



CITY OF BOAZ

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

small town • big future

Adopted: July 13, 2020



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INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan describes the overall strategy for how Boaz will shape itself, through public and private investment, over the next twenty years. The City prepared this plan as a guide to making decisions regarding capital improvements, City services, growth management and economic development efforts. The plan gives Boaz residents, property owners, merchants, builders and developers a reasonable expectation of the city's future so that they may invest in the community with confidence. The plan is long-range, general, and focused primarily on the physical and economic development of the community. It will be a living document whose relevance will continue even as circumstances change over time.

Through the Boaz Comprehensive Plan, City officials wish to:

- Illustrate the ways in which the city should develop over time.
- Coordinate land use recommendations with those for transportation and other infrastructure improvements.
- Provide a guide to development decisions and a basis for making and revising zoning and other regulations.
- Ensure that as development occurs, the city's most significant natural and historic features will be conserved and enhanced, while property values are protected.
- Provide a pattern for land use and development that strives for a sustainable community with a diversified tax base to support necessary and desired facilities and services.

In response, the City of Boaz will continually refer to this document to:

- Visualize what can reasonably be expected to occur in Boaz—to provide some assurance and security regarding development investment decisions.
- Review and evaluate development proposals and rezoning requests in the context of Boaz's vision.
- Provide guidance on improving and updating the City's development policies and regulations.
- Identify priorities and strategies for making infrastructure investments.
- The Boaz Comprehensive Plan recognizes the value of the city's underlying natural resources, history and community values. The plan will guide development to balance growth with the conservation of important natural resources. For example, activity centers—where infrastructure is in place and private investment is already occurring—function as magnets for economic growth. This approach reinforces existing businesses, optimizes use of existing roads and infrastructure, while avoiding encroachment into neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive areas. And, development will be supported and encouraged by the City of Boaz to foster efficiency, stability, entrepreneurial activity and a strong quality of life and community image.

USING THE PLAN

- The Comprehensive Plan is a combination of vision, maps, priority actions and policies—a framework for guiding public and private decisions that will affect new development and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and business areas. The plan is based on the community's vision for its future. The plan looks ahead, focusing on the physical form of the city, and strives to shape Boaz's future development in a fiscally responsible pattern consistent with the community's vision.
- The plan is a general, long-range guide to assist public officials and private citizens as they consider investments that may have long-term impacts on the community. To do this, the plan must be continuously reviewed and updated as changes occur in physical, political and economic conditions.
- The plan will be implemented through actions by City staff, the City Council, the Planning Commission and other boards and commissions and by those of developers and private organizations and citizens. Major public actions in support of plan implementation will include adoption, revision and enforcement of the city's development regulations, capital improvement planning and budgeting, and decisions regarding development proposals and annexation. Guidance provided by this monitoring and renewal process will assist the city refine the Comprehensive Plan through consideration of amendments as may be needed over the years.
- The Boaz Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a living document, to evolve and grow in response to changes in community values and to market and physical conditions. Only through continuing use, evaluation, detailing, and updating can the plan fully serve Boaz.
- Boaz draws to it more people, businesses and private investment every year. The underlying question is how growth should be channeled. That is the role of Boaz's continuing planning process and the task of this Comprehensive Plan—to assure growth and change is compatible with the vision the people of Boaz have set for their community.



COMMUNITY VISION

The following section describes the community’s vision for the continued development and improvement of Boaz that arose from an initial community visioning session. Over 440 residents, business and property owners and local workers responded to an online survey, the results of which were used, in combination with the results of the Visioning Session, to identify the major goals for the plan.

VISIONING SESSION

On July 16, 2019 the City held a Visioning Session attended by residents, elected and appointed officials, city staff and other community representatives to discuss the state of Boaz and how they would like it to be in the future. Participants were presented a series of questions to elicit thoughts that would help the Planning Commission and City Council as they considered the future of the city. What follows below is a summation of the main themes of the responses (see Appendix for complete listing).

ASSETS

Those attending the Visioning Meeting were asked first about what they considered the assets of Boaz—those special features they hold in high regard and that set the community apart from other places.

Boaz, once referred to as the “Garden City” has a unique history, including notable residents who have contributed to the community’s arts and music culture and to the world. It is home to Snead State Community College and Marshall County Medical Center. Boaz prides itself in its quality schools, churches, library and quaint downtown. Community businesses benefit from regional traffic on US Highway 431. The city has been successful in attracting industries that provide job opportunities for its diverse population, who—despite occasional differences like any small town—pull together in times of need. Boaz is an affordable community with opportunities to grow.

ISSUES

Regardless of the affection for their community, participants in the Visioning Session made it clear that work remains to be done to bring conditions up to the standards they would like to enjoy throughout the community.

The community is concerned about its physical appearance and outside image and could do more to promote what is good about Boaz. There is a desire for additional businesses, like a hotel and a nice restaurant or two, new industries offering good paying jobs and places to showcase local culture and talent. While there is little room for new development on the highway, there are vacant stores, an empty industrial site and landowners asking perhaps too much for property. There is a need for more investment in historic buildings, including in downtown, which gets little traffic and offers little to families and nearby college students. Boaz is easy enough to get around in a car but not so much without one. The water system needs upgrades, but long-standing drainage problems are now starting to get fixed. And, residents are concerned about the effects of the national opioid epidemic on the community.

OUTSIDE FORCES

There are always factors outside the control of the community—occurring sometimes at county, state, national and even global levels—that can affect Boaz, for better or worse, over time.

Among those that residents perceive as potentially negative influences are developments in nearby Guntersville and Albertville that may draw activity away from Boaz. Some noted that these

developments may have a spillover effect that could benefit Boaz if the community is able to take advantage of it. Alabama communities are benefiting from growth in the film industry making movies in the state and from the state's continuing focus on industrial recruitment.

Increasing online shopping is seen as hampering brick and mortar businesses in Boaz. Nationally, there has been a growing trend toward downtown revitalization, where people seek out authentic places to shop, eat and play. Boaz is also in position to draw new residents and investment as part of a longstanding trend of those choosing to live and raise families in small towns. The re-emergence of food trucks—that now offer a variety of quality, locally-prepared foods—can bring new dining options for residents and workers and lowers the entry threshold for entrepreneurs interested in creating their own restaurants.

SACRED COWS

In Boaz there are elements of the community that are considered “sacred” or essential to its character and should not be lost, tampered with or taken for granted.

Meeting participants noted the importance of Snead State Community College as one of the community's most sacred places. Some noted the importance of protecting Boaz's small town character and others preserving and revitalizing Downtown Boaz. The community's history and historic churches and homes—some of which are on the national Register of Historic Places, including the founder's home—should not be lost to time but preserved and appreciated.

VISIONS FOR BOAZ

Building upon discussions of assets, issues, outside influences and the reasons people are drawn to the city, visioning participants were asked to envision Boaz as they would like it to be in at least a decade or so. Each person was asked to share one significant aspect of that future condition they perceived to be absent from Boaz today.

Participants envision Boaz that actively cultivates economic opportunities for individuals. With a system in place to develop workforce skills and incubate business development, Boaz will attract companies offering high paying jobs and grow others locally.

Boaz residents and workers will have more choices for shopping and dining. Businesses and attractions will offer residents and visitors things to do for fun. Incentives will encourage property and business owners to reinvest and bring new life to Downtown Boaz. Downtown businesses and amenities will cater to retirees, families, Snead State students and others.

Boaz will no longer just be known as the city with an outlet center, but will have a new, forward-looking identity and positive self-image that unifies and motivates the community.

The quality of life in Boaz will be unsurpassed. It will be easier to get around town thanks to a new public transportation service. The library will grow and become even better. An arts and entertainment district, where people can see plays and hear local music, will flourish. A community venue will celebrate the history of Boaz and the artistic talents of residents, past, present and future. There will be a Farmers Market and other unique places, activities and events throughout the year to be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

THE "WOW" QUESTION

Meeting participants were asked to name one change to the community that would impress them the most. The following illustrate participants' responses.

vibrant
downtown

baseball game at
Snead under the
lights

a new rec
center

families feel secure and
safe while people of all ages
engage in multiple activities

business and
factories coming to
town

families, kids and
students mingling at
shops and restaurants
downtown

a self-sufficient
town-all my needs
are met in Boaz

thriving
downtown and
college

high quality
housing

COMMUNITY SURVEY

A community survey was published in June 2019 to understand the feelings of residents, property and business owners and local workers regarding the current state of the city, how it appears to be changing and the issues that are most important to the community's future.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Over 60% of respondents rated life in Boaz as “good” or “very good.” Asked how quality of life has changed Boaz in the last five years, respondents were split. About 38% felt it had become at least somewhat better and the same felt it had stayed about the same. The remainder felt it had “somewhat declined” or “declined.”

The top five conditions that respondents noted as contributing positively to their quality of life were: cost of living (44%), schools (42%), sense of community (34%), access to healthcare (28%) and access to goods and services (27%). The top five conditions considered to be hampering their quality of life were: economic opportunities (50%), traffic (46%), recreational opportunities (37%), access to goods and services (37%) and arts and cultural amenities (33%).

ISSUES

Respondents were asked to select three issues out of ten they felt were critical to the future of Boaz: The top five responses were: business development (60%), industrial and workforce development (53%), community appearance and image (39%), recreational and cultural opportunities (34%) and PreK-12 education (33%).

POSITIVE, LONG-TERM IMPACT

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to name any one change they felt would have a positive, long-term impact on the community. Responses were translated into the following categories (ranked in order by the number of instances they appeared in responses):

1. Recruit/grow businesses
2. Recruit/grow industries
3. Recruit/grow restaurants
4. Add higher-paying jobs
5. Add recreation
6. Improve traffic
7. Clean up city image
8. Add “things to do”
9. Fix the outlets
10. Improve education
11. Revitalize downtown
12. Educate the workforce

GOALS

The following overarching goals were culled from input of residents, business and property owners, City staff and officials and other stakeholders. These topics represent

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Boaz must continue to recruit retailers, restaurants and other businesses to the City, support existing businesses and grow new ones locally to provide residents with access to goods and services and assure a sustainable tax base to fund city services and facilities.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Boaz must continue to attract and grow industries that offer good-paying jobs to residents. Boaz will continue to build partnerships to create a skilled workforce to foster the growth of existing and new industries and provide a high quality of life that attracts corporate investment.

COMMUNITY IMAGE

Boaz must re-brand itself now that the outlet center is no longer part of the city's identity. And, the community must work on its self-image and improving its physical appearance—enhancing key roadways and public spaces and encouraging good design and maintenance by business and property owners.

RECREATION AND CULTURE

Boaz must continue to build on its recreational offerings to residents of all ages and grow arts and cultural activities by tapping into its history and its tradition of creative and talented residents. Building a strong system of recreational and cultural amenities and programs will greatly enhance quality of life and support business development.

CITY SCHOOLS

Boaz must safeguard and continue to improve upon its school system. As the school system goes, so goes the community. Having quality schools protects property values, attracts residential growth and can support industrial recruitment efforts.



PLAN PRIORITIES

GOAL 1

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Boaz must continue to recruit retailers, restaurants and other businesses to the City, support existing businesses and grow new ones locally to provide residents with access to goods and services and assure a sustainable tax base to fund city services and facilities.

Objective 1 Recruit retail and restaurants

While its location along a heavily travelled highway has helped attract restaurants and retailers, the size of the community and its median income establish some limits to its drawing power for national and regional businesses that pick and choose communities based on these indicators. While there are still businesses within Boaz's economic range, the community clearly desires more and higher quality businesses, particularly in terms of dining. With unemployment numbers at an all-time low, Boaz may be reaching a turning point economically that will help attract the types of businesses the community is looking for. Population and income growth will help Boaz recruit more and high end businesses.

There are several locations in the community for additional retail and restaurant development that are already served by roads and infrastructure:

- US 431. Though US 431 is almost completely developed, there are some properties along the highway that are underutilized and that could be redeveloped to accommodate new businesses. The highway is generally going to be the most appropriate for national and regional retail and dining, for which highway visibility and traffic counts are key to their success.
- The historic downtown area, outlet center and Mill Avenue represent another key business development location, with available, existing buildings and opportunities for redevelopment. Downtown storefronts will be more attractive to local businesses rather than national franchises. Infill and redevelopment at the outlet center and along Mill Avenue are more likely to include both local and chain businesses. The City has already begun revitalizing the outlet center/ Mill Avenue area by building a park and recreation center, which together will make the area become a new type of destination. To get an economic return on these public investments, new restaurants, entertainment and shopping amenities and changes to make the area more "visitable" are necessary.
- The neighborhood centers identified in the Growth Strategy can accommodate smaller businesses that serve the day-to-day needs of residents in nearby neighborhoods, including both home grown and chain businesses.

The City could facilitate new development or redevelopment by assembling properties and seeking proposals for privately led commercial development.



Retail developers are reinventing older shopping centers with outdoor gathering spaces, a mix of entertainment and other activities and design for walkability and more 24/7 activity and vibrancy.

Objective 2 Recruit a Hotel

Quality lodging accommodations are limited in Marshall County. Development of a quality hotel in Boaz would help the community take advantage of area tourism—which is expected to grow significantly with the sports facility development in nearby Albertville—and would also support industrial recruitment efforts. With attractive lodging options available in Boaz, visitors to events in Albertville will be likely to shop and dine in Boaz for some part of their stay. A new hotel would also be convenient for families visiting overnight patients at the medical center. A location near the medical center would be ideal as it would be central to hospital visitors, the industrial park and near Albertville.

Another strategic location would be near downtown and the recreation center now under construction. Lodging in this area would help keep visitor shopping and dining dollars in Boaz, whether they are staying for events in Boaz or elsewhere. This would be a strategic piece in evolving the former outlet center area into a new mixed-use, entertainment oriented destination.

Objective 3 Improve US 431

As development continues on US 431, it will become increasingly important to manage congestion, through access management improvements and improving signal timing. Likewise, beautification improvements along the highway will help local businesses draw in through traffic. If traffic flow is not managed and the appearance of the corridor is not improved, recruiting desirable businesses will become more difficult.



Objective 4 Support Homegrown Businesses

To meet the demands of the community for more and high quality businesses, Boaz should look to its own resources in addition to outside business investment. Communities can spur local business growth by creating a pipeline to cultivate entrepreneurial activity. Snead State, local banks, the Chamber of Commerce and other community partners can enable business start-ups through business education, incubator programs, peer-to-peer mentoring, small business financing and promotional activities.

GOAL 2

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Boaz must continue to attract and grow industries that offer good-paying jobs to residents. Boaz will continue to build partnerships to create a skilled workforce to foster the growth of existing and new industries and provide a high quality of life that attracts corporate investment.

Objective 1 Continue retention, expansion and recruitment efforts

Boaz and the communities of Marshall County have been successful in industrial recruitment. In 2019, Marshall County had the second lowest unemployment rate in the state. However, more work is needed. As indicated by community responses to the survey and in planning meetings, there is a concern that the Boaz economy is not producing enough high pay jobs. Continued industrial development paired with workforce training will be necessary to increase economic opportunities for residents.

