

City of Ashland, Alabama



Comprehensive Plan

2018

Prepared by the East Alabama Regional Planning
and Development Commission

**CITY OF ASHLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This document was prepared under the direction of the

ASHLAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

AND

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL

by the

**EAST ALABAMA REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

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Abstract:

The intent of this Comprehensive Plan is to serve as a guide for the future growth and development of the City of Ashland, Alabama. This document is to be used as a basis for policy and zoning decisions in the community through the year 2026. This study presents recommendations on the general location and extent of residential, commercial, and public land uses needed to serve the projected population.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The primary purpose of the comprehensive plan is to provide direction for local public policy and planning implementation necessary for increasing quality of life and livability for a community's citizens and visitors presently and in the future. The comprehensive plan, also called a master plan, is the most basic public policy guide for a community and its development. All other plans, studies, and land use codes and ordinances should be adopted in accordance with the comprehensive plan and toward the promotion and advancement of its goals and objectives. A comprehensive plan consists of the following components:

1. an inventory and assessment of population and economic trends and community resources (such as schools, roads, public buildings, undeveloped land, constrained land, and natural resources);
2. a summary of community needs and goals; and
3. a coordinated strategy for the management or improvement of community resources and the future growth and development of the city.

The comprehensive plan serves two major purposes: to help local officials better understand growth and development trends and community problems; and to develop strategies to use available resources effectively when addressing local problems and building capacity for future growth. If the growth and development of a city can be compared to the construction of a house, then the comprehensive plan is the blueprint. It contains a list of building tools and materials (the inventory and assessment component), instructions on how to put the pieces together and in what order (the statement of goals, objectives, and policy recommendations, and implementation schedule), and a picture or image of the desired product (the conceptual future land use map).

The Benefits of the Comprehensive Plan

A plan can provide many benefits to a community. For example, a comprehensive plan can and does:

1. draw attention to important community problems or needs;
2. promote the city to outside development interests;
3. communicate public policies to residents of the community;
4. help prioritize and coordinate investments in public improvements;
5. help minimize wasteful spending of tax dollars;
6. identify sources of funds that can be used to address local needs; and
7. serve as a guide for local zoning ordinances and other development codes.

Although a plan can offer many benefits to a community, it is important to remember that the plan is only as good as the information it contains, and can only benefit the community if it is used by the city and updated regularly to reflect changing needs and conditions. It is recommended that a community adopt a new comprehensive plan once every 10 years in order to accommodate

changes in growth and development patterns and the most recent needs and desires for the community.

Legal Authority

Alabama law requires that every municipal planning commission prepare and adopt a plan for the community (Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 8 of the Code of Alabama, 1975). Although the comprehensive plan is adopted by the planning commission, it should serve as the primary guide for the formulation of local public policy and for coordinating the future growth and development of the community. Therefore, the governing body of the community should be involved in the plan preparation process, or should be afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan before its adoption by the planning commission. In some communities, the city council also has adopted the plan after its adoption by the planning commission. However, Alabama law recognizes only the planning commission's action on the plan, so adoption of the plan by a city council cannot substitute for adoption by the planning commission.

According to Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 10 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, the planning commission may adopt a comprehensive plan in its entirety, or it may adopt individual sections or chapters of the plan as they are prepared. Before the plan or any section or portion of it may be adopted by the planning commission, a public hearing must be conducted. Alabama law does allow the planning commission to dispense with the public hearing, if the city council conducts a public hearing on the plan or plan section prior to its adoption by the planning commission. Once the comprehensive plan has been adopted by the planning commission, an attested copy of the plan must be certified to the city council and the Probate Judge.

The law also requires local zoning to be prepared in accordance with the comprehensive plan (Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 72 of the Code of Alabama, 1975). Some communities interpret this provision of law to mean that the zoning map and the future land use map in the comprehensive plan must be identical. However, this interpretation of the relationship between the zoning map and the comprehensive plan only constrains the plan's ability to guide future growth and development. The future land use map contained in the plan should be developed as a general depiction of desired local development patterns at the end of the planning period, which may be ten to twenty years into the future. Therefore, it should identify areas that will be more desirable for more intensive development after the supporting infrastructure improvements have been completed to allow such development. On the other hand, zoning should guide land uses and development to occur in areas that are suitable given existing conditions and limitations. This distinction between the future land use map contained in the comprehensive plan and the zoning map gives the zoning map legal authority to regulate current development, and allows the plan to serve as a guide for future zoning changes to provide for new growth and development.

The adoption of a comprehensive plan also gives the planning commission authority to review and approve the construction of public streets and squares, parks, public buildings, and public utilities (Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 11 of the Code of Alabama, 1975). If the planning commission determines that a proposal to construct such public facilities is not consistent with the comprehensive plan, it may disapprove the proposal and provide written notice of its findings to the city council or the applicable governing authority. The city council or applicable governing

authority can overturn the planning commission's disapproval by a two-thirds majority vote of its entire membership.

Planning Process

In February of 2015 the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) contracted with the City of Ashland to create a comprehensive plan for Ashland in order to guide and direct land use and development in a logical manner, consistent with the goals and objectives of the city.

To initiate the planning process, an initial public hearing was called and conducted on July, 2015 in Ashland City Hall. The meeting was used to inform the city council and the public on the nature, benefits, and processes involved in creating and using a comprehensive plan for future land use and development in the city. The meeting also was used to gather public input about community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in what is referred to as a SWOT Analysis. This information was recorded by staff for future use.

After the initial public hearing, EARPDC staff conducted a series of working sessions with the Ashland Planning Commission (APC) on a monthly or bi-monthly basis in order to keep APC updated on the plans progress and for EARPDC staff to receive guidance and direction on the plan. Working sessions focused on analyzing and discussing information presented in the chapters of the plan and were also used to create goals, objectives, strategies and plans for land use and development within the City of Ashland. The EARPDC cartography staff provided mapping services for practical land use research and applications.

Location

The City of Ashland is located in central Clay County, bordering the Appalachian foothills of northeastern Alabama. Nearby cities include Lineville about 5 miles to the east and Wedowee, in Randolph County, approximately 20 miles directly east. Ashland is also located near Talladega National Forest and Mount Cheaha, Alabama's largest mountain, at 2,405 feet high. The Anniston/Oxford metro area is located approximately 35 miles to the north. Two major state routes, AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77, intersect in downtown Ashland, which provides the city with a substantial opportunity for economic development and community growth. For more details on Ashland's location in relation to other Alabama communities see Map #1: *Location*.

General Information

The City of Ashland (pop. 2,037 2010 US Census) is a rural small town, rich in history, natural amenities, and resources. Also known as the "City of Friends" Ashland is proud of its charming small town atmosphere and friendly social environment. Community spirit can be seen throughout the city with excellent public schools, remodeled library, community hospital and wellness center, nursing home and senior center, as well as an active county-wide Arts League and numerous opportunities for sports and recreation. Talladega National Forest is the major recreational attraction near Ashland, covering approximately 392, 567 acres at the southern edge of the

Appalachian Mountains. Another major attraction in the Talladega National Forest is Cheaha State Park, in which resides the largest mountain in Alabama, Mt. Cheaha at 2,405 ft. with beautiful views of the forest and lakes of east Alabama. Overall the City of Ashland strives to preserve its rich history, culture, and scenic beauty, capitalize on existing resources, and promote and encourage sustainable growth and development for future generations.

Historical Background

The City of Ashland is rich in historical culture and heritage. The geographical area of Ashland, up until the late 1500s, was the home of a variety of local Indian tribes, primarily the Coushatta (Coosa), Alibamo (Alabama), Uchi, Tallassee, Arbeka, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Natchez. The white man probably made first contact with these tribes during Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto's 1540 expedition through the area. Some historians believe a few of DeSoto's scouts came up the Talladega Creek into what is now Clay County. In the late 1500s the powerful and aggressive Muscogee Indian tribe emerged as the most dominant group and were soon referred to a "Creeks" due to their tendency to settle near streams or creeks. The Creeks quickly subjugated the smaller tribes, but gave them the option of remaining on their land if they complied with the laws of the Creek Confederacy. Larger tribes such as the Cherokee and Choctaw were pushed out into other lands. The first white settlers began moving into Creek territory in the early 1800s, which lead to inevitable violent conflict between the two cultures. Raids and retaliatory soon led to the Creek Indian or Red Stick War of 1813-1814. The Red Sticks were a faction of the Creek, and their most aggressive group. The term "red stick" was derived from the red colored war clubs and ceremonial red sticks used by their medicine men. As war escalated, United States General Andrew Jackson the state militia forces under his command were assembled to deal with the situation. Two major battles between Jackson and the Creeks, the battle at Enitachopko and Emuckfaw, fought in the area of what is now Clay County, 10 miles south of present day Ashland, resulted in Jackson's defeat. However, Jackson returned to battle the Creek with more forces and eventually established complete victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, near present day Alexander City, in March of 1814. From there the Creeks were forced out of 22.5 million acres of their native lands and into an elongated slice of 5.2 million acres, between the Coosa River and the Georgia Line, lands which would later become Clay County. Later, in 1828, when Jackson became President of the United States, he soon passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Treaty of Cusseta in 1832 which further displaced Indian tribes and opened up more land for white settlement in Alabama.

In the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era Clay County was established, named after Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky. The primary reason for the county's foundation was the difficulty in administering the remote sections of Talladega and Randolph Counties which lay between the Talladega Mountains and the Tallapoosa River. Clay County was formed on December 7, 1866 and less than a year later Ashland was established as the county seat on land donated by Hollingsworth Watts for the construction of the courthouse. The city was thereby named in commemoration of 19th century statesman Henry Clay's Kentucky estate home—Ashland. In the early years of the town's establishment, Ashland grew very rapidly from 118 people in 1870 to 635 in 1890, a 228% increase in the first decade and a 64% climb in the second. Such significant growth could have been due to Ashland's establishment as the county seat and its central location in Clay County. Mining took hold as a substantial industry in Clay County as the state's first

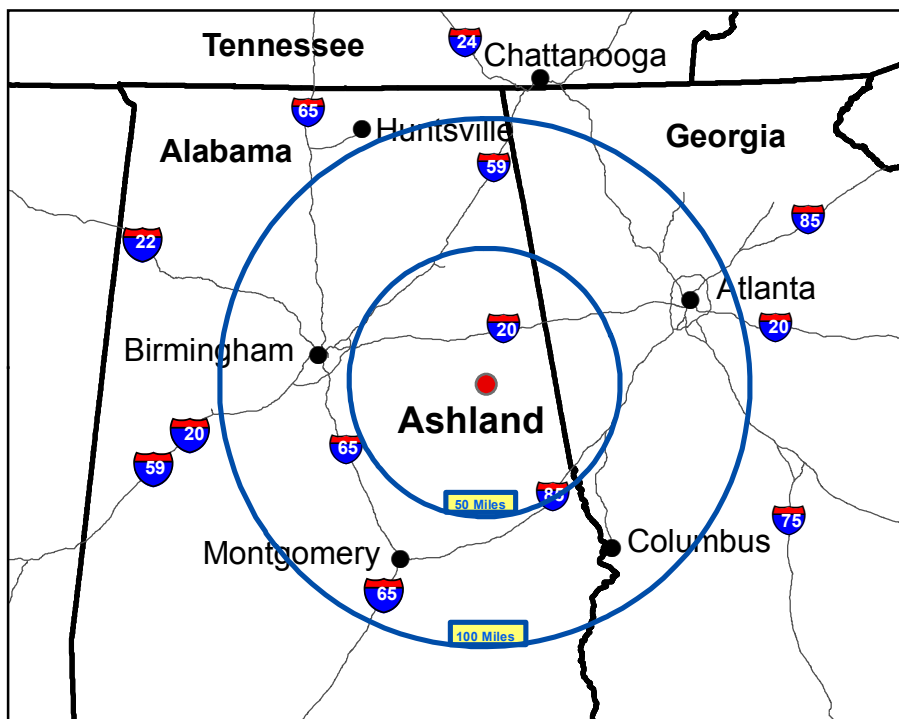
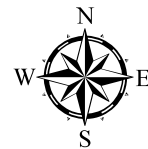
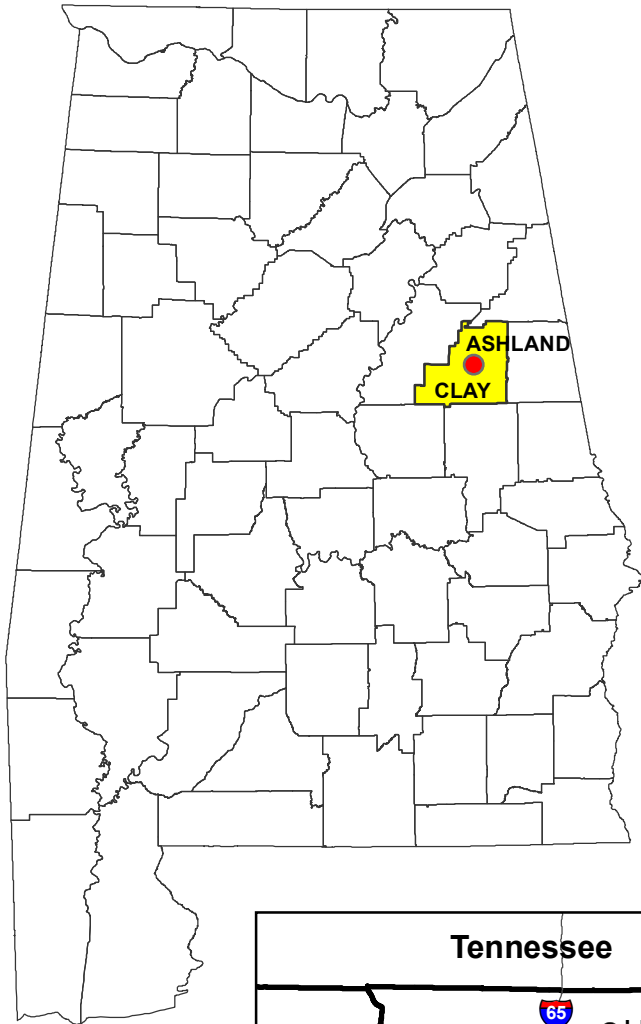
graphite mine was opened in 1899. By 1920, Alabama was producing approximately 58% of the nation's crystalline graphite, most of which was extracted from nearly 50 mines in Clay County. Although earlier mining for gold, iron ore, pyrite, soapstone, and other minerals brought some prosperity to the county, the graphite boom left the greatest impression. However, by 1929, with the onset of the Great Depression and demand for graphite decreasing, in large part due to the ending of WWI, many mining operations closed down, increasing unemployment and forcing many families to find work in larger cities. Subsequently, in the 1930s infestations of the boll weevil beetle destroyed the cotton industry, forcing farmers to abandon a historically long and stable commodity and diversify their industries. Thus, timber, poultry, and cabinet making became the dominant industries in Clay County by the beginning of the 21st century.

