

Alabaster Forward

City of Alabaster
Comprehensive Plan Update



Adopted March 14, 2016

Alabaster

Alabaster Forward: Comprehensive Plan Adopted March 14, 2016

“We are Alabaster, Shelby County’s premier community for families and businesses, striving for an even higher quality of life and a bright future.”

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The contents of the Comprehensive Plan are designed to serve as a guide in the public and private development of land and as such are not binding upon the City of Alabaster when making specific land use decisions and public investments.



Acknowledgments

Marty Handlon, Mayor
George Henry, City Manager

Alabaster City Council

Sophie Martin, Ward 1
Bob Hicks, Ward 2
Stacy Rakestraw, Ward 3
Rick Walters, Ward 4
Russell Bedsole, Ward 5
Scott Brakefield, Ward 6
Tommy Ryals, Ward 7

Alabaster Forward Advisory Committee

Mike Allen
Marsha Bates
Rayford Coleman
Jim Golden
Barbara Gore
Marty Handlon, Mayor
George Henry, City Manager
Keri Johnson
Bolaji Kukoyi
Kerri Pate
Dennis Torrealba
Rick Walters, Council Member

Planning and Zoning Commission

Mike Allen
Jeff Anthony
George Henry, City Manager
Kerri Pate
Calvin Rumph
Tommy Ryals, Council Member
Robert Shinpaugh, Chairman
Mike Whitaker
Gary Wright

Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

Charles Ball, AICP, Executive Director
Scott Tillman, Director of Planning and Operations
Darrell Howard, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning and Co-Project Manager
Lindsay S. Puckett, AICP, Co-Project Manager
Brett Isom, GIS Manager
Mikhail Alert, Senior Planner I
Maria Hines, Community Planner
Hunter Garrison, Public Involvement Planner
Anthony Alston, Urban Planner

See It Productions, LLC

Stasi Bara, Film Maker

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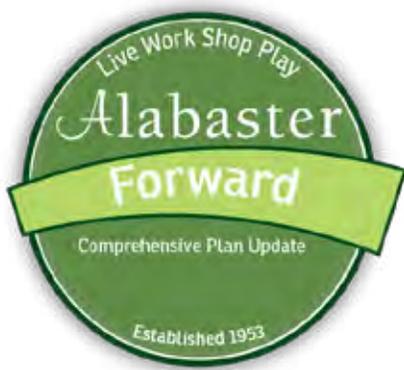
Introduction

Background

The *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* is an update of the Alabaster Comprehensive Plan 2030: A City for Families! Planning for the Future!, which was adopted in 2005.

In June 2014, the City of Alabaster approached the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) in regards to updating its 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The City of Alabaster has continued to grow in both population and jobs. This growth has placed significant pressure on the city's infrastructure and services. The RPCGB subsequently prepared a proposal for the City of Alabaster to update the Comprehensive Plan.

Funding for the Comprehensive Plan was provided via the RPCGB's planning assistance program, Building Communities. Under the Building Communities Program, the RPCGB provides funding at 80% of the plan's total cost; the City of Alabaster provided funding in the amount of 20% of the plan's total cost. The proposal was subsequently accepted by the City of Alabaster, and the RPCGB began work on *Alabaster Forward* in October 2014.



Purpose of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan update for the City of Alabaster, Alabama, is intended to define the city's overall vision for growth and (re)development. The Comprehensive Plan is used as a guide for decision-making about the natural and built environment. The plan is used in guiding decisions regarding land use, development, growth management and capital improvements. It provides a framework for guiding public and private decisions that will affect new development as well as reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and business areas. A Comprehensive Plan is based on the residents' vision of how they want their city to grow in the future— it is a long-term vision.

Alabaster Forward considers a 25-year planning horizon, and looks ahead to the year 2040. Many changes happen over a 25 year time frame. Cities that look far into the future and consider what they want things to be long-term are much more likely to achieve their goals in a fiscally responsible manner. With future growth on the horizon, the elected leadership, business community, and residents ask themselves questions like:

- How can we attract more jobs to Alabaster to boost the city's economy?
- What range of housing types and lifestyle options will be available to accommodate people at various stages in their lives?
- What transportation options will be available from your home and work place?
- Can new development occur to provide opportunities for more shopping, outdoor recreation, restaurants, entertainment venues and places for social interaction?
- How can we address rising household and transportation costs created by long commutes and lack of transportation options, leaving many who live and work in the city vulnerable to spikes in fuel cost?

Overall, this *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* is intended to address:

- Population growth and demographic changes;

- Economic growth;
 - Retail / commercial development
 - Industrial development
 - Healthcare
 - Residential development
- Infrastructure and community services
- Quality of life preferences

Alabaster Forward is meant to be a living document that focuses on the city's physical development, articulating the city's vision and expectations for growth. The plan keeps an eye on the long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability of Alabaster while focusing on near-term planning horizons. Without losing sight of this objective for near-term success, it is important to consider long-term changes in the economy, changes in technology, and the preservation of existing natural, historic, and cultural resources. The *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* document also provides the City of Alabaster with the flexibility to respond to changes in the urban environment.

Planning History

This plan is the sixth Comprehensive Plan prepared for the City of Alabaster. During the 1970s, Alabaster went through its first comprehensive planning process with the assistance of the Alabama Development Office in 1971, which was followed by a second plan prepared by the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) in 1978. No planning was done in Alabaster during the 1980's. Then, during the 1990's, Alabaster underwent two more comprehensive planning processes with the assistance of the BRPC. A chronological list of previous planning projects undertaken by Alabaster is listed below:

- 1971: Comprehensive Plan for Alabaster – Alabama Development Office
- 1978: Comprehensive Plan for Alabaster – Birmingham Regional Planning Commission
- 1990: Reshaping Alabaster: Planning for the Future – BRPC
- 1995: Alabaster Comprehensive Plan – BRPC
- 2005: Alabaster Comprehensive Plan: A City for Families! Planning for the Future!- RPCGB

Legal Requirements

Planning in the State of Alabama is not compulsory, and there is no specific requirement on the frequency of comprehensive plan updates. However it is strongly recommended that the City of Alabaster's Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council, regularly review and update (as frequently as every five years) the Comprehensive Plan. This is especially true if the city is experiencing rapid population and/or employment growth, major changes such as an annexation of land or a major land development decision has occurred, or the completion of another study that impacts the plan. Frequent review and updates also will help safeguard the city from legal challenges and enable them to be proactive in steering the city towards achieving its vision and goals, instead of being reactive to issues and challenges that arise because of the lack of adequate planning.

The Alabama Legislature provides guidance for municipalities that choose to exercise their ability to plan for their city's growth and development. The Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 11-52-8 and Section 11-52-9 of the Code of Alabama directs planning commissions "to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the commission's judgment, bear relation to the planning of such municipality." Section 11-52-8 goes further to state "Such plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts and descriptive matter shall show the commission's recommendations for the development of said territory..." The procedure for adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is established in Section 11-52-10 of the Code of Alabama.

Relationship of the Comprehensive Plan to the Zoning Ordinance

The Comprehensive Plan guides land use decisions and becomes the foundation of zoning and subdivision choices that are made by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* should not be confused with the City of Alabaster Zoning Ordinance. Zoning is a legal mechanism enacted by the city, whereby land is classified according to specific uses. Where the comprehensive plan is a guide for future growth and development, zoning is the tool utilized by the city to influence and direct development so that it reflects the intensity 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 decisions of the Planning Commission and the City Council as they apply the Zoning Ordinance and make decisions about changes to zoning on individual properties. Changing the Comprehensive Plan for a parcel of land requires a Comprehensive Plan amendment, and changing the zoning for that parcel requires a rezoning application.

Plan Organization

The *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* is designed to be user friendly and easy to follow. The plan document contains five main chapters and six technical appendices. A description of each chapter and appendix in the plan is outlined in **Table 1.2**.

Table 1.1: *Comprehensive Plan vs. Zoning Ordinance*

Comprehensive Plan	Zoning Ordinance
Provides general <i>policies</i> , a guide.	Provides specific <i>regulations</i> , the law.
Describes what should happen in the long-term – recommended land use for the next 20 years, not necessarily the recommended use for today.	Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions.
Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups.	Deals only with development-related issues under control.
Flexible to respond to changing conditions.	Predictable, fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change.
General Land Use Categories (e.g., residential, commercial)	Zoning Districts (e.g., R1 Residential, B-1 Office District)
General Land Use Locations	Parcel specific zoning designations
Base document, declaration of goals	Implementation of goals/plans

Table 1.2: Plan Organization

Description	
1 Introduction	<p>This chapter includes the purpose of the plan, planning history in Alabaster, the legal foundation for planning in Alabama, related planning efforts, and explains the relationship of the comprehensive plan to the zoning ordinance.</p> <p><i>Look at this chapter in order to better understand the role of the Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan in the City's day-to-day operations.</i></p>
2 Vision and Goals	<p>This chapter includes a high level overview of the public involvement process, along with the overall vision statement and Comprehensive Plan goals.</p> <p><i>Look in this chapter to learn about the community's overall vision for the future</i></p>
3 Future Land Use Plan	<p>This chapter presents the Future Land Use Map, which will guide the City's future zoning and land use decisions. A description of the future land use categories, along with other elements such as gateways, neighborhood commercial target areas and priority redevelopment areas is also provided.</p> <p><i>Look at this chapter to better understand the City's expectation for its physical growth and its desires for the use of land, particularly as it relates to modifications to the zoning ordinance.</i></p>
4 Policies and Actions	<p>This chapter details the policies to address the Plan's Vision and Goals, and the recommended actions, or measures that need to be undertaken by the City and its partners to implement the policies.</p> <p><i>Look at this chapter for an understanding of the seven major elements of the plan: land use, housing, community services and infrastructure, civic and cultural amenities, transportation, economic development and governance.</i></p>
5 Implementation	<p>This chapter includes the detailed implementation matrix for the Plan's policies and actions, and describes potential financing and investment tools and potential funding sources.</p> <p><i>Look at this chapter to see the implementation matrix that includes: lead responsibility, supporting responsibility, estimated timeframe for implementation.</i></p>
A Appendix A. Existing Conditions	<p>The document is an in-depth assessment of where Alabaster is today and cover a range of topics: a description of the current city departments, boards and commissions, a demographic summary, existing land use, zoning and development trends, natural, cultural and historic resources, the transportation system, utilities and infrastructure and community facilities and services. Included is a list of accomplishments since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.</p>

Description	
B	Appendix B. Market Analysis
C	Appendix C. Public Involvement Summary
D	Appendix D. City of Alabaster Transportation Plan
E	Appendix E. Design Recommendations for Siluria Mill and the Medical Mile Corridor
F	Appendix F. Corridors Overlay District

The document provides an overview of the current and emerging employment and demographic trends associated with Alabaster’s retail, industrial, office and housing markets. Potential local economic development opportunity sites are identified to help position Alabaster in the various markets.

A detailed documentation of the *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan’s* public involvement process. The range outreach strategies are detailed (website, surveys, email, social media, events, advisory committee meetings, print media and media coverage), along with the participation rates and information gathered through the outreach activities.

The Transportation Plan takes a comprehensive look at the city’s multi-modal transportation network and recommended improvements. The transportation plan takes into account the long-term land use plan for Alabaster, and the community’s mobility priorities. Prior to this plan, the City of Alabaster did not have a citywide transportation plan to guide policy decisions. An overview of the existing transportation conditions is provided in Appendix A Existing Conditions.

The design recommendations for Siluria Mill and the U.S. 31 Medical Mile Corridor include recommendations related to land uses and urban design characteristics. Potential redevelopment concepts have been created. These reflect the City of Alabaster’s targeted effort to address blight and economic development through place-making strategies. The concepts identify potential civic land uses and buildings, greenspaces, parks, and streetscape improvements.

The proposed Corridors Overlay District is a draft overlay district written to establish minimum development standards and regulations for properties abutting State Route 119 and along the U.S. 31 Medical Mile in Alabaster. They vary from the base zoning requirements regarding building development, building design and orientation, land uses, site development, landscaping, buffering and screening, access, parking and signage.

The City of Alabaster Zoning Ordinance would have to be modified to include the adoption of the proposed Corridors Overlay District. All provisions described would be regulatory in nature and have the same force and effect as, but are variations from, the standards set forth for the base zone districts in the zoning ordinance of the City of Alabaster Code of Ordinances.

Relationship to Adjacent Municipal Plans

The adjacent municipalities along Alabaster’s city limits include Shelby County, Calera, Helena, Montevallo and Pelham (See [Figure 1.1](#)). While each municipality is moving in a slightly different direction based on its own conditions, all have adjacent land use characteristics that fit one of three types: commercial redevelopment corridor, suburban residential, and light industrial.

It is essential that the City of Alabaster coordinate with its adjacent neighbors, especially as new growth and redevelopment occurs in order to mitigate potential impacts to the City, and to leverage potential benefits.

Shelby County Comprehensive Plan.

The *Shelby County Comprehensive Plan: A Path to the Future*, was adopted by the Shelby County Planning Commission on September 30, 2004 and ratified by the Shelby County Commission on October 25th of the same year. The County’s Comprehensive Plan lays out a vision for the orderly growth, development, and redevelopment of the county through place-making principles. It is organized around a Strategic Development Concept based on a clearly defined framework of identifiable places.

The Strategic Development Concepts framework includes the following four location types:

1. Community cores
2. Community focus areas
3. Transition areas
4. Rural landscapes

The Shelby County Comprehensive Plan envisions a “countywide land use pattern focused on the creation and expansion of places as its preferred development form for accommodating and managing future growth”. The plan states that “New growth should be targeted to designated development areas... so that growth takes place in a controlled manner.” In short, the Shelby County Comprehensive Plan encourages growth in existing

communities. The City of Alabaster is one of these communities.

Each of the four location types described in the Shelby County Comprehensive Plan’s Strategic Development Concept, exists within the City of Alabaster. The *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* addresses these, and provides guidance for the growth, development and redevelopment of each of the different location types. The City’s Future Land Use Plan is presented in Chapter 3 of this document. Chapter 3 also provides additional discussion about these areas existing and desired development character to include the elements needed to help them become unique places.

Montevallo Comprehensive Plan. *The Montevallo Comprehensive Plan: College Culture, Country Charm*, was adopted by the Montevallo Planning Commission in October 2008. The City’s comprehensive plan outlines how the city intends to develop, preserve its rural character, and maintain the vibrant cultural resources through placemaking principles. The plan is organized by identifiable objectives that form an action plan to preserve the City’s rural character.

Six key objectives form the framework for Montevallo’s Future Land Use Plan and include:

1. Absorb growth in city centers
2. Conservation and preservation
3. Preserve historical context
4. Placemaking in centers
5. Downtown as the heart of the community
6. Transportation and connectivity

The City’s plan recommends new growth be concentrated in locations already served by existing infrastructure, such as downtown, and in specific pedestrian-oriented centers which promote community. Moreover, the plan discourages conventional suburban development, development greater than rural scale outside of a neighborhood center, and encourages adequate transitional development where growth abuts the rural landscape.

Montevallo has several communities that abut its boarder, and the City of Alabaster is one of them. The City's Future Land Use Plan depicts the Alabaster border as a space that encourages the conservation of the existing woodland and rural landscapes; as well as industrial land uses to the northwest of CR 17.

Helena Comprehensive Plan.

Creating Connections and Special Places: Helena Comprehensive Plan 2025, was adopted by the Helena Planning and Zoning Board on October 23, 2003. Helena's Comprehensive Plan aims to "preserve the small town character of Helena by encouraging connectivity and the creation of special places that will promote economic vitality, new business opportunities, attractive neighborhoods, and environmental stewardship". The plan is organized by future land uses, with growth primarily occurring with existing developing trends. The City of Alabaster neighbors Helena on the most southern edge of the city. Helena's Future Land Use Plan calls for a continuation of residential land uses to boarder Alabaster, with a mixed-use node at the intersection of CR 58 and CR 95 (9th Street NW). In addition to residential land uses, agriculture land uses also remain along CR 17.

Pelham Comprehensive Plan.

Continuing the Progress: Pelham Comprehensive Plan 2025, was adopted by the Pelham Planning Commission on November 14, 2002, and adopted with revisions by the Pelham City Council March 17, 2003. Pelham's Comprehensive Plan updated the 1977 Comprehensive Plan and aims to serve as a guide for the orderly and efficient growth of the City of Pelham with the theme being "continuing the progress" to reflect the city's desire to expand upon accomplishments made in the past 25 years. The vision statement of the plan is "Pelham recognizes the value of its people and is committed to being a progressive community that residents are proud to call home."

The five key desires of the community are listed as:

1. Safe and attractive neighborhoods
2. Quality educational opportunities
3. Vibrant economic opportunities
4. Diverse cultural and recreational opportunities

5. Improved quality of life

The City of Alabaster neighbors Pelham on the most northern edge of the city, primarily on the SR 119/ U.S. 31 Corridor. Pelham's future land use plan calls for heavy commercial land use to continue along the SR 119/ U.S. 31 corridor. Alabaster also has heavy commercial land use along this corridor and should remain aware of new development and commercial use occurring on this corridor in Pelham.

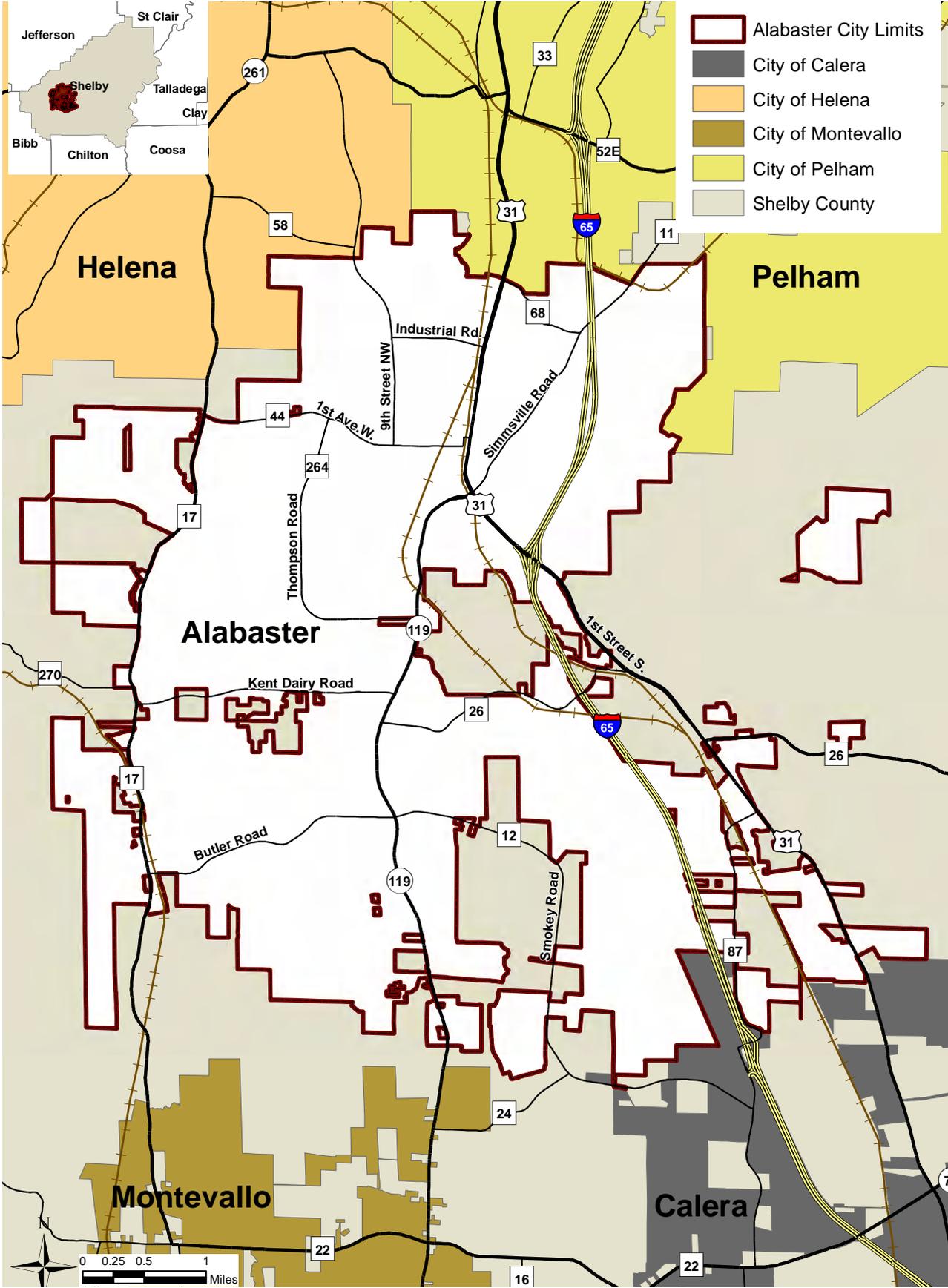
Under Recreational Land Use the plan recommends a greenway multi-use trail system along its portion of Buck Creek which could be integrated into Alabaster's Buck Creek trail network.

Calera Comprehensive Plan.

Calera, Alabama Comprehensive Plan 2009, was adopted by the City of Calera Planning Commission on August 9, 2009. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to guide development in order to balance growth with the conservation of important natural resources. It is intended that the activity centers identified in the plan will concentrate a diversity of functions at appropriate locations, structured by a citywide open space network and accessibility system. It is also intended that development be located, planned and designed in such a way as to be compatible with this city wide organizational system. Development will be supported and encouraged by the city in order to provide opportunities for creativity, efficiency, stability, image and diversity.

Calera's Comprehensive Plan calls for continued industrial and industrial park oriented land used along its northern border with Alabaster. This is consistent with Alabaster's industrial use near the airport and Limestone Park on its southeastern border.

Figure 1.1: Adjacent Communities Map



Growth Trends

The City of Alabaster is approximately 25 square miles. It is the largest city in Shelby County and the fourth largest city in the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The City accounts for 3% of all residents living within the 7-county MSA. Of the region's cities and towns, Alabaster had the third highest population increase since 2010 behind the cities of Hoover and Calera. Between 1990 and 2014, the City added nearly 4,000 acres of land to its corporate limits through annexations, a 33% increase in the territorial jurisdiction.

With an estimated residential population of 31,566 and 11,067 households in 2014, there are approximately 1,263 persons per square mile (1.97 per acre). The City of Alabaster has a growing population, adding approximately 8,950 people (a 40% increase) between 2000 and 2014. The City's population is expected to reach almost 49,739 people by the year 2040 (see [Table 1.3](#)). In 2014 it is estimated that the total housing inventory is 11,748 units. Approximately 3,154 new housing units, representing 22% of the City's entire housing stock, have been constructed since 2000. The 2014 median home property valuations are estimated at \$176,761. At the current rate of growth, the number of housing units in the City of Alabaster is expected to reach almost 19,500 units by the year 2040 (see [Table 1.3](#)).