Though it is not located near an interstate and offers only limited rail service, Boaz meets many of the needs of many types of industries. Boaz, which already has a Tier 1 Honda supplier in TS Tech, may be attractive to tier 1, 2 or 3 suppliers to the Mazda Toyota facility developing in Huntsville. While Boaz should continue to market itself, through the Marshall County EDC and other partners, to a variety of industry segments, metal manufacturing and forest products already have proven successful in the community and may be a focus for expanding and recruiting associated businesses. Likewise, Marshall County has a strong aviation segment. Despite not having air service in town, Boaz could become home to aviation-related industries that do not require proximity to an airport.

The Industrial Development Board owns and is marketing a 68-acre property in the industrial park that is ready for development. The site is large enough to house one or more industries. There are other properties within and adjacent to the industrial park that could site additional industries. These include another IDB property (16 acres) and some privately-owned properties that are vacant or only minimally used or developed. A few remaining residential properties will likely become available as industries continue to develop in the area and it becomes appropriate for residential use.

Objective 2 Support Workforce Training

One of the most pressing industrial development needs in Boaz and in Marshall County, is growing a qualified workforce. With a skilled local workforce, Boaz will be better able to grow existing companies and attract new industries that can offer higher paying jobs to residents. In addition to its secondary schools, which offer career tech education opportunities for students, Boaz has a great asset to help in this endeavor—Snead State Community College. Through collaboration with local industries and economic development agencies, the city, local schools and college can create education and training programs to produce the skilled workforce industries are seeking.

Objective 3 Develop Workforce Housing

Boaz offers a high quality-of-life with a small-town atmosphere that is attractive to prospective companies and their employees. However, Boaz has a tight housing market that limits the community's ability to accommodate an influx of workers. Quality, affordable housing is limited, particularly rental housing. The city can encourage affordable housing development, in part, by fine-tuning its zoning and subdivision regulations to facilitate a wide variety of residential products that are affordable to build and that are attractive and meet the needs of the community. The City can also be proactive by recruiting housing developers, acquiring land for residential development and by planning public investments (road improvements, parks, schools, fire stations, etc.) in areas of town targeted for residential growth.



Yarmouth Way workforce housing development in Boulder CO included a mix of market rate and affordable, deed-restricted units. Costs were kept low by focusing on high density single-family units, duplexes and townhouses so that fewer corners were cut in the housing design. The sale of market rate units kept public subsidies low and NeighborWorks America provided an interest-free loan for predevelopment costs.

Objective 4 Re-use the Former Pilgrim's Pride Facility

The shuttered Pilgrim's Pride facility on Boaz's west side has been closed since 2014 as the Colorado-based company consolidated its operations in the state. After its closure, the company has maintained ownership. Because the facilities were designed specifically for poultry processing (and now is considered "small" for such an operation), it has been difficult to sell and be re-used. The City could facilitate the sell and re-use of the facility (or the land) by acquiring the property and razing all or a portion of the existing structures. The 30+ acre site, which includes several individual parcels, could be redeveloped for industrial or possibly other uses.



GOAL 3

COMMUNITY IMAGE

Boaz must re-brand itself now that the outlet center is no longer part of the city's identity. And, the community must work on its self-image and improving its physical appearance—enhancing key roadways and public spaces and encouraging good design and maintenance by business and property owners.

Objective 1 Construct Wayfinding System

A wayfinding system directs visitors to key destinations within the community through signage placed typically on major roads. Places eligible for inclusion on vehicular wayfinding signs are typically special districts, parks and cultural facilities, government facilities, major institutions and other one-of-a-kind destinations. Wayfinding systems enhance the image of the community, giving visitors the impression that the community is thoughtful and organized and cares about its appearance. Comprehensive wayfinding systems include signage and landscaping at city gateways, vehicular directional signs and smaller scale signs and kiosks that give directions to visitors upon arrival in a special district. Elements of a wayfinding system within a district may also direct visitors to lodging and public parking facilities, and can include informational kiosks and district banners.

Boaz is currently developing a vehicular wayfinding system. Once that is established, future phases of the citywide wayfinding system might include banners and additional wayfinding signs in the greater downtown area.

Objective 2 Enhance Gateways and Image Corridors

Boaz already has gateway signage on the north and south ends of US 431. However, additional landscaping and lighting improvements will make the current signs more effective and the arrival experience more attractive. As the current signs age, they should be replaced with larger signs. Additional gateway improvements should also be considered on Highways 168 and 205.



Beautification efforts on US 431 will have a substantial impact on the image of Boaz. Highway beautification typically involves public investment in lighting and landscaping. Enhancements within the right-of-way must conform to ALDOT standards. Access management improvements will also benefit beautification and may create more room for landscaping, by closing redundant curb cuts or reducing the size of excessive ones. Several businesses along US 431 have parking lots that extend across the width of their lots with no curb or other separation between the highway edge and the property. Modifying these and installing landscaping will improve traffic safety, stormwater drainage and the appearance of the businesses.



Communities are using lighting, art and other creative methods to enhance their appearance in strategic locations at often very low costs.

Objective 3 Property Maintenance and Nuisance Abatement

In addition to beautification within the right-of-way, improvement of private properties and buildings along US 431 is necessary to truly improving the appearance of Boaz along its major image corridor. The City can address this, in part, through enforcement of property maintenance standards and nuisance abatement processes as there are a number of properties along the highway that are inadequately maintained, including overgrown lots and deteriorating structures. Such efforts require significant commitment on the part of the City, including budgetary and political support for city staff to carry out duties that will undoubtedly create friction with some property owners.

To assure that future private investment along major roads helps to create and sustain a more positive image for Boaz, the City may also implement special development standards along the corridor through its zoning ordinance. This can be done by adopting an “overlay district” that establishes supplemental standards for landscaping, signage, lighting and building design, while existing, underlying zoning districts remain in place.

GOAL 4

RECREATION AND CULTURE

Boaz must continue to build on its recreational offerings to residents of all ages and grow arts and cultural activities by tapping into its history and its tradition of creative and talented residents. Developing a robust park system should be part of the City’s strategy to provide a high quality of life for residents, but also to attract residents, businesses and industries.

Municipal parks systems are traditionally made up of two primary types of parks—community parks and neighborhood parks. Community parks are large parks (25+ acres) with a mix of sports facilities and passive recreational amenities. Cities should offer 5-8 acres of community park space per 1,000 residents. Neighborhood parks are somewhat smaller (starting at five acres) and typically feature children’s play areas, one or more open areas that can be used for pick-up games and sometimes tennis or basketball courts. Cities should offer 1-2 acres of neighborhood park space per 1,000 residents. At its current population, Boaz should have roughly 50-80 acres of community park space and 10-20 acres of neighborhood park space. City parks systems also feature special use parks, such as the recently build Old Mill Park, that vary greatly in size and use.

The Paradise Park SportPlex and adjacent recreation center, together form Boaz’s primary community park. Cherokee Park, the Boaz soccer field and a 2-acre park between Cooper Street and Williams Street fall roughly within the neighborhood park category.

active recreational facilities may be desired, most Boaz parks are devoted almost exclusively to sports activities. A priority should be placed on park space for passive recreation. This can be accomplished in part through creation of the recommended neighborhood park east of US 431 that would feature spaces for picnicking, children’s play areas, walking paths and an open area that can be used for informal sports use, playing Frisbee, flying kites, etc. The community should be engaged, at the appropriate time, to solicit input on programming of any future parks.

Objective 1 Expand parks and recreation system east of US 431

All city park facilities are located west of US 431. As residential development grows in Boaz, it is expected that much of that will occur east of US 431 where there are no existing parks and recreation facilities. The City should evaluate opportunities to acquire parkland as residential developments are proposed in east Boaz. Such efforts should be focused on creating a neighborhood park that is central and accessible to existing and emerging residential areas.

Other than direct selection and purchasing of property, parkland acquisition can be facilitated during the planning and subdivision of land for private development. In this process, land that is part of a proposed subdivision would be temporarily set aside to allow the City to consider its potential use for parks or other public facilities. If the City finds that the reserved land is suitable, it would then negotiate terms with the developer to acquire the land. The evaluation period gives the City the opportunity to consider other sites, including the possibility of joining the reserved land with adjacent land if appropriate.

Objective 2 Expand Passive Recreation Facilities

As made clear through community input, there is a strong desire for more passive recreation amenities—park spaces for informal recreational use, as contrasted with organized sports activity. While additional

Objective 3 Plan for a Future Arts Center

Boaz prides itself on its talented citizens, past and present. However, Boaz does not have a facility for showcasing the arts. Community input indicated a strong interest in developing a public facility for this purpose. This would be another opportunity to enhance quality of life—and therefore attract business and residential development—while also drawing visitors to the community. Arts centers can support economic activity. When residents and visitors attend arts center events, they tend to go out for dinner. Visitors may stay overnight at a local hotel, especially if there are other activities to enjoy during their visit.

Approaching development of an arts center should be done conservatively, perhaps by looking for a temporary initial location in an existing building of suitable size and that requires only modest interior changes. If the venture proves successful, the City may plan for development of a permanent facility, either in an existing building or a newly constructed one. An arts center would be ideally located in or east of downtown near Old Mill Park and the new recreation center so that the destinations in combination have a stronger draw. With shops and restaurants located nearby, especially if the area is walkable, an arts center would have the best chance of contributing economically.



Above: While Boaz now has an amphitheater at Old Mill Park for special performances and events, local talent can be tapped to provide outdoor entertainment downtown and in the evolving Mill Avenue area on weekends and during less formal events.

Left: Northport, Alabama is well-known for its arts community and the annual Kentuck Arts Festival. Local artists and arts advocates acquired and repurposed five existing buildings, including a former vacuum cleaner repair shop to create an arts center with a retail shop, artists' studios, galleries, classrooms and meeting space.

GOAL 5

CITY SCHOOLS

As the school system goes, so goes the community. Having quality schools protects property values, attracts residential growth and can support industrial recruitment efforts. The Boaz school system was created in 2004 so that the community had greater control over its local schools to assure their success. While Boaz City Schools is operated separately, the city government—and the Boaz community—play a role in sustaining the school system. Pursuing the following objectives is dependent on the continuing partnership between the school system, city government and the community, while recognizing it is the school board that will make final decisions and direct investments in Boaz schools.

Objective 1 Assure Adequate School Funding

Boaz City Schools spends an estimated total of about \$9,140 per student. Local funding accounts for just under 13%, state funding 68.6% and federal about 15%. The statewide average per student is slightly higher at \$9,425 total. In Boaz, the PIRATE Foundation was created to provide additional funds for local schools through local donations. While higher spending per student does not guarantee higher performing schools, the state's top performing school districts often outspend other districts (although, it should be noted that school districts with larger populations of students in poverty and with special needs also spend more per student but do not perform as highly as school districts with lower spending levels).

To maintain and enhance local schools, adequate funding is critical. Public schools derive most of their funding from the State of Alabama, with local property and other tax dollars contributing as well. Federal funding also supports local schools, particularly specialized education programs. The bulk of local tax dollars applied to schools comes from property taxes, therefore the value of property in a community is important. Educational foundations and city governments, through special allocations, also contribute to school funding.

The community, through the PIRATE Foundation, and the City of Boaz should continue to look for opportunities to help Boaz City Schools assure and sustain a level of funding necessary to improve the performance of the community's schools. For the City, this might involve budgeting special allocations to the school system. Continued development in Boaz, revitalization and reduction of blight can also raise property values, which then increases property taxes directed to city schools.



Objective 2 Enhance Workforce Training

The City of Boaz has actively recruited industries to the community to expand job opportunities for residents. To optimize industry recruitment, communities across the country have focused on workforce development programs, in both secondary and post-secondary schools, create a capable workforce attractive to companies. Boaz City Schools offer career and technical education programs through its three academies, each focused on different set of compatible job fields. Snead State has also developed an array of workforce, job-readiness and continuing education programs. These efforts need to continue. As mentioned previously, collaboration between Boaz City Schools and Snead State guided by input from state and local economic development agencies and local industries is critical to making secondary and post-secondary programs most effective.



Objective 3 Planning for Future Growth

As residential development continues, there may become a need for an additional school in the city school system. The timing of that is dependent on the amount of growth experienced by Boaz in the coming years. Boaz City Schools regularly monitors population projections and will be responsible for determining when school construction takes place as well as what grade levels would be included in a future school.

All Boaz schools are located west of US 431. It is recommended that Boaz City Schools consider a site east of US 431 when the time comes. This will provide convenience for residents already living in east Boaz and make the area even more attractive for residential development. Proximity to elementary and intermediate level schools is a significant amenity for families considering investing in a new home. This will also reduce school traffic crossing US 431.



ALABAMA
200



WEATHERS

mdeco

CITY OF BOAZ

F. B. B.
First Bank of Boaz



GROWTH STRATEGY

This section describes the overall growth strategy for Boaz. The strategy builds on and reinforces the prevailing patterns of existing development. The intent is to capitalize on the city's resources, to build on past investment, history and institutions in combination with the advantages of the city's location, land character and setting. The concept gives physical expression to the citywide vision that emerged from community meetings and provides a general framework for the economic and community development strategies of the plan.

The Development Concept on the following page illustrates the locations and relationships of existing development, growth opportunities, and key elements of the city's infrastructure. Each of the major elements portrayed in the Development Concept are described in this section and reflect the following development policies:

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Boaz will be a legible city—its edges and districts will be clear; and visitors will be readily able to find their destinations. City gateways will be well defined and major roads will reflect an appropriate overall image.

Continued business development will be directed toward Downtown Boaz and Mill Avenue, neighborhood centers and strategic locations along US Highway 431. Through new development and reinvestment, each commercial center will become more attractive, legible and accessible to multiple modes of travel.

Downtown will remain the civic heart of the community—the revitalization of Downtown Boaz will be supported by reinvestment in the former outlet center and transformation of the Mill Avenue business corridor as an extension of downtown to US Highway 431.

Development of the street network will be managed to emphasize connectivity, access management, walkability and appropriateness to adjoining land uses.