In 1940 the county's first hard surface road was paved, AL Hwy. 9, traversing from Montgomery to Heflin, passing through Ashland. The new road also marked the beginning of the end of local railroad passenger service. By the end of the 1940s decade the county paved three hard surface roads as a result of the "farm to market" program. The goal of the hard surface roads was to improve vehicle travel and increase traffic volume and trade between businesses in town and the surrounding farm communities, however, economic gains were soon nullified by these same roads as access to larger shopping centers in nearby cities increased and travel became easier and more convenient. This could have contributed to some population growth for the city, however, by 1950 the city showed decline, most likely due to military demands and sacrifices the city made during WWII.

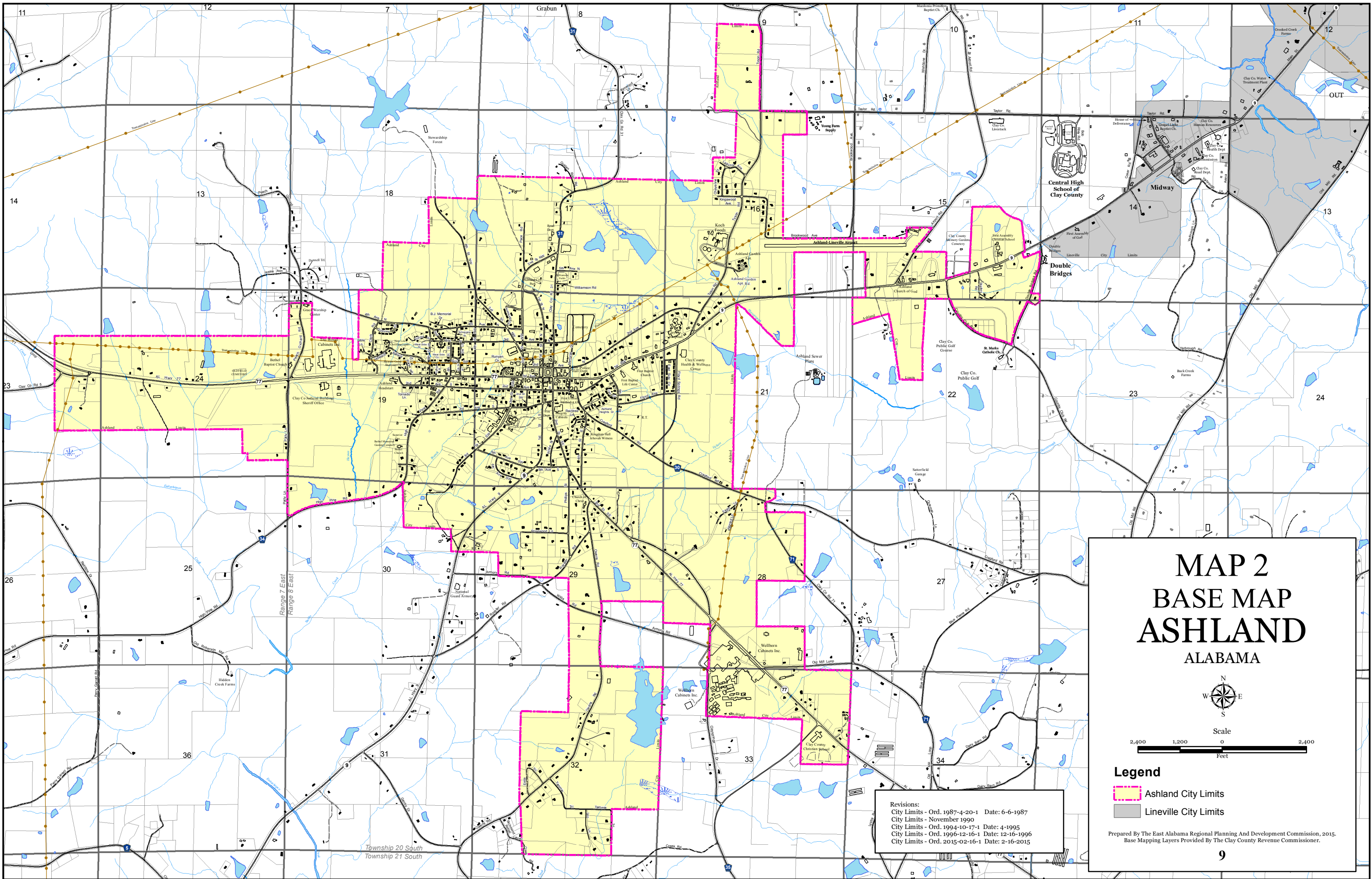
Today Ashland stands as a prosperous and successful community with an abundance of natural amenities and resources to serve as opportunities for continued growth and development. As a rural Alabama community, the city strives to build upon small town charm and friendly neighborhoods to provide a high quality of life to current residents and visitors as well as those to come in the future.

MAP 1 LOCATION

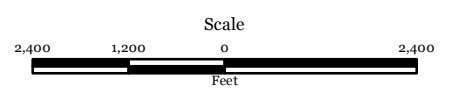
ALABAMA



SOUTHEASTERN U.S.



MAP 2 BASE MAP ASHLAND ALABAMA



Legend

- Ashland City Limits
- Lineville City Limits

Revisions:
 City Limits - Ord. 1987-4-20-1 Date: 6-6-1987
 City Limits - November 1990
 City Limits - Ord. 1994-10-17-1 Date: 4-1995
 City Limits - Ord. 1996-12-16-1 Date: 12-16-1996
 City Limits - Ord. 2015-02-16-1 Date: 2-16-2015

Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2015.
 Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.

CHAPTER II: POPULATION

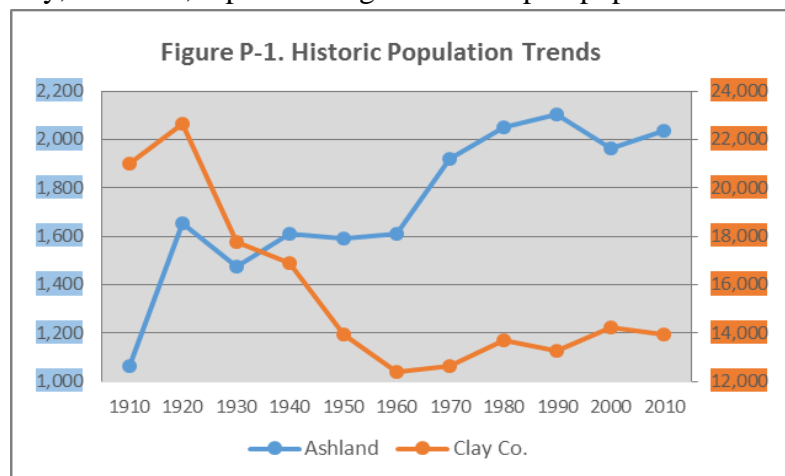
Population characteristics and trends play a pivotal role in the planning effort. Since people constitute a city, the general population creates a city's identity, distinguishing it from other communities. Changes in population influence land use decisions, economic spending patterns and employment, public services, and needs for public improvements. Furthermore, a clear understanding of existing population characteristics and trends gives guidance to city officials for making the most informed and effective decisions in meeting growth and development needs in a diverse and changing community. The purpose of this chapter is to gain an understanding of population change and composition in the City of Ashland in order to explore decisions and develop public policies and plans, which will best serve its present and future residents. This chapter examines historic population trends and place of birth and residence patterns. Population composition includes elements such as age, racial, and gender distributions, and marital status. Finally, an analytical summary of population findings concludes the chapter.

Population Trends

Historic Population Trends

All community populations change to some degree over a given span of time. Historic population trends are useful in showing when and to what degree population has increased, decreased, or stabilized over a given time period. Major trends usually identify and reflect the goals and values of our nation as a whole and how communities respond to changing times and historical events. Although unfit for predicting the future, this information is useful for planning by understanding how and why social and cultural history shaped the city, making it what it is today.

Historically, Ashland has shown somewhat fairly consistent population growth, increasing from 1,062 persons in 1910 to 2,037 in 2010, a 91% increase. Both Ashland and Clay County increased significantly in population from 1910 to 1920 (55% and 7%, respectively) most likely due to the railroad established through the city in 1907 as well as new logging operations and the discovery of large graphite and mineral deposits, which brought in more jobs, people, and resources. The city, however, reported a significant drop in population from 1920 with 1,655 persons to 1,476 in



1930, a -10% decrease while the county showed a more significant decline of -21%. During this time Alabama and the US increased in population by 12% and 16%, respectively. Furthermore, county population continued to decline from 1930 to 1960 (-30%) while the city increased by 9% during this time. Such decline for the county could be attributed largely to economic dependence on an agricultural corn and cotton cash

system, which succumbed to major hits during the great depression in the 1930s. Fabric mills in 1930s and defense plants during WWII in the 1940s also drew away much farming employment from the county, resulting in population loss. Ashland’s second most substantial population increase occurred between 1960 with 1,610 persons to 1990 with 2,103, an increase of 30%. This could be attributed to the large paper companies, in the mid to late 1950s, introducing artificial reforestation to the area and establishing thousands of acres of new pine plantation. From the logging industry Ashland brought in new businesses such as wood-based cabinetry and furniture, and thus more population. Today logging is Clay County’s primary economic engine since approximately 90% of the county is forest land. Adding to this growth was the construction of R.L. Harris Reservoir, commonly known as Lake Wedowee, which began in 1974 and was completed in 1983. Although located in neighboring Randolph County, the Lake is located near the border to Clay County, only about 10 miles east of Ashland, and provides for many outdoor recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, swimming, and camping. Clay County’s population, from 1960 to 2010, for the most part, leveled off with slight increases and decreases between decades most likely due to reasonable stability in forest harvesting, while Ashland’s population leveled off from 1990 to 2010 most likely attributable to logging based manufacturing in the city. Figure P-1 shows historic population trends for Ashland and Clay County from 1910 to 2010. Notice the sharp population increase for both the city and county from 1910 to 1930 while the county declined from 1920 to 1960. Also notice the city’s substantial growth from 1960 to 1990 when population then leveled off until 2010. Table P-1 displays historic population trends for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US from 1910 to 2010 and population estimates for 2013.

