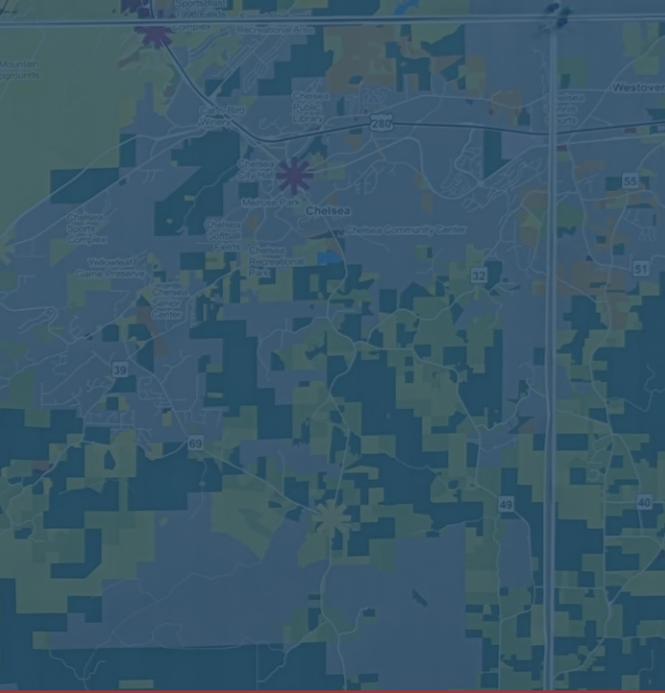
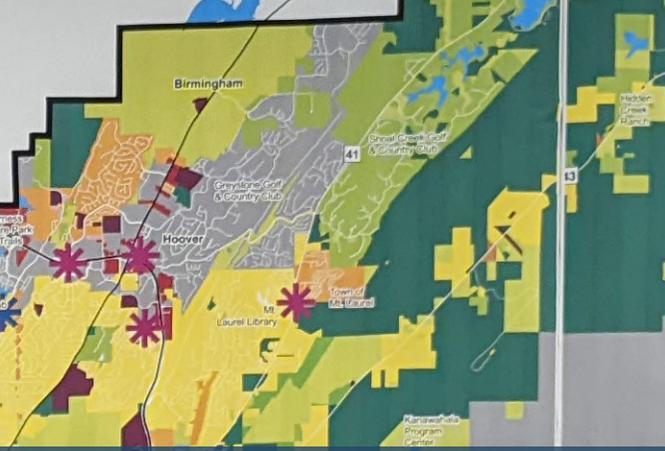
Developers, builders, property owners, and development groups are encouraged to use this Plan to develop projects and site plans that consider the broader countywide context in which their projects are situated. This Plan should stimulate productive conversations about the character of development related to community expectations and techniques for promoting development that is sustainable, both environmentally and economically.



chapter two

Charting the Course

“I think Shelby County is a fantastic place to live. I am liking the way our community is developing: smaller but close-to-home commercial areas, naturally beautiful neighborhoods, and the development of new recreational outdoor areas. I want to preserve the natural beauty of our area while welcoming new small businesses and neighborhoods in our area of the county.” - Shelby County Resident



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**The Plan’s Overarching Vision -
“Quality Inspired...It’s in Our Nature”
.....33**

Guiding Principles.....34

Charting the Course



Image Credit: Shelby County

A robust public engagement process was essential to ensure this Plan reflects the needs of community residents and businesses. Residents and stakeholders brought forth a wealth of knowledge on local issues and challenges as well as opportunities. This chapter includes highlights of the process to illustrate how outreach and public engagement directly led to this Plan’s overarching vision of “Quality Inspired...It’s in Our Nature” and the Plan’s 10 Guiding Principles.

This chapter includes the four sections shown below:

- Plan Development Process
- Public Involvement Process and Key Findings
- The Plan’s Overarching Vision - “Quality Inspired...It’s in Our Nature”
- Guiding Principles

Plan Development Process

As shown in **Figure 2.1**, the process to develop the Comprehensive Plan was divided into four main phases:

- **Phase 1:** Community Visioning and Existing Conditions (August 2021 – February 2022)
- **Phase 2:** Plan Development and Recommendations (March 2022 – September 2022)
- **Phase 3:** Plan Documentation and Publication (October 2022 – February 2023)
- **Phase 4:** Plan Finalization and Adoption (February 2023 – March 2023)



Source: Shelby County

Figure 2.1: Plan Development Process



Public Involvement Process and Key Findings

Effective outreach provides ample opportunity for residents to be actively engaged in the plan development process. This process sought to educate residents about the purpose of the planning effort and the important role they played in the development of the Plan’s recommended actions. Community leaders and key stakeholders were engaged in several different ways throughout the planning process and were encouraged to actively discuss concerns, express desires, and voice their opinions about the future of Shelby County. The following public outreach activities were used by the “planning team,” composed of planners from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) and the Shelby County Department of Development Services. A key component of the public outreach process was to provide everyone an opportunity to participate in the process. Online and in-person participation options were available throughout the planning process.

Visioning Survey

The Visioning Survey, which was built using the PublicInput online platform, was open from August 17 through December 1, 2021, and resulted in 2,095 responses, with 51% of responses from unincorporated areas of the County. This survey asked questions on a variety of topics and included several opportunities for respondents to map their responses. The survey was disseminated throughout the community using traditional methods such as posting flyers, plus digital outreach, including social media and e-blasts coordinated through community partners. Topics that emerged from the Visioning Survey were instrumental in shaping the recommended actions in this Plan; key findings are summarized in the next section.

For detailed results from the Visioning Survey, please see **Appendix A: Visioning Survey Results**.

Image Source: RPCGB



Steering Committee Meetings

A Steering Committee was established to develop the Comprehensive Plan. To ensure a broad representation of the many communities throughout the county, 28 community leaders were invited by the Shelby County Manager to serve as members of the Steering Committee. The Committee acted as spokespersons for the planning effort, played a critical role in providing direction and feedback to the planning team at crucial moments in the process. The Steering Committee met seven times during the planning process, with meetings organized around topics as identified in **Table 2.1**. Each meeting included a presentation from the planning team and opportunities for discussion and feedback.

Table 2.1: List of Steering Committee Meetings

Meeting #	Date	Topic
1	1/14/2022	Planning Process and Visioning Survey Results
2	2/15/2022	Existing Conditions and Trends
3	4/19/2022	Scenario Planning Process and Outcomes
4	6/21/2022	Draft Future Development Map
5	9/20/2022	Key Plan Recommendations
6	11/15/2022	Draft Plan Overview
7	1/17/2023	Final Discussion Items

Senior Survey

Members of the planning team distributed surveys to senior adults at the 2022 Shelby County Senior Picnic on June 8, 2022, at Thompson High School. This survey identified key needs of senior adults and specifically focused on housing, transportation, and community engagement topics. Responses were used to develop actions under the “Addressing the Needs of Senior Adults” topic in **Chapter 9: Livability and Public Services**.

Stakeholder Interviews with County Employees

Throughout the development of this Plan, the planning team conducted stakeholder interviews with key Shelby County employees and community partners to better understand baseline conditions, current challenges and opportunities, and major plans, projects, programs and initiatives. Information gathered contributed directly to the recommended actions in the Comprehensive Plan.



Source: RPCGB

Public Meetings / Open Houses

Draft Future Development Map Open Houses and Public Comment Period

The planning team held two all-day open houses to solicit feedback from the public on a draft version of the Future Development Map. These events were held on August 9 and August 11, 2022, from 9am to 6pm at the two Shelby County Services buildings. The Open Houses were publicized through print and digital flyers, the Shelby County Reporter, and targeted e-blasts. Media coverage included tv interviews that aired on WBRC Fox 6 and CBS 42, and an article in the Shelby County Reporter.

Open House attendees were able to view a recorded presentation that played each hour on the hour. The presentation explained the purpose of the Future Development Map, described each Future Development Map category, and ran through example scenarios of how the Future Development Map can be used to guide rezoning decisions by the Shelby County Planning Commission.

Those who could not attend had the opportunity to view the presentation on the project website and to submit comments during a public comment period that was open from August 9 to September 2, 2022.

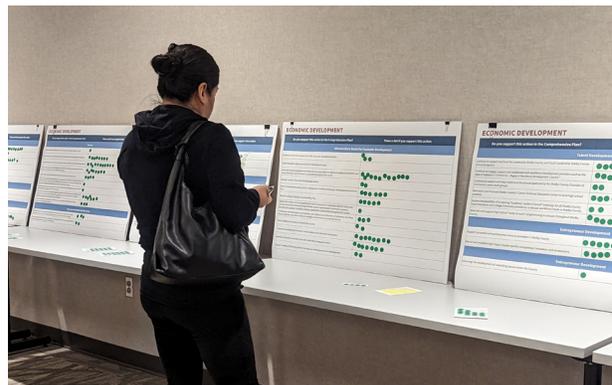
Draft Plan Reveal Open Houses and 30-day Public Comment Period

Two Open House meetings were held on January 18 and January 19, 2023, at the two Shelby County Services buildings. At these meetings, an overview presentation of the Comprehensive Plan was given to the public to reveal the key recommendations that had emerged from the public input process. Participants were asked to indicate which of the Plan's recommended actions they support.

Those that could not attend had the opportunity to view the overview presentation on the project website and to submit comments during a 30-day public comment period that was open from January 20 to February 20, 2023.



Source: RPCGB



Source: RPCGB

We Need Your Help...

Shelby County Comprehensive Plan

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SURVEY



SCAN THE QR CODE TO THE LEFT TO GO DIRECTLY TO THE SURVEY



Source: RPCGB

Key Findings from the Visioning Survey

The survey was open from August 17 to December 1, 2021. The full survey results can be found in **Appendix A: Visioning Survey Results**.

Background

Across the County, survey participants want the same things.

2,095 total participants:

- 49% participants live in incorporated areas
- 51% participants live in unincorporated areas

Quality-of-life

Participants enjoy the County's strengths but are concerned about traffic congestion (85%) and rapid growth (75%).



Top 2 Strengths

85% quality of public schools



80% family friendly atmosphere

Quality-of-life Challenges



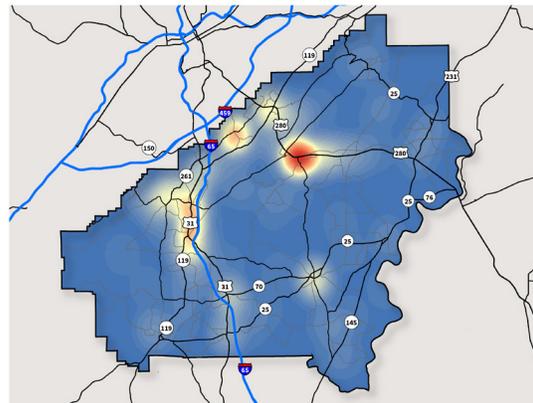
69% vacant businesses



68% availability of cultural & entertainment options

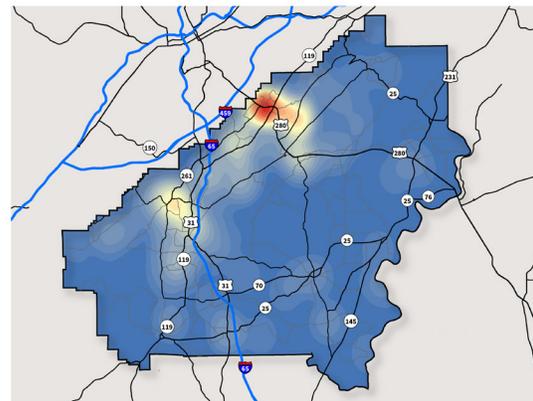
Future Development

Survey takers want to see new development encouraged at growing commercial nodes and along major corridors...



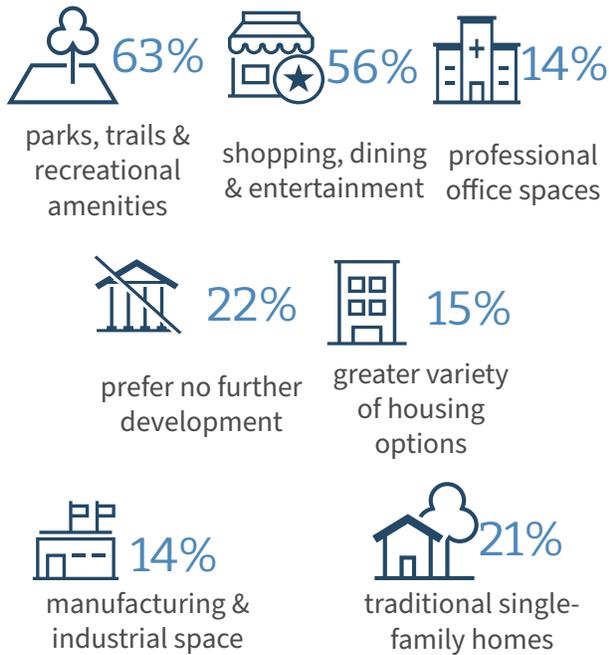
* Areas highlighted in yellow & red illustrate where residents want to see more development

...and discourage additional development in larger cities with perceived congestion and around environmentally sensitive areas.



* Areas highlighted in yellow & red illustrate where residents want to limit development

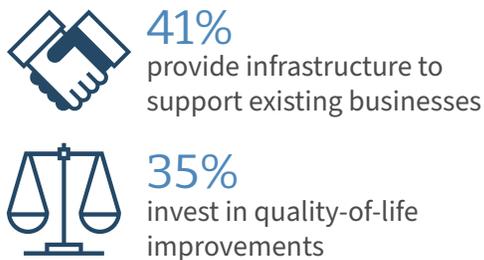
Desired Future Development



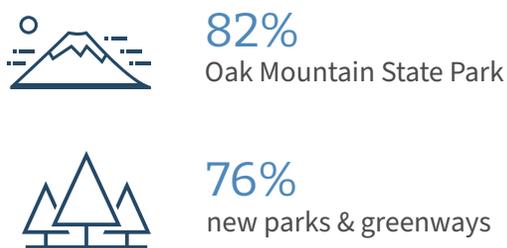
Economic Vitality

Participants were interested in economic growth.

How should we retain existing businesses?

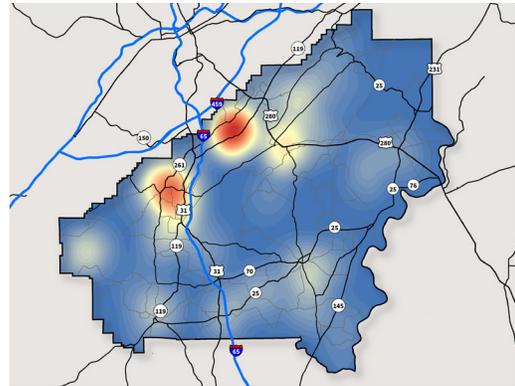


Where should the County prioritize investing in tourism?



Parks & Trails

Parks and trails are highly popular, and more are wanted (see figure below).



* Areas highlighted in yellow & red illustrate where residents want to see more parks & trails

Desired Recreational Amenities



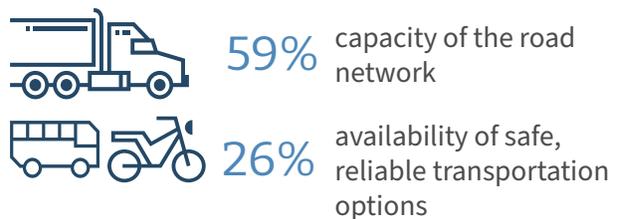
Transportation

Residents are most concerned about traffic congestion and roadway maintenance, especially along major corridors.

Desired Transportation Investments



Challenges to Economic Growth



Guiding Principles

These Guiding Principles emerged through the planning process and express the local values of Shelby County residents. The influence of the Guiding Principles is seen throughout the Plan as they shape many of the chapter topics and recommended actions.

1

Ensure the County’s long-term economic competitiveness through the provision of quality-of-life amenities.

This Plan promotes the provision of high quality-of-life amenities that will attract employers and entice employees to live, work, and play in Shelby County.

Why is this important?

High quality-of-life amenities such as parks and recreation facilities, trails, transportation and housing options, educational and health care facilities, and other factors play an increasing role in employment-related decisions. Quality growth, coupled with the provision of excellent amenities, will ensure the County supports the retention, expansion and location of employers across many diverse economic sectors and provides attractions to expand its tourism industry.



Source: Keith McCoy

2

Develop strong multi-modal connections.

This Plan promotes the development of a safe and interconnected pedestrian and bicycle network, including multi-use trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle facilities that provide connections between residential areas and major community amenities and attractions.

Why is this important?

Connectivity refers to alternative travel routes between any two locations. Multi-use trails with walking and biking paths should be integrated into the transportation system to connect residential neighborhoods with commercial and retail centers, parks and schools. The development and expansion of an interconnected system of trails and sidewalks is important for outdoor recreation opportunities and for active transportation opportunities.



Source: Eddie Freyer

3

Establish Shelby County as a home of well-balanced communities with mutually supportive uses.

This Plan promotes the development of well-balanced communities across Shelby County where people can live their entire lives with ample residential, educational, employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities.

Why is this important?

In the previous two decades, new growth in Shelby County has been heavily oriented toward residential growth, with many people living in the county but commuting to neighboring counties for jobs. This is not unusual for a growing county on the edge of a metropolitan area, and is similar to what has happened all over the country.

Communities recognize that purely residential growth without the balance of enterprise and recreation is not sustainable. Shelby County residents should have the opportunity to experience a full life lived in the county. This might include little league sports in their youth, school choices, higher education, first jobs, first careers, first homes and home choices, supporting or raising their own family, recreation choices, work growth and retirement options. Shelby County residents ought to be able to grow up in the county, find their first independent housing in the county, be able to buy their first house, move up in housing as they are able, and ultimately retire and live out their lives in Shelby County, all with ample choices. Likewise, Shelby County residents ought to be able to find a range of quality and career-oriented job choices within the county. In short, they ought to be able to have a range of high-quality life choices without moving out of the county, coupled with adequate emergency services, human services, and education opportunities that strongly impact public safety and community well-being.

4

Make great places.

This plan promotes strategies and land use development regulations to create more enduring, distinct and “lovable” places that serve a variety of different lifestyles and needs while providing for a wide variety of housing, shopping, recreation, and employment options throughout the County.

Why is this important?

Shelby County understands the value of having healthy neighborhoods and housing and is committed to enhancing the quality-of-life for all residents. Ensuring the stability and livability of neighborhoods and housing is a key factor in the success of the County. Focusing on placemaking attracts talent and improves quality-of-life for residents and employees. Placemaking is an approach to creating vibrant communities with long-lasting appeal and value. The National Endowment for the Arts defines Creative Placemaking as “a technique that animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.”

People are drawn to places that offer a range of features and qualities, a wide variety of spontaneous activities, and most importantly other people. In the future, development is encouraged to be accessible and well connected to other destinations, have a unique identity or “sense of place,” attract people to participate in activities and events, and create social environments that encourage people to gather and visit again and again.

5

Balance growth with the conservation of rural lands and natural resources.

This Plan promotes more compact growth patterns by directing development in and near existing neighborhoods, focusing on redevelopment, infill development and the creation of well planned, walkable, mixed-use areas in an effort to preserve the rural character of the County.

Why is this important?

Conventional development patterns place significant pressure on rural lands when more land is consumed to support a smaller population. While suburban and rural growth on previously undeveloped land is attractive to many developers and residents, the tradeoffs of expanding development patterns include the loss of rural lands, open space, and environmentally sensitive lands.



Source: www.LandandFarm.com

6

Match housing and community needs with land use regulations and codes.

This Plan examines land use regulations and codes, such as the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and building codes, on a regular basis to determine how they can be revised to promote innovative design and building techniques, a better mix of uses, and a variety of housing types that meet the needs of people in all stages of life.

Why is this important?

When it comes to housing, one size does not fit all. A healthy community accommodates a variety of people, backgrounds, and lifestyles, including first responders, managers, teachers, seniors, young people, and those living with a disability. The County should strive for more diverse housing choices that embody a high standard of design quality. While the County cannot control the housing market, modifications to the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to improve the quality of housing being developed may be adopted. For example, there is little desire for conventional freestanding apartment complexes. Non-single-family housing, such as live-work units, upper-story residential units and townhouse condominiums, may be carefully integrated into high-quality walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use centers only at certain defined and planned locations, meeting high-quality standards set out in land use regulations.

7

Protect the County's natural and cultural resources.

This Plan promotes the protection of the County's natural features that provide irreplaceable benefits such as open space, agricultural products, water resources, and wildlife habitat.

Why is this important?

Shelby County's environmental resources affect the economy and quality-of-life for residents. If the County's environmentally sensitive areas are not respected—if its critical elements are allowed to be diminished or depleted—the health, safety and quality-of-life in the community will suffer. Natural resources have limits and development decisions typically affect far more than the property's owner and immediate neighbors. Use, type and the density of development ultimately affect the character of the community. The County should make certain to protect the natural topography, scenic views, drainage patterns, existing vegetation, and agricultural elements that define this character while promoting responsible development. By continuing to protect these unaltered environments, the County can ensure residents have access to safe and healthy places to walk, bike, fish, hunt, swim and enjoy nature's beauty for years to come.



Source: Shelby County

8

Promote fiscally responsible and sustainable growth.

This Plan encourages growth and development of varied types, mixes and patterns that will produce positive fiscal benefits to the County and that will fairly allocate the cost of providing public services and infrastructure among existing and new growth.

Why is this important?

Residents of the County have made it clearly known that they want development that enhances the unique characteristics of their communities and preserves the open space that contributes to their quality-of-life. As Shelby County continues to follow current growth trends, the need for both new and improved public services and infrastructure will continue. Growth must be guided by deliberate action and wise investment decisions to provide new and improved public services and infrastructure in a timely yet fiscally responsible manner.



Source: Tradition at Red Hook

9

Provide improved government services through enhanced partnerships and cooperation with public and private partners.

This Plan will promote strategies for more collaboration efforts, partnerships and inter-local agreements among the County and its local municipalities, public agencies, semi-public agencies, public safety providers, private companies and other community partners.

Why is this important?

While Shelby County is dedicated to planning for the future, the reality is that it only controls part of what will determine that future. The County’s 17 municipalities also play an important role and many other public and semi-public agencies will influence the County’s future. Decisions about annexations by municipalities, school locations by the Shelby County Board of Education and other local school districts, locations of sewer and water facilities by municipal and private systems, roads by ALDOT, public safety service areas and response times, and many others have profound influences on how, where, and when growth and improvements will occur.



Source: Shelby County 911

10

Balance and respect local values.

This Plan seeks to balance and respect local values, acknowledging that public planning for a desired future quality-of-life must be balanced with the protection of private property rights.

Why is this important?

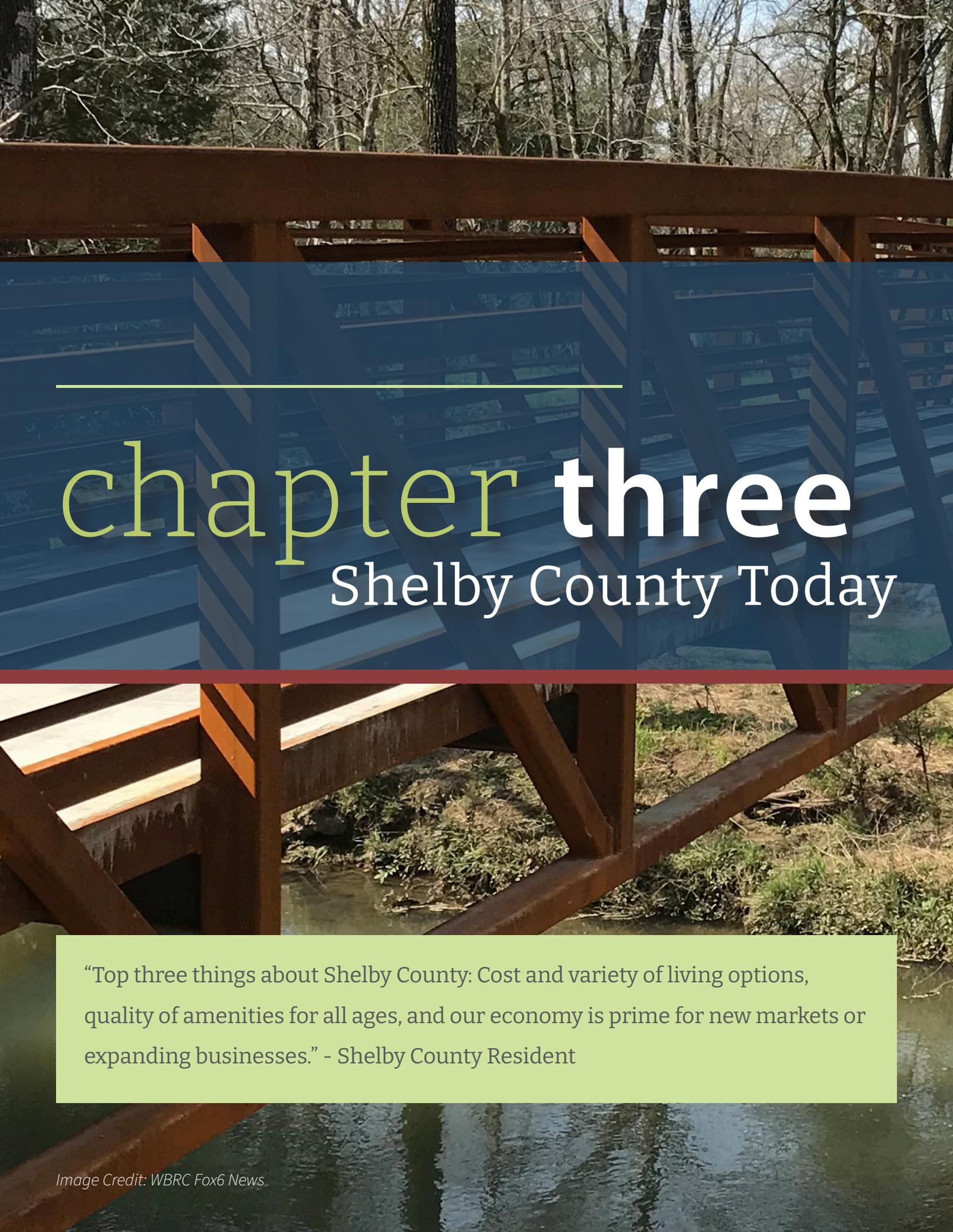
The vast majority of new growth and development will occur on land that is in private ownership—much of it is held in large assemblages by families who have been in Shelby County for generations. Private property rights are a core part of our legal system, and they are — and should be — given great respect. Part of the legal tradition of property rights also involves avoiding negative impacts of uses on adjacent properties since not all land uses are compatible. Likewise, local governments are responsible for providing public services and facilities for new development, and the way in which land is used can impact the efficient use of tax dollars. The planning process should always involve balancing these interests.



Source: www.LandandFarm.com

Image Source: Style Blueprint





chapter three

Shelby County Today

“Top three things about Shelby County: Cost and variety of living options, quality of amenities for all ages, and our economy is prime for new markets or expanding businesses.” - Shelby County Resident



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Source: Shelby County Alabama

Demographic Profile

Population Trends

Shelby County is steadily growing and will continue to do so.

Between 2010 and 2020, Shelby County’s population increased by 14.32% from 195,085 to 223,024 people. The average annual growth rate of 1.43% for Shelby County was higher than the State of Alabama (0.51%) over the 2010 to 2020 time period.

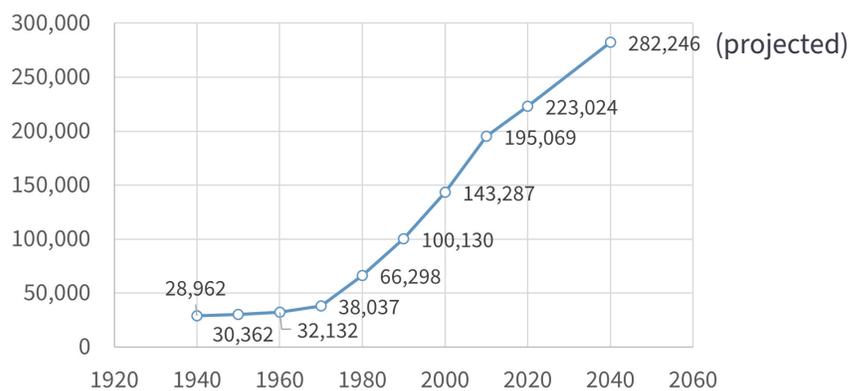
According to RPCGB projections, this growth is expected to continue, with Shelby County’s population projected to reach 282,246 people by 2040, a 27% increase over the 2020 population. Over the same time period, the number of housing units and employed persons in the County are also projected to increase. Continued residential subdivision development will lead to this population growth trend.

Following the 2020 Census, the County now ranks as the seventh largest in Alabama. At the conclusion of the 2010 Census, Shelby County ranked as the fifth largest county in the State.

Table 3.1: Shelby County 2040 Forecasts

Measure	2040 Forecasts
Population	282,246
Housing Units	113,930
Occupied Housing Units	107,318

Figure 3.1: Shelby County Population (1940 – 2040)



Source: U.S. Census and RPCGB forecasts

Per Capita Income

\$38,131

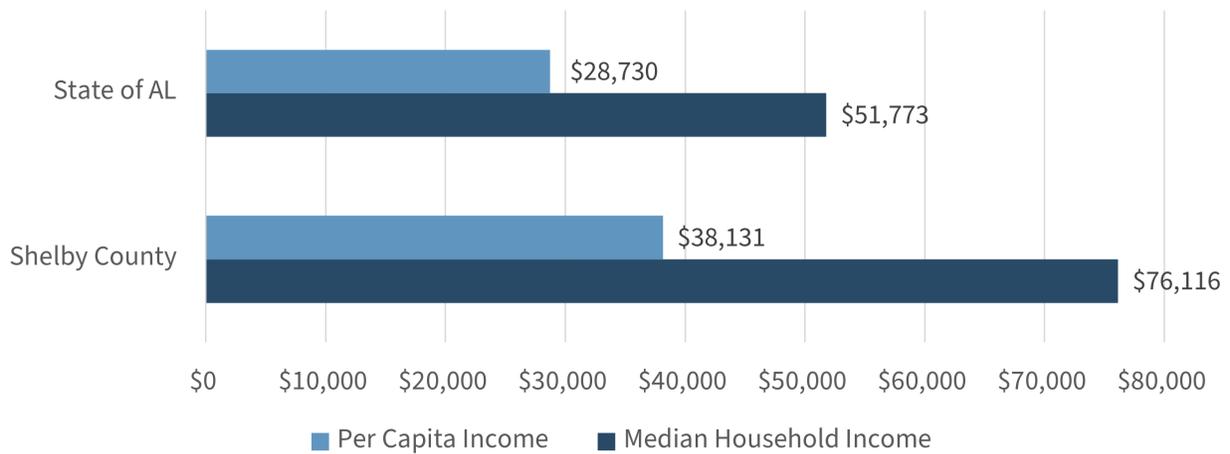
was the per capita income of Shelby County residents in 2021. Per capita income measures the average annual income earned by each person, regardless of household. This is approximately \$9,401 more than the per capita income of the State of Alabama (\$28,730).

Median Household Income

\$76,116

was the median household income of Shelby County residents in 2021. Household income includes the incomes of all people aged 15 and over in a housing unit. This is \$24,343 more than the median household income of the State of Alabama (\$51,773).

Figure 3.2: Per Capita Income and Median Household Income (2021)



Source: U.S. Census and ESRI forecasts for 2021

Housing Profile

Housing Trends

Shelby County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Alabama. The number of total housing units increased by 18% from an estimated 78,760 in 2010 to 92,671 in 2021. Since 2000, the County’s housing market has captured the rise in population with an average vacancy of 9.0%.

Table 3.2: Housing Units (2000 - 2040)

Year	Total Units	Numeric Growth	Percent Growth
2000	59,258	-	-
2010	78,760	19,502	33%
2021	92,671	13,911	18%
2040 (projected)	113,390	20,719	22%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI forecasts for 2021, and 2040 RPCGB forecasts



Source: Greater Birmingham MLS

Did you know?



1,198 homes
are expected to be built in the next 5 years in unincorporated Shelby County



7,241 homes
are expected to be built in the next 5 years in incorporated areas of Shelby County

Housing Units by Type

Shelby County’s housing unit distribution has remained constant with most housing units being the traditional single-unit detached type, which has steadily increased its share of the County’s housing stock since 2000. The second-most prevalent housing type is multi-family units (5+ units) even though its share of the County’s total units has remained constant since 2000. The number of mobile home structures has decreased from 15% to 8% from 2000 to 2021.

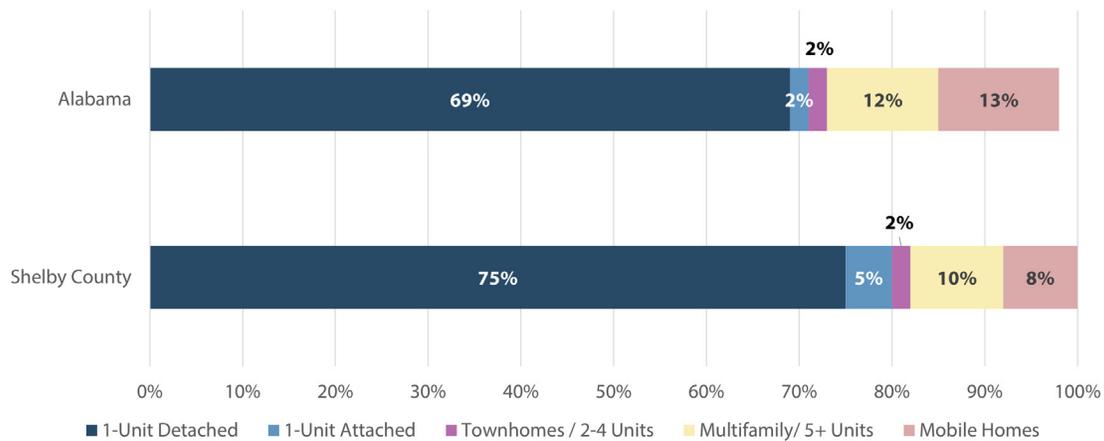
Table 3.3: Housing Units by Type in Shelby County (2000 - 2019)

	Single Unit Detached	Single Unit Attached	Townhouses 2 to 4 Units	Multi-family 5+ Units	Mobile Homes
2000	68%	4%	2%	10%	15%
2010	73%	5%	1%	10%	11%
2021	75%	5%	2%	10%	8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey, and RPCGB

The allocation of housing unit types is broadly similar between Shelby County and the State of Alabama. The County’s housing stock slightly favors single unit homes, with 75% of homes being single unit detached homes and an additional 5% being single unit attached homes. The County has a lower share (10%) of multi-family buildings with five or more units than the State of Alabama (12%). Overall the County’s housing stock reflects the fact it is home to a variety of low-density suburban and semi-rural housing types.

Figure 3.3: Comparison of Housing Units by Type (2021)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey, and RPCGB

Employment Profile

The residential and local workforces (see definitions in the callout box at the bottom of this page) have somewhat overlapping employment sectors, with Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance being among the top employment sectors for both groups. For the local workforce of 93,327 employees, the predominant sectors are Retail Trade (13.2%), Finance and Insurance (12.6%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (8.8%), while the predominant employment sectors for the resident workforce are Health Care and Social Assistance (13.8%), Retail Trade (11.6%) and Educational Services (8.9%). See **Table 3.4**.

Jobs Inflow / Outflow Analysis

According to 2019 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Data, Shelby County’s local workforce is composed of approximately 93,327 full-time employees. Of these, approximately 33,457 (35.8%) people live within Shelby County, while the other 59,870 (64.2%) workers commute in from somewhere else. The residential workforce totaled approximately 96,483 employees. Of these, approximately 63,026 (65.3%) commute outside the county for their job (see **Figure 3.4** to the right).

Local Workforce



These people work in Shelby County,
and either live in Shelby County or
somewhere else

Resident Workforce



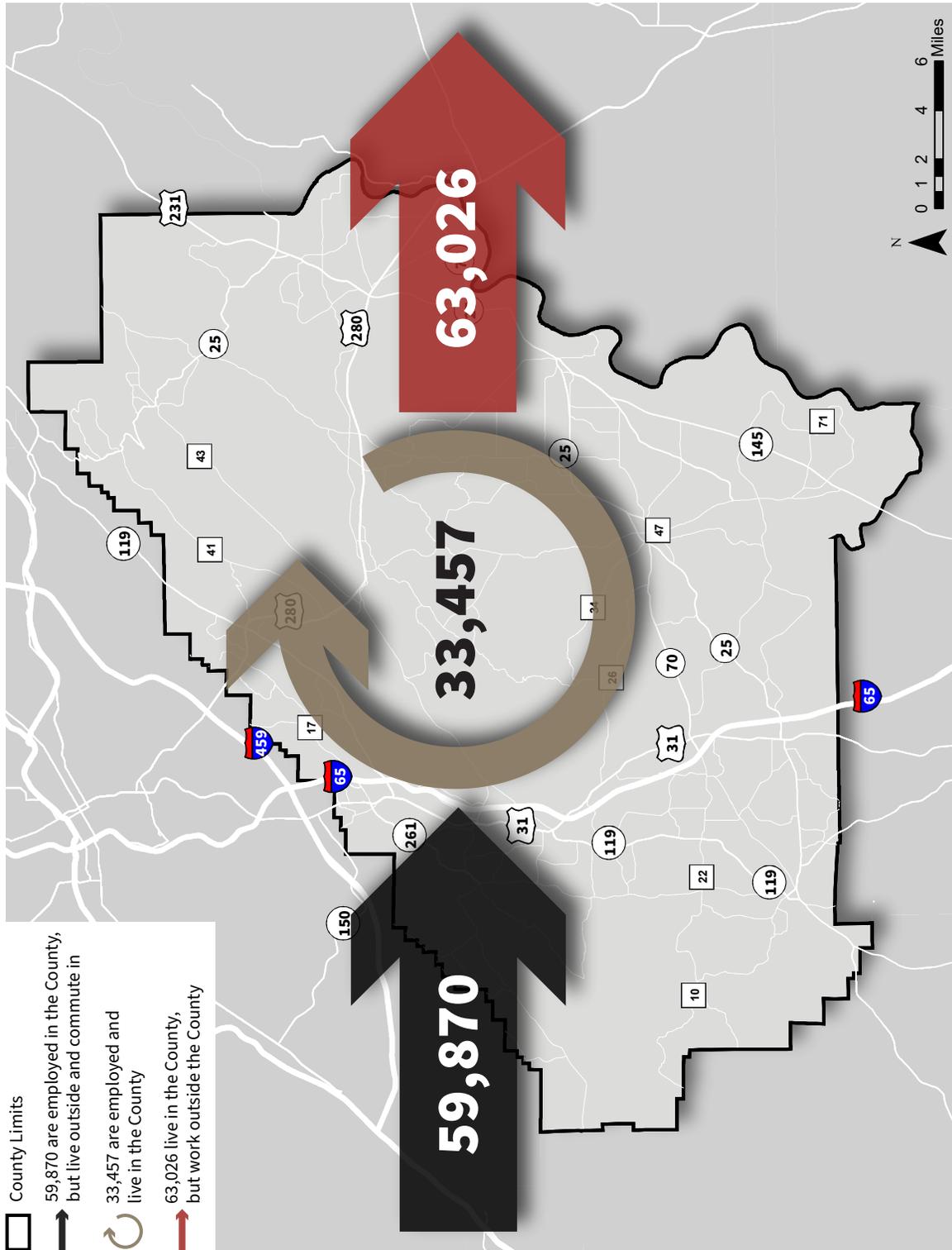
These people live in Shelby County,
and either work in Shelby County or
somewhere else

Table 3.4: Local Workforce vs. Resident Workforce by Employment Sector (2019)

	Local Workforce	Resident Workforce
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.2%	0.1%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.5%	0.4%
Utilities	1.5%	1.8%
Construction	6.2%	5.1%
Manufacturing	5.9%	6.9%
Wholesale Trade	6.7%	5.6%
Retail Trade	13.2%	11.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	2.0%	2.6%
Information	1.2%	1.9%
Finance and Insurance	12.6%	8.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.5%	1.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	8.2%	7.3%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2.5%	2.0%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	6.8%	6.0%
Educational Services	7.0%	8.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	8.8%	13.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.1%	1.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	8.4%	7.8%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	3.2%	3.1%
Public Administration	2.5%	4.2%
Total	93,327	96,476

Source: U.S. Census and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Data (2019)

Figure 3.4: Jobs Inflow / Outflow Map (2019)



Source: U.S. Census and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Data (2019)



Source: Terje Bendiksby



Source: RPCGB



Source: Alabama Department of Transportation

Transportation & Infrastructure

Roadways

As shown in **Figure 3.5**, Shelby County’s only interstate highway is I-65 that runs north-south through the County linking it with Birmingham and Montgomery. U.S. Highways include US-31, which is a major commercial corridor that roughly parallels I-65, US-280 that runs generally east-west through the northeast portion of the County, and US-231 that runs from US-280 toward Pell City to the east.

Numerous government agencies construct, maintain and repair roads in Shelby County. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) has authority over Interstate highways, U.S. highways and State highways. The Shelby County Highway Department is responsible for planning, designing, constructing and maintaining county roads. Municipalities are responsible for the construction, maintenance and repair of local roads within their municipal corporate limits.

Annual Transportation Costs

27%

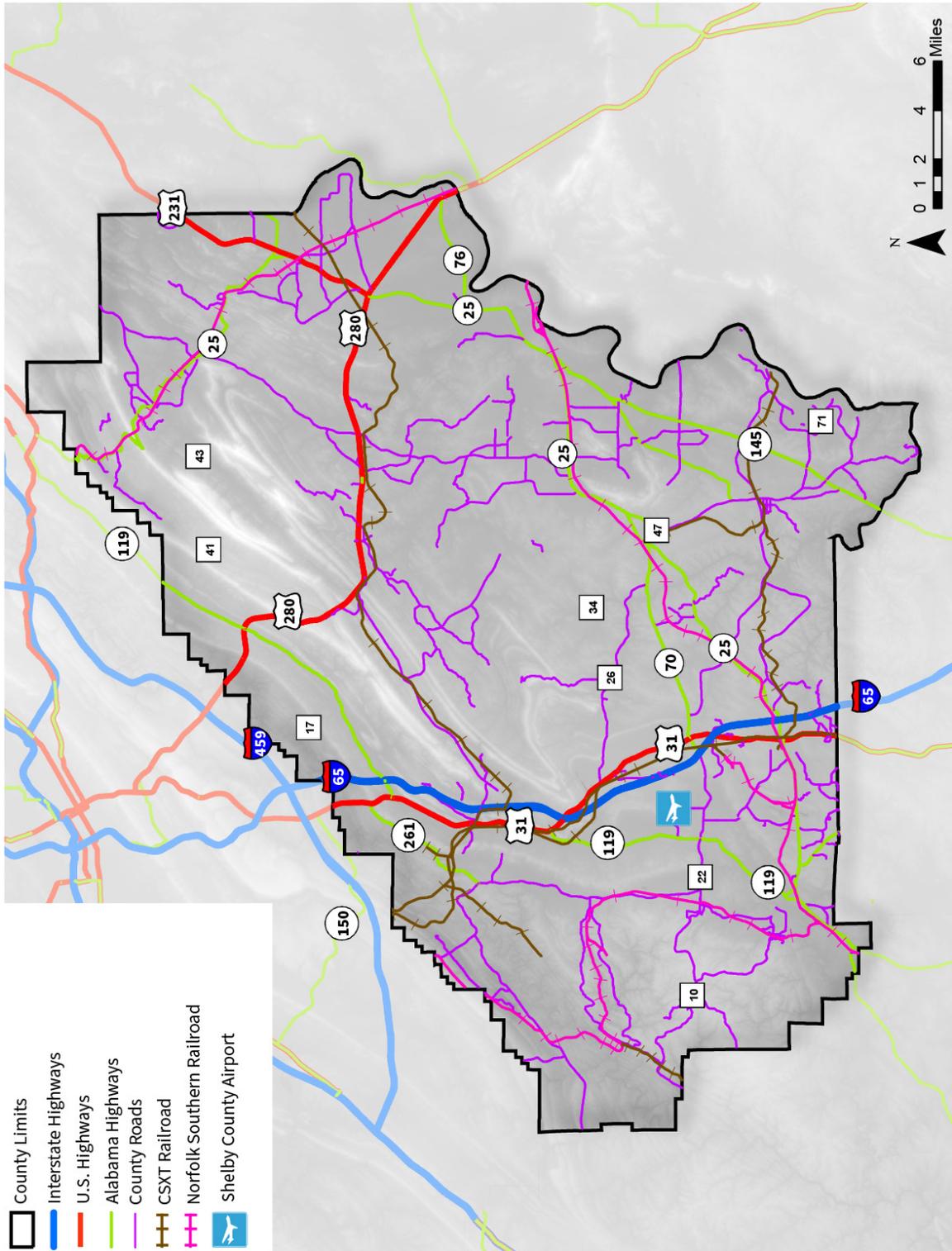
is the percentage of household income Shelby County residents spend on transportation costs annually (including auto ownership, auto use costs such as gas, and public transit use costs). Transportation is considered “affordable” when it costs 15% or less of household income. Like other State of Alabama counties, most residents in Shelby County lack affordable transportation options.

\$13,360

is the average cost Shelby County residents spend annually on transportation. Transportation costs are higher for households in places that are least accessible and have the fewest mode options available such as walking, biking, or transit.

Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology – H+T Index

Figure 3.5: Existing Transportation Facilities



Source: RPCGB

Planned Transportation Projects with Committed Federal Funding

The Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization develops the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a document that provides a short-term (four-year) work program listing all federally funded transportation projects, programs, and transportation services to be carried out within the metropolitan planning area. The TIP only includes projects for which federal funding has been identified using currently available or anticipated revenues. The TIP is a direct subset of the long-range 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and serves as a strategic management tool that accomplishes the objectives of the RTP. The TIP is adopted only once every four years and is essentially the first four years of the 25-year RTP. The TIP is updated annually and can be amended as necessary to account for changes in funding or project needs.

At present, there are 30 transportation projects listed in the TIP within Shelby County. These projects are shown in **Figure 1.22** and detailed in **Table 1.14** on **pages 34 and 35** of **Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends**.

Transportation Options

Public Transit

The only Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) fixed-transit route that currently serves Shelby County is the US-280 route with stops in Inverness down to the Walmart Supercenter in Brook Highland Plaza. ClasTran is a regional transportation provider that provides curb-to-curb demand-response service in Jefferson and Shelby counties. It is funded in part by the Federal Transit Administration, ALDOT, Jefferson County, Shelby County, the City of Birmingham, and many other municipalities. Individuals are eligible to utilize ClasTran's services if they are age 60 and over or if they have a disability. An application must be filled out to determine eligibility. To learn more visit www.Clastran.com.

Sidewalk Infrastructure

Shelby County has approximately 765 miles of sidewalks, of which approximately 121 (19%) are located in unincorporated Shelby County.

Bicycle Infrastructure

Shelby County has approximately 28 miles of bicycle lanes that are located primarily within incorporated municipalities. Approximately 7.6 miles of bicycle lanes (27% of the total) are located within Oak Mountain State Park.

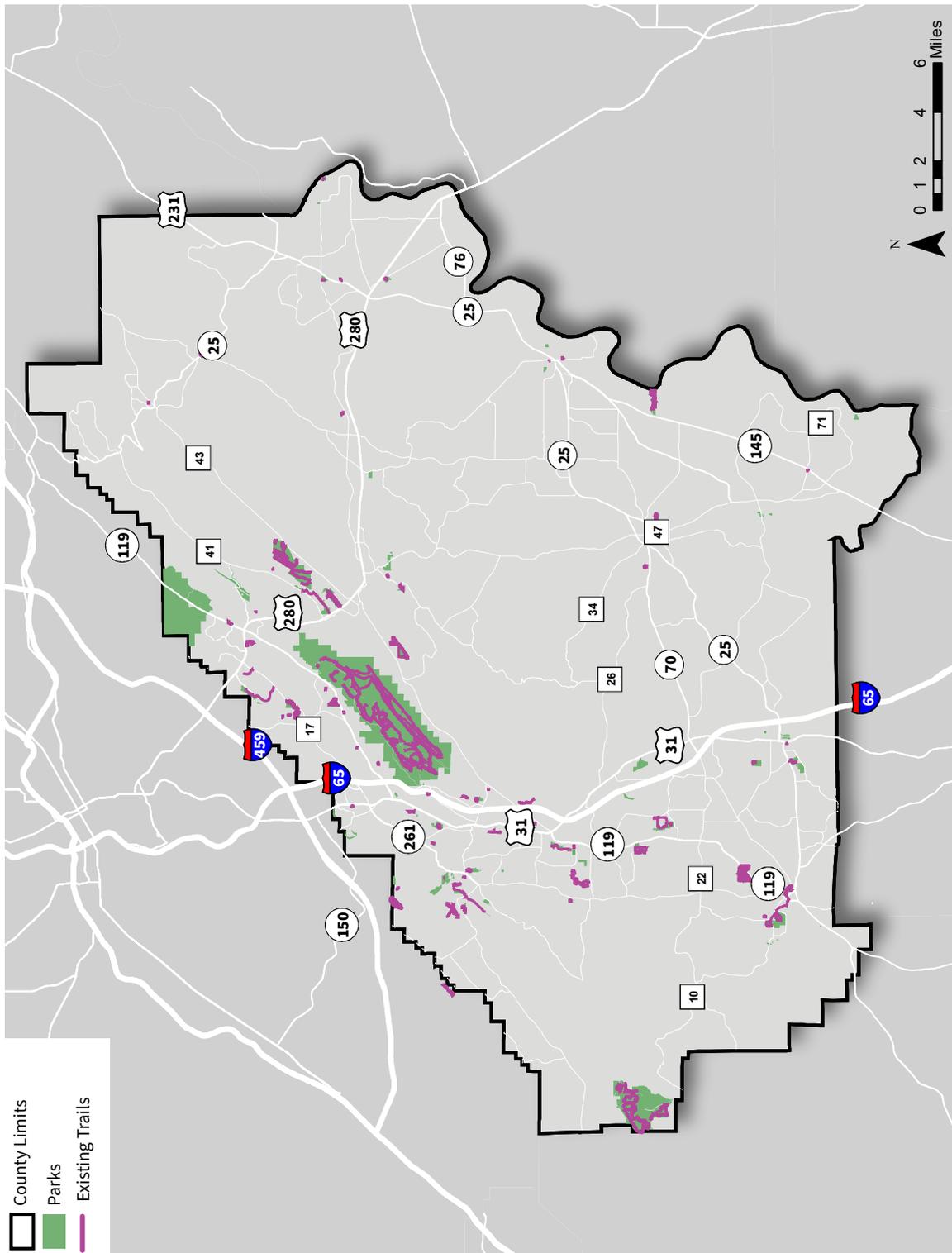
Using data from STRAVA, a ride tracking app popular with cyclists, the map in **Figure 1.23** in **Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends** exhibits the most popular bicycling routes among riders by individual trip count. In calendar year 2021, a total of 51,583 bicycling trips were made by 5,226 people.

- 98% of trips were for recreational purposes, 2% of trips were for commuting purposes
- 44% of trips were made on the weekend
- Out of the 5,226 people making the trips, approximately 31% were locals and 69% were visitors

Trails and Greenways

The number of trails and greenways in Shelby County continues to grow. Designed for use by pedestrians and cyclists, greenways serve both transportation and recreational purposes. They complement the on-street pedestrian and bicycle network and provide important linkages to other destinations. To date, almost 160 miles of off-road greenways and trails have been built in Shelby County (see **Table 1.15** and **Figure 1.24** in **Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends**). While this number is modest by road network standards, it signals a growing trend toward providing Shelby County residents with a viable alternative for mobility and physical activity.

Figure 3.6: Existing Trails and Greenways in Shelby County



Source: Shelby County Department of Development Services (2023)

Land Use & Development Profile

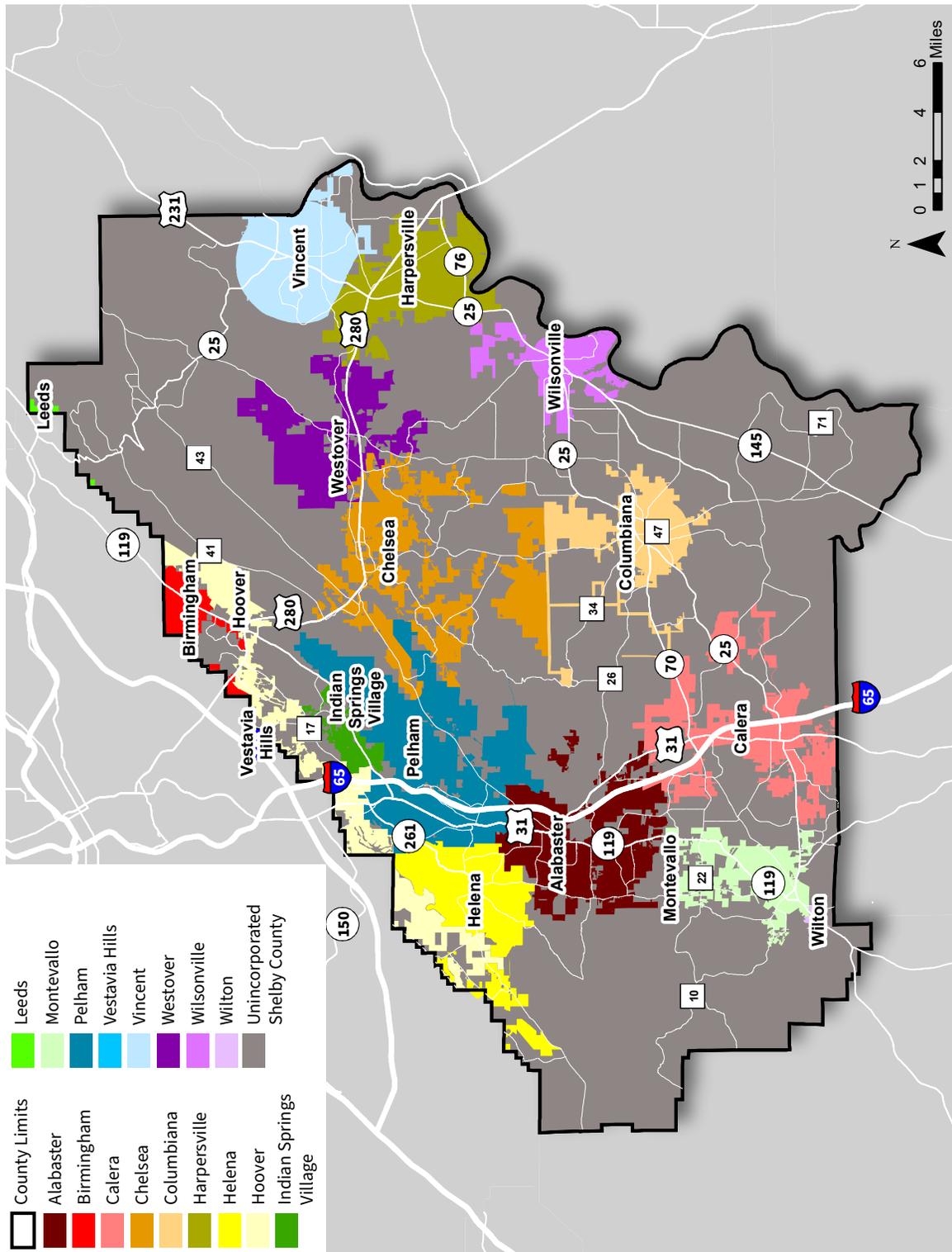
Municipalities in Shelby County

17 municipalities are either completely or partially within Shelby County (see **Table 3.5** and **Figure 3.7**). Incorporated municipal areas account for 34% of the county’s land area; while the unincorporated areas account for 66% of the county’s land area.

Table 3.5: List of Municipalities in Shelby County

Municipalities	Description
Alabaster	Located on I-65 just 20 miles south of Birmingham and just six miles south of I-459.
Birmingham	Birmingham is the largest city in Alabama and is situated in both Shelby and Jefferson counties.
Calera	Calera is located approximately 30 miles south of Birmingham and positioned along the I-65 corridor. Calera is located primarily within the southern portion of Shelby County but does extend into Chilton County.
Chelsea	Chelsea is located in north central Shelby County approximately 10 miles southeast of Birmingham along the US-280 corridor.
Columbiana	Columbiana is centrally located and serves as the county seat with many county government offices in the city. As such, many people come to Columbiana to conduct business.
Harpersville	Harpersville is located on the east central border of Shelby County along the Coosa River and US-280 approximately 28 miles southeast of Birmingham.
Helena	Helena is located approximately 20 miles south of Birmingham. Helena is located primarily within Shelby County but does extend into Jefferson County.
Hoover	Hoover is located in both Jefferson and Shelby counties and is the largest suburban city in Alabama.
Indian Springs Village	Indian Springs Village is located in northern Shelby County approximately 12 miles south of the City of Birmingham.
Leeds	Leeds is located in the most northern portion of Shelby County and is contiguous to the City of Birmingham. Leeds is primarily located in Jefferson County but extends into Shelby and St. Clair counties.
Montevallo	Montevallo is located in the southwestern section of the County and approximately 30 miles south of Birmingham. Montevallo offers a small-town quality of life but within short driving distance of Alabama's largest metropolitan area.
Pelham	Pelham is located in the central portion of the County and approximately 15 miles south of Birmingham.
Vestavia Hills	Vestavia Hills is located in both Jefferson and Shelby counties in northern Shelby County and is an adjoining suburb of the City of Birmingham.

Figure 3.7: Municipalities in Shelby County



Source: Shelby County Department of Development Services

Municipalities	Description
Vincent	Vincent is located along the Coosa River in northeastern Shelby County, and extends into St. Clair and Talladega counties, with all households located within Sheby County. Vincent is approximately 30 miles southeast of Birmingham.
Westover	Westover is located along the US-280 corridor in the northeast quadrant of Shelby County approximately 20 miles southeast of the city of Birmingham.
Wilsonville	Wilsonville is located in southeast Shelby County just 30 miles southeast of Birmingham.
Wilton	Wilton is located in the southwestern section of the County, approximately 40 miles south of Birmingham.

Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Zoning

Zoning is a development control strategy which may be used regardless of whether an area is incorporated or unincorporated. The land areas in the county that lie within the boundaries of the 17 incorporated areas are zoned according to the municipal zoning ordinances. In 1982, Shelby County was granted special enabling legislation (Act 82-693) that provided the County with zoning authority in the unincorporated areas and designated the Shelby County Planning Commission as the authority for managing the zoning and subdivision regulations for the County. Zoning in the unincorporated areas of Shelby County is established only by a beat election. Currently, 8 out of 12 zoning beats in the unincorporated areas have full or partial zoning and are protected by the requirements of the *Zoning Regulations of Shelby County*. They are located within the vicinity of Westover / South Wilsonville, Calera and portions of North Shelby County (see **Figure 3.8**).

Seventeen zoning districts are currently available under the *Zoning Regulations of Shelby County*. The *Zoning Regulations of Shelby County* regulate the use of buildings, structures, and land for trade, industry, residential or other purposes by specifying which uses are permitted within each district. For example, an industrial use would not be permitted in an area zoned for residential use. In this way, zoning serves to protect property values. The *Zoning Regulations* also regulate the location and height of buildings and other structures including the amount of land that may be covered by building or paving, uniform setback distances of structures, and the sizes of yards and other open spaces. This helps to prevent buildings from being built too close to one another or to the street. It also helps to protect the integrity and character of neighborhoods and commercial areas.

