

FUTURE  HOOVER

A Grand Vision for an Exceptional City

2040 Comprehensive Plan

City of Hoover, Alabama



Adopted by the
City of Hoover Planning Commission

07.08.2019

Prepared by
Mac Martin, AICP
City Planner
City of Hoover, Alabama

with the assistance of
KPS Group, Inc.
Skipper Consulting
Dr. Arthur Allaway
Steer Davies Gleave



Moss Rock Preserve
photo credit: Dennis Johnson

SUMMARY

This Plan is meant to serve as a vision and long-range guide to help shape the future development of the city—to assist public officials and private citizens alike as they consider investments that may have long-term implications for Hoover. It presents guiding principles for making Hoover a successful and sustainable city and ideas for maintaining and building on the qualities of community that residents value.

The Plan is not a regulatory instrument levying restrictions on individual properties. It illustrates a ‘general’ development pattern that allows the City to forecast infrastructure needs so that public monies are used wisely. Likewise, this helps developers and other private citizens visualize what can reasonably be expected to occur in Hoover over time, providing some assurance regarding their own investment decisions.

The Plan portrays this vision by looking at the Built, Natural, Social, and Economic Environments, all of which are integrally connected:

The **Built Environment** presents a vision for land use, transportation, and neighborhood development that best serves our present population and retains and attracts future generations.

The **Natural Environment** highlights the Cahaba River as a truly unique feature deserving to be brought to the forefront of our city’s story, protecting and enhancing it and other natural features in the community.

The **Social Environment** focuses on ways to improve the overall quality of life for our citizens, through city facilities and services as well as private organizations and programs.

The **Economic Environment** presents strategies for creating a more resilient, diversified economy built on Hoover’s unique assets.

The Hoover Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a living document, to evolve in response to changes in public values and to market and physical conditions.

GOALS

Recurring throughout the plan are several goals that evolved from community input and analysis. These desires influenced the development of plan recommendations within each of the four environments. Often, these goals are inter-related and making progress toward one will also help move the city closer to achieving another.

These goals also can be used to test choices before city officials—will a decision we will be asked to make help achieve one or more of our goals or will it cause us to lose ground?

improve traffic

reducing congestion will require an interconnected street network, managing access on major roads and coordinating land use and transportation planning decisions



enjoy the cahaba

...and Hoover's other exceptional natural features through conservation and improving public access



encourage housing choices

enable and promote development of quality housing options for residents at all stages in life



diversify the economy

our future economy will feature a robust tech industry sector, tourism and unmatched shopping amenities



social

built

HOOVER
The Exceptional City

natural

economic

increase facilities & services coverage

provide quality public facilities throughout the city and sustain Hoover's excellent level of services



enhance walkability

"walkability" means having a variety of destinations within walking distance, a connected path system and a safe pedestrian environment



create gathering places

from dynamic mixed-use centers to quaint neighborhood parks, residents and visitors alike will have places to meet and enjoy life in Hoover



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2	Existing Conditions	59	Parks and Recreation	122
Why is a Citywide Plan is important?	2	Traffic Volume	61	Health and Wellness	127
Community Profile	4	Roadway Capacity and Level of Service	61	Sense of Place and Community	128
By the Numbers	4	Recommended Improvements	67	Gateways and Image Corridors	130
The Community Speaks	8	Access Management	69	Social Environment Implementation	132
The Plan	12	Roadway Connectivity	72	The Economic Environment.....	136
Purpose	12	Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities	74	Economic Diversity and Resiliency	136
Framework	13	Transit	76	Employment and Workforce	136
Vision Statement	13	Housing and Neighborhoods	85	Industry 4.0	139
Planning Challenges	14	Utility Facilities and Infrastructure	89	Courting the Millennial Talent Pool	139
Key Factors	14	Annexation	90	Revitalization and Retail Evolution	140
Key Assumptions	15	Built Environment Implementation	91	Economic Environment Implementation	141
Illustrating the Plan	15	The Natural Environment	96	Implementation Toolbox.....	144
Implementing the Plan	16	Conservation Strategy	96	Regulatory Tools	144
Hoover’s Role in the Metropolitan Area	17	Environmental Quality	97	Monetary Tools	144
The Built Environment.....	21	Green Infrastructure	97	Authority Tools	145
Land Development and Use	21	Waterways	98	Partnering Tools	145
General Growth Strategy	21	Greenways	99	Public-Private Partnerships	145
Strategic Development Concept	22	Steep Slopes	102	Public-Public Partnerships	146
Future Land Use Plan	55	Stormwater Management	104	Capital Investment Tools	146
Open Space and Recreation	55	Natural Environment Implementation	105	Funding and Resource Organizations	146
Low Density Residential	55	The Social Environment	108	Transportation	146
Traditional Single-family Residential	55	Quality of Life	108	Recreation	147
Traditional Mixed Residential	55	Education	109	Environment	147
Multifamily Residential	56	Hoover City Schools	109	Economic Development	147
Institutional	56	Higher Education	111	Other	147
Neighborhood Commercial	56	Public Safety	113	Conclusion.....	150
General Commercial	56	Libraries	116	Built Environment	151
Office / Light Industrial	56	History	117	Natural Environment	151
Mixed-Use Commercial	57	Arts and Culture	119	Social Environment	151
Mixed Use / City Center	57	Cultural Arts Center	120	Economic Environment	151
Transportation	59	Arts and Entertainment Districts	121	“To plan is human, to implement is divine”	151
Roadways	59	Planning for Arts Development	121	Bibliography	154

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

BY THE CITY OF HOOVER PLANNING COMMISSION

ADOPTED this the 8th day of July, 2019.

_____ (ss) Mike Wood _____

Chairman

City of Hoover Planning Commission

CERTIFICATION OF SECRETARY

STATE OF ALABAMA)

JEFFERSON COUNTY)

I, _____, Secretary of the City of Hoover Planning Commission, do hereby certify and attest that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by the City of Hoover Planning Commission, on the ___ day of _____, 2019.

Witness my hand this ___ day of _____, 2019.

Secretary
City of Hoover Planning Commission



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to:

The **City of Hoover, Alabama** for complete funding of the project, technical support, and the opportunity for me to serve in a planning capacity.

Mayor

Frank Brocato

City Council

- Gene Smith – President
- John Greene – President Pro-Tempore
- John Lyda
- Dr. Casey Middlebrooks
- Derrick Murphy
- Curt Posey
- Mike Shaw

City Administrators

- Allan Rice – City Administrator
- Tim Westhoven – Chief Operations Officer
- Rod Long – City Engineer
- Jeffrey Reeves – Assistant City Engineer
- Jim Wyatt – Inspections Department Director
- Nick Derzis – Chief of Police
- Jehad Al-Dakka – Police Executive Officer
- Kevin Bentley – Fire Chief
- Michael Etheredge – Assistant Fire Chief

- Joe Duke Moore – Fire Marshall
- Greg Knighten – Economic Development
- Craig Moss – Parks and Recreation Manager
- Sharon Nelson – Landscape Architect
- Colin Conner – Urban Forester

Hoover Planning Commission

- Mike Wood, Chair
- Sammy Harris, Vice-Chair
- Ben Wieseman
- Nathan Reed
- Carl West
- Jennifer Peace
- Jason Lavoy
- Mike Shaw (Council Representative)
- Allan Rice (City Administration Representative)

KPS Group, Jason Fondren for serving as lead consultant, helping to organize the planning program, providing high quality illustrative services and facilitating community workshops.

Skipper, Inc., Darrell Skipper and Mickey Hall for providing consultation on transportation issues.

Steer Davies Gleave, Dennis Fletcher for providing consultation on transit systems.

Allaway Consulting Group, Dr. Arthur and Suzanne Allaway for providing demographic and economic analysis.

Community Advisory Committee

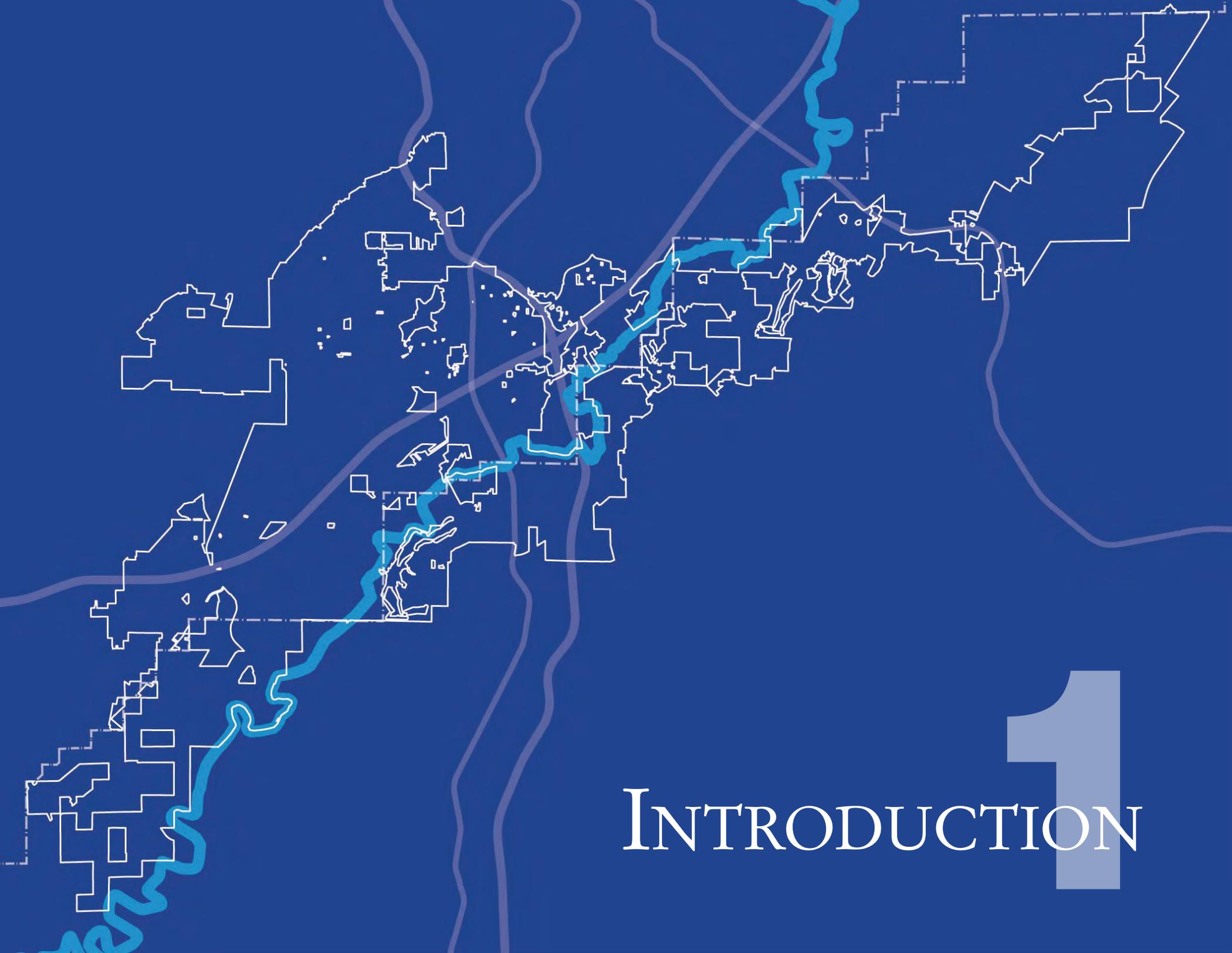
- Jonathan Belcher – Signature Homes
- Mark Gonzalez – GSA Engineering
- Ken Hardin – Owner, Bluff Park Village
- Mary Sue Ludwig – Greystone Community
- Susan Wright – Monte Doro HOA
- Dr. Kathy Murphy – Hoover City Schools
- Georgia Pearson – Bluff Park Resident
- Paulette Pearson – Arts Council, Chairperson
- Joann Rome – Eden Ridge HOA
- Billy Silver – US Steel
- Arnold Singer – Hoover Historic Society
- Mike White – Riverchase Galleria
- Byron Young – Leasing Consultant

The **citizens of Hoover**, including those who participated in workshops, public hearings, and surveys.



Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.

-Alan Lakein



INTRODUCTION

1

INTRODUCTION

Hoover was incorporated in 1967 as a small suburban town, at the time not much more than one commercial strip center and a residential subdivision along Highway 31. In the 50 years since, Hoover has experienced phenomenal growth, becoming the sixth largest city in the state and the second largest city in the Birmingham-Hoover metropolitan area.

Today, Hoover is a maturing suburb with most of its footprint built out. Growth no longer occurs at the breakneck pace of the 1990s and 2000s. Most suburban, greenfield development now occurs further toward the periphery of the metro area. Still, the city continues to grow at a modest pace and possesses tremendous potential. Much of Hoover's future development lies in older developed areas that are ripe for reinvestment and some limited undeveloped areas.

While there is great optimism for the future, there are challenges Hoover must address to reach its full potential. These issues include a lack of a clear identity, threats to revenue streams, need for a comprehensive strategy for growth, increased traffic and the decline of older portions of the city.

Development in Hoover has taken a largely suburban, low density form with most daily activities isolated from one another within an infrastructure devoted almost entirely to car travel. This is not unique to Hoover. This has been the development

pattern experienced throughout the United States for more than 50 years. Over time US cities began to question the fiscal sustainability of “sprawl,” concerned that it requires a greater level of support by local governments to service.

Hoover is a city of 84,848 located in central Alabama. It is located on the south side of the Birmingham Metropolitan Area roughly 12 miles from downtown Birmingham.

With rising costs of city services and negative long-term economic, social and environmental effects associated with sprawl development, residents and city leaders alike are looking for fiscally sound development choices that will meet community needs while supporting the expansion of the city's economy, which has historically been focused almost entirely on retail.

Why is a Citywide Plan is important?

The Code of Alabama assigns to the City's Planning Commission the function and duty to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the city. *Future Hoover: A Comprehensive Plan* (“the Plan”) serves as that master plan and establishes a the commission's recommendations for future development and zoning. The recommendations reflect a collective vision based on analysis of existing conditions, national

and regional trends and what the citizens of Hoover desire going forward. This Plan presents general guiding principles and ideas for making Hoover a successful and sustainable city for the long term. It is not a regulatory instrument that places restrictions on private property.

While the City has an extensive history of planning for specific areas, projects and topics, like the citywide Pedestrian, Bicycle, Greenway Master Plan drafted in 1999 or the multiple planned unit developments across the city, today, there is a need for an overarching plan—one that maps out a comprehensive view of future development. Such a plan is quite useful in determining how best to meet the needs of the growing community while preserving what makes Hoover a special place. Indeed, a plan is necessary to document the common vision held by citizens regarding the growth of the community. A plan is also necessary to create a transparent, overarching process for attaining that vision across the various organizations, developers, and city departments making decisions that impact the city's form.

Land use decisions are crucial to the development pattern of the community. Land “can be considered a resource whereby land use decisions are interrelated and impact the quality of life for the entire community. It is impossible to engage in planning without making value judgments concerning the relative desirability or undesirability of possible future uses of land” (City of Wilmington, NC, 2004). Land development decisions have interrelated,



far-reaching and long-range impacts. Decisions that are made today can affect a developing property, surrounding properties, and the entire community for a considerable span of time, either to the benefit or the detriment of the community.

With such close proximity to Birmingham and a prominent location along Interstate 65, Interstate 459, US 31, and US 280, change in Hoover is inevitable. If our city can maintain and improve on our outstanding levels of service and quality of life, Hoover will continue to attract new residents and businesses. So long as the Birmingham metropolitan area continues to grow in size, population, and importance, the city will attract growth. The real question we must face is “How do we want to grow?”

As a maturing suburb with limited room for horizontal growth, it is imperative that we make wise use of what undeveloped land remains, attract high quality redevelopment and adaptive reuse, and improve infrastructure and our overall quality of life. This means negotiating between market forces and community desires to support development of spaces like Hidden Valley in a way that has the greatest positive impact on our community and economy. It means supporting the evolution of business areas, like the Galleria, to once again be on the cutting edge of attractive centers of commerce, entertainment and civic life. It means bringing a natural resource like the Cahaba River to the forefront of the community’s conscience and identity by maximizing its value as a recreational amenity with incredible conservation potential. It

means supporting the development of neighborhoods with housing options, including “missing middle” housing, and a mix of uses to support the next generation of talented professionals and those who will live in Hoover during their retirement years. It means these concepts and much more.

Today, the community is ready to take a fresh look at the future and another step forward. This planning exercise is a conscious effort to promote the health, safety and welfare of the general public by encouraging harmonious development patterns and anticipating and addressing future needs. It is meant to guide decisions and policies in land use, development, transportation, environment, and recreation to benefit the community as a whole over the next 20 years and beyond.

The Plan presents a comprehensive strategy for development. The range of topics covered in the Plan are divided into four major categories, or “Environments,” based on their impact on the city’s geography. These include the Built, Natural, Social, and Economic Environments. Each section of the Plan is accompanied by illustrations that help convey the vision and lay out the broad development pattern the community seeks to achieve over the life of the plan.

Findings developed during the planning process, including a community profile and documentation of the public participation program, along with background literature, methodologies, maps, and studies can be found in the Appendix.

Community Profile

At the outset of the planning process, the planning team developed a “community profile” to fully understand and engage the community in an informed discussion about where the city is today and how it may change in the future. The profile included analysis maps, demographic projections and comparisons with peer and neighboring communities.

By the Numbers

- Hoover has added an average of 2,000 residents per year since 1970.
- 70% of Hoover households are “family households.”
- 9 out of 10 nonfamily households are individuals living alone.
- The median monthly mortgage in Hoover is \$1218, on par with nearby cities. However, the median monthly rent (\$984) is low for the area.

Approved Future Residential Development (as of March 30, 2019)				
Subdivision/Development	Single-family detached	Townhouse	Multifamily	Total
Bridgewater	27	0	0	27
Black Ridge Sig.	459	0	0	459
Black Ridge Rwds.	500	0	0	500
Brock Point	31	0	0	31
Greystone	109	0	0	109
Hoover Ridge	0	170	0	170
Inverness	228	102	243	573
Lake Cyrus	148	0	0	148
Lakeview	100	0	0	100
McGill	39	0	0	39
Preserve	295	0	0	295
Ross Bridge	95	10	0	105
Trace Crossings	67	0	0	67
Trace Crossings Amend 11	475	0	0	475
Tyler-Alford PRD	35	0	0	35
Wilborn	304	0	0	304
Woodlands	54	0	0	54
USS-Hwy 52-Trigger Creek	1944	0	0	1944

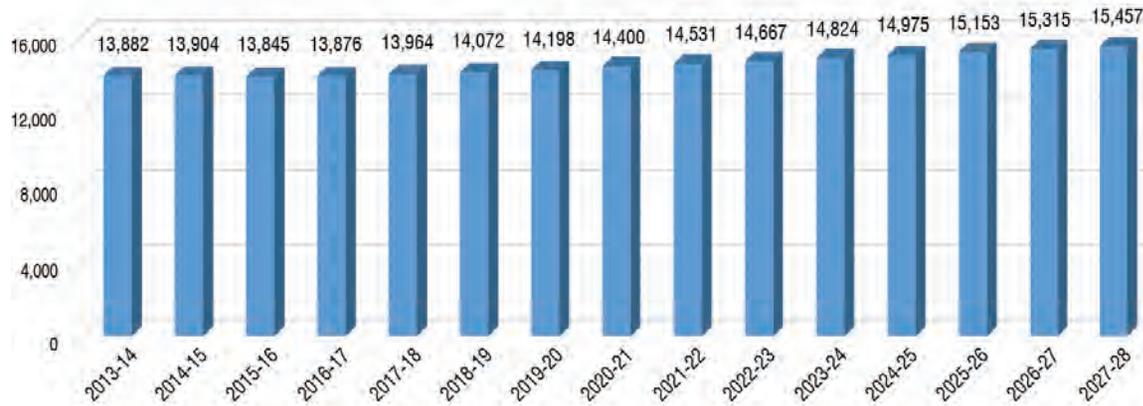
Note: Includes only approved development with 10 or more units remaining to be developed.



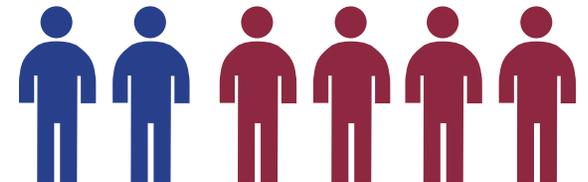
The Finley Center features over 83,000 square feet of multi-court space, including 11 basketball courts and 17 volleyball courts. Photo: Hoover Metropolitan Complex



- Hoover residents are well-educated. About 55% of residents 25 yrs and older earned a bachelor's or higher degree.
- Over 20% of Hoover families have incomes over \$200,000, which is well above the metro area (9.5%), state (7%) and nation (11.4%).
- Hoover City Schools operates 10 elementary schools, one intermediate school, three middle schools, two high schools and a new career technical school. The system estimates enrollment will grow by 1,385 students over the next 10 years.
- Newly constructed homes are half as likely to have children in Hoover City Schools as existing homes.
- Hoover's estimated jobs population is 44,000 with an estimated unemployment rate of 2.5% in 2017.
- Hoover commuters spend about 23 minutes traveling to work on average. Five percent of Hoover's workforce work from home.
- Today, the Hoover Fire Department provides 1.8 personnel per 1,000 residents. Twenty years ago, the department had 2.4 personnel per 1,000 residents.
- According to City-data.com, In 2016 Hoover had a crime rate of 170.1, making the city much safer than the nation, which had a crime rate index of 278.1.
- The Hoover Met Complex, with its recently constructed Finley Center, is estimated to have created a \$14.86 million economic impact in 2018.
- One of Hoover's local attractions, Aldrich Gardens boasts over 80,000 visitors per year.



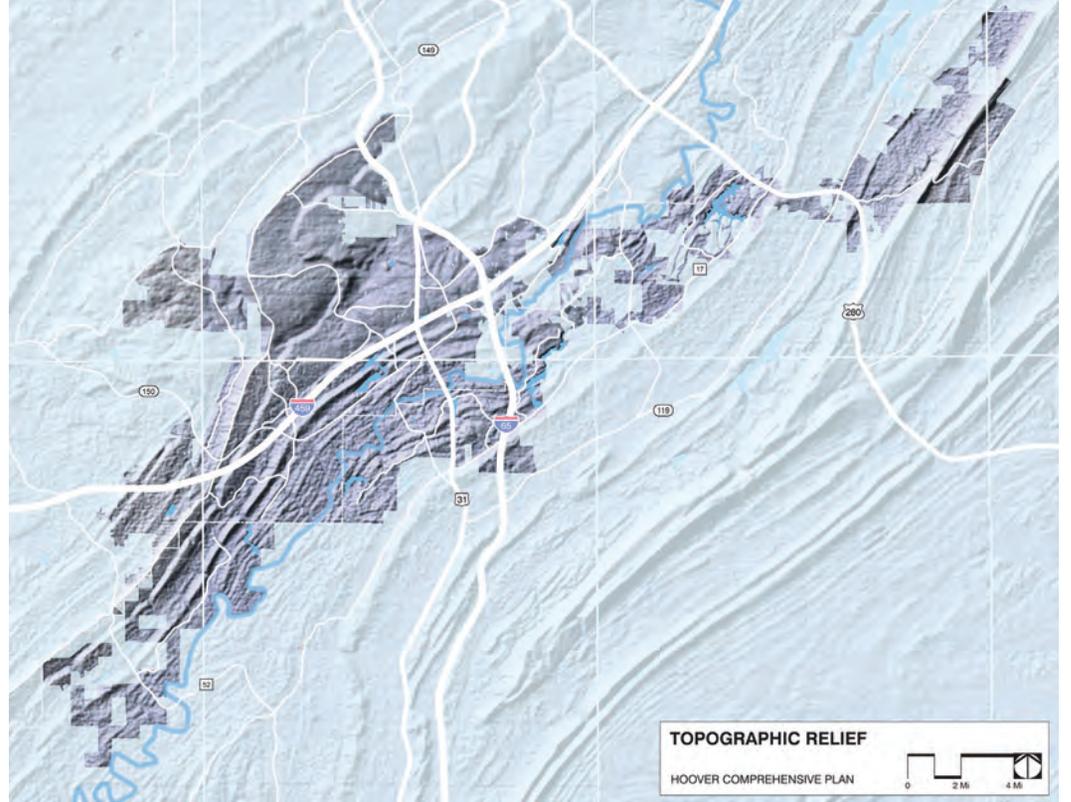
Historical and Projected City Schools Enrollment (2013-2028)



According to data on annual enrollment and new housing starts, for every ten newly built homes, just under two children attend Hoover schools. For every ten existing houses, just under four children attend Hoover schools.

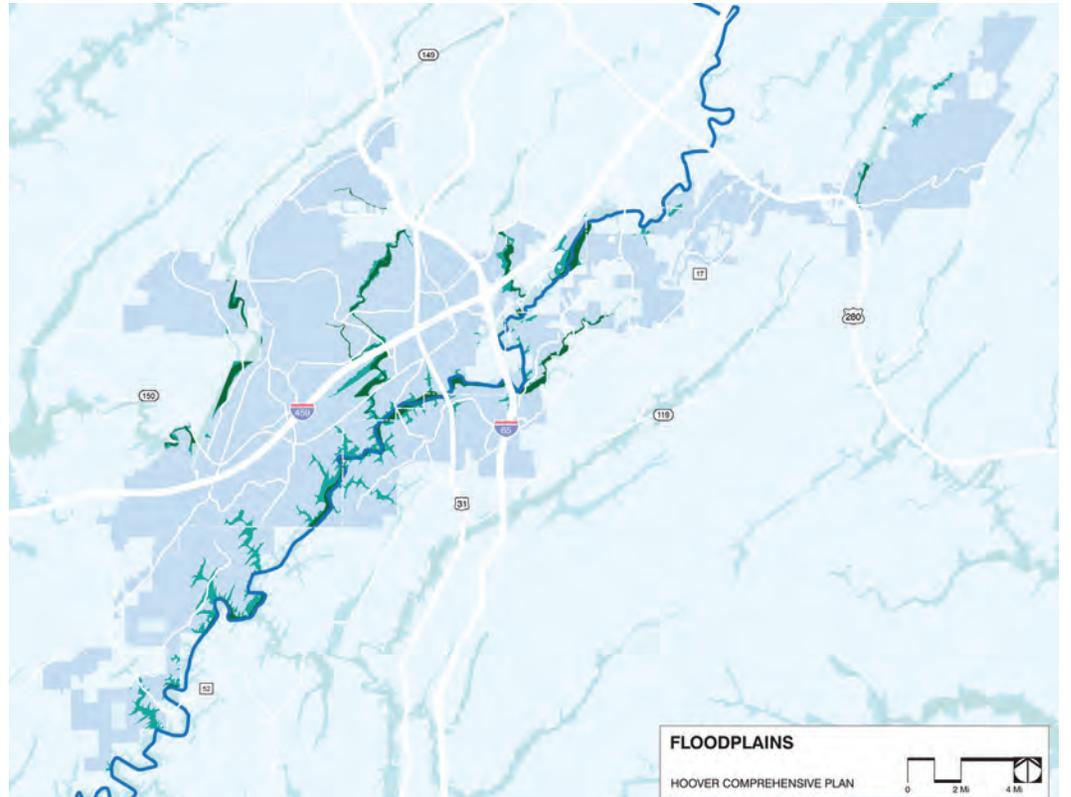
Relief

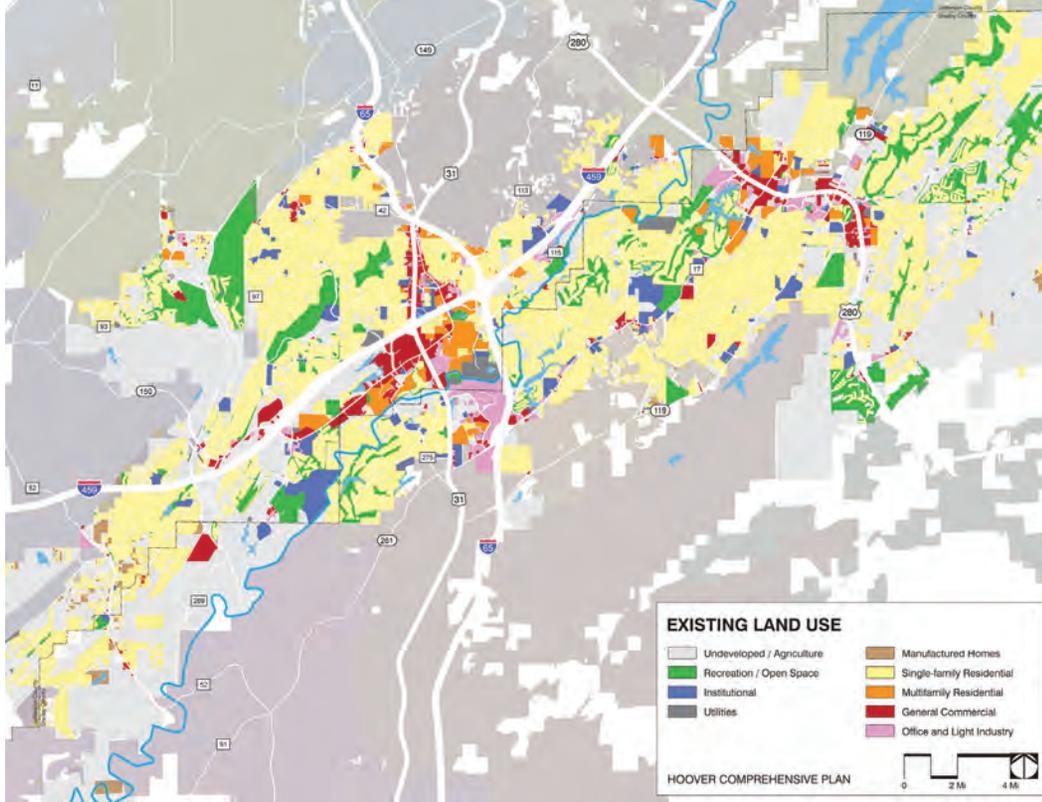
Hoover is a city of mountain ridges and valleys running roughly southwest to northeast. This is epitomized by the scenic valley view from Lover's Leap atop Shades Mountain in Bluff Park, photo: onlyinyourstate.com.



Hydrology

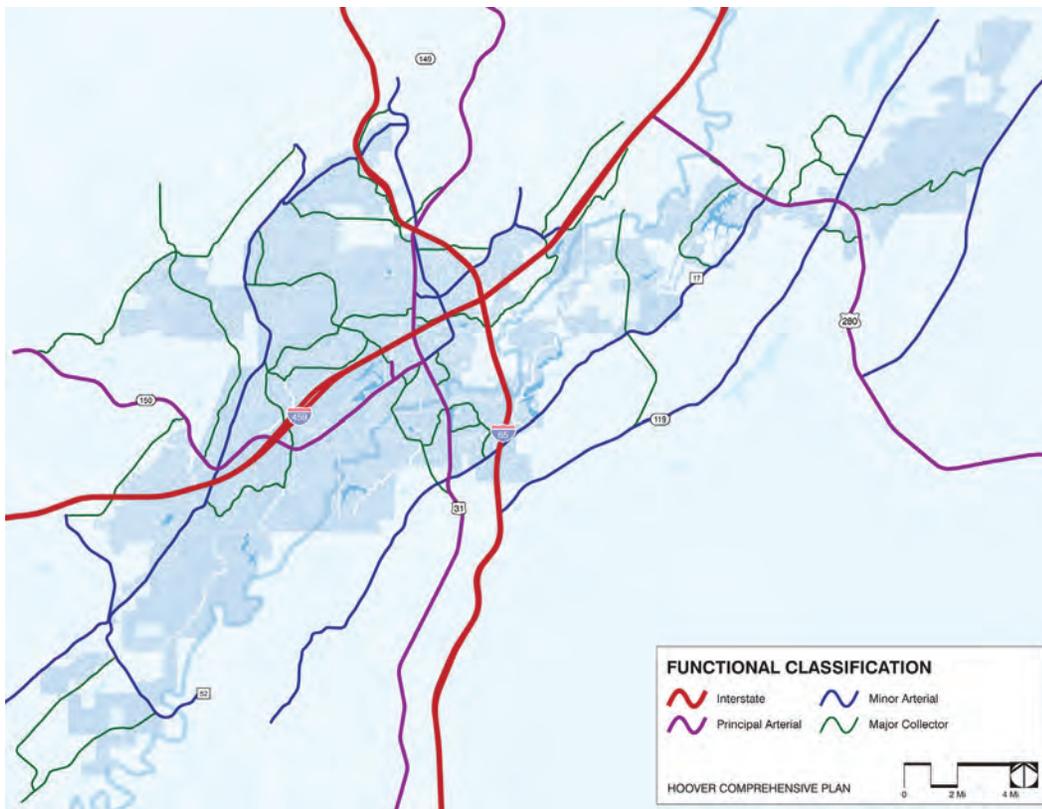
The Cahaba River meanders roughly 20 miles through Hoover, fed by Patton Creek, Shades Creek, Little Shades Creek and other area streams flowing between the city's hills and ridges, photo: marketplacehomes.com.





Existing Land Use

Hoover's land area is comprised mostly of single-family residences (yellow). Retail, lodging and commercial uses are located almost exclusively along major roadways, such as US Highways 31 and 280 and AL Highway 150, photo: Smallwoods, Reynolds, Stewart, Stewart.



Transportation System

Hoover benefits from the accessibility provided by I-65 and I-459. Following the area's ridges and valleys, major roads tend to run southwest to northeast; US Highway 31 is one of few north-south routes, photo: Neel-Schaffer.





The Community Speaks

The Code of Alabama requires the City Planning Commission to conduct studies, surveys and public hearings to assure the involvement of the community in preparing a city's master plan. These requirements were fulfilled through a public participation program held through the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018. During this time, the City sought input from the public in multiple ways including an online survey, town hall workshops, a planning charrette, and stakeholder focus groups. Upon its completion the Plan was presented at multiple public forums and in a hearing before the Planning Commission.

Several themes resonated throughout town hall meetings, community planning sessions and the online survey:

- The success of its schools is critical to Hoover's quality of life. Residents are concerned about the impact continued growth poses on the city school system.
- Many residents feel growth has outpaced the city's ability to plan and build supportive infrastructure, particularly with respect to traffic.
- Hoover needs more facilities for walking and bicycling.
- As national trends show a continued decline in brick and mortar retail, Hoover must diversify its tax base to support city services.
- Hoover's sense of community can be strengthened through places and spaces that can enhance community bonds (downtown, entertainment district, village or neighborhood centers).

bike lanes
sidewalks **transit parks**
Cahaba **tech district** **east side** **water & sewer** **beautification**
traffic **town center**
arts center



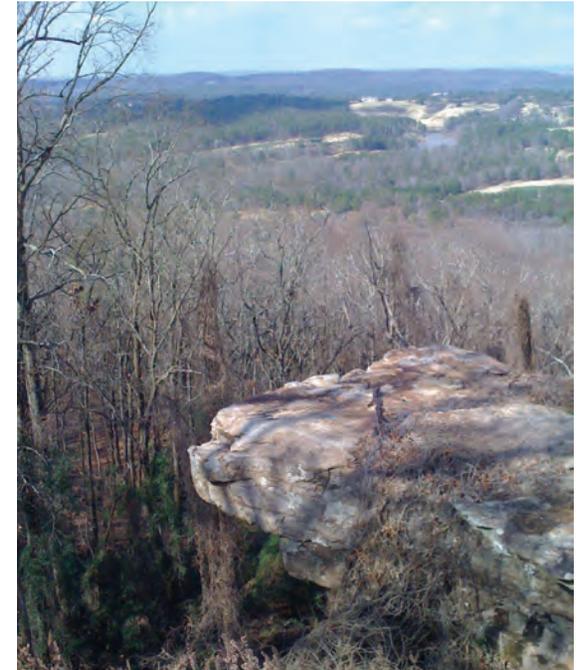
Over 1,100 Hoover residents and business owners took the online survey.



Hoover residents getting a run in on Brock's Gap Parkway.
Source: Jon Anderson, Hoover Sun



Grand opening of the Explore Playground and Splash Pad.
Source: Jon Anderson, Hoover Sun



View from Lover's Leap in Bluff Park
Source: Brian Toone, Toonecycling.com

...connect communities with sidewalks, trails and bike lanes.

...to modernize but remain relevant to the reasons why people love Hoover.

...to still see the beautiful view we enjoy today.

In planning workshops, participants suggested changes over the next twenty years that would impress them the most. The quotes below represent just a few of those ideas.

Have a plan. Follow the plan, and you'll be surprised how successful you can be.

-Paul "Bear" Bryant



THE PLAN **2**

THE PLAN

Purpose

The Plan is meant to fulfill in large part the duty conveyed on the City and its Planning Commission to “make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality” according to Sections 11-52-8 through 11-52-10 of the Code of Alabama 1975, as amended. It aims to serve as a framework for the overall future growth of the city, guiding decisions and investments that will affect the development and use of land within



its corporate limits. It seeks to articulate a vision for Hoover's future, informed by the citizens and leaders of the community and illustrating a future that is desirous to achieve over the course of the next 20 years. The Plan also provides strategies and guidance for its implementation.

While the Plan is comprehensive in nature, it is not meant to be exhaustive in covering all facets of the city. The Plan is not intended to be an exact blueprint for things to come, for the future is never truly certain. Rather this Plan will serve as a living document that will guide public officials and private citizens alike as they consider decisions, actions, and commitments of resources that will have an

impact on the development of the community. The Plan should be monitored closely over time for its effectiveness in carrying out the community's vision. The Plan may be adjusted over time to reflect ever-changing physical conditions, economic circumstances, and community values.

We acknowledge that achieving all that the Plan illustrates is a lofty goal indeed. Some of what the Plan calls for may not be realized within 20 years, if at all. However, even if the Plan is not achieved in whole, applying the plan's concepts and recommendations will guide City projects and decisions so that Hoover can realize steady improvement and avoid or minimize the types of problems that confront growing cities.

Framework

Vision Statement

We are Hoover, Alabama.

Though our city is little more than 50 years old, we have achieved the status of being the second largest city in the Birmingham-Hoover metropolitan area (developing enough economic power over time to attain inclusion in the official designation of the MSA) and the sixth largest city in the state. We have achieved this by offering residents old and new an exceptional level of service, leading to an exceptional quality of life.

- Our schools provide an exceptional education for our city's youth, preparing an exceptional workforce for tomorrow.
- Our public safety services provide an exceptional level of police and fire protection and quick response times – leading to such achievements as the highest ISO rating achievable and a level of safety that is second to none.
- Our library offers exceptional levels of service, entertainment, and resources to our citizens, becoming the most highly trafficked library in the state.
- Our parks and recreational facilities and programs offer exceptional opportunities for our citizens to enjoy nature, enhance their health and well-being, and engage in friendly sport.
- The various developed areas across our city offer exceptional environments for citizens to live, work, and shop.

These are but a few reasons why our city is exceptional.

Our desire going forward is to further enhance our city's strengths while meeting the challenges that come with an ever-changing economy, shifting needs and desires of the citizenry, and the impacts of growth. We seek to do this by promoting exceptional improvement across our city in four environments: built, natural, social, and economic. Through the "Four Environments," we seek to grow our city in a responsible manner, improve mobility for all users, preserve and enhance our natural environment, improve the livability of our city and quality of life of our citizens, and foster the development of a diverse and vibrant economy. We aim to do this while making wise use of our most precious resources – our people, land, and wealth. We desire to redefine what it means to be a dynamic, growing, and successful suburban city and serve as a driving force in improving, complementing, and growing our metropolitan region.

We are Hoover, Alabama and we are, and will continue to be, an exceptional city!

The Four Environments— A Framework for our Vision:

- Built
- Natural
- Social
- Economic



Planning Challenges

Hoover faces the challenge of planning for issues such as:

- Generally low density in development.
- Threats to the viability of our city's retail sector and potential of maintaining existing revenue streams.
- Lack of connectivity and options in the transportation network.
- Threats to environmentally-sensitive areas.
- Maintaining infrastructure and providing services over a large area.
- Potential to outgrow our ability to provide exceptional services (Public safety, schools, transportation infrastructure, etc.).

While Hoover's days of explosive growth and expansion are largely behind us, demand for residential and commercial growth remains. The City's viability and quality of life will be challenged if new development and reinvestment is not effectively planned and the city's current challenges are not thoughtfully addressed.

Key Factors

Before delving into the plan, a couple of things need to be identified as key influences on land development and use, and thus, this plan. One, there are factors that exist that are beyond the control of the Hoover city government. These factors include policies adopted by other levels of government or neighboring communities. Though they are beyond our control, it is important to understand them and be able to react to such forces appropriately. The following paragraphs do not present an exhaustive list of these forces, but present a few important examples.

The federal government institutes policy that controls development in floodways and floodplains and areas with endangered species. Developments are subject to approval by the Army Corps of Engineers should they involve a "blue line" stream.

The State of Alabama is another governmental entity with powers that supersede local laws and policies. The State requires that local development be in compliance with a variety of codes and policies. State controlled and maintained rights-of-way come under the governance of the Alabama Department of Transportation, and any and all activity and access within said rights-of-way must be approved by that authority.

The State does delegate a considerable amount of power to the city to regulate land use and development through its planning and zoning enabling legislation. However, the State also has the ability to intervene and remove those powers through amendments to the State Constitution.

There are also forces at play locally that are outside of the City's control. There are several examples of this in the provision of utilities within Hoover's city limits. The city is served by three water authorities, including Birmingham Water Works Board, Bessemer Water Works, and Shelby County Water. There are also three providers of sewer service across the city, including the City of Hoover (Riverchase and Inverness), Jefferson County Environmental Services, and Southwest Water (Greystone vicinity). Alabama Power and Spire, private utility companies governed by the State Public Service Commission, maintain and operate facilities across the city.

Other factors beyond our control may present themselves in the future. These factors may include natural or man-made disasters, conflicts, fluctuations in the economy, or major economic opportunities in the area. Surrounding communities may also make land use and development decisions that Hoover will have no control over. These factors may slightly affect our implementation of the plan or render it completely irrelevant. What Hoover can control is its response to these factors. The City should consider the values and vision expressed by the public in this Plan as it chooses a course of action.

Key Assumptions

There are also several assumptions made in the production of this plan that must be discussed. These are based on observations of activities within our community, activities in other communities, and references discussed in the Literature Review. The assumptions are as follows:

- Hoover will be affected by the rapid change in demographics nationwide and will need to respond to changing needs.
- Developing a vision and a strategy for implementing it (“Backcasting”) will reach a more desired result than planning based solely on past trends, particularly with demographic shifts occurring.
- Taking an “infill first” approach to city building, which includes focusing on developing the city from the inside out through (1) infill development, (2) core revitalization, (3) increasing population density, and (4) increasing connectivity of infrastructure, results in higher revenue and a better quality of life for citizens (Figure 1). This assumption is partially based on the economies of scale that come with more residents and businesses (City service customers) being located in areas where the City provides little or no additional resource input.



Figure 1 “Infill first” approach to increased revenue and higher quality of life

Illustrating the Plan

To convey the vision of the Plan in a way that the entire community understands, illustrations accompany and expand on the text. The Plan uses a variety of illustrative tools to depict existing conditions, concepts and recommendations:

- City-wide and intermediate scale maps
- The Transect Model
- Intermediate scale architectural renderings
- Street level photo renderings

Maps

The maps produced at the citywide and intermediate scales are drawn by the City and KPS utilizing GIS software. These illustrations show natural and built conditions, including land use and development patterns using a color pallet that communicates various levels of use and intensity.

Transect Model

The Transect Model originally devised by the Florida-based architecture and planning firm Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company and revised by others uses a series of watercolor images to convey the physical form of development in a sequential

pattern from low density community edges to dense neighborhood and urban cores. As you progress along the transect from the city's edge to the core, you will see an increase in the density of the built environment, an increase in the mixture of uses, and a physical environment that is built more so to the human scale, with buildings oriented closer to the street and streetscape treatments designed with pedestrians and bicyclists in mind. The images correlate to the development patterns communicated in citywide and intermediate scale maps.

The transect imagery used in the Plan (figure 2) was drafted by Dover Kohl and Associates for the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas, and is used here with the express permission of the City of Fayetteville. Other images are used for districts that do not adhere to the general characteristics of the transect model. Images not developed by the producers of this document are credited to the source.

Architectural Renderings

Intermediate scale architectural renderings are utilized to illustrate conceptual development patterns in specific focus areas throughout the city. They provide a depth of form, detail, and color to the landscape that is difficult to achieve in GIS mapping software. Examples of this include illustrating additional buildings, their orientation to the street, landscape improvements, and other treatments and improvements to the physical landscape. These illustrations include overhead (plan) views and "birdseye" views to get a richer sense of the concepts being described.

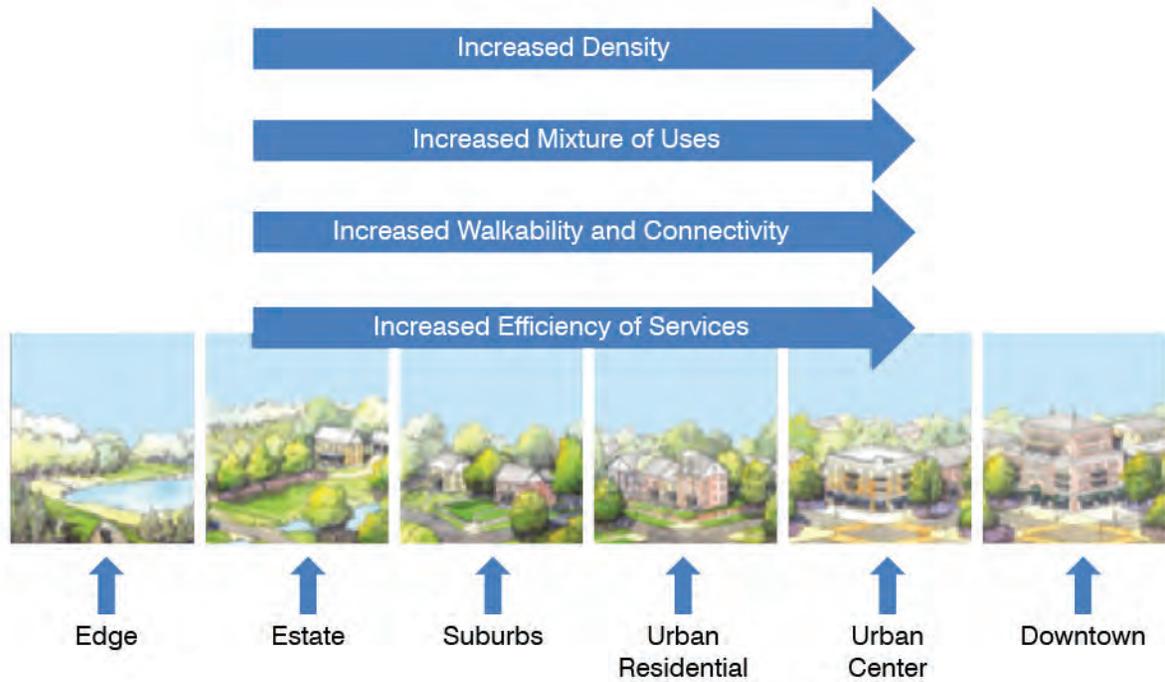


Figure 2: The "transect" describes the range of natural and built environments within a city, source: City of Fayetteville, AK

Photo Renderings

There are also some instances of photo renderings and snapshots from the city simulator Cities: Skylines to provide additional perspectives of the overall vision.

Implementing the Plan

Just as the formulation of the Plan required a comprehensive look at issues facing the community and cooperation amongst many interests of the community, so too will its implementation require a collaborative effort across public and private sectors. The City will implement the vision of the

Plan through policy revisions; individual decisions and actions by the Council, Administration, Planning Commission, and other appointed boards; and through direct capital investments and operating budgets.

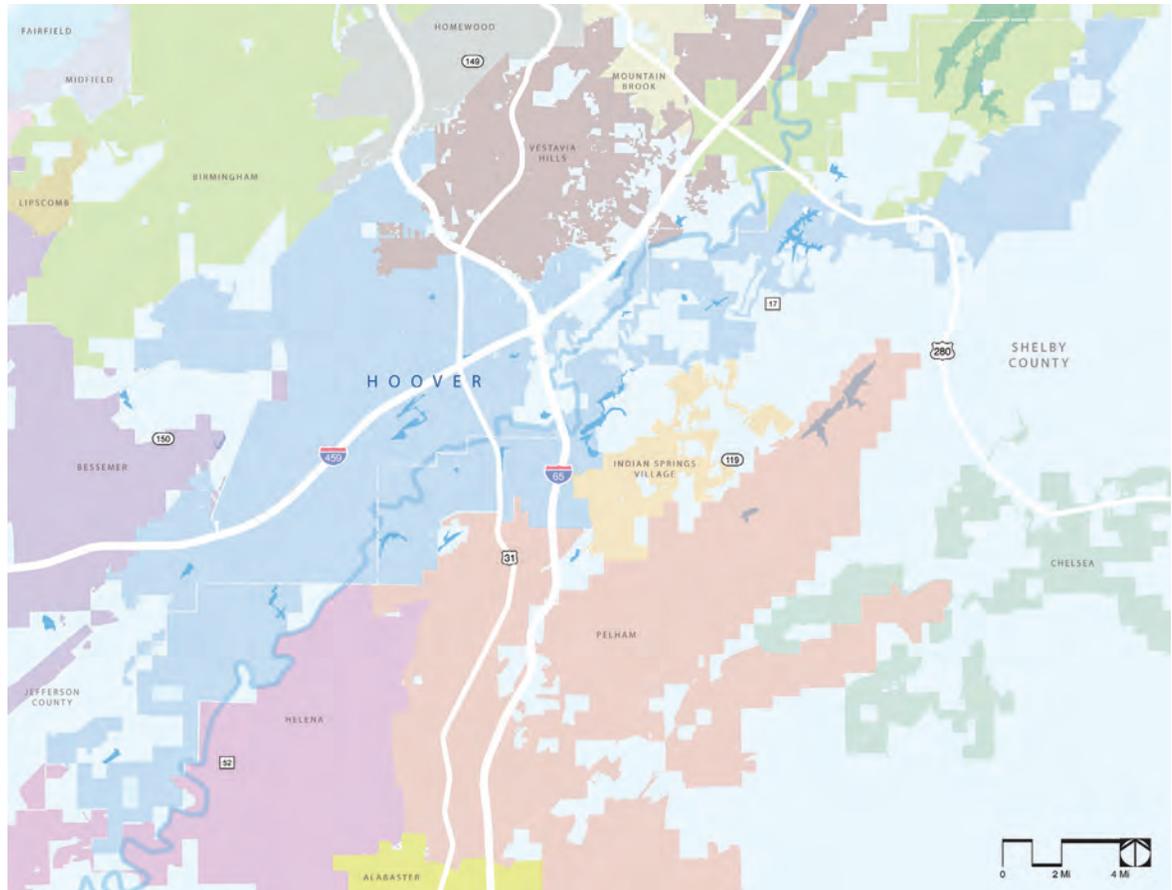
The private sector will contribute through investment in site development and adherence to adopted policies and ordinances. Other agencies in the community, particularly institutions and nonprofit organizations, are also encouraged to join the implementation process by tailoring their future plans and investments to support Hoover's vision.

Figure 3: Hoover and the Metropolitan Area

Only through the collective efforts of the community as a whole can we realize Hoover's full potential and see this vision come to fruition. At the end of each of the "Four Environments" components, the Plan recommends courses of action for the community to take over the life of the plan. These implementation strategies include specific actions, the agency responsible for taking the actions, and a timeframe for completing the actions. The timeframes are divided into short-term (1-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years), long-term (more than 10 years), and on-going actions that will be carried out throughout the life of the plan.

Hoover's Role in the Metropolitan Area

Hoover is already a major economic engine in the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Area. Though its economy has become increasingly diverse, Hoover intends to be much more than just a retail center and bedroom community. There is great concern in the community about the lackluster growth of the metropolitan area. The overall metro is hovering at the bottom of the nation's largest 50 metropolitan areas by population. Continued stagnation will eventually lead to the metro dropping out of this list as other regions continue to grow. This will have negative impacts on the entire area, including Hoover, as the metropolitan areas that Birmingham-Hoover had competed with continue to grow economically. We will find our region playing a less prominent role in the Southeast and the nation.

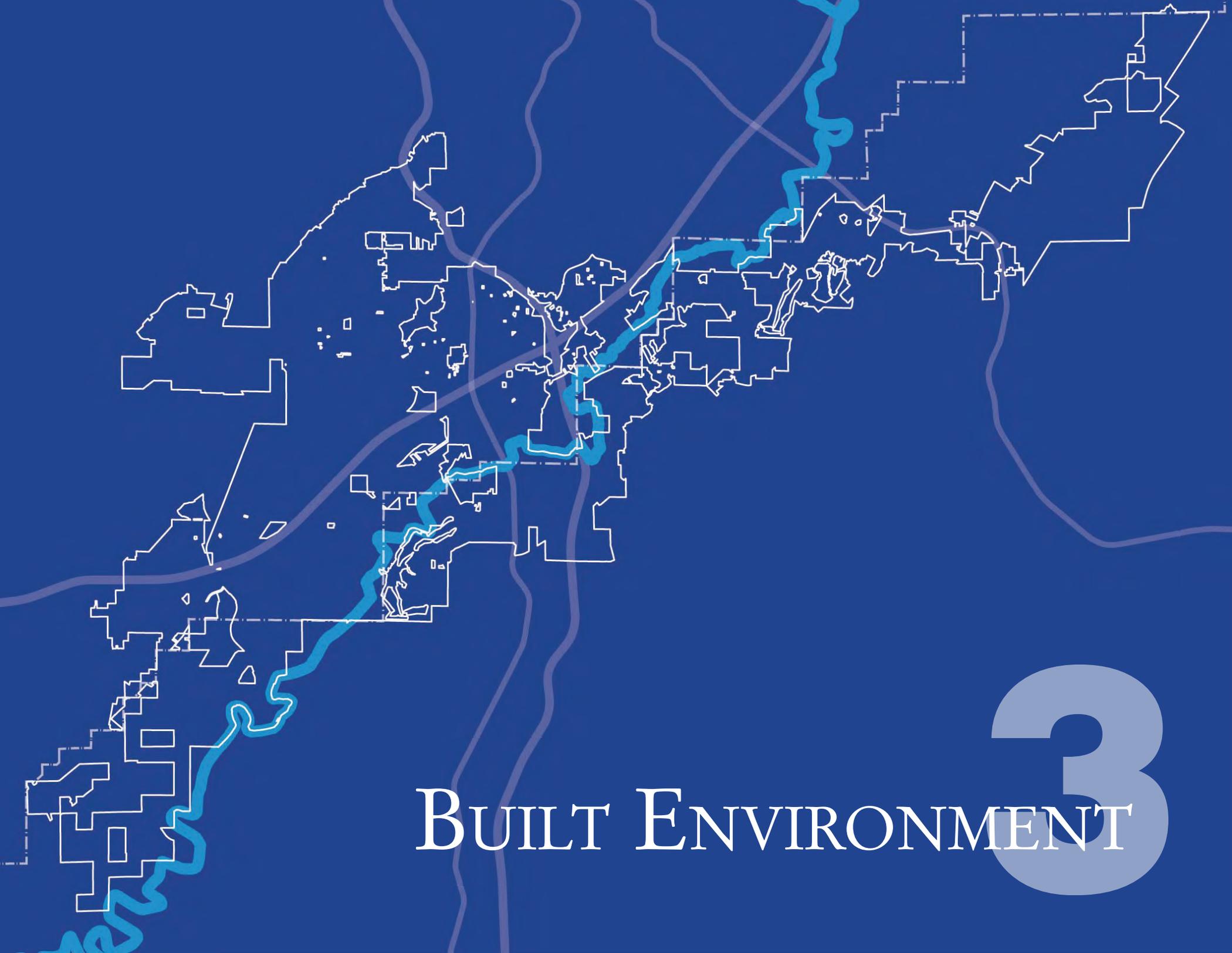


Each community in a metropolitan area should utilize its resources and unique traits to complement the region rather than compete against its neighbors. Hoover desires to do its part by leveraging its strengths and resources to become a greater driving force in the metropolitan economy, helping bolster growth of the metro. Simultaneously, Hoover seeks to provide a variety of enhancements to the

quality of life of metro residents that complement the already numerous amenities offered in communities throughout the metro. Together, Hoover and the other communities can unite the metro with the aim of growing and better competing with other metros across the Southeast in attracting the best and brightest residents and economic opportunities.

The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.

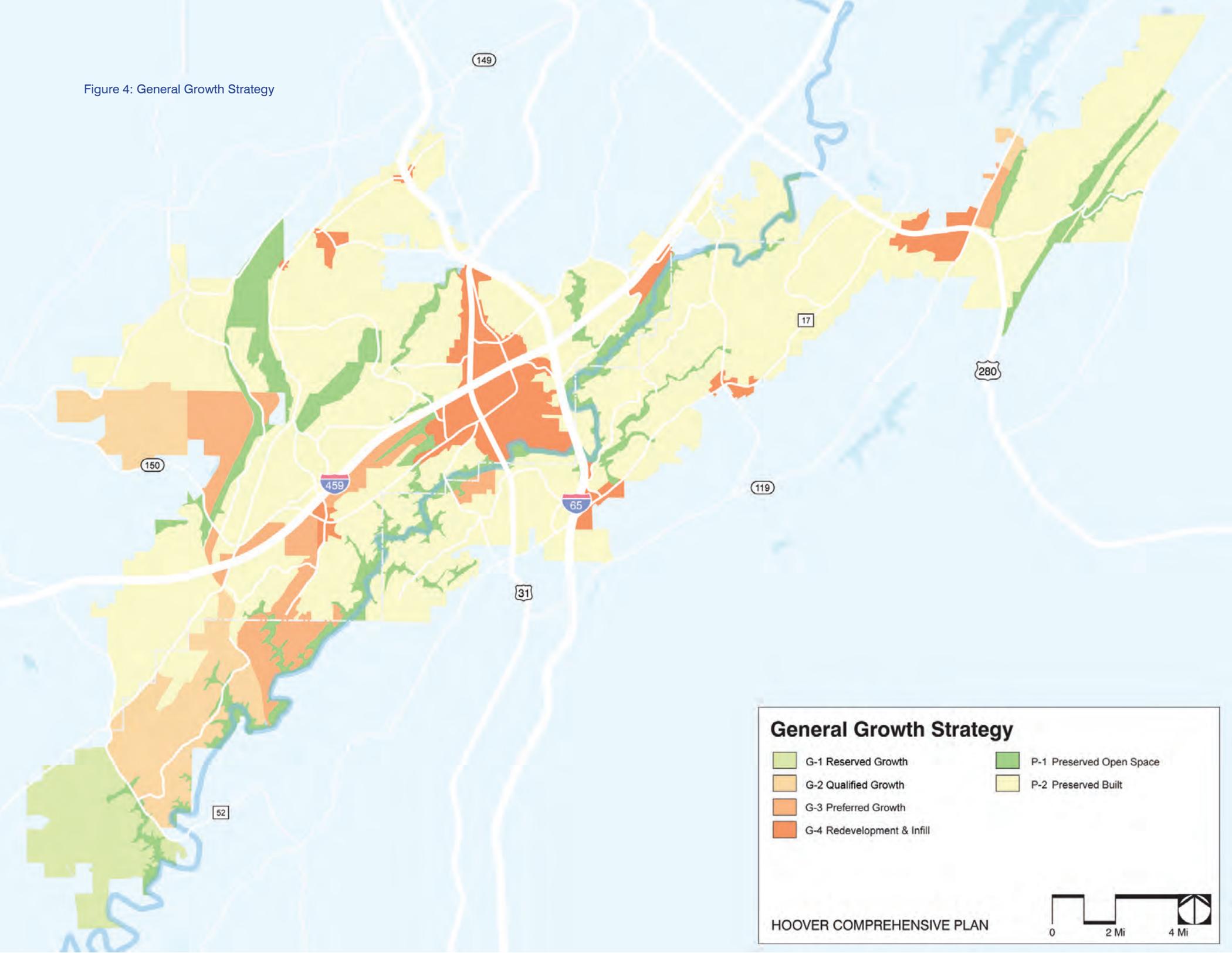
-Edward T. McMahon



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3

Figure 4: General Growth Strategy



General Growth Strategy

 G-1 Reserved Growth	 P-1 Preserved Open Space
 G-2 Qualified Growth	 P-2 Preserved Built
 G-3 Preferred Growth	
 G-4 Redevelopment & Infill	

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

0 2 Mi 4 Mi



THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment consists of everything man-made across the cityscape. Expanding the built environment requires significant resources.