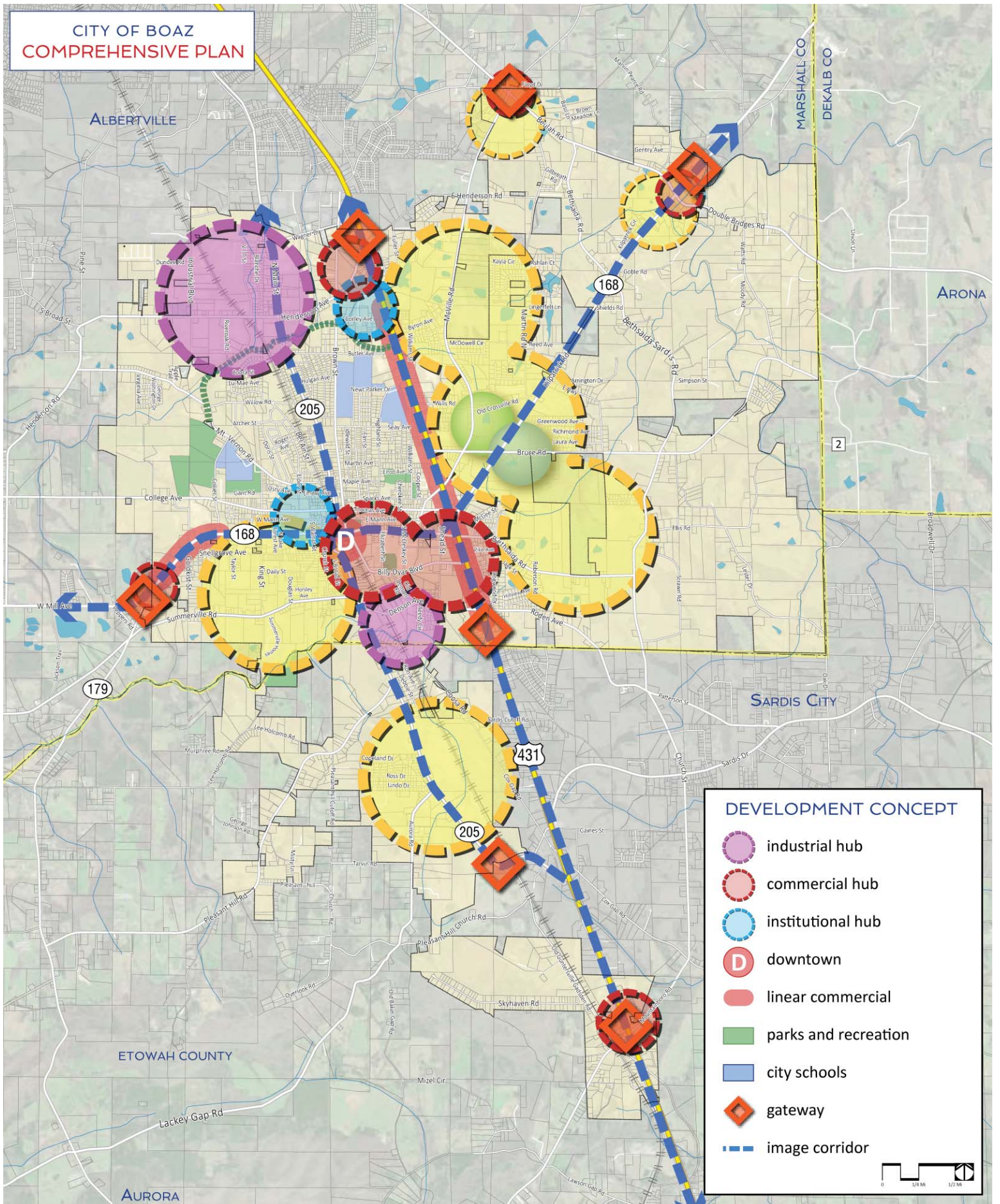
The park and recreation system will grow proportionately with the city so that a balanced system of passive and active parks and recreation facilities are distributed to best meet the needs of the city's neighborhoods.

Pedestrian and bicycle mobility will be enhanced between neighborhoods, schools, parks, downtown and commercial hubs.

Green infrastructure will be conserved to enhance development, preserve community character and maintain environmental functions.

The city will plan and carry out public investments in ways that support the community's vision and encourage private investment to grow the city in accordance with that vision.

**CITY OF BOAZ
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

-  industrial hub
-  commercial hub
-  institutional hub
-  downtown
-  linear commercial
-  parks and recreation
-  city schools
-  gateway
-  image corridor



DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

INDUSTRIAL HUBS

Boaz has been successful in growing a varied manufacturing base that provides employment opportunities to residents. The Industrial Development Board has acquired over 410 acres in an effort to recruit industry. About 110 acres remain available for development. About 90 acres, mostly contiguous, is available near Henderson Road and Industrial Boulevard. Another 20 acres lies undeveloped near the Snead Door facility along Coosa Road.

Currently, there is very little industrial development east of US 431. Any future industrial development in east Boaz should be limited to sites closer to the highway. This will help limit impacts on lower intensity uses and lessen industrial traffic through existing and future residential areas.

Future industrial development should continue to be focused around the existing concentration of industries in the northwest corner of the city near Henderson Road and between Denson Avenue and Coosa Road.

Care should be taken with industrial development to mitigate drainage and water quality impacts on adjacent creeks. Buffers should be provided to lessen noise, smoke, odor, light pollution and other impacts on neighboring residential development. Truck access is critical to most industries, and so streets providing access to industrial hubs must be designed to accommodate regular use by large vehicles, including greater lane widths and curb radii.

COMMERCIAL HUBS

East Mill Road

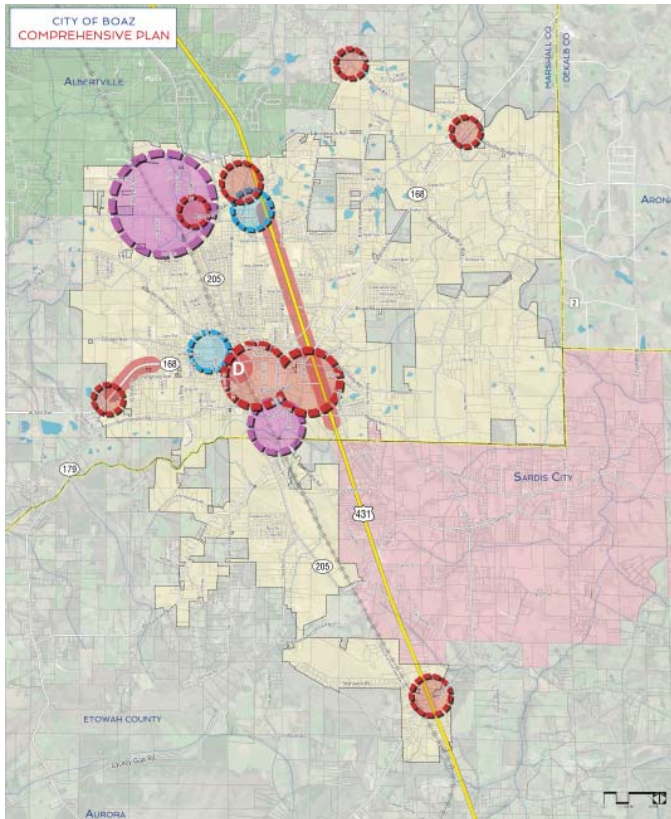
Boaz's most notable success in terms of commercial success was the development of the outlet center adjacent to its historic downtown. With the outlet activity all but faded, the City has proposed to re-energize this area with a park (replacing a former mill) and a multi-purpose recreation center capable of drawing sports-related tourism (replacing a portion of the outlet center).

The remaining outlet center and the aging business area along East Mill Road, together, represent an opportunity to establish a new pattern for commercial development in Boaz that is compact, walkable and includes a mix of uses that generate traffic day and night. This would form a bridge between the charming, yet under-appreciated downtown and the popular, yet less-charming strip development on US 431. It would also provide an environment more conducive to the sports-tourism activity expected from the future recreation center—providing shopping, dining and lodging opportunities within walking distance of the recreation center and new park. Such a transformation of this area should be leveraged to fill empty storefronts in the historic downtown only a short walk over the railroad tracks.

Downtown

Downtown Boaz should be viewed as more than just the two block section of historic buildings along Main Street. Downtown extends from East Mann Avenue south to Line Avenue, from the railroad west to Church Street—which includes a wider variety of business and other activities that draw traffic to the center of town. A comprehensive approach must be pursued to revitalize the historic downtown. Creating a stronger economic and physical relationship with recommended reinvestments along East Mill Road will likely garner more interest and activity for downtown as well.

To provide convenient, store-front parking for businesses along the original Main Street, the street was converted to one-way and angled parking placed on both sides. The change to one-way has been viewed by many as making access more difficult and, while it improved appearances, it did little to sustain downtown business activity as retail and dining traffic moved more and more to US 431. With generous off-street parking available nearby, including several city-owned lots, it may be desirable to change the street configuration back to two-way, either with parking only on one side, or changed to parallel parking. However, this alone will not bring activity back to Downtown Boaz. Opportunities to bring life back to downtown might include:



- Housing in vacant upper-stories and new residential development flanking downtown to provide a built-in customer base for downtown
- Redevelopment and increased activity at the nearby outlet center (as described above)
- Businesses catering more to Snead State faculty, staff and students
- Recruiting successful local businesses to locate in existing space downtown
- Incubating homegrown retail, entertainment and restaurant businesses

In community meetings, participants remarked on local music, arts and culture as an asset that has not been fully tapped. Downtown is likely the most logical place to celebrate, promote and sell music, arts and

culture, whether this comes in the form of community events, art galleries, performing arts venues or entertainment businesses. Arts and cultural activities downtown can take advantage of the proximity to Snead State, the park and the recreational center being built nearby. Arts and cultural activities tend to take place in the evenings and weekends, helping to generate traffic that can support businesses downtown beyond typical weekday hours.

The City is currently exploring a partnership with Main Street Alabama, a statewide nonprofit that provides technical and other support services to communities to spur economic development through downtown revitalization. In addition to evolving the mix of business and other activities that make downtowns successful, Main Street Alabama encourages communities to focus on: 1) design to create places and experiences people are drawn to, 2) organizing local stakeholders to lead, manage and sustain revitalization efforts and 3) promoting downtown through community events, branding and advertising.

Neighborhood Centers

There are several small concentrations of businesses that should be fostered to provide everyday shopping and compatible activities convenient to neighborhoods. These neighborhood centers are often located at key intersections. In Boaz, these include: 1) a string of businesses along Mill Avenue west of downtown, 2) the intersection of US 431 and Mountain Drive, 3) the intersection of Kilpatrick Road and Double Bridges/Beulah Road and 4) the intersection of McVile Road and Beulah Road. While these areas have grown organically over time, there should be a more concerted effort to attract neighborhood-serving businesses to these locations, particularly as residential development occurs east of US 431. Small offices, pocket parks and higher density housing can complement and draw traffic to neighborhood businesses. Each neighborhood center should be planned and designed for compatibility with adjoining residential areas and with walkability in mind, including installation of sidewalks and street trees and placing parking to the side and rear of buildings.

Linear Commercial

Continued linear development of businesses, as has happened on US 431, should be avoided. That is not to say that commercial development on US 431 is inappropriate. It is more a matter of optimizing use and long-term management of infrastructure, emphasizing value of properties in other locations, encouraging walkable development patterns and decreasing traffic congestion created by intermingling through traffic and local business traffic. These benefits emerge by encouraging commercial development in a clustered, hub pattern—rather than stretching businesses out along a corridor.

INSTITUTIONAL HUBS

There are two major institutions in Boaz that have been and can be further leveraged as magnets for ancillary development—Marshall Medical Center South and Snead State Community College.

Marshall Medical Center South

The Marshall Medical Center South campus and adjoining healthcare development represent an important economic engine for Boaz. The Marshall County Health Care Authority owns approximately 80 acres along US 431. Just over half of the landholding has been developed, including the hospital, an apartment complex, a physical therapy center and various medical other healthcare facilities. The undeveloped land owned by the authority may be used in the future for development of additional healthcare functions. Because of the amount of available land, there is also an opportunity to develop a retail, dining, lodging and residential uses supportive of and interconnected with the hospital. This could include housing options for employees, overnight accommodations for families visiting patients, and food and shopping for both—all in easy walking distance.

Snead State Community College

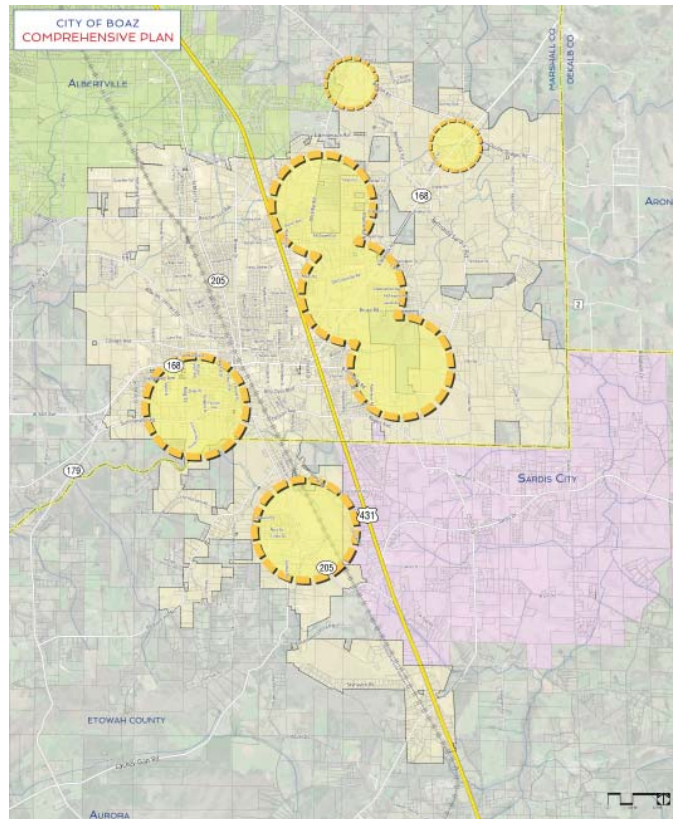
Snead State is a long-standing institutional anchor for Boaz. It draws traffic to the community—commuting students, faculty, administration and staff. This built in daytime population can be leveraged to support nearby businesses, particularly in the downtown area, which is close by. Though there is some on-campus housing and most students commute to school, there may be some demand for student housing near campus. The sparsely developed residential area immediately to the south of the college could accommodate some student housing as well as single-family homes for faculty and staff. Vacant space downtown, particularly in upper-stories, could be retrofitted for housing supporting the school as well.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Higher concentrations of residential development are generally located north of the downtown and west of US 431. Most residential development in the southern part of the city and east of US 431 is rural—with a mix of large lots and family farms—interspersed with a few lower density single-family subdivisions.

Opportunities for residential growth are many, particularly east of US 431. There are also a few locations within the current city limits, west and south of downtown, appropriate for residential development.

As a general rule, higher density residential development should occur in “close-in” locations, where utilities and infrastructure are already in place and the street network is interconnected enough to handle more traffic. Having a concentration of residential development close by also creates built-in customers for nearby businesses. Streets serving centrally-located, higher density residential neighborhoods should have sidewalks so that residents have the option of walking to nearby parks, schools and businesses. The density of residential development should dissipate further from major roads and development centers, where utilities and road infrastructure is less robust. This pattern of development also is more efficient for a variety of public services, including police, fire, parks and schools.

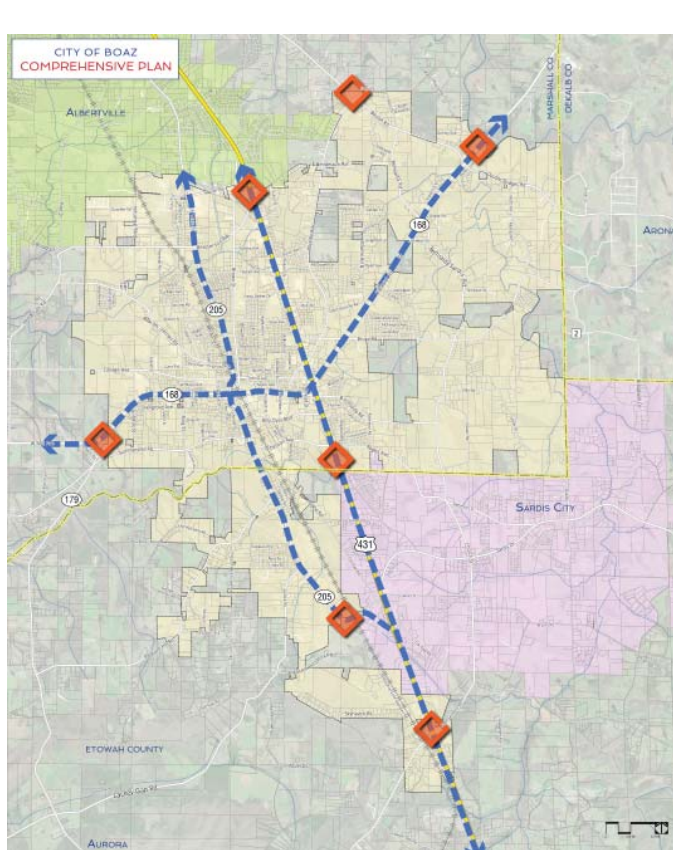


AGRICULTURE

While Boaz has evolved considerably from its early focus on farming, agriculture is still a relevant part of its economy and way of life. To enable farming activity to continue, “leapfrog” development should be avoided. Leapfrog development is a pattern of residential development that favors inexpensive land at the edges of a community over available land closer in, often better situated with respect to infrastructure and city services. Encroachment of development into agricultural areas at the edges of the city often results in conflicts between the existing and new uses.