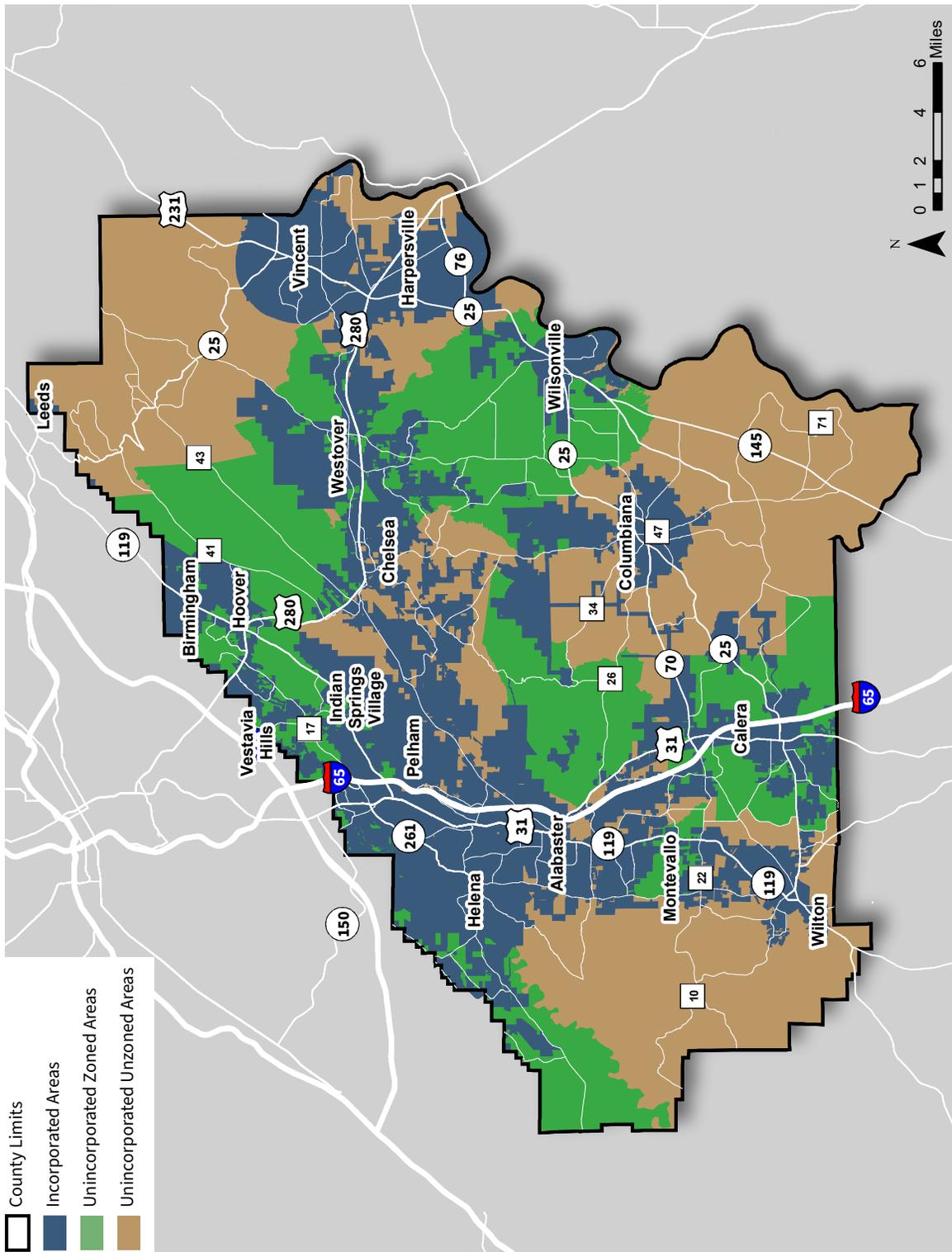
To learn more, contact the Shelby County Department of Development Services and visit <https://www.shelbyal.com/230/Land-Development>.

Table 3.6: Zoning Status of Land in Shelby County

Shelby County	Square Miles	Percent of the County
Incorporated Zoned Areas	277.7	34%
Unincorporated Zoned Areas	199.8	25%
Unincorporated Unzoned Areas	331.3	41%
Total	808.8	100%

Source: Shelby County Department of Development Services (2021)

Figure 3.8: Zoned Areas



Source: Shelby County Department of Development Services (2021)

Existing Land Use

The Existing Land Use Map shown in **Figure 3.9** was derived from Tax Assessor records based on property class, improvement codes, ownership, and 2021 aerial imagery. Currently, only 2.4% of the County’s land is Vacant but Developable, meaning the land has been cleared for potential development. The two largest land uses are agricultural and residential that account for 61.8% and 19.6% of the County’s total land area, respectively. Recreational land uses account for 4.1%, while 2.3% is devoted to extraction / mining land uses as well as institutional land uses. Commercial, industrial and utilities & infrastructure land uses each account for 1% or less of the County’s total land area.

Table 3.7: Existing Land Use (2021)

Existing Land Use	Square Miles	Percent of Total Square Miles
Agricultural	499.7	61.8%
Residential	158.1	19.6%
Recreational	33.4	4.1%
Extraction / Mining	18.9	2.3%
Institutional	18.4	2.3%
Commercial	8.1	1.0%
Industrial	6.3	0.8%
Utilities & Infrastructure	5.4	0.7%
Vacant but Developable	19.5	2.4%
Right-of-way/ Waterbodies	41.1	5.1%
Total	808.8	100.0%

Source: Shelby County Department of Development Services and RPCGB

Parks and Open Space

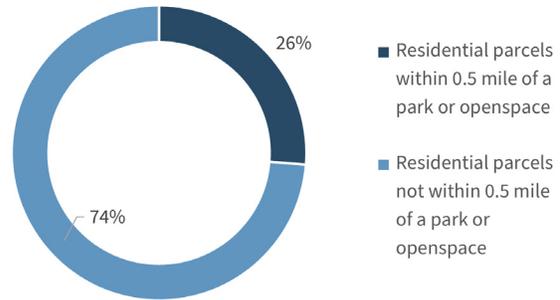
Shelby County has both locally oriented and regionally significant parks and open space.

Shelby County features more than 80 parks for residents with a variety of amenities totaling 19,306 acres (or 30.2 square miles). In addition, Oak Mountain State Park, Alabama’s largest park (11,632 acres or 18.2 square miles), is in the northern part of the County. The state park features more than 50 miles of walking and mountain biking trails, a Bicycle Motorcross Course, camping and lodging options, the Oaks golf course, horse riding stables and trails, the Alabama Wildlife Center, and the Oak Mountain Interpretive Center, a 2,500 square foot interactive exhibit space, meeting room and teaching laboratory.

Some residents may have difficulty accessing existing park spaces by foot.

Nationwide research demonstrates the existence of even small park spaces within a short 10-minute walk (which equates to a half-mile) have a large impact on residents’ perceived quality of life. Lack of pedestrian-accessible park facilities can limit recreational opportunities. Park access has also been shown to reduce obesity rates by making outdoor exercise more accessible. Only 26% of residential parcels in Shelby County today are within a half-mile radius of a park.

Figure 3.10: Percentage of Residential Parcels within a Half-mile Radius (10-minute walk) of a Park (2021)



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

**19,306 acres
(30.2 square miles)
of parks
and open space**

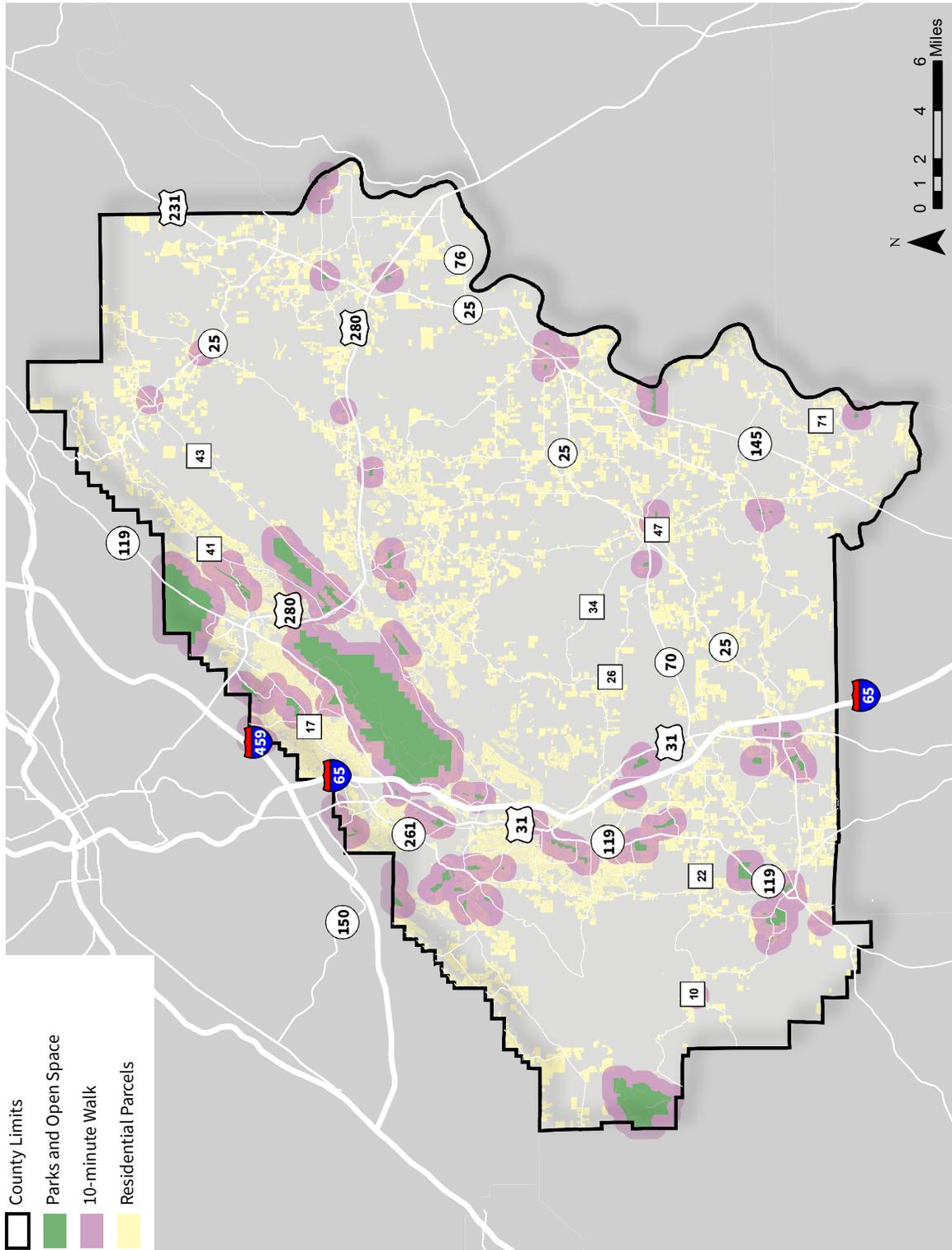


**11,632 acres
(18.2 square miles)**



**Oak Mountain
State Park**

Figure 3.11: Residential Parcels within a Half-mile Radius (10-minute walk) of a Park (2021)



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB



chapter **four**

Future Land Use & Development

“My big idea is that Shelby County would be an ideal place to live, work, shop, eat, and play to the extent that it would be unnecessary to ever leave.” - Shelby County Resident



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Future Land Use & Development



This chapter includes the Future Development Map that depicts the type of development and land uses desired for specific areas within the County, as well as recommended actions to guide future development and redevelopment in ways that promote sustainability and enhance quality of life. The Future Development Map is based on the 10 Guiding Principles described in **Chapter 2** and helps illustrate the community's vision for growth and development over the next 15 years.

The Future Development Map was developed through a public involvement process, which included an online public survey with interactive maps, activities at steering committee meetings, and public open houses. Scenario planning was also used to inform the development of the Future Development Map. Scenario planning encourages stakeholders to think and make decisions about the impacts of growth on the region to develop a common vision for the future. For a complete description of the scenario planning process used to develop the Future Development Map refer to **Appendix C: Two Future Growth Scenarios**.

This Future Development chapter includes the six sections shown below:

- About the Future Development Map
- Future Development Map Categories
- Evaluating Zoning Proposals for Consistency with the Future Development Map and Comprehensive Plan
- Respecting the Edges of Incorporated Areas
- Sustainable and Managed Growth
- Housing

About the Future Development Map

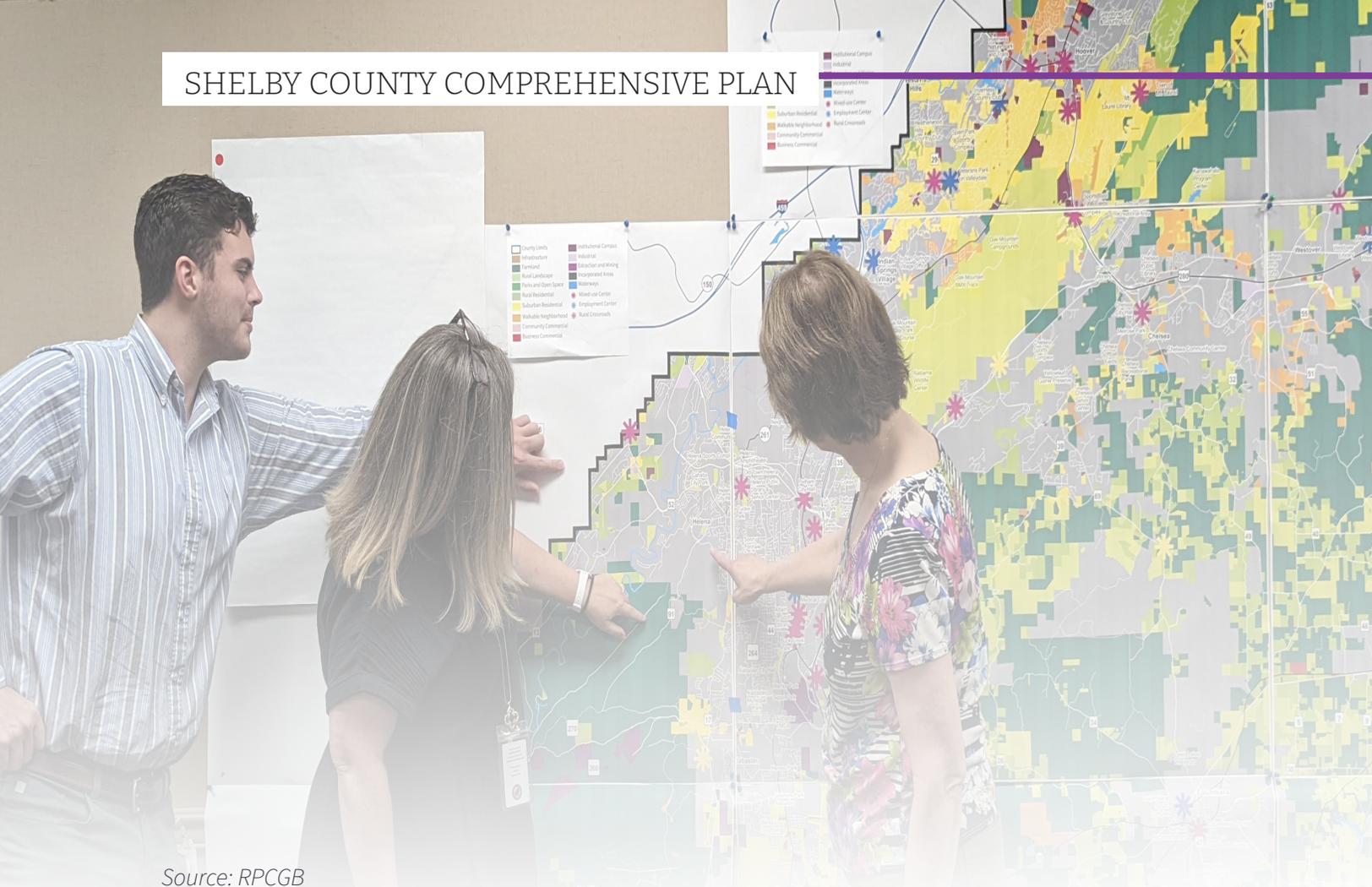
The Future Development Map is a long-range tool intended to guide future development or land use decisions. It is not a zoning map. Whereas zoning maps are parcel specific and establish detailed requirements for setbacks, height, use, parking and other characteristics, the land use categories on the Future Development Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities to be considered when evaluating development proposals.

Shelby County’s desired future land use patterns are shown on the Future Development Map in **Figure 4.1**. The map illustrates the intended distribution and intensity of land uses over the next 15 years and should be used as a guide to define where different types of development could occur.

In some cases, the recommended future land use shown on the Future Development Map is the same as the existing land use. However, in certain locations throughout the County, the Future Development Map contains areas where existing uses are proposed for a change in land use, either for new development or for redevelopment. In either case, it is not the intent of this plan to place existing uses in a situation where their value or the quality of life of residents is adversely affected. Rather, the intent is to demonstrate to potential purchasers or developers the County’s long-range view of how particular properties could be reconfigured and used should it become feasible to do so.

In general:

- The Future Development Map is a generalized depiction of potential uses. It is not an “existing land use map or zoning map,” although in some cases future uses in an area may be similar to those that exist today.
- The rezoning of any given area should be guided by the Future Development Map, interpreted in conjunction with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and community input during a public hearing.
- Whereas zoning maps establish detailed requirements for setbacks, height, use, parking, and other attributes, the land use categories of the Future Development Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities.



Source: RPCGB

Future Development Map Categories

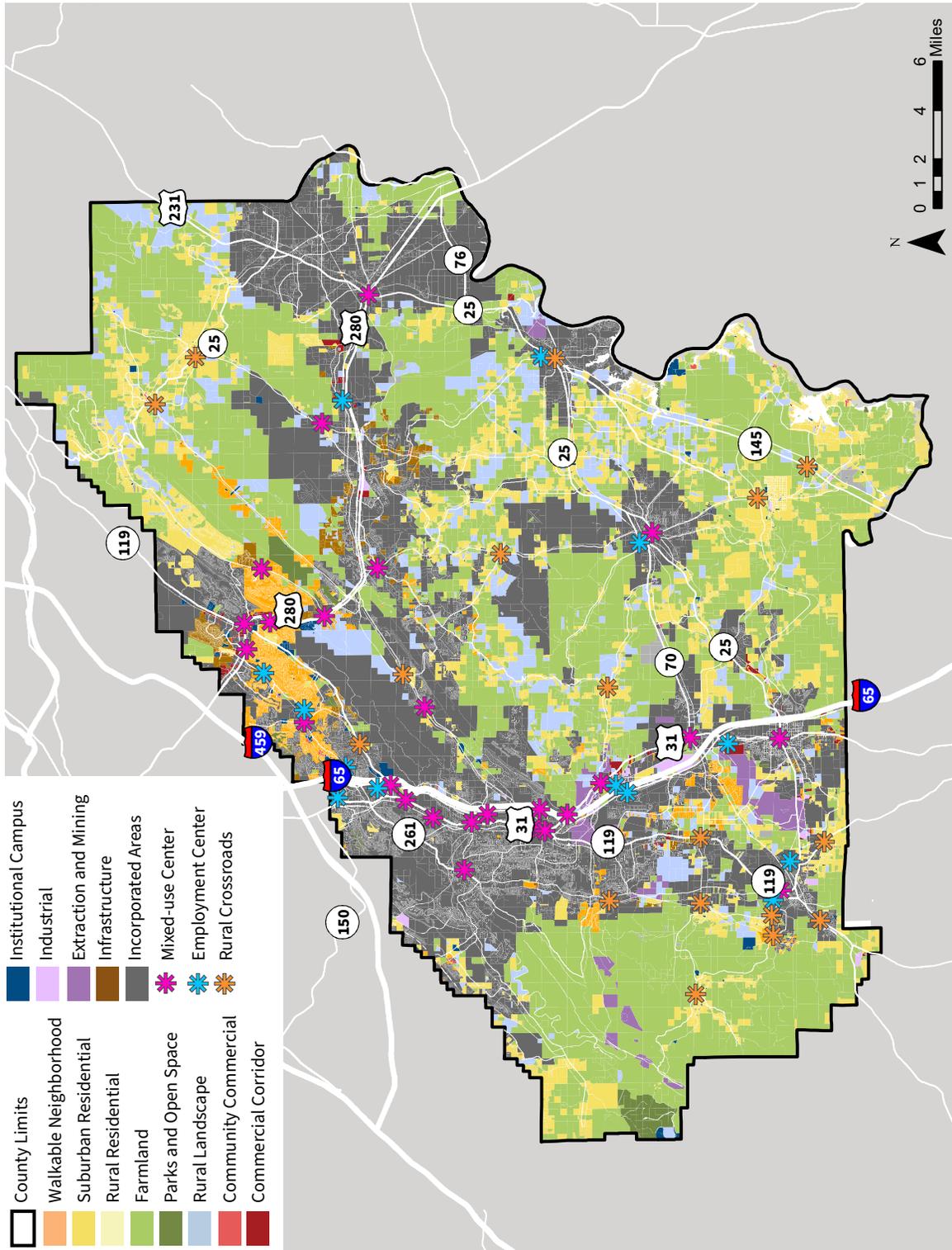
The Future Development Map shown in **Figure 4.1** uses color-coded categories to express public policy on future land uses across the County. The land use designations have been drawn based on parcel lines, existing and desired development patterns, streets, environmental features, and other logical boundaries.

The Future Development Map categories on the following pages describe in detail the general character of each land use type, including primary and secondary land uses, and general characteristics. Where applicable, Future Development Map categories may tie directly to an appropriate zoning district(s). Again, the land use categories indicated on the map must not be interpreted as zoning districts.

Learn More!

Want to see the Future Development Map in more detail? **Appendix D: Future Development Map Book** provides zoomed-in versions of the Future Development Map.

Figure 4.1: Future Development Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Walkable Neighborhood

Walkable neighborhoods feature a mix of housing types on small lots with a single-family neighborhood appearance. These types of neighborhoods have a grid street network with small blocks, defined centers and edges, and connections to surrounding developments. These neighborhoods can include appropriately scaled nodes of small-scale retail and offices. Complementary uses like parks and community facilities should be in walking distance.



Source: Greater Alabama MLS

Primary Uses

Single-family residential (small lot), attached residential including townhouses, two-family dwelling units (duplexes), and multiplexes.

Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses, including neighborhood commercial uses, open space and recreation, schools, places of worship, and other public or civic uses are appropriate.



Source: Style Blueprint

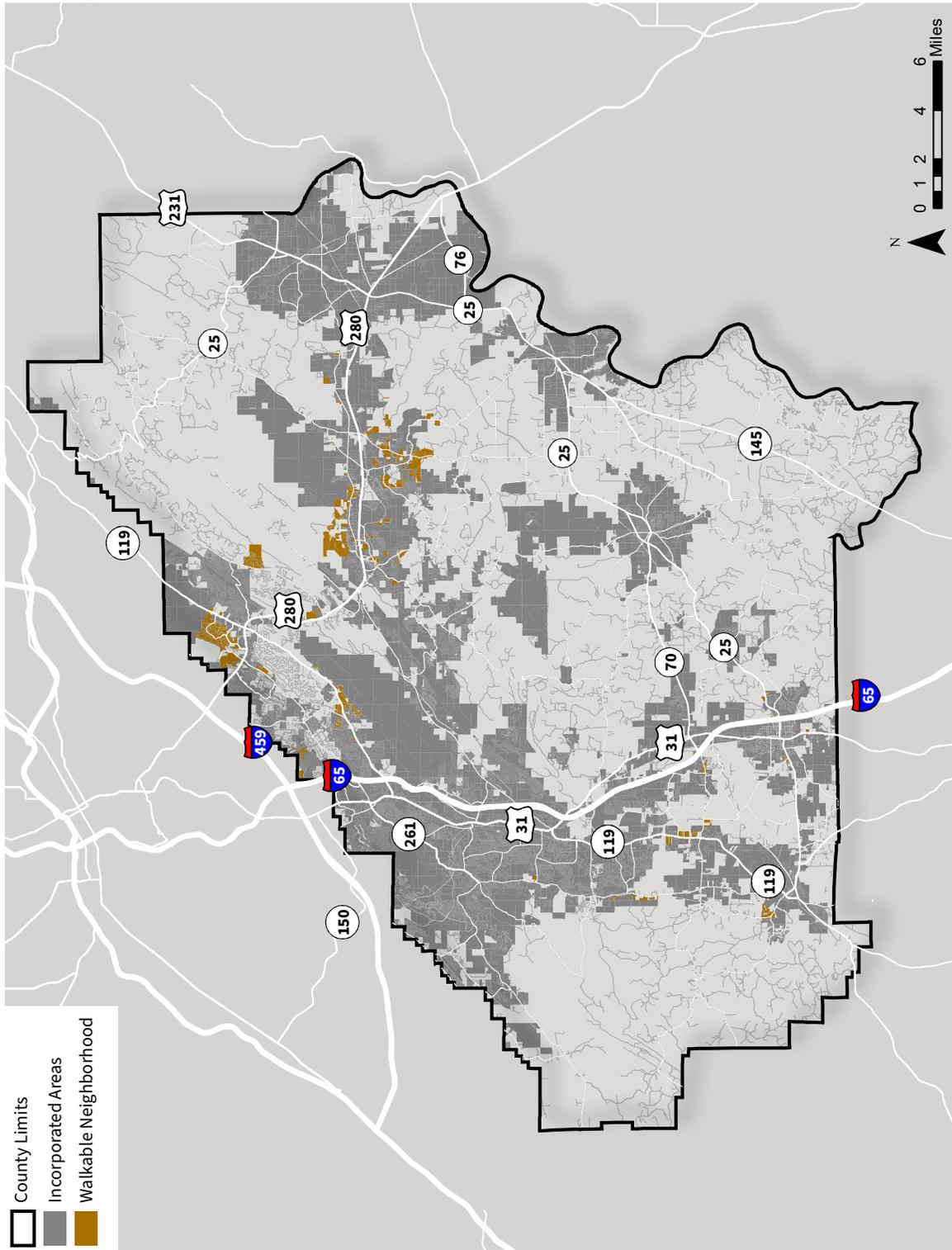
Corresponding Zoning Districts

- Planned Residential District
- Plan Implementation District
- R-2 Single-Family District
- R-4 Multi-Family District
- R-5 Multi-Family District



Source: Style Blueprint

Figure 4.2: Areas shown as Walkable Neighborhood on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Suburban Residential

This land use category includes predominately single-family homes arranged along wide, curvilinear streets with few intersections, with some townhouses and two-family (duplex) residences. Building types and lot sizes range in size and density but tend to be consistent within a development. Typically, there is limited connectivity between different residential types and uses.



Source: RPCGB

Primary Uses

Single-family detached residences located on medium to large lots (15,000 to 1 acre) and attached residential uses, such as townhouses and two-family (duplexes) residences.



Source: Greater Alabama MLS

Secondary Uses

Multi-family residential (multiplexes and apartment complexes), schools and places of worship, parks and open space, and senior housing facilities.

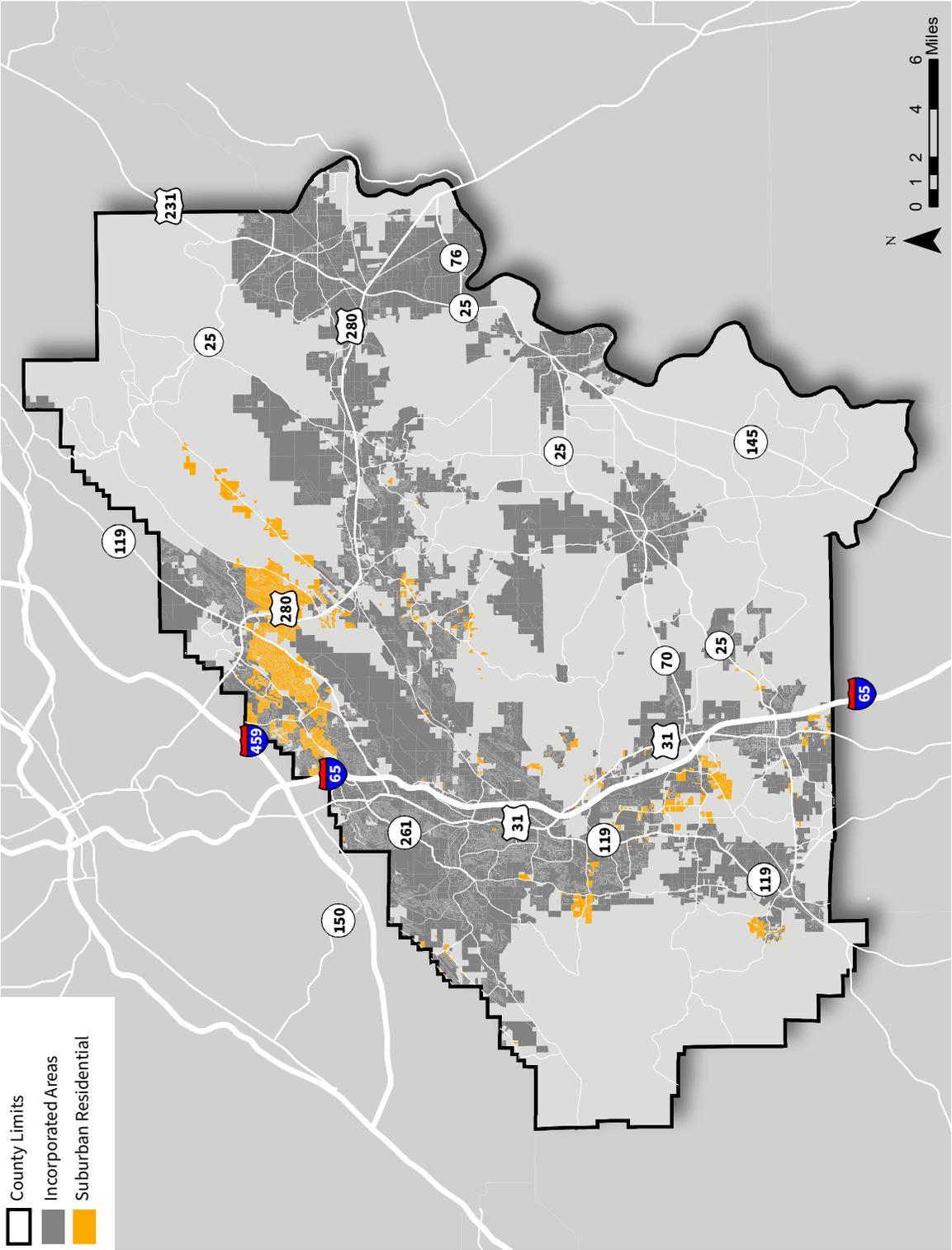
Corresponding Zoning Districts

- E-1 Single-Family Estate District
- E-2 Single-Family Estate District
- R-1 Single-Family District
- R-4 Multi-Family District



Source: Re/Max Metro Atlanta Cityside

Figure 4.3: Areas shown as Suburban Residential on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Rural Residential

This land use category includes areas characterized by low-density, single-family residential uses with deep setbacks from the road. Future development should continue to reflect low-density detached single-family residences and neighborhood design should incorporate a high percentage of open space, which can include buffers, permeable lot area, and other types of undeveloped land. When possible, conservation subdivisions that cluster large-lot residential homes should be encouraged to preserve natural features, open space, and agricultural land.

Primary Uses

Single-family residences on individual large lots (predominantly 1 to 3 acres); clustering is encouraged. Farm animals and horses are appropriate in this category.

Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses including open space and recreation, equestrian uses, schools, places of worship, and other public uses are appropriate, as well as accessory structures such as barns and stables.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- A-1 Agricultural District
- A-R Agricultural-Residential District
- E-1 Single-Family Estate District



Source: Investopedia

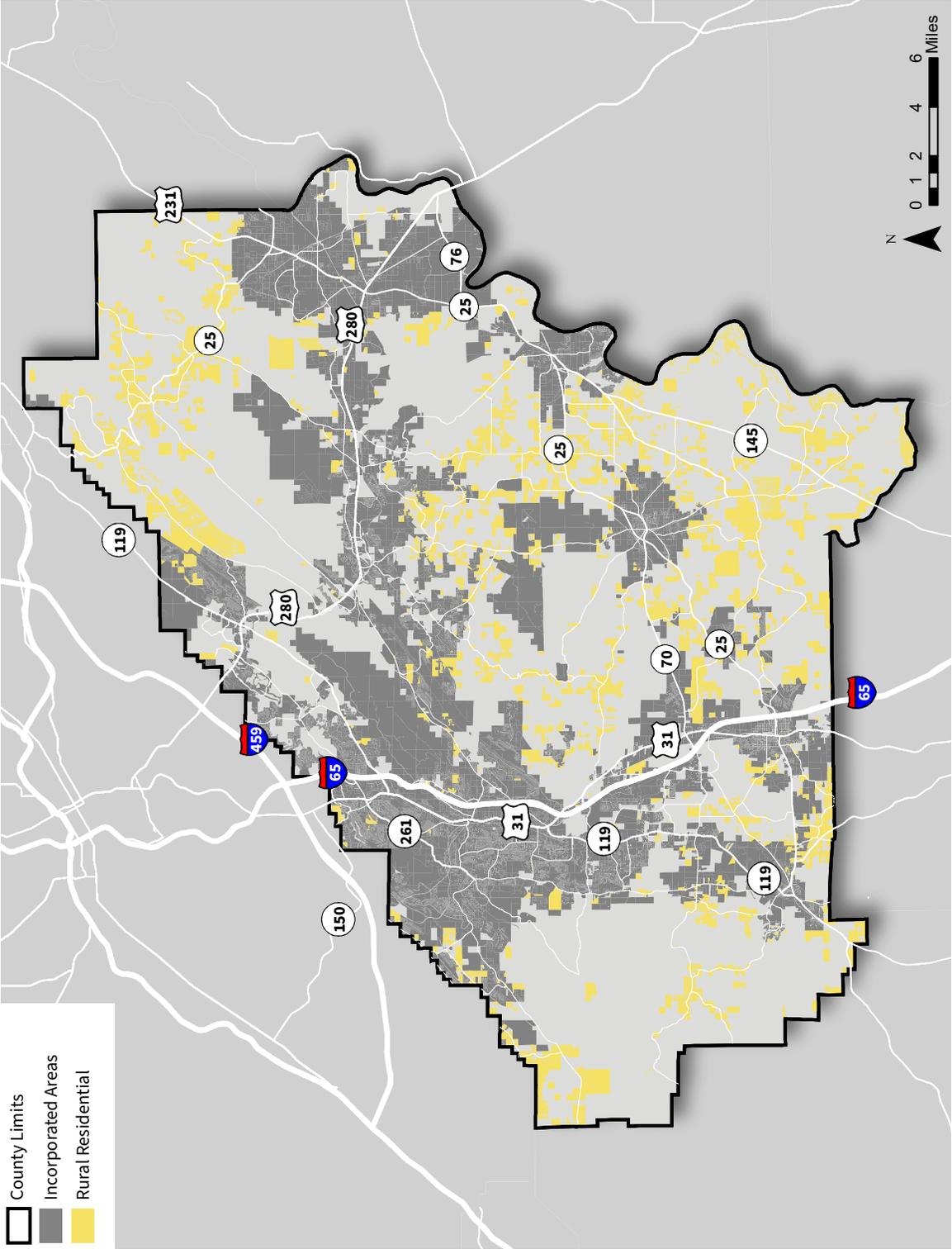


Source: Greater Alabama MLS



Source: Greater Alabama MLS

Figure 4.4: Areas shown as Rural Residential on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Farmland

This land use category includes agriculturally related areas characterized by very low-density single-family residential uses, as well as agricultural and forestry activities. The development pattern is generally scattered with large distances between buildings and deep setbacks from two-lane roads. Residents wish to preserve the existing rural character of the County, including agricultural uses.

Primary Uses

Forestry, farming, and other agriculturally related uses, including farm animals.

Secondary Uses

Forestry and agriculture related businesses and farming support services are encouraged (e.g., game hunting, equestrian activities, breeding and boarding, vet services, roadside stand, agricultural tourism activities, farm machine repair). Very low-density residential uses that are intended to conserve land for agriculture, farming, or natural and cultural resources.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- A-1 Agricultural District



Source: Shelby County Alabama

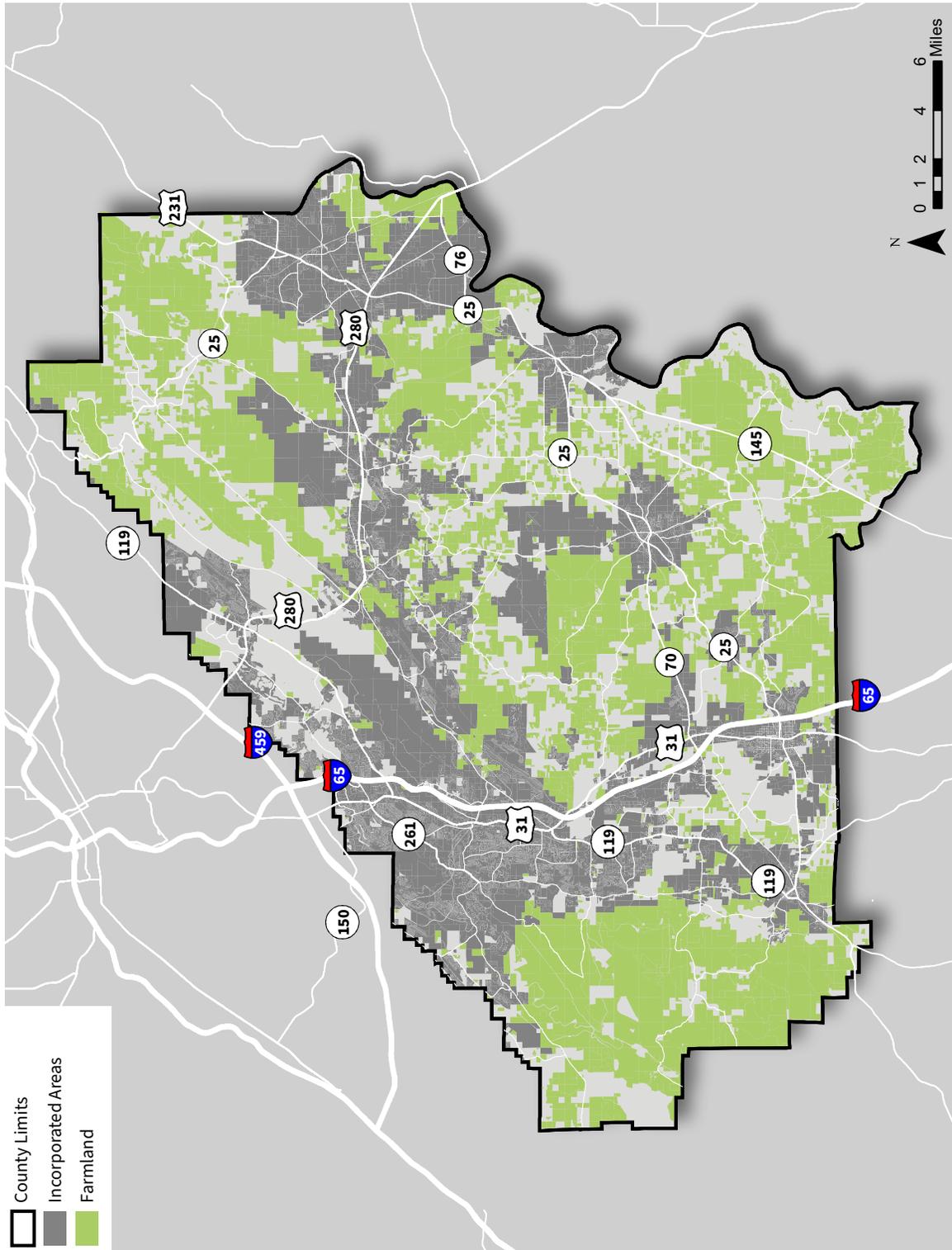


Source: Greater Alabama MLS



Source: Shelby County Alabama

Figure 4.5: Areas shown as Farmland on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Parks and Open Space

This land use category includes parks, open space, and other natural undeveloped areas. They may serve as recreational amenities or conservation areas and therefore should be protected from future development.

Primary Uses

Parks, greenspace (public or privately owned), environmentally sensitive lands including the floodway, wetlands, steep slopes, and conservation easements.

Secondary Uses

Cemeteries and public utilities.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- A-1 Agricultural District
- O-1 Office and Institutional District
- H-Z Holding Zone District



Source: Shelby County Alabama

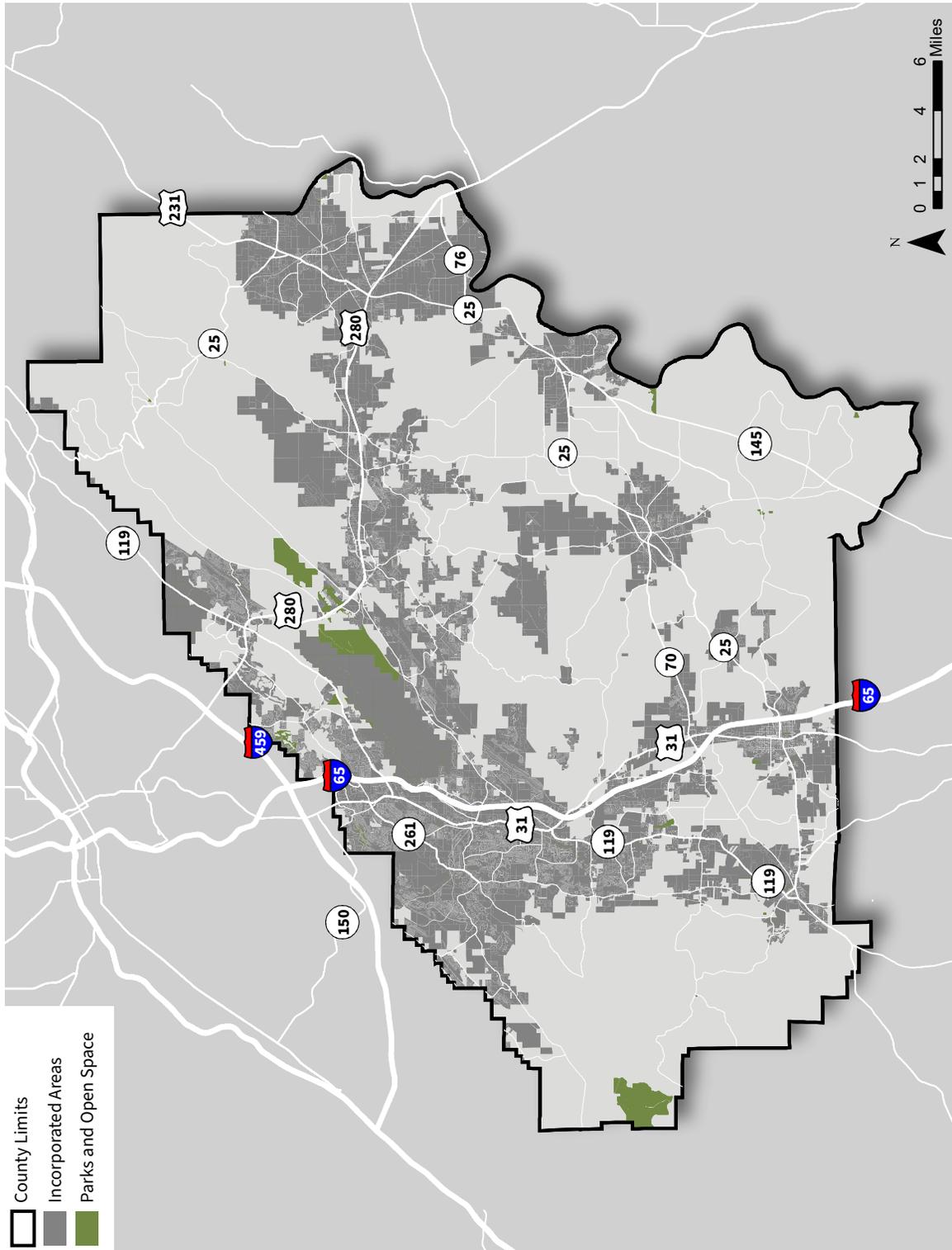


Source: Birmingham 365



Source: Shelby County Alabama

Figure 4.6: Areas shown as Parks and Open Space on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Rural Landscape

This land use category includes lands that intersect with the 100-year floodplain, wetlands, slopes greater than 20%, and ridgetop developments.

Primary Uses

Residential uses (and accessory structures) and undevelopable lands, which could include flood plains, wetlands, steep slopes, and conservation easements.

Secondary Uses

Parks and open space, agriculture.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- H-Z Holding Zone District
- A-1 Agricultural District



Source: Greater Alabama MLS

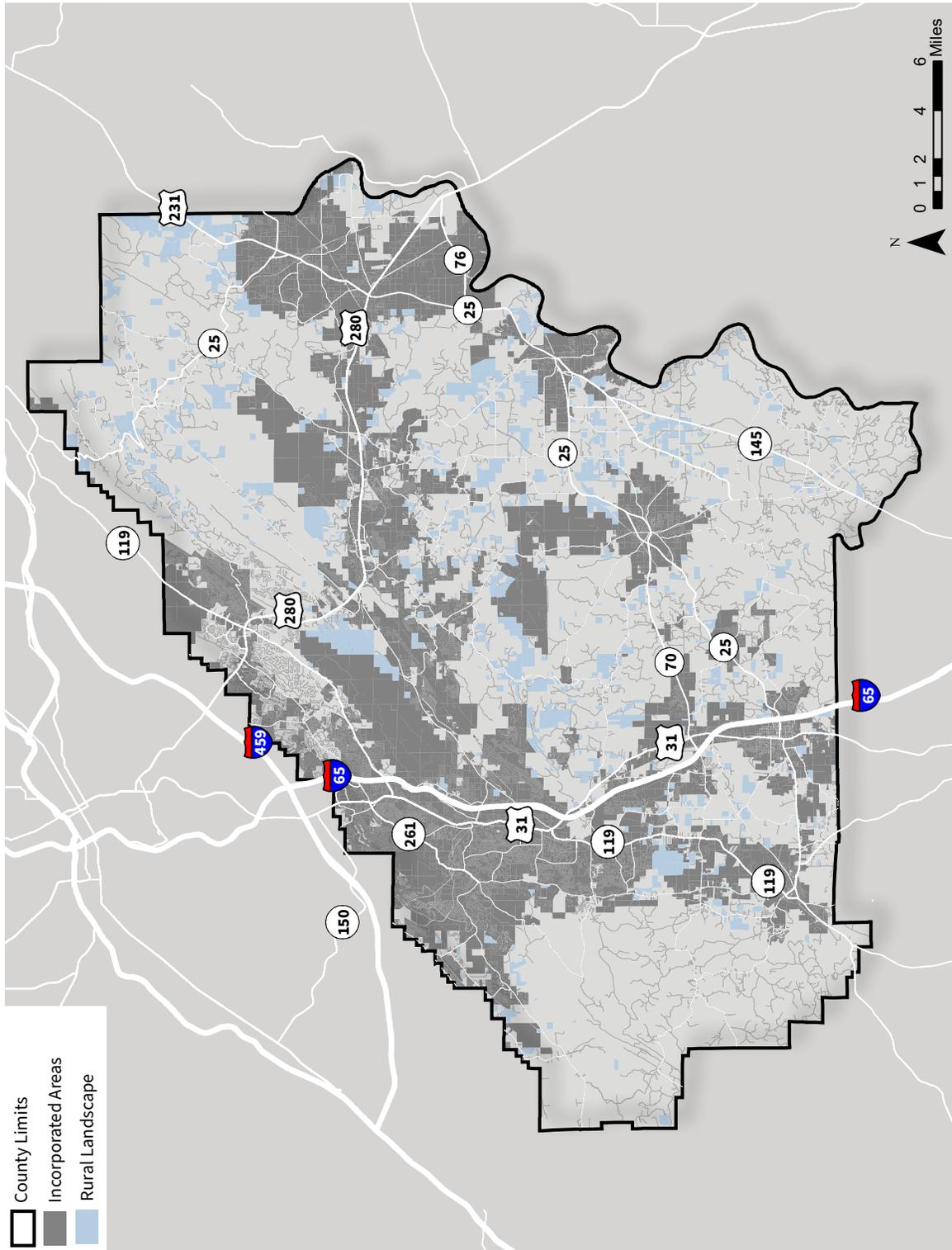


Source: Greater Alabama MLS



Source: Greater Alabama MLS

Figure 4.7: Areas shown as Rural Landscape on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Rural Crossroads

Rural crossroads are characterized by clustered commercial or service type development around the intersection of major roads. The general development pattern is compact with stand-alone or multiple businesses depending on the location. Development should support the immediate surrounding area.

Primary Uses

Neighborhood services and offices.

Secondary Uses

Open space, places of worship, and other public or civic uses.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- O-1 Office and Institutional District
- B-1 Neighborhood Business District



Source: Gary Okerlund

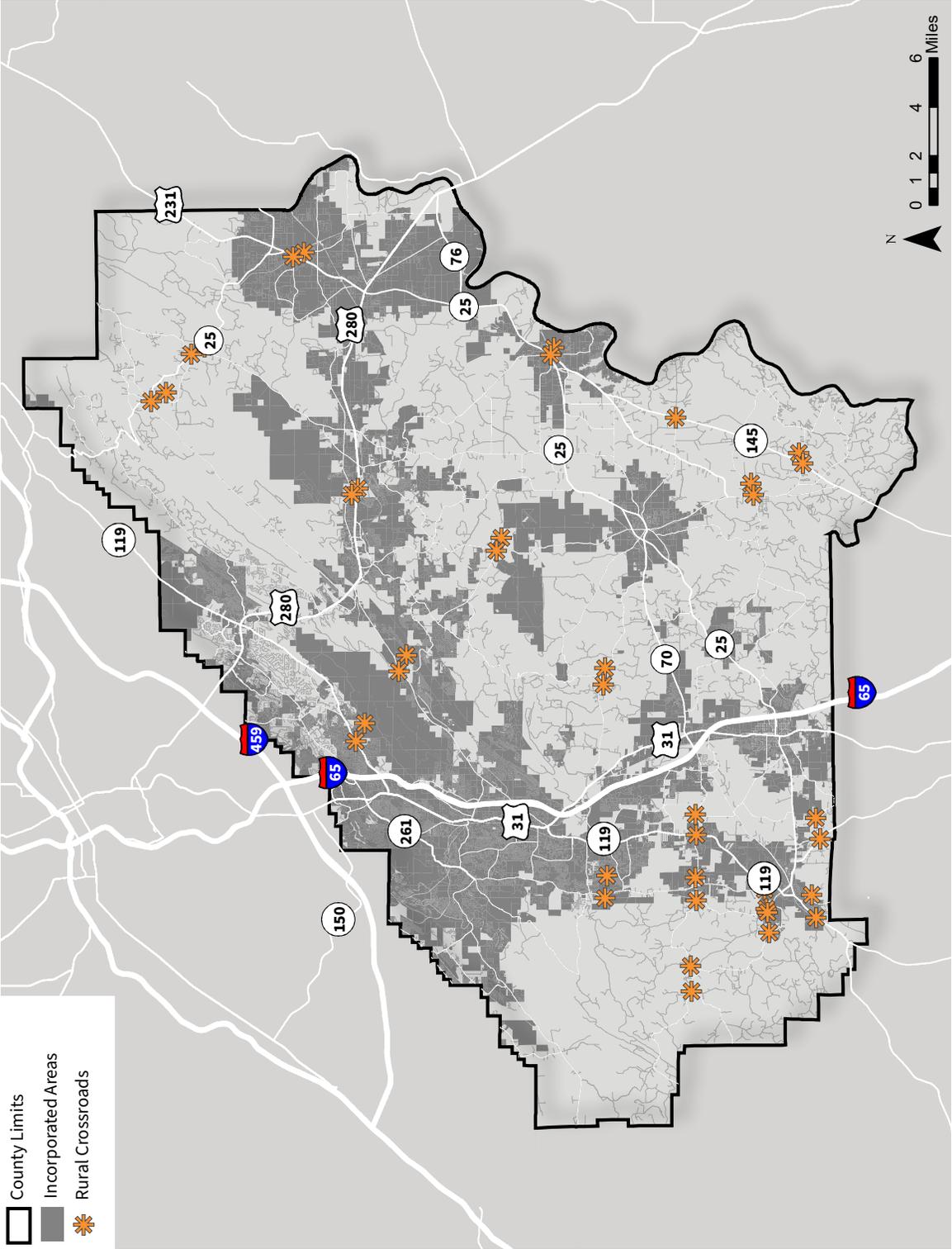


Source: Crossroads Presbyterian Church



Source: Dee Davis

Figure 4.8: Areas shown as Rural Crossroads on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Community Commercial

This land use category is intended to provide spaces for small-scale retail that serve the convenience needs of neighboring residents. It should be noted that development near major intersections will become increasingly important in terms of tax revenue for the County as the residential population continues to grow. Therefore, the County should protect optimal locations for Service Commercial development.

Primary Uses

Neighborhood services, office, retail, and restaurants.

Secondary Uses

Civic and institutional uses.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- B-1 Neighborhood Business District
- B-2 General Business District
- O-I Office and Institutional District



Source: RPCGB

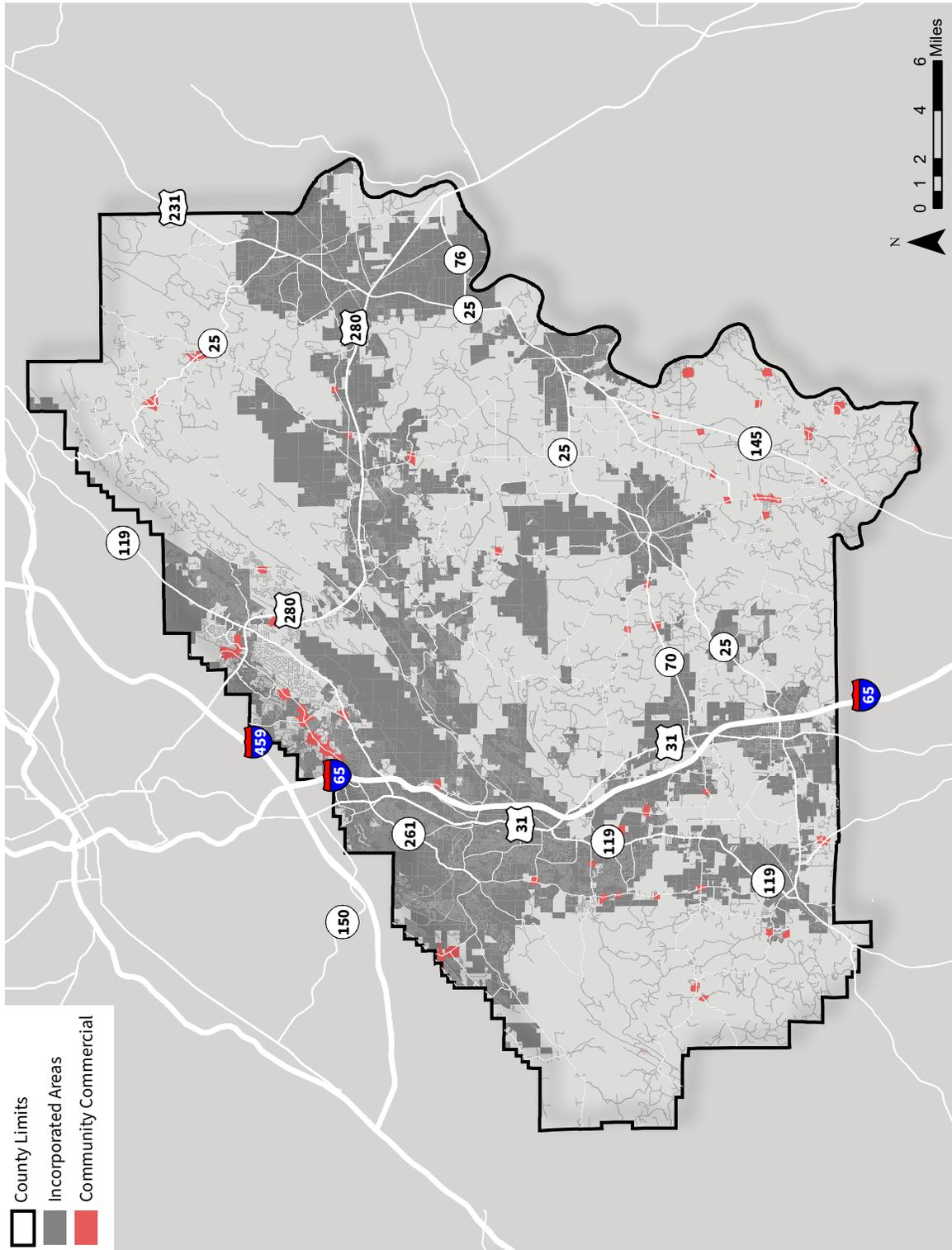


Source: Andre Eleazer



Source: www.Terrain.org

Figure 4.9: Areas shown as Community Commercial on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Business Commercial

The location of Commercial Corridors on the Future Development Map are generally those thoroughfares that connect activity centers and are intended to accommodate commercial uses without encroaching upon adjacent neighborhoods. Future development should emphasize facilitating traffic flow, building site design standards, and avoiding conflicts with local neighborhoods.

Primary Uses

Commercial and service uses, general and large tenant retail, restaurants, and food stores.

Secondary Uses

Hotels, motels, movie theaters, professional offices, schools, places of worship, other community facilities.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- B-2 General Business District
- O-I Office and Institutional District
- Planned Shopping Center District



Source: Holiday Inn Express

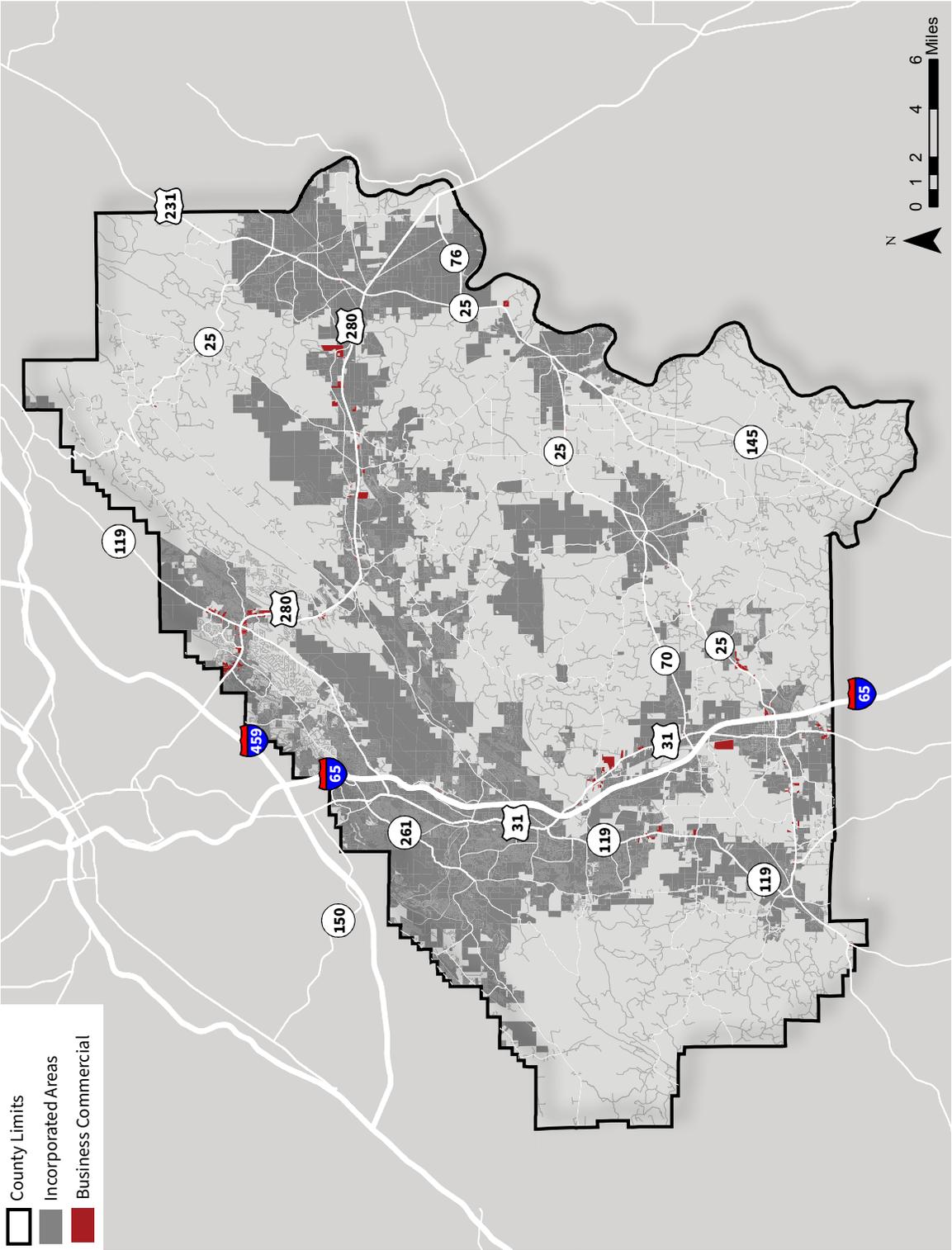


Source:RPCGB



Source: DSW

Figure 4.10: Areas shown as Business Commercial on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Mixed-Use Center

Mixed-use centers are characterized by compact, walkable, higher-density developments. These areas provide a mix of uses that include neighborhood and regional commercial uses, employment opportunities, gathering spots and residential uses that contribute to a live-work-play type of environment. Future development should emphasize high-quality building and site design, dedicated public space, and connectivity. The Future Development Map illustrates 24 mixed-use centers across the County.



Source: River Street Architecture

Primary Uses

Regional scale commercial and retail, mixed-use, mid-rise office space, high-density residential (apartments, condos, townhouses), hotels.