Through this plan Hoover is to become a more vibrant city with neighborhoods that are walkable, safe, and desirable; an exciting and energetic city center that serves as the focus of civic and commercial life for the city; distinct urban districts and town centers with a variety of uses, activities, and employment opportunities; and a transportation network that is well-connected and offers a variety of modes.

Land Development and Use

The Land Development and Use component is presented in three parts: General Growth, Strategic Development Concept, and Future Land Use. Each component is progressively more specific in how the City should approach development. The aim is to create a holistic picture of the proposed growth pattern and use of land over the course of this plan's lifespan.

General Growth Strategy

Based on the outlook for City services and input from the public, this plan recommends the following general growth strategy (Figure 4), which classifies the City into six categories: four growth sectors and two preservation sectors.



G-1 Reserved Growth

The G-1 Reserved Growth sector includes territory in the far southwest end of Hoover southwest of Morgan Rd. At present, this area remains largely undeveloped. The reason for this designation, and the main reason it has remained mostly undeveloped, is the lack of infrastructure and difficulty for the City in extending services to the area.

Morgan Rd. and South Shades Rd. suffer from poor levels of service today. Unchecked development of this sector without significant upgrades to the area's road network will further diminish levels of service and make commuting increasingly difficult. Public safety services are also stretched to service this portion of town. The area is presently outside of a 5-mile roadway service radius from an existing Hoover fire station. Through a joint response agreement, the City of Helena's fire department currently serves as the first responder covering the area. Any considerable development will require the City to examine its ability to provide an exceptional level of services, likely leading to the need for new facilities and staff.

This sector is also far from the nearest elementary school. With the Blackridge development being closed to through traffic, South Shades Elementary would be the closest elementary school. Depending on the amount of growth north of Morgan Rd., an appreciable amount of development in this sector may precipitate the need for additional schools.

Today, this sector is appropriate for lower density development, which requires less in services and generates less traffic, including clustered or "conservation" development that would preserve the area's forested and rolling terrain. With a priority on developing available land and bolstering services in more central areas, and given the amount of infrastructure needed to support development here, it will take time and planning between the City and developers to enable more robust development. A master-planned and carefully phased approach that corresponds with infrastructure and services improvements could make a mix of housing densities and other uses possible .



G-2 Qualified Growth

The G-2 Qualified Growth sector is closer to the core of the city than the G-1 Reserved Growth sector. It includes areas north of Morgan Rd. towards the Blackridge development (and includes future phases of the same) and in unincorporated Jefferson County southwest of Ross Bridge. These areas will accommodate continued development of largely single-family housing that is more accessible to existing infrastructure and services. Limitations in city facilities and services present a challenge here, but with developer participation, it can become more appropriate for development. The development pattern should consist of low density neighborhoods with a high degree of connectivity between each other and surrounding development. Development should pose a low impact on existing infrastructure.

G-3 Preferred Growth

The G-3 Preferred Growth Sector is a higher priority for new development. Infrastructure and services are readily available, with mostly enhancements necessary to absorb the impact of new development. These are targeted areas where growth—if planned and constructed appropriately—will have a positive impact by way of revenue generation, while presenting opportunities for development that will be unique to Hoover.

G-4 Redevelopment / Infill

The G-4 Redevelopment and Infill Sector is a high priority for reinvestment in central locations. Unlike the G-3 Sector, G-4 consists mostly of already developed land. Areas within this sector have been identified for revitalization or present great opportunities for an increased intensity of development. Whether the opportunity is for revitalization or infill, these areas are well suited for multi-story buildings in a compact, walkable environment of residential, commercial or mixed uses.

The G-4 Sector includes the Galleria campus, which presents a unique opportunity to become Hoover’s “city center”. The sector also includes several other nodes well positioned to become neighborhood centers and mixed-use districts. These include Meadowbrook Office Park, the Lorna Road-Rocky Ridge Road vicinity, the Stadium Trace

Pkwy-AL Hwy 150 vicinity, sections of US Hwy 31 (particularly those adjacent to transit stations), and other key locations across the city with aging buildings and underutilized or vacant land.

P-1 Preserved Open Space

The P-1 Preserved Open Space Sector comprises land areas with valuable natural and environmental assets and resources. These areas should be preserved from development due to their significance as water quality features, flood hazard areas, old growth forests, scenic spaces, recreational areas, or a combination of these. Many of these areas are along the Cahaba River and various tributaries flowing through Hoover, as well as steep mountain slopes with a high degree of visibility.

P-2 Preserved Built Environment

The P-2 Preserved Built Environment Sector consists of vast stretches of Hoover that are already developed and have maintained their value and viability such that major revitalization efforts are not needed at this time. Existing single-family neighborhoods make up the bulk of this sector.

The community wishes to preserve and enhance the value and character that these neighborhoods bring to the city fabric. Apart from such enhancements as greater walkability, traffic calming, and lighting, most community participants felt the conditions of their neighborhoods was satisfactory.

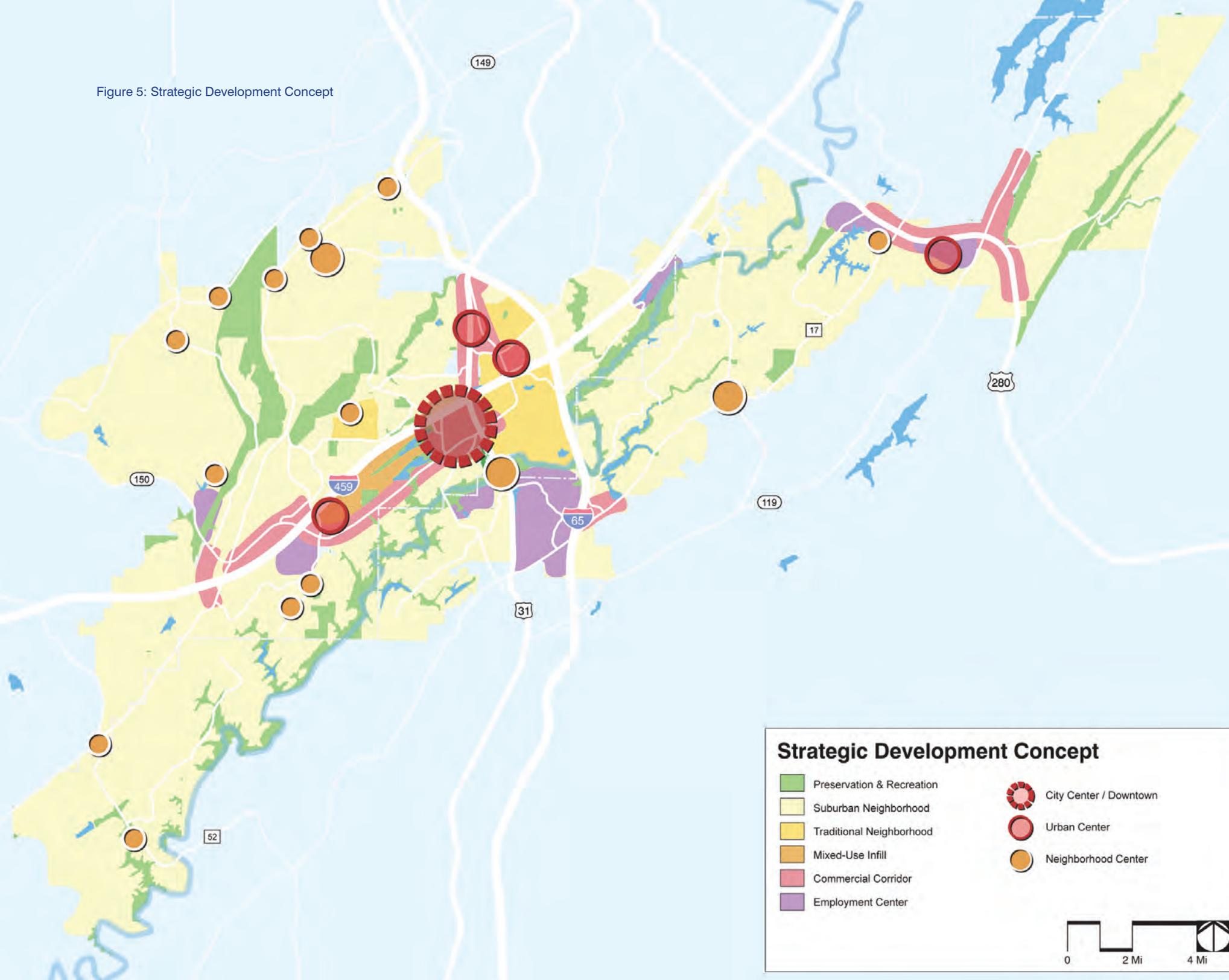
Strategic Development Concept

Informed by the General Growth Strategy, the Strategic Development Concept digs deeper into the proposed citywide development pattern. This component illustrates nine development strategies across the city (Figure 5). These include the following, listed in order from the perimeter of the city to its center:

- suburban neighborhoods
- preservation/recreation
- employment centers
- commercial corridors
- traditional neighborhoods
- neighborhood centers
- town centers
- city center

To further describe the development patterns envisioned for these areas, plan strategies are accompanied by illustrations from the development transect model presented earlier as well as other images and maps. These illustrations are not meant to be exhaustive of the development types encouraged within each area, but rather to describe how each area fits within the development continuum.

Figure 5: Strategic Development Concept



Strategic Development Concept

	Preservation & Recreation		City Center / Downtown
	Suburban Neighborhood		Urban Center
	Traditional Neighborhood		Neighborhood Center
	Mixed-Use Infill		
	Commercial Corridor		
	Employment Center		

0 2 Mi 4 Mi



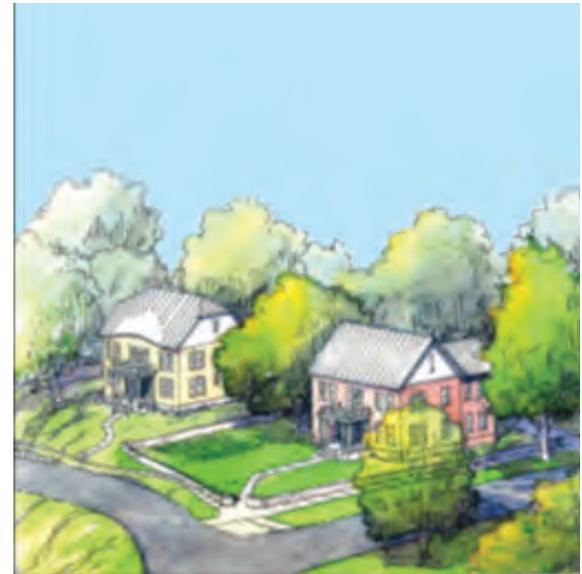
Suburbs

These areas are primarily single-family neighborhoods, where the suburban pattern of development emerged over the past 50-60 years, is encouraged to remain. These areas are largely built out. Preservation and enhancement of the prevailing, desirable characteristics of Hoover’s suburban neighborhoods are key components of the plan. Improvements such as improved street lighting, additional sidewalks, increased interconnectivity in the road network, and traffic calming measures are encouraged.

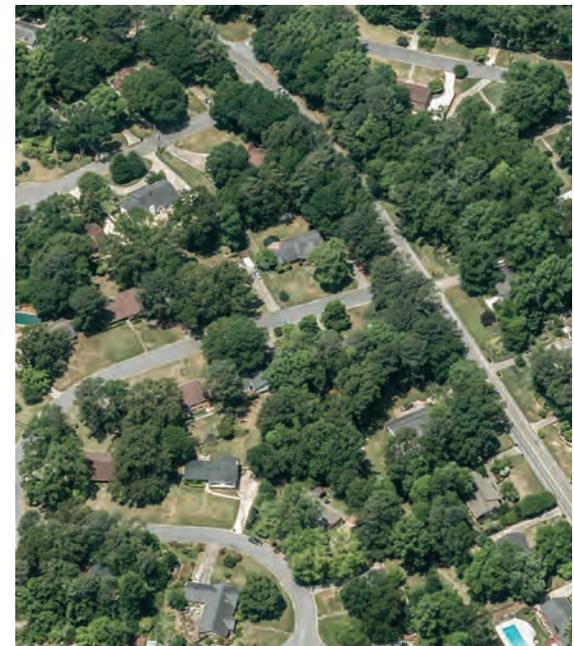
Greenfield development within this area should minimize impact to the natural environment. This may include conservation development, where residential development is consolidated into the most developable parts of a property so that other portions of the site are left in a natural or near natural state, improving environmental quality and recreational opportunities and lowering maintenance costs. Conservation developments should also exhibit a high degree of walkability and street connectivity.

Neighborhood-scaled commercial and institutional developments should also be encouraged to serve local residents. The Preserve and Ross Bridge are two prominent local examples of incorporating nonresidential uses within an otherwise residential neighborhood development.

Figure 6: Illustration of development within Suburbs



When it was annexed into the city, the Trigger Creek area south of Morgan Road was given a housing unit cap of approximately 2000 units. While the intent was to limit development, the ordinance quantified its housing development rights. The ordinance does not specify a time when these units may come online, however. City services are overstretched to cover this area today. Development in this area should be coordinated with infrastructure and service improvements to assure a high level of services, including the widening of Morgan Road, in Jefferson County, to five lanes (expected to be completed in the two year range), a future public safety facility and a roadway paralleling South Shades Crest Road (see Transportation section).



Preserved/Recreation

Preservation and Recreation areas are intended primarily to be left natural or used for recreation purposes. These areas are mostly located within the floodways and floodplains along the Cahaba River, Patton Creek and other waterways, as well as steep slopes areas throughout the city. A sizable portion of the existing tree canopy is found here as well. Development is already prohibited or strictly limited for much of this area such as through floodway and floodplain regulations and ownership—the Freshwater Land Trust controls significant acreage along the west face of Shades Mountain.

Privately held land in these areas may nonetheless be developed as allowed under city regulations and established rights. Standards should be crafted by the City to protect these environmental features and the public welfare, particularly along steep slopes, while accommodating the rights of owners to the use of their land.



Figure 17: Illustration of Preserved/Recreation areas

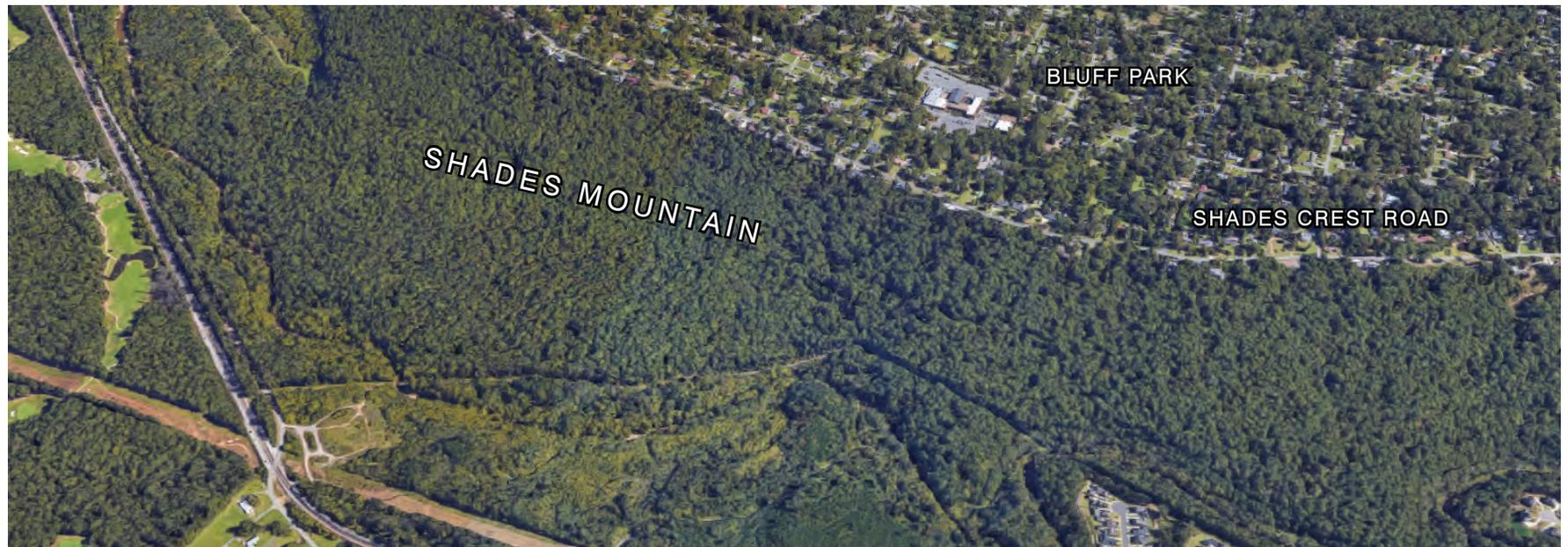




Figure 8: Illustration of development within Employment Centers Source: Avery Street Corridor Plan – Dublin, OH

 *Employment Centers*

Employment Centers include office parks, distribution centers, technology-based companies and other clean industries that pose no adverse impacts on their neighbors. These areas are located close to interstate interchanges, particularly where little development has yet occurred. These developments should be designed to support a positive image for the city, especially in gateway locations, through quality architecture, materials and landscaping. Employment centers should also be planned and designed in harmony with their neighbors and interwoven into the city fabric—not developed as isolated enclaves. Where appropriate they should include a mix of uses, usable open space and a

street network that is well-integrated with city streets to distribute traffic. Employment centers may also incorporate or be flanked by housing areas. The Planned Unit Development zoning tool may be used to provide the flexibility to create unique developments and mixing of uses in these centers.

The International Park, Stadium Trace Village and Shades Creek areas present particularly attractive prospects for this type of development, with several of these including large, undeveloped tracts of land. The openness of the properties and the excellent visibility along major roads and highways allows the city to showcase these prominent, attractive industries to the traveling public.

New approaches are emerging for the planning and design of office, technology and light industrial parks. These trends echo the increased attention to employee preferences for their living and work environments. As new business and technology parks are developed, older employment centers are likewise being revitalized to feature:

- walkability
- bicycle accessibility
- transit access
- a mix of uses, including:
 - lodging
 - ground floor retail
 - accessory residential
- usable open space
- activities and amenities



Great Valley Corporate Center Redevelopment Concept (Malvern, PA), source: Gensler



Figure 9: Illustration of development concept within Commercial Corridors Source: Orion Planning + Design

Hoover Commons Shopping Center on US Hwy 31 is a strip shopping center with outparcel businesses, a development type seen often along Hoover's highway corridors.



Commercial Corridors

Commercial Corridors have historically consisted of large, automobile-oriented commercial developments along the city's major thoroughfares. Since these corridors are highly visible and accessible to a large volume of traffic, the city's image can be enhanced if developments along them are attractive, with generous landscaping and quality architecture and building materials.

A combination of frontage roads, cross streets, shared drives, alleys and other means of access should be used to separate through traffic from local traffic. These access management strategies will optimize safety while preserving capacity on

major roads. The thoroughfares themselves should also be beautified to present an aesthetically pleasing image for the city in these high visibility locations.

It may become desirable over time to adapt or redevelop older strip developments and shopping centers to accommodate a mix of uses or more intensive, walkable form of development. This is appropriate, if not preferable, but each project must be planned and designed carefully. Creating a walkable "Main Street" environment is not practicable along Hoover's principal arterials. It may be achievable, however, along their cross streets and other lower classification thoroughfares, including internal streets designed as part of redevelopments.



The Patton Creek Shopping Center, opened in 2004, was the first retail development in Hoover to feature a walkable "main street" element.

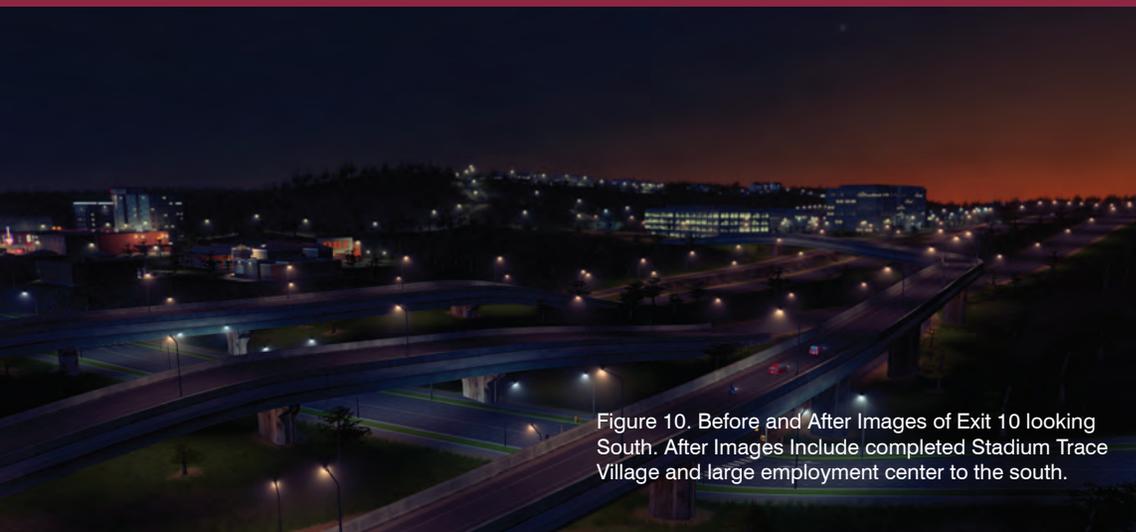


Figure 10. Before and After Images of Exit 10 looking South. After Images Include completed Stadium Trace Village and large employment center to the south.

Exit 10

The interchange at the junction of I-459 and AL Hwy 150 is the fastest developing area of Hoover today. Most of the city's ongoing residential development is occurring to the south along Stadium Trace Pkwy. A substantial commercial project is underway on the southwest quadrant of the interchange in Stadium Trace Village. While this development is slated for anchor and shadow retail, there is also a mixed commercial village center component along with medical and hotel uses planned for the site.

While the north side of the interstate is largely developed, areas to the south of I-459 offer opportunities for additional development. Northeast of AL Hwy 150, the Princeton site (formerly a grocery-anchored shopping center) and Hidden Valley provide excellent opportunities for commercial and employment center development. A new corridor of development is envisioned along Hidden Valley from Preserve Pkwy. to Patton Creek. The excellent visibility and access from the interstate makes this an ideal site for mixed commercial, office, and light industrial uses, with some preserved natural space along the mountain slope and wetlands adjacent to Patton Creek. Residential development may also be appropriate, providing housing above or in easy walking distance of employers.

Another prime location for development lies just to the south and west of Stadium Trace Village along the south side of I-459. There is ample acreage for a sizable mixed use or employment center. Nestled between Chestnut Ridge and the interstate, the location features visibility from and access to I-459 (Figure 10). A proposed transportation project to help relieve growing congestion in the area—additional ramps from the interstate, similar to the Galleria “flyover,”—will also enhance access to the site. To further ease traffic concerns in the Trace Crossing community, new streets can be incorporated into a future site layout to access the added ramps.

Traditional Neighborhoods

These areas are near the core of city. They are already developed, but in a manner that does not fully support neighborhood character and long-term enhancement. These include large residential complexes that were developed originally in unincorporated Jefferson County. Most are isolated rather than interconnected, often having only one access point to the city street network. Unlike neighborhoods with many individually-owned buildings and properties, these areas have a few owners responsible for many buildings and large areas of land. Because of their size, these complexes greatly influence surrounding land uses. When they age and transition down in value and upkeep, as has happened in this area, the impact on surrounding areas can be dramatic.

In some instances, multifamily developments were permitted in otherwise single-family residential areas, such as in the Chapel Hill neighborhood. While mixing residential types in “traditional neighborhoods” is generally desirable, the design and functional layout is critical to making it work well. In Chapel Hill, the apartments were not designed to fit within the neighborhood. They are set off from and built to a scale that overpowers nearby homes. They feature large parking areas along the street front, homogenous architecture, and little relationship to the neighborhood street environment. These developments have seen little reinvestment and thus have aged poorly.



Figure 11: Illustration of development within Traditional Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Centers

The desired development pattern, as shown in Figure 11, is one where careful transitions in scale and density and sound neighborhood design create a cohesive, interconnected neighborhood fabric that meets a variety of housing needs. These areas are desirable locations for what has been



termed “missing middle” housing, one of the key developmental goals that emerged during the planning process. Further explored in Housing and Neighborhoods, the missing middle includes live/work units, townhouses and row houses, bungalow courts and courtyard apartments.



Bungalow courts are one of several “missing middle” housing types within Traditional Neighborhoods.

Mixed-Use Infill

The Hidden Valley area represents a unique opportunity for greenfield development near the core of the city. While the site includes slopes, flood prone areas and other natural features that should be treated carefully, the site's central location and access to the interstate make it an attractive site for development for a variety of uses. Development here should strive for compactness, connectivity with adjoining development, walkability and other features recommended for traditional neighborhoods and town centers. A conservation development approach, possibly through planned unit development, would likely balance these developmental goals with the desire to preserve the site's natural features and functions.

Neighborhood Centers

One of the main objectives of the plan is to strengthen the community at the neighborhood level. As such, a key starting point is the development of centers within those neighborhoods. These neighborhood centers are located at key intersections throughout the city. Neighborhood centers should provide essential services to surrounding neighborhoods, including neighborhood-scale businesses. The public realm should include treatments that make the center readily identifiable with and connected to surrounding neighborhoods through bicycle and pedestrian facilities. A mixture of uses, higher density housing, and public spaces are encouraged within or around these centers.



Figure 12: Illustration of development within Town Centers

Town Centers

There are a few locations across the city that have been identified as potential nodes of enhanced activity—town centers that serve large swaths of town. Whereas a city center is a focal point for an entire city, these town centers are hubs that cater to the needs of adjoining communities and neighborhoods. The centers shown in Figure 5 are existing commercial areas and office parks that are well positioned to serve the larger community with a variety of businesses and services. These nodes are conveniently located near neighborhoods and large transportation routes.

Existing development in these centers has historically been automobile-oriented; and they are served by high speed, high volume roadways. Large shopping centers, strip centers and standalone



businesses situated behind parking lots represent the current pattern of development. Reinvestment in these nodes is intended to create more compact, walkable and vibrant urban town centers, as seen in Figure 12. These new town centers will display a strong “sense of place,” which is further defined in [Chapter 5 The Social Environment](#), while also featuring higher densities and intensities of development, a mix of uses within close proximity to one another, and multiple modes of transportation and high levels of walkability. Examples include the area around the intersection of Lorna Road and Rocky Ridge Road, Hoover Court Town Center (and other locations along US 31 between I-65 and I-459), and Meadowbrook office park.

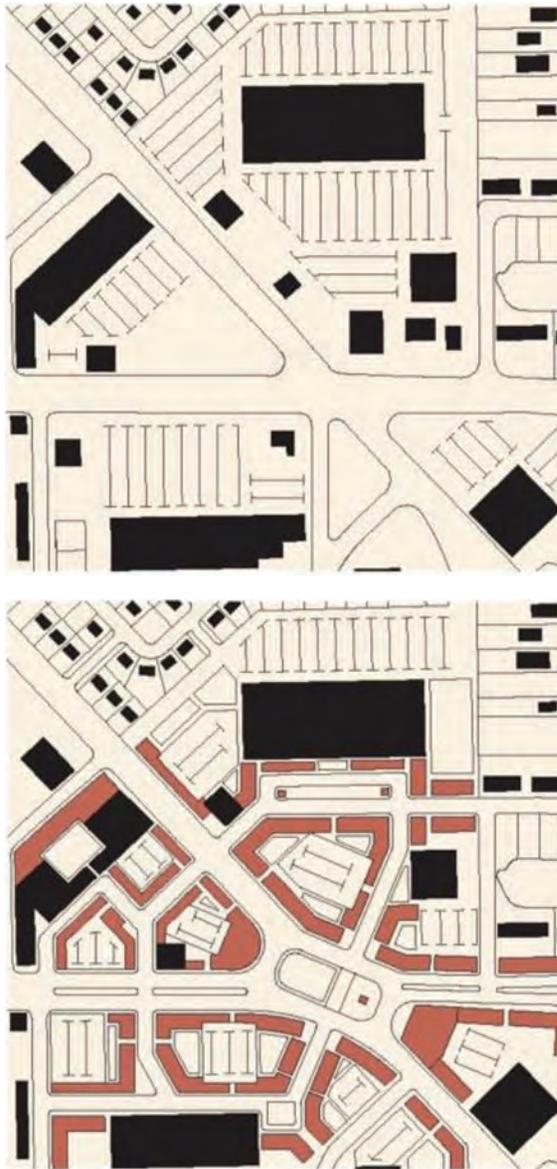


Figure 13. Before and After Plan View of Redevelopment of an auto-centric commercial area to a walkable, town center; Source: DPZ, Sprawl Repair Manual, 2010

In the cases of Lorna Road and Hoover Court, there are existing shopping centers that have transitioned from primary market power centers to aging secondary or tertiary market commercial centers. There is still an abundance of activity at these locations and their position near primary intersections and roads makes them attractive candidates for redevelopment into mixed-use town centers. Since Hoover Court does have some historical significance in the development of city, serving as its first commercial development and the first location for public safety and local government functions, redevelopment of this center should in some manner pay homage to these contributions.

The Lorna Road center is unique as it has become emblematic of the growing diversity of Hoover and its citizenry. The area offers a wide array of retail, service, and restaurant options to citizens of many different backgrounds. The housing options in the immediate vicinity, including the multiple apartment complexes and the Chapel Hill neighborhood in particular, also offer residence to citizens of different backgrounds and income levels. One of the primary challenges of redeveloping this center will be providing new investment into the area while not displacing those citizens with longstanding commitment to existing neighborhoods and what they add to Hoover's community fabric.

As each of these locations undergo redevelopment, the following are key factors that should be addressed:

- *Transition of uses, scale and design from center to neighborhood.* Rather than the stark transition that presently occurs from existing businesses to single family homes, there should be an intermediate transition of uses and intensities of development between the two that compliments both ends of the spectrum. "Missing middle" housing with some mixing in of businesses would be ideal.
- *A high degree of street interconnectivity.* Major roads connect town centers to other parts of the city and to highways and interstates. Local streets provide convenient access for residents from adjoining neighborhoods, while the street network is designed to distribute traffic and limit through traffic on residential streets.
- *Multiple transportation options serving centers and surrounding areas.* In addition to capitalizing on the major roadways serving these sites, the centers should provide a high degree of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods. Town centers should take advantage of existing and future transit services to serve a larger customer base and capture greater development potential. With reliable transit, these centers could become places where

those looking for more affordable housing options can live and commute to work or to other hubs while businesses can enjoy the benefits of having a “captive audience” of patrons.

- *High quality design.* Urban and architectural design should reflect the social and economic importance of these centers, lending a strong sense of place. The visitor should have a clear sense of when they are arriving and leaving. Colors, materials, and design details should create a balance between diversity and visual harmony, rather than uniformity and homogeneity.
- *Public space.* Town centers feature and are often focused around a public space. Squares, plazas and other “third places,” where people meet outside of work and home, help build a sense of community and encourage visitors to stay longer and patronize nearby businesses.



Figure 15. Before and After Birdseye View of Redevelopment of Auto-Centric Intersection and Shopping to an Urban Town Center
 Source: DPZ, Sprawl Repair Manual, 2010.

Sprawl Repair

The impact a regional mall has on the surrounding community cannot be understated, says author Galina Tachieva in her book *Sprawl Repair Manual*. Given the scale of the development, an active and successful mall campus can have a positive ripple effect on surrounding commercial areas and neighborhoods. Of course the converse can be true if a mall begins to falter. What Hoover cannot afford is for the Galleria property to falter. With the changing retail sector rendering many large anchor stores obsolete, and with brands represented in the major anchor spaces at the Galleria closing stores across the nation, now is the time to have a visionary and proactive strategy for redevelopment.

Tachieva continues that malls are ideal locations to begin to transform sprawl into high quality urban spaces. Because of their scale, typical

location along major regional roadways, existing infrastructure, large parcel sizes, limited ownership interests, and transit opportunities, malls have a unique ability to transition into mixed use urban environments. But the mall campus has a number of deficiencies to overcome to become a walkable urban environment. These include having a “footprint that is excessively large for a single-use building, pedestrian circulation hampered by vast areas of underutilized surface parking, and only well-defined public space located inside the mall.” However, these deficiencies can also become great opportunities for redevelopment. This is particularly the case with the large expanse of surface parking, which can more “easily accommodate a new urban fabric as well as a range of public spaces” than many other locations in suburbia (Tachieva, p. 131).

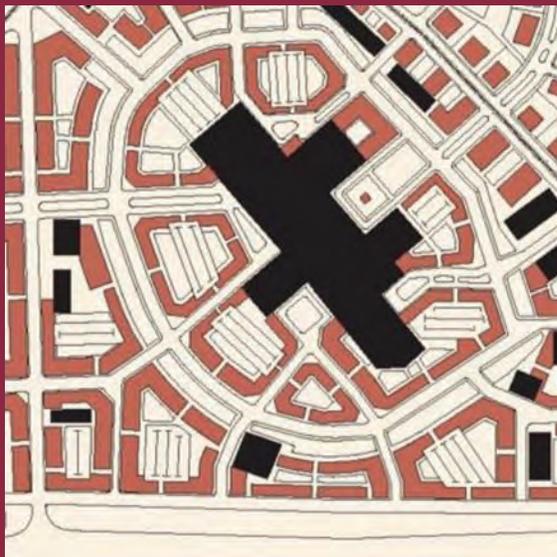
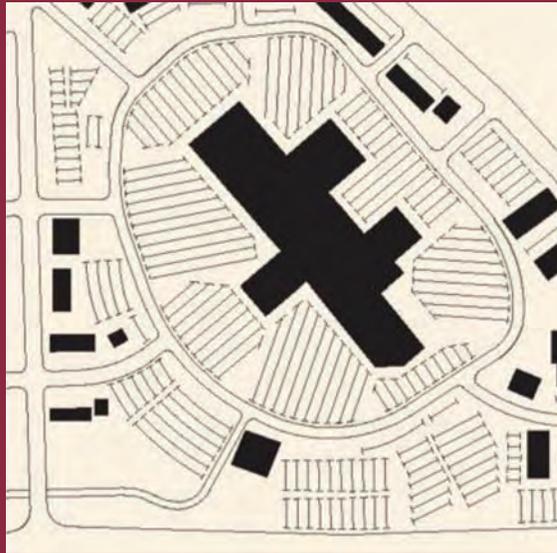


Figure 16. Before and After Comparison of the Creation of a Town Center from a Suburban Mall.
Source: DPZ, *Sprawl Repair Manual*, 2010



The early 1960s strip mall New Seabury Shopping Center in Mashpee, Massachusetts is one of the earliest examples of a suburban mall retrofit, becoming Mashpee Commons, the community’s downtown.
Source: Mashpee Commons



Hwy 31 North

The US Hwy 31 corridor north of I-459 consists of strip centers, outparcel developments and several large shopping centers. Many aging commercial developments are unable to pull the rents and revenues they once did. Future reinvestment and redevelopment along this corridor will bring about a more purposeful mix of uses, increased walkability and more intensive development of property to achieve the highest value out of these exceptionally visible and accessible properties.

The Hoover Court vicinity, may be an ideal starting point for redevelopment along the corridor with intensity declining away from Hwy 31 to adjacent neighborhoods. Regional transit options and transit service along the highway are expected to improve in the future, which will make properties close to transit stations more attractive for reinvestment.

Reuse of valuable real estate along the highway will optimize land area by “going vertical”—constructing more multi-story buildings with a mix of

commercial and other uses. To achieve the highest redevelopment potential, parking structures will become more necessary. Surface parking absorbs such a high percentage of land in commercial developments that in areas with high land values, it becomes inefficient. At the same time, increased transit activity and the rise of the autonomous vehicles, in the near future, will begin to chip away at the need to devote land to parking.



Hidden Valley

Whereas other town center opportunities will require reinvesting in and changing already developed areas, the highly accessible Hidden Valley location represents an opportunity for “greenfield” development of a town center near US 150 and Preserve Parkway. Tied in with future development of the eastern portions of the valley, the town center would provide a convenient hub for neighborhoods on Hoover’s west side, with a walkable mix of uses and amenities.

The planning and design of development in this location must respond carefully to the site’s intensive topography, which includes some areas subject to flooding in the northeast end of the site along Patton Creek. While these natural features present constraints, they also provide opportunities for a much more unique and dramatic development, including expansive views of the city that can be enjoyed from the ridge traversing the site. This site would be an appropriate location for a conservation development approach, where housing and other uses are clustered together in parts of the site that are not constrained by steep slopes or flooding.

Strategic connections to adjacent major roads will help to disperse traffic generated by the new development to avoid congestion and improve access and mobility.

The drive to put more buildings and more uses on each redevelopment site will directly increase walkability. Initially, these improvements will be internal to new developments, but as the corridor continues to see reinvestment, connections between redeveloped sites should emerge. However, for the foreseeable future, the highway itself will

likely remain relatively inhospitable to pedestrians. Because of this, the next generation of development along the corridor will feature more buildings fronting on new internal streets, side streets and parallel streets such as Lorna Road and Old Columbiana Road. This will ultimately lead to stronger pedestrian access to adjoining residential areas.

Lorna Road Town Center

Today, the Lorna Road area (Figure 17-18) is a collection of aging shopping centers and apartment complexes built during the development of the sprawling suburban landscape of yesteryear. This plan envisions the redevelopment of the area into a true town center with development along the stretch of Lorna Road from I-459 to Rocky Ridge Road taking on the form of a “secondary downtown.”

East of Lorna Road, the shopping center is partially redeveloped with a compact array of buildings offering commercial business/office and high density residential opportunities. West of Lorna Road, the development pattern transitions from compact, zero setback mixed-use/commercial to

high density residential to single family detached residential further west.

Figures 19-22 illustrate how the area may evolve into an urban environment with a variety of commercial and housing options, all within a comfortable walking distance with complete streets. The compact, mix of uses will offer a number of opportunities for businesses. The concept includes the replacement of two apartment complexes with mixed-use, multi-story buildings along Lorna Road and new housing away from the busy street, including a possible mix of urban flats, lofts, townhouses, and detached single family homes.

In the long term, the redevelopment momentum begun here should spread outward—to the Chapel Hill neighborhood, south of I-459 around Aldridge Gardens, and the light industrial and office areas along Lorna Lane and Lorna Ridge Road. Commercial uses along the east side of Lorna Road and north side of Rocky Ridge Road encircling Chapel Hill and other neighborhoods should be of an intensity that is compatible with nearby residences and should serve as attractive gateways into the neighborhood.

Bicycle and pedestrian connections to neighboring areas should be improved, particularly south over the interstate to Aldridge Gardens.



Figure 17. Aerial of existing development at Lorna Road and Rocky Ridge Road



Figure 18. Figure-ground diagram of existing development

Uses

- Retail, entertainment and dining uses are recommended primarily along interior streets rather than along Lorna Road. Dining and entertainment uses will be most successful when clustered together at key intersections. Buildings near the central open space should be a priority location for restaurant and entertainment businesses.
- Upper floors of buildings are envisioned for office and residential uses.
- A boutique hotel may be appropriate in the town center.

- Offices and other commercial uses that benefit less from foot traffic would be appropriate for ground floor spaces facing Lorna Road. However, should streetscape improvements Lorna Road succeed in making the corridor more pedestrian-friendly, a broader range of businesses may be suitable along this busy road.
- A high density neighborhood with a variety of housing types is envisioned on the west side of Lorna Road, clustered around the center of the development and neighborhood open spaces.
- The undeveloped site accessed from Sierra Drive is shown being developed for townhouses in a “cluster” arrangement, in which lots face each other across a common open space. Resident

parking is located in garages to the rear of the unit. Visitor parking is located near the common open spaces near the north and south entrances.

Existing Buildings and Uses

- Portions of the Lorna Ridge Shopping Center, including the original grocery store space and the two retail buildings closest to Lorna Road were retained. An initial phase of redevelopment would likely include construction of the parking deck and new buildings in the parking lots along Lornaridge Lane. Businesses that are to remain may shift to new buildings to accommodate demolition and construction in the subsequent phases.
- The theater is retained for renovation or repurposing. The sloping floor design will limit the types of uses that can easily re-use the building. Multiplex theaters have been repurposed as performing arts facilities, concert venues and educational buildings (sloping floor can be used for lecture-style classrooms). Theater floors can also be modified to suit a broader range of uses but at additional expense. Alternatively, the building can be replaced to suit demand as the area develops.
- New buildings are placed at the back of the sidewalk and close to one another to optimize walkability and windowshopping.
- Existing businesses in the proposed town center area can be retained by placing them in newly created spaces so that their existing buildings can be redeveloped in subsequent phases.

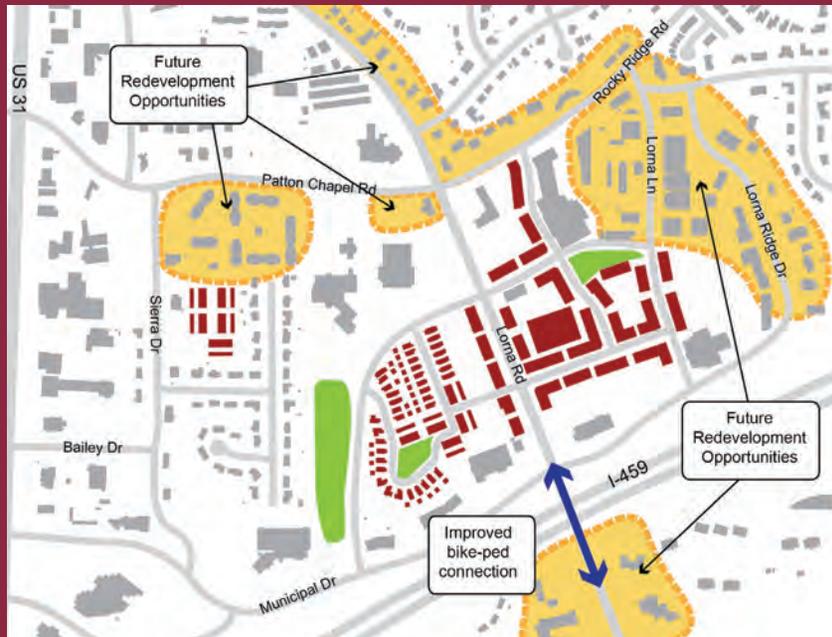
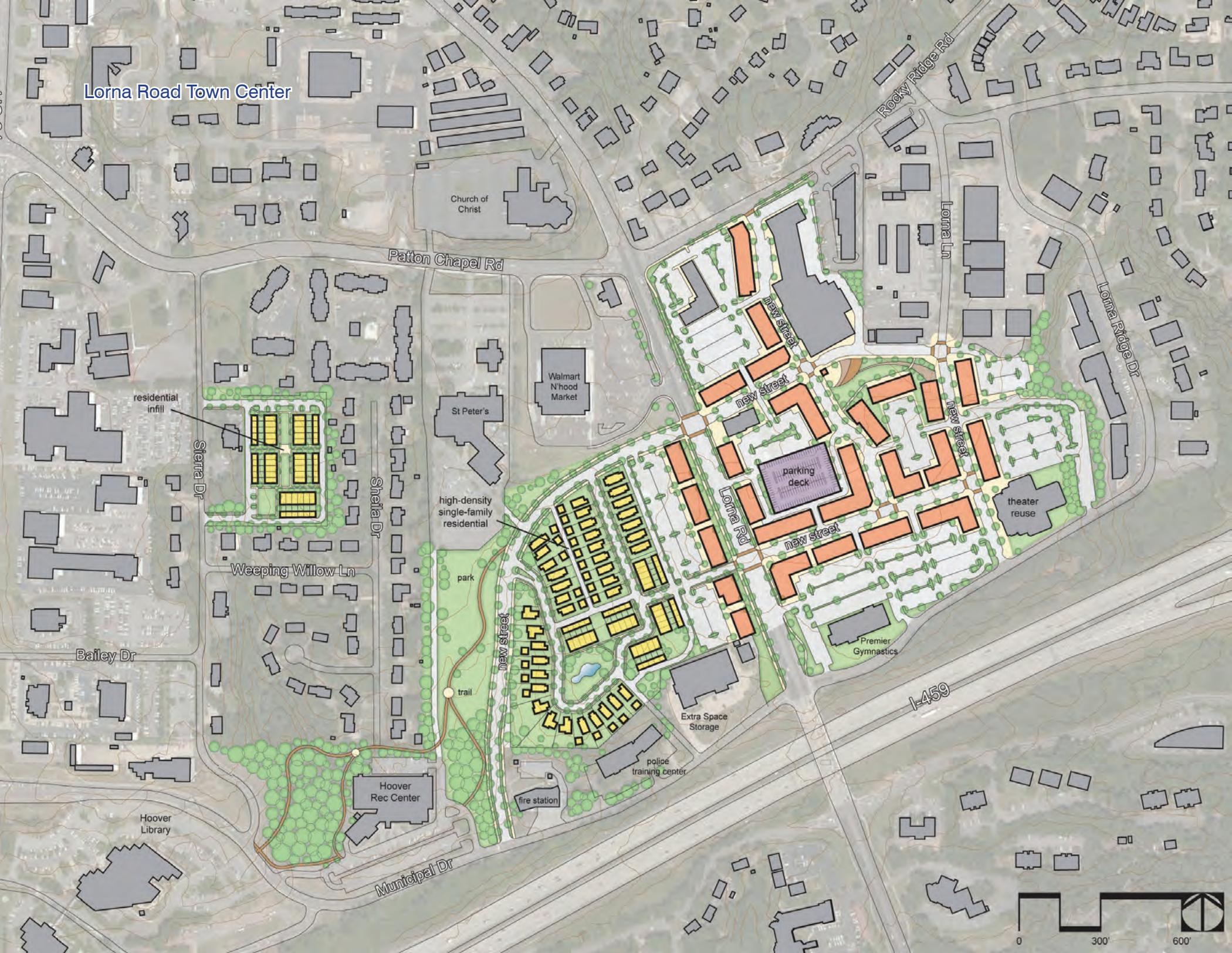


Figure 19: Concept diagram showing proposed buildings, parks and street system

Lorna Road Town Center



Church of Christ

Patton Chapel Rd

Walmart N'hood Market

St Peter's

residential infill

Sierra Dr

Sheila Dr

high-density single-family residential

Weeping Willow Ln

park

trail

new street

new street

new street

new street

new street

new street

Loma Rd

Loma Ln

Loma Ridge Dr

parking deck

theater reuse

Premier Gymnastics

Extra Space Storage

police training center

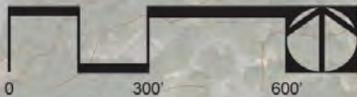
fire station

Hoover Rec Center

Hoover Library

Municipal Dr

I-459



Open Space

- A town commons is proposed as a centerpiece uniting the portions of the town center along the extended Lorna Lane and the shopping center redevelopment area. The open space would accommodate special events, outdoor dining, picnicking and similar uses that would encourage residents to stay longer.
- On the west side of Lorna Road, the underutilized rear portion of the St Peter's property is envisioned as a neighborhood park space that connects to the Hoover Recreation Center, Library and Lake House area. A trail would traverse the park improving pedestrian and bicycle access to the city amenities.
- The mixed density housing north of the Fire Station includes a central green with a water feature that also serves as a stormwater retention basin.
- The townhouse development near Weeping Willow Lane is oriented around a green space. Each home opens directly onto the green.

Parking

- Surface parking is placed behind buildings away from interior streets.
- A structured parking facility is included in a central location to enable multi-story development within the town center.
- Peripheral parking areas in the town center provide parking for nearby buildings and overflow parking for peak periods.
- On-street parking on interior streets also contribute to parking inventory for the town center. On-street parking should be metered to encourage constant turnover during peak periods.
- Parking for the housing areas west of Lorna Road is provided in detached or attached garages located away from the street. Garages for townhouses are accessed from rear alleys.

Street Network

- New streets break down the town center into walkable blocks and create alternative routes for vehicular access. The interconnected street system can relieve existing traffic at the Patton Chapel/Rocky Ridge intersection and reduce the impact on Lorna Road of the additional traffic the redevelopment would attract.
- Lorna Lane, currently a cul-de-sac, is extended southward to connect to Lorna Ridge Drive, making greater use of Lorna Ridge Drive and drawing some business traffic away from Rocky Ridge Road.
- On the west side, a new connecting street is proposed between Municipal Drive and the town center. As with the proposed streets on the east side, this will draw some traffic away from the two existing intersections along Lorna Road.
- New residential streets are proposed as part of the single-family residential development on the west side of Lorna Road.
- Currently, each business fronting on Lorna Road has at least one driveway along the major road. The overabundance of driveways increases congestion and reduces overall safety for motorists and sidewalk users. The number of access points along Lorna is significantly reduced.

Figure 20: Conceptual illustrative plan, Lorna Road Town Center

Lorna Road Town Center

Right: Existing development along Lorna Road



Figure 21. Conceptual birdseye rendering, Lorna Road Town Center. View is from east above Lorna Lane looking toward Lorna Road with town "commons" in foreground

Multimodal Design

- Parallel or on-street parking is recommended on the town center's interior streets. This creates a slower-paced environment on local streets, separates traffic from pedestrian areas and provides premium parking spaces throughout the town center.
- Sidewalks in the town center are 15-20 ft wide, including a five-foot wide street-side zone that accommodates street trees, parking meters, hydrants, garbage receptacles, benches, and similar furnishings and equipment. This width also accommodates some sidewalk dining.
- Crosswalks are marked at street intersections and typically include corner bulbouts, or curb extensions. Bulbouts are used at intersections of streets wherever on-street parking is present to reduce crossing distance for pedestrians while maintaining a relatively wide radius for turning movements by delivery trucks, buses and other large vehicles. Bulbouts also prevent cars from being parked too close to the intersection.
- Street trees are recommended at an average spacing of 50-60 ft along interior streets within the town center and on residential streets proposed on the west side of Lorna Road. Street trees are also recommended as part of an overall re-imagining of Lorna Road between Patton Chapel/ Rocky Ridge Road and Municipal Drive. A wide tree lawn between the curb and new sidewalks will help create a calmer streetscape that is more welcoming to pedestrians.
- The walkable, compact, mixed-use nature of the Lorna Road Town Center Concept makes it an ideal location for a stop or station serving a future local transit circulator.
- The residential streets on the west side of Lorna Road would include five-foot sidewalks on both sides and a tree lawn of five feet between the curb and sidewalk.

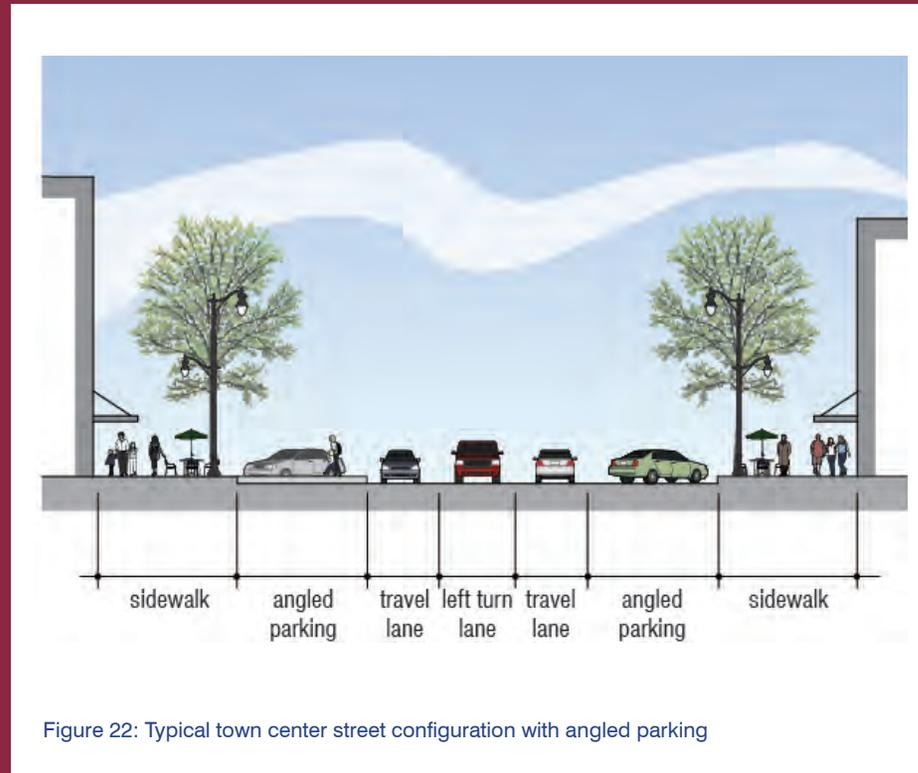


Figure 22: Typical town center street configuration with angled parking

Meadowbrook Tech Village

Meadowbrook office park developed in the early 1980s through 2002 along the burgeoning US 280 corridor. It is one of two corporate parks along the highway within Hoover’s city limits. The master-planned campus features two lakes and Class A and B office buildings located along a mature, wooded parkway. This plan envisions the office park transforming over time into a 24-7 “tech” village with new buildings and uses creating a more immersive environment for working, living and playing.

Meadowbrook is in an ideal location for becoming a city center for East Hoover, with a variety of uses, activities, and gathering spaces. It offers plenty of developable space and amenities that will enhance its adaptive reuse.

One of the most attractive amenities on the campus are its lakes. While there is little interaction with office activities today, the lakes will become a more central element in the village. The existing path around the lakes would be improved to accommodate more users, bikes, sidewalk dining and fitness stations. Improvements to existing buildings will engage the lakefront and loop in a colonnade fashion. A decorative pedestrian/bike bridge will provide more convenient access across the lake. With the increased activity and engagement along the lake’s edge, the end result should be reminiscent of the award winning Big Spring Park in Huntsville, with lights and movement along the periphery reflected and dancing upon the water.

Immediately south of Meadow Lake Drive, an amphitheater is nestled into the lake’s edge with a “floating” stage on the water. The topography and distance should limit sound impacts on neighborhoods in the area while producing ample energy and activity in the park.

A future civic building, housing an east library branch and community meeting space, is placed in a prominent location—at the intersection of Corporate Parkway and Corporate Drive—to set the tone for the development as visitors enter the village. The architecture for this building should be stately and instantly signal its public purpose.

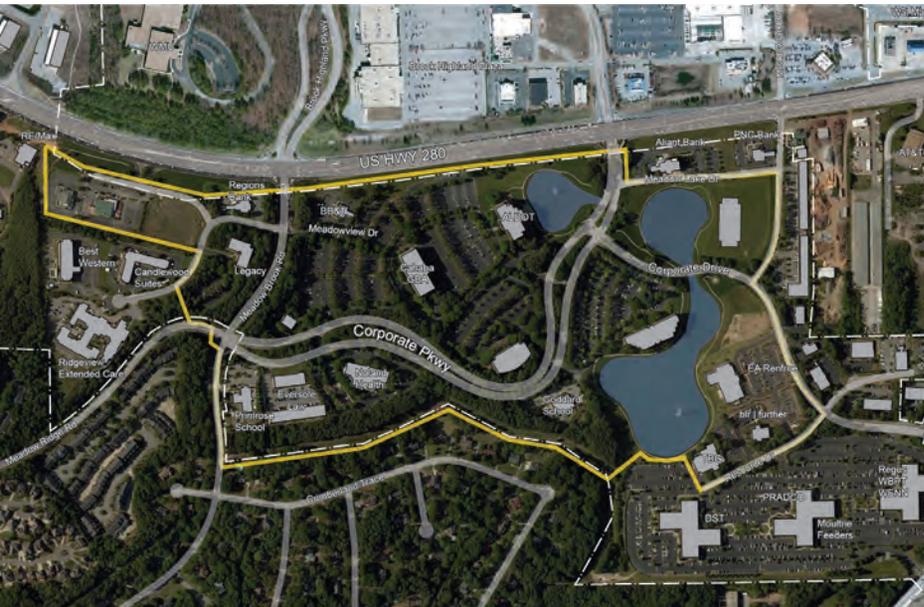


Figure 23. Aerial of existing development



Figure 24. Figure-ground diagram of existing development

The village center is north of the parkway, taking the place of large surface parking lots. It would feature a variety of uses: office, research and development, retail, dining, residential and open space. The office park will take on the attributes of a modern traditional neighborhood, providing opportunities for to work, shop, eat, and recreate within the development. The street network is highly interconnected internally and with adjacent neighborhoods and business areas. To the northwest, Meadowview Drive would be extended into the village center, incorporating existing and future businesses west of Meadow Brook Road into the Tech Village.

Uses

- Existing and future buildings are envisioned as containing multiple uses, with ground floor uses ranging from offices and research and development firms to retail and restaurants. Upper floors may house residential or office/R&D uses. Buildings further from the village center may contain a higher ratio of residential units.
- Retail, dining and entertainment uses are encouraged particularly near the village lawn and in the existing and new buildings along the west side of the lake.

- Buildings nearest Meadow Brook Road are envisioned as primarily residential although they may include office or R&D uses.
- Buildings located along the lake would “front” on and be accessible from the pathway that encircles the lake. It is envisioned that these buildings incorporate uses at ground level that draw foot traffic along and around the lake.
- A public building housing one or more community functions is proposed at the intersection of Corporate Drive and Corporate Parkway. This location gives the civic use a prominent view from the parkway entrance and from US 280. The location also places the civic use conveniently between the village center and the lake.
- The site of two restaurants, in the area of US 280 known as Bailey’s Gap, is currently being considered by the landowner for creation of a dining and entertainment hub, possibly including a brewery. It will be advantageous to create strong physical and programmatic links between this venture and the village center.

Existing Buildings and Uses

- All existing buildings in the office park are retained in the village center concept. Existing office uses may remain or buildings may be partially or completely repurposed for other uses, including residential in upper floors. New buildings are accommodated by developing two multi-story parking structures.