COMMUNITY IMAGE

The community, through the visioning session and survey, expressed concern over the image of the city, in particular, the appearance, quality of design and condition of development along US 431—and rightly so. US 431 is the most frequently traveled part of Boaz, for residents, for those who work in Boaz and for those visiting and passing through. It is the city's primary "image corridor."



Improving the image of the community involves public and private efforts. The city addresses this through investment and maintenance of streets, landscaping, gateways and signage and adopting and enforcing building maintenance, nuisance abatement and development regulations. The private sector contributes to community image by investing in development that meets or exceeds community standards, that is compatible with its neighbors and that is well-maintained over time.

The City must be strategic, focusing on investments that will have the highest cost-to-benefit ratio, to make substantive improvements in the community's image. Its gateways and image corridors should be the primary focus of image enhancement efforts. This will encourage property owners in these critical areas to invest compatibly in their buildings and grounds.

GATEWAYS

The city has installed gateway signage, typically, where major roads enter the city. Gateway signs help create a positive impression for visitors and are part of the city's overall branding and wayfinding systems. They are

more symbolic than literal (compared to a sign indicating that you are entering or exiting the city limits). It is not necessary for them to be placed at city boundaries. Ideally, locations are strategically chosen to afford the best first impression, such as sites with pleasant natural scenery or where surrounding development and the street environment are particularly attractive. In developed areas, it is important that gateway signage is placed, designed and sized to fit into and complement its built context but also to stand out. Otherwise, signage can be lost amidst other signs, buildings, landscaping and activity. Gateway signage is appropriate, not only along US 431, but also AL 168 and McVille Road.

IMAGE CORRIDORS

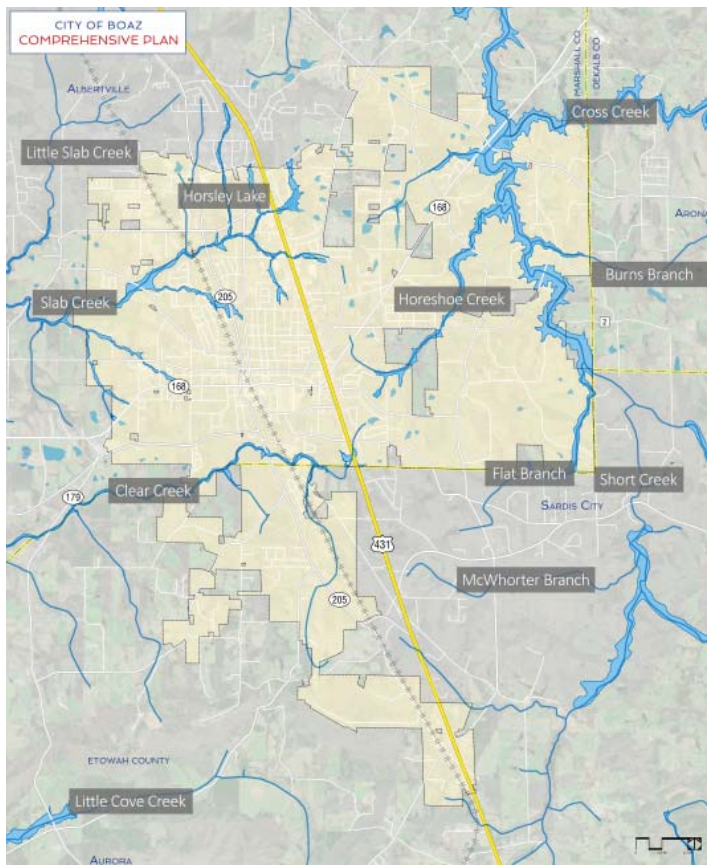
US 431 is the most traveled road in Boaz. It is a critical route for locals, commuters and visitors. It is also home to much of the city's commercial development. For these reasons the design and upkeep of the roadway as well as the development alongside it have a profound impact on the way that residents and visitors view Boaz. The degree to which traffic flows smoothly along US 431 also leaves an impression.

AL 168 and AL 205 also are well-traveled routes for locals and visitors, both leading into Downtown Boaz and the East Mill Road commercial hub. These routes should be cared for as well, with signage, and possibly banners, marking entry into the downtown area.

To manage and improve the image of the community within the rights-of-way of image corridors, cities can invest in streetscape improvements, gateways, lighting, banners and wayfinding signage. Access management and other traffic improvements are sometimes necessary to address congestion and operational factors that negatively impact community impressions. To enhance the image of the city through private development along major corridors, cities adopt zoning rules and/or design guidelines that establish standards for site, building, signage, landscaping and lighting. This can be done through overlay regulations that apply only to specific areas or general requirements for commercial, multifamily and mixed-use development. To ensure that property is well-maintained, cities adopt and enforce property maintenance codes and ordinances on weed and nuisance abatement.

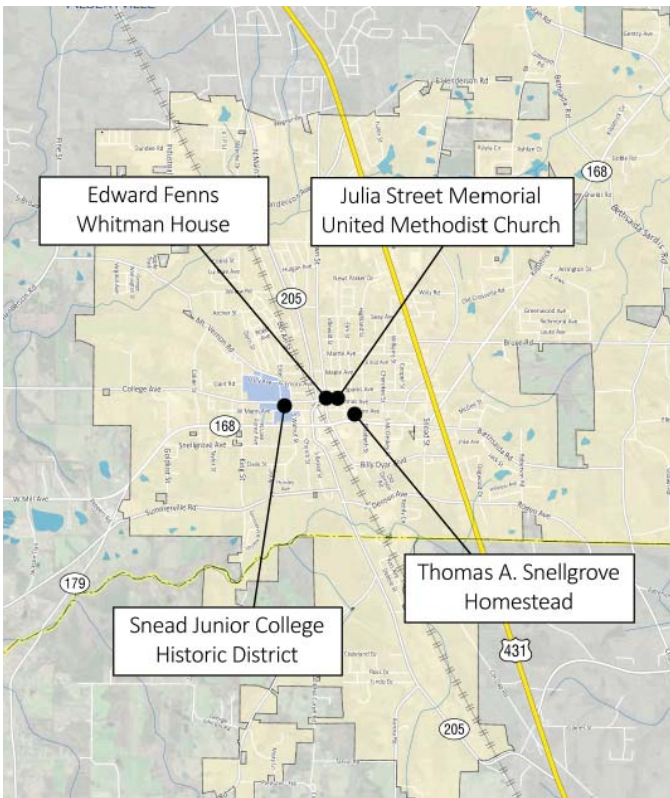
CONSERVATION

Conservation is a process of saving—or at least reducing negative impacts on—things that are important to a community. Conservation is normally associated with nature (saving trees or preventing pollution in waterways), but it also includes retaining historically valued buildings and sites. Boaz has natural and man-made elements worthy of conservation.



Conserving nature and the critical functions it provides involves both large-scale strategies as well as site-specific ones. Natural conservation, at both scales, is often referred to as “green infrastructure.” At the community-scale, it may include limiting development on steep slopes or preserving natural buffers along waterways. At the site-specific scale, “low impact” engineering

techniques—using pervious paving, swales and other designs—are used during development to lessen changes to the land and to use or mimic natural systems to manage stormwater.



Conserving a community's history also involves efforts at multiple scales. Establishing historic districts is a community-wide effort often used to promote and protect community history. There are several buildings in Boaz that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. While this is a great honor, it does not assure that these important places will be saved. Fully protecting historic buildings and neighborhoods must be done at the local government level, typically by establishing local historic districts and a review process for how existing buildings are treated and how new ones are designed to fit with their historic surroundings. But before enacting local rules, the community must first come to a consensus that its history is worth saving. Ultimately, what has the greatest impact on historic resources, are decisions made every day by their owners regarding, for better or worse.



INFRASTRUCTURE

WATER

The Boaz Water and Sewer Board provides water service to the community, obtaining water from the Municipal Utilities Board of Albertville (MUBA). The water system has capacity to support continued development and is in good condition. Regular maintenance, repair and replacement of aging lines and other components may be required to keep the aging system in good operating condition.

There are several independent water systems serving communities in Marshall and nearby counties, many of which purchase water from another larger system like MUBA. In some cases a system purchasing water from MUBA may be re-selling water to another smaller system. Consolidation of multiple small systems would likely benefit customers by standardizing operations from community to community, lowering administrative overhead, and achieving greater economies of scale. Such changes could result in lower rates in some communities. It is not necessarily recommended that Boaz actively pursue consolidation with other systems, but should the opportunity arise, the City and the Water and Sewer Board should consider the potential benefits to Boaz customers and support such efforts, if deemed appropriate.

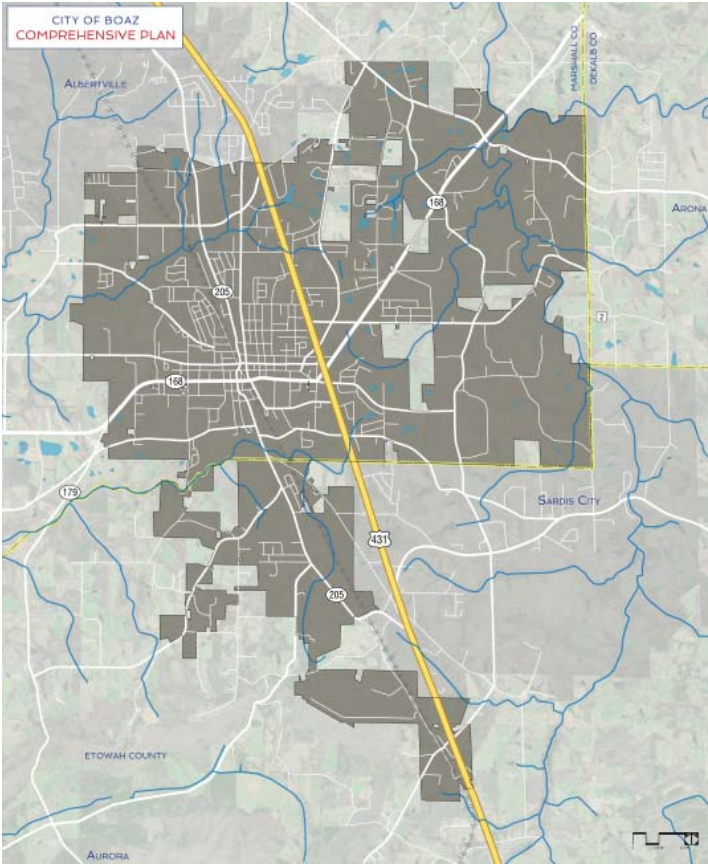
SEWER

The Boaz Water and Sewer Board provides sewer service to most areas within the city limits. Upgrading the sewer treatment plant to improve filtration and lower the total daily maximum load (TMDL) on receiving streams and replacing old main outfall lines are near-term priorities for the system. Areas designated for continued residential growth in the Land Use Plan are either covered by the sewer system or can be covered by modest extension of lines, such as to the southwest near Lee Holcomb Road. Extension of the system along US 431 would enable more commercial growth and could lead to reinvestment in aging business areas that developed without sewer access.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Street Connectivity

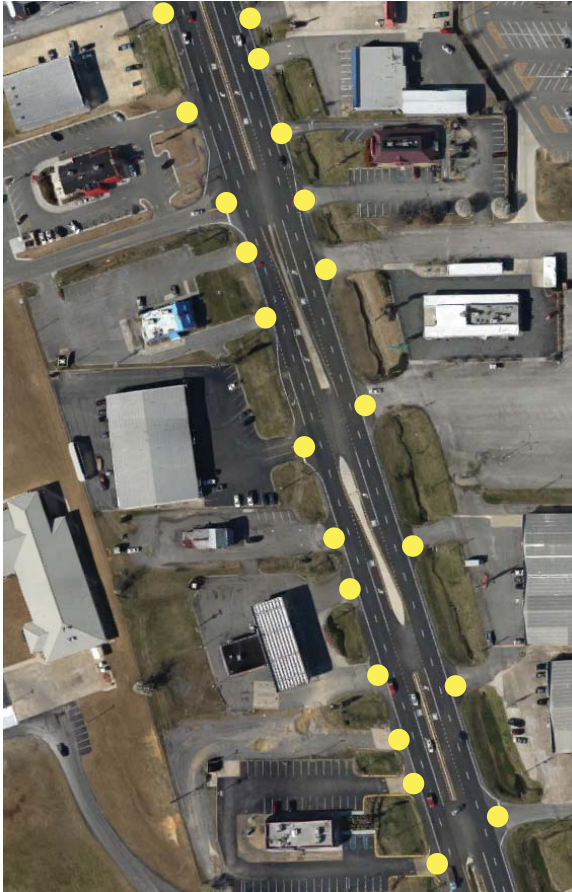
West of US 431, Boaz has a well interconnected street network. Connectivity in street networks is beneficial for traffic flow because it provides drivers options for moving around the community and disperses traffic. By contrast, street networks with little connectivity, funnel daily trips onto a few major roads that can become congested. As development occurs in the future, particularly on the east side of US 431, the city should encourage street connectivity within developments and from one to the other.



Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

More than at any time in the past, Americans are willing to pay more to live in neighborhoods where their children can walk or bike safely to school and where they have the option to walk to nearby stores, parks and restaurants or simply for leisure or exercise.

Other than older streets near the center of town, there are few sidewalks in Boaz and no dedicated bicycle facilities or multi-use paths. As development occurs in the future and as the City reinvests in existing streets and public facilities, sidewalks and other pedestrian and bicycle accommodations should be encouraged. Adding sidewalks along existing streets can often prove costly. While state and federal assistance can be obtained to help fund such improvements, the City will need to be strategic to improve non-vehicular mobility in already developed areas.



Developing off-street paths may be an effective approach for providing bicycle and pedestrian connections between some existing neighborhoods and community destinations.

US 431 Access Management

Access management is the practice of controlling the location, size and number of access points to a street to maintain traffic flow and safety. A lack of access management, particularly on busy, high speed roads tends to create congestion and increases conflict points where accidents may occur. Through the initial community survey and in community meetings, residents acknowledged frustration with travel on US Highway 431. As development occurred on the highway, more and more driveways were created, openings in the median were cut and traffic lights were installed. Through traffic levels increased while local use of the highway to access businesses also grew. Without any access management policies or rules in place, congestion increased. To improve traffic flow and safety on the highway, there will need to be a reduction over time in the number and size of driveways, addition of turn lanes in strategic locations and related access management enhancements.