This growth means more demand will be placed on the City's natural and built systems. For example, increased patterns of suburbanization means longer commute patterns, more demand placed on transportation systems and increased transportation cost. Additional demands will also be placed on the City's water and energy supplies, health care services, available land, etc. The City is also experiencing a shift in demographics. The City of Alabaster is getting steadily older and becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. This shift can have an impact on the choices residents make in the future. For example, an aging population could mean that more individuals will have difficulty driving to access daily needs and an alternative means of mobility may be necessary. Shrinking average household sizes means that people will make different housing choices, including household size and location. The current average household size in the City of Alabaster is 2.82 persons per household.

These growth and demographic trends are likely to influence the City for decades to come. The implications of these trends must be taken into consideration as the City of Alabaster moves forward.

For more growth and development trends, see the Alabaster Existing Conditions Report in Appendix A as well as the Alabaster Market Analysis in Appendix B, which describes in detail the trends in the employment, retail and housing markets.

Table 1.3: City of Alabaster's Population and Housing Projections, 2014 - 2040

Year	Population	Growth Rate from 2014 - 2040	Housing Units	Growth Rate from 2014 - 2040
2014	31,566	--	11,748	--
2020	35,453	12.3%	13,389	14.0%
2025	39,025	23.6%	14,917	27.0%
2030	42,596	34.9%	16,444	40.0%
2035	46,168	46.3%	17,972	53.0%
2040	49,739	57.6%	19,500	66.0%

Source: RPCGB Forecasts

Highlights...

Age and Racial Composition

- The residential population of Alabaster is becoming slightly older. The median age has increased from 35.6 in 2010 to an estimated 36.2 in 2014.
- The racial composition of Alabaster, according to the 2010 estimates, consisted of 79.4% of residents reported as White, 13.5% Black or African American, and 7.1% making up the remaining racial categories (see [Table 2-2](#)). Persons of Hispanic origin made up 9.0% of the population.

Median Household Income

- Median household income in the City of Alabaster has increased from \$58,379 in 2000 to an estimated \$71,905 in 2014, a 23% increase.
- Since 2010, Alabaster residents have experienced a median household income increase of 6.8% while that of Shelby County has increased by 3.4% and the State of Alabama has essentially remained unchanged. This increase is due in part to comparably higher wage jobs, higher rates of economic mobility/ opportunity, and low unemployment among Alabaster's residential labor force.

Employment

- Alabaster currently has an estimated 10,500 jobs. These make up about 1.5% of the region's jobs. Shelby County possesses approximately 16% of the region's jobs, while Alabaster accounts for about 10% of all jobs in the county.
- The residential labor force in the City of Alabaster is approximately 16,280 residents. Of those labor force participants, 94.6% are employed and 5.4% are unemployed. Most of Alabaster's workforce is employed within the industry sectors of Services (49%), Retail Trade (13%), and Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (9%).
- There are approximately 1,867 businesses in the City of Alabaster employing over 10,000 people. The Health Care and Social Assistance industry makes up 21% of the area jobs, followed by Retail Trade (19%) and Manufacturing (11%).
- The largest employers include Shelby Baptist Medical Center (1,100 employment), Walmart Supercenter (350 employment), Shelby Ridge Rehabilitation Center (200 employment), AGC Automotive Americas (200 employment), Cardiovascular Associates (200 employment) and Chandler Health and Rehabilitation Center (200 employment). These five businesses make up 22.5% of Alabaster's total jobs.
- Commuting data indicates that 23% of employed residents of Alabaster also work in Alabaster (primarily in Health Care and Retail Trade) while 77% of employed residents work outside the City. Primary commuting destinations include Birmingham (23%), Hoover (16%), Pelham (12%), and Homewood (6%).
- Average daily travel times for workers living in the City of Alabaster were reported to average 30.4 minutes in 2013 with nearly 4,800 (32%) of employed residents commuting in excess of 40 minutes to work each day.

2

Vision and Goals

Public Involvement Process

Effective outreach provides ample opportunity for citizens to be involved in the plan development process. It educates citizens about the purpose of the planning effort, and the important role they play in developing the plan. As a part of the *Alabaster Forward* plan development, community stakeholders were engaged in several different ways throughout the planning process. They were encouraged to actively voice their opinions about Alabaster's future.

Stakeholders were actively engaged through a variety of means including the establishment of an Advisory Committee; one-on-one interviews/conversations with key stakeholders; a community-wide visioning survey; and a series of public workshops and meetings. A full public involvement summary is included in Appendix C.

Advisory Committee. An Advisory Committee was established for the *Alabaster Forward* plan process. This committee played an integral role in relaying community needs to the plan development team, and communicating details of the planning efforts to the general public. The committee meet four times during the *Alabaster Forward* process. Their meeting schedule is identified below.

- Advisory Committee Meeting 1: February 26, 2015
- Advisory Committee Meeting 2: March 26, 2015
- Advisory Committee Meeting 3: May 18, 2015
- Advisory Committee Meeting 4 with Planning and Zoning Commission: July 15, 2015

Stakeholder Interviews. Throughout the development of plan, the project team conducted informal interviews and discussion with key community stakeholders. This included local elected officials such as the City of Alabaster Mayor and City Councilors, the city manager, appointed commission and board members, City staff, business leaders, and other key organizations such as the Shelby County Planning and Development Services and the City of Alabaster schools. Interviews and discussions helped the plan development team to better understand baseline conditions. They also assisted

with identifying key community initiatives, needs, and priorities. Finally, they helped to inform key discussion points for public involvement activities.

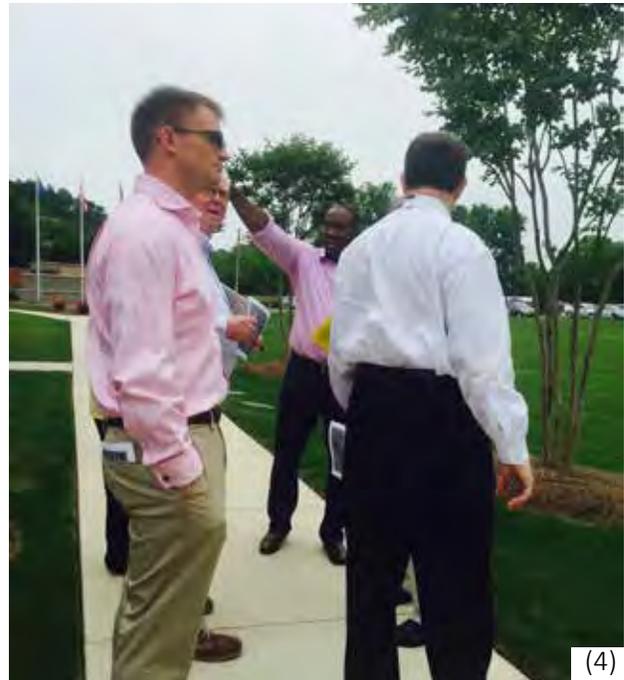
Visioning Survey. This multiple-choice and open-ended question survey was created on SurveyMonkey.com and a direct link to it was hosted on the project website. The survey included 15 questions that were intended to show the *Alabaster Forward* planning team the highest priorities and needs of the citizens of Alabaster. The survey was also promoted via E-blasts, as well as promoted on the RPCGB and the Alabaster City Hall's Facebook pages. Hard copies of the survey were also made available at the Kickoff Open House on March 10, 2015. The survey was open for answers from February 23, 2015 through March 30, 2015.

Open Houses and Public Meetings. Obtaining input from the general public was a key component of the planning process. The following meetings were held with the general public:

A Kickoff Open House was held on March 10, 2015 between 6:30 and 8pm at the City of Alabaster's City Hall. The City of Alabaster's City Hall is located at 1953 Municipal Way in the Siluria Mill Community. The Open House was intended to publicly kickoff and generate momentum for *Alabaster Forward*, allowing participants to get information on the Comprehensive Plan update, to share their thoughts and Ideas on what Alabaster should look like in the future and to learn more ways to get involved. 38 people attended.

RPCGB and the City of Alabaster also held an Open House to present design concepts and receive feedback from the Open Design Studios on April 30, 2015 at 6:30PM at the Alabaster City Hall. Full summaries of each public engagement opportunity can be found in Appendix C.

Project Website. A formal website for the *Alabaster Forward* project was maintained throughout the life of the project. This website, www.alabasterforward.com, served as an information gateway for the plan, and provided easy access to plan documents, public meeting details, and other information.



Above:

(1) Alabaster Forward Community Remarks Page.

(2) During the initial Open House, residents were asked to tell the RPCGB how they imagined Alabaster in the "I Imagine Alabaster" Whiteboard Activity.

(3) Guest at the first Open House share their opinions in the Visioning Survey.

(4) Local Developers and Historians join the RPCGB on a "Walkshop" during the Open Design Studio to understand Siluria Mill's potential development.

(5) Ben Wiesemen, of REV Birmingham, presents on the importance of Placemaking during the Open Design Studios.

(6) The RPCGB works with participants to plan the Buck Creek Trail Extension.

OUR VISION

“We are Alabaster, Shelby County’s premier community for families and businesses, striving for an even higher quality of life and a bright future.”



Our Vision

The input from citizens and analysis from the existing conditions document were used to development the vision for Alabaster. The vision reflects the community’s consensus on values, aspirations and concerns for the future of Alabaster. It establishes a framework for guiding future growth and development in a sustainable manner and ensures compatibility with existing developments, while enhancing the quality of life for residents.

A vision statement provides an overall “big picture” guidance for the entire Comprehensive Plan. All the goals and policies for the different elements of the Comprehensive Plan will support the vision statement. Based on the outcomes of the public involvement process, the vision statement for *Alabaster Forward* was created.

“We are Alabaster, Shelby County’s premier community for families and businesses, striving for an even higher quality of life and a bright future.”

Goals

The Comprehensive Plan's Goals capture the overall community consensus of where the City of Alabaster is headed in the long-term. Overwhelmingly, City leaders, community residents, civic and business leaders, and other community stakeholders expressed that Alabaster is headed in the right direction, and that the City should continue to strive to provide high quality services and a home town feel. While there are some important decisions the City will need to make regarding its long-term development character and sustainability, particularly as it relates to infrastructure and services, there is pervasive agreement that the City should maintain the energy, leadership, and policy direction that has brought it to where it is today.

The *Alabaster Forward* goals are the direct result of the input received during the public involvement process. Input also was received from the *Alabaster Forward* Advisory Committee, elected officials, and key community stakeholders. These goals further articulate the City of Alabaster’s vision for its future, and espouse the guiding ideas that the City should aspire to achieve in its day to day operations and decision making. They are supported by the policies and recommended actions that are detailed in Chapter 4.



Community Goals...



- I. Goal 1. Create a greater sense of community identity and place.** The City of Alabaster contains a number of assets that many communities desire to have. These include great schools, good access to the transportation network, a strong employment base, vibrant neighborhoods, a growing medical district, and a number of strong commercial centers.



- II. Goal 2. Support a thriving business environment.** A strong business climate, in Alabaster, is vital to maintaining and improving the overall quality of life for City residents. Alabaster's leadership should be responsive to the needs of existing businesses, and work hand-in-hand with the local business community to support their growth. The wide variety of development options available in the City – spaces for lease, purchase, and properties for development and redevelopment- should be aggressively marketed. Additionally, the city should work to recruit new businesses and develop programs to encourage local entrepreneurial endeavors, especially those that support the city's vision and development goals.



- III. Goal 3. Improve land use and urban design.** Like many post-war suburban cities whose development and expansion occurred during the height of the automobile era, the City of Alabaster developed in a suburban pattern characterized by sprawling development, strip commercial centers, multiple driveways, and homes whose predominant feature were their driveways and garages. This land development pattern, while desirable for its low density, has proven problematic for the City over time. These problems are mainly experienced through abandonment, underutilization and blight of older areas, low quality development, lack of aesthetic appeal, and traffic congestion. As such, Alabaster can address these issues and control the quality of development through strong land use policies and design regulations.



- IV. Goal 4. Promote a healthy and safe living environment.** As our understanding of urban development has matured, cities are recognizing that the built environment, and the development of quality places plays a crucial role in human health. Safe living environments play a key role in determining upward social and economic mobility, and greatly contribute to the success of a community's residents. To that end, *Alabaster Forward* articulates a vision of a city that is welcoming, and where all citizens thrive regardless of age, income or ethnicity. *Alabaster Forward* also envisions a wide variety of housing, shopping, recreation, and employment options within the city, and envisions a place where residents and visitors are safe and secure as they move about the city, and in their homes.



V. Goal 5. Develop and maintain strong multi-modal connections.

The City of Alabaster is well connected to the regional transportation system. However, the City still needs to make system level improvements, especially in its local pedestrian and bicycle network. A key goal of *Alabaster Forward* is to invest in the development of a safe pedestrian and bicycle network, including sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle lanes, and multi-use trails that provide connections between the city's neighborhood centers.



VI. Goal 6. Provide quality government service through partnership and cooperation.

The City of Alabaster is a well-managed municipality. The City's leaders work cooperatively with adjacent governments, Shelby County, and regional entities to achieve common goals. The City maintains an open-door government that actively strives to positively engage all citizens and community groups, providing transparency to the decision-making process. City services not only maintain health, safety and welfare, but also promote a well-rounded community.

Federal Livability Principles

As mentioned in Chapter 1, 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 Birmingham MPO or the RPCGB. In order to fulfill the requirements for the use of these Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds, the *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* addresses the six Federal Livability Principles. **Table 2.1** shows the correlation between the *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* and the Federal Livability Principles.

Livability is about tying the quality and location of transportation facilities to broader opportunities such as access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and safer streets and roads. FHWA supports livable communities through funding transportation related projects and sponsoring activities that enable people to live closer to jobs, enabling households to save time and money, and in effect, reduces pollution. FHWA works within the HUD/DOT/EPA Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities to coordinate and leverage federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure policies and investments.

Table 2.1: Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan and Federal Livability Principles

Federal Livability Principles	
Alabaster Forward Goals	Federal Livability Principlals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1. Create a greater sense of community identity and place. • Goal 5. Develop and maintain strong multi-modal connections. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Provide more transportation choices.</p> <p>Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 4. Promote a healthy and safe living environment. • Goal 6. Provide quality government service through partnership and cooperation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Promote equitable, affordable housing.</p> <p>Expand location, and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 2. Support a thriving business environment. • Goal 3. Improve land use and urban design. • Goal 4. Promote a healthy and safe living environment. • Goal 5. Develop and maintain strong multi-modal connections. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Value communities and neighborhoods.</p> <p>Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 2. Support a thriving business environment. • Goal 3. Improve land use and urban design. • Goal 4. Promote a healthy and safe living environment. • Goal 6. Provide quality government service through partnership and cooperation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support existing communities.</p> <p>Target federal funding toward existing communities—through such strategies as transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization, improve the efficiency of public works investments, and safeguard rural landscapes.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 2. Support a thriving business environment. • Goal 3. Improve land use and urban design. • Goal 4. Promote a healthy and safe living environment. • Goal 6. Provide quality government service through partnership and cooperation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Enhance economic competitiveness.</p> <p>Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers as well as expanded business access to markets.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 3. Improve land use and urban design. • Goal 6. Provide quality government service through partnership and cooperation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Coordinate and leverage federal policies investments.</p> <p>Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.</p>

3

Future Land Use Plan

Introduction to the Future Land Use Plan

The overall Future Land Use Plan is supported by unique features and characteristics that should help further guide Alabaster's future land use divisions and public investment decisions. Each of these unique features and characteristics is highlighted on the following pages.

- Future Land Use Map
- Gateway Features
- Neighborhood Commercial Target Areas
- Healthy and Active Living Resources
- Priority Redevelopment Areas

This Plan attempts to manage, not stop, growth. It accepts and encourages additional growth of population and the economy into the future. At the same time, however, the Plan addresses the need to manage growth so that the environment is protected, social equity is achieved, the economy prospers, and governmental funds are spent efficiently providing needed governmental facilities and services.

Future Land Use Principles

- Concentrate growth into Mixed-use Centers: Create more accessible, compact (non-sprawling) commercial and small-scale neighborhood centers. "Strip" development should be avoided.
- Encourage new development in areas with existing infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.).
- Integrate land uses and promote development patterns that enable people to live, work, learn, and play in the same community.
- Revitalize Siluria Mill- Planning, additional public improvements and new private investment in Siluria Mill should make this historic, centrally-located, "mixed-use" area an attractive civic and activity center for the community. See Appendix E for more information.
- Provide a broader range of housing choices

:Growth, changing demographics, and an evolving economy require a greater diversity of housing choices in both infill locations and in new neighborhoods.

- Encourage development around the city's assets.

Future Land Use Map

Alabaster's desired future land use patterns are shown on the Future Land Use Map, which provides the land use foundation for this Comprehensive Plan. The Future Land Use Map is shown in **Figure 3.1**, and zoomed in maps of the city are shown in **Figures 3.2** through **3.5**. It indicates the intended distribution and intensity of land uses over the next 20 years, and should be used as a guide to define where different development land use types should be allowed to develop in the future.

The Future Land Use Map is part of the adopted Comprehensive Plan and carries the same legal weight as the Plan document itself. The Future Land Use map uses color-coded categories to express public policy on future land uses across the City. The land use designations have been drawn based on parcel lines, existing and desired development patterns, streets, environmental features and other logical boundaries.

Purpose of the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is a long-range tool intended to guide future zoning decisions and capital investment decisions. The Future Land Use Map 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 of the Future Land Use Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities.

The Future Land Use Map is not intended to change stable neighborhoods—its primary focus is on places where new development will occur in the future, and to guide redevelopment. The future land use categories should allow future neighborhoods and activity centers to become distinctive, diverse places with a mix of compatible activities. They

