

# Town of Brookside

Town of Brookside, Alabama

May 2009

Adopted by the Town Council May 7th, 2009



*A Plan for the Future that Embraces the Past*



## Disclaimer



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# I N T R O D U C T I O N

## Overview

This master plan defines the “vision” of the community and guides the citizens of Brookside in ensuring that future growth and development supports its people, enhances its place and furthers its prosperity.



## Overview

The master plan of the Town of Brookside, Alabama serves these main purposes: the plan offers the Town Council, the Town Planning Commission, and the citizens of Brookside an opportunity to examine current town policies relating to the changing conditions in the area and in the region. The plan is a set of guidelines which defines the goals of the community with regards to development expectations for the next twenty years. The town initiated this planning process to develop a master plan to address growth and future development. This master plan defines the “vision” of the community and guides the citizens of Brookside in ensuring that future growth and development supports its people, enhances its place and furthers its prosperity.

## Purpose

The Master Plan for the Town of Brookside intends to direct the community’s growth and physical development, and to guide the major development decisions over the next ten to twenty years. It is a statement of today’s values, ideals and aspirations intended to reflect the Town’s future character. As Brookside continues to grow and change over the upcoming years, the master plan

will serve as a guide for public officials, developers and citizens, who are instrumental in reshaping the community’s physical form and raising the quality of life for the town’s current and future residents.

The people of Brookside have come together through these planning efforts to better understand what they desire as a community, to figure out how best to achieve these desires and commit to fulfilling these desires. The master plan sets forth the purposes and intentions of the Town of Brookside. The plan describes implementation strategies to advance the community vision, improve the quality of life for all citizens, and serve as our primary tool for managing growth and community investment.

## Authority, Participants and Roles of Local Planning

The Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 11-52-2 authorizes and empowers municipalities to “plan”. This enabling legislation defines the system in which planning is performed by a local government. The local planning system for any town in Alabama consists of four main entities - the Town Council, the Planning Commission, the Board of Adjustment, and the Planning Staff. These four bodies play unique parts in the establishment and

administration of policies and regulations intended to maintain a positive quality of life for all citizens in the face of growth and change within the community. The Town Council, the elected legislative body of a municipality, is the major decision-making group within the planning system. The Council is responsible for the use of public revenues to provide and expand local services and facilities (roads, water, sewer, parks, meeting facilities, etc.), a pivotal element in the growth of any community. By establishing a “plan” and a “local planning system”, a town creates a framework in which all decisions are based on community policy and goals for the town’s future, including the ways in which private property is developed. The Planning Commission, is responsible for creating the Master Plan, which lays out that vision and policies based on community desires and concerns; and they are responsible for the supporting regulations to implement the policies of the Plan.

As provided by State Code, zoning and land subdivision are the two major areas a town may regulate to ensure positive growth. With support from planning staff, the Planning Commission writes these regulations which are then adopted as law by the Council. In administering zoning regulations, all bodies of the local planning system may play a part.

The planning staff or commission interacts with the citizen/developer; the Planning Commission hears zoning requests and submits recommendations to the Council, which makes the final decision. In this process, a decision or order from a town official may be appealed to the Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment is intended to ensure that the interpretation and enforcement of zoning regulations does not unfairly affect the use of property. In contrast to the way zoning includes all these groups, land subdivision regulations are controlled exclusively by the Planning Commission. In order that the local planning system works efficiently and follows the “vision” of the community, it is important that all of the players be familiar with the policies of the Master Plan; that land regulations support these policies; and that interpretation and enforcement of regulations are in concert with the overall intent of the Master Plan.

## History of Planning

Brookside, in 1992 had an active Planning Commission and adopted a zoning ordinance. In 1995, the ordinance came under legal scrutiny and it was determined that the zoning ordinance would no longer be used in the community. No formal resolution

withdrew the ordinance from record. The Planning Commission also dissolved at this time and was never reorganized.

The Brookside Visioning Charrette took place on January 30 - 31, 2006, at Bivens Chapel United Methodist Church. Over fifty people from the community joined a team of twelve design professionals and eighteen graduate students, from Auburn University, in a two day event of community tours, resource identification and analysis, design development, meetings and presentations.

The charrette event brought together property and business owners, residents, county and state representatives, and a team of professionals with expertise in land planning, architecture, landscape architecture, transportation engineering, civil engineering, geotechnical engineering, landscape architecture, planning and much more to collaborate on a future vision for the Town of Brookside. Recognizing the two-day event as a first step toward establishing a master plan, participants were divided into teams focused on specific areas of interest: stakeholder visioning; transportation; land use; planning; architectural character; infrastructure; economic development; and land preservation, greenway and open space development.

For two days, local residents made hourly visits to observe the “plan in motion” and provide additional input and much appreciated sustenance for the designers and volunteers. Each charrette focus group toured the entire Brookside town limits area, documenting their findings as they pertained to their specific discipline. Key issues addressed are listed and detailed later in this document. An open house presenting all work in progress was held on Monday evening. A second presentation was held Tuesday evening and included over fifty residents and several town council members. The information and recommendations presented received enthusiastic support that was reinforced by an overwhelming sense of hope for the future. The intended goal of the event was to provide a report of illustrations and thoughts of opportunities from Brookside’s future and to provide a list of action items to guide the town toward revitalization and development in accordance to the community’s ideals and aspirations.

## Historical Planning Documents

The Brookside Charrette Report (Spring 2006)  
4Site, Inc. & RPCGB

Rebuilding Brookside: A Plan for Recovery and Growth (2005) Lehe Planning, LLC.

Looking Back to the Future: A Report on the Social and Architectural History of Brookside, Alabama (2004) Lehe Planning, LLC.

Alabama Historical Commission Architectural Survey (2004) Lehe Planning, LLC.

## Plan Methodology and Process

Planning is the process by which a community assesses present conditions to provide for future needs through the thoughtful consideration of present conditions and their relationships to the community at large. Planning is most often associated with guiding the future form of land development through policy and design guidance. Planning also accounts for the provision of public services and needs, historic and cultural values, the environment, economic development and transportation issues.

The master plan addresses primary components that most directly affect the quality of life and economic sustainability of the town. The plan organizes a broad spectrum of challenges, desires and possibilities that confront the Town of Brookside. The master plan provides a framework and a methodology for converting those possibilities into sustainable realities through implementation of a shared vision

and a common set of goals.

The master plan provides recommendations for keeping Brookside to a position of sustainability. A position that capitalizes upon the natural and cultural features within the landscape. A position that builds upon the place, the people and leads to prosperity and progress. The plan is organized by Place, People, Prosperity and Progress. The plan is presented through words, photographs, diagrams, sketches and maps which are organized into the following sections.

### PLACE: Community Assessment

In section one, the community assessment, RPC staff utilized a variety of data gathering techniques to analyze and inventory existing conditions in the community. These techniques included fieldwork to verify existing land use and housing conditions, surveying town departments about community facilities and services, acquiring pertinent transportation data from the Alabama Department of Transportation's (ALDOT) 3rd Division and reviewing the most current U.S. Census data.

This section includes a description of the community and its regional context, the history and culture of Brookside,

the environmental features, the existing development, the existing public infrastructure, demographic and economic conditions.

### PEOPLE: Community Visioning

The second section, the community visioning, is the public participation process that informs the preliminary conceptual master plan. A variety of methods were employed to inform and educate the public and solicit their input into the plan process. Under the guidance of the planning commission, all members of the community were given an opportunity to participate through a series of community meetings and a charrette. During these meetings, citizen input was collected through visioning and brainstorming sessions, mapping exercises, a visual preference survey, likes and dislikes analysis and a charrette.

Engaging the community in this way serves a number of important purposes. First, it educates citizens and raises their awareness of the importance of planning and the planning process, in directing growth in a preferred manner. Additionally, participants are empowered with a sense of ownership of the plan, the kind of citizen support that is essential for successful plan implementation.

Such public engagement provides planners with insight into the community's values and ideals, and yields qualitative data that typically can not be collected through technical research. This greater understanding of the community helps planners to prepare a vision and set goals for the town that address citizens' desires for their future - a vision that the community will embrace and compel citizen participants to remain engaged and see the plan through to implementation.

This section includes a summary of the processes and outcomes of the visioning activities carried out through this planning effort, including the community's vision statement, a likes and dislikes analysis, a visual preference survey, dot map analysis, and a preliminary concept plan that begins to define the vision that will guide the development of the Town of Brookside.

### PROSPERITY: Vision for Growth

The third section is the vision for growth. This section builds upon the community assessment and reflects the vision and goals that emerged from community visioning process. The RPC staff synthesizes the results of the public participation process with the research and analysis of the community

assessment to direct and guide the future master plan. The Vision for Growth displays the vision for growth through the future land use plan, future transportation plan, future community facilities plan and economic development strategies that identify the locations and relationships among functions within the Town of Brookside.

### PROGRESS: Plan Implementation

This section summarizes major tasks on how the town will implement the plan, tools to implement the plan, community policies to follow and next steps on the how the Town of Brookside will achieve its vision in the future.

### APPENDICES

The appendices list supplementary material that is important to the Master Plan. This section includes the land use classification guide, traffic calming techniques, a list of major funding and educational resources available to the community and the glossary of terms used in the master plan document.

# P L A C E

## Community Assessment

The following section provides an overview and analysis of the existing conditions in the Town of Brookside.

## Location

Brookside is located in Jefferson County, Alabama, northwest of Birmingham, Alabama. Jefferson County, named in honor of Thomas Jefferson, was established on December 13, 1819, sixty-seven years before the first mine opened in Brookside, by the Alabama legislature. The county is located in the north-central portion of the state of Alabama, on the southern extension of the Appalachian Mountains and encompasses 1,119 square miles. The county is located in the center of the iron, coal and limestone belt of the South Eastern United States. Jefferson County is bordered by Blount, Bibb, St. Clair, Shelby, Tuscaloosa, and Walker counties.

## Planning Area

The area considered within the master plan includes those areas currently with the incorporated area of the Town of Brookside.

## History and Culture

Brookside was founded by Samuel Fields in 1831 on the Georgia Pacific Railroad Line. The Town of Brookside is surrounded by

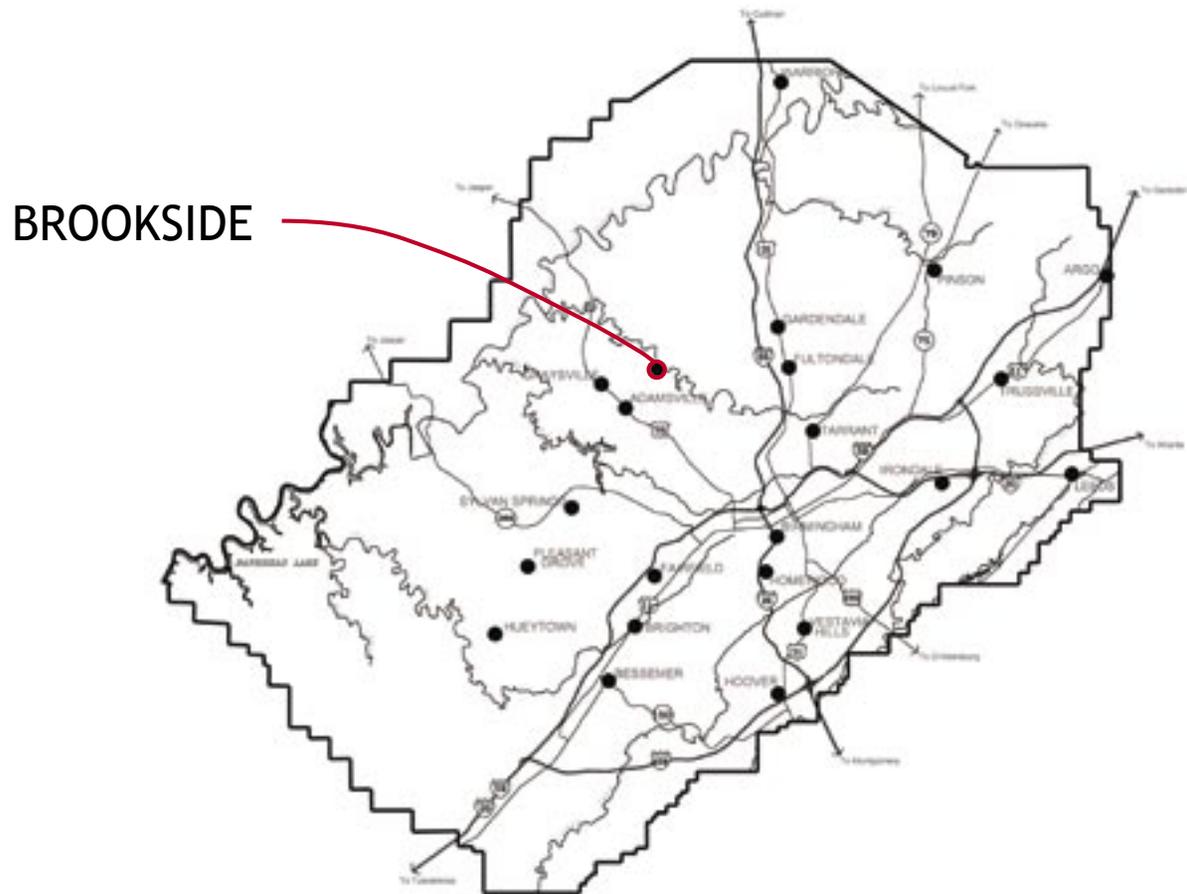


Figure 1: Location and Vicinity Map

Five Mile Creek to the north, east and west, which provided water for both industrial and domestic use. The town's high concentration of natural resources made it an ideal site for it to become a mining settlement. In 1886 the Coalburg Coal and Coke Company opened the first mine in Brookside. It was purchased one year later by the Sloss Iron and Steel-Sheffield Company as a source of fuel for their blast furnaces in Birmingham. With its heavy coal seam and abundance of other resource advantages, Sloss anticipated tremendous output at Brookside and equipped it with the best-designed coke ovens, ventilation fans, engine houses, and washers. With these state-of-the-art materials, Brookside was one of the earliest mechanized coal mines in the area.

Following the practice of the time, the mined coal was processed into coke in rows of beehive ovens banked into the hillside below the mine opening. A beehive oven is used to turn coal ore into coke. In 1897 a Robinson-Ramsey Coal Washer was installed, increasing the efficiency of coke burning and therefore the overall efficiency of the mine. Other advanced equipment was also installed at Brookside, placing it at the forefront of

Figure 2: Coke Ovens in Brookside



mining technology in the Birmingham area at the turn of the century.

Brookside served as the headquarters for four Sloss-owned mines in the immediate area which included, Cardiff, Coalburg, Brazil, and Brookside. Since the capacity of Brookside's processing equipment exceeded the mine output, some of the slack from the Brazil mine was brought to Brookside for washing and coking. Between 1910 and 1920, mining operations jumped around to several seams and the number of miners fluctuated between a low of 54 in 1910 and a high of over 600 in 1914. The United Mine Workers of America-led general strike in 1920 along with a global depreciation in the coal market, led to a shutdown of the mine. When the

Figure 3: Coal Mines in Brookside



strike was settled in 1921, Brookside mine was never re-opened. Sloss removed all of the surface works and held on to the mine property. In 1952 Sloss merged with the U. S. Pipe and Foundry Company, a subsidiary of Jim Walter Industries since 1969.

Sloss, like other employers in the booming industrial expansion of the early 20th century, had difficulty recruiting skilled labor. The problem of attracting skilled labor led the Sloss Company to seek workers from the northern states and Europe. A prominent group that heeded this call was Slovaks from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. Exhausted with small farm life and fiscal oppression, many Slovaks immigrated to America around the

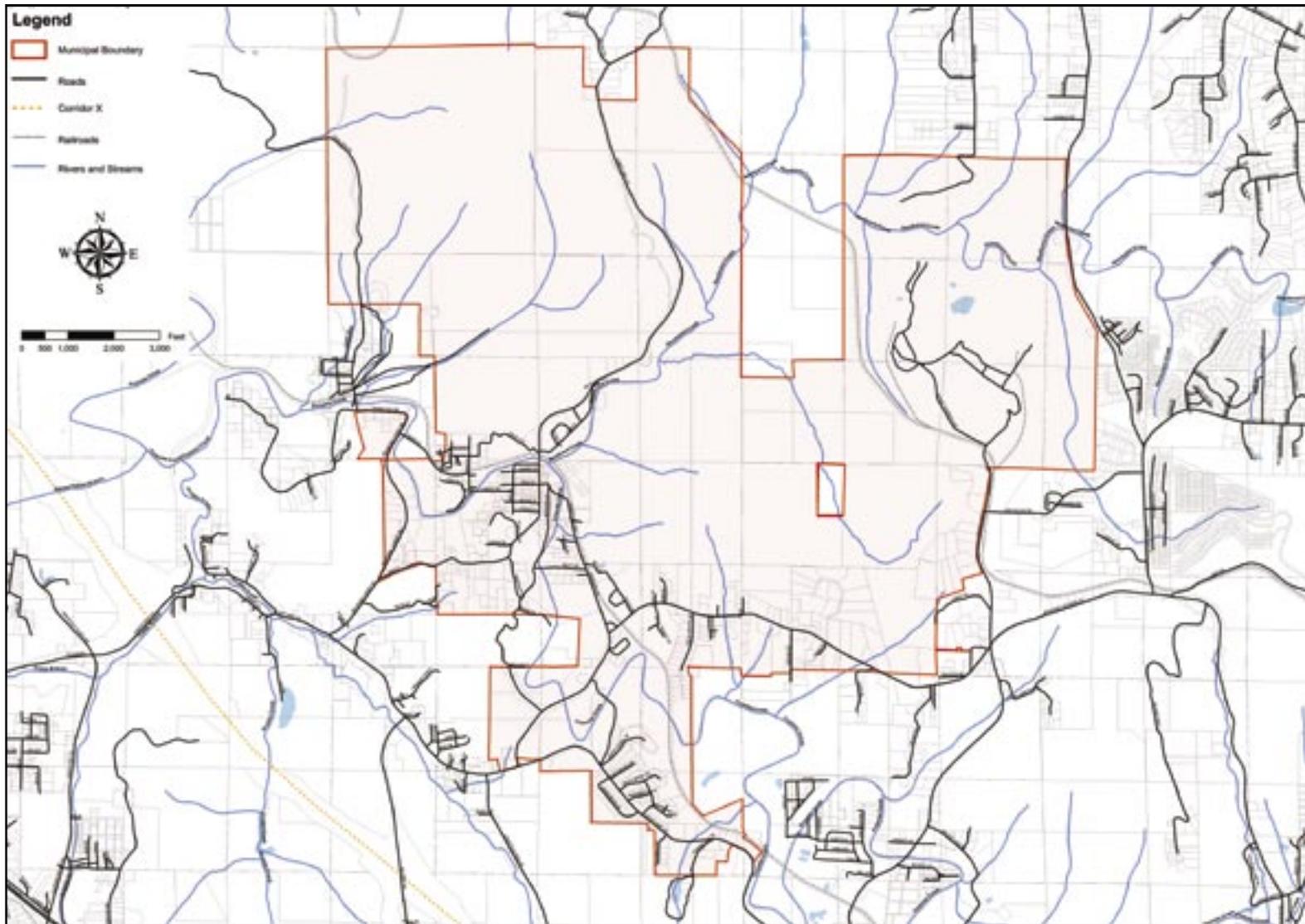


Figure 4: Municipal Boundary

Figure 5: Drug Store in Downtown Brookside



turn of the century and sought industrial jobs. Irish and German immigrants also were among those who left New York and Pennsylvania to take jobs in Brookside's coal mines. Among these immigrants, cousins and relatives kept each other informed of work opportunities and labor conditions, encouraging and helping other extended family members come to America and take jobs in Brookside. These family networks promoted a sense of kinship among Brookside's immigrant workers, and such feelings are manifested in the physical development they established in the center of town. Unlike American-born white and black miners, the Slovaks usually rejected company housing, and careful money management frequently allowed them to purchase their own homes. By 1910, 65% of Brookside's Slovaks owned their own houses, as

Figure 6: Downtown Brookside



opposed to only 30% of Birmingham residents.

Brookside became a destination for Eastern European miners in the area, the culture of the town reflected their ethnic traditions. Most illustrious of its Eastern European ancestry is St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church. Slovakian immigrants assembled their first Russian Orthodox parish in 1894. Over time, the building has been rebuilt twice; the original temple, dedicated to St. George, was destroyed by a tornado, and the second temple, dedicated to the mother of God, burned to the ground. Still standing is the church that was constructed in 1916 which is dedicated to St. Nicholas of Myra. Built in 1916 in traditional styles, the church contains iconic designs and objects resembling Russian Orthodox architecture in Eastern Europe. St. Nicholas is the site of a popular Russian Food Festival which annually features traditional

Slavic foods and other imported items.

In May, 2003, a series of super cell thunderstorms moved from Mississippi across the northern half of Alabama bringing with them several tornadoes, wind damage, hail, and incredible amounts of rain. The north and north-eastern sections of metro Birmingham were hit especially hard. The rainfall from this event was the highest on record, recorded at 10.5 inches in a ten hour period, with an amazing 5.5 inches in a one hour period. The torrential rains resulted in the highest stage, 19.14 feet gage datum, since records began in 1953. These floodwaters inundated local roads, including Highway 79. Flooding was especially intense and devastating in Brookside. Most of the small businesses and the town hall, fire department and boys and girls club were completely destroyed. Fifty Homes were also destroyed during the flood. Several residents were also displaced. Despite this devastation, Brookside remains a small town with a distinct Eastern European flavor. The onion-dome of St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, re-faced with brick in 1965, still holds services for approximately 70 congregants. An annual "Russian Food Festival", the Five Mile Creek Canoe Company and the annual Brookside Greenway Festival brings visitors from neighboring communities throughout the region.

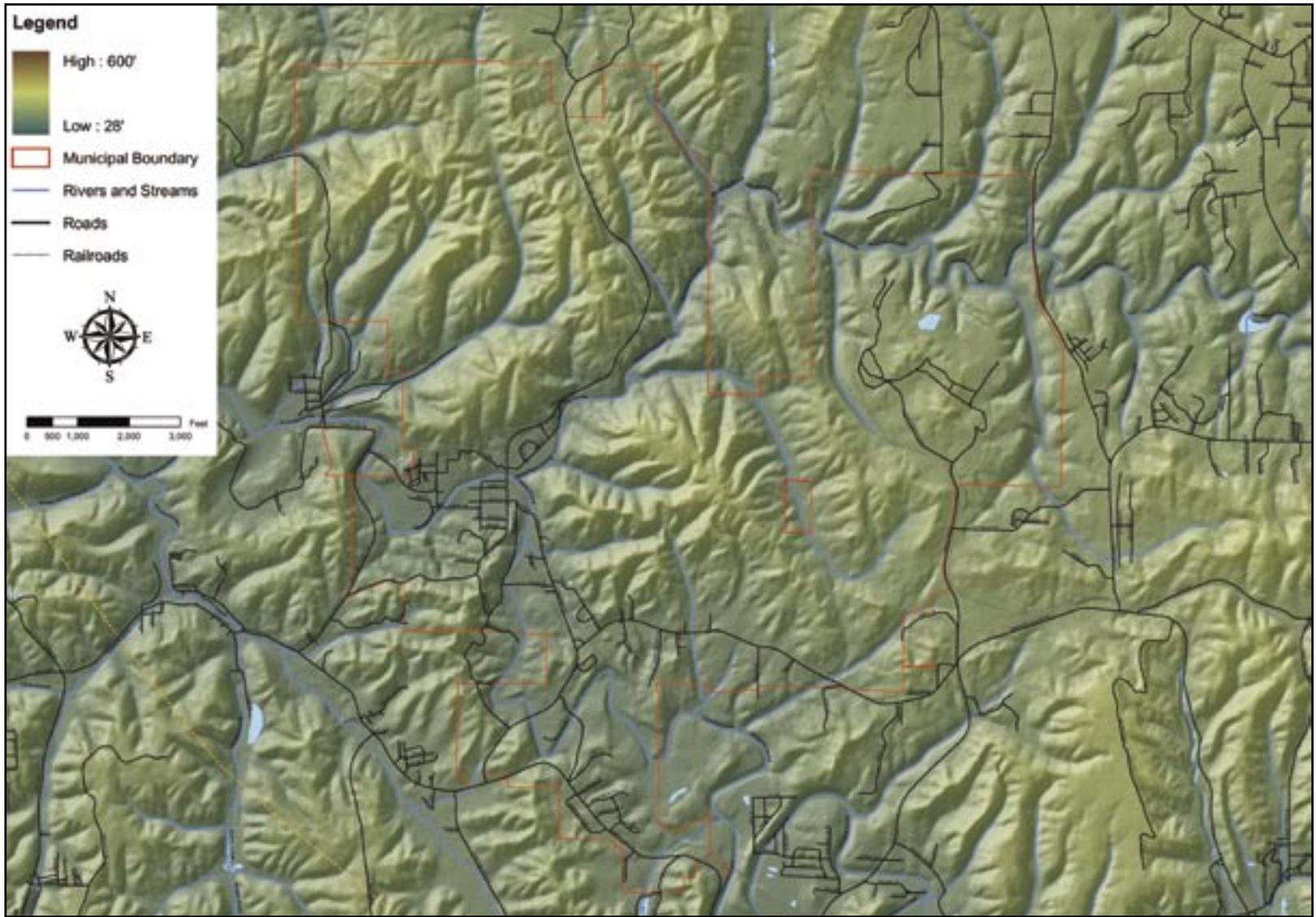


Figure 7: Physical Relief Map

# Natural Environment

Consideration to the environment is necessary when determining future land uses and development patterns due to the ability of these factors to influence the location and the types of developments possible. The purpose of doing such an analysis is to determine a growth pattern, allowing development to occur in a harmonious way with the surrounding environment. This section includes the physiography, geology and soil conditions, hydrology, vegetation and wildlife found throughout the Brookside area.

The constraints placed on development based on environmental factors are determined based on the qualities of slope, soil types, hydrology, animal habitat and other factors when substantially impacted. The goal is to have development that functions harmoniously with the surrounding environment. The overall impact of development on the land and these combined factors was considered for the entire study area.

## Physiography and Geology

Jefferson County is located in the Appalachian Highlands section of the Cumberland Plateau. This area is a major physical division of the United States. The Town of Brookside, located in the northwestern part of the county is situated in the Cumberland Plateau area. Brookside has a topography of rolling wooded hills and level plateaus well watered by Five Mile Creek that flows along the southern boarder of the town and Newfound Creek that connects with Five Mile Creek at the northern edge of historic downtown Brookside. The region was exposed to erosion and subsequently began to form the landscape we see in present day.

The Cumberland Plateau section is the southernmost section of the Appalachian Plateaus province of the Appalachian Highlands Region. Hereafter called the Cumberland Plateau, it is recognized by its pattern of relief features and landforms that differ significantly from those of adjacent sections. It occupies about 15 percent of the state and occurs as a roughly northeast-oriented rectangular area in central and northeastern Alabama, encompassing mainly Jackson, DeKalb, Marshall, Blount, Cullman, Winston and Walker counties, and it continues into northeastern Georgia and Tennessee. The

Cumberland Plateau borders the Highland Rim section to the north, the Valley and Ridge province to the southeast, and the Cumberland Plateau to the southwest. The landscape consists of flat-topped high-elevation plateaus separated by deep, steep-sided valleys. The plateaus slope gently from the northeast to the southwest. The highest elevations are above 1,500 feet in DeKalb and eastern Madison counties, and the lowest elevations are about 200 feet, near Holt Lock and Dam in Tuscaloosa County.

Horizontal sedimentary bedrock layers that are deeply dissected by streams underlie the Cumberland Plateau. The landform is a pattern of low irregular hills with broad, gently rolling summits and steep slopes. Many of these hills are capped with beds of sandstone. The rock strata are mostly of the Pennsylvanian Age Pottsville Formation consisting of alternating beds of sandstone and shale with numerous coal seams and associated under clays.

The Cumberland Plateau is a deeply dissected plateau, with topographic relief commonly of about four hundred feet (120 meters), and frequent sandstone outcroppings and bluffs. Many coal seams are present in the area causing the area to be heavily mined. The hills in the western most areas of the

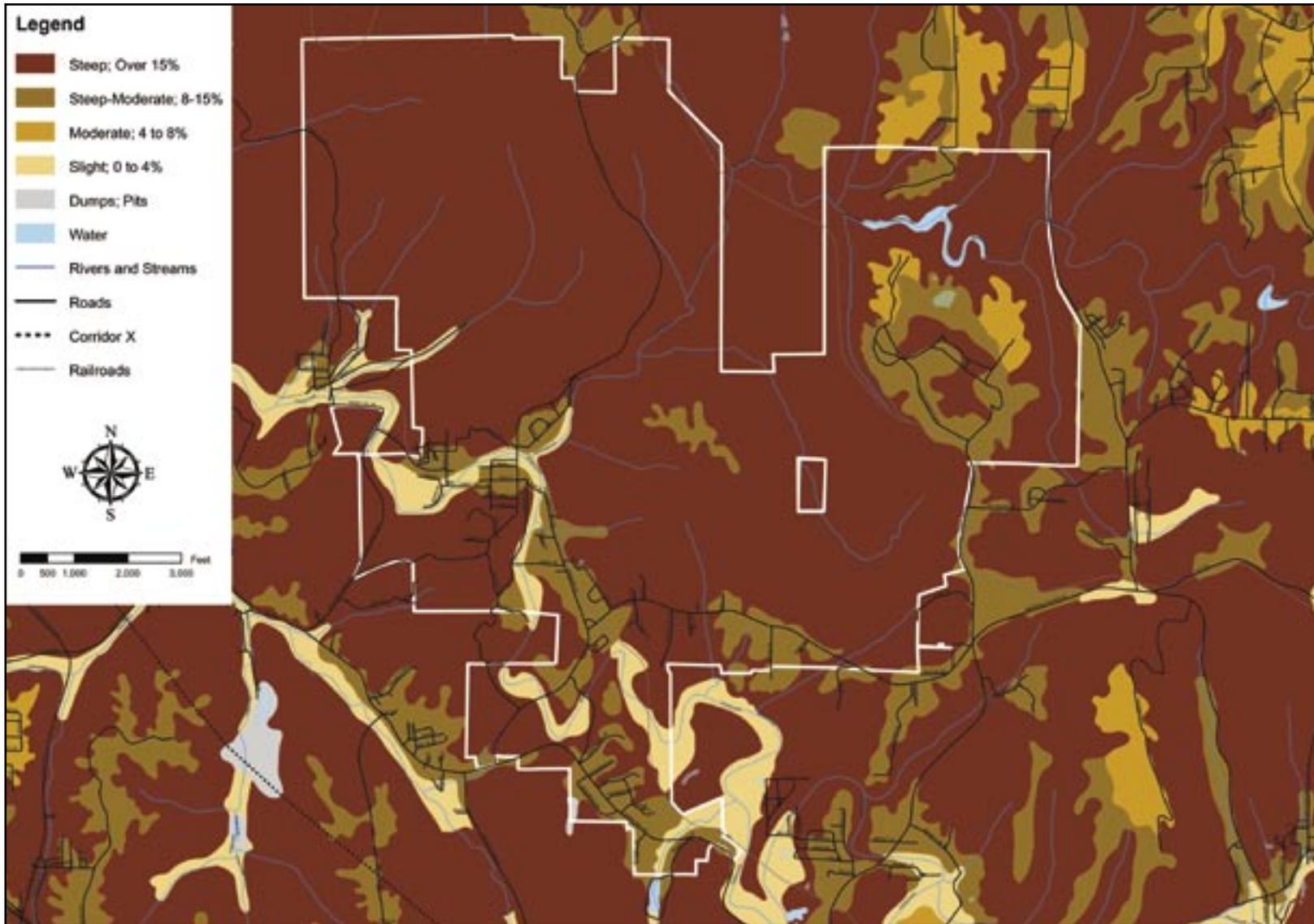


Figure 8: Soil Conditions for Slope

plateau have a relief of around 200 feet. The sedimentary rocks are composed of near shore sediments washed westward from the original Appalachian Mountains. Though the plateau is not composed of true mountains it has some of the most rugged terrain in the eastern United States. The plateau contains some of the largest stretches of contiguous forest in the eastern United States evident throughout the less populated areas of Brookside.

## Brookside Foundation Conditions

By John M. Ozier, OMI, Inc. Huntsville

Overview: The geology of the Brookside area is the Pottsville Formation. The Pottsville Formation is characterized as sandstone and shale with coal layers. The coal layers (seams) are the reason that Brookside exist. The formation gently dips toward the south. From a Geotechnical perspective, there are several ways of mote and concern.

First; the undisturbed areas, where flat or gently sloping are usually suitable to support almost any size building. Second, historical mines can cause areas that can subside due to collapse or areas of tailings or strip mine soil pride that will settle detrimentally under a building. Third, the step slopes can have loose soil on them that is called

colluviums. Colluviums move down a hillside at a rate of ¼ to several inches per year. It is usually not noted by the casual observes until the site is developed. Colluvial soil must be identified and properly tested with engineered solutions. Fourth, the soils above the bedrock are usually from a few inches to about 10 feet deep. The soils are suitable for septic tank disposal as long as the houses are spread widely apart. However when housing developments place houses in a dense arrangement the soils have trouble assimilating the treated sewage and problems with wet weather springs and inadequately treated sewer occur. Fifth, the sandstone and unweathered shale can not be excavated with backhoes or track hoes. They can be excavated if they are thin bedded but not if they are thick bedded. This will cause problems with excavation for buildings or sewer trenches.

## Soils

Soil is the product of parent material (which is the soil's underlying geology), topography, climate, plant and animal life, and time. The nature of soils at any given place in time depends on the combination of these five factors. Each of these five factors affects not only the soil but also how each of the other

factors will continue to affect the soil. For example, plant life growing in a soil protects it from the external climate. Due to the interaction of these factors, knowledge of soil types in an area can provide information on topography, erosion patterns, water threshold, construction tolerance and storm water management.

The soils of the Cumberland Plateau where Brookside resides are typically medium to fine textured with a mesic temperature regime, udic soil moisture regime, with mixed or siliceous mineralogy. Many of the most common soil types in Brookside are complex and often have slopes to work with. Many of the soils are subject to erosion if not tended to properly. The most common rock types include silty/sandy loam type soils with a heavy influence of sandstone and shale.

Soils have a strong impact on development much like steep slopes. Soil types affect the scale of a building, the sites ability to handle storm water runoff, permeability for septic systems and suitability for basements. For larger scale buildings the type soil and its compatibility can affect the ultimate scale of the structure.

Soils in the planning area are categorized and ranked for different types of use by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. The ranking used



Figure 9: Soil Conditions for Septic Tank Absorption

by the Soil Conservation Service are: severe, moderate and slight. A ranking of “severe” indicates greater difficulty and greater expense in preparing the land for the type of development that will occur. A ranking of “slight” indicates that such problems are minimal. This classification system should be used only for a general understanding of the soil conditions within the study area and are not adequate to convey specific soil characteristics on any given site. For new development, site-specific soils analysis should be performed.

As can be seen from Figure 8, many areas in Brookside have soil conditions that have steep slopes. Many of the soils are classified as “severe-to-moderate” (indicated in light brown and dark brown). This indicates in these areas that future road and land development will be somewhat challenging. However, several soil complexes have “slight to moderate” constraints (indicated in light beige and orange) located in a few areas in town. The slighter slope constraints indicate areas the Town of Brookside should consider for future road and land development.

Figure 9 reveals the severe constraints on septic tank absorption (due to how well the soils absorb septic discharge) in the Town of Brookside. Some of the soil areas in the

Town of Brookside are classified as “severe” (indicated in red). These areas should be avoided for septic tank use; or only very low-density residential or agricultural uses should be permitted in conjunction with septic tanks. Because most non-residential uses require sewer access, this illustration is more important in considering the locations of sewered and unsewered residential development. An important note that should be included here is that use of new “alternative wastewater management systems” may slightly decrease the level of constraint represented by these soil conditions. Decentralized, on-site systems may be used, though they will still require adequate areas for absorption of treated wastewater.