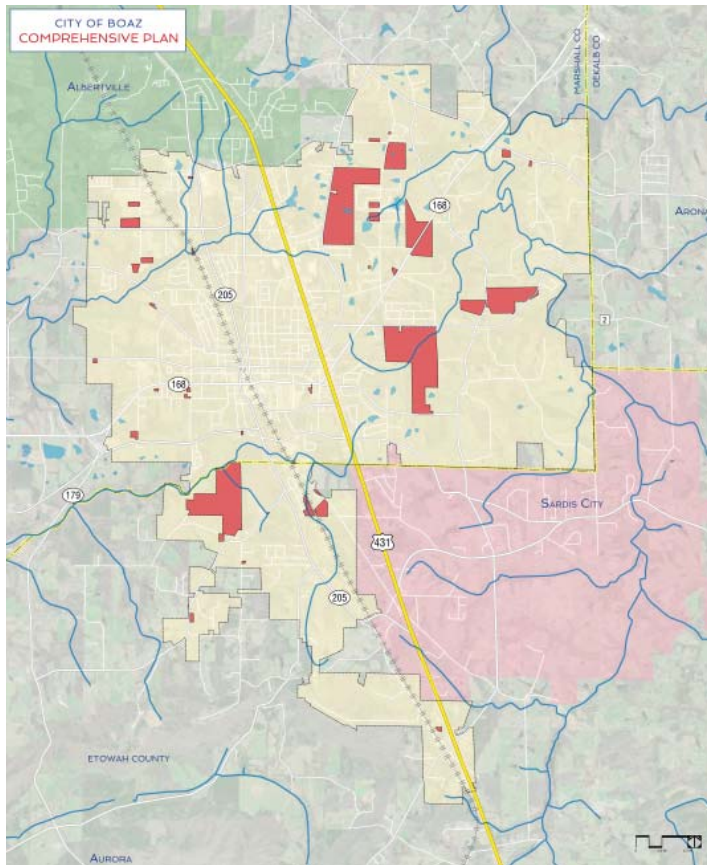
DRAINAGE

There are a few areas in the center of town and to the west where flooding or stormwater drainage tend to be recurring problems. These are low-lying areas, and in some cases, relatively flat where stormwater drains poorly. Deteriorated pipes and undersized culverts also contribute to these issues. The City is pursuing funding assistance through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs to resolve these issues. To help prevent future drainage issues, the City may require drainage plans be evaluated as part of the approval process for subdivisions and other types of development and establishing more effective stormwater management standards.

ANNEXATION

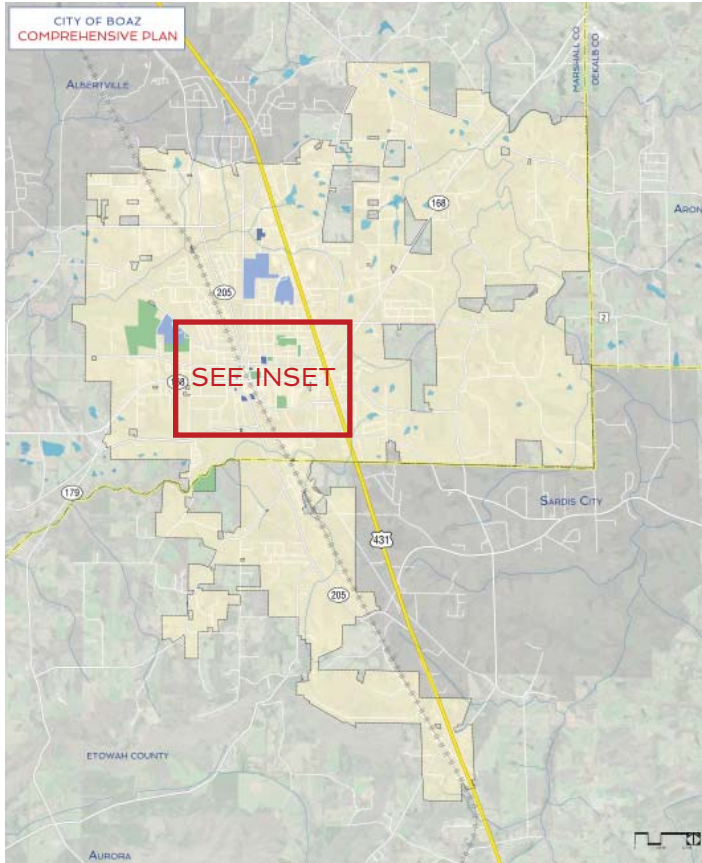
For the foreseeable future, only limited annexation is desirable, and that generally limited to incorporating islands not previously annexed into the city. Typically, cities pursue annexation to incorporate properties likely to generate revenue through business development, to manage otherwise unregulated growth at the edges of the community and to absorb areas that are already served by municipal services so that the property taxes gained through annexation contribute to the costs of those services. There are several unincorporated islands within the city limits that may be of annexation value without adding costs to city services.

Adjacency of Albertville and Sardis City limits annexation along US 431, there are few obvious areas for Boaz to annex for revenue generation. There may be some opportunity for additional business development along US 431 in the Mountainboro area.



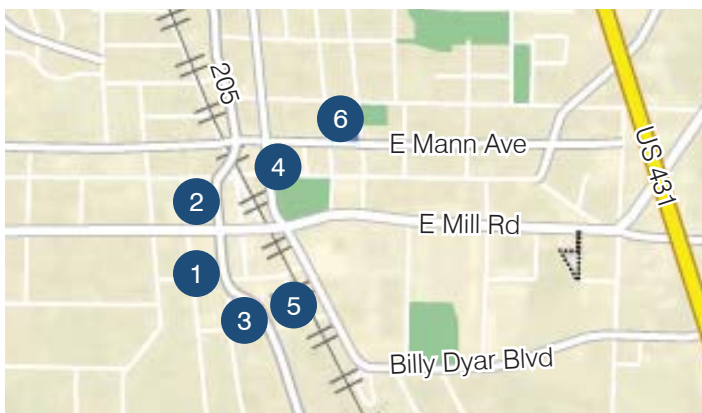
Overly aggressive annexation can result in cities being spread too thin in providing police, fire and other services to far flung areas that do not generate enough property tax revenue to offset the added service costs. Boaz is nearing that point, particularly with regard to fire protection services. If the city were to expand much more without additional fire stations, personnel or equipment, the City's Insurance Service Organization (ISO) rating could be affected, which could then increase property owner insurance costs. In evaluating future annexations, the City must take into consideration whether it can provide equitable police, fire and parks services, whether it has the capacity to maintain road infrastructure and whether City schools can absorb additional students, all without reducing the quality of those services.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES



All Boaz community facilities are located on the west side of US 431 though there is a considerable, albeit sparsely populated, portion of the city east of the highway.

Should housing growth occur in the future, there will be more pressure, and for good reason, for planning additional community facilities on the city's east side, such as one or more neighborhood parks and a new elementary school. Substantial housing development would have to occur to warrant a new school. Nonetheless, Boaz City Schools and the City of Boaz must work together in the coming years to monitor housing development so that they can respond proactively, acquiring land before growth pressures increase land costs too far. Continued development in east Boaz will also increase the need for a second fire station to provide quicker response time to those areas.



By planning ahead for such an event, future facilities can be placed in the best locations to serve new development.

City Facilities in Downtown Boaz

1. Senior Center
2. City Hall
3. Police Department
4. Fire Department
5. Public Safety Training Center
6. Library



LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION

The following land use and transportation strategies result from analysis of existing land uses, environmental and man-made conditions, and the principles embedded in the Vision and Growth Strategy. Plans for land use and transportation are included together in this chapter to reinforce that they are integral to one another and must be evaluated and planned for simultaneously. Simply put, different land uses and densities require different levels and types of transportation infrastructure. Conversion of one type of use or density to another will have direct impacts on street design and capacity, property access, connectivity and pedestrian facilities.

The Future Land Use map illustrates generally how different parts of the community should function and relate to one another. The map portrays a pattern of various activity centers, their relationships with each other and with the city's neighborhoods. Building on this structure, Boaz intends to invest, reinvest and develop so that new growth is suited to the capacity of the land and to the city's ability to economically provide infrastructure and quality services and facilities.

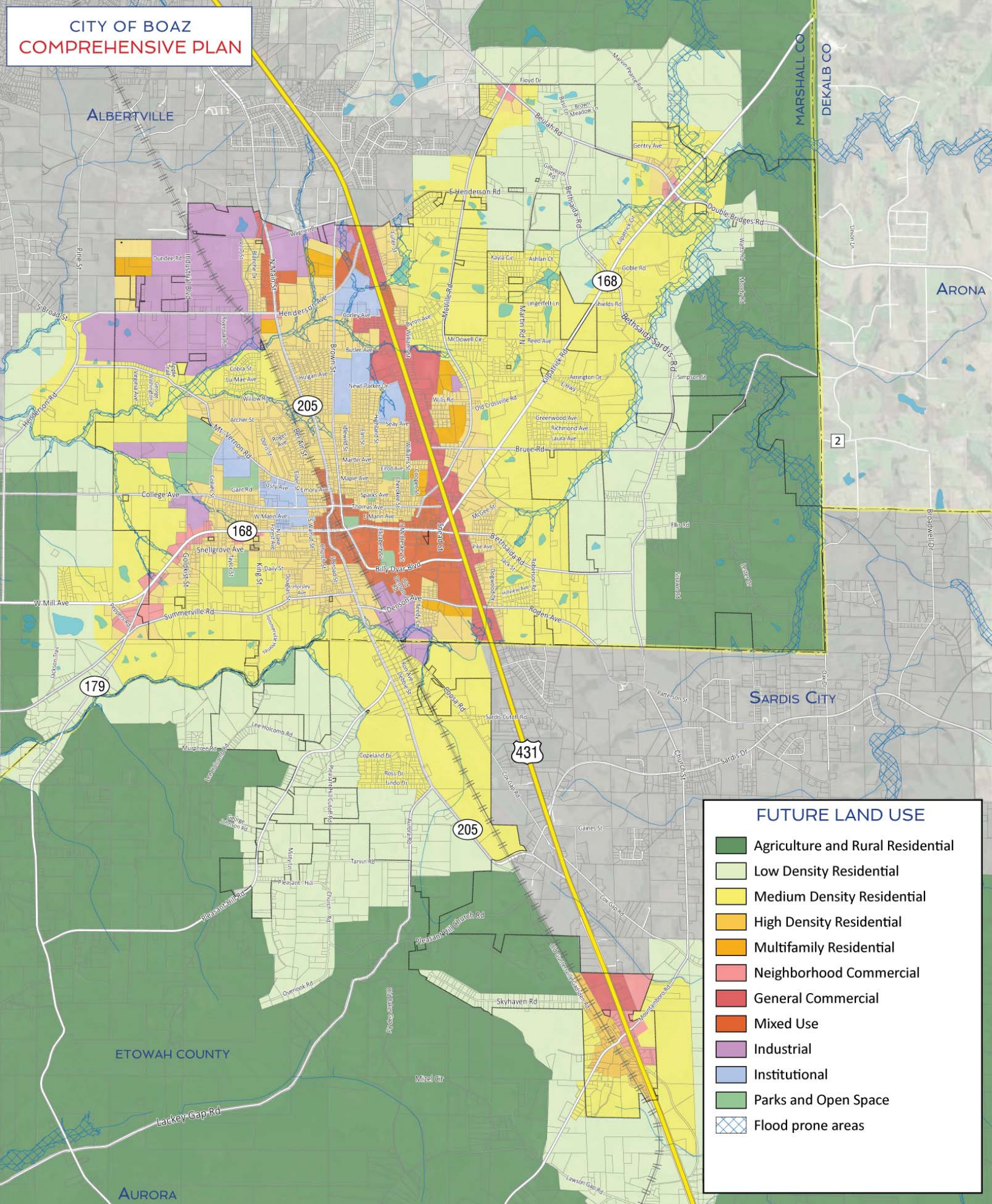
The Transportation Plan map illustrates how the city's street network must develop to accommodate the types, intensities and extents of development described in this plan. In addition to proposing improvements to resolve or improve existing transportation issues, the map identifies transportation improvements that will enable desired development and improve traveling within and through Boaz.

LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION CONCEPT

The integrated land use and transportation concept is built around the following principles:

- Arrange uses to avoid incompatibility that can harm property values.
- Provide comfortable transitions between uses of different types, densities and intensities.
- Arrange uses so that traffic from industrial, commercial and other traffic generators is not funneled through residential areas.
- Treat commercial areas as centers or hubs around which residential, institutional and other community elements are arranged.
- Locate higher density residential uses close to commercial hubs and major roads and lower density residential areas further out from commercial hubs and major roads.
- Designate environmentally sensitive areas for recreational uses or development types with low impact on flood plains, steep slopes, etc.
- Face similar uses across streets. Arrange uses so that land use transitions occur mostly along rear lot lines and man-made and natural barriers (railroads, highways, streams, etc.). Land use transitions along side lot lines should be considered on a case by case basis and may require buffers between some uses.

**CITY OF BOAZ
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



FUTURE LAND USE

- Agriculture and Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Multifamily Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Flood prone areas

LAND USE PLAN

The purpose of the Land Use Plan is to identify the range of uses, densities and development patterns that may be allowed in a given area—should changes occur in the future—to support orderly growth and avoid incompatibility between neighboring uses that can harm property values. The Plan represents a desired pattern of land uses. It is not intended that existing uses, which differ from the land use plan, must change. But, if they do change, then changes should be consistent with the overall pattern established in the Land Use Plan.

The Land Use Plan is used by the City for a variety of purposes. One of the most common of these is in reviewing the appropriateness of zoning and subdivision applications. The Future Land Use map is not a zoning map but a guide to how the zoning map may change. The boundaries of land use categories shown on the Future Land Use map should not be interpreted rigidly but the general pattern should be observed to support comfortable transitions between uses.

The Land Use Plan should be consulted in planning for expansion and new development of public facilities and utilities to serve the growing community because it represents a reasonable picture of the future state of the community.

The Future Land Use map is not intended to be static and unchanging. There will likely be instances when otherwise appropriate development requests will not conform exactly to the Future Land Use map. At those times it may be necessary for the City to consider amending the Land Use Plan (and/or map).

The designation of land uses on the Future Land Use map should not be interpreted to propose, approve, deny nor preclude any specific action without full consideration of all policies, principles, standards or intentions expressed in this plan and the city's development regulations. Specific site conditions, such as topography, geology, soils and hydrology, must be considered when choosing sites for new developments, especially those of larger scale, and planning and designing their uses and densities. These realities, plus attitudes toward development on the part of public officials, other agencies, area residents, property owners and developers will play a large part in determining appropriate development location and design. Similarly, adequate community facilities and infrastructure – streets, parks, fire protection services, and water and sewer systems, should be assured before making any significant development proposals or decisions.

LAND USE TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The following land use types are depicted on the Future Land Use map. Land use categories include street design guidance appropriate to the type and intensity of development that should be applied to development involving the construction of new streets or changes to existing streets. For categories without such information, street design should be consistent with the broader land use context.

Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces

Includes land permanently reserved as open space and/or recreation including public parks, land trust properties and cemeteries.

Agriculture and Rural Residential

Includes very low density single-family housing, crop farming, timbering, raising of livestock and some agriculturally-related business uses that produce little traffic and involve a low ratio of building to land area.

Street-side stormwater drainage is handled by swales rather than curb and gutter. Sidewalks are not provided but off-street paths may be desirable for pedestrian, bicycle, horse or all-terrain vehicle use where desirable.

Residential

Includes detached single-family housing, townhouses, manufactured housing and multifamily residential uses. Low intensity institutional uses, parks and open spaces are also included within each of four residential categories—low density single-family, medium density single-family, high density single-family and multifamily (refer also to illustrations below).

Low density residential uses are single-family detached houses on large lots (under three dwelling units per acre) that vary in character from suburban estates to more rural housing areas. These areas are located where transportation and other infrastructure are limited.

Green space is incorporated through generously-sized yards.

Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of collector streets and set back from the road edge. Alternatively, low density subdivisions can be connected to community destinations through trails. Streets may include vegetated swales, valley gutters or raised curbs for stormwater purposes.

Low density residential



Medium density residential



Medium density residential uses include single-family detached homes and duplexes with moderate lot sizes (three to six dwelling units per acre). Manufactured home subdivisions may be considered on a case-by-case basis in these areas and should be designed to the same standard as subdivisions for site-built homes.

Green space is provided in common open spaces and in the streetscape (primarily in front lawns).

Five foot wide sidewalks are provided on at least one side of the street (on both sides of collector streets). Sidewalks are set back from the curb by a buffer strip planted with street trees. Streets serving the lower end of this density range may have swales, valley curbs or curb and gutter for stormwater purposes. Otherwise, streets should generally have curb and gutter.

High density single-family residential uses include single-family detached homes on small lots (more than six dwelling units per acre), including townhouses. In these areas, duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes may also be appropriate. These developments are located around mixed-use and commercial hubs in relatively close-in locations. Manufactured home parks may be considered on a case-by-case basis in these areas and should be designed to a comparable standard to subdivisions for high density site-built homes.

Green space is provided in common open spaces and in the streetscape.

Alleys or shared driveways provide access to the rear of lots, which provides a discrete location for parking, utilities and garbage pick-up. Due to the narrowness of townhouse lots, front driveways would take up most of the front yard and so are discouraged. Parking can instead be provided in common parking areas or at the rear of individual lots.

Five foot wide sidewalks are provided on both sides of the street. Sidewalks are set back from the curb by a buffer strip planted with street trees. Streets should have curb and gutter.

Multifamily residential uses are residential developments in which three or more units are located within the same building. They are generally intended to develop within or at the edges of mixed-use and commercial hubs. This provides a transition between the more intensive activity in these hubs and the desired quiet in medium and low density neighborhoods. Green space is provided in common open spaces and within the streetscape.

Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the street and are separated from the street by a buffer strip planted with street trees. Streets feature vertical curb and gutter for stormwater purposes. Mid-block alleys or private drives provide access to parking areas, which should be located within the development rather than in front of buildings.

High density single-family residential



Multifamily residential



Commercial

Includes retail, business and personal services, office, dining, entertainment and lodging accommodations. These are to be concentrated in community and neighborhood commercial centers identified in the Growth Strategy. Shopping and dining uses should be concentrated at the heart of each commercial center with other business uses located in upper stories of buildings or flanking the core uses. High density and multifamily residential uses may be appropriate at the edges of commercial activity centers and in upper floors of buildings. Institutional uses may also be appropriate in commercial areas.

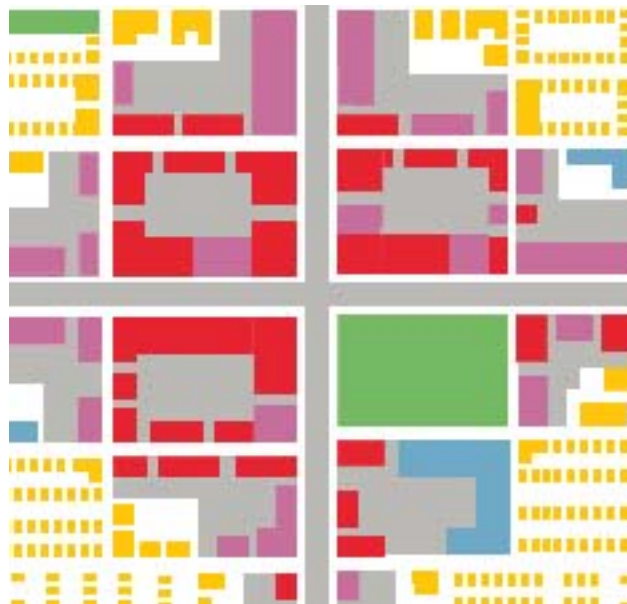
New commercial development should feature sidewalks on both sides of the street to provide pedestrian access throughout the district and to connect to adjoining neighborhoods. With the exception of US 431, streets in commercial areas should have vertical curb and gutter.

General Commercial includes a wide range of businesses that serve patrons from throughout the city and nearby areas, regardless of size and traffic impact. This category applies primarily along US Highway 431. In new development, parking areas of adjacent businesses should be connected and the number and size of curb cuts along the highway minimized.

Neighborhood Commercial includes small businesses that primarily serve the daily and weekly needs of nearby residents. Large businesses and ones that draw considerable traffic from outside the general vicinity are not generally appropriate. Auto-oriented businesses (restaurants and other businesses with drive-throughs, car washes, auto repair businesses and gas stations) may be considered on a case-by-case basis and only when designed to minimize traffic, light, noise and other characteristics incompatible with adjacent residential areas. If permitted, drive-through elements should be located away from streets and from adjoining housing. In new development, parking areas should be located to the side or rear of buildings rather than along the front.

Mixed-use

Includes a variety of commercial, residential, recreational and institutional uses. Shopping and dining uses should be concentrated at the heart of each mixed-use hub with other business uses located in upper stories of buildings or flanking the core uses. High density and multifamily residential uses may be appropriate at the edges of mixed-use hubs and in upper floors of buildings. This category is applied to Downtown Boaz, along Mill Avenue and adjacent to the medical center. Future infill development and redevelopment is intended to be compatible in scale and density to existing downtown development.



Mixed use areas should operate as hubs with residential areas orbiting around them, decreasing in density further from the hub. Parking is located internally to each block (to the sides and rear of buildings rather than in front) so that the area is walkable and the streetscape is defined by landscaping and buildings rather than parking lots and signs. Uses can be mixed vertically or horizontally, with a focus on shopping and dining at the center.

Institutional

Includes government facilities, schools, places of worship, medical, and community service uses and lands. NOTE: Only existing institutional uses are shown. Large churches and schools, hospitals and other higher intensity institutional uses, which tend to comprise larger buildings and draw larger amounts of traffic, should generally be located in high visibility places where access is suitable and adjacent land uses are compatible. Less-intense institutions, which range from small churches to elementary schools, may be appropriate in strategic locations in or adjacent to neighborhoods provided there is sufficient transportation access that does not interfere with the enjoyment of the neighborhood.

The development pattern—building heights, setbacks, parking location, street and sidewalk design—of institutional uses is generally determined by the pattern of the dominant use in the area (i.e., residential, commercial, mixed-use, etc.).



Industrial

Includes warehousing and distribution, light and heavy manufacturing, industrial and technology parks, mining and extraction, and similar uses.

Light manufacturing, storage, research laboratories and similar uses that tend to be less land intensive and more compatible with non-industrial uses may be appropriate in relatively central locations and can provide transitions between heavy industrial areas and non-industrial uses. Resource extraction, heavy manufacturing and other industrial operations that are land intensive and that generate excessive noise, smoke, odor or dust are considered heavy industries and should be located away from commercial centers and neighborhoods.

Industrial areas need not have sidewalks except as determined by context. For example, sidewalks may be desirable to connect industries to an adjacent commercial area so that employees can walk to nearby restaurants and other businesses. Context may also determine whether streets are lined with swales, valley curbs or curb and gutter.

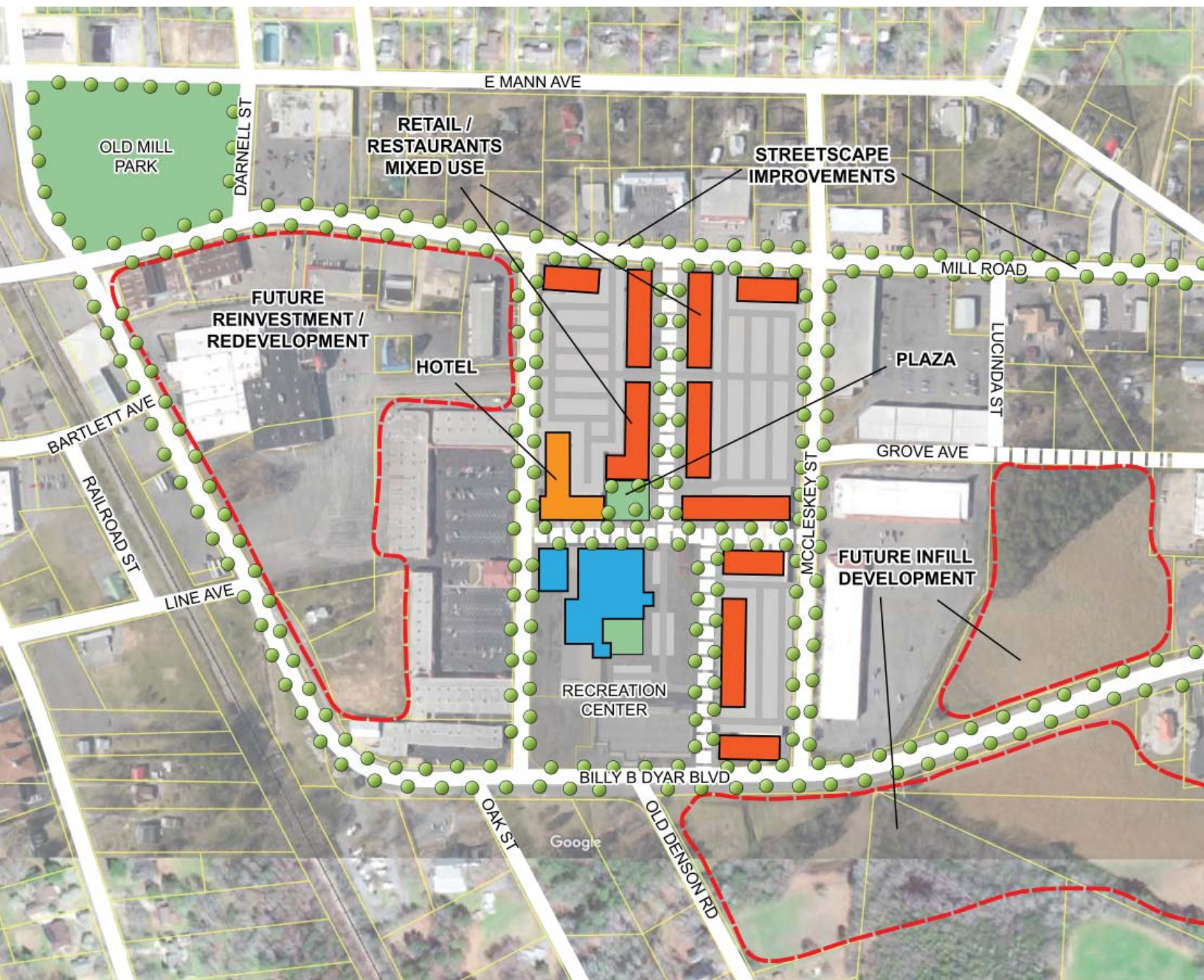


FOCUS AREAS

The following focus areas were selected to show how they may improve as a result of implementing the policies and recommendations in the Growth Strategy and Land Use and Transportation Plan.

Downtown / Mill Road

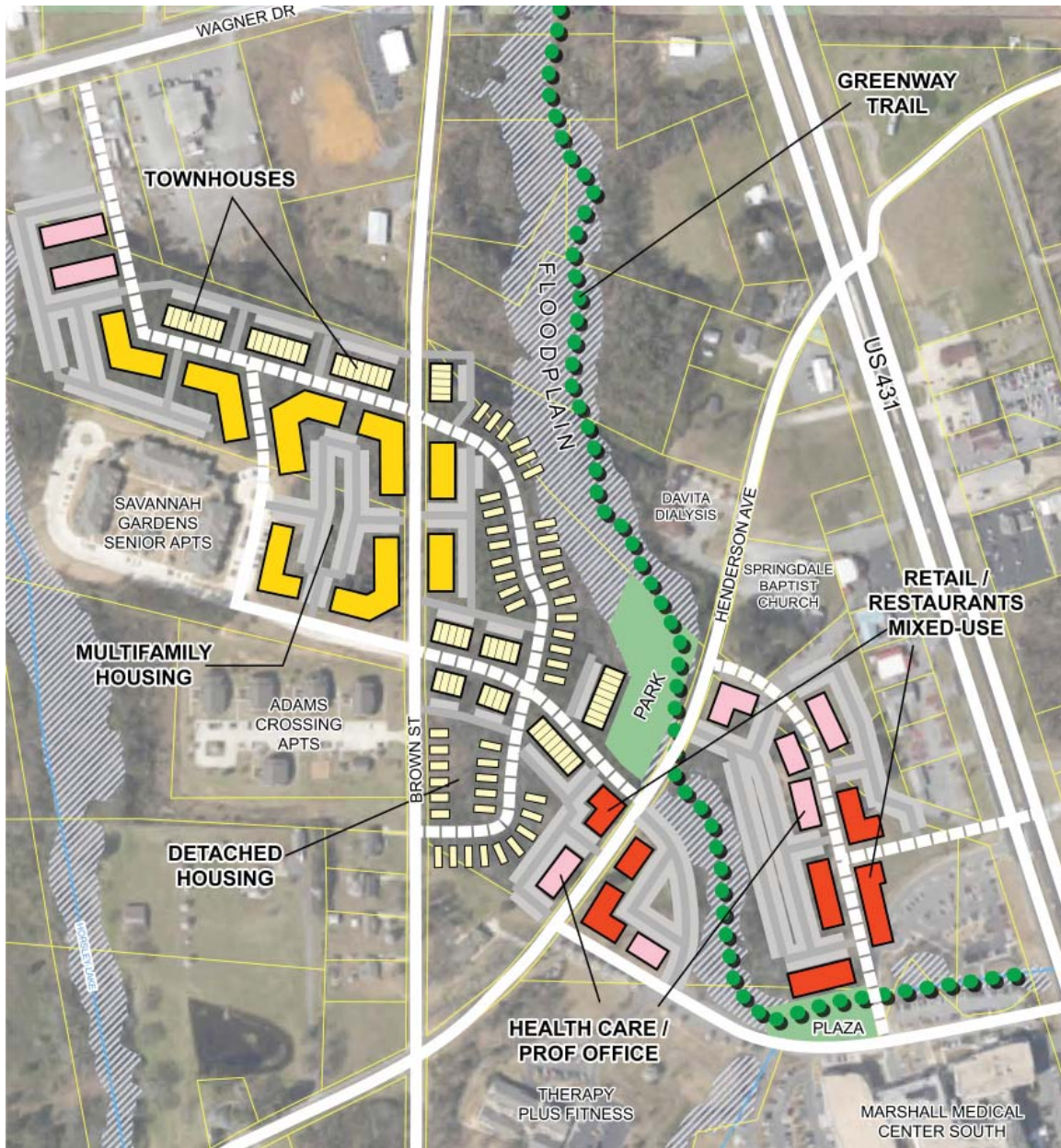
With the decline of the outlet center, the City of Boaz has taken on two projects with the potential to bring more traffic to the former shopping destination and the historic downtown just a couple blocks away. The city redeveloped a full block on the north side of Mill Road between downtown and the outlet center as a city park. The park includes a splash pad, amphitheater and other amenities. The second project is a planned recreation and aquatic center that is envisioned as a destination for sports tourism. The recreation center is to be developed on a southern portion of the former outlet center. Together, the two projects have the potential to draw residents and out-of-towners to the center of Boaz, however, the condition and occupancy of neighboring buildings, several of them part of the former outlet operation, may limit the potential of these city investments if they, too, are not also transformed.