Figure 3.1: Future Land Use Map

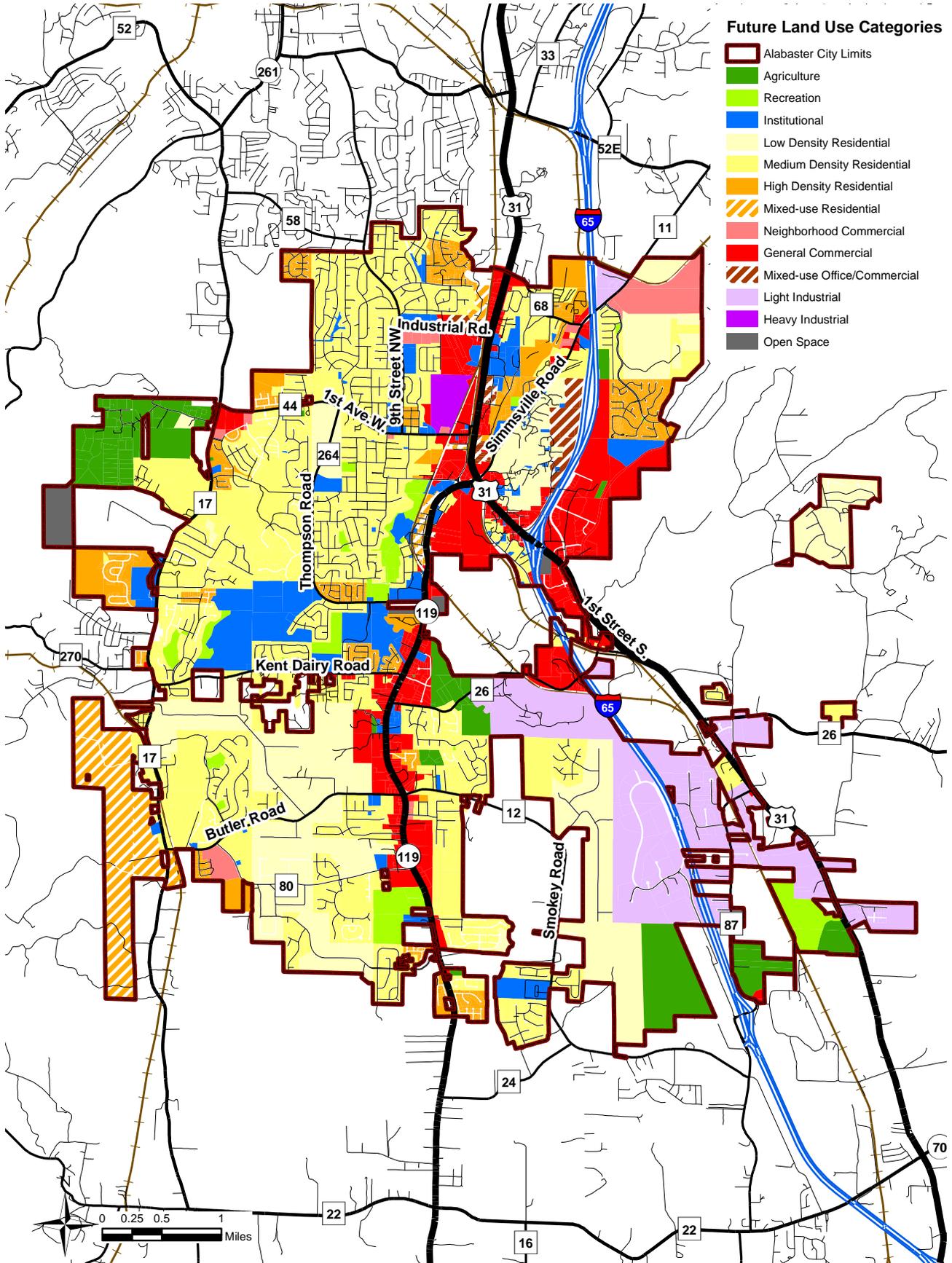


Figure 3.2: Future Land Use Map - Northwest Portion of the City

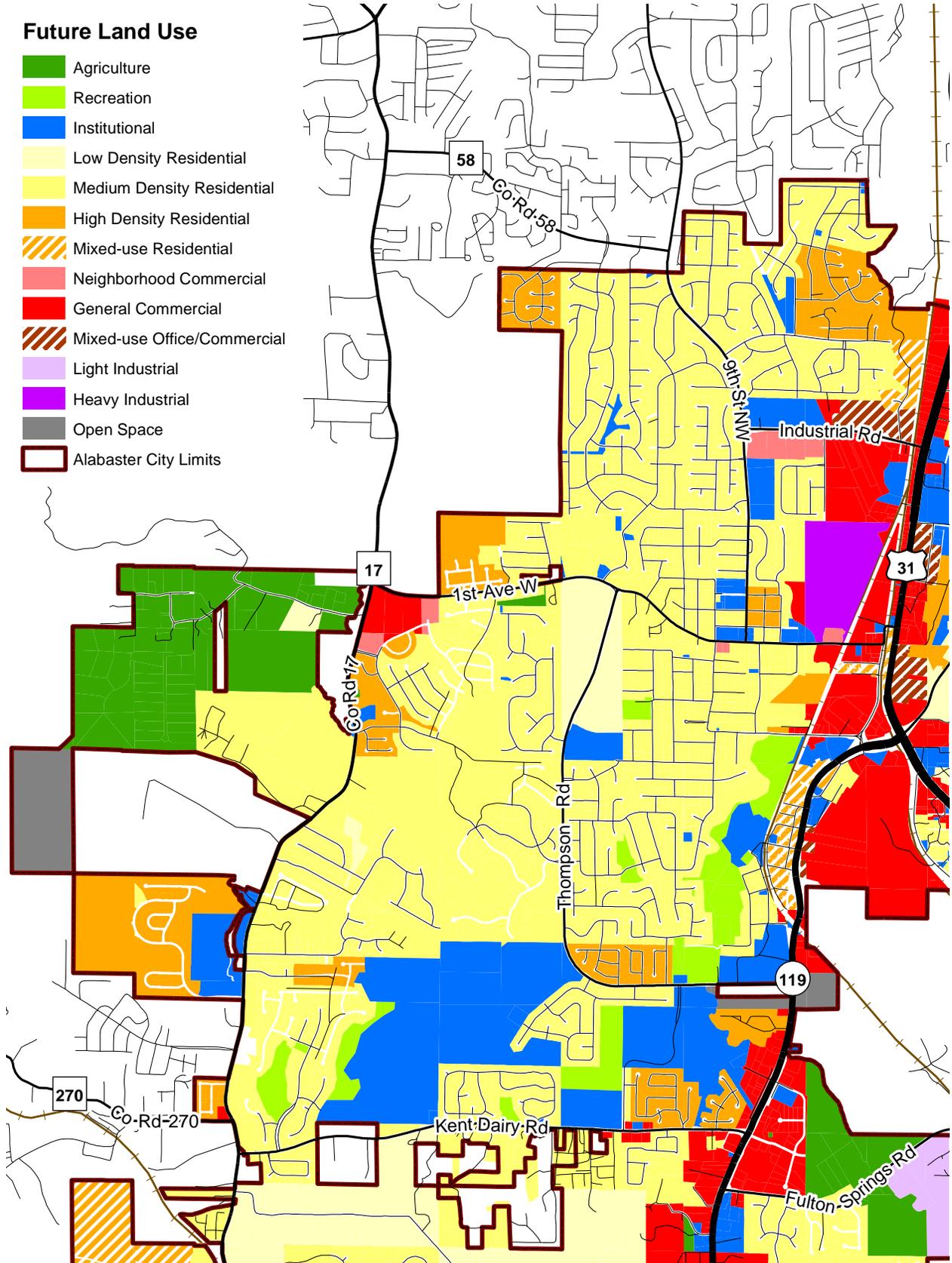


Figure 3.3: Future Land Use Map - Northeast Portion of the City

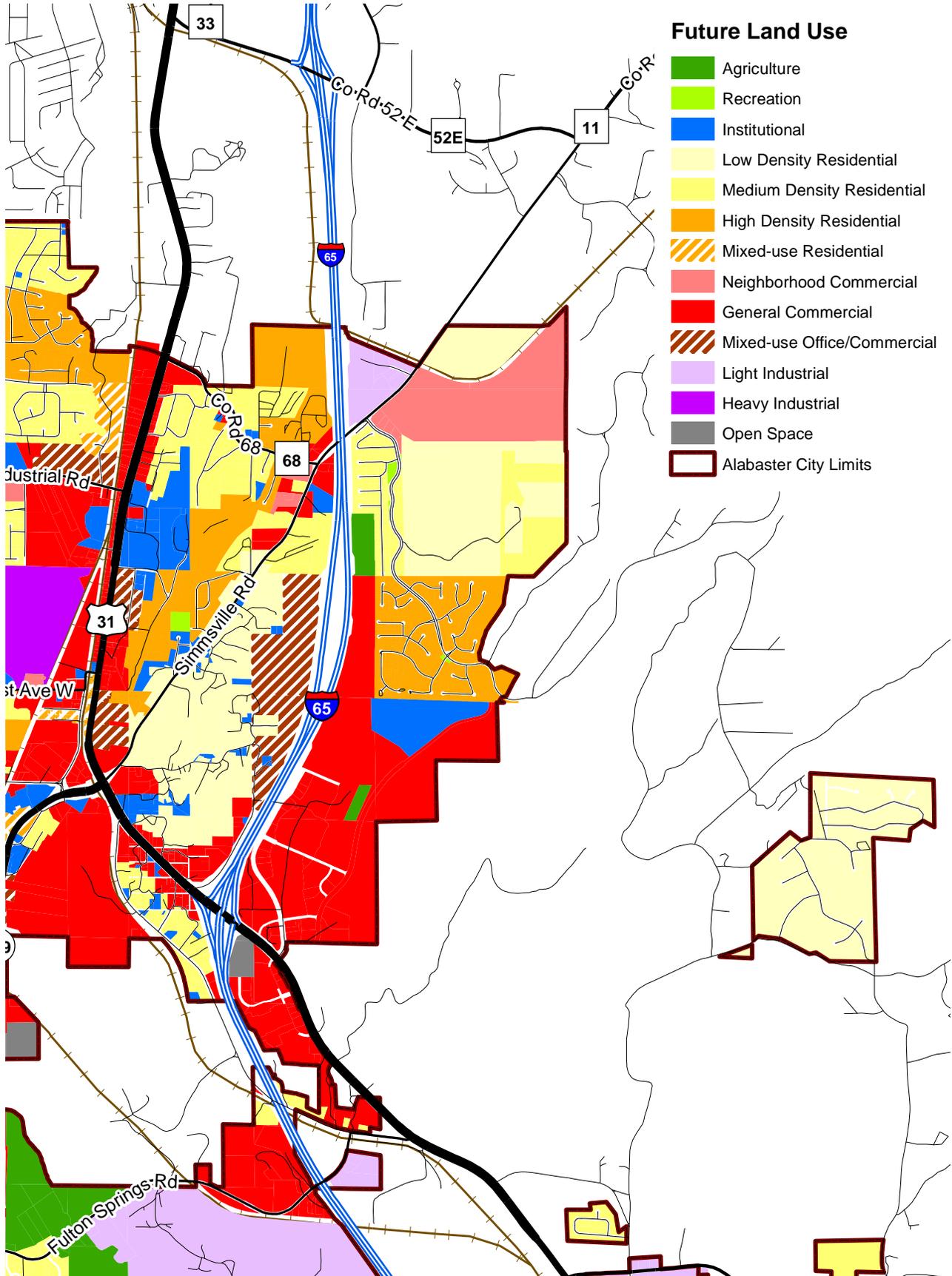


Figure 3.4: Future Land Use Map - Southwest Portion of the City

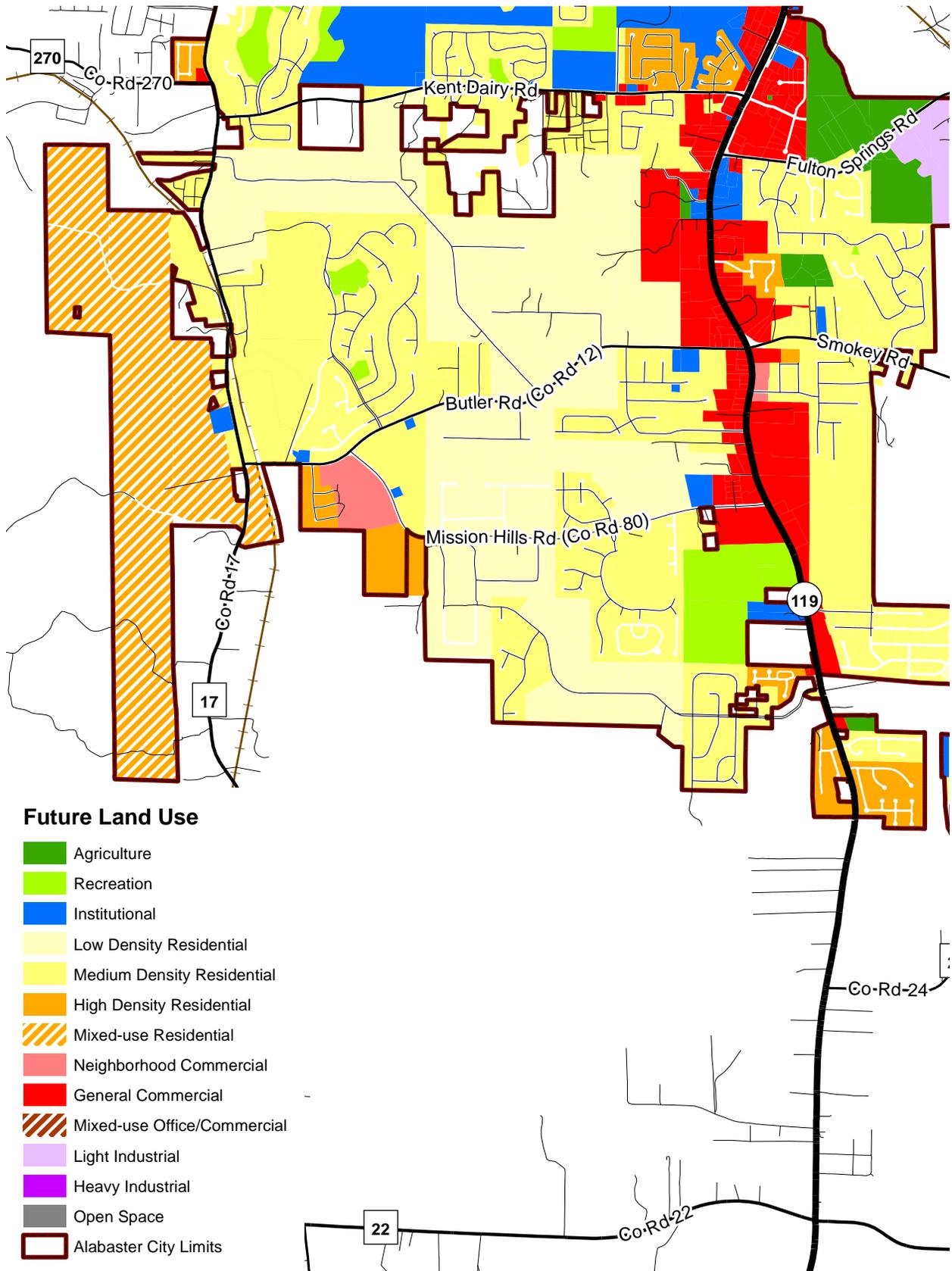
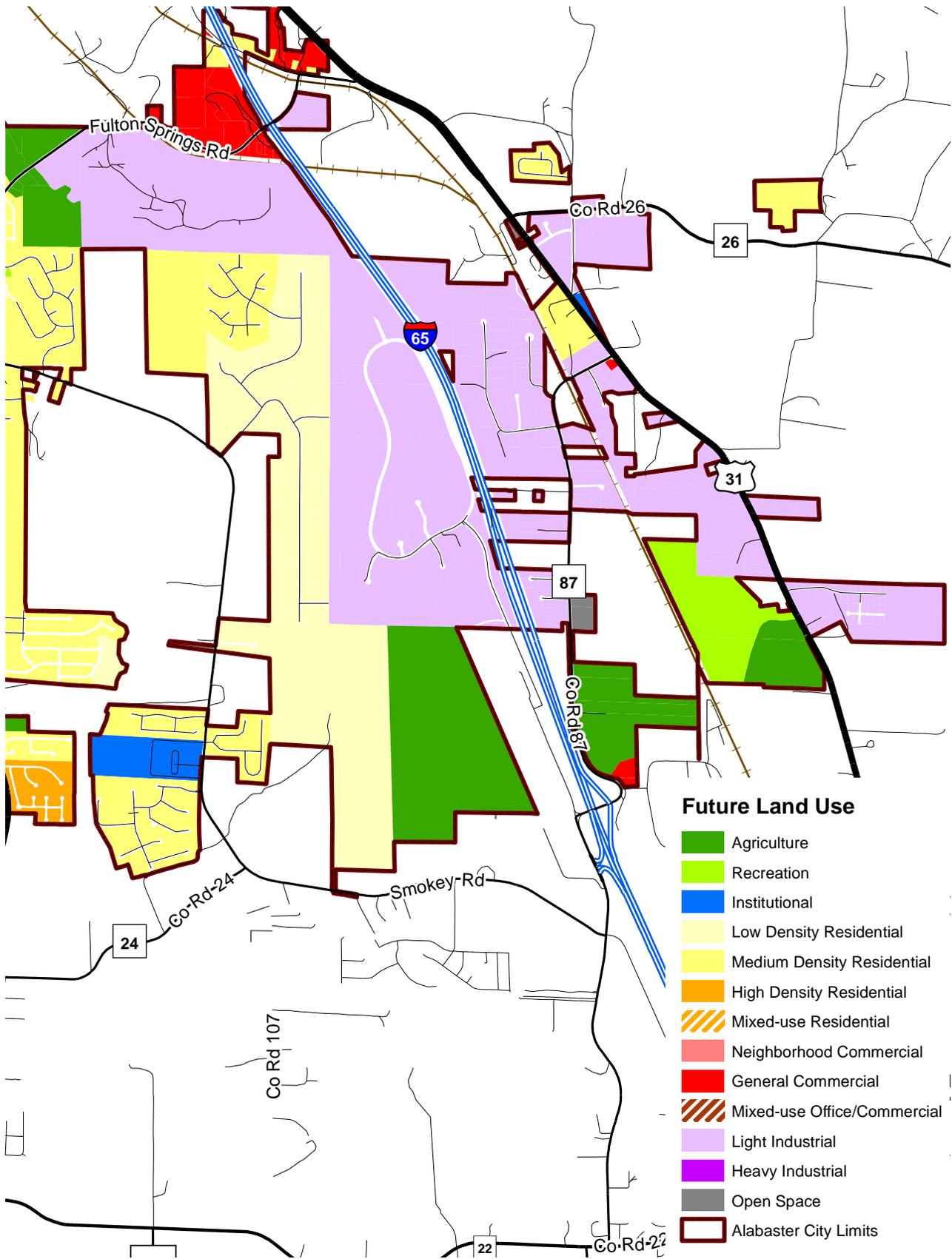


Figure 3.5: Future Land Use Map - Southeast Portion of the City



also provide some flexibility to respond to market conditions.

In some cases the recommended future land use is the same as the existing land use. However, in certain locations throughout the City, the Future Land Use Map contains areas where existing uses are proposed for a change in land use, 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 City's long range view of how particular properties should be reconfigured and used should it become feasible to do so.

Specific site conditions, such as topography, geology, soils and hydrology, must be considered when choosing sites for new developments—especially those of larger scale—and when planning and designing their uses and densities. These realities, plus attitudes toward development on the part of public officials, other agencies, area residents, property owners and developers, will play a large part in determining appropriate development location and design. Similarly, adequate community facilities and infrastructure—streets, parks, fire protection services, and water and sewer systems, should be assured before making any significant development proposals or decisions.

Future Land Use Categories

This section describes in detail the future land use categories, which explain the general character of each land use type, including typical ranges for residential densities and general access and site characteristics. Each future land use category ties directly to an appropriate existing or proposed zoning district. Again, the land use categories indicated on the map must not be interpreted as zoning districts.

Increasing walkability, bikeability, and overall mobility in Alabaster's land uses is viewed as important. This should be considered an inherent component of the vision for each future land use category. The City's Transportation Plan (see Appendix D), provides detailed implementation strategies for furthering walkability, bikeability, and overall mobility in the city.



Agriculture

Land Use Description

Agricultural land areas are intended to accommodate very low-density development including agricultural uses (forestry, farming, etc.) and unsewered, large lot residential development. These are areas generally outside of the city’s development focus (where infrastructure expansion is not intended within the time frame of this plan) and that represent an opportunity to preserve the natural, scenic qualities surrounding the community. These areas will be served primarily with rural roads with drainage swales (rather than curb and gutter or valley curbs) and no dedicated on-street parking. Development on individual lots should require the smallest amount of land disturbance in order to prepare the site for the use intended, including minimal impervious surfaces. Agricultural uses will be limited by topography and soil characteristics. Livestock and tree farms should occur on lots (or commonly-owned land) of three or more acres.

Few true agriculture areas exist in Alabaster due to suburbanization, but remnants of this land use still exist in the southern, eastern and western borders of the City. These areas also serve as a greenbelt buffer between the Cities of Calera, Montevallo and Helena. In order to preserve Alabaster’s agriculture/ rural atmosphere, a significant amount of open space should remain within the city limits. New development should be strictly limited, especially residential subdivisions. Any new development should be required to use compatible architecture styles that maintain the rural character.

Table 3.1: Form and Pattern of Agriculture Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Agriculture, forestry, undeveloped land
Secondary Land Uses
Single-family residential, rural civic or commercial uses
Residential Density
0 - 1 dwelling unit / acre (single-family)
Non-Residential Intensity
Less than 0.10 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Agriculture (A)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
High degree of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Defined by a pattern of large unsubdivided lots with widely spaced roads suited for agricultural and rural levels of traffic movement.
- The primary residence of the property owner and any processing or outbuildings associated with activities on the working farm are the only buildings on the land.
- Buildings are low in density and residential development and processing facilities should be considered “accessory” to the use of the land itself.
- Buildings are 1 to 2 stories high and are traditional in style for homes, barns and processing facilities.

Recreation

Land Use Description

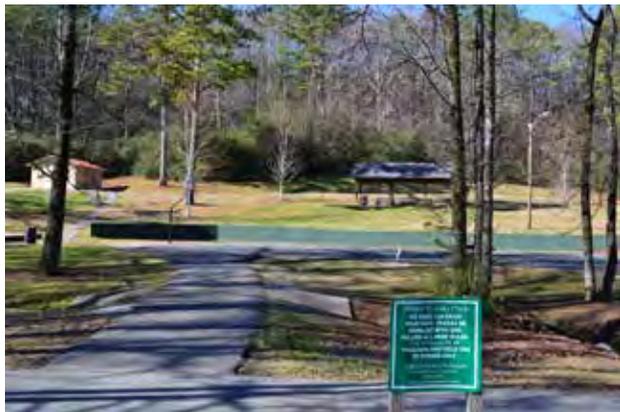
The Recreation land use classification is defined as establishments that operate facilities, or provide services for a variety of cultural, entertainment, and recreational function.

Current recreation areas in Alabaster are generally found adjacent to major highways and within large neighborhoods and floodplain areas. The largest concentration of recreational land use within Alabaster is located at Veterans Park. It is located off SR 119, and along Buck Creek where Buck Creek Park and Buck Creek Trail are located. In addition to city parks, recreational open space is often provided in large, master planned communities such as Lake Forest, Weatherly, Grande View and Stage Coach Trace.

New Recreation areas will be created either by city land acquisition, dedication of land by a private owner (to the City or a public/non-profit agency), or direct development by the private sector. New recreational areas are envisioned as extensions to the Buck Creek Trail to connect activity areas throughout the city. New neighborhood parks should be designed with flexibility to accommodate impromptu uses and may include playgrounds for children and picnic areas. Such parks might be integrated into the design of Neighborhood Commercial centers.

Table 3.2: Form and Pattern of Recreation Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Multi-purpose trails, sports fields, playgrounds, golf courses, active and passive parks
Secondary Land Uses
Restrooms, parking lots, accessory structures, museums
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
Less than 0.10 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
High degree of active and passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low



Open Space

Land Use Description

Alabaster has large tracts of undeveloped land that exist on the fringe of the city limits with many environmentally sensitive areas that serve as natural buffers and open spaces. Open Space areas should be promoted for passive uses, tourism and passive recreation destinations. The vast amount of open space is intended to provide wildlife habitat and natural processes for flood management, erosion control, or air quality.

Table 3.3: Form and Pattern of Open Space Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Nature preserve, municipal reserve, wildlife management areas
Secondary Land Uses
Passive recreation
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
Municipal Reserve (MR), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
High degree of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Undeveloped natural lands
- Environmentally sensitive areas that are not suitable for development, such as:
 - Lands with scenic views
 - Lands with steep slopes
 - Lands with floodplains
 - Wildlife management areas
- Open Space land should be retained or maintained in a natural forested or grassland state.
- Relatively minimal land subdivision and visible infrastructure.



Low Density Residential

Land Use Description

Low Density Residential is developed at densities lower than typical suburban residential areas, and cater to estate residential and lifestyles that keep horses and other animals. The average density of lower density residential lots is 0.0 units per acre to 2.0 units per acre. Some grandfathered lots may be smaller. Roads are usually paved, but may be gravel. Open space is on private lands. This type of residential development emphasizes privacy over convenience.

The City of Alabaster currently maintains Low Density Residential properties along the fringes of the City, as well as south of CR 26. To maintain this character, new Low Density Residential development should be accommodated by permitting rural clustering or conservation subdivision designs that incorporate significant amounts of open space. Compatible regional architecture styles, greater pedestrian orientation and access, clustered development, and open space should be encouraged. Low density uses can be buffered from nonresidential uses with medium and high density residential land uses.



Table 3.4: Form and Pattern of Low Density Residential Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Single-family detached homes
Secondary Land Uses
Accessory structures, schools, places of worship
Residential Density
0 - 2 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
Single Family Estate District (E), Single Family District (R-1), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Active pocket parks, community gardens, regional parks
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Single family residences on individual large lots (clustering is encouraged).
- Each lot typically has access to the main arterial road or subdivision road.
- Low pedestrian orientation and access.
- High degree of separation between buildings.

Medium Density Residential

Land Use Description

Medium Density Residential properties offer smaller lots than their Low Density Residential counterparts.

Medium Density Residential properties can currently be found scattered throughout the city, with the highest concentration area located between CR 264 (Thompson Road) and CR 17 (North of CR 44/1st Avenue West). Most of this housing stock is relatively new.

In short, the Medium Density Residential category is similar in character to the Low Density Residential category, but accommodates slightly higher densities on smaller lots. Large lot residential uses may be consolidated into new subdivisions. In the future, new development should be planned with a mix of uses, blending development with schools, parks, recreation, retail, and services linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking.



Table 3.5: Form and Pattern of Medium Density Residential Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Single-family detached homes
Secondary Land Uses
Manufactured and mobile homes, accessory structures, schools, places of worship, police, fire, and emergency medical stations
Residential Density
2 - 4.5 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
Single Family District (R-2), Single Family District (R-3), Planned Single-Family Residential District (PRD-1), Manufactured and Mobile Home District (MHD, Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Active pocket parks, community gardens, regional parks
Street Connectivity
Medium

General Characteristics:

- Open spaces and landscaping along the perimeter or edges of developments act as a buffer from commercial or higher intensity development, and to screen the uses from adjacent single-family residential uses.
- Individual lots are uniform in size (either rectangular or irregular in shape).
- Buildings typically are located in the center of lots with regular front and side yard setbacks.
- Streets have a narrow to moderate cross section. Sidewalks and paths are provided on at least one side of the street and paths may be provided through common open spaces.