This section describes the soil types in Brookside in more detail. For more information on soil types contact the United States Department of Agricultural Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Townley-Urban land complex: Consisting of strongly sloping, well-drained Townley soils and areas of urban land on shale ridges and knolls. The surface is typically very dark grayish brown silt loam approximately four inches thick and a subsoil 21 inches thick. Townley soils have a low available water

capacity and permeate at a slow rate. The soil has unfavorable properties for residential uses. It is mostly suited for recreational uses. Much of downtown Brookside is built on this soil, including the public housing north of downtown, along Brookside Coalburg Road and the area north of John Bensko Park.

Sullivan-State complex: The soils consist of nearly level, well-drained Sullivan soils on flood plains and well-drained State soils. The surface is typically four inches of dark brown silt loam with 35 inch subsoil. The soils have a moderate to high water capacity and are well-suited for crops, parks, playgrounds, golf courses, and horse farms. Flooding remains a hazard in these areas and is a management concern. It is unfavorable to residential and industrial uses due to the high water table. Often found along stream terraces, this soil type is located along Five Mile Creek and Newfound Creek in Brookside.

Hanceville-Urban land complex: Consisting of gently sloping to sloping well-drained Hanceville soils and areas of urban land on mountains and ridges underlain by sandstone. The surface layer is typically dark reddish brown fine sandy loam, six inches thick with subsoil greater than 64 inches. Hanceville soils have a high capacity for water but have periods of dryness. The soil has

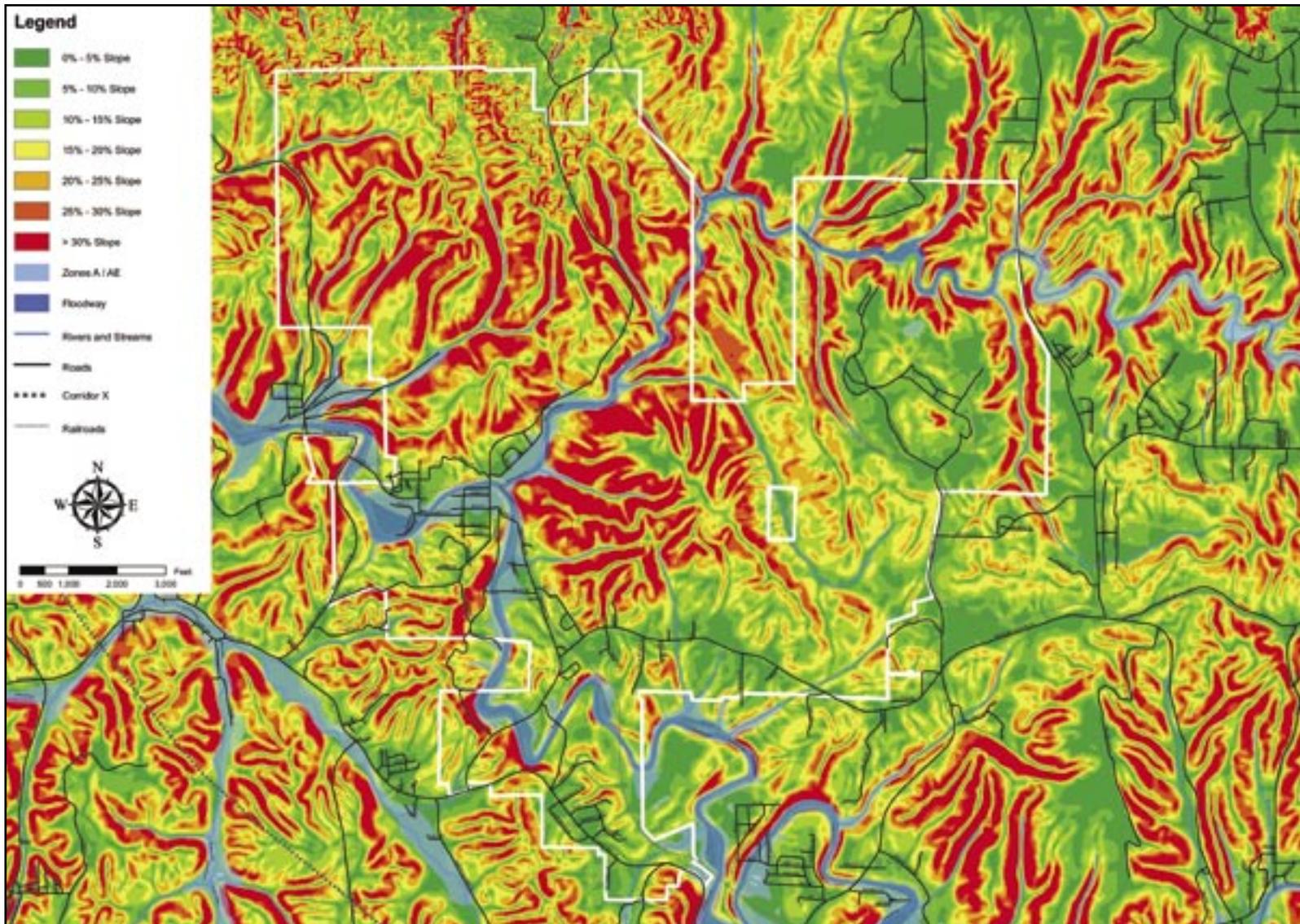


Figure 10: Slope Analysis

favorable properties for residential and small commercial uses. The soil is located mainly along Mississippi Street in Brookside.

**Holston loam:** A gently sloping, well-drained soil on to slopes, colluvial fans and stream terraces. The surface of the soil is often dissected by upland drainage. It typically has a very dark grayish brown loam about six inches thick and a subsurface of more than 59 inches. The available water capacity for Holston loam is high but may be tilled with a wide range in moisture content. The soil is favorable to low density residential and industrial uses. It is found mostly in the eastern portion of Brookside and on the north side of Brookside Coalburg Road.

**Montevallo-Nauvoo association:** Consists of soils on strongly dissected areas of sandstone and shale patterns. Extensive surface and deep mining of coal occur in this area. The Montevallo soils surface is typically very dark gray silt loam about 10 inches thick with a subsurface of 10 inches underlain by weather siltstone and shale. The Nauvoo soil has a typically dark grayish brown fine sandy loam about six inches thick with a subsurface about 36 inches thick. The water capacity for the soils is low to moderate. These soils are well-suited to woodland use; however, the steep slopes can occasionally cause hazards during

dry period of the year. Montevallo soils are not favorable to residential and industrial uses. The soil is also not favorable to septic tank use to due to elevation changes which would cause the tank effluent to flow to the surface. Nauvoo soils are more favorable to residential and industrial uses but slope remains a limitation. The combined soil types are most favorable to recreation uses. The extensive mining of these soils can cause the re-establishment of vegetation to be difficult. The northern portion of Brookside has an abundance of this type of soil.

**Palmerdale complex:** This soil consists of steep, somewhat excessively drained Palmerdale soils and other soils on surface mining spoil piles. Palmerdale soils are typically a dark gray very shale-based silt loam 60 inches thick. The soils have a low available water capacity and moderately rapid permeability. Erosion can cause some limitations in development. Soils of this type are located near the municipal complex center of Brookside currently under construction.

## Topography and Slope

Topography and Slope is a strong factor in the Brookside area, particularly due to its location in the foothills of the Appalachian

Mountains. In addition to soil type, slope is a strong factor in determining the types of foundations required for construction of buildings and access roads. Steep slopes increase the expense of a project when it is required to complete excess grading of the land or use engineered fill and compacting. Also, stabilization of the slope during and after construction is a time consuming process that requires years of monitoring before the developed land can be considered truly stable.

An important land planning concept to understand is slope and grade. Grade and slope are terms that are often used interchangeably. Grade is most frequently used to describe roadways and slope to define hillsides. They are terms describing the same relationship. The grade (or gradient or pitch or slope) of any physical feature such as a hill, stream, roof, railroad, or road, refers to the amount of inclination of that surface where zero indicates level (with respect to gravity) and larger numbers indicate higher degrees of “tilt”. Often slope is calculated as a ratio of “rise over run” in which run is the horizontal distance and rise is the vertical distance.

The grade of a road is defined as a measure of the road’s steepness as it rises and falls

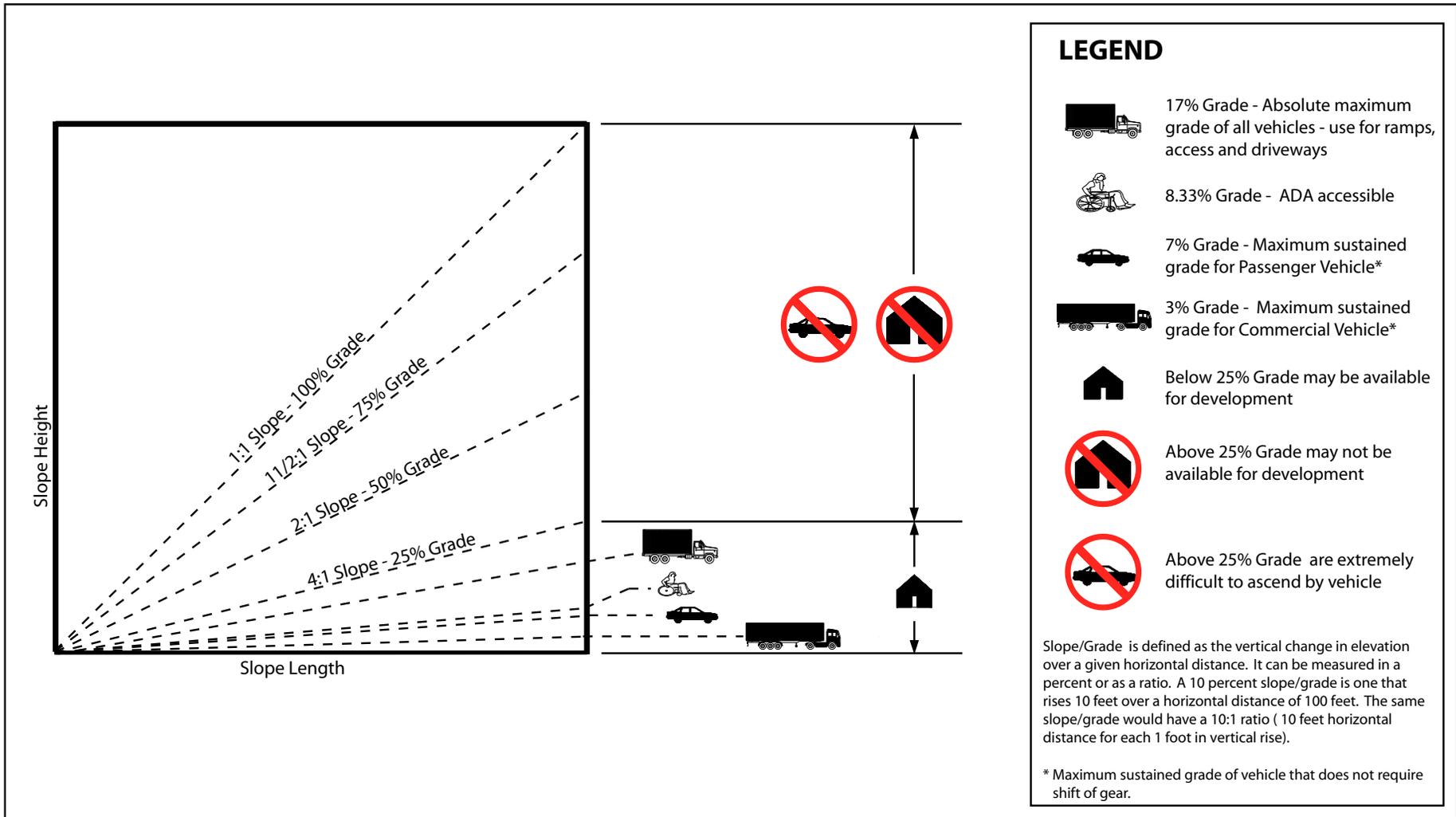
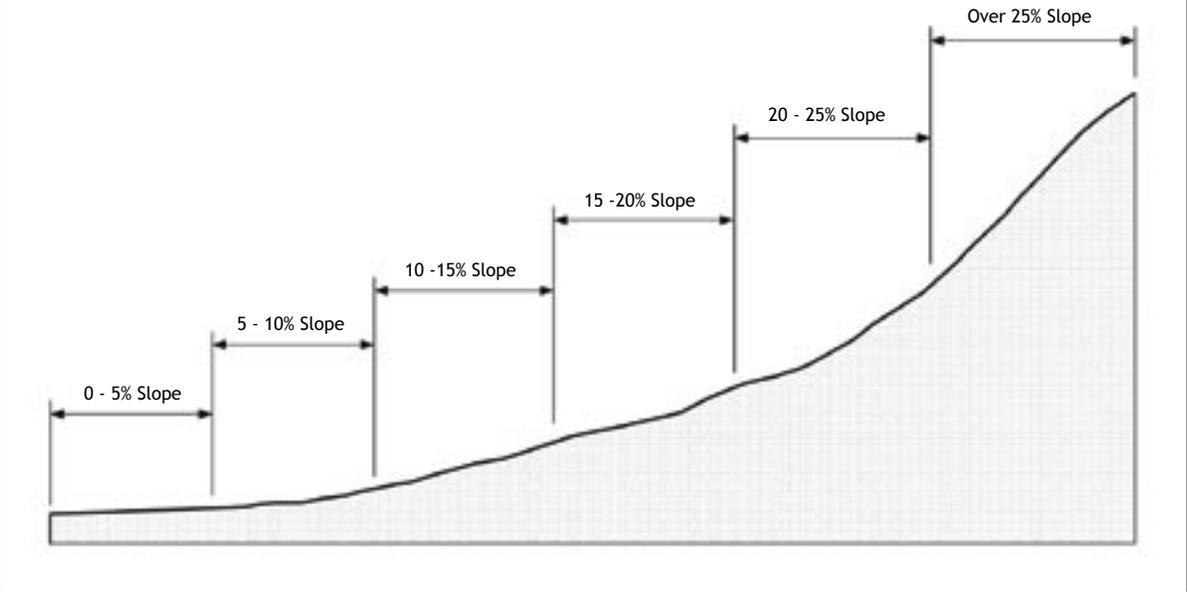


Figure 11: Slope Explanation Chart

along its route. In other words, it is the magnitude of its incline or slope. The amount of grade indicates how much the highway is inclined from the horizontal. For example, if a section of road is perfectly flat and level, then its grade along that section is zero. In a steep section the grade will be expressed as a number, usually a percentage, such as 10 percent.

As mentioned, the topography in the Brookside planning area is a significant factor to future growth. The hilly terrain raises the cost of site preparation for most types of development and makes drainage a complex issue to manage for the Town, as it reviews and regulates new development. Figure 10 depicts the topography in the planning area by delineating the land contours, which form the hills, valleys and waterways in the community. Figure x is a computer-generated model of the topography, depicting the slope conditions throughout the planning area. Flatter land areas are shown in light green and green, whereas steeper slopes are shown in orange and red (20% slopes and greater). This image most clearly identifies the areas that are more practical to develop given existing topography. It also represents those areas which will be the most difficult to prepare for development.

Figure 12: Slope Categories



Grading of land for development is an important concern in protecting adjacent lands from erosion and runoff. Reshaping the land, in this way, alters natural drainage patterns and can increase drainage and flooding risks off-site. Grading is also a concern to residents who place a value on the natural character of the land. Excessive grading and clear-cutting can remove those natural, scenic qualities inherent to the land, which may have attracted them to the community, while also exacerbating drainage, flooding and erosion problems.

For the community to grow in an integrated, attractive and environmentally-sensitive manner, both land disturbance and preservation must occur. Areas, which are high priorities for future development, should be graded as necessary to accommodate the uses, density and character deemed appropriate by the community; while other areas that are the least important for new growth should be adequately preserved. Determining such priority areas is addressed, in part, through this plan. Other factors, which contribute to this issue, are soil

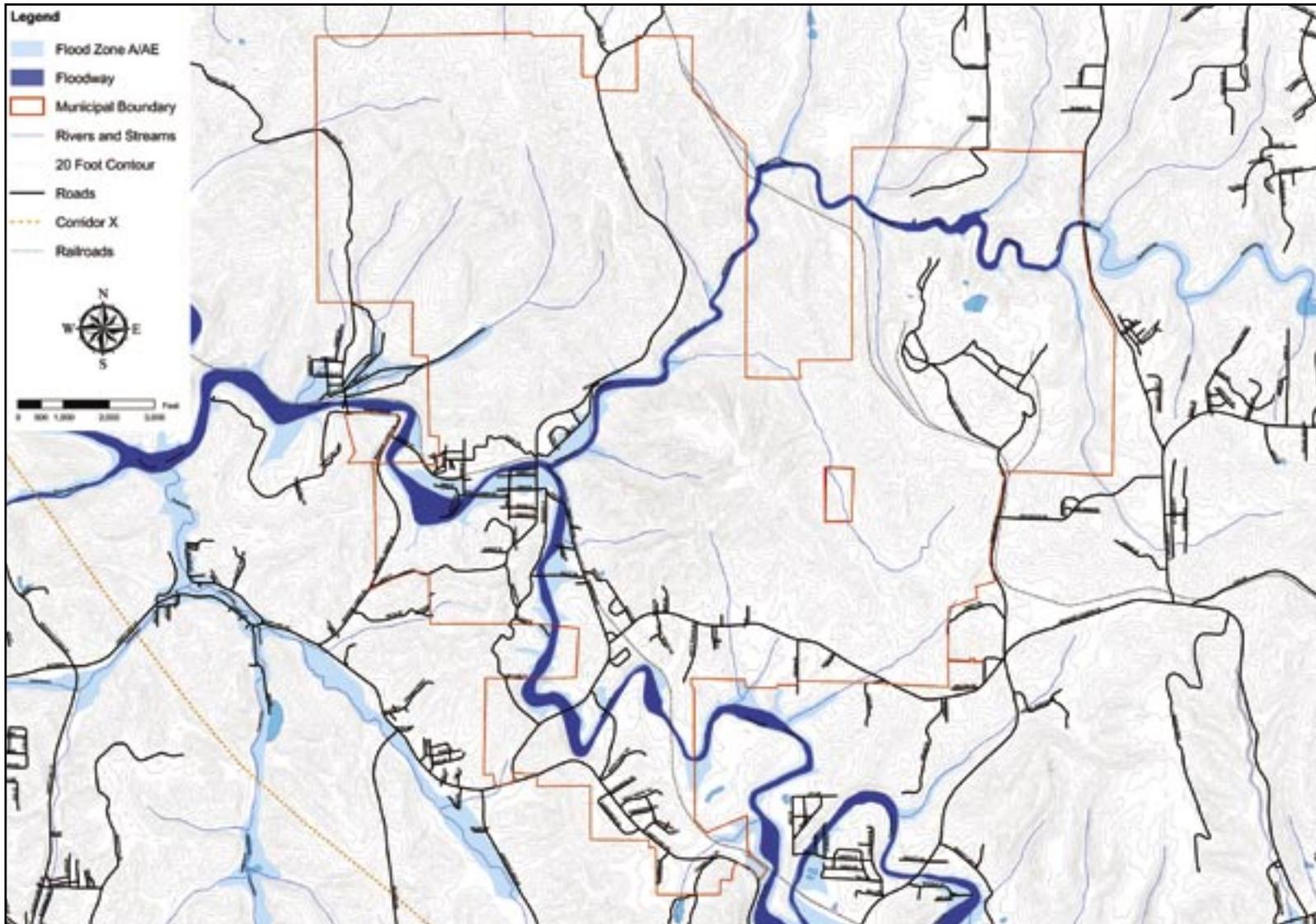


Figure 13: Topography + Hydrology Map

suitability and the capacity for and efficiency of extending public infrastructure and services.

Steep slopes are a serious constraint to both commercial and residential development due to two factors. First, steep slopes in hilly or mountainous areas usually have shallow depth to bedrock soils. Such soils are very rocky and require extensive engineering and alteration to support development. Secondly, soils on steep slopes also tend to be more susceptible to erosion and mudslides. As impervious surfaces (i.e. roads and asphalt parking lots) are added to steep slopes, the rate and velocity of stormwater runoff increases, contributing to increased soil erosion and instability. While modern engineering practices can be used to overcome these problems somewhat, the expense involved in development on steep slopes can make development in such areas economically impractical. Developing conservation subdivision regulations and/or hillside development regulations may protect the citizens, the environment and developers from costly mistakes.

Although specific threshold criteria for steep slopes vary depending upon the type of development activity, the general slope thresholds below are often used to determine

where slopes become a significant engineering and design constraint to development.

#### **General Slope Rating Criteria for Development**

**0-5%** Well suited to large-scale shopping center development and small-scale individual commercial structures, single and multi-family residences. Acceptable limit for construction of roads and railroads.

**5-10%** Truck access becomes difficult and expensive when the slope exceeds 7%, and in areas of slope over 8% road routing is virtually dictated by the terrain. Small-scale, individual, commercial structures on slopes from 5 to 8% with virtually no parking demand or, if provided, with parking garages.

**10-15%** Economically impractical for industrial, commercial and townhouse developments. Hillside subdivision for single-family homes and apartment construction is often feasible, with special care taken to design of access roads and parking areas.

**15-20%** Point at which engineering costs for most developments become significant and extensive anchoring, soil stabilization, and stormwater management measures must be applied. Single-family homes and apartment construction is possible only if special care is taken in the design of access roads, parking

areas, water supply, and sewage disposal. Any road design requires special care.

**20-25%** Economically impractical for all development activity. All urban areas which require the construction of roads and the provision of utilities are both prohibitively expensive and extremely damaging to the terrain.

**25% and steeper** As a general rule, land with a slope of over 25% should not be developed or disturbed.

### **Hydrology**

This section refers to the waterways, floodplains, wetlands and related hydrologic features, which altogether are an important consideration in the growth of the community.

The hydrologic area within Brookside lies completely within the Five Mile Creek watershed of the Locust Fork section of the Black Warrior watershed. Starting near Chalkville and flowing 44 miles to its confluence with Brookside of the Warrior River, the stream drains approximately 100 square miles of North Jefferson County. Five Mile Creek has suffered from decades of industrial, mining, and urban pollution

and impact. But after the devastating floods of 2001-2003, the communities along Five Mile Creek began to seek a solution to the problems of “Creosote Creek”.

The Five Mile Creek Greenway Partnership formed to protect and preserve the water quality and quality of life for residents along Five Mile Creek by protecting streamside buffers and planning for “smart-growth” within the watershed. The Partnership was formed through a Memorandum of Agreement between the cities of Birmingham, Center Point, Tarrant, Fulndale, Brookside, and Graysville, in order to commit to developing a “greenway” buffer along Five Mile Creek. Other partners in this effort include Jefferson County Commission, the Freshwater Land Trust, CAWACO Resource Conservation and Development Council, the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, and many other community agencies and stakeholders.

Floodplain areas are frequently inundated by rising water levels during major storm events, and flooding occurs within a floodplain whenever stormwater runoff collects or accumulates at a faster rate than the receiving river or creek is capable of transmitting the excess flow downstream. Development within floodplains is not recommended for three reasons. First and

most importantly, the periodic inundations that occur within floodplains pose a threat to lives and property. Second, the addition of impervious surfaces and structures within floodplains can impede the flow or absorption of floodwaters, thereby increasing the chances or intensity of upstream flooding during major storms. Third, the undeveloped floodplain areas serve as natural filters for stormwater runoff which helps to improve water quality and helps to lessen the potential for flooding.

Zone A is the flood insurance rate zone that corresponds to the 100-year floodplains (or the one percent annual change floodplains) that are determined in the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) by approximate methods. Because detailed hydraulic analyses are not performed for such areas, no Base Flood Elevations or depths are shown within the zone. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements apply.

Zone AE is the flood insurance rate zone that corresponds to the 100-year floodplains (or the one percent annual change floodplains) that are determined in the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) by detailed methods. In most instances, Base Flood Elevations derived from the detailed hydraulic analyses are shown at selected intervals within this zone. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements apply.

In recent years, many communities have opted to use floodplain areas for community recreation such as linear parks and greenways. Funding assistance for such recreational developments may be obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

## Vegetation

Natural environments like trees and ground cover provide habitat for birds, rodents, deer and other forms of wildlife. Trees also provide important cooling sources on hot days providing shade. Different species of trees provide barriers between land uses and provide an absorption cushion against excessive noise. They aid in the control of storm water, erosion and providing community pride. The watercourses and their subsequent floodplains also provide habitat for smaller creatures that rely both on the water source and land for survival. Natural areas should remain undisturbed as often as possible. Improvements like building construction should maintain the largest portion of existing ground cover feasible.

Brookside is primarily covered in oak and pine. The Oak-Pine Forest type that pertains to Brookside is dominated by *Quercus rubra* (Red Oak) and *Pinus taeda* (Loblolly Pine). The canopy tends to be somewhat open. The shrub layer is sparse and mostly composed of tree species regeneration. Herbs and dwarf shrubs are spotty: *Kalmia angustifolia*, *Vaccinium angustifolium*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Trientalis borealis*, and oak seedlings are typical. These forests typically occur on gentle to moderate slopes at low to mid elevations. This successional forest of the eastern United States is a broadly defined community developing after severe disturbance like the heavy mining that occurred in Brookside. Since the 1960's vegetation has slowly started to reclaim the areas where mines once operated.

## Climate

Brookside lies within the state's Appalachian Mountain climatological region, which has a moist subtropical climate with mild winters, warm summers and ample precipitation throughout the year. Annual precipitation averages 54 inches, with an average relative humidity of 86% at 6 a.m. and 65% at 6 p.m. Summers are generally hot and humid with scattered afternoon thunderstorms.

Successive cold fronts moving from west to east that draw moisture out of the Gulf and influence winter weather, sometimes produce heavy downpours. Rainfall occurs an average of 117 days per year with an annual precipitation of 54 inches. Snowfall is infrequent with an average winter temperature of 45 degrees Fahrenheit. The growing season averages 198 days, with the last freeze usually occurring in early April and the first usually occurring in late October. The sun shines an average of 58% of the daylight hours. Prevailing winds are from the south during winter and from the southwest during summer.

## Wildlife

The Brookside area and Jefferson County are home to many different kinds of animal species. These can range from small mammals like raccoons, squirrels, and beavers, to larger mammals such as white tail deer. It also includes many species of bird, fish and reptiles. Wild Russian blue boar and Mule deer have been released into the area for hunting.

## Coal Resources

Since discovery in 1821 of Alabama's Warrior Coal Field, coal has become Alabama's leading industrial mineral. Alabama has traditionally been one of the nation's major coal-producing states, especially with the rise of the Birmingham steel industry in the 1870 that directly influenced the development of the Brookside area since its conception in 1886. The current rate of coal production is expected to continue due to Alabama's high-quality, low sulfur bituminous coal. Alabama also has high-grade, near-surface lignite deposits, which are not presently being mined.

# Built Environment

## Existing Land Use

This section describes the land uses and the physical development of the Town of Brookside. Land use can impact physical environments, visual impressions and transportation systems. Land use can shape the character of a community by influencing the location and density of various uses throughout the town. Land use controls aid in managing potential growth in a beneficial way to the community.

Brookside is located in the northwestern portion of Jefferson County, approximately 20 minutes from downtown Birmingham. It is also near the cities of Fultondale, Adamsville, Graysville and Gardendale. School districts for the town are Brooksville-Bragg and Gardendale in Jefferson County. Brookside does not have its own school district. With the construction of Corridor X and the proposed Northern Beltline, Brookside is presented with a better opportunity to connect to the growing areas that surround it.

Table 1: Existing Land Uses

Land Use Categories	Acres	Percent
Residential - Low Density	605.0	12.0%
Residential - High Density	56.0	0.01%
Commercial	0.4	0.00%
Park & Recreational	18.1	0.03%
Public & Institutional	79.4	1.5%
Utilities	3.3	0.01%
Industrial	571.1	11.0%
Agriculture & Forestry	3909.8	75.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5243.1</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Brookside was once a thriving coal mining community with a thriving downtown. However, today much of the town is residential. A land use survey was completed in the early 1990's through the use of aerial photography. Since then, various events, including the Flood of May 2003 have caused commercial businesses to leave the Town of Brookside. The post office is the only commercial building that is still located in the once prosperous downtown. Much of the land is covered by a mixture of forested areas, including kudzu, which has taken over much of the roadsides and floodways.

Brookside is approximately six square miles in size and 0.17% water. The existing land uses include residential, some minor private commercial and industrial, minor agricultural, and a lot of forested land and abandoned mines. Forested areas cover near 75% or 3909 acres of land in the Town of Brookside. Residential uses account for 605 acres and 12% of the total land area in Brookside. The old Dupont Industrial site account for 571 acre or 11% of the total land area in Brookside. Public and Institutional accounts for 79.4 acres of land with parks and recreational accounting for 18.1 acres.

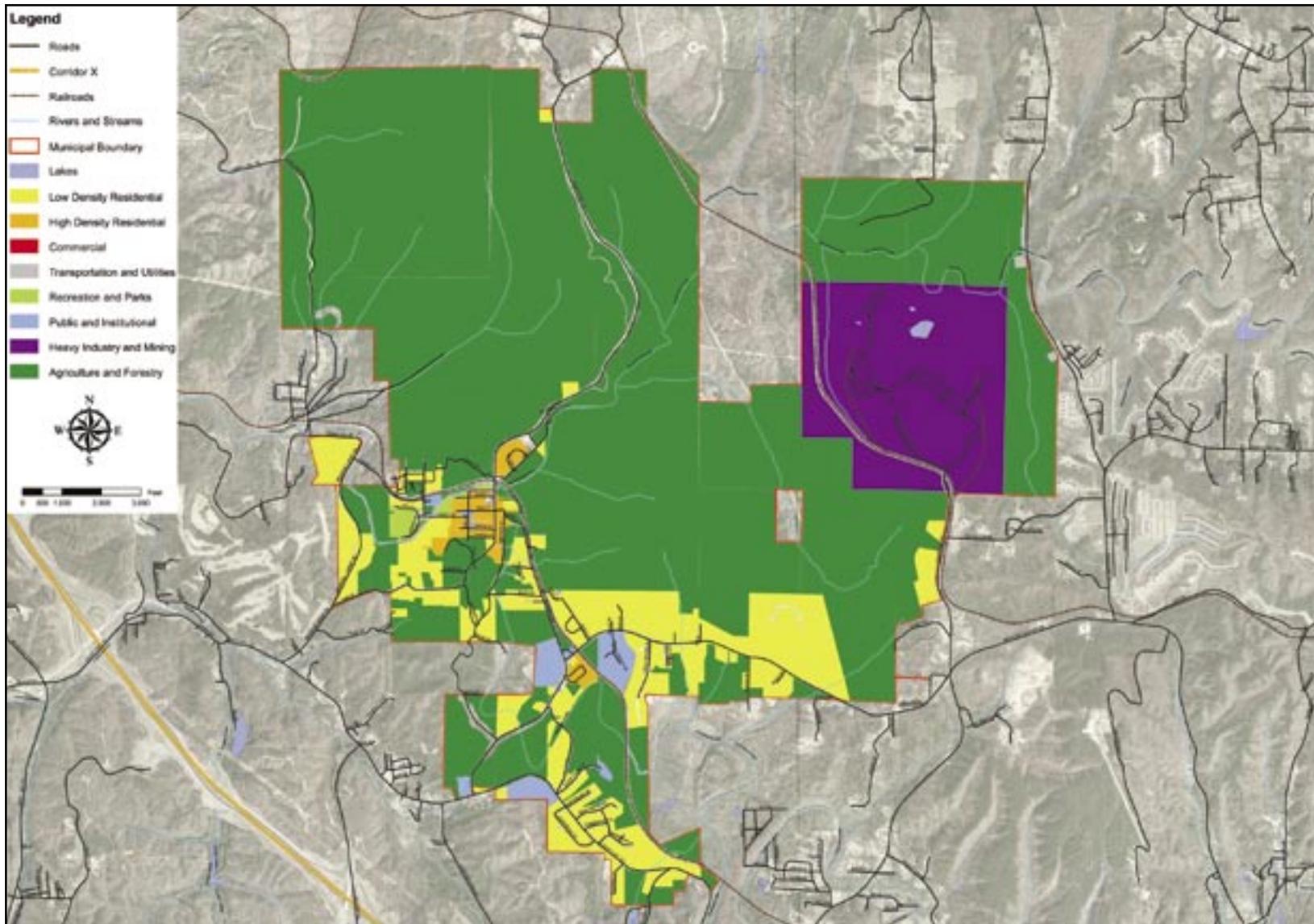


Figure 14: Existing Land Use Map

## Agriculture and Forestry

Some homeowners on larger lots outside of town grow minor row crops. Previously, owners also raised livestock. In most instances, these smaller crops are not commercially sold and are utilized for personal consumption only.

A large percentage of Brookside is covered in hilly terrain with ample vegetation including deciduous, coniferous, and mixed forest. Kudzu has also spread to many of these forests and is prevalent along the creek banks.

## Residential

Single-family detached residential homes are the most prominent type of dwelling units represented in Brookside. These homes are laid out in organized blocks or cul-de-sac streets scattered throughout the town.

Multi-family residential homes are residences consisting of two or more attached units. The public housing facilities located in the northeastern part of downtown and on Brookside Coalburg Road account for the presence of these units in Brookside.

Manufactured/mobile homes are located in two areas of in the town. Both manufactured

home communities are located in the southern section of town near the new municipal complex site.

## Commercial

A post office is the only commercial establishment that currently operates downtown. Some additional commercial facilities in the planning area include Jones Rod Building Custom Rods, Custo Trucking Accessories, some plumbing services, and a few various other businesses. A locally-owned grocery operated in Brookside until flood damage in 2003 forced it to close its doors.

## Public and Institutional

### Churches:

Brookside Church of God, Sharon Heights Baptist Church, St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Brookside Church of Christ, Brookside First Baptist Church, and Mineral Springs Baptist Church

### Cemeteries:

Russian Orthodox Cathedral Cemetery, Fields Cemetery and St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery are the historic cemeteries in Brookside.

There are also several other cemeteries in the planning area.

### Governmental buildings:

In January 2009 the newly constructed Municipal Center held its grand opening. The Municipal Center includes the Town Hall, police department, storm shelter, and future fire station. The Flood of 2003 devastated the previous structure, and then a fire destroyed the remainder of the building. The Community Center was also devastated by flooding and has not been in usable condition since.

## Parks and Recreational

John Bensko Park is located on the western side of town and has three ball fields that are in meager condition. Some of the fencing has been replaced since the May 2003 flood, the fields are used by neighboring schools. Mountain View Golf Course is located in nearby Graysville.

The town presently maintains one park within the town limits, John Bensko Park (Brookside Ball Park). The park is maintained by staff at the town hall. It consists of three baseball diamonds, a children's play area with swings and a

slide, a covered picnic area with a fire pit, concession bar with restrooms, a walking path and canoe launch. It is located on the northern bank of Five Mile Creek, south of Cardiff Street in the western portion of downtown Brookside. The Annual Brookside Greenway Festival is held at this park as well as numerous local church and family gatherings.

The park once catered to flourishing groups of Little League ball players. As the population of the town decreased so did the interest in Little League. Over time the three baseball diamonds saw less use. In 2003 the fencing surrounding the fields suffered some damage when floodwaters covered the park. Of the recovered fencing some of it was replaced while the remainder is stored for later possible uses. Although a Boys and Girls Club operates in Brookside little interest remains in reorganizing the Little League venue.

The most utilized portion of the park is the walking path. An asphalt path runs the circumference of the park and walkers are seen regularly.

The park's location provides a great amount of potential for low impact recreational activities. The town has

considered many options for revitalizing the park including but not limited to a fishing dock, picnic areas, and trail head facilities.

## Industrial

A DuPont Powder Plant used to operate in the northeastern part of Brookside. That plant has been closed and is no longer operational. There are no other industrial sites in the town.

**Mines:** Brookside was once a mining town that produced coke for the steel mills. The remnant of this production can still be seen in the Town of Brookside where the abandoned mines have been taken over by nature. The coke ovens and mines themselves are no longer in use; although remnants of the mines, ovens and other utilities can still be seen around town.