Secondary Uses

Civic and institutional, open space.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- B-1 Neighborhood Business District
- B-2 General Business District
- Planned Shopping Center District
- Planned Residential District
- Planned Implementation District

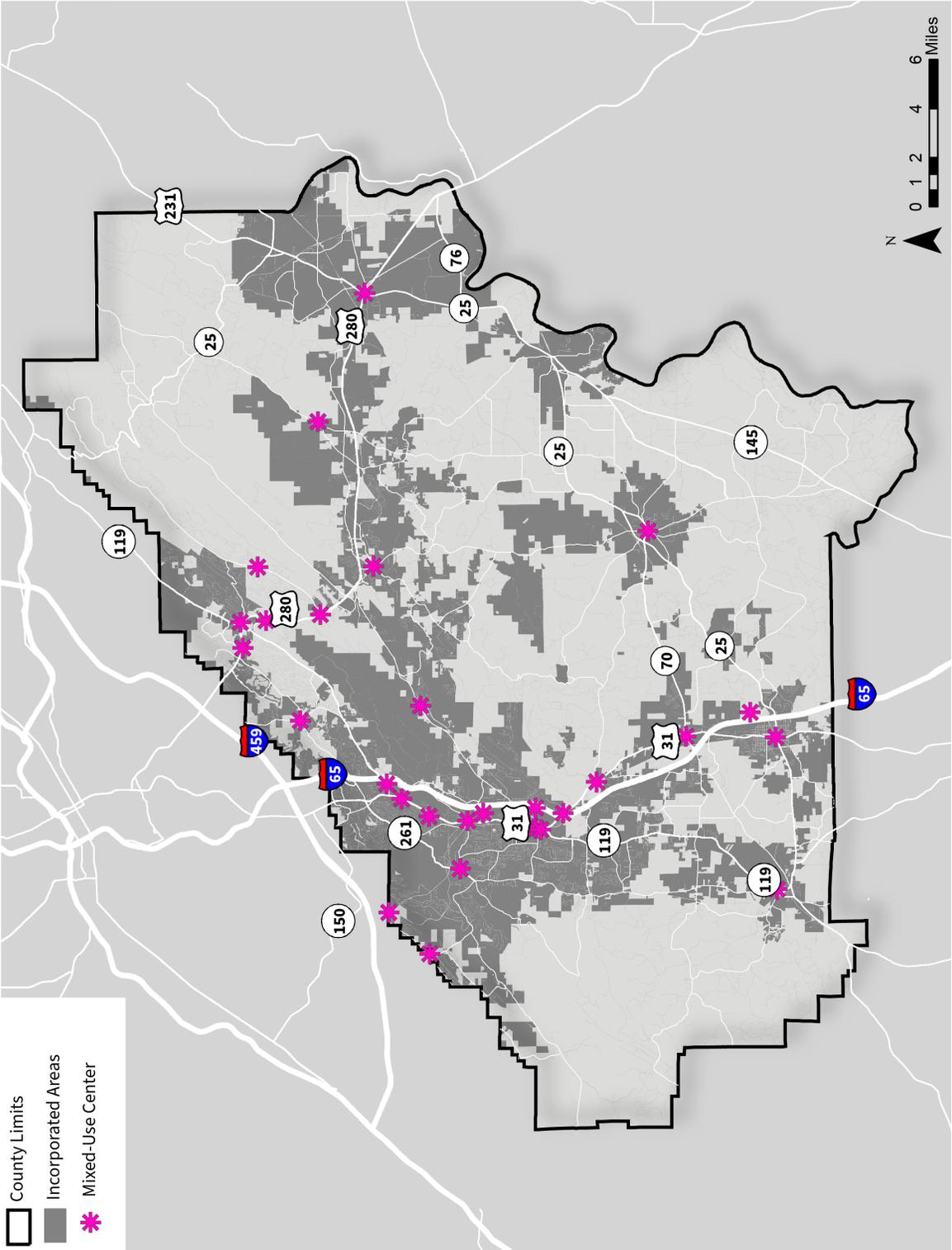


Source: Style Blueprint



Source: Style Blueprint

Figure 4.11: Areas shown as Mixed-Use Center on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Employment Center

Employment centers are characterized by office and light industrial-style developments. They include large footprint structures that offer flexible space to accommodate market demand for various users. Buildings should be oriented to face the street and can be adapted to support different uses such as light manufacturing, high-tech industries, and research and development. Plazas and pocket parks should serve as amenities for employees. The Future Development Map illustrates 13 employment centers across the County.



Source: 58 INC

Primary Uses

Light industrial, office, commercial.

Secondary Uses

Civic and institutional, parks and open space, retail.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- B-1 Neighborhood Business District
- B-2 General Business District
- O-I Office and Institutional District
- M-1 Light Industrial District
- Planned Industrial District

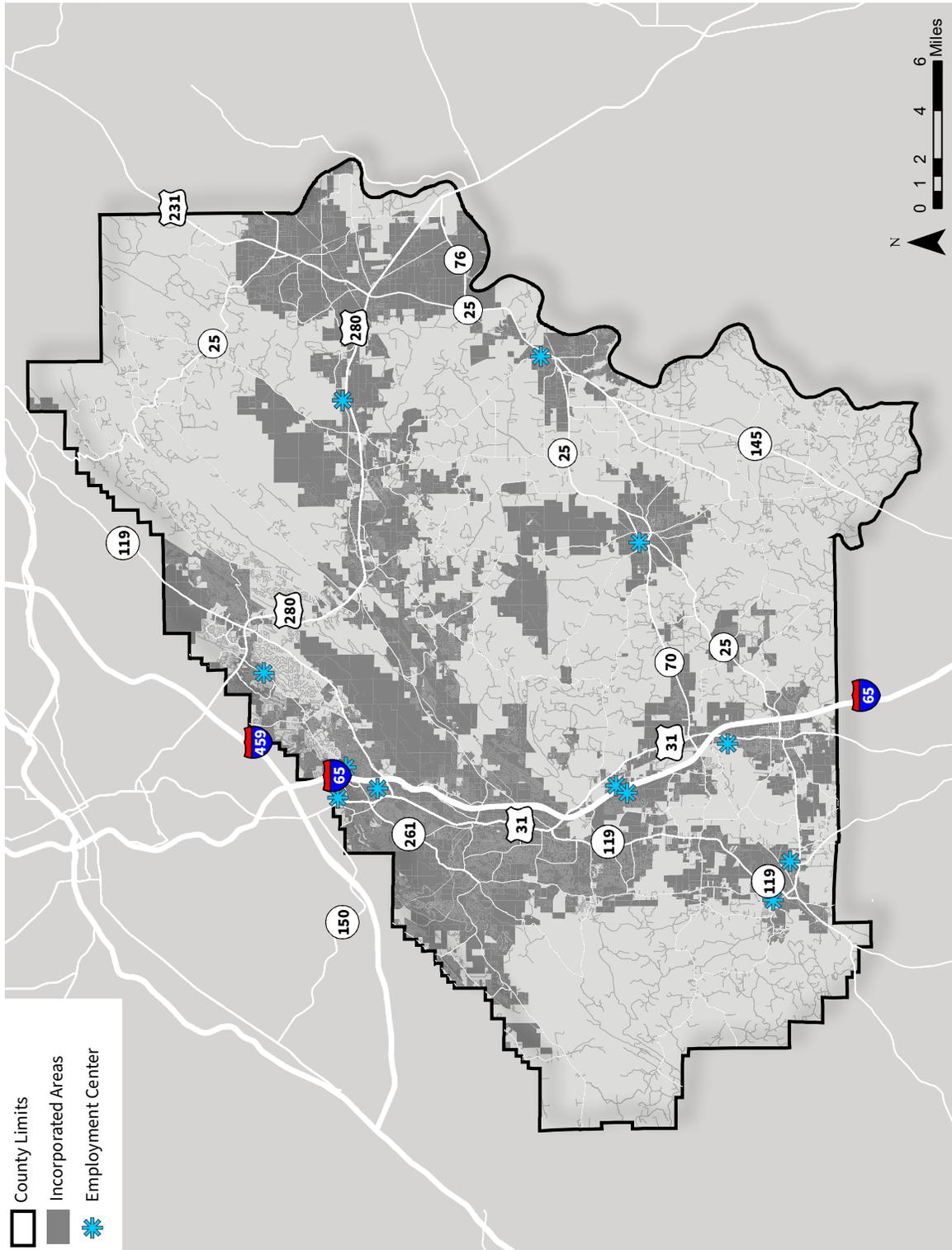


Source: 58 INC



Source: 58 INC

Figure 4.12: Areas shown as Employment Center on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Institutional Campus

This land use category includes academic, government and medical (hospital) campuses, religious facilities, and churches. Institutional Campus may serve as a stand-alone use or may be clustered in a walkable pattern with parking areas located at the edge of the campus.

Primary Uses

Civic and institutional.

Secondary Uses

Office, commercial, retail, multi-family residential, parks and open space.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- O-I Office and Institutional District



Source: Shelby County Alabama

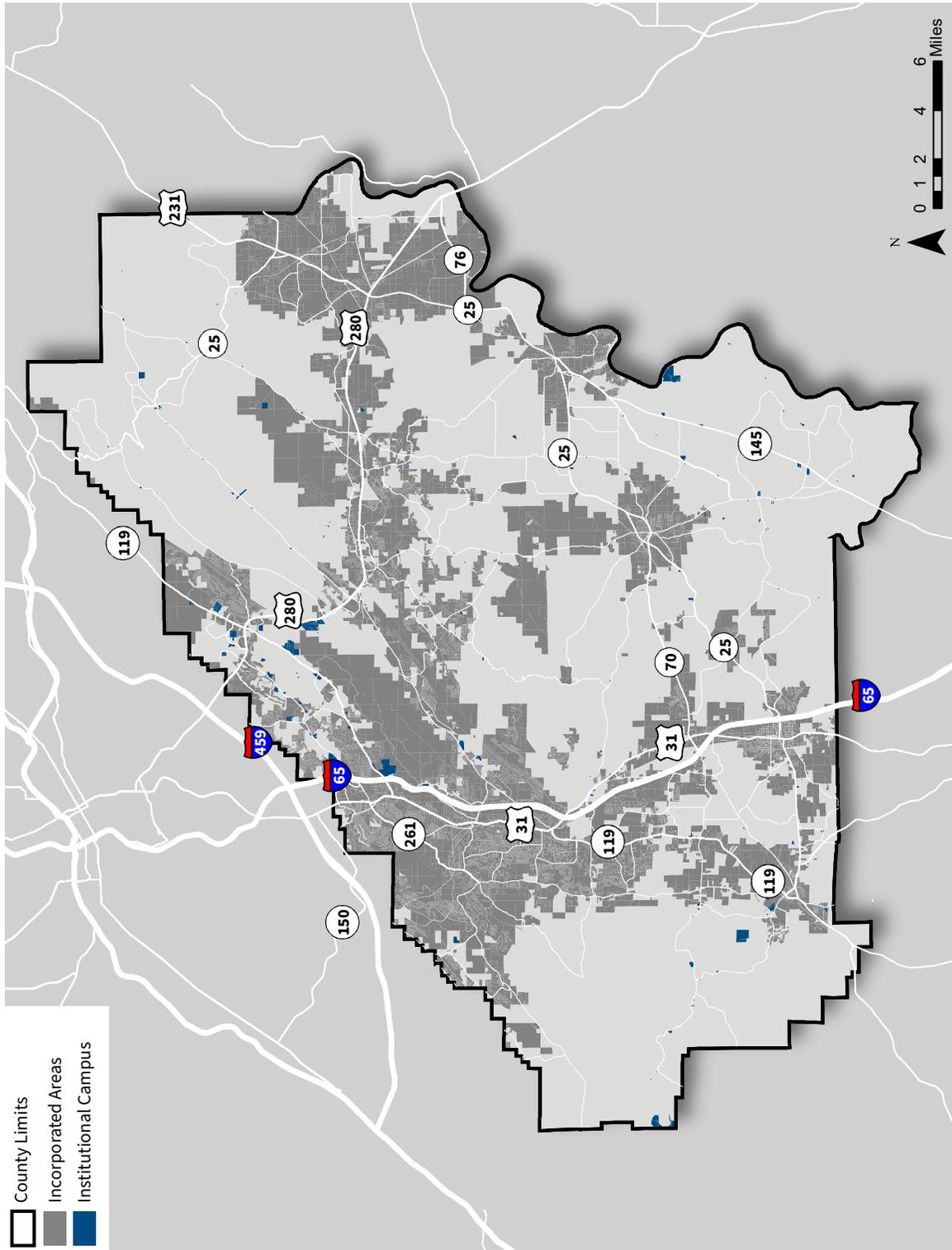


Source: Shelby County Alabama



Source: Shelby County Alabama

Figure 4.13: Areas shown as Institutional Campus on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Industrial

This land use category encompasses heavy and light industrial uses. Outdoor storage and heavy industry may be appropriate in certain areas and should be evaluated as part of the development review process. High-visibility locations require greater attention to design. Industrial areas should be located with access to major transportation facilities, such as interstates and railroads.

Primary Uses

Offices, distribution, wholesaling, warehouses, manufacturing, fabrication, and general light and heavy industrial uses.

Secondary Uses

Supporting retail uses and services, open space and recreation, and other public or civic uses.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- M-1 Light Industrial District
- M-2 Heavy Industrial District



Source: 58 INC

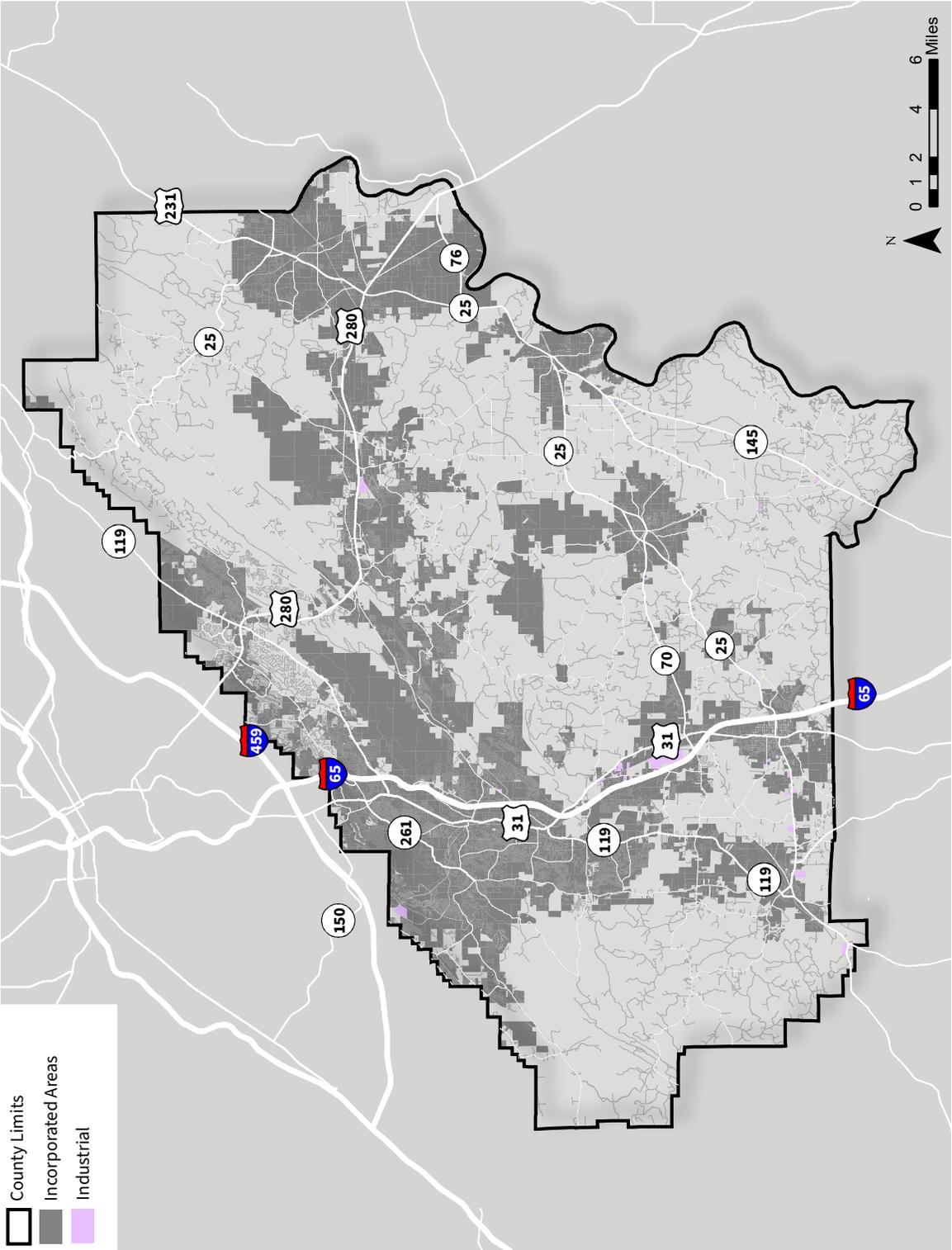


Source: Loopnet



Source: Birmingham Business Alliance

Figure 4.14: Areas shown as Industrial on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Extraction and Mining

Extraction operations include a wide variety of mining activities, both surface and subsurface. Included are stone and limestone quarries, as well as gravel, sand, and clay pits. Open mining areas frequently contain water. Extractive mining areas may range from stone quarries to small borrow pits. These uses should be located with access to major transportation facilities, such as interstates and railroads.



Source: US Aggregates

Primary Uses

Resource extraction and mining, heavy manufacturing, general and heavy industrial uses.

Secondary Uses

Supporting wholesaling and distribution uses.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- M-2 Heavy Industrial District

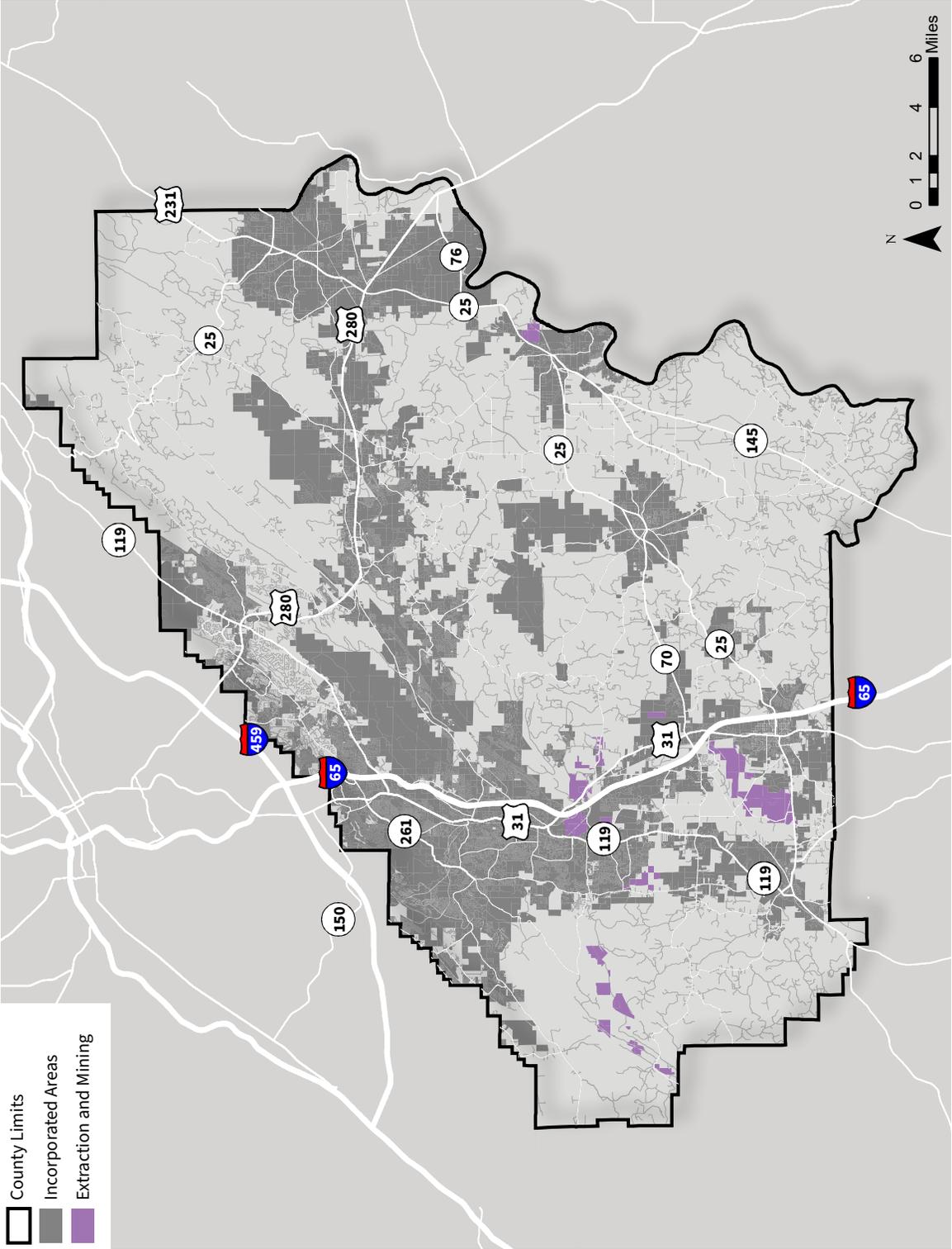


Source: Axora



Source: Blue Water Park Pelham

Figure 4.15: Areas shown as Extraction and Mining on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Infrastructure

This land use category is reserved for public or privately owned infrastructure including water and wastewater treatment plants, landfills, telecommunication towers, etc.

Primary Uses

Public or privately owned water, waste, and telecommunications facilities.

Secondary Uses

Utility easements.

Corresponding Zoning Districts

- A-1 Agricultural District
- H-Z Holding Zone District
- M-1 Light Industrial District
- M-2 Heavy Industrial District



Source: *The Birmingham News*

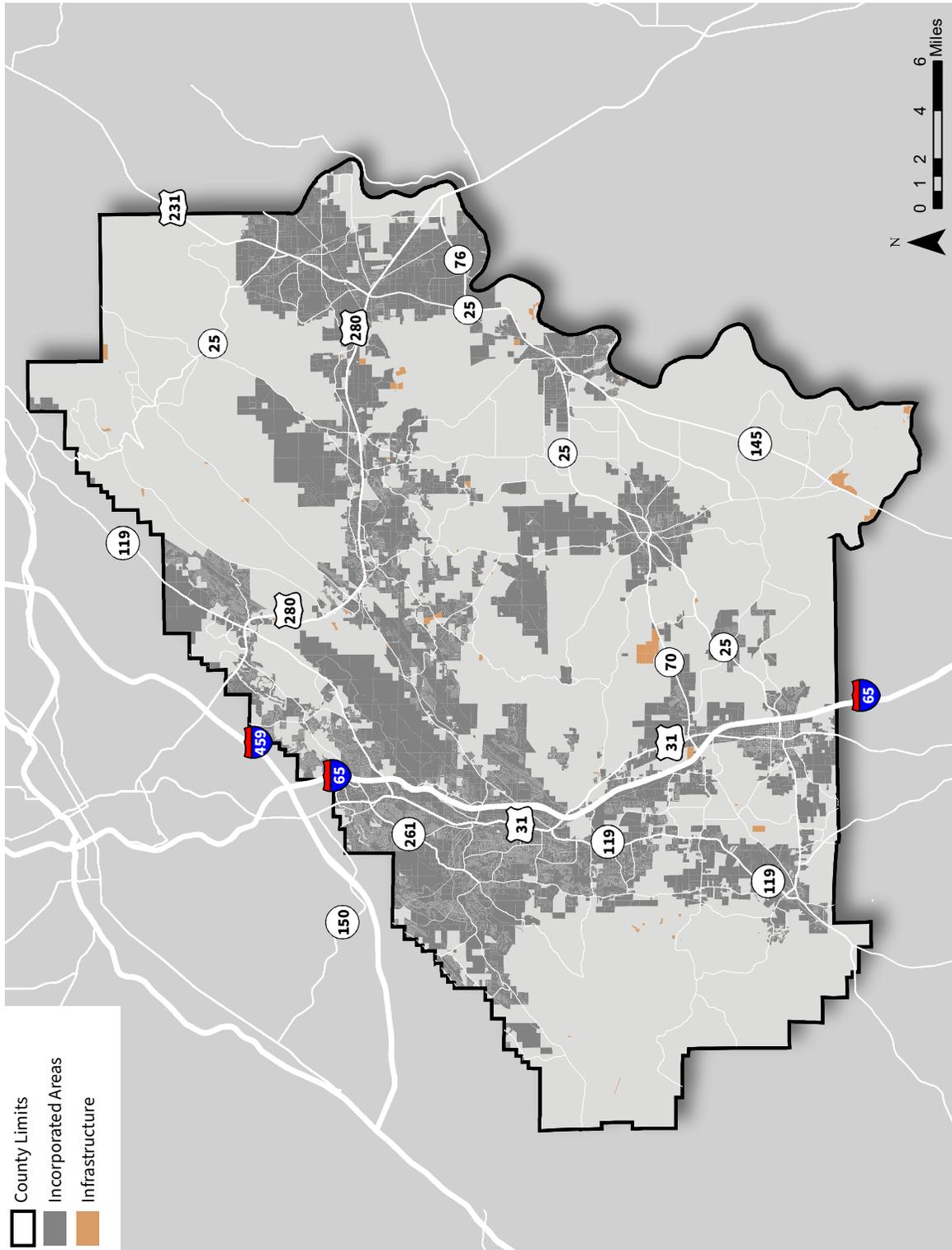


Source: *Shelby County Reporter*



Source: *City of Alabaster*

Figure 4.16: Areas shown as Infrastructure on the Future Land Use Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Evaluating Zoning Proposals for Consistency with the Future Development Map and Comprehensive Plan

The Future Development Map expresses the community’s vision for how they want to see Shelby County develop over time. It is a policy map, not a regulatory map. It does not replace the County’s zoning map. The Future Development Map and the descriptions of each Future Development Map category are intended to guide decisions on zoning amendments by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission should refer to the Future Development Map whenever they evaluate a proposed rezoning or new development. If the proposal is consistent with the Future Development Map, then they should approve it; if it is not, then they should evaluate other alternatives. The Future Development Map is not a static map; and it can and should be periodically updated to reflect changes in real conditions and community preferences.

The designation of an area to a specific category on the Future Development Map does not mean that one land use is recommended. Rather, a range of land uses is appropriate for each Future Development Map category, as seen in **Table 4.1**. The table can be used to evaluate the consistency of development proposals with the Future Development Map. If a particular land use is appropriate within a Future Development Map category, then it will be shaded in **gray and marked with an “X”**. If it is not an appropriate land use for that category, then it is left blank.

The categories employed in the Future Development Map should not be interpreted to support or preclude developments without consideration of the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Site considerations relating to topography, soil, conservation resources, or hydrology are also important in establishing the specific use and intensity of a particular parcel. Similarly, the presence or absence of adequate streets, schools, parks, and other community facilities should be considered before a development is approved that would otherwise be in conformance with the Future Development Map.

Determination of the consistency of a proposed use or zone with the Comprehensive Plan will include consideration of the following questions:

- Is the development proposal consistent with the Future Development Map? Does the proposal align with the suggested land uses within the designated Future Development Map category?
- Is the proposed development compatible with the existing or planned character of the adjacent area? Or will it create substantial adverse impacts to the adjacent area?
- Is the proposal consistent with the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan?

Table 4.1: Appropriate Land Uses for Each Future Development Map Category

Future Development Map Categories	Commercial Agriculture-Farming and Animal Raising	Non-commercial Agriculture	Single-family Residential	Townhouses	Multiplex - 2.5 stories	Apartments/ Condos - 4 stories	Mixed-Use (Commercial/ Residential)	Neighborhood Services	Restaurants and Retail	Professional Offices	Civic Uses	Parks and Open Space	Regional Commercial	Hotels	Mid-rise Office	Light Industrial	Heavy Industrial	Warehouse	Extraction and Mining
Farmland	X	X																	
Rural Residential		X	X								X	X							
Suburban Residential			X	X							X	X							
Walkable Neighborhood			X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X							
Rural Crossroads	X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X			X	X			
Community Commercial								X	X	X	X								
Business Commercial								X	X	X	X				X				
Mixed-Use Center							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Employment Center								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Institutional Campus							X			X	X	X			X				
Parks and Open Space												X							
Rural Landscape												X							
Infrastructure												X						X	
Industrial													X		X	X	X	X	
Extraction and Mining																			X

Respecting the Edges of Incorporated Areas

This Comprehensive Plan illustrates and describes the desired future land use and related development within the County’s unincorporated areas. In drafting the Future Development Map, the County considered the edges of the adopted Future Land Use plans of each incorporated city and town. The Future Development Map shows the incorporated areas in a gray color. Each incorporated municipality within Shelby County has a right to exercise their planning and zoning authority and adopt their own comprehensive plans. The incorporated areas account for 34% of the County’s land area while unincorporated areas account for 66% of the County’s land area (see **Figure 4.17**).

In addition, each municipality may designate growth areas (no greater than 5 miles outside of their boundaries) within their comprehensive plan where they desire to annex unincorporated areas in the future. Municipal Growth Areas are areas designated for annexation in the respective municipality’s comprehensive plan; however, County Regulations remain the regulating authority until an annexation occurs. The following municipalities have designated or recommended Municipal Growth Areas listed in their comprehensive plans: Alabaster, Chelsea, Helena, Hoover, Indian Springs Village, Pelham, and Vestavia Hills.

A list of the latest planning efforts for each of the municipalities in Shelby County can be found in **Table 1.16** on **pages 44-45** of **Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends**.



Action 1

Participate in comprehensive plan updates for the incorporated cities and towns within and adjacent to Shelby County to coordinate land use and related planning efforts.



Action 2

Coordinate with incorporated areas on future development proposals for “edge” development to ensure compatibility with adopted municipal future land use plans.

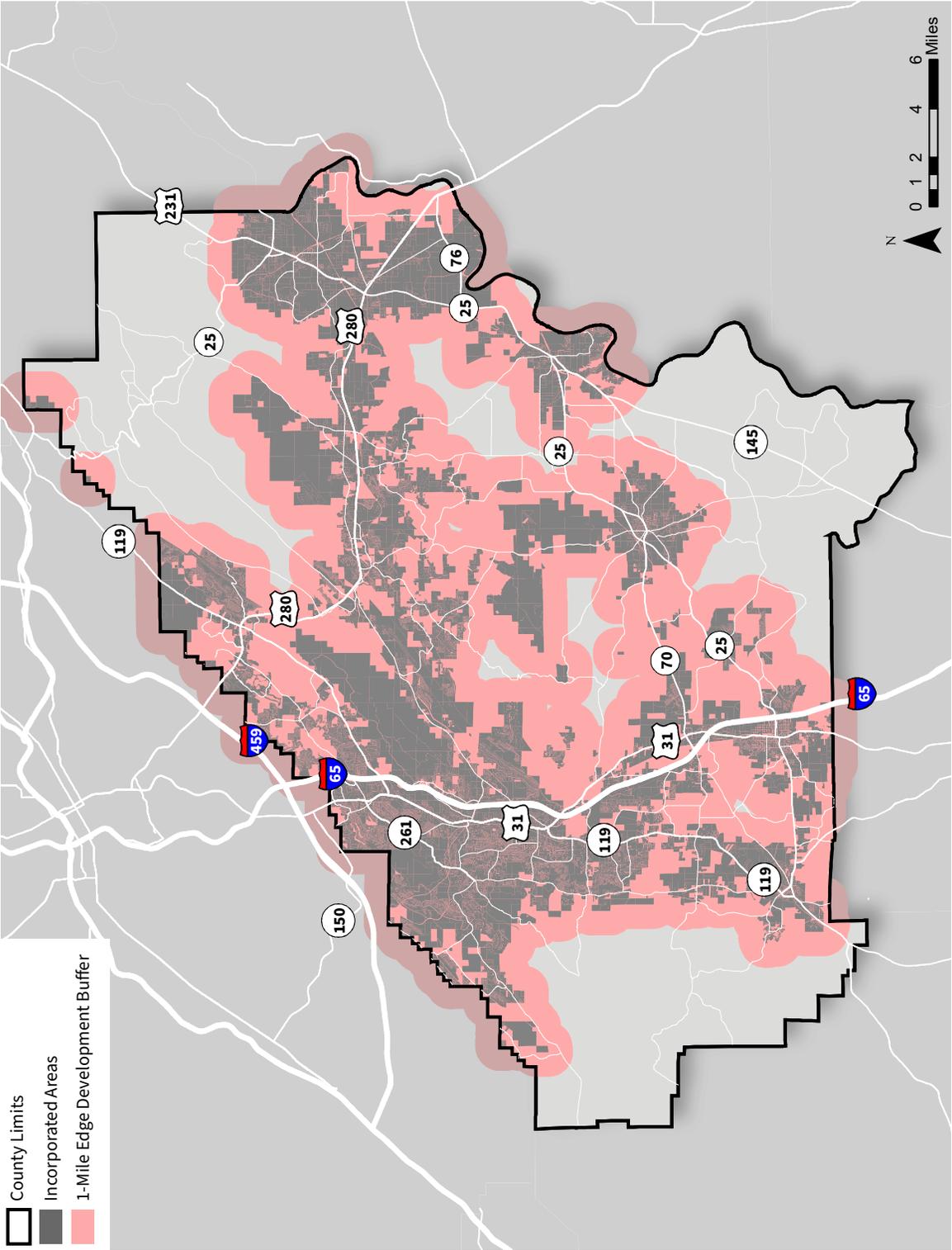
The County desires to respect the “edges” of incorporated areas by ensuring that future development proposals are designed to reflect the character of the surrounding areas and that the proposals are consistent with the adopted municipal future land use plans to the extent possible as some unincorporated areas are unzoned. Areas adjacent to incorporated areas, or “edge” development, tend to be suited for growth because they provide the most efficient investment for infrastructure, public safety, and schools. They offer logical extensions of roads, sidewalks, infrastructure and public services, and are ultimately expected to be connected to municipal water and sewer.



Action 3

Promote and support municipal efforts to allow mixed-use development in areas designated as “Mixed-Use Centers” on the Future Development Map.

Figure 4.17: 1-Mile Buffer from the Edges of Incorporated Areas



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB



Action 4

Work with the incorporated municipalities to develop orderly annexation agreements.

While there are three legal paths to annexation allowed under Alabama Code of Law Section 11-42-2 (as defined in the Annexation callout box on **page 99**), none of them involves the type of coordination required to extend services, infrastructure, and transportation in an orderly fashion. For example, in the event of a proposed annexation of unincorporated land in Shelby County by a city or town, an interlocal agreement should be established between Shelby County and that municipality to establish a utility policy that will require the annexation to access municipal services.

Did you know?

Shelby County has no authority to deny annexations when a property owner in an unincorporated area of the county petitions to annex into a municipality. If the property owner desires to annex into a municipality, and said municipality is willing to annex their property, then Shelby County does not have the authority to legally prevent the annexation.



Source: City of Montevallo

Sustainable and Managed Growth

The influx of newcomers since 2000, drawn by the prospect of affordable homes, quality schools and an affordable cost of living, has left its mark on the County's existing land use. New subdivisions and commercial developments have steadily replaced timberland and pastureland. Residential land uses account for approximately 19.6% of the County's total land area and 21.1% of the County's developed land. These new developments may be located far away from mainstreets and walkable cores and contribute to a growing pattern of automobile-dependent lifestyles.

Shelby County residents expressed a desire to see managed growth and not just one subdivision after another of the same design layout and housing choice. Shelby County has an opportunity to encourage more sustainable land uses and proactively shape the nature of new development to ensure it accomplishes broader community goals such as walkability, connectivity, and sustainability. This can be accomplished by implementing the following actions.



Action 5

Encourage mixed-use development.

Mixed-use development would allow residents and visitors to do more than one thing at a given location. These uses support each other and keep users from having to make multiple automobile-based trips. A key concept of this Comprehensive Plan is to encourage mixed-use development that is compact, diverse, walkable, and that enhances character and form through appropriate design at appropriate locations.

Annexation Methods in Alabama

Currently there are three legal paths to annexation under Alabama Code § 11-42. They include:

- Petition by 100% of adjacent property owners seeking to annex into a particular municipality. The land must be contiguous (i.e., share a common boundary) with the municipality's existing corporate limits.
- Referendum by municipality seeking to annex contiguous land. This is where a municipality will seek interested property owners to sign a petition in order to build an annexation map to identify the areas that are interested and want to be included in the annexation by election. Once the area is determined and the petition is signed, the petition will be handed to the probate judge, who will go through the legal process to set up an annexation by election. Each voter included in the map will be eligible to vote, for or against the annexation of the area.
- Act of the Alabama Legislature

Of these three, petitions and referenda are the most common, and may be carried out solely at the local level. These two methods both include consent of the municipality and the people whose land may be annexed. If annexation is to occur by a petition of residents seeking to be annexed, the city has leeway in deciding to accept the annexation. Moreover, a municipality seeking to annex land with a referendum must demonstrate that the proposed annexation would have a positive effect on the public health or public good.

An act of the State Legislature is the least common, but has been successfully used to prevent undesirable land uses from opening in municipalities' extraterritorial planning jurisdiction.

Contiguous or noncontiguous municipalities may choose to consolidate, although this is less common than annexation, follows different procedures, and achieves different aims.

The municipality's population determines the precise annexation laws which must be followed. Municipalities with 2,000+ inhabitants, municipalities with 25,000+ inhabitants, and Class 6 municipalities (12,000-25,000 inhabitants) all have slightly different regulations, but with broad similarities. Relevant sections of the Alabama Code of Law include:

- AL Code § 11-42 Article 2: Annexation of Territory by Municipalities of 2,000 Inhabitants or More
- AL Code § 11-42 Article 2A: Annexation of Territory by Class 6 Municipality of Land Contiguous to Public University
- AL Code § 11-42 Article 3: Annexation of Territory by Cities of 25,000 Inhabitants or More
- AL Code § 11-42 Article 4: Consolidation of Contiguous Municipalities
- AL Code § 11-42 Article 5: Consolidation of Noncontiguous Municipalities

The concept of mixed-use development:

- ✘ Encourages the construction of mixed-use centers and/or buildings that combine restaurants, offices, housing, live-work spaces, civic buildings, cultural buildings and other complementary uses arranged in an environment that is convenient for customers, employees, residents and tourists;
- ✘ Promotes new infill residential and non-residential development;
- ✘ Promotes site design that accommodates and enhances pedestrian activity along the street, that is not dominated by parking and that reduces conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles;
- ✘ Provides unique places for people to live, work, shop, play and learn; and
- ✘ Encourages appropriate transitions between higher-intensity uses and adjacent lower-density residential districts.

Mixed-use development should be encouraged in downtowns and activity centers across the County. The rehabilitation and re-use of existing historic and/or older buildings and structures should allow upper-story dwellings in mixed-use buildings. New mixed-use development should include public amenities such as pedestrian plazas, sidewalks, and landscaping that help to create a walkable and cohesive development.



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Source: – Mcmillian, Pazdan and Smith Architecture



Source: The Retail Companies



Action 6

Encourage infill development of vacant sites and redevelopment of older shopping centers.

The term “redevelopment” describes converting an existing built structure into another use. “Infill development” occurs in a pre-built area, often using vacant land or underutilized sites (such as parking lots)

and involves the reconstruction of existing buildings. Infill development can utilize existing infrastructure and can reduce the need to expand infrastructure such as sewer and water lines, roads, and public services resulting in cost efficiencies.

Many older shopping centers are underutilized and have left behind empty storefronts and large parking areas. These “grayfield” sites also provide a unique opportunity for redevelopment that can re-energize adjacent neighborhoods and commercial corridors while providing new options for housing. This provides new economic value for these sites and relieves pressure for new development in greenfield areas.

From a transportation perspective, infill development contributes to the creation of concentrated activity centers and, because of the proximity to existing commercial areas and neighborhoods, tends to encourage walking and bicycling. Beyond transportation, infill development provides other community benefits:

- ✘ Lower costs because it is not necessary to extend costly infrastructure to serve infill development.
- ✘ Efficient utilization of existing services.
- ✘ Increased economic development and vitality of cities.
- ✘ Increased conservation of agricultural land and open space by slowing the growth of development in the suburban and exurban fringe.

See **Chapter 5: Infill Development** for planning patterns and best practices that support infill development.



Action 7

Allow areas within and near mixed-use centers and employment centers, as shown on the Future Development Map, to be developed for larger scale commercial, office, and mixed-use development.

When asked “If new commercial development were to occur in your area, which of the following development strategies would you prefer?” 45% of survey respondents stated they would prefer to focus on redeveloping underutilized properties, while 37% of survey respondents answered they would prefer creating new or redeveloping dynamic town centers or mixed-use developments with a mix of housing, jobs, shopping, and entertainment options.

Going forward, the County should encourage the redevelopment of underutilized properties and existing town centers, as well as the creation of new town centers and mixed-use developments. In doing so, the County can carry out the preferences of residents while yielding more sustainable development.

In fact, the scenario planning exercise associated with this Plan (see **Appendix C: Two Future Growth Scenarios**) illustrated that concentrating future large-scale commercial, office and mixed-use development in mixed-use centers and employment centers significantly reduced suburban sprawl, vehicle miles traveled, water use, energy use, and household costs for residents. Furthermore, it preserved more farmland and open space — a high priority for residents.



Action 8

Concentrate commercial development around major intersections and discourage highway strip development.

Many of the highway corridors in Shelby County, including the US-280, US-31, SR-119, SR-25 corridors, are some of the most prosperous commercial corridors in the region, providing a variety of goods and services. This prosperity has also come with increased traffic congestion that poses a burden to residents, visitors, and businesses. That congestion is in large part attributable to poor land use planning and a lack of intergovernmental coordination. The addition of many driveway cuts has impeded traffic flow and created dangerous conflict points.

Prosperity and congestion can be decoupled by discouraging typical highway strip development and encouraging more sound land use decisions. Shelby County is encouraged to allow future commercial development in distinct nodes at major road intersections that are served by well-phased traffic signals, rather than allowing the highway to be overrun by non-descript strip malls and parking lots. By clustering development into nodes, the County can encourage more attractive development aesthetics, more efficiently utilize its highway frontage, and preserve traffic operations along key highway corridors.



Source: Downtown Franklin Association



Action 9

Continue to explore potential sites for new industrial parks, employment centers, and innovation centers.

Ten industrial parks exist in the County today, and while they were an important step toward attracting quality employers to the County, their capacity is limited. As a part of this Comprehensive Plan process, local businesses leaders expressed concern that the lack of large industrial-zoned land within county limits deters investment from employers who want to locate in Shelby County. As the County continues to grow, leadership must promote additional properties in suitable locations available for office and industrial uses.



Action 10

Ensure future developments improve both internal and external multi-modal connectivity.

Poor connectivity — defined as the lack of convenient points of access within and between neighborhoods — makes walking and bicycling inconvenient and dangerous, and further forces Shelby County residents to rely on an automobile for even the most basic trip.

New development proposals should provide a high degree of pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular access within the development itself and to adjoining neighborhoods or developments. Excessive cul-de-sacs and long blocks should be discouraged, while integrated pedestrian pathways in addition to stubbed streets and intersecting roads that enable connections to future adjacent developments should be promoted.

Benefits of Smart Growth

From the perspective of Shelby County as a fiscal entity, sprawl costs a lot of money to extend and provide services. It costs more money to repair a street or a water pipe that connects four homes spread over eight acres than four homes spread over one acre. Law enforcement must travel greater distances to reach the same amount of people, exacerbating safety issues. Buses must travel farther and longer to reach the same amount of students. Residents must drive farther and make more trips by car, contributing to air pollution and road wear and tear. More and more developed land consists of impermeable surface, exacerbating stormwater runoff issues. This additional pavement also contributes to the urban heat island effect. Over time, the cost of maintaining these spread out and redundant services can be a drain on even the most responsible public entity.

Smart growth, by contrast, describes development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, and infill development within existing neighborhoods rather than in undeveloped areas. Smart growth takes advantage of compact design to create walkable, resilient neighborhoods that preserve the finite open space that lends Shelby County its beauty. It creates distinctive, attractive neighborhoods with a strong sense of place that accommodate residents of all ages and backgrounds. There are two keys to smart growth:

- Directing development toward existing population centers where they can utilize existing community infrastructure; and
- Using compact design that encourages walking and lowers municipal service costs per household.

Smart growth can help the County satisfy development demand without excessive long-term infrastructure obligations and can help maintain its desirable natural features. Shelby County is experiencing growth pressure because it is desirable and fiscally responsible; therefore, the County should invest in development patterns that will maintain desirability and be affordable to maintain for a long period of time.

Sprawl (Current Trends Scenario)

- Average Annual Household Utility Costs: \$4,289 (+6.3%)
- Building Energy Costs: \$2,870 (+0.5%)
- Water Costs: \$1,419 (+20.3%)
- Average Annual Household Auto Costs: \$15,028 (+5.1%)

Smart Growth (Alternate Growth Scenario)

- Average Annual Household Utility Costs: \$4,016 (-0.5%)
- Building Energy Costs: \$2,847 (-0.3%)
- Water Costs: \$1,169 (-0.9%)
- Average Annual Household Auto Costs: \$14,085 (-1.5%)

All figures are from the scenario planning exercise, which is described in greater detail in **Appendix C: Two Future Growth Scenarios**.



Action 11

Encourage residential development types that fit the character of different areas of the County.

Residential types can be developed in a variety of ways. Today, Shelby County is made up of predominantly conventional subdivisions even though the County is composed of a diverse population with different lifestyle needs. In the future, the County should encourage the development of a wider range of residential types such as conservation subdivisions, traditional neighborhood developments, and agricultural friendly subdivisions, alongside conventional subdivisions.

- ✦ Conventional subdivisions are the predominant residential development type in Shelby County today. They are typically composed of residential lots and minimal amounts of public open space. Dimensional requirements, including minimum lot size and buffers are based on requirements of the applicable zoning district. On the Future Development Map, areas labeled as “Suburban Residential” are encouraged to be developed as conventional subdivisions.
- ✦ Traditional neighborhood developments (TNDs) are a mixed-use development anchored by a town center composed of commercial, civic, and a mix of housing types. Traditional neighborhood developments can add to Shelby County’s tax base, help residents meet their daily needs, and preserve community character. An example of a traditional neighborhood development is Mt Laurel. On the Future Development Map, areas labeled “Walkable Neighborhood” are encouraged to be developed as traditional neighborhood developments with a mix of lot sizes and

land uses. For more information about TNDs, see **Action 9** in **Chapter 6: Code Modifications**.

- ✦ Conservation subdivisions typically have more than 40% of open space and preserve natural features as amenities in exchange for flexibility related to minimum lot sizes and housing types. This type of subdivision is encouraged in areas indicated as “Rural Landscape” and “Rural Residential” on the Future Development Map. For more information about conservation subdivisions, see **Action 10** in **Chapter 6: Code Modifications**.
- ✦ Agricultural friendly subdivisions are low-density, typically one dwelling unit on large acre lots, with some clustering to the degree practical given soils and/or utilities on larger homesteading lots that could have some active agricultural uses for non-commercial use. Open space and buffers should be located near working farms and forest. These types of areas are appropriate in areas marked as “Rural Landscape,” “Rural Residential,” and “Farmland.”



Action 12

Preserve and protect existing residential and agricultural areas from adjacent development.

Shelby County residents frequently expressed their love for the County’s small-town feel, including its residential areas and working agricultural land. Preserving and protecting these open spaces and established residential areas is also in line with best planning practices, which recognize that different densities are appropriate in different areas of the County. According to Smart Growth principles, development should naturally “step down” or decrease in intensity as it radiates

Traditional Neighborhood Development

TNDs accommodate all members of the community by including a variety of housing types and encouraging pedestrian movement with interconnected streets, thoughtful public spaces, and neighborhood-appropriate businesses. The TND has a range of benefits over a conventional subdivision because it encourages a range of housing types, provides a mix of land uses, encourages pedestrian movement, and can reduce the amount of required infrastructure.

Successful TNDs include:

- A community anchor that may feature a park, community meeting space, corner store, post office, library, or entertainment center. The community anchor is within a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (5-to-10 minute walk) of homes.
- A range of housing types to attract people of various ages and socioeconomic levels.
- A mix of land uses that support the residential needs including shops, offices, and restaurants.
- Streets that are laid out to form an interconnected grid that reduces traffic congestion by allowing multiple route options. Streets are relatively narrow and are shaded by trees — there are sidewalks and sometimes bike lanes.
- Buildings that are located close to the street, creating a sense of place by framing the sidewalks with street trees and building walls.
- Public parks and civic spaces that bring the community together and serve as a place to relax and recharge with friends and neighbors.

The Town of Mt Laurel is an example of a TND located in the County; while Hampstead is a TND located in Montgomery, Alabama.



Image Credit: DPZ CoDesign



Image Credit: RPCGB



Image Credit: Hampstead Living



Image Credit: Hampstead Living

outward from a “center.” Higher-density residential areas should step down from to lower-density residential areas, to rural areas and then natural areas.

In Shelby County, this means encouraging relatively higher densities in town centers and mixed-use activity areas as well as in neighborhoods adjacent to these areas. Existing agricultural and rural residential areas should be protected from the impacts of future development. To ensure that current and future residents can enjoy their neighborhoods, these areas should be protected from future adjacent development to maintain residents’ quality of life. This can in large part be accomplished by directing future development elsewhere in the County, as this Plan suggests. Residential areas can also benefit from appropriate buffers. The County should ensure that appropriate buffer space, such as undeveloped open space and natural areas, remains between residential areas and any future development.



Action 13

Allow new development in rural areas only when adequate infrastructure and public facilities are in place to accommodate growth and then only at a context and scale appropriate to the locale.

This Comprehensive Plan encourages new development to minimize the conversion of undeveloped land in the rural areas of Shelby County and to maximize the use of existing infrastructure. Growth should not put existing neighborhoods at undue risk of change and should occur where there is adequate existing infrastructure and public facilities to accommodate it (such as roads, water, sewer, fire protection). By encouraging development in existing areas, the County can benefit from a stronger tax base, closer proximity of homes to services

and jobs, increased efficiency of already developed land and infrastructure, and the preservation of prime farmland and open space.



Action 14

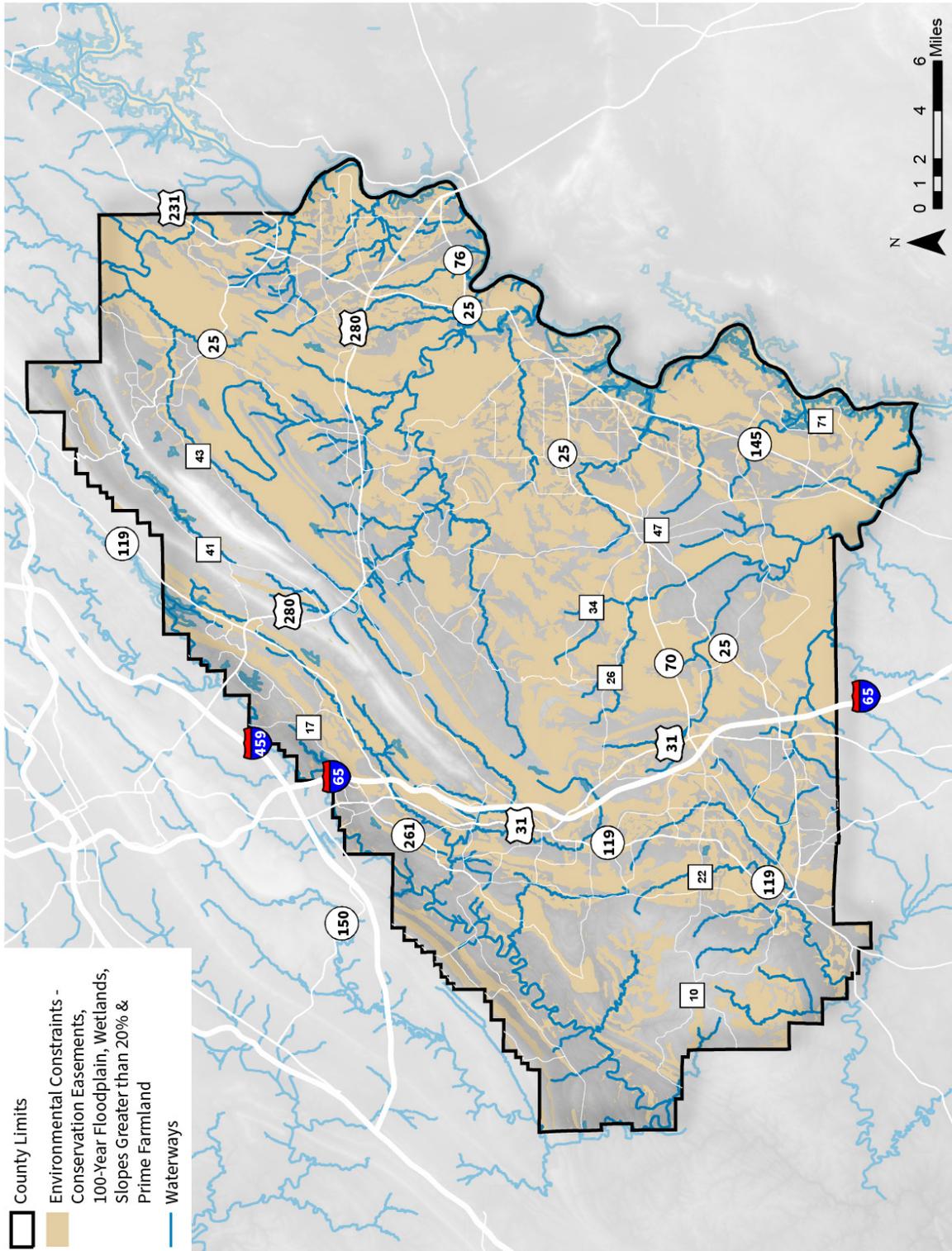
Protect prime farmlands, steep slopes, waterways, and scenic areas from inadvertent damage due to future development / construction.

Shelby County’s small-town character is cherished by its residents. The County should make certain that future development is sensitive to the natural topography, views, drainage patterns, existing vegetation, and agricultural elements that define this character. The County will encourage developments that are sensitive to the natural landforms and that maintain scenic vistas and natural drainage patterns. Proposals involving massive cut and fill alterations that modify the visual character of the area should be discouraged. The County should also ensure all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve and incorporate existing trees into future development plans.



Source: Southeastern Land Group

Figure 4.18: Environmental Constraints Map



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Conservation Subdivisions

The image below depicts two types of development, both occurring on the same site, with the same number of housing units. The image on the left is for a conventional subdivision and the right for a conservation subdivision. As can be seen below, conservation subdivisions “cluster” development on a more compact piece of land, preserving the remainder for outdoor recreation, rural preservation, agriculture, and wildlife habitat.



Image credits: Better Town Toolkit

This type of development has myriad benefits compared to traditional subdivision design. It is easier to travel out of and within, it preserves rural farmland, it is better at managing stormwater and has been shown to have higher property values particularly over time. Ideally, in a conservation subdivision 50 to 70 percent of buildable land is set aside as open space by grouping homes on the developed portion of the land.

Conservation subdivisions are also ideal places to build new amenities such as recreational trails. While residents do not have large individual lots, this is more than made up for by the open space that can be provided to the community through higher density.



Action 15

Support context-sensitive design that preserves rural and small-town character.

Over the next 15 years, the County's focus will be on preserving and protecting unique landscapes, building interconnected vibrant communities, infilling neighborhoods and commercial corridors with context appropriate development, and redevelop targeted commercial and existing mixed-use hubs, creating communities to better serve the needs of the County. The importance of context sensitive design is more important than ever.

Context sensitive design is meant to describe an approach to site layout, landscaping, building design, and transportation infrastructure that seeks to be sensitive to community values. It can include elements such as architectural features that resemble historical structures and local vernacular, site design that reduces impacts on historic structures, integrated open space, and preservation of unique natural features such as heritage trees and mature forests. In the future, new development should demonstrate design principles that preserve rural and small-town character.



Action 16

Promote the use of conservation easements.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land to protect its conservation values. It allows the property owner to continue to own and use the land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. When a property owner donates a conservation easement to a land trust, they give up some of the development rights

associated with the land. For example, some owners might give up the right to build additional structures, while retaining the right to grow crops. Future owners also will be bound by the easement's terms. The land trust is responsible for making sure the easement's terms are followed.

Conservation easements offer great flexibility. An easement on property containing rare wildlife habitat might prohibit any development, for example, while one on a farm might allow continued farming and the building of additional agricultural structures. An easement may apply to just a portion of the property and need not require public access.

A landowner sometimes sells a conservation easement, but usually easements are donated. If the donation benefits the public by permanently protecting important conservation resources and meets other federal tax code requirements, it can qualify as a tax-deductible charitable donation. The amount of the donation is the difference between the land's value with the easement and its value without the easement, but it is important to note that placing an easement on a property may or may not result in property tax savings.

A conservation easement can be essential for passing land on to the next generation. By removing the land's development potential, the easement lowers its market value, which in turn lowers estate tax. Whether the easement is donated during life or by will, it can make a critical difference in conservation efforts (source: www.freshwaterlandtrust.org).



Action 17

Encourage developers to phase development projects to reduce environmental and stormwater impacts, to reduce mass grade impacts to the landscape, to protect water quality, and to reduce the impact to the surrounding community.



Action 18

Periodically review the Future Development Map and make land use map amendments to keep it aligned with evolving market and growth patterns.

Housing



Action 19

Encourage the development of a variety of housing types for households of all configurations and lifestyles.

When it comes to housing, one size does not fit all. A healthy community accommodates a variety of people, backgrounds, and lifestyles, including first responders, managers, janitors, teachers, seniors or retirees, young professionals, and those living with disabilities. Today, homes in Shelby County are affordable, but choices are limited. In 2021, 36% of all homes in Shelby County were valued between \$100,000-\$200,000 and approximately 80% of the entire housing stock in Shelby County was composed of single-family homes. This lack of housing choices is a direct result of past market trends, flexible building practices, and existing zoning regulations.

While the County cannot control the housing market, it can adopt modifications to the Zoning Ordinance (see **Actions 9 to 13 in Chapter 6: Code Modifications**) to expand housing choices and improve the quality of housing being developed. In addition, a change from this dominant single-family development pattern will require a diversity of housing choices, including estates, garden homes, townhomes, condos, live-work units, mixed-use buildings and others that cater to the preferences of all residents. Housing diversity offers the following benefits:

- ✘ **Economic development:** Diverse housing options at a variety of price points are critical to the local economy, as they improve the ability of businesses to recruit and retain employees that match required skill sets.
- ✘ **Long-term economic stability:** Research has shown that communities with more variety in housing types have lower foreclosure rates in the long run¹. Like a diversified investment portfolio, a community needs a broad range of housing choices in order to weather unpredictable economic cycles.
- ✘ **Accommodating our aging population:** As Shelby County’s proportion of senior citizens rises, so too will the demand for housing options that can accommodate them. Having a variety of housing choices that address a broad spectrum of income levels and lifestyle choices will allow Shelby County seniors to remain in their homes and keep contributing to their community.
- ✘ **Sustaining Families:** Shelby County is a family-oriented community of communities, and diverse housing options support the health and well-being of children and families. When housing needs are appropriately met, children are more likely to be healthy

¹ Chakroborty & McMillan, 2018. Journal of Planning Education and Research. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0739456X18810787>

and perform well in school, and parents are more likely to participate in the workforce.



Action 20

Encourage traditional neighborhood developments that offer a variety of housing choices.

In order to help provide a variety of housing choices as discussed in **Action 19** of this chapter, the County should encourage traditional neighborhood developments that include a variety of home sizes, types, and densities. This can be accomplished through creating a new Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) zoning district as discussed in **Action 9** of **Chapter 6: Code Modifications**. Zoning regulations can be effective methods for promoting walkable, sustainable neighborhoods that meet the needs of Shelby County's residents.

TND is a planning technique that replicates the enduring and historic development patterns found in American cities and applies these patterns to new development. Unlike conventional sprawling subdivisions, TNDs offer compact, pedestrian-friendly development with a mix of land uses that can reduce reliance on automobiles. They accommodate all members of the community by including a variety of housing types and encouraging pedestrian movement with interconnected streets, thoughtful public spaces, and neighborhood-appropriate businesses. Their compact design requires less infrastructure per household, lowering future maintenance obligations on taxpayers. Development adhering to these principles can lead to vibrant, memorable neighborhoods that form the backbone of a community's life and identity.

Successful TNDs include the following design principles:

- ✘ A neighborhood center composed of a mix of commercial, residential, civic or institutional, and open space uses is within a ½ mile (10-minute walk or less) of the residential areas depending on the scale of the neighborhood.
- ✘ A mix of residential land uses provides a variety of housing types for residents of various ages and socioeconomic levels. These may include single-family detached dwellings, duplexes, townhomes, multi-family dwellings, independent and assisted living facilities, and accessory dwelling units on single-family lots.
- ✘ The mix of uses should support the essential needs of immediate residents, including shops, offices, and restaurants.
- ✘ Buildings should front the street, creating a sense of place by framing the sidewalks with street trees and building walls.
- ✘ A system of relatively narrow, interconnected streets with sidewalks and bikeways that offer multiple routes for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists should provide for the connections of those streets to existing and future developments.
- ✘ Significant environmental features are incorporated into the design. These may include greenways / trails, protected natural areas, neighborhood or community parks, streams, ponds, and other water bodies, and stormwater detention / retention facilities.



Action 21

Encourage the development of viable senior housing options.

In 2021, residents ages 55 and older made up approximately 28% of the population of Shelby County. To accommodate an aging population, more viable housing choices at all affordability levels will need to be made available. To enable older adults and those people with special needs to remain in Shelby County for as long as possible, the County should work with the development community to encourage the construction of more senior living options that are affordable and accessible.

Housing types include assisted living facilities, independent living facilities, nursing homes, continuum care retirement communities, townhouses and condominiums, or a combination thereof. The co-housing concept consists of multiple individually owned housing units that are oriented around a common open area and a common house.