High Density Residential

Land Use Description

The High Density Residential category is intended to create the opportunity for neighborhoods to offer a variety of lot sizes, housing unit types, and ownership options. The category could include townhomes, condominiums and apartment communities. Buildings are usually facing an internal circulation network of roads with landscaping or open space along the edges of the developments to act as a buffer. Generally these areas are often found in proximity to commercial areas. High Density Residential neighborhoods should support cost effective housing, facilitate infill development, encourage multiple forms of transportation, such as walking and biking, and promote efficient use of existing infrastructure.

In order to ensure that multi-family areas are designed to a high standard in the future, the City should consider incorporating design guidelines into the appropriate section of the City of Alabaster Zoning Ordinance.



Table 3.6: Form and Pattern of High Density Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Garden homes, single-family attached homes (townhomes, duplexes), multi-family housing (condos, apartments, senior housing)
Secondary Land Uses
Supporting retail, schools, places of worship, other community facilities
Residential Density
More than 4.5 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
Residential Patio/Garden District [R-4], Two Family Residential District (R-5), Multifamily District (R-6), Townhouse District (R-7), Planned Attached Residential District [PRD-2], Institutional (I), Neighborhood Business District B-2)
Building Heights
1 - 4 stories
Open Space
Active pocket parks, community gardens, passive open space
Street Connectivity
Medium

General Characteristics:

- Buildings are oriented toward the street. Structured parking garages, when present, are located behind the main facade and are often detached.
- Open spaces and landscaping along the perimeter or edges of developments act as a buffer from commercial or higher intensity development, and to screen the uses from adjacent single-family residential uses.
- Streets often have narrower cross-sections and sidewalks creating a more pedestrian friendly environment.

Mixed-use Residential

Land Use Description

The Mixed-use Residential category is intended to create and incorporate a variety of housing types, such as single-family attached residences that include duplexes and townhomes, garden homes, and live/work units. The term “live/work units” is applied to buildings with commercial occupancy on the ground floor and usually a single residential unit above. The integration of a broad range of housing within neighborhoods will allow for greater housing choices particularly for younger and older age groups. Mixed-use Residential development is appropriate near or along arterials and collector streets. The overall intent is to provide an integrated mix of land uses either vertical (one use located above another) or horizontal (side-by-side), including a residential component.



Table 3.7: Form and Pattern of Mixed-use Residential Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Commercial, retail, condos, apartments, flats
Secondary Land Uses
Compatible civic / institutional, townhomes, offices
Residential Density
4.5 - 8 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
0.25 - 1.00 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Multifamily District (R-6), Townhouse District (R-7), Institutional (I), Office District (B-1), Neighborhood Business District B-2), Planned Neighborhood Commercial (PCD-1), Planned Commercial District (PCD-2), Mixed Use District (MXD), or new/modified district to be added to the Zoning Ordinance
Building Heights
1 -2 stories, but 3- 5 stories might be appropriate in some locations
Open Space
Public and civic green spaces
Street Connectivity
High

General Characteristics:

- Contain public amenities such as a pedestrian plazas, sidewalks, and landscaping that help to create a walkable and cohesive development.
- The higher intensity mix of uses are intended to cater to an ‘urban’ lifestyle, providing a comfortable pedestrian environment of blocks based on a grid or intersecting perpendicular street pattern.
- Buildings are oriented toward the street with sidewalks and street furniture.
- On street parking is encouraged. Other parking is placed in structures or in surface lots behind buildings to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

Mixed-use Office/Commercial

Land Use Description

The Mixed-use Office/Commercial category is intended to provide an integrated mix of commercial and office land uses within a pedestrian oriented environment, by allowing for the mix of uses to be vertical (one use located above another) or horizontal (side-by-side).

Candidate locations for a successful Mixed-use Office / Commercial land uses include entire block faces where commercial or office uses would be viable, prominent corner locations where a parcel large enough for a vertical mix of uses, with commercial and retail uses on the first floor and office uses on the upper floor(s). The areas can also have mixed uses on different lots.



Table 3.8: Form and Patterns of Mixed-use Office/Commercial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Commercial, retail, professional offices
Secondary Land Uses
Compatible civic / institutional, condos, flats, townhomes
Residential Density
4.5 - 8 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
0.30 - 1.00 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Planned Office and Institution District (POD), Planned Commercial District (PCD-2), Townhouse District (R-7), Institutional (I), Office District (B-1), Neighborhood Business District B-2), Planned Neighborhood Commercial (PCD-1), Mixed Use District (MXD), or new/modified district to be added to the Zoning Ordinance
Building Heights
1 -2 stories, but 3- 5 stories might be appropriate in some locations
Open Space
Public and civic green spaces
Street Connectivity
High

General Characteristics:

- Contain public amenities such as a pedestrian plazas, sidewalks, and landscaping that help to create a walkable and cohesive development.
- Small block sizes to accommodate the denser mix of uses and to create a highly walkable environment.
- Buildings are oriented toward the street with sidewalks. Buildings should incorporate human scale elements.
- On street parking is encouraged.
- Parking is placed in structures or in surface lots behind buildings to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, which includes well-connected sidewalks, planting strips and street furniture.

Neighborhood Commercial

Land Use Description

The Neighborhood Commercial land use category intends to provide spaces for small scale retail and service developments that serve the convenience needs of neighboring residents.

Neighborhood Commercial is currently concentrated in two main locations in Alabaster. The first area is located at the intersection of Kent Dairy Road and CR 26 (Fulton Springs Road) at the White Stone Center (this includes new construction). While the second area is located at the intersection of SR 119 and 1st Street Southwest. Both feature several neighborhood goods and services, such as a grocery store, pharmacy, local offices, and restaurants. Both are focal points for their neighborhood.

It should be noted that development in close proximity to major intersections will become increasingly important in terms of tax revenue for the City as the local population continues to grow. Therefore, the City should protect optimal locations for Neighborhood Commercial development, as property at these locations should not be developed as just residential or commercial, when all of the characteristics of a prime retail location exist.



Table 3.9: Form and Pattern of Neighborhood Commercial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Commercial / service, general retail, office, small restaurants, pharmacies
Secondary Land Uses
Supporting retail, schools, places of worship, other community facilities
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Office District (B-1), Neighborhood Business District B-2), Planned Neighborhood Commercial (PCD-1), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Active pocket parks, community gardens, passive open space
Street Connectivity
Medium

General Characteristics:

- Neighborhood Commercial is characterized by a locally-oriented concentration of retail, office and service uses that are typically located at busy arterial intersections within neighborhoods or at their perimeter.
- Primarily intended to serve the daily needs of surrounding residential areas within a one-mile radius.
- This land use area may occupy the four corners of an intersection, or only one lot within a neighborhood.
- Neighborhood Commercial may be used as a transition between neighborhoods and more intense business districts.

General Commercial

Land Use Description

General Commercial areas are located throughout the city to serve the day-to-day commercial needs of surrounding neighborhoods, or to serve as regional commercial areas, drawing from a service area of five miles or more, depending on the actual use. Alabaster’s current commercial areas include the Medical Mile, Propst Promenade and the White Stone Center.

In the future, existing commercial lands may need to be retro-fitted to be more aesthetically appealing and, therefore, more marketable to prospective tenants by building new commercial structures to front the street, taking a portion of the parking lot and creating a shopping square. Moreover, facades can be updated to reflect improvements with new architectural elements, and awnings; pedestrian amenities should be provided.

See Appendix F for sample language for a Corridors Overlay District and recommended design guidelines along the SR 119 and U.S. 31 corridors in Alabaster. For areas in which newly developed or redeveloped general commercial uses will be located on properties that abut the corridors, increased design-related guidelines should be applied to future commercial development. This could be implemented by the adoption of a Corridors Overlay District in the City of Alabaster Zoning Ordinance, and would help to ensure that commercial uses enhance the aesthetic nature of the high traffic corridors.



Table 3.10: Form and Pattern of General Commercial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Commercial / service, general and large tenant retail, restaurants and food stores
Secondary Land Uses
Hotels, motels, movie theaters, professional offices, schools, places of worship, other community facilities
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.20 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Community Business District (B-3), General Business District (B-4), Central Business District (B-5), Planned Commercial District (PCD-2), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Small amount of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Located along a major thoroughfare.
- High degree of access to the site by vehicular traffic. Careful use of access management from the primary roadway is essential to maintain adequate traffic flow.
- See sample Corridors Overlay District in Appendix F.



Light Industrial

Land Use Description

The Light Industrial land use category is intended for lower intensity industrial uses that require a finished product consisting of small machine parts or electronic equipment, the manufacturing or assembling of small products within a business and elements of wholesale and storage of products in a manner and character that does not create significant negative impacts to the environment or surrounding area.

Alabaster’s current Light Industrial land use areas are located along the CSX railway, I-65 Interstate corridor, U.S. 31, and CR 66 (Industrial Road). The largest concentrations of Light Industrial use are associated with Shelby West Corporate Park (located off I-65 and U.S. 31), which consists of 400 acres of various commerce and industry, as well as a technology park and Hibbett Sports Distribution Center located off of I-65 at Exit 234.

Examples of desirable uses within the designated industrial areas include research and technology complexes. It is recommended that the City of Alabaster concentrate on attracting businesses engaging in light industrial-type activities contained within a building (i.e. a minimal amount of open storage), such as high-tech services, medical services, and software manufacturing. Such businesses tend to have many advantages, including employment and increased tax base.



Table 3.11: Form and Pattern of Light Industrial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Light industrial, wholesale, distribution warehouses, utility uses, manufacturing, processing, logistics operations
Secondary Land Uses
Professional offices, supporting commercial
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Light Industrial District (M-1), Planned Industrial District (PID), Office District (B-1), General Business District (B-4)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Small amount of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Medium

General Characteristics:

- Should be developed or, where possible, retrofitted as a part of a planned industrial park having adequate water, sewer, storm-water, and transportation and telecommunication infrastructure for all component uses at build-out.
- Typically located near major roads, highways, railways and other large industrial centers.
- These areas may include industrial parks, manufacturing centers, warehouse and distribution centers and assembly operations.
- They are often buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas that shield the view of structures, loading docks, or outdoor storage from nearby properties and roads.
- Way-finding signage and lighting guidelines are suggested to enhance the quality of the development.

Heavy Industrial

Land Use Description

The Heavy Industrial classification is intended for sites that provide a full range of medium to heavy industrial uses and activities such as manufacturing, warehousing, industrial processing, resource and energy production and general service and distribution that can generate substantial impacts on the surrounding area. Noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characters are not contained on site.

Alabaster’s largest Heavy Industrial land uses include the existing two quarries, located off of 1st Avenue and west of the CSX railway and U.S. 31, and off of CR 26 (Fulton Springs Road). In the long-range planning period, these areas may necessitate environmental remediation if another land use is to be established. The City will need to examine the necessity of probable remediation measures as potential land use changes are initially proposed to ensure proper preparation for re-use in the long-range planning period.



Table 3.12: Form and Pattern of Heavy Industrial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Manufacturing, fabrication, distribution and warehouses, plants, quarries
Secondary Land Uses
Supporting commercial
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Heavy Industrial District (M-2), Planned Industrial District (PID), General Business District (B-4)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Small amount of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Protect land designated for industrial development from incompatible uses using buffers and setbacks and facilitate their future development by planning and constructing necessary infrastructure, adopting appropriate economic incentives, and assisting where necessary in marking available land.
- The high volume of truck traffic contributes to congestion, as well as noise issues in some residential areas. The city should investigate designated truck routes through the city to lessen these impacts (see Appendix D Transportation Plan).

Institutional

Land Use Description

The Institutional land use classification includes both public and privately owned or operated civic and institutional uses. Civic uses include public buildings and institutions owned and operated by governmental or other public agencies.

The current Institutional land use pattern in Alabaster is primarily located along U.S. 31 at the Shelby Baptist Medical Center, at the site of the Alabaster City Hall and Senior Center in Siluria Mill, in areas along SR 119 between CR 264 (Thompson Road) and CR 12 (Butler Road) for the Intermediate school, post office, churches and cemeteries, and in the area off of CR 264 (Thompson Road) and off of Kent Dairy Road. The Future Land Use Plan shows as Institutional the proposed location of the new Thompson High School, a large site between Thompson Road and Kent Dairy Road near the Sterling Gate subdivision. The intensity of other new Institutional development should be determined based on use and location.



Table 3.13: Form and Pattern of Institutional Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Schools, civic and government offices, places of worship, hospitals, non-profit facilities
Secondary Land Uses
Cemeteries, utilities, educational facilities, educational campuses
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.60 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Planned Office and Institution District (POD), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 -3 stories
Open Space
Active sports fields and passive green spaces
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- With future expansions, partnerships are encouraged among the City’s many large institutions to coordinate future growth and development of these institutions with surrounding land uses and neighborhoods.

Relationship of the Future Land Use Map to the Zoning Map

Consistency with the Future Land Use Map is not the only criterion that will be used to determine the reasonableness of a zoning map amendment. Other criterion include, but are not limited to, compatibility with the existing character of the surrounding area and impact on public services, infrastructure, traffic, fire, safety, parks and recreation, environmental and historic resources.

The following parameters apply to the use and interpretation of the Future Land Use Map:

- The Future Land Use Map is a generalized depiction of intended uses. It is not an “existing land use map,” although in many cases future uses in an area may be the same as those that exist today.
- The rezoning of any given area should be guided by the Future Land Use Map, interpreted in conjunction with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. However, the Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map.
- While the Future Land Use Map will influence future zoning, it does not alter current zoning or affect the right of property owners to use the land for its purpose as zoned at the time of this Plan’s adoption. The Future Land Use Map will not be referenced as part of the site plan review.
- Whereas zoning maps establish detailed requirements for setbacks, height, use, parking, and other attributes, the land use categories of the Future Land Use Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities.

When the Future Land Use Map conflicts with the Current Zoning Map...

While the Future Land Use Plan map was partially based on existing land use and the City's adopted zoning map, some areas within the City of Alabaster conflict in terms of the way in which they are recommended to develop based on the Future Land Use Plan map and the way in which they are currently zoned. In certain areas, such inconsistency can be in the City's favor. For example, you have an area that is shown on the zoning map as zoned as Agriculture (A), yet the Future Land Use Plan shows the same area as recommended for a nonresidential use. Then when a particular proposal is before the City's Planning and Zoning Commission that is deemed a suitable non-residential land use for the location, the commission can elect to rezone the property to allow for the nonresidential use.

Amending the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use map is intended to promote a logical pattern of development in the community suited to the city's natural landscape and infrastructure capacity, foster sustained economic growth consistent with the community's vision and goals, and minimize conflicts between residential, commercial and other land uses. It should not, however, be considered a static plan. From time to time it will be necessary to consider changes of varying magnitude to the Future Land Use Map. These decision points may come about in response to public investments in roads and other infrastructure, some of which may vary in scale, location or alignment from that which is forecasted in the Comprehensive Plan. In some cases it will necessary to consider amending the map in response to individual development requests that, though they do not conform perfectly to the land use designations assigned in the Future Land Use map, are otherwise consistent with the goals and policies of the city, including those within the Comprehensive Plan.

The City can institute a formal process to address these changes on a case-by-case basis, particularly when requests to change the zoning classification of properties are to be considered that do not conform perfectly to the Future Land Use Map. In this process a "change in land use designation" may be requested prior to or simultaneously with a rezoning request. At such time the Alabaster Planning and Zoning Commission would review the proposed change and hold a public hearing on the matter. The Commission should evaluate each request according to an established set of criteria, such as the following, to assure that the amendment is appropriate:

- Is the proposed change in land use considered a better land use than that recommended by the Future Land Use Plan?
- Will the proposed land use be similar in nature in terms of appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects of compatibility to adjacent uses?
- Will the proposed change in land use materially affect the adequacy or availability of community facilities and services to the immediate area or to the city overall?
- Will the proposed change in land use negatively affect the city's plans for capital improvements in the area?
- Will the proposed change in land use present a significant benefit to the public health, safety and welfare of the community?
- Will the proposed change in land use contribute to the City's long-term economic well-being?

In this process it would be the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence showing that the request meets the city's established criteria for amending the Future Land Use Map. Adjacent property owners should be notified of the request and hearing. This notice may be provided together with the notice for the zoning hearing, when applicable.

The Transportation Component

Transportation is a fundamental aspect of daily life that is almost universally shared. In Alabaster, the dominant mode of transportation is the car, with few other options available to most residents. Whether it's housing, lifestyle or transportation, Alabaster residents want more choices available to them in the future. This means the ability to live a suburban or rural lifestyle, to raise a family in a free-standing home then transition to a townhome – within the same neighborhood – and the choice of whether to walk, cycle, take a bus or drive to meet daily needs. Expanding transportation choices will allow all residents to choose a mode that fits their individual mobility needs, budgets, and lifestyles.

The City of Alabaster Transportation Plan is included in detail in Appendix D and serves as the transportation element of the *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan*. It is the City's first citywide transportation plan, providing both a technical and policy framework to meet the specific transportation needs of the City and is intended to guide future transportation investment decisions.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction and a gives a transportation system inventory of travel in Alabaster today. Chapter 2 of the Transportation Plan provides an assessment of current and future travel needs. It is important to understand what issues the city faces and what opportunities it has for moving forward. Discussions with City leaders and residents revealed their desire to develop multi-modal corridors and centers that maximize both the capacity and efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure, and employing strategies to eliminate and/or minimize congestion. One of the expressed desires for Alabaster's transportation system is to create a balanced transportation network; one that accommodates the predominant travel mode – the automobile, while reorienting travel between and within the City's communities and neighborhood centers towards pedestrians and bicycles using a series of trails and paths to provide access.

Chapter 3 of the Transportation Plan outlines the recommendations (project description and purpose) and implementation strategies (timeframe, potential

funding, lead agency) as they pertain to the following types of projects:

- Roadway improvement projects
- Trail network projects
- Sidewalk development projects
- Priority pedestrian crossings
- On-street bicycle facilities
- A park and ride lot at Propst Promenade
- Regional express bus service
- A local city shuttle / circulator service
- Designated truck routes
- Physical improvements for freight
- A streetscape program
- A local transportation investment program

Chapter 4 describes the potential funding sources available for transportation projects, at the federal state and local levels.

Appendix A of the Transportation Plan gives guidance on access management practices, and includes:

- The 10 principles of access management.
- Subdivision regulations that can enforce and support good access management principles.
- The regulatory environment for enforcing access management, including a matrix that summarizes the authorities available to the state, a county and/or municipality under current Alabama law.
- Strategies for approaching the financing of access management improvements.

Appendix B of the Transportation Plan touches on traffic impact study guidelines, and includes"

- What is a traffic impact study?
- What is the purpose of a traffic impact study?
- When should a traffic impact study be conducted?
- Who should prepare a traffic impact studies?
- Who should review a traffic impact studies?
- Sample report outline of a traffic impact study.
- Sample evaluation questions for traffic impact studies.

Accommodating Future Growth

The City of Alabaster still has ample opportunity for growth. There are a number of large land tracts located within the City limits. There are also large land tracts located on unincorporated land immediately adjacent to the City boundaries, and in the unincorporated “donut holes”. Both the properties within the City limits and the unincorporated areas potentially could be available for development. The *Alabaster Forward* Comprehensive Plan Update did not produce a consensus on the rate or amount of growth desired. However, consensus was achieved about the manner of future growth. That is, City leaders agreed that future population, business, and employment growth should occur in a responsible and minimally impactful manner.

Given the city’s strategic location along the I- 65 corridor and regional arterial highways, access to two Class I rail lines that connect the cities of Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile core, and the expected future growth pattern of Shelby County, growth pressure can be expected to continue in Alabaster for the foreseeable future.

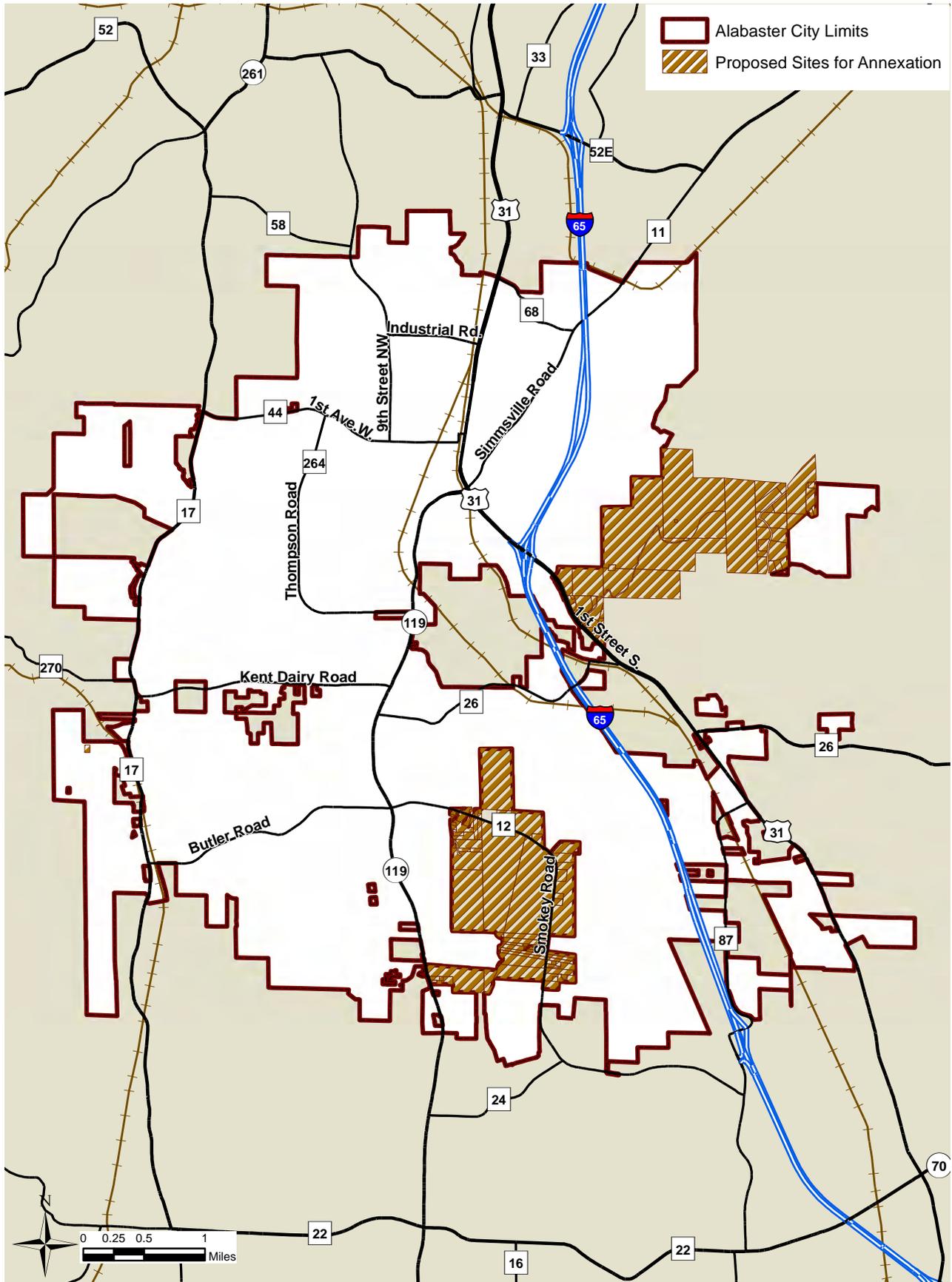
The City of Alabaster can accommodate future development – both residential and economic driven uses – on land that is currently developed to some degree. This might occur within or near existing residential neighborhoods that have not been fully built out, and in new mixed-use communities. Ideally, this new development will be served by infrastructure and services that already exist, and have adequate capacity to accommodate the increases brought about by additional population, employees, and visitors. This “redevelopment approach” to accommodating and managing future growth rests on some basic policy assumptions derived from a philosophy of sustainability and place-making. Aspects of this philosophy were vocalized by City leaders and community residents during the plan development process.