Medical Center Hub

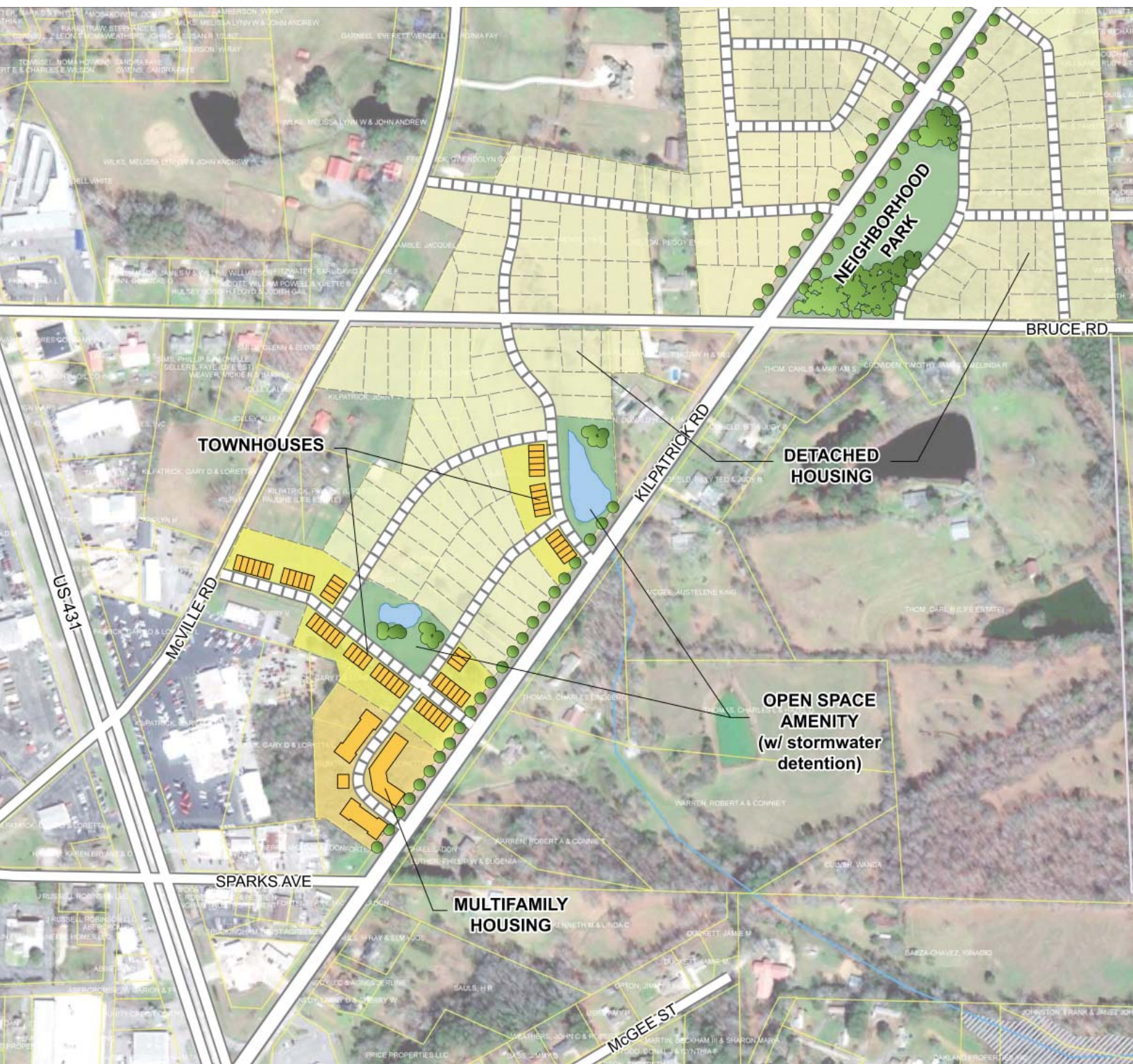
In addition to the health care services the hospital provides, Marshall Medical Center South is critical to the City's economy. It is a major employer in Boaz and draws traffic from outside the community. Families and friends of patients are likely to shop and eat in Boaz while visiting. The Marshall County Healthcare Authority controls additional land around the hospital that is undeveloped. Acquired to accommodate growth of the hospital and associated medical facilities, some of that land could be developed for retail and services businesses that would be patronized by employees and visitors. Eateries, personal services (hair salons, dry cleaners, etc.) and some retail businesses within walking distance of the medical center would be convenient for workers during lunch break and before or after shift.

Development of businesses in the area, and potentially housing above or at the edges, should follow a compact pattern emphasizing walkability. This includes locating parking lots to the side of buildings or within the interior of blocks, rather than in front of buildings. Streets should have wide sidewalks, street trees and attractive, pedestrian-scale lighting. If designed well, such a mixed-use area could grow to be a community destination, attracting patrons from far beyond the medical center.



East Residential

Residential development east of US 431 should be expected to continue in the coming years, with considerable amounts of easily developable land convenient to community shopping areas and to US 431, which provides easy access for commuters. The following illustrates how recommended development patterns described in the plan would be applied to future residential development—placing higher densities near business hubs (where the street network is strongest), interconnecting streets to avoid congestion on major roads and including sidewalks, street trees and open spaces within neighborhoods. Respondents to the second plan survey indicated a strong desire for sidewalks and tree-lined streets to be included in new residential development. NOTE: The image below is for illustrative purposes only and does not represent recommended or planned development of the properties shown.



TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Boaz has a strong, well-functioning network of streets that provides a high level of mobility for motorists. The primary transportation goals in the coming years are:

- Improving traffic flow and safety on US Highway 431
- Correcting deficiencies among existing streets and intersections
- Assuring that future development east of US Hwy 431 continues the level of connectivity within the street network west of the highway
- Maintaining the street network in good condition over time
- Enhancing mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists and those with limited access to vehicular transportation

Transportation Policies

The following policies will guide transportation decisions and investments made by the City of Boaz and the City's evaluation and decisions regarding new development and subdivisions:

- Promote higher level of street connectivity in more intensively developed areas
- Encourage development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other forms of mobility
- Manage access on major roads
- Maintain an attractive, functional street network that enhances community character

CONNECTIVITY

As new development occurs—that involves the creation of new streets—connectivity should be highly encouraged. This is of particular concern east of US 431 where considerable single-family residential development is possible, if not likely. In this area, there are already several existing roads (Bethsaida Sardis Road, Kirkpatrick Road, McVile Road, and Double Bridges/Beulah Road) that provide a good foundation for developing a street network that disperses traffic, provides better emergency access and helps people move about the community more easily and more safely.

Connectivity is important for safety. When poorly connected street systems funnel local trips onto major roads, it unnecessarily exposes local drivers to accidents on roads with higher design speeds, which increases the severity of injuries and the potential for fatalities. Connected street systems are more beneficial to emergency response by police, fire and paramedics because they provide shorter routes to calls and alternative routes if primary routes are clogged.

Because interconnected streets inherently see more traffic than cul-de-sacs, residents—and the developers who design and build subdivisions for them—often oppose the connection of streets internally and from one neighborhood to another. But, a balance must be struck between accommodating residents' desires for minimal traffic and the general welfare and safety of the community overall.

Greater connectivity in street networks increases walkability—regardless of whether or not there are sidewalks—by providing connected walking routes. By contrast, in a subdivision with a large number of cul-de-sacs, a person must walk (or bike) a greater distance to reach another part of the same neighborhood.

Street connectivity can be ensured in new development through the City's development regulations by establishing maximum block sizes and other connectivity standards based on the type and intensity of development.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities along streets are of most value to the community in commercial and medium and higher density residential areas and around parks, schools and similar destinations.



On-Street Facilities include sidewalks or multiuse, or shared use, paths that run alongside streets, dedicated bicycle lanes within the roadway, and sharrows or shared lanes, which are travel lanes shared by motorists and bicyclists.

Sidewalks should be provided on-streets within any type of development near schools, parks and Downtown Boaz. They should also be required, as described in the Land Use Plan, in medium and higher density residential subdivision, multifamily developments and in commercial and mixed-use development areas. This can be implemented through the City's subdivision regulations.

Off-Street Facilities include pedestrian paths and multiuse paths (generally designed for use by pedestrians and bicyclists) that are not located within a street right-of-way. They may follow waterways or other natural features, abandoned railroad lines, utility easements or any reasonable route that can be obtained outside of public rights-of-way. Off-street paths provide safe routes for bicyclists and pedestrians, to and from their homes, schools, parks, business areas and other strategic destinations.

Project and Strategy Recommendations

Whenever projects are planned to re-design, upgrade or improve access management on existing streets, adding sidewalks and/or bicycle facilities should be considered. A priority should be placed on including such accommodations in street projects near schools and parks and adjacent to Downtown Boaz and Snead State. And, whenever private properties are developed or redeveloped in these locations, the City may require sidewalks be installed or participate in redevelopment efforts by funding streetscape and sidewalk improvements.



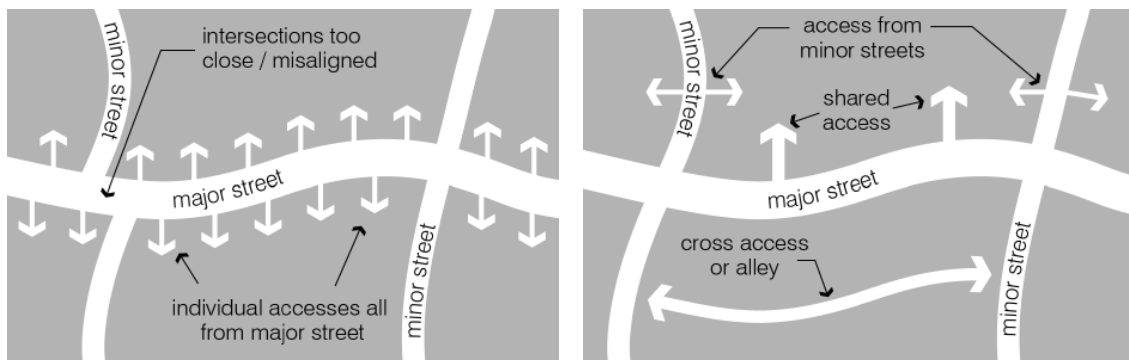
The City should also look for opportunities to proactively increase walking and bicycle access to schools and parks. For example, despite the fact that Boaz and Corley Elementary Schools and Paradise Park are very close to neighborhoods to the north and south, only a portion of Mt Vernon Road includes a sidewalk on the south side of the street to connect to Mt. Vernon Homes. Adding a sidewalk on Collier Street and an off-street path between Archer Street and Mt Vernon Road would greatly increase safe walking access to the schools and park for children in nearby homes.

Slab Creek between Mt Vernon Road and US 431 could form the basic route of a multiuse path that connects between the elementary school and recreation complex to neighborhoods, to the high school and middle school, and to the business areas on US 431. Power line easements also can be used as routes for off-street facilities.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

As described in the Growth Strategy, access management will be the primary approach to improving traffic flow and safety on US Highway 431. This will likely be a politically difficult, lengthy and expensive process because it will involve making access changes to existing developments involving many individual property owners. This illustrates why it is important to have access management standards in place as property along a major road is developed. The following strategies can be incorporated into the City's development regulations to manage access on other major roads in Boaz:

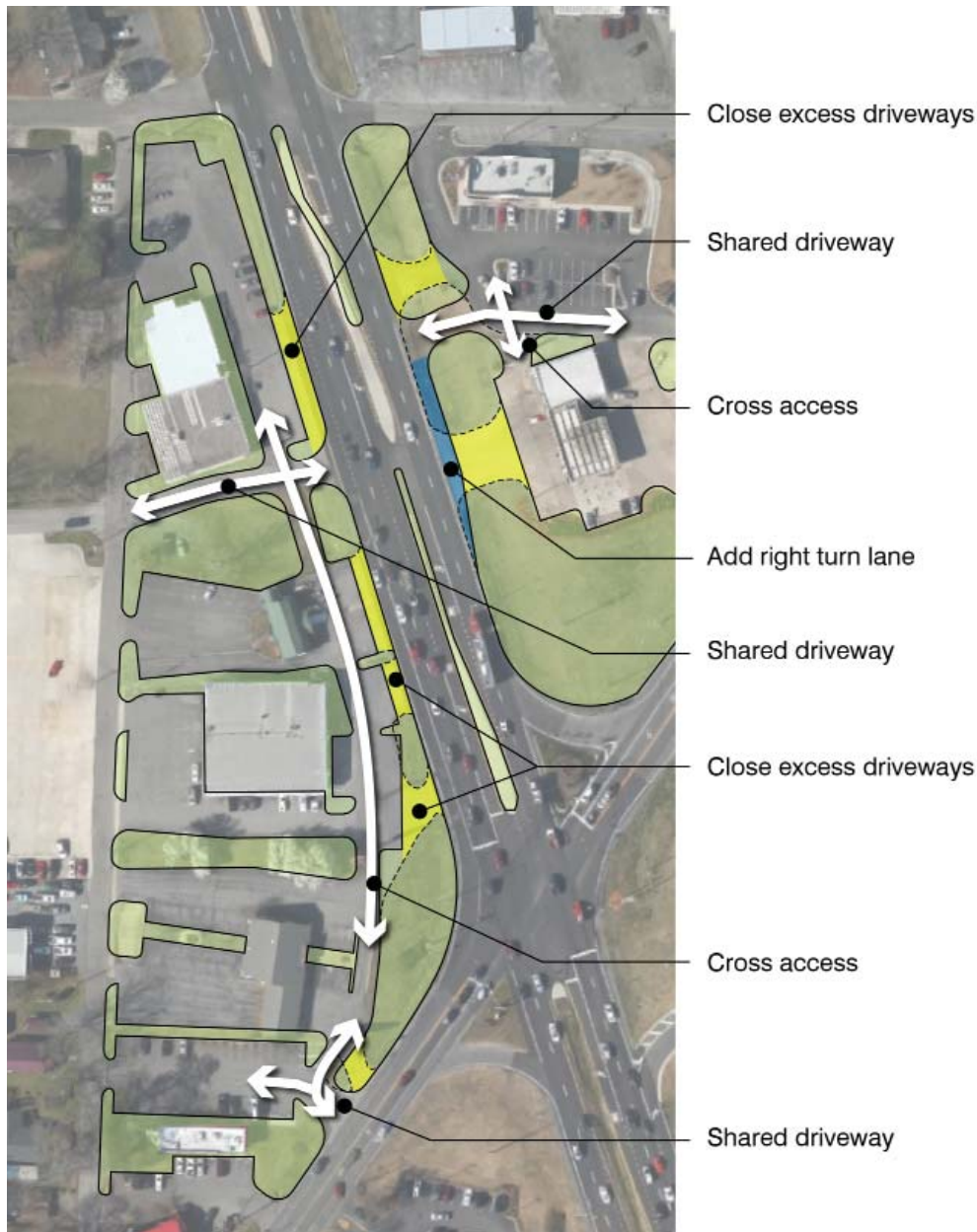
- **Separate conflict points** The distance between intersections of arterials and collectors and driveways should be regulated. As a general rule, driveways should not be located within the area of influence of intersections.
- **Restrict turning movements** The use of full directional unsignalized streets and driveways should be limited. Full movement intersections should serve multiple developments through joint use driveways or cross access easements.
- **Design standards** Design standards that address access spacing, the length of turn lanes and tapers and driveway dimensions should be developed for application throughout the city on arterials and major collectors and adopted as part of a Public Works Manual.
- **Traffic signal spacing** Signals should only be installed when appropriate studies indicate their spacing and interconnection can be accomplished without significant impacts on corridor capacity.
- **Turn lanes** Left and right turn lanes should be required for developments on arterial and major collector streets. In some cases, acceleration lanes may be required.
- **Shared driveways and access** Joint use driveways and inter-parcel interconnections, including alleys, should be required to reduce the proliferation of driveways in order to preserve the capacity of the corridor.