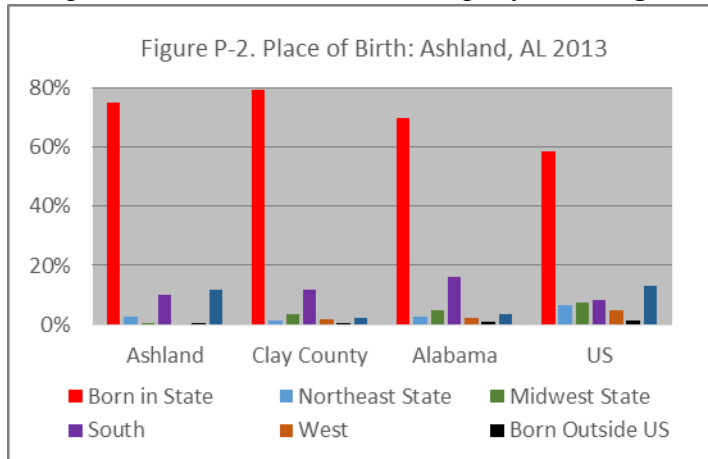
Table P-1. Historic Population Trends: Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, US								
Year	Ashland	% Change	Clay Co.	% Change	Alabama	% Change	US	% Change
1910	1,062	N/A	21,006	N/A	2,138,093	NA	92,228,531	N/A
1920	1,655	55.8%	22,645	7.8%	2,348,174	9.8%	106,021,568	15.0%
1930	1,476	-10.8%	17,768	-21.5%	2,646,248	12.7%	123,202,660	16.2%
1940	1,608	8.9%	16,907	-4.8%	2,832,961	7.1%	132,165,129	7.3%
1950	1,593	-0.9%	13,929	-17.6%	3,061,743	8.1%	151,325,798	14.5%
1960	1,610	1.1%	12,400	-11.0%	3,266,740	6.7%	179,323,175	18.5%
1970	1,921	19.3%	12,636	1.9%	3,444,165	5.4%	203,302,031	13.4%
1980	2,052	6.8%	13,703	8.4%	3,893,888	13.1%	226,542,199	11.4%
1990	2,103	2.5%	13,252	-3.3%	4,040,587	3.8%	248,718,301	9.8%
2000	1,963	-6.7%	14,254	7.6%	4,447,100	10.1%	281,421,906	13.1%
2010	2,037	3.8%	13,932	-2.3%	4,779,736	7.5%	308,745,538	9.7%
2013 est.	1,980	-2.8%	13,486	-3.2%	4,833,722	1.1%	316,128,839	2.4%

Source: Wikipedia, US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010.

Place of Birth

Place of birth data is useful in determining population trends through migration patterns in the city’s population. Examination of this data will show if the community is drawing population from other states and other counties or if the population is predominantly Alabama-born. Place of birth patterns show that Ashland had only a small portion of it’s population migrate inward from other states and a small portion born outside the US.

The majority of residents in Ashland (75%) in 2013 were born in the State of Alabama while 12% were born in a different state and 11% were foreign born. Clay County reported similar findings with approximately 79% of the population born in Alabama, 18% born in different state, and 2% foreign born. Alabama showed a slightly smaller portion (70%) of residents born in the state and a



slightly larger portion (25%) of residents born in a different state, while the US recorded considerably less residents born in their respective states at 58% and substantially more foreign born residents at 12%, indicating considerably more diversity than the city, county, and state. Figure P-2 illustrates percent place of birth for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2013. Notice the somewhat substantially larger portion of residents born in the state in the city and county compared to the state and nation and the

larger portion of residents from other states in the state and nation. This information indicates less inward migration into the city and county than in the state and nation in 2013.

Place of Residence

Place of residence is defined as: The area of residence 1 year prior to the reference date 2012 of those who reported moving to a different housing unit (U.S. Census Glossary). This data is useful to determine city migration patterns. Examination of this data will verify if the city has been gaining or losing in population previously living in other states and countries, and if the city's residents have been fairly stationary or mobile.

From 2011 to 2012 Ashland showed little migration of residents with approximately 83% of the city's resident population remaining in the same house, while approximately 3% moved into the city from somewhere else in Clay County, 4% moved in from some other county in Alabama, and 6% moved in from another state. Ashland reported no residents moving in from other countries at this time. Figure P-3 displays percent place of residence for Ashland for residents moving or staying in place from 2011 to 2012. Notice the substantial portion of residents remaining in place compared to those who moved in from other places in the county, state, and nation. This information indicates that Ashland showed little in-migration from other places. Most residents remained in place during this time. For more information consult Table P-3. *Place of Residence* in Appendix A.

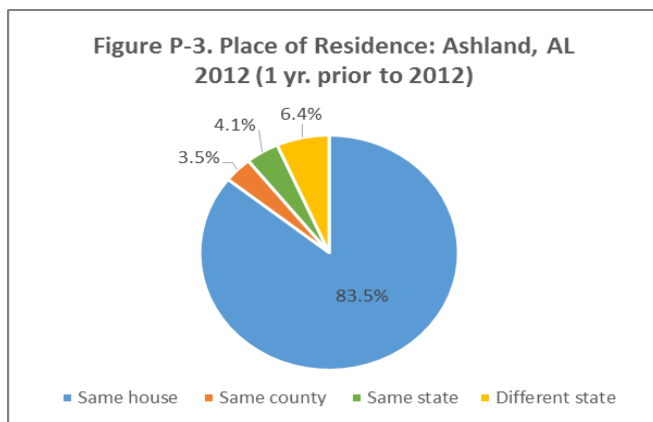


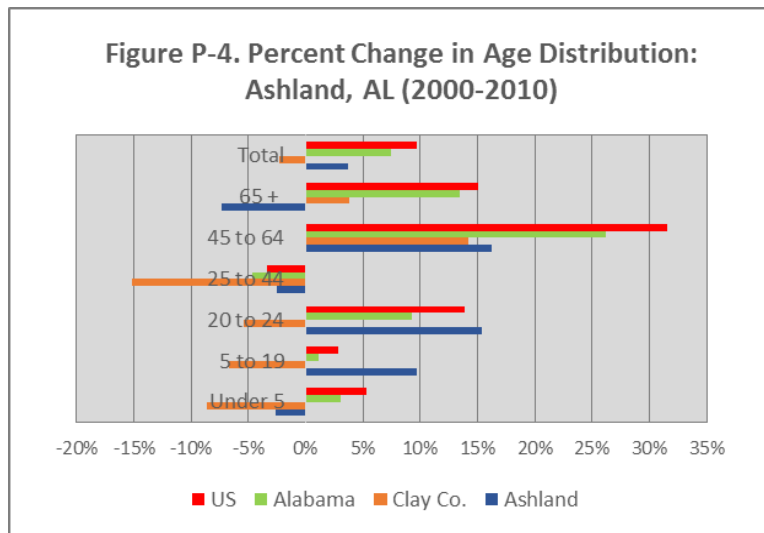
Figure P-3 displays percent place of residence for Ashland for residents moving or staying in place from 2011 to 2012. Notice the substantial portion of residents remaining in place compared to those who moved in from other places in the county, state, and nation. This information indicates that Ashland showed little in-migration from other places. Most residents remained in place during this time. For more information consult Table P-3. *Place of Residence* in Appendix A.

Population Composition

Age Distribution

Age distribution is a critical element in any population study. A community must structure their budget and resources to meet a wide variety of residents’ needs. Needs tend to differ significantly from one age group to another, therefore a proper understanding of age distribution in the community is necessary. For the purposes of this study, age distributions are classified as followed: Toddler/Preschool (Less than 5 years in age), Youth/K-12 (5 to 19), Young Adult/College Age (20 to 24), Young Adult/ Beginning Worker (25 to 44) Middle Age/Working Adult (44 to 64), and Senior/Retired (65+).

Ashland’s changes in age distribution followed somewhat different patterns than Clay County and somewhat similar patterns compared to Alabama and the US. From 2000 to 2010 the city reported a significant increase in youth population (ages 5 to 19) by 9% and also a climb in young adult/college age (20-24) persons by 15% while the county declined in youth by -6% and by -5% in young adult/college age persons. Ashland grew most significantly in the middle age/working adult age group (45-64) with a 16% increase as did the county at 14% and the state (26%) and nation (31%), all showing similar substantial growth trends in this age category. Meanwhile the city reported population loss in young adult/beginning worker (25-44) at -2% but significantly more so in the county at -15%. This was a common trend also in the state and nation, where both lost minor populations at -4% and -3%, respectively. As a trend different from the county, state, and nation, the city dropped in senior (65+) population by -7% while the county climbed in this population by 3% and the state (13%) and nation (15%) showed substantially higher growth in

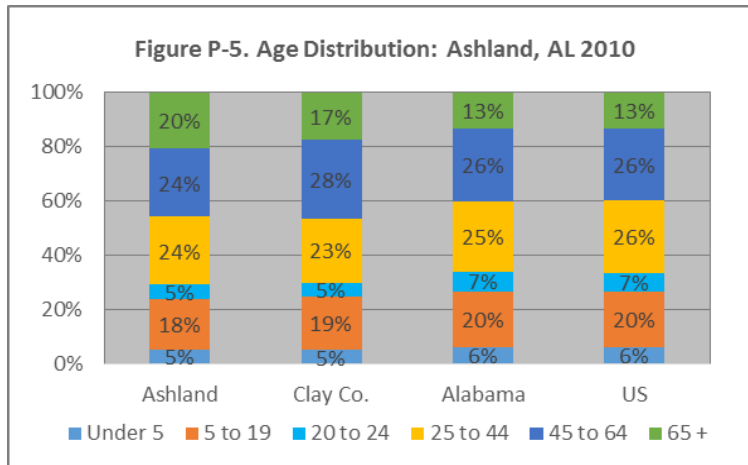


senior residents. Figure P-4 illustrates percent change in age distribution for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and US between 2000 and 2010. Notice the considerably higher growth in middle age/working adults (45-64) in the state and nation compared to the county and city. Also notice the substantial decline in senior populations in the city while the county, state, and nation grew in this age group. The county also showed somewhat significant decline in all age groups 44 and younger. This information suggests that many

younger generations in the rural areas of Clay County might be moving out of the county and Ashland may be receiving young population from elsewhere in the state. Declines in young adults/beginning (25-44) workers could be attributed to a national trend where these populations are leaving rural areas to find employment in metro areas, with closer proximity to major job centers and convenient access to interstates for travel. Significant growth in middle age working adults (45-64) could be due to the increase and expansion of regionally or nationally established businesses and business owners in rural areas where these people have decided to stay and call

home. The drop in senior population for the city could be due to senior residents leaving in order to be closer to larger metro areas where healthcare is more readily available and to possibly be closer to their younger families who may have located in another area. For more information consult Table P-4 *Age Distribution* in Appendix A.

Age distribution in portion to the overall population was also examined. According to 2010 Census data, the two most populated age groups in Ashland was middle-age 45 to 64 and young adult age 25 to 44, both accounting for 24% of the population, which showed similar trends to Clay County at 28% and 23% and Alabama and the US. Despite loss in senior population, the city reported a slightly higher portion of seniors aged 65 and older at 20%, than the county (17%), and a



somewhat considerably larger portion than the state and nation, both at 13%. In contrast, the city recorded a slightly lower portion of youth age 5-19 at 18% than the county (19%), and the state and nation both at 20%. This information indicates that the city and county held a somewhat considerably larger portion of older residents than the state and nation and a somewhat smaller portion of young adults.

Figure P-5 displays age distribution for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2010.

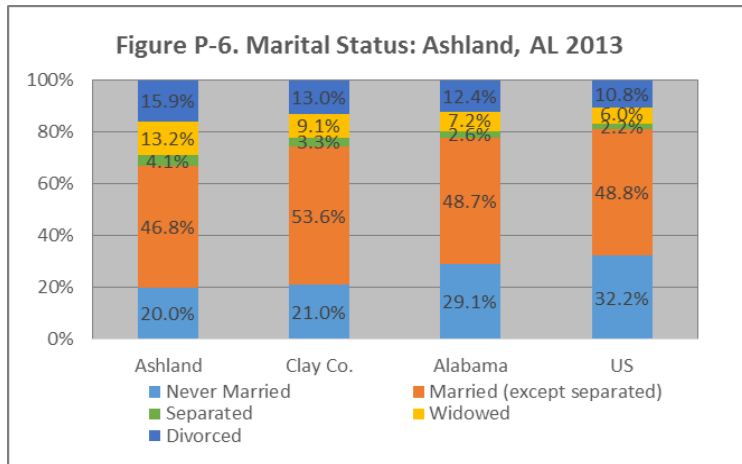
Notice that the city held a slightly larger portion of seniors than the county and a somewhat substantially larger portion than the state and nation, while the state and nation reported a slightly larger portion of young adults. For more information consult Table P-5.