**Salvage yards:** Cherry Towing Company is the only salvage yard in the Town of Brookside.

## Landmarks

Most illustrious of Brookside's Slovakian ancestry is St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church. Built in 1916 in traditional styles,

the church contains iconic designs and objects resembling Russian Orthodox architecture in Eastern Europe. Located on Park Avenue, it is the only temple of its kind in the state. Both the interior and exterior were renovated in 1965. Today, St. Nicholas is still in use as a parish and is the site of an annual Russian Food Festival.

Along with St. Nicholas Church is the Russian Orthodox Cemetery on Main Street where many of the original Slovakian immigrants are buried. Across the street is St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery. It was formerly the Bivens Family Cemetery but the property was acquired by the Sloss Company and given to the people for use as a Catholic cemetery in 1901. The water tower on Tiger Hill Road was put to use in 1933 as a holding tank for water soon to be filtered by a new filtering plan and pumping station. This was the first time the town provided itself with public utilities and supplied residents with public water.

There is currently a historic study being conducted for the Town of Brookside. Figure 15 illustrates the significant historic and environmental sites in the Town of Brookside as well as the proposed area of the historical study. Figure 15 also shows the previous sites of mining activity. All mine site information was provided by Jefferson County.

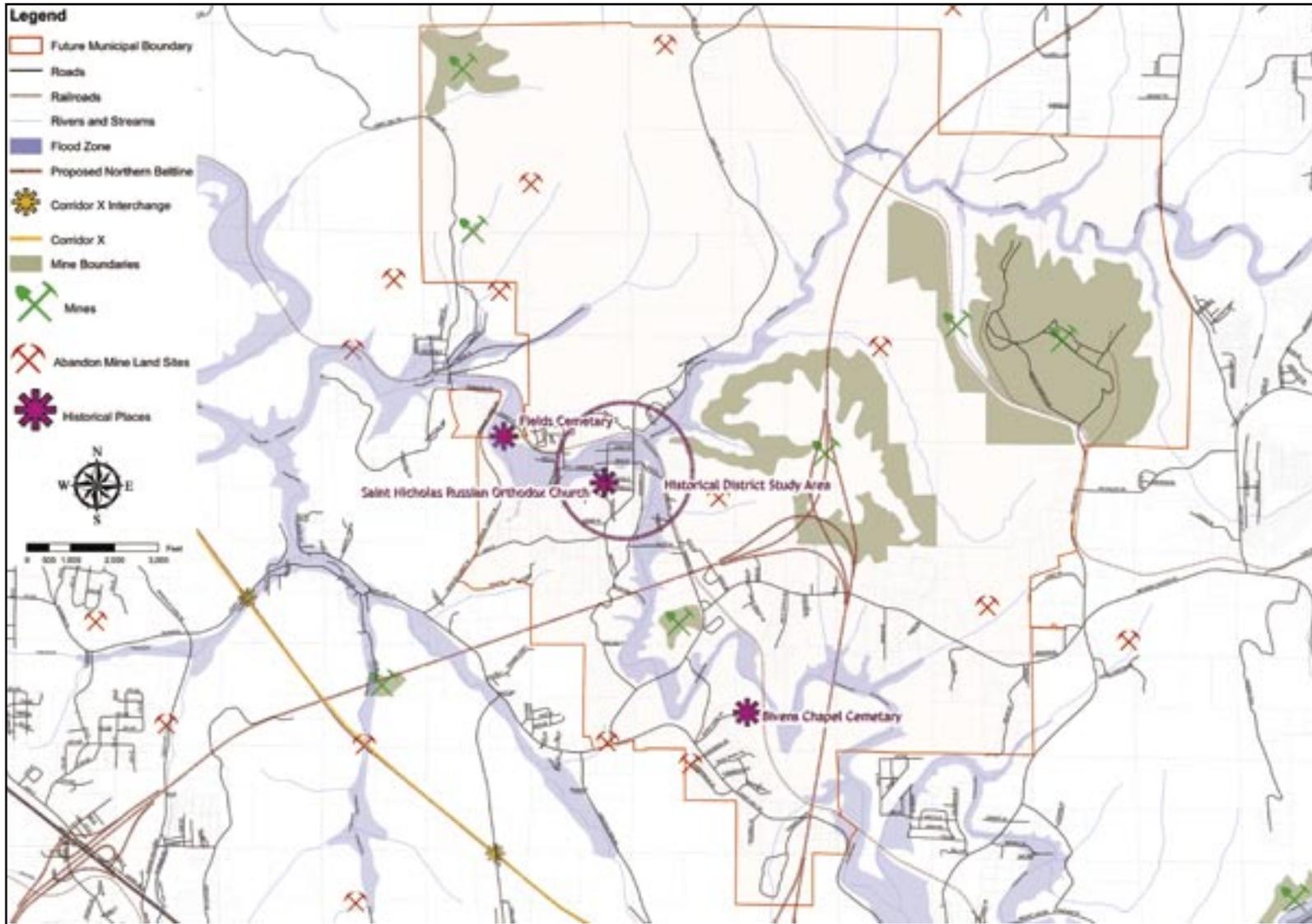


Figure 15: Environmental and Historical Sites

# Public Infrastructure and Services

## Transportation

The Town of Brookside does not have any interstates or expressways that run through it. Currently, the closest interstates are I-65 and I-59. Additionally, there are plans for an extension of I-459, referred to locally as the Northern Beltline that would run through Brookside. There are no plans for an interstate exit within Brookside town limits. US Highway 78, known as Corridor X, is the closest major roadway; it is located approximately four miles west of the Town of Brookside.

## Water and Gas Services

Water services are provided and managed by Brookside Water. Gas Services are provided and managed by Brookside Gas.

## Sewer and Garbage Services

There is currently no sewer service in

Brookside. Garbage Service is provided by Allied Waste.

## Fire Department

The Brookside Fire Department will be located at the new Municipal Complex site in the near future. The fire department maintains an ISO (Insurance Service Office) rating of “7”. The ISO rates fire protection and suppression services on a scale of “1” to “10” with a rating of “1” representing exemplary services while a rating of a “10” shows that the fire services program does not meet ISO minimum standards. Communities with better ISO ratings receive better insurance premiums for their residents. ISO ratings are based on three main criteria: 1) alarm, communications and dispatch systems; 2) equipment, staffing, training and geographic distribution of fire companies; and 3) available water supply and fire hydrants.

The fire department includes a full time staff of six paid employees and fifteen volunteer employees. This includes four level three EMTs, one intermediate EMT and one basic EMT. The department uses two fire trucks, one service vehicle and one rescue vehicle. The fire departments vehicles are in fair good condition but are very old. The fire department provides services primarily to

areas located within the Town of Brookside and upon request assist neighboring municipalities. The following short-term recommendations from the fire department are that they are in desperate need of self contained breathing apparatus air packs for their EMTs. They would also need to employ two more full time EMTs. The long-term recommendations of the Fire Department include two more fire trucks, a new rescue truck and to increase the number of paid and volunteer personnel.

## Police Department

The Brookside Police Department is located at the new Municipal Complex and employs one full-time staff, one part-time staff and a Police Chief. The Brookside Police Department currently operates two police cars.

## Municipal Government

Brookside’s municipal government consists of a mayor and town council. The mayor and the town council are elected to serve four-year terms. These are the only elected offices in the town government.

The town’s appointed committee is the

Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Committee. The Parks and Recreation Committee meet regularly. However, the Planning Commission has yet to form. The Planning Commission was established by Town Ordinance for the purpose of oversight and adoption of the Master Plan. The town also maintains membership in the Alabama League of Municipalities and working relationships with the Jefferson County Planning Commission and the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham.

The town’s municipal staff consists of approximately 11 individuals who perform day-to-day operations. This staff includes the mayor, clerk, administrative assistant, police, fire, utilities staff, and grounds maintenance. All staff will operate out of one municipal building on the Municipal Complex site. The town council holds its monthly meeting on the first Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m..

The community jail, the gas and water department, the fire department, the town hall, the community center, the tornado shelter, and maintenance storage areas are all located at the newly built Municipal Complex.

**Table 2: Population Change 1980 - 2035**

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	POPULATION CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
1980	1,409	N/A	N/A
1990	1,365	-44	-3.1%
2000*	1,398	33	2.4%
2001	1,389	-9	-0.6%
2002	1,390	1	0.1%
2003	1,387	-3	-0.2%
2004	1,370	-17	-1.2%
2005	1,353	-17	-1.2%
2006	1,338	-15	-1.1%
2007**	1,328	-10	-0.7%
2010	1,341	13	0.9%
2015	1,362	21	1.6%
2020	1,383	21	1.6%
2025	1,405	21	1.6%
2030	1,426	21	1.6%
2035	1,447	21	1.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census  
 Revised Census number (6/24/04)  
 \*\* RPC Estimate

### Educational Facilities

The education facilities for the residents of Brookside are located outside the municipal

boundary of the Town of Brookside. The elementary school is Brookville Elementary. The middle school is Bragg Middle School and the high school is Gardendale High School.

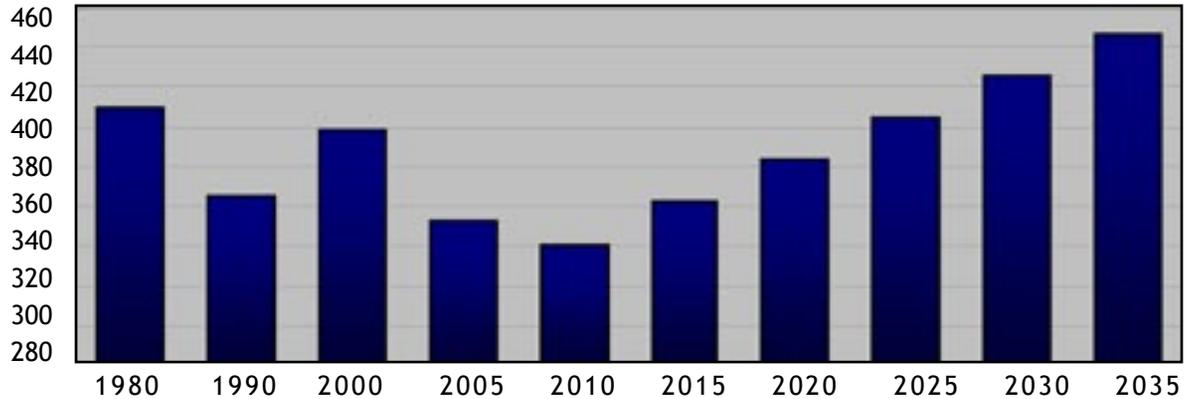
# Demographics and Economic Conditions

This section provides a historical analysis of population and socioeconomic trends in the Brookside area (including Birmingham, Jefferson County and the State of Alabama) and provides growth projections for this area over the next twenty-five years (through 2030). Baseline population data comes from the 2000 U.S. Census and U.S. Census estimates for 2054. Population projections include a low and high range to establish a reasonable range for growth expectations on which the Town can continue to plan local services and infrastructure to accommodate future residential growth.

## Population Trends and Projections

An examination of the population characteristics of Brookside is an essential element of the planning process. The present size and composition of the population and the probable future trends provide the basis for determining public service needs, future land use requirements and the timing of public improvements. The Town’s population composition and distribution greatly

Table 3: Population Change Graph 1980 - 2035



Source: US Bureau of the Census and RPC Projections

Table 4: Age Group Projections 2007 - 2035

AGE GROUP	2007	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
AGE UNDER 5 YEARS	95	94	97	97	97	99	101
AGE 5 TO 19 YEARS	258	266	272	286	293	296	304
AGE 20 TO 59 YEARS	727	736	722	702	699	709	701
AGE 60 AND OVER	248	246	270	298	316	321	341
AGE 65 AND OVER	179	172	185	208	232	246	266
TOTAL POPULATION	1,328	1,341	1,362	1,383	1,405	1,426	1,447

Source: W & P Economics and RPCGB projections

determine future demands to be placed not only on land, but also on the delivery of services associated with urban-type activities. A clear understanding of size composition and spatial distribution of the present and future populace will enable local officials to better visualize growth trends in terms of magnitude and geographic location. This understanding is crucial in attempting to guide future development along a predetermined path.

Trends in population growth for Brookside are closely related to the mining activity that occurred over the years. Around 1880 the first mines began operating in Brookside. Sloss Industries opened their Birmingham factory around the 1920's and by 1929 coke mines in Brookside ceased operations. However, surface mining in Brookside continued operating into the late 1960's. The population in Brookside by this time was established and rising. By the 1950's the population was on the rise at 733 individuals. By 1960, one decade later the town population had increased to 36% to 999 individuals. From 1960 to 1970 the population remained fairly consistent, declining by only 9 persons. By 1980, though, it had risen again increasing by 42% or 419 persons. The population fluctuated in the nineties continuing to rise through 1994 to a total of 1,508 persons, an increase of 105%

**Table 5: Racial Composition - 2007**

Race	Brookside			Jefferson County	
	2007 Total	Percentage	% of Jefferson County	2007 Total	Percentage
White	1,202	90.52%	0.3%	363,448	55.17%
Black or African-American	115	8.69%	0.0%	273,920	41.58%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5	0.36%	0.4%	1,252	0.19%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	0	0.00%	0.0%	7,247	1.10%
Other	6	0.43%	0.0%	12,912	1.96%
Hispanic Origin*	12	0.93%	0.1%	16,469	2.50%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>658,779</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: RPC & Claritas, 2007  
 \* Defined as an ethnicity, not a racial category.

**Table 6: Household Types 2000 - 2007**

Household Types	2000 Total	2000%	2007 Total	2007%
Total Households	546	100.0%	577	100.0%
Family Households	393	72.0%	410	71.1%
Married Couple Families w/ Own Children Under 18 Years	119	21.8%	123	21.3%
Female Householder w/ Own Children	41	7.5%	44	7.6%
Nonfamily Households	153	28.0%	167	28.9%

Source: RPC & Claritas, Inc.

since 1950. By 2000 Brookside’s population had decreased to 1,393 persons. The 2000 census states there are 1,393 people, 546 households, and 393 families residing in the town. The population density was 89.9/km<sup>2</sup> (232.8/mi<sup>2</sup>).

For comparison, Jefferson County gained in population each decennial period between 1950 and 1980. However, the population of the county decreased between 1980 and 1990. This decrease in population could be attributed to several factors. These factors include the closing of the DuPont Powder Plant in 1986. The plant had become the town’s largest employer with the shutting down of mines. Other contributors include many Jefferson County residents moving to neighboring counties like Shelby, St. Clair, and Blount.

RPCGB estimates show that the population of Brookside could increase by 22% or over 1000 people by the year 2030. This increase is generated largely due to the increased access to this more rural western part of Jefferson County. In response to the construction of Corridor X and the proposed Northern Beltline, Brookside’s population is projected to change dramatically over the next 20 years. Also, the trend in Jefferson County has shown more people living outside

**Table 7: Family Households by Household Income - 2007**

INCOME	HOUSEHOLDS
Less than \$15,000	48
\$15,000 to \$24,999	53
\$25,000 to \$34,999	70
\$35,000 to \$49,999	73
\$50,000 to \$74,999	65
\$75,000 to \$99,999	61
\$100,000 to \$149,999	38
\$150,000 to \$249,999	2
\$250,000 to \$499,999	0
\$500,000 or more	0
2007 Median Family Income	\$41,993

Source: Claritas, Inc

of Birmingham and commuting for jobs. There will continue to be some fluctuation in growth until the construction of the two main highway corridors is completed with a positive effect on overall growth.

### Age Distribution

The year 2000 shows that many of the Brookside residents are between the ages of 35-54 or 5-17. In 1990 the Jefferson County population was largely between 25

**Table 8: Annual Residential Building Permits 2000 - 2006**

YEAR	PERMITS
2000	2
2001	7
2002	6
2003	2
2004	2
2005	0
2006	1
Annual Average	3

Source: US Bureau of the Census

- 44 years and 5 - 17 years. This showed little change over the ten-year period. Jefferson County’s population in 2000 is similar to Brookside with a majority of the population between the ages of 25 and 54 years.

### Racial Composition

The population of Brookside has continued to change over the years. Jefferson County had many opportunities for mining and attracted

many immigrant workers from the British Isles at first and then other European countries including Ireland, Germany and Slovakia. In Brookside, the most predominant immigrant coal miners were those from Slovakia. The Slovaks came to Brookside, made it their home, imported family members, and created a downtown center building homes and churches while supporting private commercial vendors. By 1910, the Slovak population was 37% of the town, with 50% of the population being white and the other 13% European or African-American.

Although Brookside has the only Russian Orthodox Church in northern Alabama, only about 11.4% of the residents still describe themselves as being from a European background. Approximately 12% are from eastern European and United Kingdom descent; 22% call themselves simply American. As the next generation reached adulthood, some of their children stayed while others left the town.

The racial makeup of the town during the 2000 census was 90.52% White, 8.69% Black or African American, 0.36% Native American, 0.00% Asian, 0.00% Pacific Islander, 0.14% from other races, and 0.29% from two or more races. 0.93% of the population was Hispanic or Latino of any race.

**Table 9: Comparative Educational Attainment 2007 - Persons 25 Years and Older**

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	BROOKSIDE		BHAM-HOOVER MSA	JEFFERSON COUNTY	ALABAMA
	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
Less than 9th grade	84	8.8%	6.6%	5.4%	8.1%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	255	26.8%	14.2%	13.1%	16.1%
High school graduate	382	40.1%	28.8%	27.7%	30.2%
Some college, no degree	151	15.9%	21.6%	22.8%	20.6%
Associate degree	48	5.0%	5.5%	5.7%	5.4%
Bachelor's degree	21	2.2%	15.3%	16.2%	12.6%
Master's degree	6	0.6%	5.2%	5.6%	4.9%
Professional school degree	0	0.0%	2.0%	2.4%	1.4%
Doctorate degree	5	0.5%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%
Total	952	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: RPC & Claritas, Inc.

**Table 10: Comparative Housing Tenure - 2007**

HOUSING TENURE	BROOKSIDE		BHAM-HOOVER MSA		JEFFERSON COUNTY		ALABAMA	
	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
Total units	623	100.0%	489,117	100.0%	299,010	100.0%	2,098,587	100.0%
Total Occupied units	540	86.0%	440,039	90.0%	266,997	89.3%	1,841,066	87.7%
Owner-occupied units	398	73.7%	321,518	73.1%	179,819	81.0%	1,345,017	73.1%
Renter-occupied units	142	26.3%	118,521	26.9%	87,178	19.0%	495,989	26.9%
Homeowner vacancy rate (%)	-	2.9%	-	1.9%	-	2.3%	-	2.0%
Rental vacancy rate (%)	-	13.7%	-	10.3%	-	10.1%	-	11.8%
Avg. household size	2.46	-	2.46	-	2.40	-	2.44	-

Source: RPC & Claritas, Inc.

## Family

There are 546 households out of which 31.7% have children under the age of 18 living with them, 51.6% were married couples living together, 15.8% had a female householder with no husband present, and 28.0% were non-families. 26.2% of all households were made up of individuals and 10.8% have someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.55 and the average family size is 3.08.

## Income

Family income is an important indicator of Brookside’s economic vitality. Studies demonstrate that the magnitude of income determines the local revenue base and is therefore related to the ability of the jurisdiction to provide infrastructure, amenities and community facilities necessary for population and economic growth.

In 2000 the median income for families in Jefferson County was estimated at \$45,951. This number has shown consistent increase over the years, increasing by 68% since 1989. Jefferson County showed the same increase in family income over a ten-year period. The Alabama median income is \$41,657. Although the increase rate has remained

Table 11: Year Structure Built - 2007

YEARS	BROOKSIDE		BHAM-HOOVER MSA		JEFFERSON COUNTY		ALABAMA	
	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
1999 to 2007	50	8.0%	64,741	13.2%	28,395	9.5%	261,008	12.4%
1995 to 1998	23	3.7%	42,165	8.6%	15,920	5.3%	191,336	9.1%
1990 to 1994	40	6.4%	37,242	7.6%	16,332	5.5%	179,655	8.6%
1980 to 1989	73	11.7%	69,022	14.1%	35,549	11.9%	341,057	16.3%
1970 to 1979	175	28.0%	86,967	17.8%	55,924	18.7%	387,901	18.5%
1960 to 1969	63	10.1%	66,136	13.5%	50,310	16.8%	284,093	13.5%
1950 to 1959	86	13.8%	55,127	11.3%	44,629	14.9%	207,099	9.9%
1949 or earlier	114	18.3%	67,717	13.8%	51,951	17.4%	246,438	11.7%

Source: RPC & Claritas

similar between the county and the state, the difference in income shows a \$4,000 and more difference. This difference is not very significant.

Brookside differs considerably from both the county and the state. The median family income for the Town of Brookside in 2000 was \$34,829. This is a gap of more than \$10,000 annually. The percentage increase of income for Brookside was negligibly better than the county or state at 70%. The highest concentration of salary by families falls under \$30,000 with 14.7% of families in Brookside that live below the poverty line. Many of those families living below the poverty line are led by single parents.

## Educational Attainment

Education is an important factor in any community. It has a direct relationship with the potential earning power of an individual. The education level of a community affects the labor force quality that is locally available for companies and industries looking to expand or relocate in the vicinity.

Since 1990 Brookside’s educational attainment has increased slightly. The most significant factor is the number of persons over 25 who completed above a ninth grade level of education. The number of individuals age 25 or more that received lower than a ninth grade level of education dropped by 42.9%. However, the number of students that receive

a high school education without graduating changed a little. The overall educational attainment for Brookside shows a positive increase. More individuals are staying in school, attending higher education institutions to receive their associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, and even their graduate degree.

As shown in the table below, these numbers are much lower than the statistics for Jefferson County. This high amount of persons receiving a bachelor’s degree can be partially attributed to the University of Alabama located in downtown Birmingham in Jefferson County. The state percentage of adults 25 and older obtaining high school graduation is 75.3. This number falls between both Jefferson County and Brookside. Brookside has continued to show an increase in individual attaining a higher level of education and as the community grows this trend should also continue. They are currently increasing by approximately the same amount as the county and state.

## Housing

Owner occupied housing has increased over the previous decade, while renter occupied housing has decreased. There are 623 total housing units in Brookside in 2007, with 73.7% being owner-occupied,

**Table 12: Comparative Employment by Major Industry Group - 2000**

INDUSTRY	BROOKSIDE		JEFFERSON COUNTY	ALABAMA
	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
Agriculture & Mining	4	0.7%	0.6%	1.9%
Construction	67	11.2%	6.2%	7.6%
Manufacturing	96	16.1%	10.0%	18.4%
Wholesale Trade	32	5.4%	4.7%	3.6%
Retail Trade	71	11.9%	11.8%	12.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	51	8.5%	5.5%	5.3%
Information	22	3.7%	3.7%	2.2%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	52	8.7%	9.7%	5.8%
Professional	32	5.4%	9.6%	7.1%
Education and Health	82	13.7%	21.8%	19.3%
Arts and Entertainment	24	4.0%	6.6%	6.4%
Other Services	37	6.2%	5.4%	5.1%
Public Administration	27	4.5%	4.2%	5.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: US Bureau of the Census

26.3% being renter occupied and the average household size is 2.46. The housing tenure is very comparable to the Birmingham metropolitan area and the state of Alabama.

The age and condition of housing in a community can be an important indicator of

housing needs and can assist in identifying housing that requires special attention to continue to provide safe and decent shelter. Declining housing conditions can be an indication of unsafe and inadequate shelter for some residents. Table 11 shows the age of housing in Brookside compared to the Birmingham, Metropolitan area, Jefferson

County and the State of Alabama. Brookside has over 70% percent of their housing built before 1970.

### Economic Conditions

The commercial and residential growth of Brookside and the County are directly related to the economic growth of the region. The future growth of the town would be accelerated with the completion of Corridor X (I-22) and the Northern Beltline. However, the current plan for the Northern Beltline does not provide access to the Town of Brookside. Commercial development in the town will be dependent on this transportation investment.

The 2000 Census information on employment of Brookside residents (civilians 16 years and older) shows that manufacturing, education and health and construction ranks as the top employer of residents, with retail trade not far behind. It is not surprising that education, health and social services ranks so high, when compared to the State, the County and other municipalities in the region. The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), in downtown Birmingham, and related healthcare businesses have a significant impact on employment throughout the region. With the exception of those employed

**Table 13: Comparative Employment by Occupation - 2007**

LABOR FORCE DISTRIBUTION	BROOKSIDE		BHAM-HOOVER MSA	JEFFERSON COUNTY	ALABAMA
	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
Management, business, & financial operations	37	6.2%	13.6%	13.4%	11.4%
Professional & related operations	59	9.9%	20.0%	21.1%	18.8%
Service occupations	72	12.1%	12.3%	13.3%	13.2%
Sales and office occupations	180	30.4%	29.2%	30.8%	25.9%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.8%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	103	17.4%	10.9%	8.8%	11.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	142	23.9%	13.7%	12.4%	18.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Claritas, Inc

in this industry, a large portion of residents is employed in industries that do not require a high level of education (manufacturing, retail, construction, etc.).

Should the Town of Brookside receive greater residential growth over the coming years,

the types of industries residents work in will change accordingly. Interstate access to the community from various parts of the region due to the Northern Beltline and Corridor X (I-22) will make the community more competitive in attracting new residents who may work in or outside of the

Town. Continued residential growth and development may attract supporting retail and service development, creating new local jobs for residents. Challenging topography may limit Brookside's ability to attract warehousing, manufacturing and other light to heavy industries.

Across the globe, technological advances have greatly shifted the world marketplace. More and more, workers and businesses are less tied to specific locations. Workers are already able to live away from where they work (up to a point) due to automobile. Money and information is now more easily transported across the internet. Businesses, which previously would have considered physical proximity to like facilities, now can be located nearly anywhere. Similarly, people are able to work from home through telecommuting with no limit on how far they are from their "workplace".

Because of such changes, many industries now consider other factors when locating businesses. Important considerations for large corporations include the quality of life of the surrounding community. Corporations with large numbers of employees are now more sensitive to the quality of neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, parks and recreation and other amenities in a community that are

important to their employees. Businesses are recognizing that these factors are crucial in recruiting talented, educated personnel. To be highly competitive in attracting new businesses, especially those with large employment numbers, Brookside must strive to provide a high quality of life for residents.

Brookside's future will depend on residential growth. The residential growth will be attracted by the quality of life in Brookside. The influencing factors will be the small town atmosphere, low cost of housing and the connection to the natural environment.

# P E O P L E

## Community Visioning

The following section describes the “visioning” and public participation process undertaken for the development of this plan, including the input of residents and other stakeholders, which forms the basis of the Community Policies contained in the following section. Visioning generates a common goal, hope, and encouragement; offers a possibility for fundamental change; gives people a sense of control; gives a group something to move toward; and generates creative thinking and passion that improves the town.

## Vision Statement

While preserving its small-town character and strong heritage, the Town of Brookside seeks to capitalize on its assets of culture, history and greenspace in order to become self-sustaining and improve its quality of life.

## Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities Analysis

The S.W.O. exercise analyzes the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities (S.W.O) of the community---both on its own merit and compared to the surrounding area. The goal is to determine the opportunities and challenges within the community. The purpose of this exercise was to identify various elements relative to the Town that were viewed as areas upon which Brookside could build and also identify those areas where citizens believe attention needed to be given to improve the quality of life in the community. The SWO was serves as a comparative tool to provide measurable information to compare against the data received from the visual preference survey.

**Strengths:** current conditions that make the community a desirable place to live, work, learn and play.

The Numerous Churches  
Five Mile Creek  
Beautiful Cemeteries (4)  
Coke Ovens and Mines  
History  
Water Tower  
Railroads  
Topography  
Park and Greenway  
Location at the Crossroads  
Available and Vacant Land  
Leadership and Town Staff  
People  
Corridor X/I-22  
Northern Beltline

**Weaknesses:** current conditions that detract from the community as being a desirable place to live, work, learn and play

Five Mile Creek (Flooding)  
Lack Of Sewer  
Poor Condition Of Local Roads  
Lack Of Street Lights (And Poor Conditions)  
Litter  
Community Reputation  
Lack Of Zoning And Other Regulations  
No Schools  
No Commercial Development  
Public Housing Conditions

**Opportunities:** potential conditions and events that can improve the community and its efforts to achieve goals

Greenways  
Access Management/roads at Interchanges  
Underground Utilities  
Improve Community Image  
Prepare Zoning, Plans And Other Regulations  
Promote Russian Food Festival  
Welcome Center/museum  
Old Town/New Town Connection  
New Residential & Commercial Development  
Corridor X/I-22  
Northern Beltline  
Research & Development, High-Tech, Clean Industry Parks (Dupont Property)  
Bio-diesel Conversion Facility (Birmingham Port-Tennessee /tom Waterway/Port Of Mobile) Black Belt  
Development Initiative

What we learned from the S.W.O. Analysis is that the Town of Brookside believes in itself. Strengths listed reflect community pride in their recreation, their character, their town staff and education. Although they recognize the limitations a lack of retail growth and housing variety have on their sustainability, they also see these weaknesses as opportunities for the future.

## Visual Preference Survey

The first major public step in the master plan process utilized in the Town of Brookside was a Visual Preference Survey. Residents were asked to participate in this survey, to obtain from their perspectives a visual vocabulary of the type of development patterns desired and those patterns that may not necessarily be favored. Images were shown reflecting a variety of categories: different types of commercial, a mixture of residential types, industrial uses, traffic and mobility, parks and recreation and participants were to respond to the slides by indicating which patterns are desired and those that are not.

In designing the survey, careful attention was paid to selecting images that presented a wide array of development types appropriate to the community context. Images of existing types of development from the greater Birmingham area were used, along with other precedent images from similar communities.

While not scientific survey instruments, visual preference surveys are effective tools in helping planners gain general insights into the kind of growth the residents would like to see in their community. By giving the public a visual reference point for development preferences, these place types could then be used to help participants create an ideal

community concept plan for the overall interchange area.

Approximately 100 slides were shown to citizens present at this working session. Some of the slides were local photos and some were from regional or national settings. Participants had 5 (five) seconds to view the slide and then provide a numerical rating. Slides were assigned a rating from 1-5 with 1 representing least preferred to 5 indicating most preferred. The time was limited to try to ascertain the most unbiased and unfiltered responses. To obtain the best result from the exercise participants were asked to hold all questions about any slide until the end of the presentation.

The consensus response to the visual preferences survey was overwhelmingly consistent. The visual preference survey results confirmed the findings contained in the SWO Analysis.

## Preliminary Concept Plan

A conceptual plan was developed during the January 2006 charrette that built upon the visual preference survey, the SWO analysis, and the visioning process that took place during the days of the Charrette. The Conceptual Plan is based upon the strong

values expressed by local residents and the positive attitudes and responses that were shared with one another during the Charrette. The Conceptual Plan builds upon the historical heritage of downtown and embraces the new direction of the Town of Brookside.

The Charrette provided the Conceptual Plan the following understanding.

- **Opportunities for Annexation:** As highlighted in lavender, there are opportunities for annexation to the north, south and east. The areas to the south may offer Brookside much needed access to I-22, while the areas to the north offer somewhat flatter parcels of land for future development. Adding these areas will provide continuity and a more contiguous boundary for Brookside as a whole.
- **New Village Centers:** As indicated by the red stars Brookside is encouraged to consider locating Neighborhood Village Centers in areas where visitors and local residents will be able to take advantage of the services. This should be both a convenience and a source of income for Brookside.
- **Gateways:** Brookside is in need of a gateway that helps signal to visitors that they are entering Brookside. The intersection of Brookside Cardiff Road and Cherry Avenue is

one recommended gateway location.

- Promote the Five Mile Creek Greenway as a regional green space corridor for recreational uses.
- Promote Brookside's historic heritage and provide eco-tourism opportunities based on the coal mining past.

This conceptual plan was built upon the spirit of the residents during the charrette process in January 2006. The intent is to capitalize on the town's resources, to build upon its history, traditions and institutions in combination with the environmental advantages of the Town's physical setting on the hills on Five Mile Creek. This conceptual plan that emerged from the charrette gives a physical expression on the resident's desires for the future of Brookside. However, this is not the land use plan for the Town of Brookside. This is a conceptual plan from the 2006 Charrette. Figure 19 is the land use plan for the Town of Brookside. There are notable differences in the Conceptual Plan from 2006 and the land use plan in this document, primarily being the town's land uses in the future land use plan being more recreational and forestry than being residential land uses as shown in Figure 16.

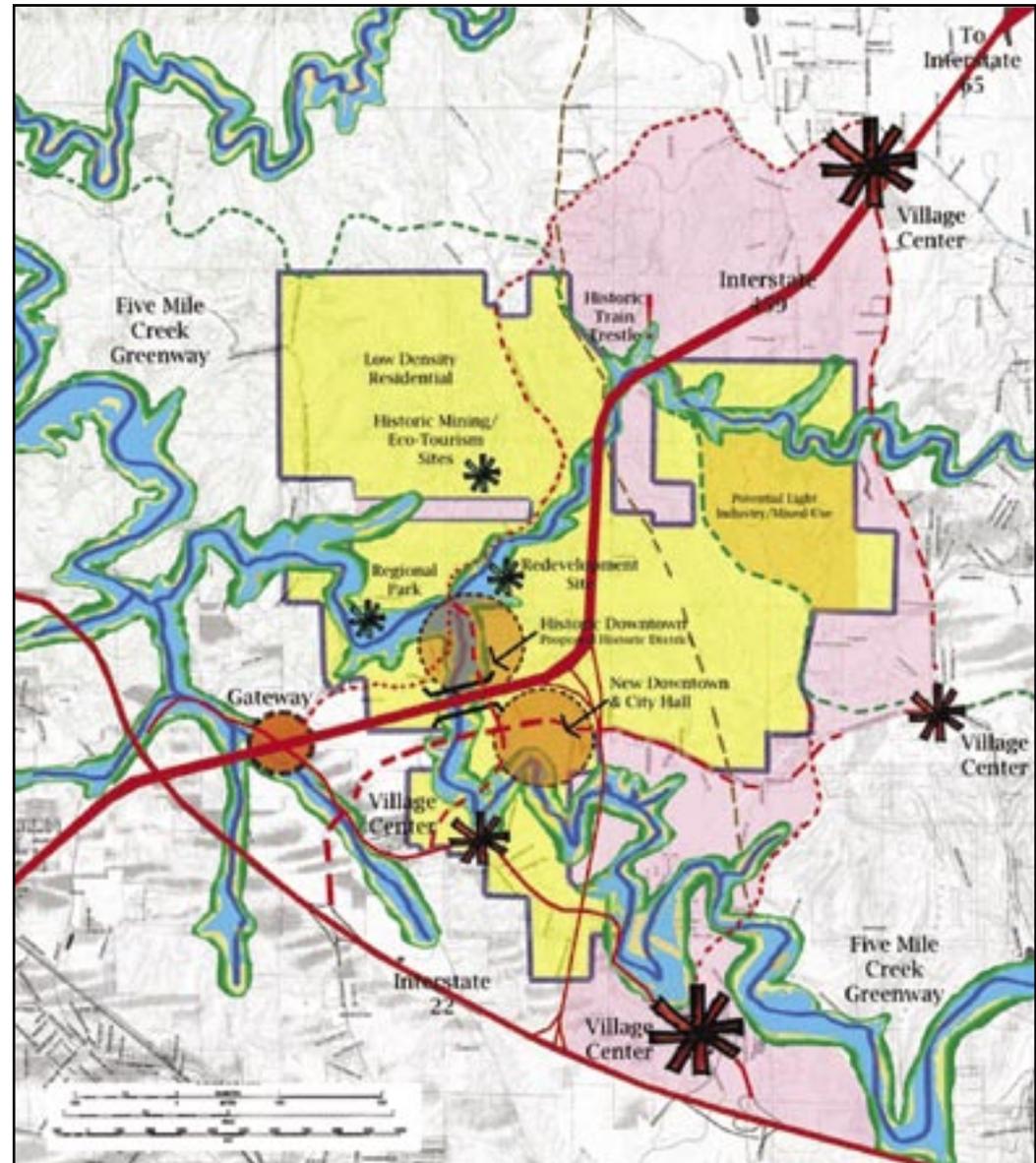


Figure 16: Conceptual Plan from the 2006 Charrette

# P R O S P E R I T Y

## Vision for Growth

This section builds upon the community assessment and reflects the vision and goals that emerged from community visioning process. The Regional Planning Commission staff synthesizes the results of the public participation process with the research and analysis of the community assessment to direct and guide the future master plan. This section displays the vision for growth through the future land use and transportation plans, with specific recommendations and principles to guide the future development of Brookside.