Other suggestions:

- ✦ Consider incentives for Universal Design and Visitability. Universal design features enable occupants to live in a dwelling regardless of their level of ability or disability. Features include stepless entrances, accessible bathroom fixtures and kitchen appliances. Visitability is a design approach for new homes guided by the principle that a non-resident in a wheelchair should be able to visit.
- ✦ Consider allowing pocket neighborhoods, co-housing and other forms of housing that appeal to seniors near town centers.



Action 22

Encourage any new multi-family developments to be built as a component of mixed-use developments or within the “Mixed-use Centers” as designated on the Future Development Map.

When multi-family housing is included as a component of a mixed-use development, a greater amount of residential units can be placed in a concentrated area that not only helps to provide financial support to the commercial components of the mixed-use neighborhood, but also adds vibrancy to the development. In addition, mixed-use developments that include multi-family housing help to accommodate residents of all ages and stages of life.



Action 23

Encourage the incorporation of affordable and workforce housing in new developments.

According to the Affordability Gap Analysis performed as a part of this Comprehensive Plan (see pages **18-23** of **Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends**), the County has a shortage of owner-occupied housing valued between \$374,674 and \$468,343, and a shortage of renter-occupied housing units valued across all household incomes. This is likely due to the preference to build single-family units over multi-family units. According to HUD’s State of the Cities Database that tracks building permits, only 450 multi-family units were built between 2010 and 2019 in Shelby County; compared to 8,704 single-family structures that were built. In the future, the County should encourage the incorporation of affordable workforce housing in new developments to meet residents’ rising demand.



Action 24

Encourage developers to partner with other developers specializing in affordable and accessible housing such as Habitat for Humanity or other nonprofit builders.

According to the Affordability Gap Analysis performed as a part of this Comprehensive Plan (see **pages 18-23 of Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends**), there is a great need for more affordable rental housing in the County. In fact, the most recent data shows a substantial shortage of rental options across all household incomes. The lack of affordable rental units is not isolated to just Shelby County — it is an issue that is found across the region, and demand is rising nationwide. Financing and developing affordable housing can be challenging. Oftentimes, affordable housing projects involve more planning and entail greater risks than similar market-rate projects due to the layers of financing required. Some of the most creative affordable housing solutions arise from innovative collaborations among governmental agencies, private companies, and nonprofit groups. Collaboration enables developers and their partners to share/offset the financial risks, allowing them to pursue these projects and produce successful communities. This Plan encourages commercial developers to partner with other developers and nonprofits that specialize in affordable and accessible housing on future opportunities to increase the number of affordable rental units across the County and provide creativity in design, open space, and nonexclusive rental properties.



Source: Nathan Watson



Source: Johnson Design Group



Source: OC Housing Authority

chapter five

Infill Development



“My big idea is that Shelby County would become an all-inclusive community with mixed use areas and greenbelts that encourage walkability to improve residents’ health and air quality, and cultural events and recreational opportunities to enrich their lives.” - Shelby County Resident



**Ten Planning Patterns that Support
Infill Development.....120**

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.....130**



Infill Development



Source: Google Earth

Development in Shelby County has historically followed the post-WWII pattern of suburban sprawl, resulting in people living and working farther away from each other and from the places where they want to play and shop. In turn, this has led to longer travel times, traffic congestion, and a lack of walkable places. Shelby County is projected to experience substantial growth in population, homes, and jobs over the lifetime of this Plan and must accommodate this growth somehow. A choice exists between following the historical pattern or promoting innovative solutions and investing in better growth strategies.

Increasing density in developed areas can prove to be a much more efficient use of infill space than typical development patterns. It may seem counterintuitive, but strategically adding density within already developed areas will preserve the County's cherished landscape. Every home or commercial space that is added to an already developed area represents open space that is preserved elsewhere. Infill development is a tool to counteract the cycle of disinvestment which has threatened some activity centers. The term "infill development" relates to construction in a pre-built area, often using vacant land or underutilized sites (such as parking lots) and can involve the revitalization of existing buildings.

Infill development was also something the residents of Shelby County have voiced as a priority. During the survey associated with the development of this Plan, when asked "If new commercial development were to occur in your area, which of the following development strategies would you prefer?" 45% of survey respondents stated they would prefer to "focus on redeveloping underutilized properties." Infill development is about reversing the negative aspects of sprawl. The promotion of infill development thus represents an opportunity to ensure that new development creates more vibrant, walkable, and livable places while insulating natural areas from development pressure.

“I would like to see empty space re-purposed and utilized rather than trees clear cut and new buildings added.”

- Shelby County Resident



Source: Loopnet



Source: 58 INC

This chapter begins with a list of ten planning patterns that support infill development followed by a range of strategies to encourage infill development, which should be adopted in regulatory documents or incorporated into site plans and land use decisions. The chapter ends with the illustration of example infill development concepts in four different areas across the County.

This Infill Development chapter includes the seven sections shown below:

- Ten Planning Patterns that Support Infill Development
- Strategies to Encourage Infill Development
- Assessing Properties across the County for Potential Redevelopment
- Example Infill Development Concept: CR-52 at CR-93
- Example Infill Development Concept: Within the Town of Shelby
- Example Infill Development Concept: Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road
- Example Infill Development Concept: US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnivant Valley Road)

Ten Planning Patterns that Support Infill Development

The following planning patterns are designed to support infill development at different development scales, from large centers to individual parcels. The County should consider the feasibility of incorporating these land uses into its land use regulations where appropriate:



Source: SHODEEN Group



Source: RPCGB



Source: Ranch Office



Mixed-Use Buildings

- Description:** This refers to a mix of uses within a single building. Buildings along main streets typically have commercial space on the ground floor with office or residential space above, but ground-floor residential should be permitted. Ground-floor commercial facing the street should have entryway and window glazing requirements to encourage transparency and a sense of place.
- Role:** Mixed-use buildings minimize regulatory barriers to changing uses within a building. They also support active commercial areas, downtowns and town centers by allowing a mix of uses in a small footprint.



Flex-Use Space

- Description:** Flex-use refers to buildings or spaces designed to accommodate a wide range of tenants. Each is designed to suit a broad sector. An industrial flex building is designed to be suitable for commercial, research, and light industrial uses, while a flex-use space on the first floor of a building may accommodate retail, office, or even residential uses. Partition walls allow rapid reconfiguration of interior space.

- **Role:** Because they are designed to be suitable for a wide variety of uses, they can have low vacancy rates and continued occupation even if one tenant moves out.



On-Street Parking

- **Description:** This refers to public parking spaces located along the street. Parallel parking results in a smaller amount of the street right-of-way section being devoted to parking and typically gives drivers greater sight lines.
- **Role:** On-street parking creates a barrier between the street and sidewalk, promoting “safety” and comfort for pedestrians. Best practices call for businesses to be able to count the on-street parking along their frontage toward their required on-site parking minimums.



Source: Loopnet



Source: RPCGB



Parking Behind

- **Description:** This refers to new commercial or residential developments with parking located to the rear of the building, not between the building and the street.
- **Role:** Locating parking behind new commercial and residential developments makes it possible for buildings to have a clear relationship with the street or sidewalk and to each other. This creates a sense of place within new developments and encourages people to walk between uses.



Source: RPCGB



Complete Streets & Road Diets

- **Description:** This planning model calls for streets to include adequate space for bicyclists, sidewalks or pedestrian paths, safe crosswalks, and traffic calming measures. In commercial areas, Complete Streets include street trees, awnings, and overhangs for protection from the elements.
- **Role:** Complete Streets create a comfortable environment for people traveling by any mode, which promotes vibrancy and high activity levels.



Source: RPCGB



Underground Utilities

- **Description:** This refers to electrical and telecommunications wires buried underground, typically in trenches along the right-of-way.
- **Role:** Underground utilities eliminate clutter and promote resiliency. Utility corridors allow for organized infrastructure to maximize efficient use of space.

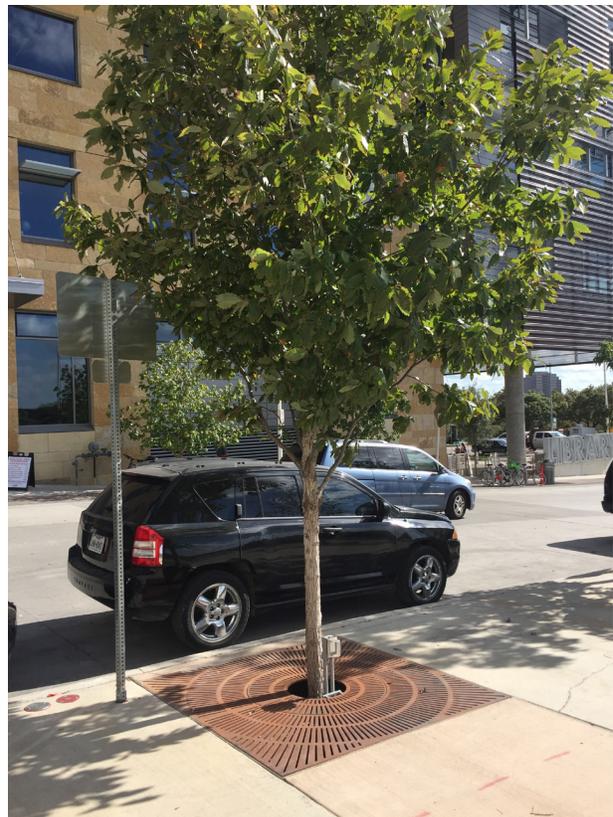


Source: www.Charmeck.org



Street Trees

- **Description:** These are trees planted at regular intervals along the street, typically between the sidewalk and street. They should be large enough at maturity to provide ample shade.
- **Role:** Street trees provide shade in hot weather and allow pedestrians to continue using the public realm year-round. Depending on orientation, they can reduce solar gain on nearby frontages and reduce utility bills.



Source: RPCGB



Source: Loopnet



Source: Urban Nashville



Source: RPCGB



Source: Greater Alabama MLS



Upper Story Residential

- **Description:** These are one- or two-story apartments or condos in a multi-story building, often located above ground-floor retail or office space. Live-work units are arranged the same way and allow business owners to live and work in the same building.
- **Role:** When zoning permits it, upper-story residential uses allow existing property owners to maximize the use of their property, which promotes continued building occupancy.



Connected Townhomes

- **Description:** These are attached homes, typically two stories, with each home having a separate entry from its connected neighbors. Garages should be located on the rear and may be detached.
- **Role:** Connected townhomes are designed to provide households with ample living space in a more walkable setting. These fit well within mixed-use developments.



Bungalows & Garden Homes

- **Description:** These homes are one- or one-and-a-half-stories with a deep porch and pitched roof located on a small or medium size lot. They are typically clad in siding or wood, but rarely brick. They have an attached or detached garage to the side or behind.
- **Role:** These are excellent candidates for residential infill.

Strategies to Encourage Infill Development

Infill development will be most successful when carried out at all scales, from larger developments down to individual buildings. Regulatory and policy changes can direct development to more developed areas of the County, as well as to vacant or underutilized spaces within those areas. Employing and encouraging the following strategies in concert with one another will allow infill development to arrest the cycle of sprawl and spur reinvestment in our communities.



Strategy 1

Consider streamlining the regulatory framework by allowing by-right development for appropriate uses and building types, particularly in cases with a high frequency of conditional use or rezoning applications.

By-right development refers to land uses and patterns that are deemed permissible without needing to apply for and receive additional permits, such as conditional use permits. This streamlines the development process. Heightened requirements can still be added through other means without requiring additional permits. A high frequency of conditional use or rezoning applications for a specific use or pattern could indicate that permitting by-right development could incentivize development that the market is prepared to supply.



Strategy 2

Consider requiring the underground placement of utilities in large-scale redevelopment projects.

Aboveground utility wires and overhead utility wires are unsightly and may make the electrical system prone to outages during storms. Because relocating utilities underground provides aesthetic benefits by reducing visual clutter, it is similar to other aesthetically beneficial investments such as streetscape improvements. Infill redevelopment presents an opportunity to invest in reliability and aesthetics by placing these utilities underground.

Underground utilities should be considered for all development projects that meet certain size thresholds. For example, it would not be feasible to require a single-family home redevelopment project to relocate utilities underground, but it may be desirable to require it of large-scale commercial projects such as a commercial strip center redevelopment. Along with the County and developers, relevant parties include the utility provider and road right-of-way holder. For more information about how underground utilities may be required in new developments, please see **Action 7 in Chapter 6: Code Modifications.**



Source: Oppidan



Strategy 3

Consider allowing higher-density residential uses near or within targeted infill development sites.

Infill development promises more efficient use of infrastructure, the preservation of open space, and the creation of more walkable places. These benefits can be realized through new residential developments if they are compactly built and include housing types such as townhomes, duplexes, and small-lot single-family homes. These infill housing varieties can be put in place as a complement to adjacent uses, maintaining the predominately single-family characteristics of a neighborhood and preserving nearby open space that may otherwise have been developed. Following these guidelines allows places to develop into more resilient and vibrant neighborhoods.

The County is also encouraged to allow higher density residential uses near or within targeted infill development sites, such as identified mixed-use development, as well as allowing slightly higher intensities for infill projects within residential areas. This could create the type of blended residential area of single-family homes, duplexes, and townhomes that has created such pleasant, long-lasting neighborhoods in cities across the region. As with other infill projects, these would allow for more open space to be preserved and for services to be used more efficiently.

For more information about the housing types discussed here, see the ten planning patterns that support infill development on **pages 122-124** in this chapter. For more information about Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs) component/ district that would support compact and walkable neighborhoods, please see **Action 9 in Chapter 6: Code Modifications**.



Source: RPCGB



Source: Zillow



Source: RPCGB



Source: Apartment Guide



Strategy 4

Allow and encourage the development of surface parking and vacant lots into commercial uses.

Many commercial uses have been developed with excess parking, which consumes valuable urban land and often sits empty. One major tool for infill is to reclaim parking for people and buildings. This requires modifying parking requirements to allow new uses to be built without requiring more excess parking. The same guidelines apply to developing vacant lots for which the highest and best use often consists of people-centered uses over parking. To facilitate these transitions, Shelby County can:

- **Right-size parking requirements:** Zoning ordinances have traditionally required far more parking than is necessary. For more information on right-size parking requirements, please see **Action 4 in Chapter 6: Code Modifications.**
- **Reduce parking requirements for infill development:** Many communities have found success by allowing reduced parking requirements for infill development. These policies work well in tandem with shared parking requirements.
- **Facilitate outparcel development:** Much of this development should occur on outparcels. The County should encourage developers to split parcels to create outparcels where needed.
- **Build-to lines:** These lines run parallel to the street or sidewalk and determine where the front façade must be located. This replaces front setback requirements and creates commercial spaces that front the corridor. Parking is typically located to the rear, although it is common for one bay of parking to be placed in front.

For a successful example of infill development in Alabama, see the **callout box on page 126.**



Source: *Sprawl Repair Manual* by Galina Tachieva of DPZ CoDesign

SPRAWL REPAIR TOOLKIT: GAS STATION EXTENSION



Source: *Sprawl Repair Manual* by Galina Tachieva of DPZ CoDesign



Strategy 5

Locate new development close to existing infrastructure.

Because of its proximity to existing development and accompanying infrastructure such as roads and utility lines, infill development generally maximizes efficient use of the established infrastructure system. New development should be directed in accordance with the Future Development Map, which calls for additional development and redevelopment in areas such as Employment Centers, Mixed-Use Centers, and Rural Crossroads. Directing development to these areas minimizes the costs both to the County and to developers to provide and maintain public services.



Strategy 6

Encourage developers to include pedestrian access improvements in development proposals.

During the infill development process, developers may be required to provide access improvements that facilitate entry to the site. Access improvements such as driveways or roadway extensions prioritize vehicles but are not always welcoming to people arriving by other modes. Tailoring access improvements to pedestrians and cyclists creates more walkable vibrant spaces, which in turn benefits retailers¹. The County should encourage developers to include pedestrian access improvements, such as sidewalk or trail extensions, in development proposals.



Strategy 7

Evaluate tools for growth management.

Growth management refers to a set of tools with a common goal: to influence how and where growth and development occur to serve a municipality's long-term interests. It is a proactive and forward-thinking way of managing/running/governance since it guides future growth before growth occurs rather than reacting to it after the fact. Growth management seeks to direct growth to desired areas where infrastructure is in place or planned to accommodate development.

Without growth management policies, a community is at risk of sprawl and inefficient use of infrastructure. Unplanned growth can add more demand for facilities and services such as water, sewer, and street systems, which cost the municipality and its taxpayers more in the long run than if it directed development in an orderly way.

Regulatory tools to help manage growth management include:

- Growth phasing
- Adequate public facilities (AFP) ordinances
- Impact fees (Capital improvement fees)

¹ Alfonzo M. and Leinberger C.B., 2012. Walk This Way: The Economic Promise of Walkable Places in Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Report. Accessed 8/31/2022. www.brookings.edu/research/walk-this-way-the-economic-promise-of-walkable-places-in-metropolitan-washington-d-c/

Renew Opelika Road: Auburn, Alabama

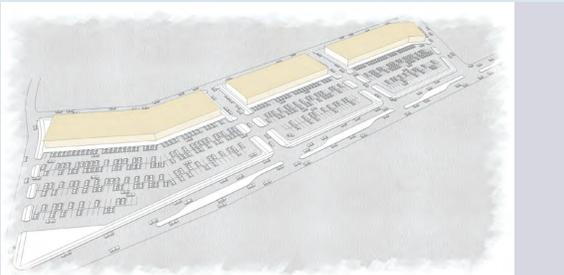
One example to consider is the Auburn Mall along the Opelika Road corridor in the City of Auburn. Following the recommendations in their 2011 *CompPlan 2030*, the City adopted the Renew Opelika Road Plan in 2013, a corridor plan focused on revitalizing a critical commercial corridor. The fading Opelika Road corridor was under ALDOT jurisdiction, so the City worked to take ownership to ensure it would be able to guide development.

One major intersection of this corridor was anchored by Auburn Mall, which followed the typical suburban development pattern and was surrounded by an abundance of parking. Well-timed streetscape improvements and involvement from the area-specific Opelika Road Merchants Association facilitated commercial reinvestment, and the City laid the groundwork for this new development to fill in existing but mostly empty parking lots.

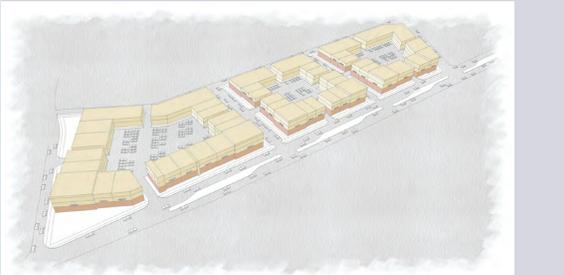
Outparcels composed of parking lots were developed into commercial uses on both sides of Opelika Road, but particularly on the excess parking location of the site of Auburn Mall. Outparcel development also occurred on the mall site along secondary roads. The new corridor development was composed of street-facing retail uses lining Opelika Road. To accommodate new uses, the City reduced parking requirements and allowed shared-use parking for non-overlapping uses. Cross access was maintained between sites, and no new driveway curb cuts were permitted. Planners also removed front setback requirements and established build-to lines fronting Opelika Road. This ensured that new storefronts fronted the corridor with only one bay of parking between structures and the road. All of these policy interventions have worked together to help continue revitalization along the corridor.



Source: City of Auburn



Temple Street center illustrating "business as usual"



Temple Street center illustrating how retail might front onto Opelika Road



Temple Street center illustrating parking along Opelika Road and side streets

Source: City of Auburn and Design Workshop

Did you know?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Sustainable Communities has published the following series of guidance reports on infill development that are available for free download at www.epa.gov/smartgrowth:

- Smart Growth and Economic Success: Investing in Infill Development
- Smart Growth and Economic Success: Benefits for Real Estate Developers, Investors, Business, and Local Governments
- Smart Growth and Economic Success: Strategies for Local Governments
- Smart Growth and Economic Success: The Business Case



Strategy 8

Explore a variety of financing tools for funding new developments and redevelopment.

Please see **Action 12** in **Chapter 10: Economic Development**.



Strategy 9

Utilize the public realm as an economic development asset.

Please see **Action 2** in **Chapter 10: Economic Development**.



Strategy 10

Encourage updates to Utility Master Plans.

Utility master plans are typically focused on a utility corridor or specific area, such as a mixed-use development or an area receiving reinvestment and infill development. These plans bring together information from all utilities serving the area, including:

- Water
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Electricity
- Natural gas
- Broadband internet
- Cellular coverage

Shelby County does not provide all of the utilities listed, with some being provided by private businesses, municipalities, or both; however, the County is encouraged to actively support utility master plans in areas where it does provide utility service. This support may include sharing data, facilitating communication among providers, or even recommending these plans to developers working in areas under its jurisdiction.

Topics may vary by plan, but the following topics are typically covered for each utility:

- Capacity
- Major maintenance schedule
- Use projections
- Capacity expansion and installation

These items are cross-referenced to find issues of concern, inefficiencies to be

corrected, and plan for end-of-life-cycle replacements and capacity expansions. Utility master plans ensure that capacity exists for these interrelated systems and that all providers are using the same set of projections for capacity expansion. These plans are increasingly important as more services are considered infrastructure. Broadband internet, for example, commonly includes underground fiber or aboveground 5G towers, both of which have only recently been deployed at scale.

Assessing Properties across the County for Potential Redevelopment

To identify parcels across Shelby County with redevelopment potential, this Plan employed a process using property appraiser parcel data. First, all parcels across the county were selected, except for those designated as agricultural or parks and open space uses. This selection was refined to only include parcels containing buildings built or renovated after 1970. The final criteria was to select the parcels that had an Improvement Value to Land Value Ratio (I/L ratio) of less than one. This ratio is calculated using the assessed value of a parcel's improvements (buildings or other structures) divided by the assessed value of the land. Parcels with a low I/L ratio represent those that are underutilized and, thus, are more likely to have redevelopment potential.

The following I/L ratio thresholds are a general rule of thumb:

- An I/L ratio of less than 1 means the parcel's improvements are worth less than the value of the land. This means that the land is worth more than the existing improvements.
- An I/L ratio of 1 to 2.5 means the parcel's improvements are worth up to 2.5 times as much as the value of the land.
- An I/L ratio of greater than 2.5 means the parcel's improvements are worth more than 2.5 times the value of the land.

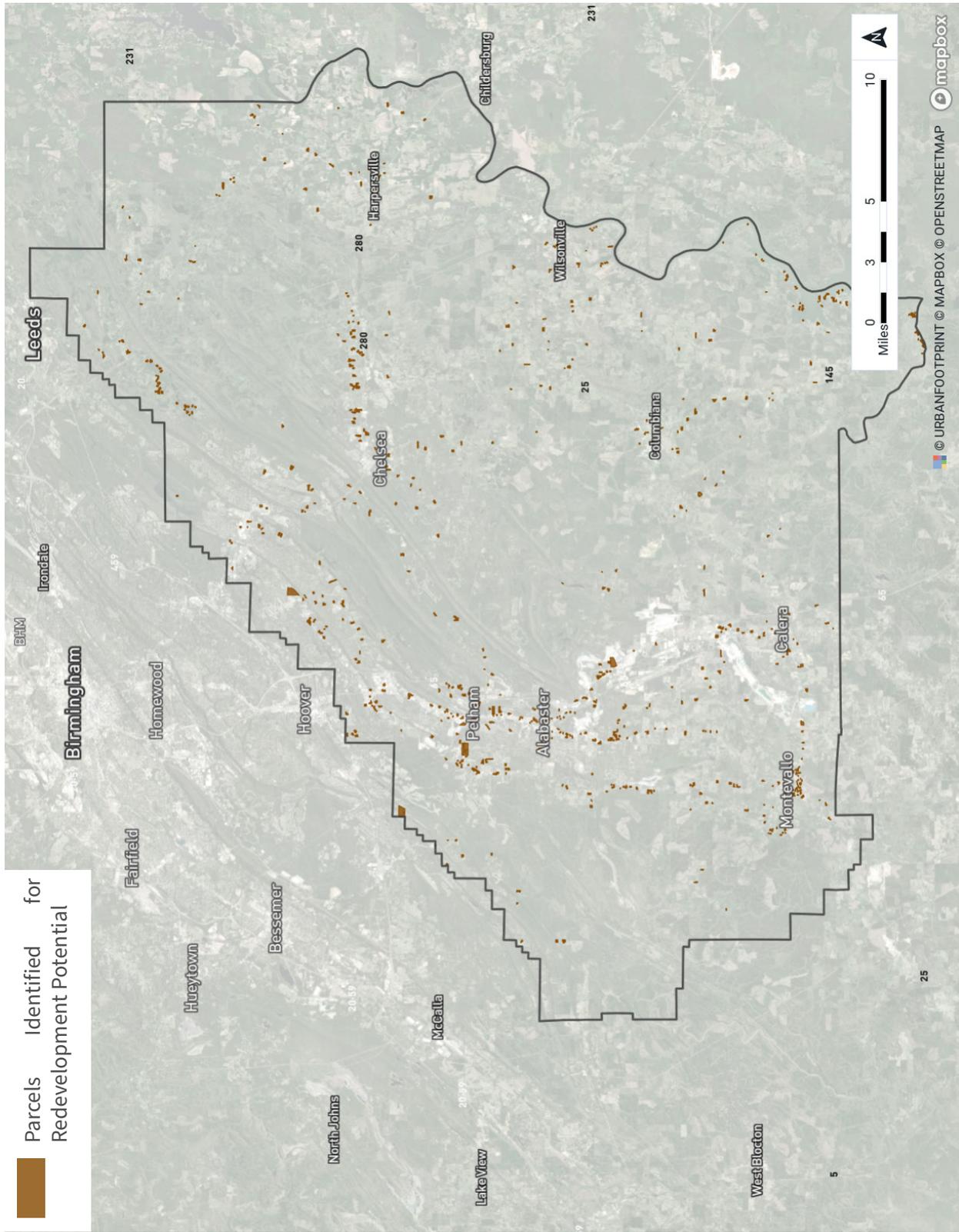
Figure 5.1 shows the 909 parcels across Shelby County that were identified for redevelopment potential after being examined through the selection criteria described above. In total, these parcels account for approximately 15,000 acres, and included 818 residential parcels and 91 non-residential parcels. A majority of the non-residential parcels are found along major corridors and in downtown areas.

After analyzing the properties shown in **Figure 5.1**, four sites were selected across the county to analyze further. The four sites include:

- Example Infill Development Concept for CR-52 at CR-93
- Example Infill Development Concept for the Town of Shelby
- Example Infill Development Concept for Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road
- Example Infill Development Concept for US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnavant Valley Road)

It is important to note that each site has its own unique challenges and would need to be studied further if a project were to be built. Example Infill concepts are shown on **pages 130 to 141**.

Figure 5.1: Parcels in Shelby County with Redevelopment Potential



Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

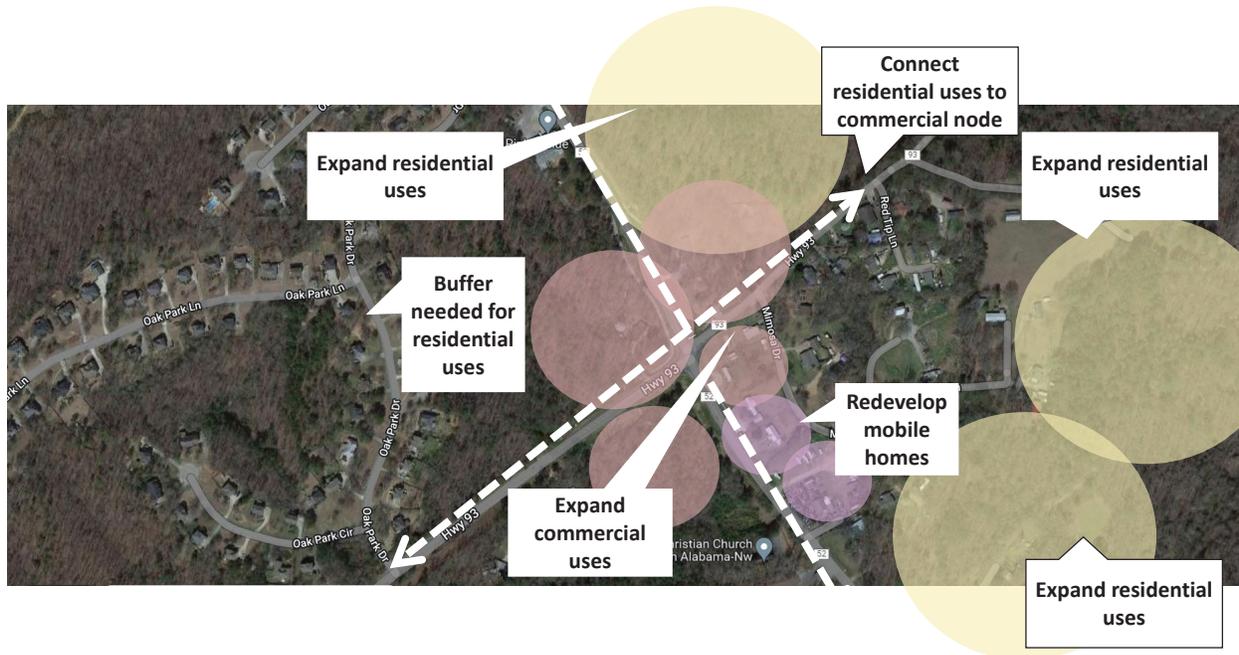
Example Infill Development Concept: CR-52 at CR-93

Figure 5.2: Redevelopment Potential for CR-52 at CR-93

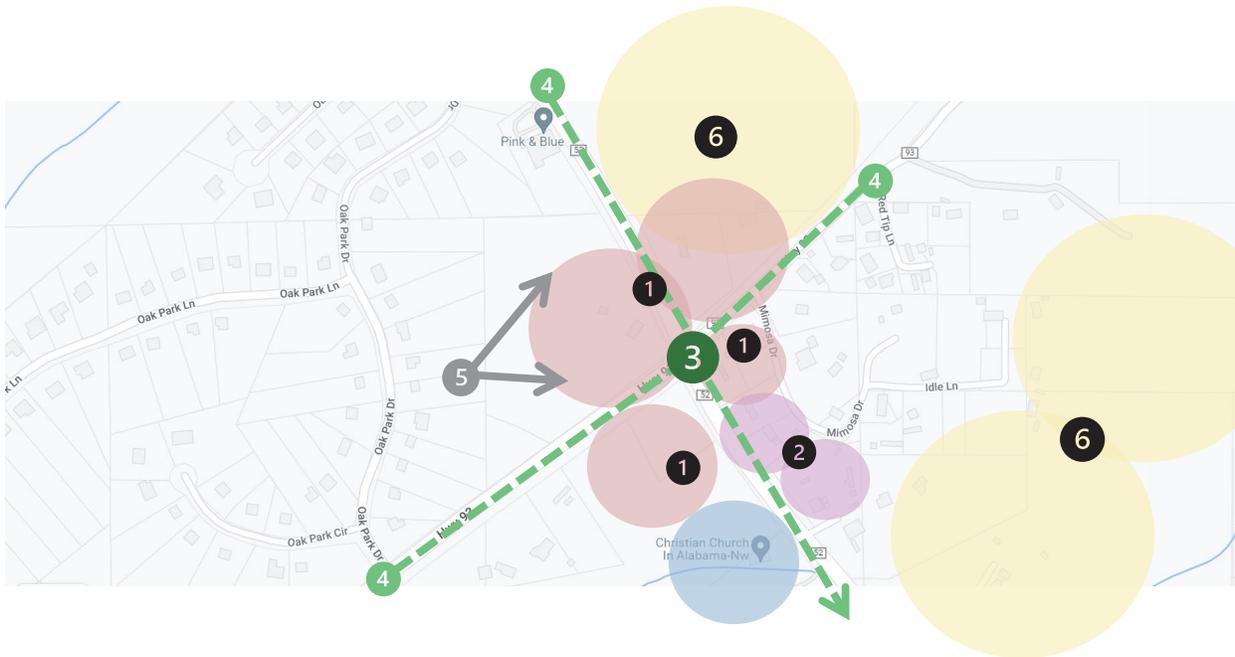


Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

Figure 5.3: Existing Conditions for CR-52 at CR-93



Source: Google and RPCGB

Figure 5.4: Recommendations for CR-52 at CR-93

Source: Google and RPCGB

Recommendations for CR-52 at CR-93:

1. Encourage the development of a community commercial node at the intersection of CR-52 and CR-93. New development should utilize context sensitive design to ensure that it “fits in” instead of sticking out. New development should face the street, be composed of durable materials, and provide plenty of natural light. Commercial uses are encouraged to provide outdoor dining and engage with the street. Parking should be primarily located in the side or rear of the development.
2. Rezone and redevelop existing residential uses (currently mobile homes) along CR-52 to live-work units, townhomes, or small-scale mixed-use.
3. Explore the feasibility of constructing pedestrian improvements at this intersection
4. Work with ALDOT, the Shelby County Highway Department, the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, and property owners to construct a multi-use greenway on one side of CR-52 and CR-93 to connect residents to the new development.
5. Ensure residential development is buffered appropriately from new development.
6. Ensure the commercial development provides adequate buffering and screening from residential development.

Using the Urban Footprint platform, the planning team simulated this infill development to find out how many homes, people, and jobs the County might gain (see **Figure 5.5** and **Figure 5.6**). These are estimates and certain development choices, such as retail vs. office or type of home, may result in different projections.

Figure 5.5: Infill Redevelopment Potential for CR-52 at CR-93



Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

Figure 5.6: CR-52 at CR-93 By the Numbers

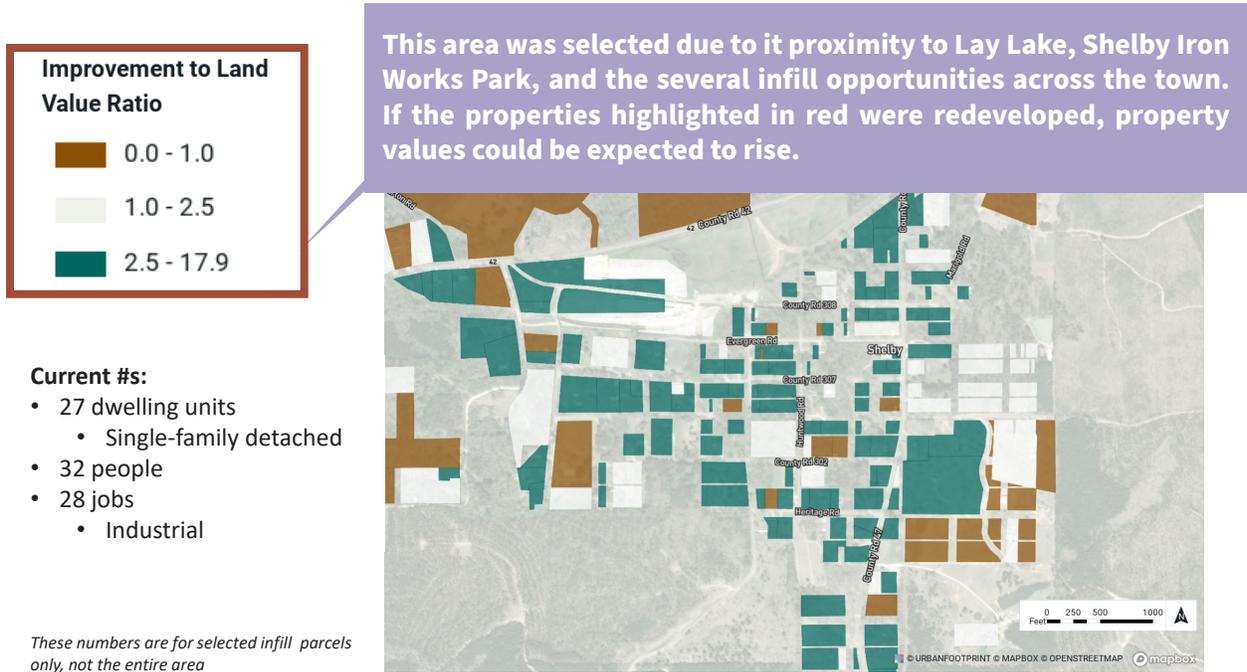
	 Housing Units	 People	 Employment
Before Infill:	9	36	4
Infill Adds:	+ 35	+ 85	+ 374
Resulting in:	44	121	378

These numbers are for selected infill parcels only, not the entire area

Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

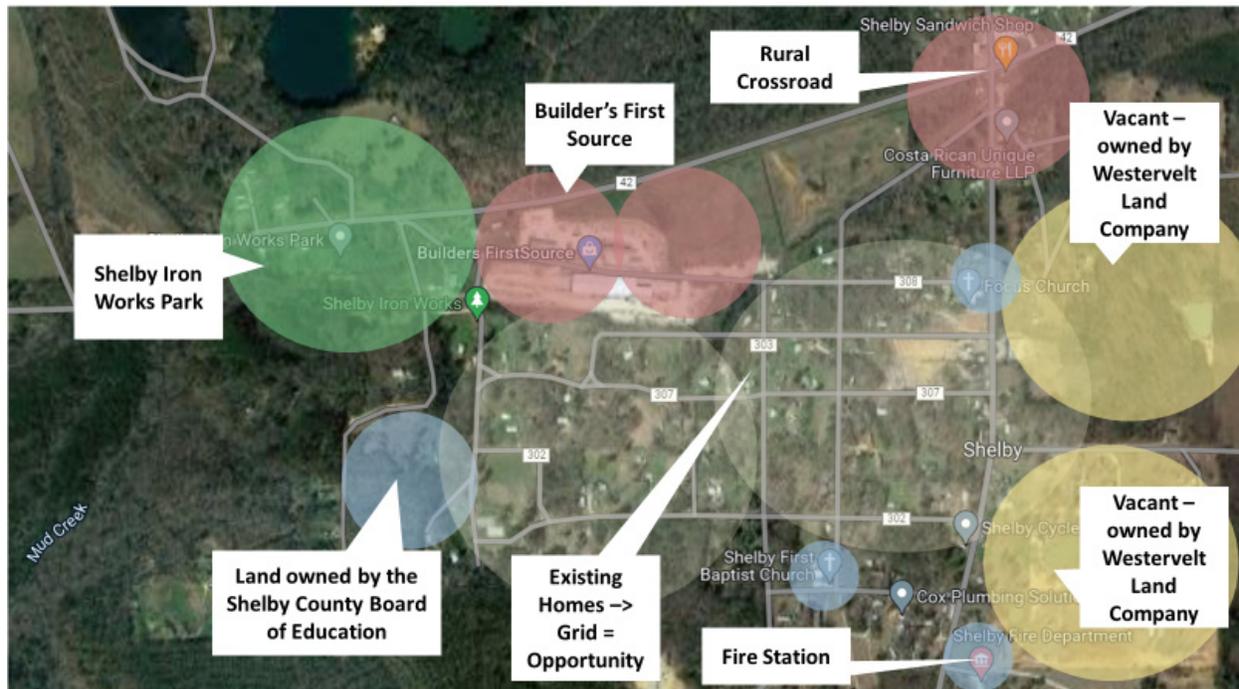
Example Infill Development Concept: Town of Shelby

Figure 5.7: Redevelopment Potential within the Town of Shelby



Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

Figure 5.8: Existing Conditions within the Town of Shelby



Source: Google and RPCGB

Figure 5.9: Recommendations for the Town of Shelby



Source: Google and RPCGB

Recommendations for the Town of Shelby

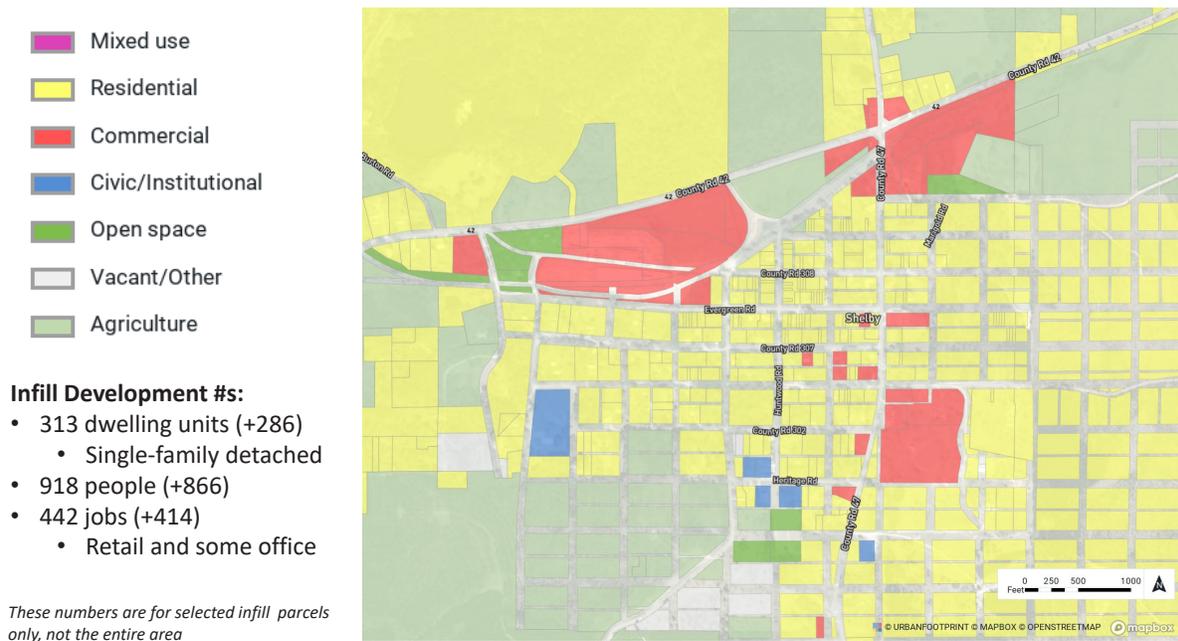
1. Develop wayfinding to direct visitors to park and the Town.
2. Make park improvements, such as interactive signage and an audio/historical guide. Improve the Shelby Iron Works website and continue to hold events.
3. Focus on recruiting businesses to fill the vacant corner of the intersection. Existing businesses include Shelby Sandwich Shop, Exxon, and Citgo. Work with businesses to implement aesthetic improvements.
4. Capitalize on proximity to Lay Lake — signage, restaurants, lodge, boat/ rental related activities.
5. Make connections to the existing grid network. Encourage new construction to front the street and average setbacks with adjacent development. Large

parking areas should be directed to the side or rear of the building.

6. Work with the Westervelt Land Company to develop residential homes to the east of CR-47. New development should utilize traditional neighborhood design guidelines.
7. Work with the Board of Education to develop a new elementary school on their property along School Road — to replace the worn-out school on CR-47.
8. As the Town develops, more commercial development may be needed. Encourage new community commercial development at key nodes including CR-42 and CR-46, and CR-42 and School Road.

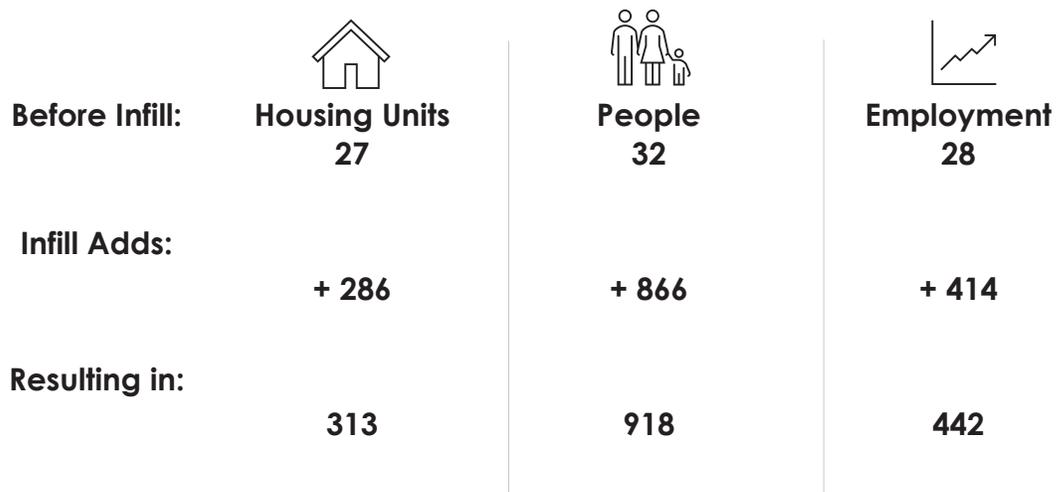
Using the Urban Footprint platform, the planning team simulated this infill development to find out how many homes, people, and jobs the County might gain (see **Figure 5.10** and **Figure 5.11**). These are estimates and certain development choices, such as retail vs. office or type of home, may result in different projections.

Figure 5.10: Infill Redevelopment Potential for the Town of Shelby



Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

Figure 5.11: Town of Shelby By the Numbers



These numbers are for selected infill parcels only, not the entire area

Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

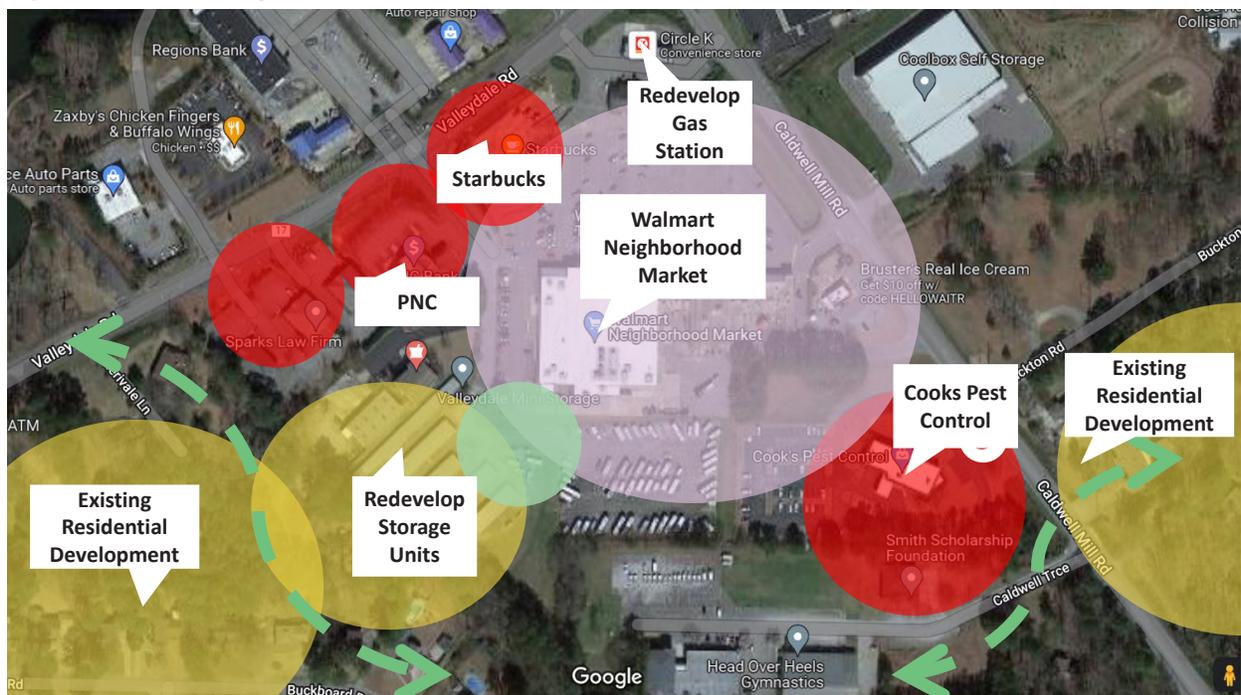
Example Infill Development Concept: Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road

Figure 5.12: Redevelopment Potential for Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road



Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

Figure 5.13: Existing Conditions for Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road



Source: Google and RPCGB

Figure 5.14: Recommendations for Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road

Source: Google and RPCGB

Recommendations for Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road

1. Encourage the development of new liner buildings. Buildings should front the street. Parking should be located to the rear or side of the building.
2. Create a pocket park. The pocket park should provide useable amenities for the surrounding residential development; 60% should be shaded.
3. Encourage multi-family or mixed-use/townhomes (orange). Parking or driveways should be located behind the building. Ensure there is enough screening and buffering from commercial buildings.
4. Redevelop gas station into plaza or green. Signage for the development should be placed here.
5. Streets should be extended and form a grid pattern where possible. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street. Trees and lighting should also be included to enhance walkability and safety for pedestrians. Landscaping should be maintained by the developer. Gray lines illustrate the new grid network.

Note, in this scenario, the Valleydale Mini Storage and Gas Station were redeveloped; and the Walmart Neighborhood Market, PNC Bank, Sparks Law Firm, Starbucks, Cooks Pest Control, and Bruster's were preserved.

Using the Urban Footprint platform, the planning team simulated this infill development to find out how many homes, people, and jobs the County might gain (see **Figure 5.15** and **Figure 5.16**). These are estimates and certain development choices, such as retail vs. office or type of home, may result in different projections.

Figure 5.15: Infill Redevelopment Potential for Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road



Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

Figure 5.16: Caldwell Mill Road at Valleydale Road By the Numbers

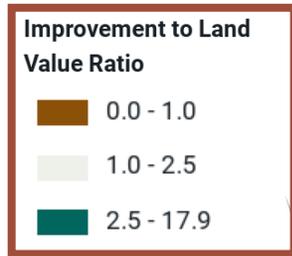
	 Housing Units	 People	 Employment
Before Infill:	-	-	585
Infill Adds:	+ 59	+ 114	+ 111
Resulting in:	59	114	696

These numbers are for selected infill parcels only, not the entire area

Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

Example Infill Development Concept: US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnivant Valley Road)

Figure 5.17: Redevelopment Potential for US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnivant Valley Road)



Current #s:

- 7 dwelling units
 - Single-family detached
- 16 people

These numbers are for selected infill parcels only, not the entire area

Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

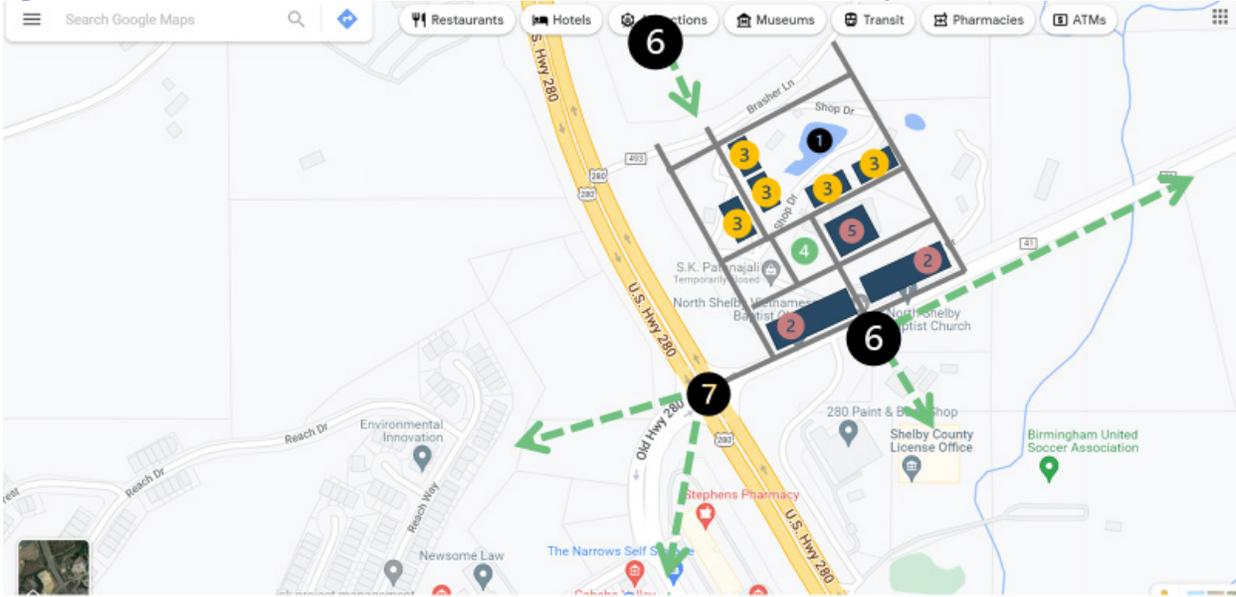
For this site, a complete redevelopment is proposed, so even though the commercial plaza itself has a high improvement-to-land ratio, it was included, due to the impact it could make on the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. As you can see, the residential properties nearby present great opportunities for infill development. If the commercial plaza was to be redeveloped, it is likely that the residential properties would follow.

Figure 5.18: Existing Conditions for US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnivant Valley Road)



Source: Google and RPCGB

Figure 5.19: Recommendations for US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnivant Valley Road)



Source: Google and RPCGB

Recommendations for US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnivant Valley Road)

1. Create a community greenspace with a walking track around the lake.
2. Encourage the development of commercial liner buildings that front the street. Parking should be limited to one bay in front of the building with overflow parking located to the side or the rear of the property.
3. Encourage the development of townhomes along Reach Drive.
4. Create a community greenspace, plaza and/or outdoor dining room. Utilize angled parking.
5. Encourage the reuse of the existing building to face the community greenspace recommended in #4.
6. Provide pedestrian connections to surrounding developments, including the proposed walkable neighborhood, Shelby County Services Building, soccer fields, and the Dunnivant Valley Trail.
7. Explore opportunities for pedestrians to cross over US-280 to reach existing and proposed commercial developments.

Using the Urban Footprint platform, the planning team simulated this infill development to find out how many homes, people, and jobs the County might gain (see **Figure 5.20** and **Figure 5.21**). These are estimates and certain development choices, such as retail vs. office or type of home, may result in different projections.

Figure 5.20: Infill Redevelopment Potential for US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnivant Valley Road)



Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB

Figure 5.21: US-280 at CR-41 (Dunnivant Valley Road) By the Numbers

	 Housing Units	 People	 Employment
Before Infill:	7	16	-
Infill Adds:	+ 28	+ 66	+ 187
Resulting in:	35	82	187

These numbers are for selected infill parcels only, not the entire area

Source: Urban Footprint and RPCGB



chapter **six**

Code Modifications



“Capacidad para caminar y accesibilidad para todos. A cambio, esto mejora la salud, el bienestar y la calidad de vida!”

- Residente del Condado de Shelby

“Walkability and accessibility for all. In return, they improve health, well-being and quality of life!”

- Shelby County Resident



Purpose of the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations.....147

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Code Modifications



Image Credit: City of Franklin

Shelby County uses land development ordinances to guide growth and regulate development to protect the health, safety, appearance, and prosperity of the county. County staff utilizes three adopted documents to guide land development: the Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Map, and the Subdivision Regulations. These documents regulate different aspects of Shelby County's land use, but they all work toward the same goal — to implement the County's land use vision for the future. There is some overlap between topics covered in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, which is why this chapter is arranged by topic (residential, commercial, etc.).

This chapter highlights recommended code modifications to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, including:

- Regulations related to Commercial Developments
- Regulations related to Residential Developments
- Regulations related to Non-Vehicular Mobility
- Regulations related to Stormwater Management
- Permitted Uses within the Zoning Ordinance
- Other Recommended Changes to the Zoning Ordinance
- Other Recommended Changes to the Subdivision Regulations

“My big idea for Shelby County is to grow - but with purpose. To preserve the beauty that we have with our outdoor space and farmland. Allow that to remain in harmony with each other.”

- Shelby County Resident



Purpose of the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations

The primary purpose of zoning land is to provide for the public health, safety and welfare in the development of land by ensuring that property is developed in an appropriate manner within the context of its immediate surroundings and the larger community of which it is a part. The purpose of these regulations is to prevent incompatible uses from negatively affecting the orderly growth and development of the land and to promote the use of land and natural resources in accordance with their character and adaptability. The Ordinance regulates land use by dividing those uses into districts based on type of use (e.g., residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, agricultural) and intensity of use (e.g., B-1 Neighborhood Business District vs. B-2 General Business District). Some uses, such as industrial facilities, are compatible with very few

other land uses and are restricted to one or two zoning districts. Some land uses, such as parks and places of worship, are compatible with different residential and commercial settings, and so they may be permitted in a wide range of zoning districts on the condition they meet additional restrictions. Zoning districts each contain a list of permitted or conditional uses, and each district includes regulations to control the density or intensity of use through building height, setbacks, and other area and dimensional requirements. The Zoning Ordinance also includes standards for commercial developments including parking, landscaping and design requirements for certain areas of the County. Buffer requirements are intended to mitigate and provide transition between uses of differing intensity. The Zoning Map applies the zoning districts to property located in zoned areas of Shelby County. Zoning districts are spatially arranged to prevent incompatible uses from being developed too close to one another.

The Subdivision Regulations govern how land is subdivided and platted and designed to encourage an orderly and efficient development pattern. They establish standards for the connection of streets, pedestrian facilities, utilities and other systems within individual subdivisions of land, between adjacent land areas, in relation to existing and planned facilities. For example, when developing

a subdivision, a developer must design a street network that connects to the existing network and promotes internal connectivity for residents to reach their homes. The Subdivision Regulations govern the type of street design. Lot sizes and arrangements are also governed to help control the frequency of conflict points along a roadway. These regulations also establish requirements for utilities and other facilities within the right-of-way as well as useable open space. The Subdivision Regulations are process-oriented and include requirements that the County and developers must adhere to during the planning and development processes. These regulations include the submittal requirements for new development, review process, and anticipated review timelines. This fosters an environment based on certainty so that all parties know what they can expect.

Table 6.1 provides a summary of the types of development regulations contained in the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations.

Table 6.1: Summary of Development Regulations in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations

Zoning Ordinance Regulates	Subdivision Regulations Regulate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted uses • Type of use (residential, commercial, institutional, etc.) • Intensity of use (B-1 Neighborhood Business District vs. B-2 General Business District) • Building heights • Lot size and dimensions • Setbacks • Parking requirements • Sign regulations • Buffering between uses • Landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street network (connectivity requirements, block length, intersection standards, etc.) • Street cross-section (right-of-way, lanes and lane width, shoulders, etc.) • Stormwater facilities • Sidewalks • Open space • Concept plan and master plan requirements • Plat approval process and timeline

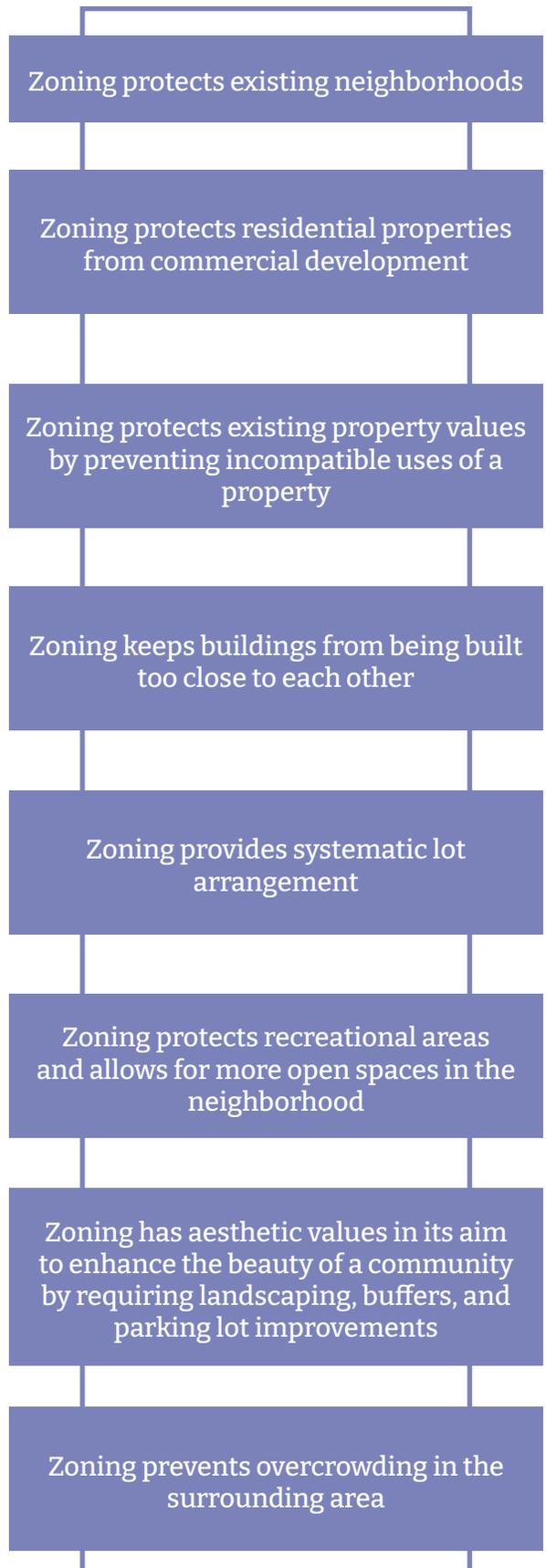
Benefits of Zoning

Zoning shapes the community and benefits the County in several ways. First, zoning applies constraints such as height limitation, space requirement, buildingsize, and other development standards. These restrictions and standards help prevent overcrowding in the specified area by limiting the amount and sizes of structures and parcels. Second, zoning helps to protect property values by separating incompatible or unsuitable uses from existing properties. For example, zoning protects residential properties from incompatible industrial types of development. Finally, areas with zoning are usually more attractive to developers. Developers prefer to locate projects in areas where they have some certainty that the community will accept the project and that the project is compatible with uses permitted in the district. For this reason, zoning facilitates community development.