While growth can be accommodated through redevelopment, the likelihood of development in greenfield areas is much greater. Land availability along the “donut hole” located between CR 12 (Smokey Road) and CR 26 (Fulton Springs Road) east of SR 119, and the undeveloped area between Alabaster’s eastern boundary and the Saddle Lake community, all present strong potential for development (See *Figure 3.6*). In particular CR 17 presents near term opportunities for development as the land is located within the City’s boundaries and has zoning to accommodate housing and commercial uses.

The properties between CR 12 (Butler Road/Smokey Road) and CR 26 (Fulton Springs Road), as well as the areas between the City’s eastern boundary and the Saddle Lake community are not currently within the City’s municipal limits and would need to be annexed. Both of these areas are either completely surrounded by the City of Alabaster, or are adjacent to the City and between existing Alabaster communities. *Figure 3.6* illustrates these areas.

This strategy for accommodating future growth through both infill/redevelopment and greenfield development, though interrelated, points to different growth areas. However, responsible growth will not look at utilizing one strategy over the other, but instead will consider applying both. As the City ages and property in older areas becomes available, infill and redevelopment opportunities need to be pursued as these areas might well become the modern, walkable and higher density centers that are coveted by both Baby Boomers and Millennials. Likewise, as younger residents begin their families, traditional single-family homes built in greenfields, as well as the larger estate properties catering to higher income professionals, might be developed in order to help Alabaster meet its future housing needs and address identified gaps in the housing stock (refer to the Housing Market Analysis in Appendix B).

Figure 3.6: Accommodating Future Growth Map



The City of Alabaster should consider the following principles when looking at where and how to accommodate future growth:

- Growth should occur where there is adequate existing or planned infrastructure (such as roads, schools, water, sewer, etc.) to accommodate it.
- Growth should be encouraged where the city has made a substantial public investment.
- Growth should occur in places that potentially have the most benefit for all city residents.
- Growth should help to define Alabaster’s identity and enhance the high quality of life.
- Growth should not put existing neighborhoods at undue risk of change.

Given these conditions, redevelopment opportunities fall into two broad categories:

- Redevelopment of land that enhances and/or improves existing uses in response to land use policy decisions (i.e. Historic Downtown and Silluria Mill).
- Development of land that changes use based on increasing market pressure supported by policy i.e. SR 119 corridor.



(1)



(2)

Gateways

A gateway feature designation has been applied to areas where entry markers are needed to signify entrance into the City of Alabaster. These features may include signage, architecture, public art (sculptures/murals), fountains, and landscaping. Gateway features provide the City with the opportunity to build a unique image, identity and overall brand. These are distinctive areas that have the ability to convey a lasting image to residents, businesspeople and visitors of the City upon arrival.

All gateways into Alabaster should be well maintained, enhanced by attractive signage and landscaping to signal arrival to both visitors and residents. The following locations serve as image corridors into the city and are identified as gateways into Alabaster:

- I-65 at U.S. 31
- CR 11 (Simmsville Road) at northeastern city limits
- U.S 31 at the northern city limits
- SR 119 at U.S 31
- CR 17 at CR 12/ Butler Road (Old Maylene)
- CR 17 at 1st Avenue West (Fox Valley)
- CR 95 (9th Street NW) at the northern city limits

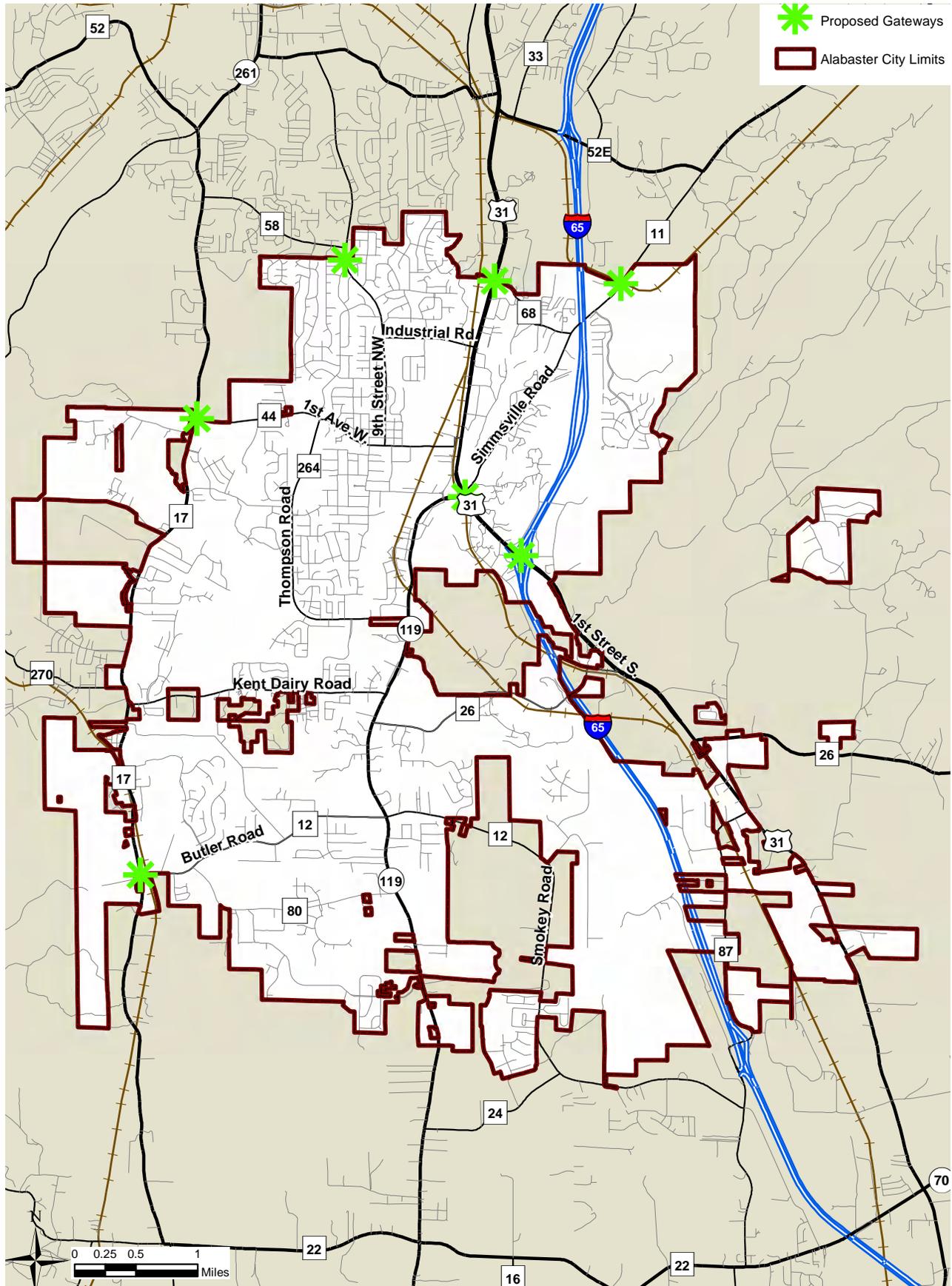
These heavily traveled corridors represent the most logical location for public investment in gateway features. To have the biggest impact on establishing a community identity, gateway features should have common themes (consistency), yet be unique to the character of feature it describes. The scale of these gateways may vary based upon roadway size. **Figure 3.7** identifies where proposed gateway features should be located.

Left:

(1) Existing Gateway at U.S. 31 S and I-65

(2) Illustration of a gateway at U.S. 31 and CR 66 (Industrial Road)

Figure 3.7: Gateways Map





(1)



(2)

Healthy and Active Living Resources

Healthy and active living infrastructure is an important priority for Alabaster’s future. Through the public involvement process, the desire to create a more active environment where individuals, families, and friends can walk and bike throughout the City while easily accessing parks, and community facilities and transit was identified. Providing connections and furthering synergies among these resources will help further Alabaster’s quality of life. Important resources to leverage include:

- U.S. 31 Medical Mile
- Buck Creek Trail
- Alabaster YMCA
- Alabaster Senior Center
- Places of worship
- Shelby Baptist Medical Center



(3)



(4)

Above:
 (1) Alabaster Senior Center
 (2) Alabaster YMCA
 (Source: www.facebook.com/alabasterymca)
 (3) Siluria Baptist Church
 (4) Buck Creek Trail and Trailhead

Neighborhood Commercial Target Areas

Figure 3.8 identifies designated Neighborhood Commercial Target Areas as does the Future Land Use Map. Neighborhood Commercial is defined as properties that accommodate small scale retail and service developments that serve the convenience needs of neighboring residents. Typical uses include restaurants, pharmacies, convenience stores, dry cleaners, and salons. The following development recommendations are specific to retail and service opportunities. These recommendations are intended to address community retail demand gaps and to bolster employment opportunities for residents.

- CR 17 at 1st Avenue West
- CR 66 (Industrial Road) at CR 95 (9th Street SW)
- CR 11 (Simmsville Road) in the northeast city limits
- CR 12 (Butler Road) near CR 80 (Mission Hills Road)

Neighborhood Commercial Target Areas are strategically located to provide convenient retail and services within walking distance of surrounding neighborhoods. They are identified as areas that are currently underserved with neighborhood commercial uses. They have been prioritized to fill the ‘gaps’ of residential areas that do not have retail uses in comfortable walking distance (1/4 – 1/2 of a mile).

These target areas include:

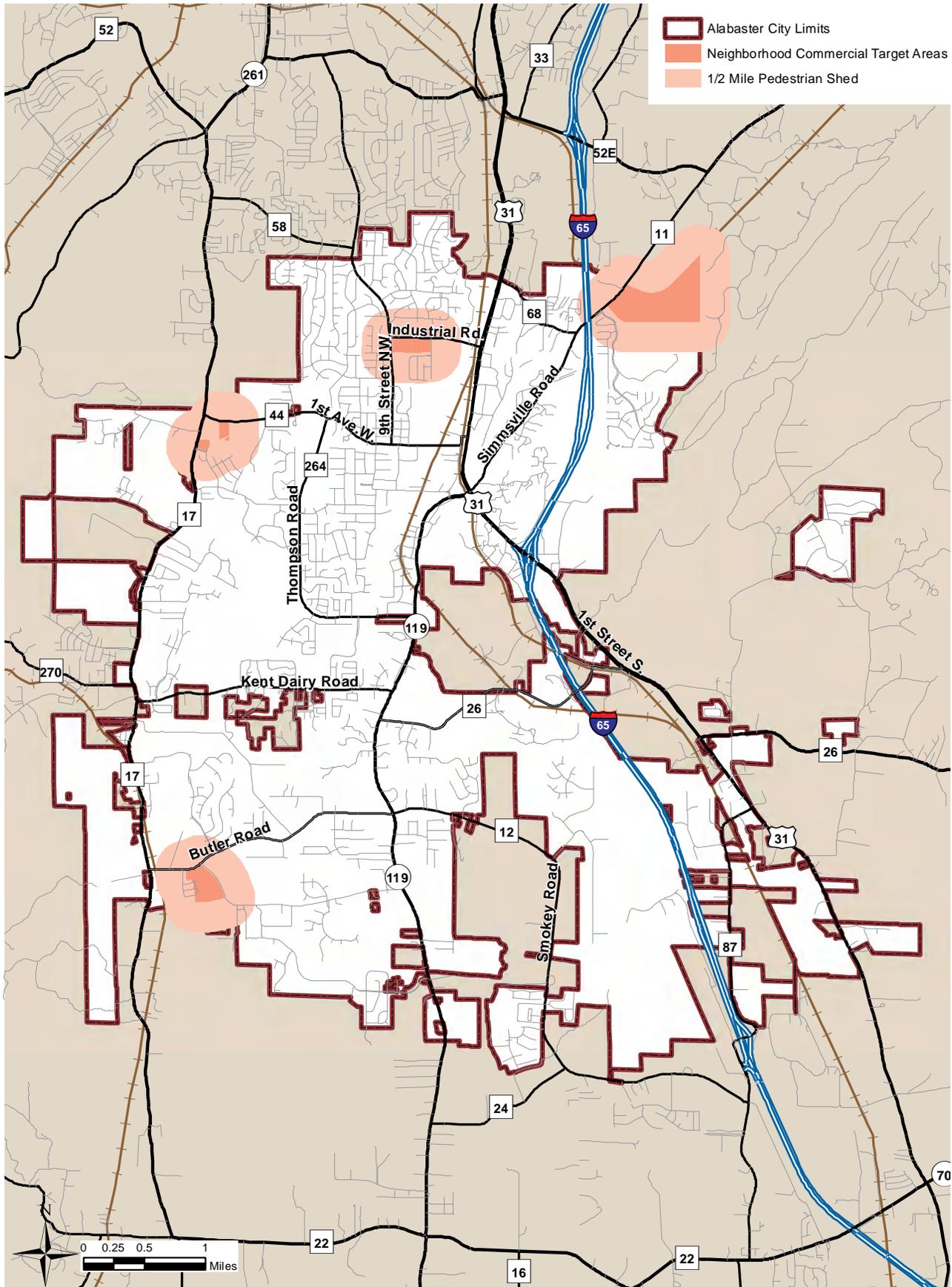


Neighborhood Commercial can help further a walkable and bikeable environment while providing desired amenities for adjacent neighborhoods as well as an active street life.



Left: Before and after images of a neighborhood corner in West Homewood, Alabama.

Figure 3.8: Neighborhood Commercial Target Areas



Priority Redevelopment Areas

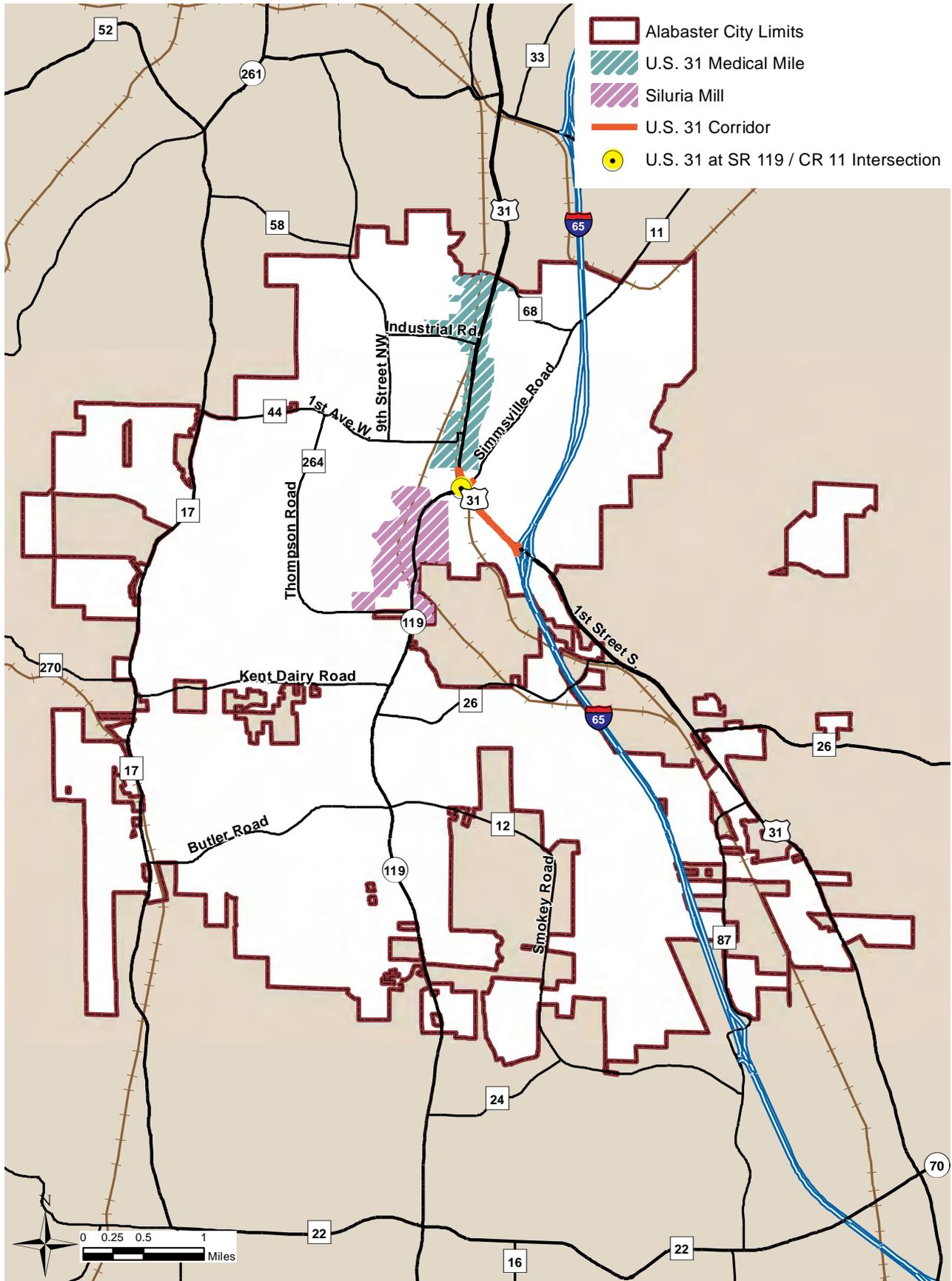
Through this planning process, two priority redevelopment areas within the City of Alabaster were identified. These include the U.S. 31 Medical Mile and Siluria Mill.

The *Alabaster Forward* plan development process created specific redevelopment concepts and recommendations for both the U.S. 31 Medical Mile Corridor and Siluria Mill. These concepts, while illustrative in nature, represent the community's vision for how both of these important locations can actively be redeveloped, and evolve over time when provided the right tools and incentives as catalysts. These concepts are presented in greater detail in Appendix E (Design Recommendations for Siluria Mill and the Medical Mile Corridor).

Figure 3.9 illustrates other key areas within the city that need attention, maybe not to the level of the Medical Mile and Siluria Mill, but none-the-less needing some sort of action to slow or remediate decay. The top area needing attention, as identified by stakeholders and the public, is the U.S. 31 corridor between the I-65 interchange and SR 119. This corridor is a major gateway into the City. Recommendations for this corridor include addressing land uses and civic assets that front the corridor, as well as buffering the corridor from the neighborhoods that sit behind it. Taking steps to beautify the corridor, as well as working on other improvements, will serve the City well as it looks to attract private investment.

In addition to beautifying this corridor, the intersection of U.S. 31 with SR 119/CR-11 (Simmsville Road) needs to be aesthetically improved. While little, if anything can be done to mitigate the impact of the CSX railroad crossing that parallels U.S. 31 in this area, the City has the ability to work with ALDOT and Shelby County to improve the intersection. This includes greening the approaches and accommodating pedestrian movements through the intersection.

Figure 3.9: Priority Redevelopment Areas Map



Higher Density Development: Myth and Fact

Myth	Fact
Higher-density development overburdens public schools and other public services and requires more infrastructure support systems.	<p>The nature of who lives in higher density housing- fewer families with children—puts less demand on schools and other public services than low-density housing. Moreover, the compact nature of higher-density development requires less extensive infrastructure to support it.</p> <p>Number of School Age Children per 100 Units of New Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-to-high rise apartments- 19 children • Garden apartments- 21 children • Owner-occupied single-family homes- 64 children
Higher-density developments lower property values in surrounding areas.	No discernible difference exists in the appreciation rate of properties located near higher-density development and those that are not. Some research even shows that higher-density development can increase property values.
Higher-density development creates more regional traffic congestion and parking problems than low-density development.	<p>Higher-density development generates less traffic than low-density development per unit; it makes walking and public transit more feasible and creates opportunities for shared parking.</p> <p>Average Daily Car Trips by Type of Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family detached housing- 10 per day • Apartment- 6.3 per day
Higher-density development leads to higher crime rates.	The crime rates at higher-density developments are not significantly different from those at lower-density developments
Higher-density development is environmentally more destructive than lower-density development.	Low-density development increases air and water pollution and destroys natural areas by paving and urbanizing greater swaths of land.
Higher-density development is unattractive and does not fit in a low-density community.	Attractive, well-designed, and well-maintained higher-density development attracts good residents and tenants and fits into existing communities.
No one in suburban areas wants higher-density development.	Our population is changing and becoming increasingly diverse. Many of these households now prefer higher-density housing, even in suburban locations.
Higher-density housing is only for lower-income households.	People of all income groups choose higher-density housing.

Source: Haughey, Richard M. *Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact*. Washington, D.C.:

ULI—the Urban Land Institute, 2005.

Available for download at http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/HigherDensity_MythFact.ashx.pdf

Planning Staff Reports - Development Impacts

It is recommended that the City of Alabaster Planning and Zoning Department staff conduct and produce staff reports for each proposed development application that is presented before the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Typical Elements of Staff Reports

1. **Project description:**
 - a. General location / address
 - b. Parcel I.D. , township, range, section
 - c. Property owner(s)
 - d. Agent / Applicant name and affiliation
 - e. Acreage
 - f. Current zoning
 - g. Proposed zoning
 - h. Existing land use
 - i. Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designation
2. **Description of the request**
 - a. Type of request (rezoning, comprehensive plan amendment, annexation, plat, etc)
 - b. Maps displaying subject property (aerial imagery, zoning map, site plan)
 - c. Background and history
 - d. Details of the site plan
 - e. Public meetings (if required)
3. **Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and other Adopted City Plans or Policies**
4. **Comments from City Departments or other County Agencies (if applicable)**
 - a. Police
 - b. Fire
 - c. Public Works
 - d. Environmental Services
 - e. Parks and Recreation
 - f. School Board
5. **Impact Analysis**
 - a. Projected financial impact of the request
 - b. Traffic impact analysis (if applicable)
 - See example in City of Alabaster Transportation Plan (Appendix D)
 - c. School impact analysis (if applicable)
 - Provide information regarding the difference in the number of potential students from the existing zoning to the proposed zoning.
 - Number of students potentially generated by the proposed development.
 - Compare with the adequacy of school capacity in the immediate area of the proposed development.
6. **Staff comments and recommendation, including proposed conditions**

See the following link for a good example of a planning staff report that includes an impact analysis of the proposed development on the schools: http://www.matthewsnc.gov/Portals/0/Board%20Agenda/2013%20October%202014/7A-2013-602_memo.pdf

4

Policies and Actions

What are Policies?