## Introduction

The Vision for Growth provides a land use framework that will guide the community to develop great places and quality development as it grows in the future. This guide 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 land use categories should allow future neighborhoods and activity centers to become distinctive, diverse places with a mix of compatible activities. They also provide some flexibility to respond to market conditions.

## Land Use Planning

Land use planning is a process by which land is allocated between competing and sometimes conflicting uses in order to secure a rational and orderly development of land in an environmentally sound manner that hopefully will ensure the creation of a sustainable community. Land-use planning does not exist in isolation. It is an integral part of the process of a town's growth and development. Planning seeks to identify and satisfy the basic social & human needs of a town's population within the context of available economic/financial resources

and technical knowledge. Communities have needs that must be satisfied. For instance, they need housing; jobs; education; opportunities for recreation; transport; and basic services like water, electricity, clean air and health care. Social planning and policies attempt to take care of the basic social needs of the town's population. Economic planning and policies seek to ensure that the town has a sound economic base which provides revenue to finance government operations and pay for provision of services to the public while also ensuring that jobs are available to the town's labor force. Land-use planning seeks to accommodate these needs within the land that is available to the town.

## Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan includes two types of tools: (1) the Land Use Classifications that define the primary and secondary uses of the specified land use, and (2) Recommendations that guide the community about how to achieve the goals within each desired land use.

## Future Land Use Categories

The following are a set of land use classifications for the Town of Brookside.

The land use categories are grouped under ten major types for the Future Land Use Plan of Brookside. Please see the appendix for the complete Land Use Classification document that further defines the land use classifications. The ten types of land use classifications for Brookside are described below.

## Low Density Residential

### Overview

The Low Density Residential Land Use is the third largest land use category containing 1133.5 acres or 16.8% of the total land area in the Town of Brookside. Low Density Residential neighborhoods are shown in various areas throughout the town, both existing and future areas. Low Density Residential development is located throughout the municipality of Brookside occurring where past industry occurred and where forested areas are currently existing. The future expansion of low density development should build upon the current and proposed infrastructure and transportation systems in Brookside.

### Primary Uses

The Low Density Residential category allows

single family residences on individual large lots.

### **Secondary Uses**

Supporting and complementary uses include open space and recreation, equestrian uses, schools, places of worship, and other public or civic uses are appropriate, as well as accessory structures, such as barns and stables. Farm animals and horses are appropriate but should not exceed animal density standards established within the adopted zoning ordinance.

Low density residential will develop at densities lower than typically found in the more high density residential areas, and cater to lifestyles oriented to more rural characteristics. The average density of low density residential is one dwelling unit per one to five acres or even larger, depending on underlying zoning. Some grandfathered lots may be smaller. Roads are usually paved, but may be gravel. This type of residential development emphasizes privacy over convenience.

Landowners may develop large lot single-family low density residential, or cluster development on smaller lots to conserve open space, views, and other natural features. This Future Land Use Plan promotes open space

conservation that provides larger connected open space or agricultural lands that are conserved in perpetuity. The following design principles are appropriate for all low density residential development:

- Minimize cut and fill for roads and site grading.
- Use native or non-invasive plants for landscaping.
- Steer development away from geologic features, such as rock outcroppings or steep slopes.
- Use appropriate setbacks, and placement of structures that are compatible with adjacent agricultural activities.
- Design buildings that reflect the architectural heritage of the town and that are located at the toe of slopes to allow for windbreaks.
- Incorporate wildlife friendly fencing or “rural” open fencing rather than solid fencing.
- Preserve existing buildings and other features of the site.

## **High Density Residential**

### **Overview**

The High Density Residential Land Use category is 190 acres or 2.8% of the total land area in the Town of Brookside. High Density Residential is located on the new proposed development of the Dupont Powder Plant and near the historic downtown. The High Density Residential development will provide a variety of housing choices for the residents of Brookside.

### **Primary Uses**

The High Density Residential category allows for a diverse array of residential types, including single-family detached residences, and compact residential development such as garden homes, condominiums, cottage homes, mobile homes, duplexes, town-homes, and apartments.

### **Secondary Uses**

Supporting and complementary uses include open space and recreation, schools, places of worship, and other public or civic uses are appropriate. Senior housing facilities and child care centers are also appropriate. Neighborhood commercial may be appropriate in newly developing areas.

The Future Land Use Plan encourages new neighborhoods to be developed in traditional development patterns with a mix of densities, lot sizes, housing types, and home sizes that are well integrated with one another. New high density residential developments should have a wide variety of housing types, lot sizes, styles, and patterns. Future neighborhoods should also include well planned amenities such as parks, trails and open space.

The core of a high density residential neighborhood should contain higher-density housing, and encourages single-family attached units such as duplexes, town-homes, and condominiums. The neighborhood may include neighborhood commercial uses organized around a public space that is inviting for pedestrians. The neighborhood should also contain parks and open space for public enjoyment. The secondary uses are intended to serve the neighborhood and should be developed and operated in harmony with the residential character of the community.

Within high density residential neighborhoods, streets and sidewalks should provide connections to, from, and within the neighborhoods to make it safe and convenient for people to walk and ride bicycles. High Density Residential areas will be served by

central water and sewer, and will contain paved streets with sidewalks.

## Commercial Overview

The Commercial Land Use category is 0.9 acres or 0.1% of the total land area in the Town of Brookside. The commercial areas are located along Cherry Avenue and Brookside Coalburg Road. The commercial categories on the Future Land Use Plan have a variety of uses, development intensities, and characteristics. These are the areas of the community designed to provide jobs, services, and economic vitality. The commercial areas are planned to be compatible with existing and proposed development, site constraints, and market demand. The commercial land uses are divided into three categories: Town Center, Neighborhood Commercial and Highway Commercial.

## Town Center Commercial

### Primary Uses

The Town Center category is intended to promote a mix of land uses, with primarily retail services, civic uses, office, and live/work areas. Parks, plazas and/or open space should also be part of the core of the Town

Center. Retail services are oriented to both adjacent neighborhoods as well as a destination in the community.

### Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include high density residential units such as duplexes and townhouses, condominiums, apartments and other higher intensity owner-oriented residential uses. Places of worship, parks and recreation and other public or civic uses are also appropriate.

Town Center areas should be located near principal arterial or minor arterial streets, and can become larger activity centers. The intent is to create an environment that has employment and shopping opportunities, a range of housing types, parks and open spaces, and civic uses. Uses may be mixed either vertically or horizontally.

The Town Center should be developed in an integrated, pedestrian friendly manner and should not be overly dominated by any one land use or housing type. No single land use should exceed eighty percent of the land area of a project, nor should any single land use exceed eighty percent of total building square footage where a mix of uses are provided within the building. Building heights should be evaluated during the development review

process. Where appropriate, building height transitions and step-downs should be provided to be compatible with adjacent development.

## Neighborhood Commercial

### Primary Uses

Commercial centers located within close proximity to residential neighborhoods that provide goods and services. This category includes, but is not limited to, professional/business offices, general retail, financial institutions, and restaurants.

### Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include, open space and recreation, and other public or civic uses are appropriate. Multi-family housing and High Density residential may be appropriate if designed as part of an integrated mixed-use concept plan.

Use the following criteria in determining the location and design of Neighborhood Commercial Centers. This type of center should:

- Have frontage on an arterial and a collector or two collector roads.
- Vary in size depending on the mix of uses.

Table 14: Future Land Uses

Future Land Use Categories	Acres	Percent
Residential - Low Density	1133.5	16.8%
Residential - High Density	190.0	2.8%
Commercial	0.9	0.1%
Park & Recreational	2082.1	31.1%
Public & Institutional	86.9	1.3%
Utilities	3.3	0.1%
Agriculture & Forestry	3195.2	47.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,691.9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- Serve a trade area up to two miles.
- Have a gross floor area up to 200,000 square feet of non-residential uses.
- Typical format consists of one anchor store, such as a supermarket or drug store, and smaller retail and services.
- The project may also contain some residential redevelopment either vertically or horizontally mixed.
- The main part of the development should contain amenities such as a pedestrian plaza and landscaping.
- Additional Neighborhood Commercial

Centers can be located in the community provided that traffic impacts are mitigated and transitions are provided for residential areas.

- Internal streets and sidewalks should provide access and connections to nearby neighborhoods. Community business should blend into the neighborhoods, with scale, design, signage, landscaping and lighting.
- Design signage that identifies businesses without dominating the landscape.
- Screen utilities and service areas from public view using landscaping or architectural elements that are integrated into the building's architecture.

## Highway Commercial

### Primary Uses

Highway Commercial Centers are located along major transportation arterials in the community to serve the day to day commercial needs of the community or region. This category includes retail and commercial uses, such as restaurants on pad sites, motel and hotels, large tenant commercial and regional shopping malls, that typically serve several neighborhoods or a region.

### Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include, active parks and public plazas, and other public or civic uses are appropriate. Multi-family housing and High Density Residential may be appropriate if designed as part of an integrated mixed-use concept plan.

Use the following criteria in determining the location and design of Highway Commercial centers. This type of center should:

- Be located near an Interstate interchange or off a major transportation arterial.
- Range in size up to 100 acres.
- Serve a trade area up to 5 miles.

- Have a gross floor area of over 200,000 square feet for non-residential uses.
- Typical format consists of one to two anchor stores, such as a supermarket or drug store, or can consist of regional shopping, “lifestyle” centers, outlet mall, and “big box” configurations.
- Contain amenities such as a pedestrian plaza, landscaping and access control to create a cohesive development.
- Design signage with street addresses that identifies businesses without dominating the landscape.
- Distribute parking to the sides and rear where possible, with connections to neighboring retail sites.
- Screen utilities, maintenance and service areas from public view using landscaping or architectural elements that are integrated into the building’s architecture.
- Additional Highway Commercial Centers can be located in the community provided that traffic impacts are mitigated and transitions are provided for residential areas.

## Parks and Recreation

### Overview

The Parks and Recreation Land Use category is the second largest land use category containing 2082.1 acres or 31.1% of the total land area in the Town of Brookside. Recreational and open space areas will be created either by Town land acquisition, dedication of land by a private owner (to the Town or a public/non-profit agency), or direct development by the private sector. The plan recommends expanding the current park and provides a green way throughout the Town. Future greenways should be planned along the existing transportation, utility and hydrology corridors. Such recreational areas are envisioned as linear greenways or trails that connect activity areas throughout the community along the watersheds within Town.

The activity areas that can be connected by these greenways might include parks, canoe launches, fishing areas, neighborhoods, schools, business areas, or combinations of these. This accomplishes three primary intents: to ensure access to these natural amenities to the community and the general public; to prevent over development that can impact their ecosystems (especially water quality); and to create a greater economic

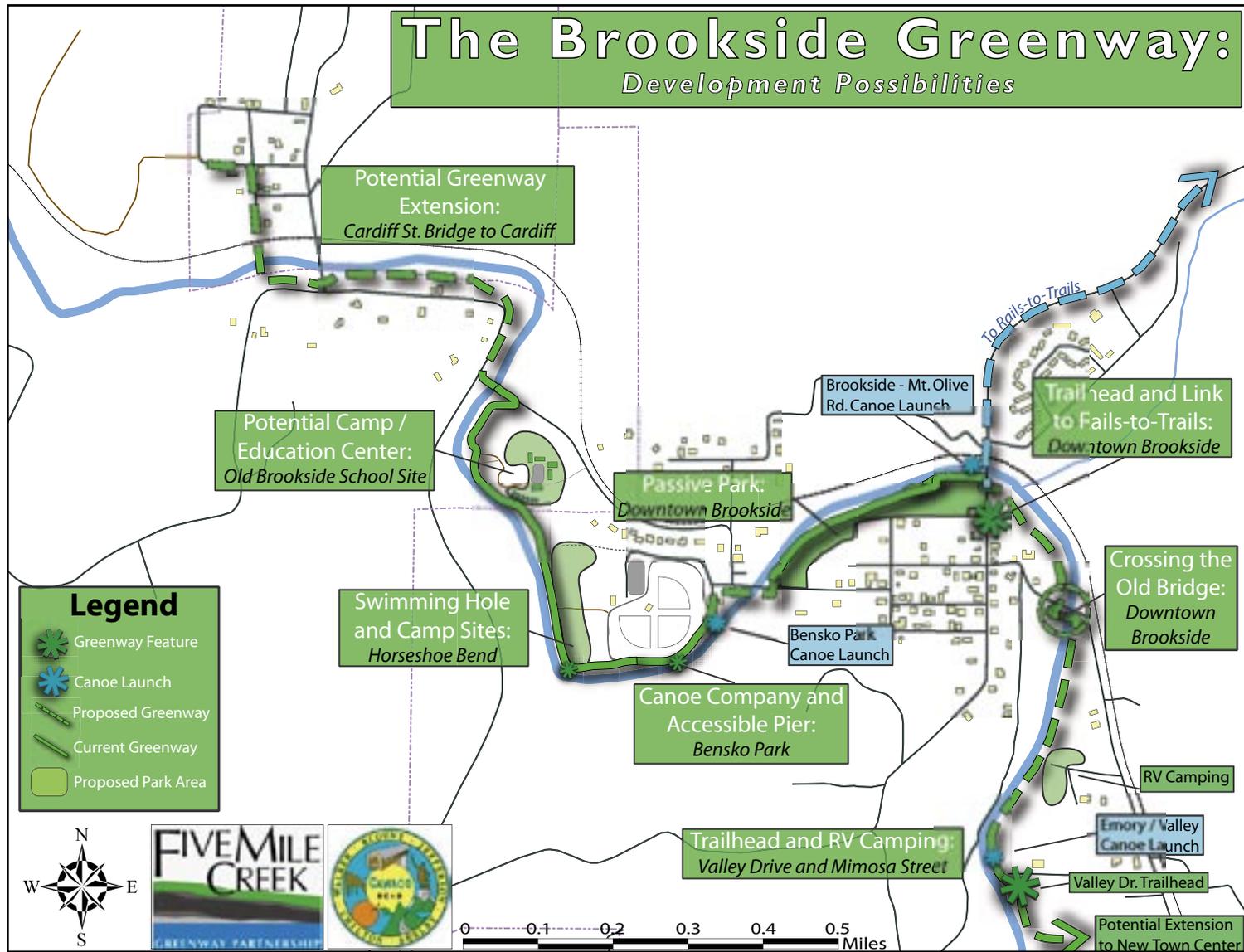


Figure 17: Brookside Greenway Development Possibilities

benefit out of these natural assets. This last intent assumes that these amenities can draw tourist/recreational traffic that benefits area businesses and also that preserving the health and scenic values of the waterways will add value to adjacent properties. A primary environmental concern is the amount of impervious surfaces (buildings, pavement, etc.) near the waterway. Greater amounts of impervious surfaces increase runoff, erosion and potential for flooding, all of which affect adjacent properties and those downstream.

Other recreational/open space areas will include passive parks serving the surrounding neighborhoods, sports facilities for school-age youth, and other town park areas. All park areas should include basic items such as pedestrian-scale lighting, walkways, seating, garbage receptacles, etc. 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 future residential development. Sports facilities may be provided within school campuses and in recreational complexes devoted to a number of sports uses. The design of such facilities varies with the activities to be accommodated and require large parking areas. Because these parking areas receive intermittent use, it

may be advantageous to use an impervious surface material such as gravel, especially where drainage is a concern. If such a complex is to be developed, the Town should consider a central location and strive to have the complex integrated within surrounding development, including access from multiple thoroughfares.

Currently, there are several efforts under way to acquire properties along Five Mile Creek in Brookside. These programs include FEMA flood buyout (Administered by the Town of Brookside), The Five Mile Creek Greenway Partnership, The Jefferson County flood mitigation program (Administered by Jefferson County), and the Jefferson County Greenways program. The flood buyout and flood mitigation programs target developed properties that are prone to flooding, while the greenways program targets undeveloped properties along Five Mile Creek. It is anticipated that the properties acquired under these programs will join together to create contiguous areas of open space along Five Mile Creek. That will constitute a major Greenway or Greenbelt through the region.

This open space will afford substantial public recreational opportunities for walking, running, biking, canoeing, fishing, and will also provide important connectivity

from residential and commercial areas to points of natural, cultural, and historical interest. Figure 17 illustrates some of the recreational possibilities within the Town of Brookside. The Fresh Water Land Trust will continue to work with public and private partners to acquire properties that will connect area being acquired through the above mentioned programs- the goal being to create a continuous Greenway along Five mile Creek through the Town of Brookside.

#### **Primary Uses**

Public and private open space, public and private parks, which include active and passive parks, linear parks and trails, gateways and landscaping, conservation areas, recreational centers, country clubs, and golf courses are appropriate uses. This category may also include natural/cultural resource areas as well. The location, access, terrain, size, and design will vary for future recreation and park development depending on the specific use.

#### **Secondary Uses**

Supporting and complementary uses include public utilities, civic and institutional uses, facilities, and some small scale retail such as restaurants may also be appropriate.

Parks and public spaces should be designed

using the following principles. They should:

- Be designed and planned as part of neighborhoods—not be merely “left over.”
- Be large enough to provide adequate space to meet the intended uses.
- Incorporate and preserve natural features, including ridge lines, habitats, hills, drainage ways, and historic sites or landmarks.
- Be visible from at least one local street (two ideally) to invite use, encourage a sense of ownership, and provide a safe area.
- Include a focal point and a variety of amenities.
- Include appropriate lighting and ample landscaping with parking.
- Provide places to sit and provide trash and recycling receptacles.
- Provide connections to the park from neighboring land uses.
- Parks should be designed for multi-purposes and be flexible for a wide variety of uses and activities.
- Landscaping along riparian and habitat

areas should use native or non-invasive plants.

## Public and Institutional

### Overview

The Public and Institutional Land Use category is 86.9 acres or 1.3% of the total land area in the Town of Brookside. Public and Institutional uses should be located in the town center near the existing public and institutional uses near the intersection of Brookside Coalburg Road and Bivens Brookside Road. Figure 19 shows the public land acquired in or near the Flood Plain.

### Primary Uses

Public and Institutional uses to serve neighborhoods, the community and the region. The Public and Institutional category includes existing and proposed uses related to community services, such as fire stations, police stations and jails, places of worship, cemeteries, schools, libraries, community centers, hospitals, civic buildings and government buildings.

### Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include, open space and recreation, parks and trails,

child care facilities and educational centers.

The Public and Institutional category should be designed using the following principles:

- Internal streets and sidewalks should provide access and connections to nearby neighborhoods.
- Public and Institutional buildings should blend into the neighborhoods, with scale, design, signage, landscaping and lighting.
- Public and Institutional uses should be located adjacent to a collector street or streets within neighborhoods. Avoid locations adjacent to major thoroughfares or arterials.
- Public and Institutional uses should be near parks, trails, and other recreation facilities to provide combined recreation facilities.

## Agriculture and Forestry

### Overview

The Agriculture and Forestry Land Use category is the largest land use category containing 3195.2 acres or 47.8% of the total land area in the Town of Brookside. It is the intent of this Plan to promote continued forestry services in areas identified as agricultural and forestry rather than low

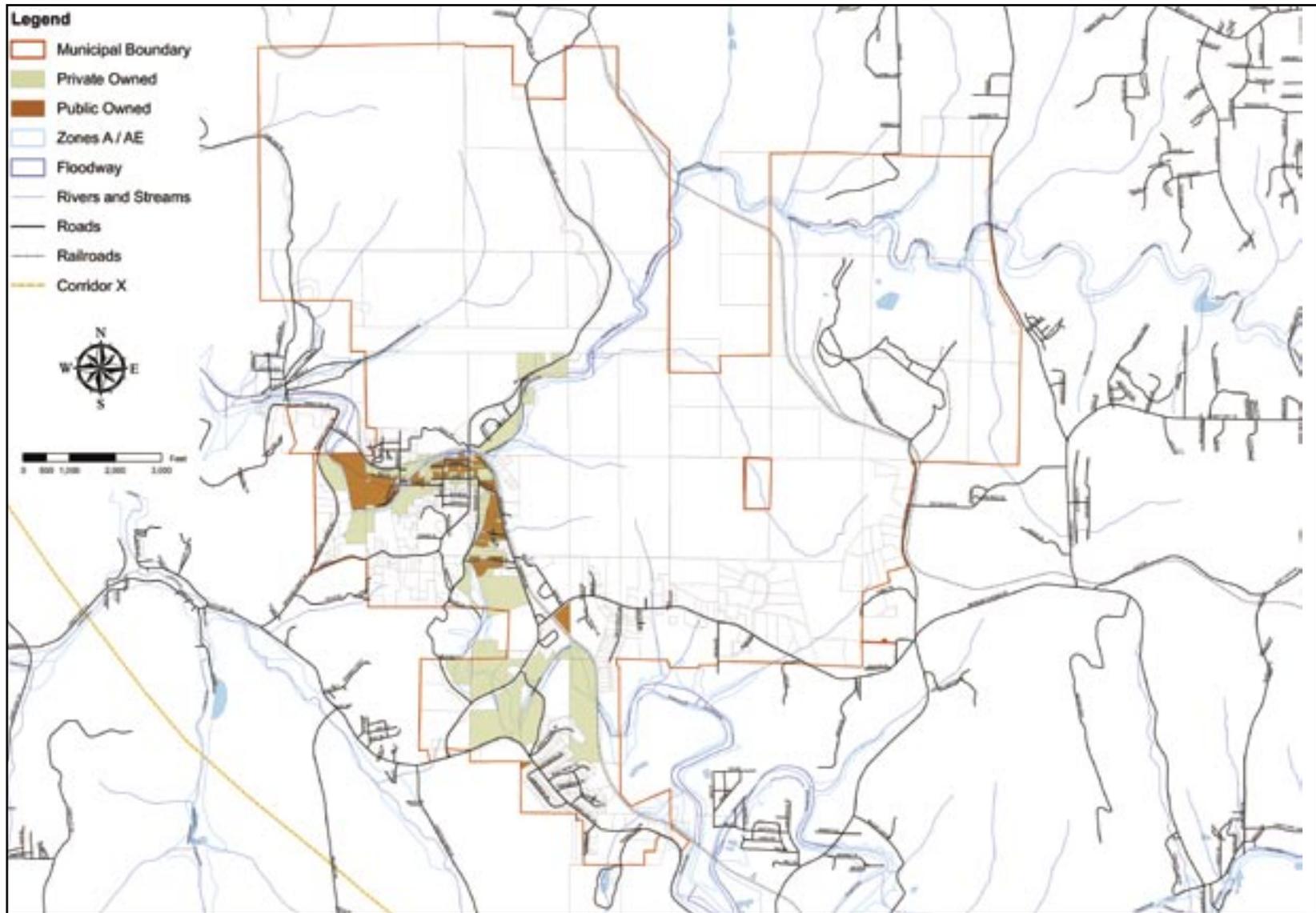


Figure 18: Public and Private Owned Land in or near the Flood Plain

density residential development. However, low density residential will continue to be a choice available to residents of the Town whose property is located in areas identified as agricultural. These are areas generally outside of the Town's development focus (where infrastructure and transportation 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 residences rely on individual wells and septic systems, and open space usually is owned privately. 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.

### **Primary Uses**

Agriculture, forestry, farming, and other agriculturally related uses, including farm animals, and ranches are appropriate.

### **Secondary Uses**

Supporting and complementary uses include forestry and agriculture related businesses and farming support services (e.g., game

hunting, equestrian activities, breeding and boarding, vet services, roadside stand, agricultural tourism activities, farm machine repair, and others). Also very low density residential (e.g., Low Density houses that occupy large tracts of land and are designed to conserve land for agriculture, farming, or natural and cultural resources) is permitted.

Agricultural uses will be limited by topography and soil characteristics. Agricultural operations typically require very large parcels of land. Livestock and tree farms should occur on lots (or commonly-owned land) of three or more acres. Farms that include only a small number of livestock or crops only may be appropriate on smaller lots, but generally no less than two acres. Agricultural operations should have access to County roads. Agriculture is permitted in floodplains and geologic hazard areas, subject to Federal, State and County regulations

### **Future Land Use Recommendations**

The Town of Brookside should consider adopting modest zoning regulations and subdivision regulations to guide the future development in a positive direction suitable to the rural, small town character of the community; to prevent land use conflicts; and to provide guidelines for the way

development are planned and designed, (i.e. building setback guidelines, parking, landscape standards, etc.). Residential setback guidelines should be developed to support the general character of existing neighborhoods.

### **Future Land Use Strategies**

New growth should be absorbed by allowing appropriate increases in density in the development sheds of the Downtown area and designated or approved neighborhood areas, at a scale and context that is compatible with the project location.

Increases in density consistent with this plan, should be permitted only when incorporated into or extended from the traditional grid plan of Downtown, or an approved master regulating plan of a neighborhood center.

Link appropriate density increases in the downtown development shed (and mixed use centers) with density reductions and conservation in the Conservation Areas of the rural landscape through use of transferable development rights (TDRs).

Ensure a diverse and appropriate range of commercial, residential, cultural, civic, and recreational uses and activities in the

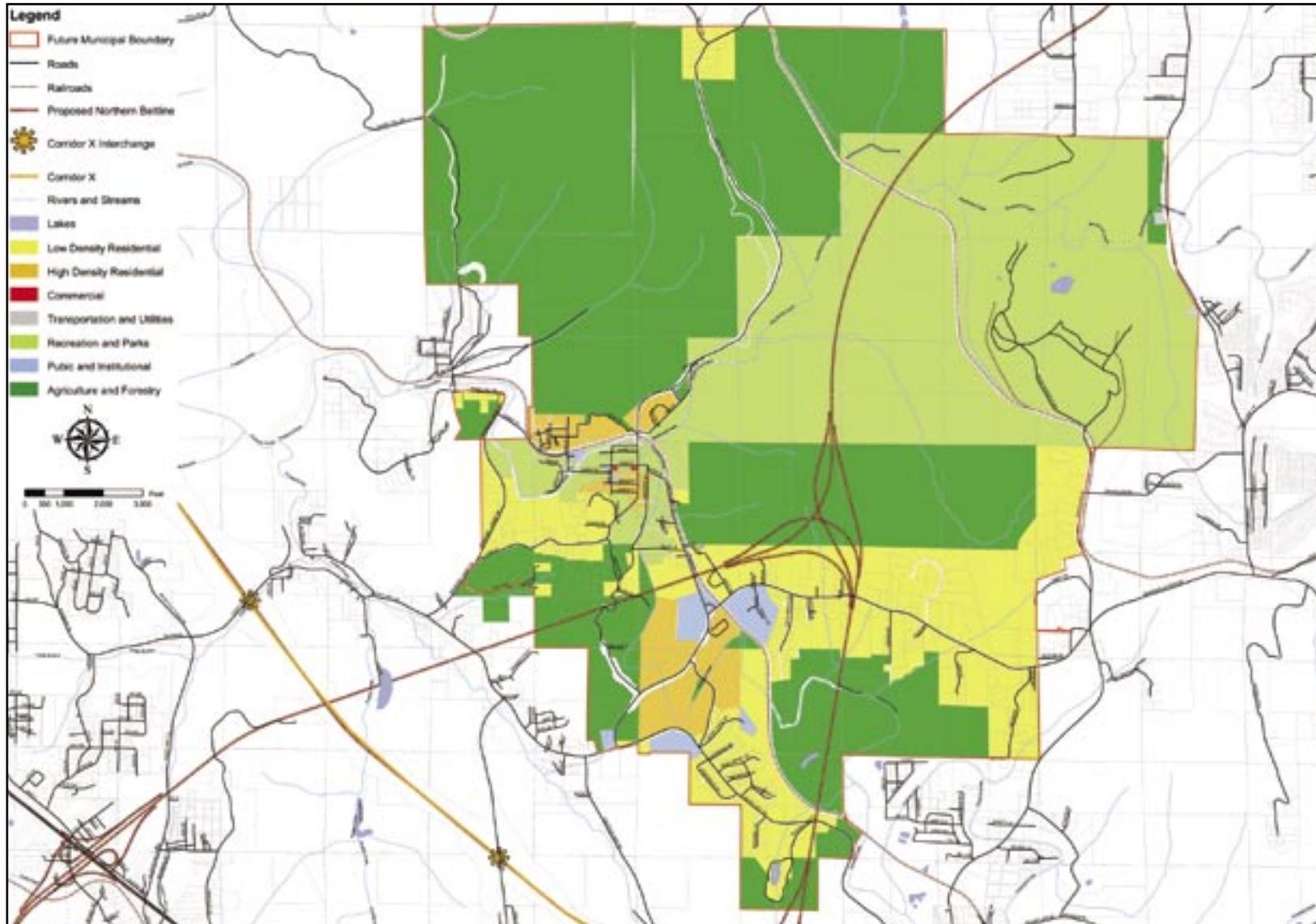


Figure 19: Future Land Use Plan

downtown development shed.

Attached dwelling units should be encouraged or required within the development sheds of Downtown and approved mixed use centers, subject to the following:

The relative concentration of attached dwelling units encouraged or allowed, should be highest in and adjacent to the core area, and should generally diminish, as distance from the core increases.

The relative concentration, configuration and design of attached dwelling units encouraged or required of new development should be compatible with the context and scale of the project location.

Require that new development be compatible and complimentary in design and scale with the context of its location.

The density of new development should be at least four dwelling units per acre (minimum required to support walkability and local transit), within at least:

Elevate the priority of pedestrian activity relative to vehicular circulation in and around the Downtown and neighborhood/mixed use centers, through the use of traffic calming and control techniques.

New regulations developed to implement this plan should incorporate standards for new construction in centers and neighborhoods that yield safe, pedestrian friendly streets and address the improvement or elimination of existing substandard or unsafe housing.

Encourage or require through the regulatory process, the proportionate, fine grained mixing of housing type and affordability, and discourage or prohibit the mass concentration of similar types or affordability, at the street/ block level. Specifically:

Vary lot sizes at the block level which necessarily result in varying unit types and affordability.

Promote the integration with detached units at the block level of small configurations of attached units such as duplexes, 4-8 unit buildings mid block or on corners.

Promote the use of alleys to provide off street parking and alternative egress and the inclusion of garage apartments when garage is accessed via an alley.

Promote or require that varying levels of affordability at the block/street level, as results in isolation and disaffection based on socio-economic status.

Prohibit the concentration of similar levels

of affordability at the block/street level, as results in isolation and disaffection based on socio-economic status.

Prohibit the large concentration of attached dwelling units in complexes.

Require that historically significant structures, sites and resources be incorporated into development master plans.

Discourage the concentration of similar lot sizes or unit types at the block level.

Ensure that development in the areas of transition between a development shed and adjacent rural or natural area is at a scale compatible with maintaining the viability of that adjacent resource.

Recognize the interdependence of water bodies and their associated slopes, vegetative cover and wetlands and their crucial functions of moderating flooding and climate extremes, preserving soil and water quality and filtering pollutants.

Prohibit practices that degrade the functional integrity of natural systems and the rural landscape, such as the wholesale clear cutting of sites speculatively or prior to receiving land development approval.

Prohibit large scale commercial activity in

locations not designated as cores consistent with this plan.

Strongly discourage conventional suburban development in the rural landscape.

New development should occur in rural areas only when adequate public facilities, transportation facilities and land resources to accommodate growth are available, and then only at a context and scale appropriate to the locale.

Seek opportunities to link land use and transportation decisions to ensure that future transportation improvements are well timed and compatible with the context and scale of the communities served.

Develop land use policies that will benefit and guide the community in the future.

Protect residential areas from adverse impacts from incompatible development.

Organize land uses to increase compatibility and development potential and to avoid future conflicts.

Encourage industrial development in suitable locations within the town.

Encourage development of a central shopping district within the community.

Preserve agricultural areas and rural lands from improper redevelopment.

Adopt appropriate standards for development of future residential neighborhoods.

Adopt appropriate guidelines for the development and location of new manufactured housing.

Take advantage of the growing family housing market by encouraging development of new residential types.

## Residential Recommendations

Development of new residential areas should reinforce existing neighborhoods and take advantage of existing infrastructure. Near the town center where land values are higher, smaller-lot residences are more affordable than large lots. Development of residential lots one acre or larger in size, being similar in character and density to farmsteads, can create a good transition from smaller-lot developments near the town center and the agricultural areas surrounding the town. These lower density developments will not be as dependent on a local sewer system and therefore may develop more freely.

Protect residential areas from incompatible uses by encouraging consistent development

patterns, encouraging land-owners and developers to consider best locations for their land uses. The town should review and revise the current subdivision regulations to meet the concerns and needs of residential development in Brookside. Development of different housing types such as cottage homes for retirees and young families will be an affordable and attractive alternative to typical single family homes. Any requirements of the Town's subdivision regulations should be reviewed to ensure that housing alternatives are not unnecessarily difficult or unreasonably expensive to build.

Community involved residents are encouraged to create a local beautification board. This group can organize volunteer clean-up activities, obtain donations of materials and resources for these efforts, and sponsor a town beautification campaign.

## Affordable Housing Recommendations

Affordable housing may be an important opportunity for the Town of Brookside to retain population and provide a variety of accommodations for residents of all ages, including single adults entering the job market, young professionals, empty nesters and the elderly. People at different ages in

life desire different housing accommodations that suit their lifestyles and their budgets. Unfortunately, the majority of options available in many communities are limited to manufactured housing and apartment complexes. Housing type variety and the cost of developing residential subdivisions is directly affected by zoning and subdivision regulations. In many cases, opportunities for affordable housing development are greatly diminished by regulations that limit the types of housing that can be developed in the community or within certain zoning districts. Conventional zoning and subdivision regulations apply a “one-size-fits-all” approach to residential developments, rather than customizing requirements based on the varying impacts and intents of different housing types. Therefore it is important for Brookside to recognize the value of affordable housing, to ensure that the community’s regulations allow a variety of housing types, and to ensure that each housing type is appropriately regulated. The following housing types are affordable, meet the needs of individuals and families during different stages in life and can be integrated attractively into the community.

#### **Garage apartments/granny flats**

These dwellings are built on the same lot as

a conventional home, either above a garage or behind the main house. These are most appropriate in low and medium density areas, where there is sufficient space for an additional building without overcrowding the site. They offer additional space for extended family (hence the name “granny flat”) or provide opportunities for rental housing, creating additional income for the owner. The size of these dwellings should be kept small, such as one bedroom units, so that they are not too obtrusive and do not cause extra traffic within the neighborhood. Depending on the design of the surrounding neighborhood, they are either accessible from a rear alley or share the driveway used for the main house. These dwellings may be appropriate in unsewered areas where there is sufficient septic absorption. These units are ideal for college students, young people just entering the job market and for extended family. When not regularly occupied, they can also be used as guest accommodations.

#### **Small lot homes**

These dwellings are built on lots smaller than typical houses. Front and side yards are fairly small though rear yards may be any size. These dwellings should be located where access to utilities, especially sewer, is available and where there is a sufficiently

interconnected street network. These areas make a good transition between higher density areas (commercial and multi-family residential) and lower density, single-family neighborhoods. Optimally, these homes are served by rear alleys. This allows the lot width to be smaller because the driveway can be to the rear of the house rather than along the side. Alleys allow “service” elements to be placed at the rear of homes rather than in the front, such as driveways, overhead utilities and garbage pick-up, maintaining a much more attractive street presence. These units are ideal starter homes for young singles, couples and small families and are also good for empty nesters that need less room and prefer a little less yard work but like the feel of a single family neighborhood.

#### **Cottage subdivisions**

These dwellings are built facing a common front yard rather than each dwelling facing the street, which is required for single-family homes in most conventional regulations. The lack of individual front yards and street frontage allows each lot to be smaller. These developments work well on large, deep blocks. Side yards and rear yards are small. Parking is provided in one common area or along the rear of each house, accessed by an alley along the perimeter of the site.

A planted buffer strip should be included around the perimeter to help integrate such a development within more conventional, single-family areas. Such developments should be kept to between 6 and 10 units. House sizes should be limited to prevent over-crowding the site. Homes should be no taller than 2 stories or about 30 feet with the first floor no larger than about 1,000 square feet. Like other small lot homes, these developments are intended for areas with sewer access and an interconnected street network. These developments are ideal as starter homes for young singles, couples and empty nesters that need less room and prefer a little less yard work. Because each unit faces the common yard, there tends to be a built-in “sense of community”.