Unzoned areas do not have this same kind of protection. Limited development regulations apply in the unzoned areas of Shelby County. While these unzoned areas are not subject to the regulations within the Shelby County Zoning Ordinance, they are still subject to the County’s Subdivision Regulations, the list of adopted building codes, and other adopted codes such as the Regulations for Manufactured Home Communities. **Figure 3.8 in Chapter 3: Shelby County Today** shows the current zoned and unzoned areas in Shelby County.

Did you know?

Shelby County Development Services produced a pamphlet of common zoning questions. Go to <https://www.shelbyal.com/230/Land-Development> to learn more!



Regulations Related to Commercial Developments



Action 1

Prioritize infill development.

The County should continue to proactively direct future development near existing residential and commercial areas to the extent available through development regulations. These preferred locations are served by existing community infrastructure, including police and fire protection, transportation, parks, schools, and other community facilities. Directing new development near established centers allows the more efficient utilization of infrastructure already in place, rather than costly expansion. It would also preserve Shelby County’s rural character by relieving pressure to expand on the county’s periphery. Finally, concentrating development helps to create more walkable neighborhoods, which are less dependent on automobiles to access essential goods and services.

To implement this action, the County is encouraged to modify the Subdivision Regulations and the Zoning Ordinance to promote infill development. Infill development prioritizes the redevelopment of underutilized buildings and sites for both residential and commercial development.



Source: Visit Omaha



Source: Bham Now



Source: A Place for Mom



Action 2

Revise the Special District Article in the Zoning Ordinance.

The Special District Article in the Zoning Ordinance was created with the purpose of providing optional methods for land development, which encourages imaginative solutions to environmental design problems. Projects that utilize this District are characterized by a unified building and site development program that includes coordinated open space and architectural treatments. The following zoning districts are included under the Article XVIII Special District:

- ✘ Planned Shopping Center District
- ✘ Planned Residential District
- ✘ Planned Industrial District
- ✘ Manufactured Home Community
- ✘ Drive-in Theatres
- ✘ Cemeteries, Mortuaries, Funeral Homes
- ✘ Continuing Care Retirement Community
- ✘ Uses not covered elsewhere in the Zoning Ordinance
- ✘ Planned Implementation District

This Plan recommends that the County conduct an audit of the Article XVIII Special District to:

- ✘ Address inconsistencies
- ✘ Introduce best practices and new land use concepts
- ✘ Identify what is working well and what needs to be modified in the Article
- ✘ Understand any shortcomings and problems before they become controversial



Action 3

Adopt a mixed-use component as part of the Special District Article in the Zoning Ordinance.

To better implement the land use vision set forth in this Comprehensive Plan, the County should consider adopting a mixed-use district as a component of the Special District Article in the Zoning Ordinance. Successful mixed-use centers depend upon a diverse mix of compatible uses organized around a walkable grid and vibrant public spaces. Such places do not occur overnight – they are gradually built out by multiple developers over long periods of time as the community evolves. A new mixed-use district, once created, could be applied to areas designated on the Future Development Map in Chapter 4 as Mixed-use Centers, Employment Centers, Community Commercial, or Business Commercial.

A mixed-use zoning district would permit a diverse mix of housing, civic, and commercial uses (e.g., retail, restaurants, and offices), both in vertical and horizontal dimensions. It would not require shopfronts with housing above; it would simply permit this and other flexible arrangements of uses that can shift to adapt to evolving community preferences. It could also include design standards that promote walkable development such as small block sizes, buildings that face the street, and parking lots behind buildings.



Action 4

Modify the parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.

Historically across the country, local governments set parking minimums in their original land development regulations for various types of uses, and Shelby County is no different. The purpose of parking minimums is to ensure there are enough off-street parking spaces for each development, and these parking minimums are typically based on the building use and size (gross floor area). But as more and more shoppers get their goods online, these lots remain empty, leaving vast amounts of unused asphalt.

Now there is a parking reform wave across the country to reduce or eliminate parking minimums, allowing the private market to determine how much parking new housing and commercial developments should provide. Communities of all sizes are eliminating parking minimums, whether just downtown or throughout the whole city.

An interactive map from the Parking Reform Network can be found at www.parkingreform.org/mandates-map/ that allows users to not just see where reforms are happening, but also click through to read the details about local parking regulations. Of the 200 or so communities currently on the map, more than 130 have populations under 100,000. Even the National Parking Association, the industry’s trade group of parking operators, now supports reducing or eliminating parking minimums and instead favors allowing communities and developers to make market-based decisions on parking supply and demand.

It is recommended that the County consider reducing or eliminating off-street parking requirements because parking is already regulated by two entities: bank financing

and market demand. Thus, developers and businesses should be the ones deciding how many parking spaces are needed in a new development to provide for their customers.



Action 5

Revise the Off-Street Parking and Loading Requirements Article in the Zoning Ordinance to establish parking location criteria for new commercial developments.

Vast amounts of visible parking lots occupy valuable real estate. The County should consider establishing parking location criteria in new developments. Parking should be behind or beside the building, with a limited amount of parking between the building and the front street, such as only one or two rows of parking stalls with a two-way drive aisle. Relegating parking to the rear or side of buildings preserves the relationship between buildings and the sidewalk and results in more aesthetically pleasing, human-scaled commercial areas.



Source: Baysinger Partners



Action 6

Encourage the use of permeable pavement materials by allowing their incorporation into plan design to reduce the stormwater pond size requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.

It is recommended that the County explore the feasibility of reducing the stormwater pond size requirement in the Zoning Ordinance if a developer installs permeable pavement. Benefits of permeable paving include:

- ✘ Eliminates the need for traditional stormwater catch basins, embeds, and piping infrastructure; interior curbing; and associated labor costs.
- ✘ Reduces the asphalt needed for roadways, which reduces the heat island effect.
- ✘ Installing permeable paving can reduce the amount of land needed for detention vaults, ponds, and perimeter structures; allowing developers to reclaim additional lots and the County to receive additional tax dollars.
- ✘ Eliminates untreated stormwater and reduces runoff.
- ✘ Recharges groundwater and mimics natural infiltration of the site.



Action 7

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require underground utilities in new developments.

The County is encouraged to amend the Zoning Ordinance to require underground utilities in all new developments except for those zoned A-1 Agricultural District and the M-2 Heavy Industrial District. Burying utility

lines can eliminate fire hazards and can reduce accidents, safety risks, and power outages due to downed lines.

Underground utilities can also improve road safety by lessening the chances of vehicles striking poles. Moreover, it can improve the aesthetic quality of a development and may preserve natural beauty. Finally, developments with underground utilities often have higher property values than those with overhead lines.



Action 8

Revise commercial and non-residential articles of the Zoning Ordinance.

This Plan recommends the County conduct an audit of each land use article to:

- ✘ Include modern land use terms
- ✘ Address inconsistencies
- ✘ Introduce best practices and new land use concepts; including dark sky lighting, native plants, and low impact development practices
- ✘ Identify what is working well and what needs to be modified in each Article
- ✘ Understand any shortcomings and problems before they become controversial



Source: Fridrich and Clark Realty

Regulations Related to Residential Developments



Action 9

Modify the Zoning Ordinance to allow Traditional Neighborhood Development.

Traditional neighborhood development (TND) is a planning technique that replicates the enduring and historic development patterns found in American towns and applies these patterns to new development. Hallmarks of TNDs include gridded, narrow streets, reduced front and side setbacks, and an orientation of streets and neighborhoods around a pedestrian oriented “town center.” Unlike conventional subdivisions, TNDs include:

- ✘ A community anchor that may feature a park, community meeting space, corner store, post office, library, or entertainment center. The community anchor is within a ¼ to ½ mile (5 to 10-minute walk) of homes.
- ✘ A range of housing types to attract people of various ages and socioeconomic levels.
- ✘ A mix of land uses that support the residential needs including shops, offices, and restaurants.
- ✘ Streets that are laid out to form an interconnected grid that reduces traffic congestion by allowing multiple route options. Streets are relatively narrow and are shaded by trees – there are sidewalks and sometimes bike lanes.

- ✘ Buildings that are located close to the street, creating a sense of place by framing the sidewalks with street trees and building walls.

Since Shelby County currently has no guidelines and standards for the creation and use of TNDs, it is recommended that the County modify the Zoning Ordinance to either include a TND component/district or add regulations to Article 6 General Regulations that would allow TNDs to be permitted under any of the residential zoning districts.

To further encourage developers to build TNDs rather than conventional subdivisions, the County could include any of the following developer incentives for TNDs:

- ✘ Density bonuses that offer development permissions beyond what’s allowed by the Zoning Ordinance
- ✘ Flexibility in lot size and siting requirements



Source: DPZ CODesign



Source: Greater Alabama MLS



Action 10

Modify the Conservation Subdivision Standards in the Subdivision Regulations.

Conservation subdivisions (also known as cluster subdivisions) are an alternative way of building traditional single-family subdivisions that “cluster” development on a site to preserve land as common open space for residents. These types of subdivisions have numerous benefits, both financial and environmental, including:

- ✘ Preservation of rural community character
- ✘ Reduced infrastructure costs per home
- ✘ Greater access to open space for residents
- ✘ Improved stormwater management
- ✘ Wildlife conservation

The County’s Subdivision Regulations currently provide standards for conservation subdivisions, but it is recommended the County modify the standards to enhance design flexibility of future developments. It is recommended that the following modifications be considered to the Article 4 Conservation Subdivision Standards:

- ✘ Reduce the minimum number of acres required from 20 to 10 contiguous acres.
- ✘ Remove Section 4.04.B Block Standards.
- ✘ Clarify the density bonus calculations in Section 4.04 E – e.g., Conservation Subdivisions are eligible for a five percent (5%) density bonus for each additional ten percent (10%) of the site, more than the minimum open space requirement in 4.05 Open Space that is permanently protected by conservation easement.

- ✘ Consider increasing the required open space requirement from 20% to 35%.
- ✘ Remove the following statement in Section 4.05.B.3 – “While a Conservation Subdivision may involve more than one preserved area, no single contiguous Conservation Area shall be less than five acres or 15 percent of the site, whichever is greater.”
- ✘ Revise Section 4.05.B.7 to allow for conservation areas to be dedicated by easement to local land trusts.

To further encourage developers to build conservation subdivisions rather than conventional subdivisions, the County could consider changing the approval process for conservation subdivisions. Currently, all proposed subdivision plans are reviewed by Shelby County Departments (Development Services, Highway, Water Services, and Environmental Services) and the local fire chief. The Department of Development Services then prepares a staff report detailing the project to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has the authority to make the final decision.

For more information about Conservation Subdivisions, please see the callout box on **page 108**.



Source: Siepmann Realty



Action 11

Modify the Form-Based Subdivision Standards in the Subdivision Regulations.

Article Five in the Subdivision Regulations addresses Form-Based Subdivision Standards, which are intended to implement the “Communities of Place” concept from the 2004 Shelby County Comprehensive Plan, including “Mixed-use Cores” and “Focus Areas of supporting neighborhoods.” The process is intended to add flexibility to allow innovation in development applications that better advance the goals and policies of the County’s Comprehensive Plan.

To date, no development has utilized these regulations, likely due to the minimum 20-acre requirement, as well as the stipulation that the development must contain a Core Area and a Focus Area. To achieve the goals outlined in the Form-Based Subdivision Standards, it is recommended that the County incorporate a mixed-use component and a Traditional Neighborhood Development component into the Special District Article in the Zoning Ordinance (see **Action 3** and **Action 9** in this **Chapter**). To promote more walkable neighborhoods and connected communities across the county, it is recommended that the County revise the following standards for conventional subdivisions in the Subdivision Regulations:

- ✖ Set a minimum block width
- ✖ Reduce the maximum block length from 1,000 feet
- ✖ Limit cul-de-sacs and collector streets
- ✖ Require connectivity within and among subdivisions – streets, trails and sidewalks should connect to each other, and to adjacent public improvements and facilities such as parks, schools, and libraries



Prohibit the use of dead-end streets whenever possible



Action 12

Expand the open space requirement in the Subdivision Regulations for residential developments.

Parks and open space enhance quality of life for residents, and often attract tax paying businesses and residents to communities. It is recommended that the County expand the open space requirement for residential developments as listed in the Subdivision Regulations to provide varying types of open space in conventional subdivisions regardless of the lot size.

Currently, the County requires 200 square feet of open space per dwelling unit for all conventional subdivisions containing 20,000 square foot lots and smaller. It also requires that 80% of all dwelling units in a subdivision be located within a quarter mile or 5-minute walk of useable open space. By expanding the existing regulations, the County can increase the quality of life for residents by ensuring that residents of new developments have convenient access to public open space.



Source: Sharron Swain



Action 13

Modify the Master Plan requirements in the Subdivision Regulations for non-administrative conventional subdivisions.

A master plan depicts the proposed development of a property including the physical and functional interrelationships between uses and facilities that are proposed to be phased over a period of time. Currently, the Subdivision Regulations requires a master plan for non-administrative conventional subdivisions when:

- ✘ Any conventional subdivision that will result in multiple phases through more than one final plat.
- ✘ Any preliminary plat that encompasses 40 acres or more and/or 100 lots or more.
- ✘ Any development that includes more than one land use or different zoning districts under any applicable zoning regulation.

It is recommended that the County modify these requirements (in Section 3.02.B.2 in the Subdivision Regulations) to provide more flexibility.



Source: Greater Birmingham MLS

Regulations Related to Non-Vehicular Mobility



Action 14

Modify the Subdivision Regulations to require public access easements in new subdivisions for the construction of multi-use trails to enhance pedestrian and non-vehicular connectivity between developments.

When asked what amenities they felt were most needed in the County, shared-use paths or multi-use trails for walking and biking were the number one priority for survey respondents. It is recommended that the County modify the Shelby County Subdivision Regulations to require that new subdivisions provide a public access easement of at least 15 feet in width for the construction of multi-use trails to enhance pedestrian and non-vehicular connectivity between developments. The width of the easement might vary between 10 to 15 feet depending on available rights-of-way and street design. A minimum of 10 feet width is required to allow bicycles and pedestrians to share the space, or to provide for two-way pedestrian travel.

What is an easement?

An easement grants someone access to a piece of property without owning it. For example, utility companies often have easements on property, allowing them to access it in order to maintain power, water, gas, and phone lines on land. Easements can also take other forms, such as allowing access to a path through a backyard or an agreement to share a driveway. An easement is a legal recorded instrument, remaining in place as property changes ownership. It is important to be aware of what easements exist on a piece of property before developing it so that you can avoid infringing upon other parties' interest in the property.

Did you know? Stormwater easements are a common type of easement found in Shelby County and the maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner.

network must incorporate well-connected sidewalks and trails that link each residential lot with on-site open space, recreational facilities, and other amenities within the development site.”



Action 16

Modify the Subdivision Regulations to amend the pedestrian facility requirements to revise the set thresholds for when sidewalks should be required.

Currently Table 6-2 Pedestrian Facility Requirements listed in the Subdivision Regulations requires sidewalks based on the functional classification of the roadway (arterial, collector, and local roads). Sidewalks are not appropriate or deemed necessary in all locations, such as rural areas; therefore, the County should consider amending the pedestrian facility requirements to revise the set of thresholds for when sidewalks should be required.



Action 15

Establish standards in the Subdivision Regulations to require an integrated pedestrian pathways network to connect new development along County and State thoroughfares.

The County should establish standards to require pedestrian pathways within new developments to connect to a comprehensive trail system. These integrated pedestrian pathways provide recreational opportunities for the community and could provide a natural wildlife corridor. Example language is provided below.

“The County may consider the installation of an integrated pedestrian pathway network to connect new development. The pathway



Source: City of Asheville



Source: Jon Anderson

Regulations Related to Stormwater Management



Action 17

Restore and sustain water quality, natural habitats, and groundwater by incorporating best practices for environmental site design and stormwater management in development regulations.

As areas are developed, the amount of paved surface increases leading to an increase in stormwater volume and pollutants that can harm ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams. To mitigate the stormwater impacts of new development and redevelopment projects, the County should encourage the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that treat and store runoff and allow it to infiltrate onsite before it affects water bodies downstream.

Innovative site designs and other Low Impact Development (LID) practices that reduce paved (impervious) surfaces and increase infiltration are recommended to reduce flows and improve water quality. In addition, many BMPs and LID infrastructure provide greenspace and improve a site's aesthetics. For more information on BMPs and LID, see the callout boxes on **pages 226-229**.

It is recommended that the County revise regulations to require and/or provide incentives for Low Impact Development. The County could take actions such as:

- ✘ Continue to improve staff training and staff expertise for construction and post-construction stormwater management.

- ✘ Develop strategies to implement a combination of structural and non-structural BMPs, especially in the Landscape and Buffer Requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
- ✘ Improve the Zoning Ordinance to regulate and control post-construction runoff.
- ✘ Create a program to ensure adequate long-term operation and maintenance of BMPs.



Action 18

Adopt appropriate policies and regulations to protect prime farmlands, steep slopes, waterways, and scenic areas from inadvertent damage due to future development / construction.

See the callout box on **page 159** for potential preservation strategies.



Action 19

Pursue opportunities for the acquisition, conservation, and restoration of open space along year-round streams and rivers and actively protect these resources through land use management, steep slope development regulations, conservation subdivisions, and cluster development.

Shelby County is blessed with ample natural open space, rolling hills, and several year-round streams and creeks. Where possible, this land should be protected through various means by the County and preserved to protect vital natural resources, water quality, recreational space, and wildlife habitat.

Several options the County should consider to protect critical habitat and streams include:

- ✘ Encourage conservation subdivisions (See **Action 10** in this chapter).
- ✘ Encourage private landowners and developers to partner with a land trust to conserve sensitive land through conservation easements and land donations.
- ✘ Consider adopting a steep slopes ordinance to protect scenic vistas and reduce stormwater runoff and erosion or minimize high-density development to prevent mass grading in environmentally sensitive areas.

the noise, vibration, or other nuisances sometimes associated with industrial production. Their high level of automation allows them to employ fewer people per shift than a traditional factory, and sometimes a large portion of their workforce is research and development (R&D) as opposed to production.

Since these types of characteristics produce a land use that is highly compatible with office and institutional land uses, Shelby County is encouraged to modify the O-I and O-I (2) districts in the Zoning Ordinance to permit advanced manufacturing. This modification will signal the County’s commitment to recruiting and retaining this economic cluster and can be used as a recruitment tool.

Permitted Uses within the Zoning Ordinance



Action 20

Modify the Office and Institutional Districts [O-I and O-I (2)] in the Zoning Ordinance to allow for advanced manufacturing and research and development uses.

Advanced manufacturing refers to a variety of high-tech businesses that produce small, value-dense finished goods. Common advanced manufacturing industries include biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and computer hardware production. These businesses do produce goods, but their land use much more closely resembles office and institutional uses than light or heavy industrial uses. Because they produce and move small, valuable finished goods, they generate minimal truck traffic, and their manufacturing processes do not produce



Action 21

Modify the Zoning Ordinance to permit extraction and mining where appropriate.

Today, a number of quarries exist throughout Shelby County, all of which are considered a legal non-conforming use by the Zoning Ordinance. A legal non-conforming use is a use of land or structure that was legally established according to the applicable zoning and building laws of the time but does not meet current zoning and building regulations. Typically, zoning laws are “forward looking” and regulate future uses of a land or property rather than existing ones. While the existing quarries can operate in Shelby County today, the County is encouraged to explore different opportunities to permit mining and extraction to allow existing quarries to continue their operation under a legal zoning status if they need to expand.

Green Systems Preservation Toolbox

Counties have a number of legal and administrative tools they can use to preserve the natural environment, address stormwater and flooding issues, and guide development in a sustainable fashion. **Table 6.2** lists some of the tools available and the environmental issues they address. Some of these tools, such as ordinances and overlay districts, are directly administered by a county. Others, such as conservation easements, are tools that property owners and non-profit land banks use to preserve land.

Shelby County officials may find that a number of these tools or solutions are needed to address an area of concern. Some options are more comprehensive than others and, as such, may require more up-front work, legal procedures, or planning. For example, both steep slope ordinances and mountain overlay districts address concerns due to erosion on higher elevations. A steep slope ordinance simply restricts development on grades over a certain percentage, making it relatively straightforward to administer, whereas a mountain overlay district allows the County to incorporate the same regulations that a steep slope ordinance would include, but it also would further allow the County to preserve scenic view sheds by incorporating aesthetic and density regulations that are beyond the purview of a steep slope ordinance. The County should use the toolbox in **Table 6.2** to help guide decision-making in determining what environmental regulations are most effective at preserving the scenic and rural charm of Shelby County as well as saving on future administrative and infrastructure costs.

Table 6.2: Green Systems Preservation Toolbox

Issue / Concern	Green Systems Tool				
	Mountain Overlay District	Steep Slope Ordinance	Conservation Subdivision	Conservation Easements	Low Impact Development Subdivision Regulations
Stormwater & Flooding	●	●	●	●	●
Erosion	●	●	●	○	●
Scenic Views	●	●	●	●	●
Sprawl Prevention	●	●	●	●	●
Critical Habitat	●	●	●	●	●
Walkable Communities	○	○	●	○	●
Scenic/ Rural Protection	●	●	●	●	●
Code Updates Required?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Administrative Difficulty	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate

Key: ● Directly Addresses ● Partly Addresses ○ Does Not Address



Action 22

Modify the A-1 and A-R Districts to allow for agritourism and other rural economic enterprises.

One way to support agricultural economic development efforts in rural areas is to promote the diversification of farm-related activities. This typically takes the form of permitting the pursuit of value-added, agriculturally related, accessory commercial uses on working farms. The term agritourism is commonly used to describe any activity incidental to the operation of a farm that brings members of the public to the farm for educational, recreation, or retail purposes. Municipalities may adopt zoning regulations that encourage agritourism and its accompanying economic benefits by allowing these activities without imposing undue burdens or costs on farmers.

It is recommended that the County permit agritourism and other rural economic enterprises in the A-1 Agricultural District and A-R Agricultural-Residential District. Typically, this is done by defining agritourism uses and permitting them as an accessory use to primary agricultural uses, or special uses within the Zoning Ordinance. Some communities list the general term “agritourism” and then provide more specific definitions and standards in the supplemental use standards.



Source: Old Baker Farm



Action 23

Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide additional design standards for auto repair shops, shooting ranges, animal clinics, kennels, and other similar noise-related uses throughout the County.

County officials and staff should decide how these types of businesses will be regulated in the future to limit their effects on surrounding properties. It is important to consider the location and impact of these businesses to:

- ✘ Reduce traffic congestion that is reported to be associated with these types of businesses.
- ✘ Reduce the concentration of these types of businesses in certain areas in an effort to encourage and enhance economic development within that area by promoting business diversity in the offering of other goods and/or services.
- ✘ Provide for zoning protection of existing residential and commercial real estate values from possible economic impairment by these types of businesses.
- ✘ In general, to provide for the protection of the health, safety, comfort and general welfare of the residents of Shelby County.

**Action 24**

Make necessary modifications to the Zoning Ordinance to support the development of electric vehicle charging stations.

Shelby County is encouraged to capitalize on the ongoing nationwide trend toward clean, renewable energy. The State of Alabama's 2022 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan identified I-65 for additional investments in electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and residents may desire charging stations in other areas of the county.

The County is encouraged to facilitate the installation of EV charging stations and reduce barriers that may exist, such as ensuring proper zoning is in place and working with utility providers and developers. It is recommended that the County consider the following modifications to its Zoning Ordinance to encourage the development of EV charging stations:

- ✘ Define EV and EV charging stations.
- ✘ Restrict, permit or require EV charging infrastructure based on zoning districts.
- ✘ Establish the minimum number and type (level) of EV charging stations.
- ✘ Request developers install Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) or wiring for future EVSE installation with a new development or major redevelopment. Generally, it is more cost-effective to install wiring at the time a parking lot is built than after the fact.
- ✘ Establish design criteria for EVSE installation.
- ✘ Consider providing incentives to developers who install EV charging stations or pre-wiring (fewer required parking spaces, density bonuses, etc.).

Other Recommended Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

**Action 25**

Modify the Zoning Ordinance to include illustrations for clarification and user-friendliness.

To enhance the user-friendliness of the Zoning Ordinance, it is recommended that critical elements be illustrated with graphics to provide better clarification. Illustrations can help define terms and explain concepts such as minimum lot width, minimum yards, and types of signs.

**Action 26**

Revise and modernize the definition language in the Zoning Ordinance.

Article IV Definitions describes a series of terms listed in the Zoning Ordinance. In some cases, the definitions provide supplemental use regulations and reference state law. Like many ordinances, Shelby County's definition section provides dated language that needs to be modernized to provide clarification and reflect the current marketplace. For example, agritourism is not defined in the ordinance; therefore it is not a permitted use within the County today. To ensure the Zoning Ordinance remains relevant, the County is encouraged to review and revise the list of definitions, as well as provide new definitions when appropriate. Definitions should be organized alphabetically, linked to state statutes, and provide illustrations to help define related terms.



Action 27

Add a summary table of permitted uses across all zoning categories.

Currently, the existing Shelby County Zoning Ordinance provides a separate list of permitted uses under each individual zoning district. It is recommended that an overall summary table, or matrix, of permitted uses be added. The table should contain a list of uses that may be permitted in one or more of the various zoning districts established by the Zoning Ordinance. Uses should be listed in alphabetical order under functional categories. This would make it easier to quickly find the permitted use information and would benefit the reader, including applicants, county staff, and elected officials.

improvements such as, but not limited to, water and sewer lines, footings, foundations, and/or work done above the foundation wall or other foundation support; clearing, grading, the storage of building materials, or the placement of temporary structures shall not constitute beginning construction. “

Did you know?

Current development application fees can be found on the County’s website under the Development Services webpage.



Action 28

Add language in the Zoning Ordinance to set an expiration date for conditional uses, site plans, variances and add in a definition for “construction.”

Example language to add includes:

“Expiration and Revocation. Approval of a Conditional Use shall be considered exercised when the use has been established or when the Building Permit has been issued and substantial construction accomplished. When such use is abandoned or discontinued for a period of two (2) years, it shall not be reestablished unless authorized by the Commission. Conditional Use approval shall be revoked when the applicant fails to comply with the conditions imposed by the Commission.”

Other Recommended Changes to the Subdivision Regulations



Action 29

Revise and add illustrations in the Subdivision Regulations for enhanced clarification.

It is recommended that the County revise the street type illustrations and add Best Management Practices and Low Impact Development illustrations to the Subdivision Regulations.

In addition, for better clarity, it is recommended that the word “construction” be defined in Article IV Definitions of the Zoning Ordinance. A suggested definition is “Construction shall mean physical

Source: Shelby County Alabama



chapter seven

Transportation & Infrastructure

“I love living in Shelby County. We have beautiful parks and recreation, shopping, dining and entertainment venues. I would greatly appreciate the county addressing traffic issues in specific areas where improvement is possible.” - Shelby County Resident



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Transportation & Infrastructure



Source: Davis Enterprise

Shelby County's geographic location in relation to nationally and regionally significant transportation roadways will likely ensure discussions about countywide and regional transportation issues remain in the forefront of public policy well into the future. Shelby County is traversed by I-65 and US-31, which are both crucial to the County's economic success, as well as the success of the greater Birmingham region and the State of Alabama.

The transportation needs identified in this chapter were informed by various data and analysis, conversations with the Shelby County Highway Department, as well as public input. This chapter outlines recommendations to develop a safe, interconnected multi-modal transportation system that improves operational efficiency for motorists and non-motorists alike and enhances the quality of life for all travelers.

This Transportation chapter includes the seven sections shown below:

- Roadway Improvement Projects
- Railroad Crossing Improvements
- Bicycle Facilities and Infrastructure
- Transportation Infrastructure Maintenance
- Transportation Demand Management
- Public Transportation
- Electric Vehicles

Roadway Improvement Projects

In Shelby County, transportation planning and funding allocations are provided at the federal, state, regional, county and municipal levels. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), the Shelby County Highway Department and the local municipalities manage the transportation system within Shelby County. The Shelby County Highway Department is responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of county-maintained road and bridge projects, although funding for improvements to county-maintained roadways and bridges can come from federal, state or local sources.

Decisions regarding the use of federal transportation funds throughout the Birmingham metropolitan area are made by the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is a federally mandated and federally funded transportation policy-making body that is made up of representatives from ALDOT, local governments and transportation agencies, including Shelby County. Since most major transportation projects have costs that are beyond the fiscal means of local governments, these said governments (or “project sponsors”) seek federal transportation funding for projects. When federal transportation funding is secured for a project, the project sponsor typically provides a 20% local match of the total project cost.



Action 1

Pursue funding to construct major roadway improvement projects.

The map shown in **Figure 7.1** indicates where roadway improvement projects should be constructed in the future on county and state highways throughout Shelby County. These projects, listed in **Tables 7.1 – 7.3**, have been identified by Shelby County, ALDOT or local

municipalities through the transportation planning process. In addition, the desire to see these roadway projects implemented was emphasized by public input associated with the development of this Plan. These projects either have the potential to alleviate traffic congestion or improve safety, and they are in various stages for funding and implementation, as described below.

The projects listed in **Table 7.1** are considered “Programmed” projects, which means that funding has been identified for the projects using currently available or anticipated revenues. These projects are listed in the Birmingham MPO’s current four-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The TIP is adopted only once every four years; however, the TIP is updated annually and can be amended as necessary to account for changes in funding or project needs.

The projects listed in **Table 7.2** are considered “Planned” projects, which means that funding has been identified for the projects based on currently available revenue streams that can be reasonably expected to continue for the foreseeable future. These projects are listed in the Birmingham MPO’s current long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is a financially-constrained plan, which means the total estimated cost of operating, maintaining, and improving the transportation system does not exceed the forecasted revenue over the 25-year horizon of the plan. Hence, the RTP is a collection of “planned” transportation projects to be implemented over the next 25 years.

The projects listed in **Table 7.3** are considered “Visionary” projects, which means they currently lack funding based on existing funding streams and should be considered for implementation if additional or alternative funding becomes available. These visionary projects are also listed in the Birmingham MPO’s current long-range RTP, with the hope that additional funds will be acquired.

Roadway improvement projects can be expensive because, while some roadways have the terrain and right-of-way that allow for additional lane width and the addition of paved shoulders, most roadways do not meet these conditions; thus, roadway widening requires the acquisition of additional right-of-way and significant work for the relocation of utilities. Future roadway widening projects should have context-sensitive design that fits into the character of the community. They should also include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, when appropriate.

Table 7.1: “Programmed” Roadway Improvement Projects listed in the Birmingham MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program

Project Sponsor	Route	From / To	Roadway Improvements Needed	Project Length	MPO Map ID
Alabaster	SR-119	From CR-12 (Butler Road) to CR-80 (Mission Hills Road) - Phase 2	Widening from 2 to 4 lanes	0.6	1335
ALDOT / Shelby County / Helena / Hoover / Pelham	SR-261 / Helena Road	From Bearden Road to US-31	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	2.3	141
ALDOT	CR-52	From I-65 to US-31	Widening from 3 to 4 lanes and intersection improvements at US-31	1.1	111
ALDOT and Helena	CR-52 at SR-261		Intersection improvements in Helena		1328
Hoover	CR-17 (Valleydale Road)	From US-31 to Riverchase Parkway East	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	0.8	83
Hoover / Shelby County	CR-17 (Valleydale Road)	From CR-29 (Caldwell Mill Road) to Meadow Drive - Phase 1	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	3.5	263
Jefferson County / Shelby County	CR-29 (Caldwell Mill Road)	From CR-370 (Heatherwood Drive) to CR-231 (Action Road)	Widening and bridge replacement over the Cahaba River	4.0	106

Source: Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program (www.rpcgb.org/transportation-improvement-program-tip)

Table 7.2: “Planned” Roadway Improvement Projects listed in the Birmingham MPO’s Regional Transportation Plan

Project Sponsor	Route	From / To	Roadway Improvements Needed	Project Length	MPO Map ID
ALDOT	SR-119	From south of Oak Mountain Elementary to north of Greystone Way	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	5.1	34
ALDOT	I-65	From 0.2 mile south of CR-87 (Exit 234) to US-31 (Exit 238)	Widening from 4 to 8 lanes	4.5	22
ALDOT	I-65	From US-31 (Exit 231) to CR-87 (Exit 234)	Widening from 4 to 8 lanes	2.7	162
ALDOT	I-65	From Chilton County line to US-31 (Exit 231)	Widening from 4 to 8 lanes	5.2	631
ALDOT	US-280	From SR-119 to Doug Baker Boulevard	Widening from 4 to 6 lanes and restripe right turn pockets	0.9	1334
Shelby County	CR-26 (Kent Dairy Road)	From CR-17 to SR-119	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	2.1	425
Shelby County	CR-11	From US-31 to CR-52	Widening from 2 to 3 lanes and add turn lane	1.6	120
Shelby County	CR-11	From CR-52 to CR-36	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	5.7	426
Shelby County	CR-11	From CR-36 to US-280	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	3.9	427
Shelby County / Helena / Hoover	CR-52 (Helena Road)	From Shades Crest Road to CR-13	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes and add signals	2.0	1192
Shelby County / Helena / Hoover	CR-52 (Helena Road)	From CR-13 to SR-261	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes and add signals	2.9	365

Source: Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Regional Transportation Plan (www.rpcgb.org/regional-transportation-plan)

Table 7.3: “Visionary” Roadway Improvement Projects listed in the Birmingham MPO’s Regional Transportation Plan

Project Sponsor	Route	From / To	Roadway Improvements Needed	Project Length	MPO Map ID
ALDOT	US-280	From CR-17 (Valleydale Road) to CR-355 (Eagle Point Parkway)	Widening from 4/6 to 6/8 lanes and access management improvements	2.6	535
ALDOT	US-31	From CR-52 to I-65 in Alabaster and from CR-105 to Riverchase Parkway	Widening from 4 to 6 lanes	8.9	1150
ALDOT	US-31	From I-65 (Exit 231) north to Alabaster	Widening from 2 to 4 lanes	6.2	361
ALDOT	SR-70	From US-31 in Calera to SR-25 in Columbiana	Widening from 2 to 4 lanes	6.5	9
ALDOT /Pelham / Shelby County	CR-52	US-31 to west of Buck Creek	Realignment of CR-52 West and rail crossing elimination	0.5	Not shown
Shelby County	CR-17	From SR-261 / CR-52 in Helena south to CR-12 (Butler Road)	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	6.0	424
Shelby County	CR-52	From SR-261 to Johnson Street (near US-31)	Widening from 2 to 5 lanes	2.2	429

Source: Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Regional Transportation Plan (www.rpcgb.org/regional-transportation-plan)

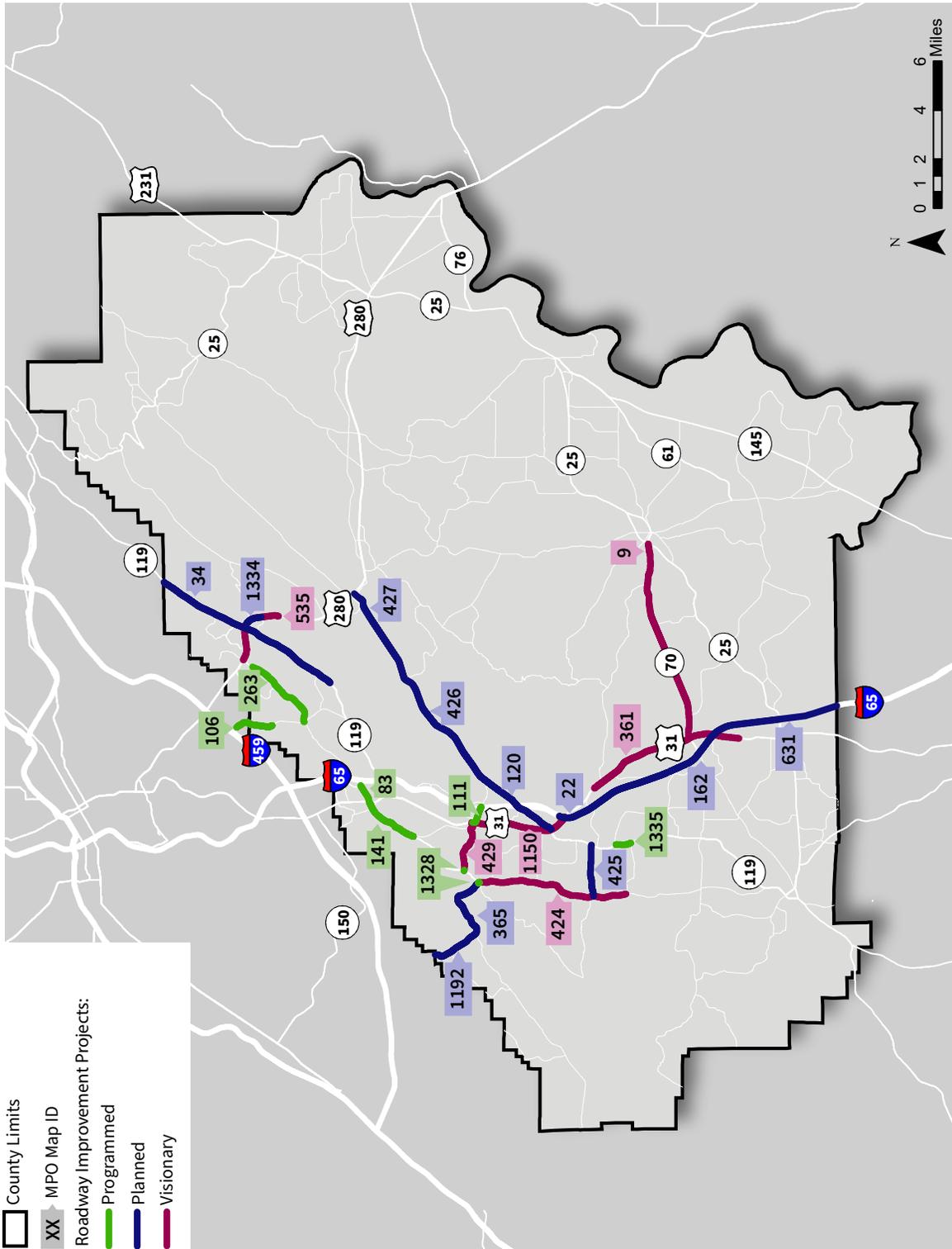


Action 2

Work with local municipalities to advocate that ALDOT fund and construct improvement projects on state highways and interstates throughout the County.

Highway traffic in Shelby County is carried not only on county highways, but on state highways and interstates that are owned and maintained by ALDOT. The County should continue to partner with local municipalities to advocate that ALDOT fund and construct improvement projects on state highways and interstates throughout the county. These types of projects will mostly consist of roadway widening to provide additional lanes to accommodate increased traffic volumes and to facilitate left-turning movements.

Figure 7.1: Recommended Roadway Improvement Projects



Source: Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

For example, Shelby County should continue to advocate and work with ALDOT to fund and construct the widening of I-65 from four to eight lanes south to the Chilton County line.



Action 3

Consider incorporating bicycle and pedestrian facilities, when appropriate, into significant roadway improvement projects.

Major roadways have relatively high speeds (i.e., greater than 45 mph) and have a wide range of characteristics that other roads in Shelby County usually do not have, such as intersections with multiple right- and/or left-turn lanes, guardrails, and lengthy merge lanes. These types of roads traverse a wide variety of land use contexts, some of which may not change in the future, and some of which are likely to change over the next 10-20 years. In most cases, these roads provide the most direct connection between major destinations in the County. Future upgrades to these roads will be driven primarily by traffic management needs and opportunities and needs created by major development or redevelopment in each corridor.

While it is difficult to currently imagine how bicycle and pedestrian travel should be accommodated on these types of roads, when significant improvements are made, safe bicycle and pedestrian accommodations should be considered. At that time, selection of facility or facility combinations should be coordinated with other key planning decisions regarding the roadway’s capacity and operation and the development that occurs along it, specifically the type and configuration of the development and the size and type of roadway selected.

It is recommended that the County consider incorporating bicycle and

pedestrian facilities into significant roadway improvement projects, as appropriate. However, in some cases bicycle or pedestrian facilities may be impractical, such as:

- When the law prohibits bicyclists and pedestrians from using the roadway.
- When the cost of incorporating bicycle or pedestrian facilities would increase the project cost by 20% or more.
- When the intent of the transportation project is for maintenance purposes for a road that meets all current design standards.
- When the logical termini for the bicycle facility extends the overall project limits by more than 500 linear feet.
- Where scarcity of population or other factors indicate an absence of need.
- Where the addition of a bicycle facility would contribute to an overall reduction in vehicular carrying capacity in any direction.



Action 4

Regularly identify and evaluate potential operational and safety improvements to intersections.

There are intersections within Shelby County that currently experience traffic congestion. During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Plan, residents noted several intersections where a traffic signal and/or turn lanes are desired due to potential safety hazards and/or operational inefficiencies. It is recommended the County, ALDOT, and local municipalities work together to take advantage of available opportunities to address traffic control, intersection lane geometrics, and pedestrian facilities when such occurrences arise.



Action 5

Utilize RPCGB's safety assistance programs to analyze roadways and intersections that have safety concerns and identify potential funding sources for improvements.

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) funds and manages safety assessment studies in the region. For those municipalities that utilize the safety assistance programs, the process includes a safety data analysis, followed by a needs assessment, which will then result in the identification of potential projects to improve safety performance in the local jurisdiction. The studies help local leaders and engineers by:

- ✘ Identifying safety issues in their local jurisdiction.
- ✘ Understanding how to develop safety improvement projects and/or countermeasures.
- ✘ Developing a list of proposed safety improvement projects (some might need to be studied in greater detail).
- ✘ Finding potential funding sources for the proposed safety improvement projects (such as through ALDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program).



Action 6

Utilize the RPCGB's Advanced Planning, Programming and Logical Engineering (APPLE) program to help develop and advance transportation projects.

The Advanced Planning, Programming and Logical Engineering (APPLE) program is a local technical assistance program established by the RPCGB in 2014. The

purpose of the program is to educate local governments about the project development process, assist them in their decision-making process, and provide resources to help develop and advance transportation projects.

The studies funded by the APPLE program are essentially transportation project feasibility studies. To help determine project feasibility, any given APPLE study includes:

- ✘ A summary of existing conditions, including field review, property ownership, utility identification, environmental features and constraints.
- ✘ A defined Purpose and Need for the proposed transportation project.
- ✘ The identification of potential alternatives or alignments.
- ✘ An evaluation of potential positive and negative environmental impacts to the area and adjacent properties that may be associated with each potential alignment.
- ✘ A breakdown of cost estimates for the potential alternatives or alignments.
- ✘ Funding options, which will help the local government to determine if it is feasible to pursue federal funding assistance for the proposed project, or whether the local government wants to pursue the project at all.
- ✘ A summary of stakeholder and public input.
- ✘ A list of potential challenges (e.g., right-of-way acquisition and/or property easements, blue line streams, permitting, underground utilities, and conflict points).

The APPLE program can be used to determine the feasibility of any type of proposed transportation project – roadway

improvements, intersection improvements, new trails / greenways, transit routes, etc. Studies funded by the program have a maximum budget of \$60,000 and require a 20% local funding match. To learn more and view a list of studies funded by the APPLE program visit www.rpcgb.org/transportation-project-feasibility-studies-apple.

Railroad Crossing Improvements

CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern Railway are the two Class I railroad owners operating tracks within Shelby County, who each own approximately 48% of the railroad miles within the county. Their rail lines connect with intermodal facilities in Birmingham and serve several of the quarries in Shelby County. While the County’s leaders and residents recognize the important freight function of these rail lines, they also are desirous of finding some way to mitigate their impact on residential communities and local traffic.

As shown in **Figure 7.2**, there are approximately 151 railroad crossings over roadways within Shelby County. Among those, 132 crossings are at-grade crossings while 19 are grade-separated crossings, meaning overpasses or underpasses. Out of the 151 rail crossings, 85 cross Shelby County maintained roadways. Among those, two are overpasses, four are underpasses, and the remaining 79 are at-grade crossings.

Both the CSX and Norfolk Southern rail lines cross major roadways at-grade. An example is the CSX line that mostly parallels US-31. This rail line runs so close to US-31 that the signal timing at the intersection of US-31 and CR-11/SR-119 is coordinated with the rail crossing gate’s signals. The fast-moving trains present a problem for commuters during both the morning and afternoon peak travel hours in that trains often run during these travel periods. Although they are

moving at a reasonable speed, the typical duration of a rail movement across an at-grade intersection is about five minutes. This exacerbates the already long traffic delays, causing vehicles to stack up and exceed turn lane capacities, which then adds further to signal cycle failures.



Action 7

Pursue funding to eliminate highway-rail grade crossings throughout the County.

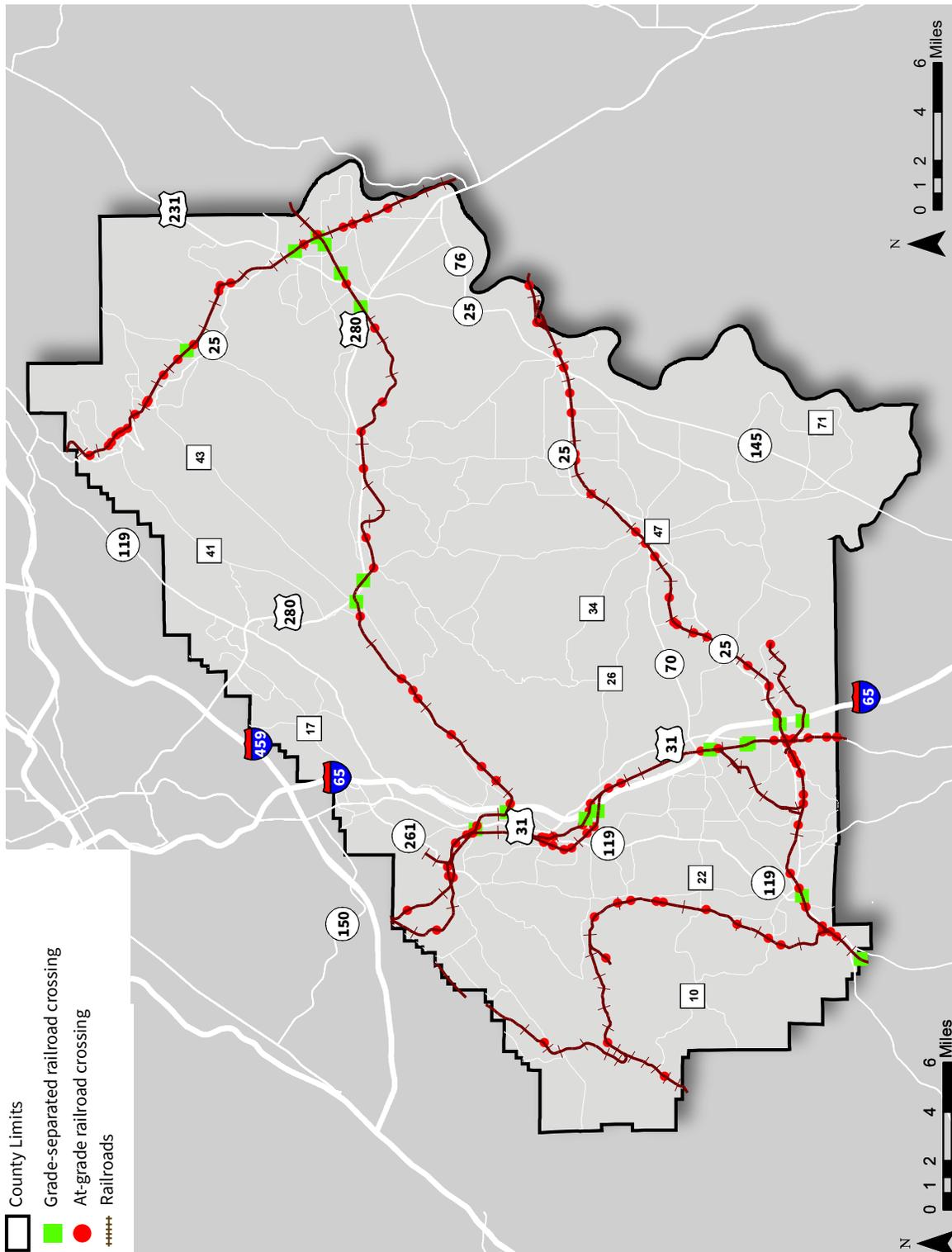
Highway-rail grade crossing crashes, together with crashes caused by trespassing along the railroad right-of-way, account for 94% of all rail-related deaths and injuries.

As shown in **Figure 7.2**, Shelby County has numerous at-grade railroad crossings in Alabaster, Calera, Helena and Pelham that have idling trains which frequently block traffic from moving. The hazards at these at-grade crossings include but are not limited to:

- ✘ Delays to emergency response personnel to fire, medical emergencies, or criminal activity.
- ✘ The risk of road users driving into the side of a stopped train during nighttime or low-visibility conditions.
- ✘ The risk of motor vehicle collisions from turning around to seek an alternative route.
- ✘ Pedestrians cutting through or under a train to access homes, schools, or businesses on the other side of the idling train.

It is recommended that the Shelby County Highway Department pursue grant funding to improve the safety at highway-rail grade crossings or to remove such crossings when the opportunities arise.

Figure 7.2: Location of Grade-Separated and At-Grade Railroad Crossings



Source: Federal Railroad Administration Highway/Rail Crossing Database

The following are two current grant programs at the federal and state levels:

- ✖ The Federal Railroad Administration is administering the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program that was established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- ✖ The Rail-Highway Program of ALDOT is administering the ALDOT Grade Crossing Hazard Elimination program as part of the ALDOT Rail State Action Plan.

Eligible types of work for these grant programs typically include but are not limited to:

- ✖ Improvements at public grade crossings to eliminate hazards posed by blocked crossings.
- ✖ Crossing consolidation, elimination, or relocation of roadway to eliminate a grade crossing.
- ✖ Installation or upgrade of active and/or passive warning devices at crossings to reduce hazards.
- ✖ Addressing corridor safety improvements at a minimum of three crossings located along the same segment of rail track.



Action 8

Work with ALDOT and railroad companies to routinely inspect railroad crossings for needed improvements to active and passive warning devices.

When rail grade crossings cannot be eliminated, other safety improvements can be leveraged. Traffic control devices are a key component of each rail crossing and can present opportunities to enhance safety. Thus, the installation and upgrades of passive or active warning devices are very important.

Public highway-rail crossings have warning devices that are classified as passive or active. Passive warning devices typically consist of crossbucks, advance warning signs, regulatory signs, and pavement markings. Passive crossings refer to crossings without active warning devices. Active warning devices typically consist of automatic gates and/or flashing lights and bells.

The Shelby County Highway Department has control over the installation of passive warning devices, whereas the railroad companies have control over active warning devices. It is recommended that the County work with the railroad companies to regularly inspect railroad crossings and leverage opportunities to improve safety whenever possible.



Source: Martin Reed



Source: Martin Reed

Bicycle Facilities & Infrastructure

Shelby County is well established as a popular destination for recreational bicyclists. As shown on **page 37 of Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends**, Shelby County features several roadways surrounding Oak Mountain State Park and in Dunnavant Valley that are very popular for bicyclists. Currently, the County has approximately 8 miles of bicycle lanes, located primarily within Oak Mountain State Park. An expanded bicycle network of facilities and infrastructure will benefit Shelby County residents and visitors who wish to bicycle for recreation or residents who choose to use bicycling for personal needs, such as commuting.



Action 9

Work with local municipalities and ALDOT to assess the suitability of incorporating context-sensitive bicycle facilities along strategic corridors.

There are many ways to include bicycling facilities along roadway corridors. Different land use contexts and conditions, such as rural versus suburban development patterns, traffic volumes, roadway design speeds, and available right-of-way require different approaches to facility selection and design. Hence, design guidance can be used to help incorporate “context-sensitive” bicycle facilities. See the callout box on **page 180** regarding bicycle facility selection guidance.

As part of this Plan, a bicycle demand analysis was created to identify roadway segments with the highest potential demand for bicycle activity based on several indicators associated with a desire for bicycling. Appropriate bicycling radii or buffer distances were mapped from the locations of these indicators, and then the roadway segments that fell within these buffer areas or met

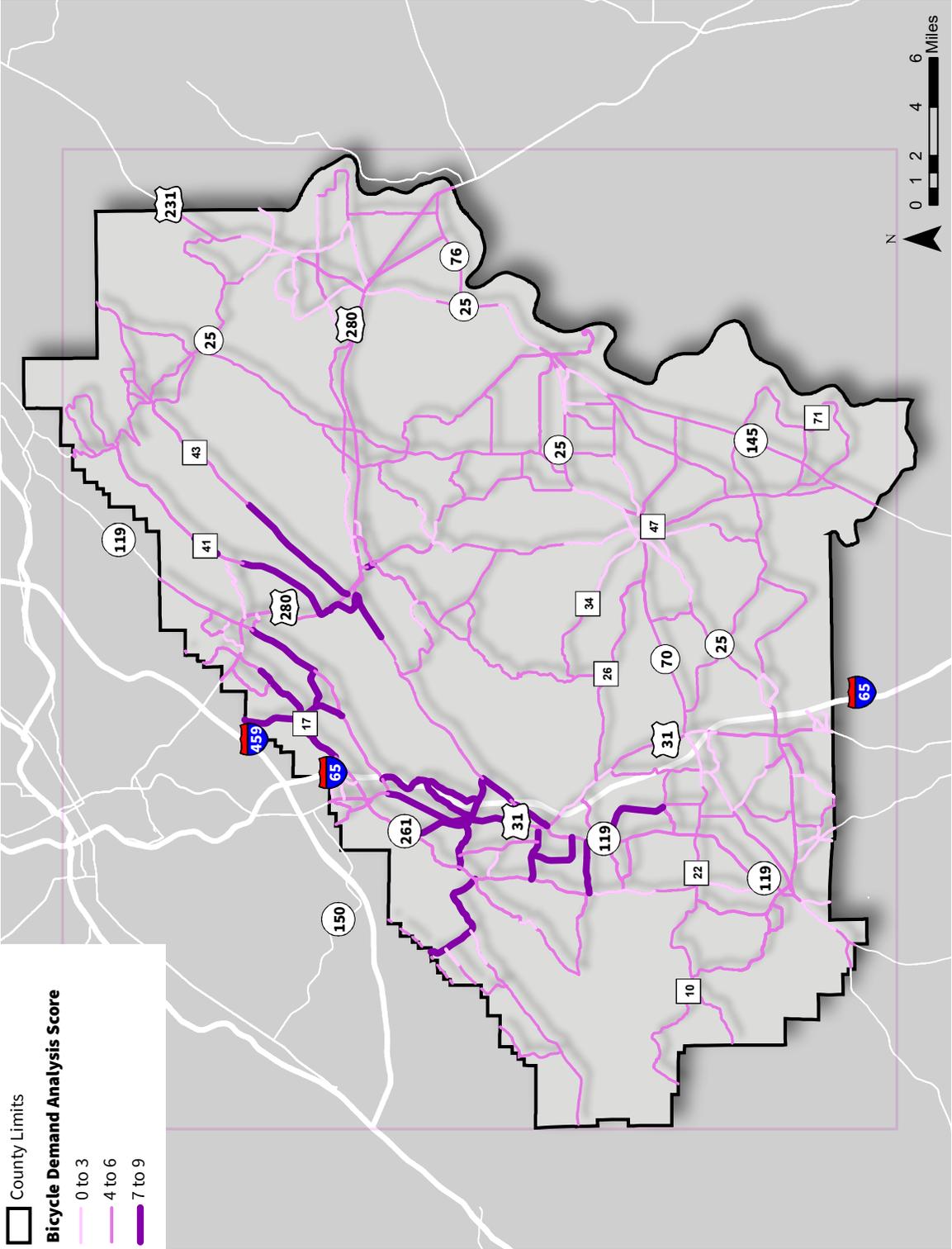
the criteria scored points. The indicators included in the bicycle demand analysis are listed in **Table 7.4**. The highest possible score based on the indicators was an 11. **Figure 7.3** displays the bicycle demand analysis score for roadway segments on major roadway corridors throughout the County. This bicycle demand analysis is intended to help the County determine which roadway segments should be considered as a priority for adding context-sensitive bicycle facilities if funding and rights-of-way become available.

Table 5.3: Scoring Criteria for the Bicycle Demand Analysis

Bicycle Demand Analysis Indicators	Scoring Weight (in points)
Roadway segments identified by the public at least three times or more during the public involvement associated with this Comprehensive Plan	2
Road segments with an existing Bicycle Level of Service of D, E or F	1
Road segments that are within 1/2 mile of an existing park	1
Road segments that are within 2 miles of Oak Mountain State Park	1
Road segments that are within 1/2 mile of existing trails / greenways	2
Road segments that had more than 500 total trips made by bicyclists during the 2021 calendar year (according to STRAVA)	2
Road segments that are owned and maintained by Shelby County	2

Source: RPCGB

Figure 7.3: Bicycle Demand Analysis Results



Source: Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

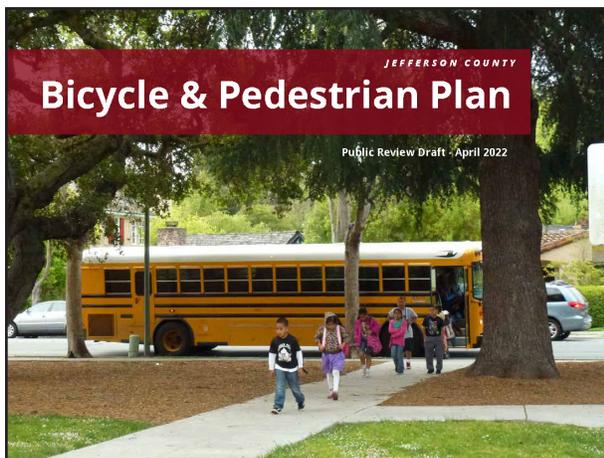


Action 10

Develop a countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

It is recommended that Shelby County Highway Department work with a consultant team to develop a Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that would create a recommended network of interconnected, comprehensive, safe, and feasible nonmotorized facilities that expands and complements the existing network of sidewalks, bicycle facilities and trails. The study area limits would have to be determined, but most countywide plans focus on recommendations within the unincorporated areas of the county and along County-owned roads that connect through incorporated areas.

The Plan should identify high-priority areas and establish project priorities while also identifying realistic improvements and key connections. The Plan should also help guide infrastructure, policy and program improvements and assist the County, municipal partners, ALDOT, developers and other local and regional planning partners to strategically build better connections for walking and bicycling throughout the county.



Source: Alta Planning + Design, Inc. and Jefferson County Alabama

Transportation Infrastructure Maintenance

Transportation infrastructure maintenance is a very important element of an overall transportation system development strategy. Every inch of infrastructure that gets built is another inch that someone must pay to maintain. Nationwide, county and municipal budgets are buckling beneath the mounting weight of long-term infrastructure maintenance obligations. Shelby County should continue to take measures today that will set it up for future solvency.

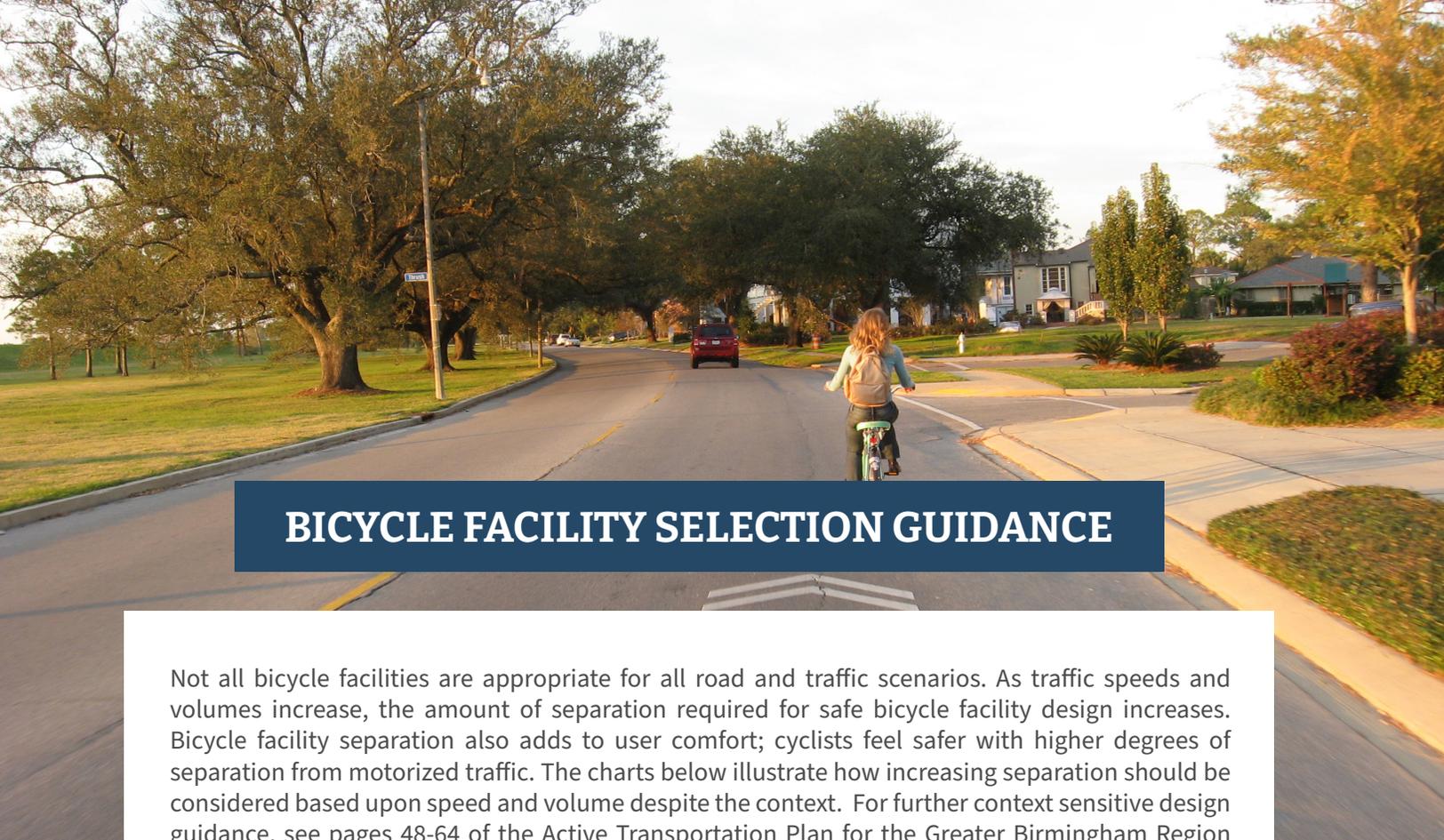


Action 11

Continue to evaluate and update the County's Asset Management Program to maintain the County-owned transportation infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

With nearly 850 miles of paved roads (154 miles of which are subdivision roads), 102 miles of unpaved roads, 190 bridges over 20 feet in length, 89 bridges less than 20 feet in length, seven signalized intersections and numerous culverts, drainage ditches and roadside miles of vegetation to maintain, achieving the best overall condition of the county-owned transportation system is a constant balancing act that requires cooperation, creativity and collaboration. Many times the preservation and preventative maintenance of existing assets gets strained by a number of competing factors, including new construction.