Policies are adopted to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local officials and decision-makers for making decisions in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including achieving the Vision and appropriately addressing the Plan’s goals. Supporting the policies are actions, which are specific measures that need to be undertaken by the City and its partners to implement the policies. While some actions are ongoing, most actions have an entity(ies) tasked with its implementation (see Implementation Chapter 5). The following policies are organized around the seven major elements of the plan:

1. Land Use
2. Housing
3. Community Services and Infrastructure
4. Civic and Cultural Amenities
5. Transportation
6. Economic Development
7. Governance

Icons following each policy indicate the policy’s relationship to the corresponding Comprehensive Plan goals, as described in Chapter 2.

Land Use Policies



Improve community appearance and character.

Action 1.1

Evaluate and amend development regulations to help insure aesthetic quality and preserve the character of Alabaster’s neighborhoods and communities.

Action 1.2

Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance to create design overlay districts for Siluria Mill, and along the State Route 119 (SR 119) and U.S. 31 Corridors

Design overlay districts are intended to encourage a more uniform and aesthetically pleasing appearance. The design overlay zoning districts are placed “over” the base zoning in an area in order to modify the base zoning’s regulatory standards. Typically, a design overlay district alters such standards as building placement, size and height, parking and access, landscaping and buffering, and signage. See more information in the call out box.

Policies and Actions User Guide

Figure 4.1: Policies and Actions Example

Goals #	Icon
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	



Did you Know....

Overlay Districts encourage a more uniform and aesthetically pleasing appearance. An overlay district is a zoning tool that guides the future growth and character of an area in a manner consistent with the desired vision for that road corridors. The overlay zoning district is placed “over” the base zoning in an area in order to modify the base zoning’s regulatory standards.

Typically, an overlay district alters such standards as building placement, size and height, parking and access, landscaping and buffering, and signage. An overlay district does not determine the use of the property; the use is governed by the underlying base zoning. The standards and guidelines would apply to all residential and non-residential new construction and improvement in the overlay area that require building and/or sign permits, or to any modifications that are made to the exterior appearance of existing buildings and parking. By establishing an overall standard of design quality, an overlay district helps to avoid the visual chaos and functional inefficiencies of places where design decisions are made independently with little or no regard for how they affect a neighboring property or the perception of the area.

An overlay district typically includes both mandatory (standards) and advisory (guidelines) design principles:

- Standards are specific development controls that govern quantitative and measurable design objectives, such as the placement and height of buildings or the dimensions and lighting of signs. They are expressed with terms like “shall” and “must”, and are often described in tables and diagrams that show precise dimensions or fixed limits within which a proposed design must fall.
- Guidelines provide direction on more subjective or qualitative design objectives, such as the architectural character of buildings, materials and colors. Guidelines are open to interpretation and admit a variety of solutions that support the general design intent of the overlay district. They are expressed with terms like “should” and “encouraged”, and are illustrated with examples from other communities.

The different sections covered within the overlay district might include:

- Building Standards (for building setbacks, building height, glazing of the street wall, and maximum lot coverage)
- Architectural Treatment Standards and Guidelines (for facades, massing, materials, colors, roofs, awnings and canopies)
- Parking and Access Design Standards and Guidelines (for surface parking and structured parking)
- Signage Standards & Guidelines (for design and materials, types of prohibited signs, lighting, permitted signs by type: awning and canopy signs, free-standing signs, monument signs, wall signs, window signs, flags and flagpoles, and temporary signage)
- Landscape Screening and Buffer Design Standards & Guidelines (for buffers between zoning districts, parking perimeter screening and parking interior planting)
- Streetscape Design Standards and Guidelines (for sidewalks, landscaping, street furniture, lighting)

See Appendix F for sample language of a Corridors Overlay District that could be applied to properties along SR 119 and U.S. 31.

 **Action 1.3**

Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance to develop city-wide minimal architectural standards.

New development, redevelopment and rehabilitation of structures and sites shall occur in a manner that is consistent with the neighborhood and architectural context of the immediate area, and is supportive of Alabaster’s unique characters.

 **Action 1.4**

Consider “Demolition by Neglect” statutes to be included in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to deter landowners from allowing their properties to deteriorate to the point they must be removed.

 **Action 1.5**

Review and utilize eminent domain powers when necessary to take control of properties that are abandoned or neglected, especially those spreading blight.

 **Policy 2.**    

Promote land use patterns that are supportive of non-motorized transportation systems.

 **Action 2.1**

Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance to create mixed-use districts.

The Alabaster Forward Future Land Use Plan recommends a broader range of land use categories and related activities than is found in the previous 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The existing Mixed-Use District should be eliminated and two new categories should be created: a Mixed-use Residential District and a new Mixed-use Office / Commercial District.

 **Policy 3.**   

Reform parking requirements.

 **Action 3.1**

Modify parking requirements within the existing Zoning Ordinance to reduce environmental impacts as a function of the amount of parking space required.

 **Policy 4.**    

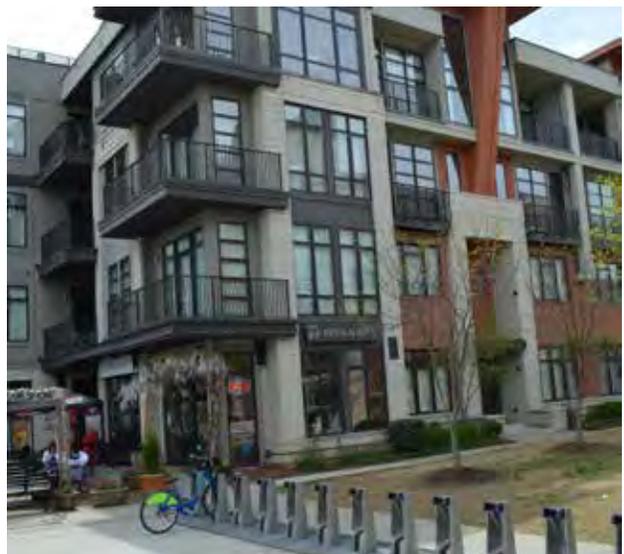
Encourage infill and redevelopment.

 **Action 4.1**

Promote reuse and redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, obsolete commercial development, and residential buildings by the private sector over the conversion of vacant greenspace into new development.

 **Action 4.2**

Incentivize the redevelopment of vacant lots, deteriorated buildings and greyfield redevelopment along major arterial corridors.



Above: Mixed-use development in Chattanooga



Creating Jobs. Keeping Character.

Above: Main Street Alabama Logo (Source: <http://www.mainstreetalabama.org/>)

 **Action 4.3**

Revitalize Alabaster’s historic downtown by pursuing a Main Street Alabama distinction.

A critical component of Alabaster’s redevelopment is the revitalization of the historic downtown area along U.S. 31. Main Street provides a unique sense of place, unlike many other areas in Shelby County. The City should make an effort to revitalize Main Street by seeking Main Street Alabama distinction. The Main Street Program is designed to encourage economic development by relying upon the following “four-point approach”: Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring.

Housing Policies



Expand housing choices.

 **Action 1.1**

Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance to allow for a variety of housing types and densities to promote lifelong housing needs, such as accessory units, townhomes, assisted living facilities, and a variety of single-family and multi-family units.

 **Action 1.2**

Implement the Future Land Use Plan to allow for a variety of housing types and densities.

 **Action 1.3**

Consider large scale multi-family developments to be built as a component within Planned Development Districts (PDD) and smaller scale multi-family developments permitted within new Mixed-use districts. Higher densities in such areas will provide financial support to the commercial components and add vibrancy to the development.

Architectural standards should be considered for new multi-family developments (see Land Use Action 1.4).



Protect and rehabilitate existing places.

 **Action 2.1**

Develop a publicly accessible citywide parcel database with the property condition and code enforcement statuses of each property.

The database should include property conditions collected from a community assessment, code enforcement status, tax delinquency status, foreclosures, and lending patterns. The creation of an app or dedicated website, and/or a property conditions link on the City’s website should be considered for accessibility.

 **Action 2.2**

Create a code enforcement guide that enables citizens to properly report poor property conditions.

Residents and community organizations would benefit from learning about the process of code enforcement and redevelopment opportunities in or near their neighborhoods. The code enforcement guide would help increase the City’s capacity to identify and track properties by streamlining the public reporting process. Consider making the guide available online and in print formats.

✂ Action 2.3

Maintain a community beautification entity to support the City’s code enforcement guide.

The creation of a “Community Beautification Coalition” that comprises of residents, community, and neighborhood leaders, and representatives from faith-base and other non-profits organizations should be used to support the City’s code enforcement staff in identifying aging, dilapidated, and vacant properties. The entity could also identify and celebrate exceptional well-maintained properties.



Above: Citizens Code Enforcement Guide in Manatee County Florida (Source: Manatee County).

Community Services and Infrastructure Policies



Provide adequate public infrastructure.

✂ Action 1.1

Adopt an Adequate Facilities Ordinance.

Adequate Facilities Ordinances require that new developments can only be approved once sufficient public facilities are either already in place or will be built concurrently with the proposed development.

✂ Action 1.2

Create a standalone Broadband Strategic Plan to identify where and how broadband infrastructure should be deployed.

✂ Action 1.3

Modify the existing Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to include broadband infrastructure provisions to include fiber optic conduit or cable in the suite of infrastructure improvements that currently include water, sewer, electric utilities, etc.

✂ Action 1.4

Develop a joint-use policy to provide clear direction on who will own the broadband infrastructure (will it be a public dedication or will the developer own it), and to ensure access to future broadband infrastructure.

✂ Action 1.5

Develop a replacement plan for obsolete sewer infrastructure.

✂ Action 1.6

Review and update the existing stormwater management ordinance to ensure sufficient capacity to meet needs.

In addition to existing stormwater management measures, the incorporation of rain gardens and bio-retention ponds as additional stormwater management components and other best management practices should be considered for new development.

Policy 2.   

Enhance existing fire and police services.

Action 2.1 

Construct new fire stations to provide better response times to remote areas.

The following areas within the city have been identified for lack of service and low response times: U.S 31 south corridor, Saginaw, Camp Branch and CR 17.

Action 2.2 

Allocate funding for an aerial ladder truck.

Action 2.3 

Explore the feasibility of having an Alabaster Fire Department based ambulance system.

Action 2.4 

Seek to obtain a lower Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating.



(1)

Above:
 (1) Aerial Ladder Truck (Source: City of Cambridge MA)
 (2) Fire Ambulance Truck (Source: Arete Healthcare Services)

Action 2.5 

Purchase a robotic / automated call system to contact citizens in case of emergencies, power outages, hazardous spills, etc.

Action 2.6 

Upgrade the digital radio system for both the Police and Fire Departments.

Action 2.7 

Explore the feasibility of co-locating the Police and Fire Departments into a new public services facility.

Civic and Cultural Amenities Policies

Policy 1.     

Address inadequacies in aging public facilities.

Action 1.1 

Develop a phasing plan for public facilities.

Action 1.2 

Consider adaptive re-use of shopping center space to provide new and ADA compliant public facilities.

Action 1.3 

Coordinate with school districts to provide public facilities on or near school campuses that can be used by the entire community, thereby reducing school district costs for these amenities.

 **Action 1.4**

Construct a recreation center in Siluria Mill (see Appendix E for the Redevelopment Scenario Concepts for Siluria Mill).

 **Action 1.5**

Construct a civic / convention center along the U.S. 31 Medical Mile (see Appendix E for the Redevelopment Scenario Concept for the U.S. 31 Medical Mile).



Above: Illustration of a Civic Center for the Medical Mile



Expand recreational opportunities.

 **Action 2.1**

Extend the Buck Creek Trail north to the U.S. 31 Medical Mile and south to Veterans Park to accommodate recreational user needs (see Transportation Action 1.2. and Appendix D Transportation Plan).

Above: Buck Creek Waterway



 **Action 2.2**

Build a trail connection off of the Buck Creek Trail to the proposed new Thompson High School campus.

 **Action 2.3**

Construct a town / city green in Siluria Mill (see Appendix E for the Redevelopment Scenario Concepts for Siluria Mill)

The town / city green could be used for community events, including an amphitheater for performances.

 **Action 2.4**

Modify the existing Subdivision Regulations to require a minimum amount of green space in new subdivisions.

 **Action 2.5**

Acquire vacant and tax delinquent properties to expand recreational opportunities for residents, creating areas for pocket parks and community gardens.



Promote art and culture in Alabaster.

 **Action 3.1**

Establish public-private organization to promote

existing cultural amenities in Alabaster and to increase involvement.

✂ Action 3.2

Develop a citywide Public Art Master Plan that identifies and prioritizes outdoor areas for public art.

✂ Action 3.3

Engage local and regional artists to understand how the City can help support their cultural activities.

✂ Action 3.4

Continue to sponsor and organize local cultural events, such as art exhibits, performances, festivals, art competitions, farmers markets, concerts and trail runs.



Above: Alabaster City Fest 2015 (Source: Facebook.com/AlabasterCityFest)

✂ Action 3.5

Partner with Thompson High School’s Fine Arts Department, local art galleries, the University of Montevallo, American Village and the private sector to host events.

Transportation Policies

Policy 1. 

Develop a multimodal transportation system.

✂ Action 1.1

Expand the Buck Creek Trail to connect north to the U.S. 31 Medical Mile and south to Veterans Park, and to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians as an alternative transportation route.

The long term vision is to make the Buck Creek Trail more accessible through the development of trail extensions. Appropriate environmental protections are needed to ensure the creek is healthy and sufficiently buffered from area development.

✂ Action 1.2

Modify the Subdivision Regulations to require new subdivisions to allow convenient circulation and to provide multiple, alternative outlets from the neighborhood to adjoining neighborhoods and /or major streets.

✂ Action 1.3

Consider a community circulator shuttle service that connects the Senior Center to the U.S 31 Medical Mile, and that connects residential neighborhoods to larger commercial centers such as the Propst Promenade (see Appendix D Transportation Plan).

 **Action 1.4**

Consider adopting a Complete Streets policy in all roadway maintenance and reconstruction projects.

A Complete Street is safe, comfortable and convenient. It supports a full range of travel choices, not only for the automobile but also for those traveling by foot, bicycle, and transit. Complete streets are fully accessible to all users (kids, adults, seniors and people with disabilities).



Above: A Complete Street (Source: walksacramento.org)

 **Action 1.5**

Provide safe pedestrian crossings along busy roadways at appropriate locations.

 **Policy 2.**  

Evaluate the traffic impacts of new developments.

 **Action 2.1**

Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to require that new large scale developments submit traffic impact studies.

 **Action 2.2**

Develop and publish Traffic Impact Study guidelines (see Appendix D Transportation Plan).

 **Policy 3.**  

Manage access onto major streets and activity sites to minimize traffic conflicts.



 **Action 3.1**

Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to include access management policies that will manage access to and from adjacent properties and that will preserve traffic flow in terms of safety, capacity and speed.

 **Action 3.2**

Develop corridor specific access management plans for the SR 119 and U.S. 31 corridors (see Appendix D Transportation Plan).

Economic Development Policies

 **Policy 1.** 

Enhance economic development activities.

 **Action 1.1**

Consolidate the various economic development activities occurring within the City.

Designate a single individual to serve as the city's Economic Development Director.

 **Action 1.2**

Develop a web page (maybe part of the City's website or separate) and/or a brochure with a list of available resources for local businesses.

 **Policy 2.** 

Promote entrepreneurship.

 **Action 2.1**

Encourage entrepreneurship by providing start-up help, training, technical and financial assistance and incentives.



Above: Improve the City of Alabaster's existing economic development page by providing more resources to potential clients.

 **Action 2.2**

Evaluate the feasibility of a local business incubator program potentially located in the city.



Innovation Depot, a local business incubator, in Birmingham, Alabama (Source: Luker Photography & Video).

 **Policy 3.**   

Attract new businesses.

 **Action 3.1**

Recruit businesses based on the potential identified in the Market Analysis (see Appendix B).

 **Action 3.2**

Establish a quasi-public retail leasing and management agency/professional to plan and coordinate the leasing strategy, actively recruit tenants, and direct them to appropriate property owners so that leasing deals may be conducted privately.

 **Action 3.3**

Focus on business opportunities that complement existing business.

Avoid recruitment of competing business and services. Recruitment should serve to increase business diversity in the community rather than increase competitiveness. The retail environment should first serve and enhance the surrounding

neighborhoods with a broader trade area as a secondary objective.

 **Action 3.4**

Create and maintain an online database of available retail spaces including size, zoning, lease rates, price, utilities, condition, etc.

 **Action 3.5**

Utilize a cluster development strategy in business recruitment efforts that focus on the Health Care and Social Assistance industry.

Cluster development is a tool for improving regional competitiveness by actively pursuing industry sectors where Alabaster has a distinct competitive advantage. Companies that locate in a cluster benefit from collaboration and innovation, a skilled labor force, and coordinated efforts that can save costs.



Create high quality environments through place-making initiatives.

 **Action 4.1**

Complete a strategic and wayfinding and branding study for the city that considers signage, gateways, lighting and landscaping unique to Alabaster.

 **Action 4.2**

Create and promote a consistent branding strategy.

 **Action 4.3**

Establish a Capital Improvement District to attract new business development in targeted areas such as Siluria Mill and the U.S. 31 Medical Mile.

 **Action 4.4**

Establish a facade improvement program along the U.S. 31 Medical Mile.

 **Action 4.5**

Modify / adopt the Corridors Overlay District for properties along SR 119 and U.S. 31 (see Appendix F).

Governance Policies



Enhance City of Alabaster E-services.

Action 1.1

Use innovative technology to make the City of Alabaster more efficient.

City services can be streamlined by providing a single online bill pay site, and technology could be used to provide electronic notifications of service outages.

Action 1.2

Conduct a quarterly review of the City of Alabaster website to ensure information is relevant and that the website remains user friendly.

Action 1.3

Develop a “Community Feedback Loop” to improve communication between the City, residents and any other vested partners.

The “Community Feedback Loop,” would allow the City of Alabaster to prioritize actions in the Alabaster Forward plan with the consensus of the residents. This could be accomplished through a webpage or mobile app.



Above: The Alabaster First Mobile App could be utilized to accomplish this action.

Action 1.4

Develop a “New residents” portal.

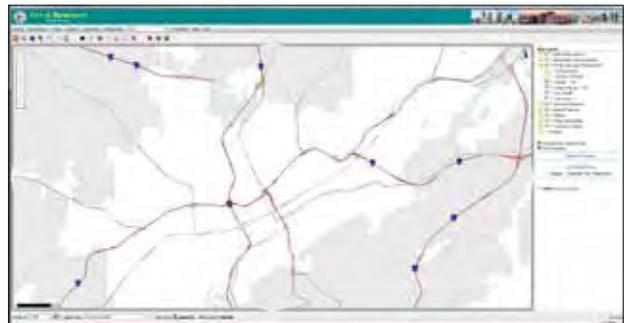
The “New Residents” portal should be linked directly from the City’s main webpage. It should serve as a central hub with links to a variety of topics someone new to the city would need including: how to enroll in schools, utility hookup information, cable/internet providers, churches, hospitals, etc.



Action 2.1

Create a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS database to improve coordination across Alabaster City Departments.

The City needs to be able to provide the most recent GIS data available to City Departments to ensure the efficiency, accuracy, and to alleviate inquiry discrepancies. The City should consider publishing the data online for the public to view.



Above: The City of Birmingham provides the public with free online map data, with layers such as zoning, parcels and school districts. The City of Alabaster could consider a similar system. (Source: <http://gisweb.informationbirmingham.com/>)

5

Implementation

Introduction

The *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* sets forth a bold vision for the City of Alabaster's future and a set of goals, policies and action steps to achieve these goals. The plan focuses on policy and organizational initiatives to more effectively achieve the goals, and it identifies criteria for decision making and the kinds of projects that are preferred, given the goals of the plan. The plan will require a significant commitment of time, energy and financial resources to implement and it must be implemented incrementally over time, one step at a time.

The adoption of this *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan* is the first step in the implementation process. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the City of Alabaster and its City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, planning staff, as well as many other municipal departments, community leaders, and concerned citizens. Continuing action to implement the Plan will be needed for it to have lasting impact. Working with a range of implementation partners, the planning staff will be the lead facilitator to implement the Plan and coordinate consistency reviews among municipal departments.

Implementation Matrix

The implementation matrix in **Table 5.1** identifies how the policies and actions in Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan should be implemented. The lead and supporting agencies and departments charged with leading the implementation are identified. The actions are assigned suggested time frames for implementation, which may vary based on economic influences, potential funding sources (described later in this chapter) and other factors:

- Short-term: Tasks that could be initiated and/or implemented within 1-5 years of the Comprehensive Plan's adoption.
- Long-term: Tasks that are on a 6 year or greater timeframe after the Comprehensive Plan's adoption.
- Ongoing: Tasks that may be implemented in a series of incremental steps involving numerous agencies or tasks that are ongoing, continuous efforts.

Implementation Agencies

Since the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be implemented over several years, during which administrations, departments, boards and commissions may change, it is important to identify which agency(ies) should take the lead and be in a supporting role for a particular action task. A list of agencies and abbreviations is shown on the next page. It is important to note that the policies and recommended actions outlined in the matrix are for consideration only, and do not constitute an obligation on any City department, agency or organization's part to lead, support or participate in any given activity. The implementation matrix simply identifies recommended actions and potential partners in furthering the plan's goals and policies.