#### **Town Center Townhouses**

These dwellings are fairly common in more developed communities and are considered more “urban”. Because they are “attached”, they are a unique form of single-family housing. Many townhouse developments have been “mass-produced” under conventional, suburban standards, which diminish the charm that this housing type can accomplish. Townhouses should only be allowed in higher-density areas where there is access to sewer and an interconnected road network. They

make a good transition from high-density areas and single-family neighborhoods. The number of attached units should be minimized (about eight) and it is preferable to have the fronts of each unit staggered to prevent a bland, uniform street wall. Ideally, the main floor is slightly above-grade creating a “stoop” within the small front yard area. The stoop creates a nice transition between the public sidewalk and the private entrance to the unit. Parking should be to the rear rather than having driveways and garages in the front. It is more important for townhouses to front on a nicely landscaped sidewalk than on a generous front yard. If the community or the developer desire green space within the site, it can be accommodated in rear yards or within a central common open space. These developments are ideal for singles, couples, small families, and empty nesters who are interested in a denser, urban environment.

#### **Live/Work and Upper-story dwellings**

These units are typically located in mixed-use areas, such as a town center or neighborhood center, with sewer access and an interconnected street network. Live/work units include a business space, typically on the first floor, and a dwelling above for the business owner. Since these are in more urban areas, they do not include “yards”,

though a private rear yard may be desirable. Upper-story dwellings are located above office, retail or other non-residential uses and should have a separate entrance from the ground floor uses. Upper story dwellings may be condominiums (owned) or apartments (rented). Like townhouses, parking is to the rear, usually accessed by way of an alley. A front yard should not be required; instead, the front façade should be along a nicely landscaped sidewalk. For residents who prefer such accommodations, the street is their front yard. These developments are ideal for singles, couples, empty nesters and older residents who are interested in a dense, lively environment where most activities are within easy walking distance

#### **Apartment buildings**

These developments are located in mixed-use areas, such as a town center or neighborhood center, with sewer access and an interconnected street network. Apartment buildings are different from apartment complexes in that apartment buildings are integrated into an urban environment, may be more than two or three stories tall, and are developed as individual buildings. Apartment complexes are suburban in character and are designed as enclaves, separate from the surrounding neighborhood and adjacent

business areas. These buildings always front on a street, either: with no front yard or with a courtyard separating the building entrance from the sidewalk. Parking is placed behind or to the side of the building. It is preferable for the main floor to be raised above ground level to create a physical transition from the public space of the street/sidewalk and the private entrance to the building. This is also important to obscure views through windows into individual units, once again reinforcing privacy. Similar to live/work and upper-story dwellings, this housing type is ideal for singles, couples, empty nesters and older residents who are interested in a dense, lively environment where most activities are within easy walking distance.

## Future Transportation Plan

A well connected and funded transportation and mobility system that provides for a range of transportation choices without diminishing the efficient movement of people, goods, and services in Brookside.

The transportation infrastructure of the town should be a ‘complete street’. A Complete Street is safe, comfortable and convenient for travel by automobile, foot, bicycle, and transit. Complete Streets:

- Offers a full range of travel choices.
- Provide sidewalks either separated by a park strip or with ample width to provide for pedestrian safety on all new roadways.
- Build bicycle facilities on all new roadways and retrofit existing roadways with major reconstruction projects.
- Connects to a network that offers choices.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings at intersections.
- Build corridors that will be conducive to transit, even if transit is not available.
- Is fully accessible to all: kids, seniors and people with disabilities.
- Supports and contributes to life in pleasant, convenient neighborhoods.
- Serves and supports public transit

### Primary Uses

The Transportation and Utilities land uses are the main transportation, infrastructure and utilities elements of the Town. The transportation element includes principal streets, secondary streets, residential streets, alleys and parking areas. The Utility elements include sewer, water, gas, and

electrical infrastructure, telecommunications and other utility infrastructure that serve the town or region.

### Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include other infrastructure and utility elements, and parks and recreational elements.

## Traffic Calming

Traffic-calming can be handled in a number of ways without resorting to a disconnected network with a great number of dead-end streets, including: network design including grid offsets; narrow, tree-lined streets with sidewalks, curb and gutter and on-street parking; and curved streets. Existing streets, where traffic is too fast, can be retrofitted with traffic-calming devices such as intersection roundabouts, chicanes, neckdowns and raised crosswalks. Traffic calming techniques may be appropriate for carefully selected neighborhood streets within the Town as a means of:

1. Reducing traffic speeds;
2. Reducing traffic-related noise levels;
3. Reducing traffic volumes in selected areas;

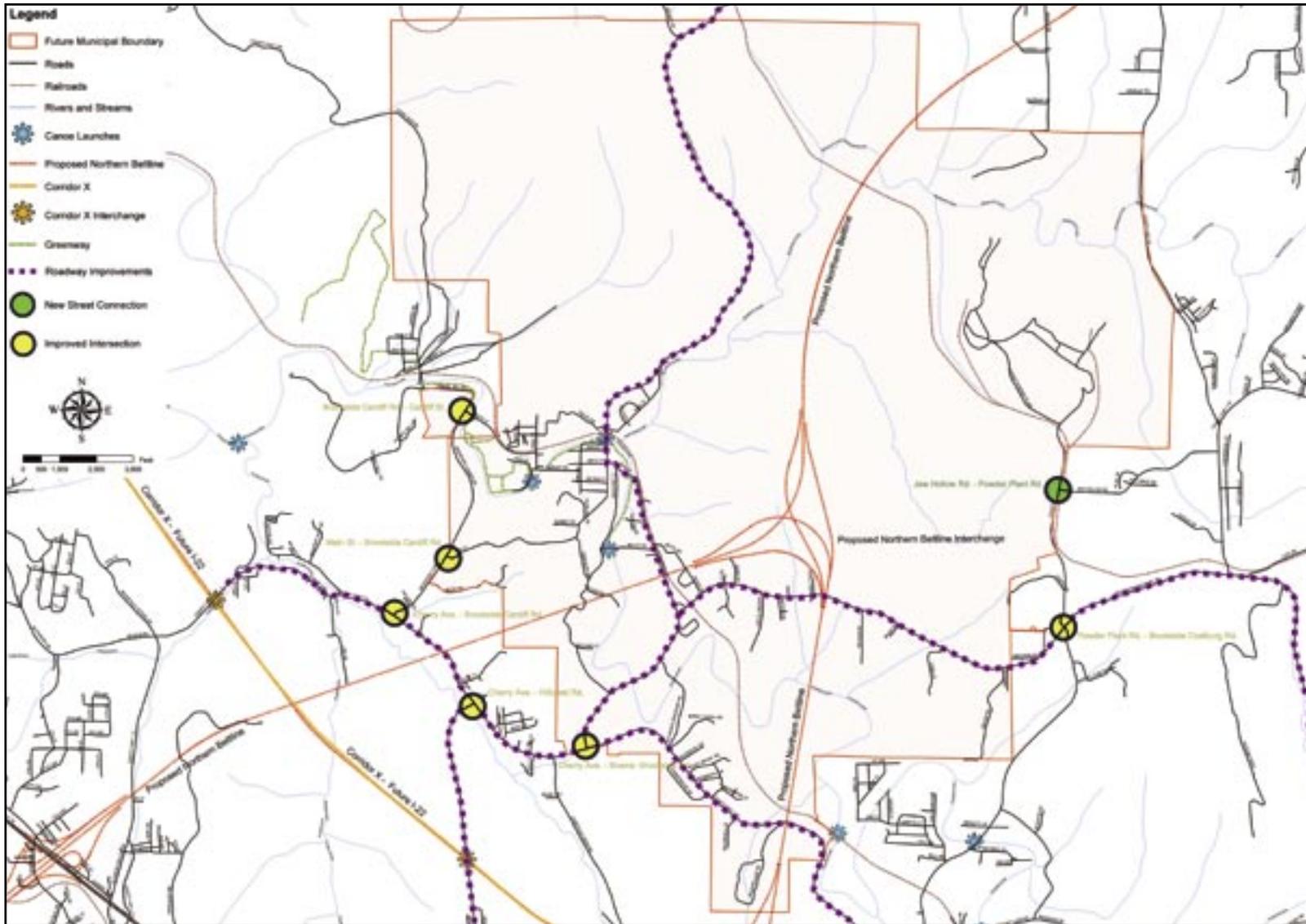


Figure 20: Future Transportation Plan

4. Ensuring fair and appropriate distribution of traffic throughout a neighborhood;
5. Improving safety and travel conditions for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists;
6. Improving traffic circulation;
7. Reducing the need for traffic regulation and heightened law enforcement in problem area;
8. Reducing air pollution levels; and
9. Providing increased opportunities for neighborhood revitalization.

Traffic calming techniques should not be applied in isolation. All traffic calming devices should be planned and designed with significant input by residents and businesses in the affected areas. Care should be taken in the location and design of traffic calming devices to avoid significantly reducing emergency response times. All traffic calming devices should be planned and designed in keeping with sound engineering and planning practices, and with careful consideration of long-term, cost-effective maintenance. Listed below are different traffic calming techniques that may be employed. Illustrations of those techniques are provided in the Appendix.

- Roundabouts
- Speed humps
- Traffic Circles
- Chicanes
- Lane narrowing
- Neck-down(s)
- Intersection Humps
- Raised crosswalks

A good source of information on traffic-calming improvements can be found at [www.trafficcalming.org](http://www.trafficcalming.org) and in the appendices.

To ensure there is adequate transportation infrastructure as demand increases with future development, subdivision regulations should require dedication of rights-of-way to extend, widen or build new roads based on the growth areas indicated in this document and the traffic impact that each development creates.

### Access Management

Access management should be a critical component of thoroughfare design, land subdivision and property development,

especially along major roads. Employ proper access management techniques that include: shared driveways or alleys sufficiently separated from intersections and from one another; “throat length” to accommodate the stacking of vehicles merging onto the thoroughfare from a driveway, alley or cross-street; acceleration and deceleration lanes to smoothly move merging/departing cars from thru lanes; and landscaped medians to control left turns between intersections.

Continuous two-way left turn lanes are a product of poor access management and should be avoided. Instead, landscaped medians accommodate left turn lanes at intersections and, in some cases, at mid-block. Frontage roads are another option for providing access from arterial roadways to property without congesting thru traffic. At intersections, the frontage road should meet the cross-street at least one block from the arterial. On-street parking and pedestrian activity should be moved to the slower speed frontage road rather than the arterial. Proper access management techniques should include:

#### 1. Provide a specialized roadway system.

All roadways should be classified (freeway, arterial, collector, local, etc.) to establish the planned function of different types of

roadways, differing roadway types will have different priorities placed on access versus through traffic movement.

**2. Limit direct access to major roadways.**

Coordinating access spacing for potentially high volume, unsignalized access points with signalized access spacing on high volumes routes, will help ensure traffic signal progression requirements can be achieved. Direct property access is to be provided from a local road, collector roadway or service road system rather than directly from the major roadway.

**3. Promote intersection hierarchy throughout the corridor.**

The proper selection of the type of intersection or interchange that transitions one classification of roadway to another is very important for any transportation system network to operate efficiently. Freeways connect to freeways through directional interchanges. Major arterials connect to a freeway through an interchange properly designed for the transition.

**4. Locate signals to favor through movements.**

Signal spacing directly affects roadway efficiency. An essential element for efficient

operation along any major arterial is selecting a long, uniform for signalized intersections.

**5. Preserve the functional area of intersections and interchanges.**

AASHTO states, “Ideally, driveways should not be situated within the functional area of an intersection or in the influence area of an intersection or in the influence area of an adjacent driveway”. The functional area is where motorists are responding to an intersection. It is the area where acceleration, deceleration, turning and maneuvering to stop takes place.

**6. Limit the number of conflict points.**

Studies have shown that reducing the number and types of conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists contributes improved traffic operations and safety.

**7. Separate conflict areas.**

Drivers need adequate perception and reaction time to react to conflicts. As speeds increase, the space needed for drivers to react also increases.

**8. Remove turning vehicles from through traffic lanes.**

Safety and efficiency is improved when turn lanes are provided allowing vehicles to wait

in a protected area and be removed from the through traffic.

**9. Use non-traversable medians to manage left-turn/U-turn movements.**

Minimizing left turns and channeling turning movements to properly spaced locations will improve safety. Research has shown that the majority of collisions occurring at driveways involve left turning vehicles.

**10. Provide a supporting street and circulation system.**

Alternative access increases with improved connectivity of the local street system. As development occurs along a corridor, it will be important to promote continuation of alternate routes for short, local trips thereby reducing the demand on the major route.

### Transportation Recommendations

The Future Transportation Plan proposes new connections, improved intersections, roadway and shoulder improvements that should be built as the town grows to provide better connectivity throughout the town. The Town should consult with the Alabama Department of Transportation on improving, expanding and maintaining roadway and shoulder improvements on Cherry Avenue,

Hillcrest Road, Brookside Coalburg Road, and Bivens-Brookside Road. A connection is desirable at Jew Hollow Road and Powder Plant Road. Intersection improvements are desired at the intersection of Powder Plant Road and Brookside Coalburg Road, Brookside Cardiff Road and Cardiff Street, Main Street and Brookside Cardiff Road, and Cherry Avenue and Biven-Brookside Road. The Town of Brookside must collaborate with Jefferson County in road improvements, maintaining existing streets and laying out new streets. The town should work with private developers to discuss appropriate infrastructure placements. The Planning Commission should create an oversight committee to regulate and administer the future building and development of the community.

Funding opportunities for transportation improvements, including sidewalks, should be researched by the Town with the assistance of Jefferson County and The Regional Planning Commission. The Town may be able to find funding sources for other community projects through state and federal programs for transportation improvements.

## Transportation Strategies

Prepare and maintain a long range Major Street Plan (MSP) to guide decision making

and prioritize the funding and timing of maintenance, network expansion and enhancements programming for the local transportation infrastructure, consistent with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and the goals and objectives of this plan. The MSP should:

Promote and seek funding for the development of a multi-modal transportation system of context sensitive streets, roads, greenways, bike paths and other pathways that supports and promotes the use of pedestrian, bicycle and other alternative modes of transportation.

Serve the mobility needs of the general public, especially the elderly, handicapped and economically disadvantaged.

Ensure that all vehicular and non-vehicular pathways contribute to a system of fully connected, interesting routes among Brookside area neighborhoods, destinations and attractions.

Require provision of inter-parcel, connections between adjacent parcels and land uses.

Provide policy guidance and design standards for the use of non-traditional traffic management and control mechanisms, that: Effectively manage and improve traffic circulation, while maintaining vehicle

speeds at a level that encourages pedestrian circulation, and Providing opportunities for creating green features, visual landmarks, terminating vistas, and gateways.

Provide policy guidance and design standards for the installation of traffic calming devices and techniques that calm traffic and increase pedestrian safety, such as road diets, reverse angle parking, curb-side parking and other devices such as bulb outs, tree islands, medians, chicanes, and street tables.

Provide policy guidance and design standards that protect the scenic vistas and viewscapes and historic resources along area transportation corridors.

Seek diverse and creative funding sources for financing implementation of the Future Transportation Plan.

## Community Utilities

Expanding the water and sewer systems in accordance with this plan will be essential in controlling how and where growth occurs. The most efficient way for the Town to expand these systems is outward from the existing coverage area in an incremental fashion. This reduces “leapfrog” growth, a pattern where far-flung areas develop

before land adjacent to areas with adequate infrastructure, forcing extensive and costly expansion of infrastructure out of phase with the intentions or capabilities of the Town of Brookside and other utilities providers.

Given this issue, the Town of Brookside, using the Future Land Use Plan as a guide, should prioritize areas for future water and sewer facilities and lines, working with the County where necessary to implement those plans. This provides the community with reasonable expectations on which areas will develop before others. This would give priority to future growth areas closest to existing coverage areas.

Brookside needs either a town managed sewer system or have Jefferson County expand its current lines that can be incrementally expanded to cover a majority of the town limits. Commercial growth should be encouraged in the town center to support the public investments in future sewer system more sustainable.

One sewer system management technique to consider is requiring new developments to tie-on to future sewer lines when they become available within an area. This would affect developments that occur without public sewer already in place. When such developments occur, they would be required

to provide a capped sewer connection so that upon completion of a sewer extension, the development would tie-on. This ensures future customers to pay for the investments made in expanding the service.

Another option for ensuring adequacy of infrastructure in future developments is “alternative wastewater management” or decentralized sewer systems. This method frees the Town and the County of the costs of providing public sewer extensions to developing areas. Instead, an on-site sewage system is built by the developer and open spaces within the development are used as drip fields. Drip irrigation technology makes it safe to use playgrounds, golf courses and sports fields as drip fields.

Today, these systems can be effectively managed, monitored and regulated. It is recommended that these systems eventually transfer to an established utility provider, rather than to a homeowner’s association, for its long-term management. This can be a benefit to the utility since operating costs are often lower than conventional sewer service billing rates. Decentralized sewer is a growing technology and can help the community realize its long-term growth desires when off-site sewer treatment is not available and when individual septic systems

are undesirable (either due to desired density or for environmental causes).

Another technique for financing utilities and other infrastructure improvements is the creation of a multi-jurisdictional “cooperative district” or authority. Neighboring communities, who might otherwise be competing over new development, may partner together to plan and construct infrastructure improvements to attract new growth, from which all of the municipal (and/or county) partners benefit. By combining financial resources, such cooperative authorities are better able to fund larger projects. Such an approach would also allow the Town of Brookside and its partners more leverage over potential developers, since it is not uncommon for developers to “play” communities against one another to increase incentives offered by the cities.

## Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Recreation areas will need to be created to serve new residential growth. Land for parks and may be acquired by the Town or donated or provided by residential developers. These would be considered important amenities to potential homeowners, and the developer could charge more for homes/lots to absorb the cost of the land. The types and sizes of

parks required may differ based on the size of the development, for instance smaller planned developments may only be required to provide children's playgrounds while larger developments may be required to provide neighborhood parks. The size of dedicated park areas may be scaled according the number of homes to be developed, and may also have a higher scale for high-density dwellings, which include less open space per unit.

This method can assist the Town of Brookside in providing passive recreational opportunities to residents, allowing the Town to focus on active recreational needs. Developers may provide park space to the homeowners' association or dedicate such land to the Town. When the land is transferred to a homeowners' association, the land may not be accessible to the general public and should be managed by the association according to covenants specific to the development. When the land is dedicated to the Town, it should be accessible to all residents and be maintained by the Town of Brookside.

All park areas should include pedestrian lighting, walkways, seating, garbage receptacles, etc. Neighborhood parks should accommodate passive recreational spaces and playgrounds. Neighborhood parks should

be integrated into the design of neighborhood centers wherever possible.

In addition, sports facilities should be provided at or near school campuses and in recreational complexes devoted to a number of sports uses. The design of such facilities varies with the activities to be accommodated and require large parking areas. Because these parking areas receive only intermittent use, it is proper to use an impervious surface material such as gravel, especially if drainage is a concern.

The Future Land Use Plan includes recommendations to expand the park to the historic downtown and further expand the greenway along Five Mile Creek. New public parks may require additional staff for maintenance. Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants and other sources are available for land acquisition and park improvements. Refer to Appendix for applicable funding sources.

## Community Services and Facilities

To ensure a high quality of life throughout the community as growth occurs, the Town departments and services will need to expand. Budgeting for departmental needs is an important process that should be

incorporated into an annual and multi-annual budgeting process for the Town of Brookside. The Council should consider establishing a job classification/pay-scale structure that would help with budgeting for staff needs and improve staff retention in the future.

The Town of Brookside should consider alternative ways to provide additional educational and community resources (such as a library and medical facility) through cooperation with the County and the nearby communities through fund raising and volunteer efforts.

### Police Department

The Town of Brookside desires to expand its current police force. Currently the Brookside Police force consist of two officers with back up help provided by Jefferson County and neighboring municipalities. The Police department is located at the new Municipal Complex. The short term goals of the Police force is to hire additional staff to meet the demands of Brookside. The long term goals are that the Police Department seeks two new police cruisers and improved dispatching services.

### Fire Department

New equipment will need to be purchased and additional staff hired by the to serve

the growing community and to maintain and improve the community's ISO rating. Ideally, any new fire stations would be located so that they are centrally located within the areas they serve.

The fire departments can apply for various grants for funding assistance. Applicable grant sources include SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response), AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grants) and FP&S (Fire Prevention and Safety) grants from the Department of Homeland Security, which can be used for equipment, staff retention and other fire safety needs.

Among the most critical areas for departmental improvements are acquiring additional staff to ensure personnel on-site 24-hours per day and on weekends and replacing old equipment and vehicles. The National Fire Protection Act (NFPA) recommends classifying ten year old vehicles as reserve vehicles and completely replacing vehicles 20 years or older. Meeting such standards will be important to maintain fire safety as the community grows and ensure a good ISO rating, which reduces insurance costs.

The following short-term recommendations from the fire department are that they are in desperate need of self contained breathing

apparatus air packs for their EMTs. They would also need to employ two more full time EMTs. The long-term recommendations of the Fire Department include two more fire trucks, a new rescue truck and to increase the number of paid and volunteer personnel.

### **Educational Facilities**

Schools and education facilities may need to be created to serve new residential growth if that so occurs. Land for parks and schools may be acquired by the Town or donated by developers. These would be considered important amenities to potential homeowners, and the developer could charge more for homes/lots to absorb the cost of the donated land. New schools must be planned and constructed by the Jefferson County Board of Education.

New school locations and the size of facilities should be planned to support forecasted growth. Schools, ideally should be located at the heart of residential neighborhoods to limit the need for bussing by maximizing the number of children who can walk or bicycle to school. Proximity to a school can increase property values in new development and encourage more parent involvement in school events and issues.

The Town should encourage the development

of "walkable" schools conveniently located to best serve the residents of Brookside and that positively address access for those outside the community.

In several states throughout the nation, education officials, parents and other advocates are debating the value of "megaschools" versus traditional "neighborhood" schools. While megaschools offer some cost-savings through consolidation, the effect on community and parental involvement, quality of education, costs of increased bussing and other factors are questions that remain unresolved. Proponents of "neighborhood" schools see opportunities for these facilities to serve as neighborhood-oriented community centers, providing meeting space, recreational facilities and computer resources to children and adult residents.

### **Library and Other Community Facilities**

New or expanded community facilities (community center, senior center, etc.) will be needed as residential growth occurs. The Town of Brookside currently does not have a library. This plan encourages the addition of a library in the new Municipal Complex.

## Community Policies

### Growth and Development

The Town of Brookside should:

- Follow a multi-centered approach to new growth within the community to support existing and future neighborhoods.
- Ensure the development of walkable neighborhoods and commercial centers throughout the community.
- Encourage the development of affordable housing through allocation of a broad range of housing types within appropriate locations within the Town.
- Plan and develop attractive gateways into the community
- Respect the diverse characteristics of the community's natural environment by guiding growth in areas most suitable for development while preserving natural areas in a manner that enhances the quality and value of existing neighborhoods
- Respond effectively to growth issues through the adoption and implementation of regulatory tools that steward diverse, attractive neighborhoods and activity centers while balancing economic and environmental concerns.

### Transportation

The Town of Brookside should:

- Ensure proper management of traffic, safety and access in areas surrounding Brookside Coalburg Road, Bivens Brookside Road, Cherry Avenue and other high-traffic areas throughout the community.
- Encourage the construction of complete streets, designed to safely accommodate motorists, pedestrians and emergency access and, further, designed to suit the character of the neighborhoods and activity centers they serve.
- Require substantial “connectivity” in the planning of new commercial centers and neighborhoods to disperse local traffic into a street network and reduce the need for local travel on major arteries.

### Utilities

The Town of Brookside should:

- Guide future growth through strategic extension of water, sewer and other utilities to areas planned for growth.
- Work with adjacent municipalities, Jefferson County and other agencies to accomplish goals for utilities expansion.

- Encourage development patterns that can most efficiently take advantage of future expansions and that incorporate utilities in a well-planned, attractive manner.

### Fire and Police Protection

The Town of Brookside should:

- Provide well-planned fire and police protection services to the community, including locations of future facilities that support the Town's vision for growth, to best protect all residents.
- Provide quality police services that best protect all residents of Brookside.

### Education

The Town of Brookside should:

- Work with adjacent municipalities and the Jefferson County Board of Education to provide excellent educational opportunities to the children of Brookside.

### Community Facilities

The Town of Brookside should:

- Provide a variety of quality community facilities to the residents of Brookside, including community activity facilities, parks and recreation areas, and other

public buildings and spaces.

- Maintain and enhance existing community facilities in Brookside.
- Support the multi-centered vision for the town by planning for future locations of community facilities to conveniently serve future residents.

## Economic Development

Economic development is an integral component of the Brookside master plan. The Town's future economic development has a direct impact on land use, transportation, infrastructure, housing, and the provision of community services and facilities. Economic development is defined as "the process by which a community creates, retains, and reinvests wealth and improves the quality of life" (David Dobson, MDC, Inc.). Quality economic development is about adding jobs and increasing local incomes, but it is more than that. Economic development is about improving the quality of life for the people that live in Brookside.

The purpose of the economic development component of the Town's master plan is to outline how the Town will provide the community with economic stability,

better-paying (quality) jobs, and a tax base that is sufficient to support quality community services and facilities. The goal of economic development planning is to help the community develop a successful local economy that features quality jobs, good wages and a high quality of life for all residents. The economic development policies and strategies in the plan report, give priority to the development of quality jobs, retail growth, the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and promoting small business development and entrepreneurship as economic development strategies. Specific economic development policies should include the following:

- Maintain and enhance a superior quality of life throughout the Brookside community.
- Promote the sustainable development of natural resources in and around the community.
- Finance and maintain necessary infrastructure to support economic development.
- Designate a downtown district as the commercial heart of the community.
- Facilitate and promote cooperation among Brookside and other municipal and county governments, regional

development organizations, state government and the private sector.

- Develop a high quality, well-educated work force with the skills and abilities required to secure high paying jobs.
- Focus on assisting the community's existing businesses and services in identifying strategies to support their retention and growth in Brookside.

In implementing these policies, the Town of Brookside should employ the following tasks and recommendations in an overall economic development strategy. Several of these recommendations add further support to the policies described in the previous section:

Attract new retail development to the community, particularly the following types of businesses: grocery store, restaurants, bank, medical clinic, pharmacy, dentist office, and hardware store.

Work with Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham and public transit providers to expand opportunities for public transportation in Brookside. The community features a large segment of its population that is older and many of these residents either don't drive or lack access to personal automobiles. Providing sidewalks that connect users to transit stops is critical to ensure

feasibility. The downtown area should be considered a local priority for a new transit stop.

Upgrade recreation programs and facilities to address current needs and to attract business. Today, large businesses are placing more importance on community amenities for their employees when choosing new locations.

Develop an active, convenient business district with restaurants, beauty shops, dry cleaners and similar service businesses. The collection and density of bringing businesses together in a convenient, high visible location will increase the patronage by visitors and residents of Brookside.

A healthy, attractive community is a good incentive to bring good development to Brookside. The active citizens in the town through volunteer efforts can help the town government enhance the image of Brookside to attract businesses to the area. Furthermore, local organizers may create a campaign to promote shopping in Brookside to keep sales revenue in the community. The Town of Brookside and other community stakeholders should use the future development of the sanitary sewer system and the future expansion of the water system as incentives for new commercial and residential development.

The Town of Brookside should collaborate with the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce and the neighboring towns to promote and encourage commercial and industrial development in the area. The area could benefit greatly from sharing resources and working together to attract businesses and services rather than competing for them.

Develop policies that identify economic development opportunities based on community assets, market assessment and service sector oriented areas.

Develop regulations that will be conducive for the appropriate and also complimenting land use for business and mix use.

Create economic development policies that include quality of life, job/resident retention, community reinvestment, community resources, local events, chamber of commerce development and other programs as identified.

### **Economic Development Strategies**

Maintain a supply of sites and buildings into areas already served (or planned to be served) by existing utilities and support infrastructure sufficient for meeting the future needs of a diverse range of commercial activities.

Develop revenue measures that spread the

cost burden equitably to all users of Town services.

Identify, and foster development and expansion of, and promote local industry clusters, niches and gaps as distinct economic communities.

Retain and support existing commercial activity where consistent with objectives and policies of this plan.

Maintain a favorable social and cultural climate in the community in order to enhance its attractiveness to new businesses and investments.

Develop a local agricultural economy, by providing support for local agriculture and related business activities, and the development of new rural economic opportunities reclaimed flood zones could provide the opportunity

The Town should plan for expansion of the sewer system and other public services to provide for the future economic development of the town.

Invest and support activities that promote the eco-tourism opportunities.

Complete a Fiscal Assessment of the Town.

Assess the Town's Financial Health.



# P R O G R E S S

## P l a n I m p l e m e n t a t i o n

This section summarizes major tasks on how the town will implement the plan, tools to implement the plan, strategies to follow and next steps on the how the Town of Brookside will achieve its vision in the future.

## Implementation Overview

The Town of Brookside Master Plan represents a bold vision for the future. The plan will require a significant commitment of time, energy and financial resources to implement. The plan must be implemented incrementally over time, one step at a time. A viable community is in a state of constant change and evolution over time. The current state and form of the community is the accumulative result of thousands of incremental decisions and actions that have occurred over many years. Contemplating the implementation of a master plan with all of its inter-related elements can appear daunting if viewed in its entirety. The prospect for success is more optimistic, however, if approached as ongoing series of individual decisions and actions each made to move the community forward in a manner consist with the Plan's recommendations and strategies.

## Implementation Tools

To implement the policies and recommendations within this plan, the Town must address its development regulations (zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations). The Town's has no Zoning

Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations need to be updated after the adoption of this plan. These regulatory tools are critical to shape the future growth of Brookside in the manner recommended through this plan. The following are recommendations on amending the Town's development regulations to better support the community vision.

## Zoning

The Town of Brookside needs to create a Zoning Ordinance to implement the Town's master plan. The zoning ordinance should include zoning districts that reflect the community elements described within this plan: the town center, neighborhood commercial centers, highway commercial centers, industrial areas, low density and high density neighborhoods, and agricultural and rural areas. Each district should be developed (permitted uses, area and dimensional requirements, etc.) according to the descriptions provided in the Vision for Growth section and the Land Use Classification document included in this plan. By accommodating an acceptable range of uses within each of the above categories, it is unnecessary to provide special districts for institutions, utilities, cemeteries, etc. Instead, such special uses should be carefully

integrated into various districts according to certain parameters described in the ordinance (supplemental use regulations, screening, buffers, etc.).

After all, it is extremely rare that any one section of a community might be entirely devoted to churches and hospitals or to public utilities or to cemeteries. These uses are always a part of a larger neighborhood or activity center that include other uses and should be regulated as such. Zoning individual properties for such uses is most often only an administrative procedure and has little positive effect in integrating it into the surrounding community. Instead this practice results in spots or islands of special use zoning throughout the community that have very little positive impact on the way the community grows. By incorporating special regulations for such uses (supplemental or special use regulations) the community is able to accommodate the use where it is most practical while safeguarding adjacent properties from undesirable impacts (noise, lighting, traffic, unsightliness, etc.).

To accommodate the development of large, phased developments, the Town should consider a Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay district. Such a district would allow the developer flexibility with regard to the

regulations of the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, though too much flexibility could be a disadvantage to the Town. Guidelines and standards should accompany a PUD overlay district to ensure that the future development is in accordance with the master plan. A PUD district might allow more than just residential uses, such as an activity center to serve the neighborhood developing around it. A PUD district may require a percentage of open space or park space to provide recreational opportunities to the developing neighborhood. The accessibility of these spaces to the outlying community would be negotiated between the Town and the developer. For example, to allow public access, the developer may ask that the Town maintain the open space. Otherwise, the Town should require that a private park (and other open spaces) are cared for by a homeowner's association prior to development approval.

## Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations focus mainly on how land is platted and improved to accommodate development - streets, sidewalks, curb and gutter, traffic signals and signs, etc. Because residential development includes a significant amount of land subdivisions, new blocks, new

streets, etc. subdivision regulations have the greatest impact on the construction of new residential areas. The Town of Brookside's regulations need to be modified to encourage "block" development, interconnected streets (and neighborhoods), and, generally, a more walkable environment. Based on the recommendations from the Vision for Growth section, the regulations should require land improvements that are appropriate to their context, i.e. sidewalks should be required in the town center, neighborhood centers, and residential areas but not in agricultural or industrial areas.

These regulations should also have access management standards to better balance traffic flow with access to property. This maximizes safety for motorists and pedestrians by limiting traffic conflicts. It also encourages longer useful life spans of roads by limiting congestion so that the need for adding more travel lanes is minimized. Blocks with alleys provide the optimum form of managed access, preventing the need for individual driveways. However, such arrangements are not always possible, especially in areas that are already partially developed. In these areas, driveways shared by multiple businesses are beneficial. Such standards may also address where turn lanes and medians should be provided

to accommodate and control access to property. Generally, lower density residential subdivisions should be allowed individual driveways; however, where house lots face a high-traffic road, other arrangements should be made to provide safe access, including mid-block alleys that provide access to the rear of homes.

To improve the Town of Brookside's capacity to address transportation infrastructure demand over time as areas develop, the Town should incorporate provisions in the subdivision regulations to require dedication of rights-of-way. The rights-of way are used to extend, widen or build new roads based on the growth areas indicated in this document and the traffic impact that individual developments will entail. The subdivision regulations will provide the community greater independence and control over road development. In addition to allowing the Town to plan the location of new major roads, it will also allow the Town the ability to predetermine the design of future roads. To fully address this opportunity, the Town should develop a Major Thoroughfare Plan to determine the most appropriate locations of new roads to serve the Town's vision for growth, including the design capacity, costs and priorities for such roads. The subdivision regulations would refer to the Major

Thoroughfare Plan to require dedications by developers.

Other traffic elements should also be covered by these regulations: intersection design (sight distance, curb radii, crosswalks), street widths, on-street parking, required street stubs and limitations on cul-de-sacs, sidewalk widths and locations, etc. These regulations should also cover: control of erosion and stormwater runoff before and after development, to what extent land may be graded (and when), retention of trees and existing vegetation, and how utilities, fire hydrants and street lighting are provided. Because of the hilly terrain in the Brookside area, it will be particularly important to manage grading, runoff, and erosion. Land should not be graded unless it is to be subsequently developed and erosion and control of run-off should be restricted during and after construction.

Many communities in the region are interested in underground utilities, rather than above-ground utilities which are believed to have a negative impact on the character of community streets and are prone to damage during bad weather. An alternative approach is locating above-ground utilities in mid-block alleys. This removes them from public view and can afford some protection from

vehicular damage and bad weather.

The regulations should be supportive of mid-block alleys, which help accomplish several benefits in addition to the unified access they provide in non-residential areas. Mid-block alleys can provide access to house lots with steep front yards and those fronting on heavily-traveled roads. They also offer a more discreet location for trash pick-up and above-ground utilities as mentioned above. They also offer an alternative means of accessing garages. Many recent “cookie cutter” subdivisions have two-car garages placed at the front of the home, usually closer to the street than the front door, reducing curb “appeal”. Alleys offer the chance to have garages accessible from the back of the lot rather than the front, which also reduces accidents between pedestrians and motorists when backing out of a driveway.

### Conservation Subdivision Regulations

The Town of Brookside should consider adopting a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance to permit flexibility of new subdivision layout design while promoting environmentally sensitive and efficient use of land. This provides for the preservation of open space, including environmentally, historically and

culturally sensitive areas.

Conservation subdivisions allow for an adjustment in the location of residential dwelling units on a parcel of land so long as the total number of dwelling units does not exceed the number of units otherwise permitted in the zoning district. The dwelling units are grouped or “clustered” on only a portion of a parcel of land. The remainder of the site is preserved as open space, farmland, or as an environmentally and culturally sensitive area. This clustering of the dwellings into a small area is made possible by reducing the individual lot sizes. The open space is permanently protected and held in common ownership. Sometimes additional dwelling units may be permitted if certain objectives are achieved.