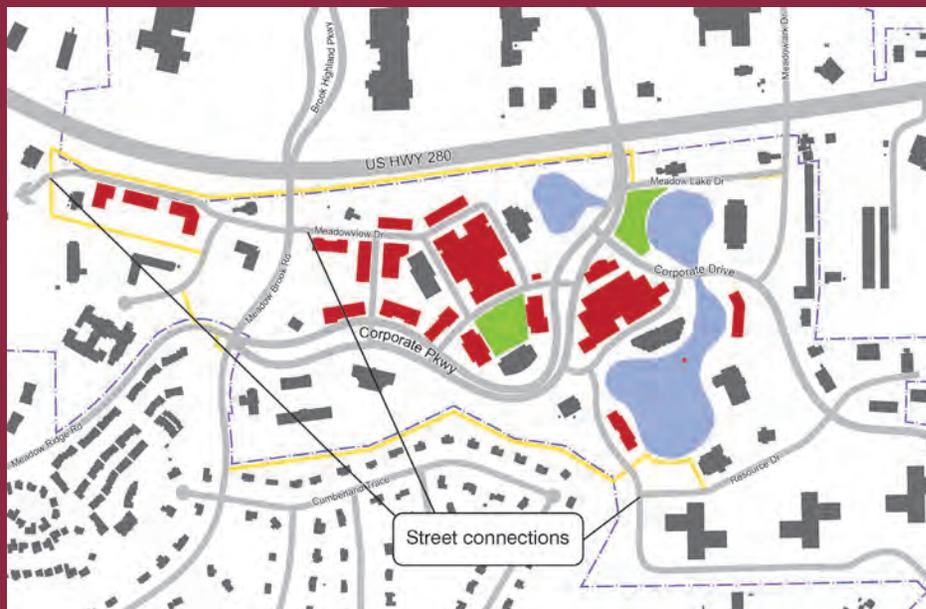


Figure 25. Concept diagram showing proposed buildings, parks and street system

Meadowbrook Tech Village

Figure 26: Conceptual illustrative plan, Meadowbrook "Tech Village"



Open Space

- The wooded median along Corporate Parkway remains as a signature open space corridor.
- The lake and lakeside will become a more prominent feature of the village with additional buildings developed with easy pedestrian access for residents, workers and visitors. An amphitheater or similar outdoor amenity is proposed as an activity generator that takes advantage of the lake amenity.
- A bicycle-pedestrian bridge is proposed across a narrow portion of the lake to create a stronger connection between the east and west sides. A pavilion or other amenity along the bridge represents another opportunity to activate and enhance enjoyment of the lake.
- A lawn or civic park becomes a focal point of the village center west of the lake. The lawn accommodates outdoor dining, picnicking and special events. Multiuse paths connect the lawn to the lake, at the north and south ends.
- An existing wooded buffer between nearby homes (along Cumberland Trace) and the village is improved with a multiuse path that connects adjacent businesses and homes to the lake along its southern end.

Parking

- As a general rule, surface parking is placed behind buildings away from interior streets.
- Two parking structures are proposed within existing surface parking areas to enable intensive development. The parking structures are located strategically to support uses around the village center and additional infill development around the lake.
- Surface parking lots are located away from the village center along the west and north perimeter.
- On-street parking on interior streets also contribute to parking inventory for the village center. On-street parking should be metered to encourage constant turnover during peak periods.

Street Network

- New streets break down the village center into walkable blocks and create alternative routes for vehicular access.
- Meadowview Drive is extended so that it will connect from the village center to Inverness Corners shopping Center, thereby creating an alternate route parallel to US 280.
- A street connection is also recommended to connect southward to Resource Drive and to the parking lot drive that serves the adjoining office buildings. This would create two connections to Hwy 119, the southerly access interconnecting with Doug Baker Blvd.

Meadowbrook Tech Village



US 280

Corporate Pkwy

Corporate Dr

Figure 27: Conceptual birdseye rendering, Meadowbrook "Tech Village" with US Hwy 280 in the background.

Multimodal Design

- Parallel or on-street parking is recommended on the village center's interior streets. This creates a slower-paced environment on local streets, separates traffic from pedestrian areas and provides premium parking spaces throughout the village center.
- Sidewalks in the village center are 15-20 ft wide, including a five-foot wide street-side zone that accommodates street trees, parking meters, hydrants, garbage receptacles, benches, and similar furnishings and equipment. This width also accommodates some sidewalk dining.
- Crosswalks are marked at street intersections and typically include corner bulbouts, or curb extensions. Bulbouts are used at intersections of streets wherever on-street parking is present to reduce crossing distance for pedestrians while maintaining a relatively wide radius for turning movements by delivery trucks, buses and other large vehicles. Bulbouts also prevent cars from being parked too close to the intersection.
- Sidewalks are recommended along Corporate Parkway only in strategic locations. The intent is that most pedestrian travel will be along new, interior streets and a multiuse path that traverses the village lawn and connects to existing and new paths along the lakeside.
- Street trees are recommended at an average spacing of 50-60 ft along interior streets.
- The walkable, compact, mixed-use nature of the proposed village center will make it an excellent location for a transit stop along US 280.
- Incorporating shared lanes, or 'sharrows,' along Corporate Parkway should be considered. Alternatively, a multiuse path could be integrated within the wooded median, possibly supplemented by facilities on the north side of the road where the median narrows.

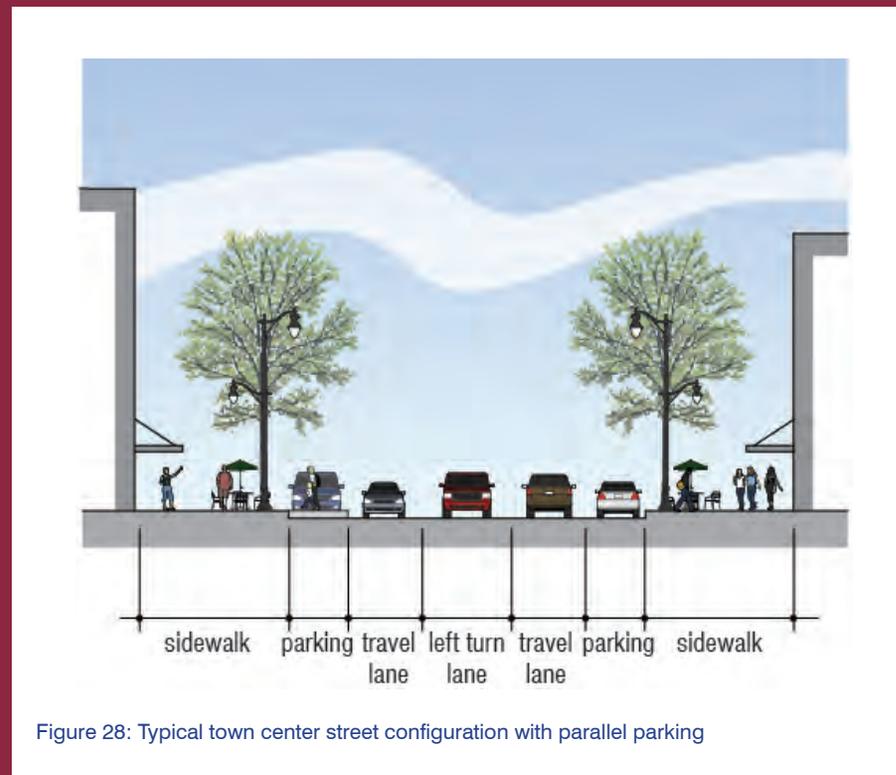


Figure 28: Typical town center street configuration with parallel parking

Hoover's City Center

The Riverchase Galleria campus represents a prime opportunity to develop a city center for Hoover. Most respondents to the plan survey identified the Galleria as the “center” of Hoover.

The Galleria is a well-performing super-regional indoor mall with outparcel commercial development. Opening in 1986 the Galleria was ahead of its time, mixing an office tower and hotel within the mall structure. According to the mall’s owner and management firm, it currently has an occupancy rate over 90%, outpacing most other indoor malls. However, the Galleria owner and City leaders recognize the need to plan ahead and ensure that the Galleria not only remains relevant, but highly successful over the lifetime of this plan.



Figure 29: Aerial of existing development

There are several factors that make the Riverchase Galleria a natural fit for becoming Hoover’s city center:

- Location at the confluence of two major regional highways, I-459 and US 31. It is also centrally located in Hoover and easily accessed from the entire region
- Existence of large parcels, limited ownership interests, and ample space
- Existing infrastructure
- Existing high-rises and mixture of uses
- Having the distinction of being the symbol of Hoover’s coming of age in the 1980s.



Figure 30: Figure-ground diagram of existing development

Both the private sector and the City recognize that the recipe for continued success will be in transforming the property so that it attracts younger and aging populations alike. The Plan envisions the Galleria becoming the epicenter not only of Hoover retail—as it has since its founding—but for all manner of commerce and civic life. Here, a bold vision is laid out for the campus becoming a densely developed city center growing out of the large expanse of parking lots and the atrium interior to the mall with a mixture of businesses, housing, and civic spaces that together provide activity and use for the site 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The development pattern of the new city center should include the following concepts to make the space feel and function like a true urban city center:

- Buildings should be built to engage the streetscape.
- Parking should be within parking structures or to the rear of buildings. Parallel or angled on-street parking is also encouraged.
- Streets should be “complete streets,” accommodating automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles and transit. Adequate lighting and landscaping should be provided along streets, including street trees to offer shade and color, to reduce heat islands and to buffer sidewalks from vehicular travelways.

NOTE: Image revised 10/18/18

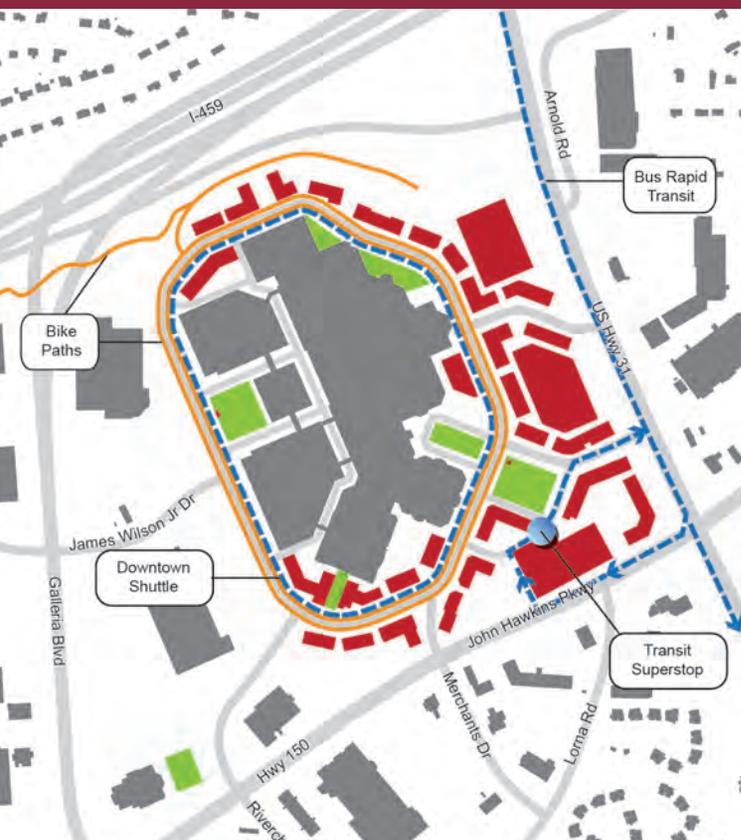


Figure 31: Concept diagram showing proposed buildings, open spaces, and circulation system

Uses

- Existing and future buildings are envisioned as containing multiple uses, with ground floor uses including offices, retail, entertainment and restaurants. Upper floors may house residential or office uses.
- Retail, dining and entertainment uses are encouraged particularly along public spaces and the main entrances to the mall.
- One or more buildings housing public functions and public open spaces will establish the redevelopment area as an authentic “city center” for all of Hoover. Public uses will draw additional visitors to businesses and activities on-site.
- Adaptive reuse of an existing building on the campus could house a cultural and performing arts center. Should the city center concept come to fruition and the arts center grow—as is likely, it would be ideal to move the arts facility into a custom-built, permanent facility located centrally within the city center development.
- A transit “superstop” is proposed that would improve access for users of the current US Hwy 31 route, accommodate future bus rapid transit (BRT) service, and serve as a transfer station for a local transit operation.

Existing Buildings and Uses

- The Riverchase Galleria building is maintained although it may become advantageous to modify the footprint to accommodate new uses and provide more direct entry into the heart of the mall building.
- Existing outparcels and parking lots along the loop road would be redeveloped to integrate new mixed-use buildings and parking structures that are necessary to create the compact, multistory development envisioned. Restaurants and other businesses currently housed in outparcel buildings could move into new, more central spaces as those are developed.

Open Space

- The parking lot in front of the Von Maur department store is redeveloped as a small park, creating an attractive gateway from Galleria Boulevard and generating more foot traffic on the west side.
- Two civic open spaces are proposed on the south end of the site offering space to meet friends, for outdoor dining and to hold civic events.
- An open space at the northeast Galleria entrance provides outdoor space for shoppers, diners and hotel-goers.
- A multiuse trail will extend from the wooded northwest corner of the site under the interstate flyover ultimately connecting to open spaces and future development in the Hidden Valley area.

Hoover's City Center

Through thoughtful redevelopment and infill, the Riverchase Galleria can transform into a city center environment activated by a broad mix of uses. While the core of the indoor mall, hotel and office tower remain in place in this concept, new multistory buildings emerge in the perimeter parking lots to create a walkable “Main Street” along the mall’s loop road. Lining the new main street will be new shopping, dining and entertainment options, well-defined green spaces, offices and upscale, upper-story living.

This evolution of an indoor mall into a bustling city center is not an untried concept. It has been successful in other US cities, particularly those with a ‘champion’ on the public and developer sides, who will shepherd the vision to reality. To facilitate this dramatic transformation and assure the right complement of public spaces and activities, a public-private venture will be critical. The City’s potential contributions might include tax incentives, infrastructure improvements and/or public building projects.

Figure 32. Conceptual illustrative plan, developing a “downtown” on the Riverchase Galleria campus



Parking

- As a general rule, surface parking is placed behind buildings away from interior streets.
- Three parking structures are proposed along the east side of the site to enable more intensive development. One of these structures will be connected to the transit superstop to accommodate park and ride users. Mixed-use buildings line each parking structure along the “main street.”
- On-street parking is located on interior streets and on the outside of the loop road. This will provide convenience for visitors, add to the overall parking supply and support a more walkable street environment. On-street parking spaces should be metered to encourage constant turnover during peak periods.

Street Network

- The loop road that allows shoppers to navigate the Galleria today is kept mostly in place. The alignment changes slightly to allow room for additional development on the north end of the site.
- Existing entry drives are converted into streets, several with building planned on each side, to break down the campus into walkable downtown blocks.
- The US 31 entry drive nearest I-459 is removed to accommodate infill development and improve traffic flow on the highway.

Multimodal Design

- The loop road evolves into a “complete street” with vehicular lanes, dedicated bicycle lanes, sidewalks and a transit lane along the front of the mall building.
- Parallel or on-street parking is recommended on the interior streets. This creates a slower-paced environment along streets, separates traffic from pedestrian areas and provides premium parking spaces throughout the city center.
- Sidewalks are 15-20 ft wide, including a five-foot wide street-side zone that accommodates street trees, parking meters, hydrants, garbage receptacles, benches, and similar furnishings and equipment. This width also accommodates sidewalk dining.
- Crosswalks are marked at street intersections and typically include corner bulbouts, or curb extensions. Bulbouts are used at intersections of streets wherever on-street parking is present to reduce crossing distance for pedestrians while maintaining a relatively wide radius for turning movements by delivery trucks, buses and other large vehicles. Bulbouts also prevent cars from being parked too close to the intersection, which can interfere with turning movements, pedestrian crossing and sight distance .

- Street trees are recommended at an average spacing of 50-60 ft along interior streets.
- The walkable, compact, mixed-use nature of the proposed city center will enable those arriving by transit to enjoy the city center on foot.
- Those arriving by BRT can walk easily throughout the city center, hop on the circulator or transfer to a local shuttle service connecting them to other Hoover destinations.
- Goods and services sought after by park-and-ride commuters will be located conveniently near the transit superstop.

Hoover's City Center

Right: The Galleria is surrounded by parking lots that can be redeveloped to create a "two-sided" Main Street environment.

Figure 33. City Center street environment



Main Street Concept

Redesigning the existing loop road that encircles the indoor mall will be a key part of creating a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment. Shown below are two options for retrofitting the loop road—several other configurations are possible as well. A few elements are prerequisites, they must be included to create a welcoming “main street.”

- There must be buildings on both sides of the street, not parking lots.
- Sidewalks must be at least 15 feet wide (20 ft will allow sidewalk dining) with street trees and other fixtures along the curb, separating the sidewalk from traffic.
- Street lighting must include a pedestrian fixture directed over the sidewalk.
- On-street parking provides premium parking spaces for adjacent businesses. It also forces motorists to drive more slowly and with more care. On-street parking also separates sidewalks and moving traffic.

The options below differ in whether a landscaped median will be included in the ultimate design. The median shown in the image below left would give way to a left turn lane at intersections where necessary. The median helps break down the scale of the street, adds shade and greenery, and offers opportunities for pedestrian refuges at crosswalks. The center left-turn lane option (below right) slightly narrows the cross-section and is more accommodating of left turn movements. It is still quite pedestrian-friendly if only slightly less so than with the landscaped median.

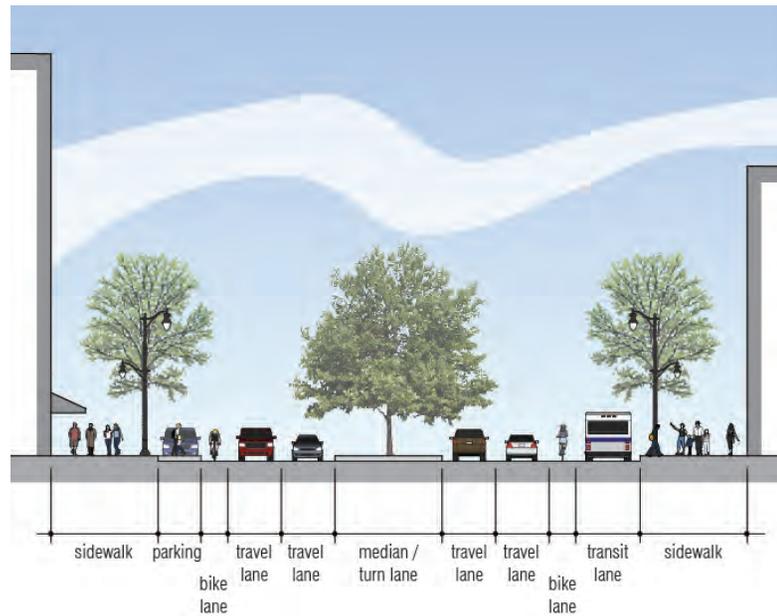


Figure 34: City Center Loop Road configuration with center median/turn lane

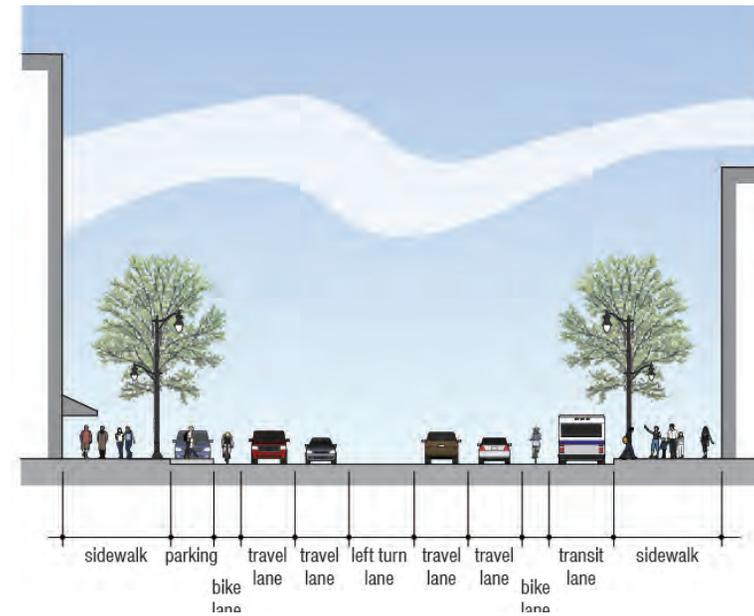
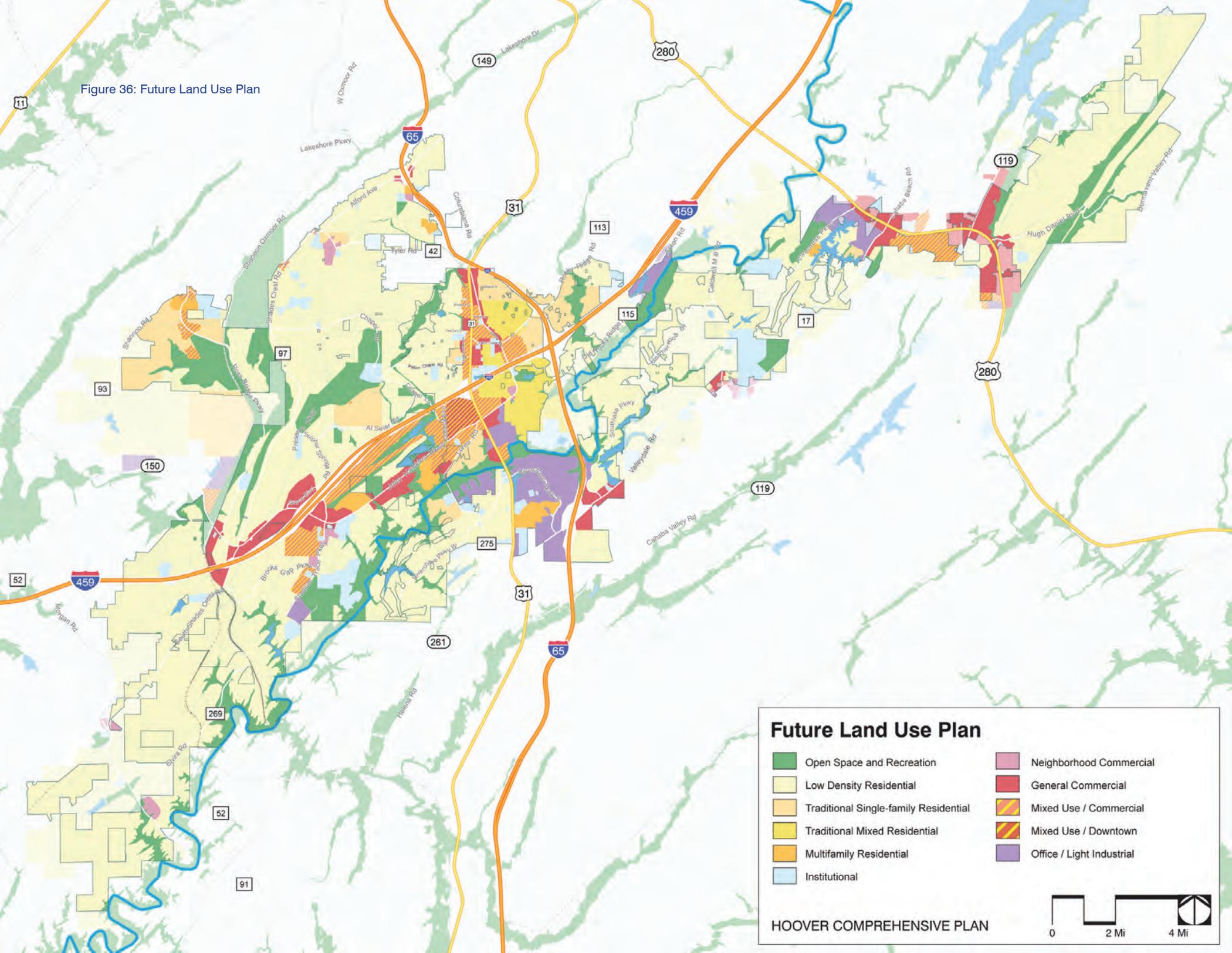


Figure 35: City Center Loop Road configuration with center turn lane

Figure 36: Future Land Use Plan



Future Land Use Plan

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | Open Space and Recreation |  | Neighborhood Commercial |
|  | Low Density Residential |  | General Commercial |
|  | Traditional Single-family Residential |  | Mixed Use / Commercial |
|  | Traditional Mixed Residential |  | Mixed Use / Downtown |
|  | Multifamily Residential |  | Office / Light Industrial |
|  | Institutional | | |

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan (Figure 36) corresponds directly with the development pattern illustrated in the Strategic Development Concept. It offers additional insight and guidance as to the uses envisioned within each of the growth and preservation sectors throughout the city. The two components are meant to serve as complimentary guides that convey a holistic vision for the community's future. Both should be reviewed when considering policy decisions and resource allocations that directly influence the development and use of land. Should an opportunity arise that is not reflected in the Future Land Use Plan that would have a clear and substantial positive impact on the community, the best interest and long term success of the community should be given more weight.

It should be noted that designation of land uses on the Future Land Use map should not be interpreted to propose, approve, deny nor preclude any particular action without full consideration of all policies, principles, standards or intentions expressed in this plan as well as vested rights established under existing zoning or City agreements. In addition, specific site conditions, such as topography, geology, soils and hydrology, will be of major importance when evaluating sites for new development, especially those of larger scale, and planning and designing their uses and densities. Similarly, adequate community facilities and infrastructure should be assured before making any significant development proposals or decisions.

Open Space and Recreation

These areas accommodate open space or recreational uses only. The majority of this area is located within the various floodways and floodplains. Encroachments into the floodways should be prohibited and those extending into the 100 year floodplain should be kept to a minimum. Forested areas should remain intact whenever possible. Recreational uses, particularly those that require large amounts of open space, are encouraged to locate in this area.

Low Density Residential

These areas accommodate low density (0.25 acre and larger lots) residential subdivisions. These subdivisions should be connected to a sanitary sewer system. Conservation subdivisions are encouraged with appropriate septic/sewer facilities. Schools, places of worship and other institutions requiring ample parking may be appropriate where conditions warrant. The street network exhibits a moderate level of connectivity. Sidewalks or off-street paths are encouraged to accommodate pedestrian activity.

Traditional Single-family Residential

These areas include a mixture of single family detached housing types and sizes, with lot sizes averaging 0.25 acres or less; bungalow courts; townhouses; and duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes where conditions permit. The street network should have a high degree of connectivity. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the street as topography allows. Off-street paths are encouraged for pedestrian and bicycle use, particularly where sidewalks are not feasible.

Traditional Mixed Residential

These areas accommodate traditional neighborhood development of mixed but relatively higher densities. Residential uses include a mixture of single family detached housing types and sizes, with lot sizes averaging 0.25 acres or less; bungalow courts; attached townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes; and urban apartments, stacked flats, and condos. The street network should have a high degree of connectivity, like that of the traditional grid network. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the street.

 **Multifamily Residential**

These areas represent existing multifamily developments including apartment buildings, complexes and condominiums. Multifamily residential uses tend to be more centrally located near major roads. They may provide a transition between commercial/mixed-use areas and single-family neighborhoods. Future multifamily development will occur primarily within areas designated as Mixed-Use and Traditional Mixed Residential, often within the upper floors of mixed-use buildings. Street connectivity and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations should be improved through any future redevelopment in these areas.

 **Institutional**

These areas include government facilities, schools, places of worship, medical, and community service uses and lands. Higher intensity institutional uses, which tend to draw larger amounts of traffic, should be located in highly accessible locations where adjacent land uses are compatible. Less intense institutions, which range from small churches to elementary schools, may be appropriate in or adjacent to neighborhoods provided there is sufficient transportation access that does not interfere with the enjoyment of the neighborhood. The development pattern—including setbacks, heights and street design—should be consistent with that of adjoining development.

 **Neighborhood Commercial**

Neighborhood business nodes are located at key intersections to accommodate smaller scale, lower intensity commercial activities that provide essential services to surrounding neighborhoods. The public realm should include treatments that make the center readily identifiable with the surrounding neighborhood(s). Some mixing of uses, higher density residential uses, and public spaces are encouraged within or close to these nodes. The street network should be highly interconnected. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of streets.

 **General Commercial**

These areas include large, automobile-oriented commercial development along major thoroughfares. Uses include a variety of retail and service commercial establishments. These uses should be attractive with generous landscaping and high quality building materials. More intensive development is encouraged along major thoroughfares. Near residential areas development should be less intense with adequate buffering provided. Large parcels along major roadways should remain unsubdivided to allow for intensive redevelopment in the future. The street network is intended to become more interconnected. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of streets, including arterials where practicable.

 **Office / Light Industrial**

These areas accommodate low impact, attractive employment centers, including uses that require large amounts of space and quick access to the interstate. Uses include offices, distribution centers, research and development facilities, clean industries and government facilities. These areas may feature mixed-use centers and housing areas. Given their high visibility, these areas should be well-designed and maintained with quality materials, coordinated signage and landscaping. The street network should have a moderate to high level of connectivity. Multi-tenant campuses should be walkable.



Mixed-Use Commercial

These areas accommodate a mix of commercial, lodging, institutional and residential uses of moderate intensity. Retail, dining and entertainment uses are concentrated at ground level in central locations. Office and other commercial uses may occupy ground and upper floor spaces. Within the center of mixed-use areas, residential uses may be located only in upper floors. Toward the edges of these areas, residential buildings may be appropriate. Squares, plazas, parks or similar public spaces are encouraged at or near the center of mixed-use areas.

Parking structures and lots are located primarily to the rear of buildings. The street network is highly interconnected and may include on-street parking. Streets feature sidewalks on both sides. In addition to pedestrian use, sidewalks are of a width to accommodate street trees, furnishings, and sidewalk dining (where appropriate). Utilities are underground or located away from street frontages.



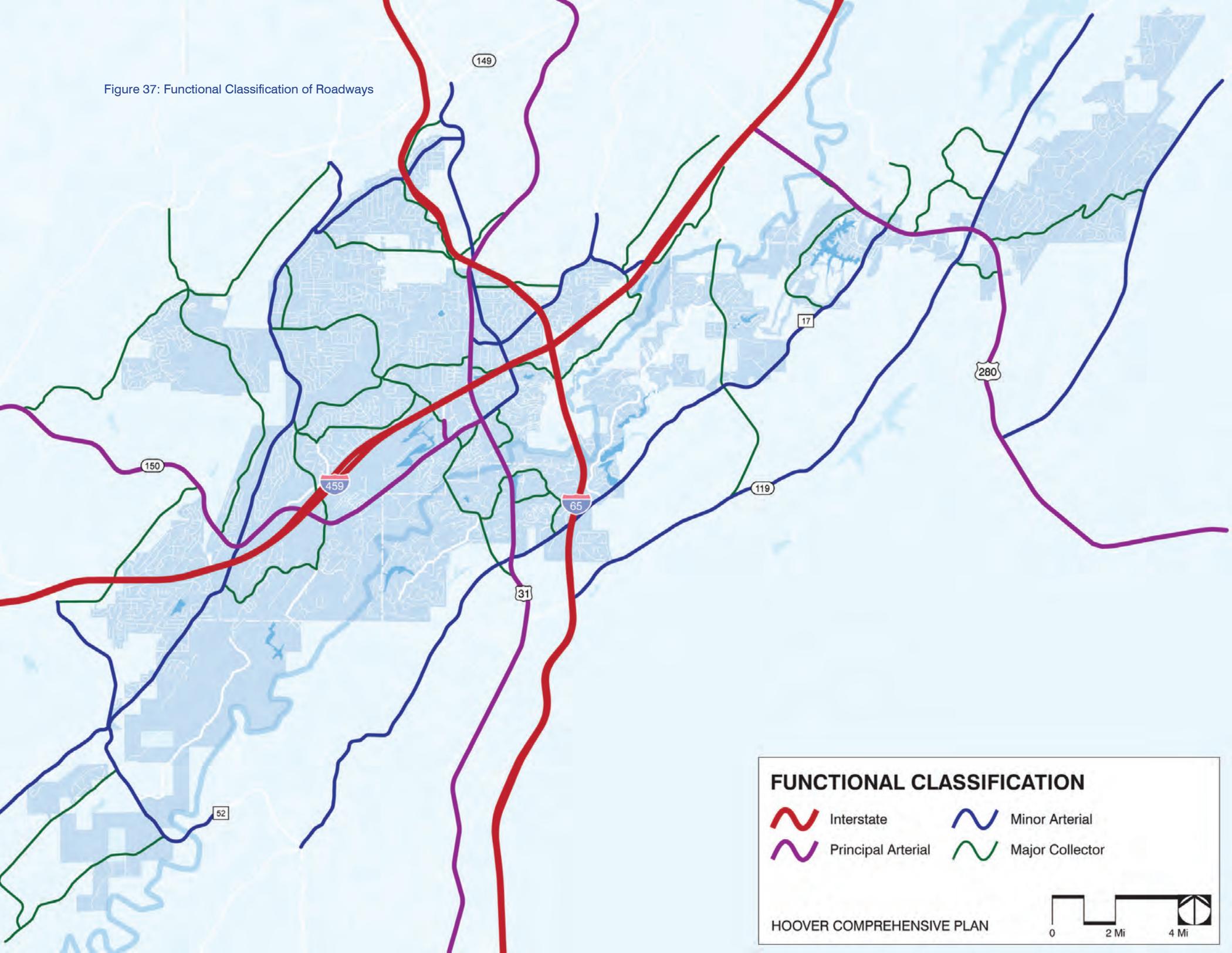
Mixed Use / City Center

This area accommodates a mix of commercial, lodging, institutional and residential uses of highest intensity. Retail, dining and entertainment uses are concentrated at ground level in central locations. Office and other commercial uses may occupy ground and upper floor spaces. Residential uses may be located only in upper floors. Squares, plazas, parks or similar public spaces are encouraged at or near the center of mixed-use areas.

Parking structures and lots are located primarily to the rear of buildings. The street network is highly interconnected and may include on-street parking and separated bicycle facilities. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of streets. In addition to pedestrian use, sidewalks are of a width to accommodate street trees, furnishings, and sidewalk dining (where appropriate). Utilities are underground or located away from street frontages.

Mixed-use centers are encouraged in larger developments to create the dynamic environments envisioned by our citizens for the future of the city. The size, use mix and intensity of these centers will depend on the market's ability to support them. A phased approach to mixed-use development may be necessary to first produce the number of homes necessary to create and maintain market demand for business uses that will become the anchors of these centers.

Figure 37: Functional Classification of Roadways



FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

 Interstate	 Minor Arterial
 Principal Arterial	 Major Collector

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Transportation

Transportation is a critical component of any city's planning program. It is one of the basic tenants of the city's physical layout and functionality. Transportation is especially close to the Land Development and Use component of planning since each has a symbiotic relationship with the other. The level of access to and type of adjacent transport facilities correlates to the development potential of land, while the development and use of land determines the efficiency and adequacy of the adjacent transport network.

The level by which the transportation network handles traffic loads and provides access and mobility to citizens directly influences our quality. If a roadway network has poor connectivity, offering fewer route options, arterials and collectors become congested and less functional, particularly if no other modes are offered to help reduce automobile traffic. Many times, particularly in Alabama, transportation is viewed almost exclusively through the lens of roadways and personal automobile transport. While that is certainly a major component of the transportation network, other means of transport are often overlooked, leaving many in the community who would prefer or need alternative means of mobility without such options. With health concerns and consciousness on the rise, active means of mobility are growing in importance to not only provide alternative means to reach destinations, but improve health and wellness of the citizenry. Also, as the cost of living continues to rise, individuals and families continue to look for ways to live within

their means. Transportation choices offer residents, workers and others opportunities to reduce their transportation costs and free more disposable income for them to spend on other goods and services.

The primary goal of the transportation component of the Plan is to improve access and mobility for all of the citizens of Hoover through a variety of modes. This transportation strategy will help mitigate current and future deficiencies, increase mobility, support land use and development planning, and create a safe and efficient means of travel for the future. It includes proposed improvements to the roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks.

Roadways

An adequate road and street network should provide safe and efficient traffic flow and access throughout the city. The general purposes of the road and street network are as follows:

- To move people and goods with minimum interference to local residents and commercial activities.
- To enable residents to move safely and easily from one part of the community to another. To develop a local road and street system that connects to the regional network.
- To develop a road and street system that separates thru and local traffic.

- To develop a road and street system that is highly connected, allowing for the dispersal of local traffic, a more efficient provision of services, and improved emergency access.
- To minimize conflict points between motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

(Daniels et. al., 2007)

Existing Conditions

Functional Roadway Classifications

To develop a hierarchy of movement in the roadway network, each thoroughfare is classified by the degree to which they provide traffic movement and property access. These categories include, from highest to lowest: interstates, arterials, collectors, and local streets (Figure 37). The higher a classification is on the hierarchal scale, the more emphasis is placed on traffic movement. The lower a classification is on the scale, the more emphasis is placed on property access (Figure 38).

Interstate

An interstate's primary function is to carry through traffic for long distances at high speeds. Access to interstates is limited to exits specially designed to separate local traffic from interstate traffic. Pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles are prohibited from utilizing an interstate. Interstates 65 and 459 are examples of interstates in Hoover.

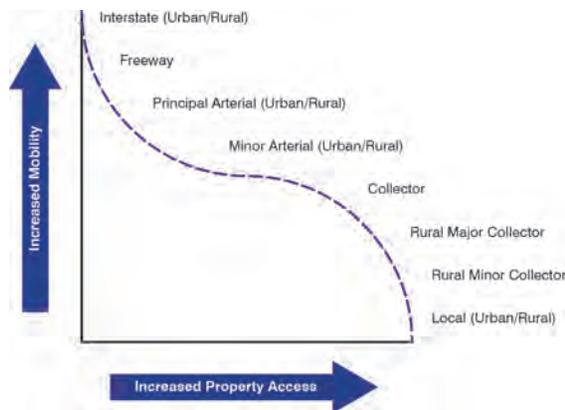


Figure 38. Functionality of Road Classifications. Source: ALDOT Access Management Manual, 2014

Arterials

An arterial road’s primary function is to carry people and goods into and out of the community. These roads are generally major highways that carry traffic at high speeds and offer limited access to adjoining properties. Bicycles and pedestrians are not encouraged to travel on or close to arterials without proper separation and well-marked facilities. Arterials often serve as the primary gateways into a community and are the most visible parts of the city to the traveling public (Daniels et. al., 2007). According to ALDOT, arterial roadways in the Hoover vicinity include principal arterials US Highways 31 and 280 and AL Highway 150, along with secondary arterials.

Secondary Arterials

- AL Highway 119
- AL Highway 261 (Pelham/Helena)
- Morgan Road
- Shades Crest Road
- South Shades Crest Road
- West Oxmoor Road
- Alford Road
- Columbiana Road
- Lorna Road
- Patton Chapel Road (east extent)
- Rocky Ridge Road
- Old Rocky Ridge Road (east extent)
- Acton Road at I-459
- Valleydale Road
- Dunnavant Valley Road.

Collectors

Collector streets function to carry traffic from local streets to arterial roadways and vice versa. Collectors are designed to carry traffic at slower speeds and are meant to handle lower traffic volumes than arterials. Collectors have a higher level of accessibility to adjacent properties than arterials, but not to the extent local streets do. Collectors as a functional classification also begin to accommodate more pedestrian and bicycle traffic with less separation from motorized vehicles. Hoover area collectors include:

Collector streets

- Parkwood Road
- Ross Bridge Parkway
- Shannon-Oxmoor Road
- Brock’s Gap Parkway
- Stadium Trace Parkway
- Preserve Parkway
- Park Avenue
- Chapel Road
- Al Seier Road
- Patton Chapel Road (west of US Hwy 31)
- Tyler Road
- Municipal Drive
- Old Montgomery Hwy
- Data Drive
- Riverchase Parkway
- Parkway Lake Drive
- Old Rocky Ridge Road
- Acton Road
- Altadena Road
- Caldwell Mill Road
- Inverness Parkway
- Cahaba Beach Road
- Brook Highland Parkway
- Brook Highland Drive
- Doug Baker Boulevard
- Hugh Daniel Drive

All other streets are classified as local streets. The primary purposes of local streets are to “provide access to property, serve as right-of-way easements for utilities, provide temporary parking space, separate buildings to provide light and air, and act as a border to prevent the spread of fire” (Daniels et. al. 2004, p. 149). Local streets accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic to a greater degree and with less separation than other classifications. Width, speed limit, and the availability of on-street parking may vary from street to street and across different zoning districts.

Traffic Volume

Analyzing traffic volume is a good way of determining whether or not a road is meeting the travel demands of the community. To study traffic volume, this plan looks at traffic counts taken at various points along the interstate, arterials, and collectors within Hoover. Traffic counts reported in this plan are found in the Appendix.

Roadway Capacity and Level of Service

Level of services (LOS) as it relates to roadways is a measurement of a thoroughfare’s performance in handling traffic volume. It is measured on a hierarchal scale with letter grades A-F representing how traffic flows on the thoroughfare. LOS is generally calculated by taking existing traffic counts and dividing them by the roadway’s capacity based on its functional classification and design (Figure 39). A grade of LOS A-C means that the traffic along the roadway is in free to stable flow. LOS D is applied to roadways that have high and dense traffic volume, but the flow is still stable. LOS E signifies that stability of the traffic flow is breaking down, while LOS F means the roadway is not capable of functioning properly with the existing traffic volume. According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the functionality of a roadway is deemed to be acceptable if it operates at LOS A-D.

A roadway’s capacity is influenced by a number of factors including functional classification, number of lanes, presence of traffic signals, level of access management, etc. Given the geographical scope of this plan, it utilizes a general roadway capacity guide produced by ALDOT that utilizes functional classification and number of lanes (Figure 41). More localized studies should consider additional factors.

When applying the capacity guide to roadways in the Hoover area with their respective traffic counts and mapping these data (Figure 40), we find that the level of service permits stable flow along most segments of the city’s collector network, but traffic flow begins to break down along area arterials. The design of the collector network by and large accommodates the traffic volume. The arterial network consistently scores in the LOS D-F range, indicating much of the network is inadequate to handle traffic volumes with its present design.

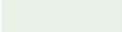
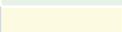
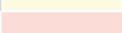
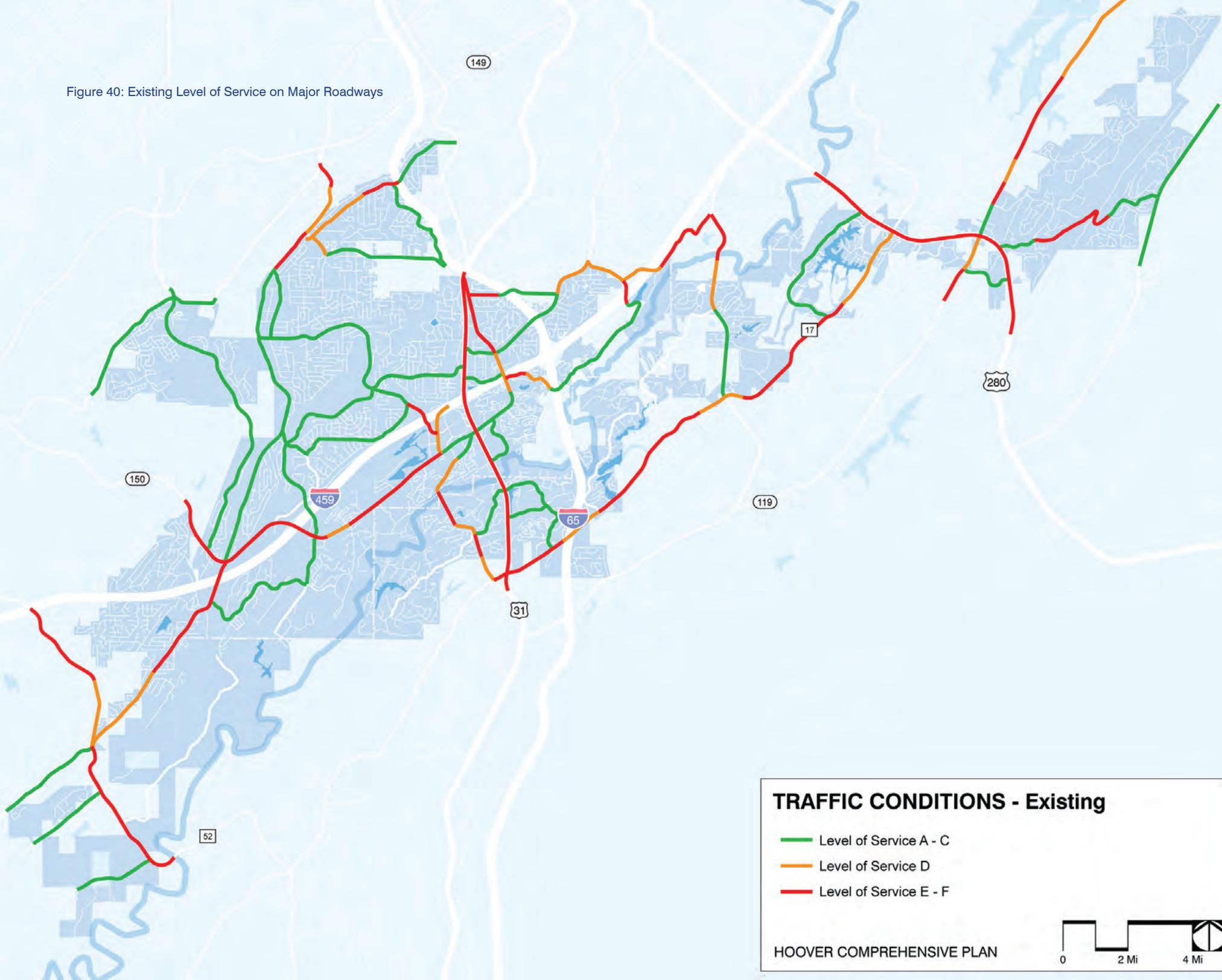
Level of Service Scale		
LOS A		Free traffic flow (0-35% of capacity)
LOS B		Stable traffic flow (35-50% of capacity)
LOS C		Stable traffic flow (50-62% of capacity)
LOS D		High density stable traffic flow (62-75% of capacity)
LOS E		Capacity level traffic flow (75-100% of capacity)
LOS F		Forced or breakdown traffic flow (> 100% of capacity)

Figure 39. Transportation Research Board Automobile Level of Service Scale (LOS).

Figure 40: Existing Level of Service on Major Roadways



TRAFFIC CONDITIONS - Existing

- Level of Service A - C
- Level of Service D
- Level of Service E - F

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

0 2 Mi 4 Mi

The causes of congestion on Hoover’s roadways appears to have less to do with the number of lanes a roadway has and more to do with an overall lack of connectivity in the roadway network. In the Bluff Park/Shades Mountain area, local roadways are more interconnected and provide more routing options for travelers. This distributes traffic and lessens traffic loads on any particular collector or arterial. However, when observing other sectors of the community that were built with more of a suburban development pattern, with neighborhoods limited to one or two means of ingress/egress on the collector and arterial network and limited internal street connectivity within the neighborhood, travelers are left with limited options for routing and become dependent on a limited of collectors and arterials. This is particularly the case south of I-459, where a combination of large subdivisions and apartment complexes with limited access, along with challenging terrain, limit the number of north-south and east-west oriented crosstown arterials and supporting collectors. Add to this the through traffic from other communities on a limited number of arterial routes, and congestion and flow breakdown ensue.

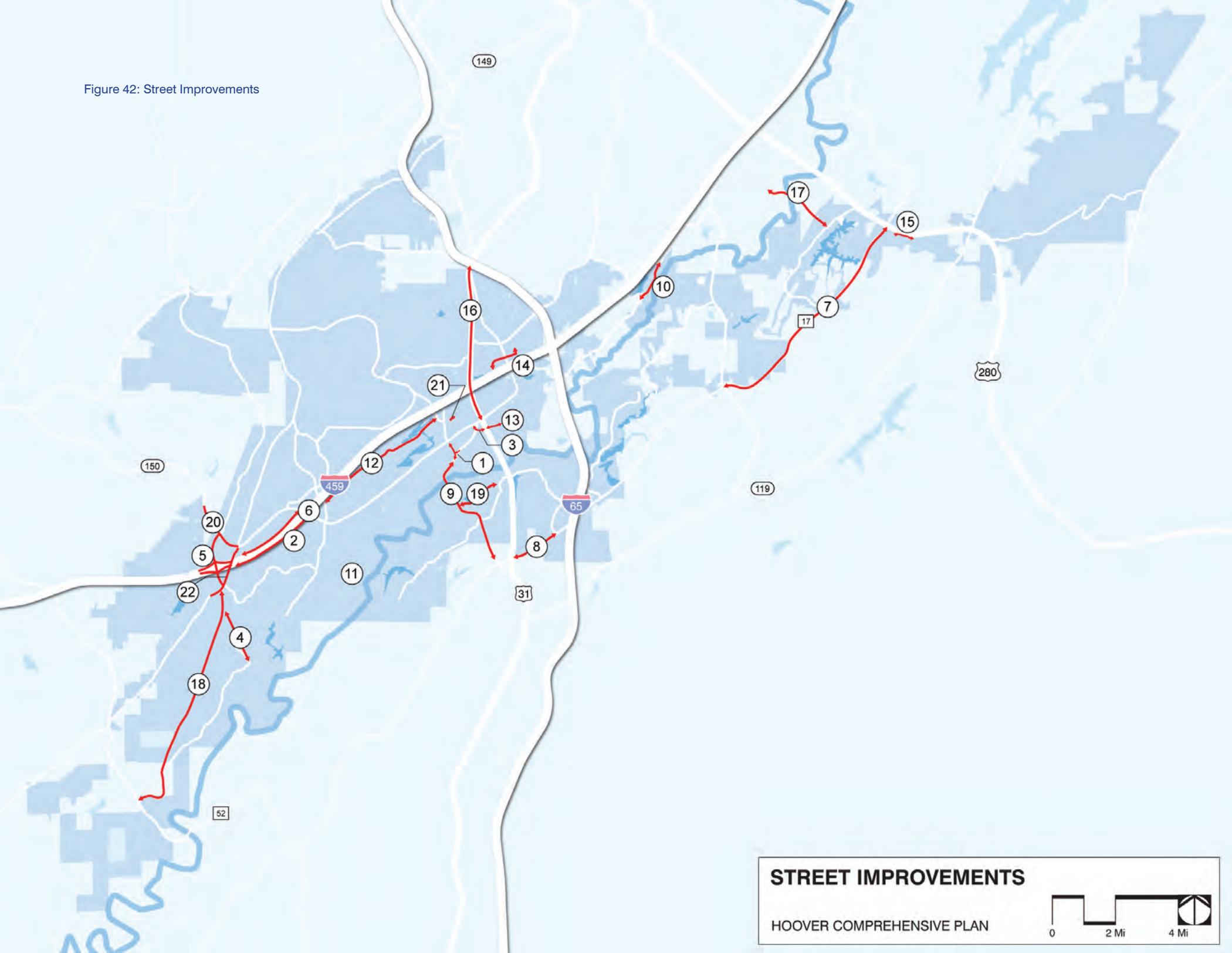
Arterial roadways in several areas of the city exhibit poor level of service for the reasons previously mentioned. The US Hwy 31 and 280 corridors are major commuter routes *and* commercial corridors. Due to the limited number of commuter routes linking Downtown Birmingham with surrounding communities, and with few prospects of new routes emerging in the future, these corridors will continue to function as primary commuter routes while also balancing the demands of access to developments along these highways.

On the west side Morgan and South Shades Crest Roads exhibit low levels of service. Commuter traffic from Helena generates most of the volume on Morgan Rd. and some on South Shades Crest Rd., while a number of large subdivisions utilize South Shades Crest Rd. as their primary means of access. These two-lane roads are ill equipped to handle the load. Although there are some improvements planned (adding a single north-bound lane on South Shades Crest Rd.), these improvements are not projected to provide significant long-term relief.

Figure 41: ALDOT Approved Traffic Capacity by Functional Classification.

Functional Classification	# of lanes	Capacity
Freeway	4	68,000
	6	102,000
	8	136,000
	10	170,000
Expressway	4	50,000
	6	75,000
	8	100,000
Divided Principal Arterial	2	22,000
	4	33,900
	6	50,000
	8	73,600
Undivided Principal Arterial	2	17,800
	4	31,000
	6	45,800
	8	63,100
Divided Minor Arterial	2	21,000
	4	31,900
	6	45,600
	8	N/A
Undivided Minor Arterial	2	17,800
	4	27,400
	6	N/A
	8	N/A
Divided Collector	2	20,800
	4	28,500
	6	42,000
Undivided Collector	2	16,600
	4	26,200
	6	38,700
One-way Principal Arterial	2	17,100
	3	25,600
	4	37,800
One-way Minor Arterial	2	14,100
	3	19,500
	4	26,000
One-way Collector	2	11,300
	3	15,600
	4	20,800
One-way Ramp	1	9,000
	2	18,000
	3	27,000

Figure 42: Street Improvements



STREET IMPROVEMENTS

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



To mitigate congestion issues, while providing appropriate levels of access to developable land, the following roadway improvements are recommended, as shown in Figure 42.

Proposed Street Improvements		
Map No	Project Description	Bicycle-Pedestrian Accommodations
1	Extend Galleria Blvd/tee Lorna Rd. into extended Blvd.	Sidewalk, where applicable
2	Construct I-459 frontage roads	n/a
3	Construct new street to bypass 31/150 intersection, SW quadrant	Sidewalk on at least one side as feasible
4	Stadium Trace to South Shades Rd. connector	Multiuse trail – one side
5	I-459/ South Shades Crest Rd. interchange with Ross Bridge Pkwy connector	Multiuse trail – one side, sidewalk – other side
6	Modify interchange at I-459 and AL Hwy 150	n/a
7	Widen Valleydale Rd. to 5 lanes - Caldwell Mill Rd. to Hwy280	Sidewalk – north side
8	Widen Valleydale Rd. to 5 lanes – Hwy 31 to Riverchase Pkwy	Sidewalk – north side
9	Widen old Montgomery Hwy to 5 lanes	Multiuse trail where feasible
10	Old Rocky Ridge Rd. to Acton Rd. connector	Sidewalk tentatively
11	Identify and construct additional connection(s) to High School	n/a
12	Hidden Valley Rd. (Chapel Ln to Preserve Pkwy)	Bicycle and pedestrian, facility type(s) TBD
13	Hwy 31 to Data Drive connector ¹	n/a
14	Lornaridge/Lorna Ln to Municipal Dr ²	Sidewalks both sides
15	Inverness Corners to Meadowview Pkwy connector	Sidewalk on at least one side
16	Median and access management Hwy 31	n/a
17	Cahaba River Rd. to Inverness Pkwy connector	Multiuse trail if feasible
18	S Shades Crest Rd. to Elvira Rd./52 connector	
19	Connect Old Montgomery Hwy at Arbor Hill Pkwy to Riverchase Pkwy W	Multiuse trail – one side
20	Widen AL 150 to 5 lanes from Shades Crest Rd. to Lake Cyrus Blvd	n/a
21	Add lanes (four thru lanes) on Jim Wilson Blvd from Costco Dr to Galleria Blvd	Sidewalk on one side as feasible
22	Add northbound lane on S Shades Crest Rd. from Willow Lakes Dr to Hwy 150	Sidewalk on at least one side as feasible

¹ Local street connection to alleviate congestion at 31/150 intersection, proposed during Comprehensive Plan charrette.

² Project would occur as part of Lorna Road redevelopment, proposed during Comprehensive Plan charrette.

AL Hwy 150 is another corridor suffering from congestion. Some of this congestion, particularly on the segment west of Exit 10 @ I-459, correlates directly with the traffic volumes experienced on South Shades Crest Rd. with commuters trying to access the interstate. AL Hwy 150 is an emerging commercial corridor with a number of new large shopping center developments. Large residential subdivisions and apartment complexes use AL Hwy 150 along its entire length as their primary, if not only, means of access.

Other roadways, such as northern Lorna Road, Old Montgomery Hwy, Acton Road, Valleydale Road, and AL Hwy 119 also exhibit poor levels of service primarily due to their two- or three-lane configurations. Traffic loads have simply become too heavy for these designs.

Baseline Scenario

To better understanding traffic trends going forward and their impact on the roadway network, future traffic conditions were modeled on major roadways without improvements (see Appendix). As would be expected, this “Baseline Scenario” predicts increased congestion and declining levels of service, particularly on the arterial network. Unless key improvements are made to the roadway network, traffic conditions will worsen, adversely impacting existing neighborhoods and business areas, future reinvestment and development and Hoover residents’ quality of life.



Recommended Improvements

In western Hoover, there are a number of improvements recommended to relieve congestion on AL Hwy 150, South Shades Crest Rd., and Morgan Rd.—one of the most congested parts of Hoover’s street network. As mentioned earlier, large neighborhoods, commercial developments, civic facilities, and intercity commutes place high traffic volumes on these routes with few or no alternatives. Recommended projects are intended to improve access to I-459 and alternative routes. A new interchange on I-459 west of the South Shades Crest overpass is proposed, connecting to Exit 10 with service ramps to provide parallel routing to AL Hwy 150.

Connecting with the proposed I-459 interchange is a new limited access parkway extending from the intersection of AL Hwy 150 and Ross Bridge Pkwy. southward to a new intersection with South Shades Crest Rd., and continuing south to Morgan Rd. While acting as a parallel route to South Shades Crest Rd., the new parkway would serve as a bypass around much of western Hoover stretching from Morgan Rd. to Lakeshore Pkwy. To optimize this route’s performance, access to it by other than cross streets should be limited, thereby avoiding the creation of another congested route like the ones the parkway intends to relieve.

Once in place, the new parkway would connect to and provide alternative routing for traffic in the various neighborhoods to the east and west of the route. Existing neighborhoods like Trace Crossings with its large civic facilities, developing neighborhoods like Lake Wilborn and Blackridge, and future developments like Riverwoods could develop direct access to the new parkway. This would help not only provide residents and users of the Hoover Met Complex and schools alternative routes, but would also improve traffic safety in the area.

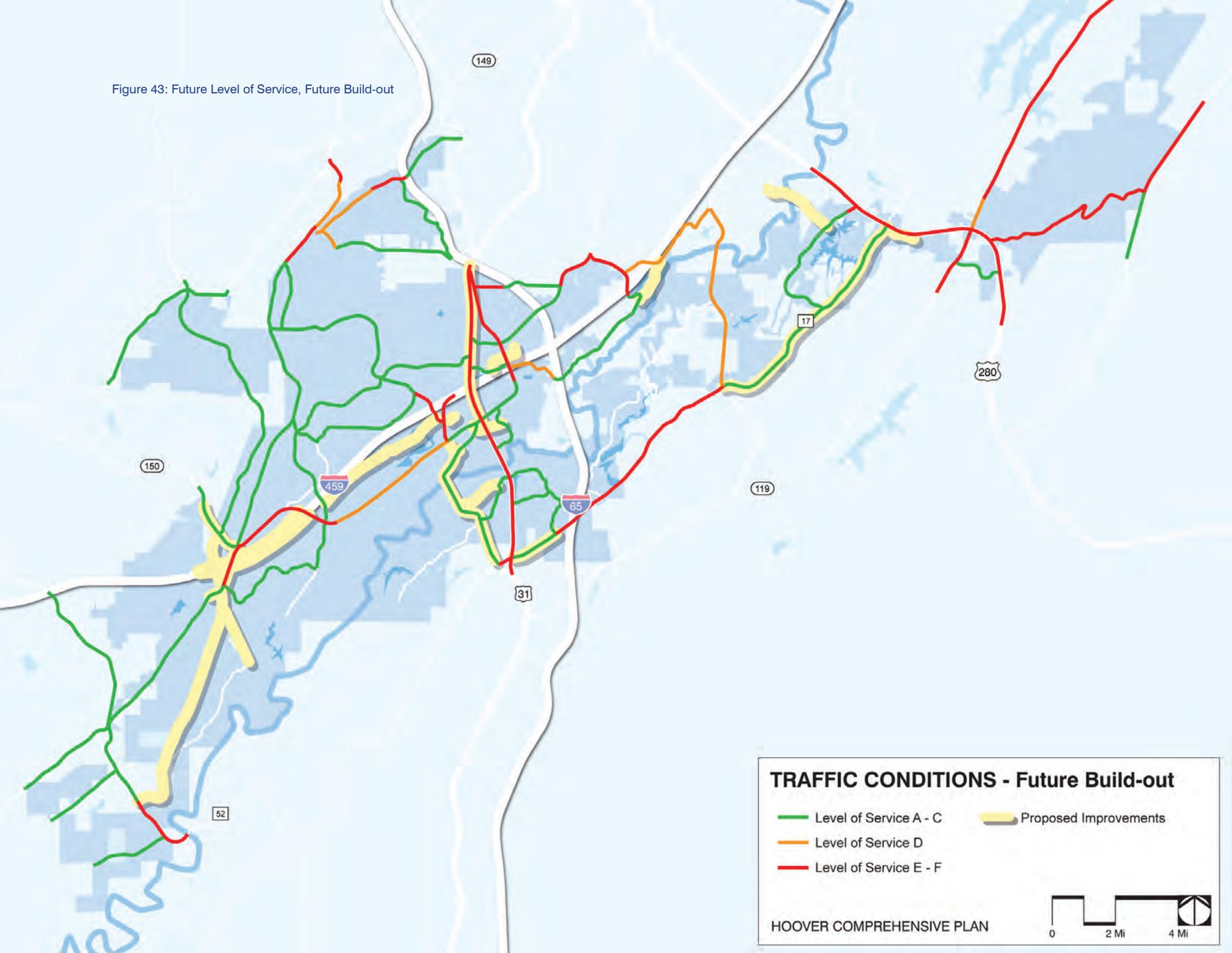
The City is currently studying traffic patterns and a number of potential routes to reduce traffic congestion in the Stadium Trace area. With multiple schools, the City’s primary sports destination facility and continued residential and commercial development in the area, an alternative route is critical to ease congestion and assure adequate emergency response times. To determine the most appropriate, the City will evaluate the cost of improvements, their positive effect on traffic as well as their impact on adjoining development.