Marital Status

Marital status also plays an important role in demographic studies. A thorough understanding of marital status allows a community to determine family needs and develop programs and policy toward building stronger families. For purposes of this study, marital status reports for all persons age 15 and older and is organized into 5 categories which are as follows: 1) never married, 2) married (except separated), 3) separated, 4) widowed, 5) divorced.

Ashland reported somewhat similar marital status to Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2010, with some various differences, however. In 2013, the city showed almost half (46%) of residents being married, which was slightly less compared to the state and nation, both at 48%, however, the county recorded over half (53%) being married, indicating proportionately more married couples than the city, state, and nation at this time. Ashland also reported somewhat less single persons who had never married at 20% compared to the county at 21% and considerably less than the state (29%) and nation at 32%. In 2013, the city also reported a slightly higher portion of divorcees (15%) and widowed (13%) than the county, state, and nation. Figure P-6 illustrates marital status for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and US in 2013. Notice the lower portions of married and never married persons in the city compared to the county, state, and nation and the higher representation of separated, divorced, and widowed population groups. While the county, state,

and nation showed proportionately more married and never married persons, the city reported higher portions of residents who were either divorced, widowed, or separated, in comparison. This could be attributed to the city holding more senior residents than the county, state, and nation,



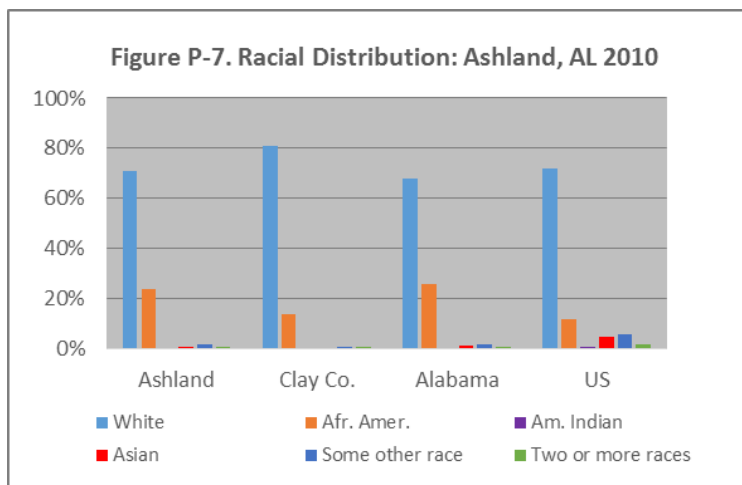
since this population tends to show more of the above listed characteristics, due to having lived longer, particularly widowed. Despite losses in senior populations, as previously discussed, the city holds more seniors than the county, state, and nation. Therefore, the city needs to make plans and policies to accommodate seniors and to stem the flow of seniors leaving the city in the future. Due to higher than average divorce and separation in the

community, the city should also consider plans and policies to help families in need and promote and encourage organizations and agencies who lend guidance and support to struggling families.

Race Distribution

A general understanding of racial diversity is necessary for a community to better serve its residents. Communities with varying races tend to have differing cultural and ethnic needs, however, these factors can spur greater opportunities for growth within the community.

In 2010, Ashland showed somewhat more racial diversity than Clay County in the portion of whites and black populations, which accounted for approximately 71% white and 24% black, while Clay County showed 81% white and 14% black. During this time, the city, however, reported somewhat substantially less racial diversity than the state, which recorded 68% white and 26% black. The nation showed



substantially more diversity than the city, county, and state with 72% white, 12% black and “other” races such as Asian at 4%, some other race alone at 6%, and 2% in persons showing two or more races in 2010. Figure P-7 illustrates percent racial distribution for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2010. Notice the considerably larger portion of black population and lower white population in the city compared to the compared to the county, state, and nation. This

information indicates that the city showed somewhat more racial diversity than the county, but somewhat substantially less than the state and considerably less diversity than the nation.

Gender Distribution

In typical American communities females tend to slightly outnumber males, due primarily to higher male mortality rates and longer female life expectancy. This trend, from the 2010 Census, is shown in Ashland to a somewhat larger degree, with approximately 54% female and 45% male, compared to the Clay County, Alabama, and US all of which ranged from 50-51% female and 48-49% male. This information indicates that in 2010 the city held a slightly larger female population than the county, state, and nation and a lower male population.

Analytical Summary

The analytical summary provides a general review of the topics discussed in each chapter followed by a brief assessment of the information.

Historical Population Trends

Historically, Ashland has shown somewhat fairly consistent population growth, increasing from 1,062 persons in 1910 to 2,037 in 2010, a 91% increase. Both Ashland and Clay County increased significantly in population from 1910 to 1920 (55% and 7%, respectively) most likely due to the railroad established through the city in 1907 as well as new logging operations and the discovery of large graphite and mineral deposits, which brought in more jobs, people, and resources. The city, however, reported a significant drop in population from 1920 with 1,655 persons to 1,476 in 1930, a -10% decrease while the county showed a more significant decline of -21%. During this time Alabama and the US increased in population by 12% and 16%, respectively.

Assessment: Ashland showed steady population increase for most of its history, while the county reported steady decline.

Place of Birth

The majority of residents in Ashland (75%) in 2013 were born in the State of Alabama while 12% were born in a different state and 11% were foreign born. Clay County reported similar findings with approximately 79% of the population born in Alabama, 18% born in different state, and 2% foreign born. Alabama showed a slightly smaller portion (70%) of residents born in the state and a slightly larger portion (25%) of residents born in a different state, while the US recorded considerably less residents born in their respective states at 58% and substantially more foreign born residents at 12%, indicating considerably more diversity than the city, county, and state.

Assessment: The considerable majority of Ashland residents were born in Alabama.

Place of Residence

From 2011 to 2012 Ashland showed little migration of residents with approximately 83% of the city's resident population remaining in the same house, while approximately 3% moved into the city from somewhere else in Clay County, 4% moved in from some other county in Alabama, and 6% moved in from another state. Ashland reported no residents moving in from other countries at this time.

Assessment: Ashland reported little in-migration of residents from 2011 to 2012.

Age Distribution

Ashland grew most significantly in the middle age/working adult age group (45-64) with a 16% increase as did the county at 14% and the state (26%) and nation (31%), all showing similar substantial growth trends in this age category.

According to 2010 Census data, the two most populated age groups in Ashland was middle-age 45 to 64 and young adult age 25 to 44, both accounting for 24% of the population, which showed

similar trends to Clay County at 28% and 23% and Alabama and the US. Despite loss in senior population, the city reported a slightly higher portion of seniors aged 65 and older at 20%, than the county (17%), and a somewhat considerably larger portion than the state and nation, both at 13%. In contrast, the city recorded a slightly lower portion of youth age 5-19 at 18% than the county (19%), and the state and nation both at 20%.

Assessment: The city reported a similar portion of young adult and middle age population compared to the county, state, and nation, but a slightly higher portion of seniors.

Marital Status

In 2013, the city showed almost half (46%) of residents being married, which was slightly less compared to the state and nation, both at 48%, however, the county recorded over half (53%) being married, indicating proportionately more married couples than the city, state, and nation at this time. Ashland also reported somewhat less single persons who had never married at 20% compared to the county at 21% and considerably less than the state (29%) and nation at 32%. In 2013, the city also reported a slightly higher portion of divorcees (15%) and widowed (13%) than the county, state, and nation.

Assessment: The city showed slightly less single and never married individuals and slightly more widowed and divorcees than the county, state, and nation in 2013. This could be attributed to a slightly larger senior population than the county, state, and nation.

Race Distribution

In 2010, Ashland showed somewhat more racial diversity than Clay County in the portion of whites and black populations, which accounted for approximately 71% white and 24% black, while Clay County showed 81% white and 14% black. During this time, the city, however, reported somewhat substantially less racial diversity than the state, which recorded 68% white and 26% black. The nation showed substantially more diversity than the city, county, and state with 72% white, 12% black and “other” races such as Asian at 4%, some other race alone at 6%, and 2% in persons showing two or more races in 2010.

Assessment: Ashland showed more racial diversity than Clay County, but less compared to Alabama and the US.

Gender Distribution

Ashland showed a somewhat substantially larger portion of females to males, with approximately 54% female and 45% male, compared to the Clay County, Alabama, and US, all of which ranged from 50-51% female and 48-49% male. This information indicates that in 2010 the city held a slightly larger female population than the county, state, and nation and a lower male population.

Assessment: In 2010 the city held a slightly larger female population than the county, state, and nation and a lower male population.

CHAPTER III: ECONOMY

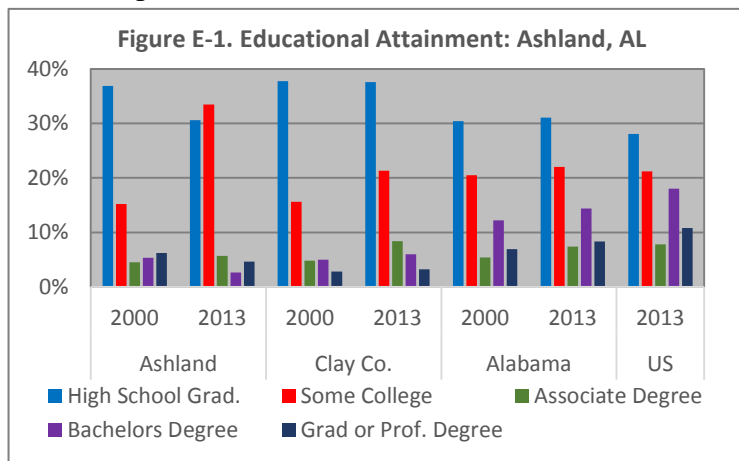
The economy directly affects a community's growth and prosperity. The state of the local economy i.e. how well it creates and maintains employment opportunities, handles production, and distributes goods and services greatly influences population, housing, transportation, and land use. Therefore, a clear understanding of the local economy is a vital factor for community growth and development as well as a sustainable comprehensive planning effort. Located in the central part of Clay County at the junction of AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77 Ashland serves as a center-point crossroads for commerce and economic development and may prepare for substantial highway commercial development, particularly in the downtown and surrounding areas. In addition, the city holds opportunity for industrial development in the Ashland Industrial Park, situated on AL Hwy. 9 in the eastern part of the city. Furthermore, the city serves as a gateway community to Talladega National Forest and Mount Cheaha, Alabama's highest peak. Visitors to this nationally recognized forest traveling from the south in nearby Tallapoosa County or from the east in neighboring Randolph County pass through Ashland in-route to the forest and this popular mountain. This natural amenity, provides additional opportunity for economic development in the form of recreation and tourism.

This chapter of the comprehensive plan examines the following economy related elements: educational attainment, income, labor force participation and unemployment, industrial composition, occupational status, and poverty. These elements for the city shall be compared to those of the county, state, and nation in order to establish a foundation for comparison. Economic information for this chapter has been obtained from the US Census 2000 as well as American Community Survey (ACS) estimates collected between the years of 2009-2013. However, due to variations in their data collection methodologies, much of the information presented from these sources cannot be compared together for trend analysis or should only be compared with caution. For example, one of the most significant differences between the US Census 2000 and the ACS is the data collection timeframe or reference period. All Census 2000 data was collected in 1999, while ACS data for small cities and towns, under 20,000 in population was collected between the years of 2009 and 2013. This methodology was established in order to provide more recent data updates in 5 year increments as opposed to 10 year. Other methodology factors for consideration may include differences in question wording, tabulation, and universes. For purposes of a complete economic study each section of this chapter shall explain which aspects of the 2000 Census and 2009-2013 ACS may be compared and trends shall be examined more closely when safe comparisons are deemed available between the two sources. General comparisons in data sources must be analyzed as speculation and only comparisons of percentages, means, medians, and rates have been examined, not standard numbers, as recommended by the Census Bureau.

Educational Attainment

Education is a vital factor for initiating community growth and economic development. A high quality education system prepares and empowers individuals within the community to be productive, successful leaders in their respective fields of training and expertise. This, in turn, qualifies individuals for greater earning potential, allowing more money to be reinvested into the community, building the local economy. According to Census Bureau analysts, educational attainment information between the 2000 Census and 2009-2013 ACS may be safely compared.