Conservation subdivisions are an alternative approach to the conventional lot-by-lot division of land in rural areas which spreads development evenly throughout a parcel with little regard to impacts on the natural and cultural features of the area. Conservation subdivisions enable a developer to concentrate units on the most buildable portion of a site, preserving natural drainage systems, open space, and environmentally and culturally sensitive areas.

## Hillside and Ridgeline Protection

One tool that the Town of Brookside can use to protect major earth movement of its hillsides from future development is to adopt a Hillside and Ridgeline Protection Ordinance.

Figure 10 on page 18 illustrates the steep topography in the Town of Brookside. Within the Town of Brookside there is a large percentage of land above twenty percent slope. Slopes greater than twenty to twenty-five percent should be protected and preserved. A hillside and ridgeline protection ordinance would protect these vulnerable slopes and ridges.

The purpose of a Hillside and Ridgeline Protection Ordinance is to provide development regulations applicable to hillsides and ridgelines to ensure that future development occurs in a manner that:

- Protects the natural and topographic character of hillsides;
- Prevents inappropriate development on hillsides, steeply sloping sites and in geologically hazardous sites;
- Protects fragile steep slopes and other environmental resources;
- Preserves the aesthetic and scenic

qualities of hillsides and steep slopes;

- Ensures the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The provisions of the ordinance are intended to prevent developments that will erode hillsides, result in sedimentation of lower slopes, cause damage from landslides or create potential for damage from landslides, flood downhill properties or result in the severe cutting of trees or the scarring of the landscape. Hillside and Ridgeline protection development standards encourage a sensitive form of development and to allow for a reasonable use that complements the natural and visual character of the community.

The ordinance would apply to any development proposal for property with a natural slope of twenty percent or more, and including the crests, summits, and ridge tops which lie at elevations higher than any such areas even though the slopes of such crests, summits and ridge tops have a slope of less than twenty percent.

## Additional Regulatory Options

During the course of developing this plan, the community has shown interest in the SmartCode, a development code created

by Duany Plater Zyberk and members of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU). The SmartCode was developed to assist communities in creating more sustainable, livable, and attractive communities through regulation and regulatory incentives. Alabama is home to a growing number of traditional neighborhood developments that were planned and designed in accordance with the guidelines represented in the SmartCode. At this time, the SmartCode is being adopted as a parallel code by various communities in the Southeast - where a developer may choose between conventional development regulations and the SmartCode. The Town should further investigate implementation of the SmartCode as a tool to steward growth according to the vision described in this plan.

## Infrastructure and Services

Described in the following section are strategies for addressing the Town of Brookside's goals for future infrastructure and services. In addition to these strategies, an implementation tool discussed in community meetings is the creation of impact fees to help the Town provide infrastructure and services to respond to future demands. Impact fees are a way for the Town to accrue money to fund infrastructure and service

costs, such as for utilities expansions, fire protection, road maintenance, schools, parks and other community facilities. While not all of these services are currently provided by the Town of Brookside, current Town services may be greatly enhanced by use of impact fees. It may even be possible, through the establishment of these fees, that the Town may position itself over time to provide broader services and become more independent from County services. Impact fees are calculated and charged based on the impact that new homes will have on the services the Town provides. To a limited extent, other communities in the region have developed fees that work in this manner, however, a more master use of this technique is mostly untested in the region, though several communities have shown interest in the concept. The Town should partner with other municipalities interested in exploring the issue, perhaps through the hiring of an experienced consultant, and assess the practicality of implementing such fees on new development in Brookside.

## Infrastructure

Expanding the sewer system in accordance with this plan will be one of the most meaningful tools in controlling how and

where growth occurs. In concept, the most efficient way for the Town of Brookside to expand the sewer system is outward from the existing coverage area in an incremental fashion. This reduces “leapfrog” growth, a pattern where far-flung areas develop before land adjacent to areas with adequate infrastructure, forcing extensive and costly expansion of infrastructure out of phase with the intentions or capabilities of the Town and other utilities providers. Given this issue, the Town, using the Future Land Use Plan as a guide, should prioritize areas for future sewer installations, working with the County to implement those plans. This provides the community with reasonable expectations on which areas will develop before others. This would give priority to future growth areas closest to the existing sewer coverage area.

As an example, the Town of Brookside might create plans to extend sewer lines to an area shown on the Future Land Use Plan as a future neighborhood center. A developer can then connect to the new line to build the sewer lines that will serve the development (typically, the neighborhood center will develop sometime after the surrounding neighborhood does). In a desirable scenario, the neighborhood center would be planned together with the surrounding residential areas by the land developer - though it may

not be constructed right away. Any residential areas developing, afterwards, around this growth area would then connect on to the system, as expanded by the previous development.

Another sewer technique to consider is requiring new developments to tie-on to future sewer lines when they become available within an area. This would affect developments that occur without the public sewer already in place. When such developments occur, they would be required to provide a capped sewer connection so that upon completion of a sewer extension, the development would tie-on. This ensures future customers to pay for the investments made in expanding the service.

Another option for ensuring adequacy of infrastructure in future developments is “alternative wastewater management” or “decentralized sewer”. This method frees the Town or County of the costs of providing public sewer extensions to developing areas. Instead, an on-site sewage system can be built by the developer and open spaces within the development can be used for disposal of treated wastewater. Drip irrigation technology makes it safe to use playgrounds, golf courses and sports fields as drain fields. Today, these systems can be effectively managed,

monitored and regulated. It is recommended that these systems, after implementation, are transferred to an established utility provider, such as the Town or County, rather than to a homeowner's association, for long-term management. This can be a benefit to the utility since operating costs are often lower than conventional sewer service billing rates. Decentralized sewer is a growing technology and can help the community realize its long-term growth desires when off-site sewer treatment is not available and when individual septic systems are undesirable (either due to desired density or for environmental causes).

Another technique for financing utilities and other infrastructure improvements is the creation of a multi-jurisdictional "cooperative district" or authority. This has been used successfully in other communities in the region. Neighboring communities, who might otherwise be competing over new development, have partnered together to plan and construct infrastructure improvements to attract new growth, from which all of the municipal (and/or County) partners benefit. By combining financial resources, such cooperative authorities are better able to fund larger projects. Such an approach would also allow the Town and its partners more leverage over potential developers. It is not uncommon in the region for developers to

"play" cities against one another to increase the incentives offered by the cities, partly because so many municipalities have shown more willingness to compete rather than collaborate.

Other infrastructure improvements that should be considered by the Town of Brookside are street improvements to widen specific roads to accommodate increased traffic as the community grows, to add sidewalks to existing thoroughfares (especially where such sidewalks would help connect community facilities and business areas to neighborhoods), and to improve the streetscape in the downtown area.

Several funding sources are available to assist communities in expanding water and sewer services, to build roads, sidewalks, and trails and other infrastructure needs. Refer to the Appendix for applicable funding sources.

## Services and Facilities

To ensure a high quality of life throughout the community, as growth occurs, the Town of Brookside's departments and services will need to expand. New fire stations will need to be constructed, equipment purchased and additional staff hired to serve future neighborhoods and activity centers to maintain

a good ISO rating (refer to Community Assessment for staff recommendations). Ideally, these fire stations would be located in or near the activity centers, so that they are centrally located within the area they will serve. It is unlikely that the Town will need to build any additional police stations though over time additional staff, vehicles and equipment may be needed (refer to staff recommendations in Community Assessment). Refer to the Appendix for applicable funding sources.

Furthermore, schools and recreation areas may need to be created to serve new residential growth. Land for parks and schools may be acquired by the Town or donated by developers. These would be considered important amenities to potential homeowners, and the developer could charge more for homes/lots to absorb the cost of the donated land. New schools must be planned and constructed by the Jefferson County Board of Education. New school locations and the size of facilities should be planned to support forecasted growth. Schools, ideally should be located at the heart of residential neighborhoods to limit the need for bussing by maximizing the number of children who can walk or bicycle to school. Proximity to a school can increase property values in new development

and encourage more parent involvement in school events and issues. In several states throughout the nation, education officials, parents and other advocates are debating the value of “megaschools” versus traditional “neighborhood” schools. While megaschools offer some cost-savings through consolidation, the effect on community and parental involvement, quality of education, costs of increased bussing and other factors are questions that remain unresolved. Proponents of “neighborhood” schools see opportunities for these facilities to serve as neighborhood-oriented community centers, providing meeting space, recreational facilities and computer resources to children and adult residents.

New public parks may require additional Town staff for maintenance. Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants and other sources are available for land acquisition and park improvements. Refer to Appendix for applicable funding sources. The master plan also includes recommendations to develop trails and recreational areas along the waterways traversing the community as well as a trail connecting the park to the school and downtown.

Community facilities such as the community center, library, senior center, etc. may

also be upgraded or expanded as a result of continued residential growth. The Town of Brookside should keep such facilities in the centrally-located downtown area. However, as the community grows outward it may be worthwhile to develop satellite locations in developing neighborhood centers. Several grant sources are available to assist communities with such investments. Refer to the Appendix for applicable funding sources.

### Implementation Strategies

An implementation strategy is essential for bridging the transition between plan document and the desired realities of physical and economic improvements. The management strategies discussed below establishes a foundation of consistent and dependable partnerships accommodating effective implementation. While the Town of Brookside fulfills the primary role of leadership, public/private partnerships and individual business interests must fulfill an important role by providing innovative private or charitable sector resources to accommodate physical improvements. Following are recommendations for addressing implementation:

### Energize Citizens and Community Groups

Community resources are a tremendous means of support and momentum for the long process of implementation. Community resources include:

- Town Government: Mayor and Town Council
- Brookside Planning Commission
- Individuals: Ask them to serve on Committees, Commissions, and Task Forces
- Neighborhood Associations
- Civic Clubs
- Local Church Groups
- Jefferson County School Districts
- Boy Scout Troops
- Local Industries and Businesses
- Brookside Chamber of Commerce or Merchants Association (proposed)
- Northwest Jefferson Chamber of Commerce

## Identify short-term plan recommendations

Transition from the plan development phase to the implementation phase is extremely important. Momentum generated during the planning process can be diminished if immediate action is delayed following adoption. In many ways the plan's success is decided in the initial implementation phase. The plan provides a long list of potential recommendations: the town must determine its priority objectives and take action.

## Oversight of the Implementation Efforts

Successful implementation is directly related to stewardship and focus on specific priorities. Brookside should delegate someone or some public entity with responsibility for oversight of the plan implementation. A zoning ordinance, including subdivision design and regulation issues will also require needed oversight from the planning commission. Responsibilities include:

- Monitor implementation of the plan
- Manage financial resource needs- i.e. overseeing capital improvements program and grant writing

- Coordinate ongoing initiatives and dissemination of information on plan implementation
- Oversee development regulations and day-to-day planning and zoning issues
- Facilitate collaborative efforts among various citizens and community resources

## Capital Improvements Program

Good capital planning is essential. A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) provides tools for integrating physical and financial planning. Prioritizing for capital improvements is essential. Using a CIP to target annual expenditures for public improvements is one of the best ways to implement a comprehensive plan. The primary reason for creating a CIP is to encourage town officials and residents to think about the future of the town and budget capital improvements under guidance of a time-line ensuring progress toward the desired outcomes.

A CIP typically covers projected improvements over a six-year period. A capital budget process is concerned with the selection of projects, timing of expenditures, and impact on total government finances. The program is updated annually in terms of completed

projects, newly identified needs, and changes in sources of revenue.

Capital improvement projects are typically major investments or expenditures such as the purchase, construction, reconstruction, renovation, or replacement of a public building, streetscapes, parks and recreational facilities, and major equipment purchases. Many improvements recommended for the Town of Brookside are also designed to enhance the quality of life for residents, and provide a methodology for leveraging small public investments with private sector capital.

Projects to expand, replace, or upgrade facilities must be based on the town's service standards, which represent an obligation to the citizens. New projects should not be financed at the expense of neglecting existing infrastructure, town services, or other basic needs supplied by the town. Capital improvements do not include maintenance of existing facilities, property and buildings. The town must continue to invest in standard maintenance, preventing unnecessary costs as a result of neglect.

## Implementation Timeline and Prioritization of Tasks and Objectives

A master plan contains elements of both a long-term and short-term nature. The timeline highlights expected time for completion of incremental tasks as well as the overall plan. In addition to frequent updates reflecting the dynamics of implementation, the town should also incorporate the following formal reviews during the process:

### Provide an Annual Review of Plan Progress

The town should conduct an annual review and assessment of progress made under the master plan. Results should be made available to the public, providing an opportunity to celebrate progress, redefine goals as needed, and gain interactive feedback from stakeholders and citizens.

### Update Plan every Five Years

Implementation of this plan will require ambitious effort and hard work over a long period of time. Updating the master plan every five years serves to keep objectives and recommendations current.

## Financial Assistance and Resources- Public Sector

Many of the master plan's recommendations will require utilization of existing resources and supplemental sources of funding. The implementation chart and the funding sources in the appendix provide specific sources of internal and external funding that can assist in making plan objectives and recommendations a reality. While much can be accomplished through the designation of town and community assets, outside sources of assistance greatly enhance successful implementation of community improvement initiatives.

### Outside Sources of Funding- Private Sector

Private foundations are another important source of funding, and/or technical assistance. Often grant funding applicants are non-profit organization with an IRS 501(c) 3 status. Such non-profits typically have established missions and targeted audiences, selecting projects for funding based on need, qualification, and probability for success. Typically, grantees require a local funding match: leveraging existing funds to attract new funding is important to keep in mind

throughout the process.

## Strategic Guide

An action-oriented strategy is critical to successful implementation of plan objectives and recommendations. Consistent with the timeline, recommendations are classified below in an action strategy prioritized for implementation. It is important to acknowledge that timelines and strategic guides are not intended to remain static, but should adapt according to achievements and milestones.

The implementation source chart was created to facilitate a strategic approach to plan objectives. These documents provide a concise overview designed to facilitate the ongoing process of achieving incremental successes during the long journey of achieving full implementation.

Table 15: Implementation Techniques for Community Initiatives

Land Acquisition Technique	Purpose	Benefits	Drawbacks
<b>Fee Simple Purchase</b>	Acquire property for public use- i.e. parks.	Public control over property. Can stop development of property.	Expensive. Public support for purchase may be difficult to obtain.
<b>Advance Acquisition (land banking)</b>	Government purchases land before it is ready to be developed. Can resell with restrictions- i.e. specify type/ layout of development.	Better control over timing and type of development. Can promote more comprehensive, planned development. Discourages land speculation and leapfrog development.	Uncertain how long Government will hold land. Can be expensive, politically controversial.
<b>Purchase of Development Rights (conservation Easement)</b>	Provide strong and long term protection for farmland, forest and open space areas. Involves compensation for land owner in exchange for legally binding agreement to not further develop the property.	Can be more effective, permanent than zoning. Voluntary, property remains in private hands.	Potentially expensive. Can create islands of unconnected protected land
<b>Transfer of Development Rights</b>	Send development potential from resource lands to designated growth areas.	Developers foot the bill. Growth better concentrated. Can be an effective growth management tool and implementation of Master. Plan vision and goals.	Difficult to agree on sending and receiving areas. Public TDR bank may be needed. Requires careful planning and trained staff.
<b>Developer Exactions and dedications</b>	Require developers to provide public amenities like parks, streets, even school space in return for development approval.	Place more of the cost of development on the developer.	Opposition from developer. Requires more planning commission/ staff review. Raises cost of development.
<b>Private land trusts 501 (c ) 3 org.</b>	Trusts aim to protect natural areas, farm and forestlands. Sometimes are involved in limited developments	Can collaborate with public agencies. Can work with private landowners that are suspicious of government.	May lack financial resources. Can create islands of unconnected protected land.
<b>Impact fees</b>	One time payment from developer to cover costs of providing public services- i.e. police, fire, schools- for development.	Place more of cost of new development. or developer.	Raises cost of development. Must be definite connection for fees going to provision of services.

<b>Financing Technique</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Drawbacks</b>
<b>Capital Improvement Program</b>	Integrates physical with financial planning. A capital budget process is concerned with the selection of capital projects, timing of expenditures, and impact on total government finances.	Prioritization and allocation of funds over 6 yr. period. Encourages public officials to think about improvements to occur within context of anticipated revenue.	Program can change. Political changes can also influence/ eliminate strategic implementation over period of years.
<b>Tax Increment Financing</b>	Assist in preparation of (re) development activities. Usually pays for large scale land assembly or infrastructure development- i.e. road improvements, sewer system, parking structures, and streetscapes. Town “freezes” assessed value of certain properties or designated area.	Over specified period of time, property owners make annual payments equal to frozen tax level and higher tax level resulting from improvements. Incremental taxes pooled to pay for improvements in targeted area.	
<b>Alabama Improvement District</b>	Under the Alabama Improvement Act, counties and municipalities are authorized to form improvement districts which are public corporations authorized to issue bonds backed by assessment of real estate within the district.	Public or utility property such as roads, bridges, sidewalks, or lakes may be developed in this manner. Useful in connection with development of residential, mixed use and industrial subdivision.	
<b>Municipal Bonds</b>	Long term debt instruments issued by municipality on behalf of targeted recipient or project. Different bonds include: Revenue, Industrial Development, 501 (c) 3 bonds.	Important source of low-cost capital for economic development- interest earnings typically exempt from Federal and State taxes.	Rates can vary. Currently low rates.
<b>Public-Private Sponsorship</b>	Collaborative efforts between public agency (is) and private entities. Varied objectives and implementation possible.	Much success seen for small to larger scale implementation- ex. Business community sponsorship of new park to be constructed.	Tangling of public and private actions- perception that private money can dilute “common good” goal of public organizations. Can present conflicting perspectives and goals.

<b>Business Improvement District</b>	Special assessment district in which property owners within a defined geographic area agree to pay tax levies dedicated to special services funding in area. Typically levy is calculated using a predetermined tax rate, multiplied by assessed value or street frontage of property.	Separate, focused effort on defined geographic area. Services usually include professional staff and management, security, sanitation, and promotional events.	Must be approved by majority of property owners in district, mission and implementation of objectives can suffer from conflicting owner viewpoints, no real clout for regulatory control- must partner with municipality effectively to implement change.
<b>Specified Purpose Taxation</b>	Taxation passed with defined purpose- egg. .05% of generated sales tax to go towards implementation of recreational areas and trails.	Defined source of local funding- mechanism already in place.	Can be politically difficult to pass. Must ensure money raised actually used for what it was intended.
<b>Tax Abatement</b>	Forgives completely or a portion of a project's tax bill. Many tax abatement incentives targeted toward specific types of business (i.e. manufacturing) or particular geographic area.	Can help to substantially improve a property's cash flow and therefore debt capacity.	Abatements can be overused by competing municipalities- cost of lost revenue must be weighed within context of expected benefits.



# A P P E N D I C E S

This section includes the land use classification guide, traffic calming techniques, a list of major funding resources available to the community, training and educational opportunities and the glossary of terms used in the master plan document.



# Land Use Classification Guide

prepared by the

Regional Planning Commission

of Greater Birmingham





# Introduction

The Land Use Classification Guide provides a land use framework that will guide the community to develop great places and quality development as it grows in the future. This guide 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 land use categories should allow future neighborhoods and activity centers to become distinctive, diverse places with a mix of compatible activities. They also provide some flexibility to respond to market conditions. The Land Use Classification Guide includes two types of tools: (1) the Land Use Classifications that define the primary and secondary uses of the specified land use, and (2) the Desired Characteristics and Design Principles that inform the community about how to achieve the goals within each desired land use.

## The Land Use Categories

The following are a set of land use classifications for the town. The land use categories are grouped under eleven major types.

Low Density Residential	
High Density Residential	
Town Center	
Neighborhood Commercial	
Highway Commercial	
Light Industry and Office	
Transportation and Utilities	
Recreation and Parks	
Public and Institutional	
Heavy Industry and Mining	
Agriculture and Forestry	

## Residential Overview

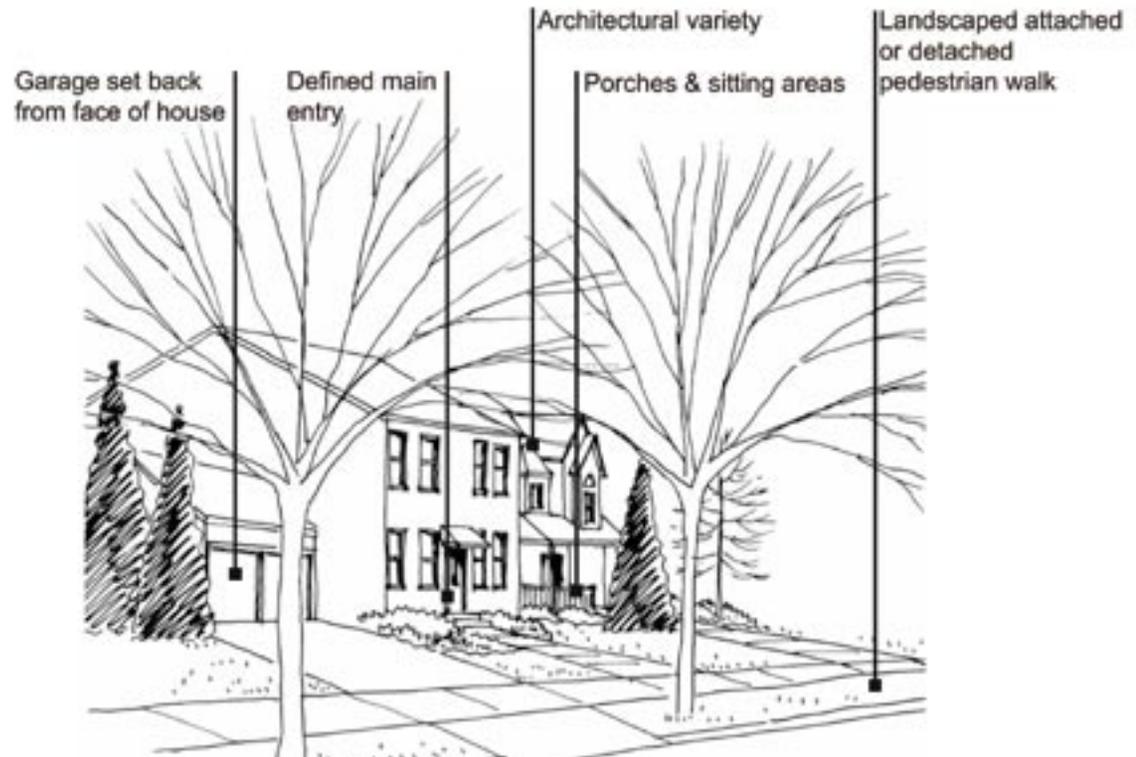
The locations of future residential areas will be designed to protect and strengthen existing and proposed neighborhoods. The developer will propose the desired project density at the beginning of the process, taking into consideration current zoning, proposed zoning, subdivision regulations, site constraints, adjacent development, and the desired character described in the Future Land Use Plan. Project density will be subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission and the appropriate Governing Bodies. The community will also consider availability of utilities, the development's impact on the transportation system and roads, accessibility, and proximity to, and impact upon community facilities such as schools, parks, and open space. For multi-family residential, vehicular, bicycle, and transit routes should be accessible. Residential areas should be protected from heavy traffic by utilizing access roads and open space buffers. In addition, these types of residential developments should be within convenient proximity to the town center or neighborhood commercial centers as well as open space and parks.

Neighborhoods will have transitions between different densities or activities. For example, low density residential is appropriate away

from shopping and other activity centers and should be accessed from local or collector streets. For these areas, some common open space should be provided. Open space should be usable and/or connected.

High Density Residential is appropriate in locations closer to activity centers or supporting business uses. These types of housing are generally served by collector

streets or arterial streets. In these high density residential areas some common open space or other amenities shall be provided. Open space shall provide connectivity within the community and provide a buffer between different land uses. In addition, for multi-family residential projects, other private recreational amenities should be provided, such as tot lots, playgrounds, or garden and



courtyards. Where it is adjacent to lower density development, densities and building heights should step down so that no building is 150% taller than an adjacent building.

### Neighborhood Design Principles

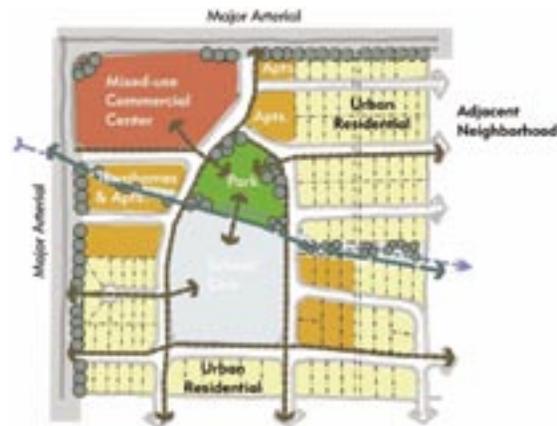
New neighborhoods should be designed following the principles below.

- The Neighborhood shall contain a mix of lot sizes, housing styles, types, and home sizes, with a mix of land uses.
- The Neighborhood shall include a neighborhood center, offering retail and civic services, and/or a gathering space (e.g., a

park, plaza, school, community center, or natural open space). At least one neighborhood park should occur within every one square mile or every one hundred homes.

- The Neighborhood shall contain connected streets and sidewalks based on a modified-grid pattern with blocks no longer than 600 feet. Blocks ranging from 400 to 600 feet should have pedestrian pass-throughs.
- The Neighborhood shall be designed for pedestrians, including amenities such as sidewalks, trails, parks, benches, shade trees, human scale signs and other pedestrian friendly features.
- The Neighborhood shall include open space, parks, trails and other amenities.
- The Neighborhood shall contain a variety of buildings types to avoid monotony.

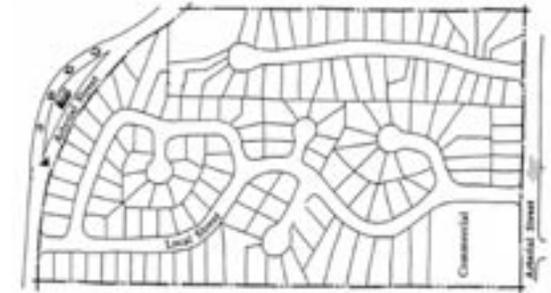
- The Neighborhood shall respect the natural landscape and conserve the natural features, such as the topography, hydrology or other geologic features.
- The Neighborhood shall include transitions between different building types so that no building is more than 150% the height of an adjacent building.



An example plan of traditional neighborhood development.



An example of a clustered residential development.



Typical example of residential development.



An example of a pedestrian-oriented residential development.

# Low Density Residential



## Primary Uses

The Low Density Residential category allows single family residences on individual large lots.

## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include open space and recreation, equestrian uses, schools, places of worship, and other public or civic uses are appropriate, as well as accessory structures, such as barns and stables. Farm animals and horses are appropriate but should not exceed animal density standards established within the adopted zoning ordinance.

## Desired Characteristics

Low density residential will develop at densities lower than typically found in the more high density residential areas, and cater to lifestyles oriented to more rural characteristics. The average density of low density residential is one dwelling unit per one to five acres or even larger, depending on underlying zoning. Some grandfathered lots may be smaller. Roads are usually paved, but may be gravel. This type of residential development emphasizes privacy over convenience.

Landowners may develop large lot single-family low density residential, or cluster development on smaller lots to conserve open space, views, and other natural features. This Future Land Use Plan promotes open space conservation that provides larger connected open space or agricultural lands that are conserved in perpetuity. The following design principles are appropriate for all low density residential development:

- Minimize cut and fill for roads and site grading.
- Use native or non-invasive plants for landscaping.
- Steer development away from geologic features, such as rock outcroppings or steep slopes.
- Use appropriate setbacks, and placement of structures that are compatible with adjacent agricultural activities.
- Design buildings that reflect the architectural heritage of the region and that are located at the toe of slopes to allow for windbreaks.
- Incorporate wildlife friendly fencing or “rural” open fencing rather than solid fencing.
- Preserve existing farm buildings and other features of the site.



Examples of low density development.

# High Density Residential



## Primary Uses

The High Density Residential category allows for a diverse array of residential types, including single-family detached residences, and compact residential development such as garden homes, condominiums, cottage homes, mobile homes, duplexes, town-homes, and apartments.

## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include open space and recreation, schools, places of worship, and other public or civic uses are appropriate. Senior housing facilities and child care centers are also appropriate. Neighborhood commercial may be appropriate in newly developing areas.

## Desired Characteristics

High Density Residential is shown in established neighborhoods and newly developing neighborhoods. The Future Land Use Plan encourages new neighborhoods to be developed in traditional development patterns with a mix of densities, lot sizes, housing types, and home sizes that are well integrated with one another. New high density residential developments should have a wide variety of

housing types, lot sizes, styles, and patterns. Future neighborhoods should also include well planned amenities such as parks, trails and open space.

The core of a high density residential neighborhood should contain higher-density housing, and encourages single-family attached units such as duplexes, town-homes, and condominiums. The neighborhood may include neighborhood commercial uses organized around a public space that is inviting for pedestrians. The neighborhood should also contain parks and open space for public enjoyment. The secondary uses are intended to serve the neighborhood and should be developed and operated in harmony with the residential character of the community.

Within high density residential neighborhoods, streets and sidewalks should provide connections to, from, and within the neighborhoods to make it safe and convenient for people to walk and ride bicycles. High Density Residential areas will be served by central water and sewer, and will contain paved streets with sidewalks.



Examples of high density residential development.

## Commercial Overview

The commercial categories on the Future Land Use Plan have a variety of uses, development intensities, and characteristics. These are the areas of the community designed to provide jobs, services, and economic vitality. The commercial areas are planned to be compatible with existing and proposed development, site constraints, and market demand. The commercial land uses are divided into three categories: Town Center, Neighborhood Commercial and Highway Commercial.

### Commercial Development Principles

- Commercial development should be designed using the following principles:
- Provide greater attention to design in high visibility locations, such as along interstates or on arterials.
- Incorporate gateway features and landscaped areas in commercial areas.
- Screen service areas and outdoor storage areas with landscaping.
- Provide pedestrian access from the main street through parking areas to the building.
- Provide attractive fencing and low level lighting.

## Town Center

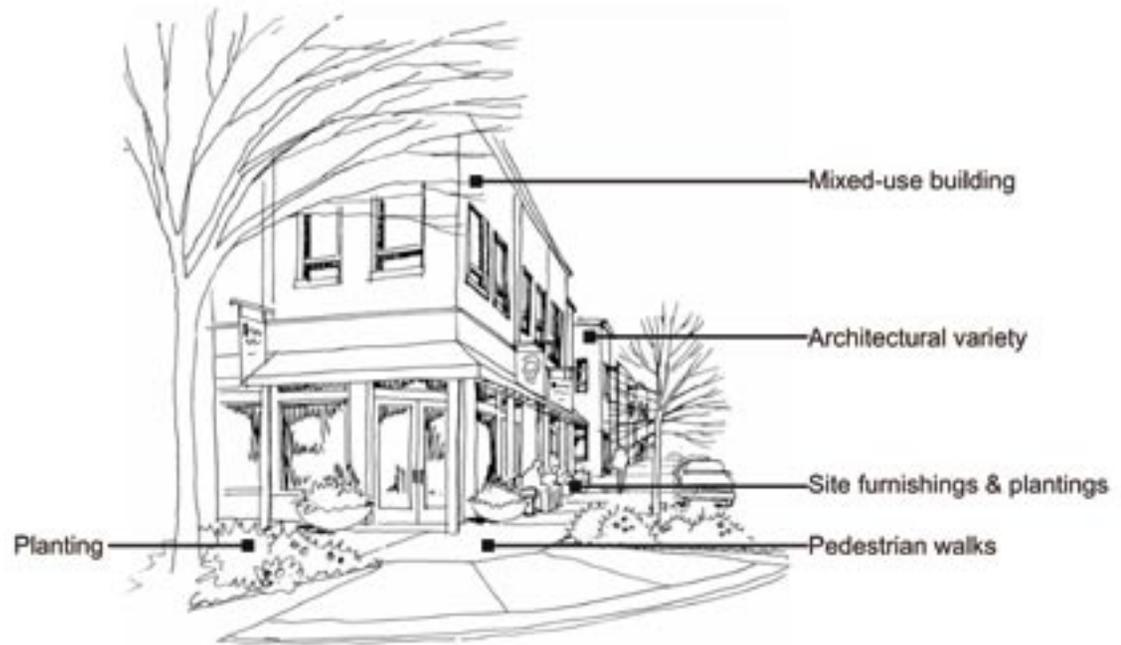


### Primary Uses

The Town Center category is intended to promote a mix of land uses, with primarily retail services, civic uses, office, and live/work areas. Parks, plazas and/or open space should also be part of the core of the Town Center. Retail services are oriented to both adjacent neighborhoods as well as a destination in the community.

### Secondary Uses

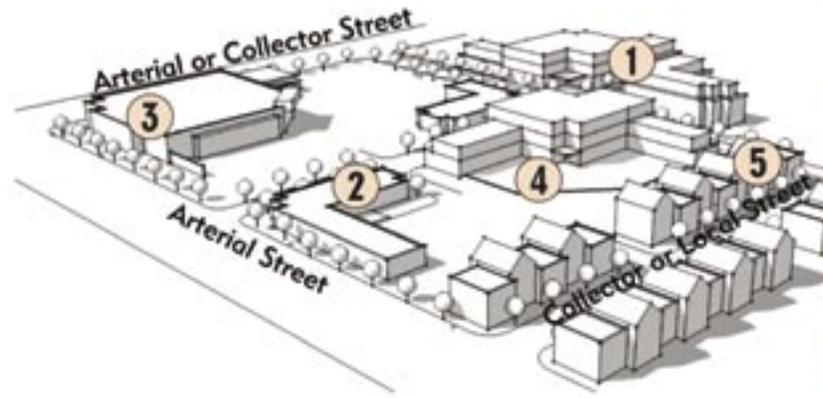
Supporting and complementary uses include high density residential units such as duplexes and townhouses, condominiums, apartments and other higher intensity owner-oriented residential uses. Places of worship, parks and recreation and other public or civic uses are also appropriate.



## Desired Characteristics

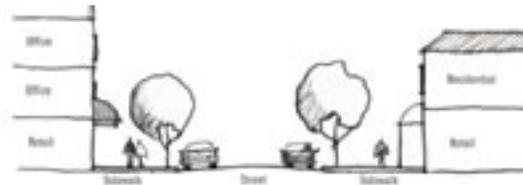
Town Center areas should be located near principal arterial or minor arterial streets, and can become larger activity centers. The intent is to create an environment that has employment and shopping opportunities, a range of housing types, parks and open spaces, and civic uses. Uses may be mixed either vertically or horizontally.

The Town Center should be developed in an integrated, pedestrian friendly manner and should not be overly dominated by any one land use or housing type. No single land use shall exceed eighty percent of the land area of a project, nor should any single land use exceed eighty percent of total building square footage where a mix of uses are provided within the building. Building heights should be evaluated during the development review process. Where appropriate, building height transitions and step-downs should be provided to be compatible with adjacent development.



- 1 Buildings are oriented to and close to an internally-focused "main street" to create a pedestrian-friendly street edge.
- 2 Buildings are oriented to frame an internal network of streets, allowing easy walking between uses.
- 3 Commercial buildings are located to be visible from the arterial or collector streets.
- 4 Parking is in smaller lots, is centrally-located, away from streets, and pedestrian-friendly.
- 5 Medium density housing or offices can provide a transition to surrounding neighborhoods. Site should contain walkways through from commercial core to houses.

Examples of town centers:



Vertical mix of uses often used in Town Centers.

# Neighborhood Commercial



## Primary Uses

Commercial centers located within close proximity to residential neighborhoods that provide goods and services. This category includes, but is not limited to, professional/business offices, general retail, financial institutions, and restaurants.