A parkway running the length of Hidden Valley from Preserve Pkwy. to Chapel Lane is proposed as part of future development in the area. While this does provide an alternative parallel route to AL Hwy 150, its impact on Hwy 150 traffic would be modest. The parkway’s primary purpose is access to new development.

Several road improvements are proposed in the Riverchase area. The extension of Galleria Blvd. shown is already under right-of-way acquisitions and will provide direct access from AL Hwy 150 to Old Montgomery Hwy. While this will provide necessary relief to existing roadways in the area connecting to AL Hwy 150, such as Riverchase Dr., West Lorna Rd., and the private drive to Ashley Furniture, the improvement is expected to further highlight the breakdown in level of service of Old Montgomery Hwy to the south. Old Montgomery Hwy from Galleria Blvd. to Helena Road will be widened. In addition, a new parkway connecting Old Montgomery Hwy. to Riverchase Pkwy. near its intersection with US Hwy 31 is recommended. This would provide access for potential infill development along the south side of the Cahaba River and offer a preferable route for through traffic instead of said traffic traveling along Riverchase Pkwy. through a residential neighborhood as is presently the case.

Other proposed routes near the heart of town are recommended primarily for interconnectivity and alternative routing. At present, West Lorna Road intersects with AL Hwy 150 very close to the intersection of AL Hwy 150 and US Hwy 31. Not only does this make for some awkward traffic maneuvering, but limits the length of a critical right turn lane from AL Hwy 150 to US Hwy 31 southbound. The proposed bypass route would allow for a redesign of main intersection.

Figure 43: Future Level of Service, Future Build-out



TRAFFIC CONDITIONS - Future Build-out

- Level of Service A - C
- Level of Service D
- Level of Service E - F
- Proposed Improvements

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

0 2 Mi 4 Mi

Further south and east, Valleydale Road is the primary east-west arterial in the City for crosstown traffic between US Hwy 31 and US Hwy 280. It also provides access to a number of neighborhoods, commercial areas, and important institutional and recreational facilities. All remaining 2-3 lane segments will be widened to a 4-lane divided/5-lane configuration with accompanying pedestrian facilities. Right-of-way acquisition is presently underway for the segment east of I-65.

Other improvements proposed east of I-65 include a new connector through International Park, a route across the Cahaba River connecting the back of the Colonnade to Inverness, and a connector between Meadowbrook and commercial property slated for redevelopment along the top of Bailey Gap. All three proposed projects provide parallel routing to congested roadways and enhanced connectivity in the network. The International Park connector would provide a means to bypass the dog-leg routing north of I-459 along Old Rocky Ridge Rd. and Acton Rd., providing congestion relief to both roads. It also opens International Park to the prospect of redevelopment into an active mixed use center along the City's northern edge. The Colonnade-Inverness connection would give commuters an alternative to US Hwy 280. Since this

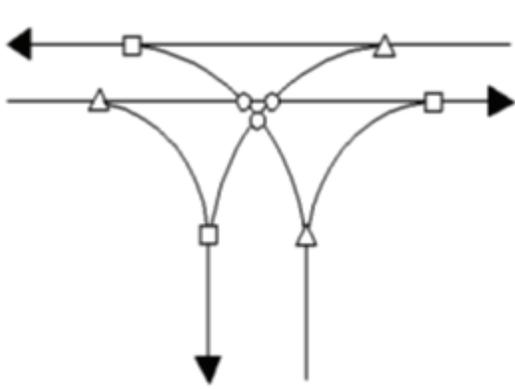
route passes through multiple municipal and county jurisdictions, the Plan recommends this route be an inter-governmental joint project. The Bailey Gap road would help to connect commercial property with high visibility at the top of the gap to the overall re-imagined town center in Meadowbrook.

Build Out Scenario

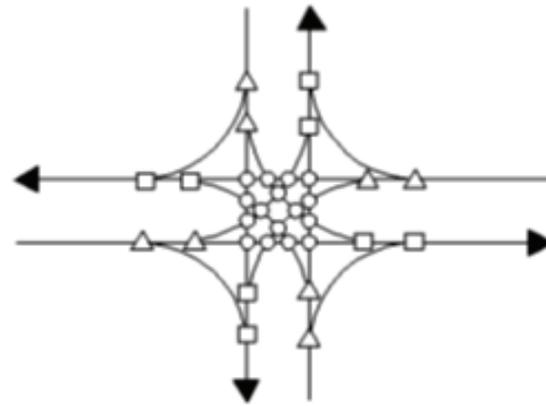
A traffic model was developed to evaluate the impact of the proposed street improvements. Future levels of service at "build-out" are shown in Figure 43. The model's results indicate substantial relief across the system, particularly compared to the "no-build" scenario. The greatest improvement will be felt in west Hoover, where the level of service for most existing roadways would improve to the A-C range. While a segment of AL Hwy 150 would remain in the LOS E-F range over Shades Mountain, most of AL Hwy 150 improves to at least LOS D. Other notable improvements in level of service occur on Old Montgomery Hwy, Acton Rd., Caldwell Mill Rd., and eastern segments of Valleydale Rd. While some roadways still show no improvement or decline in levels of service, much of this is due to the inability to provide adequate alternative routes or growth forces in adjacent communities.

Access Management

One of the greatest threats to traffic flow, safety, and transportation efficiency is excessive development of conflict points. A conflict point is any point where vehicle paths cross, merge, or weave. Every street and driveway that intersects a roadway has its associated conflict points based on all of the possible traffic movements at the given location (see Figure 44). Higher numbers of street intersections and driveways lead to higher numbers of conflict points. Even if actual contact isn't made by vehicles at the conflict points, excessive conflict points create more opportunities for vehicles to reduce speed and add maneuvers, slowing the flow of traffic. Reducing the number of conflict points will not only improve traffic flow but will also preserve the useful life of the roadway, help avoid expensive roadway widening or new roadway construction projects and provide safer access to properties.



Vehicular Conflict Points
 ○ 3 crossing
 □ 3 diverge
 △ 3 merge
 9 total



Vehicular Conflict Points
 ○ 16 crossing
 □ 8 diverge
 △ 8 merge
 32 total

Figure 44: Conflict points at typical three and four-leg intersections, source: ALDOT Access Management Manual 2014.

The programmatic approach to controlling and reducing conflict points is called access management. While ALDOT has access management standards it implements along State rights-of-way, the City does not currently have adopted standards. Access management standards would assist the City in improving safety and traffic flow on arterials and collectors by limiting conflict points as properties develop or redevelop—limiting the number of new driveways directly accessing them, preventing excessive subdivision of lots along their frontage, and assisting developments in designing shared facilities.

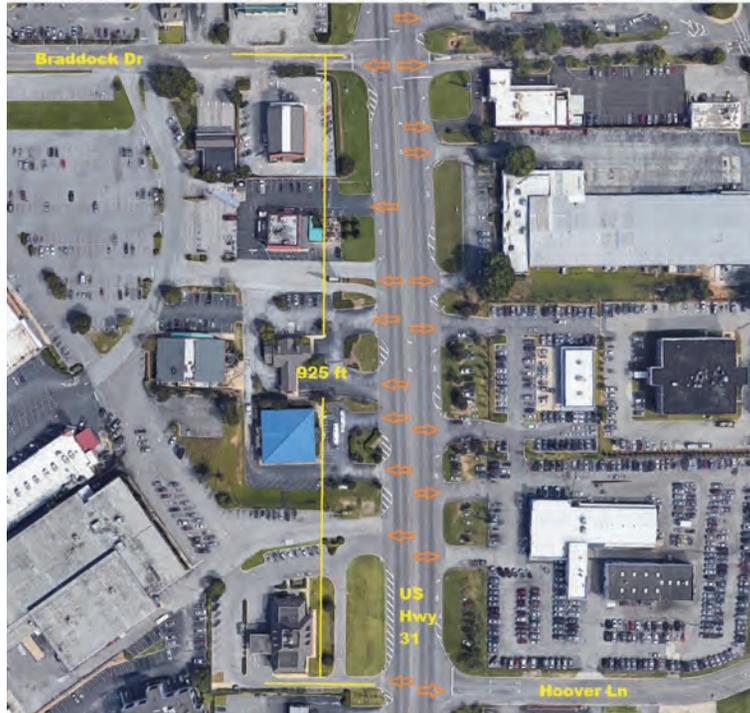


Figure 45: Access points along US Hwy 31. In under 1,000 feet, there are 18 points where cars leave or enter the highway, including the intersections at Braddock Drive and Hoover Lane. The large number of driveways results in more frequent slowing and maneuvering by motorists wishing to turn right or left. In these conditions it also becomes much more difficult to discern which driveway is the correct one, resulting in additional slowing of traffic flow. For major traffic arteries like US Hwy 31, parallel streets, frontage roads or “backage” roads to remove local traffic from the flow of through traffic. In the absence of parallel roads, shared driveways and cross access drives may be required to serve multiple properties.

Figure 46: Alternative intersection design with restricted and channelized left turn movements. This design is usually accompanied by a designated U-Turn opportunity. Source: Google Maps.

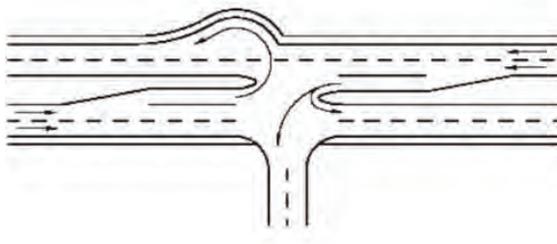


Figure 47: Conventional median opening with left-turn lanes and loons at three-leg intersection, source: NCHRP report 524.

The City should engage in a proactive access management program along area arterials and collectors where possible and as funding is available, improve area roadways to reduce conflict points. Removing crossovers, installing medians, and engaging in alternative intersection designs, such as those illustrated Figures 47 through 49, reduce conflict points while providing an appropriate level of property access. Some design solutions may involve the removal or modification of traffic signals at concerned intersections.

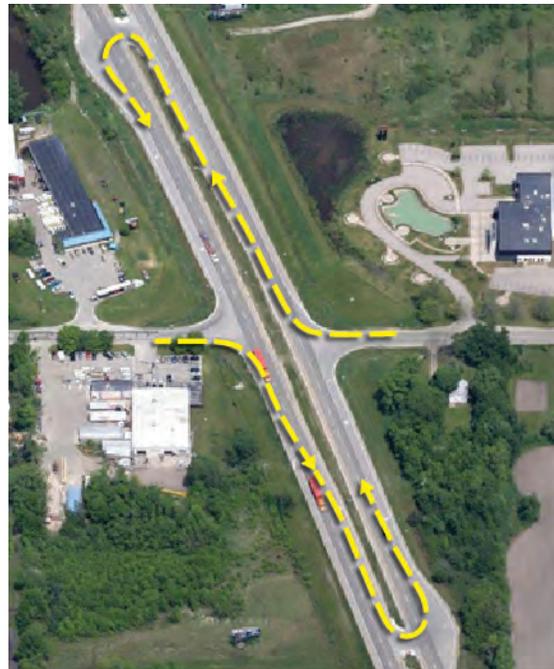


Figure 48: Michigan Right-Turn/U-Turn (RTUT) intersection, source: Google Maps.

An intersection that could implement the “Alabama T” design (Figure 49) would be the that of US Hwy 31 and Parkway Lake Dr. in Riverchase. There should be ample room in the US Hwy 31 ROW to make this modification. Doing so would allow the southbound lanes to remain in free-flow while left turning traffic off of the side street can merge into said lanes. Only US Hwy 31 northbound would be impacted by a signal for left-turning traffic from Parkway Lake Dr.

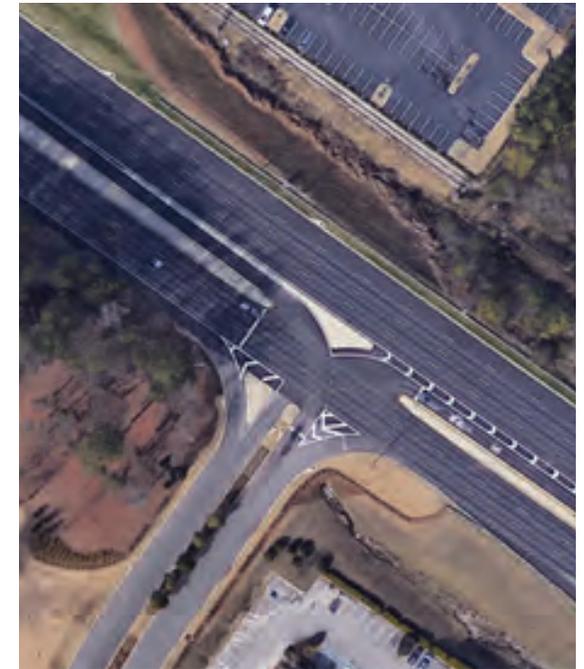


Figure 49: “Alabama T”, which allows continued flow on opposite side of the intersecting street, source: Google Maps.

Roadway Connectivity

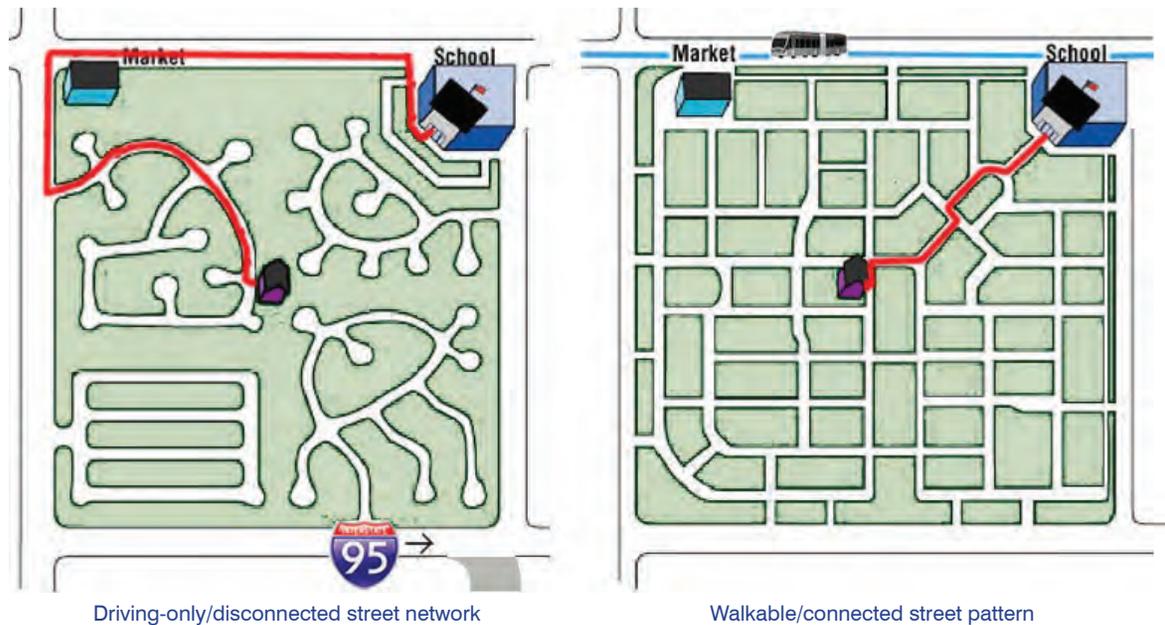
Ensuring a high degree of connectivity and efficiency in the transportation network can also improve LOS for arterials and collectors by giving travelers multiple routes to their destinations and reducing over-dependence on a limited number of routes and intersections. Connectivity “refers to the density of connections in a path or road network and the directness of links. A well-connected road or path network has many short links, numerous intersections, and minimal dead-ends (cul-de-sacs)” (Victoria Transport Policy Institute 2014) (Figure 50). Dead-ends / cul-de-sacs should only be used when challenging topography such as steep slopes and waterways renders all other methods of street connectivity impractical (Figure 51).

According to Handy et. al., the following recommendations improve roadway and pathway connectivity:

- Minimize dead-end streets, and where used, limit their length.
- Apply “complete streets” policies that ensure that roadway planning and design accommodate diverse users and uses.
- Where there are dead-end streets, include paths that provide shortcuts for walking and cycling.
- A modified-grid street network with a high degree of connectivity should generally be used in more intensely developed areas.

(list continues on following page)

Figure 50: Comparison of disconnected and connected street networks, source: Congress for the New Urbanism, 2008.



Benefits of Street Connectivity

- Reduction in travel distance (VMT) for drivers
- Reduction in travel times for drivers;
- Better and redundant emergency vehicle access;
- More efficient public services access (mail, garbage, transit)
- Improved bicycle and pedestrian routes and accessibility.
- Higher percentage mode share for transit, bicycling and walking
- Safer roads

(Planning Division, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, 2009)

Figure 51: Use of cul-de-sac where warranted by topography, source: Google Maps.



- New developments and urban redevelopments should have a high degree of roadway and pathway connectivity.
- Use short street and small blocks as much as possible. A 300 to 500 foot grid is recommended for walkable, urban developments. A 500 to 1,000 foot grid is appropriate for auto-oriented corridors.
- Planners should watch for opportunities to increase connectivity, particularly for non-motorized paths.
- Traffic calming should generally be used instead of street closures to control excessive vehicle traffic on urban streets.

(Planning for Street Connectivity, 2004)

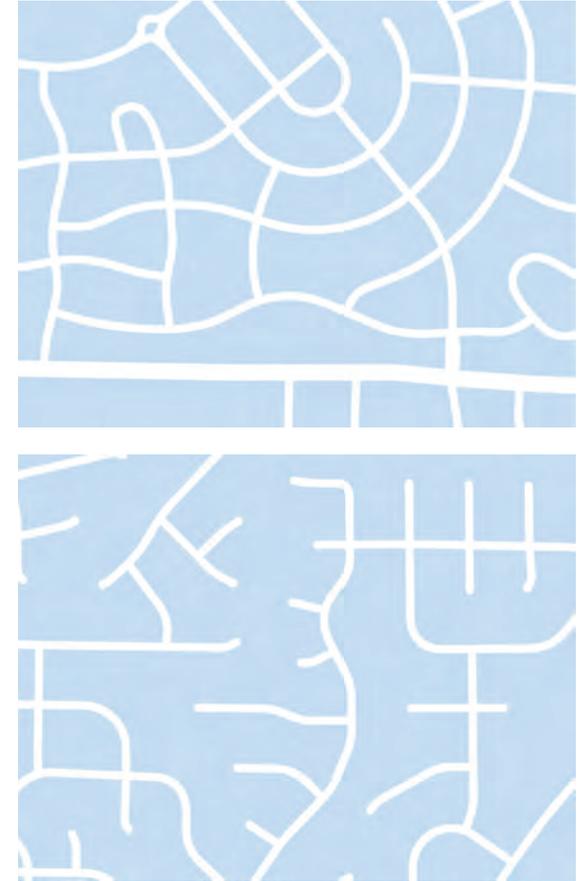
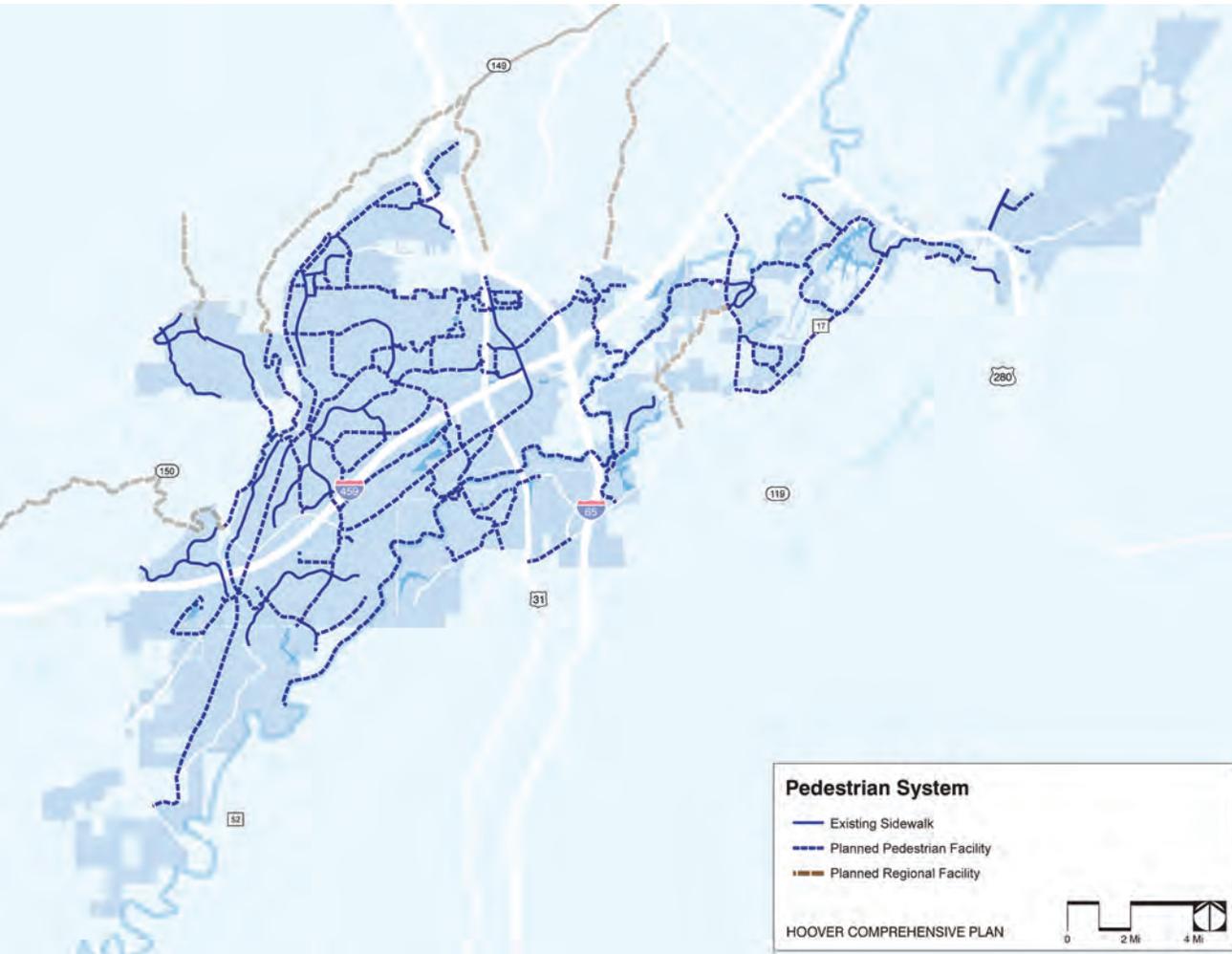


Figure 52. Comparison of street connectivity in two Hoover neighborhoods, the Preserve (above) and Russet Woods (below).



Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

As the City initiated this comprehensive planning effort, a pedestrian and bicycle transportation plan was nearing completion. That plan is appended to this Plan and proposed for adoption by reference.

Hoover and many similar aged suburban communities developed without sidewalks or bicycle accommodations. However, over the last two decades the City, in response to community advocacy, has invested in sidewalk retrofits throughout the community. Because of challenging topography and limitations of built conditions, funding and the sheer amount of roadways without sidewalks, the process has moved along slowly but steadily.

After an extensive analysis of the existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and a series of public meetings, an aggressive, long-term strategy emerged laying out extensive pedestrian and bicycle network improvements. Projects that capitalize on existing infrastructure, complete important loops in the network, and connect residents with destinations of various types were prioritized. Other priorities include connections with the Cahaba River, greenways along the river and other tributaries, as well as to trails planned as part of the regional Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System. Figures 54 and 55 provide an overview of the proposed pedestrian and bicycle facilities respectively. The entire pedestrian and bicycle transportation plan is included in the Appendix.

Figure 53 Pedestrian System. The citywide network pictured above includes on-street (sidewalks and multi-use paths) and off-street (greenways and trails) facilities proposed in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and Jefferson County's regional plan. Also included are opportunities identified during the comprehensive planning process: pedestrian accommodations associated with proposed street improvements, facilities within the proposed City Center and Town Centers, and off-street trails along power line easements and streams.

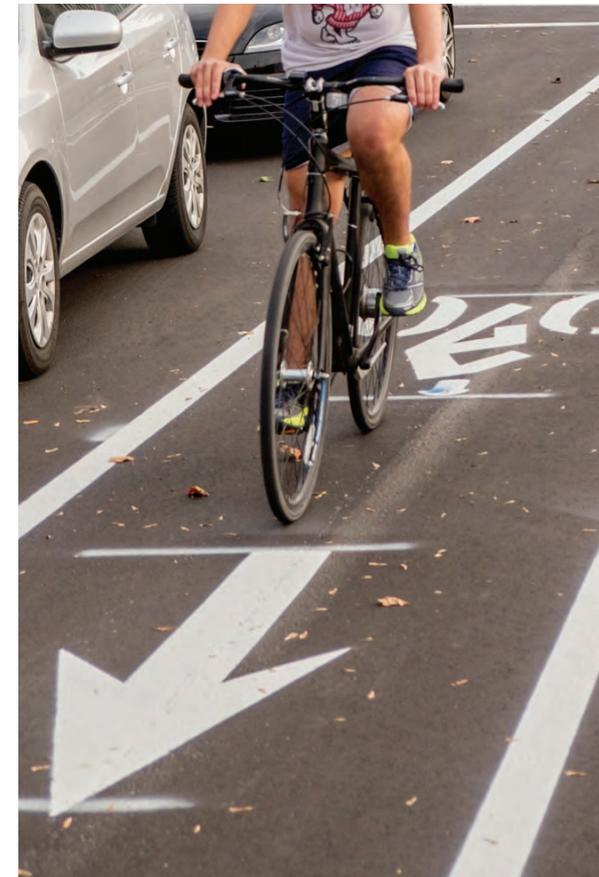
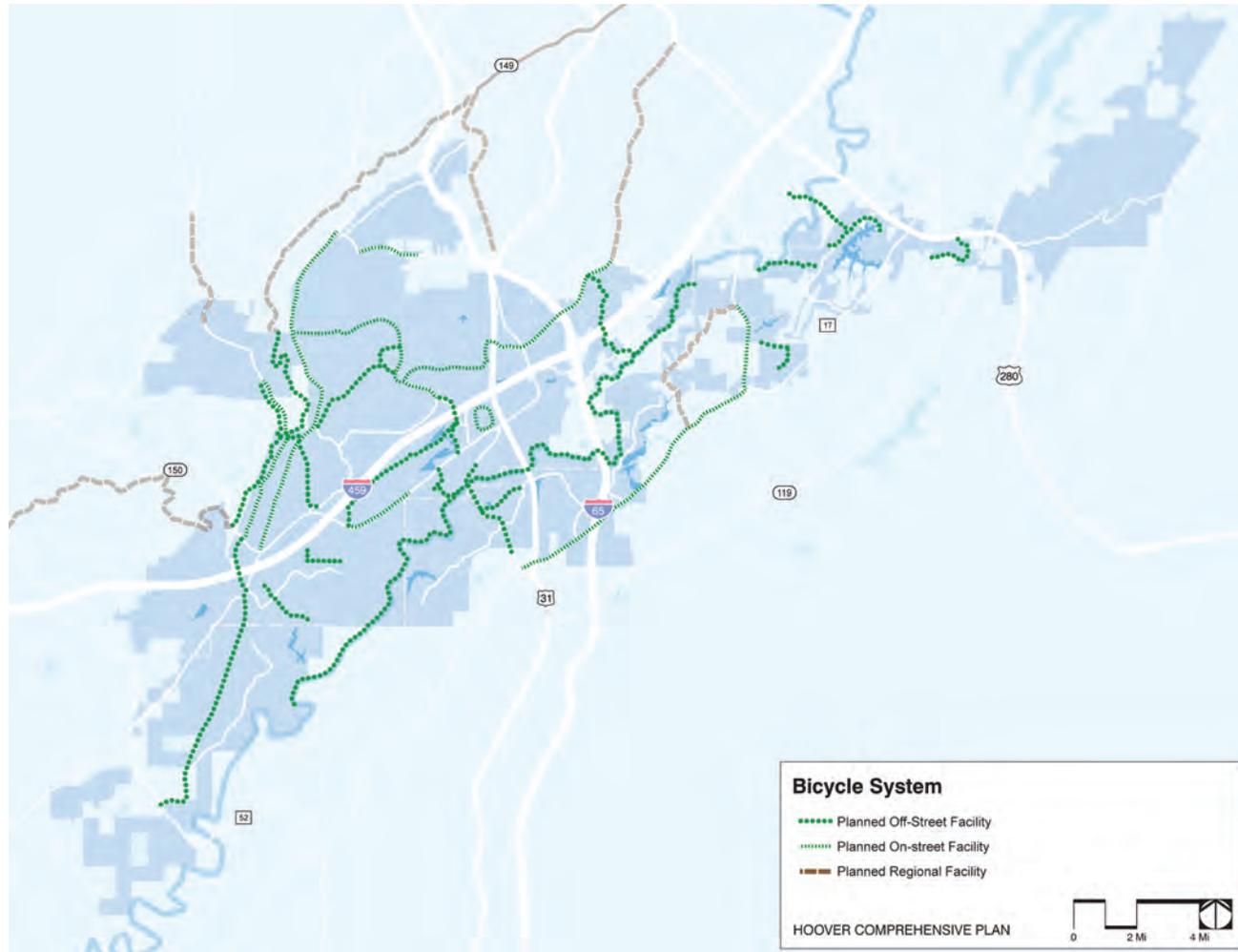


Figure 54 Bike System. The citywide network pictured above includes on-street (bike lanes and sharrows) and off-street (greenways and trails) facilities proposed in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and Jefferson County’s regional plan. Also included are opportunities identified during the comprehensive planning process: bicycle accommodations associated with proposed street improvements, facilities within the proposed City Center and Town Centers, and off-street trails along power line easements and streams.

Transit

Hoover is currently served by two routes of the BJCTA's Max bus transit system. One route follows the US Hwy 31 corridor while the other follows US Hwy 280 (Figure 55). Both routes originate at the central terminal in downtown Birmingham. The 31 route reaches a terminus at the Riverchase Galleria before returning to US Hwy 31 via Lorna Rd. The 280 route terminates at the Hoover Walmart near Meadowbrook.

According to transit consultant Steer Davies Gleave, the US 31 and US 280 routes offer trips to and from the central station in downtown Birmingham in 40-45 minutes and 55-60 minutes respectively. While this commute time may be comparable to what automobile commuters experience during rush hour, both routes suffer a number of issues that depress usage to those riders who simply have no other options.

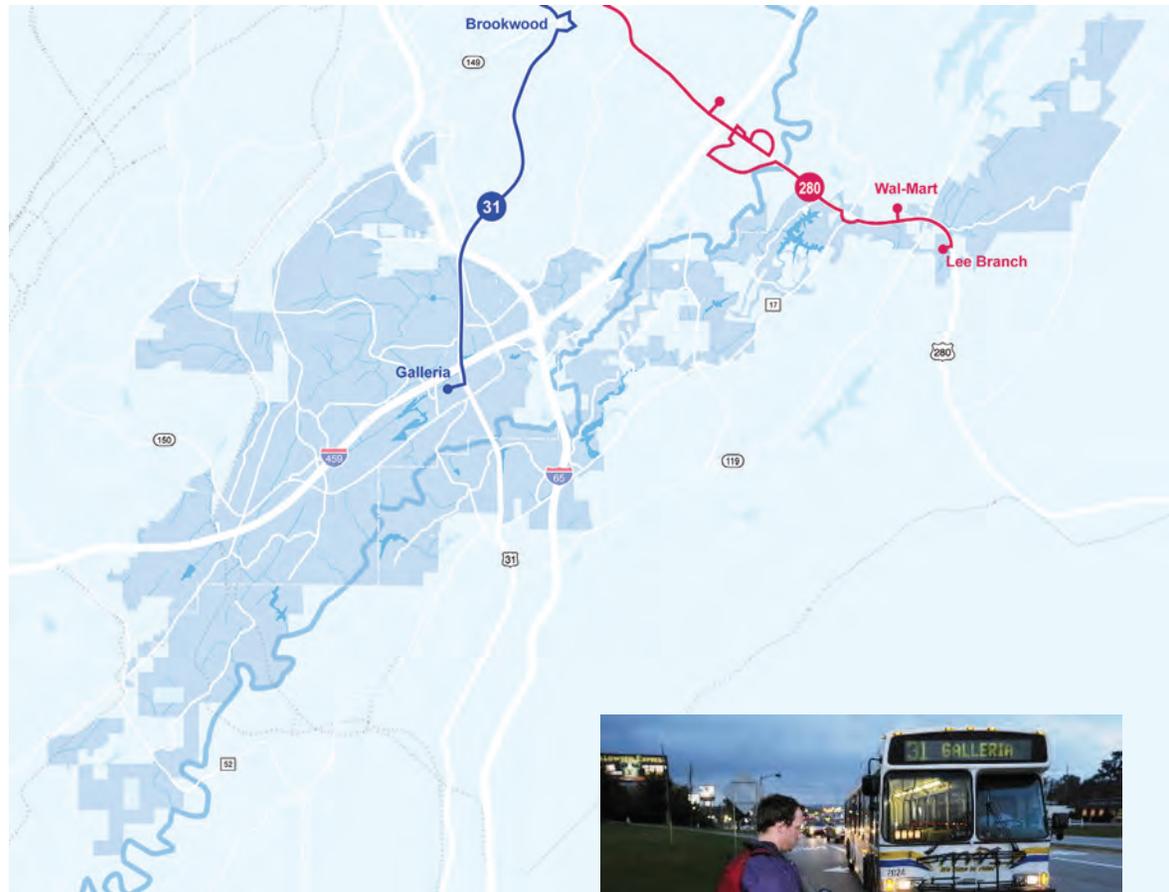


Figure 55. Existing MAX Transit Routes Serving Hoover.



A lack of sidewalks, other accommodations and limited service and coverage deter transit ridership, particularly among those who have mobility choices. Photo source: AL.com

Reasons drivers will choose not to use transit include the following:

- Low service levels – Limited or hourly service on routes
- Underdeveloped pedestrian network – makes it difficult to connect stops to the people using the system and their destinations
- Service provided in high median income community – system does not attract higher income ridership. Said demographic presently prefers private automobile
- Limited coverage – Routes provide minimal coverage to the overall Hoover community
- Limited connectivity – Routes oriented to-from Birmingham. No connecting routes across Hoover serving Hoover-oriented travel. All routes go through downtown central station, making transit rides from one side of Hoover to the other excessively time consuming
- Present road network – Lack of alternative routes, network connectivity, transit oriented design
- Lack of transit culture.

More detail of these existing routes is provided in the transit report produced by the consultant in the Appendix.

While Hoover and other typical suburban communities across the metro and the nation may lack a transit culture, there is evidence to suggest changing demographics and transportation preferences may lead to more demand for such services. For instance, the desire to drive by the younger generation seems to be waning. According to research by Duany Plater-Zyberk Partners, only 44% of 17-year-olds had driver's licenses in 2013 compared to two-thirds of all 17-year-olds in 1980 (DPZ 2015). This finding is echoed in the Transport Center 2014 Mobility Attitudes Survey (Figure 56), where a minority of people under the age of 30 obtained their driver's license at age 16.

At the regional level, Hoover is ideally situated to provide critical links in the transit network to other suburban communities on the south periphery of the metro area. In addition to increased and more efficient service along the existing 31 and 280 routes, new links could be created east and west of the core of Hoover, offering enhanced service to Hoover residents and to those who commute

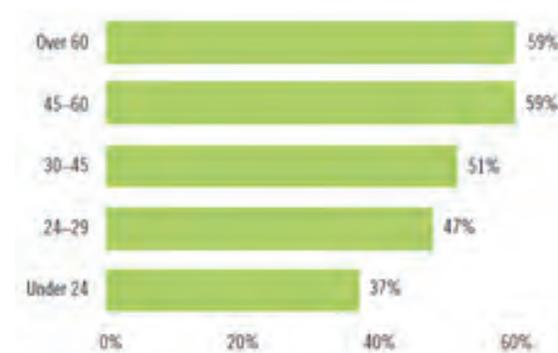


Figure 56: Percent of Age Cohort that Obtained a Driver's License at Age 16.

to and through Hoover. These new east-west links would dramatically reduce travel time for those whose commuting patterns presently run in those directions, offering more direct routes that bypass having to travel all the way to the central terminal in downtown Birmingham to transfer lines to the desired destination. There could also be an extension of the 31 service line southward into Riverchase and points further south. In this scenario, illustrated in Figure 57, the new Hoover City Center would serve as the major hub of the peripheral service lines, placing more people there and increasing its opportunity as an energetic city center.

The 31 and 280 routes are proposed as bus rapid transit (BRT) express trunk routes to provide faster transit service between the suburbs and Downtown Birmingham. The key to a successful BRT route is emphasizing the “R” – Rapid. Frequent stops can greatly lengthen headways of bus routes. BRT routes are intended for traveling across greater distances and therefore include fewer stops, reducing travel time for riders. And, because conventional bus transit routes use the same roadway as private vehicles, they are hindered by the same rush hour congestion all motorists experience.

Bus Rapid Transit systems allow transit vehicles to bypass traffic jam and allowing riders to reach their destinations more rapidly, riders who have mode options are more likely to choose to ride transit rather than take a personal car. The general school of thought regarding BRTs is that planners and engineers for the service should “think train, implement bus,” meaning they should look at ways to create separation between the automobile’s use of the road and that of the bus, while also thinking about the stops and routing in terms that would speed up the service. For the 31 and 280 routes, this would include reducing the number of stops, enhancing the remaining stops, creating more localized feeder routes that connect commuters to the BRT routes, and providing means by which the buses running on the BRT express routes can bypass traffic congestion and signals.

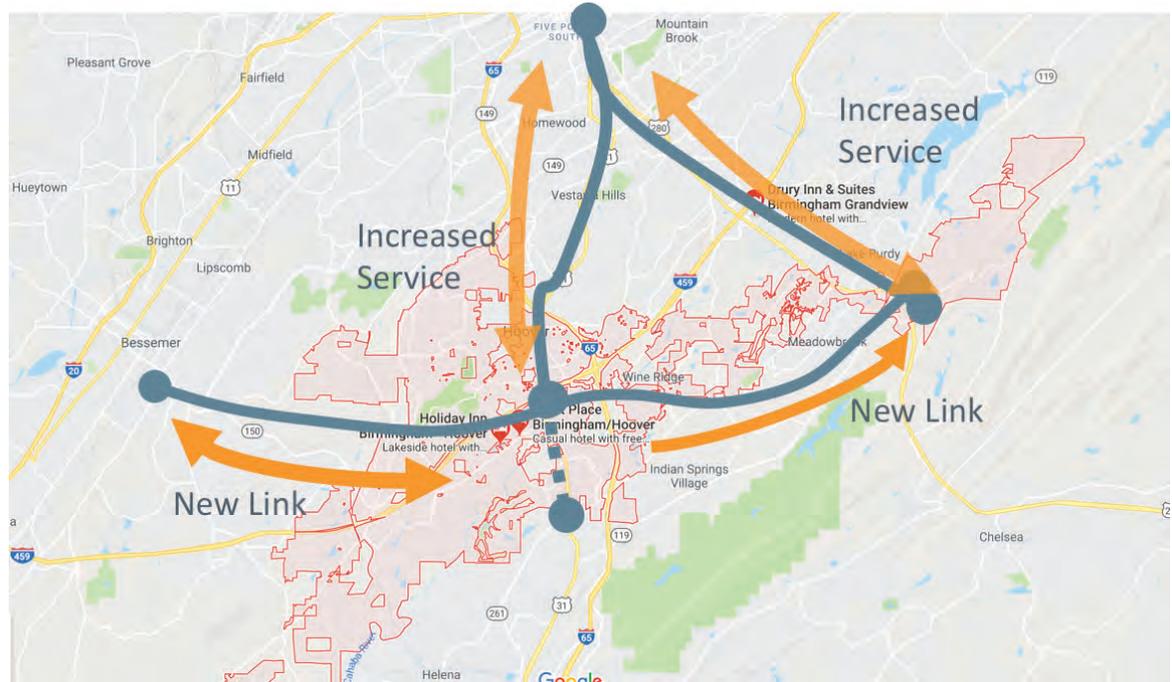


Figure 57: Proposed Regional Transit Upgrades



Figure 58: Queue Jump for BRT Route. Green “I” Signal Allows Bus to Pass Through While All Other Users Remain Stopped.

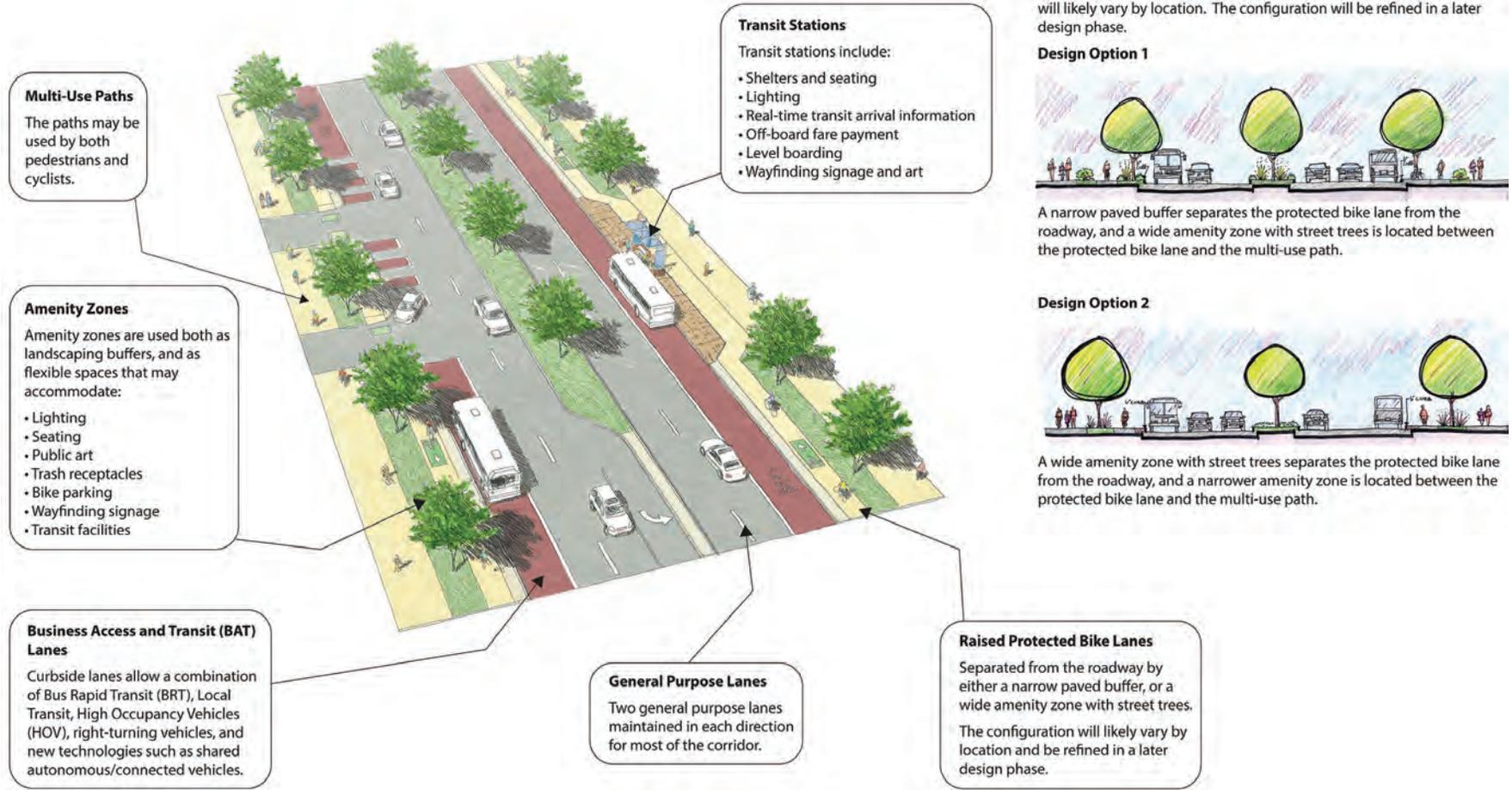
Figure 59: Before and After of Conceptual BRT Stop and Transit Oriented Development



One intermediate step in creating a BRT express route would be to provide the buses with a way around the nodes with the highest potential for causing delays – signalized intersections. Bus service can get a leg up on automobile traffic in rapidity if they don't have to stop at signals. “Queue jumps” are a means of producing this result (Figure 58). A queue jump consists of two primary features – a dedicated lane for buses at signalized intersections, and a specialized signal with a dedicated light for the bus lane. The additional lane exclusively for bus use allows the bus to avoid getting into the line, or queue, of automobiles waiting for a green signal. As the bus approaches the intersection and merges into this lane, a wireless signal is sent from the bus to the traffic signal, causing the traffic light to give “preemption”, or a special green light, to the bus while maintaining a red “stop” signal to all other travel lanes. This allows the bus to pass through the intersection without delay.

A more long term solution, particularly along arterials with high traffic volumes throughout the day, is the creation of special lanes for BRTs that run the entire distance of a roadway segment. These lanes, called Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes, run along the edge on both sides of the road. As the name implies, these lanes are specifically dedicated to the BRT and for automobile users merging to access property along the road. Automobiles would yield to the BRT so no delay is caused for the transit option. These lanes would tie into the queue jumps at intersections, allowing the BRT to pass through the signal without delay.

Figure 60: Cross-section concepts for integrated BRT along US Hwy 31, source: City of Boulder, CO

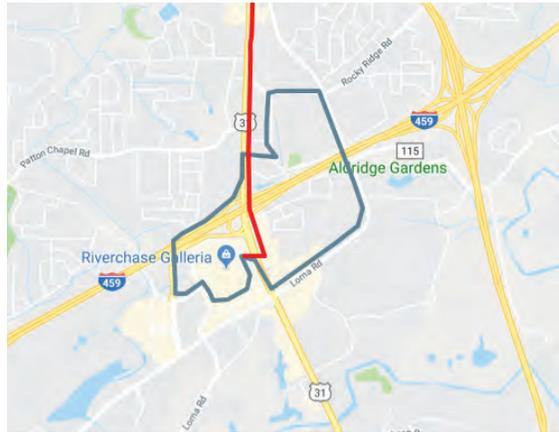


Both the 31 and 280 routes are ideal for this treatment. While Hwy 280 would require more work, Hwy 31 through Hoover has space to implement this with large lane widths and continuous right turn lanes. Figure 59 shows a before and after concept for implementing a BRT and BAT lane concept on US Hwy 31, while Figure 60 illustrates a cross-section of the recommended right-of-way profile.

Continuous BAT lanes are placed where the near continuous right turn lanes are presently located, providing the BRT with preemption at each signalized intersection. Access management design is implemented to reduce the number of curb cuts and median crossings, thus reducing the number of conflict points and reducing traffic congestion. Bus stops are enhanced to take on the look and function

of full transit stations. Pedestrian bridges at these transit stations permit users to safely cross the highway and board the BRT bound for either direction. The addition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities gives the corridor a true multi-modal functionality, allowing for all manner of trips, from regional to local, for all manner of users. The addition of amenity zones for landscaping, lighting, and other

Figure 61: Short-Term Concept for Fixed Route Local Service Shuttle



streetscape amenities creates an aesthetic quality and level of comfort for the users of the corridor that is emblematic of a special place unlike many experienced on major thoroughfares.

Once in place, BRT transit station then becomes a catalyst for redevelopment of nearby properties. A well-functioning transit line allows new development nearby to carry less reliance on automobiles, permitting a higher level of density for development. Meanwhile, with the pedestrian, bicycle, and amenity zone improvements, development can begin to move forward towards the roadway and interact with the facilities in the

right-of-way instead of having large setbacks. All of these facilities combined create an environment built more to the human scale than that of rapidly moving automobiles.

Once the BRT route is established, it will be important to have a feeder system in place that transports riders to and from the BRT. On Hwy 31, the loop along Lorna Rd. is removed from the express route heading into Birmingham in favor of a more direct and rapid route on US Hwy 31. In its place, a feeder route with shuttle service, which could be branded as the “Hoover Mover” or something similar to identify it as a local service,

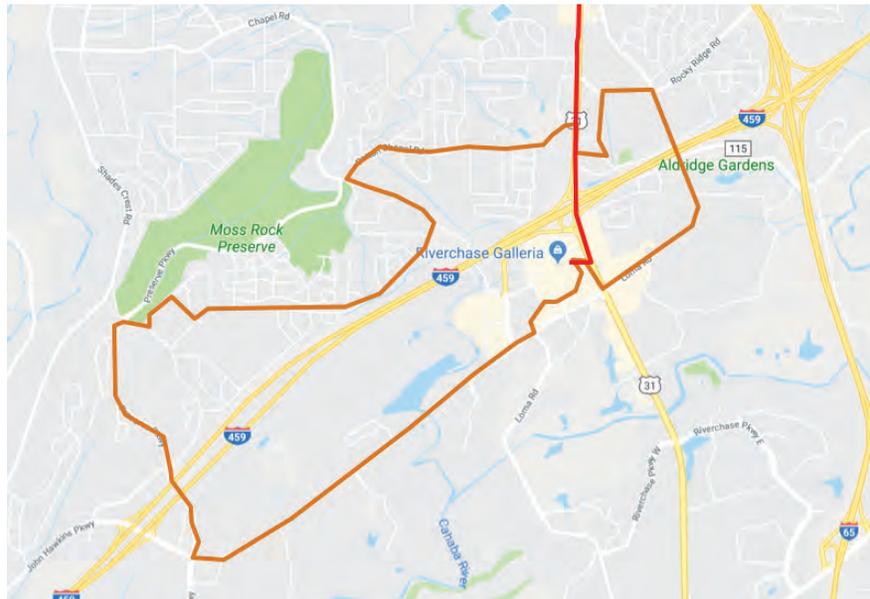


Figure 62: Long-Term Concept for Fixed Route Local Service Shuttle

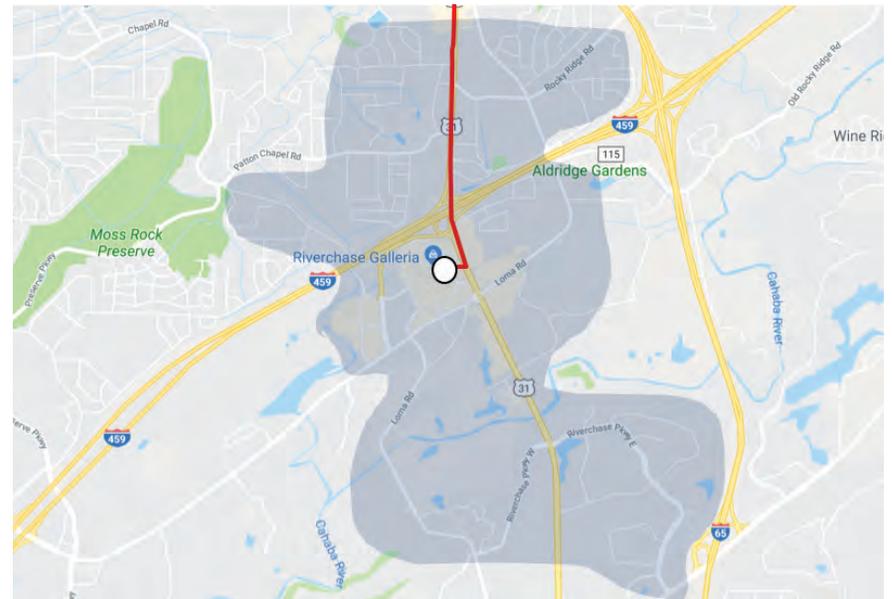


Figure 63: Option for Local Non-fixed (Zonal) Shuttle Service Area

is recommended for the Lorna Road vicinity that connects riders to the BRT stations on US Hwy 31 (Figure 61). The Hoover Mover route would connect with the BRT at Hoover's city center and provide local access to a number of neighborhoods and amenities in the community. As time goes on, if further studies find a need for expansion, the Hoover Mover's route can be expanded to include more neighborhoods and destinations (Figure 62). Hoover Mover routes could also expand further out from a fixed loop in the center of town to new fixed routes or routes for special events, particularly those held at the revamped Hoover Met Complex.

If a designated, fixed route does not efficiently serve the community, emerging technologies allow for local transit to utilize a zonal system (Figure 63). This type of local service provides riders the option of contacting a non-fixed shuttle to pick them up. This shuttle can then deliver them within the local zone it covers, or provide transport to or from the regional hub, where the rider can access the BRT. In some cases, cities are enlisting the aid of services like Uber and other rideshare providers to provide this first-mile, last-mile local transport service.

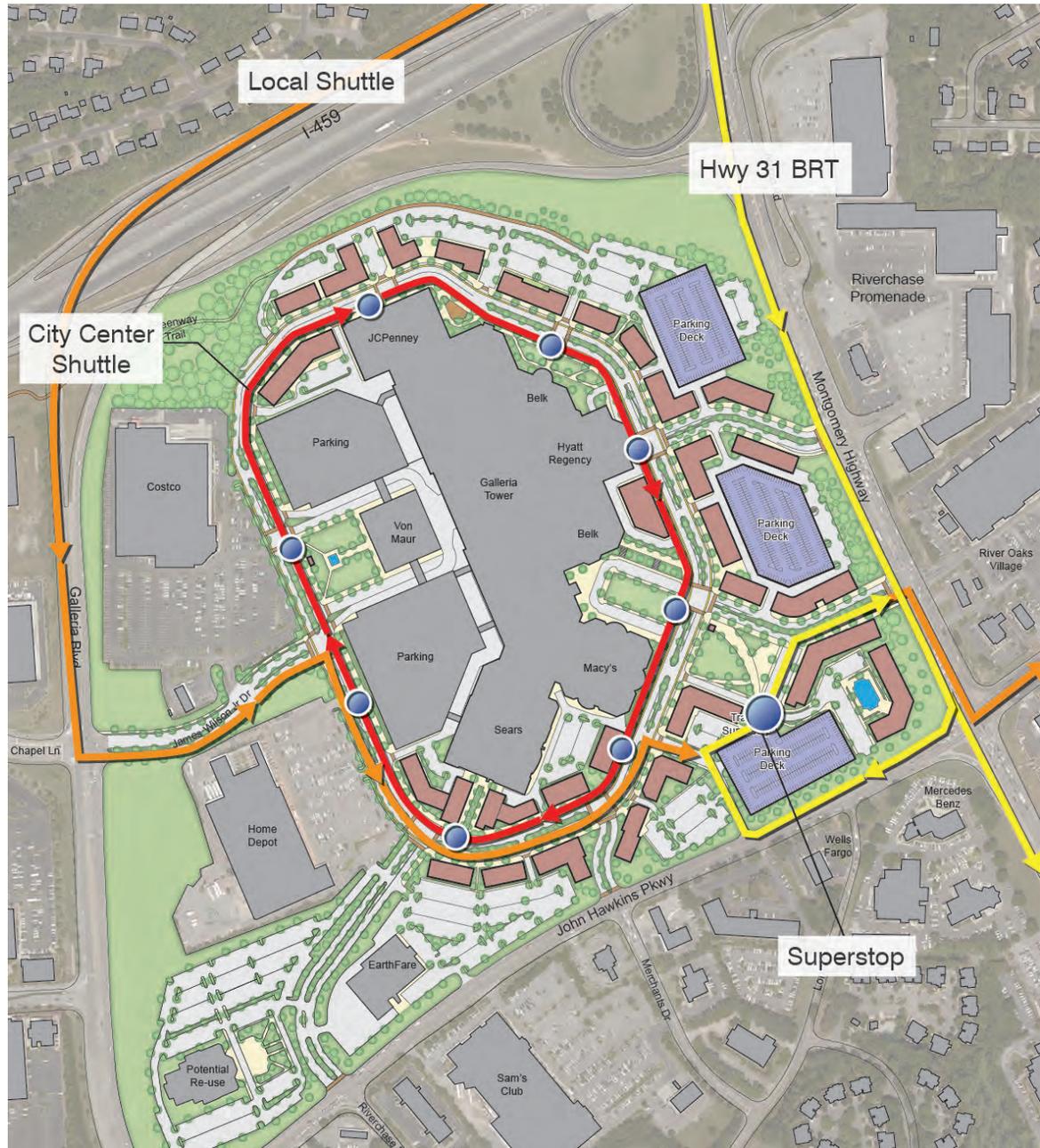


Figure 64: Conceptual City Center Shuttle Route with connecting transit services

Figure 65: Short-Term Shuttle Option for City Center Circulator Route Source for MB Sprinter City: Wikiwand 2018



Focusing in on Hoover's new city center, there will be a need for local transit service to provide riders an easy and efficient way to navigate the area. This is particularly the case since the vision for this new city center involves reusing the vast surface parking lots at the Galleria for mixed use development. Most parking will be within parking structures. The city center circulator will allow those who park in these structures to access any portion of the city center with ease.

The existing loop road will be reconfigured into a complete street, taking on a "Main Street" feel with multimodal functionality. A dedicated transit lane will be provided on the interior side of the loop road. This dedicated lane will enable the shuttle to circumnavigate the city center without interruption (Figure 64). Stops will be located at important nodes for ease of access to the BRT stop, parking, businesses and other destinations.

In the short term, accessible, state-of-the-art shuttle vehicles would serve the city center circulator (Figure 65). Over time the human-operated shuttles could give way to autonomous vehicles once the technology is proven reliable (Figure 66). This circulator route would be an ideal situation for use of autonomous vehicle technology given the simple, fixed nature of the route. A manned shuttle may still be needed to assist riders with special needs.



Figure 66: Long-Term Autonomous Vehicle Options for City Center Circulator Route



Housing and Neighborhoods

Encouraging the development of housing and neighborhoods that meet the needs and desires of the public and improves the quality of life of our citizens is of paramount importance if Hoover is to be a desirable place to live for future generations. In order to prepare our community to meet these needs and desires, we must understand what they are and where the population is trending with their housing choices.

In short, the population of the U.S. trending sharply towards living in more urban, walkable settings. This is the result of a younger generation coming along that has a different attitude and outlook for denser urban environments, a generation of older citizens that are looking for smaller living spaces, and blue collar workers looking for living arrangements they can afford within a reasonable distance from work. All of these groups like the idea

and convenience of being close if not walking distance to amenities, retail, and restaurants. Multiple generations are also discovering the health benefits of living in a walkable environment as opposed to driving to all destinations, for both business and pleasure.