Ashland ranked fairly low in terms of educational attainment compared to Clay County, and considerably low in relation to Alabama and the US. Between 2000 and 2013 the city declined in the portion of residents having received a bachelor's degree or higher from 11% to 7%, while the county increased slightly from 7% to 9% and the state grew from 19% to 22%. The US reported 28% in 2013 in this category. During this time the city increased significantly in the portion of residents having some college training, but no degree, from 15% in 2000 to 33% in 2013, indicating that more residents had attended college but not received a degree. Both the county and state increased slightly in this category from 15% to 21% and from 20% to 22%, respectively. In 2013 the significant majority of Ashland residents (64%) had received a high school diploma or some college, while Clay County showed 58%, Alabama 53%, and the US 49%. Figure E-1 illustrates percent educational attainment for Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama from 2000 to 2013 and the US in 2013 for comparative purposes.



Notice the significant decrease in the portion of city residents holding a high school education and the considerable increase in residents having some college education, but no degree. Also notice that the city showed a slightly smaller portion of residents having a bachelor's degree or higher compared to the county, and substantially smaller representation than the state and nation in this attainment. This information

indicates that the city held somewhat less educational attainment than the county and considerably less attainment than the state and nation. Such decline and low attainment for the city could be attributed to workers with higher educational attainment moving to the metro areas of the state and larger communities to find employment opportunities in these places. As a planning consideration, the city should work with schools and business to enhance curriculum to serve local business and keep graduates in town by providing appropriate transition from school into the local workforce. For more information consult Table E-1. *Educational Attainment* in Appendix B.

Income

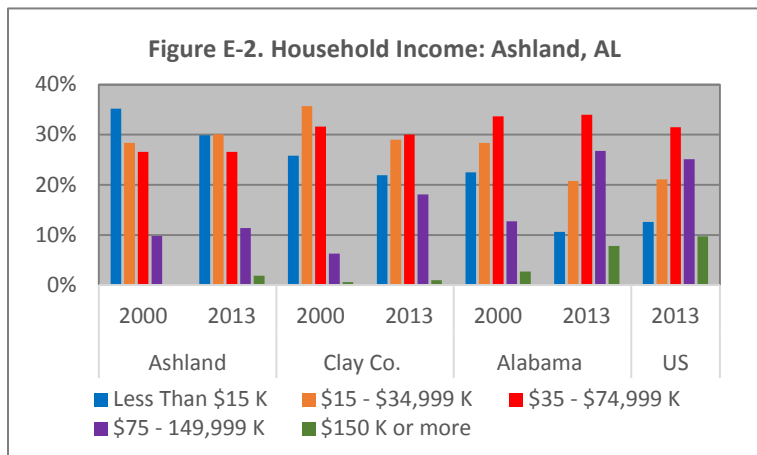
Monetary income is a primary factor in determining a community's wealth and prosperity. Higher incomes promote a higher standard of living and more return investment into the community, while lower incomes suggest lower standards and less investment. Therefore, a comprehensive economic study requires a thorough understanding of community income.

Household Income

Household income (HHI) is the most basic and generalized variable in measuring income. A household is considered a dwelling unit in which one or more individuals live. Therefore, the HHI is the accumulation of all income generated within a specified household. Median household income (MHI), which is characterized as the exact middle point monetary amount of household incomes collected, was also examined. To gain a better understanding of how wealth is distributed

throughout the community, an examination of the percent total and percentage change of households at different income levels (or brackets) was conducted. This information was obtained from the 2000 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) 2009-2013. The Census Bureau maintains that income information from these sources may be compared and analyzed, but only with substantial caution due to differences in the reference period in which the data was collected (See Economy Chapter Introduction for more details). Inflation from 2009 to 2013 must also be considered when comparing changes in income during this time.

Ashland ranked somewhat considerably lower than Clay County in terms of household income and substantially lower in comparison to Alabama and the US. From 2000 to 2013 the city declined in households earning less than \$15 K by -4%, while the county declined by -17%, and the state - 66%. During this time, the city grew in households earning between \$15 K and \$75 K by a combined 32% as both the county and state declined in households earning this income by -18% and -75%, respectively. In 2013 the significant majority (60%) of city households earned less than 35 K while the county reported a somewhat considerably lower portion at 50% and the state (31%) and nation (33%) reported even less representation in this income bracket. In contrast, the county



recorded a somewhat considerably larger portion of households earning \$35 K or more at 49% as the state and nation showed 68% and 66%, respectively. Figure E-2 shows household income distribution for Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama from 2000 to 2013 and the US in 2013 for comparative purposes. Notice the substantially higher portion of city households earning less than \$15 K compared to the county, state, and nation. Also notice

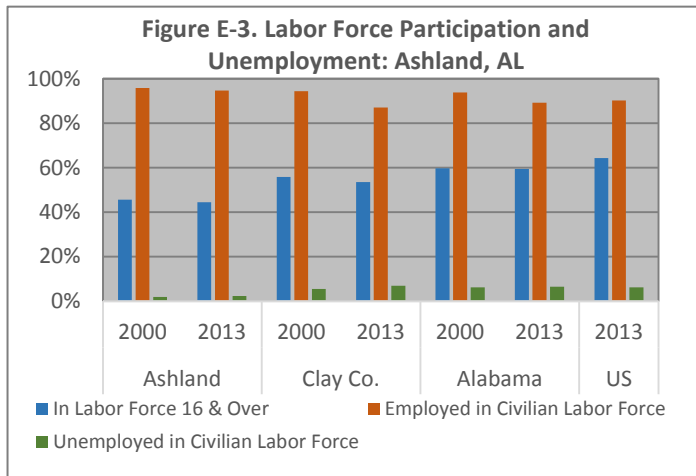
that the county, state, and nation showed considerably larger representation of households earning higher incomes (35 K and higher) compared to the city. This information indicates that Ashland should consider planning and policy to provide more high skilled labor and higher paying jobs for the community in order to better compete in economic markets. As a planning consideration, the city should work with schools and business to strengthen career placement with local employment in the community and create plans and policies to bring in more high-skilled business employers to the area. For more information consult Table E-2. *Household Income Distribution* in Appendix B.

In addition to household income distribution, median household income was also examined to further verify distribution levels. Median household income (MHI) for Ashland grew from \$23,469 in 2000 to \$24,512 in 2013, a 4% increase while Clay County MHI increased from \$27,885 to \$34,002 a 23% increase. Alabama increased from \$34,135 to \$43,253 a growth of 26% while the US reported \$53,046 in 2013.

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment

Labor force participation is based on how many individuals ages 16 and over are a part of the labor force, and if they are employed or unemployed as civilian or armed forces. Businesses desiring to relocate or expand seek communities with a strong labor force from which to draw qualified employment. To do this they must estimate approximately how many candidates are available to fill positions required to perform necessary operations. Therefore, a proper understanding of a community's labor force is critical to a comprehensive planning effort.

Labor force participation in Ashland ranked substantially lower compared to Clay County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2000 and 2013, the city's civilian labor force increased by -2% while the county labor force decreased by -4% and the state declined by a minor -0.5%. In 2013, approximately 44% of the city's population age 16 and over participated in the labor force, while the county recorded 53%, and the state 59% and nation 64%, indicating that the city showed substantially less labor force participation than the county, state, and nation during this time. Unemployment, in the civilian labor force, for the city increased from 1.8% to 2.3%, between 2000



and 2013, as the county reported slight growth from 5.5% to 6.9% and the state grew from 6.2% to 6.4%. The US reported 6.2% unemployment in 2013. This information, however, shows that despite some slight growth in civilian unemployment, Ashland held slightly less unemployment than Clay County, Alabama, and the US. Figure E-3 displays percent labor force participation and unemployment for Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama from 2000 to 2013 and the US in 2013 for comparative purposes.

Notice the city's remained fairly stationary in civilian labor force employment from 2000 to 2013. Although the county, state, and nation reported slightly higher labor force participation than the city in both 2000 and 2013, the city, however, showed a slightly smaller portion of unemployment in the civilian labor force. This could be attributed to a slightly higher portion of senior, retired residents in the city, compared to the county, state, and nation. For more information consult Table E-6. *Labor Force Participation* in Appendix B.

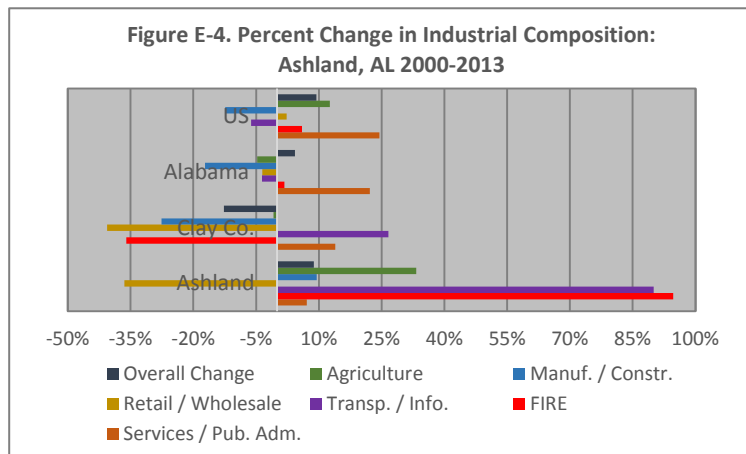
Industrial Composition

Any economically prosperous community will have a diverse and changing economic base, offering a variety of job opportunities and services to its population. As markets change and demand for specified goods and services increase or decrease, industrial sectors will vary in size and in their influence on the overall industrial composition and economic welfare of the community, therefore, a proper examination of industrial composition is necessary to plan for economic development and opportunities.

This section of the economy chapter focuses on industrial composition through employment by industry data for the civilian population age 16 and older. This information is useful in determining economic diversity and where economic development and opportunity is expected to grow and/or decline. For categorization purposes, industries have been organized into 9 distinct industrial sectors, which included: 1) Agriculture—which includes forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining, 2) Construction, 3) Manufacturing, 4) Wholesale Trade, 5) Retail Trade, 6) Transportation—which includes warehousing and utilities, 7) Information, 8) FIRE—which entails finance, insurance, and real estate, 9) Services—which entails professional, administrative, arts, education, healthcare, food accommodation, and other services except public administration, and 10) Public Administration. For the purposes of this study, particular similar sectors have been combined such as Manufacturing and Construction, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Transportation and Information, and Services and Public Administration. Information for this study based on individual sectors was collected from the 2000 Census and the 2009-2013 American Community Survey. According to the Census Bureau, industrial data between the 2000 Census and ACS 2009-2013 may be compared, but with caution due to tabulation differences.

Change in Industrial Composition

Between 2000 and 2013 Ashland exhibited fairly different trends in industrial change compared to Clay County, Alabama, and the US. In overall industrial growth the city increased in jobs by 8%, while the county declined by -12%, the state grew by 4% and the nation 9%. This information indicates that, in overall job growth, the city fared slightly better than the county and state and held comparable to the nation. The most significant industrial growth for the city occurred in Finance/Insurance/Real-estate (FIRE) and Transportation/Information which grew by 94% and 90%, respectively. However, with such a small number of jobs in this sector, any minor increases



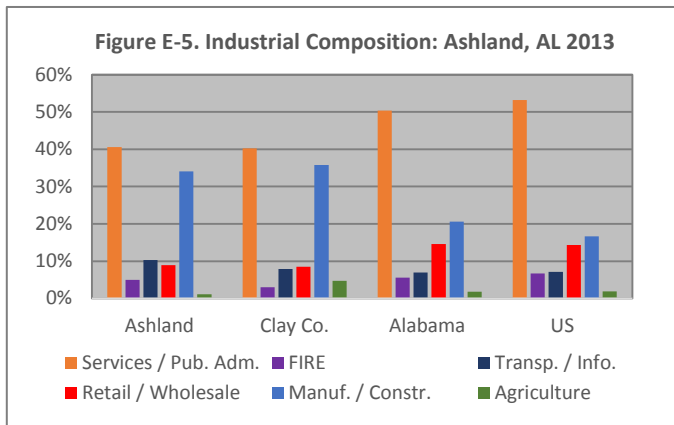
show as a substantial percent change. The most significant decline in jobs occurred in Retail/Wholesale Trade with a drop of -36% and a decrease from 15% to 8% in the portion of jobs represented in this sector. Both the county at -40% and state at -3% reported loss in Retail/Wholesale Trade. This could be attributed to a national trend of retail establishments leaving rural areas in favor of urban centers closer to larger residential areas with more convenient interstate

access. Figure E-4 illustrates percent industrial change for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US from 2000 to 2013. Notice that Ashland reported a significant decline in Retail/Wholesale Trade as did Clay County. Clay County also showed significant decline in FIRE, Manufacturing, and overall business growth while Alabama and the US reported somewhat substantial decline in the Manufacturing sector.