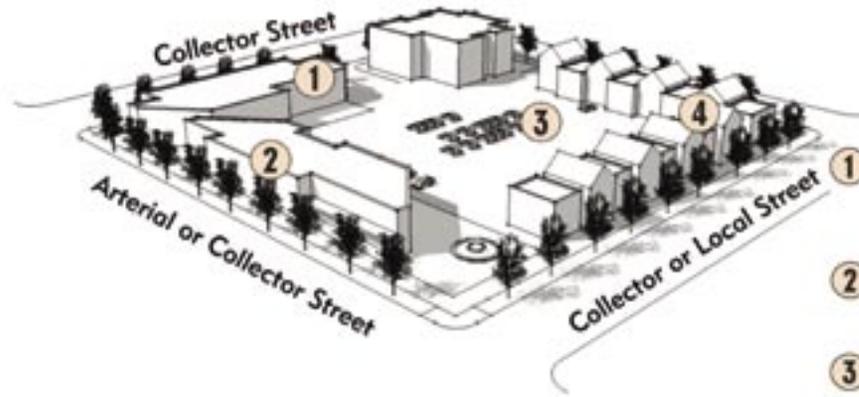
## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include, open space and recreation, and other public or civic uses are appropriate. Multi-family housing and High Density residential may be appropriate if designed as part of an integrated mixed-use concept plan.

## Desired Characteristics

Use the following criteria in determining the location and design of Neighborhood Commercial Centers. This type of center should:

- Have frontage on an arterial and a collector or two collector roads.
- Vary in size depending on the mix of uses.
- Serve a trade area up to two miles.
- Have a gross floor area up to 200,000 square



- 1 Buildings are internally focused to frame internal parking and to create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere—allowing easy walking between uses.
- 2 Commercial buildings are located to be visible from the arterial and/or collector streets.
- 3 Parking is internally located and away from the street.
- 4 Medium density housing or offices can provide a transition to surrounding neighborhoods.

feet of non-residential uses.

- Typical format consists of one anchor store, such as a supermarket or drug store, and smaller retail and services. The project may also contain some residential development either vertically or horizontally mixed.
- The main part of the development should contain amenities such as a pedestrian plaza and landscaping as well as wayfinding to create a cohesive development.
- Additional Neighborhood Commercial Centers can be located in the community provided that traffic impacts are mitigated and transitions are provided for residential areas.



Examples of Neighborhood Commercial.

- Internal streets and sidewalks should provide access and connections to nearby neighborhoods. Community business should blend into the neighborhoods, with scale, design, signage, landscaping and lighting.
- Design signage that identifies businesses without dominating the landscape.
- Screen utilities and service areas from public view using landscaping or architectural elements that are integrated into the building's architecture.



Examples of Neighborhood Commercial.

# Highway Commercial



## Primary Uses

Highway Commercial Centers are located along major transportation arterials in the community to serve the day to day commercial needs of the community or region. This category includes retail and commercial uses, such as restaurants on pad sites, motel and hotels, large tenant commercial and regional shopping malls, that typically serve several neighborhoods or a region.

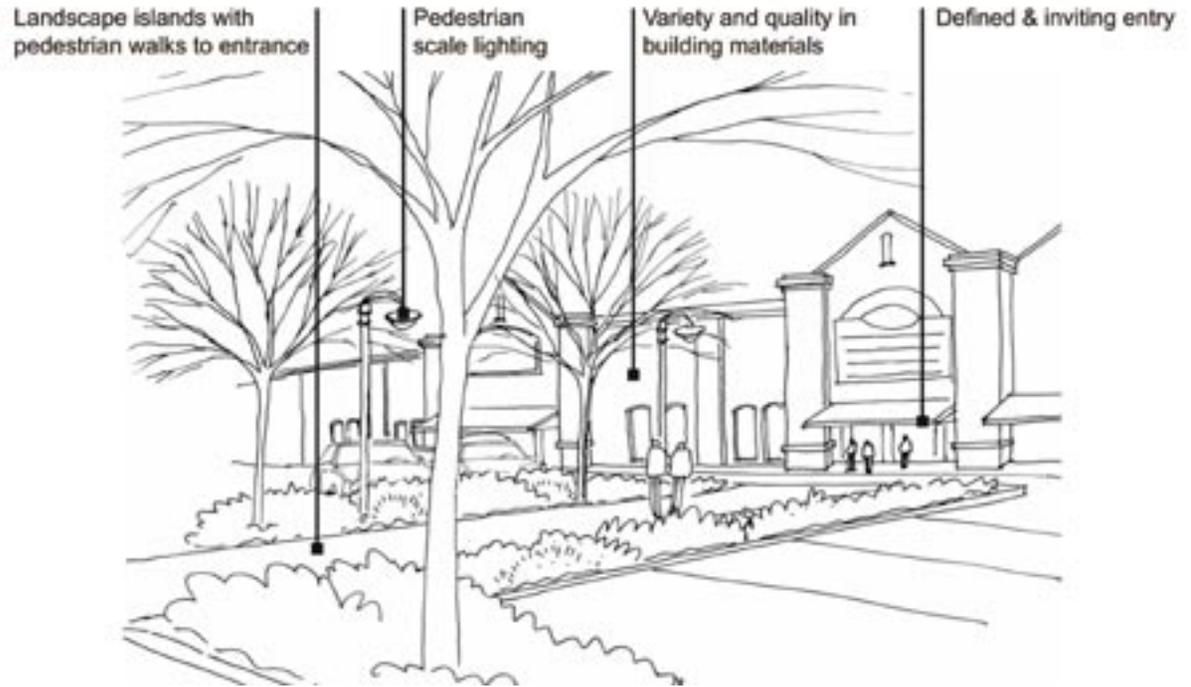
## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include, active parks and public plazas, and other public or civic uses are appropriate. Multi-family housing and High Density Residential may be appropriate if designed as part of an integrated mixed-use concept plan.

## Desired Characteristics

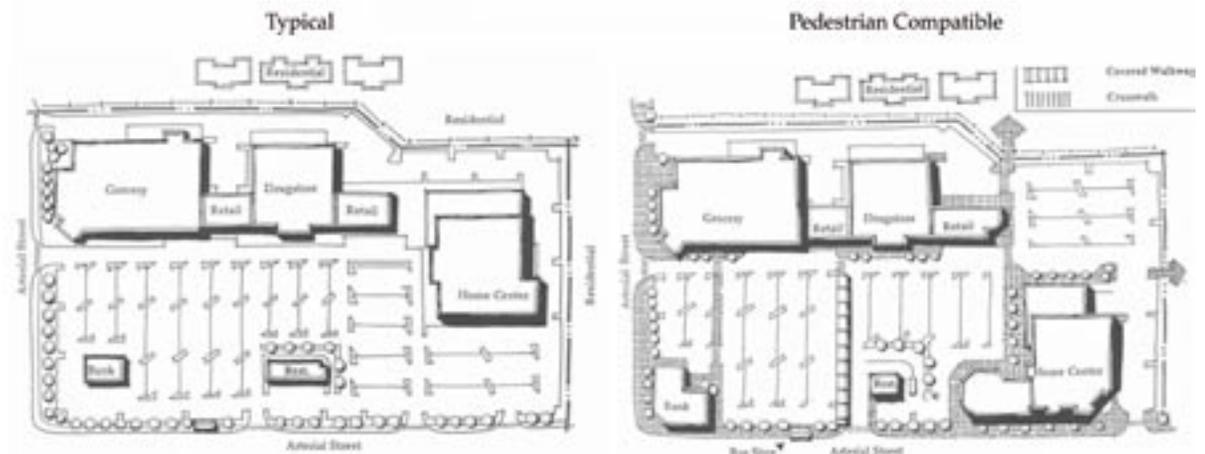
Use the following criteria in determining the location and design of Highway Commercial centers. This type of center should:

- Be located near an Interstate interchange or off a major transportation arterial.
- Range in size up to 100 acres.



Examples of Highway Commercial.

- Serve a trade area up to 5 miles.
- Have a gross floor area of over 200,000 square feet for non-residential uses.
- Typical format consists of one to two anchor stores, such as a supermarket or drug store, or can consist of regional shopping, “lifestyle” centers, outlet mall, and “big box” configurations.
- Contain amenities such as a pedestrian plaza and landscaping as well as wayfinding and access control to create a cohesive development.
- Design signage with street addresses that identifies businesses without dominating the landscape.
- Distribute parking to the sides and rear where possible, with connections to neighboring retail sites.
- Screen utilities, maintenance and service areas from public view using landscaping or architectural elements that are integrated into the building’s architecture.
- Additional Highway Commercial Centers can be located in the community provided that traffic impacts are mitigated and transitions are provided for residential areas.



Examples of Highway Commercial.

# Light Industry and Office



## Primary Uses

The Light Industry and Office categories have a variety of uses and development intensities, and characteristics that generally do not include much, if any potential residential development. This category is intended to promote a range of land uses with primarily light industry and offices designed in an campus setting.

## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses includes manufacturing, distribution centers, storage centers, places of worship, smaller scale neighborhood commercial and other public or civic uses.

## Desired Characteristics

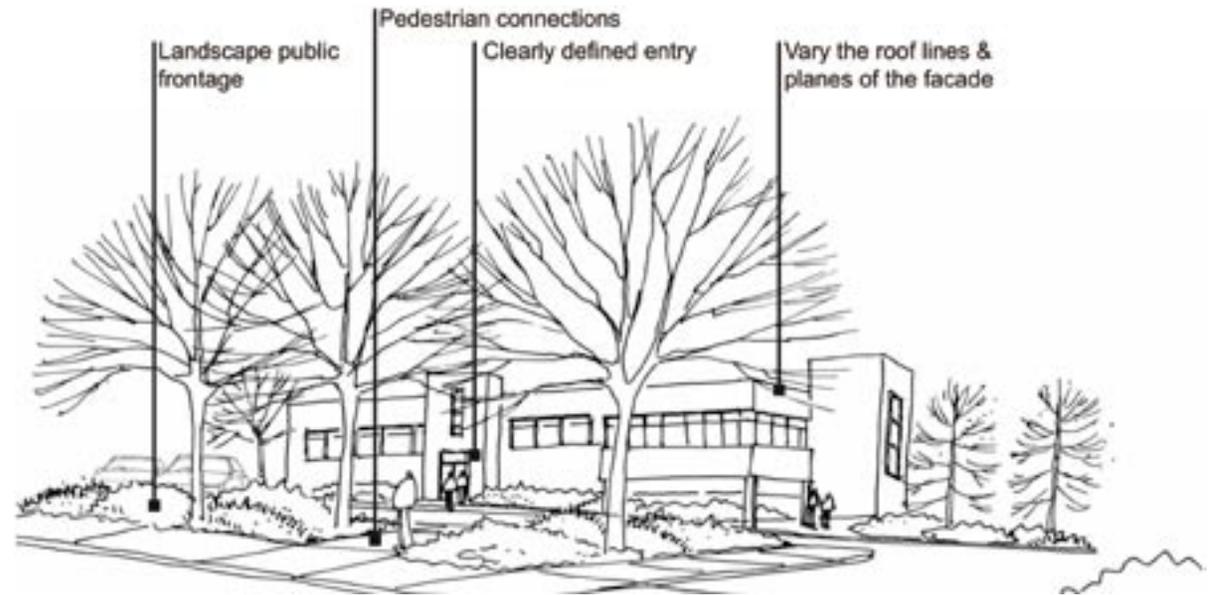
The intent of the Light Industry and Office category is to create an environment that enables Light Industrial and Office activities to occur, but at the same time encourage employment opportunities and retail services. The campus should include both passive and active open space, pedestrian walkways, and possibly even parks and plazas. Light Industrial and Office areas should be developed in an integrated, pedestrian friendly manner. The

industrial and office uses shall be planned to be compatible with existing and proposed development, site constraints, and market demand. Use the following criteria in determining the location and design of Light Industrial and Office centers. This type of center should:

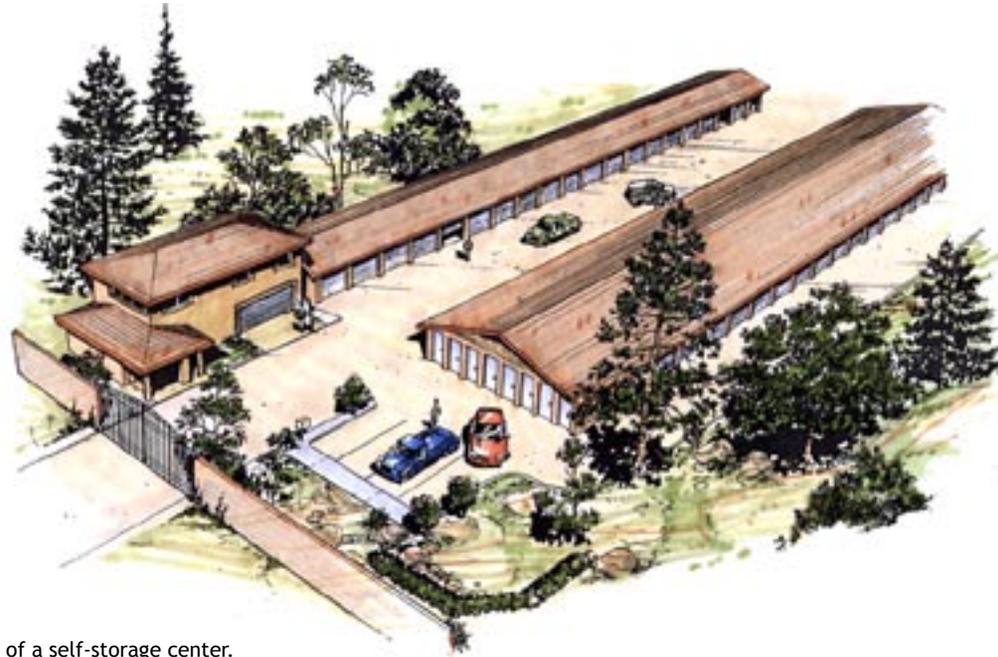
- Provide greater attention to design in high visibility locations, such as along interstates or on arterials.



Example of varied facade planes and landscape screening for light industry.



- Incorporate gateway features and landscaping in light industry and office areas.
- Screen utilities, maintenance and service areas from public view using landscaping or architectural elements that are integrated into the building's architecture.
- Provide pedestrian access from the main street through parking areas to the building.
- Provide attractive fencing and low level lighting.



Example of a self-storage center.



Examples of Light Industry.

# Transportation and Utilities



## Primary Uses

The Transportation and Utilities land uses are the main transportation, infrastructure and utilities elements of the Town. The transportation element includes principal streets, secondary streets, residential streets, alleys and parking areas. The Utility elements include sewer, water, gas, and electrical infrastructure, telecommunications and other utility infrastructure that serve the town or region.

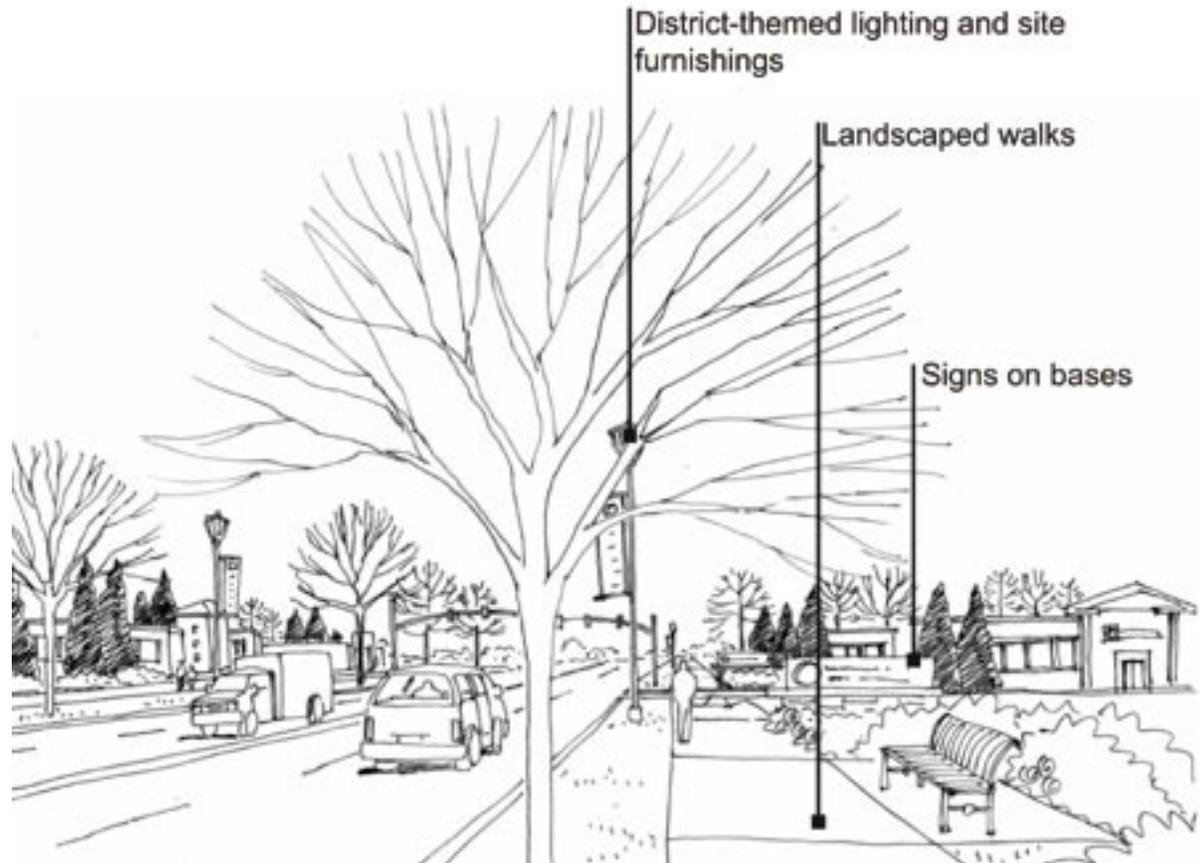
## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include other infrastructure and utility elements and Parks and Recreational uses.

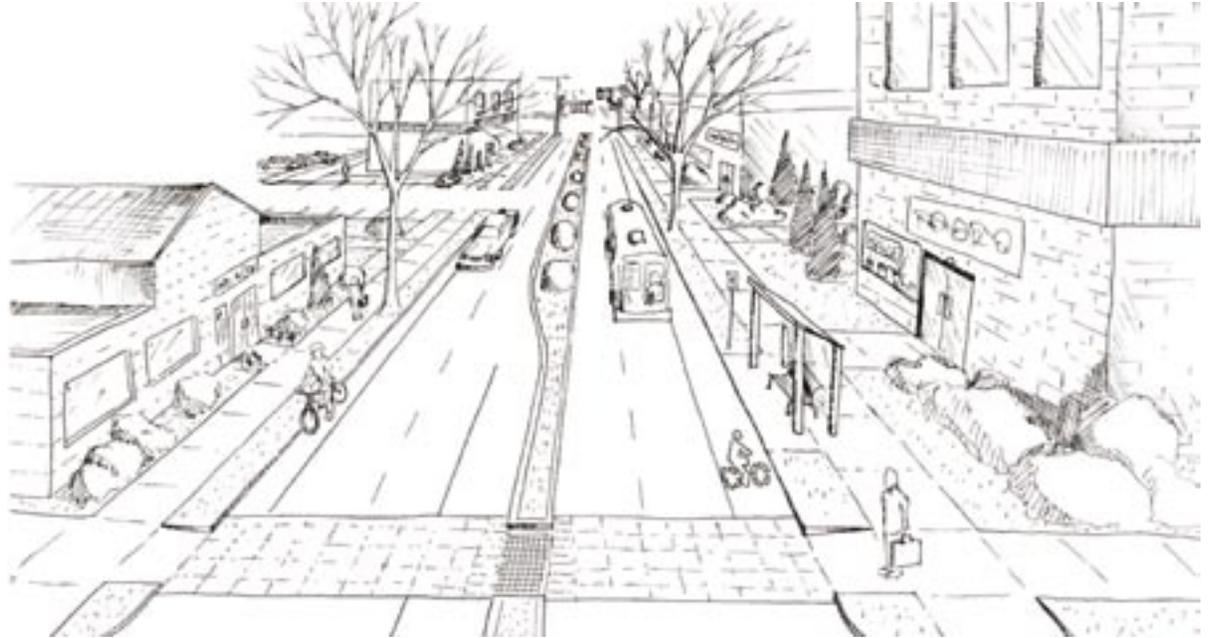
## Desired Characteristics

The transportation infrastructure of the town should be a 'complete street'. A Complete Street is safe, comfortable and convenient for travel via automobile, foot, bicycle, and transit. Complete Streets:

- Offers a full range of travel choices.
- Provide sidewalks either separated by a park strip or with ample width to provide for pedestrian safety on all new roadways.



- Build bicycle facilities on all new roadways and retrofit existing roadways with major reconstruction projects.
  - Connects to a network that offers choices.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings at intersections.
- Build corridors that will be conducive to transit, even if transit is not available
  - Is fully accessible to all: kids, seniors and people with disabilities.
  - Supports & contributes to life in pleasant, convenient neighborhoods.
  - Serves and supports public transit



Complete street Illustration.



Bicycle lanes and sidewalks on residential street.



Pedestrian-friendly residential street with side walks and landscaped median.



Provide safe crosswalks to encourage pedestrian activity to develop a walkable community.

# Recreation and Parks



## Primary Uses

Public and private open space, public and private parks, which include active and passive parks, liner parks and trails, gateways and landscaping, conservation areas, recreational centers, country clubs, and golf courses are appropriate uses. This category may also include natural/cultural resource areas as well. The location, access, terrain, size, and design will vary for future recreation and park development depending on the specific use.

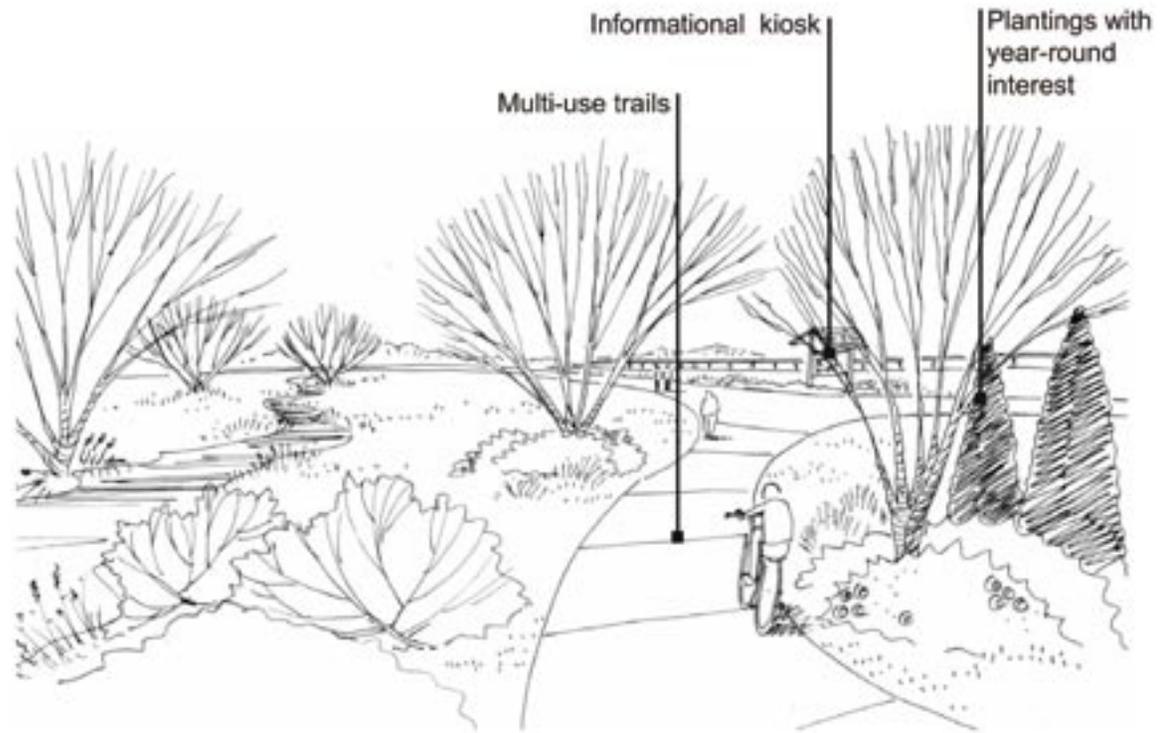
## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include public utilities, civic and institutional uses, facilities, and some small scale retail such as restaurants may also be appropriate.

## Desired Characteristics

Parks and public spaces should be designed using the following principles. They should:

- Be designed and planned as part of neighborhoods—not be merely “left over.”
- Be large enough to provide adequate space to meet the intended uses.
- Incorporate and preserve natural features, including ridge lines, habitats, hills, drainage



ways, and historic sites or landmarks.

- Be visible from at least one local street (two ideally) to invite use, encourage a sense of ownership, and provide a safe area.
- Include a focal point and a variety of amenities.
- Include appropriate lighting and ample landscaping with parking.
- Provide places to sit and provide trash and recycling receptacles.
- Provide connections to the park from neighboring land uses.
- Parks should be designed for multi-purposes and be flexible for a wide variety of uses and activities.
- Landscaping along riparian and habitat areas should use native or non-invasive plants.



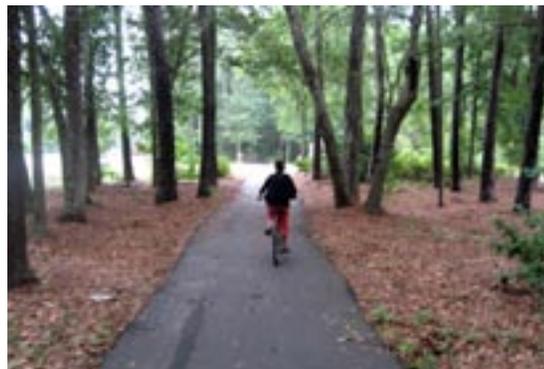
Active recreational fields provide opportunities for communities to come together.



Dog Parks provide a place for dogs and residents to socialize.



Stormwater drainage should be utilized to provide water for neighborhood parks and trails.



One of the benefits of planning is providing trails and walkable neighborhoods giving residents opportunities for healthy lifestyles.



Parks provide a place for children to play, exercise and socialize with other children in the community.

# Public and Institutional



## Primary Uses

Public and Institutional uses to serve neighborhoods, the community and the region. The Public and Institutional category includes existing and proposed uses related to community services, such as fire stations, police stations and jails, places of worship, cemeteries, schools, libraries, community centers, hospitals, civic buildings and government buildings.

## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include, open space and recreation, parks and trails, child care facilities and educational centers.

## Desired Characteristics

The Public and Institutional category should be designed using the following principles.

- Internal streets and sidewalks should provide access and connections to nearby neighborhoods.
- Public and Institutional buildings should blend into the neighborhoods, with scale, design, signage, landscaping and lighting.
- Public and Institutional uses should be

located adjacent to a collector street or streets within neighborhoods. Avoid locations adjacent to major thoroughfares or arterials.

- Public and Institutional uses should be near parks, trails, and other recreation facilities to provide combined recreation facilities.

Examples of Public and Institutional land uses:



# Heavy Industry and Mining



## Primary Uses

Heavy Industry and Mining, distribution and warehouses, and manufacturing and fabrication are appropriate in this category.

## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include open space and recreation, transportation and utilities, and agriculture and forestry.

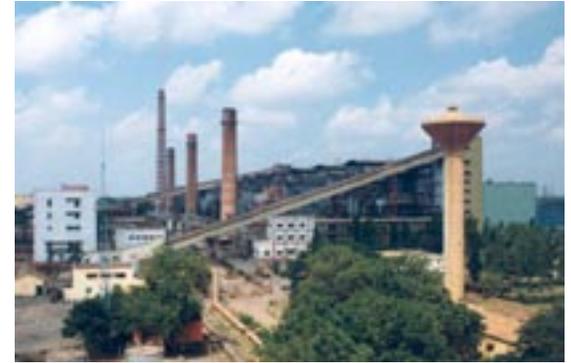
## Desired Characteristics

This category encompasses the heavier industrial areas and generally provides a location where less restrictive regulations are applied. High visibility locations require greater attention to design and landscaping. Industrial areas should be located with access to major transportation facilities, such as interstates and railroads. Use the following criteria in determining the location and design of Heavy Industrial and Mining areas. This type of uses should:

- Provide greater attention to design in high visibility locations, such as along interstates or on arterials.
- Provide ample buffers and vegetation between neighboring land uses.

- Screen service areas and outdoor storage to the extent possible.
- Provide attractive fencing and low level lighting.
- Located near major transportation facilities.

Examples of Heavy Industry and Mining:



# Agriculture and Forestry



## Primary Uses

Agriculture, forestry, farming, and other agriculturally related uses, including farm animals, and ranches are appropriate.

## Secondary Uses

Supporting and complementary uses include forestry and agriculture related businesses and farming support services (e.g., game hunting, equestrian activities, breeding and boarding, vet services, roadside stand, agricultural tourism activities, farm machine repair, and others). Also very low density residential (e.g., Low Density houses that occupy large tracts of land and are designed to conserve land for agriculture, farming, or natural and cultural resources) is permitted.

## Desired Characteristics

It is the intent of this Plan to promote continued forestry and agricultural services in areas identified as agricultural and forestry rather than low density residential development. However, low density residential will continue to be a choice available to residents of the Town whose property is located in areas identified as agricultural. Agricultural operations typically require very large parcels of land. Scattered

areas of residences on large lots are also located in this classification. These residences rely on individual wells and septic systems, and open space usually is owned privately. Agriculture depends on soil capabilities and requires some basic utility services. Agricultural operations should have access to County roads. Agriculture is permitted in floodplains and geologic hazard areas, subject to Federal, State and County regulations.

Examples of Agriculture and Forestry Land Use:



# T R A F F I C C A L M I N G T E C H N I Q U E S

This section summarizes major traffic calming techniques that share the goal of reducing vehicle speeds, improving safety, and enhancing quality of life.

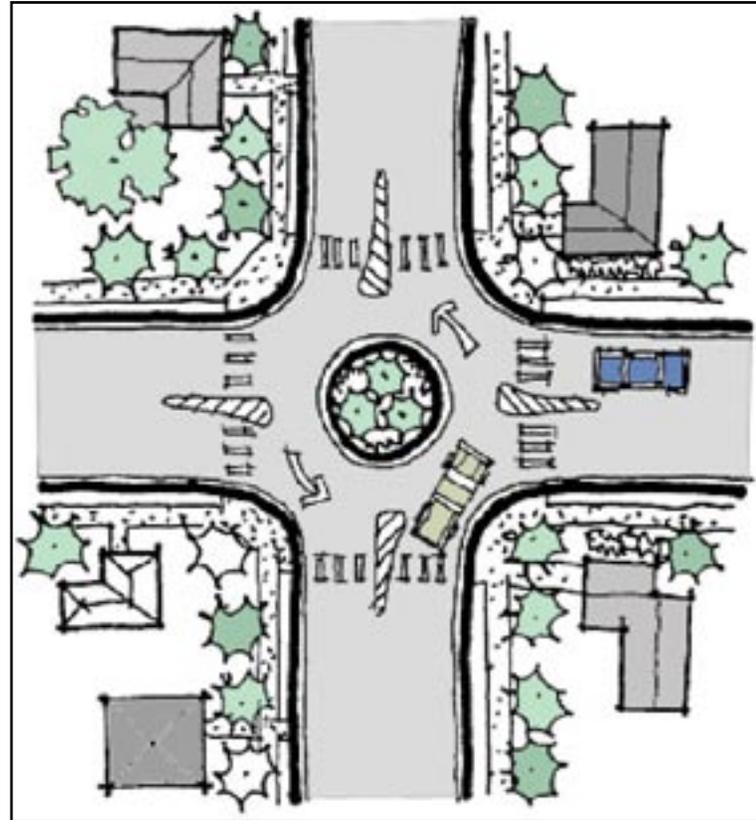
# Roundabouts

## Definition:

Roundabouts are raised circular areas (similar to medians) placed at intersections. Drivers travel in a counter-clockwise direction around the circle. Modern roundabouts are “yield upon entry,” meaning that cars in the circle have the right of way and cars entering the circle must wait to do so until the path is clear.

## Advantages:

- Reduces crashes by 50 to 90 percent when compared to 2-way, 4-way stop signs and traffic signals by reducing the number of conflict points at intersections
- Reduces speed at intersection approach.
- Longer speed reduction influence zones.
- Provides space for landscaping.
- Cheaper to maintain than a traffic signal.
- Effective at multi-leg intersections.
- Provides equal access to intersections for all drivers.
- Provides a good environment for cyclists.
- Does not restrict movements, but makes them more difficult.



## Disadvantages:

- May be restrictive for larger vehicles if designed to a low speed. Providing a mountable apron minimizes this limitation.
- May require additional lighting and signage.
- If left turns by large vehicles are to be accommodated then right of way may have to be purchased.
- Initial safety issues as drivers adjust.
- May increase volumes on adjacent streets.
- Maintenance responsibility if landscaped.

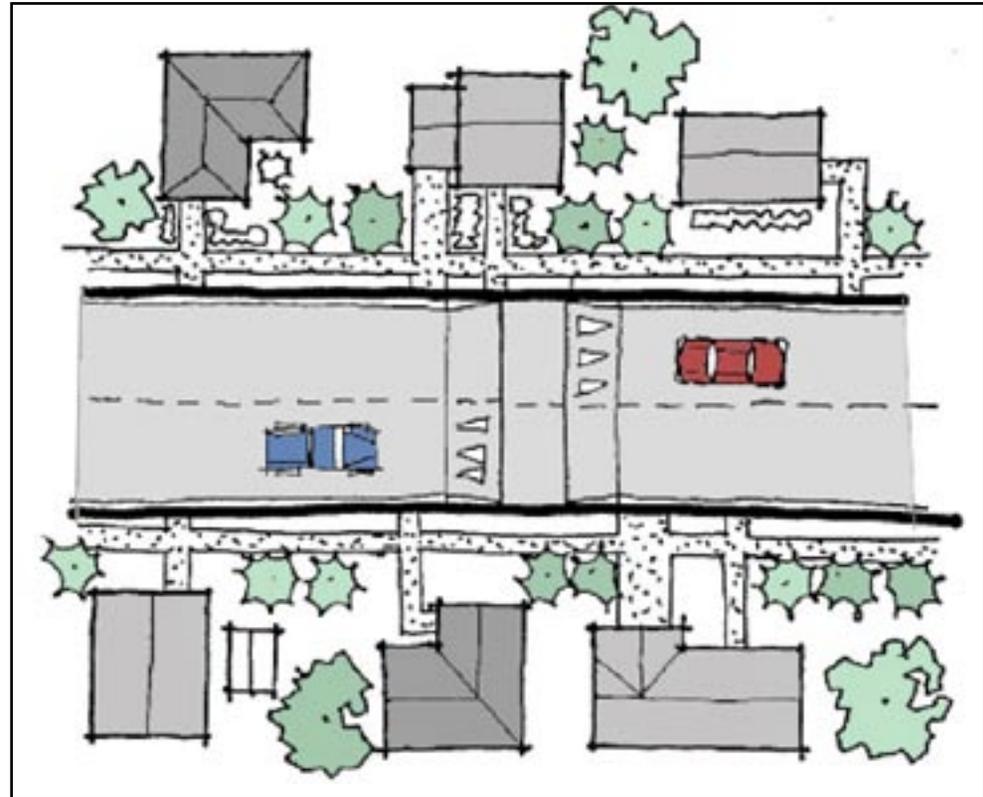
# Speed Humps

## Definition:

Speed humps are wave-shaped humps in the street. The height of the speed hump determines how fast it may be navigated without causing discomfort to the driver or damage to the vehicle. Discomfort increases as speed over the hump increases. Typically speed humps are placed in a series rather than singularly. Speed humps are effective in reducing speed while not creating hazards to emergency response and transit vehicles.

## Advantages:

- Reduces vehicle speeds in the vicinity of the hump without increasing crashes. Better if used in a series at 300' to 500' spacing.
- Self-enforcing.
- Relatively inexpensive.



## Disadvantages:

- May create noise particularly if there are loose items in the vehicle or trailer.
- If not properly designed, drivers may try to skirt around to avoid impact.
- May be a problem for emergency vehicles.
- May impact drainage.
- Drivers may speed up between humps.
- May increase volumes on other streets.
- Difficult to properly construct.
- Requires signage that may be considered unsightly.