According to Duany Plater-Zyberk Partners, a premier urban planning firm founded in Florida, 52% of American desire to live in single family detached homes. That leaves almost half of the American population desiring another form of housing. Their research has found that a majority of Americans prefer living in mixed-use neighborhoods (60%) and having transit options (59%) (DPZ 2015).

To further illustrate the point that Americans desire more urban, mixed use communities, the Transport Center released results of a survey they conducted in 2014 showcasing where citizens of all ages live and what they view as their ideal

neighborhood type (Figures 68-69). The study showed that while most Americans live in the suburbs, with around 30% living in single-use residential suburbs, a growing number are desiring more urban and mixed use neighborhoods. Over 60% of Americans under the age of 30 desire to live in urban neighborhoods or suburban neighborhoods that offer a mix of uses within close proximity of their homes. These figures correspond to the younger population seeking living opportunities with the option of using transit.

If Hoover desires to be a City sought after by younger residents, and one that can better serve aging citizens, the City will need to embrace policies that encourage the development of more housing in traditional, mixed use, and walkable neighborhood environments as well as proposed town center and city center concepts. This will represent a shift in longstanding policy favoring lower density single-family detached subdivisions located driving distance from other uses and employment centers.

Of course, this new policy direction should be implemented only in coordination with City services to ensure they remain at an appropriately high level.

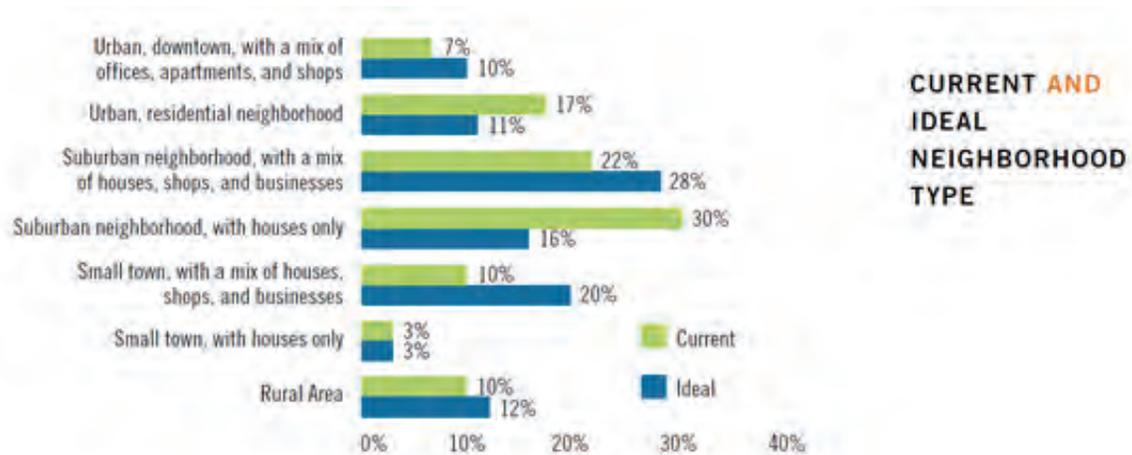


Figure 67: Where Americans Live vs. Where They Want to Live, source: Transport Center 2014 Mobility Attitudes Survey

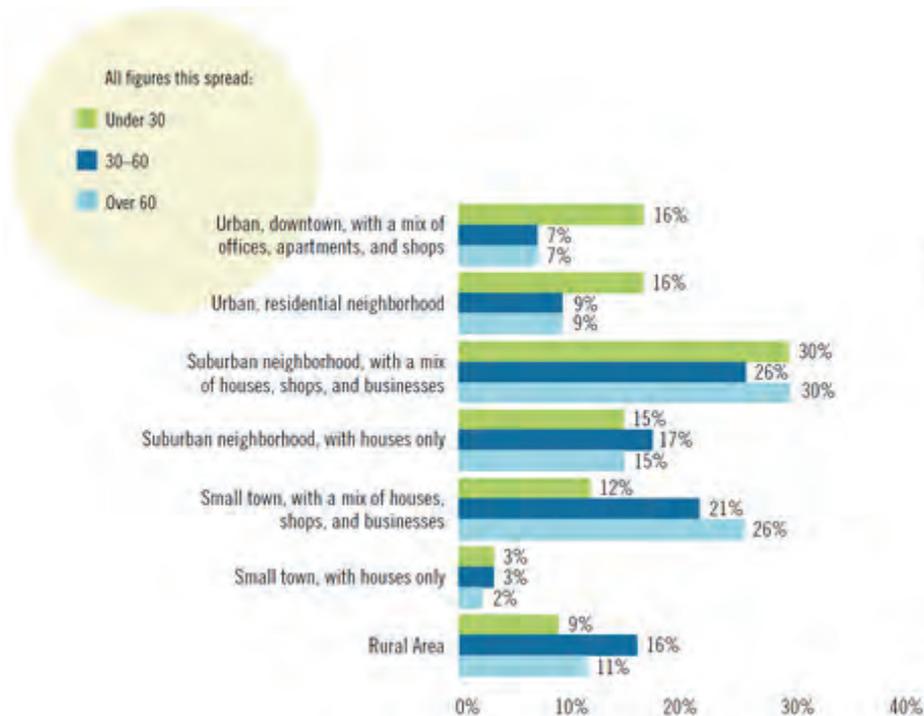


Figure 68: Where Americans Live by Age Source: Transport Center 2014 Mobility Attitudes Survey

bungalow courts, townhouses, single building apartments, and live-work buildings (see Figure 69). Missing middle housing is enjoying renewed popularity as more American households are seeking the benefits of a walkable urban neighborhood.

According to Ellen Dunham-Jones, co-author of the book *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*, having missing middle housing in a neighborhood enhances walkability, meets the needs of and attracts households of differing ages, incomes, and sizes, and brings added vibrancy and safety to the area. The missing middle emphasizes design that seamlessly integrates housing into a neighborhood setting with single-family housing. The concept also serves as a logical transition in scale and density from multifamily housing and mixed use buildings to detached single-family neighborhoods. Housing “complexes” are discouraged. Instead, a healthy, traditional neighborhood contains a mix of housing types

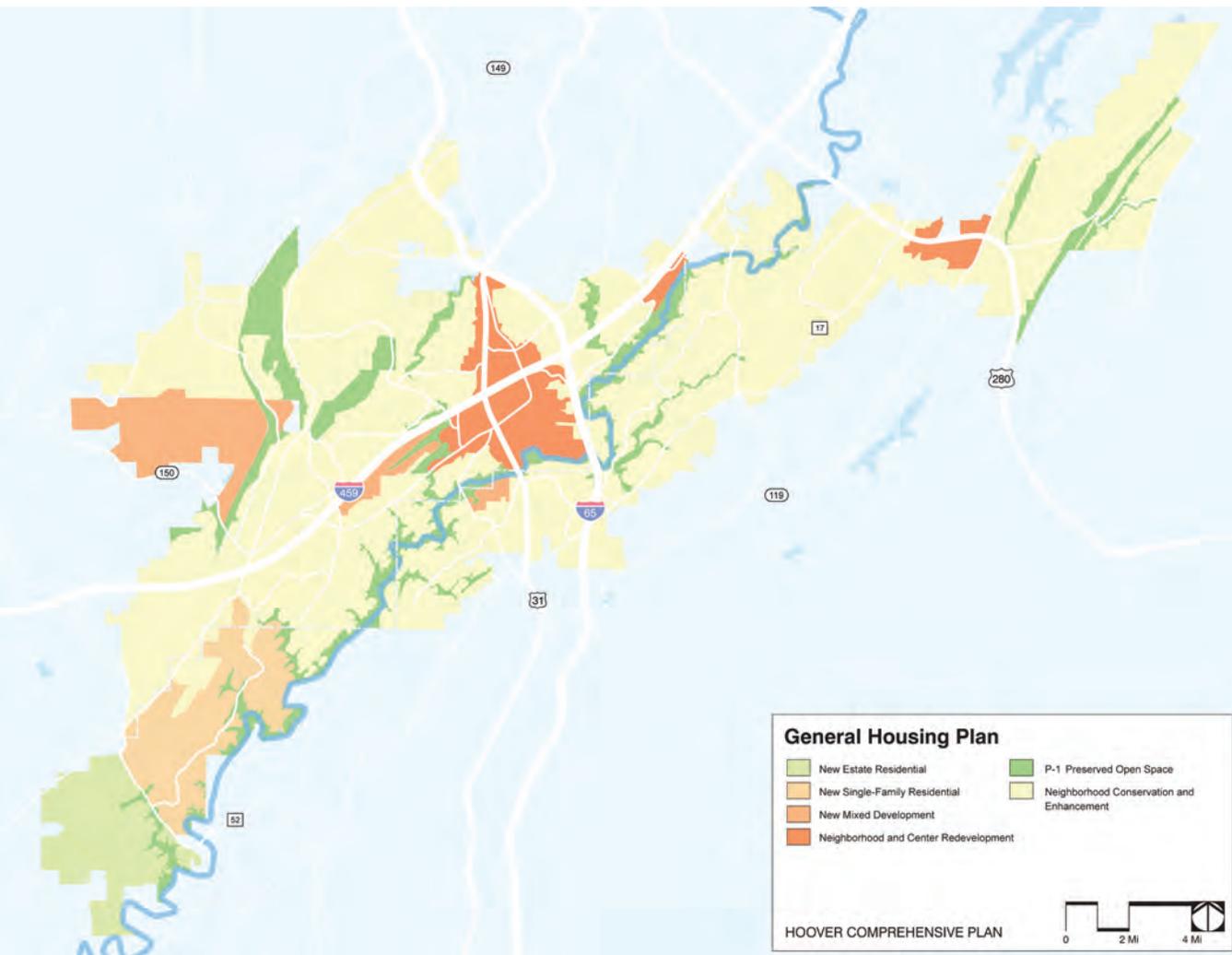
Naturally, a denser, more traditional style mixed use neighborhood is going to include housing types besides single-family detached homes. As mentioned in the Strategic Development Concept, these neighborhoods are well positioned for the “missing middle” including a variety of moderate density single family and multifamily housing types.

The “missing middle” is a term coined by urban planner and designer Daniel Parolek. It describes types of housing that were popular before the rapid suburbanization of the U.S. and were largely left out of the suburban construct. These include duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, courtyard apartments,



Figure 69: Missing Middle Housing, source: Opticos Design Inc., missingmiddlehousing.com

Figure 70 General Housing Plan



that manifest themselves in individual buildings on individual properties. In addition to the buildings being appropriately scaled and placed on their lots, ample sidewalks, traffic calming, parking to the rear of buildings, and other design concepts are essential to making traditional neighborhood streets functional, safe and inviting.

The density of missing middle housing also creates additional opportunities for commercial prospects nearby, particularly in neighborhood centers, town centers, and commercial corridors within walking distance.

In studying the community impacts of multifamily housing, Mark Obrinsky and Debra Stein of the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University found that it has a lower per unit impact on city finances and infrastructure than single family detached homes. Some of their findings include:

- New construction multifamily produces 0.29 school-aged students per unit vs. 0.64 school-aged students per unit of single family detached.
- “Effective tax rates” (ratio of property tax to property value) for multifamily averages 48-54 basis points higher than single family houses.
- More compact multifamily development creates more economies of scale and are thus less burdensome on public infrastructure (streets, water, sewer, public safety) per unit than single-family subdivisions.

(Obrinsky and Stein 2007)

Bear in mind, this is not an argument for open-ended development of multifamily housing. Not all multifamily developments are created equal. Some contribute positively to their neighborhood settings, while others exacerbate sprawl issues and become large space-eating pods of isolated and fractured development across the city’s landscape.

Vecchia Pizzeria and Mercato is a popular neighborhood restaurant and market located in The Preserve. Vecchia is in easy walking distance of nearby homes and features shared tables and patio dining, source: Grace Klein Community.



Hallman Hill, a mixed-use development replaced an aging housing development adjacent to downtown Homewood, helping to generate more shopping and dining activity in the evenings, source: Shannon Waltchack.



It was clear from public input during the planning process that preservation and enhancement of existing neighborhoods is vitally important. As such, it is not an objective of this plan to alter the character of the city’s neighborhoods. Rather, a strategic approach should be taken to encourage restructuring and reinvestment in areas with high concentrations of housing that are suffering from disinvestment. Over time these areas, as well as declining or underperforming commercial areas that adjoin them, may evolve into mixed-use neighborhoods that are better integrated into the city.

As the General Housing Plan (Figure 70) shows, new traditional, mixed-density housing is primarily located in areas designated as Traditional Neighborhoods in the Strategic Development Concept—in and around the core of the city, our future city center, and town centers and employment centers across the city. Most existing neighborhoods are slated for conservation and enhancement activities to help ensure long-term stability.

Privately developed, mixed-density housing will likely replace older housing in these areas. Opportunities for walkable, neighborhood-oriented retail and restaurants will emerge as the new housing areas come on-line.

The greatest transformation will take place in the core of the city where large, single-use suburban developments will evolve into interconnected, walkable neighborhoods with a variety of housing types within close proximity to commercial uses. With the proposed housing policies, most housing in these new traditional, mixed use neighborhoods will replace existing developments in the target areas, taking advantage of existing infrastructure. These new neighborhoods would include a wide array of “missing middle” housing types, providing traditional, mixed-use, and walkable neighborhoods for Hoover residents of a variety of household sizes, ages, incomes and other needs.



Existing multifamily development in Hoover, source: Google Maps

It should be noted there is a high probability new traditional style neighborhoods and high density residential components in town center and city center concepts will lead to more housing units total in the city. Increasing housing unit allotment, along with the possibility of permitting some commercial space along major streets, are possible incentives to affect the kind of change proposed by this Plan. As mentioned previously, the increases in the number of housing units needs to be coordinated with City services and the schools system and should be reflected in future facilities planning efforts. To better understand the impacts that the various housing

types proposed in this Plan would have on City services, a housing study should be performed as part of the implementation of the Plan. The study should look at housing types already present in the City to make sure their impacts are accurately represented, as well as other housing types proposed in the concepts herein that are already increasing in popularity in municipalities across the country. The greater our understanding of the true impacts of various housing types, both existing and proposed, the better equipped the City and its affiliates will be to plan for and address service capacity needs.

Utility Facilities and Infrastructure

Most of the utility facilities and infrastructure in Hoover is owned and operated by other entities outside the city government. However, the sanitary sewer facilities serving the Inverness and Riverchase areas are owned and operated by Hoover. According to City officials, these two systems are in dire need of capital investments, together totaling around \$7 million. Capital improvements have been postponed for some time, but each system is reaching a point where needed improvements can no longer be delayed. The systems also presently run at a deficit of nearly \$1 million per year, leaving the rest of the city to subsidize them.

Conversations with the residents of these two neighborhoods have been ongoing, but it appears that an increase in fees may be necessary to fund proper maintenance of the systems and service to their customers.

Annexation

Achieving the goals and aspirations of this plan will require an expansion and enhancement of the built environment in Hoover. Through the process of assessing the physical landscape of the area and listening to input from the public, this plan finds the following as driving forces in determining how this growth will occur:

- Through the annexation programs of surrounding communities, there are limited opportunities for Hoover to annex developable land.
- Annexation in some directions will adversely impact the City's ability to provide exceptional levels of service.
- The public is more concerned about seeing older developed areas revitalized than continuing horizontal growth beyond our present limits.

Given these factors, it is recommended that Hoover focus any future annexation decisions following these guidelines:

- Fill in unincorporated gaps that diminish continuity of service within Hoover's footprint.
- Limit expansions of the corporate limits to areas that are viable for economic development or natural conservation.
- Limit expansions of the corporate limits that put unnecessary strain on the City's resources and services.

These considerations are shown in Figure 71.

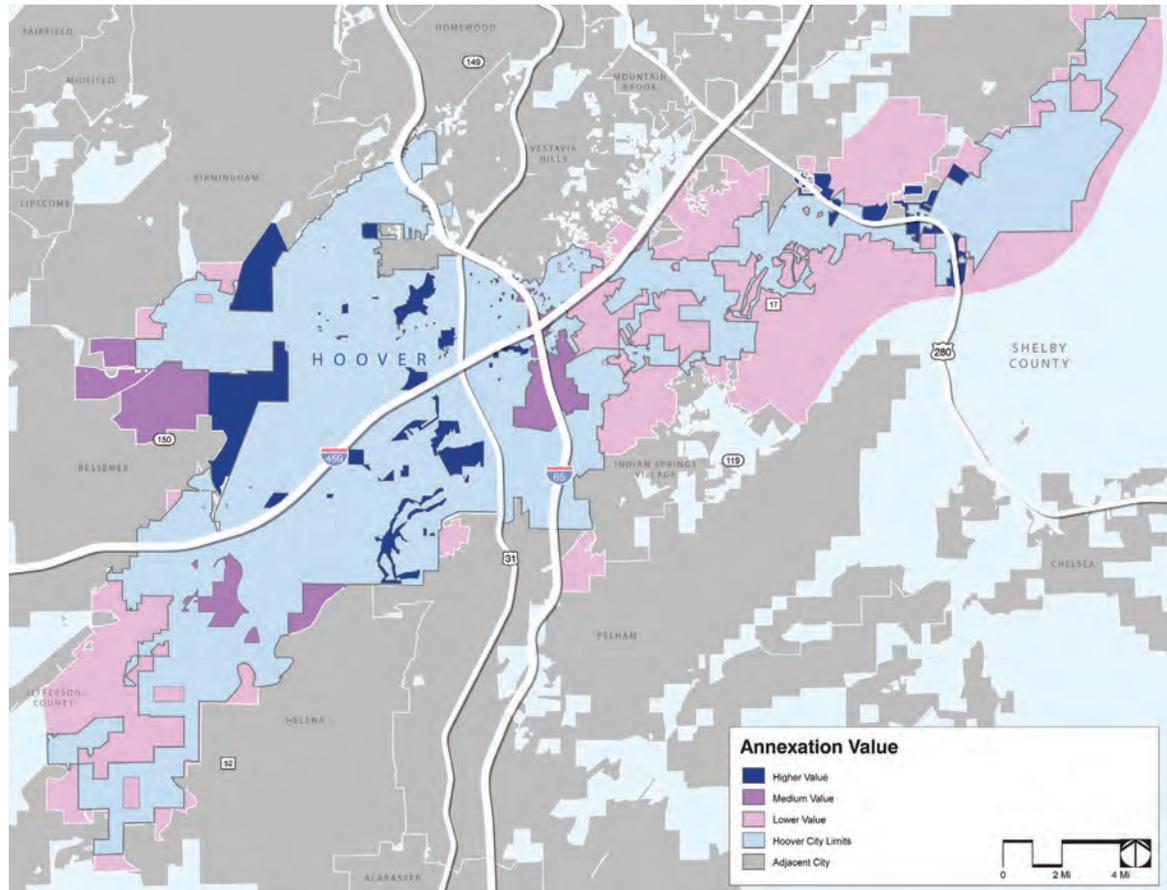


Figure 71: Annexation Value. The above graphic depicts, in a general way, the relative value of annexing unincorporated areas taking into account the costs of providing city services, cost savings that may be generated by simplifying service boundaries, and the benefits of any tax revenue that may be generated.

Built Environment Implementation

Implementation Strategies	Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Category
Evaluate the Land Development and Use component every 5 years, or as necessary, to ensure consistency with citywide goals as they may change over time.	City Departments	Short Term	Planning
Preserve areas suitable for major commercial and industrial development from excessive subdivision and encroachment of other uses.	Planning, Economic Development, Engineering	Ongoing	
Review and update land use and development policies and regulations, including Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, to reflect the desired development pattern in the Plan.	Planning	Short Term	Zoning, Subdivision and Building Codes
Develop a new official Zoning Map to coordinate with the Plan and implement goals and objectives. This may include the creation of new zoning districts. Re-evaluate and alter, as needed, existing zoning districts for consistency with the Plan.	Planning	Short Term	
Create regulatory incentives to encourage redevelopment of underperforming retail and multifamily development.	Economic Development, Planning	Short Term	
Update zoning regulations to accommodate a variety of housing types, including special needs housing.	Planning, Building	Short Term	
Review and consider future building code updates (from International Code Council or equivalent).	Building, Fire	Ongoing	
Ensure that development regulations appropriately scale development from town centers to single family neighborhoods	Planning	Short to Mid Term	
Update review criteria for mixed-use developments.	City Departments	Short to Mid Term	
Adopt and implement standards to encourage complementary uses and foster multi-modal transportation connections and circulation. Establish maximum lengths for cul-de-sacs and criteria to assure street connectivity in new development.	City Departments	Short to Mid Term	

Timeframe | Short Term - 5 years | Mid Term - 5-10 years | Long Term - 10+ years

Implementation Strategies	Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Category
Prioritize and schedule capital funding for roadway improvement projects	Engineering, Planning	Ongoing	Transportation
Prioritize and schedule capital funding for bike/ped improvement projects.	Engineering, Planning	Ongoing	
Review and update roadway standards to accommodate all modes of transportation.	Engineering, Planning	Short to Mid Term	
Identify and improve locations within the city's transportation infrastructure to meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards.	Engineering, Public Works	Ongoing	
Implement traffic calming strategies to reduce traffic speeds and improve safety where appropriate.	Engineering, Public Works	Ongoing	
Develop an access management action plan for arterials and collectors to enhance safety and traffic flow.	Engineering, Planning, ALDOT, County Engineering	Short to Mid Term	
Develop a program to improve/install sidewalks, bike facilities, and lighting along major roadways.	Planning, Engineering, ALDOT, County Engineering	Short to Mid Term	
Develop a program to improve/incorporate sidewalks and lighting in neighborhoods.	Planning, Engineering	Short to Mid Term	
Engage with BJCTA to develop a more in-depth transit plan and implementation strategy following the concepts in this Plan.	BJCTA, Engineering, Planning, ALDOT, County Engineering	Ongoing	
Prepare employment-focused transit study with BJCTA and Hoover Chamber of Commerce to identify benefits and priorities for improvements to transit system.	BJCTA, Chamber of Commerce, Administration	Mid Term	

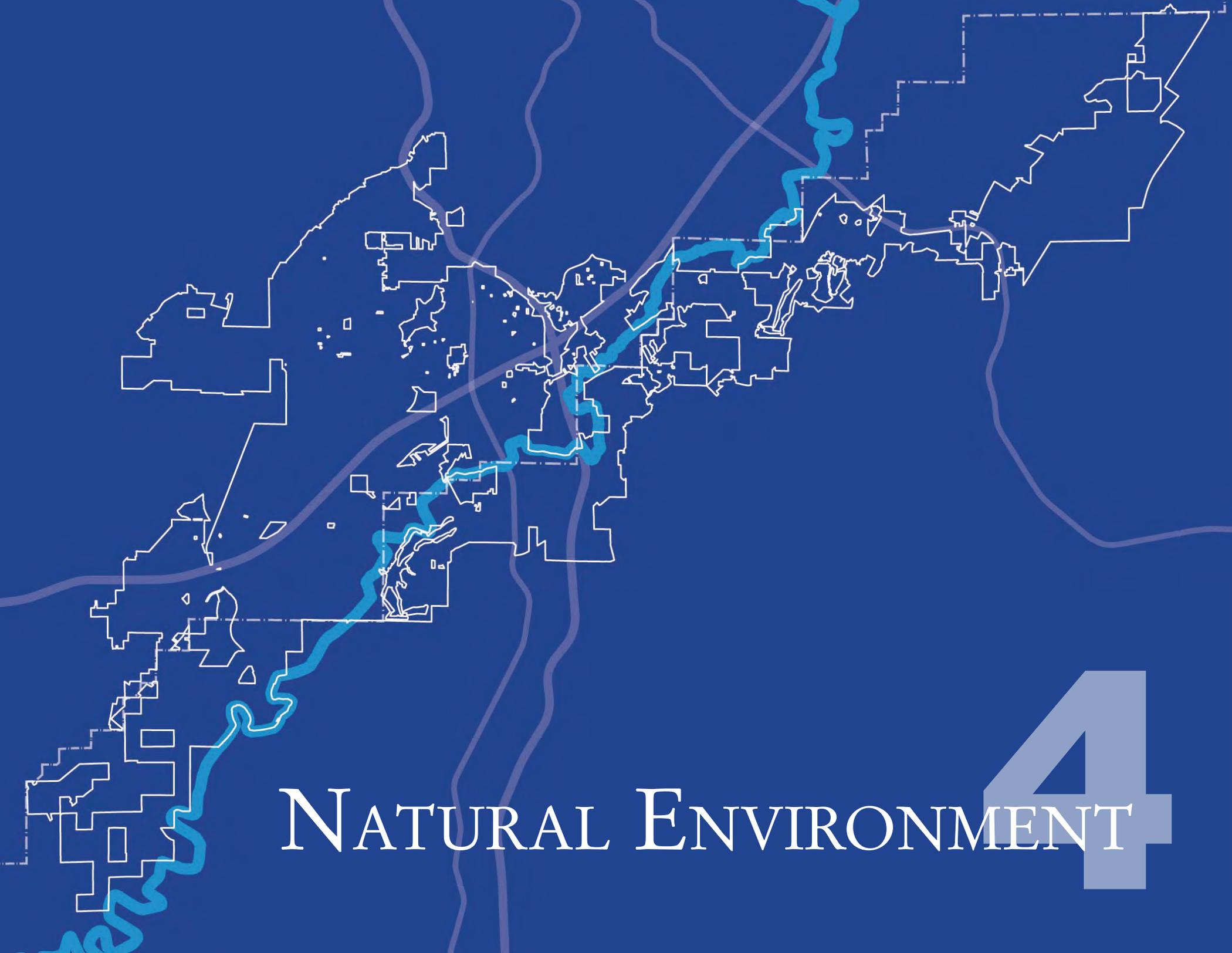
Timeframe | Short Term - 5 years | Mid Term - 5-10 years | Long Term - 10+ years

Implementation Strategies	Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Category
Pursue annexations of unincorporated islands where necessary to improve service delivery	City Departments	Ongoing	Annexation
Conduct studies and action plans for housing options, workforce housing and neighborhood/housing value retention to ensure adequate housing and neighborhood integrity.	Planning	Ongoing	
Increase opportunities for “missing middle” housing through future changes to zoning ordinance, including by right and planned unit development	Planning	Short Term	Housing
Engage in a Housing Impact Study to help determine service impacts of various housing typologies.	City Departments, City Schools	Short Term	
Identify locations for area-specific plans to guide development and redevelopment efforts.	Planning, Economic Development	Ongoing	Revitalization
Identify areas that warrant City investment and/or incentives programs to catalyze private reinvestment.	Economic Development, Planning	Ongoing	
Develop mechanism to adjust sewer fees to cover anticipated capital and operational expenses.	Finance, Engineering	Short Term	Capital Improvements
Develop plans for future locations of municipal facilities	City Departments	Short Term	
Develop a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for financing, scheduling, and constructing physical improvements illustrated in the Plan and define each department’s role in fulfilling the plan.	City Departments	Short Term	
Study alternative methods of financing improvements and services	City Administration / Council	Ongoing	

Timeframe | Short Term - 5 years | Mid Term - 5-10 years | Long Term - 10+ years

**If civilization is to survive, it must live on
the interest, not the capital, of nature.**

-Ronald Wright



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

4

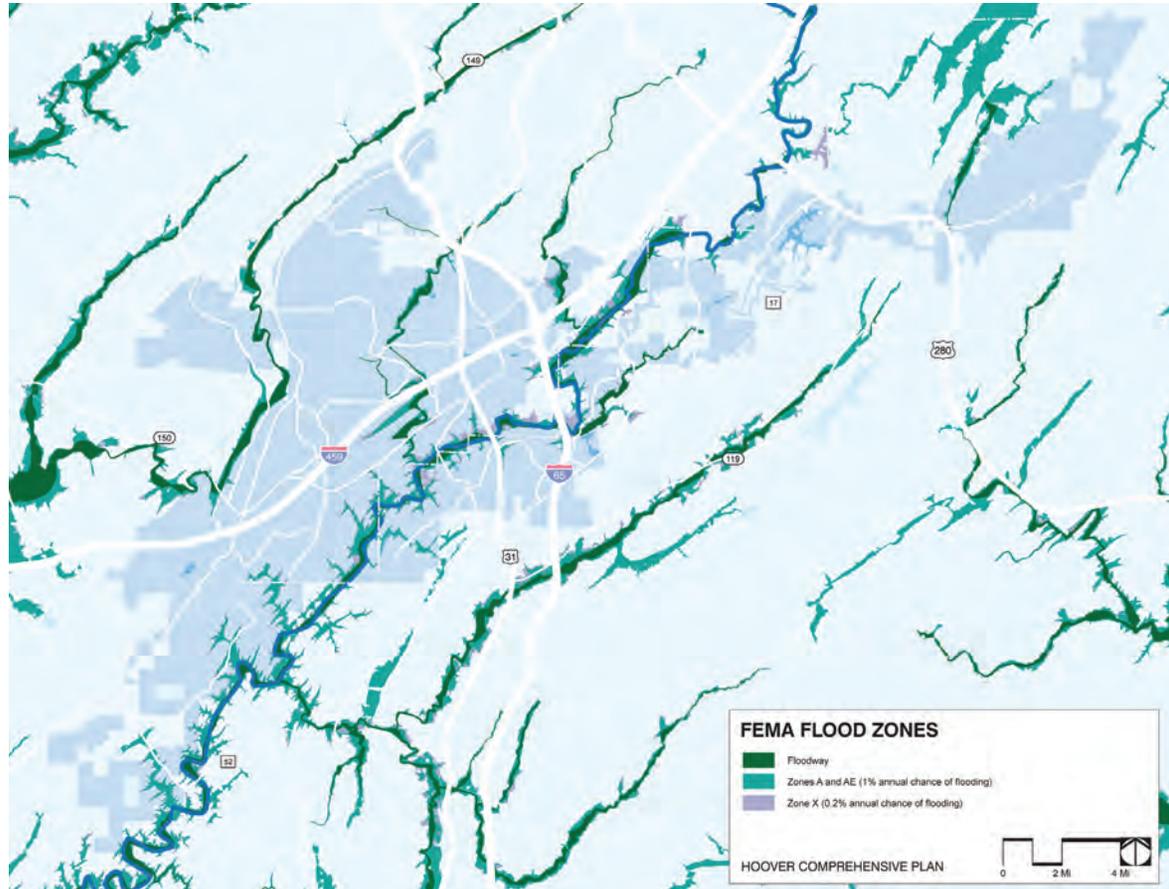
Figure 73: FEMA Flood Zones

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment consists of various natural resources and attributes across the city. The Plan envisions Hoover as a place that develops in a responsible fashion with respect to the natural environment—creating a healthy and sustainable city with a built environment designed to have minimal impact on the natural environment and a substantial natural landscape that is protected and enhanced. A concerted effort to preserve the natural environment not only improves our natural resources, but enhances the health and quality of life of our citizens by creating opportunities for recreation, reducing pollutants, and bolstering the aesthetic nature of the city. This section focuses on enhancements the city can make to the overall environmental quality of the cityscape and how the City plans to improve the relationship between the built and natural environments.

Conservation Strategy

The citywide development strategy focuses primarily on revitalization and infill opportunities where infrastructure already exists. Unrestricted greenfield development at the city’s edges is discouraged. Where infrastructure and services are available at these edges, greenfield development is acceptable but should be undertaken with maintaining



natural areas, habitats and functions in mind. This can be done through a conservation development approach, in which homes and other building types are clustered more closely together so that ample amounts of natural area are preserved. This minimizes disruption of the natural environment conventional low-density, sprawling development while also promoting better air and water.

Following are strategies and enhancements the City can implement to improve the overall environmental quality of the city and the relationship between the built and natural environments.

The Cahaba River meanders through the City of Hoover for over twenty miles,
photo: AL.com

Environmental Quality

Hoover is located in a southwest to northeast-oriented ridge and valley system. The City's footprint stretches from Shannon Valley along Shades Creek, over Shades Mountain, across the Cahaba River valley, and up and over the slopes of Oak Mountain. As a result, there is extraordinary diversity in Hoover's natural environment from forested ridge tops and slopes down to tributaries, flood prone areas (Figure 73) and wetlands (Figure 74) along the bottom of each valley.

Its beautiful landscape is part of the reason Hoover became a popular destination for residents of the metro area seeking a high quality bedroom community to live in. However, as development continued, so too did the strain on the natural environment. Ridges were removed, lands cleared of vegetation, tributaries piped, wetlands drained, and all were replaced with copious amounts of impervious asphalt and concrete that increased polluted runoff into the local tributaries. Before environmental and landscape requirements improved, the natural environment was a distant afterthought.



Today, we have a better understanding of the importance of natural systems and a more effective regulatory framework to minimize impact. Hoover residents realize the value of having green space across the community and have communicated a desire for more of it. This plan envisions Hoover taking the next step in enhancing the quality of the natural environment by actively promoting our “green infrastructure.”

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is defined as “the interconnected system of green spaces that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, sustains clear air and water, and provides a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife. Green infrastructure is a community's natural life support system, the ecological framework needed for environmental and economic sustainability” (Benedict 2002). The green infrastructure strategy (Figure 75) emphasizes an interconnected framework of greenways, natural areas, and parks.

Figure 74: Wetlands and Watersheds

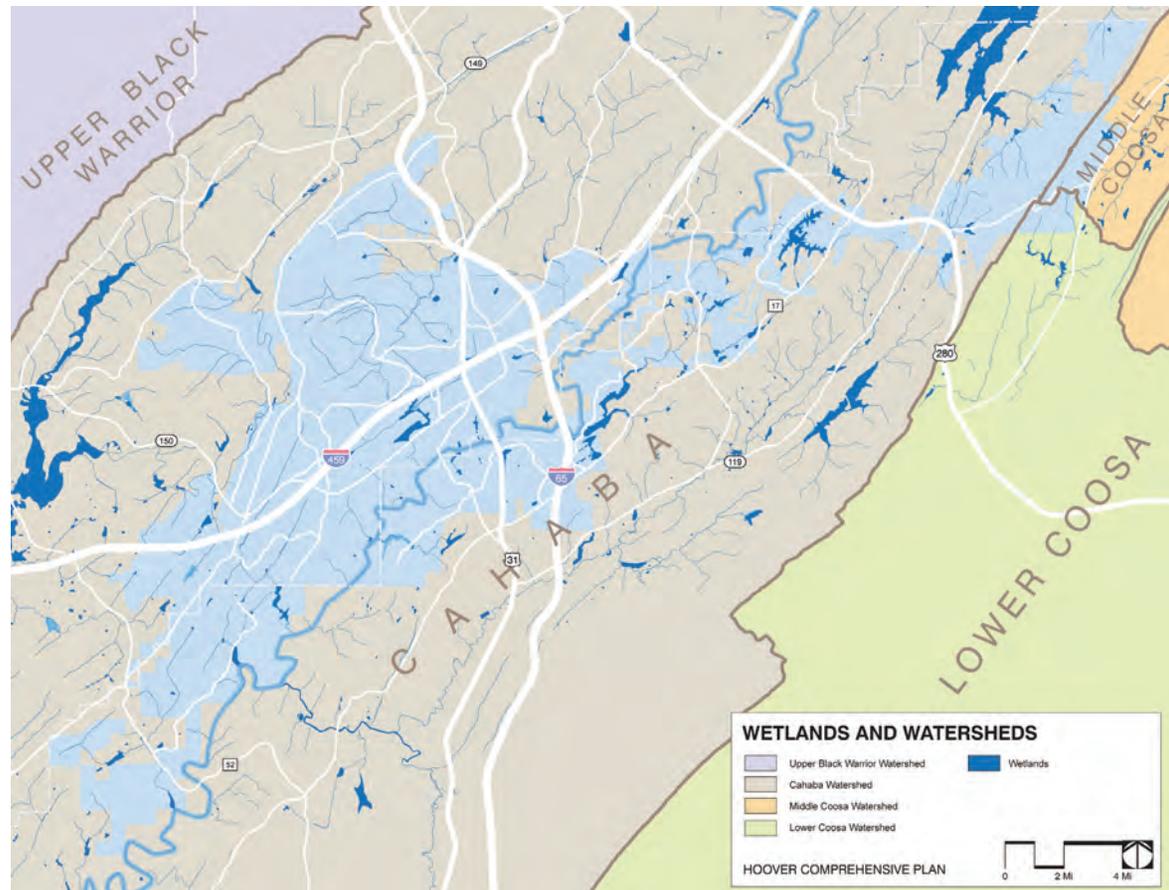
According to the American Planning Association’s City Parks Forum, an interconnected green space system can reduce flood control and stormwater management costs, protect biological diversity, preserve essential ecological functions, serve as a place for recreational and civic engagement, and shape the urban form of the developing city (2003). This interconnected system of green infrastructure is infinitely more valuable and impactful to the community than individual, isolated parks.

To optimize positive impacts on environmental preservation, stormwater management and quality of life benefits, greenways and open spaces envisioned in this component be connected wherever possible to the parks and recreational facilities, existing and proposed, discussed in the Parks and Recreation component.

Waterways

Through the center of Hoover flows the Cahaba River, the longest free-flowing river in the state and one of the most biologically diverse waterways in the country. Hoover is located almost entirely within the Cahaba River watershed. Portions of the Greystone community fall within the Middle and Lower Coosa watersheds (see Figure 74).

A watershed is an area of land in which all of the precipitation that falls in it and all of the water that flows through it goes to a common outlet. For most all of Hoover, that is the Cahaba River. The Cahaba watershed is bordered to the south by Oak Mountain and to the north by Red Mountain. Rain that falls on the north side of Oak Mountain drains to the Cahaba



while rain that falls on the south side drains to the Coosa River.

Wetlands are areas where water regularly covers soil. They contribute to water quality, store floodwaters and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Because of these functions, disruption of wetlands is regulated by the Corps of Engineers. When construction projects impact wetlands, mitigation is

required in the form of restoration and enhancement or creation of new wetlands.

According to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management’s report “Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Siltation and Habitat Alteration in the Upper Cahaba River Watershed,” the segment of the Cahaba flowing through Hoover, identified as Segment 4, is an



View of Paradise Lake from the West. Paradise Lake helps maintain water quality of Area waterways by serving as a catch basin. Source: Google Maps 2018.

impaired section of the river. This segment was first listed as impaired in 1998. The primary impairment is identified as siltation resulting from increased stormwater runoff and elevated peak flow rates.

Use of best management practices (BMPs) for siltation control at construction sites and better stormwater management for new developments have greatly reduced point-source pollution, or siltation directly from disturbed and altered sites. However, the increased flows and velocities of water movement in the Cahaba and its tributaries resulting from urbanization of the watershed have resulted in an increase in non-point source siltation pollution. The built environment includes streets, parking

lots, buildings, and other surfaces unable to absorb stormwater. Rather than seeping into the ground, stormwater runs across these impervious surfaces at a high rate of speed to the lowest point. Without detention or retention facilities, stormwater surges into nearby ditches, streams, and tributaries. The sudden changes in the amount of water and the speed of the current resulting from stormwater leads to erosion along waterways, causing non-point source siltation. According to the TMDL report, this scenario is playing out along the Cahaba and its tributaries and is directly and adversely impacting biological species and their habitats.

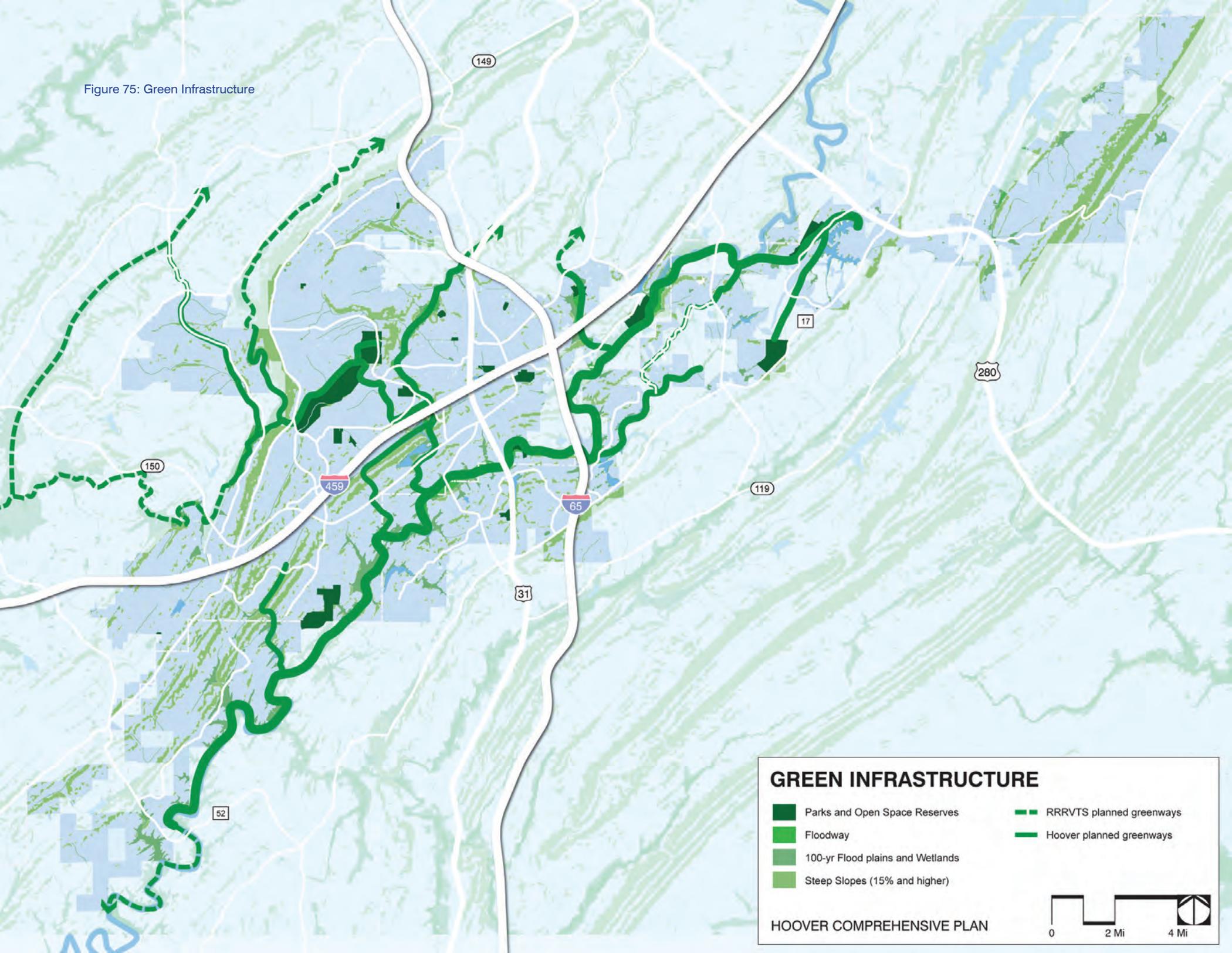
ADEM 2013

Greenways

The Cahaba River Greenway acts as the “spine” of the green infrastructure network. The floodway, and to the maximum extent possible, the 100-year floodplain should be preserved as part of the corridor. This corridor should include a multipurpose greenway path for pedestrians and bicyclists its entire distance through town, along with nodes for canoe and kayak launches and landings that give it the designation of a “blueway” as well. With these preservation and improvement tactics, the Cahaba River corridor would serve as an important biological and ecological preserve, offering Hoover residents the ability to experience the river and its natural surroundings while promoting an active, healthy lifestyle.

From the Cahaba River Greenway, the green infrastructure network extends up the various tributaries and wetlands feeding into the river. These waterways include the Lake Wilborn branch, Patton Creek, Indian Valley Lake, Little Shades Creek, and multiple tributaries in Inverness, and offer many opportunities to connect numerous neighborhoods throughout the City to the network. Ponds and lakes along these secondary tributary greenways, like Paradise Lake along the proposed Patton Creek Greenway, would not only offer scenic qualities and natural habitats along the greenway, but can contribute to stormwater management and water quality efforts. These lakes and ponds are critical forebays and catch basins for particulates that otherwise

Figure 75: Green Infrastructure



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Parks and Open Space Reserves	RRRVTS planned greenways
Floodway	Hoover planned greenways
100-yr Flood plains and Wetlands	
Steep Slopes (15% and higher)	

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

0 2 Mi 4 Mi

Low Impact Development

Low impact development (LID) is an approach to site and building design that uses natural forms, materials and processes to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality. One of the premises of LID is addressing stormwater issues on-site first. Controlling the volume, quality and rate of release of stormwater before it leaves developed property reduces flooding risks and pollutants that intermingle with stormwater as it moves across the built environment. The second premise of LID is what sets it apart from conventional engineering practice—using natural systems as the model for designing site-specific solutions.

In the LID approach, changes to a site's landform are avoided and a number of low impact design tools may be employed based on the specific characteristics of the site and proposed development:

- Vegetated roofs absorb, filter and slowly release rainwater before it hits the ground.
- Rain barrels and cisterns capture stormwater shed from roofs so that it can be used for irrigation during dry periods.
- Pervious paving allows rainwater to be absorbed rather than flow across an impervious asphalt surface.
- Vegetated swales allow a portion of runoff to be absorbed while also slowing the velocity of runoff that continues through the system.

Multiple LID design solutions used in a parking lot design, source: Schollen & Company



Vegetated swales, or bioswales, are designed with vegetation and other materials to filter pollutants out of stormwater as it flows through the drainage system. In contrast, conventionally-designed drainage channels and pipes allow stormwater to flow unabated and without any filtering, which can increase flash flooding and worsens water quality in area waterways and water bodies.

Studies have shown that LID projects are comparable in cost or can be less expensive than conventional drainage designs, both in terms of construction and long-term maintenance.

For development (and redevelopment) in which a substantial portion of each lot will be developed for buildings and parking, a strategic combination of conventional and LID strategies will be necessary. LID practices can also be incorporated in the design of streets, another contributor to a city's impervious surfaces and a major source of pollutants that runoff carries into area waterways.

LID strategies can be incorporated into Hoover's zoning and subdivision regulations. At a minimum, regulatory obstacles to low impact design should be removed. The city's development rules should encourage LID practices as much as practicable.

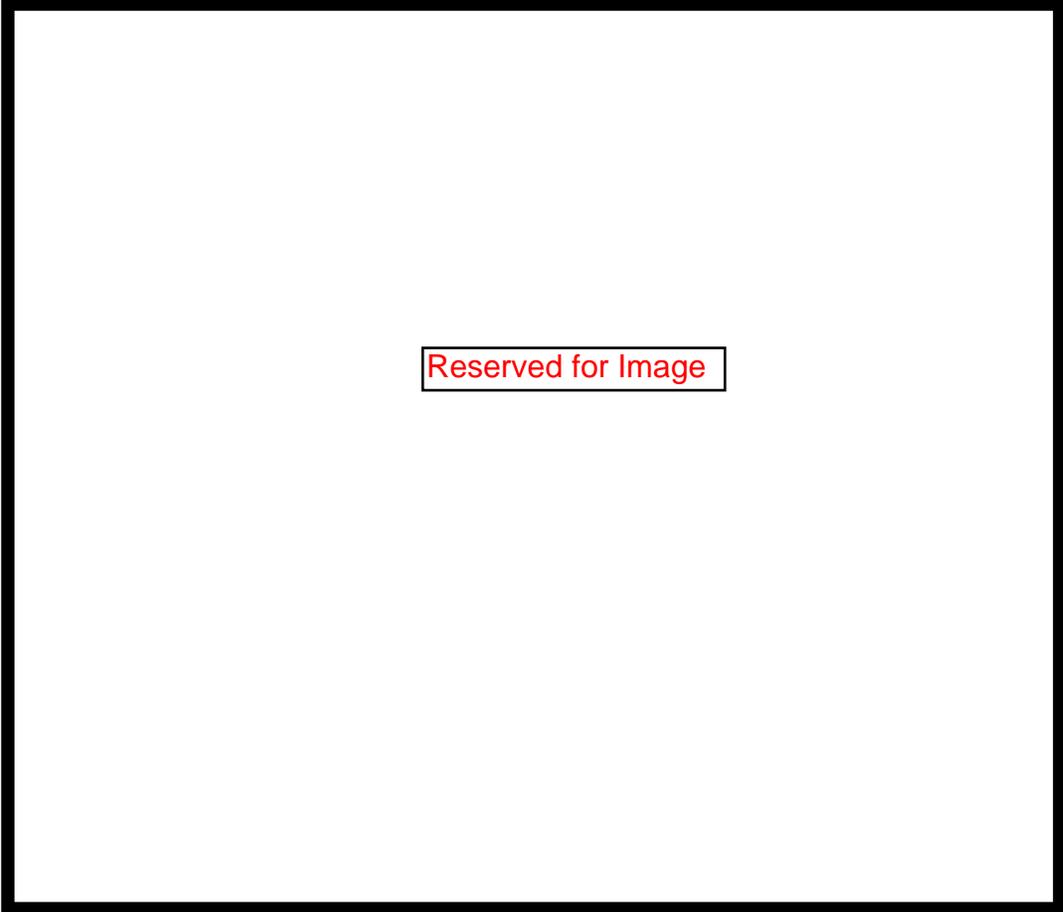
Figure 76: Reserved

would end up in the tributaries, and eventually the Cahaba River. These ponds and lakes should be incorporated into the greenway network for public enjoyment and into the City's stormwater program, which would dredge these water bodies for continued support of their function as catch basins.

Over Shades Mountain, Shades Creek would serve as the primary greenway in the Shannon Valley, with connections into the neighborhoods along its path. The tributary greenway network in Shannon Valley is further enhanced by significant landholdings by the Freshwater Land Trust, which aims to preserve land for natural habitat and recreational use.

Steep Slopes

(Reserved for future amendment)



Reserved for Image

Conservation Development

Conservation subdivisions are an approach to development used to protect green infrastructure features such as flood plains, wetlands, steep slope areas and wildlife habitat.

The conservation subdivision technique preserves natural areas without reducing the number of homes that can be built on a site. Natural features to be conserved are set aside and residential lots are clustered into the remainder of the site. Conserved areas are kept in a natural or near natural state. They may become open space amenities with streets and buildings arranged around them to take best advantage of the proximity.

A conservation development option within zoning regulations allows residential lots and setbacks to be smaller than normally required. But, the number of homes may not exceed what can be

developed based on the district's minimum lot size (or other limits). Developed and undeveloped portions of the site are included in the density calculation. This is referred to as "density averaging."

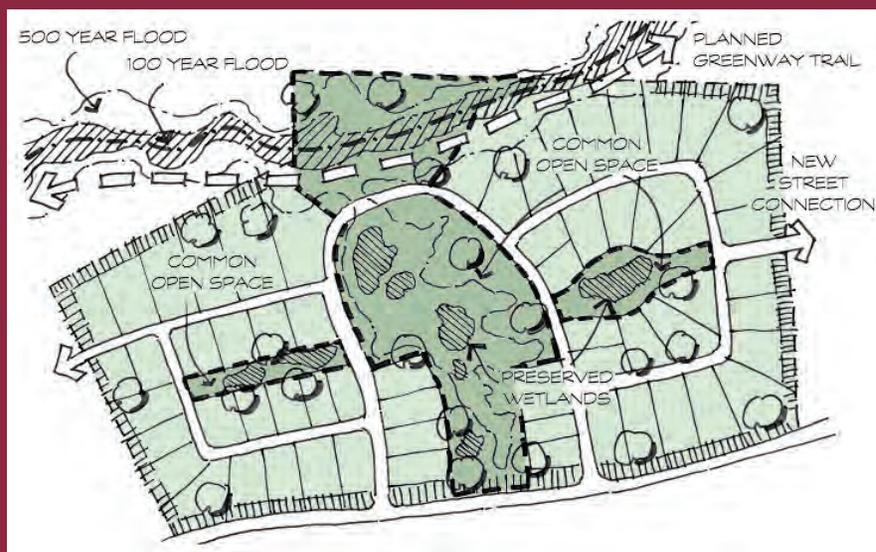
Regulatory requirements include limits on how the open spaces may be used and improved. This is to prevent grading, paving and other changes that would be counter to conservation objectives. There also must be a structure set up to assure the long-term management of created open spaces. The spaces can be owned by a property owner association, land trust or public entity.

While Hoover does not have a 'by right' conservation development option, Ross Bridge and a few other neighborhoods built through the City's planned unit development (PUD) option exhibit features of the conservation development approach.

Creating a well-defined 'by right' option may be more attractive to developers and more successful, in terms of conservation goals, than the PUD process.

BENEFITS

- Less infrastructure saves development costs
- Homes sell faster and for more
- Reduced fragmentation of natural features, corridors and habitats
- Reduced impervious surfaces benefits stormwater arrangement
- Residents enjoy access—within walking distance—to natural and open space



Above: A typical home lot in the Garnet Oaks development, a conservation subdivision developed in 1994 in Bethel Township, Pennsylvania.
Right: Illustration of the conservation subdivision approach creating permanent, usable open space around flood plains and wetlands.

(Reserved)

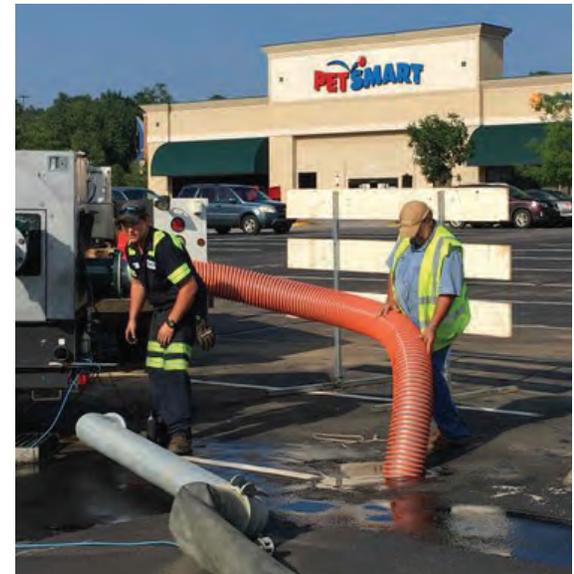
Stormwater Management

Stormwater management is the process of controlling rainwater as it reaches the ground. Stormwaters either soak into soil, are held in place or drains into waterways and water bodies. As cities develop and impervious surfaces—buildings and pavement—increase, there are fewer opportunities for stormwater to infiltrate the ground and flooding risks increase. Streetside gutters, swales and storm sewers collect and direct runoff to area waterways to avoid flooding. But during heavy rainfalls, this drainage system can be overwhelmed resulting in flash flooding. Grading, detention ponds and other on-site improvements are made on individual properties to control the amount and speed at which rainfall enters the storm sewers and water ways.

Hoover has adopted a revised stormwater management program in accordance with Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) requirements. The program focuses on mitigating impacts the built environment has on the natural environment, with particular attention to area tributaries. At present, the City has multiple tributaries identified by ADEM as impaired, including the Cahaba River and Shades Creek.

The primary cause of impairment is siltation from channel alteration and erosion resulting from increased peak water volume and flow velocity caused by stormwater from developed areas. The most significant change in the new permit is the requirement for Post-Construction Stormwater Management in New Development and Re-Development program. This includes a range of measures to encourage low impact development (LID) and reduce pollutants generated by development after construction activity has ceased, primarily by ensuring that stormwater facilities are maintained and adequately operating according to their intended purpose – to slow the rate and reduce the volume of stormwater making it to waterways.

The long term goal of the new post-construction stormwater management requirements is to restore impaired streams and rivers back to an unimpaired state. Additional information related to the new permit is included in the Appendix. This Plan encourages the City to follow through with the new program, officially implemented as of February 2018, and monitor the results before altering it further.



Heavy rainfall on July 27, 2017 caused flash flooding in several areas of the city, particularly along Patton Creek.

Top: Stormwaters covered streets and yards in the Monte D'Oro neighborhood, photo: Kathy Torres (via Hoover Sun)

Right: Workers pump stormwater from a shopping center parking lot, photo: Jon Anderson, Hoover Sun.

Natural Environment Implementation

Implementation Strategies	Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Category
Review and update land use and development policies and regulations to enable and encourage best practices in sustainable building and site planning.	Planning, Building, Engineering, Landscape Architecture	Short Term	Regulations
Identify and adopt development management tools for preserving key natural assets	Planning, Landscape Architecture	Short Term	
Develop a Green Infrastructure Action Plan for the development/preservation of greenways, steep slopes, wetlands, and other sensitive natural resources and lands.	Planning, Landscape Architecture, Engineering, Parks and Rec	Short to Mid Term	Planning
Develop plans for future locations of municipal facilities that will contribute to development of the green infrastructure system (greenways, parks, preserves, etc.)	City Departments	Short Term	
Develop action plan for making municipal facilities and buildings more energy efficient.	City Departments	Ongoing	Capital Improvements
Develop cost-benefit analysis of installing solar or other micro-generation technology at municipal facilities.	Engineering, Public Works, Parks and Rec	Ongoing	
Implement new ADEM permit requirements for the installation and maintenance of stormwater facilities.	Engineering	Ongoing	Stormwater Management
Work to lower pollutant levels in the Cahaba and other tributaries, warranting their removal from impacted streams list	Administration and Development Community	Ongoing	

Timeframe | Short Term - 5 years | Mid Term - 5-10 years | Long Term - 10+ years

**We shape our buildings, and afterwards,
our buildings shape us.**

-Winston Churchill



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

5

THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

While the previous two components of the Plan focused on envisioning future built and natural environments of Hoover, the social component is focused on the people that will occupy that future Hoover and how to connect them with the community. Providing existing and future residents of Hoover with an exceptional quality of life and sense of belonging is of paramount importance if the city is to continue to grow and achieve the elite status of being atop national “best places to live” lists annually.

Quality of Life

It goes without saying that quality of life is perhaps the most important aspect of a community. If the quality of life of citizens in a community suffers, the overall desirability of the community suffers. So much is invested on the part of individuals and families to move into and reside in a particular community that quality of life often becomes the primary deciding factor on whether or not your community makes the cut and if residents stay. Promoting services that bolster quality of life, while expensive, is critical for keeping and attracting residents to the city, which in turn attracts commerce and businesses that generate the revenue necessary to run it. This Plan envisions the City offering exceptional services to the extent Hoover becomes the most desirable city in the state in which to live.