Employment by Industrial Sector

A study of employment in the city, county, and state is useful in determining the probable direction of job growth and opportunity. Employment by industrial sector examines the portion of persons employed in each industrial sector in Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama from 2000 to 2013, and in the US in 2013 to show comparisons.

In 2013 Ashland’s most significant industrial sector was Services/Public Administration, comprising 40% of the local economy, followed somewhat closely by Manufacturing/Construction which constituted 34%. Clay County reported a similar pattern with 40% in Services/Public Administration and 35% in Manufacturing/Construction. Both Alabama and the US recorded a somewhat slightly different pattern with substantially more representation in Services/Public Administration, at 50% and 53%, respectively, and a considerably smaller portion of Manufacturing/Construction, 20% for the state and 16% for the nation. Ashland and Clay County also reported a somewhat smaller portion of Retail/Wholesale Trade, both at 8%, while the state and nation both recorded 14%. Figure E-5 illustrates industrial composition for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2013. Notice the similar trends in the city and county with most dominant industrial sector in Services/Public Administration and the second most dominant sector being Manufacturing/Construction. Both the city and county reported a considerably larger portion



of Manufacturing/Construction employment compared to the state and nation. This could be attributed to the high importance of timber trade and manufacturing in the city and county, as previously explained, and the variety of jobs entailing the construction of wood products in the larger regional area. The smaller representation of Retail/Wholesale in the city and county compared to the state and nation could be due to loss of employment in the retail sector due to retail establishments moving

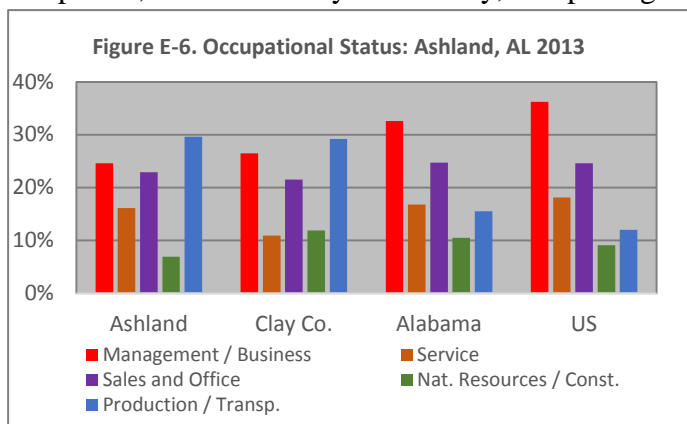
out from rural areas and seeking employment in larger service centers near interstates and other major and roadways. As a planning consideration, Ashland should strive to diversify the local economy in strengthening existing and recruiting more commercial business by working with local schools and regional colleges and universities to create curriculum and vocational trade which will best serve local business and create a more stable and balanced economy for future generations. For more information consult Table E-7. *Industrial Composition* in Appendix B.

Occupational Status

Every economically viable community has a variety of job occupations through which services are performed and money is circulated. A study of occupational status shows what kind of labor is being utilized in a community. This is useful for determining where job opportunities exist and where job growth is most or least likely to occur. For categorization purposes, occupational status has been divided into 6 categories, which included: 1) Management—which constitutes business, sciences, and arts occupations 2) Services—which includes healthcare support, firefighting and

law enforcement, ground and building maintenance, food accommodation, and personal care services, 3) Sales / Office—sales and related, and administrative, 4) Natural Resources—which entails fishing, farming, mining, as well as construction trade workers, extraction workers, and supervisors, 5) Production / Transportation—production occupations, transportation and moving occupations, aircraft and traffic control operations, motor vehicle operators, rail, water, and other transportation related occupations. Occupational status comparisons between 2000 Census and ACS 2009-2013 information has been accepted by the Census Bureau, however, caution must be noted due to changes in tabulation.

Ashland reported somewhat different occupation status compared to Clay County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2000 and 2013 the most significant growth in city occupation was in Sales and Office, which increased by 36%, while county and state Sales and Office occupations declined by -10% and 0.6%, respectively. Production/Transportation in 2013 was the most dominant occupation, in both the city and county, comprising 29% of all jobs in both places while the largest



occupation status for both the state and nation was Management/Business at 32% and 36%, respectively. This indicates that the city and county, during this time, held proportionately more blue-collar jobs as the state and nation comprised a larger portion of white-collar professions. Figure E-6 displays occupational status for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and US in 2013. Notice that the city and county reported significant larger portion of Production/Transportation occupations

than the state and nation, while the state and nation showed more Management/Business related occupations. Once again, this could be attributed to forest production industries, which are more prominent in the city and county than in the state and nation, in connection to the economy. For more information consult Table E-8. *Occupational Status* in Appendix B.

Poverty Status

Poverty status shows the economic welfare of a community and can be used to assess a community's need for public assistance. According to the U.S. Census glossary, poverty is measured in accordance with monetary income, excluding capital gains or losses, taxes, non-cash benefits, and whether or not a person lives in a family or non-family household, compared to the selected poverty threshold, which varies based on family size and composition. People who cannot be included in poverty studies include: unrelated individuals under 15, and people in institutional group quarters, college dormitories, military barracks, and living conditions without conventional housing and who are not in shelters. According to the Census Bureau, poverty status may be compared, but with caution due to reference period issues.

Poverty in Ashland rated high compared to Clay County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2000 and 2013 individuals below poverty level in the city increased from 19% to 26%, while the county increased from 17% to 19%, the state climbed from 16% to 18% and the nation grew from 12% to 15%. Despite the growth in poverty at the county, state, and national level, individual city poverty rated higher in 2013. Family poverty also rated higher in Ashland, which increased substantially from 12% in 2000 to 22% in 2013. Clay County also increased somewhat significantly in family poverty from 12% to 16%, while Alabama grew slightly from 12% to 14%, as did the US, increasing from 9% to 11%.

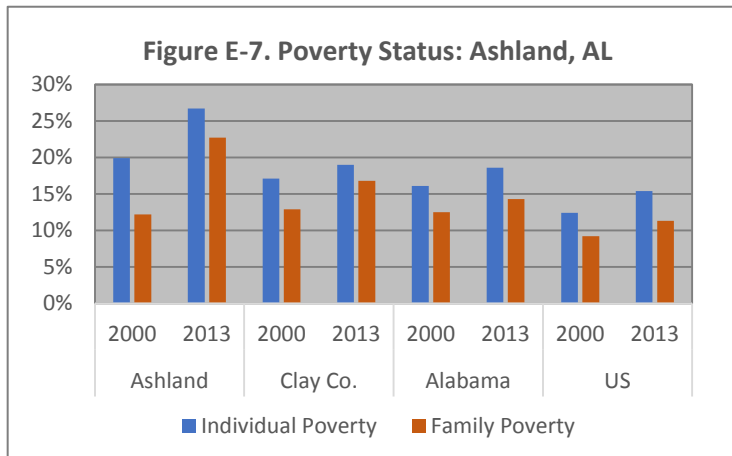


Figure E-7 shows percent individual and family poverty status for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2000 and 2013. Notice that both individual and family poverty status for the city consistently ranked higher than the county, state, and nation. This could be attributed to the considerably higher portion of residents earning less than \$15 K

compared to the county, state, and nation, as previous discussed in the income section. Many of these income earners could be employed through manufacturing and production positions, which tend to pay less in wages than those persons employed in business and management. As a planning consideration, Ashland should strive to adopt and implement policies and plans to alleviate poverty and increase income earnings in the city. For more information consult Table E-9. *Occupational Status* in Appendix B.

As a planning consideration, Ashland should strive to adopt and implement policies and plans to alleviate poverty and increase income earnings in the city. For more information consult Table E-9. *Occupational Status* in Appendix B.

Analytical Summary

The analytical summary provides a general review of the topics discussed in each chapter and an assessment of the data findings for each topic.

Educational Attainment

Bachelor's Degree or Higher: Ashland ranked fairly low in terms of educational attainment compared to Clay County, and considerably low in relation to Alabama and the US. Between 2000 and 2013 the city declined in the portion of residents having received a bachelor's degree or higher from 11% to 7%, while the county increased slightly from 7% to 9% and the state grew from 19% to 22%. The US reported 28% in 2013 in this category.

Assessment: Ashland ranked slightly low in educational attainment compared to Clay County and considerably low compared to Alabama and the US.

Income

Households Earning Less than \$35 K: In 2013 the significant majority (60%) of city households earned less than 35 K while the county reported a somewhat considerably lower portion at 50% and the state (31%) and nation (33%) reported even less representation in this income bracket.

Households Earning More than \$35 K: In contrast, the county recorded a somewhat considerably larger portion of households earning \$35 K or more at 49% as the state and nation showed 68% and 66%, respectively.

Median Household Income: Median household income (MHI) for Ashland grew from \$23,469 in 2000 to \$24,512 in 2013, a 4% increase while Clay County MHI increased from \$27,885 to \$34,002 a 23% increase. Alabama increased from \$34,135 to \$43,253 a growth of 26% while the US reported \$53,046 in 2013.

Assessment: The city reported significantly lower household income earnings and median household income compared to the county, state, and nation.

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment

Labor Force Participation: In 2013, approximately 44% of the city's population age 16 and over participated in the labor force, while the county recorded 53%, and the state 59% and nation 64%, indicating that the city showed substantially less labor force participation than the county, state, and nation during this time.

Unemployment: Unemployment, in the civilian labor force, for the city increased from 1.8% to 2.3%, between 2000 and 2013, as the county reported slight growth from 5.5% to 6.9% and the state grew from 6.2% to 6.4%. The US reported 6.2% unemployment in 2013.

Assessment: Ashland reported, in 2013, considerably lower labor force participation than the Clay County, Alabama, and the US and slightly lower unemployment than the county, state, and nation.

Industrial Composition

In 2013 Ashland's most significant industrial sector was Services/Public Administration, comprising 40% of the local economy, followed somewhat closely by Manufacturing/Construction which constituted 34%. Clay County reported a similar pattern with 40% in Services/Public Administration and 35% in Manufacturing/Construction. Both Alabama and the US recorded a somewhat slightly different pattern with substantially more representation in Services/Public Administration, at 50% and 53%, respectively, and a considerably smaller portion of Manufacturing/Construction, 20% for the state and 16% for the nation.

Assessment: Ashland and Clay County reported more employment in manufacturing and construction than Alabama and the US and less in services and public administration.

Occupational Status

Production/Transportation in 2013 was the most dominant occupation, in both the city and county, comprising 29% of all jobs in both places while the largest occupation status for both the state and nation was Management/Business at 32% and 36%, respectively. This indicates that the city and county, during this time, held proportionately more blue-collar jobs as the state and nation comprised a larger portion of white-collar professions.

Assessment: Ashland and Clay County showed a larger portion of production and transportation jobs in 2013 compared to Alabama and the US, while the state and nation reported considerably more management and business occupations.

Poverty Status

Between 2000 and 2013 individuals below poverty level in the city increased from 19% to 26%, while the county increased from 17% to 19%, the state climbed from 16% to 18% and the nation grew from 12% to 15%. Despite the growth in poverty at the county, state, and national level, individual city poverty rated higher in 2013. Family poverty also rated higher in Ashland, which increased substantially from 12% in 2000 to 22% in 2013. Clay County also increased somewhat significantly in family poverty from 12% to 16%, while Alabama grew slightly from 12% to 14%, as did the US, increasing from 9% to 11%.

Assessment: In 2013, both family and individual poverty in the city rated substantially higher than the county, state, and nation at this time.

CHAPTER IV: HOUSING

Housing is one of the most fundamental elements of community needs. In order for a community to grow and prosper there must be a diverse and satisfactory amount of quality housing available. A housing examination is useful in determining housing types, existing housing conditions, availability, and affordability, in order to identify and meet the city's housing needs. The City of Ashland recognizes these needs and has taken action to address concerns. This chapter examines housing characteristics such as unit types, tenure and occupancy status, vacancy status, household size, housing stock age, physical conditions, selected physical conditions, value, and affordability.

Housing information was collected from the US 2000 Census and US 2010 Census and the 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS). Census 2000 and 2010 information is used as 100-percent count benchmark data for people and housing, and collected once every 10 years during the year prior to dissemination, while the 2009-2013 ACS consists of estimate data updated yearly, and collected within a 5-year timeframe, for communities with a population of less than 20,000 people. The Census Bureau provides both forms of information in order to offer the most accurate data (every 10 years in the Census) as well as the most recent (in the ACS working on yearly schedule). Housing information such as tenure and occupancy, and vacancy status have been obtained from the 2000 and 2010 Census while data pertaining to units by type, household size, housing stock age, selected physical housing conditions, housing value, gross rent, and owner and renter affordability have been drawn from ACS. Physical housing conditions have been obtained from a special EARPDC observational survey conducted in 2014.