An excess number of driveways and driveways too close to one another and to intersections causes congestion and creates safety hazards.

Access management helps avoid congestion and increases safety by limiting the frequency of driveways on major roads through shared driveways, access from minor streets and cross access between properties.

The diagram below illustrates access management concepts that could be implemented along US 431 (around the intersection with AL 168) to avoid congestion and improve safety. This includes consolidating driveways to adjoining businesses and providing cross access between them, installing a turn lane to move slower, turning vehicles out of through lanes, and increasing the use of local streets for property access. The changes shown are illustrative only and are not specific recommendations of this plan.



OTHER RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Mill Road at Sned Street/Bethsaida Road

Intersections involving more than two streets tend to experience more accidents because of the increased number of conflict points between vehicles moving through the intersection. This intersection involves three streets with six approaches within its area of influence—five immediate approaches and an additional approach just west of the intersection. To improve safety at this intersection will require restricting some turning movements from one or more legs of the intersection and installing diverters within the intersection.

AL 205 at Mill Ave/ AL 168

Large trucks approaching the intersection from the west along Mill Avenue have difficulty turning onto AL 205. On the northwest and southwest corners, historic commercial buildings extend to the right-of-way line, leaving almost no opportunity to widen the turning radius for trucks and limiting sight distance. Conversion of the angled parking to parallel parking on the west side of 205 will provide more space for turning movements.

AL 205

Two sections of AL 205 through Boaz should be converted from four-lane sections to three-lane sections (two travel lanes with a center two-way left turn lane). The four-lane section is unnecessary for the amount of traffic and a three-lane section is better able to separate slower-moving, turning vehicles from through traffic. The conversion will leave space that can be used for bicycle and/or pedestrian use. The two sections of AL 205 are from Coosa Road to Line Avenue and from College Street to Henderson Road.



Downtown Main Street

To support the revitalization of the historic downtown, the City of Boaz redesigned the streetscape to improve landscaping, sidewalks and parking. To optimize parking it was decided to convert two blocks of Main Street to one-way operation. This allowed angled parking on both sides of the street. However, with only a few active businesses along the historic street, there is more on-street parking than is ever occupied and public off-street parking areas have also been created. With strong interest from the community in re-activating the historic downtown, it may be worthwhile to study ways to change the street back to two-way operation. However, this is not a silver bullet that will bring downtown back to life, no more than the previous streetscape project did. There must be other efforts taking place to draw businesses into vacant buildings before additional public investments are made.



Streetscape Improvements

The street system is a fundamental part of the community's image and is, with the exception of US 431 and state roads, at the direction of the City of Boaz. Over time, the City can enhance the community through streetscape upgrades. Wherever possible these investments should be incorporated into other capital projects, such as traffic safety, drainage, access management and other improvements. If appropriate and as funding allows, streetscape projects can certainly be carried out in their own right. In addition, through its Subdivision Regulations, the City of Boaz should require any new streets include sidewalks, lighting and trees appropriate to the function of the street and the type of development alongside it.





IMPLEMENTATION

The major theme of this Comprehensive Plan is to support and encourage growth and the character of the city. The City has prepared this plan to guide decisions regarding land use, development and conservation, zoning and capital improvements. The plan is also intended to help residents, property owners, merchants, builders, and developers invest in Boaz by providing a reasonable expectation of its future physical layout and character.

The Comprehensive Plan is to be carried out through a combination of public and private investment, decisions by the City Council, Planning Commission and other public boards and commissions. The plan's recommendations will continue to be translated into action through revision and enforcement of the city's development regulations; through transportation improvements and access management programs in cooperation with County roads and transportation departments (county roads) and the Alabama Department of Transportation (state highways); through city budgeting and capital improvement programming and through public and private decisions in support of planned, cost-effective annexation.

Boaz is a municipal corporation, formed under powers granted by the State of Alabama. The City uses this police power to enforce local ordinances and development regulations. Also, the City uses its taxation power to plan for and implement a budgeting system that includes capital investments for infrastructure and other city facilities and services that it uses to help shape growth and development. All of these tools will continue to be used together to shape Boaz in accord with this Comprehensive Plan.

PRIORITIES

As plan strategies and projects were identified, the community was asked for their input on the relative importance of these recommended efforts through a community meeting and an online survey. Input from these engagement efforts, as well as the initial survey, was synthesized to prepare an action plan consistent with community opinion.

Below are the top three ranked strategies and actions under each of the plan's major goals and a sixth infrastructure category. Because the survey reflected only a small sample of the population, it should not be interpreted to represent the community's consensus but a rough indicator of the community's attitudes toward plan objectives:

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

1. Encourage redevelopment of underutilized property on US 431
2. Transform downtown and the outlet center area into a shopping, recreation and entertainment destination
3. Support small business development in centers convenient to neighborhoods

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Recruit new industries
2. Create a workforce training/development system with Snead State and other partners
3. Acquire and clear Pilgrim's Pride site and market for re-use

COMMUNITY IMAGE

1. Create a new identity and branding strategy for Boaz
2. Strengthen property maintenance and nuisance abatement programs
3. Beautify US 431 with lighting, landscaping and other improvements

RECREATION AND CULTURE

1. Add passive recreation options (picnicking, playgrounds, etc.) to existing parks
2. Bring music/entertainment venue(s) and art to downtown/outlet center area
3. Improve the park at Sparks and Cooper Street to encourage greater use

CITY SCHOOLS

1. Develop strong partnerships between the City of Boaz, City schools, Snead State and others
2. Assure appropriate funding over time, including from public and private sources
3. Build on current STEM/skills training programs in City schools

Among all of the objectives combined, regardless of goal category, the community indicated that the most important efforts Boaz should pursue are: reinvestment on US 431, industrial recruitment, workforce training, educational partnering and school funding.

INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Enhance traffic flow on US 431 by updating traffic signals, turn lanes and other access management improvements
2. Build and staff a new fire station east of US 431 as housing development there continues
3. Improve stormwater drainage in central business and residential areas

ACTION PLAN

The following matrix categorizes recommended actions according to the plan's five main goals and an infrastructure category. Each action is assigned a phase based on its importance to the community, sense of urgency, cost considerations, expediency and other considerations. Low-hanging fruit—projects that are inexpensive and relatively simple to accomplish—are typically assigned early timeframes. Accomplishing these tasks shows progress and helps build confidence. Major projects can be complicated, expensive and take considerable time to complete but they may have initial steps that need to be taken early on to avoid unnecessary delays.

TIMEFRAME This represents a combination of the relative importance of the task to the community and the likely duration necessary to complete related actions: short (1-5 yrs), mid (6-10 yrs), and long (11+ yrs). Tasks referred to as “long-term” may be extraordinarily important to the community but will likely take a considerable amount of time to complete because of costs or other complicating factors. Initial steps for some mid- and long-term tasks may need to be taken relatively soon to assure they can ultimately be accomplished within a ten or twenty year horizon.

LEAD - PARTNERS These are local and state entities whose involvement—which may vary from political support to technical assistance—may be essential in pursuing and completing the task. The lead organization is listed first followed by potential partner organizations. Additional partners, such as private foundations, may also be available depending on the nature of the action.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES These are organizations and programs that offer funding, technical assistance or other types of assistance relevant to the particular task.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
1 Encourage redevelopment of underutilized property on US 431	Ongoing	City - Chamber, EDC	US SBA
2 Transform downtown and Mill Avenue area into a shopping, recreation and entertainment destination	Mid-Term	City - Chamber, EDC	Main Street Alabama
3 Support small business development in neighborhood centers	Ongoing	City - Chamber	US SBA
Recruit a hotel	Short-Term	City - Chamber, EDC	
Provide business education and mentoring for small businesses and start-ups	Short-Term	Chamber - City, Snead State	The Catalyst Center (Huntsville)
Create a new business incubator program	Mid-Term	City - Chamber, EDA, Snead State	US EDA, USDA, Main Street Alabama

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
1 Recruit new industries	Ongoing	EDC - City, IDB	EDPA, AL Dept Comm, ALDOT (Industrial Access fund)
Support retention and expansion of existing industries	Ongoing	EDC - City, IDB	AL Dept Comm
2 Create a collaborative workforce training/development system with Snead State and other partners	Short-Term	City - EDC, Snead State, local industries	Ready to Work, AIDT, Alabama Works!, Apprenticeship Alabama
Assemble land and market to/recruit housing developers for workforce housing	Mid-Term	City - IDB	
Invest in community facilities (schools, parks, etc.) to attract workforce housing development	Ongoing	City - Boaz City Schools	ADECA, State Council on Arts
3 Acquire and clear Pilgrim's Pride site and market for re-use	Mid-Term	City - EDC, IDB	ADEM Redevelopment Program

COMMUNITY IMAGE

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
1 Create a new identity and branding strategy for Boaz (post-Outlet Center)	Short-Term	City - Chamber, Marshall County CVB	
Enhance gateway signs (lighting and landscaping)	Mid-Term	City - Chamber	Local companies
Install wayfinding sign system	Short-Term	City	
2 Strengthen property maintenance and nuisance abatement programs	Short-Term	City	
3 Beautify US 431 (lighting, landscaping, etc.)	Mid-Term	City - ALDOT	ALDOT
Update zoning ordinance to improve landscaping and other standards	Short-Term	City	
Incorporate art in public spaces	Short-Term/ Ongoing	City - Chamber, Snead State, Boaz City Schools	State Council on Arts
Encourage the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods	Ongoing	City - Chamber	Alabama Historical Commission

RECREATION AND CULTURE

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
1 Add passive recreation options to existing and future parks	Short-Term	City - Chamber	AMRV (RC&D), local companies, USDA, private foundations
Develop new park east of US 431 as growth occurs	Long-Term	City	ADECA (LWCF), local companies, AMRV (RC&D)
2 Bring music/entertainment venue(s) and art to downtown and the Mill Avenue area	Mid-Term	City - Chamber	Main Street Alabama
3 Improve park at Sparks Ave & Cooper St	Short-Term	City	AMRV (RC&D), local companies USDA, private foundations
Create a community arts center	Long-Term	City - Boaz City Schools, Snead State	State Council on Arts, private foundations
Hold regular music, entertainment and art events downtown and in Mill Avenue area	Short-Term	Chamber - City	Main Street Alabama, State Council on Arts, private foundations

CITY SCHOOLS

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
1 Develop strong partnership with city schools, Snead State, others	Short-Term	Boaz City Schools - City, Snead State	Private foundations
2 Assure appropriate funding over time (public and private sources)	Ongoing	Boaz City Schools - City, PIRATE Foundation	
3 Build on current STEM/skills training programs	Ongoing	Boaz City Schools	ALSDE, Snead State
Plan for future school east of US 431 as growth occurs	Long-Term	Boaz City Schools	

INFRASTRUCTURE

Action	Timeframe	Lead - Partners	Potential Resources
1 Enhance traffic flow on US 431 by updating traffic signals, turn lanes and other access management improvements	Short-Term/ Ongoing	City - ALDOT, Albertville	ALDOT
2 Build and staff a new fire station east of US 431 as housing development there continues	Mid-Term	City	USDA, USFA, FEMA (Homeland Security)
3 Improve stormwater drainage in central business and residential areas	Mid-Term	City	ADECA, ADEM (CWSRF)
Improve walkability by installing sidewalks and building off-street paths near schools, parks and central business areas	Ongoing	City	ALDOT, ADECA, America Walks
Develop paths (on- and off-street) for people to bicycle safely in Boaz	Mid-Term	City	ALDOT, ADECA, UACED

KEEPING THE PLAN UP TO DATE

Comprehensive planning is often viewed as an occasional activity overseen by the Planning Commission, while preparing the city budget is an annual responsibility of the City Council. As a result, the comprehensive plan can become less useful as a guide to city budgeting if not reviewed and updated over time. This can be avoided by coordinating plan updates with budgeting processes every year or so.

Coordinated updates may help the Mayor and Council better determine capital budget priorities, consider plan and development regulation amendments, and coordinate public investments toward reaching the vision set out in the plan. To coordinate plan policies and their implementation, each city department, board and commission (and non-city groups that may be eligible for city funding assistance) should review the comprehensive plan and submit a report to the city that would include the following:

- All tasks essential for accomplishing elements of the comprehensive plan during the coming year that are or should be the responsibility of the respondent.
- Suggested changes in city programs – including but not limited to regulations, capital investments, operation and maintenance, and intergovernmental coordination – that the respondent feels to be in the best interests of overall plan implementation.
- Suggested changes in city policy toward growth and development as described in the comprehensive plan.
- Suggested changes in the respondent's responsibility or authority that would better enable implementation of any parts of the comprehensive plan.
- A preliminary budget proposal, including capital equipment and investments needed to deal with the above, and the portion of those costs it is requested that the city bear.

The mayor's office would collect this information for consideration in drafting a capital budget and suggested plan amendments for the coming year. After discussions with department heads and others, the mayor's office would forward a draft capital budget and suggested plan amendments to the Planning Commission, who would review it in light of the comprehensive plan. The Planning Commission would report to the mayor's office the findings of its review of proposed capital investments, recommendations for plan amendments, and adjustments to development regulations.

The mayor's office would prepare and present a proposed capital budget and revenue forecast to the City Council. The Planning Commission would take action regarding any recommended changes to the comprehensive plan and/or subdivision regulations and suggest zoning ordinance amendments, as needed, to the Council.



Prepared by the
City of Boaz
with assistance of:

The Kelley Group
KPS Group, Inc.
Skipper Consulting

CITY OF BOAZ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

small town • big future