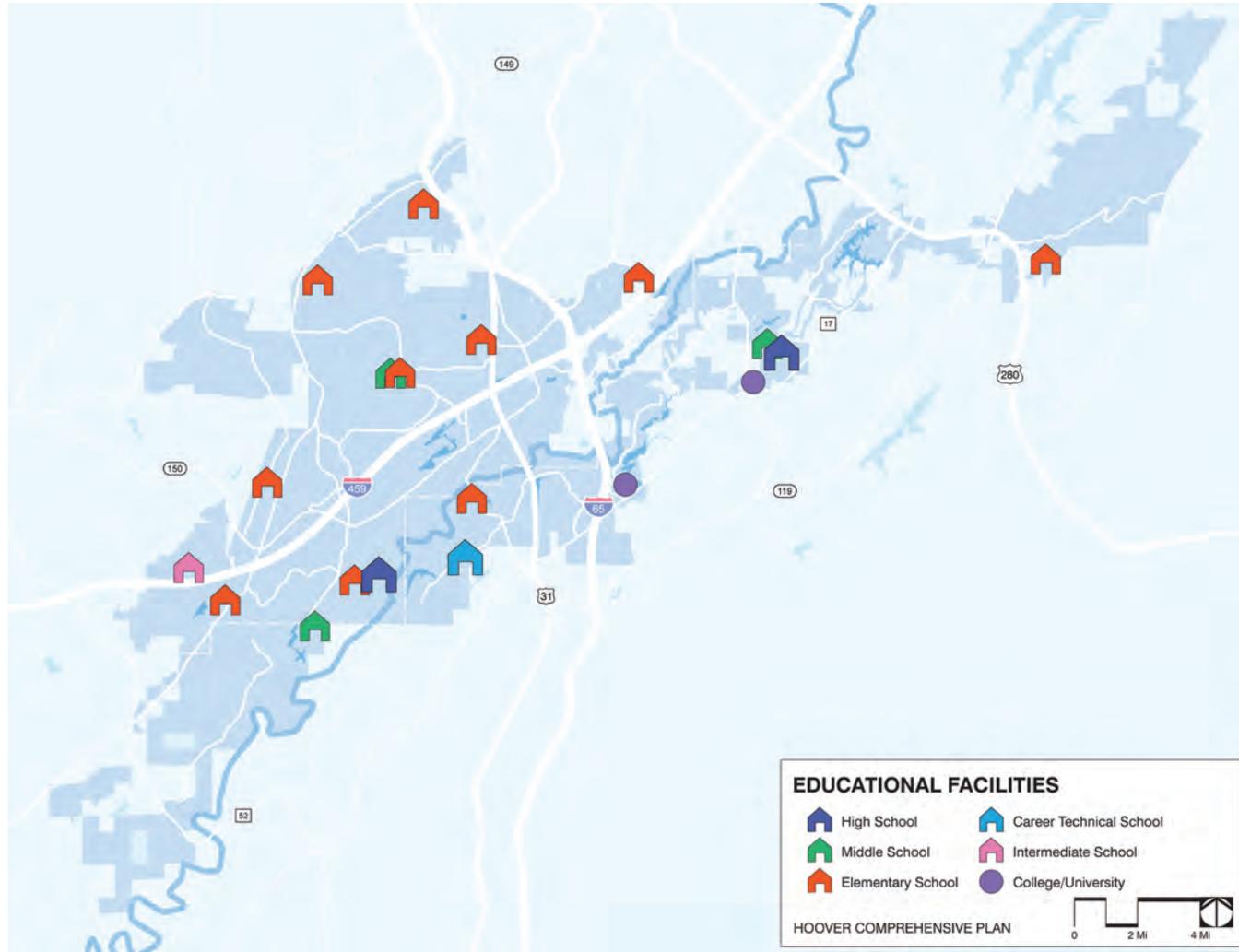


Figure 77: Educational Facilities



Hoover students learn how to build and program robots, source: Hoover City Schools Foundation

Education

One of the cornerstones of Hoover's success is its high performing school system. It offers Hoover children an incredible education, building a solid foundation for their futures. The system's programming is diverse, and its facilities are among the best in the state. The system consists of ten elementary schools, an intermediate school, three middle schools, two high schools, and a career technical school that began its first year of service in the 2018-19 school year (see Figure 77 for school locations).

Hoover City Schools

This Plan is very limited in its focus on planning for the school system since the system has its own planning function. However, redevelopment and new development will ultimately lead to population growth, which will impact the school system. The policy of the school system is to educate every school-aged child within the city. With that comes a responsibility to provide adequate facilities. The City has a shared responsibility in ensuring that the city's school children have the resources and facilities necessary to keep Hoover's public schools ranked amongst the premier systems in the state.

Much of Hoover's future growth will occur through infill and revitalization of already developed parts of the city. This type of growth does not extend our city services footprint. This would be true as well

Hoover City Schools Enrollment 2017-18	
Elementary Schools	
Bluff Park	662
Deer Valley	976
Green Valley	509
Greystone	509
Gwin	553
Riverchase	698
Rocky Ridge	567
Shades Mountain	318
South Shades Crest	626
Trace Crossings	426
Brock's Gap Intermediate (3rd-5th Grades)	808
Middle Schools	
Berry	1,176
Bumpus	839
Simmons	830
High Schools	
Hoover	2,898
Spain Park	1,626
TOTAL	14,021

Figure 78: 2017-2018 Enrollment in Hoover City Schools



for schools as well, bringing much of future growth to neighborhoods and areas within the schools present service area. This should enable the school system to focus future investments on existing facilities to handle growth in enrollment rather than new facilities at the far edges of the city. That is not to say that new greenfield development is out of the picture. But, in such cases, greenfield development must be carefully managed so that infrastructure and services, including schools, are in place.

To promote continued growth of our community, the leadership of both the City and the school system will need to remain engaged in continuous communication to ensure a healthy level of resource

allocation and planning are in place to educate the City's youth. This Plan recommends that the two parties not only have a plan in place to maintain the system, but plan for healthy expansion of the system that will accommodate growth over the long term. As part of this effort, the Plan also recommends performing a housing study to verify the actual impact existing housing types have on the system, but also to determine what impact potential housing types not currently present would have as well. Doing so will generate assurances among members of the community that their children and future generations will continue to receive an exceptional education, providing them with an excellent start on career opportunities.

Higher Education

There are two institutions of higher learning in the city—Jefferson State Community College and Faulkner University—both of which are located on Valleydale Rd. (Figure 77).

While Jefferson State has a vibrant, growing campus on Valleydale Road, the Faulkner University facility occupies a former grocery store. In the future there may be an opportunity for Faulkner or another satellite university campus to relocate close to Hoover's future city center. A new college campus would bring a number of faculty, students, and staff to the heart of the city, providing yet another layer of activity and energy to the city's core while also boosting the quality of life and opportunities for Hoover residents.

Jefferson State offers career/professional programs in the following fields:

- Accounting
- Banking and Finance
- Biomedical Equipment Technology
- Business
- Child Development
- Computer Information Systems Technology
- Construction and Building Science Technology
- Culinary and Hospitality
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Science
- Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice
- Manufacturing and Technology
- Medical Laboratory Technology - Phlebotomy
- Nursing Education

In addition to four associate degrees, Faulkner's campus on Valleydale Road, offers Bachelor's degrees in the following fields:

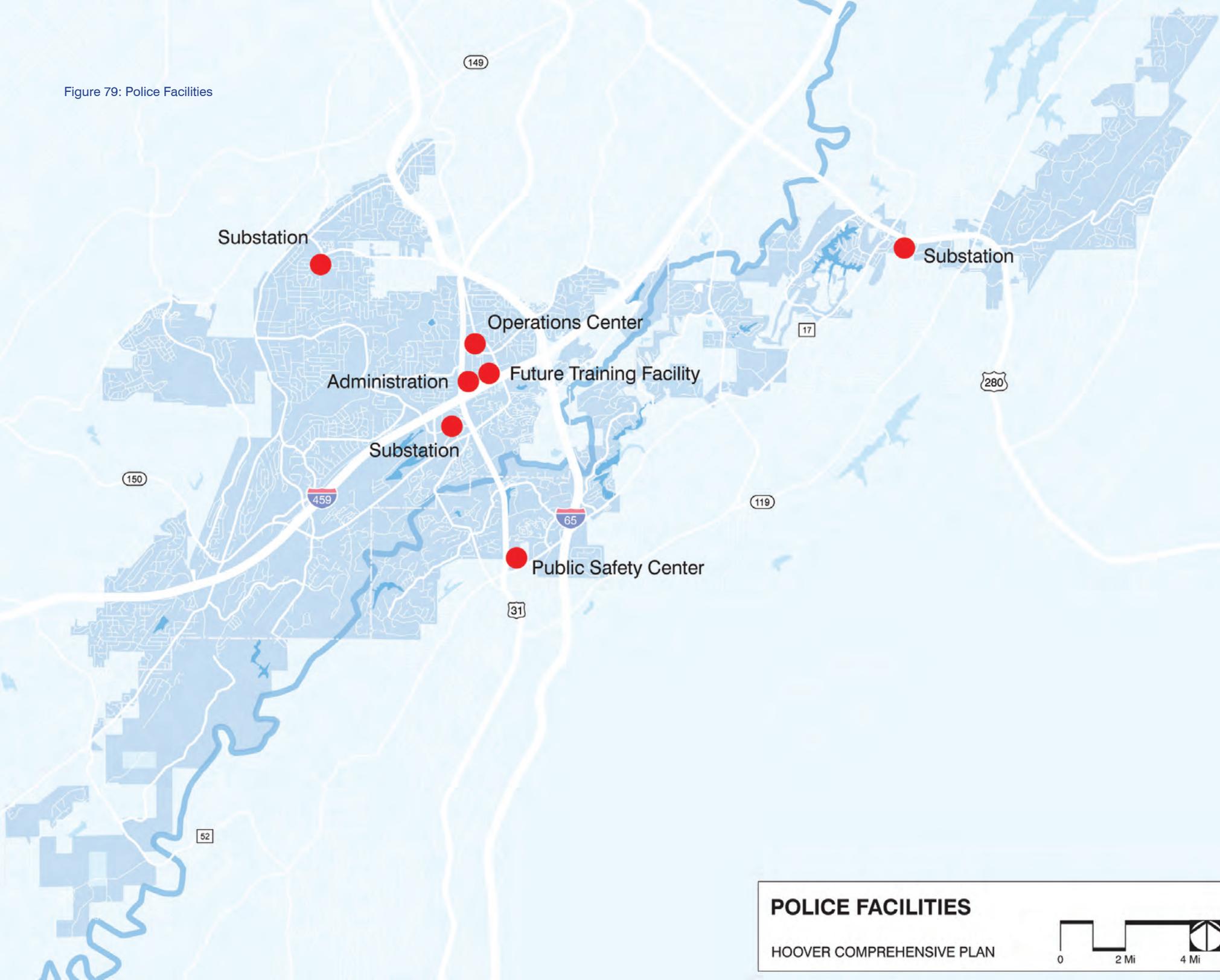
- Business Administration
- Business (fully online)
- Counseling Psychology
- Criminal Justice
- General/Clinical Psychology
- Forensic Psychology
- Health & Rehabilitation Psychology
- Health & Rehab. Psych. with Pre-Occupational Therapy
- Human Resource Management (fully online)
- Industrial/Organizational Psychology
- Legal Studies
- Sports Psychology



Faulkner University - Birmingham Campus, Valleydale Road, source: Faulkner University

Jefferson State Community College Shelby-Hoover Campus, source: Jefferson State Community College

Figure 79: Police Facilities



POLICE FACILITIES

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

0 2 Mi 4 Mi

Public Safety

Another cornerstone to our high quality of life is the sense that people who live and do business in Hoover are safe. The City’s public safety services, including both Fire and Rescue as well as the Police Department, received extremely high marks from the public in our survey. The residents of Hoover appear to be very satisfied with the level of service they receive from these departments. However, according to both departments, there are several major challenges ahead to keeping the City’s first responders operating at an exceptional level of service.

Police Department

The Police Department consists of an administrative headquarters, an investigations division, an operations center, and three substations across the city (Bluff Park, Galleria, and Inverness) as shown in Figure 79. There are plans presently in place to construct a training facility on Municipal Drive next to Fire Station 4. In addition to normal patrol and response services, the department also includes SWAT, K-9, and one of the few bomb squads in the state.

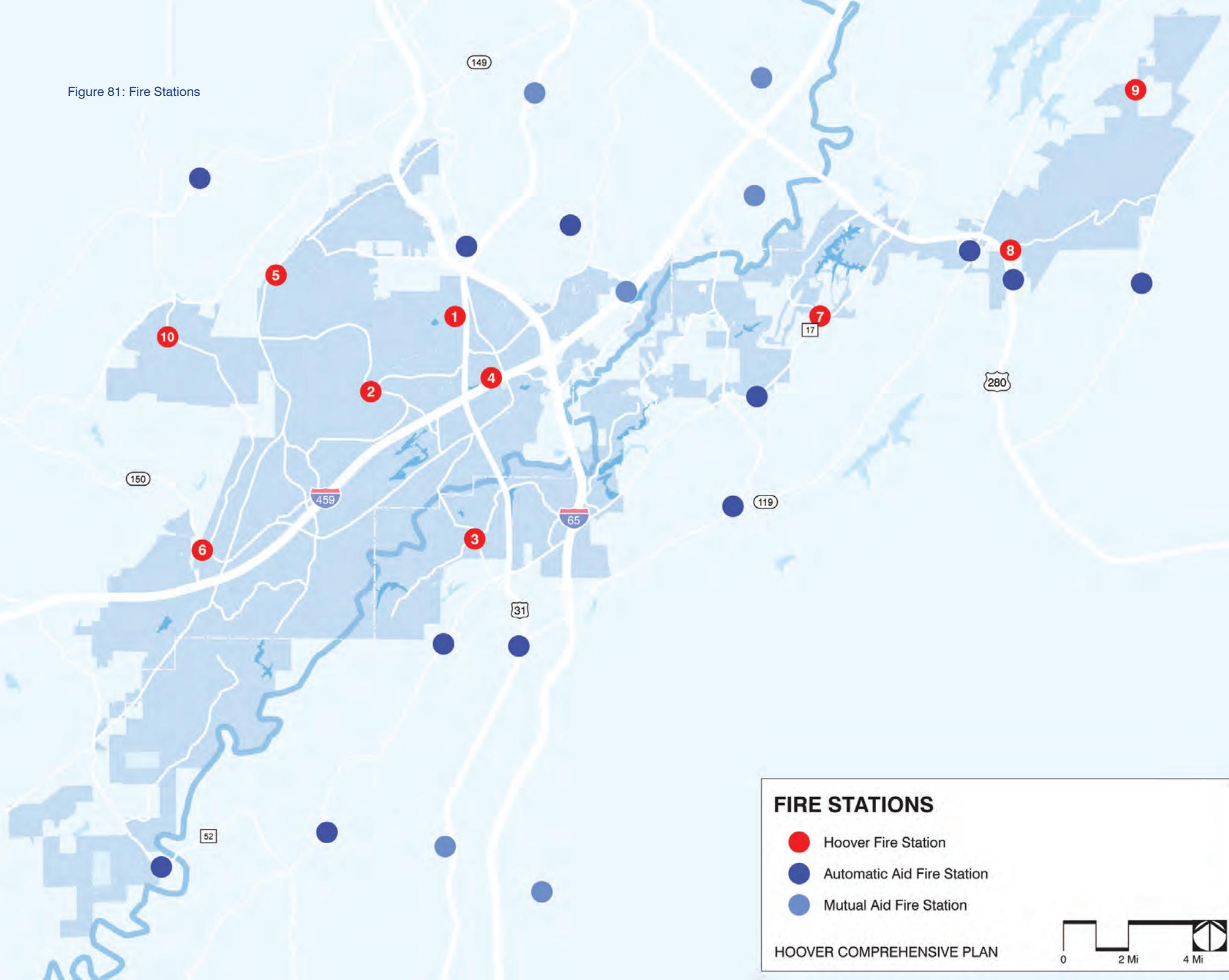
A primary concern to the Police Department is maintaining an exceptional level of service for the foreseeable future. The Department is operating at approximately 2 officers per 1000 residents. Of the six largest cities in the state and of the majority of Birmingham suburbs, this per capita figure ranks the lowest (Figure 80). The continued development of western portions of Hoover, along with the significant additions of sports and events programming at the revamped Hoover Met Complex will continue to strain the police force if long-term solutions are not reached on staffing and operations.

Size of Police Force by Population of Alabama Cities				
	City	Population	Sworn Officers	No. of Officers per 1000 pop.
Top 6 Alabama cities by Population	Birmingham	212,461	912	4.3
	Montgomery	200,602	524	2.6
	Mobile	194,288	500	2.6
	Huntsville	190,582	407	2.1
	Tuscaloosa	98,332	285	2.9
	Hoover	84,848	169	1.9
Adjacent cities	Vestavia Hills	36,000	87	2.4
	Alabaster	32,000	67	2.1
	Bessemer	30,000	125	4.2
	Homewood	25,252	79	3.1
	Pelham	22,699	72	3.2
	Mountain Brook	21,000	58	2.8

The population for “over the mountain” cities combined—Vestavia Hills, Homewood, and Mountain Brook—totals 82,252 with 224 total officers to cover those areas. By comparison Hoover, with a population of 84,848, has 169 officers.

Figure 80: Police Force Comparisons

Figure 81: Fire Stations



FIRE STATIONS

- Hoover Fire Station
- Automatic Aid Fire Station
- Mutual Aid Fire Station

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Fire and Rescue Department

The Fire and Rescue Department presently consists of 10 fire stations across the city (Figure 81). In addition to the City’s stations, the City has automatic and mutual aid agreements with neighboring cities and fire districts in what is one of the finest examples of inter-governmental/agency cooperation in the metro. Because of the excellent coverage and exemplary training programs and resources dedicated to Fire and Rescue, the City has achieved an ISO rating of 1, the highest mark achievable under the Insurance Service Office rating system. Having this rating greatly benefits the public by lowering property insurance rates across the city.

According to the Fire Department, 1.8 fire and rescue personnel per 1,000 residents, about 1 firefighter per capita less than neighboring cities of Birmingham, Homewood, Mountain Brook, and Vestavia Hills (Figure 82). This represents a steady decline in per capita fire and rescue personnel since 1999, when that figure was 2.4 per 1,000 residents. According the department, the strain of maintaining the present level of service with fewer per capita personnel is starting to show.

While this is an issue across the city, nowhere is the strain more evident than Station #6. This station has the largest service area—over 14 square miles on the west side of town, covering Trace Crossings, Lake Cyrus, Russet Woods, South Shades Crest, and all points along AL Hwy 150 from the Bessemer city limits to the Toyota dealership east of the Ridge Crossings apartment complex. Portions of Hoover

in the Blackridge community under development, the southern end of South Shades Crest, and the Morgan Road vicinity are beyond the standard five-mile coverage distance from Station #6, the closest Hoover fire station. See Figure 80.

Comparison of Fire/Rescue Personnel and Activity in 1999 and 2018	
1999	2018
37 personnel on duty	43 personnel on duty
4900 calls for the year	11,000 calls projected
60,000 population	84,848 population
8 Fire Stations	10 Fire Stations
144 uniformed personnel	159 uniformed personnel plus 17 part-time
2.4 per 1000 residents	1.8 per 1000 residents

Figure 82: Fire Rescue Personnel Comparison

Fortunately, Helena’s station on Morgan Road is close enough to provide assistance for present development in that vicinity under the mutual aid agreement. Also, according to a planned unit development ordinance adopted for the Blackridge development, the developers must build a new fire station. The station will cover the Trace Crossings, Lake Wilborn, and Blackridge vicinity, proving quicker response for area residents, the Hoover Met complex and multiple schools. The Council has funded personnel and equipment for the new station. The Fire Department is in discussions with the developer to determine an optimal location for the station

While the new station would excel service to development along Stadium Trace Pkwy. and provide some relief to Station #6, should the area south of Morgan Road develop further, the City would need to evaluate whether or not additional facilities are warranted as some areas there within the city limits would likely be beyond five miles of the new station if it is built along Stadium Trace Pkwy. The City would rather not become dependent on automatic aid agreement stations or push excessive service pressure on them, as the agreements are dependent upon other governmental agencies being willing to support them and are subject to change. A primary reason for carefully planning and phasing growth south of Morgan Road is the difficulty in providing an appropriate level of public safety services to new development in the area.

Despite being staffed at a lower level than area departments, the Hoover Fire Department has achieved the top ISO rating, which lowers our insurance costs. Further straining the system by increased road mileage and longer response times jeopardizes this rating. As growth continues, more staff and facilities will be needed to maintain an exceptional level of service.

Libraries

Founded in 1983, the Hoover Public Library has become one of the centerpieces of social life in Hoover. While it provides services and resources considered traditional for a library, the programming of this library is anything but traditional. According to their website, the library is not only a building offering reading materials, but a place “you come to meet your friends, experience live theater, peruse art, listen to music, entertain your children, learn about new technology, seek job searching

assistance, explore your interests, find good book recommendations and much, much more.” The resources, programming, and overall experience is why over 600,000 patrons visited the library last year, making it the busiest municipal library in the state.

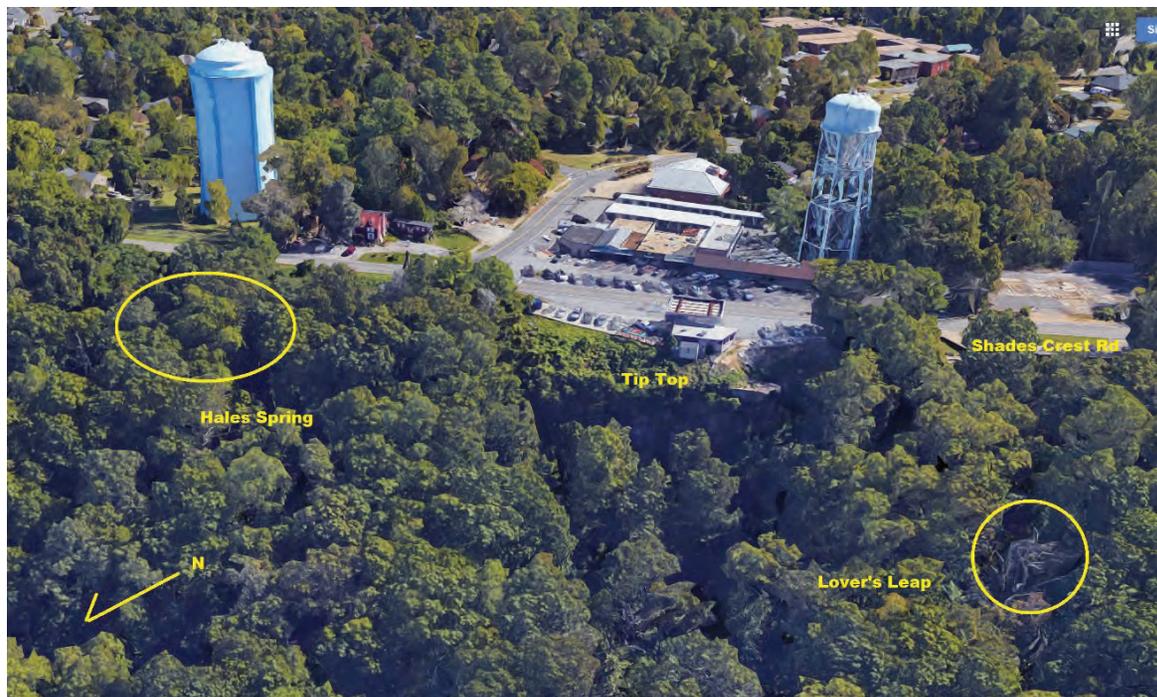
In 2017, the library adopted a 5-year strategic plan laying out their primary goals over that time-frame (see Appendix). The City desires through its planning efforts to support the library in developing and improving their services as a major component

of the City’s overall quality of life. A major emphasis of the library’s plan is ensuring convenience for patrons across the city. And, one of its main goals is establishing a branch to serve east Hoover along the US Hwy 280 corridor. The Plan envisions a library branch being an integral part to the exciting development envisioned for the Meadowbrook office park. The Meadowbrook branch would not only be ideally situated to serve the US Hwy 280 corridor, but would serve as a cornerstone for the new town center. There may be a need for a temporary arrangement until the town center envisioned develops. However, the Plan envisions a library branch being a critical component of the new East Hoover Town Center at Meadowbrook.

In the long term, smaller branches may be developed to provide convenience for residents in Hoover’s growing west side. These could be located in new town or neighborhood centers as those areas develop.



Figure 83: View of west face of Shades Mountain at Bluff Park, source: Google Maps, 2018.



History

Perhaps the most important aspect of a community's culture is its history. While Hoover itself is only 50 years old, there are parts of the city that are much older than that.

Most historic assets in Hoover are located in the Bluff Park neighborhood atop Shades Mountain. In the early 9th Century, Bluff Park was founded and developed as a resort and later became a destination getaway for those living in the heart of Birmingham with enough means to afford an escape from the smog produced by the numerous furnaces that fueled the city's economy. Many of the

area's historic properties are located in the honorary Shades Crest and Park Avenue Historic Districts.

There are several key historic assets in Bluff Park that played a pivotal role in the development of Hoover's oldest neighborhood. In need of preservation and enhancement for public enjoyment, Lover's Leap and Hale Springs (Figure 83) represent the earliest known inhabitants who predated later settlers and the water source that led to the very founding of the settlement. The two landmarks are located on private property with no formal preservation designation in place. The Hale Springs property is also within the city limits of Birmingham. Since they are in close proximity to one another, the City



Lover's Leap historic interpretive sign, source: StyleBlueprint magazine.

of Hoover could incorporate the Hale Springs property and create a historic park space to preserve both landmarks and make them accessible to the public. The park could feature an elevated path or boardwalk allowing people of all abilities to see the landmarks and enjoy a scenic overlook of Shades Valley.

Bluff Park Community School, source: Hoover Historical Society



The old Bluff Park Community School is a building on Park Avenue near Bluff Park Elementary School. Built in 1923 with community support, the school building later became home to Artists on the Bluff and the Hoover Historic Society when the newer elementary school was finished. In 2017, the building was determined to be in need of repair and compliance with Building and Fire Codes before being reoccupied.



Hoover Folklore Center, source: Hoover Historical Society

With the site occupying such a prominent place in the history of the neighborhood, the Plan encourages the City to partner with the present owner, Hoover City Schools, to determine a course of action to repair the school so that it may continue to serve the community. Both organizations should explore public/private/nonprofit partnerships to make this possible.

The Hoover Historic Society is a nonprofit organization with the mission of preserving the community's history and telling the story of our past. The organization operates the Folklore Center next to Bluff Park Elementary School on land owned by the city's school system. The Folklore Center tells the story not only of Bluff Park's history, but that of the entire Hoover area, with interactive displays dating back to 1840s.

The points of interest named in this plan, along with the others listed by the Hoover Historic Society, could become an interesting addition to the repertoire of tourism activities available to visitors in Hoover. Coupled with natural attractions and sporting events, Hoover's historic assets could become part of a larger circuit of activities and attractions for residents and guests alike. The Plan envisions the City's promotional services further developing such a route across the city.

The Artists on the Bluff program includes a variety of arts workshops including vintage furniture painting. Photo: lazenbydecorativeart.com



Arts and Culture

The Birmingham-Hoover metro area is not only the economic and population center of Alabama, it is the center of arts and culture as well. With a plethora of museums, attractions, entertainment venues, botanical gardens, and more, there are a lot of ways metro residents can enjoy the region's arts and culture. However, there is a sense among residents that Hoover is underrepresented in the metro area when it comes to arts and cultural facilities.

There is growing interest in the community for developing and cultivating the artistic and cultural scene in Hoover. This is a promising development

as arts and culture are increasingly viewed across the country as essential to the vibrancy, quality of life and even the economy of cities. According to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, arts and cultural resources “serve as an economic engine for investments and employment opportunities, a magnet for cultural tourism, and a key component in improving the quality of life in the region, which helps attract the kind of talent that’s highly prized in the 21st Century – creative talent capable of tackling complex problems and helping envision a brighter future” (CMAP 2014). This fits well into the vision statement and overall strategy of this Plan.

Today athletics play an enormous role in the city. Hoover residents love and support the local youth sports and school related athletic programs. Sizeable contributions of resources and community support have helped the athletic programs at both high schools become competitive at the state championship level in multiple sports. The City is upgrading the Hoover Met Complex to bring in competitive youth sports programs from around the country. Once complete, it will be the largest youth sports destination in central Alabama. The City will continue to improve sports programming and facilities to ensure they meet the expectations of the community.

There is a growing desire for more support and resources dedicated to growing Hoover’s arts infrastructure. The demand is such that the City Council formed (in 2018) an Arts Council to explore ways to support the arts. While this is a new effort, other efforts to support the arts have been in place for some time. The neighborhood in Hoover most associated with the arts, Bluff Park, birthed an organic movement dedicated to the creation and appreciation of the visual arts – Artists on the Bluff. While the organization has been around for some time, there is currently no dedicated space that collectively houses the artists and their work, much less space for other Hoover artists.

Cultural Arts Center

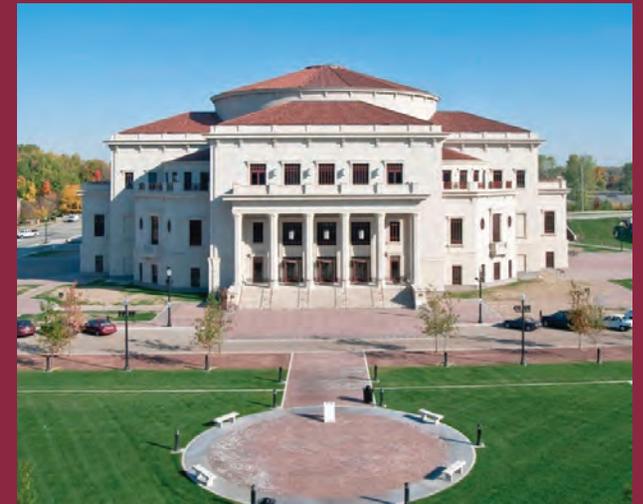
There is increasing demand for the City to play a role in cultivating more arts and entertainment offerings in the community. Through comprehensive plan meetings and the online survey, residents indicated that they wanted a space that could accommodate both performing (music and theatrical) and visual arts – a cultural arts center. To bolster the regional impact of such a facility should Hoover develop a program to build one, it will be important to design the facility to be unique within the metro area and not duplicate functions already served by facilities with a regional draw such as the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center and the Alys Stephens Center.

While Hoover may not take the same course as a community like Carmel, Indiana (see inset), there are valuable lessons to be learned from the Carmel example and the importance of promoting arts, culture, and a sense of place in defining what it means to be a truly exceptional city.

Arts and Culture in Carmel

One glowing example of a suburban city transformed by arts and culture is Carmel, Indiana. A suburb on the north side of the Indianapolis, Carmel is a city of just over 92,000 residents and 48 square miles in area. Beginning in the 1990's, the Arts and Design District was formed in the oldest section of town as a way to transform the area from dilapidated buildings and over-worn streets to a place bustling with activity.

Today, the district is a vibrant corridor along Main Street with art galleries, cafes, restaurants, boutiques, and upper floor housing within older and newly constructed buildings. The first phase of Carmel's \$300 million public-private City Center mixed use development was completed in 2011 with an arts center as its centerpiece. In both the City Center and the Art's and Design District, careful attention was paid to quality architecture that enhances one's experience and sense of place. Since the early 2010's, Carmel has managed to grow and retain a diverse economic base with over 40 corporate headquarters and consistent ranking in the top 5 of the best places to live in America.





Arts and Entertainment Districts

There are also other methods to generate additional arts and entertainment activities. Should the proposed city center or village, neighborhood and town centers come to fruition, these would make excellent destinations for arts and entertainment districts. Alabama Law permits a city like Hoover to create up to three such districts, which create a more hospitable and flexible environment for special events, concerts, art shows, and outdoor consumption of food and beverages.

Planning for Arts Development

Additional planning exercises should be conducted to explore the ways in which Hoover can expand its arts and cultural programming to meet local demand and find its own niche regionally. CMAP suggests in their Toolkit for Arts and Cultural Planning the following planning process:

- Preparation. Creating a local definition for arts and culture, setting goals, and articulating a desired result early in the process.

- Participation and Input. Identifying key stakeholders, exploring and establishing partnerships, soliciting and processing feedback from the community, and vetting and refining of goals and strategies as they are formed.
- Assessment. Evaluating current conditions and identifying potential obstacles as they relate to established goals, essentially asking the question, “What do we need that we don’t currently have, and what is stopping us from getting it?”
- Implementation. Formulating policies and regulatory approaches to achieve the vision of the community

(CMAP 2014)

Such a process will allow Hoover to more accurately define what arts and culture mean for our city, create a vision for what form Hoover’s arts and cultural scene should take, and put our community on a path to achieving the desired results.

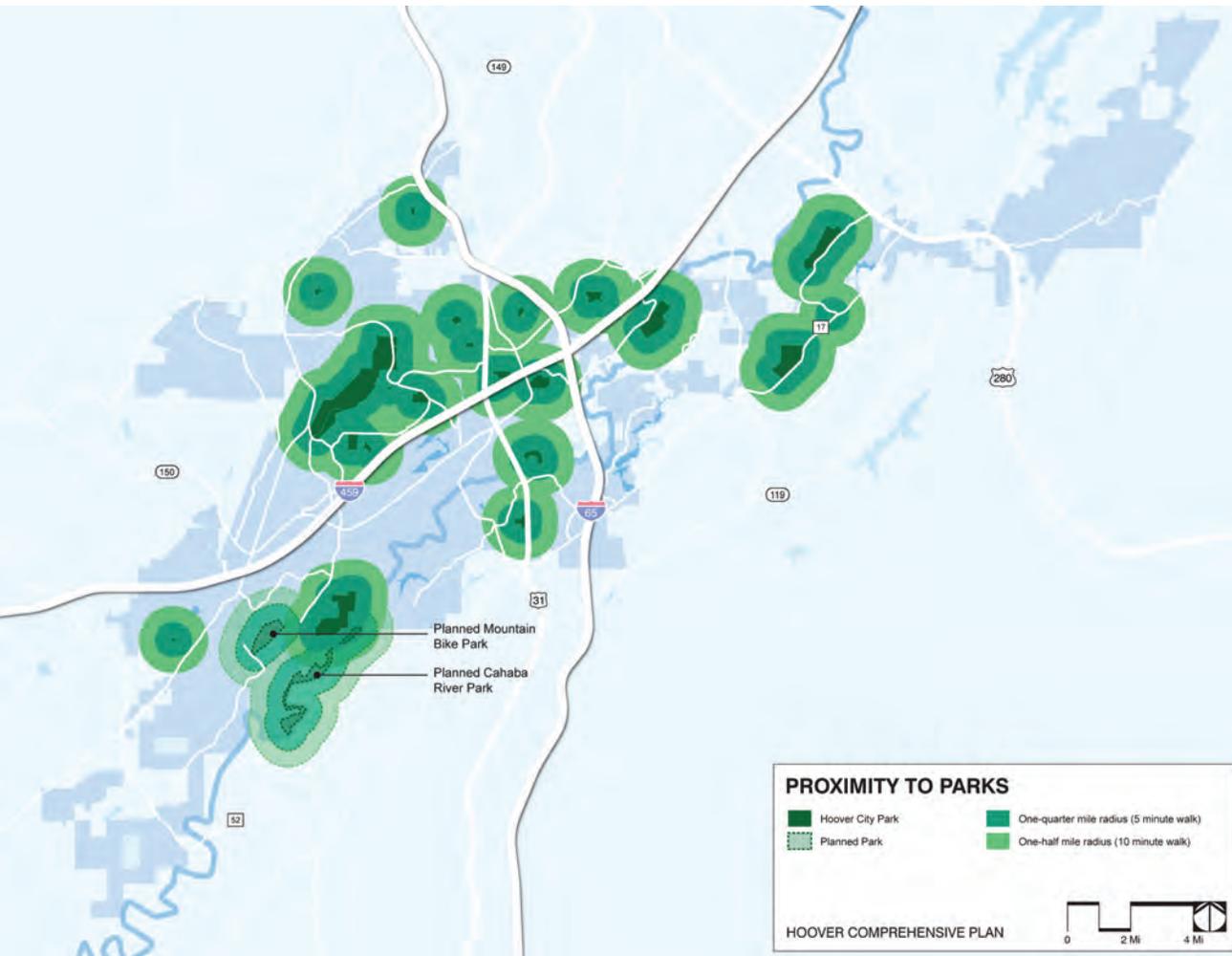


Figure 84: Proximity to City of Hoover Parks. Locating parks near where people live is a goal of citywide parks planning. This diagram shows the distribution of Hoover parks facilities and areas that are within a quarter mile radius (five-minute walk) and a half mile (ten-minute walk) of city parks. The diagram also illustrates those parts of the city that are far from a public park.

Parks and Recreation

Hoover residents have a variety of parks, green spaces and recreation facilities to enjoy across the city. These parks and facilities include opportunities for both active and passive recreation. Active recreation refers to sports and other activities that require specialized facilities, development and organization, while passive recreation encompasses a range of activities involving little structure (hiking, canoeing, picnicking). Hoover’s active recreational facilities include multiple sports complexes, the Hoover Recreation Center on Municipal Dr. and the new Finley Center indoor multi-purpose facility. Passive City recreation facilities include multiple parks with open space for a variety of uses, like Veterans Park, walking trails, a dog park, and preserved green space, like the Moss Rock Preserve. In addition to City owned and operated facilities, numerous residential developments include recreation spaces as part of their planned development concept. There are also private swimming and exercise facilities in the City requiring membership.

According to the Trust for Public Land, 55% of youth in the US live within a 10-minute walk to a park; and children’s use of neighborhood parks increases 400% when parks are close to where they live.

Figure 85: Parkland Analysis by Park Type and Population

Parkland Analysis					
	NRPA Benchmark	2017 Actual Parkland	2017 pop.	2030 est. pop.	2040 est. pop.
	acres per 1,000 pop.	Total Ac	recommended acres	recommended acres	recommended acres
Overall Core Park Space	6.25-10.5	605	84,848 530 - 808	106,157 663 - 1115	129,064 807 - 1355
Mini or Pocket Parks ¹	.25-.5	3.9	21 - 42	27 - 53	32 - 65
Neighborhood Parks ²	1-2	51	85 - 170	106 - 212	129 - 258
Community Parks ³	5-8	540.2	424 - 679	531 - 849	645 - 1033
Additional Parks					
Preserve	n/a	349	n/a	n/a	n/a
Special Purpose Parks ⁴	n/a	182.9	n/a	n/a	n/a

- 1 Includes Inverness Park playground, park area adjacent to Bluff Park community center, and tennis courts adjacent to Simmons Middle School
- 2 Includes Blue Ridge Park, Russet Woods Park, Star Lake Park, Sertoma Park, Hoover Dog Park and Wildflower Park
- 3 Includes five sports parks, recreation area adjacent to City Hall (Recreation Center, Senior Center and Hoover Lake House), Inverness Nature Park and Trail, planned Cahaba River Park and Veteran’s Park
- 4 Includes Botanical Gardens, planned Mountain Bike Park, Finley Center and Hoover Met Baseball Park and RV Campgrounds

With the addition of the planned Cahaba River Park in southwest Hoover, the city’s core park space will meet National Recreation and Parks Association’s population-based guidelines (Figure 85). According to recent NRPA analysis, the typical park and recreation agency offers one park for every 2,114 residents. Hoover offers one park per 4,300 residents. Most of the city’s parkland is concentrated in a few large parks.

Private open space can be a helpful supplement to the city park system, but it does not provide equal access to all Hoover residents. Moreover private open spaces, some of which are created to meet regulatory requirements, vary widely in usability. And, because they are owned and managed by property owner associations, their maintenance conditions vary widely as well.

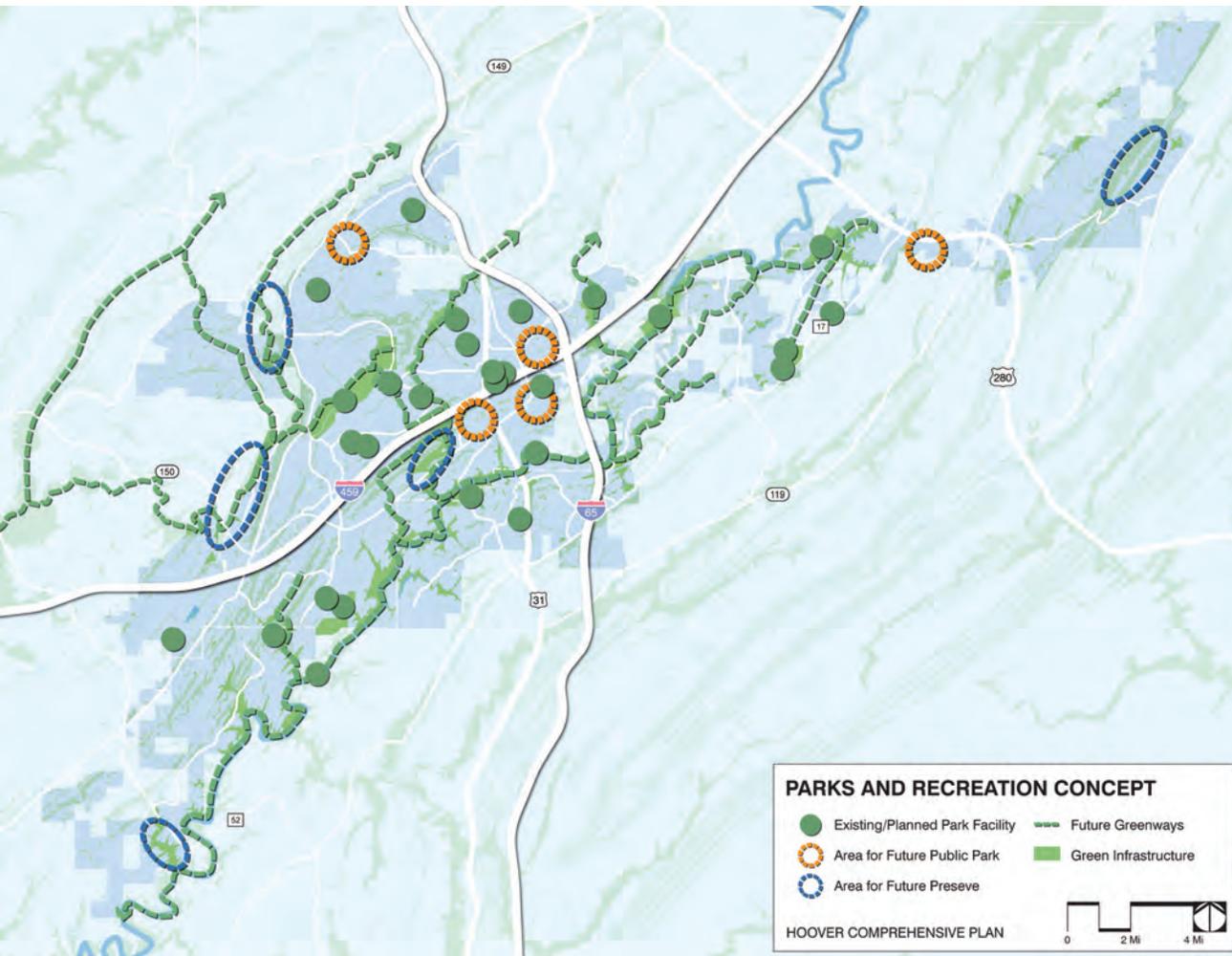
Hoover’s current park system is oriented primarily toward sports uses. 85% of the city’s core parkland (excluding Moss Rock Preserve) falls within the community park category, though they are almost exclusively for sports use. Community parks are the largest of the three core types of city parks and, while they often feature sports facilities, they are intended to also include open space for passive recreation. Veterans Park is the only large park that accommodates both passive recreational uses and sports.

Historically, cities have created smaller “pocket” and neighborhood parks that are distributed so that most residents can live close to a city park. In Hoover there are very few pocket or neighborhood parks, which means most residents do not live close to a park. Hoover’s large parks are few and far between and tend to be designed for organized sports use and offer little to those who are not participating in or watching a sporting event.

As Hoover continues to grow, it is recommended that the City grow its park system with two concepts in mind:

- distribute parks of varying size throughout the city so that more and more residents are within walking distance of a city park
- create a better balance between passive recreation and sports, through new parks and improving existing ones in the future

Figure 86: Parks and Recreation Enhancement Strategy



During discussions with City staff and residents, there were a number of issues that came up that this Plan seeks to address:

- Concern that our facilities will soon be insufficient for our growing city (though the construction of the new sports complex at the Hoover met will help with organized sports).
- A feeling by residents of East Hoover/US Hwy 280 corridor that they are underserved, with most park and recreation facilities being oriented towards the western half of the city.
- A lack of connection/utilization of the Cahaba River and other tributaries for greenways/preserves/passive park spaces.
- Concern that current resources will not permit the City maintain an exceptional experience with existing and new recreation facilities.

With existing facilities and these concerns in mind, the Plan envisions multiple means of enhancing the parks and recreation network across the city. First, the Plan envisions developing the river and tributaries across the city into an integrated network of greenways, which can tie into neighborhoods, current and future parks and preserves, and planned regional trails (Figure 74, Chapter 4 Natural Environment). This will allow the city and its citizens to finally connect with and enjoy the Cahaba River, Shades Creek, Little Shades Creek, and other tributaries.

As can be seen in Figure 84, which illustrates quarter and half-mile parks service areas, there are several areas far from a city park. These include portions of Bluff Park and several residential communities to the far east (Meadowbrook and Greystone), to the west/southwest (Brocks Gap,

Lake Cyrus and Deer Valley) and in “central” Hoover (Acton, Chace Lake, Windover and Southlake) and. While some of these are planned communities with their own private open spaces, some have only modest, usable park space while others have none.

The Cahaba is a great opportunity for public access to nature and water-based recreation. The City has begun to acquire land along the river to take advantage of this natural asset. The river corridor, as well as space along the other tributaries in town, can host natural park spaces as well as a greenway trail to interconnect neighborhoods and business areas. And, as part of the Trace Crossings planned unit development, 125 acres along the Cahaba River is being reserved for passive park space. This segment of the Cahaba River should be accessible when the City finishes a loop road presently under construction to the east of the Hoover Met.

Along several of these waterways, there is a sizeable amount of undisturbed space ideal for larger preserves similar to Moss Rock Preserve. The City recently annexed approximately 260 acres owned and preserved by the Freshwater Land Trust

near Ross Bridge. This property includes a substantial segment of Shades Creek and the northwest slope of Shades Mountain.

The Plan also envisions the City not only looking at tributaries and wetlands for opportunities for preserve and passive park space, but also significant slopes along the various ridges and mountains in Hoover (Figure 75, Chapter 4 Natural Environment and Figure 86). As mentioned in the Natural Environment section, these slopes are not only highly visible to the public and valuable resources for maintaining water quality downstream, but also exceptional opportunities for recreation such as scenic hikes and mountain biking. The City should include these spaces in the greenway and recreation network, beginning with City owned property along Oak Mountain and Freshwater Land Trust property on Shades Mountain.

In addition to new preserves and greenways, this Plan also encourages the development of new parks in strategic locations across the city (Figure 86). On the east side of town, the Plan recommends new public park space in the redevelopment of Meadowbrook into a town center. The lakes within Meadowbrook are ideal for designation as public spaces. There the public can enjoy a leisurely stroll around the lakes, take in a performance at the proposed amphitheater, or perhaps even enjoy a paddleboat ride. More recreational fields are also needed on the east side. It may be possible to meet these needs with land already owned by the City in the Inverness area.

Several new parks are recommended around the core of the city. One park would be a central feature in the new city center, creating an inviting public space for civic gatherings and functions. Another park will be situated along Old Montgomery Highway near Riverchase Elementary School to serve as a central gateway to the Cahaba River and a trailhead for the proposed Cahaba River greenway. Construction is set to begin on the trailhead and park in the 2019 fiscal year.



Star Lake Park Source: Hoover Sun



Figure 87: Hoover Met Sports Complex Plan

Other proposed parks would be situated such that, along with existing park facilities, most if not all residences in the revitalized traditional neighborhoods at the core of town are within a ¼ mile walk from a park or recreation space. This is a key component of creating the urban, walkable neighborhood fabric the Plan recommends for this area. The Plan also recommends an additional park in Bluff Park near the confluence of Tyler, Sanders, and Alford Roads. This park would ideally be connected to redevelopment of the existing shopping centers in the vicinity.

Proximity to parks generally increases residential property values. It should be noted, however, that sports facilities can have a negative effect on the value of the closest properties while having a positive impact on properties further away. As existing sports-oriented facilities are renovated in the

future, more passive recreation space, shade trees and other park amenities should be incorporated into them wherever possible. Future parks should include more space for passive recreational space to appeal to the interests of the young and old alike. Should any of Hoover's golf courses be closed in the future—as the sport struggles to maintain interest nationally—these present opportunities to create passive park spaces accessible to neighborhoods.

Parks can be an important hub for city neighborhoods, particularly those that do not have their own neighborhood shopping areas or other “third places,” where residents see one another away from home. Even small “pocket” parks when strategically located can create a sense of unity and shared identity among residential subdivisions that share little now but property lines.



Celebrating Hoover Day at Veterans Park, source: Shelby County Reporter

Health and Wellness

According to the white paper *Creating A Healthy Environment: The Impact of the Built Environment on Public Health*, “People who participate in regular physical activity reap substantial health benefits. According to the Surgeon General the most significant benefits of active living are:

- “Lower mortality rates for both older and younger adults. Even moderate increases in activity are helpful;”
- “Lower risk for heart disease and stroke;”
- “Prevention or delay of the onset of high blood pressure and actual lowering of blood pressure among people with hypertension;”
- “Decreased risk for colon cancer;”
- “Lowered risk for non-insulin-dependent diabetes;”
- “Weight loss and redistribution of body fat; increase in muscle mass;”
- “Relief of the symptoms of depression and anxiety and improvement of mood; and” — “Apparent improvement in health-related quality of life by enhancing psychological well-being and by improving physical functioning among people with poor health.”

Jackson 2001

UAB Health System’s Medical West operates a freestanding emergency department in southwest Hoover. The facility opened in 2015 and saw nearly 16,000 patients its first year, photo: Medical West Freestanding Emergency Department



The ultimate goal for Hoover should be to become one of the healthiest cities in the state and nation. Throughout this Plan, recommendations are made to fashion the built and natural environments in such a way as to promote active living. Creating a city that is walkable and provides access to facilities and programs dedicated to health, recreation and wellness is a major component to providing residents with the opportunities to live a healthy life.

Another way Hoover can bolster its status as a healthy city is to have premier healthcare facilities that provide residents with all manner of health

related services. While there are numerous doctor’s offices and clinics across the city, including three standalone emergency rooms, the one major component to the healthcare system that is missing in Hoover is a hospital. Hoover is the largest municipality in the state without a hospital. While there are several hospitals in the metro area that are renowned for their services and capabilities, having such a facility in Hoover would place its citizens much closer to the health services they and their families depend on.

Sense of Place and Community

Every development decision our community makes, whether it be related to a new commercial or residential development, a revitalization project, or simply landscaping and signage, should be made with an emphasis on making Hoover a unique and captivating place. Presently, while Hoover’s regulatory framework does include requirements for building materials and landscaping, most of these requirements are aimed at ensuring the quality of the development meets certain minimum standards as opposed to making a concerted effort to create a special place.

Creating a sense of place is more than just a particular way of designing a space or what materials are used. “Placemaking” is the process by which a space is designed and built at the human scale, with special care taken to ensure that people connect and identify with a place. A community with a true sense of place includes tangibles and intangibles that create a special bond with the people who inhabit and experience the place, such that it resonates with them and drives a strong desire to be there. A couple of locations in Hoover have succeeded in creating a sense of place, including Ross Bridge and the Preserve. However, much of the rest of the city does not enjoy the same level of placemaking as these communities.

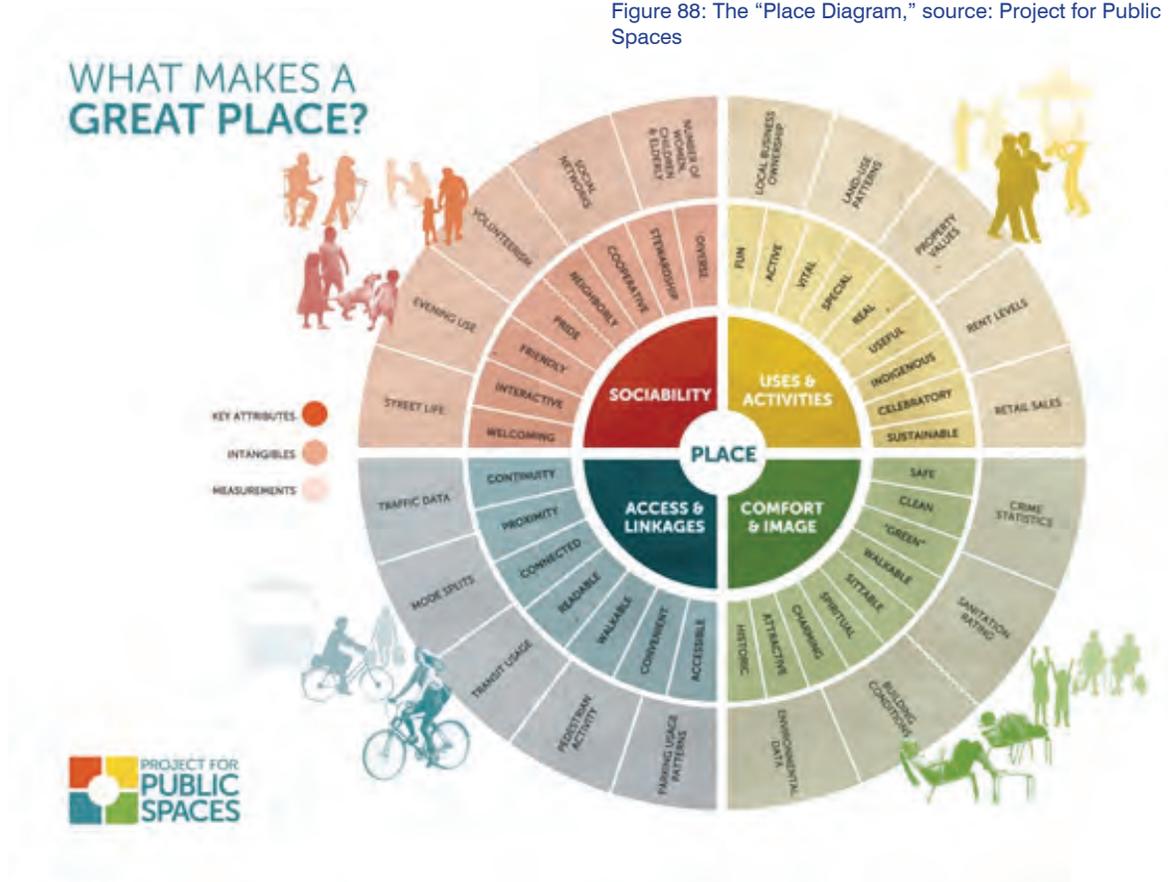


Figure 88: The “Place Diagram,” source: Project for Public Spaces

The best place to begin the process of placemaking is with civic spaces. These spaces can be parks, plazas, buildings and associated grounds, or even areas within the rights-of-way. According to the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), there are four key attributes that make a truly great place. The space has to be accessible, sociable, active, and comfortable. With guidance from key stakeholders, the City should work to ensure that these ingredients are in place, leading to a number of intangible properties

that permit the space to become a true vibrant destination. Once the special place is in place and activated, the City can measure the attributes for continued improvement of the space. The PPS charts these qualities in what is referred to as the “Place Diagram” (Figure 88). Once the civic space is addressed, it is important that the surrounding built environment also follow the placemaking guide to expand upon the destination qualities and experience.

Figure 89: The Power of 10+ placemaking at scales ranging from individual sites to cities and regions,” source: Project for Public Spaces



The PPS also provides other tools for the implementation of placemaking in your community. The PPS suggests using their “Power of 10+” to transform the city at multiple scales (Figure 89). First, the city should define 10+ destinations. Next, each destination should have 10+ places designed at the human scale. Then, each place should be programmed with 10+ activities and uses to make it unique and interesting. This approach drives people from across the city and region to visit, experience, and even live and/or shop at the various destinations. Taken as a whole, these destinations work to create a unique and exceptional city.

Several key areas are identified in this Plan where placemaking will be part of the overall redevelopment strategy, such as the new city center, Lorna vicinity, North 31, and Meadowbrook. The City should also engage in placemaking to enhance locations that are already special to those living in the community. These enhancements may simply involve making a space more inviting and comfortable to the public, while contributing to its already positive sense of place. One example, shown in Figure 90, is a neighborhood business district in Bluff Park. The addition of sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting, along with the relocation of utility lines, make the environment appear more coordinated

and inviting for walking. The streetscape improvements also contribute to traffic calming, which would make the intersection safer for pedestrians and motorists.

As part of this effort, the City should work with stakeholders to develop character guides for the various destinations and neighborhoods across the city to ensure unique character is preserved and promoted through design. The Plan encourages the use of techniques that make the developing or revitalized destinations appear as organic as possible, shedding the sameness and redundancy that makes much of the suburban landscape dull and lacking in energy.

Critical to creating a sense of place is giving the community opportunities to make personal connections with the space. One method of making this connection is by providing a mechanism for individuals to sponsor improvements like street lighting, brick sidewalks, trees, benches, and other improvements. As part of the sponsorship, an individual’s or family’s names can be inscribed on the improvement. This instantly provides a connection that members of the community can experience over the lifetime of the improvement and the space.

Another way to create that person connection is through actively joining and engaging with organizations created specifically for implementing improvements programs. While several such organizations exist in Hoover with special areas of interest, such as historic preservation and the arts, one other organization not presently active in Hoover



Figure 90: Before and After of placemaking improvements in Bluff Park

Gateways and Image Corridors

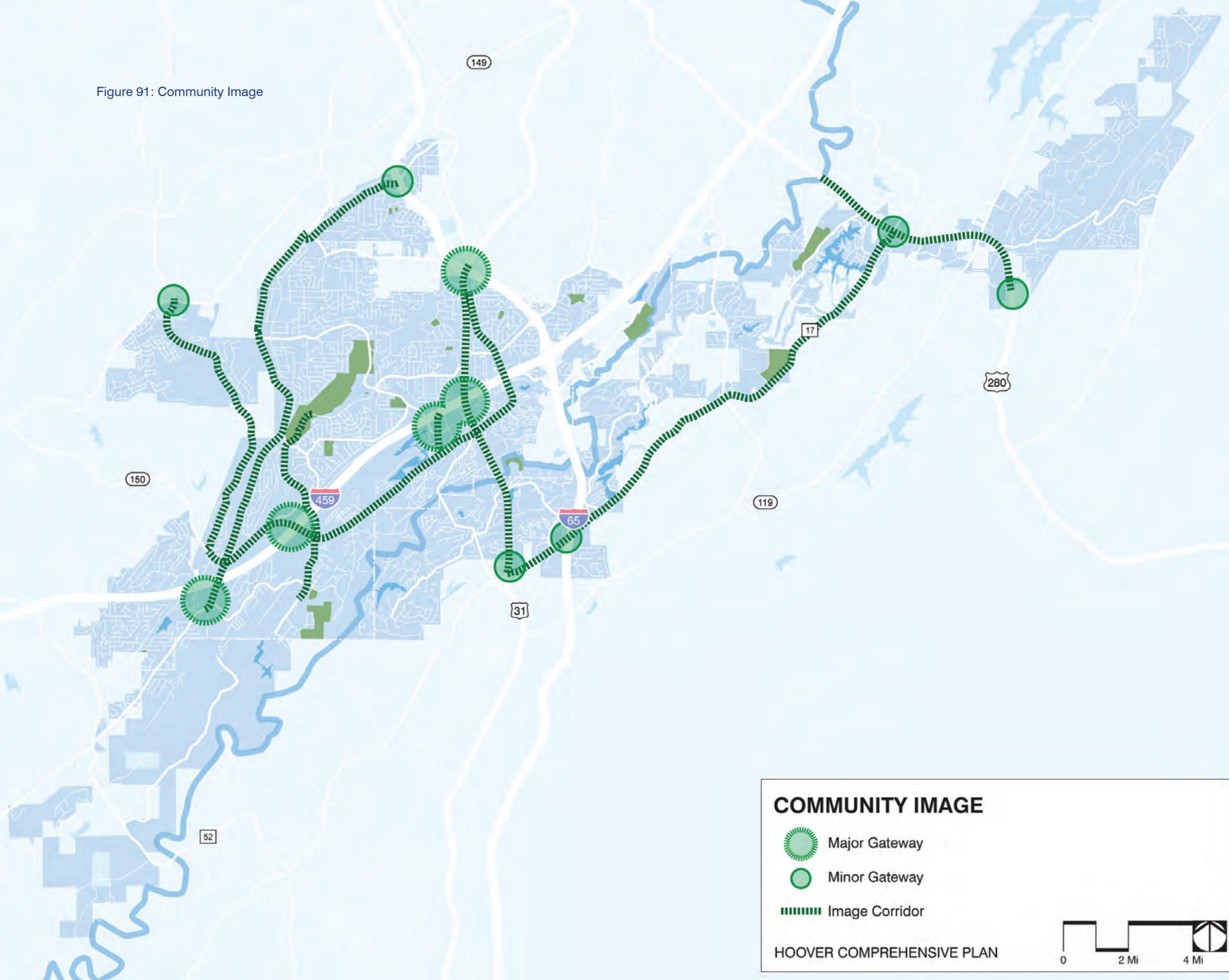
Attention must be paid to enhancing and maintaining attractive gateways and corridors so that Hoover projects a strong, positive image to residents, visitors and investors. The level of planning, design and maintenance within gateway areas establishes a lasting first impression on those visiting the city. The city’s “image corridors” have the responsibility of upholding that initial promise of an exceptional experience as people travel to key destinations and throughout the city. Like gateways these corridors must be well-planned, designed and maintained—within the public right-of-way and adjoining private development.