For comparative purposes and trend analysis, housing information from Census 2000 has been examined, however, according to Census Bureau experts, certain data characteristics in Census 2000 cannot be safely compared with the American Community Survey due to differences in data collection methodology. The Census Bureau has determined that the following housing characteristics for Census 2000 and ACS may be safely compared: units in structure (units by type), tenure and occupancy, household size, kitchen facilities and plumbing facilities (selected physical housing conditions), home value (owner-occupied housing). Characteristics that may not be safely compared: year structure built (housing stock age), gross rent, and gross rent as a percentage of household income (affordability). For this study these characteristics have only been examined through the 2009-2013 ACS. Vacancy status should only compare Census 2000 data with Census 2010.

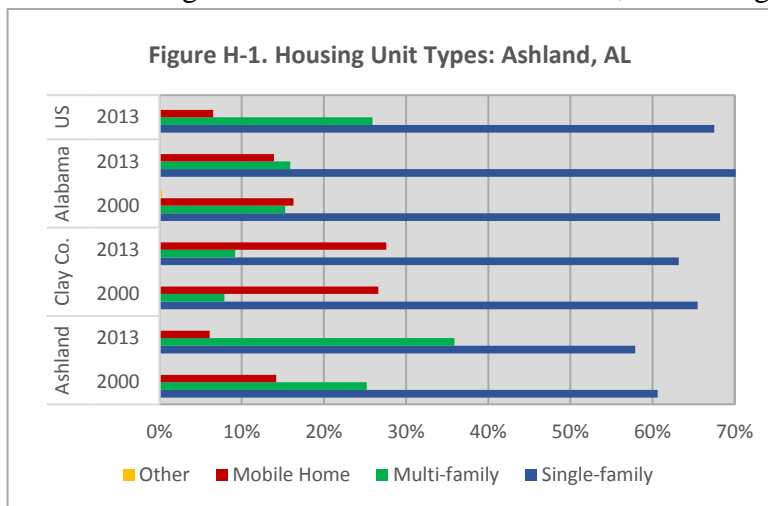
Housing Inventory

Units by Type

Housing comes in many forms and styles, each aiming to satisfy a wide range of people with changing demands and needs. A community that champions a variety of housing types has an advantage in that it provides many housing options with which to choose from, thus attracting more people. An examination of unit types reveals the most common and least common housing options available, expressing trends in housing development. Ashland housing consists of the following types: 1) Single-family—one unit attached or detached structures housing one family,

primarily a house 2) Multi-family—contains two or more units within one structure with one family per unit; these include apartments, town homes, and duplexes, 3) Manufactured—a transportable structure which is three hundred-twenty or more square feet, when installed, to be used as a dwelling with or without a foundation, 4) Other—any living accommodations occupied as a housing unit that does not fit the previous types, such as houseboats, railroad cars, campers, and vans. According to the Census Bureau, housing units by type in Census 2000 and the ACS may be safely compared.

Single-family housing for Ashland was the substantially dominant housing unit, although declining slightly from 584 units (60% of the housing stock) in 2000 to 577 units in 2013 (57% of the housing stock), a minor 1.2% decrease. Meanwhile Clay County increased in single-family homes by 11% as did Alabama by 14%. Single-family housing, in 2013, was also the dominant housing type in the county at 62% of all housing unit types and the state (70%) and nation at 67%. Multi-family was also a significantly popular housing unit type in the city. Between 2000 and 2013 Ashland increased in multi-family housing by 47% while Clay County reported a similar increase of 48% and Alabama showed a substantially smaller climb of 15%. In 2013 the city recorded a substantially larger portion of multi-family housing at 35% than the county at 10%, state (15%) and nation (26%) suggesting proportionately more rental housing and possibly smaller families than average, common characteristics of multi-family housing. During this time Ashland exhibited a somewhat significant decline in mobile homes, decreasing from 14% to 6% of the housing stock and a -55% drop in units.



Meanwhile the county increased in mobile homes by 22% and the state showed a -5% decline. In 2013 Clay County showed a significant 27% of all housing units as mobile homes while Alabama reported 13% and the US 6%. Figure H-1 illustrates percent housing unit types for Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama in 2000 and 2013 and the US in 2013 for comparative purposes. On the chart notice that single-family is the substantially dominant housing

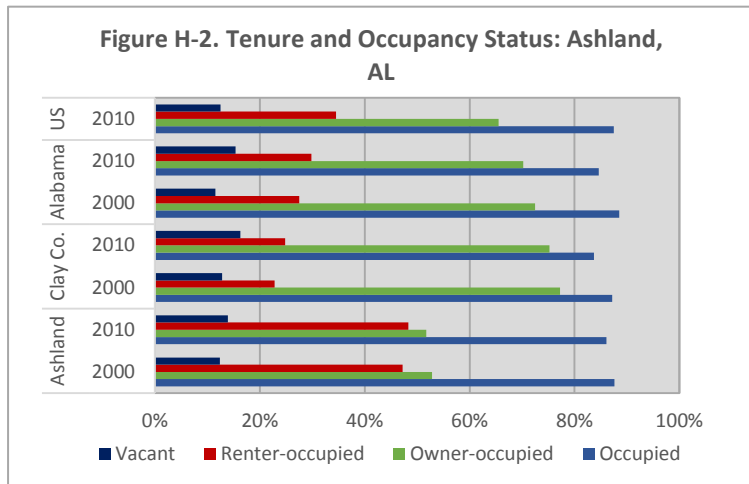
type in the city, county, state, and nation. Also notice that multi-family housing in 2013 was considerably more prominent in the city than in the county, state, and nation. This could be attributed to a larger increase of youth and young adult populations for the city between 2000 and 2013, as previously discussed in the population chapter. The city also showed a substantial decrease in the number and portion of mobile homes. This could be due to a shift in housing type preferences as residents, such as young families, living in mobile homes could have transitioned to multi-family units as more units were being built.

Tenure and Occupancy Status

Housing occupancy and ownership patterns change as a result of the housing market and population growth or decline. A study of housing ownership patterns is useful in analyzing housing

needs and guiding policies toward better housing development.

Between 2000 and 2010 home occupancy decreased in Ashland by a slight -0.6% and also in Clay County by -1% while Alabama increased occupancy by 5%. The city and county declined most significantly in owner-occupied housing, dropping by -2% and -4%, respectively while the state increased by 2%. Meanwhile rental home occupancy increased in the city by a slight 1%, county 6%, and state 14%, indicating that rental housing became increasingly popular while owner-occupied declined in the housing of choice, particularly in Ashland and Clay County. Despite the decline in owner-occupied homes, these housing units remained the substantially dominant housing preference, accounting for 51% of occupied units in the city, county (75%), state (70%),



and nation (65%) in 2010. Also in 2010, renter-occupied housing showed a substantially higher portion of occupied homes in the city at 48%, than in the county (24%), and state (29%), and the nation at 34%. This could be attributed to a higher portion of multi-family units in the city than in the county and state, as previously discussed. Figure H-2 displays percent housing occupancy and tenure for Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama from 2000 to 2010 and the US in 2010 for comparative purposes.

Notice the considerably larger portion of owner-occupied housing in the city, county, state, and nation compared to renter-occupied. Also notice that Ashland reported significantly more renter-occupied housing than Clay County and Alabama, but similar portion to the US. As a planning consideration, Ashland should seek community input in order to verify if more multi-family housing is needed and make plans and policies to promote and encourage these housing units in the most effective manner and in the most beneficial places. For more information consult Table H-2. *Housing Occupancy and Tenure* in Appendix C.

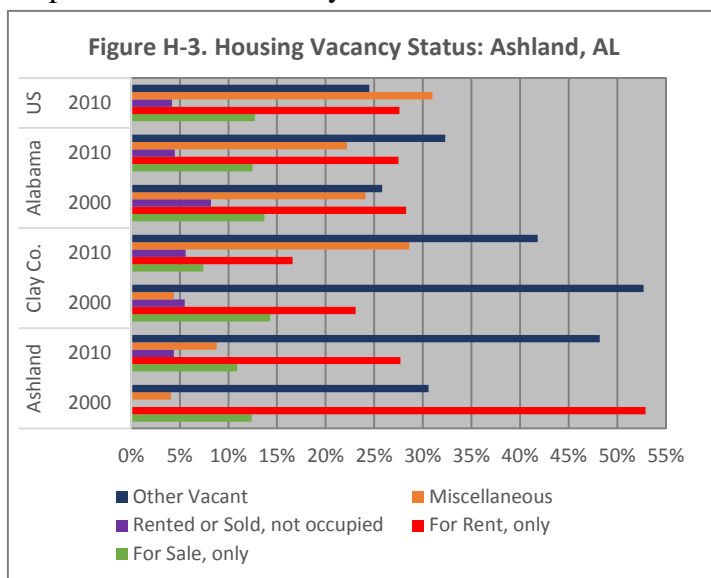
Vacancy Status

Vacancy status is useful in determining how vacant housing has been utilized. Any unoccupied housing unit is considered vacant. Vacancies can also be occupied houses for rent, sale, or for seasonal or recreational use only. Five basic categories were selected to identify how vacant housing was being used, these included: 1) for sale only units, 2) for rent only units, 3) rented or sold, but not occupied, 4) miscellaneous—this includes units used for seasonal, recreational, occasional use, or migrant workers, 5) other—which entails other non-specified uses.

Ashland showed somewhat different patterns in vacancy status compared to Clay County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2000 and 2010 the city increased in total vacant housing units, climbing from 121 units to 137, a 13% increase, while the county increased from 91 to 1,106, a 1,115% increase, and the state grew by 27%. Ashland increased in every type of vacancy to a greater or lesser degree, with the exception of for rent only units, and both Clay County and

Alabama increased in every type, with the except of units rented or sold, but not occupied, which dropped by -29% in the state. Between 2000 and 2010 the dominant vacancy status in the city shifted from for rent only at 52% to “other vacant” at 48%. The county showed a somewhat similar trend with an 862% increase in “other vacant” units but also a 776% increase in for rent only units. This information suggests that, for the city, many of the previously “for rent only” vacant units transitioned to non-specified vacant uses. As previously mentioned, the city holds a higher than average number of multi-family housing units. These multi-family units could have been vacated and used for non-specified uses. However, more information should be collected on this speculation.

Figure H-3 illustrates housing vacancy for Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama between 2000 and 2010 and the US in 2010 for comparative purposes. Notice, in the city, the substantial decline in the portion of for rent only vacant units in 2010 and then the significant increase in the portion of



“other vacant” uses. Also notice that the county also held dominant representation of “other vacant” uses, similar to the city. Both the state and nation reported a significantly smaller portion of “other vacant” uses and more miscellaneous uses than the city and county during this time. Ashland reported a slightly larger portion of for rent only uses compared to the county, and similar representation to the state and nation. This could be attributed to a high portion of multi-family units scattered throughout the city. As a planning consideration, Ashland could strive to identify non-specified vacant housing uses in order to

make plans and policies to increase occupancies. For more information consult Table H-3.

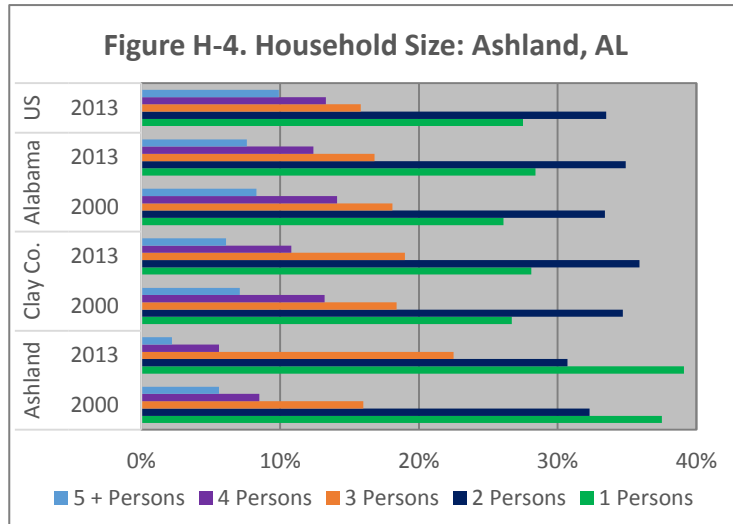
Housing Vacancy Status in Appendix C.