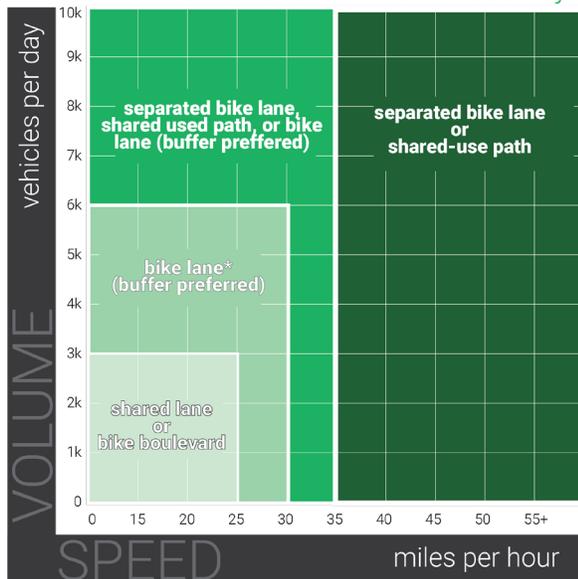
It is recommended that the Shelby County Highway Department continue to evaluate its asset management system and update it as needed to expand capabilities. The term "asset management" refers to the



BICYCLE FACILITY SELECTION GUIDANCE

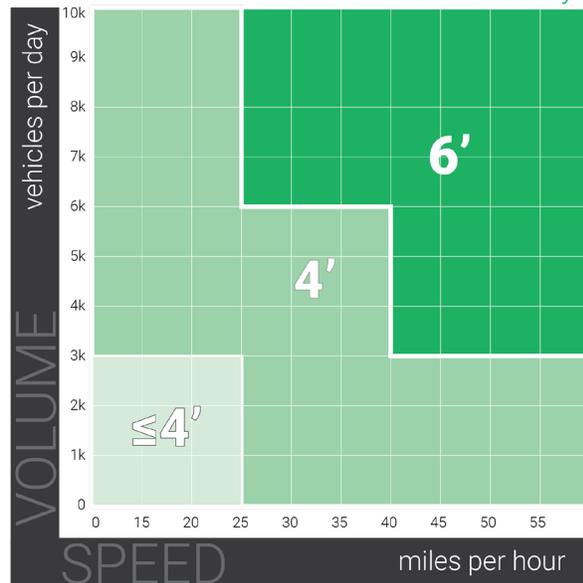
Not all bicycle facilities are appropriate for all road and traffic scenarios. As traffic speeds and volumes increase, the amount of separation required for safe bicycle facility design increases. Bicycle facility separation also adds to user comfort; cyclists feel safer with higher degrees of separation from motorized traffic. The charts below illustrate how increasing separation should be considered based upon speed and volume despite the context. For further context sensitive design guidance, see pages 48-64 of the Active Transportation Plan for the Greater Birmingham Region (also known as the B-Active Plan) at www.B-ActivePlan.com, which was developed by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham.

Bicycle Facility Selection Chart Urban and Suburban Roadways



*advisory bike lanes may be an option where traffic volume < 4K Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

Recommended Minimum Shoulder Rural Roadways



*advisory bike lanes may be an option where traffic volume < 3K ADT

Source: Toole Design Group

Image Source: CicLAvia

combination of management, financial, economic, engineering, information technology and other practices applied to physical transportation assets with the objective of providing the required level of service in the most cost-effective manner. Key concepts include asset inventory, condition, risk, valuation, maintenance best practices and life cycle cost analysis.

teleworking. The program offers a variety of incentives to encourage commuters to use these options, including gift cards, free emergency rides home and even direct payments for each alternative commute. The County should partner with the RPCGB to actively promote CommuteSmart to residents and employers. Visit www.CommuteSmart.org to learn more.

Transportation Demand Management

Almost every commuter in the Birmingham region drives to work alone with empty passenger seats in the car. Building enough road capacity to keep all traffic flowing at all times is impossible. Instead, the County should actively promote transportation demand management (TDM). TDM describes programs and projects that aim to provide more competitive transportation options to driving alone, which reduces the need for vehicle trips and improves traffic congestion without building more roads.



Action 12

Shelby County should partner with RPCGB to promote the CommuteSmart program for Shelby County commuters.

CommuteSmart is a federally funded initiative of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) that formed in 1999 to promote alternative commuting options for the Birmingham area. Since its formation, CommuteSmart has partnered with local agencies and employers to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by providing alternative commuting options, such as walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling, transit and



Action 13

Promote the use of the park-and-ride lot at the Shelby County Airport for commuters.

Since 2014, Shelby County has maintained a park-and-ride lot at the Shelby County Airport (off I-65 at CR-87, Exit 234). The 125-space park-and-ride lot is located at the north end of the airport runway (outside the fenced-in facility area) on Shelby West Parkway and is available for the public to use for carpooling purposes.

Public Transportation

Shelby County’s current public transit offerings are very limited. Currently, the only fixed-transit route between Shelby County and Jefferson County is the “US-280 Route” that is operated by the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority and runs from the Birmingham Central Station to the Walmart Supercenter on US-280 near the intersection of SR-119.

In 2019, approximately 46,300 Shelby County residents drove to Jefferson County for work, which accounted for 48% of the daily job outflow. In addition, approximately 28,300 Jefferson County residents drove to Shelby County for work, which accounted for 30% of the daily job inflow.

Thus, there is a potential public transit market for both the commuters and the reverse-commuters.

In the public transit industry, the type of riders typically fall into three different categories:

- “Occasional riders” who only use transit for unusual trips
- “Commuters” who use transit to travel to work but do not use it for many other trips
- “All-purpose riders” who use transit to commute to work, run errands and for a variety of other purposes



Source: BJCTA



Action 14

Partner with regional entities to provide a range of public transportation services.

Public transportation provides people with mobility and access to employment, community resources, medical care, and recreational opportunities. In addition, the changing needs of an aging population underscore the need for investments in mobility options beyond the use of private vehicles. As part of this Plan, a survey was administered at the 2022 Shelby County Senior Picnic. When asked “If you do not drive, are there adequate transportation options to transport you to activities such as shopping, visiting the doctor, running errands or meeting friends?” 44% of the survey respondents answered “No.” In

addition, when asked “Which of the following should the County better promote to help seniors?” the top response out of the 15 multiple-choice items was “more transportation options” (this, too, was chosen by 44% of the survey respondents).

It is recommended that Shelby County partner with regional entities to provide its residents with more public transportation options, such as:

- ✘ Demand response offers door-to-door or curb-to-curb service, and generally uses smaller, more comfortable vehicles. Customers request a trip in advance, are picked up at their origin and dropped off at their destination. Demand response usually takes one of three forms: (1) many origins to one destination; (2) many origins to a few destinations; or (3) many origins to many destinations. Demand response services are provided by public entities, nonprofits, and private providers.
- ✘ On-demand ridesharing is a service that provides one-time shared rides on very short notice, usually arranged through a smartphone app. These rides make use of three technologies: GPS navigation, smartphones, and social networks. The two dominant players in the ridesharing market in the US are Uber and Lyft. In general, a potential rider provides information regarding the pick-up and destination points, after which the rider is quoted a price and approximate arrival time. If the rider accepts, payment is made through the app. The rider is given a picture of the driver and vehicle description. This makes it safer for everyone, especially individuals who are vulnerable.
- ✘ Express bus service, which is characterized by limited pick-up and drop-off locations and faster trips than traditional local bus service. The express bus service typically runs during peak

ROADWAY JURISDICTION: WHOSE ROAD IS IT TO MAINTAIN?

Properly maintained roads are essential to residents, businesses, schools and emergency service providers. Numerous government agencies construct, maintain and repair roads throughout Shelby County.

Interstates, US Highways and State Routes

Interstates, US Highway and State Routes are under the authority of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to maintain. Visit the ALDOT website at www.dot.state.al.us/reportaconcern.html or call (334) 353-6554 to report a concern along these routes.



The sign on the left identifies interstates, such as I-65. The sign in the center identifies US highway routes, such as US-280, US-31 and US-231. The sign on the right identifies state highways, such as SR-25, SR-70, SR-119, and SR-261.



County Roads

This blue and gold sign identifies numbered County Routes such as CR-12 (Smokey Road and Butler Road), CR-29 (Caldwell Mill Road) and CR-17 (Valleydale Road and HWY 17 that runs from Helena to Montevallo). Many other roads, including subdivision roads, in unincorporated areas are under the authority of Shelby County. The Shelby County Highway Department is responsible for planning, designing, constructing and maintaining county roads. Visit the County website at www.shelbyal.com/272/Highway or call (205) 669-3880 to learn more or report a concern.



Local Streets

While most local streets are located within municipalities, many neighborhood streets in the unincorporated portions of Shelby County are under the authority of the Shelby County Highway Department. Most municipal streets provide access to neighborhoods or within subdivisions. Each municipality is responsible for the construction, maintenance and repair of the local streets within their municipal limits.

travel hours for use by commuters. It provides an option that is competitive with automobile travel times and costs and can help lower traffic congestion in major travel corridors. Access to express bus service is typically made through park and ride facilities.



Action 15

Evaluate priority locations for the installation of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations.

Shelby County is encouraged to capitalize on the ongoing nationwide trend toward clean, renewable energy. Ownership of electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) has increased and is projected to continue to grow, presenting a growing need for publicly accessible EV charging stations. To be eligible for federal EV infrastructure funding as part of the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program, each state must adopt an EV infrastructure plan. The State of Alabama’s 2022 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan identified I-65 for additional investments in EV charging stations, and as EVs continue to capture market share of new vehicle purchases, residents will desire a network of publicly accessible charging stations across the County.

The County is encouraged to facilitate the installation of EV charging stations and reduce barriers that may exist, such as ensuring proper zoning is in place and working with utility providers and private developers. As more charging stations are developed, the County is encouraged to consider how to equitably distribute EV infrastructure and how infrastructure placement can support economic development.

The Alabama Partners for Clean Air (www.alabamacleanair.org/) and the Alabama Clean Fuel Coalition (www.alabamacleanfuels.org) may be valuable partners in identifying where charging stations are needed most.

Did you know?

Since 2019, the City of Birmingham has had great success administering Birmingham On-Demand in partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham and Via, which is able to provide shared rides within their service area for \$1.50 per passenger.



Source: Birmingham Times

Electric Vehicles

Like the rest of the country, Shelby County’s transportation system is primarily oriented around gasoline and diesel vehicles. Increasing rates of electric vehicle (EV) ownership will offer environmental and financial benefits, but these can only be realized with new investments in charging infrastructure.



Action 16

Apply for state and federal grant programs to install EV charging infrastructure projects.

To catalyze the development of EV infrastructure, Shelby County is encouraged to pursue grants at the state and federal level. Current grants include:

- EV Infrastructure Planning and Grant Program:** This is a state-level grant administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). To date, this grant program has awarded more than \$4.1 million in grants to 18 public and private entities across seven counties, funding up to 80% of the cost of each charging station project.
- Discretionary Grant Program for Charging and Fueling Infrastructure:** This is a federal grant administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation that will award up to \$2.5 billion via a competitive grant program to strategically deploy publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure and other alternative fueling infrastructure along designated alternative fuel corridors. At least half of this funding must be used for a community grant program where priority is given to projects that expand access to EV charging and alternative fueling infrastructure within rural areas, low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, and communities with a low ratio of private parking spaces.
- National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Set-aside Discretionary Grant:** This is a federal grant administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation that is composed of 10% of the total

NEVI Formula Program. This program provides additional assistance to strategically deploy EV charging infrastructure.



Action 17

Create partnerships to attract private investments in electric vehicle charging infrastructure projects.

Shelby County should identify opportunities for collaboration with the private sector to spur the development of additional EV infrastructure, such as Drive Electric Alabama, a statewide coalition dedicated to improving our state through the adoption of electric vehicles. The Drive Electric Alabama initiative is composed of a group of diverse stakeholders across the state, led by ADECA, who are dedicated to engaging automakers and dealers, conducting infrastructure planning, and bringing jobs to Alabama. A similar public-private initiative within Shelby County could educate possible EV owners about the benefits of purchasing an EV as well as conduct localized EV infrastructure planning.

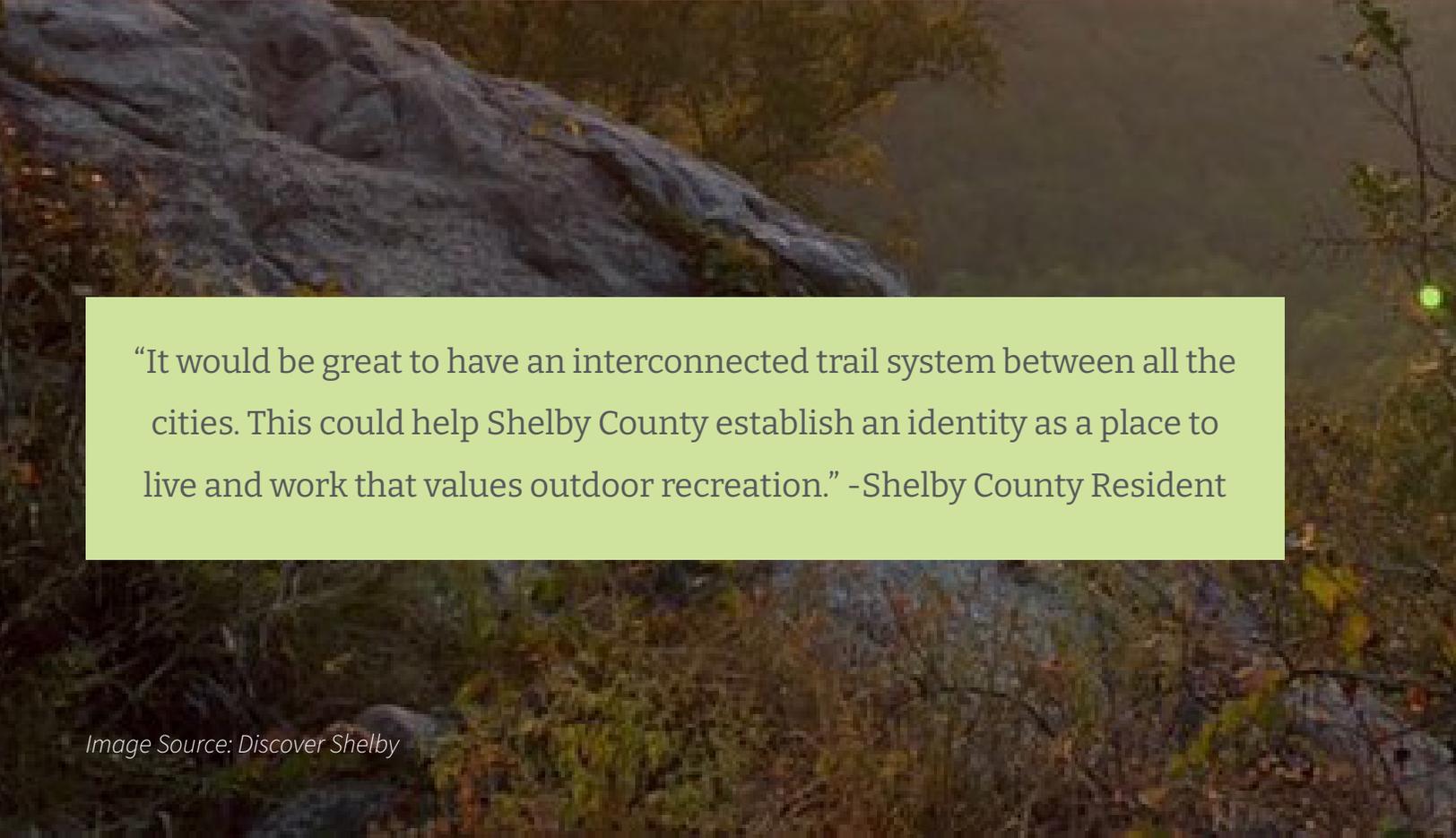
Utility companies such as Alabama Power Company may be valuable partners. Along with Mercedes-Benz International, Alabama Power is a private sector partner of the Alabama Mobility and Power (AMP) Center, a research and development hub housed within the University of Alabama's Alabama Transportation Institute.

While the precise organization of these groups may differ, they share the goal of bringing together stakeholders from the public and private sectors to ease the transition to a national fleet increasingly composed of EVs and to deploy the infrastructure necessary to support these vehicles.

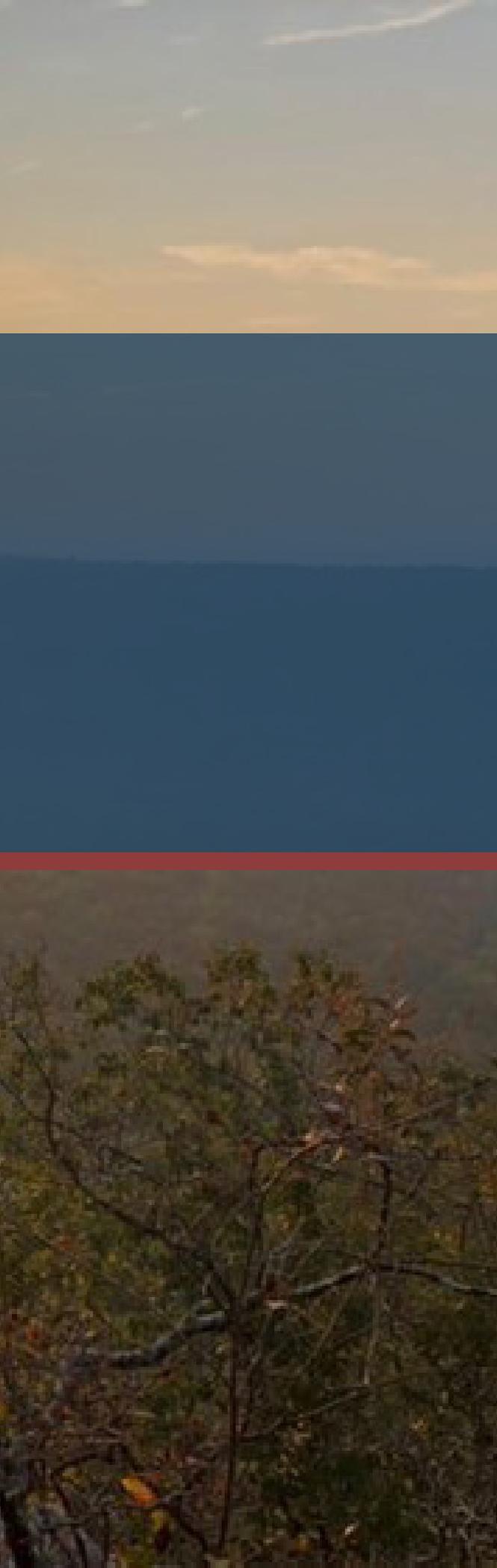


chapter eight

Parks, Recreation & Trails



“It would be great to have an interconnected trail system between all the cities. This could help Shelby County establish an identity as a place to live and work that values outdoor recreation.” -Shelby County Resident



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Parks, Recreation & Trails



Image Source: Discover Shelby

In the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Shelby County is home to a wide range of natural features for outdoor recreation, including Oak Mountain State Park, Lay Lake, Lake Purdy, and numerous other ridges, streams, and forests. Oak Mountain State Park is a major asset to Shelby County, which at 11,632 acres (or 18.2 square miles) is the largest and most-visited state park in Alabama. These natural assets are supplemented by a comprehensive park system containing dozens of additional public parks and open space areas totaling approximately 7,674 acres (or 12.0 square miles). Many of these parks may be accessed using the existing countywide trail network that currently totals approximately 160 miles.

During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Comprehensive Plan, the public noted that providing more outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and expanding the trail system should be one of the County's highest priorities. As the population in Shelby County has grown, the demand for access to public parks and recreation facilities within the County has grown as well. This chapter outlines recommendations for how the County should maintain, expand, and connect its parks and trail systems.

This Parks, Recreation and Trails chapter includes the three sections shown below:

- Park Maintenance and Improvements
- Expansion of Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Trails

Learn more:

For more information regarding existing parks and trails throughout Shelby County, see **pages 38-42 and pages 60-69 of Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends.**

Park Maintenance and Improvements



Action 1

Continue to allocate annual funding for the Shelby County Park and Recreation Grant Program administered by the Shelby County Department of Development Services.

The Park and Recreation Grant Program is intended to assist the various entities within Shelby County in developing and/or improving parks and recreational opportunities. The program is designed to help provide additional funding for entities after they have already obtained funds from the Shelby County Commission, municipalities within the County, the public-school systems in the County, the Shelby County Parks and Recreation Authority and/or private associations and organizations throughout the county. The grant program is designed to increase the user capacity of existing facilities, acquire property to increase the physical size of existing facilities, and/or to provide for the capital development of facilities in public areas un-served by present facilities.

The funding priorities for the grant program include:

- ✘ New construction of parks, trails, and other recreational facilities
- ✘ Increasing user capacity through expansion of existing facilities
- ✘ Renovation, replacement or repair of existing recreational fields, equipment, and/or facilities

- ✘ Combination of new construction and renovation of existing recreational facilities

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- ✘ Municipalities within Shelby County
- ✘ All public school systems within Shelby County
- ✘ Public Agency property owners
- ✘ Shelby County-area non-profit athletic or recreational associations

Funding Requirements:

All projects are considered on a 50% matching basis, up to the appropriate maximum funding amount. The applicant must identify matching fund sources and amounts at the time of application with one or more of the following: current organization financial balance sheets, IRS form 990, a letter of credit from a financial institution or any other documentation deemed appropriate by Shelby County.



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Action 2

Continue to dedicate adequate funding for maintenance and capital improvements to public parks to meet evolving needs.

During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Plan, survey participants were asked to “Rank the top 5 recreational amenities you feel are most needed in the County, from most to least.” Survey participants identified the greatest need as “Improved public facilities at existing park spaces (bathrooms, pavilions, and picnic areas).” See **Appendix A: Visioning Survey Results** for more details. Sufficiently funding public parks, ensuring continued maintenance, and providing for future facilities helps to improve the image of the County and attract private investment to neighborhoods and commercial areas.

The following are project examples the County should continue to dedicate adequate funding for:

- ✘ Replacements of playground equipment, bleachers, press boxes, dugouts, scoreboards, etc.
- ✘ Field maintenance such as top-dressing or re-grading of fields, aeration, replacing existing irrigation.
- ✘ Building of new athletic fields and complexes.
- ✘ Building of new trails.
- ✘ Providing new light fixtures or replacement of existing fixtures that increase lighting functionality; increase safety enhancements; reduction in energy consumption; reduction in foot candles; include a design that minimizes light pollution.
- ✘ Enhancements to passive recreational parks and facilities.

Did you know?

The Shelby County Department of Facilities and General Services is responsible for maintaining Shelby County’s building structures, building grounds, recreational parks and sports facilities.



Action 3

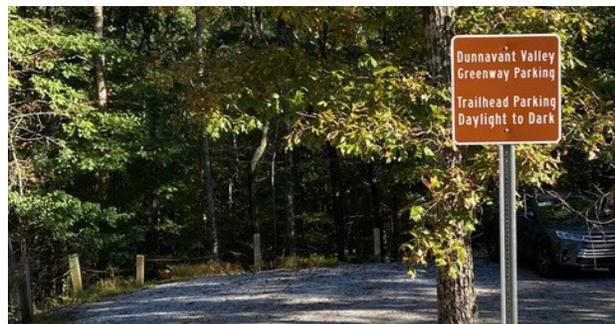
Continue to utilize the County’s existing parks maintenance request system to address reactive and preventative maintenance items needed at parks.



Action 4

Raise awareness among the public to report any feedback regarding needed maintenance improvements, about parks or on trails, by sending an email to eyes@shelbyal.com.

The public can report any feedback regarding needed maintenance improvements to Shelby County parks or trails by sending an email to eyes@shelbyal.com. Examples of maintenance improvements could include a downed tree on a trail, a broken swing at Cahaba Lily Park, or overflowing trash cans at Heardmont Park.



Source: Tom Opie



Action 5

Continue to partner with other municipalities and public entities to jointly invest in outdoor recreation facilities that provide access to the public and enhance tourism.

Shelby County is actively investing in park and open space areas and recreation programs to create opportunities to enhance quality of life for its residents, improve the local economy by increasing tourism, conserving the natural environment, and strengthening community connections. Yet, despite the tremendous benefits of the County providing recreational opportunities, the reality is that keeping up with the demand of such amenities can be costly, difficult to maintain or perhaps unfeasible at times.

Partnering with neighboring municipalities, local schools, non-profit organizations, and private businesses can give residents access to a much more diverse array of recreational opportunities. Benefits of recreation partnerships include:

- ✘ They provide a broader array of programs and facilities.
- ✘ They heighten a program’s credibility and visibility through joint marketing efforts.
- ✘ They increase the user base for existing programs and facilities (preventing cancellations and lowering fees).
- ✘ They increase the volunteer base.
- ✘ They provide cost savings through shared resources.
- ✘ They provide better efficiency through combining buying power, administrative capabilities, etc.



Source: Rand Corporation



Source: i Stock



Action 6

Improve accommodations at parks for senior adults.

Parks and open spaces are important assets for all residents of Shelby County. They provide physical, mental, and social benefits. Studies show that parks are particularly important for senior adults, who often do not have satisfactory options to exercise, socialize or enjoy nature. However, design and programming for parks often neglect the specific needs and preferences of senior adults. As a result, many senior adults do not frequent public parks. In the future, the County should work to incorporate accessible design and programming into existing and future parks.

Design best practices to better serve senior adults at parks include:

- ✘ Visible sign that marks the entrance of the park and indicates its name.

- ✘ Appropriate wayfinding signage to direct visitors to the park where the park is not visible.
- ✘ Maps of the park’s layout posted at the entrance and at other areas of the park.
- ✘ Distinctive and highly visible features (e.g., a kiosk, a clock tower, a fountain and some boulders)for large parks that have a variety of different settings (e.g., picnic areas, lawns and paths) that can help with orientation.
- ✘ Opportunities for both passive recreation (places to sit, read, people-watch, play cards, and socialize with friends) and active recreation (walking paths, exercise activities, gardening).
- ✘ Seating arrangements for individuals, small groups, as well as moveable seats to facilitate social interaction and allow people to watch activity.
- ✘ Technological innovations that increase security (motion-activated lights, surveillance camera coverage, emergency report systems and buttons).
- ✘ Non-slippery and porous paving materials. Attention should be given to the interface between paved and unpaved surfaces.
- ✘ Handrails on stairs, ramps, and paths.
- ✘ Paths that are flat or have a very gentle slope (less than 2%), that are wide enough for those using walkers or wheelchairs (5 to 7 feet), and have no steps.
- ✘ New parks in relation to other facilities used by seniors such as senior citizen centers, churches, community centers, and other institutions.
- ✘ Adequate handicapped parking close to the park.

- ✘ Multiple clean and spacious restrooms with hooks for canes, including restrooms for handicapped access.

For more information about best practices for designing park spaces for senior adults, visit https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/04/Seniors-and-Parks-8-28-Print_reduced.pdf



Action 7

Improve accommodations for disabled individuals at parks and recreational facilities.

Enjoying the outdoors with a physical disability can be challenging. To do the kinds of things that non-disabled people do without even thinking about it requires more steps, as well as accessible accommodations and even adaptive equipment. To ensure all individuals can enjoy the parks and open spaces that Shelby County offers, the County should consider making the following accommodations in existing and future park spaces:

Programming:

- ✘ Create a variety of recreational activities designed to provide kids with disabilities the opportunity to engage in a large group situation with peers that do not have disabilities.
- ✘ Provide adaptive recreation programs for residents with disabilities. These types of programs offer more structured environments and a lower staff ratio. Adaptive programming could include learn-to-swim classes, aquatic exercise classes, adapted yoga, fitness training, and fishing.

Design:

- ✘ Incorporate universal design to the greatest extent possible in new facilities, modify existing facilities where possible. Universal design includes consideration for accessible surfacing and routes, activities for diverse abilities, multisensory activities, wide ramps, seating and rest areas, offering activities along a developmental continuum, and combining shade and sunlight to provide a comfortable atmosphere.
- ✘ Ensure handicap parking spaces are close to park entrances.
- ✘ Construct more accessible trails. Accessible trails should be made of a firm and stable surface, be between five and seven feet wide, and have a cross slope less than 2% for wheelchair access.
- ✘ Provide more accessible vista points.
- ✘ Place signs no more than 56 inches off the ground since the line of sight for most individuals in a wheelchair is 43 inches.

Promotional Information:

- ✘ Create a guide to provide additional information, features, and programs that are accessible at each County-owned park. Ensure the guide is available online and at County-owned facilities.

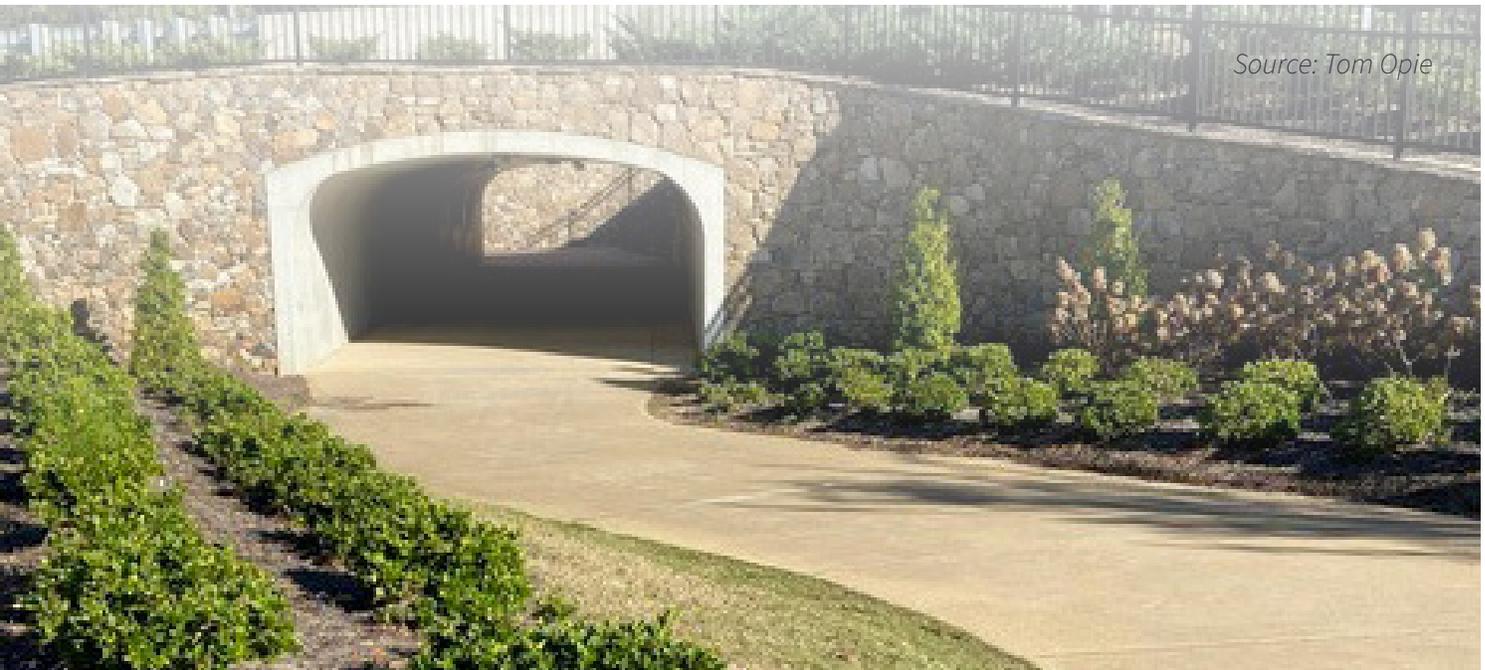


Action 8

Continue to implement a consistent branding package for county-owned parks and trailheads.

To ensure that county-owned parks and trailheads are easily identifiable and distinguishable from other local amenities, the County is encouraged to continue developing and implementing a consistent branding package. For example, when someone say a park’s name out loud, there should be visual identifiers such as images, words, and colors that pop into their mind because they are used to seeing those things on logos, signage, brochures, maps, website materials, etc.

Consistent branding creates a sense of security and understanding, whereas fragmented branding can leave people feeling confused, lost and even frustrated. The County is encouraged to create standards for signage, such as typography, color palettes, and materials, as well as painting standards for buildings, restrooms and pavilions. The branding should also be applied to informational materials on the DiscoverShelby.com website.



Source: Tom Opie



Action 9

Work with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the Shelby County Highway Department to add directional signage off I-65 and US-280 to direct visitors to Double Oak Mountain Park.

Directional signage helps people get oriented to new spaces; helps them find their destination with minimum stress and without getting lost; and helps them locate points of interest such as parks, trails, and community facilities. To direct visitors to the County’s newest recreational park, this Plan recommends the County work with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the Shelby County Highway Department to provide directional signage off I-65 and US-280 to direct visitors to Double Oak Mountain Park.



Action 10

Ensure that Lay Lake is preserved and protected from the impacts of future development.

During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Plan, the desire to preserve Lay Lake from future development was a clear priority of residents. The County should explore joint opportunities to permanently preserve the lake for future generations. Presently, Lay Lake is an impressive 12,000-acre reservoir that stretches for 48 miles through Talladega, Shelby, Coosa, and Chilton counties. The primary uses for this lake are hydroelectric power generation and outdoor recreation.

Lay Lake offers 289 miles of shoreline and provides recreational opportunities for boating, fishing, swimming, and other outdoor activities. Boat ramps, picnic facilities, nature trails, and restrooms are available to the public.



Action 11

Continue to maintain a partnership with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources regarding improvements needed to Oak Mountain State Park.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) is the state agency responsible for the conservation and management of Alabama’s natural resources including state parks, state lands, wildlife, and aquatic resources. The department is funded through the sale of fishing and hunting licenses, boat registration fees, oil and gas royalties from leases of state lands, and usage fees at state parks. Oak Mountain State Park is composed of 11,632 acres (or 18.2 square miles) and is estimated to have 775,000 annual visitors. Due to its popularity and size, the Park requires significant funding to maintain existing park amenities and facilities. It is recommended that the County continue to partner with ADCNR to fund and address necessary maintenance and park improvements.



Source: Shelby County Alabama

Expansion of Parks and Recreation Facilities



Action 12

Partner with municipalities to identify locations to build future parks in currently underserved residential areas.

During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Plan, survey participants were asked to “Rank what amenities you feel are most needed in the County.” Shared-use paths or greenways for walking or biking and additional green spaces, parks, or pocket parks were among the highest ranked answers. See **Appendix A: Visioning Survey Results** for more details.

Higher quality of life is not the only benefit for residents within walking distance of a park. These residents typically report better health and are less prone to chronic diseases. Decades of research have demonstrated that proximity to parks and green spaces supports health and wellness. In addition, parks that are accessible by sidewalks or multi-use trails allow users to make fewer car trips – thereby reducing local congestion. Park spaces do not have to be large to be beneficial. Modest spaces such as pocket parks and other neighborhood parks still provide residents with nearby green space.

Parks and recreational facilities make great communities, but not all Shelby County residents have easy access to them. Approximately 36% of residents live within a 10-minute walk, or one half-mile, of a public park (see **Figure 1.35 in**

Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends). In addition, this access is not evenly distributed. The majority of homes outside of the 10-minute walking distance to parks are located in the rural central portion of Shelby County as well as in outlying unincorporated areas. Two denser residential areas outside of the 10-minute walking shed are along the Hoover – Indian Springs Village border and near the intersection of US-280 and SR-119. Building additional parks in these areas could have a great impact.

The County should promote policies that can increase the share of residents within walking distance of public parks or publicly accessible green spaces. These policies may include:

- ✘ Identifying locations for future parks of varying sizes near currently underserved residential areas, or locating pocket parks on flood-prone lands.
- ✘ Directing future residential development as close as possible to existing parks.
- ✘ Ensuring future residential developments contain dedicated and/or accessible park space.



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Action 13

Continue to facilitate joint efforts between the Shelby County Department of Facilities and General Services and the Shelby County School System.

Historically, schools have had a variety of recreational facilities, such as gymnasiums, playgrounds, fields, courts, and tracks. While some schools close their property to the public during after-school hours because of concerns about costs, vandalism, security, maintenance, and liability in the event of an injury, several Shelby County schools have shared use agreements with the County that allow the public to utilize their buildings and grounds by extending access during non-school hours. This relationship allows the Shelby County School System and the County to mutually benefit from the development, operation, and maintenance of the facilities that are shared. Past joint efforts between the Shelby County Department of Facilities and General Services and the Shelby County School System include lighting, field improvements and walking trail projects. The County is encouraged to continue this mutually beneficial relationship that fosters community, allows for a more efficient use of public space and funding, and provides several health benefits for residents.



Action 14

Work with local municipalities to acquire publicly owned land adjacent to the Cahaba River.

The Cahaba River is a major asset to Shelby County. Much of the Cahaba’s main channel is wild, beautiful, and very popular for canoeing, fishing, swimming, and environmental education. It is the longest free-flowing river in Alabama and is among the most scenic and biologically diverse

ivers in the United States. To preserve the scenic beauty and biodiversity of the Cahaba River, the County is encouraged to work with local municipalities to acquire publicly owned land adjacent to the Cahaba River to increase the number of access points and parking areas for the public to use.



Action 15

Partner with the Cahaba Blueway Initiative and local municipalities to develop new Cahaba Blueway access points along the Cahaba River.

The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development (UACED) is working in partnership with the Cahaba River Society, the Nature Conservancy, the Cahaba Riverkeeper, the Freshwater Land Trust, and the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to realize the Cahaba’s potential through the Cahaba Blueway Initiative. This program is intended to create a formal “water trail” on the Cahaba by providing the infrastructure and information needed to make accessing the river easier and branding that will make the blueway or water trail marketable.

Similar water trails elsewhere in the Southeast and across the country have expanded opportunities for hospitality and retail businesses while making nearby communities more livable and attractive to prospective residents. The Cahaba Blueway Organization has produced guideline documents that encourage adjacent municipalities to the Cahaba River to use as key references when planning and developing new Cahaba Blueway access points. For more information, visit: <https://www.cahabablueway.org/about/>



Action 16

Work with Alabama Power to dedicate a site at Lake Purdy for a public park.

Lake Purdy is Birmingham’s primary drinking water source and is owned by Alabama Power. The lake currently offers fishing, boat rentals, and picnic areas. Lake Purdy’s natural beauty provides a perfect setting for a leisurely stroll, a long bike ride, or a challenging hike or other recreational experience. During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Plan, residents expressed an interest in having access to a public park with trails at Lake Purdy. The County should work with Alabama Power to encourage this idea, which would allow more local residents to utilize all the amenities Lake Purdy has to offer. As a first step, a survey should be conducted to understand what additional amenities and types of trails the public would like to see.

- ✘ Pelham Racquet Club
- ✘ University of Montevallo Athletic Facilities
- ✘ Veterans Park on Valleydale

To increase the utilization of existing sports venues, the County should facilitate better coordination between the Shelby County Department of Facilities and General Services and the County’s Tourism and Events staff to ensure venues have the items and equipment needed to recruit specific events to the County. In addition, the County should work with surrounding counties and municipalities to attract large multi-venue events.

Trails



Action 17

Increase the utilization of existing sports venues.

Sports tourism is becoming increasingly popular, with the number of people attending out-of-area sports events increasing every day. Shelby County is home to several wonderful sports venues including:

- ✘ Beeswax Creek Park
- ✘ Dunnavant Valley Fields
- ✘ Eagle Sports Complex
- ✘ Lay Lake
- ✘ Oak Mountain State Park
- ✘ Pelham Civic Complex and Ice Arena



Action 18

Develop a Shelby County Trails Master Plan to establish a trail network vision and identify missing linkages.

A trails master plan is needed to establish a countywide trail network vision and identify opportunities to connect more trails to county-owned parks, residential areas, schools, and other community destinations. A trails master plan should address trail needs throughout Shelby County by planning for a complete trail network, closing gaps in the existing network, and enhancing safety and accessibility. In turn, these efforts should boost quality of life and support economic development. The plan should also provide clear direction to the community on how to prioritize future trail investments and identify key partners for land acquisition or easements.

Key components of a trails master plan should include:

- ✘ Identification of gaps in the existing trail network
- ✘ Connectivity to neighboring trails
- ✘ Best route suggestions that are both feasible and economical due to the location of existing utilities and rights-of-way
- ✘ Priority list of new trail projects and methodology for prioritizing projects
- ✘ Trail surface determination - soft vs. hard - and ADA compliance (if paved)
- ✘ Strategy for rights-of-way acquisition and easements
- ✘ Land acquisition strategy
- ✘ Cost estimates for trail projects
- ✘ Funding opportunities
- ✘ Phased implementation plan, as appropriate
- ✘ Trail maintenance plan



Action 19

Continue to build County-owned trails in high growth areas.

As identified by the residents during the public involvement process associated with this Plan, expanding the countywide trail system should remain a high priority for the County. As of 2022, Shelby County owns and maintains approximately 47 miles of trails (41 miles are single-track and 6 miles are double-track). The single-track trails were built as part of park projects; and since 2013, the County has been building its own double-track trails. All of the trails permit hiking, walking, and trail running, but some trails do not permit bicyclists.

Recent land acquisitions, such as the 750-acre purchase of land running between

Dunnivant Valley Road and Bear Creek Road (CR-43) to build Double Oak Park, will allow for the construction of additional miles of trails. Currently, Shelby County is one of only two entities in the State of Alabama that owns trail building equipment. Due to topography limitations, the County has been primarily building natural trail paths made of stone or dirt. A benefit to these types of stone or dirt trails is that they can be built over utility easements, which then allows flexibility for digging in case the utilities must be accessed or a new development is built in the future.



Action 20

Work with local municipalities and other entities to build trails that connect to the countywide trail system.

While the County currently owns and maintains 47 miles of trails, an additional 113 miles of trails exist that are owned and maintained by local municipalities or other entities. For example, the City of Helena owns and maintains the Hillsboro Trail. (A full list of existing trails throughout Shelby County can be found in **Table 1.15** in **Appendix B: Existing Conditions and Trends**.) The County is encouraged to continue working with local municipalities, counties, and other entities to build trails that connect to the overall countywide trail system. Whenever feasible, trails should be constructed that fill gaps, create trail loops, or extend the trail system into more populated areas.

The County should also encourage local municipalities to collaborate on a connected system of municipal-owned trails. Currently, the cities of Alabaster, Helena and Pelham have a vision to connect the Buck Creek Trail system and the Bishop Creek Trail system to Oak Mountain State Park. In addition, the City of Hoover is exploring opportunities to tie its municipal trail system into Helena via

a pedestrian bridge over the Cahaba River. Where possible, the County should provide local municipalities with assistance on trail design, construction, grant preparation, etc.



Action 21

Incorporate universal design to the greatest extent possible when developing future trails.

When developing future trails, the County should seek to incorporate the concept of universal design, a philosophy that attempts to meet the needs of the widest possible range of potential users. Universally designed trails include design elements that facilitate use by all people to the greatest extent practicable, given terrain constraints and the desired trail experience. This includes people with disabilities, people with varying comfort levels, and non-pedestrian users such as cyclists and equestrians. Some hikers use a wheelchair or power scooter as a personal mobility device, while others use a walking stick or backpack to make the hike more enjoyable.



Action 22

Work to build a trail system that is flexible for users at varying levels of comfort.

Trails attract a diverse set of users including walkers, hikers, trail runners, bicyclists, and back-country horseback riding; the County plans to accommodate them all. The needs of more seasoned hikers should also be accommodated on trail segments whose design is heavily constrained by slope or other features. As the County continues to build trails, it should work to build a trail system that accommodates the needs and abilities of as many people as possible, from the casual walker, to the trail runner, to the beginner mountain biker and the advanced mountain biker.



Action 23

Target land acquisitions for constructing new trails that connect County-owned properties to other publicly owned properties or land trust properties.

As Shelby County continues expanding its trail network, it should prioritize land acquisition that would connect publicly owned recreational properties to each other and to public access land trust properties. Conservation-oriented land trusts operating in Shelby County include the Freshwater Land Trust and the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust. For more information about these land trusts, please see the callout box on **page 203**.



Action 24

Promote the use of conservation easements and recreation easements to enhance the countywide trail system.

While some landowners wish to donate property to land trusts, other landowners wish to maintain ownership of their property while seeing it preserved (conservation easement) or to allow public access for public recreation use (recreation easement).

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or public entity. It allows the property owner to continue to own and use the land, sell it, or pass it on to heirs, but the easement and the covenants stated in the easement documents “run with the land,” meaning they do not end with a change in land ownership. Both the owner who grants the easement and all future owners of the easement area are bound to observe the holder’s rights under the easement document. Land trusts manage and preserve the donated land in perpetuity. By donating a recreation easement to a land

trust or public entity, the owner may make a designated portion of their land available for a public trail for walking, running, bicycling and transportation purposes without having to subdivide the land or lose ownership and control of the land. The width and length of the easement may vary. For example, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation advises planning for an average minimum corridor width of between 25 and 75 feet.



Action 25

Target the acquisition of undevelopable or extremely hard to develop properties for the construction of new trails.

Shelby County is encouraged to target property acquisition of land that is considered undevelopable or extremely hard to develop due to steep topography. Ridgetops and other features play important roles in the County’s ecology and hydrology. While they are not suitable for new development, they may be suitable for the construction of new trails. Land acquisition of this kind would not only help preserve the ridgetops while expanding the countywide trail system, but would help mitigate stormwater runoff by ensuring vegetation and permeable surfaces remain. This also helps protect water quality by reducing the amount of stormwater and sediment entering waterways.



Action 26

Explore the feasibility of connecting the Dunnington Valley Community Greenway to the new Double Oak Park trail system.



Action 27

Modify the Shelby County Subdivision Regulations to require public access easements in new subdivisions for the construction of sidewalks and/or multi-use trails to enhance pedestrian and non-vehicular connectivity.

See **Action 14 in Chapter 6: Code Modifications.**



Action 28

Encourage local municipalities to modify their subdivision regulations to require public access easements in new subdivisions for the construction of sidewalks and/or multi-use trails to enhance pedestrian and non-vehicular connectivity.

See **Action 14 in Chapter 6: Code Modifications.**



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Source: City of San Luis Obispo California

The Freshwater Land Trust

The Freshwater Land Trust (FLT) is a 501(c)(3) conservation non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve, connect, and care for land and water in Central Alabama, creating dynamic green spaces for future generations. They work to conserve land in the following counties: Bibb, Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Tuscaloosa and Walker.

In 2016, the FLT purchased 225 acres of the Smyer Ridge on Double Oak Mountain, totaling two miles of ridgeline seen by several communities throughout Dunnavant Valley. The property will be conserved in perpetuity through a revolving stewardship program. The FLT has noted this conservation effort's ability to protect a variety of terrestrial biodiversity, including mountain longleaf pine and migratory birds, as well as aquatic biodiversity and headwaters that reach Shoal Creek and the Coosa River. In addition to these natural landscapes, scenic views are also being preserved for future enjoyment.



Source: Freshwater Land Trust

Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust

The Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust was established by an Alabama constitutional amendment in 1996 and has secured over 270,000 acres of land in Alabama for public use.

Individuals may nominate particular tracts of land for purchase. After a review process, the Forever Wild Land Trust Board of Trustees may then make an offer to buy that tract at the appraised fair market value. For each tract the Board acquires, 15% of the appraised value is also deposited into the program's stewardship account to cover future land management needs.

Cahaba River Park is a joint venture between the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust and Shelby County. The park includes 1,838 acres (2.9 square miles) at the confluence of the Cahaba River and Shades Creek, with the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust owning 1,523 acres and Shelby County owning 315 acres. The park includes 11.5 miles of trails for mountain biking and hiking while the river miles allow visitors to enjoy canoeing, swimming or fishing when the water levels safely permit.



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Source: Shelby County Alabama



chapter nine

Livability & Public Services



“I love that Shelby County is a great place for my family to live. It has wonderful schools, places to shop and eat, and safe parks and neighborhoods.” - Shelby County Resident



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Livability & Public Services



Image Credit: krM ARCHITECTURE

Livability is the sum of factors that add up to a community's quality of life—including the built and natural environments; economic prosperity; social stability and equity; educational opportunity; and cultural, entertainment, and recreation possibilities. Thus, while there are many intangibles that make an area livable, such as a sense of community, a strong sense of place, civic pride and the friendliness of neighbors, there are also tangible aspects that can nurture livability. This chapter will focus on the tangible aspects, such as how enhancements to public services and amenities can help improve residents' quality of life. Improved livability can also help Shelby County to compete economically with other areas for businesses and workers.

This Livability and Public Services chapter includes the six sections shown below:

- Enhancements to Public Services and Facilities
- Code Enforcement
- Addressing the Needs of Senior Adults
- Public Safety
- Resiliency
- Intergovernmental Coordination

Enhancements to Public Services and Facilities



Action 1

Increase the communications capacity of the County government and its boards and commissions by regularly updating the County’s website.

Shelby County continues to expand and improve its online presence, as demonstrated by [DiscoverShelby.com](https://www.discovershelby.com) serving as a hub of tourist and event information. One aspect that should remain central during this improvement process is communicating governance information to the public. Although County Commission meeting agendas and minutes are housed in an online agenda center, this is not true for all County boards and commissions, which can make it time-consuming to find information. It is recommended that the County post information for all bodies in a centralized location while ensuring that information is still prominently posted in-person at County facilities.

In tandem with the effort to update its website, Shelby County should also strengthen its social media presence. Different segments of the County’s population frequent different platforms; e.g., older residents may spend more time on Facebook and NextDoor, while Instagram may reach younger residents. The County should monitor trends and ensure it has a presence on current and emerging platforms. This is a best practice in governance and will help the County disseminate information by meeting people where they are. Social media posts with photos and video may also assist the

County’s ongoing tourism efforts. For more information about hosting information on [DiscoverShelby.com](https://www.discovershelby.com), see **Action 13 in Chapter 10: Economic Development.**



Action 2

Explore additional opportunities for the co-location of existing and planned public facilities.

Co-locating multiple county departments or services in one building improves efficiency by reducing the number and size of certain fixed costs, such as land, and by introducing economies of scale in shared amenities such as parking and air conditioning. Housing multiple municipal services in the same building or complex is increasingly popular today among communities of all sizes.

There are examples from across the region and state; such as the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena that is home to the ice-skating rink in addition to civic spaces such as a banquet hall. Outside Shelby County, the Gardendale Civic Center Complex includes the City Hall, the Civic Center, Senior Center, and space for the local farmers market within the same block. The Auburn Public Safety Building includes all public safety departments, council chambers, and the municipal court under one roof, with additional municipal offices in the same complex.

While cities can more easily concentrate municipal uses in a central downtown area, Shelby County has a duty to make services accessible to its residents who are spread across 808.8 square miles of land. The County has taken steps in this direction, such as opening the 280 Shelby County Services Building in the Dunnington Valley area of North Shelby County in 2021. This facility houses several departments near a growing population center and demonstrates how

individual uses and departments can still be efficiently concentrated in one complex or building even as the facilities themselves are dispersed throughout the county.



Action 3

Continue making enhancements to the county library system and collaborate with other library systems to share resources and services.

The Shelby County library system includes 14 individual libraries. Of these, 11 are located in and supported by an incorporated city or town. The countywide system is administered by the Mildred B. Harrison Regional Library in Columbiana. A library card allows a Shelby County resident to request materials from any other library in the system via interlibrary loan, creating a truly countywide system.

The library system and its constituent facilities are also encouraged to continue offering flexible programming for a variety of patrons. The County is encouraged to continue outreach by extending satellite services to residents in more rural areas and to reach residents who may not be able to travel to a library. These outreach methods can be on a temporary, rotating basis, such as pop-up libraries, which are temporary flexible libraries that offer services provided at a library – library card signups, material checkouts, digital resources, and device help. Pop-up libraries are a great way to reintroduce residents to a range of resources offered by the library system, such as digital downloadable audio books, digital magazines, music borrowing, online homework help, and research databases. One case study to research and follow is the Suffolk Public Library in Suffolk, Virginia.

The County is also encouraged to explore the feasibility of creating a regional consortium to share materials with other systems in the

region, such as the Jefferson County Library Cooperative. This would greatly expand the volume of material available to patrons in these areas through increased utilization of already owned resources instead of the duplication of resources across adjacent systems. Many states organize statewide consortiums that are divided into regional groups within which it is feasible to move materials.



Action 4

Promote and expand the number of farmers markets across the County to ensure residents have access to local goods and fresh produce.

Farmers markets have become more popular in recent years and have been tied to the same rising interest in environmental practices that has spurred on ecotourism. Shelby County is home to an array of farmers markets of various sizes, with notable examples including Helena Market Days; the Market at Lee Branch; and others in the Montevallo, Mt Laurel, Valleydale, and Columbiana areas. However, additional demand likely exists in underserved areas throughout the county.

During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Plan, some survey respondents indicated they travel to the Pepper Place Market in Birmingham, underscoring the desire for more farmers market offerings. To meet desired demand and facilitate continued access to fresh and healthy food, the County is encouraged to support and promote its existing farmers markets. Promotion through Discover Shelby and social media channels would expand the reach of the County’s farmers markets and entice visitors as well as residents.



Action 5

Educate residents on the services provided by Shelby County's Animal Control Division.

The Shelby County Animal Control Division is housed within the Shelby County Environmental Services Department and is responsible for general animal control services in unincorporated areas of the county. During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Plan, some survey respondents were unclear about the roles and responsibilities for animal control within Shelby County despite much of this information being available on the Animal Control webpage.

The County is encouraged to delineate and publish responsibilities since the public may not be aware of the division of responsibilities between the County, municipalities, and the Humane Society of Shelby County. There may also be a lack of clarity surrounding ordinances, such as the State of Alabama Leash Law, and steps that Animal Control may or may not take. The County should consider including these elements in any educational outreach initiatives or awareness campaigns.



Action 6

Work with local municipalities and internet service providers to improve broadband availability and ensure that high-speed internet is accessible throughout the County.

County leaders have expressed the need for adequate broadband services to improve economic development and increase quality of life for residents. Many communities across Shelby County lack access to broadband affecting students at the K-12 and postsecondary levels and the

ability to enhance their retail, commercial and industrial sectors. Good broadband connectivity is a quality-of-life issue for residents.

The County is in the early stages of developing a Shelby County Broadband Study to analyze countywide broadband capabilities, needs, and deficiencies. The study is intended to develop a detailed, technical, and actionable broadband analysis with an emphasis on residential, institutional, civic, and business uses in both unincorporated and incorporated areas. Three types of areas will be identified and analyzed: unserved areas, underserved areas and single-service provider areas. The study will develop plans and solutions for addressing gaps in broadband service and will identify potential partnerships. The County intends to use this study to pursue broadband funding opportunities at the state and federal level, including, but not limited to, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

The County should continue to seek broadband solutions and business models from providers that are innovative, scalable and serve today's needs, and will thereby provide maximum benefit to Shelby County residents. Scalable broadband solutions can help foster innovation, drive job creation, stimulate economic growth, and serve new areas of development in the county.



Source: Parker Communications



Source: City of Dothan



Source: Your Town Alabama

remain ahead of the curve on emerging issues.

For more information, please visit www.alabamaplanning.org/professionaldevelopment/alabama-planning-institute/.



Action 8

Pursue qualification as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement county.

Shelby County is encouraged to continue pursuing qualification to become an entitlement county under the Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) Entitlement Program. The County is eligible to pursue qualification because it is an urban county with a population of at least 200,000 people. Currently, the County must coordinate with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to access CDBG funds; entitlement qualification would allow the County to administer its own CDBG program by working directly with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD awards grants to entitlement county grantees to carry out a wide range of community development activities that generally include neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and improving community facilities and services.

CDBG funds may be used for:

- ✘ Acquisition of real property
- ✘ Relocation and demolition
- ✘ Rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures
- ✘ Construction of public facilities and improvements, such as water and sewer facilities, streets, neighborhood centers, and the conversion of school buildings for eligible purposes



Action 7

Allocate money in the County budget for the Shelby County Planning Commission to attend training courses and workshops on zoning and land use planning related topics.

Like many other communities in Alabama, Shelby County Planning Commission members face the challenge of making informed decisions related to future growth and development. Thus, training seminars and workshops can allow leaders to share their strategies and success. The Alabama Planning Institute offers a range of annual workshops and training courses. The County should consider allocating funds in the annual budget for Planning Commission members to attend these and other relevant training courses in order to best position them to tackle the complex issues brought before the Planning Commission and to

- ✘ Public services, within certain limits
- ✘ Activities relating to energy conservation and renewable energy resources
- ✘ Provision of assistance to profit-motivated businesses to carry out economic development and job creation/retention activities

As an entitlement county, Shelby County would be able to develop its own programs and funding priorities so long as national objectives and criteria of the program are still met. These include:

- ✘ Benefitting low- and moderate-income people
- ✘ Prevention or elimination of slums or blight
- ✘ Addressing urgent community development needs that pose a serious threat to community health and welfare and for which other funding is not available



Action 9

Explore the possibility of increasing the County’s sales tax rate to increase revenue for public services and facilities improvements.

Shelby County should explore the possibility of raising its sales tax rates, which are lower than some of its neighboring counties. The County currently assesses a 1% general sales tax rate, while nearby counties assess between 1% and 2.75%. The additional revenue from bringing these tax rates closer to the regional average could be used to fund the improvements recommended in this Comprehensive Plan.

Your Town Alabama

Your Town Alabama was founded to meet the challenges facing small-town and rural communities, including pressure from suburban sprawl, the loss of jobs, and stagnation. While communities may face different specific issues, asset-based design is a common tool that small town and rural communities across the state can use to meet the challenges they face.

Since its inception in 1999, almost 1,000 elected officials and civic leaders representing over 130 communities have graduated from Your Town Alabama workshops, which promote asset-based design as a tool for small town and rural communities across the state. This concept gives communities the tools to focus on their assets and capitalize on what does work, not what doesn’t. These intensive, hands-on workshops give community officials, business leaders and concerned citizens the opportunity to study common issues facing our communities and develop practical solutions they can bring home to improve their livability and prosperity.

Workshops are held annually. Information will be announced on the Your Town Alabama website (www.yourtownalabama.org/).



Code Enforcement



Action 10

Continue to adopt up-to-date versions of the technical “family” of codes developed by the International Code Council.

To address the patchwork of codes across the United States, the International Code Council (ICC) was founded in 1994. It merged three existing model code organizations—the Building Officials and Code Administrators International (BOCA), the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) and the Southern Building Code Congress International, Inc. (SBCCI). The ICC consolidation became final in 2003, resulting in a single organization with over 100 years of history and experience developing model building codes.

The ICC publishes a comprehensive and coordinated set of codes applicable to commercial, institutional, and residential structures. These codes guide the compliance process to ensure safe, sustainable, and resilient construction. The ICC codes serve as living documents that are periodically reviewed and updated every three years to align with changing practices in the building industry.

- ✘ **International Building Code (IBC):** The IBC is a model building code that addresses both health and safety concerns for buildings based upon prescriptive and performance-related requirements. The purpose of this code is to establish minimum requirements to safeguard the public safety, health and general welfare through affordability, structural strength, means of egress, stability, sanitation, light and ventilation, energy conservation and safety to life and property from fire and

other hazards attributed to the built environment and to provide safety to fire fighters and emergency responders during emergency operations. Parts of the code reference other codes including the International Plumbing Code, the International Mechanical Code and the National Electric Code, and various National Fire Protection Association standards. Therefore, when a municipality adopts the IBC, it also adopts those parts of other codes referenced by the IBC. Often, the plumbing, mechanical, and electric codes are adopted along with the building code.