Agency Abbreviations

- AAC Alabaster Art’s Council
- ABE Alabaster Board of Education
- AFM Alabaster Farmer’s Market
- ALDOT Alabama Department of Transportation
- ASC Alabaster Senior Center
- ATC Alabaster Teen Council
- AV American Village
- BJCTA Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority
- BMPO Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization
- BSD Building Safety Department
- BZA Board of Zoning Adjustment
- CA City Attorney
- CAA City of Alabaster Administration
- CC City Council
- CE City of Alabaster Engineer
- CL Community Leaders
- CM City Manager
- ES Environmental Services Department
- FBO Faith Based Organizations
- FD Fire Department
- HAB Housing Abatement Board
- IDB Industrial Development Board
- L Library
- LBO Local Business Owners
- MA Mainstreet Alabama
- MO Mayor’s Office
- NA Neighborhood Associations
- NP Non-profit Organizations
- P&ZC Planning and Zoning Commission
- PD Police Department
- PO Property Owners
- POA Private Organizations or Agencies
- PP Propst Promenade
- PR Parks and Recreation Department
- PW Public Works
- PZD Planning and Zoning Department
- R Residents
- RD Revenue Department
- SB Shelby Baptist Medical Center
- SC Shelby County
- SCCC Shelby County Chamber of Commerce
- SCDT Shelby County Department of Transportation
- UMF University of Montevallo Fine Arts Department
- UP Utility Providers

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix

Action		Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*
Land Use Policies					
Policy 1: Improve community appearance and character					
Action 1.1.	Evaluate and amend development regulations to help insure aesthetic quality and preserve the character of Alabaster’s neighborhoods and communities.	PZD	P&ZC	Short-term	Staff time
Action 1.2.	Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance to create design overlay districts for Siluria Mill, and along the State Route 119 (SR 119) and U.S. 31 Corridors.	PZD, CM	P&ZC,BZA	Short-term	Staff time or General Fund for a consultant
Action 1.3.	Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance to develop city-wide minimal architectural standards.	PZD	P&ZC,BZA	Short-term	Staff time or General Fund for a consultant
Action 1.4.	Consider “Demolition by Neglect” statutes to be included in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to deter landowners from allowing their properties to deteriorate to the point they must be removed.	BSD	HAB, P&ZC, CA	Short-term	Staff time
Action 1.5.	Review and utilize eminent domain powers when necessary to take control of properties that are abandoned or neglected, especially those spreading blight.	CM,CC	CA	On going	Staff time
Policy 2: Promote land use patterns that are supportive of non-motorized transportation systems.					
Action 2.1.	Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance to create mixed-use districts.	PZD	P&ZC, BZA	Short-term	Staff time
Policy 3: Reform parking requirements					
Action 3.1.	Modify parking requirements within the existing Zoning Ordinance to reduce environmental impacts as a function of the amount of parking space required.	PZD	PW, P&ZC, BZA	Short-term	Staff time

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action		Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*
Land Use Policies					
Policy 4: Encourage infill and redevelopment					
Action 4.1.	Promote reuse and redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, obsolete commercial development, and residential buildings by the private sector over the conversion of vacant greenspace into new development.	CM, IDB	HAB, P&ZC, CC	On going	Staff time
Action 4.2.	Incentivize the redevelopment of vacant lots, deteriorated buildings and greenfield redevelopment along major arterial corridors.	CM, IDB	RD, CC	Short-term	Staff time, Tax Increment Financing, Tax Abatement
Action 4.3.	Revitalize Alabaster’s historic downtown by pursuing a Main Street Alabama distinction.	CM, MO	PO, MA	Short-term	General Fund, Main Street Alabama
Housing Policies					
Policy 1: Expand housing choices.					
Action 1.1.	Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance to allow for a variety of housing types and densities to promote lifelong housing needs, such as accessory units, townhomes, assisted living facilities, and a variety of single-family and multi-family units.	PZD	P&ZC, BZA	Short-term	Staff time
Action 1.2.	Implement the Future Land Use Plan to allow for a variety of housing types and densities.	P&ZC, CC	PZD	On going	Staff time
Action 1.3.	Consider large scale multi-family developments to be built as a component within Planned Development Districts (PDD) and smaller scale multi-family developments permitted within new Mixed-use districts. Higher densities in such areas will provide financial support to the commercial components and add vibrancy to the development.	CM, IDB	P&ZC	On going	Staff time

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action		Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*
Housing Policies					
Policy 2: Protect and rehabilitate existing places.					
Action 2.1.	Develop a publicly accessible citywide parcel database with the property condition and code enforcement statuses of each city property.	BSD, CAA (i.e GIS)	PD, FD	Short-term	Staff time or General Fund for a consultant
Action 2.2.	Create a Code Enforcement Guide that enables citizens to properly report poor property conditions.	BSD	PZD	On going	Staff time or General Fund for a consultant
Action 2.3.	Maintain a community beautification entity to support the City’s Code Enforcement Guide.	MO	R, LBO, FBO, NA, NP	Short-term	Staff time, General Fund
Community Services and Infrastructure Policies					
Policy 1: Provide adequate public infrastructure					
Action 1.1.	Adopt an Adequate Facilities Ordinance.	PZD	P&ZC, PW, PD, FD, ES, PR, L, ABE	Short-term	Staff time or General Fund for a consultant
Action 1.2.	Create a standalone Broadband Strategic Plan to identify where and how broadband infrastructure should be deployed.	CM, IDB	P&ZC, UP	Short-term	Staff time or General Fund for a consultant
Action 1.3.	Modify the existing Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to include broadband infrastructure provisions to include fiber optic conduit or cable in the suite of infrastructure improvements that currently include water, sewer, electric utilities, etc.	PZD	P&ZC, BZA	Short-term	Staff time
Action 1.4.	Develop a joint-use policy to provide clear direction on who will own the broadband infrastructure (will it be a public dedication or will the developer own it), and to ensure access to future broadband infrastructure.	CM, CA	CC	Short-term	Staff time

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action	Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*	
Community Services and Infrastructure Policies					
Policy 1: Provide adequate public infrastructure					
Action 1.5.	Develop a replacement plan for obsolete sewer infrastructure.	ES	CC	Short-term	Staff time, Sewer Fund
Action 1.6.	Review and update the existing stormwater management ordinance to ensure sufficient capacity to meet needs.	BSD, PZD	ES, P&ZC, CA	Long-term	Staff time
Policy 2: Enhance existing fire and police services.					
Action 2.1.	Construct new fire stations to provide better response times to remote areas.	FD	BSD, CC	Long-term	General Fund, Grant funds
Action 2.2.	Allocate funding for an aerial ladder truck.	FD	CC	Short-term	General Fund, Grant funds
Action 2.3.	Explore the feasibility of having an Alabaster Fire Department based ambulance system.	FD	MO	Short-term	Staff time, General Fund, Grant Funding
Action 2.4.	Seek to obtain a lower Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating.	FD	BSD	Long-term	General Fund
Action 2.5.	Purchase a robotic / automated call system to contact citizens in case of emergencies, power outages, hazardous spills, etc.	FD, PD	CC	Short-term	General Fund, Grant funds
Action 2.6.	Upgrade the digital radio system for both the Police and Fire Departments.	FD, PD	CC	Short-term	General Fund, Grant funds
Action 2.7.	Explore the feasibility of co-locating the Police and Fire Departments into a new public services facility.	CM, FD, PD	CC	Short-term	Staff time, General Fund
Civic and Cultural Amenities Policies					
Policy 1: Address inadequacies in aging public facilities.					
Action 1.1.	Develop a phasing plan for public facilities.	PZD, CM	L, PW	Short-term	Staff time
Action 1.2.	Consider adaptive re-use of shopping center space to provide new and ADA compliant public facilities.	CM, IDB	MO	On going	General Fund, Public Private Partnerships, Bond funding

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action	Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*	
Civic and Cultural Amenities Policies					
Policy 1: Address inadequacies in aging public facilities.					
Action 1.3.	Coordinate with the school district to provide public facilities on or near school campuses that can be used by the entire community, thereby reducing school district costs for these amenities.	ASB, PZD	CM, PR	On going	Staff time, General Fund
Action 1.4.	Construct a recreation center in Siluria Mill (see Appendix E for the Redevelopment Scenario Concept for Siluria Mill).	CM, PR	P&ZC, MO	Long-term	General Fund, Bond funding
Action 1.5.	Construct a civic / convention center along the U.S. 31 Medical Mile (see Appendix E for the Redevelopment Scenario Concept for the U.S. 31 Medical Mile).	CM, MO	P&ZC	Long-term	General Fund, Public Private Partnerships
	Undertake a Master Plan to explore strategic location and desirable attributes of a new civic / convention center.	CM, MO	CC	Short-term	General Fund
	Begin the process to secure site for a new civic / convention center.	CM, MO	CC	Short-term	General Fund
Policy 2: Expand recreational opportunities.					
Action 2.1.	Extend the Buck Creek Trail north to the U.S. 31 Medical Mile and south to Veterans Park and to accommodate recreational user needs (see Chapter 2 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Comprehensive Transportation Plan for further information).	PR, PZD	P&ZC	Short-term	General Fund, ADECA Recreational Trail Program Funds, Transportation Alternatives Program, Public Private Partnerships
Action 2.2.	Build a trail connection off of the Buck Creek Trail to the proposed new Thompson High School campus.	PR, PZD	P&ZC, ACB	Long-term	General Fund, ADECA RTP Funds, Bond financing
Action 2.3.	Construct a town /city green in Siluria Mill (see Appendix E for the Redevelopment Scenario Concept for Siluria Mill).	PR, CM	P&ZC	Long-term	General Fund, Public Private Partnerships

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action		Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*
Civic and Cultural Amenities Policies					
Policy 2: Expand recreational opportunities.					
Action 2.4.	Modify the existing Subdivision Regulations to require a minimum amount of green space in new subdivisions.	PZD	P&ZC	Short-term	Staff time
Action 2.5.	Acquire vacant and tax delinquent properties to expand recreational opportunities for residents, creating areas for pocket parks and community gardens.	CC	P&ZC, NP, POA	On going	General Fund, Public Private Partnerships
Policy 3: Promote art and culture in Alabaster.					
Action 3.1.	Establish public-private organization to promote existing cultural amenities in Alabaster and to increase involvement.	AAC, MO		Short-term	Public Private Partnerships
Action 3.2.	Develop and implement a citywide Public Art Master Plan that identifies and prioritizes outdoor areas for public art.	CM, MO, PR	AAC	Long-term	General Fund
Action 3.3.	Engage local and regional artists to understand how the City can help support their cultural activities.	AAC	MO	On going	Staff time
Action 3.4.	Continue to sponsor and organize local cultural events, such as art exhibits, performances, festivals, art competitions, farmers markets, concerts and trail runs.	AAC, ATC, AFM	MO	On going	Staff time, General Fund
Action 3.5.	Partner with Thompson High School's Fine Arts Department, local art galleries, the University of Montevallo, American Village and the private sector to host events.	AAC, MO	ABE, UMF, AV, NP, POA	On going	Staff time, General Fund

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action		Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*
Transportation Policies					
Policy 1: Develop a multimodal transportation system.					
Action 1.1.	Expand the Buck Creek Trail to connect north to the U.S. 31 Medical Mile and south to Veterans Park, and to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians as an alternative transportation route (see Chapter 2 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan for further information).	PR, PZD	P&ZC	Short-term	General Fund, ADECA Recreational Trail Program Funds, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Public Private Partnerships
Action 1.2.	Modify the Subdivision Regulations to require new subdivisions to allow convenient circulation and to provide multiple, alternative outlets from the neighborhood to adjoining neighborhoods and /or major streets.	PZD	P&ZC	Short-term	Staff time
Action 1.3.	Consider a community circulator shuttle service that connects the Senior Center to the U.S 31 Medical Mile, and that connects residential neighborhoods to larger commercial centers such as the Propst Promenade (see Chapter 2 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan for detailed information).	CM, BJCTA	ASC, SB, PP	Short-term	General Fund, Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 or 5339 Grants
Action 1.4.	Consider adopting a Complete Streets policy in all roadway maintenance and reconstruction projects.	PZD	PW, P&ZC	Long-term	Staff time
Action 1.5.	Provide safe pedestrian crossings along busy roadways at appropriate locations (see Chapter 2 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan for detailed information and priority pedestrian crossing projects).	PW	BMPO, ALDOT	Short-term	General Fund, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grants
Action 1.6.	Implement the proposed “Roadway Improvements” projects in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	See below	See below	On-going	See below

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action	Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*	
Transportation Policies					
Policy 1: Develop a multimodal transportation system.					
Action 1.6.1.	CR 264 (Thompson Road) widening from SR 119 to approximately 1,300 feet west of Warrior Drive.	CM, PW,SC		Short-term	General Fund, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grants
Action 1.6.2.	SR 119 widening from CR 26 (Fulton Springs Road) to CR 80 (Mission Hills Road).	CM, PW	BMPO, ALDOT	Short-term	General Fund, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grants
Action 1.6.3.	CR 11 (Simmsville Road) widening from 2 to 3 lanes and resurfacing between U.S. 31 and Weatherly Club Road.	CM, PB,SC	BMPO	Long-term	General Fund, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grants
Action 1.6.4.	CR 264 (Thompson Road) widening from 2 to 3 lanes from SR 119 to CR 44 (1st Ave. W.).	CM, PW, SC	BMPO	Long-term	General Fund, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grants
Action 1.6.5.	Kent Dairy Road widening from 2 to 3 lanes and resurfacing between CR 17 and Kentwood Drive.	CM, SCT, PW	BMPO	Long-term	General Fund, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grants
Action 1.6.6.	Alabaster Boulevard Extension from Jimmy Gould Drive to U.S. 31.	CM, PW, SC	BMPO	Long-term	General Fund, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grants
Action 1.7.1.	Implement the proposed “Sidewalk Development” projects in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	CM, PW	BMPO, ALDOT	On going	Local Funding, TAP, CMAQ, APPLE, Public Private Partnerships
Action 1.8.1.	Implement the proposed “On-street Bicycle Facilities” projects in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	CM, PW	BMPO	On going	Local Funding, TAP, CMAQ, STP

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action	Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*	
Transportation Policies					
Policy 1: Develop a multimodal transportation system.					
Action 1.9.1.	Implement the proposed “Regional Express Bus Service” project in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	CM, BJCTA	BMPO	Long-term	Local Funding, Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 Grants
Action 1.10.1.	Implement the proposed “Propst Promenade Park and Ride Lot” project in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	CM, BJCTA, PP	BMPO, CS	Short-term	Local Funding, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grants
Action 1.11.1.	Implement the proposed “Designated Truck Routes” as described in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	PW, SC		Short-term	Local Funding (City / County)
Action 1.12.1.	Create a comprehensive signage program to assist trucks on designated routes as described in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	PW, SC		Short-term	Local Funding (City / County)
Action 1.13.1.	Implement the proposed physical or operational improvements for freight as described in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	PW, SC	BMPO	Long-term	Local Funding, STP, CMAQ, APPLE
Action 1.14.1.	Implement the proposed “Streetscape Program for SR 119” as described in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan (also see Land Use Action 1.2).	PZD, PW	BMPO, ALDOT	Short-term	Local Funding, TAP
Action 1.15.1.	Implement the "Local Transportation Investment Program" to address transportation system maintenance as described in Chapter 3 of the <i>Alabaster Forward</i> Transportation Plan.	PZD, PW		On-going	Local Funding, TAP

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action	Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*	
Transportation Policies					
Policy 2: Evaluate the traffic impacts of new developments.					
Action 2.1.	Modify the existing Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to require that new large scale developments submit traffic impact studies.	PZD, BSD(CE)	P&ZC, PW	Short-term	Staff time
Action 2.2.	Develop and publish Traffic Impact Study guidelines.	PZD, BSD(CE)	P&ZC, PW	Short-term	Staff time
Policy 3: Manage access onto major streets and activity sites to minimize traffic conflicts.					
Action 3.1.	Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to include access management policies that will manage access to and from adjacent properties and that will preserve traffic flow in terms of safety, capacity and speed.	PZD	P&ZC , BZA	Short-term	Staff time
Action 3.2.	Develop corridor specific access management plans for the SR 119 and U.S. 31 corridors. (See Comprehensive Transportation Plan for further information).	PZD	P&ZC, ALDOT, SC	Short-term	General Fund, Staff time, Match programs with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action		Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*
Economic Development Policies					
Policy 1: Enhance economic development activities.					
Action 1.1.	Consolidate the various economic development activities occurring within the City.	CM	IDB	On going	Staff time
Action 1.2.	Develop a webpage (maybe part of the City’s website or separate) and/ or a brochure with a list of available resources for local businesses.	CM	CAA	Short-term	Staff time, General Fund
Policy 2: Promote Entrepreneurship.					
Action 2.1.	Encourage entrepreneurship by providing start-up help, training, technical and financial assistance and incentives.	MO	CL	Short-term	Local fund with government and business contributions, higher education funding, Alabama Innovation Fund
Action 2.2.	Evaluate the feasibility of a local business incubator program potentially located in the city.	CM	MO, IDB, SCCC	Short-term	Staff time, General Fund
Policy 3: Attract new businesses.					
Action 3.1.	Recruit businesses based on the potential identified in the Market Analysis (see Appendix B).	CM, MO	IDB	On going	Staff time, bond financing for infrastructure and site preparation
Action 3.2.	Establish a quasi-public retail leasing and management agency/ professional to plan and coordinate the leasing strategy, actively recruit tenants, and direct them to appropriate property owners so that leasing deals may be conducted privately.	MO, CM	IDB	Long-term	General Fund

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action		Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*
Economic Development Policies					
Policy 3: Attract new businesses.					
Action 3.3.	Focus on business opportunities that complement existing business.	CM, MO	IDB	On going	Staff time
Action 3.4.	Create and maintain an online database of available retail spaces including size, zoning, lease rates, price, utilities, condition, etc.	CAA	IDB, CM	On going	Staff time, General Fund
Action 3.5.	Utilize a cluster development strategy in business recruitment efforts that focus on the Health Care and Social Assistance industry.	CM, MO	IDB	On going	Staff time
Policy 4: Create high quality environments through place-making initiatives.					
Action 4.1.	Complete a strategic wayfinding and branding study for the city that considers signage, gateways, lighting and landscaping unique to Alabaster.	PZD	PW	Short-term	Staff time or General Fund for a consultant
Action 4.2.	Create and promote a consistent branding strategy.	CM, MO	IDB, CC	Short-term	Staff time, General Fund
Action 4.3.	Establish a Capital Improvement District to attract new business development in targeted areas such as Siluria Mill and the U.S. 31 Medical Mile.	CM, CC	IDB, CA	Short-term	Staff time
Action 4.4.	Establish a facade improvement program along the U.S. 31 Medical Mile.	PZD, BSD	PZ&C, PO	Long-term	Staff time or General Fund for a consultant
Action 4.5.	Modify / adopt the Corridors Overlay District for properites along SR 119 and U.S. 31 (see Appendix F).	P&ZC	PZD	On going	Staff time

Table 5.1: Implementation Matrix (continued)

Action		Lead Agency (ies)	Supporting Agency (ies)	Time Frame	Funding Resources*
Governance Policies					
Policy 1: Enhance City of Alabaster E-services.					
Action 1.1.	Use innovative technology to make the City of Alabaster more efficient.	MO	CAA	On going	Staff time, General Fund, Grant Funding
Action 1.2.	Conduct a quarterly review of the City of Alabaster website to ensure information is relevant and that the website remains user friendly.	MO	CAA	On going	Staff time
Action 1.3.	Develop a “Community Feedback Loop” to improve communication between the City, residents and any other vested partners.	MO, CC	R, CL, LBO, FBO	Short-term	Staff time, General Fund, Grant Funding
Action 1.4.	Develop a “New residents” portal.	MO	CAA	Short-term	Staff time
Policy 2: Create a comprehensive GIS database to improve coordination across Alabaster City Departments.					
Action 2.1	Create a comprehensive GIS database.	CAA		Short-term	Staff time
Policy 3: Improve relationships with neighboring municipalities and Shelby County.					
Action 3.1.	Facilitate bi-annual meetings with the Cities of Calera, Montevallo, and Pelham, as well as Shelby County, on land use and transportation projects along the City’s shared border. This will help to ensure a consistent design and compatibility of uses.	CM	MO, PZD	On going	Staff time

*Funding is subject to annual budget allocation by Mayor and City Council, potential bond issuance, and the availability of funding from federal and state grants. See description of funding sources described later in Chapter 5 of the *Alabaster Forward Comprehensive Plan*.

Financing and Investment Tools

The following is a description of a number of financial tools and investment tools that the City of Alabaster can use to encourage development that aligns with the vision set forth in the *Alabaster Forward* Comprehensive Plan. Financing tools do not generate new revenue, but allow leveraging of existing resources to accelerate the construction of projects.

Alabama Special improvement Districts

Alabama has a number of special districts in the Code of Alabama that may be useful in financing the development within a municipality or county. They do rely on existing forms of taxation and the value generated is in some cases dependent upon the bonding authority of the government entity involved in the process. Typical eligible costs include roads, water, sewer, storm sewers, drainage, curb and gutter, docks, harbors, flood control, dams, berms, sidewalks, parks, schools, athletic facilities, fire and police protection facilities, mass transit facilities, air transport, business and industrial recruitment, hospitals and medical facilities, and planning activities are also permissible within some districts.

Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts (CICD) (Code of Alabama: §11.99B)

A Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts (CICD) is formed through a combination of public entities. It is intended to encourage and facilitate cooperative efforts by public entities to provide projects for their own use and for the use and benefit of their citizens and users. The public entities bring with them their individual authorities. In one county, the county combined the industrial development authority (that could build industrial parks) with the water authority (that could levy water rates) and they raised the capital to build an industrial park that provide employment base for the county. On its own the county would have lost the opportunity because they did not have the funding to proceed

with the development of the industrial park. All obligations created or assumed and all bonds issued or assumed by the district shall be solely and exclusively an obligation of the district and shall not create an obligation or debt of any member of the district.

Alabama Improvement District (AID) (Code of Alabama: §11.99A)

An Alabama Improvement District (AID) is where property owners in a designated geographic area can make improvements to the property, issue bonds and secure the bonds through liens on the property. Developments may be residential, commercial, or industrial. Generally private roads will not qualify for tax exempt financing. The municipality assesses the lots to pay principal and interest on the bonds. Assessments are payable over the term of bonds. No 10-year limit as under prior law.

A district may borrow money by the issuance of bonds, which bonds shall be revenue obligations, payable exclusively out of assessments levied on land within the district, and the bonds shall not be supported by the full faith and credit of the appointing government. However, the bonds may be secured by additional revenues, guarantees, pledges, letters of credit, or other credit enhancements as may be provided by the district or the owner of any property within the district.

Tax Increment District (TID) (Code of Alabama: §11.99)

Tax Increment District (TID) is a procedure whereby a municipality can issue bonds to provide infrastructure for private development projects. The incremental increase in tax revenues from the higher property base resulting from private development is pledged to the payment of municipal bonds. Tax Increment Districts are permitted under Alabama law, Code of Alabama 11-99. The local governing body may issue tax increment obligations payable out of positive tax increments. Such tax increment obligations shall not be included in the computation of the constitutional debt limitation of the public entity unless they are also secured by a pledge of the full faith and credit of the public entity. Tax increment obligations may

not be issued in an amount exceeding the aggregate project costs of a project.

Commercial Development Authority (CDA) (Code of Alabama: §11.54.170 through §11.54.192)

It is the intent of the Alabama State Legislature to authorize the incorporation in any municipality of commercial development authorities to acquire, own, and lease projects for the purpose of promoting trade and commerce by inducing commercial enterprises to locate new facilities in any municipality and expand existing facilities in any municipality. It is intended that each project be self-liquidating. It is not the intent of the State Legislature to authorize any authority itself to operate any commercial enterprise. This article shall be liberally construed in conformity with the intent. All bonds issued by an authority shall be payable solely out of the revenues and receipts derived from the leasing or sale by the board of its projects or of any thereof as may be designated in the proceedings of the board under which the bonds shall be authorized to be issued.

Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA): (Code of Alabama: §11.54A)

A Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA) is intended for the revitalization and redevelopment of any business district of any city in Alabama. Revitalization and redevelopment of a business district by financing projects under the chapter will develop and promote for the public good and general welfare trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities and will promote the general welfare of the city and state. It is therefore in the public interest and is vital to the public welfare of the people of Alabama, and it is hereby declared to be the public purpose of this chapter, to so revitalize and redevelop any business district of any city in the state.

All bonds issued by the authority shall be payable solely out of the revenues and receipts derived from the leasing or sale by the board of its projects or of any thereof as may be designated in the proceedings of the board under which the bonds shall be authorized to be issued. All bonds issued

or assumed by the authority shall be solely and exclusively an obligation of the authority and shall not create an obligation or debt of the state or of any county or of the city.

Redevelopment Projects and Urban Renewal Projects (Code of Alabama: §24.2 & §24.3)

The powers conferred in these two sections of the code have been used since 1979 to justify design standards and design review committees.

Maximizing State and Federal Grant Funding with a Strategy to Fund Match Requirements

Although federal and state funding grants are available to municipalities in the Birmingham region for infrastructure expenses, many municipalities have not taken advantage of the funding because of an inability or unwillingness to meet the match requirements. Strategies to address this problem could include the creation of a “sinking fund,” and public information and communication campaigns around high-priority projects and programs to create a consensus to support contributions for match requirements.

Infrastructure Tax Credits

Infrastructure tax credits provide a tax incentive for builders and developers to invest in neighborhoods with either existing or planned infrastructure in a designated growth center. The credit is applied for neighborhood infrastructure projects such as improved outdated sewer or roads.

Tax Abatement Programs

In an abatement program, property taxes can be reduced or eliminated for a number of years, followed by gradual increases in taxes until a certain period in time. Such abatement programs are locally mandated. Sales and Use Tax Abatement guidelines are found in Code of Alabama 40-23-et al. Qualifying industries may abate all state and the

local non-educational portion of construction related transaction (sales and use) taxes associated with constructing and equipping a project.

(Mortgage and recording taxes can also be abated, but only when title is conveying into or out of a public authority, county government, or city government.) The local granting authority must grant the abatement for the qualifying project before the abatement can be used.

Statutory Requirement(s): The qualifying project must constitute an “industrial, warehousing, or research activity” defined as any trade or business described in the 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code, as: Major Groups 20 to 39, inclusive, 50 or 51, Industrial Group Number 737, or Industry Numbers 0724, 4613, 8731, 8733, or 8734. Expansion projects may qualify for an abatement under a major addition provided the project meets an additional investment threshold requirement of: the lesser of 30% of the original cost of the industrial development property, or \$2 million.

Potential Funding Sources

This section is meant to jump-start a discussion of potential funding sources on how to pay for the improvements that are needed to address identified needs and move Alabaster closer to achieving its vision.

Federal Funding Sources

Through the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) federal aid funding program, local governments like Alabaster that are within the Birmingham MPO area can apply for and receive federal transportation funds to plan, design and construct projects. These projects may be on the local roadway system (capacity projects, new roadways, roadway extensions, intersection improvements, sidewalk/ trail projects on local roadways, etc.) or in partnership with Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) for projects that are on the state or federal highway system (capacity or improvement projects on state or federal highways, interchanges or interchange modifications on the interstate system, etc.).

There are several major revenue sources that

are available to the Birmingham MPO to assist with the funding of a variety of transportation services, facilities, and physical projects. These funding sources are primarily federal in origin. The following includes detailed descriptions of the federal roadway and transit funding sources provided under the federal legislation of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). Funding authorization for MAP-21 is set to expire in summer 2015. It is uncertain at this time if Congress will choose to extend this program, terminate the program, or replace it. The funding amounts discussed in the following program descriptions are based on the current funding authorization. The descriptions include a funding ratio to show the local match required for each of the funding programs.

Advanced Planning Programming and Logical Engineering (APPLE)

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham operates Advanced Planning Programming and Logical Engineering (APPLE) program helping local governments in the Birmingham MPO area conduct planning and feasibility studies for proposed transportation projects in advance of pursuing federal aid through the metropolitan planning process. APPLE is ultimately meant to help local governments determine whether or not to pursue a project, and whether or not federal funding is appropriate. APPLE projects are capped at \$50k total (\$40k federal/\$10k local). The local government is responsible for providing a 20% match to the federal funding that the Birmingham MPO applies to the project.

The APPLE program is intended to assist local governments with:

- Providing information to decision makers about whether or not a project is technically and financially feasible
- Clearly defining transportation problems
- Articulating a project’s Purpose and Need
- Clearly defining a project’s scope
- Better understanding the potential environmental challenges benefits, and burdens

- Better understanding the financial costs and impacts of pursuing potential projects

Eligible APPLE projects might include:

- Feasibility studies of proposed transportation projects- such as capacity or intersection improvements, sidewalk, trail or transit projects.
- Larger scale traffic studies – studying existing and future traffic conditions within a city or an area and then recommending and evaluating projects that will improve traffic flow and reduce traffic congestion. Engineering evaluation of proposed projects, which involves the development of conceptual or preliminary designs / layouts for proposed projects. This may include developing conceptual or preliminary layouts of:
 - Roundabouts or other intersection improvements
 - Proposed roadway improvements (capacity improvements, new alignment roadways, roadway extensions, etc.)
 - The most feasible locations of trails and greenways
 - Other alternative improvements
 - This engineering evaluation and development of preliminary layouts will help identify project constraints or challenges such as:
 - Right of way constraints or needs
 - Major utility relocations
 - Creeks and streams to cross or bridge
 - Environmentally sensitive areas
- Environmental analysis and screening of proposed projects. Environmental screenings for proposed projects are intended to identify and evaluate impacts to sensitive areas such as:
 - Streams, floodplains and wetlands
 - Threatened and endangered species habitat
 - Hazardous material sites

- Historic resources
- Community resources (schools, parks, etc.)

APPLE studies should also involve consultation with ALDOT and FHWA to determine the level of NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) environmental document that will likely be required for a proposed project.

The development of preliminary project cost estimates that include all aspects of the project and meet federal and ALDOT requirements. Often times, project cost estimates only include the actual estimated construction cost. Other costs associated with transportation improvement projects that must be considered include environmental studies, engineering services, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocations and construction engineering and inspection (CEI).

National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)

- Funding Ratio: 80% Federal/20% Local

The National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) basically consolidates the previous Interstate Maintenance (IM), National Highway System (NHS), and some of the Bridge Program. The purposes of the NHPP are to:

1. Provide support for the condition and performance of the National Highway System (NHS)
2. Provide support for the construction of new facilities on the NHS
3. Ensure that investments of federal-aid funds in highway construction are directed to support progress toward the achievement of performance targets established in a state's asset management plan for the NHS.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

- Funding Ratio: 80% Federal/20% Local

Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds provide flexible funding that may be used for just about any type of transportation related project. MAP-21 continues the regulation that 50 percent of a state's STP apportionment is suballocated to areas based on their relative share of the total state population with the other 50 percent available for use in any

area of the State. These suballocations to the urban areas are called attributable funds. For the Birmingham MPO these funds are referred to as STPBH (for Birmingham) funds. The STP funding that ALDOT can spend anywhere in the state is called STPAA (for Any Area) funds.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

- Funding Ratio: 80% Federal/20% Local

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding is primarily used for projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities such as sidewalks and trails. Design of these trails is not covered by TAP funds, meaning the City would have to use other funding for engineering services. ALDOT and the Birmingham MPO award funding for TAP eligible projects on an annual basis. TAP funds are funneled from ALDOT through the Birmingham MPO. Each year the MPO distributes approximately \$1.2 million in TAP funding. The maximum grant amount that can be issued by the MPO is \$500,000. In addition to the TAP funding administered by the MPO, ALDOT also receives approximately \$8 million in TAP funding, which allows for 15-20 projects per year. The state may choose to use this funding for projects located anywhere in the state. Each state's TAP funds are suballocated using a formula.

TAP funds cover 80% of the construction cost of a project, and the City would be responsible for 20% of the construction cost plus all engineering services for a project. The timeframe for completing a TAP project should generally take three to five years since design plans and construction specifications are required to meet ALDOT standards.

MAP-21 also requires that both ALDOT and the Birmingham MPO create an application and a competitive process to select projects for TAP funding. The following is a list of eligible activities for TAP funding:

1. Construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian lighting, downtown streetscape (combination of sidewalks, pedestrian lighting and landscaping), and other transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

2. Construction of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
3. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.
4. Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
5. Community improvement activities, including: inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising; historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities; vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under Title 23.
6. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to address storm water management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff; or to reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats

For more information visit http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

- Funding Ratio: 80% Federal/20% Local- 100% for eligible projects with ALDOT concurrence

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) Funds may be used for transportation projects and programs that are likely to contribute to the attainment of national ambient air quality standards. The CMAQ was established by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 and has been continued by subsequent transportation bills including MAP-21.

All CMAQ projects must demonstrate the three primary elements of eligibility: transportation identity, emissions reduction, and location in

or benefitting a nonattainment or maintenance area. While project eligibilities are continued, there is some modification with new language placing considerable emphasis on select project types including electric and natural gas vehicle infrastructure and diesel retrofits.

Eligible activities include:

1. Acquisition of diesel retrofits, including tailpipe emissions control devices, and the provision of diesel-related outreach activities.
2. Intermodal equipment and facility projects that target diesel freight emissions through direct exhaust control from vehicles or indirect emissions reductions through improvements in freight network logistics.
3. Alternative fuel projects including participation in vehicle acquisitions, engine conversions, and refueling facilities.
4. Establishment or operation of a traffic monitoring, management, and control facility, including the installation of advanced truck stop electrification systems.
5. Projects that improve traffic flow, including efforts to provide signal systemization, construct HOV lanes, streamline intersections, add turning lanes, improve transportation systems management and operations that mitigate congestion and improve air quality, and implement ITS and other CMAQ-eligible projects, including efforts to improve incident and emergency response or improve mobility, such as through real time traffic, transit and multimodal traveler information. Projects or programs that shift travel demand to nonpeak hours or other transportation modes, increase vehicle occupancy rates, or otherwise reduce demand through initiatives, such as teleworking, ridesharing, pricing, and others.
6. Transit investments, including transit vehicle acquisitions and construction of new facilities or improvements to facilities that increase transit capacity. The MAP-21 provision on operating assistance (23 USC 149(m)) is being reviewed and guidance interpreting the provision will be issued in the future.
7. Non-recreational bicycle transportation and pedestrian improvements that provide a reduction in single occupant vehicle travel.

FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program

- Funding Ratio: 80% Federal/20% Local for Capital Equipment and 50% Federal/50% Local for Operating Assistance

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 program provides apportioned funds that flow directly to a locally selected designated recipient. These funds may be used for capital equipment purchases and to finance preventive maintenance on existing capital equipment. The funding is formula-based, with grants apportioned to urbanized areas on the basis of population, population density, bus vehicle revenue miles, fixed guideway revenue vehicle miles, fixed guideway directional route miles, operating cost and passenger miles. A portion of these funds may be used for operational assistance in urbanized areas over 200,000 to fixed route transit operators that operate fewer than 100 buses in peak service. Qualifying operators are eligible for assistance in an amount based on an individual operator's percentage of all public transportation service. MAP-21 also expanded eligible activities to include Job Access and Reverse Commute Projects, which provide non-traditional transportation services intended to serve the employment-related transportation needs of welfare recipients and low-income individuals. These projects were previously eligible under the repealed Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute Program.

In addition to the changes to the Urbanized Area Formula Program, MAP-21 directed FTA to establish and implement broad public transportation safety and asset management regulations, which will apply to all recipients of FTA funding once finalized.

FTA Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities

- Funding Ratio: 80% Federal/20% Local

FTA's new formula grant program under MAP-21 is established under Section 5339, replacing the previous Discretionary Bus and Bus Facilities program (Section 5309). This capital program provides funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses, vans and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. Eligible recipients under the Bus and Bus Facilities program are States and local governments, as well as public agencies

and private companies that are engaged in public transportation and private non-profit organizations.

The funds may be used for the following eligible projects: purchase and acquisition of buses for fleet and service expansion, bus maintenance and administrative facilities, transfer facilities, bus malls, transportation centers, intermodal terminals, park-and-ride stations, acquisition of replacement vehicles, bus rebuilds, passenger amenities such as passenger shelters and bus stop signs, accessory and miscellaneous equipment such as mobile radio units, supervisory vehicles, fare boxes, computers and shop and garage equipment. The Federal share of eligible capital costs is 80 percent of the net capital project cost.

State and Regional Funding Sources

Recreation Trails Program (RTP) Fund

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a funding program established by the federal government and administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). The RTP Fund was created to assist in the development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail related facilities for motorized and non-motorized uses. Each year ADECA holds a pre-application meeting to discuss the available funding and maximum grant values. This meeting is not mandatory but is encouraged. The 2015 meeting was held on June 30, 2015 and pre-applications were due July 31, 2015. A project will not be considered if a pre-application was not submitted. The timeframe for the 2016 grants should be similar to the 2015 dates. Currently, ADECA has approximately \$1,153,278 in RTP funds available and there are four funding categories: non-motorized, single-use trails; non-motorized, diverse-use trails; motorized, diverse-use trails; and education. Maximum grant funded depends on the trail type, the activity proposed, or the resources required. The current maximum grant amount that can be applied for is:

- \$35,000 for non-motorized, single-use trails
- \$100,000 for non-motorized, diverse trails; approximately
- \$330,000 for motorized, diverse use trails
- \$58,246 for education

The federal share for the RTP grant is 80% of the total eligible project costs up to either \$35,000 or \$100,000. The non-federal share is 20% and may come from state, local, or private sources. It is important to note that the Recreational Trail Program operates as a reimbursement funding source – applications must prove whether actual leveraging is assured, or the potential for leveraging is good; prior to being accepted for funds. While the RTP Fund is competitive (approximately 12 grants are awarded a year), the Recreational Trail Program may be utilized as an implementation tool for future elements in Comprehensive Plans. RTP funds cannot be used solely for the design of a trail. Given the funding requirements, the RTP Fund would be best utilized for improving trail and trail-related resources including:

- Educational projects
- Developing training on trail accessibility and sustainability
- Producing trail-related educational materials
- Trail protocols to monitor use, safety, conditions, and environmental impacts
- Maintenance of existing recreational trails.
- Restoration of areas damaged by usage of recreational trails and back country terrain
- Development of trailside and trailhead facilities that meet goals identified by the National Recreation Trails Advisory Committee
- The provision of features which facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities.
- Development of urban trail linkages near homes and workplaces (where an existing trail system is established)

It is important to note, the following:

- The RTP Fund would be best utilized if matched with additional funding sources, not as the primary funding source for a project;
- The RTP Fund functions through reimbursements;
- Extra consideration is given to applications that request far less than the maximum funding source (\$35,000 for non-motorized single use trails; \$100,000 for non-motorized diverse use trails); and

- Extra consideration is given for non-motorized diverse use trails.

For more information about the Recreational Trail Program, as well as links to all documents needed for application, go to <http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/ced/Recreation/Pages/Programs.aspx> or http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The National Park Services' Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is another funding program established by the federal government and administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). During its lifetime, the LWCF matching program has provided over 40,000 grants to state and local governments. These grants have been applied to small recreation projects as well as significant state and national parks. Projects include parks, playgrounds, forest and wildlife refuges, recreational lakes and ponds, outdoor playing fields, and picnic and camping areas. The amount of each grant varies. As part of the requirements set forth by LWCF, ADECA prepares a five-year planning document called the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). This plan provides various agencies with a guide on how to plan for recreation and natural resources. The current SCORP was adopted in 2013 and remains applicable until it is revised in 2018.

At the time this plan was prepared, 2015 numbers including the total amount of available funding and individual grant ceiling was unknown. However, it is assumed that these numbers would be fairly close to the 2014 numbers. In 2014, ADECA had an estimated \$570,000 in available funding, setting the maximum amount for an individual grant at \$50,000. Since LWCF is a 50/50 matching program, this means that for a project receiving the maximum \$50,000 grant, the sponsoring agency would be responsible for \$50,000 in order for a \$100,000 project to be completely funded. Local project costs can be paid through in-kind services or cash. If the project exceeds \$100,000 the sponsoring agency would be responsible for funding the excess. LWCF grants are used by communities to build a variety of park and recreation facilities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. It should be noted

that securing LWCF funds for a trail would require the City to agree to manage and operate the trail indefinitely.

http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/fed_state.html

<http://adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/ced/Recreation/Pages/Programs.aspx>

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham operates a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) that provides supplemental financing for expanding and new businesses located in Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby and Walker Counties whose projects will result in the creation of new permanent jobs. RLF funds may be used in conjunction with SBA 504 and 7(a) guarantees, commercial loans, mortgage loans and other public sector revolving loans. The advantages of using RLF funds are:

- Flexible terms
- Fixed interest rates
- Up to 90% financing

Eligible uses include the purchase and development of land and buildings, the renovation or modification of existing buildings, purchase of machinery and equipment and the provision of permanent working capital. The following repayment terms are considered appropriate for most RLF projects:

- Building and Real Estate: 5 year term with up to 20 year amortization
- Machinery and Equipment 5-8 years or useful life
- Working Capital 1-5 years

Eligible businesses targeted for RLF financing are:

- Manufacturing and distribution type businesses
- Manufacturing and distribution related services
- Developing businesses that have uniqueness or technology that will add value to the region's economy

- Other businesses that may help a community improve its development potential
- Businesses must be located in Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, or Walker Counties
- Businesses that contribute to a historic preservation project

RLF guidelines include creating one new job for every \$35,000 of RLF assistance and loans are to be secured by lien positions on collateral. For more information go to: <http://www.rpcgb.org/economic-development/loan-programs/revolving-loan-fund/>.

Industrial Access Road Funds

The Alabama Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation was created by act of the Alabama Legislature in 1985. Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways.

Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs. This is not a grant program where the project is approved by the corporation and a check is sent to the sponsor. The sponsor is reimbursed by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) on a monthly basis for work performed on the project and paid for by the sponsor. The corporation's Operating Policies and Procedures and the application and instructions may be found on ALDOT's website at <http://www.dot.state.al.us/adweb/Industrial%20Access.htm>.

Cawaco Challenge and Educational Grants

The Cawaco Resource Conservation and Development Council (CAWACO) offers three types of small competitive grants:

- Education Grants – grants up to \$5,000 for projects that provide information and/or educational instruction that meets Cawaco goals and objectives to children and/or adults. Example eligible projects include: books and

materials, programs and field trips, or job development / skills.

- Challenge Grants – grants up to \$5,000 to assist public and other 501 (c)(3) agencies in their efforts to serve community needs, and can cover materials, infrastructure and educational equipment. Projects funded should support Council goals and promote economic, community development and/or responsible use of the area's resources. Example eligible projects include: rain barrels / cisterns, parks and recreation, first responders and historic preservation.
- Community Development Grants – grant amount varies and comes through the State RC&D, but awards are generally \$10,000-\$25,000. A local legislature must approve the project.

For more information visit <http://www.cawaco.org/grants-programs/> or <http://www.cawaco.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/THE-CAWACO-RCD-GRANT-PROGRAM.pdf>.

Local Funding sources

Local governments in the Birmingham MPO area utilize locally generated revenues such as sales taxes, property taxes, franchise fees, business taxes, etc. to assist them in funding for local transportation improvements. These funds typically go directly into the local government general fund and transportation improvements are funded from this overall pot of money. Revenues generated are utilized mostly for local roadway resurfacing projects, and to a lesser degree to provide match to federal funds for intersection and signal improvements road widening, and routine maintenance.

Below are some examples of potential local funding sources :

General Obligation Bonds

Using debt to build infrastructure and make other necessary capital improvements is standard practice and an integral part of municipal fiscal sustainability. This is particularly the case when the assets will be used by both current and future

residents and businesses. That is, those paying for the improvements will enjoy and benefit from the capital improvements. General obligation bonds and revenue bonds are the most common options, and can be used for specific projects or to fund activities in a special district. General obligation bonds are paid back from general tax revenues and require voter approval, and revenue bonds are paid back from specific revenues, such as utility rates or user fees.

Sales Taxes

Alabaster's current sales tax is 4%, which, when added to the state sales tax of 4% and Shelby County's 1%, totals a 9% sales tax experienced by the consumer. When spending by residents, workers, and visitors generates revenue, a small increase in sales tax can result in a significant amount of new revenue for specific projects or improvements.

Lodging Taxes

Lodging taxes are common revenue generating mechanisms employed by municipal and county governments. These are applied as a sales tax on the cost per room, and revenues are often dedicated to tourism or to the development of tourism-related facilities. Its application to transportation is very limited, although some local governments have enacted this type of tax to support transportation investments where infrastructure improvements or transportation services are needed to enhance visitor experience, accessibility and mobility. Alabaster's current lodging tax is 3% and the state lodging tax is 4%.

Public Private Partnerships (P3)

In recent years, there has been an increase in private equity investment in public infrastructure through Public-Private Partnerships (P3), with financing packages that combine public and private debt, equity, and public funding. Plain and simple, the private sector provides an infusion of much needed cash, and in return the public sector agrees to repay the private investment with interest. P3s are contractual agreements between a public agency and a private entity, which allows greater private sector participation in the delivery and operation of transportation projects and facilities. P3s involve a sharing of responsibilities, risks, and rewards between public sector owners

of transportation facilities and a private sector partner(s), but the public partner retains full ownership of the facility. In other words, P3s are a procurement strategy that allow for the transfer and/or sharing of risks associated with project delivery.

P3s have been extensively used in many industry areas to provide infrastructure such as utilities, water/wastewater, and health care. In the transportation sector, P3s can be applied across modes, including transit and structures (such as bridges), and are not exclusively used for roadways or toll roads. While the use of P3 as a potential source for funding major transportation improvements has merit and is certainly applicable in the metropolitan planning area, it should be viewed cautiously and not relied upon as a primary funding source. Typically, private sector participation involves taking on project risks, such as design, finance, long-term operation, and traffic revenue.

Development Fees / Impact Fees

Development fees are levied on developers as a condition of real estate construction. Such fees (also called impact fees) may be levied on commercial, industrial, or residential development; they may be assessed on a per-unit or per-square foot basis. While taxes can be used for general purposes without any link between the taxpayer and the outcome, fees must be shown to have a link with the purposes on which they are being spent. Impact fees must therefore only be used to mitigate the impacts of particular developments (for example, if a commercial development will cause more traffic at a particular intersection, the impact fees can be used to improve the intersection).

Development fees can be levied on the construction of new parking, whether in the form of entirely new facilities or expansion of existing parking lots or garages. This could serve an important secondary effect of steering development to infill areas, if parking construction in outlying areas carried heavy development fees.

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