# Traffic Circles

## Definition:

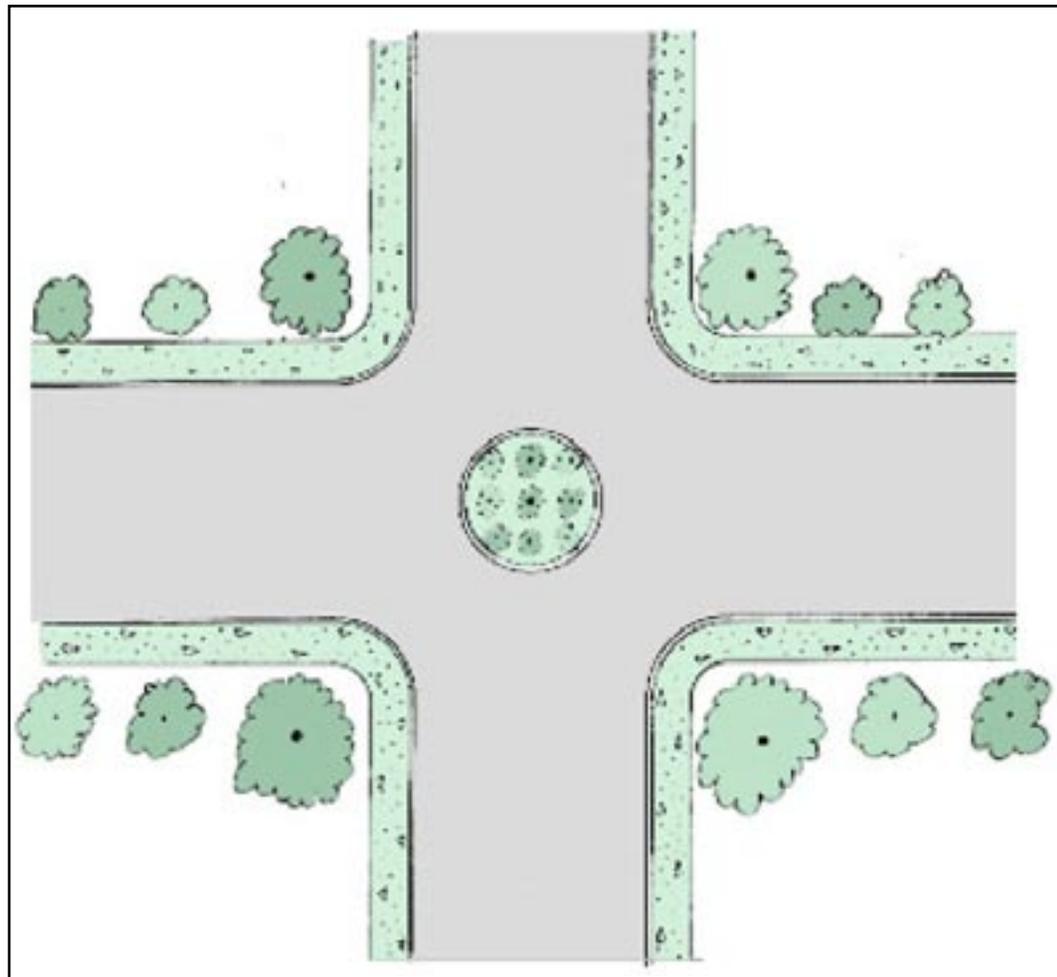
Traffic circles are raised islands constructed at intersections of residential streets. They cause motorists to decrease speed in order to maneuver around the circle.

## Advantages:

- Reduces speed at intersection approach.
- Provides space for landscaping.
- Cheaper to maintain than a traffic signal.
- Does not restrict movements, but makes them more difficult.

## Disadvantages:

- May require additional signage.
- Initial safety issues as drivers adjust.
- Maintenance responsibility if landscaped.



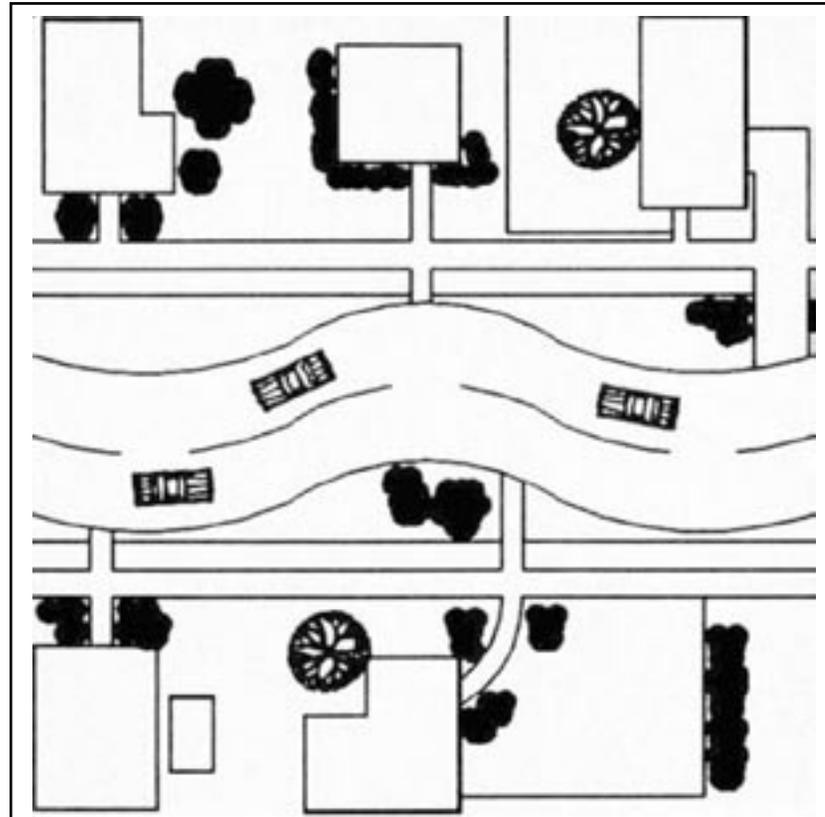
# Chicanes

## Definition:

Chicanes are mainline deviations to deter the path of travel so that the street is not a straight line (by the installation of offset curb extensions). These devices alter the sight lines and/or linear progression of motorists along straight neighborhood streets. The alteration can influence motorists to reduce speeds.

## Advantages:

- Imposes minimal inconveniences to local traffic.
- Pedestrians have a reduced crossing distance.
- Provides large area for landscaping.
- Provides a greater visual obstruction.
- Cost of device is limited by length.
- A very effective method of changing the initial impression of the street. If done correctly, drivers will not be able to see through. Appears as a road closure yet allows through movement.
- Accepted by public as speed control device.



- Aesthetically pleasing.
- Reduces speed without significantly impacting emergency response.

## Disadvantages:

- Increases the area of landscaping to be maintained by residents.

- Cost is greater than many other devices, therefore better to be installed in conjunction with street reconstruction or initial design.
- May create opportunities for head-on conflicts on narrow streets.

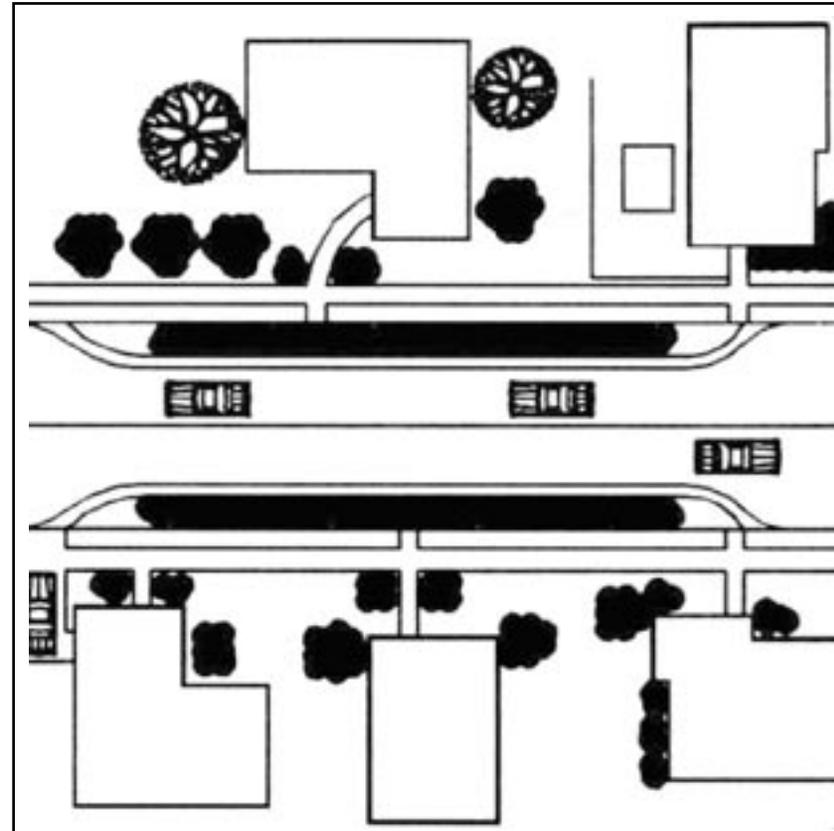
# Lane Narrowing

## Definition:

Street physically narrowed to expand sidewalks and landscaped areas; possibly adding medians, on-street parking, etc. (Similar to neckdowns but used at mid-block). The driver senses the roadway narrowing when approaching one of these devices, which can result in reduction in speed.

## Advantages:

- Minor inconveniences to drivers.
- Minimal inconveniences to local traffic.
- Good for pedestrians due to shorter crossing distance.
- Provides space for landscaping.
- Slows traffic without seriously affecting emergency response time.
- Effective when used in a series.
- Single lane narrowing reduces vehicle speed and through traffic.



## Disadvantages:

- Double lane narrowing not very effective at reducing speeds or diverting through traffic.
- Only partially effective as a visual obstruction.
- Unfriendly to cyclists unless designed to accommodate them.
- Conflict between opposing drivers arriving simultaneously could create problems.

# Neckdowns

## Definition:

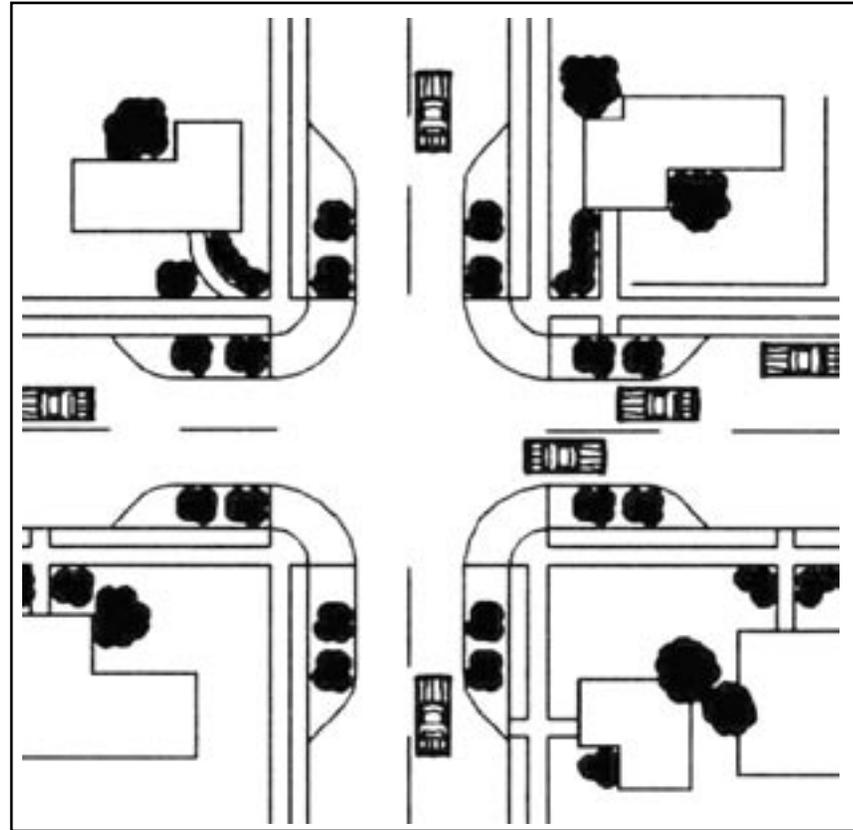
Physical curb reduction of road width at intersections. Similar to lane narrowing but used at intersection(s). Widening of street corners at intersections to discourage cut-through traffic and to help define neighborhoods.

## Advantages:

- May be aesthetically pleasing, if landscaped.
- Good for pedestrian due to shorter crossing distance.
- Can be used in multiple applications or on a single segment of roadway.

## Disadvantages:

- Unfriendly to cyclists unless designed to accommodate them.
- Landscaping may cause sight line problems.
- Increased maintenance if landscaped.



# Intersection Humps

## Definition:

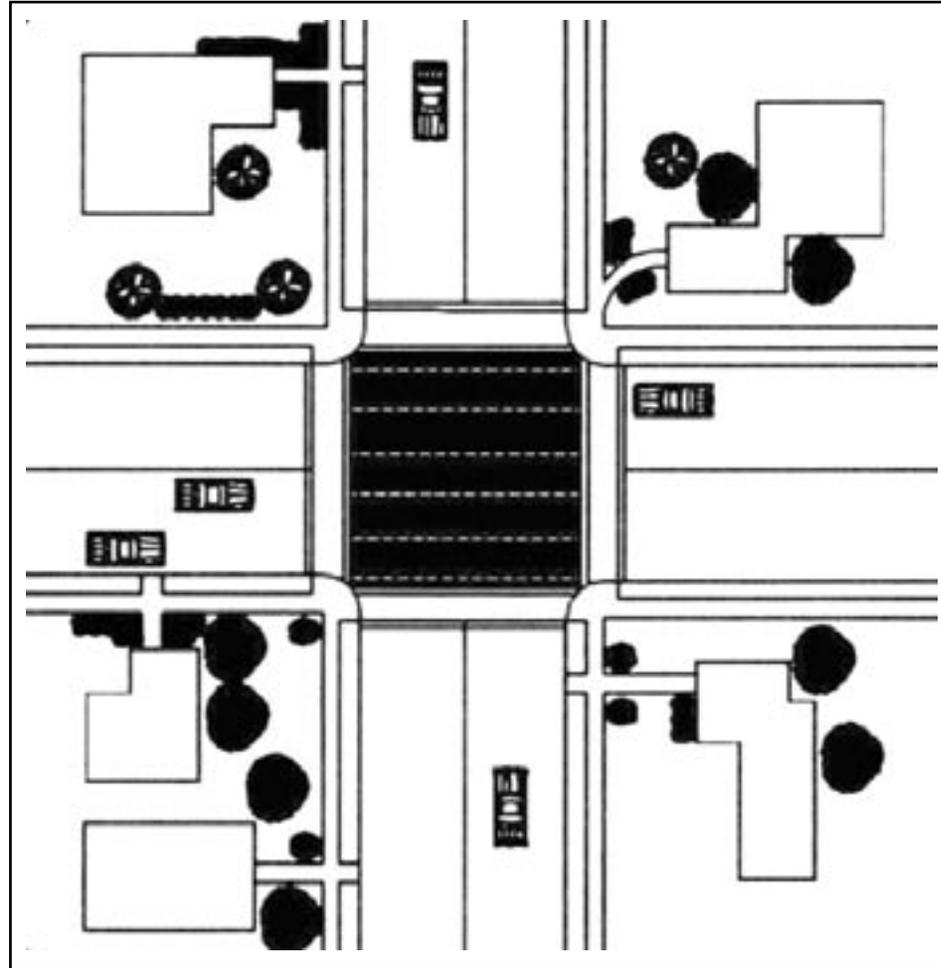
A raised plateau where roads intersect. The plateau is generally 4" above the surrounding street. A change in road surface can influence driver behavior and reduce speeds.

## Advantages:

- Slows vehicle in the most critical area and therefore helps to make conflict avoidance easier.
- Highlights intersection.
- Excellent pedestrian safety treatment.
- Aesthetically pleasing if well designed.
- Effective speed reduction, better for emergency vehicles than speed bumps.

## Disadvantages:

- Increases difficulty of making a turn.
- Increased maintenance.
- Requires adequate signage and driver education.



# Raised Crosswalks

## Definition:

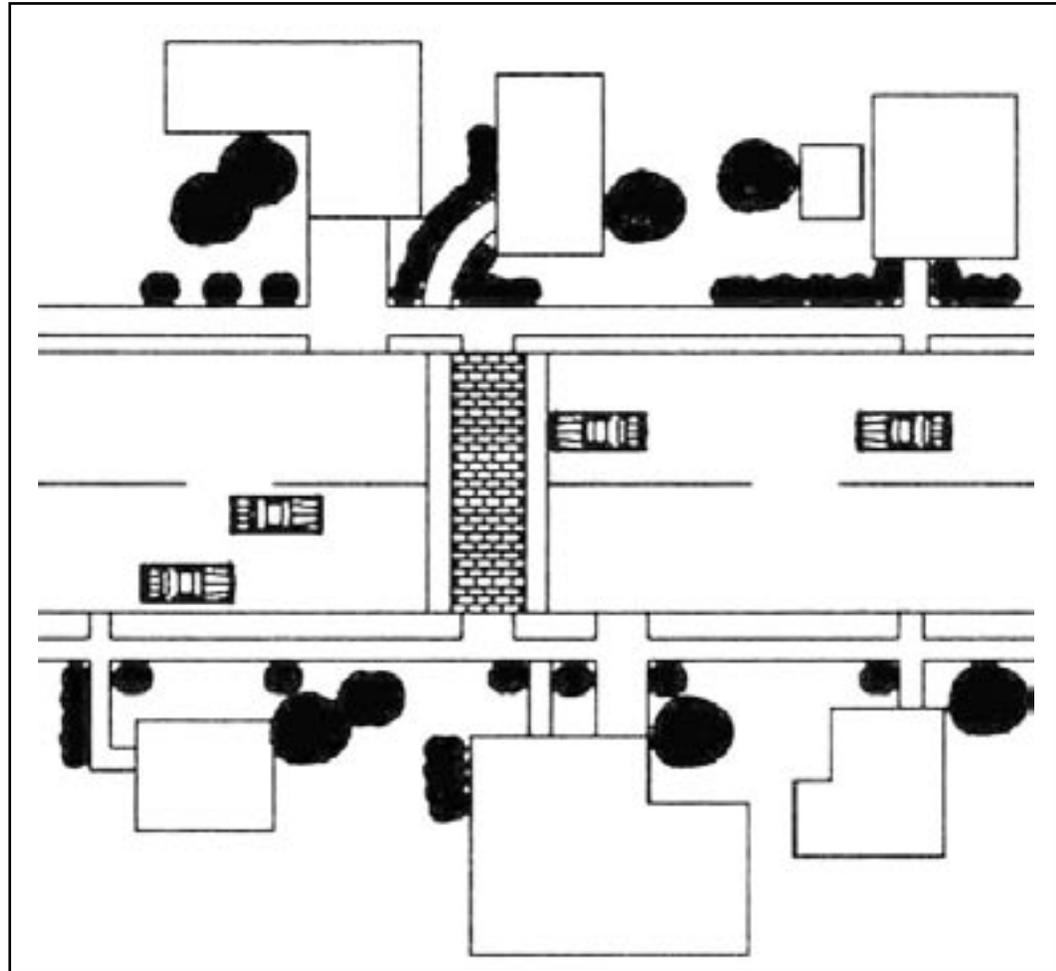
A speed hump designed as a pedestrian crossing, generally used at mid-block locations.

## Advantages:

- Effective speed control at the installation.
- Effective pedestrian amenity.
- May be designed to be aesthetically pleasing.

## Disadvantages:

- May create noise, particularly if there are loose items in the vehicle or trailer.
- May be a problem for emergency vehicles.
- May impact drainage.
- Drivers may speed up between humps.
- May increase volumes on other streets.
- Requires signage that may be considered unsightly.



# Funding Sources

## Infrastructure Grants, Site Development, and Loans for Purchase of Land, Building and Equipment

[Appalachian Regional Commission \(ARC\)](#) grant funds are available for economic development activities including industrial site development, industrial access roads, destination based tourism projects and business development activities, such as technology transfer projects and small business technical assistance programs. Contact the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)

[Community Development Block Grants \(CDBG\)](#) are administered through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). Projects must meet one of three national objectives; aid in the elimination of slum and/or blighted conditions, benefit low and moderate-income families and meet other community development needs that pose an immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community. CDBG funds can be used for funding housing rehabilitation and public infrastructure projects. Other CDBG programs

available include the Community Enhancement Fund, Special Fund, Planning Fund and the Economic Development Fund.

[The Economic Development Fund \(ED Fund\)](#) is designed to finance public and private activities necessary for industrial and other significant economic development projects. The economic development projects are funded under three distinct categories.

[ED Infrastructure Grants](#) for improvements such as extension of water and sewer lines and access roads.

[ED Loans](#) - for private activities such as purchase of land, buildings and equipment, or construction or renovation of buildings.

[ED Float Loans](#) - for private activities such as those mentioned under above except float loans, which are made out of appropriated, but unexpected, CDBG program funds, which may have been allocated to specific program activities.

[Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs \(ADECA\), Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) Community Enhancement Fund](#) - The purpose of this fund is to address activities that enhance the quality of life in a manner beyond providing for the most basic and essential needs as has been generally done through competitive funds.

Examples of such activities are senior centers, recreational activities, neighborhood centers, community centers, and fire protection activities. Contact: ADECA, Johnnie Streeter, (334) 242-5451.

[Alabama Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation](#) - The Corporation issues bonds for the construction of industrial access roads and bridges in Alabama. Duties of the Corporation include issuance and sale of bonds pursuant to the purposes of a Corporation, construction of access roads and bridges, acquisition of necessary property for bridge and highway construction, borrowing money and acquisition of personal property as needed and execution of contracts with other agencies or instrumentality's of government. Contact: Frank Corson, ALDOT, (334) 242-6311.

[Economic Development Administration \(EDA\)](#) - The EDA was established to generate new jobs, help retain existing jobs, and stimulate industrial and commercial growth in economically-distressed areas. EDA assistance is available to rural and urban areas experiencing high unemployment, low-income levels, or sudden and severe economic distress.

[Public Works and Development Facilities Program](#) purpose is to help distressed communities attract new industry, encourage

business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate long-term, private sector jobs.

[Economic Adjustment Program](#) helps States and local areas design and implement strategies for facilitating adjustment to changes in their economic situation that are causing or threaten to cause serious structural damage to the underlying economic base. Implementation activities may include, but not limited to: the creation or expansion of strategically targeted business development and financing programs including grants for revolving loan funds, infrastructure improvements, organizational development, and market or industry research and analysis. Contact: Bob Dennis, EDA, (404) 730-3020

[Alabama Department of Environmental Management \(ADEM\), Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund \(DWSRF\)](#) - Low interest loan targeted for low-income communities to assist in financing the cost of infrastructure needed to achieve/ or maintain compliance with State Requirements and to protect public health. Contact: Timothy Johnson, ADEM, (334) 271-7775.

[Alabama Department of Environmental Management \(ADEM\), Sewer Revolving Loan Fund \(SRF\)](#) - Low interest loan established to provide financial assistance to construct publicly owned wastewater treatment works.

Contact: Aubry White, ADEM, (334) 271-7805.

## Recreation Funding

[Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) Community Enhancement Funds](#) can be used to address activities that enhance the quality of life beyond providing for the most basic and essential needs through the competitive funds mentioned above. Examples include senior centers, neighborhood centers, community centers, fire protection activities and recreational activities such as parks. [www.aDeca.alabama.gov](http://www.aDeca.alabama.gov)

[Recreation Trails Program \(RTP\) Fund](#) is administered by the ADECA and was created to assist in acquiring, developing, or improving trail or trail related resources for both non-motorized and motorized user groups. [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails)

[Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\) Grants](#) are administered by ADECA. This Federal funding source was established in 1965 to provide “close to home” park and recreation opportunities to residents. LWCF grants can be used by communities to build a variety of park and recreation facilities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Communities must match LWCF grants with 50 percent of the local project costs through

in-kind services or cash. [www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf](http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf)

[Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users \(SAFETEA-LU\) Transportation Enhancement Funds](#) are available through the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and fund on a matching basis (i.e. 80% federal, 20% local). They can be used for a variety of projects that enhance the surface transportation system including transportation museums, restoration of railroad depots, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and rails to trails, etc.). [www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu)

## Historic Preservation

[Alabama Main Street Program](#) - For communities having population of 3,000-50,000, where the central business district is classified as a historical district, or is eligible to be a historical district. Commercial rehabilitation efforts are centered on providing tax credits for downtown areas and merchants and obtaining architectural assistance. Contact: Mary Shell, Alabama Historical Commission.

[Alabama Historical Commission, Survey and Planning Grant Program](#) Survey is the process of identifying and gathering data on the historic resources (historic, architectural,

and archaeological) in an area. Once historic properties are identified, they can be evaluated as to whether they meet the defined criteria of significance. Priority will be given to projects that convert Historic Preservation Funded surveys into Alabama Historical Commission's computerized format. Contact: Ellen Mertins, (334) 242-3184

Planning grants for historic preservation promote activities that involve the identification, evaluation, and management of critical information about cultural resources relating to short- and long- term development and preservation of cultural resources. Priority is given to projects that contain or address a National Register district, are in areas of high development activity, and demonstrate strong community support and public participation program. Contact: Mary Shell, (334) 242-3184.

[Federal Preservation Tax Incentives and the Wallace-Lid Bill](#) assist in the rehabilitation of historic properties. Preservation tax incentives are a credit that can be taken on federal income taxes (10% and 20% of the cost to renovate historic buildings). This represents a dollar-for-dollar tax reduction, not just a deduction to reduce earnings. The Wallace Property Relief Constitutional Amendment ("Lid Bill") Code of Alabama 40-8-1 Section

2 allows for commercial, rental, or industrial property to be assessed at the residential rate if the property is deemed historic. This would amount to a 50% property tax reduction. [www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax).

### [Business Development Financing / Business Owner Access to Capital](#)

[Alacom Finance](#) Alacom finance aids small-to-medium sized businesses in packaging and structuring finance for fixed asset needs. It is certified by the Small Business Administration to package, process, close and service loans. Contact: Diane Roehrig, President (205) 870-3360.

[Revolving Loan Fund](#) - The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham operates a revolving loan fund 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.

[CIT Capital Corp](#) - CIT is a full-service finance and equipment leasing company, that works to capitalize the endeavors of businesses. Contact: Michael Vance, Regional Accounts Manager, (205) 824-2810.

[Capital Solutions, L.L.C.](#) - Capital Solutions is a non-bank finance service company specializing in SBA and conventional loan services. Contact: Jan Roberts & Nicole Reed, (205) 879-3648.

### [Birmingham Business Resource Center](#)

The Birmingham Business Resource Center provides access to capital for a wide range of business financing needs. Programs include the Small Business Administration's 504 loan program for fixed asset financing needs, an SBA 7(a) loan guarantee program, an Economic Development Administration funded Revolving Loan Fund for operating capital as well as fixed asset needs, and a micro-lending program. Contact: Bob Dickerson, Jr. Executive Director (205) 250-6380.

[Small Business Administration](#) - Many area banks are available to process SBA 7(a) loan guarantees. Through the SBA Guaranty Loan program the participating bank is provided a guaranty of up to 80% of a small business loan less than or equal to \$100,000 and 75% for loans over \$100,000. This guaranty reduces the bank's risk and enables financing for a business that could not be financed without the guaranty. Contact: Jack E. Wright, SBA, (205) 290-7101.

[Southern Development Council](#) - Administers SBA section 504 loan funds for eligible

businesses: small for-profit businesses with fewer than 500 employees, net worth less than \$6 million, net after tax less than \$2 million, must create jobs. Contact: Dana N. Moore, Southern Development Council, (334) 244-1801.

**The Money Store** - The Money Store is a national organization that participates in the Small Business Administration's SBA 504 program. Loans may be used for fixed asset needs such as acquisition of a business, construction, expansion or renovation of land and buildings; or to purchase equipment or machinery. Contact: Sam Renta, Business Development Officer, (205) 982-7900.

### Small Business Technical Assistance and Counseling

**Alabama Small Business Development Consortium** - The Alabama Small Business Development Consortium provides managerial and technical consulting assistance and training at no cost to current and potential small business persons statewide. This service is offered through ten Small Business Development Centers, the Alabama International Trade Center and the Alabama Small Business Procurement System. These centers are a resource where information, counseling and assistance are coordinated and

disseminated to persons who plan to start a small business or are presently operating a small business. The centers also provide the entrepreneur with education and training opportunities, which cover a wide range of business topics. Contact: Brenda Walker, Center Director, Alabama Small Business Development Consortium, (205) 934- 7260.

**Service Corps of Retired Executives** - The Service Corps of Retired Executives is an organization that provides counseling to businesses by individuals who have experience in a particular field but are now retired. Contact: North Alabama SCORE Chapter, Bill Henry, (205) 934-6868.

**Alabama Business Incubation Network** Business Incubators are facilities that provide small, entrepreneurial businesses with affordable space and shared support and business development services such as financing, marketing, and management. The Alabama Business Incubation Network is an organization of business incubation facilities in the State of Alabama established for the purpose of sharing collective knowledge and expertise among existing area developing business incubation facilities, thereby enhancing and improving the quality of the business incubation programs in the State of Alabama. Contacts: Jerry Davis, Chairman,

(205) 760-9014

Auburn Center for Developing Industries, Peggy Hinson, (334) 821-2561 • Bessemer Business Center, Jim Byram, Director, (205) 424-4064

Birmingham Business Assistance Network Susan Matlock, Director, (205) 250-8000

Walker Business Development Center, Jana Steadman, Director, (205) 387-0091.

### Other Resources

**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.

**DownCity Community Mortgage Pools** can be created by the City and participating local banks interested in the financial spin-offs associated with a revitalized DownCity. Such a pool could provide construction or permanent loans for smaller commercial or residential projects, façade improvements and renovation of existing properties.

Special Grants and Appropriations from State and Federal agencies, the County Commission, the business community, private developers and private foundations, should be sought for special projects such as a DownCity. In order to secure these funds, the City’s leadership

must creatively assert its political influence.

**Alabama has Special Improvement Districts, Capital Cooperative Districts, Business Improvement Districts and Tax Increment Districts** - See Code of Alabama, Sections 11-99, 11-99A, and 11-99B for more details. A county or city may form an Improvement District. The district may issue tax exempt and taxable bonds to finance infrastructure costs for a subdivision. 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, signs and other property owned by public or utility companies.

Developments may be residential, commercial, or industrial. Generally private roads will not qualify for tax exempt financing. The county or city 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 Business Improvement District (BID)** is where property owners in a designated geographic area voluntarily collect annual assessments that are spent on projects to enhance the local business environment. Project examples

include improvements to streetscape, marketing efforts, business recruitment activity and security programs.

**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 Financing Districts are permitted under Alabama law, Code of Alabama 11-99.

**City Bonds (General Obligation or Revenue)** can be issued for specific projects or to fund activities in a special district.



## Recommended Continuing Education and Training

### Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association (ALAPA) Annual Conference/Training

Joey Hester, AICP, President  
P.O. Box C  
Decatur, AL 35602  
256.355.4515  
[www.alaapa.org](http://www.alaapa.org)

### Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) - Annual Conference/Training

5900 Carmichael Place  
Montgomery, AL 36117  
334.277.2221  
[www.alarc.org](http://www.alarc.org)

### Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM) - Annual Conference/Training

Ken Smith  
P.O. Box 1270

Montgomery, AL 36102  
334.262.2566  
[www.alalm.org/](http://www.alalm.org/)

### Alabama Planning Institute (API) Training/Certification Programs

Lavonne Gatlin  
University of North Alabama  
Continuing Studies and Outreach  
Box 5036  
Florence, AL 35630  
256.765.4862  
[www.una.edu/conted/index](http://www.una.edu/conted/index)

### Your Town Alabama - Workshops

Kellie Johnston  
1731 First Avenue North, Suite 200  
Birmingham, AL 35203  
205.251.8139

### Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE)

Stacey Bryan, State Coordinator  
PO Box 11749  
Montgomery, AL 36111  
866-557-0007  
[www.alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org](http://www.alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org)

# Glossary

## Access Management

the control of the number and location of access points to thoroughfares, including intersections, alleys, lanes and driveways.

## Active Recreation

the use of a facility for organized sports and similar activities which require space sized, designed and/or intended for one or more particular uses.

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

a federal requirement that public facilities and improvements be accessible to those with disabilities, including such items as wheelchair ramps at crosswalks or building entrances.

## Alley

a vehicular way providing access to the rear of properties often located at the center of a block. Alleys may be used as an alternative location for above-ground utilities and trash pick-up.

## Block

properties surrounded on all sides by a combination of thoroughfares, waterways, hills, or other barriers to the continuity of development.

## Buffer

landscaped space required on the site of a high-intensity use (i.e. industrial) as a separation from a pre-existing use of lesser intensity (i.e. residential). Buffers include setback widths, shrubs, trees, wall/fences, or a combination of these.

## Capital Improvements

physical development projects or initiatives funded by means of a specific financial commitment or allocation from the Town's planned operational budget.

## Curb Radius

the radius size of curbing at an intersection that affects vehicular turning movements and speeds.

## Decentralized Sewer/Wastewater System

a development-specific system built to manage wastewater, in which open spaces are

used as drip fields. Such systems are most commonly constructed by the developer but may be transferred to a utility corporation or municipality.

## Density-Averaging

a tool included in development regulations allowing flexibility from typical lot area and density requirements to encourage open space preservation.

## Double-Frontage Lot

a property, other than a corner lot, which front on two or more thoroughfares, typically at its front and its rear.

## Form Based Code

A method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm primarily by controlling physical form, with a lesser focus on land use, through city or county regulations.

## Historic Building, District, Landmark or Site

districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture at the local, state, and/or national

level. The National Register requires an age of 50 years while the Alabama Register requires an age of 40 years.

### Lane

an alley within a residential block. Lanes may be used as an alternate location for above-ground utilities, trash pick-up and mail delivery.

### Live-Work Unit

a dwelling unit attached to or on the same lot as a business, and generally occupied by the owner of the business.

### Mixed-Use

a combination of residential and commercial uses in one building or in one locale. Also includes institutional and recreational uses.

### Overlay District

a zoning classification intended for a specified area, which establishes special requirements on development in addition to or in lieu of the requirements of the base zoning district.

### Passive Recreation

the use of a site for intermittent or impromptu recreational activities of varying types and

sizes, i.e. picnics, pick-up games, kite-flying, etc.

### Planter-Strip

a strip of land between the curb and sidewalk which contains area for tree wells or which is completely grassed or landscaped; a landscaped strip of land between a parking lot and a sidewalk.

### Shared Driveway

a driveway shared by more than one property or building/use.

### Shared Parking, Common Parking

the use of one integrally designed off-street parking area or multiple, interconnected off-street parking areas by multiple uses.

### SmartCode

SmartCode is a unified land development ordinance template for planning and urban design. It folds zoning, subdivision regulations, urban design, and basic architectural standards into one compact document. Because the SmartCode enables community vision by coding specific outcomes that are desired in particular places, it is meant to be locally calibrated by professional planners,

architects, and attorneys.

### Streetscape

the physical elements contained within the area between building fronts along a right-of-way or between front lot lines, including sidewalks, planter strips, curb/gutter, on-street parking and driving lanes.

### Swale

a natural or constructed watercourse, at roadway's edge, shaped or graded in earth materials and stabilized with vegetation to convey storm runoff.

### Thoroughfare

any street, road, or highway, including dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs.

### Throat Length

the length of a driveway or similar access to property necessary to accommodate stacking of vehicles as measured from its intersection with a public thoroughfare.

### Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

a neighborhood-scale development containing a center that includes a public space and

commercial enterprise; an identifiable edge, ideally a five minute walk from the center; a mix of activities and variety of housing types; an interconnected network of streets usually in grid pattern, high priority of public space, with prominently located civic buildings and open space that includes parks, plazas, and squares.

### Traffic-Calming

the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior, and improve condition for non-motorized street users.

### Transect

a cross-section of the environment showing a range of different habitats. The rural-urban Transect of the human environment used in the SmartCode template is divided into six Transect Zones. These zones describe the physical form and character of a place, according to the Density and intensity of its land use and urban form.

### Valley Curb or Gutter

a “V” shaped concrete channel, at roadway’s edge, used to convey storm runoff.

### Walkable, Walkability

those design characteristics of development, which provide safe, attractive, and convenient facilities for pedestrian access.

### Zero-Lot Line (pattern)

a pattern of development in which buildings are built up to the front lot line, along a public sidewalk, and where buildings are permitted to be built without side setbacks.