- ✘ **International Existing Building Code (IEBC):** The IEBC establishes minimum regulations for upgrades and improvements addressing the alteration, addition or change of occupancy in existing buildings. It uses prescriptive and performance-based provision and is intended to ensure public health and safety pertaining to the existing building stock.
- ✘ **International Fire Code (IFC):** The IFC contains regulations to safeguard life and property from fires and explosion hazards. Topics include general precautions, emergency planning and preparedness, fire department access and water supplies, automatic sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, special hazards, and the storage and use of hazardous materials.
- ✘ **International Fuel and Gas Code (IFGC):** The IFGC addresses the design and installation of fuel gas systems and gas-fired appliances through prescriptive and performance requirements.
- ✘ **International Mechanical Code (IMC):** The IMC establishes minimum regulations for mechanical systems using prescriptive and performance-related provisions. The IMC was

developed with broad-based principles that make possible the use of new materials, methods and design.

✂ International Plumbing Code (IPC): The IPC is a comprehensive model plumbing code that works seamlessly with ICC’s family of building codes. It sets minimum regulations for plumbing systems and components to protect life, health and safety of building occupants and the public. IPC is built on the proven legacy of the BOCA National Plumbing Code, SBCCI Standard Plumbing Code, and ICBO Plumbing Code.

✂ International Residential Code (IRC): The IRC is a comprehensive model code for residential buildings that establishes minimum regulations for one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses using prescriptive provisions. It combines provisions for many elements and systems pertaining to residential home construction including building, plumbing, mechanical, fuel gas, energy and electrical.

✂ International Energy Conservation Code (IECC): The IECC sets the minimum requirements for energy-efficient buildings.



Action 11

Promote adaptive reuse of buildings by encouraging developers to utilize the International Existing Building Code.

Adaptive reuse is the process of changing the use on an existing building for any purpose other than what it was originally designed for. This change of use requires a building permit and a certificate of occupancy / non-residential use permit to be issued even if no alterations are required. The County has already adopted the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), which provides an alternative to full compliance with the

International Building Code for structures while ensuring adequate life, safety, health and welfare measures are provided.

To learn more about utilizing the Existing Building Code for adaptive reuse projects, contact the Shelby County Department of Development Services.



Action 12

Continue to enforce the leash law.

During the public involvement process associated with the development of this Plan, residents repeatedly expressed concern over roaming dogs across rural parts of Shelby County. The Code of Alabama, Section 3-1-5 gives counties the ability to fine property owners who allow dogs to run at large. This plan encourages the County to continue to enforce the leash law. Should a citizen contact Animal Control with a complaint concerning a possible leash law violation, the County will mail a notice letter to the possible dog owner. The complainant can elect to report to the Sheriff’s Office for the processing of a written complaint and subsequently take action through the District Attorney’s office if need be. The owner of a dog in violation of the leash law can be subject to a misdemeanor offense and payment of a fine of \$2.00 to \$50.00 if a warrant is processed against them.



Source: Angeli Wright

Addressing the Needs of Senior Adults



Action 13

Continue to support the 14 senior centers within Shelby County.

A survey tailored to senior adults was administered at the 2022 Shelby County Senior Picnic. When senior adults were asked to identify their top housing needs as they age, the top answer choice was having the opportunity for social interaction. These opportunities can be provided in ways beyond housing, such as through Shelby County’s 14 senior centers.

While many of the senior centers are run by local municipalities, the County is encouraged to offer support and coordination among the various senior centers as practicable. These senior centers provide a range of programming, which is typically free or at cost and is highly popular among seniors throughout the county. Programming such as home safety checklists, tai chi, and balance and fall prevention activities, should continue to be interwoven with more socially oriented events.

The senior survey also revealed the need for additional staffing at these facilities, which the County is encouraged to support as practicable to ensure the future provision of high-quality services for all of its senior adults.



Action 14

Co-locate new senior center facilities with parks and green space.

Access to green space is vital to quality of life, especially during aging. Parks and green space that allow both active and passive recreational areas can help seniors maintain their physical and mental well-being, and seniors have a desire for more of these types of spaces. When asked which services the County could better promote to help seniors as part of this Plan’s survey administered at the 2022 Shelby County Senior Picnic, almost a third of survey respondents identified building additional sidewalks and trails. While the County is currently expanding its trail network, care should be taken to ensure that some new green spaces are located where they can be easily accessed by seniors. This can be achieved through a co-location policy that future senior center facilities will be located alongside parks and green space, which would promote health, wellness, and quality of life for Shelby County’s senior residents. To the extent practicable, the County should also facilitate new green spaces near existing senior center facilities. Even modest pocket parks and short walking tracks can have a large benefit.



Action 15

Explore ways to assist homeowners and landlords to maintain and update their housing stock to facilitate aging in place.

As people age, many experience shifting needs and abilities that can make managing a home harder. “Aging in place” refers to anything that makes it easier for people to remain in their own homes as they age. This includes home modifications, both inside and outside, ranging from a front door ramp and grab-bars in showers to a

chairlift in the staircase. These changes can seem overwhelming, which can cause some people putting off necessary improvements. Shelby County can assist in a variety of ways. The County can create and distribute materials promoting low-cost maintenance and repair programs, such as a DIY home audit so residents and their families can determine what changes may be necessary. Since many people may not have experience hiring contractors, the County can also maintain a central referral system of local vendors with experience on these projects.



Action 16

Increase awareness of the Medicaid Waiver Program administered by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham as a continuum of affordable care that allows elderly and disabled individuals who are at risk of nursing home placement to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

Medicaid Waiver is a program of the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) and the Alabama Medicaid Agency and is administered by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB). The program is designed to allow elderly and disabled individuals who are at risk of nursing home placement to remain in their homes as long as possible. To be eligible, the individual’s income cannot exceed \$2,250 per month and the individual cannot have resources in excess of \$2,000. Individuals must exhibit disabilities and frailty for admission to a nursing home in Alabama as determined by their physician.

In 2021, the Medicaid Waiver program served 882 elderly or disabled individuals throughout the Birmingham metropolitan area, saving the State of Alabama \$65 million in funding. To learn more, visit the RPCGB’s website at www.rpcgb.org/medicaid-waiver-program.



Action 17

Improve accommodations for senior adults at existing parks.

See **Action 6** in **Chapter 8: Parks, Recreation and Trails**.



Action 18

Encourage innovative ways to improve and expand public transportation services and demand-response service.

See **Action 14** in **Chapter 7: Transportation and Infrastructure**.



Source: City of Alabaster



Source: Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Authority

Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)

The Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A) exists to help individuals access information, assistance, and resources that will empower them to self-advocate, live independently, and enjoy the highest quality of life. M4A specializes in serving older adults, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities in Blount, Chilton, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker counties in Alabama. M4A's programs include:

- The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) provides information, referrals, resources, and options/benefits counseling to individuals in need of guidance and assistance. The ADRC serves as a single point of entry and the “no wrong door” for people who call for help and its consumer specialists complete a written assessment and provide appropriate information, referrals, and resources to meet the caller’s needs. Individuals can also schedule appointments for one-on-one and personalized assistance.
- The Elder Justice Center of Alabama provides information and resources to older and vulnerable adults, family caregivers, professionals, and the public. Their primary purpose is to offer help, support, and direct services to individuals who have been victimized by an abuse, neglect, or exploitation crime, those who may be at the greatest risk of adult mistreatment, and family caregivers.
- Living Well Alabama is a 6-week workshop that meets for 2.5 hours each week, facilitated by two trained leaders. This Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) helps people better manage their health conditions and deal with the frustration, fatigue and pain that can accompany a chronic disease. The goal of this evidence-based program is to help people with chronic diseases learn how to cope with their condition to improve their overall quality of life. Over 300,000 people have participated in a CDSMP across the United States.
- The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) has certified Medicare counselors who will help beneficiaries with their coverage such as Medicare supplements, Medicare savings programs, Medicaid, prescription drugs, plan comparisons, billing and claims, rights and protections, and long-term care options.
- The SenioRx Program helps individuals who lack health insurance or prescription drug coverage obtain the medications they need. They work with pharmaceutical companies to provide free or low-cost prescription drugs to qualifying individuals. SenioRx is no longer just for seniors; people of any age who are disabled, have applied for disability, or their doctor deems them disabled can qualify for help through SenioRx.
- Alabama Cares is a caregiver support program offering supportive services for unpaid caregivers providing at least 20 hours of service per week. Eligibility criteria for the Alabama Cares program include:
 - Caregivers providing care to individuals aged 60 and older
 - Caregivers providing care to individuals of any age with a dementia-related diagnosis and related disorders

- Older relatives (including parents) aged 55 and older providing care to individuals aged 19-59 with severe disabilities
- Older relatives (not parents) aged 55 and older who are informally raising children under the age of 18
- The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based training program for older workers who provide useful community services and fosters individual economic self-sufficiency through training and placement into unsubsidized jobs. Participants work an average of 20 hours a week and are paid the highest federal, state, or local minimum wage. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants.
- The Elderly Nutrition Program provides nutritious meals in either a congregate setting such as a senior center or in a home setting where food is delivered directly to their home if they are homebound. Spouses of participants regardless of age may be eligible for meals as well as persons with a disability residing with an eligible participant. Individuals with a disability under the age of 60 living in public, low-income housing where a senior center is located are also eligible for the program.
- The Legal Assistance Program provides no-cost legal assistance in non-fee generating cases as well as non-criminal matters for people 60 years or older.
- The PANDA Project provides direct services to People with Dementia (PWD), people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) at risk of dementia, and to caregivers in Shelby County.



Source: Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)



Source: Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)



Source: Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)

Public Safety



Action 19

Ensure that all Shelby County public safety personnel have sufficient resources and equipment to respond to emergencies effectively.

Shelby County recently invested in creating AIRS-58, the countywide version of the Alabama Interoperable Radio System. This system facilitates communication among all first responders in the county, including municipal responders and volunteer agencies, during emergencies.

With future growth and development anticipated, continual investment in resources, equipment, and training will be needed to allow public safety personnel to continue responding effectively to emergencies. Future investments may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ✘ Communication towers to eliminate dead spots in radio coverage
- ✘ Dashboard and body-worn cameras for vehicles and deputies
- ✘ Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) equipment
- ✘ Training including EMT and crisis intervention
- ✘ License plate readers (LPRs)
- ✘ First responder vehicles
- ✘ Updates to facilities such as the Shelby County Fire and Emergency Medical Training Center

what3words geolocation

Street addresses are not accurate enough to specify precise locations, such as building entrances, and do not exist for parks and many rural areas. This makes it hard to find places and prevents people from describing precisely where help is needed in an emergency. The “what3words” platform solves this problem by dividing the world into 3x3 meter squares and giving each square a unique combination of three words. Many dispatchers are increasingly aware of www.what3words.com and may be able to use it to precisely direct EMS crews.



Action 20

Plan for the expansion of public safety services and facilities to coincide with projected population growth and identified needs.

As Shelby County grows, the County is encouraged to add new public safety resources that will serve growing population areas and reduce longer-than-desirable emergency response times.

The County continues to make investments in the Shelby County Adult Jail and Juvenile Detention facilities. These two facilities are responsible for the care, custody and control of the detainees housed in Shelby County. The Shelby County Adult Jail is a 550-bed facility with the average monthly census presently at 477. The Shelby County Regional Juvenile Detention Facility is a 34-bed facility with the average monthly census at 19.

The County provides onsite medical and mental healthcare 24/7/365 to all detainees in accordance with current standards



Source: Shelby County Sheriff's Department

established by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC). Services include a comprehensive medical & mental health (MH) services program in which all adults and juveniles in custody who request or are referred for services are assessed by medical and mental health professionals. These current programs include but are not limited to: inmate medical & mental health screenings, admissions evaluation, medical & MH consultations, medical & MH triage, care of medically fragile inmates, pharmacy services in consultation with an onsite medical provider, psychiatric screening, suicide risk assessments, medical & mental health clearances for intra- and inter-agency transfers, and the continuing care of identified health problems, detoxification, Medication Assisted Treatment, involuntary medications, offsite services such as visits to specialists, hospitals, or other community providers, discharge planning and care, and emergency services.

As the County continues to grow, it may consider expanding the mental health elements associated with the Jail and Juvenile Detention facility and associated mental health staff to better provide for residents along a continuum of care.



Action 21

Support additional emergency response personnel and vehicles in parts of the county that have higher response times.



Action 22

Support Emergency Medical Transport Service (EMTS), volunteer first responders, and mutual aid providers in Shelby County.

As Emergency Medical Transport Service (EMTS) availability becomes an issue of statewide importance, Shelby County remains committed to supporting EMTS providers who serve its residents. This support will be critical as the County's population continues to grow and as the proportion of older residents increases. The County currently supports its volunteer first responder agencies through annual direct grants that help compensate for the increasing costs of equipment and allow these agencies to continue providing care for the rural areas they serve. Shelby County also provides grants to EMTS providers and

mutual aid providers based upon the size of their coverage area. Eligible entities include municipalities, independent fire districts, and the nonprofit Southeast Shelby County Rescue, all of whom agree to provide EMTS and mutual aid to neighboring areas during certain situations as a condition of eligibility.

the plan are specific to certain hazards, many are designed to improve the broader processes of hazard mitigation, such as enhancing 911 communication, upgrading response systems, continuing strong training, and coordinating efforts across jurisdictions.

The County is encouraged to continue to work with multi-jurisdictional partners to provide storm shelters for County residents.

Resiliency



Action 23

Support the Emergency Management Agency in the implementation of the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Shelby County, through the Emergency Management Agency (EMA), operates the ShelbyALerts Everbridge Notification and emergency alert system, provides public safety training, and coordinates hazard mitigation planning. The EMA operates the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which provides a secure location for local government leaders and department heads to coordinate actions and decision-making during large-scale emergencies. The EMA also operates the Shelby County Fire and Emergency Medical Training Center with multiple assets along with a five-story building that allows firefighters to train for every type of emergency they might encounter. The department also oversees the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), which is the focal point for chemical emergency response planning and implementation.

The County adopted an updated Multi-Jurisdictional Hazards Mitigation Plan in 2022, and 13 constituent municipalities participated and adopted Municipality Action Plans as part of the countywide planning process. While some goals within



Action 24

Continue to implement the Shelby County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, keep it up to date, and continually address hazards determined to be of high and moderate risk through the detailed risk assessment.

The current Shelby County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated in 2022. The geographic scope for the plan includes all incorporated and unincorporated areas of Shelby County with the exception of the cities of Birmingham, Hoover, Leeds and Vestavia Hills that are primarily located in Jefferson County and are included in the Jefferson County Mitigation plan. The plan's purposes include cataloguing county hazard assets and risks, increasing education and awareness, building partnerships for risk reduction, identifying long-term strategies, identifying effective measures, and communicating priorities to potential sources of funding. Because it is a multi-jurisdictional plan, one of its core functions is to align all these risk mitigation strategies between the County and municipalities. In addition, the plan is a condition for receiving certain types of non-emergency funding disaster assistance, including funding for mitigation projects.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has several grant programs including:

- ✘ Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- ✘ Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)
- ✘ Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)
- ✘ Public Assistance Grant Program
- ✘ Individual Assistance Grant Program

Furthermore, Local Mitigation Plans must be updated and resubmitted to FEMA for approval every five years in order to continue eligibility for FEMA hazard mitigation assistance programs. Shelby County’s Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan should be updated and maintained by the Shelby County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and the assigned Shelby County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee to continually address hazards determined to be of high and moderate risk through the detailed risk assessment. Following a formal approval process by Alabama EMA and FEMA in 2022, the current Hazard Mitigation Plan is approved through early 2027.

More information about mitigation planning and grants can be found at www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning.

To ensure the plan is fully implemented, the County is encouraged to continue investing in hazard training for public safety staff.

risk throughout the county. The Shelby County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance requires a floodplain development permit before development in any Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). These measures are in place to prevent flooding as new development occurs and to preserve existing permeable surface in floodplains. The Shelby County Department of Development Services is encouraged to continue requiring a floodplain development permit before development in any FEMA-identified Special Flood Hazard Area, as provided for in the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.

Flooding may occur outside formally established floodplains. Heavy rains can produce flash flooding in other areas of the county due to the confluence of two factors: steep terrain and high relief, such as Oak Mountain and other ridgelines, and populated areas with large amounts of impervious surface located down-slope of these ridges. Stormwater runoff can be worse following a drought, when permeable surface such as soil is paradoxically less able to accommodate water infiltration and thus contributes to more runoff. The Department of Development Services is encouraged to monitor the effectiveness of this Ordinance with regard to damage caused by flooding both inside and outside the floodplain. Revisions or new requirements or recommendations may be necessary to help reduce flooding and combat its effects.



Action 25

Continue to implement the County’s Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance and revise it as necessary.

Like many areas in the Southeast, Shelby County is subject to periodic flooding. The Coosa River forms much of its eastern border and the Cahaba River, Buck Creek, and other waterways flow through the county, resulting in dispersed areas of flood



Action 26

Collaborate with local municipalities to make public facilities capable of serving as cooling centers.

Heat has long been a seasonal hazard in Shelby County, and this is expected to continue as heatwaves across the Southeast continue to bring unseasonable heat and humidity. This includes extreme heat, defined as a period of at least two days

with temperatures above 90°F. People's bodies struggle to cool off at night when the temperature stays above approximately 80°F, so extended periods of extreme heat pose compound dangers. Extreme heat is the leading weather-related cause of death in the United States, although it may go unnoticed because it can exacerbate other health conditions, unlike acute weather events such as severe storms. This is also why heat-related deaths and illnesses are often underreported. The physical makeup of urban areas, with concrete buildings and highways and relatively little shade and green space, makes extreme heat more pronounced. Certain materials such as concrete absorb heat and re-radiate it at night, making cooling even more difficult. The resulting urban heat island effect makes these urban areas as much as 7°F hotter than surrounding rural areas.

To help residents stay cool and prevent the healthcare system from becoming overtaxed during severe heat events, Shelby County is encouraged to collaborate with local municipalities to make public facilities capable of serving as cooling centers when necessary. Cooling centers are simply spaces with reliable air conditioning that is set up by local authorities during extreme heat. These spaces are typically open to all members of the public who need to cool off. For example, some households may lose air conditioning during extreme heat and not be able to reach or afford a temporary hotel stay. Some indoor pet friendly areas are encouraged, as practicable. Libraries, community centers and senior centers are often used as cooling centers because they are already publicly staffed and conveniently located.

Cooling centers have been established in Shelby County in the past. During the 2015 heat waves, the City of Alabaster set up emergency outdoor cooling stations at Veterans Park, Buck Creek Park, Abby Wooley Park, and Municipal Park. These

outdoor stations included tents for shade containing fans, bottled water, and misting areas. Because this heat can persist even at night, best practices suggest that cooling centers remain open overnight or for extended hours. Outdoor cooling stations would offer flexibility at night by providing some relief while allowing indoor spaces to be closed and cleaned.

Did you know?

The National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS), found at www.heat.gov, is a new interagency source of extreme heat information and resources directed at helping families, communities, and businesses.

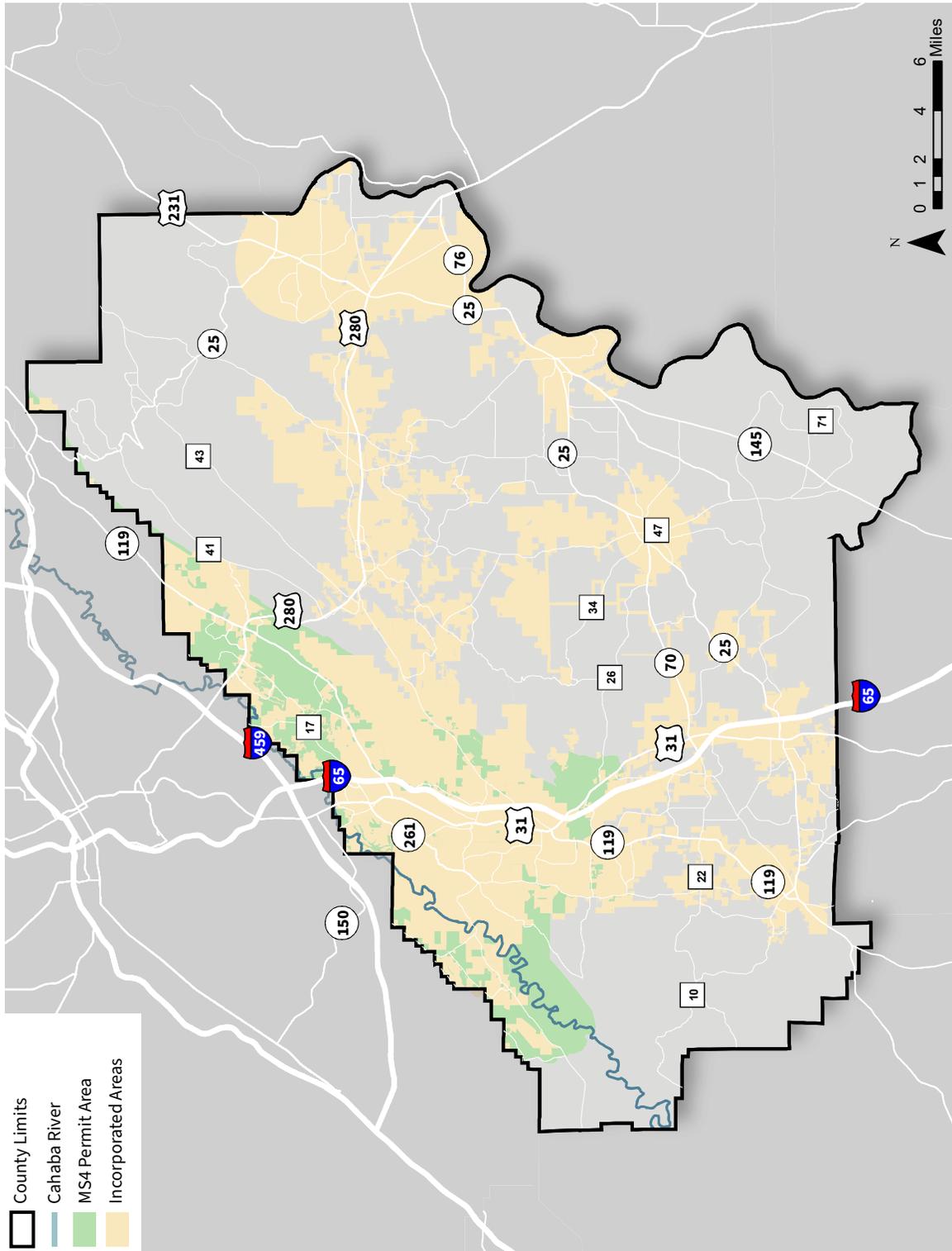


Action 27

Continue to implement the County's MS4 permit requirements.

Since 1996, Shelby County has administered a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) under a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). The permit requires a stormwater management plan be implemented and include construction site runoff controls, an industrial and high-risk runoff program, controls for chemicals, public outreach, a roadway program, and spill prevention and response. Shelby County is encouraged to continue implementing these requirements so that it may safely mitigate non-polluted stormwater. For more information about the MS4 program, see the **callout box on page 222**.

Figure 9.1: MS4 Permit Area



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB



About the MS4 Program

Shelby County administers a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). A Separate Storm Sewer System is a collection of structures, including retention basins, ditches, road-side inlets and underground pipes, designed to gather stormwater from built-up areas and discharge it without treatment, into local streams and rivers. The goal of the MS4 program, which is overseen by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is to reduce non-point source pollution. It is called separate because it operates without connecting to the sanitary sewer system which discharges wastewater from homes to a water treatment facility. Combined systems, where the storm sewer and sanitary systems are connected, are more common in older communities. As our understanding of runoff and pollution has evolved, combined systems have fallen out of favor.

Shelby County receives authorization to legally discharge stormwater into local streams through its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System, or NPDES permit, managed by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). ADEM's permitting process ensures the federal mandates outlined in Section 402 of the Clean Water Act are followed.

NPDES permits are applied for and issued on a five-year basis. From 1996 through 2015, Shelby County acted as the lead permittee for a group of nine co-permittees. Since 2015, Shelby County has applied for and received individual NPDES permits; the most recent was issued in 2022 and is valid through 2027.

The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requires six basic elements to be implemented:

- Construction Site Runoff Program
- Industrial / High-Risk Program
- Pesticide, Herbicide, and Fertilizer Application Program
- Public Education and Outreach
- Roadway Program
- Spill Prevention and Response

For more information about Shelby County's MS4 program and to view the program's educational resources, please visit www.shelbyal.com/416/MS4-Storm-Water-Program.

Image Source: Cahaba River Society



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Action 28

Continue to improve stormwater management throughout the County by encouraging Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for stormwater mitigation sites wherever practicable.

Shelby County's Subdivision Regulations currently require post-construction stormwater management in new developments and redevelopment. These standards require developers to use best management practices (BMPs) during construction to reduce stormwater runoff, with additional requirements for final plat review of projects located within the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit area. These post-construction BMPs include infiltration systems, constructed wetland systems, retention systems, filtration systems, and detention systems, all of which are designed to minimize pollutants and sediment in runoff.

The Subdivision Regulations also direct developers to consider Low Impact Development (LID) techniques. LID, also known as green infrastructure, is a method of managing stormwater as close to the source as possible by mimicking the natural water cycle. The focus of LIDs is on capturing and storing rain where it falls, filtering it through the soil, and/or recharging groundwater. LID systems utilize stormwater

to mimic natural processes of infiltration and evapotranspiration in developed areas to protect water quality and reduce flood risk within associated watersheds. The County should continue encouraging LID where feasible in order to minimize both pollutants carried by stormwater runoff and the runoff itself.

For more information on BMPs, LID, and to see examples, see the callout boxes on **pages 226 to 229**. For areas appropriate for green infrastructure, see **Figure 9.2**.

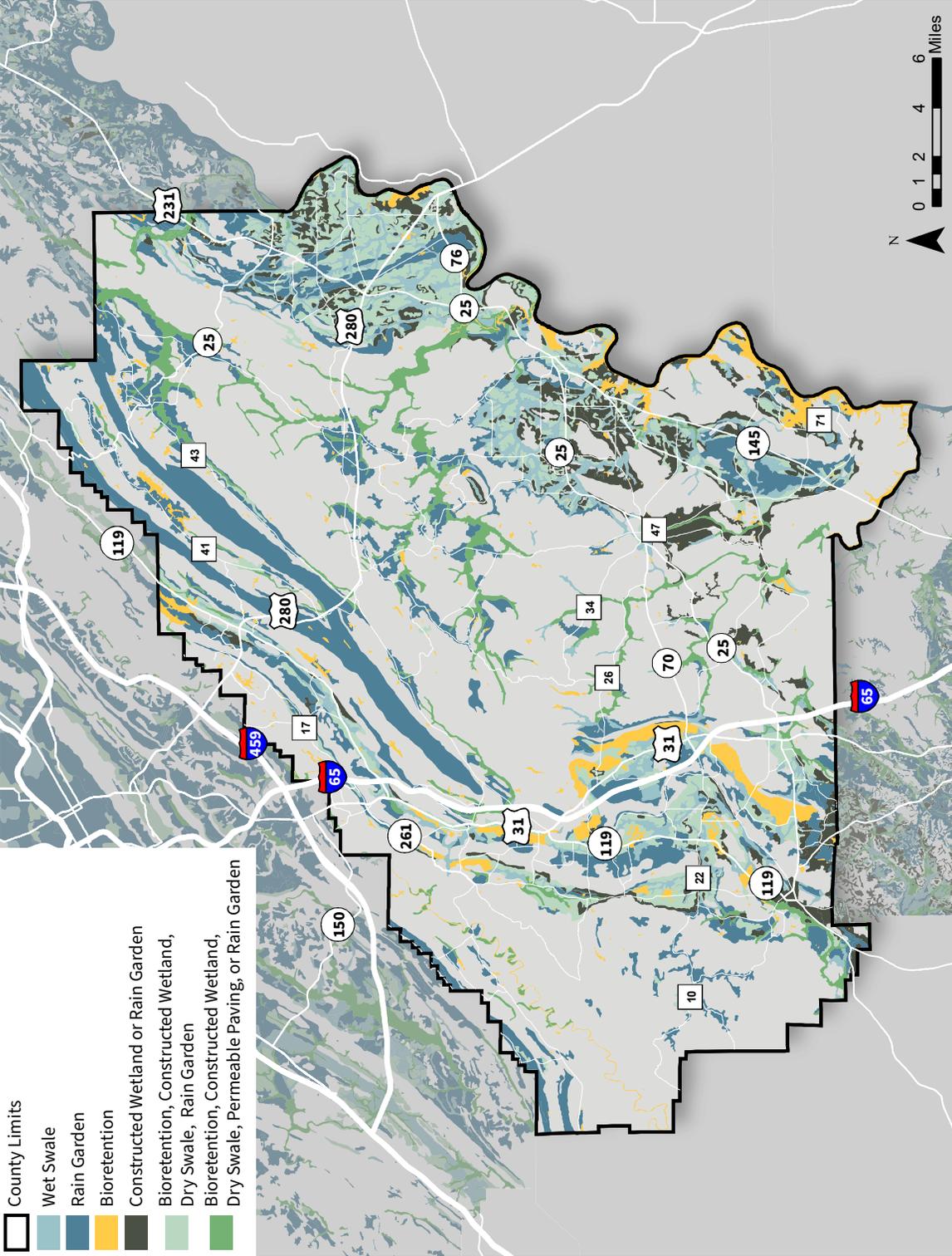


Action 29

Create a system of Green Streets.

Some of Shelby County's streets are prone to flooding due to a combination of topography, development patterns, and type of stormwater infrastructure. A system of green streets, such as "simple green streets," can help address some of these issues. A "green street" is a natural stormwater management approach that uses plants and soil to slow, filter and cleanse stormwater from streets. Traditional stormwater management directs runoff into pipes. Green streets manage stormwater at its source, where rain falls. Existing roadside ditches capture sheetflow, which is runoff that "sheets" off the road surface. These ditches can be retrofitted within vegetated bioswales that slow down and infiltrate runoff on its way downhill. Where curbs exist or are desired, curb cuts can be introduced at strategic low points to direct runoff into planted stormwater features. These are context-dependent and commonly consist of a vegetated swale or ditch that holds water while it infiltrates the soil. If curbs are not present and conditions do not allow for ditches, a roadside apron with pea gravel leading to a shallow swale can work in concert to trap sediment and then permit onsite infiltration.

Figure 9.2: Areas Appropriate for Green Infrastructure



Source: Shelby County and RPCGB

Benefits of green streets include:

- ✘ Protecting water quality in rivers and streams by removing up to 90% of pollutants
- ✘ Replenishing groundwater supplies, absorbing carbon and improving the air quality and neighborhood aesthetics
- ✘ Providing green connections between parks and open space
- ✘ Improving pedestrian and bicycle safety by calming traffic
- ✘ Reducing peak stormwater flows and overflows that lead to sanitary sewer backups, as well as other public health concerns

- ✘ Adding street trees and plantings that provide shade and reduce the urban heat island effect

The County is encouraged to prioritize roadway segments for conversion to green streets. One way to prioritize would be by impact to sensitive watershed. Roadway segments that contribute the most to runoff to sensitive waterways, such as the Cahaba River, would be prioritized above roadway segments in other watersheds or segments that are currently connected to storm sewers.

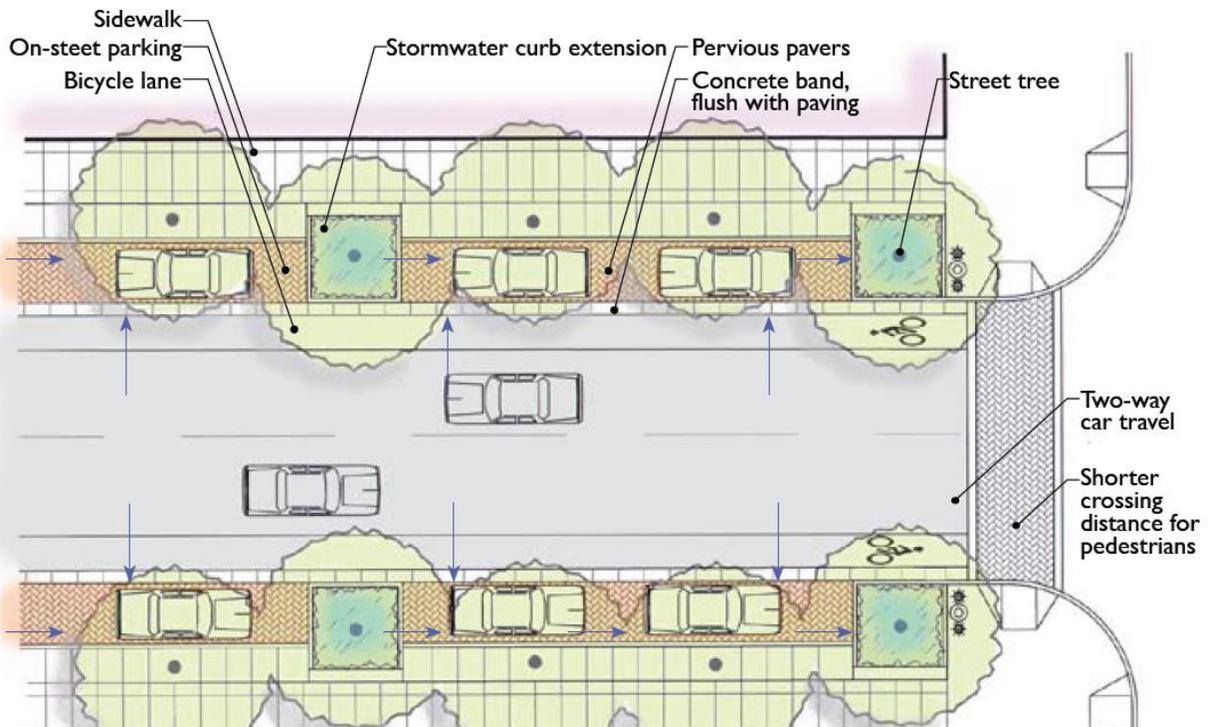


Image Source: US EPA

Green Infrastructure: Best Management Practices

Best management practices (BMPs) are employed during the construction process to limit runoff by managing stormwater as close to its source as possible, ideally using natural hydrologic processes such as infiltration, interception, and evapotranspiration. Stormwater BMPs include utilizing silt fences and wattles to reduce runoff and sediment carried away from the construction site. Low impact development (LID) is a closely related set of practices that includes constructing facilities that remain after construction to facilitate effective long-term stormwater mitigation. Both sets of practices fall under the umbrella of green infrastructure. LID principles include preserving and recreating natural landscape features and minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treats stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product.

Reduction of adverse stormwater impacts using stormwater LID practices should be the first consideration of the site designer for every land development, including redevelopments. Operationally, economically, and aesthetically, LID practices can offer significant benefits over treating and controlling stormwater onsite or downstream. Therefore, feasible opportunities for using these methods should be explored and exhausted before considering the use of the Green Infrastructure Practices (GIPs) or Total Suspended Solids (TSS) Removal Best Management Practices (BMPs). Land developments can be designed to reduce, and sometimes negate, stormwater impacts when careful efforts are made to conserve natural areas, reduce impervious cover, and better integrate stormwater management techniques. By implementing a combination of these nonstructural approaches, it is possible to reduce the amount of stormwater, and therefore pollutants, that are generated from a development during and after construction.

This overall reduction in stormwater can yield multiple benefits, such as minimizing costs for infrastructure construction and long-term post-construction maintenance.

In general, stormwater BMPs are based on the following general goals:

- Early communication and coordination between the County and the development's multi-disciplinary design team
- Prioritization of infill and redevelopment to capitalize on use of vacant properties and existing infrastructure
- Management of stormwater (quantity and quality) as close to the point of origin as possible, resulting in minimized collection and conveyance
- Prevention of negative impacts that can result from post-development stormwater, so that mitigation is unnecessary
- Utilization of simple, nonstructural methods for stormwater management that are lower cost and lower maintenance than structural control
- Creation of a multifunctional landscape that can manage stormwater and address or benefit other development needs
- Reliance on hydrology as a framework for land development design

Stormwater LID practices include several site design techniques such as preserving natural features and resources, effectively laying out the site elements to reduce impact, reducing the number of impervious surfaces, and utilizing

natural features on the site for stormwater management. The aim of using LID practices is to reduce the environmental impact “footprint” of the site while retaining and enhancing the owner/developer’s purpose and vision for the site. Many of the LID practices and concepts can reduce the cost of infrastructure while maintaining or even increasing the value of the property.

The reduction in stormwater and pollutants using LID practices can reduce the required peak discharges and volumes that must be conveyed and controlled on a site and, therefore, the size and cost of necessary drainage infrastructure and GIPs. In some cases, the use of LID practices may eliminate the need for structural controls entirely. Hence, LID can be viewed as both a water quantity and water quality management tool.

Common LID practices include:

- Early coordination, collaboration, and communication
- Work with multi-disciplinary design team (civil engineers, landscape architect, ecologist, etc.)
- Participate in stormwater pre-concept process
- Conservation of natural features and resources
- Tree and stream buffer protection and restoration
- Soil restoration
- “Build with the Land” design techniques
- Implement retrofits
- Reduce impervious surface
- Redevelopment and infill
- Greenspace enhancements
- Complete streets
- Greenway connections
- Pocket parks

Case Study: Meadowlawn Park

In 2017, the City of Vestavia Hills opened Meadowlawn Park, a one-acre pocket park adjacent to a small tributary of the Cahaba River. The site’s flood-prone nature threatened nearby homes, and a park was considered the best option to allow development without posing additional dangers to the sensitive Cahaba River watershed, which provides the City of Birmingham and Jefferson County with drinking water.

The park, which is home to a walking track and pavilion for community events, was designed with a host of LID techniques to protect the watershed. The creek’s banks were stabilized and its channel restored to promote smooth flow. A constructed wetland provides space for on-site infiltration of stormwater before it can reach the creek. The small parking area is designed to reduce stormwater runoff and promote on-site infiltration by using a permeable parking surface.

Meadowlawn Park was a 2018 recipient of the Cahaba River Society’s Watershed Development Conservation Award, celebrating responsible and environmentally friendly development.



Source: City of Vestavia Hills

Green Infrastructure: Low Impact Development

Low impact development (LID) techniques are used to mitigate the effects of development and redevelopment (pollutants to waters, stormwater runoff, stream erosion, etc.). In developed areas, impervious surfaces, like pavement and rooftops, prevent water from naturally soaking into the ground. Instead, water runs rapidly into storm drainage and natural streams causing flooding, stream bank erosion, sedimentation, habitat destruction, sewer overflows, infrastructure damage, resulting in contaminated streams, rivers, and other water bodies. Impervious surfaces also reduce the ability of groundwater to recharge, which, during drought, reduces the base flow discharge into rivers and streams that maintain water levels. LID helps to mitigate this effect by incorporating systems that allow infiltration, evapotranspiration, and re-use of stormwater to maintain natural hydrology. Careful management of LID that infiltrate surface runoff to groundwater should be considered to protect the County's drinking water source because they could inject pollutants. All of the practices listed below are referenced from the Low Impact Development Handbook for the State of Alabama (ADEM).

Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are shallow, vegetated basins that collect and absorb runoff from rooftops, sidewalks and streets. The rain gardens are used as a (LID) stormwater management solution that promotes evapotranspiration, which is the effort of evaporation and transpiration to remove water from the soil and vegetation. These gardens are typically smaller and simpler than a bioretention system – they are less than 2,000 square feet in size and do not include an under-drain. Rain gardens are versatile features that can be installed in almost any unpaved space.

Bioretention

The bioretention process utilizes a bed of sand, soil, and plants to filter contaminants and

pollutants from stormwater runoff. Although water may briefly pond during heavy rain events, bioretention areas are designed to be dry most of the time. The filtered stormwater is either returned to a storm drain through an under-drain or partially infiltrated into the soil. Like rain gardens, bioretention areas may also be vegetated.

Green Parking

Green parking differs from traditional asphalt parking lots by incorporating permeable paving materials, tree planting, and rain gardens that capture stormwater runoff and shade surfaces, thus improving water quality and cooling the parking areas. Green parking would provide residents, faith-based organizations, and businesses in the community additional parking that cannot otherwise be accommodated on the street or one's property.

Planter Boxes

Urban rain gardens with vertical walls and open or closed bottoms that collect and absorb runoff from sidewalks, parking lots, and streets. Planter boxes are ideal for space-limited sites in dense urban areas and as a streetscape element.

Bioswales

Vegetated, mulched, or xeriscaped channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another. Vegetated swales slow, infiltrate, and filter stormwater flows. As linear features, vegetated swales are particularly suitable along streets and parking lots.

Permeable Pavements

Paved surfaces that infiltrate, treat, and/or store rainwater where it falls. Permeable pavements are constructed from pervious concrete, porous asphalt, permeable interlocking pavers, and several other materials.



Source: EPA



Source: State College Borough



Source: EuroPomice



Source: US Airforce



Source: Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Intergovernmental Coordination



Action 30

Create coordination mechanisms with municipalities, adjacent counties, and service providers regarding proposed development proposals and planning issues with cross-jurisdictional impacts.

Shelby County should continue to improve the open planning process by coordinating with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies, such as local cities and towns, adjacent counties and service providers on land use applications, ordinance updates, Future Development Map amendments and other planning and zoning matters. To facilitate this recommendation, the County and the local municipalities and entities could consider holding joint coordination meetings to facilitate communication and information on new development activities and other planning issues. Where important policy agreements regarding land use, capacity and services are reached, they should be adopted in formal agreements such as memorandums of understanding or intergovernmental agreements.

For example, provide for county-municipal exchange of notification and information of requests for change of zoning within the vicinity of unincorporated area municipal boundaries. Another example would be to hold intergovernmental planning workshops to provide informal coordination between the Shelby County Comprehensive Plan and local comprehensive plans of Shelby County municipalities.



Action 31

Work with the incorporated municipalities to develop orderly annexation agreements.

See **Action 4** in **Chapter 4: Future Land Use and Development**.



Action 32

Establish forums for regular meetings between the County and municipalities to facilitate communication and understanding among jurisdictions.

Intergovernmental coordination is vital to ensure Shelby County and its local municipalities are working in alignment and not unnecessarily competing with one another. This coordination can be promoted through formal standing meetings for elected officials and staff to discuss items of mutual interest or discuss area issues and develop methods by which they can share in resolving those issues.

The Governmental Affairs Working Group within the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce facilitates regular meetings of the Shelby County Mayors' Association. County leadership, whether elected leaders, staff, or both, should attend these events to learn about successes and challenges within the cities and to share perspectives.



Action 33

Coordinate with the Shelby County School District in order to provide consistency between Shelby County’s Comprehensive Plan and public school siting decisions and programs.

The Shelby County School District educates the majority of County children, including over 20,000 students across eight school attendance zones. As enrollment increases, the District has undertaken expansion projects, including an expansion of the fine arts center at Oak Mountain High School, a new track and turf at Chelsea High School, and classroom additions at Helena Intermediate, Helena Middle, Montevallo Elementary and Calera Elementary schools. The District has also restructured school attendance zones and built new campuses to accommodate Shelby County’s ever evolving population. To meet the needs of the County’s existing and future population, the County is encouraged to create agreements with the Shelby County School District regarding the location and development of new school sites to ensure they fit within the desired future land use pattern of the County, as shown on the **Future Development Map in Figure 4.1 of Chapter 4.**



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Action 34

Coordinate with the Shelby County School District to permit the shared-use and co-location of school sites and County facilities with similar facility needs.

The County is encouraged to coordinate with the Shelby County School District regarding the location, phasing, and design of future school sites to enhance the potential of school sites to also serve as public facilities, such as public recreation areas.



Action 35

Prior to purchasing new facilities or equipment, examine the possibilities of trading, renting, sharing or contracting with neighboring jurisdictions.



Source: Shelby County Alabama



Action 36

Support efforts of local municipalities to find additional state and federal funding for infrastructure improvements.

Municipalities in Shelby County may, from time to time, apply for state or federal funding for various infrastructure improvements. These applications may be for a variety of programs such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Shelby County may be able to offer formal assistance, such as a letter of support, or informal help, such as discussions with staff who have written successful grant applications to these programs. The County is encouraged to offer formal or informal support as practicable in order to help its local municipalities continue to provide quality infrastructure.

the county. This Department has ongoing partnerships with the cities of Chelsea, Columbiana, Montevallo, and Vincent and the towns of Indian Spring Village, Wilsonville, and Wilton. These partnerships typically involve some combination of planning, inspection, or geographic information system (GIS) mapping services or floodplain administration.

The Department of Development Services also maintains partnerships with public entities such as the Shelby County Airport and Shelby West Corporate Park. The County is encouraged to promote the Department of Development Services as a resource for local municipalities and public entities to provide staff and technical support for many planning-related projects such as general planning services, building inspection and code enforcement services, GIS services, floodplain administration and/or other technical support.



Action 37

Participate in planning efforts undertaken by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) as they work on projects with Shelby County municipalities or projects in neighboring counties that have potential impacts on Shelby County or any municipalities therein.



Action 39

Work with conservation groups, municipalities, historic preservation organizations, developers, and others to preserve important historic properties.

Shelby County is home to a number of historic properties. While some, such as the Old Shelby County Courthouse in Columbiana, are currently protected and cared for, others may be threatened by neglect or development. Protecting historic resources requires an all-of-the-above approach because preservation techniques are highly context dependent. Shelby County is encouraged to work with conservation groups, historic preservation groups, developers, and others to preserve and protect historic properties. The Shelby County Historical Society may be a particularly knowledgeable partner.



Action 38

Promote the Shelby County Department of Development Services as a resource to local municipalities and public entities.

The Shelby County Department of Development Services offers a range of services to municipalities in addition to administering development regulations for

For historic properties in unincorporated areas of the county, Shelby County is encouraged to:

- ✘ Promote Alabama Historical Commission grants to local historic preservation groups.
- ✘ Promote National Park Service and Alabama Historical Commission financial incentives to developers who purchase historic properties.
- ✘ Continue promoting historic properties through itineraries, tours, and special events.



*McKibbon House in Montevallo, Alabama
(Source: Rivers Langley)*

For local municipalities with historic properties, the County can recommend additional steps such as:

- ✘ Conducting or supporting historic resource surveys.
- ✘ Supporting the nomination of historic properties to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.
- ✘ Adopting local historic preservation ordinances that provide use and other bonuses for preserving historic properties.
- ✘ Enforcing building, fire, and safety codes in older buildings to avoid loss of historic properties through fire and neglect.
- ✘ Continuing to promote historic properties through itineraries, tours, and special events.



*Montevallo Main Street
(Source: Martin Reed)*

chapter ten

Economic Development

“What is your big idea for Shelby County? Community that embraces outdoor activities, health and progressive business structure to bring in tourism dollars that would be leveraged for additional growth and public school improvements.” - Shelby County Resident



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Economic Development



Source: 58 INC

Shelby County, the geographic center of Alabama and the main suburban county in the Birmingham region, benefits from its accessible location in the Southeast – the United States’ prime region for growth. With a diverse economic base, Alabama’s most educated and productive workforce, and a patchwork of diverse communities surrounded by lush natural beauty, Shelby County has all the makings of a great business location. While the County has long been known for its fast-growing neighborhoods and high-quality public schools, recent years have brought a richness of arts, cuisine, and outdoor activities. The County is strengthened by a diversity of people, skills, employers, and industry clusters providing business with a stable and consistent source of talent.

With continued investments and policy, both tourism and industry can continue to contribute to local prosperity and allow Shelby County to provide high-quality assets for its residents and base of talent. To attract and retain knowledge-based and advanced manufacturing companies, the county should continue efforts for risk reduction. Risk reduction refers to a set of County actions that signal its commitment to a business-friendly atmosphere, including investing in infrastructure and quality of life, which provide assurances that both companies and their employees will have the necessary resources to prosper. Finally, continued investment in educational and entrepreneurial initiatives will allow residents to compete as employees and as entrepreneurs in the growing Shelby County economy.

This Economic Development chapter includes the six sections shown below:

- Infrastructure Needs for Economic Development
- Tourism
- Corporate Retention and Attraction
- Retail Attraction
- Talent Development
- Entrepreneur Development

Did you know?

The Shelby County Economic Development Corporation is branded as “58 INC” in recognition of Shelby County’s two-digit license plate identifier.

www.58inc.org



Source: 58 INC

Infrastructure Needs for Economic Development



Action 1

Continue to fund and support the 58 INC economic development team.

The Shelby County Economic Development Corporation, branded as “58 INC,” provides invaluable economic development services to county residents and companies. 58 INC is instrumental in business recruitment and retention and represents the county’s interests to existing and future businesses both within the region and around the globe. 58 INC completed a Strategic Plan in 2022 to guide the agency through 2025. The plan’s goals include:

- ✦ Corporate growth – manufacturing and knowledge-based

- ✦ Retail amenities – new master-planned development, restaurants, retail, entertainment and lodging
- ✦ Talent and Entrepreneurship programs and assets – career pathways and start-up support resources

The plan can be viewed at www.58inc.org, then navigate to [About 58 INC - 58 INC](#) under 2040 Vision.



Action 2

Utilize the public realm as an economic development asset.

Shelby County can differentiate itself by creating unique, memorable places. In turn, this can help attract desirable businesses and employees. High quality of life, including recreation and educational opportunities, are often a deciding factor for business location decisions, ranking as high as other potential incentives. This is particularly true when it comes to employee retention and mental health. Parks, natural resources, streetscapes, art and

cultural amenities, and other public realm enhancements are important economic development tools that make a community a more attractive place to work for talented employees. Shelby County is encouraged to set aside a dedicated funding source for public realm improvements.



Action 3

Work with local municipalities and internet service providers to improve broadband availability and ensure that high-speed internet is accessible throughout the County.

County leaders have expressed the need for adequate broadband services to improve economic development and increase quality of life for residents. Many communities across Shelby County lack access to broadband services affecting students at the K-12 and postsecondary levels and the ability to enhance the retail, commercial and industrial sectors. Good broadband connectivity is a quality-of-life issue for residents.

The County and 58 INC are developing a Shelby County Broadband Study to analyze countywide broadband capabilities, needs, and deficiencies. The study is intended to develop a detailed, technical, and actionable broadband analysis with an emphasis on residential, institutional, civic, and business uses in both unincorporated and incorporated areas. Three types of areas will be identified and analyzed: unserved areas, underserved areas and single-service provider areas. The study will develop plans and solutions for addressing gaps in broadband service and will identify potential partnerships. The County and its communities intend to use this study to pursue broadband funding opportunities at the state and federal level.

The County should continue to seek broadband solutions and business models from providers that are innovative, scalable and will provide maximum benefit to Shelby County residents. Scalable broadband solutions can help foster innovation, drive job creation, stimulate economic growth, and serve new areas of development in the county.



Action 4

Develop a countywide wayfinding signage system.

Wayfinding refers to signage, landmarks, and other design elements that help residents and visitors seamlessly navigate throughout the county. A wayfinding system consists of many moving parts that direct users to civic, cultural, and recreational destinations. The wayfinding experience can be broken down into five basic principles:

- ✘ Know where you are
- ✘ Know where you are going
- ✘ Know the best way to get there
- ✘ Recognize your destination upon arrival
- ✘ Find your way back

Wayfinding elements include direct tools, such as signage, banners and maps, and indirect tools that serve as visual clues and consist of things like landmark features, light fixtures, street furnishings, public artwork, and landscape design. To organize the wayfinding process, Shelby County is encouraged to commission and adopt a Wayfinding Master Plan with the following elements:

- ✘ Preferred signage placement - considering vehicular travel speed and cone of vision

- ✘ Intergovernmental cooperation – coordinate with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and local municipalities that control rights-of-way where the County wishes to place wayfinding elements
- ✘ Financing - should include planning, design, fabrication and installation, and ongoing management and eventual replacement
- ✘ Phase breaks - so the wayfinding elements can be implemented over several years, with earlier phases directing people to and from the highest priority locations



Action 5

Improve streetscaping along county roadways and consider developing a Streetscape Improvement Plan.

Streetscaping refers to aesthetic and functional improvements along roadways that are undertaken to enhance ease of use and safety. Streetscaping includes smaller projects, such as landscaped gateways, enhanced roadway and bicyclist markings, and large ones, such as landscaped medians. With over 950 miles of county roadways, including road types from rural to suburban, no single prescription will be appropriate countywide. A variety of streetscaping



Source: Shelby County Alabama

designs will be necessary depending on context. The County is encouraged to develop a Streetscape Improvement Plan to prioritize streetscape improvements and develop different streetscape plans for roads of varying widths and context. This plan should also reference the countywide wayfinding plan recommended in **Action 4 in this chapter.**

For all county roadways, general recommendations include:

- ✘ Improve landscaping and provide street trees where there are gaps and where scenic views would not be impacted
- ✘ Install green infrastructure, such as simple green streets, to reduce flooding
- ✘ Remove overhead utilities to improve aesthetics and resilience

For more suburban segments, additional recommendations include:

- ✘ Improve intersections for pedestrians and cyclists
- ✘ Add new sidewalks or rebuild existing sidewalks to ensure they are ADA compliant and provide safe crosswalks

These improvements are more than just aesthetic—they improve function and enhance safety, which can, in turn, be used as an asset for business attraction and retention.



Source: RPCGB



Action 6

Allocate funding to develop a Sustainability Plan.

58 INC has noted that the adoption of a Shelby County Sustainability Plan would serve as a business recruitment and retention tool, in addition to more obvious environmental benefits. This is because companies seek to reduce risk wherever possible. Locating to a new area already carries risks, but adopting such a plan would lessen talent attraction concerns by demonstrating the County’s commitment to remaining economically competitive in a changing world and helping companies attract an environmentally conscious workforce from around the globe.

Several counties throughout the Southeast have adopted similar plans. Fulton County, Georgia, adopted a Sustainability and Resilience Plan in 2019 which may be found at: www.fultoncountyga.gov/sustainability. That plan contains the following six priority areas:

- ✘ Climate change mitigation
- ✘ Social equity and smart transit
- ✘ High-performance county infrastructure
- ✘ Education and outreach and green jobs training placement
- ✘ Fostering partnerships
- ✘ Budgetary appropriation

Creating and adopting a Sustainability Plan with similar focus areas will help Shelby County assess and mitigate risks for itself and for its businesses. Infrastructure and energy are two strongly recommended focus areas to help local businesses make risk reduction decisions.



Action 7

Explore the creation of forming additional Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts and public/private partnerships that would help facilitate capital improvements to promote economic development, tourism, recreation, historic preservation and livability throughout the County.

Section 11-99B-1 of the Alabama Code enables public entities to create Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts (CICDs) to facilitate projects for their own use and the use and benefit of their citizens. State code dictates that the cooperative must have at least three entities which include the county, a municipality, and a public organization.

The Montevallo Development Cooperative District (MDCD) is a unique partnership between the City of Montevallo, Shelby County and the University of Montevallo. The highly successful MDCD was created in 2012 under the Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts (CICD) Section of the Alabama Code. The purpose of the district is to promote economic development, tourism, education, recreation, the arts, historic preservation, livability and healthy and active lifestyles in Montevallo. The purpose of the district is to facilitate capital improvements by acquisition, construction, and installation throughout the City. Shelby County is encouraged to explore the creation of additional CICDs throughout the county.

To create a new Capital Development Cooperative District, the following steps should be taken:

- ✘ Hold a meeting with representatives from Shelby County, the specified municipality, and a local public organization such as a Main Street organization or other nonprofit

community group to discuss the possibility of forming a capital improvement cooperative district.

- ✘ Discuss the district’s goals and create a list of potential projects to construct.
- ✘ Each entity would apply for incorporation and adopt resolutions approving or denying an application by each governing body. Next, the cooperative files a certificate of incorporation and copies of all adopted resolutions with the Shelby County probate judge and the Secretary of State.
- ✘ The Secretary of State authorizes the proposed capital improvement cooperative district.
- ✘ The municipality, public organization, and Shelby County elects a director for the cooperative’s board of directors.
- ✘ Once the board of directors is established, they would adopt bylaws for the district, including the power of the district to acquire and construct projects, and provide provisions to fund projects (by private donation, fundraising, or the selling and issuing of bonds). See Section 11-99B-7 of the Alabama State Code for a complete list of a capital improvement cooperative’s powers.
- ✘ The board of directors would then vote to select each project to fund and construct.

Did you know?

The Montevallo Development Cooperative District (MDCD) is a unique partnership between the City of Montevallo, Shelby County, and the University of Montevallo. For more information visit <https://cityofmontevallo.com/MontevalloDevelopmentCooperativeDistrict.aspx>.



Action 8

Collaborate with businesses, municipalities, the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, local Main Street programs, and other entities to revitalize downtowns across the County.

Numerous communities in the county have begun downtown revitalization efforts or established local Main Street programs in recent years, including Calera, Columbiana and Montevallo. While specific strategies have differed, goals have broadly been the same: rebuilding bases of employment, supporting local businesses and attractions, providing downtown living spaces, and adding public space amenities.

Benefits include:

- ✘ Increase in residential property values in downtown areas
- ✘ New construction in and near downtowns
- ✘ New businesses in downtowns
- ✘ Increased visitation from outside the county

To support new and ongoing downtown revitalization efforts, the County is encouraged to assist both countywide and local groups such as the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, local chambers of commerce, local Main Street organizations, and other nonprofits and community groups. Support may include sharing best practices, helping to host events, and other collaborative activities.



Source: Family Guidance Center



Source: Shelby County Citizens for Power Progress



Source: General Motors



Action 9

Recruit additional childcare services to the County.

Ensuring that parents have adequate access to affordable childcare is a key talent development strategy. Without access to childcare, many parents must reduce their working hours to care for their children, and some are forced out of the workforce entirely. As a result, this depresses wages and increases poverty, threatening the county’s economic prosperity. Recruiting childcare services is also a business retention strategy because it helps companies reduce their risk. Businesses may be more likely to locate or remain in an area where they know they will have access to a productive workforce.

In addition to recruiting childcare businesses, the County is encouraged to engage with the Shelby County Department of Health and the Alabama Department of Human Resources Child Care Services Division to promote existing services. Presently, Alabama residents may be eligible for subsidized day care services if they are employed, enrolled in school or job training, and have earnings under a predetermined cap.

For more information, please see www.dhr.alabama.gov/child-care/subsidy-overview/.



Action 10

Support the development of electric vehicle stations and alternative fuel sources.

Shelby County is encouraged to capitalize on the ongoing nationwide trend toward clean, renewable energy. The State of Alabama’s 2021 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan

identified I-65 for additional investments in electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. The County is encouraged to facilitate the installation of EV charging stations and reduce barriers that may exist, such as ensuring proper zoning is in place and working with utility providers and developers. The Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition (www.alabamacleanfuels.org) may be a valuable partner and resource.

Also see **Actions 15-17 in Chapter 7: Transportation & Infrastructure.**



Action 11

Identify locations for solar farms and other alternative energy generators.

The County is also encouraged to facilitate renewable energy generation. Large tracts of unzoned land that are inappropriate for traditional infrastructure may be suitable for solar or wind farms, and the County is encouraged to identify these properties. Wind and solar farms could bring additional jobs to Shelby County by attracting global manufacturing companies seeking alternative and affordable utilities. These developments may also lower costs and provide resilience to the power grid by providing a diversified portfolio of energy sources.



Action 12

Support a variety of financing tools for funding new developments and redevelopment.

58 INC can consult and guide in the use of public and private financing tools that may be used to finance new developments, such as mixed-use developments, or redevelopment. These types of tools include the following:

- ✦ Investment tools such as federal tax credits like New Market Credits for which areas in the southwest and southeast of the county are eligible and the federal Opportunity Zone program which is designated in areas in and near Columbiana.
- ✦ Improvement districts, which are formed under Ala. Code §§11-99A-1 et seq., as a separate public corporation to facilitate the financing of public infrastructure improvements. Where a local government does not have the debt capacity, financial resources or desire to finance infrastructure improvements with its own funds, the developer can ask that an improvement district be established to finance public infrastructure improvements with tax-exempt debt. Bonds issued by a district are payable from assessments on property in the district. Unpaid assessments constitute a lien on the property. The sponsoring local government, if it so desires, can guarantee or pledge revenue to the payment of district bonds, in which case the amount pledged will count against the local government’s debt limit.
- ✦ Tax-increment financing (TIF) districts, which are districts created by a city or county for the benefit of “blighted or economically distressed areas,” including areas in need of redevelopment or areas needing rehabilitation after a natural disaster. Alabama Code §§11-99-1 et seq. permits a city or county to issue tax-increment obligations payable from the incremental ad valorem tax increase in the project.
- ✦ Private investment financing: seed capital and/or venture capital.

Tourism



Action 13

Promote www.DiscoverShelby.com as a one-stop shop for visitors to Shelby County.

The website www.DiscoverShelby.com currently hosts a wealth of information about facilities and points of interest in the county and could be expanded further to include sample weekend itineraries for visitors and up-to-date calendars on cultural and arts-focused events.