The gateways and image corridors identified in Figure 91 are excellent opportunities for the city to impress visitors and communicate its brand. Each gateway should give passers-by a welcoming feel, while also communicating our community’s exceptional character. Gateways and corridors must not only appear pleasant but function well. Wayfinding signs, coordinated with banners, landscaping and other design features, help visitors find important destinations and give them the sense that Hoover is a well-run, thoughtful community.

that would specifically work to improve and support efforts to create a city center as well as town and neighborhood centers is Main Street Alabama. In addition to taking their successful formula for revitalizing historic downtowns, Main Street Alabama is also actively engaging newer communities to take

the same process and make genuine and exciting urban, mixed use places. The professional assistance Main Street Alabama could provide will be a valuable commodity as Hoover seeks to engage in placemaking and the creation of energetic centers across the city.

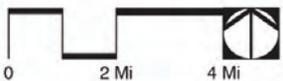
Figure 91: Community Image



COMMUNITY IMAGE

-  Major Gateway
-  Minor Gateway
-  Image Corridor

HOOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



0 2 Mi 4 Mi

Social Environment Implementation

Implementation Strategies	Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Category
Collaborate with Hoover City Schools as they develop future facilities plan to serve future development.	Planning, City Schools	Short to Mid Term	Schools
Develop an action plan for phasing in improvements to public safety personnel numbers, facilities, and equipment.	Police, Fire	Short Term	Public Safety
Evaluate existing park facilities and create a five-year improvements plan.	Parks and Rec	Short Term	Parks and Recreation
Develop action plan for tying existing parks and preserves into a green infrastructure network	Parks and Rec, Planning, Landscape Architecture, Engineering	Short Term	
Evaluate opportunities for additional park space, particularly open, flexible, and passive park space.	Parks and Rec, Planning, Landscape Architecture	Short Term	
Engage the healthcare community regarding the recruitment of a major medical facility in Hoover.	City Departments	Ongoing	Health and Wellness
Coordinate necessary infrastructure improvements to serve future medical facilities.	Engineering, Planning	Ongoing	Tourism & Promotion
Develop a coordinated tourism strategy including all natural, sports and recreation, cultural and historic points of interest, lodging, dining and entertainment	Administration	Short Term	
Create a new, coordinated branding scheme for Hoover.	Planning, Landscape Architecture	Short Term	
Integrate new brand into gateway features and image corridors.	Planning, Landscape Architecture	Ongoing	Other
Incorporate community sponsorship opportunities into public projects	Administration	Ongoing	

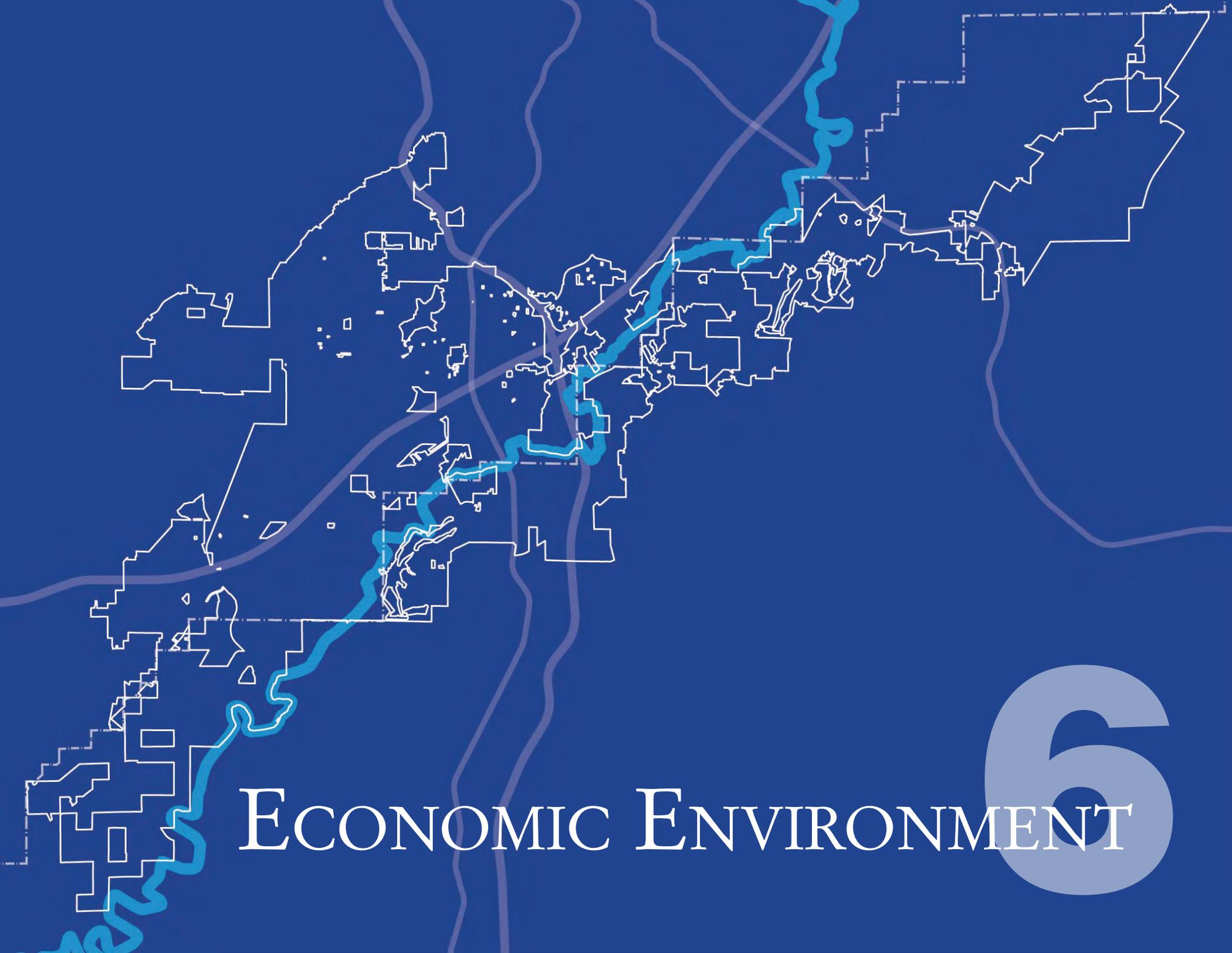
Timeframe | Short Term - 5 years | Mid Term - 5-10 years | Long Term - 10+ years

Implementation Strategies	Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Category
Identify key locations across the community to engage in active placemaking.	Planning, Landscape Architecture	Ongoing	Placemaking
Create architectural and urban design guidelines and review process for key nodes, corridors and special projects. Incorporate into economic incentives programs.	Planning, Landscape Architecture, Economic Development	Short to Mid Term	
Develop public spaces that have a strong sense of place, are engaging to the public, and serve as anchors for destinations and town centers across the city.	Planning, Landscape Architecture	Ongoing	
Engage Main Street Alabama to develop a strategy to support development of town centers	Planning	Short Term	
Create an arts and culture plan and implementation strategy	Planning, Arts Council	Short Term	Arts and Culture
Develop course of action for adding a new eastern library branch.	City Departments, Library	Short Term	
Annex Hale Spring from Birmingham into Hoover	Administration	Short to Mid Term	
Develop Hale Spring/ Lover's Leap Park with overlook and boardwalk	Operations	Long Term	
Work with Hoover City Schools and nonprofits to bring Bluff Park School up to code for community activities	Administration, City Schools	Short Term	

Timeframe | Short Term - 5 years | Mid Term - 5-10 years | Long Term - 10+ years

**It is people, not capital or raw materials
that develop an economy.**

-Peter Drucker



ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

6

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Economic Diversity and Resiliency

One threat identified by City officials to Hoover's long term success is its overdependence on a retail based economy. Hoover's primary sources of growth over its 51 year history has been as a bedroom community and regional retail center. Though corporate stakeholders in Hoover say the retail sector will remain largely brick and mortar based and by and large are adjusting to current market realities, the fact remains that an economy, and a local government, overly dependent on retail will bear the brunt of economic downturns as disposable income runs in short supply.

For this reason, Hoover intends to not only be a regional retail power and bedroom community, but a larger center of employment in a variety of sectors. The aim is for Hoover to become a leader in the metro area for job creation and help bolster growth in a metro economy that has been sluggish compared to other Southern metropolitan areas. To do this, Hoover must identify up-and-coming industries and businesses and help develop a well-qualified workforce to staff them.

The City of Hoover's Finley Center and sports complex opened in 2017. The facility is the main hub of the city's growing sports and recreational tourism industry, which will spur business for local dining, shops and hotels.



Employment and Workforce

One critical element to the future of the Hoover and greater metropolitan economy is ensuring a qualified, motivated workforce. This is particularly true if Hoover wishes to diversify its primarily retail-driven economy. Hoover is well positioned to provide education and training for the next generation of employees and industries and will need to take a leading role if the metro is to accelerate the tepid growth seen over the past several decades.

According to Ty West and Dan Bagwell of the Birmingham Business Journal (BBJ), companies across the metro area are pointing to a shortage of well-trained workers. According to a BBJ survey of companies in the metro, even though collective revenue was up 24% and employment up at 56% of the businesses, over 75% of those surveyed said they were having trouble filling positions with trained and experienced personnel. And, according to Hugh Thomas, a managing partner at staffing firm The Onin Group, "The lack of qualified labor is choking our economy. The most progressive thing

Alabama Workforce Training Center, source: WBRC.com



we are doing is serving as a catalyst to bring Ready to Work into schools in Jefferson and Shelby counties. This program trains noncollege-bound seniors for ‘New Collar’ technical work in several industries. We can’t let anyone fall through the cracks” (West and Bagwell 2018).

The results discovered by the BBJ in their survey mirror those of a recently released report by the United Way of Central Alabama backed Big Goals Coalition’s Workforce Action Network. The report, titled *Building (it) Together*, discovered that there are a number of challenges the metro area faces as we continue to lag behind other Southern metro areas in growth and employment. The following were key findings from the report:

- Employment in the Greater Birmingham region is projected to grow 8.9% over the next 10 years.
- Specific career fields that will experience supply gaps over the next 10 years include information technology business and financial operations, and architecture and engineering.
- The region experienced significant departures of skilled workforce talent – 43% of local college students and 53% of local doctoral students leave the region after graduation.
- Higher education institutions are graduating students who can drive innovation in the regional economy.
- The region is resilient, but falling behind other southeastern cities. It has experienced a GDP growth rate of 8% since 2010 while surrounding metros saw double-digit growth.
- The region has experienced an employment growth rate of 6% since 2010 while surrounding metros reported more than double that.
- The region lacks a skilled, relevant workforce. Education and industry are misaligned. 78.5% of the region’s workforce is operating in low- or middle-skill positions. Future jobs will increasingly require relevant BA and Sub-BA degrees, so high school graduation rates must increase.

(Network 2018)

Of course where there are challenges highlighted by the report, there are also a number of recommendations for improvement in hopes realigning education and training programs with the economy of tomorrow. Some of those recommendations are as follows:

- Support existing industry and leverage cluster-based approach to identify emerging companies and jobs, mainly in advanced manufacturing, life sciences and biotech, and IT.
- Focus on growth in non-local, exporting industries to encourage new wealth circulating in Birmingham.
- Invest in training related to targeted industries.
- Expand co-op and alternate training opportunities.
- Organize around recruitment of executive talent and support the risk taking necessary to change the local economy.
- Employers need to reconsider credential requirements.
- Strive for increased equity through nontraditional means, like IT boot camps.
- Increase high school and post-secondary education attainment.

(Network 2018)



Bud's Best Cookies operates out of a 130,000 square foot facility in Hoover, source: Birmingham Business Journal.

While this plan is dedicated to making Hoover a more desirable place by enhancing the physical environment, it will be difficult to elevate our city unless we make sure that employment opportunities exist for people that seek to locate here, businesses that are attracted to Hoover have a talented labor pool from which to employ personnel, and that the next generation that grows up in our community obtains the skills necessary to compete for jobs and return to the metro.

Hoover City Schools has already taken important steps by increasing a focus on STEM

education. The school system purchased Riverchase Middle School to develop into a career tech center. In addition the Hoover Library offers educational opportunities including early literacy and lifelong learning programs.

The City should also pursue regional cooperation in endeavors such as the Workforce Action Network that specifically matches area corporations and businesses with educational needs. Through these and other efforts described in this Plan, Hoover can become a driving force in preparing a highly skilled workforce to push economic growth forward for the entire metropolitan area.

According to Aaron Renn, a columnist and senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a city's economic development "is multi-factorial. There's no single component that drives every outcome. Places have to pay attention to many things, not just one." Not only do cities need to have a favorable business climate from a taxation and regulatory standpoint, but they also must offer a safe, affordable, and enticing environment for the next generation of employers and the talent upon which they depend. The multiple facets of this Plan are meant to work together to create such a climate for economic growth and prosperity for Hoover's foreseeable future.

(Renn 2018)

Industry 4.0

Hoover's economy—compared to that of surrounding cities—has a relatively small contribution per resident in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Service industries. An excellent opportunity to improve on this is through concentrating economic development efforts toward recruiting and growing an "Industry 4.0" environment. Industry 4.0 is characterized by a fusion of technologies that blurs the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. Manufacturing facilities are becoming more high-tech, smaller, smarter, and cleaner than ever before. Given the education level of Hoover residents, these types of industries would

be a perfect addition to the local economy. Industry 4.0 is marked by emerging technology breakthroughs in a number of fields, including robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, quantum computing, biotechnology, The Internet of Things, 3D printing and autonomous vehicles.

If Hoover expands its economy by recruiting and birthing firms—growing its own "Industry 4.0" sector—much more of Hoover's current and future highly educated, tech-savvy workforce can work in Hoover. Manufacturing jobs generate a multiplier of economic impact (US Bureau of Economic Analysis) several times that of retail or services jobs. The development of a high-technology business incubator in Hoover with significant amenities could begin the attraction of a variety of firms in these soon-to-be-exploding industries.

Today's young talent is much more concerned with a city's lifestyle offerings than its job market. This shift in priorities has forced companies to follow the talent...a trend that is growing in prevalence as the labor market tightens and young talent becomes more scarce.

—bisnow.com

Courting the Millennial Talent Pool

Industries, particularly those that rely on an educated and tech-oriented talent pool, are paying more attention to the quality of life that potential host cities offer. The millennial workforce that makes up a large percentage of this workforce has shown



Source: livability.com, istock

a strong inclination to more urban cities, where local economies provide a larger set of options, more of life can be experienced on foot or bike, and where there is a rich menu of amenities and entertainment for twenty- and thirty-somethings. The demand for urban living has accelerated in recent years to such a point that, now, some are being priced out of city

centers and are choosing mid-sized cities and more suburban locations over New York City and San Francisco. Altogether, this creates a unique opportunity for Hoover. By re-envisioning declining commercial areas as more walkable, mixed-use centers, Hoover will be able to offer many of the characteristics that millennials are seeking. Moreover, as this young workforce ages, marries and settles down, they will also find in Hoover family-friendly, single-family neighborhoods and high quality schools for their children.

Pursuing a mixed-use revitalization strategy will add vitality to older commercial areas while creating an environment that attracts high-tech workers and their employers.

Revitalization and Retail Evolution

As Hoover’s commercial corridors have aged, the level of reinvestment has been lackluster, in part, because there has been land available to build entirely new retail developments near where new neighborhoods are also emerging. There is a strong desire to spur new life into declining shopping areas along Highway 31, Lorna Road and other corridors, and it is proposed in Chapter 3 Built Environment that may entail redesigning these areas for more walkable, mixed-use multi-story development. This will help to shrink the glut of retail space as the

Vanderbilt University Medical Center retrofitted an empty 300,000 square foot department store in Nashville’s 100 Oaks Mall, source: Gresham, Smith and Partners.



city—and the country—find a new balance between brick and mortar stores and online shopping.

Adapting these older retail areas will create new, more immersive environments in which retail and other business types are more likely to thrive in the age of Amazon. Experts from many fields—city planning, design, marketing, management and retail—foresee the e-commerce challenge as an opportunity for an evolution in retail. Public space and public and cultural functions—libraries, farmer’s markets, DMVs, children’s museums—will become more prevalent in shopping environments. Retailers will develop more purposeful connections between their online and physical locations. Shopping mall food courts may evolve into food halls featuring high-end restaurants. Closed department stores are

well-suited to accommodate businesses and activities that require a large footprint: fitness centers, offices, medical clinics, and offices.

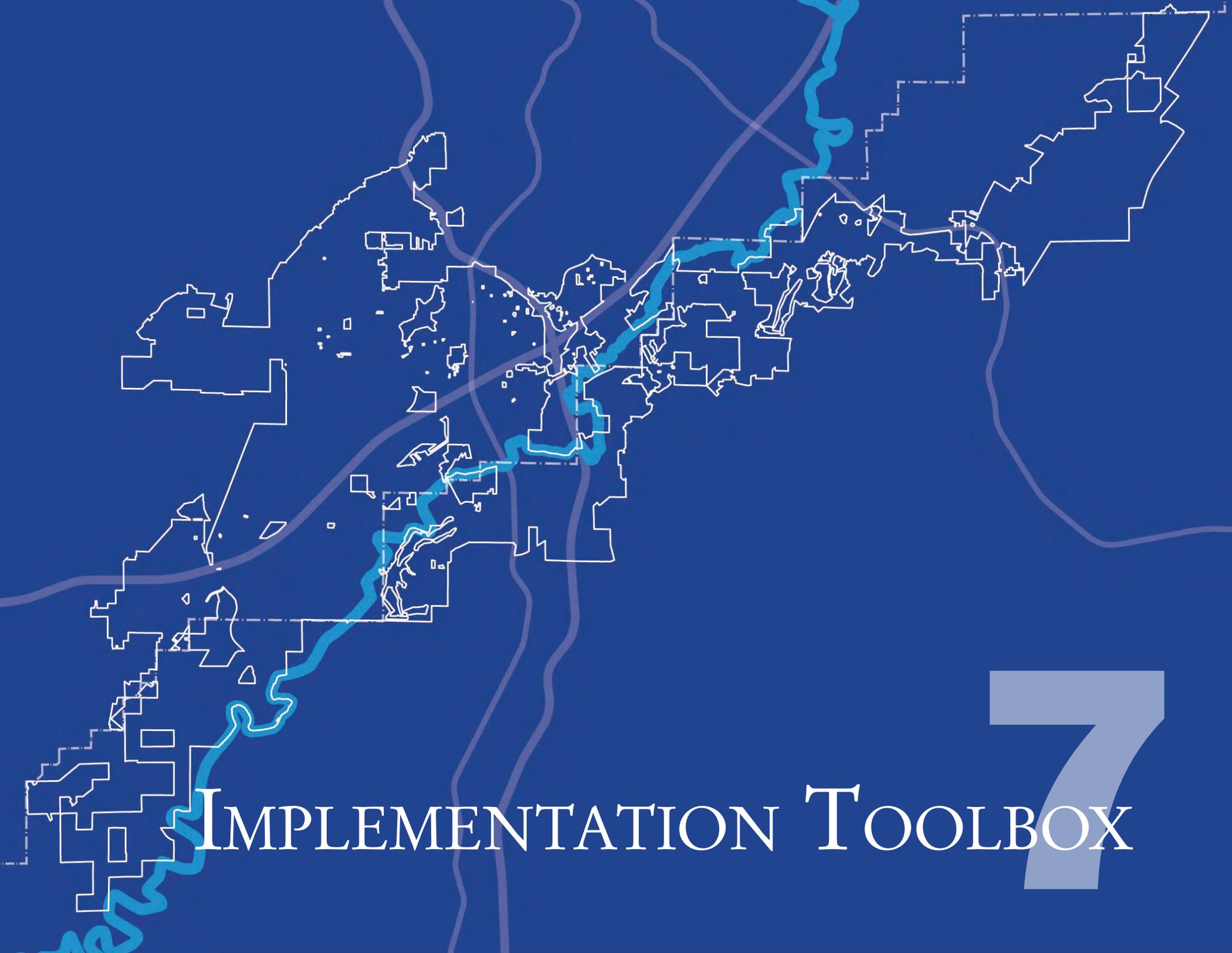
In a CNBC article on the future of shopping centers, retail expert Amanda Nicholson said “The fact is that people are still spending money on eating and going out and shopping. They want to socialize. They’re still human. But they want to do it in a way that is fundamentally different than what we were doing 40 years ago in a one-level mall with a smelly food court in the center.” Physical shopping has an advantage over online retail because it can offer a human experience. Nicholson suggests those retailers and retail centers that offer people opportunities to “do more than just buy products are probably going to win this game.”

Economic Environment Implementation

Implementation Strategies	Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Notes
Revise zoning map to include sufficient space for economic development activities.	Planning, Economic Development	Short Term	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Development Regulations</div> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Capital Improvements</div> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Economic Development</div> </div>
Revise zoning regulations to ensure new STEM economy activities, such as IT, research and development, engineering and design, and internet based businesses have appropriate districts to locate in.	Planning, Economic Development	Short Term	
Inventory existing STEM infrastructure and develop action plan for extending the same to potential development sites.	Economic Development, IT	Short to Mid Term	
Develop action plan for economic diversification, including recommendations from the appended population and economy report.	Economic Development, Planning	Short Term	
Develop action plan for participating in multi-organization efforts, such as Build (it) Together, to align workforce training and development with present and future job opportunities in the metro area.	City Departments, Hoover City Schools, other organizations	Short Term	
Promote opportunities for residents to have access to workforce training and development.	Library, local community colleges and universities.	Short Term	

Timeframe | Short Term - 5 years | Mid Term - 5-10 years | Long Term - 10+ years

Plan your work...then work your plan.
-Margaret Thatcher



IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

7

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

Upon reviewing the Plan, particularly the infill and revitalization concepts in Chapter 3 Built Environment, one is likely to ponder the question “How does the City pay for that?” Indeed, the concepts established in this Plan are sure to have a hefty price tag. However, there is one point that must be made clear: the intent is for the private sector to do the heavy lifting in making development like that illustrated in this plan come to life. The City does not intend to take on the development of private property. However, there are tools at the City’s disposal to create the “spark” or critical mass necessary to stimulate the private sector to build the kinds of places envisioned in this plan—through reinvestment, infill and redevelopment.

The following is an overview of ways the City can encourage and partner with the private sector without “cutting a check” for an entire development. Different projects will require different tools and sometimes a combination of tools, as no two projects are the same.

Regulatory Tools

One tool that is often overlooked is the City’s regulatory authority. Cutting down barriers and red tape can be an important incentive for private development. For instance, zoning and subdivision regulations are critical tools the City uses to manage the development of land. In addition to influencing the physical form of development, zoning rules can make a city, corridor or neighborhood more or less difficult or costly for the private sector to invest in. If development regulations do not permit various types of development, limit where they can occur, or place other obstacles in the way of investment, it inherently contributes to whether or not the private sector will pursue a particular project.

The more time it takes to get city approvals, and the more uncertainty the regulatory environment places on it, the less willing the private sector will be to risk capital on a project. A more streamlined regulatory framework for desired types of development can save time and money and give developers and their financiers greater assurance that projects can move forward without unnecessary or unforeseen regulatory complications. This does not mean that developers are given free reign. Regulations must clearly communicate what forms of development are desired by the community so that the approval process is predictable. At the same time, regulations should allow the developer to deliver desirable, quality development in ways that are creative and profitable.

Monetary Tools

The City has typically used a monetary tool in the past to help incentivize development. Often, this has been used to assist retail heavy developments and has taken the form of sales tax rebates. The idea is to rebate *some* of the new sales tax dollars generated by the development to help offset the developer’s capital costs. The concept relies on the buildout and activation of the site and is seen as a low risk form of assistance, given that the rebate is taken from new money the City would not have otherwise been collecting had no project been developed.

Another monetary tool available to the City to support retail development is the creation of a special tax district. Should the City determine to take on public infrastructure improvements to support development, it has the authority to create a zone encompassing the businesses directly benefitting from the capital investment and to levy a special sales tax to help pay back the direct payments or bonds used to cover the expense. While this is a viable option, retail developers tend to prefer other methods of public investment, seeing the additional sales tax as an inhibitor to drawing customers.

There are other monetary incentives the City can offer, such as paying for or issuing bonds for public infrastructure improvements based simply on potential sales, property tax revenue, and shadow or spinoff development. However, these are riskier ventures that should be carefully considered because of the burden they can place on the City's ledger, sometimes without a real guarantee of a positive return on investment. Other avenues of incentives should be considered while studying this option.

Authority Tools

There are other programs authorized by State Law through which the City can inject money into a project without it showing on its ledger. These include the Industrial Development Board (IDB) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The IDB is authorized to purchase or issue bonds, separate from the

City's ledger, for land and infrastructure (roads, rail, utilities, etc.) to support the development of industry in the community. They are even able to engage in speculative building as a way of luring businesses to the community. However, they're activity is largely relegated to industrial type projects as defined in the enabling legislation.

The TIF authority tool is not constrained to industrial projects. Indeed it can be used to support all manner of development with financing for public capital improvements. The TIF tool allows the City to create a district where it believes the infrastructure investment will have a positive impact on the development/redevelopment of land. A separate board is created to oversee the TIF mechanism and the district. The board has the authority to issue bonds for public infrastructure improvements in the area that do not impact the City's ledger. Once the public capital improvements are in place and land devel-

ops or redevelops with higher and better uses, the property taxes presumably increase with new assessments. The increment by which the City's portion of the ad valorem increases goes directly to the TIF board for repayment of the bond.

Partnering Tools

In addition to all of the tools available specifically to the City's government, there are also a variety of partnership opportunities that can assist in implementing facets of the Plan. The idea behind developing partnerships is to bring multiple players to the table to pool resources, dividing the effort of raising capital amongst multiple entities to make the burden more manageable for all involved. The two primary examples of these types of relationships include public-private partnerships and public-public partnerships.

Public-Private Partnerships

These relationships involve one or more government entities partnering with private entities to raise capital for a project. A recent example of this type of partnership in Hoover is the team effort assembled to develop the City's inclusive playground and splash pad being constructed at the Met Complex. In addition to the City's contribution, County commissioners, area businesses, and not-for-profit foundations all made generous donations to assist in making the project a reality. Additionally, there are a number of foundations that offer grant funds that the City could apply, with and without matching funds, for a variety of projects.



Tax Increment Financing, source: Star Tribune

Public-Public Partnerships

These relationships typically involve two or more government entities pooling resources to complete projects or provide services that have shared benefits for the parties involved. There are numerous examples public-public partnerships are presently being utilized and may be utilized to accomplish goals established in this plan. Depending on the beneficiaries, roadway projects may include multiple local government agencies and the State's highway department. Local governments leverage federal funds through the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority to provide transit service and upgrades in Hoover and throughout the metro area. Additionally, entities such as the City government and the City school system can partner on a variety studies, projects, and services that provide mutual benefits and greater efficiencies for both parties. It is also very common for various local and state governments, authorities, and public utilities (whether publicly or privately owned) to partner on economic development opportunities depending on the projected economic impact. Grant opportunities provided by the Federal or State Government would also be considered a variation of public-public partnerships.

Sidewalk construction, source: DVIDS

Capital Investment Tools

As part of the implementation strategy of this Plan, the City should develop a long term capital improvements plan addressing infrastructure and municipal facilities needs across the city. There are several types of capital investments that may provide the spark or momentum needed to induce private investment. The following are but a few of the capital options the City has available:

- Roadway improvements that may provide access to a development but has been previously identified and programmed to assist with connectivity and traffic flow in the community.
- Sidewalk improvements connecting the development with nearby destinations and neighborhoods.
- Public parks and greenspaces that can help anchor a development.
- Public buildings and facilities that host civic functions and help draw people to a development.



Funding and Resource Organizations

To complement city funds devoted to capital projects, there are a variety of funding sources that the City has used in the past and will continue to use in the future in implementing various aspects of this plan. These include federal and state grants as well as funding from private foundations. The following highlights some of the more notable funding resources and organizations to help with city projects and initiatives pursued by community groups:

Transportation

Street, sidewalk, trail and bicycle facility projects are eligible for State grants and Federal transportation funds administered directly from the USDOT and through state agencies. Typically, these are “80-20” match grants where the city, or local sponsor, is responsible for 20% of project costs. They include:

- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants from the US DOT for highway, road, bridge, rail, port, transit and intermodal projects.
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants from the ALDOT for bicycle, pedestrian and other non-motorized transportation projects.
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds provided through the ALDOT support transit, bicycle, pedestrian other transportation projects that reduce congestion and improve air quality.

- Recreational Trails Program Grants from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) for trails, trail facilities, maintenance equipment and land acquisition.

Recreation

- Land and Water Conservation Fund from the ADECA for conservation efforts and parks and recreation projects.
- National Recreation and Parks Association Grants for technical assistance, planning and training to promote parks, recreation and active living.
- Private foundation grants and similar funding programs for a variety of capital projects and programs supporting parks and recreation.

Environment

- Environmental Protection Agency grants and special appropriations support various efforts ranging from Brownfields cleanup and reuse to environmental education.
- Alabama Department of Environmental Management State Revolving Fund provides low interest loans for efforts including water/wastewater, green infrastructure, water conservation, etc.
- CAWACO RC&D Council provide small “challenge” grants to communities in Bount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby and Walker counties for environmental, natural resource preservation, recreation and other community projects.

- Nature Conservancy in Alabama provides research, technical assistance and other services in support of conservation efforts.
- Fresh Water Land Trust acquires land and conservation easement to support water quality initiatives and leads the development of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System.

Economic Development

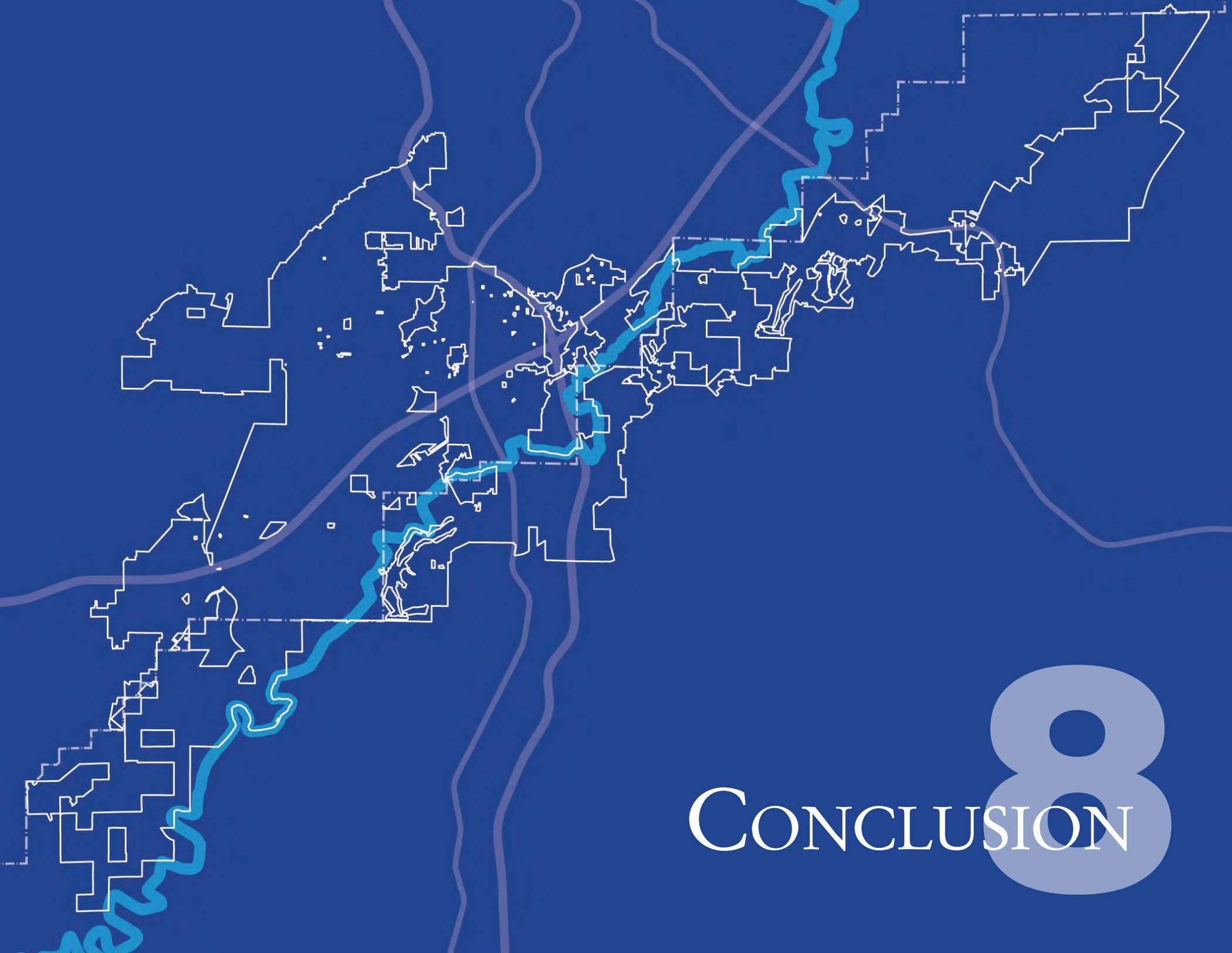
- Industrial Access Grants from the ALDOT for transportation access projects for new or expanding industries
- State Small Business Credit Initiative from the ADECA to encourage and reduce risks for lending in support of business start-ups and small business expansions.
- SBA or Small Business Administration Loans from Alabama District Office of the USSBA for new or expansion of small businesses that generate new jobs.
- EDA or Economic Development Administration provides funding for various economic development ranging from research and technical assistance to creation of innovation and entrepreneurship centers.
- ARC or Appalachian Regional Commission provides funding for economic development and quality of life efforts in eligible counties in Alabama (includes Jefferson County).

Other

- Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham provides grants to a variety of projects and programs that fall under their philanthropic mission and current initiatives.
- State and National Park Service tax credit programs for the rehabilitation, reuse and preservation of historic buildings and sites.
- Alabama Historical Commission provides grants for a variety of preservation programs and projects.
- Alabama State Council of the Arts grants for planning, design and construction of arts facilities.
- Alabama Housing Finance Authority provides tax credits and other financial support for construction of low income and senior housing projects.
- Smart Growth America provides technical assistance in support of revitalization, urban design, economic and fiscal modeling and other smart growth strategies.
- Transportation for America provides funding and technical assistance in support of complete streets efforts and placemaking.

**...lively, diverse, intense cities contain
the seeds of their own regeneration...**

-Jane Jacobs



CONCLUSION 8

CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal for Hoover is to be an exceptional place to live, work, and play in the Birmingham-Hoover metropolitan region. As the metropolitan area continues to attract new businesses and residents, Hoover, with its exceptional education system, high degree of public safety, direct access to area interstates, and proximity to all of the region's economic centers, is poised to capture a sizeable share of that growth.

As a maturing suburb, we are faced with questions concerning future development, levels of service, and how we go about achieving our goals. How can we ensure Hoover continues to grow with limited undeveloped space? How do we improve quality of life and levels of service in the context of historically low density development? How can we grow our built environment in a sustainable fashion that takes full advantage of existing public investments, focuses on revitalizing the core of the community, provides housing options for young

professionals and retired citizens, and offers a high degree of mobility to the public? How do we foster an environment that capitalizes on the Cahaba River and other natural assets to promote a clean environment and bring a greater appreciation and enjoyment of them to the public? What can the City do to help promote a social environment that unifies the community and enhances pride and culture? What strategies can we implement to ensure our economy will continue to be a driver for the metropolitan area and a sustained source of energy for continued development long into the future?

After consulting with the people of Hoover through the public participation program, it is evident that the community is skeptical, at best, of continued outward growth. It has strained city services, added pressure on the school system and congested area roadways. It has separated residents from amenities and services with sometimes long and congested car trips.

The residents voiced their concerns about new development at the edges of the city, while our city's core business districts and neighborhoods are neglected. The community asserted that reinvestment in the core of the city—in a more urban, mixed use, and walkable form—is a better option to grow the city's economy, which is necessary to maintain the excellence of city services. However, reinvestment must be carried out in a way that preserves and enhances the character of existing neighborhoods.

The rising cost of servicing an ever-expanding city is not lost on the people of Hoover. Indeed, in response to the Great Recession, Hoover—like many other cities across the nation—has taken stock of the cost of servicing its expansive territory and seeks more fiscally prudent growth and development.

Through this plan the residents of Hoover wish for the city to grow in a smarter fashion. The Plan illustrates this shared vision through its Built, Natural, Social, and Economic Environments.

Riverchase Galleria, photo: Brookfield Properties



Built Environment

The Plan calls for more emphasis to be placed on building up and revitalizing our core business districts and neighborhoods, viewing them as crucial to maintaining and projecting our community's unique identity. The Plan also calls for the City to focus redevelopment and urbanization strategies to create more density and higher revenue producing uses of property in the core. The Plan calls for the creation of a city center beginning on the Galleria campus that serves as a central gathering place for citizens, businesses, and civic activity. This city center will go to great lengths to mold our city's unique identity and separate us from other suburban settings. Furthermore, the Plan envisions new development to be focused in undeveloped pockets of land within that portion of the city where public services and infrastructure already exist, promoting appropriate infill development above development on the fringe of the city that will require a considerable amount of new public investment to service. The redevelopment of our city's core will include housing policies that promote walkable neighborhoods with a variety of housing options. Transportation improvements presented in the Plan are centered on supporting the proposed development pattern with a variety of mode options while also relieving existing congestion problems.

Natural Environment

The Plan emphasizes the need to preserve, promote, and protect valuable natural resources across the city. Such action will not only result in a cleaner environment, but also opens many opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of nature by Hoover's residents. The Plan also encourages enhanced protections for the quality of the environment during and after development of land.

Social Environment

The Plan focuses on improving those services and community attributes that enhance the quality of life for our citizens. The Plan promotes the enhancement of City services to ensure that they are keeping up with the growth of the community, so the quality of service to our citizens remains at an exceptional level. The Plan also recommends that the City engage in placemaking at key destinations throughout town, so that our citizens and visitors alike can experience a Hoover that is unique from other suburban communities.

Economic Environment

Acknowledging the potential impacts of online shopping, Hoover has recognized its overdependence on brick and mortar retail as a primary revenue stream. The Plan encourages the City to

engage in economic development activities that not only promote the commercial assets we already have, but to diversify the local economy with new and emerging clean, office, and technology oriented industries. Doing so will transform Hoover from bedroom community to regional economic driver. The Plan also promotes a collaborative effort among area agencies to align education and training programs to employment opportunities, available now and in the future, across the metro.

“To plan is human, to implement is divine”

The implementation strategy lays out steps that the City and others can take to bring the vision illustrated in this plan to fruition. It will take a team effort—from the City, school system, organizations, and individuals—to accomplish the many components of the plan.

Planning is more art than science. The future is uncertain and will be influenced as much by community actions as outside forces and past trends.

Will the vision illustrated in the Plan come to life? That will depend on whether the community goes beyond accepting the Plan and becomes champions of it. Only time will tell, though we should review our progress when the Plan is evaluated in five years. In the end, the Plan will ultimately be what we make of it.

improve traffic



enjoy the cahaba



encourage housing choices



diversify the economy



social

built

HOOVER
The Exceptional
City

natural

economic

increase facilities & services coverage

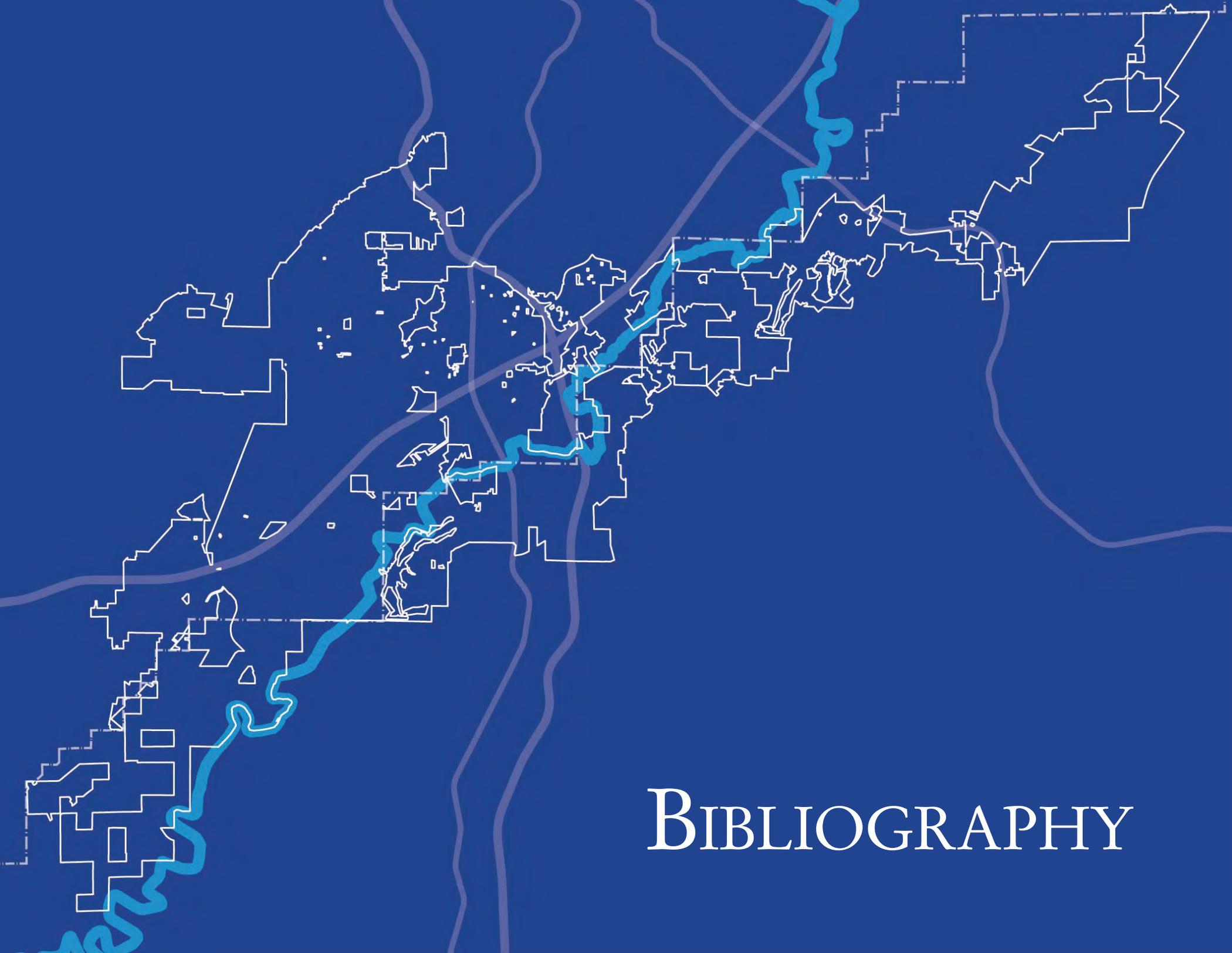


enhance walkability



create gathering places



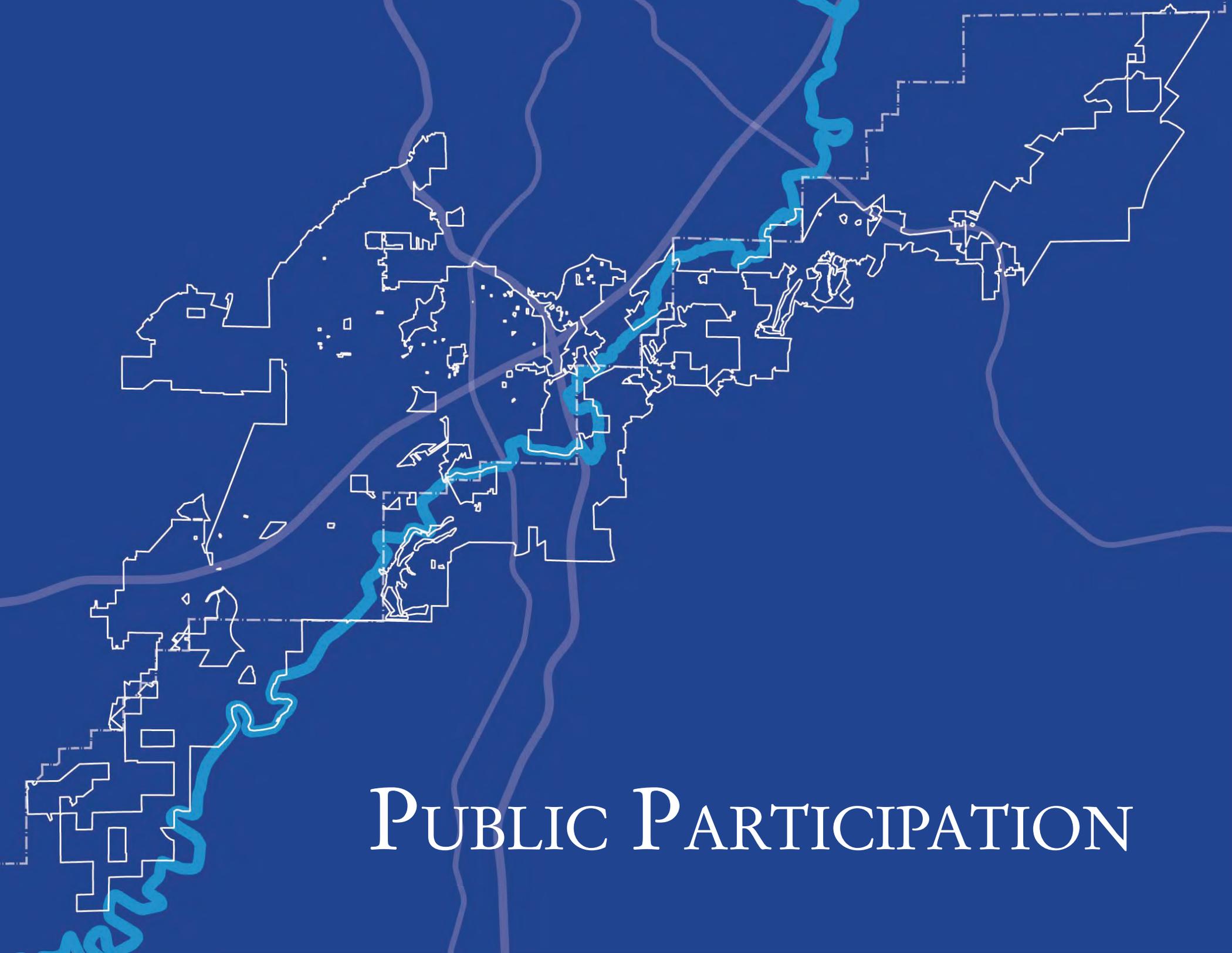


BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “Arts and Culture Planning: A Toolkit for Communities.” Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). 2014.
- Barnett, Jonathan. *Redesigning Cities : Principles, Practice, Implementation*. New York: Planners, 2003.
- Benedict, Mark A., and Edward T. McMahon 2002. “Green Infrastructure: Smart Conservation for the 21st Century.” *Renewable Resources Journal* 20:3:12-17. 12 July 2018. https://conservation-tools.org/library_items/478-Green-Infrastructure-Smart-Conservation-for-the-21st-Century
- Berke, Philip R., David R. Godschalk, and Daniel A. Rodriguez. *Urban Land Use Planning*. New York: University of Illinois, 2006.
- Brooks, Michael P, AICP. *Planning Theory for Practitioners*. Chicago, IL: Planners, American Planning Association, 2002. Print.
- Calthorpe, Peter, William Fulton, and Robert Fishman. *The Regional City : New Urbanism and the End of Sprawl*. New York: Shearwater Books, 2001.
- “City of Wilmington, North Carolina Planning, Development and Transportation Plans & Documents Future Land Use Plan.” City of Wilmington, North Carolina Planning, Development and Transportation Plans & Documents Future Land Use Plan. City of Wilmington, North Carolina, 7 Sept. 2004. Web. 25 July 2012.
- Cuthill, Michael. “Community Visioning: Facilitating Informed Citizen Participation in Local Area Planning on the Gold Coast.” *Urban Policy and Research* 22 (2004): 427-45.
- Daniels, Thomas L., John W. Keller, and Mark B. Lapping. *Small Town Planning Handbook, Third Edition*. New York: American Planning Association, 2007.
- “Diagnosed Diabetes Percentage for 2010.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d. Web. 11 Oct. 2013.
- Gaber, John, and Sharon Gaber. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. New York: Planners P, 2007.
- Gaber, John, and Sharon L. Gaber. “Utilizing Mixed Method Research Designs in Planning: The Case of 14th Street, New York City.” *Planning Education and Research* 17 (1997): 95-103.
- Garde, Ajay. “Designing and Developing New Urbanist Projects in the United States: Insights and Implications.” *Journal of Urban Design* 11 (2006): 33-54.
- Gilbert, Maureen. “Hillside Landscaping Ideas: Five Tips for Landscaping a Slope.” *Landscaping Network*. 2019. Web. 3 July 2019. <https://www.landscapingnetwork.com/hillsides/>
- Goodman, Peter S. “Worried Banks Sharply Reduce Business Loans.” *New York Times*. 28 July 2008. 29 July 2008 http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/28/business/economy/28credit.html?_r=1&em&ex=1217476800&en=68a53e01dfd0f5fa&ei=5087%0a&oref=slogin .

- Hammond, Cathie. "The Wider Benefits of Adult Learning: An Illustration of the Advantages of Multi-method Research." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. 8 (2005): 239–255
- Hanan, Kevin S. "Planning for Sustainability." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71 (2005): 27-40.
- Handy, Susan, Robert G. Paterson, and Kent Butler. *Planning for Street Connectivity: Getting From Here to There*. Rep. no. 515. N.p.: American Planning Association, 2004. Print. Planning Advisory Service.
- Hanna, Kevin S. "The Paradox of Participation and the Hidden Role of Information." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 66 (2000): 398-410.
- Jackson, Richard J. and Chris Kochtitzky. "Creating a Healthy Environment: The Impact of the Built Environment on Public Health." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2001. Department of Health and Human Services. 7 July 2018. <https://thepep.unece.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/CDC%20Creating%20Healthy%20Environment.pdf>
- Kaplan, Dave H., Steven Holloway, and James O. Wheeler. *Urban Geography*. New York: Wiley, 2003.
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. Division of Planning. *Street Connectivity Model Ordinance*. N.p.: Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, 2009. Print.
- Klosterman, Richard E. *Community Analysis and Planning Techniques*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, Incorporated, 1990.
- Phdungsilp, Aumnad. "Futures Studies' Backcasting Method Used for Strategic Sustainable City Planning." *Futures* 43 (2011): 707-14. Print.
- "Regional Network Unveils 'Building (it) Together' Report, Campaign to Align Education and Training with Jobs." *Bold Goals Coalition*. 5 June 2018. 20 June 2018. <http://boldgoals.org/regional-network-unveils-building-together-report-campaign-align-education-training-jobs/>
- Renn, Aaron. "What Employers Want From Cities: Is talent the most important factor? Taxes? Crime? It's a long list." *Governing*. July 2018. 6 August 2018. <http://www.governing.com/columns/eco-engines/gov-employers.html>
- Rhea, Carol, AICP, and Graham Billingsley, FAICP. "What Is a Planner to Do with the Significant Recent Shifts in Demographic Trends." Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association 2013 Annual Conference. Marriott Shoals Hotel and Conference Center, Florence, Alabama. 1 May 2013. Lecture.
- Tachieva, Galina. *Sprawl Repair Manual*. Washington: Island Press, 2010.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. 7 July. 2011. <http://www.census.gov> .
- "What Is Backcasting?" *The Natural Step*. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 May 2013. <http://www.naturalstep.org/en/backcasting>
- West, Ty and Dan Bagwell. "Birmingham's Largest Companies: Workforce is a Major Challenge." *Birmingham Business Journal*. 19 June 2018. 19 June 2019. <https://www.bizjournals.com/birmingham/news/2018/06/19/birminghams-largest-companies-workforce-is-a-major.html>
- Your Weather Service. *Climate - Hoover, Alabama*. U.S. Climate Data, 2018. Web. 18 Jun. 2018. <https://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/birmingham/alabama/united-states/usal0054>



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

The following sections cover the input generated by the various stages of the public participation program. The results presented here are summaries of extensive discussions. Additional information on these discussions and results are provided on the Future Hoover website.

Introductory Future Hoover Workshops (Fall 2017)

❖ Mayor

- ◆ Need to look at possible annexations that provide commercial opportunities
- ◆ Transportation
 - 2040 Traffic Study
 - \$3 million to be allocated for South Shades improvements
 - Rapid Transit (bus and light rail) – think like a big city
- ◆ Need a library branch on 280 corridor
- ◆ Demand for fine and performing arts
- ◆ Iberia Bank moving regional headquarters to Hoover

❖ Support of City Schools

- ◆ Increased communication, especially on annexation and development
- ◆ Increased monetary/resource support, covering resource officers
- ◆ Exploring ways to share resources
- ◆ City has maxed out contribution available to send funds to city school system

❖ Transportation

- ◆ Concern with cut-through traffic in neighborhoods – Chace Lake, Monte Doro, Russet Woods
- ◆ Timing of signals doesn't allow enough flow
- ◆ Seem to be too many ingress/egress at shopping centers, could some be closed
- ◆ Focus on public transit connections to downtown, transit oriented development at terminal stops, increased walkability
- ◆ Hwy 280 corridor
 - Discussing rapid transit options, fast lanes for busses
 - Alternative routes parallel to 280
 - Would like to have Cahaba Beach Road developed as an alternative to 280
- ◆ Valleydale – Would like to see signal timing looked at and turn lane enhancements (Veterans Park as an example – turn lane not long enough)
- ◆ Traffic light on 119 and main Legacy entrance, may need to work with Birmingham to get it done.
- ◆ Want sidewalks

❖ Public Safety

- ◆ Concerns about safety at 280 Walmart
- ◆ Concerns about nefarious activity at Georgetown Park
- ◆ Cooperative agreements with other fire districts aid in protection (Shelby and Cahaba Valley in US 280 corridor)

❖ Library, fine arts, performing arts

- ◆ Suggestion of conversion of church for sale next to Aldridge Gardens to cultural arts center – may be the start of an arts and entertainment district
- ◆ Suggestion from multiple residents to look at smaller options than a large performing arts centers
- ◆ Recognize need for a branch location, particularly in the east where it is difficult to reach the main branch
- ◆ Looking for options in developing fine arts facility
- ◆ Would like to see Hoover have an approx. 1100 seat venue. Auburn looking at a new venue across from the existing arts center on College St. Look for presentation.
- ◆ Don't want to build a facility that is the wrong size – just compete with existing facilities in the metro. Would like to see a venue sized to fill a need.
- ◆ Explore the potential for coupling with Jeff State for a venue

❖ Stormwater and sewer

- ◆ Concerns about covering large portions of the city with paving. Doing so creates more flooding. Shifting flood zones.
- ◆ Aging infrastructure contributing to flooding
- ◆ Not generating enough revenue to maintain the sanitary and storm sewer systems.
- ◆ Not aware of any major flooding issues on east side of town.

- ♦ Greystone area having to pay among the highest rates for sewer in the area (\$110 + per month). Not in favor of Hoover system customers having extremely low rates (+- \$20 per month) and funneling revenue collected from the rest of the city into upgrading that system. Open to seeing the City offload its independent system or raise rates to where it is self-sufficient
- ♦ Sewer systems in the east side of town causing odor problem
- ♦ Storm water revenue (\$5 per residential property in Jefferson County, not collected in Shelby County) does not cover the needs of the system. State law only allows up to \$10 per residential property and \$3,000 for commercial.
- ❖ **Economic Development**
 - ♦ Need to keep the Galleria a central focus
 - ♦ Just announced Iberia Bank locating in a large office facility in International Park
 - ♦ Should be able to announce large IT firm locating in town next week
 - ♦ Just hired an Economic Development director
 - ♦ \$1 million in sales = \$30,000 in City revenue in brick and mortar. \$1 million in internet sales with present state laws equal just over \$500 in City revenue.
 - ♦ Would like to see Hoover have its own zip code
 - ♦ Would like to see cooperation amongst cities in the region so they are not competing and offering incentives to take one another's businesses. Hoover is willing to enter an agreement like that
- ♦ Concerned about Tattersall development being "right" – designed to fit the area. Concerned about apartments, but seem to understand needing close residential to support commercial development there
- ♦ Looking at destination marketing to bring companies, residents, tourists, sports events, etc. to Hoover
 - How does the City promote itself? SEC baseball tournament has a \$14 million economic impact in the region, most of it in Hoover. SEC Women's Golf Tournament to be held for the 4th year in Greystone – needs to be promoted
 - Potential Revenue. We're currently at 1 cent less in sales tax and 3% less in lodging tax than neighboring cities.
- ❖ **Other**
 - ♦ Focus on keeping older neighborhoods healthy and vibrant
 - ♦ Can the property maintenance code be updated?
 - ♦ State law requires any city regulation that affects residential rental property to equally affect similarly situated owner-occupied residential property.
 - ♦ Need method for reporting streetlights that are out on major thoroughfares
 - ♦ Neighborhood lighting is privately handled (HOA, private property owners)
 - ♦ Besides Greystone Elementary, not much community meeting/gathering space on 280 corridor.
- ♦ Hoover recreation league is difficult to access with most facilities on west side. No Hoover sports facilities, matches on 280 corridor. Kids on 280 are having to join other leagues for convenience/travel time. Prefer Hoover league, but travel is difficult.
- ♦ Would like to see the school system have a development program to reach out and seek alumni contributions

Input Session with Hoover City Schools (Fall 2017)

❖ Capacity

- ♦ Two schools over capacity, others getting close
- ♦ Rezoning plan before judge to address some of those issues – result of Stout Case in Jefferson County. School system seeking “unitary status”
- ♦ Fed has changed outlook on bussing/distributing minority/impoverished kids to far reaches of the City, desires for these students to attend schools closer to their community
- ♦ Elementary schools by and large have seats, but middle (250 seats) and high schools (600-700 seats) come up short in absorbing the student populations

❖ Annexation

- ♦ Annexation alters school system planning, several unknowns in how it affects student population

❖ Rooftops/Enrollment - On the Horizon

- ♦ Southwest Hoover is a concern – 4,000 rooftops (2000 in TC, Wilborn, Black Ridge; 2000 in Trigger Creek area). This area has poorest level of service in terms of roads and traffic. Transferring housing units throws planning off.
- ♦ School system carries \$160 M in debt – so system is looking to push off new construction as much as possible

- ♦ Currently have room in elementary schools to handle existing approved development. Trigger Creek is the great unknown and would prompt the need for a new school.

❖ Future School Plans

- ♦ Larger focus on trades – preparing students to enter the workforce soon after graduation.
- ♦ Intentional effort for system and city to combine some efforts (from IT to lawn care) to avoid duplication of services and save \$\$\$.
- ♦ Agreements to utilize space for varying functions and events.

❖ How/where can schools accommodate growth?