For example, Discover Shelby includes a “Suggested Itineraries” section that packages information to highlight specific tourist-focused sectors. The County is already home to several wineries, but visitors to one winery may not be informed about the others. Its “Start Wining” itinerary packages information from its wineries into one document. These principles have been applied to a variety of interests, from fishing spots and golf courses to historic roadside markers. The County is encouraged to continue this with additional interests, such as antique shops and distilleries, and should consider creating map links such as a scenic driving or trail route between compatible stops. This would allow weekend visitors to plan their own weekend itineraries around the social and outdoor activities. In addition to events within the county, regional events with larger draws could also be highlighted to ensure these visitors are aware of all that Shelby County has to offer.

To ensure this information is up to date, the County could create a portal for municipalities and organizations to submit information about their events to be added to the public calendar. Static itinerary documents could be replaced as web pages, which would make the update process smoother.

Did you know?

Discover Shelby is the tourism arm of Shelby County.



Action 14

Increase the promotion of Shelby County as an outdoor recreation and agritourism destination.

Shelby County excels in offering outdoor recreation opportunities and has the potential for an expanded agritourism sector. Outdoor recreation and agritourism are adjacent but distinct types of tourism. Outdoor recreation includes more physically exerting activities such as hiking and mountain biking, while agritourism is more focused on the agricultural sector and its accompanying cultural, food, and drink options. The County should increase promotion of its regionally renowned parks and trail system and continue to use Discover Shelby to promote several points of interest that may relate to agritourism:

- ✘ Cat-n-Bird Winery
- ✘ Corbin Farms Winery
- ✘ Hidden Creek Ranch
- ✘ Lewis Lakes Vineyards
- ✘ Morgan Creek Vineyards
- ✘ Helena Hollow
- ✘ Ozan Vineyard & Cellars

The County is encouraged to promote the connections between these points of interest. Adding a separate category for agritourism on the Discover Shelby website may help visitors more easily find activities that interest them.

The County is also encouraged to solicit information from new and existing farms and other businesses that welcome guests and encourage these businesses to update information about events for enhanced promotion.



Source: Corbin Farms Winery



Action 15

Develop and expand trail systems important for outdoor recreation or non-vehicular transportation.

The County’s continual expansion and development of its trail system provides benefits not just for physical fitness, but also for economic development opportunities. The County should identify missing linkages that would connect important or heavily visited facilities, including both recreational facilities and commercial areas. This would enable active non-motorized travel between these areas as well as allow hikers and mountain bikers easy access to desired commercial spaces such as outfitters and restaurants. The County should also work with business owners to ensure that necessary infrastructure, such as bicycle racks and boot cleaning stations, are in place to allow consumers to easily transition from trail to town.



Action 16

Continue to support the use of lodging tax to fund 58 INC, new parks and recreational amenities, tourism, and additional events throughout the County.

Lodging tax (or hotel tax) is a critical revenue stream for supporting county facilities and events, organizations such as 58 INC, Shelby County’s Economic Development Corporation, the development of new parks and trails, and regional attractions such as the American Village. The County’s tourism budget is currently funded solely by lodging tax from hotels and campsites. Resident support for this funding allocation can be maintained by educating residents about all the amenities, facilities and investment in future employment base that are funded by the lodging tax. In addition, the County should ensure that Tourism and Events remains adequately funded.

For more information about a potential hotel and conference center, please see **Actions 27** and **28** in this chapter.



Action 17

Seek to secure a variety of grant opportunities to help fund tourism-related projects.

A variety of existing state and federal grants that may be used to fund tourism-related projects are discussed below.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) administers the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) that provides grant assistance to local units of government for the acquisition and/or development/improvement of recreational trails and trail-related resources. Examples of eligible trail types include but are not limited to walking, jogging, cycling, skating,

mountain biking, hiking, backpacking, off-highway vehicle, and equestrian. The project sponsor (Shelby County) must provide at least a 20% match in the form of local sources, and may include volunteer labor and/or donated materials and/or services. Applications may be submitted for the following activities:

- ✘ Construction of new recreational trails.
- ✘ Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails.
- ✘ Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails.
- ✘ Provision of features which facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities.
- ✘ Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors from willing sellers.
- ✘ Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance.
- ✘ Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to recreational trails.

The Alabama Tourism Department administers Community Grants that provide up to \$5,000 for attractions and up to \$2,500 for events. Eligible uses include:

- ✘ Brochures: promoting and advertising the recreational, historical or travel attractions and/or related events within the State of Alabama. Brochures funded with matching grant monies may not be resold and are for free distribution only.
- ✘ Websites / Free Smartphone Apps: promoting and advertising the recreational, historical or travel

attractions and/or related events within the State of Alabama.

- ✘ Advertising Out of State: promoting the recreational, historical or travel attractions and/or related events within the State of Alabama.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) administers the American Rescue Plan Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Grant that is intended to fund projects focused on new and expanded infrastructure, projects with a multi-state or national focus, and projects in regions most adversely affected by damage to the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors from the coronavirus pandemic. Projects that would support economic diversification in communities overly reliant on the travel and tourism industry are permitted, but projects that directly support the industry are preferred and will be prioritized. The local share would be at most 20% of eligible project costs. Eligible projects include:

- ✘ Construction and non-construction projects that support the travel, tourism, or outdoor recreation sectors.
- ✘ Note: State and local tourism promotion and marketing projects are not eligible under the competitive tourism grants component.



Dunnaway Valley Greenway
(Source: Discover Shelby)



Action 18

Improve coordination between the Shelby County Facilities and General Services Department and the Shelby County Tourism and Events staff and allocate funding to ensure that event venues have the items and equipment needed to recruit specific events to the County.

Currently, the Shelby County Facilities and General Services Department oversees county facilities, while Tourism and Events staff oversee events at these facilities. Increased communication between these departments is encouraged to ensure these events run smoothly and with all necessary equipment in place. Staff in these departments should also collaborate on needed improvements to county-run sports venues because certain improvements may help with recruiting large regional sporting events in the future.



Action 19

Continue to provide financial support for one event in each local municipality per year and continue to provide indirect support for other local events.

Shelby County currently provides direct financial support to each municipality within the county for one public event per year, up to approximately \$1,500. These events include festivals, such as Alabaster CityFest, which are widely attended and enjoyed by Shelby County residents and visitors. Municipalities may receive indirect support for events, such as signage and assistance with directing traffic, for additional events. The County is encouraged to continue both direct and indirect support to its municipalities to ensure such events remain successful.



Action 20

Encourage new festivals and events that highlight the diverse cultural backgrounds of Shelby County residents and work with Discover Shelby, arts organizations, and community groups to organize publicly sponsored arts and cultural events and festivals.

Shelby County is already home to a burgeoning arts and culture scene, anchored by the Shelby County Arts Center (SCAC), a 30,000-square-foot arts and events center in Columbiana. The SCAC is home to the Shelby County Arts Council, a nonprofit founded in 2004, as well as the 10,000-square-foot Grande Hall multipurpose venue, the 200-seat Black Box Performance Theatre and the 2,230-square-foot EBSCO Fine Arts Gallery. Other organizations, including the University of Montevallo, Parnell Memorial Library, Calera Main Street and Montevallo Main Street, offer performing arts venues and sponsor arts and cultural events in their communities. Shelby County is encouraged to continue supporting these organizations as they provide artistic and cultural programming for residents throughout the county.

As new community groups representing specific cultural heritages spring up, Shelby County is encouraged to highlight these groups and their public events to ensure all residents feel welcome in the community. The County is encouraged to offer its support such as space or funding to hold events as these groups develop. One way the County could assist is through promotion. Discover Shelby (www.DiscoverShelby.com) allows residents and visitors to find information about the wide variety of arts and culture activities within the county. The County should encourage all community groups to submit their events using the www.DiscoverShelby.com portal recommended in **Action 13** of this chapter.



Action 21

Increase the awareness, importance, marketability, and accessibility of Shelby County historic resources for all visitors and residents.

While Shelby County is home to a variety of cultural and historic resources, not all are promoted to their full potential or accessible to all. Such resources include:

- ✦ Aldrich Coal Mine Museum
- ✦ The American Village
- ✦ Billy Gould Coke Ovens
- ✦ Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum
- ✦ Karl C. Harrison Museum of George Washington
- ✦ Klein Arts and Culture located at the Klein-Wallace Home
- ✦ Old Town Helena
- ✦ Shelby County Museum and Archives
- ✦ Shelby Iron Works

Currently, the Discover Shelby website lists historic and cultural resources under “Points of Interest.” Creating a separate new directory category for “historic and cultural resources” may be helpful for visitors specifically interested in these types of facilities. Additional strategies include:

- ✦ Supporting nomination of certain properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage
- ✦ Encouraging private conservation efforts as opportunities arise through a countywide awards program

- ✦ Encouraging local schools, including the Shelby County School District, to continue to plan educational field trips to these local facilities

Corporate Retention and Attraction



Action 22

Partner with economic development organizations and communities to facilitate new capital investments and job creation through a cluster-based recruitment and retention strategy.

58 INC’s current business retention and attraction strategy focuses on “value-added” industries that bring knowledge-based, high-paying jobs with minimal adverse impacts to Shelby County. Chief among these is the advanced manufacturing sector, whose businesses produce high value, often small, finished goods and whose land uses are compatible with office and institutional as opposed to “heavier” industrial uses. Examples include the biotechnology industry and manufacturing of computer hardware. These businesses may be classified as industrial, but they are located in office parks and similar settings because they typically have light truck traffic and do not present other nuisances. These kinds of companies add value to the Shelby County economy because they require skilled employees and provide high wages. 58 INC is encouraged to continue recruiting their list of target industries (which currently include software and IT, biotech, professional services, automotive and advanced manufacturing businesses) and other value-

added businesses through cluster-based programming, advertising and promotion, direct outreach, and cooperation with other economic development organizations.



Action 23

Create investment-friendly policies, partnerships, and real estate plans that support preparation of sites and business parks for high-tech manufacturing.

Shelby County and 58 INC should continue developing policies, partnerships and plans that attract businesses in desired industries, such as advanced manufacturing, and that align with existing economic clusters. For example, Shelby County is conveniently located between major automotive manufacturers such as Honda in Talladega County, Hyundai in Montgomery County, and Mercedes-Benz in Tuscaloosa County. Rather than recruit a similar large manufacturer, Shelby County has begun to develop a cluster of automotive suppliers that support these businesses. This plays to one of the county’s advantages - its central location within the state and convenient location along major highways and rail corridors. Opportunities to develop near-term plans for prepared quality sites, and mid-long-range plans to develop world-class innovation and technology parks, should be pursued to support and sustain success of the employment and economic base of Shelby County. Large parcels available along the I-65 and US-280 corridors require time, resources and partnership to transform them into future places for innovation and employment.



Action 24

Continue to explore potential sites for employment and innovation centers.

Shelby West Corporate Park, located in the City of Alabaster, is a 400-acre commerce, industry, and technology park that was jointly developed and improved by the cities of Alabaster and Calera, Shelby County, and the Shelby County Economic Industrial Development Authority. As Shelby West Corporate Park nears capacity, other corporate park spaces may be needed. Future parks may take the form of “innovation centers” over traditional office and industrial parks, and may include a higher proportion of advanced manufacturing businesses and other value-added industries. Because these businesses rely more on the movement of information than materials, they may not need the same level of interstate or rail access and could be located in a wider variety of areas within Shelby County. The County is encouraged to scout suitable locations and seek to jointly develop necessary infrastructure improvements, such as roads, utilities, and fiber-optic internet, alongside municipalities or as part of public-private partnerships.



Source: 58 INC



Action 25

Work with municipalities, developers, and businesses on modernizing and adapting older office and business parks in the county through zoning changes, infrastructure improvements, marketing, and private sector investment.

Many of the county’s business parks and campuses are getting older and would benefit from new investment and renovations. To create a more diverse working environment and to appeal to younger workers, the County may want to change its zoning, and work with municipalities to change their zoning, to allow older office campuses to become more mixed use with restaurants, retail shops, service businesses, entertainment facilities, health clubs or day care centers.

In particular, Shelby West Corporate Park and Meadowbrook Corporate Park would both benefit from landscape improvements, signage updates, new footpaths, and shared open space, while private office parks in Alabaster, Montevallo and Pelham would benefit from roadway improvements. For office park improvements, valuable partners may include 58 INC, the Shelby County Economic Industrial Development Authority, the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, and individual businesses in public-private partnerships (P3s). P3s describe a variety of arrangements in which public and private sector entities jointly finance mutually beneficial projects such as infrastructure improvements. Specific arrangements vary, but typically the private sector finances the capital improvement and is paid back over time by the public sector entity.

Shared amenities and functional open space are core needs at existing office parks across Shelby County. Upgrades including shaded pathways, seating areas, public art and mixed uses (bringing coffee, lunch, housing,

etc.) could help foster interaction among talented workers in knowledge-based industry clusters such as finance, insurance, software, and biotechnology. In addition, food truck courts have a relatively low up-front cost to develop and can easily promote community interaction.



Action 26

Modify the Institutional and Office Districts [O-I and O-I (2)] in the Zoning Ordinance to allow for advanced manufacturing and research and development uses.

Advanced manufacturing refers to a variety of high-tech businesses that produce small, value-dense finished goods. Common advanced manufacturing industries include biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and computer hardware production. These businesses produce goods, but their land use much more closely resembles office and institutional uses than light or heavy industrial uses. Because they produce and move small, valuable finished goods, they generate minimal truck traffic and their manufacturing processes do not produce the noise, vibration, or other nuisances sometimes associated with industrial production. Their high level of automation allows them to employ fewer people per shift than a traditional factory, and sometimes a large portion of their workforce is research and development (R&D) as opposed to production. Since these characteristics produce a land use that is highly compatible with office and institutional land uses, Shelby County is encouraged to modify the O-I and O-I (2) Districts in the Zoning Ordinance to permit advanced manufacturing. This modification will signal the County’s commitment to recruiting and retaining this economic cluster and can be used as a recruitment tool.



58 INC

As the Shelby County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), 58 INC is a public entity serving Shelby County and its constituent communities as their economic development team. 58 INC serves as the lead for industrial, corporate office, and retail recruitment, along with retention and workforce initiatives for all major economic drivers within Shelby County and its municipalities. 58 INC is publicly funded, with a sizable portion of its funding coming from lodging tax revenue.

58 INC adopted a 2022-2025 Strategic Plan that lays out three goals: corporate growth, retail amenities, and community engagement. To help reach these goals, the plan identifies four supporting objectives: corporate retention and attraction, retail recruitment, talent development, and entrepreneurship development.

The 58 INC website (www.58inc.org) contains valuable resources for potential businesses, including assistance finding suitable sites and buildings. The website links to the AdvantageAlabama Interactive Sites and Buildings Tool, which allows prospective businesses to search all available office and industrial properties in Shelby County and was developed through the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA). 58 INC also provides a Retail Sites page that contains community market demographic information for local municipalities and the 280 Corridor, as well as information on available commercial sites and buildings available within Shelby County.

To achieve its goals, 58 INC frequently partners with regional and local economic developers, the corporate community, secondary and post-secondary educators, local government officials, private developers, and the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce.

Image Source: 58 INC

Retail Attraction



Action 27

Partner with local municipalities to create catalytic projects that can increase sales and lodging revenue.

58 INC currently focuses retail attraction on projects that will catalyze further development and lead to increased county and municipal revenues. These should be targeted to meet community desires, such as the Campus 124 mixed use redevelopment in Pelham or fast-food options in Columbiana and Harpersville. Retail attraction actions in this chapter are all designed to draw in additional development and capitalize on existing assets. Prime examples of catalytic developments include developing commercial nodes near recreational assets, which would draw in additional park and trail users, and recruiting a full-service hotel and conference center, which would bring in additional events.



Action 28

Direct new commercial development to locate near existing recreational assets such as Oak Mountain State Park, Double Oak Park, Cahaba River Park and trailheads.

Oak Mountain State Park (OMSP) is Shelby County’s number one outdoor recreation destination for residents and visitors, averaging up to 800,000 visitors annually. Many of these visitors come from across the region and the State. According to this Plan’s Visioning Survey, 82% of respondents support the County prioritizing tourism investment around Oak Mountain State Park. The new Double Oak Park also draws visitors from across the county, and the county’s

growing trail system connecting new and existing parks also enhances commercial appeal.

These recreational assets present opportunities to capitalize on the dining, lodging, retail, and other commercial needs of park visitors. Commercial development catering to both residents and tourists should be prioritized in strategic areas such as near OMSP entrances, Double Oak Park, and strategically identified trailheads. As Shelby County’s largest tourist destination, Oak Mountain State Park may be suitable for a full-service hotel and conference center in the adjacent vicinity, for which there has been interest. Locating it near OMSP may bring additional visitors to the park who do not want to camp overnight. It may also encourage guests for other events, such as conferences, to visit OMSP and other associated commercial spaces.



Action 29

Actively promote and support investment opportunities in the County’s designated Opportunity Zone.

The Opportunity Zone program was created by federal legislation in 2017 to spur reinvestment in areas of need. Opportunity Zones comprise census tracts that are classified as “low-income” but that are prime for reinvestment because of an asset such as a downtown, neighborhood, major institution, or regional interstate access. The Opportunity Zone initiative encourages redevelopment in these areas by providing federal tax breaks on qualifying capital funding for high-impact projects. Shelby County has one designated Opportunity Zone, which includes part of the City of Columbiana and unincorporated land to the southwest of the city. The County should promote this Opportunity Zone to developers and could consider

a promotional package to highlight the benefits of investment in the Opportunity Zone. In addition to 58 INC, a valuable partner is Opportunity Alabama (OPAL), a non-profit initiative dedicated to connecting investors with investable assets in Alabama’s Opportunity Zones.



Action 30

Recruit and attract additional commercial and retail development throughout Shelby County to meet the desires of residents while increasing revenue.

During the public involvement process associated with this Plan, 68% of survey respondents indicated the lack of cultural and entertainment options is a major quality of life challenge. The survey also found that 56% of respondents desire additional shopping, dining, and entertainment options. Analysis of open-ended responses revealed that county residents strongly desire additional medical services such as walk-in clinics. Recruiting these types of businesses would meet residents’ needs and also provide fiscal benefits to the county through additional sales and property taxes and development fees.



Source: RPOCB



Action 31

In partnership with secondary and postsecondary providers, enhance, encourage and expose career pathways in targeted sectors.

Shelby County should continue to work with secondary and postsecondary schools to ensure students are prepared for post-graduation choices in addition to four-year colleges and universities. Many local and regional institutions, including the Shelby County School District and Jefferson State Community College, already offer classes and training in these career fields and offer pathways to the workforce post-graduation. Some schools may provide credential attainment or work-based learning placement in conjunction with businesses. These businesses and the County as a whole benefit from a more highly skilled talent base.

58 INC included this action in its 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and is encouraged to partner with the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce for the implementation of it. As part of this effort, Shelby County should consider expanding the healthcare workforce development needs in the secondary school educational curriculum. Residents, particularly senior citizens, would benefit from additional healthcare providers in the area. The County can support this effort by encouraging the implementation of healthcare workforce education and training programs within the community through public and private educational initiatives with key partners such as Jefferson State Community College.



Action 32

Support existing industries through business contact visits and account management to identify employer issues.

58 INC and the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce should maintain discussions with Shelby County employers regarding the skills and experience that employers seek in applications and the needs of the local talent base. An ongoing dialogue will allow companies to raise issues as they arise and collectively work toward solutions. In addition, 58 INC and the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce should maintain close relationships with existing businesses in Shelby County to understand their health, current challenges, needs, and means by which they can maximize assistance.



Source: Leadership Shelby County



Source: Youth Leadership Shelby County



Action 33

Continue to support and fund the Leadership Shelby County and Youth Leadership Shelby County annual programs.

Leadership Shelby County is a nine-month community-based leadership program that is designed to connect and empower Shelby County business and community members, enhance their leadership skills and inspire them to be active and informed community leaders. Each year's class consists of up to 40 people who live or work in Shelby County, and program alumni continue to serve their communities as elected officials, non-profit directors, and community advocates. Youth Leadership Shelby County is a six-month program open to 11th grade students in the county. The program is designed to encourage young people to be socially, conscientious leaders of the future, with an emphasis on active, hands-on experience.



Action 34

Continue to engage, support and collaborate with workforce development providers such as the State of Alabama's "Central Six - Region 4 Workforce Development Council."

As the State of Alabama Region 4 Workforce Council Development, Central Six operates in Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker counties. In response to a 2006 State of Alabama executive order to implement ten regional workforce councils across the state, Central Six was originally under the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham as a task force with oversight by the Birmingham Business Alliance. Central Six now operates as a 501(c)3 nonprofit under the Central Six Development Council.

This council is a regional funding collaborative that includes the State of Alabama, philanthropic organizations, local businesses, the Alabama Community College System, the K-12 System, training providers, and local municipal governments. Its mission is to create a modernized workforce that is proactive, responsive, and results-driven, supports the region’s diverse population and employers, providing quality job opportunities in support of a vibrant regional economy. Visit www.centraisix.org to learn more.



Action 35

Support the annual goals set by the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce’s seven work groups.

In its 2022 Business Plan, the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce laid out sets of annual goals for each of its seven work groups.

These work groups include: 1) Business Development and Support Group, 2) Communications and Marketing Group, 3) Community and Career Development Group, 4) Finance and Administration Group, 5) Governmental Affairs Group, 6) Investor Relations Group, and 7) Tourism and Recreation Group. They are each chartered with a different mission and may require different levels and types of support from Shelby County to reach their objectives.

The County and its tourism department, as well as 58 INC, are encouraged to provide necessary support to the Chamber to ensure these work groups have the resources to carry out their missions and positively impact the local economy.



Action 36

Reinvest in and Promote Shelby County’s Career Technical Education Center to local high school students.

The Shelby County Career Technical Education Center (CTEC) in Columbiana provides career training opportunities and resources to students in grades 10-12 in all Shelby County high schools. CTEC offers interactive learning experiences to equip and develop students for opportunities in both post-secondary education and in the workforce. Because economic development professionals and business leaders have emphasized the importance of a skilled local talent base, the County should continue to actively promote CTEC to area students. Additionally, as the global market expands to Shelby County and demands high-tech skills, Shelby County and 58 INC are encouraged to partner and support reinvestment and possible new sites for career training within new and redeveloping innovation and tech parks.



Source: Shelby County Chamber of Commerce



Source: Shelby County Chamber of Commerce



Action 37

Support the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce’s workforce initiatives.

This Plan encourages the County to continue to support the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce’s workforce initiatives. Two specific workforce initiatives currently listed in their Business Plan are:

- ✦ Explore the possibility of re-starting “Academic Leaders Council” meetings for all Shelby County superintendents and college/university presidents to discuss workforce needs in Shelby County.
- ✦ Advocate and support High School “ready to work” programming in schools throughout Shelby County.



Source: 58 INC



Source: 58 INC

Entrepreneur Development



Action 38

Support successful entrepreneurship resource providers in Shelby County.

Shelby County benefits from an ever-growing knowledge-based workforce that is full of innovative ideas and creativity. The County should support and encourage initiatives by and with 58 INC, to recruit and retain programs and resources that encourage entrepreneurship of all kinds. These start-ups become the future employers and provider of goods and services in the county. Entrepreneurship training programs such as CO.STARTERS, recently launched in Montevallo, give small groups of prospective entrepreneurs the lessons, relationships, and tools needed to turn business ideas into actions. (For more information on CO.STARTERS, see the callout box on **page 257.**)

Unlike incubators, these training programs are designed to be relatively quick and flexible, which makes them comparatively less costly to organize and support financially. Currently, a CO.STARTERS program is sponsored by Montevallo Main Street and the Chamber offers one-on-one consulting with small business owners. Public, private, and nonprofit sponsors provided both funding and in-kind support for these offerings. Shelby County is encouraged to continue to support and celebrate the wins of these efforts as well as additional initiatives designed to reach the broader Shelby County community. This is included in 58 INC’s strategic plan.



CO.STARTERS

CO.STARTERS was established in 2008 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as part of a five-year revitalization effort branded as “CreateHere.” The program is an action-driven, collaborative process for people with a business idea but not necessarily the training or capital to get started. Participants enter into a facilitator-led, collaborative process with a small and supportive group of 10-15 like-minded peers, and each facilitator is an entrepreneur. The program covers ten foundational topics and allows participants to receive real-time feedback to develop and fine-tune their ideas.

CO.STARTERS has organized programs in over 300 cities and lent support to over 19,400 businesses, with a 92% business launch rate and a 97% business one-year survival rate. Create Birmingham sponsors the CO.STARTERS program in Birmingham, and that program has served 286 entrepreneurs, including 51% of women and 69% of people of color, who have launched 269 businesses. Within Shelby County, Montevallo Main Street is an established member of the CO.STARTERS network and sponsors the program seasonally at the University of Montevallo.

The program is designed to be flexible and affordable for participants, costing only a few hundred dollars or less. Scholarships are often available for students experiencing hardship. The flexible nature of the program also makes it affordable for the community group who sponsors it. In the case of Montevallo, public, private, and nonprofit sponsors provided both funding and in-kind support.

Image Source: City of Lynchburg Office of Economic Development



Action 39

Recruit and establish high-impact cluster-specific entrepreneur incubators and accelerators.

Incubators and accelerators refer to entrepreneurship centers that go beyond offering co-working space and general business training to offer technical expertise and sometimes provide capital investment in return for a stake in the business. Because of the highly specific technical expertise they offer, these are typically organized around specific industries; e.g., software development or biotechnology. 58 INC is encouraged to recruit these sector-specific incubators and accelerators, preferably to locate within innovation and business parks where successful start-ups can scale to become larger tenants/employers and where the ecosystem of collaboration can benefit both startups and established companies. This could, in turn, catalyze development in knowledge-based industries or advanced manufacturing, leading to greater development in these much-desired clusters. While the County is not necessarily encouraged to own or operate these centers, it is encouraged to partner with 58 INC to creatively recruit entities that operate incubators and accelerators. This is included in 58 INC’s strategic plan.



Action 40

Encourage the development of coworking spaces across the County.

Coworking spaces are businesses that allow individual workers to rent their own workspaces, conference rooms, or private offices. They offer a wealth of advantages including networking opportunities, daily structure, increased productivity, flexibility and cost savings. As more people nationwide and in Shelby County work from home some

or all of the time, these spaces may become more necessary for certain kinds of workers. Recruiting and/or developing coworking spaces would provide necessary amenities for current residents and allow the County to recruit remote workers in high-wage industries to locate to Shelby County.

Workspace businesses, such as national companies like Spaces and Serendipity Labs, along with Pelham-based Workspace, provide office space and office-related services that cater to startups, entrepreneurs, and remote workers. This space is typically offered under flexible arrangements, such as short-term leases for businesses and daily or even hourly workstation or meeting room rental for individuals. (These are not considered incubators or accelerators because they do not typically provide technical expertise or business-specific advice but provide shared office amenities.) Attracting workspace businesses will assist Shelby County in recruiting startups as well as individual remote workers in desirable high-wage industries. This is included in 58 INC’s strategic plan.



Action 41

Explore the feasibility of supporting a job training center or business incubator.

Job training centers and business incubators may require high initial startup costs, but they can have an outsize impact on the Shelby County economy by training a more skilled workforce and providing support for local businesses to get off the ground. In lieu of attracting these entities, Shelby County could support either or both of these directly itself or with partners. This would allow the county more direct ability to shape its economy, such as ensuring the workforce skills being taught are well-matched to local business needs.

The EDGE

The EDGE Entrepreneurship Center was formed in 2012 as a partnership between the University of Alabama, the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Tuscaloosa. The EDGE, which prides itself as “Tuscaloosa’s Home for Startups,” is an incubator and accelerator that focuses on growing and supporting entrepreneurs in collaborative workspaces dedicated to innovation and networking.

Part of the EDGE’s success is its office space and coworking space. The EDGE operates out of a 26,000-square-foot facility with over 20 offices, 100 workstations, and several conference rooms, all of which are offered to established entrepreneurs, people seeking to build their businesses, and individuals who need working and networking space. Memberships are available on an annual or monthly basis, and a daily drop-in program was established for those with short-term or intermittent needs.

Programming is also central to the EDGE’s success. Regular workshops, seminars, and clinics are held to connect entrepreneurs with fellow innovators and assistance developing their business. The center also hosts special events such as pitch competitions that bring together the West Alabama entrepreneurial community.

The EDGE is supported by both the Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute within the University of Alabama’s Culverhouse College of Business and the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama.



Source: The Edge



Source: The Edge



Source: The Edge

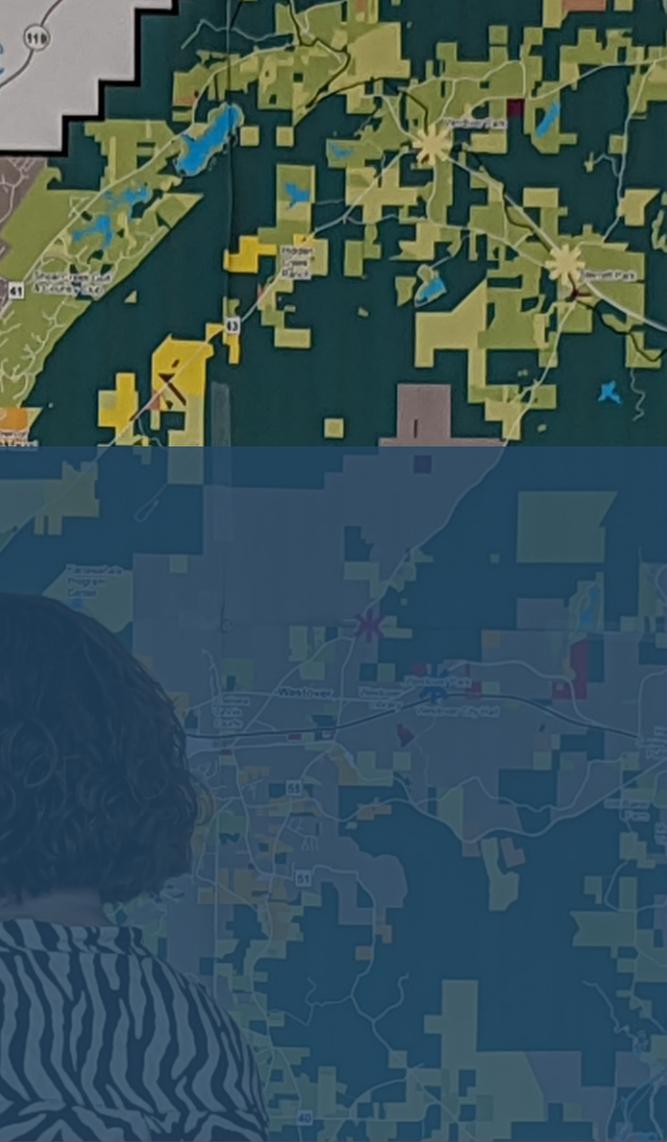


chapter eleven

Implementation

“As Shelby County continues to grow, we would do well to prioritize improvements that encourage diversity, accessibility, natural beauty and conservation. I believe these values will ensure a bright future for Shelby County for generations to come.” - Shelby County Resident

Image Source: 58 INC



Implementation264

Implementation

Implementation

This Shelby County Comprehensive Plan puts forth a bold vision for the future of Shelby County and includes a set of action steps to achieve goals. The Plan focuses on a mix of policies and program initiatives and identifies criteria for decision-making. This Plan will require a significant commitment of time, energy, and financial resources to implement and is intended to be implemented incrementally over time.

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan is the first step in the implementation process. It is the product of considerable efforts on the part of Shelby County and many other community leaders and citizens of Shelby County. The Planning Commission, the County Commission, and county staff within the various departments should be the lead facilitators to implement the Plan. This Plan should be revisited and updated over the coming years to ensure that goals and recommended actions still meet the desires of the community, and to ensure there is adequate support for these ongoing planning efforts.

It is important to note that the contents of this Comprehensive Plan are designed to serve as a guide for growth and development, in both the public and private sectors and, as such, are not binding upon Shelby County when making specific land use decisions and public investments. This Comprehensive Plan is not law or intended to be a zoning ordinance. It is a policy guide for community decision-making regarding land use, development, growth management and capital improvement decisions.



Implementation Matrix

To guide the implementation of this Plan, the implementation matrix in **Table 11.1** has been created. The table highlights the list of recommended action items, their relevant page numbers in the Plan, a suggested time frame for completion, as well as potential partners who can be charged with leading the implementation efforts.

The suggested time frames for implementation may vary based on economic influences, potential funding sources and other factors, but they are defined as:

- Short Term: tasks that could be initiated and/or implemented within 1-5 years of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan
- Long Term: tasks that are on a 6-year or greater time frame after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan
- Ongoing: tasks that may be implemented in a series of incremental steps involving numerous partners, or tasks that are ongoing, continuous efforts

Items highlighted in green were identified as top priority actions for implementation by residents. This is based upon input received during the 30-day public comment period (January 20, 2023 to February 20, 2023).

Implementation Partners

Since the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be implemented over several years, during which staff in County departments and members on commissions may change, it is important to identify which partners should take the lead or support role for a particular action task. It is important to note that the policies and recommended actions outlined in the implementation matrix are for consideration only, and do not constitute an obligation on any county department, agency or organization's part to lead, support or participate in any given activity.

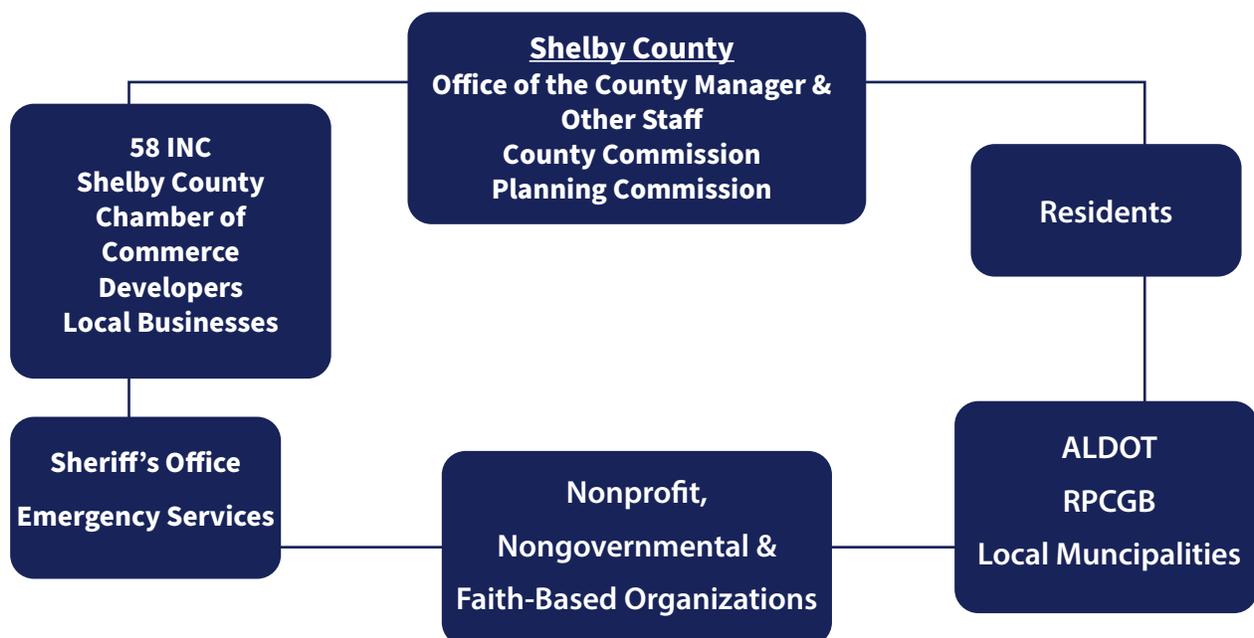


Table 11.1: Implementation Matrix

Chapter 4 – Future Land Use & Development				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Respecting the Edges of Incorporated Areas				
1	Participate in comprehensive plan updates for the incorporated cities and towns within and adjacent to Shelby County to coordinate land use and related planning efforts.	96	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and municipalities
2	Coordinate with incorporated areas on future development proposals for “edge” development to ensure compatibility with adopted municipal future land use plans.	96	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and municipalities
3	Promote and support municipal efforts to allow mixed-use development in areas designated as “Mixed-Use Centers” on the Future Development Map.	96	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and municipalities
4	Work with the incorporated municipalities to develop orderly annexation agreements.	98	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and municipalities
Sustainable and Managed Growth				
5	Encourage mixed-use development.	98	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
6	Encourage infill development of vacant sites and redevelopment of older shopping centers.	100	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
7	Allow areas within and near mixed-use centers and employment centers, as shown on the Future Development Map, to be developed for larger scale commercial, office, and mixed-use development.	101	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
8	Concentrate commercial development around major intersections and discourage highway strip development.	102	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
9	Continue to explore potential sites for new industrial parks, employment centers, and innovation centers.	102	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and 58 INC

Chapter 4 – Future Land Use & Development				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Sustainable and Managed Growth				
10	Ensure future developments improve both internal and external multi-modal connectivity.	102	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Highway Department
11	Encourage residential development types that fit the character of different areas of the County.	104	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
12	Preserve and protect existing residential and agricultural areas from adjacent development.	104	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
13	"Allow new development in rural areas only when adequate infrastructure and public facilities are in place to accommodate growth and then only at a context and scale appropriate to the locale."	106	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
14	Protect prime farmlands, steep slopes, waterways, and scenic areas from inadvertent damage due to future development / construction.	106	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
15	Support context-sensitive design that preserves rural and small-town character.	109	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
16	Promote the use of conservation easements.	109	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
17	Encourage developers to phase development projects to reduce environmental and stormwater impacts, to reduce mass grade impacts to the landscape, to protect water quality, and to reduce the impact to the surrounding community.	110	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services
18	Periodically review the Future Development Map and make land use map amendments to keep it aligned with evolving market and growth patterns.	110	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services

Chapter 4 – Future Land Use & Development				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Housing				
19	Encourage the development of a variety of housing types for households of all configurations and lifestyles.	110	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
20	Encourage traditional neighborhood developments that offer a variety of housing choices.	111	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
21	Encourage the development of viable senior housing options.	112	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
22	Encourage any new multi-family developments to be built as a component of mixed-use developments or within the “Mixed-use Centers” as designated on the Future Development Map.	112	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
23	Encourage the incorporation of affordable and workforce housing in new developments.	112	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
24	Encourage developers to partner with other developers specializing in affordable and accessible housing such as Habitat for Humanity or other nonprofit builders.	113	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, developers, and local nonprofits

Chapter 5 – Infill Development				
#	Strategy	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Strategies to Encourage Infill Development				
1	Consider streamlining the regulatory framework by allowing by-right development for appropriate uses and building types, particularly in cases with a high frequency of rezoning, conditional use, or other applications.	122	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
2	Consider requiring the underground placement of utilities in large-scale redevelopment projects.	122	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
3	Consider allowing higher-density residential uses near or within targeted infill development sites.	123	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
4	Allow and encourage the development of surface parking and vacant lots into commercial uses.	124	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
5	Locate new development close to existing infrastructure.	125	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
6	Encourage developers to include pedestrian access improvements in development proposals.	125	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
7	Evaluate tools for growth management.	125	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
8	Explore a variety of financing tools for funding new developments and redevelopment.	127	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
9	Utilize the public realm as an economic development asset.	127	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
10	Encourage updates to Utility Master Plans.	127	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services

Chapter 6 – Code Modifications				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Regulations Related to Commercial Developments				
1	Prioritize infill development.	148	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
2	Revise the Special District Article in the Zoning Ordinance.	149	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
3	Adopt a mixed-use component as part of the Special District Article in the Zoning Ordinance.	149	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
4	Modify the parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.	150	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
5	Revise the Off-Street Parking and Loading Requirements Article in the Zoning Ordinance to establish parking location criteria for new commercial developments.	150	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
6	Encourage the use of permeable pavement materials by allowing their incorporation into plan design to reduce the stormwater pond size requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.	151	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
7	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require underground utilities in new developments.	151	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
8	Revise commercial and non-residential articles of the Zoning Ordinance.	151	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
Regulations Related to Residential Developments				
9	Modify the Zoning Ordinance to allow Traditional Neighborhood Development.	152	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
10	Modify the Conservation Subdivision Standards in the Subdivision Regulations.	153	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
11	Modify the Form-Based Subdivision Standards in the Subdivision Regulations.	154	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services

Chapter 6 – Code Modifications				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Regulations Related to Residential Developments				
12	Expand the open space requirement in the Subdivision Regulations for residential developments.	154	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
13	Modify the Master Plan requirements in the Subdivision Regulations for nonadministrative conventional subdivisions.	155	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
14	Modify the Subdivision Regulations to require public access easements in new subdivisions for the construction of multi-use trails to enhance pedestrian and non-vehicular connectivity between developments.	155	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
15	Establish standards in the Subdivision Regulations to require an integrated pedestrian pathways network to connect new development along County and State thoroughfares.	156	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
16	Modify the Subdivision Regulations to amend the pedestrian facility requirements to revise the set thresholds for when sidewalks should be required.	156	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
Regulations Related to Stormwater Management				
17	Restore and sustain water quality, natural habitats, and groundwater by incorporating best practices for environmental site design and stormwater management in development regulations.	157	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
18	Adopt appropriate policies and regulations to protect prime farmlands, steep slopes, waterways, and scenic areas from inadvertent damage due to future development / construction.	157	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
19	Pursue opportunities for the acquisition, conservation, and restoration of open space along year-round streams and rivers and actively protect these resources through land use management, steep slope development regulations, conservation subdivisions, and cluster development.	157	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services

Chapter 6 – Code Modifications				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Permitted Uses within the Zoning Ordinance				
20	Modify the Office and Institutional Districts [O-I and O-I (2)] in the Zoning Ordinance to allow for advanced manufacturing and research and development uses.	158	Short Term	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and 58 INC
Permitted Uses within the Zoning Ordinance				
21	Modify the Zoning Ordinance to permit extraction and mining where appropriate.	158	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
22	Modify the A-1 and A-R Districts to allow for agritourism and other rural economic enterprises.	160	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
23	Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide additional design standards for auto repair shops, shooting ranges, animal clinics, kennels, and other similar noise-related uses throughout the County.	160	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
24	Make necessary modifications to the Zoning Ordinance to support the development of electric vehicle charging stations.	161	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
Other Recommended Changes to the Zoning Ordinance				
25	Modify the Zoning Ordinance to include illustrations for clarification and user-friendliness.	161	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
26	Revise and modernize the definition language in the Zoning Ordinance.	161	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
27	Add a summary table of permitted uses across all zoning categories.	162	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
28	Add language in the Zoning Ordinance to set an expiration date for conditional uses, site plans, variances and add in a definition for “construction.”	162	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
Other Recommended Changes to the Subdivision Regulations				
29	Revise and add illustrations in the Subdivision Regulations for enhanced clarification.	162	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services

Chapter 7 – Transportation & Infrastructure				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Roadway Improvement Projects				
1	Pursue funding to construct major roadway improvement projects.	167	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Highway Department, and ALDOT
2	Work with local municipalities to advocate that ALDOT fund and construct improvement projects on state highways and interstates throughout the County.	170	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Highway Department, ALDOT, and municipalities
3	Consider incorporating bicycle and pedestrian facilities, when appropriate, into significant roadway improvement projects.	172	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Highway Department
4	Regularly identify and evaluate potential operational and safety improvements to intersections.	172	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Highway Department
5	Utilize RPCGB’s safety assistance programs to analyze roadways and intersections that have safety concerns and identify potential funding sources for improvements.	173	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Highway Department, and RPCGB
6	Utilize the RPCGB’s Advanced Planning, Programming and Logical Engineering (APPLE) program to help develop and advance transportation projects.	173	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Highway Department, and RPCGB
Railroad Crossing Improvements				
7	Pursue funding to eliminate highway-rail grade crossings throughout the County.	174	Long Term	County Manager, County Commission, and Highway Department
8	Work with ALDOT and railroad companies to routinely inspect railroad crossings for needed improvements to active and passive warning devices.	176	Ongoing	County Commission, Highway Department, ALDOT, FRA, and railroad operators
Bicycle Facilities & Infrastructure				
9	Work with local municipalities and ALDOT to assess the suitability of incorporating context-sensitive bicycle facilities along strategic corridors.	177	Long Term	Highway Department, ALDOT, and municipalities

Chapter 7 – Transportation & Infrastructure				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Transportation Infrastructure Maintenance				
10	Develop a countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.	179	Short Term	County Manager, County Commission, Department of Development Services, and Highway Department
11	Continue to evaluate and update the County’s Asset Management Program to maintain the County-owned transportation infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective manner.	179	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Highway Department
Transportation Demand Management				
12	Shelby County should partner with RPCGB to promote the CommuteSmart program for Shelby County commuters.	181	Ongoing	Highway Department and RPCGB
13	Promote the use of the park-and-ride lot at the Shelby County Airport for commuters.	181	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and Highway Department
Public Transportation				
14	Partner with regional entities to provide a range of public transportation services.	182	Long Term	County Manager, County Commission, Highway Department, regional transportation providers, RPCGB
Electric Vehicles				
15	Evaluate priority locations for the installation of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations.	184	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
16	Apply for state and federal grant programs to install EV charging infrastructure projects.	185	Ongoing	County Manager, Highway Department, and Department of Development Services
17	Create partnerships to attract private investments in electric vehicle charging infrastructure projects.	185	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Highway Department, Drive Electric Alabama, and utility providers

Chapter 8 – Parks, Recreation & Trails				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Park Maintenance and Improvements				
1	Continue to allocate annual funding for the Shelby County Park and Recreation Grant Program administered by the Shelby County Department of Development Services.	189	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Department of Development Services
2	Continue to dedicate adequate funding for maintenance and capital improvements to public parks to meet evolving needs.	190	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Department of Facilities and General Services
3	Continue to utilize the County’s existing parks maintenance request system to address reactive and preventative maintenance items needed at parks.	190	Ongoing	Department of Facilities and General Services
4	Raise awareness among the public to report any feedback regarding needed maintenance improvements, about parks or on trails, by sending an email to eyes@shelbyal.com .	190	Ongoing	Department of Facilities and General Services
5	Continue to partner with other municipalities and public entities to jointly invest in outdoor recreation facilities that provide access to the public and enhance tourism.	191	Ongoing	Department of Facilities and General Services, municipalities, local schools, local businesses, and local nonprofits
6	Improve accommodations at parks for senior adults.	191	Long Term	County Manager, County Commission, and Department of Facilities and General Services
7	Improve accommodations for disabled individuals at parks and recreational facilities.	192	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Department of Facilities and General Services
8	Continue to implement a consistent branding package for county-owned parks and trailheads.	193	Ongoing	Tourism and Events staff and Department of Facilities and General Services
9	Work with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the Shelby County Highway Department to add directional signage off I-65 and US-280 to direct visitors to Double Oak Mountain Park.	194	Short Term	Highway Department and Tourism and Events staff

Chapter 8 – Parks, Recreation & Trails				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Park Maintenance and Improvements				
10	Ensure that Lay Lake is preserved and protected from the impacts of future development.	194	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
11	Continue to maintain a partnership with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources regarding improvements needed to Oak Mountain State Park.	194	Ongoing	Department of Facilities and General Services and Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Expansion of Parks and Recreation Facilities				
12	Partner with municipalities to identify locations to build future parks in currently underserved residential areas.	195	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and municipalities
13	Continue to facilitate joint efforts between the Shelby County Department of Facilities and General Services and the Shelby County School System.	196	Ongoing	Department of Facilities and General Services and Shelby County School System
14	Work with local municipalities to acquire publicly owned land adjacent to the Cahaba River.	196	Long Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
15	Partner with the Cahaba Blueway Initiative and local municipalities to develop new Cahaba Blueway access points along the Cahaba River.	196	Ongoing	Department of Development Services, Department of Facilities and General Services, Cahaba Blueway Initiative, and municipalities
16	Work with Alabama Power to dedicate a site at Lake Purdy for a public park.	197	Long Term	Department of Development Services, Department of Facilities and General Services, and Alabama Power
17	Increase the utilization of existing sports venues.	197	Ongoing	Department of Facilities and General Services and Tourism and Events staff

Chapter 8 – Parks, Recreation & Trails				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Trails				
18	Develop a Shelby County Trails Master Plan to establish a trail network vision and identify missing linkages.	197	Short Term	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Department of Facilities and General Services
19	Continue to build County-owned trails in high growth areas.	198	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Department of Facilities and General Services
20	Work with local municipalities and other entities to build trails that connect to the countywide trail system.	198	Long Term	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, Department of Facilities and General Services, and municipalities
21	Incorporate universal design to the greatest extent possible when developing future trails.	199	Ongoing	Department of Facilities and General Services
22	Work to build a trail system that is flexible for users at varying levels of comfort.	199	Ongoing	Department of Facilities and General Services
23	Target land acquisitions for constructing new trails that connect County-owned properties to other publicly owned properties or land trust properties.	199	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Department of Facilities and General Services
24	Promote the use of conservation easements and recreation easements to enhance the countywide trail system.	199	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Department of Facilities and General Services

Chapter 8 – Parks, Recreation & Trails				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Trails				
25	Target the acquisition of undevelopable or extremely hard to develop properties for the construction of new trails.	200	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Department of Facilities and General Services
26	Explore the feasibility of connecting the Dunnavant Valley Community Greenway to the new Double Oak Park trail system.	200	Long Term	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Department of Facilities and General Services
27	Modify the Shelby County Subdivision Regulations to require public access easements in new subdivisions for the construction of sidewalks and/or multiuse trails to enhance pedestrian and nonvehicular connectivity.	200	Short Term	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
28	Encourage local municipalities to modify their subdivision regulations to require public access easements in new subdivisions for the construction of sidewalks and/or multi-use trails to enhance pedestrian and non-vehicular connectivity.	200	Short Term	Department of Development Services and municipalities

Chapter 9 – Livability & Public Services				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Enhancements to Public Services and Facilities				
1	Increase the communications capacity of the County government and its boards and commissions by regularly updating the County’s website.	205	Ongoing	County Manager and County Commission
2	Explore additional opportunities for the co-location of existing and planned public facilities.	205	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Department of Facilities and General Services
3	Continue making enhancements to the county library system and collaborate with other library systems to share resources and services.	206	Ongoing	Harrison Regional Library
4	Promote and expand the number of farmers markets across the County to ensure residents have access to local goods and fresh produce.	206	Ongoing	Tourism and Events staff
5	Educate residents on the services provided by Shelby County’s Animal Control Division.	207	Ongoing	Environmental Services Department
6	Work with local municipalities and internet service providers to improve broadband availability and ensure that high-speed internet is accessible throughout the County.	207	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Community Services Department
7	Allocate money in the County budget for the Shelby County Planning Commission to attend training courses and workshops on zoning and land use planning related topics.	208	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Planning Commission
8	Pursue qualification as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement county.	208	Short Term	County Manager, County Commission and Community Services Department
9	Explore the possibility of increasing the County’s sales tax rate to increase revenue for public services and facilities improvements.	209	Short Term	County Manager and County Commission

Chapter 9 – Livability & Public Services				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Code Enforcement				
10	Continue to adopt up-to-date versions of the technical “family” of codes developed by the International Code Council.	210	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
11	Promote adaptive reuse of buildings by encouraging developers to utilize the International Existing Building Code.	211	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
12	Continue to enforce the leash law.	211	Ongoing	Environmental Services Department and Sheriff's Office
Addressing the Needs of Senior Adults				
13	Continue to support the 14 senior centers within Shelby County.	212	Ongoing	Community Services Department
14	Co-locate new senior center facilities with parks and green space.	212	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, Community Services Department, and Department of Facilities and General Services
15	Explore ways to assist homeowners and landlords to maintain and update their housing stock to facilitate aging in place.	212	Ongoing	Department of Development Services, Community Services Department, and local nonprofits
16	Increase awareness of the Medicaid Waiver Program administered by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham as a continuum of affordable care that allows elderly and disabled individuals who are at risk of nursing home placement to remain in their homes for as long as possible.	213	Ongoing	County Manager and County Commission
17	Improve accommodations at parks for senior adults.	213	Long Term	County Manager, County Commission, and Department of Facilities and General Services
18	Encourage innovative ways to improve and expand public transportation services and demand-response service.	213	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Highway Department, regional transportation providers, and RPCGB

Chapter 9 – Livability & Public Services				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Public Safety				
19	Ensure that all Shelby County public safety personnel have sufficient resources and equipment to respond to emergencies effectively.	216	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Sheriff's Office
20	Plan for the expansion of public safety services and facilities to coincide with projected population growth and identified needs.	216	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Sheriff's Office, and Department of Development Services
21	Support additional emergency response personnel and vehicles in parts of the county that have higher response times.	217	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Sheriff's Office
22	Support Emergency Medical Transport Service (EMTS), volunteer first responders, and mutual aid providers in Shelby County.	217	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Sheriff's Office
Resiliency				
23	Support the Emergency Management Agency in the implementation of the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazards Mitigation Plan.	218	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Emergency Management Agency
24	Continue to implement the Shelby County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, keep it up to date, and continually address hazards determined to be of high and moderate risk through the detailed risk assessment.	218	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Emergency Management Agency
25	Continue to implement the County's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance and revise it as necessary.	219	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Emergency Management Agency
26	Collaborate with local municipalities to make public facilities capable of serving as cooling centers.	219	Ongoing	Emergency Management Agency and municipalities
27	Continue to implement the County's MS4 permit requirements.	220	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and Environmental Services Department

Chapter 9 – Livability & Public Services				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Resiliency				
28	Continue to improve stormwater management throughout the County by encouraging Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for stormwater mitigation sites wherever practicable.	223	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
29	Create a system of Green Streets.	223	Long Term	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Highway Department
Intergovernmental Coordination				
30	Create coordination mechanisms with municipalities, adjacent counties, and service providers regarding proposed development proposals and planning issues with cross-jurisdictional impacts.	230	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission and municipalities
31	Work with the incorporated municipalities to develop orderly annexation agreements.	230	Ongoing	Department of Development Services, municipalities, and infrastructure providers
32	Establish forums for regular meetings between the County and municipalities to facilitate communication and understanding among jurisdictions.	230	Short Term	County Manager, County Commission, and municipalities
33	Coordinate with the Shelby County School District in order to provide consistency between Shelby County’s Comprehensive Plan and public school siting decisions and programs.	231	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Shelby County School System
34	Coordinate with the Shelby County School District to permit the shared-use and co-location of school sites and County facilities with similar facility needs.	231	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Department of Facilities and General Services, and Shelby County School System

Chapter 9 – Livability & Public Services				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Intergovernmental Coordination				
35	Prior to purchasing new facilities or equipment, examine the possibilities of trading, renting, sharing or contracting with neighboring jurisdictions.	231	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Department of Facilities and General Services
36	Support efforts of local municipalities to find additional state and federal funding for infrastructure improvements.	232	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Community Services Department
37	Participate in planning efforts undertaken by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) as they work on projects with Shelby County municipalities or projects in neighboring counties that have potential impacts on Shelby County or any municipalities therein.	232	Ongoing	County Manager and County Commission
38	Promote the Shelby County Department of Development Services as a resource to local municipalities and public entities.	232	Ongoing	County Manager and County Commission
39	Work with conservation groups, municipalities, historic preservation organizations, developers, and others to preserve important historic properties.	232	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and Tourism and Events staff

Chapter 10 – Economic Development				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Infrastructure Needs for Economic Development				
1	Continue to fund and support the 58 INC economic development team.	237	Ongoing	County Manager and County Commission
2	Utilize the public realm as an economic development asset.	237	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
3	Work with local municipalities and internet service providers to improve broadband availability and ensure that high-speed internet is accessible throughout the County.	238	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, and Community Services Department
4	Develop a countywide wayfinding signage system.	238	Short Term	Tourism and Events staff
5	Improve streetscaping along county roadways and consider developing a Streetscape Improvement Plan.	239	Long Term	Department of Development Services and Highway Department
6	Allocate funding to develop a Sustainability Plan.	240	Short Term	County Manager and County Commission
7	Explore the creation of forming additional Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts and public/private partnerships that would help facilitate capital improvements to promote economic development, tourism, recreation, historic preservation and livability throughout the County.	240	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, 58 INC, and Tourism and Events staff
8	Collaborate with businesses, municipalities, the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, local Main Street programs, and other entities to revitalize and downtowns across the County.	241	Ongoing	58 INC, Chamber of Commerce, municipalities, Main Street programs, and local nonprofits
9	Recruit additional childcare services to the County.	242	Ongoing	58 INC
10	Support the development of electric vehicle stations and alternative fuel sources.	242	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
11	Identify locations for solar farms and other alternative energy generators.	243	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
12	Support a variety of financing tools for funding new developments and redevelopment.	243	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services

Chapter 10 – Economic Development				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Tourism				
13	Promote www.DiscoverShelby.com as a one-stop shop for visitors to Shelby County.	244	Ongoing	Tourism and Events staff
14	Increase the promotion of Shelby County as an outdoor recreation and agritourism destination.	244	Ongoing	Tourism and Events staff
15	Develop and expand trail systems important for outdoor recreation or nonvehicular transportation.	245	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and Department of Facilities and General Services
16	Continue to support the use of lodging tax to fund 58 INC, new parks and recreational amenities, tourism, and additional events throughout the County.	245	Ongoing	County Manager and County Commission
17	Seek to secure a variety of grant opportunities to help fund tourism-related projects.	245	Ongoing	Tourism and Events staff
18	Improve coordination between the Shelby County Facilities and General Services Department and the Shelby County Tourism and Events staff and allocate funding to ensure that event venues have the items and equipment needed to recruit specific events to the County.	247	Ongoing	Department of Development Services and Tourism and Events staff
19	Continue to provide financial support for one event in each local municipality per year and continue to provide indirect support for other local events.	247	Ongoing	Tourism and Events staff
20	Encourage new festivals and events that highlight the diverse cultural backgrounds of Shelby County residents and work with Discover Shelby, arts organizations, and community groups to organize publicly sponsored arts and cultural events and festivals.	249	Ongoing	Tourism and Events staff and Shelby County Arts Council
21	Increase the awareness, importance, marketability, and accessibility of Shelby County historic resources for all visitors and residents.	248	Ongoing	Tourism and Events staff and Historical Society

Chapter 10 – Economic Development				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Corporate Retention and Attraction				
22	Partner with economic development organizations and communities to facilitate new capital investments and job creation through a cluster-based recruitment and retention strategy.	248	Ongoing	58 INC, Chamber of Commerce, and municipalities
23	Create investment-friendly policies, partnerships, and real estate plans that support preparation of sites and business parks for high-tech manufacturing.	249	Ongoing	County Manager, County Commission, Department of Development Services, and 58 INC
24	Continue to explore potential sites for employment and innovation centers.	249	Ongoing	58 INC, Planning Commission, and Department of Development Services
25	Work with municipalities, developers, and businesses on modernizing and adapting older office and business parks in the county through zoning changes, infrastructure improvements, marketing, and private sector investment.	250	Ongoing	58 INC, Planning Commission, and Department of Development Services
26	Modify the Institutional and Office Districts [O-I and O-I (2)] in the Zoning Ordinance to allow for advanced manufacturing and research and development uses.	250	Short Term	Planning Commission, Department of Development Services, and 58 INC
Retail Attraction				
27	Partner with local municipalities to create catalytic projects that can increase sales and lodging revenue.	252	Ongoing	58 INC and municipalities
28	Direct new commercial development to locate near existing recreational assets such as Oak Mountain State Park, Double Oak Park, Cahaba River Park and trailheads.	252	Ongoing	Planning Commission and Department of Development Services
29	Actively promote and support investment opportunities in the County’s designated Opportunity Zone.	252	Ongoing	58 INC and Opportunity Alabama
30	Recruit and attract additional commercial and retail development throughout Shelby County to meet the desires of residents while increasing revenue.	253	Ongoing	58 INC

Chapter 10 – Economic Development				
#	Action	Page	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Talent Development				
31	In partnership with secondary and postsecondary providers, enhance, encourage and expose career pathways in targeted sectors.	253	Ongoing	Shelby County School District, Jefferson State Community College, local schools, and Chamber of Commerce
32	Support existing industries through business contact visits and account management to identify employer issues.	254	Ongoing	58 INC and Chamber of Commerce
33	Continue to support and fund the Leadership Shelby County and Youth Leadership Shelby County annual programs.	254	Ongoing	County Manager and County Commission
34	Continue to engage, support and collaborate with workforce development providers such as the State of Alabama’s “Central Six – Region 4 Workforce Development Council.”	254	Ongoing	58 INC and Central Six
35	Continue to support and help implement the annual goals set by the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce’s seven work groups.	255	Ongoing	58 INC and Tourism and Events staff
36	Reinvest in and Promote Shelby County’s Career Technical Education Center to local high school students.	255	Ongoing	Shelby County School District
37	Support the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce’s workforce initiatives.	256	Short Term	Chamber of Commerce and Shelby County School District
Entrepreneur Development				
38	Support successful entrepreneurship resource providers in Shelby County.	256	Ongoing	58 INC and local entrepreneurship resource providers
39	Recruit and establish high-impact cluster-specific entrepreneur incubators and accelerators.	258	Ongoing	58 INC
40	Encourage the development of coworking spaces across the County.	258	Ongoing	58 INC
41	Explore the feasibility of supporting a job training center or business incubator.	258	Ongoing	58 INC