- ♦ West side of town is stressed from a schools standpoint
- ♦ With rezoning, current student levels will be met. However, new annexation and residential development will be challenging.
- ♦ Property adjacent to Ross Bridge has been discussed for annexation. If residential, would require new elementary school, but school system has a couple of options
- ♦ Would like to see Trigger Creek rooftops transferred to another portion of the city – like property adjacent to Ross Bridge

- ♦ Would like to see apartment families connected to the community rather than behind walls and gates in complexes...apartment units more integrated into mixed use development

- ♦ City has an interest in urban, mixed use centers – schools would like to be able to more accurately predict student ratios for that type of development. Look at communities that are comparable to Hoover and find demographics in mixed use development.

- ♦ System would love to see more development with kids on the east side of town. Classrooms going dark.

- ♦ Would love to see major improvement to South Shades Crest Road, AL 150, Stadium Trace – improve traffic to and from schools in the area.

❖ Other

- ♦ Prince of Peace Catholic only large private school

Input Sessions with City Officials (Fall 2017)

❖ Administration

- ◆ No adopted comprehensive plan that the City has followed over the course of its 50 year history.
- ◆ Plan should include community feedback and stakeholder groups
- ◆ “Retrofitting suburbia”
- ◆ Wants more village concept designs in the built environment
- ◆ Some shopping centers are getting to an age where it is feasible to take down and rebuild
- ◆ Golf courses may be in trouble – Hoover Country Club and Heatherwood – large tracts that could be repurposed.
- ◆ Big issues today
 - Redevelopment; 50-year opportunities; Smart redevelopment; Done well
 - Diversify economic base
 - Southwest portion of the city (Trigger Creek) is undeveloped. Development of this area would put a strain on City resources.
 - Traffic/transportation
 - Trace Crossings
 - South Shades Crest/AL 150
 - Ross Bridge area
 - Lack of a sense of place
- ◆ Controversial Issues
 - Some don’t want development – like things the way they are
 - Multifamily

❖ Operations

- ◆ Quick development – continuing even through recession
- ◆ Residential development trend has been more patio/smaller footprint over the last 10 years, some increase in large homes the last year or so.
- ◆ Commercial development has slowed, with the Grove being the last big development
- ◆ Issues with workload outpacing staff
- ◆ Drainage is a major issue with heavy rains this summer. Seeing a lot of old infrastructure starting to mature and decline.
- ◆ Engineering has been working on a major roads plan – on hold to see how comprehensive plan goes. Will allow comprehensive plan to guide next steps related to modeling road improvements.
- ◆ Several big projects with Hoover interested in proceeding, but state money has dried up (due to ATRIP, 59/20 downtown project).
- ◆ More interest in alternative modes of transportation. Expensive to retrofit old neighborhoods for sidewalk.
- ◆ Growth of the City is putting a strain on human resources.
- ◆ PW manages garbage contract for residential - \$7M contract
- ◆ Engineering is moving towards contracting work out as well, though paperwork/legal has significantly slowed the process.
- ◆ PW service is stretched with the wide swath of the city limits. Some thought of having two shops/areas east/west to provide more efficient service.

◆ Big projects

- Bike/ped plan underway – draft this Fall – incorporate into comprehensive plan
- Valleydale – widening from Caldwell Mill to US 280 – 2 lane to 5 lane
- Inverness Parkway greenway/sidewalk
- South Shades Crest interchange – environmental study
- Possibly tying in S Shades interchange with 150 exit
- Study for connection points around Trace Crossings. Will go through existing neighborhoods – only option
- Intersection improvements @ Stadium Trace and Brocks
- Addition leg of Galleria Blvd. from 150 to Lorna
- Toll road concept - \$20M project to parallel S Shades
- Widening S Shades with an additional northbound lane from Willow Point to 150. Requesting budget for design
- ◆ What do you see the plan accomplishing?
 - Opportunity to address older sections of town for revitalization (US 31 North, Lorna)
 - Chance for the city to proceed in a more purposeful, jointed manner
 - Connect neighborhoods to natural assets and other destinations with alternative transportation methods
- ◆ Controversial Issues
 - New roads through neighborhoods

❖ **Transportation**

- ◆ Number of hot spots in Hoover
- ◆ US 31 corridor used to be more congested, but traffic decreased to about 50,000-60,000 cars per day (manageable)
- ◆ AL 150 has seen an increase in traffic
- ◆ Engineering has envisioned doing a major north-south highway on the west side of town as a kind of “bypass.” However, \$\$\$ is such that a major highway project is probably not possible.
- ◆ There are some other projects that may help on the west side: Scenic Crest Rd. bw Shades Crest and Ross Bridge, new interchange on I-459 bw Ross Bridge and South Shades, “what if” toll road to Hwy 52
- ◆ South Shades being reconfigured for 2 north lanes, one south lane with free flow north at Brock’s Gap Elementary as a Phase 1. Eventually, the plan would be to five-lane South Shades, but will be an expensive project.
- ◆ Best solution for additional access to-from Hoover High appears to be Cahaba River Estates
- ◆ Bike/ped plan underway, draft should be complete by December. Expect a couple of bike/ped corridors to come as a result

❖ **Police Department**

- ◆ Substations
 - Inverness, Lorna, Galleria, Bluff Park
 - Not all manned 24 hours
- ◆ Crime rate
 - Pretty steady/stable
 - Mostly property crimes; home and car break-ins
 - Lorna Rd. is busiest for crime – most challenged socioeconomically area of the city.
- ◆ Traffic Accidents
 - Divided highways, particularly US 280, AL 150/I-459 interchange area
 - Police has separate traffic division
 - Most are mild-to-moderate
- ◆ Biggest Challenge
 - Heroin problem; 41 overdose saves, 10 deaths this year
 - Fentanyl issue is coming; a challenge for responding officers – if any get on the officer, immediate overdose
 - Alford Ave exit is popular spot for transients to “shoot-up”
- ◆ Other issues
 - Will need increase in staff over time
- ◆ Trends
 - Violent crime increasing nationwide

- ◆ Was discussion of regional jail, but faded. Hoover does its own thing. Rents space for Fed inmates
- ◆ DEA working with communities to build inactive maps for heroin use
- ◆ Using social media to help solve crimes
- ◆ Body cameras in use. Great tool to evaluate situations that come up.
- ◆ What about the city’s future development would make your jobs easier to perform
 - Would like to have cleaner city boundaries/ jurisdictions for service efficiency – improved annexation policy
- ◆ More urban design in development and greenways?– what impact?
 - Probably would change the way we respond – walking beats, bicycle
 - Generally view more compact development as a good thing as opposed to more sprawl
- ◆ Revenues seem to be leveling off for the City. Required budget adjustments.
- ◆ Aging of the city – will we see value maintained / reinvested. Or, do we see a downward transition. Downward transition generally means higher fire calls and more crime

❖ Fire Department

- ◆ ISO rating of 1
 - Good coverage of fire stations
 - Contracts with other agencies to aid in coverage
- ◆ Challenges
 - Geography
 - New fire station to man/operate on Stadium Trace
 - Trigger Creek area service
 - 4 water systems complicates plan review and requirements
 - Would like a Hoover spec for hydrants
 - Accessibility / street connectivity (lack) / street widths an issue
 - Areas with considerable amount of development, but with only one means of ingress/ egress
- ◆ Working to educate citizens on fire prevention to keep fire related injury and death down. Alabama as a whole lags behind.
- ◆ Methods of building and fire response are continually evolving to increase safety and fire prevention
- ◆ More urban design in development and greenways?– what impact?
 - Need to focus on building codes being met for mixed use
 - Ensure vehicles can access all areas through project planning process
 - Generally view more compact development as a good thing as opposed to more sprawl

❖ Parks, Recreation, and Landscape

- ◆ Landscape
 - A lot of development occurring
 - Current staffing levels make it difficult to enforce the landscape ordinance with the development pressure going on.
 - Remaining properties yet to be developed within Hoover are typically difficult to develop due to site conditions. With pressure to pack development into more challenging sites, landscaping tends to be considered a lesser concern.
 - Engineers are largely doing the site plans; design/landscape, almost an afterthought. Going back and forth haggling over landscaping is taking an inordinate amount of time, particularly on challenging sites.
 - Hoover has, in past, been pro-growth to the point of discarding landscape requirements – even with City funded projects.
- ◆ Parks and Recreation
 - Over the last 15-20 years, number of parks and spaces requiring maintenance has increased with no increase in staff.
 - Hoover west and Hoover east sportsplexes are getting older and starting to have large maintenance issues.
 - Parks and rec maintain some school property
 - Challenges with new Hoover Met Sportsplex w/ additional maintenance and third party running it.
 - Passive parks are being donated with additional development, but long-term maintenance not considered.

- Lack of input on facilities from staff, more seats at the planning table to address maintenance ahead of time. Input on design to reduce maintenance.
- Facilities yet to come – Mountain bike park, Cahaba ped trail, other passive spaces – little planning for maintenance.
- ◆ Future needs
 - Landscape policy that properly deals with redevelopment, infill
 - Encourage more reuse, redevelopment of existing developed areas rather than green-field development
 - Parks will need more focus on upgrading and maintaining existing facilities rather than new parks
 - Needs to be a maintenance plan, including new sportsplex.
 - Plan to replace urban forest along corridors and commercial sites as it deteriorates
 - Members of boards and commissions need to represent different backgrounds
- ◆ Expectations for Plan
 - Changes to the planning and zoning process and policy that takes landscaping in more consideration
 - Better guidelines for landscape improvements for redevelopment
 - Revisit landscape as businesses change over
 - Plan that schedules existing park maintenance and additional resources for new park spaces would give Parks and Rec a guide to go by and something to share with park users.

- ◆ Deficiencies
 - Lack of parks/rec space on east side – Spain Park, Greystone
 - Girls softball facilities are overcrowded
- ◆ Priorities, if funding available
 - Outdoor pool
 - Park and satellite rec center near Greystone
 - Municipal golf
 - Archery
 - Urban parks in town centers
 - More facilities for outdoor spaces – like at the Met. Folks outside are not taken care of with benches, etc.
 - Full blown Urban Forestry program
- ◆ Controversial Issues
 - Users for new sports complex – community vs. paying events
 - Citizens are going to be concerned about their kids’ sports facility
 - Flooding in existing development
 - Aldridge Gardens
- ❖ Zoning and Land Use
 - ◆ Most residential development is occurring on the west side:
 - Trace Crossings, Preserve, Ross Bridge, Lake Cyrus.
 - Brock’s Point subdivision largest residential development underway on east side
 - ◆ Stadium Trace Village and Brock’s Gap Village are largest new commercial developments on west side.
 - ◆ Tattersall largest commercial development on east side.
 - ◆ Two types of zoning: Use-oriented base zoning and planned unit developments (PUDs)
 - Use-oriented zoning has led to the desired result of separating incompatible land uses. Unfortunately, it has also led to the separation of all uses, leading to and reinforcing suburban sprawl.
 - Separation of uses and a disconnected street network have led to traffic problems on collector and arterial roadways.
 - PUD zoning has created means by which more flexibility can be introduced into the development process.
- PUD instrument has a long track record of slanting development oversight, enforcement, and variances procedures to the developer’s interest. This has created enormous difficulties for the City in administering the PUDs and permitting development therein due to the voluminous nature of the PUD ordinances, inconsistency in development regulations from one PUD to another, and the lack of clarity of development regulations, i.e. developers or their assigns creating regulations on the spot (such as with setbacks).
- PUDs have also created issues of equitability as the City faces a dual system of oversight. PUDs have a track record—ability to alter development regulations and grant variances, often with little or no public involvement or notice.

Visioning Sessions (Winter 2018)

Community visioning sessions were held in three locations throughout the city during January and February 2018. The purpose of the sessions was two-fold: to introduce the community to the comprehensive planning process and to initiate dialogue about the future of the city. The meetings were held in disparate parts of the city to make it convenient for residents to participate. The planning team posed several open-ended questions to participants to get a sense of which aspects of the city they value the most, which conditions they are most concerned with, and how Hoover can evolve to reach the potential that the community perceives for the city.

Purpose

Meeting participants were asked to name the reasons they live, work or have invested in Hoover. Their answers indicate the purpose Hoover serves in the lives of its residents and businesses.

Most people have chosen to live in Hoover because it is a good, safe place to raise a family with quality schools, neighborhoods and green space. You can find a good home for a reasonable price. It is diverse yet there is a sense of community that binds people together. Jobs and healthcare are available in and around Hoover.

Assets

Meeting attendees were asked about what they considered assets of Hoover—those special features they hold in especially high regard and that set the community apart from other places.

Hoover is centrally located within the region and metro area. The city features great views and nearby parks, golf courses and natural spaces like Moss Rock Preserve, Shades Mountain and the Cahaba River. Beautiful neighborhoods are nestled in Hoover's a diverse natural landscape. There is a strong sense of community; and residents take pride in their homes. An abundance of goods and services are available in the city. Residents love the library, recreation center and schools and feel well-protected by the police and fire departments. The city keeps its roads better condition than in neighboring areas.

Issues

Meeting participants were asked to identify city conditions that are not up to standard.

The city's continuing growth and its effects on city schools and traffic are top concerns for residents. Natural areas are being lost to new business developments while existing shopping areas are declining—storefronts are empty or converting to lower tier businesses—such as in Bluff Park and along Highway 31. As a result of limited reinvestment older commercial areas are beginning to show their age; and some take issue with the aesthetics

of newer commercial development. Proliferation of business signage is negatively impacting community appearance.

Residents are frustrated with limited connectivity in the road network, however, one road project—to connect Ross Bridge to the Shades Crest Road area—has been met with contention. Combined with limited road connectivity, a lack of access roads (on major arteries) and other access management efforts have allowed traffic congestion to worsen over time. Major roads are experiencing increasing wear and tear from heavy truck traffic. Litter is seen as a problem on some major roads.

Residents feel there is not enough street lighting or sidewalks in neighborhoods, and available sidewalks are not well-connected. Hoover does not have a network of greenways or other off-street walking and biking facilities.

Flooding and drainage issues are impacting some areas. There are issues with water and sewer services and rates—Hoover is served by multiple water and sewer utilities.

Some residents yearn for more city facilities—and equitable distribution, such as in easternmost Hoover—like libraries, parks, and community and arts centers. Hoover does not have a downtown or a central location with public space for parades and other civic events. The community wants to see the Hoover Met achieving greater potential. Others are concerned with the uncertain future of the former

Bluff Park Elementary School, which has housed the Artists on the Bluff organization, Hoover Historical Society and the Folklore Center.

Many are concerned with increased density and the impact of aging multifamily housing, concentrated mostly in one part of the city, on area schools. At the same time, residents note the lack of affordable for-sale housing such as townhouses, for recent college graduates, young professionals and empty nesters.

More communication and transparency from the City is desired, particularly around spending and use of tax incentives for development. There is also a perceived lack of cooperation among local governments.

Outside Forces

There are always factors not subject to local control—influences and trends may operate at county, regional, state or national levels—that affect every community, each in its own way.

The Amazon effect—a decline in brick and mortar retail as online commerce increases—could have a significant impact on Hoover, which is home to a high concentration of retailers—an important part of the city’s revenue stream. Because the economy—nationally and internationally—has become increasingly oriented around technology, urban and suburban communities are competing for industries

that can lead their economies into the future. The state is considering an internet sales tax that some argue would increase state coffers disproportionately over cities as they watch their retail economies decline.

Young tech-savvy millennials, who are the workforce for emerging industries, are looking for amenities and environments that are more diverse and more urban than Hoover offers, including more walkable and bicycle-friendly neighborhoods and business districts.

Hoover households are aging, and older residents have only limited options to stay in the city. Meanwhile, these older residents are selling their homes to newcomers, which is changing neighborhoods physically and socially.

Hoover has little control over the water and sewer systems that residents depend on, and over which several raised concern. City government also does not have control over local schools, an amenity for which many residents chose to live in Hoover. The ALDOT has control over several of Hoover’s major roadways, e.g., I-65, I-459, US 31, US 280, AL 150 and AL 119. Limited cooperation and communication between Hoover and other area governments continued to impact the success of Hoover and the metropolitan area.

Some nearby suburbs are perceived to have been more selective about growth and annexation, increasing demand in Hoover where land is available for residential development. At the same time, growth in communities south of Hoover are driving up congestion on major roads through Hoover.

Flooding and severe weather is increasing, which must be accounted for in the city’s planning.

Sacred

Participants were asked to name community features that are essential to Hoover’s sense of place and need to be protected.

The library, school system, senior center and police and fire departments are critical to Hoover’s identity. So too are the Cahaba River, Shades Mountain and Moss Rock Preserve. Many residents want natural areas and trees protected as the city evolves, including capping population density as it is today. Others felt the diversity, history and eclectic character of communities like Bluff Park are essential to Hoover’s sense of place. In particular, the arts community centered around Bluff Park must not be lost.

Some see the Galleria, the StarDome Comedy Club, Aldridge Gardens and area golf courses as being important to Hoover’s character. Others noted the importance of sports and local traditions such as I Love Hoover Day and the City Hall Christmas Tree.

Vision

Town Meeting participants were asked to imagine Hoover as they would like it to be in twenty years. After a moment to fix this vision in their minds, attendees were asked to name one significant physical aspect of that future community that is absent from Hoover today.

Meeting participants envision a future Hoover that is more walkable and more bike-able—with a pedestrian-friendly city center (or multiple smaller centers in different parts of the city), more sidewalks, bike paths and greenways. They also see public transportation linking the various parts of the city. Strategic road connections will improve mobility and reduce traffic congestion.

They foresee more cultural attractions and amenities, such as a museum, arts center, farmers' market, brewery/entertainment district, convention center, ice skating and a minor league team. There would be additional libraries, parks and a new high school (or two!). Hoover will attract a four-year college focused on science, math, engineering and technology (STEM). The Hoover Met will evolve, hosting regional and national events.

That future Hoover will have more small businesses that were cultivated in Hoover. Redevelopment will create business areas that are accessible on foot or bike, well-planned and fully occupied. High rise development suitable to tech companies will create a more fully-formed city skyline. The city will remain diverse as it continues to grow. A community “like

Bluff Park” will develop along the Cahaba River. Older neighborhoods will be vibrant, and there will be affordable, comfortable places for older residents to “age-in-place.”

Attendees want Hoover to have a stronger brand that sets it apart from everyone else.

The WOW! Question

As the meetings concluded, participants were asked to choose a future change to Hoover that would impress them the most. Here is what they said:

- ◆ Mixed-use development with residential, retail, dining and recreation in one walkable place with a low environmental impact
- ◆ High school students attending school in their own community
- ◆ Beautiful views preserved
- ◆ History Center/Museum
- ◆ Cultural/Fine/Performing Arts Center
- ◆ More patrolling in neighborhoods
- ◆ Downtown/city center
- ◆ Planning and zoning that encourages commercial near residential, like Crestline or Edgewood
- ◆ Shades Crest Road without litter/garbage
- ◆ Hoover known for the number of scholars it produces rather than the number of football championships
- ◆ Bluff Park shopping center reinvested in, cleaned up
- ◆ Sidewalks, bike lanes and trails connecting communities

- ◆ Smart development – Hoover becomes a city of villages
- ◆ A beautiful city that retains value and pride
- ◆ A modern Hoover that has remained true to why people loved it originally
- ◆ A facility large enough to accommodate school plays, concerts and proms
- ◆ High caliber school administrators and athletic directors
- ◆ Hospital on west side of Hoover
- ◆ Large park with plenty of green space in east Hoover (280/Greystone)
- ◆ High rise district for STEM companies with luxury apartments
- ◆ Equality in schools
- ◆ A facility for civic meetings, rentals to groups
- ◆ A viable commercial center with gathering space / entertainment district
- ◆ Cooperation with other cities, county and state
- ◆ No trees cut until empty buildings are filled
- ◆ 50% of Hoover electricity comes from renewables
- ◆ More green spaces with natural surfaces that are easier to walk/bike on than concrete
- ◆ Cohesive local, neighborhood, community “village” centers with mix of residential and commercial
- ◆ Planned [well-managed] development, not unbridled growth led by developers
- ◆ Honda technology offices
- ◆ Capers back on the Bluff
- ◆ Traffic solution on 280

Visioning Session 1

Greystone Elementary School, January 26

❖ PURPOSE – Why do you live, work or invest in Hoover?

- ◆ People with similar interests, values
- ◆ Schools
- ◆ Community
- ◆ Lower taxes
- ◆ Best, affordable housing choice
- ◆ Best deal
- ◆ Unique
- ◆ Family-oriented
- ◆ Healthcare
- ◆ Quality of life

❖ ASSETS – What characteristics of the City meet or exceed your own personal standards?

- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Security (police & fire protection)
- ◆ School system
- ◆ Library
- ◆ Landscape
- ◆ Road conditions
- ◆ Accessible/central location
- ◆ Center of four automotive manufacturers
- ◆ Beauty of neighborhood
- ◆ Golf
- ◆ Parks

❖ ISSUES – What characteristics of the City do not meet your own personal standards?

- ◆ Traffic
- ◆ Not enough facilities on east side, like library, feel neglected
- ◆ Sewer system
- ◆ 31 to Galleria unattractive, showing its age
- ◆ Lack of lighting on major roads (Birmingham, especially)
- ◆ No community meeting space
- ◆ Lack of townhouses for certain age/economic groups
- ◆ Lack of consistent, quality business appearance, aesthetics
- ◆ Multifamily adding to traffic
- ◆ Litter along roads

❖ OUTSIDE FORCES – What external influences or trends do you foresee that may impact Hoover, for better or worse, in the future?

- ◆ Amazon effect
- ◆ Online sales tax
- ◆ Charter Schools?
- ◆ Too many jurisdictions, poor communication
- ◆ Changing family dynamics
- ◆ Drugs
- ◆ Turnover in homes as existing residents age
- ◆ Young and old generation transition

❖ SACRED – What features of the city are sacred, or essential to Hoover's sense of place, and should be protected or retained?

- ◆ Schools and school bus system
- ◆ Golf course
- ◆ Moss Rock/Veterans Park
- ◆ Galleria
- ◆ StarDome Comedy Club
- ◆ Library
- ◆ City Hall Christmas Tree

❖ VISION – What is missing today from Hoover that you foresee in your own personal vision for the community?

- ◆ Blank spots filled in
- ◆ Downtown Hoover/City Center (Tech/Stem)
- ◆ Library (on east side)
- ◆ Community center
- ◆ Public Park – More community down 119/ Pavilion
- ◆ 280/119 Missed Opportunity
- ◆ Chastain Park/Dog Park
- ◆ Economic development, vertical towers for tech companies and workers, etc.
- ◆ Public transportation
- ◆ Autonomous vehicles
- ◆ Conventions
- ◆ Bike lanes, sidewalks
- ◆ More sports and park areas for community
- ◆ Accidents resolved more quickly (traffic)
- ◆ Additional north-south route
- ◆ Cahaba Beach Road/Grants Mill connection
- ◆ Hoover Met hosting regional/national events, continuing to evolve

Visioning Session 2

Shades Crest Baptist Church, January 30

❖ PURPOSE – Why do you live, work or invest in Hoover?

- ◆ Better situation/education
- ◆ Police
- ◆ School system
- ◆ Socially diverse
- ◆ Church
- ◆ Neighborhood
- ◆ Proximity to medical
- ◆ Community atmosphere
- ◆ From here
- ◆ Place to raise kids
- ◆ Unique
- ◆ Always something exciting
- ◆ Newer, bigger home
- ◆ Green space
- ◆ Great community support

❖ ASSETS – What characteristics of the City meet or exceed your own personal standards?

- ◆ Close to everything
- ◆ Clean air
- ◆ Views (e.g., Shades Crest, Cahaba River)
- ◆ Moss Rock Preserve
- ◆ Proximity (though somewhat isolated)
- ◆ Library
- ◆ Fire protection
- ◆ Recreation center
- ◆ No need to leave the City for goods and services

❖ ISSUES – What characteristics of the City do not meet your own personal standards?

- ◆ Development, increasing density
- ◆ Lack of green space
- ◆ No town center
- ◆ Empty storefronts
- ◆ Lack of communication with residents
- ◆ Lack of transparency on spending
- ◆ Lack of sidewalks, sidewalk connectivity
- ◆ Lack of street lighting
- ◆ Road conditions (e.g., Oxmoor)
- ◆ No fine arts infrastructure
- ◆ Use of sidewalks
- ◆ Neighboring cities
- ◆ Traffic
- ◆ Quality of development on Hwy 150
- ◆ Irresponsible growth, need third high school
- ◆ Bluff Park shopping centers
- ◆ Use of The Met
- ◆ Vehicular connectivity (e.g., high school has only one way in-one way out)
- ◆ Heavy trucks wearing out major roads
- ◆ Few police patrolling in neighborhoods (e.g., back of Russet Woods)
- ◆ Continued development while older commercial buildings are empty
- ◆ Old zoning
- ◆ Tax incentives not used responsibly
- ◆ History not promoted (94 year old school)
- ◆ Destruction of green space
- ◆ Signage

- ◆ Width of streets
 - ◆ Drainage
 - ◆ Pawn shops on Hwy 31
 - ◆ Arts, Bluff Park Art Show without home
 - ◆ Proposed road connecting Ross Bridge to Shade Crest Road on mountain
 - ◆ Potential loss of green space, development on slope of Shades Mountain
 - ◆ Bluff Park Art Show/Loss of history, school
- ### ❖ OUTSIDE FORCES – What external influences or trends do you foresee impact Hoover, for better or worse, in the future?
- ◆ Homewood, Vestavia, Mountain Brook – how does their control over growth impact Hoover
 - ◆ Consolidation of retail
 - ◆ ALDOT
 - ◆ Competition from other places
 - ◆ Water and sewer utilities
 - ◆ Landowners selling
 - ◆ Internet sales tax
 - ◆ Growth in Downtown Birmingham offers amenities that draw people from Hoover
 - ◆ Loss of school teachers
 - ◆ New shopping facilities built while older strip shopping areas declines

- ❖ SACRED – What features of the city are sacred, or essential to Hoover’s sense of place, and should be protected or retained?
 - ◆ Bluff Park School/Art Association
 - ◆ Residences of Shades Mountain
 - ◆ Cahaba River
 - ◆ Schools
 - ◆ Moss Rock Preserve
 - ◆ City facilities
 - ◆ Restoration of facilities
 - ◆ Library
 - ◆ Sense of community (e.g., Bluff Park)
 - ◆ International Baccalaureate Program at Hoover High
 - ◆ Natural areas, green spaces, trees
 - ◆ Identity/sense of place
 - ◆ Density
 - ◆ Diversity of residents
 - ◆ Trees taller than homes

- ❖ VISION – What is missing today from Hoover that you foresee in your own personal vision for the community?
 - ◆ Better planning for commercial areas
 - ◆ Dog park
 - ◆ Cultural center
 - ◆ Library
 - ◆ City center
 - ◆ Performing arts center
 - ◆ Fourth high school (third needed now)
 - ◆ Good water system
 - ◆ Bicycle paths
 - ◆ A community like Bluff Park developed along Cahaba River
 - ◆ Public transportation within Hoover
 - ◆ Small business development
 - ◆ Co-working spaces for startup businesses
 - ◆ Walkability to goods and services
 - ◆ Fully-occupied retail space
 - ◆ Redevelopment
 - ◆ Branding
 - ◆ Shades Mountain
 - ◆ Sidewalks
 - ◆ Alternative to Shades Crest Road/Local Access DDS

Visioning Session 3

City Council Chambers, February 6

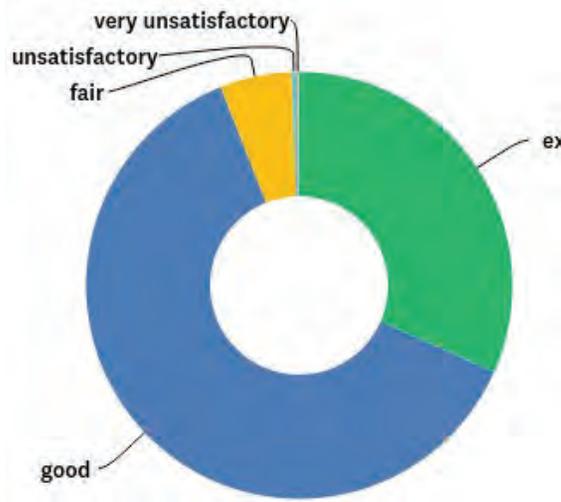
- ❖ PURPOSE – Why do you live, work or invest in Hoover?
 - ◆ Schools
 - ◆ School bus system
 - ◆ Housing
 - ◆ Annexation (“Hoover came to us!”)
 - ◆ Church
 - ◆ All-American city
 - ◆ Job
- ❖ ASSETS – What characteristics of the City meet or exceed your own personal standards?
 - ◆ Transparency
 - ◆ Location/central location
 - ◆ Proximity to goods and services
 - ◆ Sense of community, relationships
 - ◆ Diversity
 - ◆ Schools
 - ◆ School campuses
 - ◆ Unique
 - ◆ Hoover Public Library
 - ◆ Proximity of parks & recreation
 - ◆ Pride in the appearance/upkeep of homes
 - ◆ Dog park
 - ◆ Restaurants and stores

- ❖ **ISSUES – What characteristics of the City do not meet your own personal standards?**
 - ◆ Floods
 - ◆ Roads and traffic safety
 - ◆ Connection to other cities
 - ◆ Communication with others/governments
 - ◆ Lack of greenway(s)
 - ◆ Few quality housing choices for recent college grads (detached homes too expensive, apartments are aging and unattractive)
 - ◆ Sidewalks
 - ◆ Street lights (e.g., Flair Knoll)
 - ◆ Traffic (e.g., at I-459 & 65S, 65N & 31, Hwy 150, to Ross Bridge)
 - ◆ Litter (e.g., Valleydale Road)
 - ◆ Signage (size, number, appearance)
 - ◆ Deterioration of business areas (increase in pawn shops)
 - ◆ Deterioration of major corridors
 - ◆ Lack of access roads for connectivity, traffic flow
 - ◆ Lack of connectivity
 - ◆ Lack of a main street/downtown/urban center to tie they city together
- ❖ **OUTSIDE FORCES – What external influences or trends do you foresee impact Hoover, for better or worse, in the future?**
 - ◆ Climate change (flooding and severe weather)
 - ◆ Water and sewer rates
 - ◆ Decline of brick and mortar retail, shift to online shopping
- ◆ Growth of Birmingham
- ◆ New companies, economic development
- ◆ Keeping work in Hoover over Birmingham
- ◆ Technology, banking and medical jobs
- ◆ Attracting people
- ◆ Turnover of in existing housing
- ◆ Increasing interest in transit and bicycling (lacking in Hoover)
- ◆ Median age in Hoover is relatively high, need housing choices/accommodations for aging population
- ◆ Electric vehicles, charging stations
- ◆ Growth in Chelsea, Sylacauga, etc. bringing more traffic
- ◆ Schools
- ❖ **SACRED – What features of the city are sacred, or essential to Hoover’s sense of place, and should be protected or retained?**
 - ◆ Schools
 - ◆ Police and fire departments
 - ◆ Library and theater
 - ◆ StarDome Comedy Club
 - ◆ Sense of community
 - ◆ Moss Rock Preserve
 - ◆ I Love Hoover Day/ Celebrate Hoover
 - ◆ Football, baseball and other sports (including SEC Baseball Tournament)
 - ◆ Senior Center
 - ◆ Aldridge Gardens
 - ◆ Art Shows (Moss Rock)
- ❖ **VISION – What is missing today from Hoover that you foresee in your own personal vision for the community?**
 - ◆ Greenway
 - ◆ Arts venue (shared space)
 - ◆ All facilities tied together with public transportation
 - ◆ Affordable senior housing
 - ◆ Four-year college extension (STEM – Auburn or Alabama)
 - ◆ Downtown hoover
 - ◆ Walking trails and connections
 - ◆ District with “cityscape,” tall buildings
 - ◆ Multiple connected downtowns
 - ◆ Walkability
 - ◆ Diversity
 - ◆ Brewery – economic opportunity
 - ◆ Farmers Market
 - ◆ Improvements in older neighborhoods, sidewalks, lighting
 - ◆ Cahaba River Greenway
 - ◆ Cultural arts facility (able to host concerts, graduations, prom, etc.)
 - ◆ Convention center
 - ◆ Ice skating/hockey
 - ◆ Minor League sports team
 - ◆ Museum/visual arts center
 - ◆ Population growth
 - ◆ Branding, something to be known for (e.g., tech jobs)
 - ◆ Draw to retain younger residents

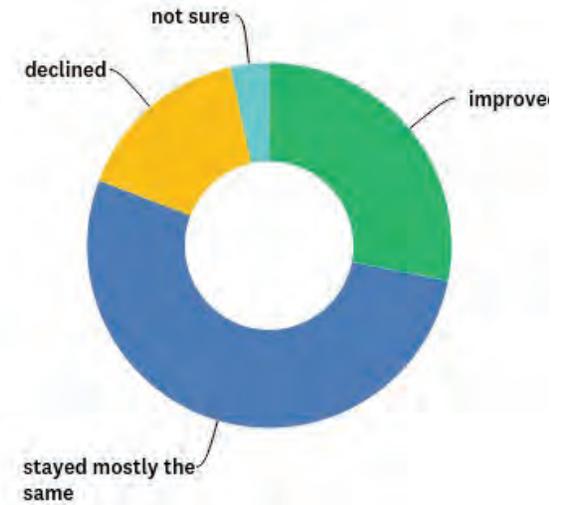
Online Survey

The survey posted on the Hoover Strategic Plan Website was completed by nearly 1,000 Hoover residents. Many of the questions asked for or allowed for multiple answers, so in many cases over 2,000 individual responses were analyzed per question. The following tables summarize the respondents' feelings about the issues that they would like to see addressed in a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the city.

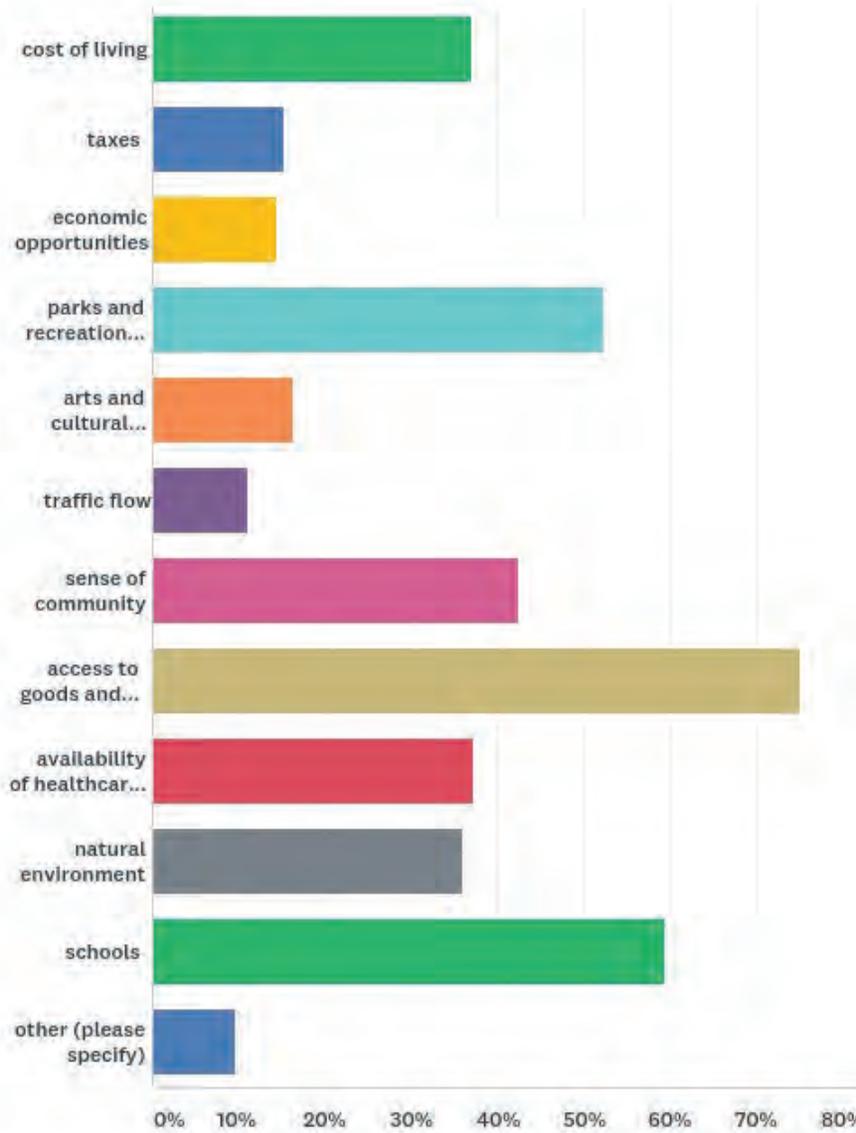
1. How do you rate Hoover's quality of life?



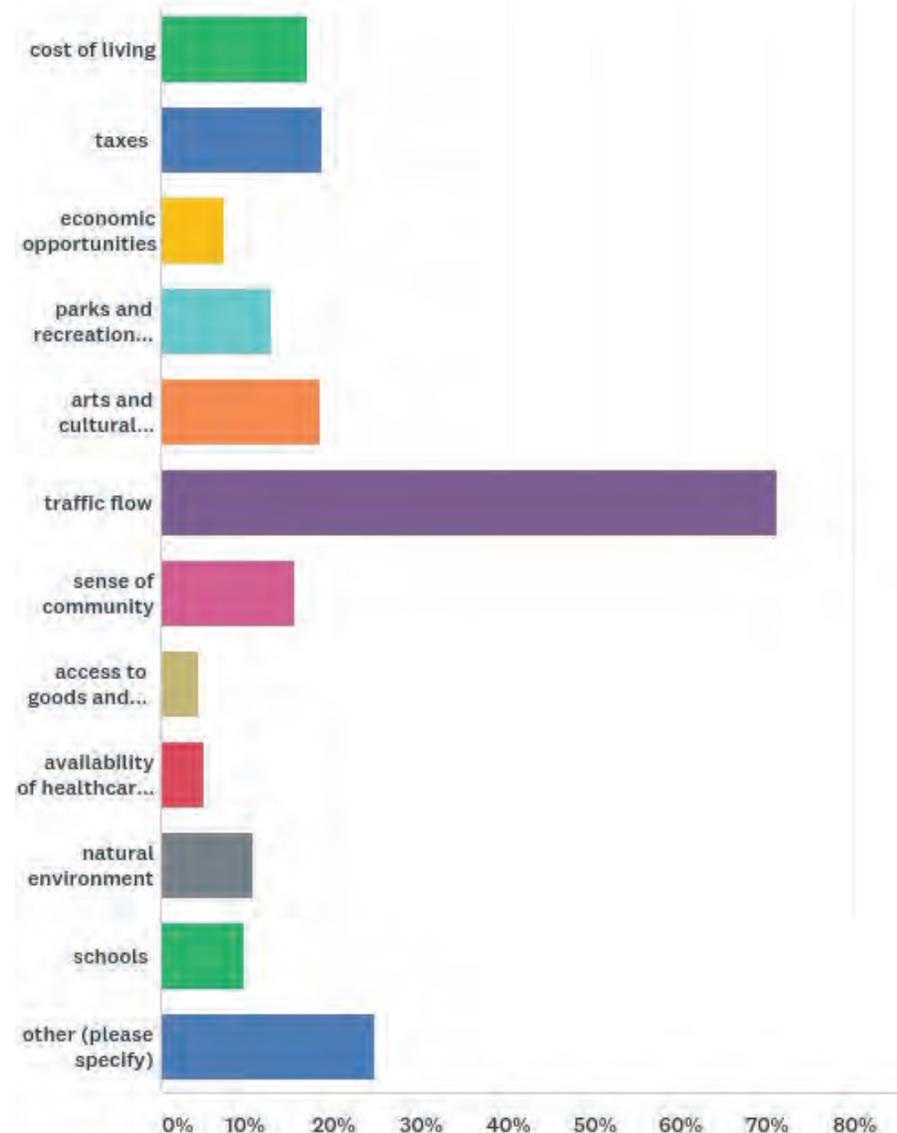
2. How has your quality of life changed in the last 5-10 years?



3. Which of these factors have contributed positively to your quality of life?



4. Which of these factors have negatively affected your quality of life?



5. If you had someone visiting you in Hoover, what would you like them to see? (most popular answers)

- ◆ Moss Rock Preserve (top)
- ◆ Aldridge Gardens
- ◆ Riverchase Galleria
- ◆ Bluff Park/View from Shades Mountain
- ◆ Galleria
- ◆ Veteran’s Park

6. If you had someone visiting, what would you like for them to avoid? (most popular answers)

- ◆ Riverchase Galleria (top)
- ◆ Lorna Road, Highway 31 and 280
- ◆ Traffic congested areas

7. How do you rate the following services?

Category	Positive	Fair	Negative
Parks and recreation	92%	4%	4%
Schools	77%	17%	5%
Library	92%	3%	1%
Road conditions	59%	33%	8%
Traffic	19%	44%	36%
Pedestrian facilities	11%	28%	54%
Bicycle facilities	4%	15%	76%
Public transportation	4%	13%	56%
Planning and zoning	19%	35%	36%
Fire protection	90%	4%	0%
Police protection	93%	5%	1%
Paramedic services	81%	3%	0%
Water system	58%	9%	17%
Sewer system	45%	19%	23%
Stormwater drainage	49%	26%	14%
Garbage collection	70%	21%	8%
Recycling	58%	27%	11%

8. Name one thing the City could do a better job of promoting: (most popular answers)

- ◆ Natural areas, parks, trails, outdoor activities (top)
- ◆ Arts, cultural and music related events
- ◆ Local restaurants and stores
- ◆ Hoover Met/Finley Center
- ◆ School system

9. What location best exemplifies the “center of Hoover?” (most popular answers)

- ◆ Galleria, Patton Creek shopping area (top)
- ◆ City Hall/municipal complex
- ◆ US Hwy 31, US Hwy 31 north of I-459

10. If you were to described Hoover as if it were a person:

What would you say is the city’s Age?

- ◆ Between 40 and 49 (35%)
- ◆ Between 50 and 59 (29%)
- ◆ Between 30 and 39 (15%)

What would you say is the city’s Gender?

- ◆ Male (66%)
- ◆ Female (20%)

What would you say is the city’s Clothing? (most popular answers)

- ◆ casual or business casual (top)
- ◆ conservative, traditional
- ◆ khakis with a nice shirt

What would you say is the city’s Education?

- ◆ bachelor’s degree (60%)
- ◆ some college (10%)
- ◆ master’s degree (9%)

What would you say is the city’s Physique?

- ◆ fit, trim, well-toned (17%)
- ◆ a bit overweight (16%)
- ◆ average (13%)

What would you say is the city’s Employment? (most popular answers)

- ◆ professional, white collar (top)
- ◆ employed full time, steady job
- ◆ retail, sales

What would you say is the city's Hobbies? (most popular answers)

- ◆ sports, watching sports (top)
- ◆ outdoor activities, hiking, running, hunting, etc.
- ◆ shopping

What would you say is the city's Temperament? (most popular answers)

- ◆ mild-mannered, easy going (top)
- ◆ easily agitated, feisty, cranky
- ◆ friendly, kind, nice, polite

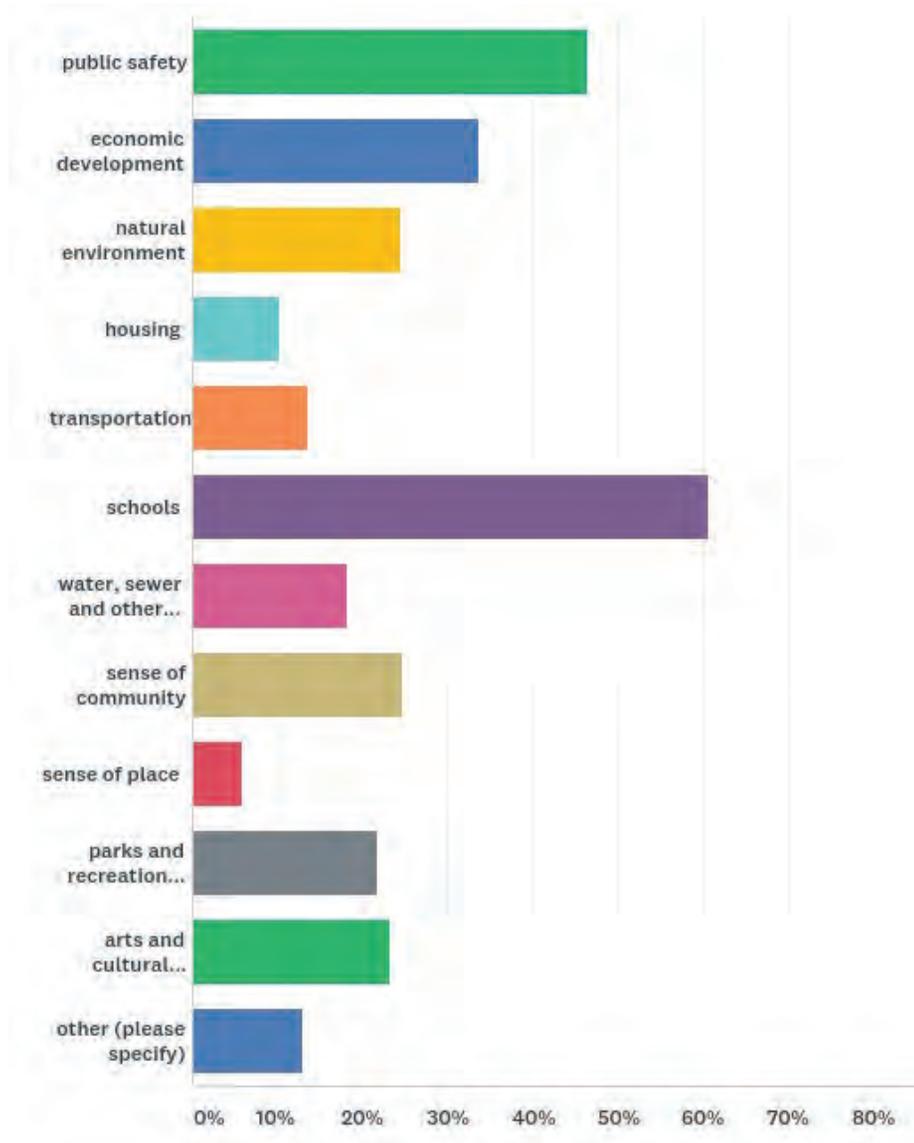
What would you say is the city's Vehicle? (most popular answers)

- ◆ SUV (top)
- ◆ 4-door sedan
- ◆ Truck
- ◆ Minivan

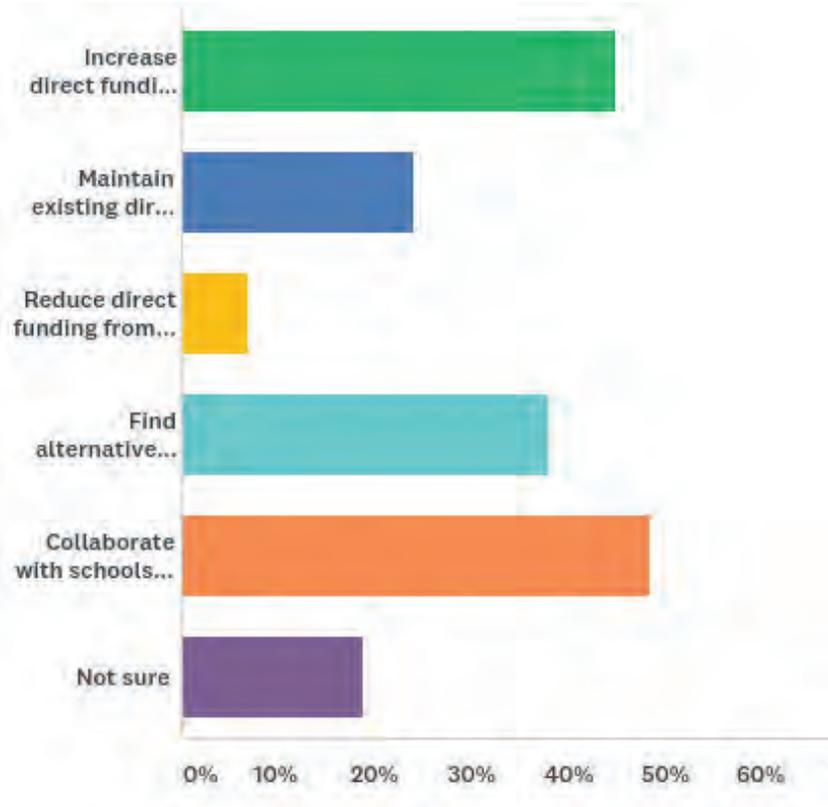
What would you say is the city's Other characteristics? (most popular answers)

- ◆ Caring, approachable, friendly, warm (top)
- ◆ Bland, boring, average
- ◆ Aging, weathered, tired, not keeping up

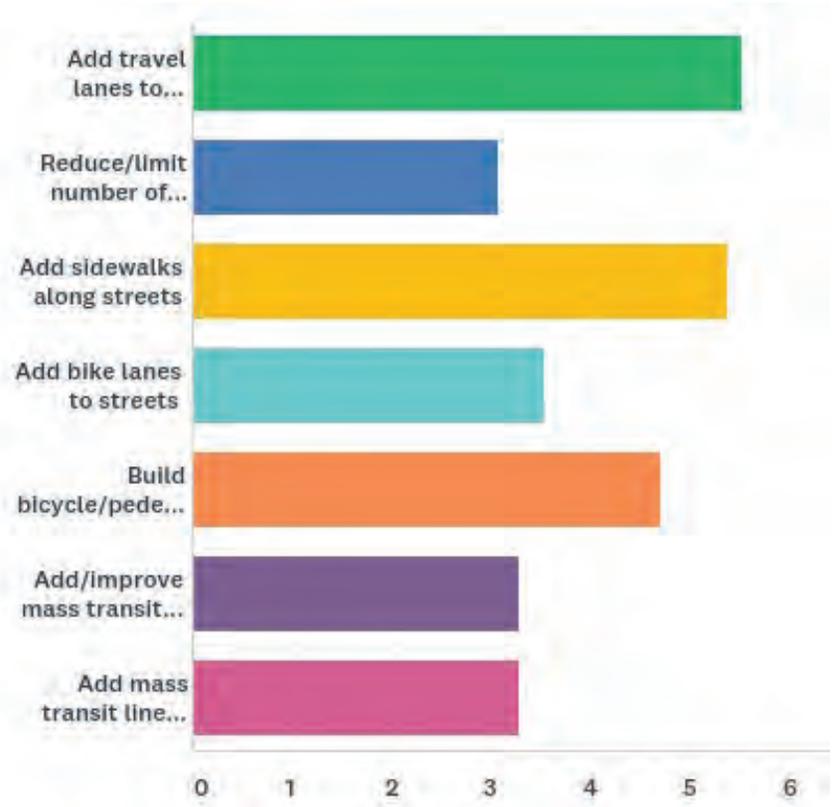
11. Select three of the following issues that you feel are important to Hoover's future (top 5 by percent of respondents choosing each answer):



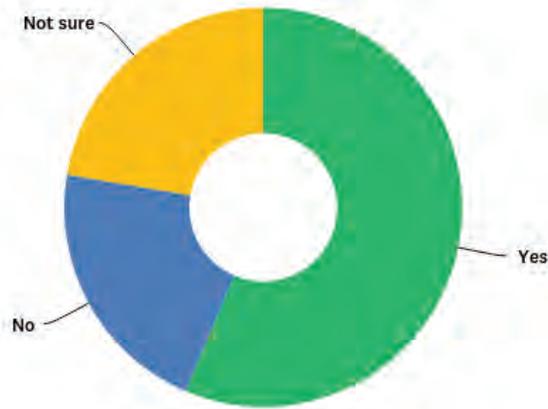
12. Regarding the City government's support of Hoover City Schools, please select ALL that you feel apply (percent of respondents choosing each answer):



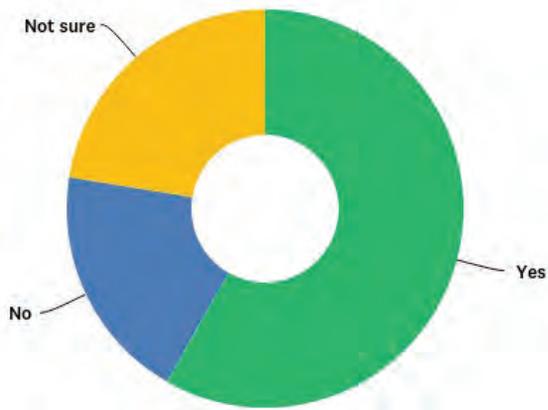
13. Regarding City investment in transportation, please rank the following in order of importance with "1" being the most apply (percent of respondents choosing each answer):



14. Recent studies have shown a need for an additional library to serve east Hoover (US 280 area). Would you support addition of a library in this area?



15. Should Hoover develop a facility dedicated to the arts?



16. Activities that should be housed in a city arts facility: (most popular answers)

- ◆ A large auditorium for band concerts, graduations, plays, etc., with performance-ready stage
- ◆ Arts classes (painting, sculpting, photography, drama, crafts, etc.)
- ◆ Space for local artists to work
- ◆ Space for art exhibits / shows

17. What is the highest priority issue the City must address in its comprehensive plan? (most popular answers)

- ◆ Schools (top)
- ◆ Traffic
- ◆ Growth, too much retail construction/not sustainable, residential exceeding infrastructure
- ◆ City center/downtown
- ◆ Pedestrian accessibility
- ◆ Public safety/crime

18. If the City had enough funding to finance a major project - of your choosing - what would it be?

- ◆ Add sidewalks, bike lanes, and pedestrian pathways (17.6%)
- ◆ Arts center (15.3%)
- ◆ Road projects to alleviate traffic (10.5%)
- ◆ Additional school(s) and other school investments (8.9%)
- ◆ Walkable city center/downtown with dining, entertainment, shopping and outdoor space (7.4%)

19. What community would you like Hoover to learn from or be more like?

- ◆ Homewood (23.4%)
- ◆ Mountain Brook (10.9%)
- ◆ Vestavia Hills (7.5%)

20. What do you like about...

Homewood

- ◆ sense of community / small town feel
- ◆ walkable city center
- ◆ local, unique shops and non-chain restaurants

Mountain Brook

- ◆ sense of community / villages
- ◆ cool local businesses
- ◆ walkability

Vestavia Hills

- ◆ schools
- ◆ sense of community
- ◆ Qualified Growth / planning

21. List up to three things you would see as signs of success for Hoover over the next twenty years: (most popular answers)

- ◆ top-ranked schools (top)
- ◆ more bicycle and pedestrian facilities connecting the city
- ◆ better traffic and roads
- ◆ more parks and outdoor amenities
- ◆ walkable downtown / entertainment district
- ◆ revitalization / beautification of commercial areas
- ◆ arts center

22. List up to three things you see as inhibitors to success for Hoover over the next twenty years: (most popular answers)

- ♦ traffic (top)
- ♦ declining schools
- ♦ too much development without planning, infrastructure in place

23. If you could give Hoover a slogan or nickname, what would it be? (summary of suggestions)

- ♦ Home Sweet Hoover
- ♦ Hoover Has It
- ♦ Happening Hoover
- ♦ Hoover's Happening
- ♦ A Great Place to Live!
- ♦ A place to call home
- ♦ At Home in Hoover. (Shop at Home. Play at Home. Be at Home. Etc)
- ♦ Beacon of the South
- ♦ Big Hometown
- ♦ City Living, Community Lifestyle
- ♦ City of Spirit
- ♦ City with a Vision
- ♦ Come Home to Hoover
- ♦ Diversity, Integrity, Community
- ♦ Education Above and Beyond
- ♦ Everyone's Hometown
- ♦ Family Friendly City
- ♦ Family. Fit. Fun.
- ♦ Happening Hoover
- ♦ Home is where Hoover is
- ♦ Hoover - For Life Style, High Style, Your Style
- ♦ Hoover - Hometown Hospitality
- ♦ Hoover - the Big Able
- ♦ Hoover - The Place To Be
- ♦ Hoover - Success Starts Here
- ♦ Hoover - Where Life Happens!
- ♦ Hoover Happens!!!
- ♦ Hoover has it all!
- ♦ Hoover is Happening!
- ♦ Hoover, AL - An easy place to call home.
- ♦ Hoover, AL - Big Community, Small Town Feel
- ♦ Hoover, AL - Live Life Well
- ♦ Hoover, AL- This is how it's done, Birmingham
- ♦ Hoover, AL Beautiful Places and Friendly Faces
- ♦ Hoover, Alabama Family, Friends, Community
- ♦ Hoover, An Inviting City
- ♦ Hoover, because you deserve better
- ♦ Hoover, the city that feels like a family
- ♦ Hoover: a global city with southern charm
- ♦ It Happens in Hoover
- ♦ Live here. Work here. Play here.
- ♦ Over the mountain, over the top.
- ♦ Relevant with a Purpose
- ♦ Simply made Southern.
- ♦ The City of the Future
- ♦ Where the World Meets the South

About Survey Respondents

1. Where in Hoover do you live?

♦ North of I-459	50.5%
♦ South of I-459, west of I-65	29.0%
♦ South of I-459, east of I-65	20.3%

2. How long have you lived in Hoover?

♦ 5 years or less	18.0%
♦ 6-10 years	15.5%
♦ 11-20 years	25.8%
♦ more than 20 years	40.7%

3. Do you rent or own your own home?

♦ rent	25.8%
♦ own	40.7%

4. What type of home do you live in?

♦ Single-family home	93.4%
♦ Duplex	0.0%
♦ Townhouse	2.0%
♦ Apartment	1.7%
♦ Condominium	0.5%

5. What water system is your home on?

♦ Birmingham Water Works	77.8%
♦ Shelby County	10.9%
♦ Bessemer Water Works	6.4%
♦ Pelham Water Works	1.4%
♦ Not on public water system	0.4%
♦ not sure	3.1%

6. What sanitary sewer system is your home on?

♦ Hoover	16.9%
♦ Southwest Water	10.1%
♦ Jefferson County	43.8%
♦ Not on sanitary sewer system	18.5%
♦ not sure	10.7%

7. Including yourself, how many people live in your home?

♦ 1	6.9%
♦ 2	34.7%
♦ 3	18.8%
♦ 4	26.7%
♦ 5	10.8%
♦ 6 or more	2.1%

8. How many in your household are under age 18?

♦ none	50.5%
♦ 1	17.0%
♦ 2	22.9%
♦ 3	8.1%
♦ 4	1.3%
♦ 5 or more	0.2%

9. If there are school age children in your household, what school(s) do they attend? Check all that apply.

♦ Hoover City Schools	40.5%
♦ Private school	6.2%
♦ Home school	1.3%
♦ No school age children	54.0%

10. Where do you work?

♦ in Hoover	40.7%
♦ I am retired	18.0%
♦ I am unemployed	4.8%
♦ Outside of Hoover*	36.5%

*Of those working outside Hoover, 42.5% work in Birmingham

11. What is your estimated gross household income (before taxes)?

♦ Under \$30,000	0.7%
♦ \$30,000-49,999	4.1%
♦ \$50,000-74,999	12.2%
♦ \$75,000-\$99,999	15.9%
♦ \$100,000-\$149,999	28.1%
♦ \$150,000 or more	39.0%

12. How far did you go in school?

♦ 8th grade or less	0.0%
♦ Some high school	0.0%
♦ High school diploma/equivalent	1.4%
♦ Some college	8.3%
♦ Associate's degree	2.5%
♦ Bachelor's degree	43.4%
♦ Master's degree or higher	44.5%

FUTURE  HOOVER

A Grand Vision for an Exceptional City
2040 Comprehensive Plan City of Hoover, Alabama