Household Size

Household size is a useful measure in determining how housing is being utilized and in meeting household needs. Generally speaking, a community with fewer individuals per household could best utilize housing by building smaller or more compact housing than a community with larger households and vice-versa.

Ashland reported slightly smaller households than Clay County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2000 and 2013 the city increased in 1 person households by a somewhat considerable 13%, while the county showed a 3% climb, and the state grew by 15%. In 2013 approximately 39% of city households were 1 person homes and 30% were 2 person homes, accounting for 69% of total city households. The county recorded 64% of homes being either 1 person or 2 person, while the state showed 63% and the nation 61%. The county, state, and nation, between 33% and 35%, reported a slightly larger portion of 2 person households than the city at 30%. This information indicates that

the city reported slightly smaller household size than the county, state, and nation in 2013. Figure H-4 shows household size for Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama from 2000 to 2013 and the US in 2013 for comparative purposes.



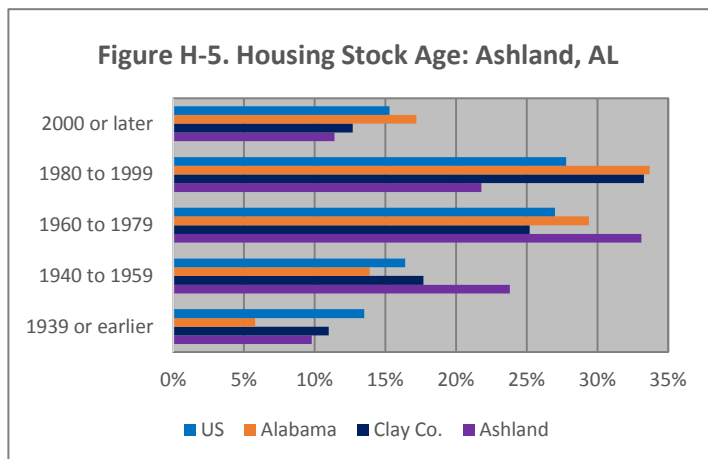
Notice the significantly larger portion of 1 person households in the city compared to the county, state, and nation in 2013 and also the slightly larger portion of 2 person households in the county, state, and nation in comparison to the city. As a planning consideration the city could make plans and policies to accommodate 1 person households, and possibly smaller housing units in order to meet community needs. For more information consult Table H-4. *Household Size* in Appendix C.

Housing Conditions

Housing Stock Age

Housing stock age is a good indicator of current housing conditions and needs. A general study of housing age can be used to assess probable housing conditions and needs for improvements within the community.

According to ACS 2009-2013, Ashland reported a considerably old housing stock. Approximately 66% of the Ashland's housing was built prior to 1980 while the Clay County showed 53%, Alabama 49%, and the US 56%. Furthermore, approximately 33% of the city's housing was built prior to 1960, as the county showed 28%, the state 19%, and the nation 29%. Ashland reported a considerably larger portion of homes built between 1940 and 1980 at 56%, compared to the Clay County (42%) and Alabama and the US both at 43%, which primarily accounts for the city's older housing stock.



New housing construction in the city (homes built from 2000 or later) reported only 11% in the city, 12% in the county and 17% in the state and 15% for the nation, showing that both the city and county with somewhat substantially less newly constructed homes than the state and nation. Figure H-5 illustrates percent housing stock age for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US from 1939

or earlier to 2000 or later. Notice the substantially larger portion of city homes built between 1940 and 1980 compared to the county, state, and nation and also the considerably larger representation

of county, state, and nation homes built post 1980 compared to the city. As a planning consideration Ashland may strive to identify deteriorating homes and make plans and policies to encourage the rebuilding and/or demolishing of older, and possibly dilapidated housing. For more information consult Table H-5. *Housing Stock Age* in Appendix C.

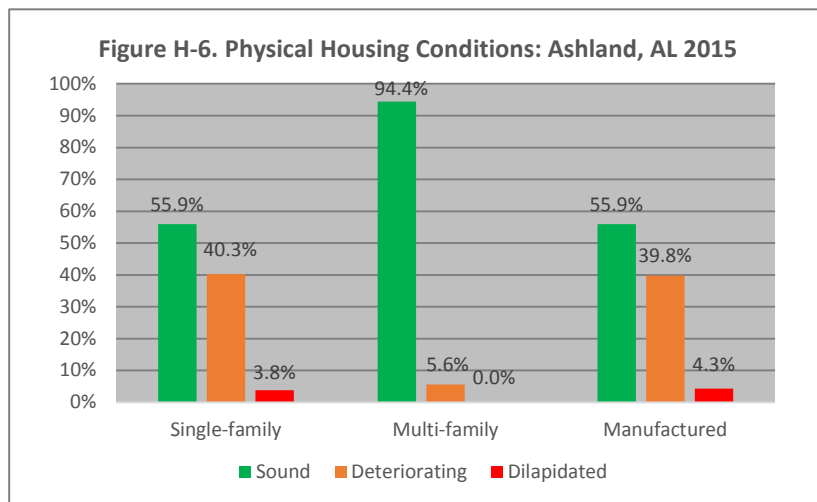
To further verify older housing conditions for the city, median year structure built was also examined. According to ACS 2009-2013 the median year for structures built in the city was 1969. In comparison, Clay County showed 1977, Alabama 1981, and the US 1976 during this time.

Physical Housing Conditions

Quality physical housing conditions play an important role in serving the general population and in attracting new people to the community. This section of the plan examines physical housing conditions for outside physical aesthetic appearance and structural stability. In 2014, EARPDC cartography staff conducted a field check of the city to inventory housing improvement needs (See Map 3: *Housing Conditions*) based on three pre-determined criteria: 1) sound condition, 2) deteriorating, 3) dilapidated. These criteria are described as follows:

- Sound conditions—units need no work, all painted areas are painted, roof is straight with no sags, good shingles or other roof material, gutters attached and in good functional shape, all siding or brick is intact and properly maintained. Windows have screens or storm windows. No rotten doors and windows in place, shingles in good condition. No rotten or missing shutters. All doors are in good shape. Foundations are full and not cracked or sagging.
- Deteriorating conditions—units may show one or many improvements needed. Roofs are sagging and/or curled with missing shingles, rotten or missing trim or siding, cracks in brick or foundation, piles of trash, unkempt yards, cluttered appearance. These units are wide ranging from almost sound condition to nearly dilapidated.
- Dilapidated—units are neglected and could be vacant, abandoned, or burned and not repaired. These units exhibit many obvious defects and have been deemed “unlivable” and not habitable under city code.

Ashland reported somewhat poor housing conditions. According to the EARPDC field check in 2014 there were 794 housing units in the city of which 583 (73% of the total) were identified as



single family, 108 (13%) multi-family, and 103 (13%) manufactured homes.

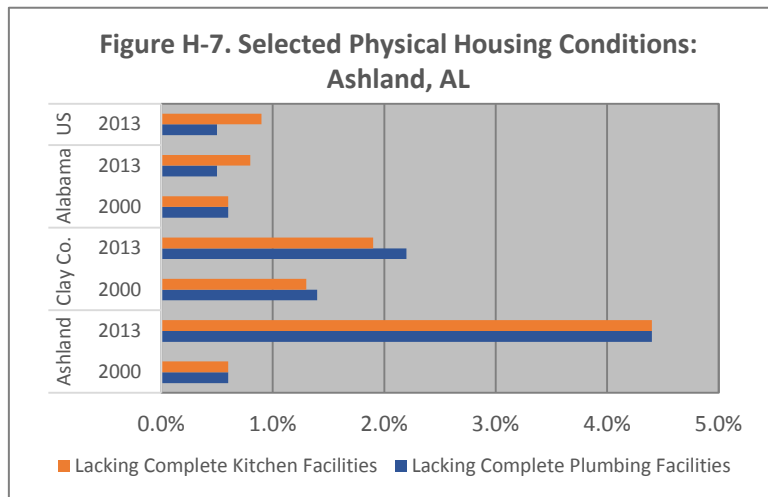
Approximately 316 (39% of the total) homes were found to be in deteriorating condition and 34 (4%) dilapidated. In 2014 somewhat less homes were reported in either deteriorating or dilapidated condition than sound condition, indicating some need for housing improvements. Single-family homes reported the most substantial need with

350 homes (44%) in either deteriorating or dilapidated condition, followed distantly by manufactured housing with 87 (84%) in need of some repair. Multi-family homes reported minor need with only 5% in deteriorating condition and no units showing as dilapidated. Figure H-6 illustrates physical housing conditions in Ashland for single family, multi-family, and manufactured homes in 2014. Notice the significant portion of single-family and manufactured homes in deteriorating condition. Also notice that approximately 44% of single family homes in the city were either deteriorating or dilapidated. As a planning consideration Ashland should seek plans and policies to improve housing conditions for single-family and manufactured homes in order to meet residential needs and accommodate quality neighborhood growth for the future.

Selected Physical Conditions

Quality selected physical housing conditions play an important role in serving the general population and in attracting new people to the community. Homes throughout the community need proper, complete, and reliable utilities such as plumbing and kitchen in order to sufficiently serve the resident population. Data pertaining to selected physical housing conditions was collected from the 2000 Census and the ACS 2009-2013 which examined units lacking complete plumbing facilities and units lacking complete kitchen facilities.

Ashland showed somewhat similar selected physical housing conditions compared to Clay County, but fairly different conditions compared to Alabama, and the US. Between 2000 and 2013 the city increased from 5 to 41 (a 720% increase) in units lacking complete plumbing facilities while the county grew from 80 to 122 (a 52% increase) and the state decreased by -22%. Ashland also increased from 5 to 41 (720%) in homes lacking complete kitchen facilities as did Clay County, increasing from 74 to 107 (a 44% climb) and Alabama grew by 45%. In 2013 approximately 4.4% of the city's homes lacked complete plumbing facilities, while the county reported 2.2%, and the state and the nation 0.5%, indicating that the city and county held proportionately more homes in need of complete plumbing than the state and nation. In a similar manner, the city and county reported more homes in need of complete kitchen facilities at 4.4% and 1.9%, respectively, while the state showed 0.8% and the nation 0.9%. Figure H-7 illustrates percent selected physical housing conditions for Ashland, Clay County, and Alabama in 2000 and 2013 and the US in 2013 for comparative purposes.

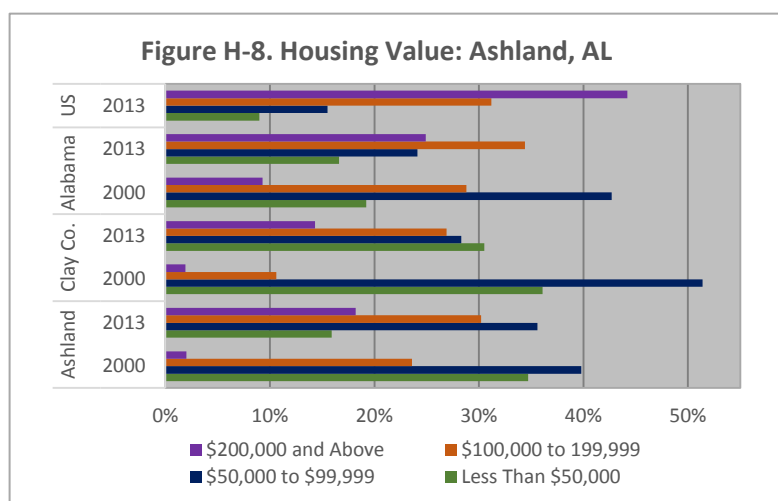


Notice that the city and county held a somewhat more substantial portion of homes lacking complete plumbing and kitchen facilities compared to the state and nation. The larger portion of homes lacking complete plumbing and kitchen facilities for Ashland and Clay County in comparison to Alabama and the US could be attributed the city and county holding somewhat considerably less new construction, and an older housing stock, as previously discussed. For more information see Table H-7 in Appendix C.

Housing Value

Housing value is a critical element of a comprehensive housing study. Every community desires housing with high resale value and growing equity. The information provided focuses chiefly on housing value for owner-occupied housing, being the primary form of housing in the community. Ashland recognizes the need to promote and encourage quality housing development and has been active in preparing for such growth.

Ashland recorded slightly higher housing value than Clay County, but considerably lower value than Alabama and the US. Between 2000 and 2013 median housing value (MHV) for Ashland increased from \$64,900 to \$89,300 while Clay County MHV grew from \$62,200 to \$79,900. Alabama MHV climbed from 85,100 to \$122,500 and the US MHV in 2013 was \$176,700 indicating overall that city housing values ranked slightly higher than the county but substantially lower than state and national median. From 2000 to 2013 the city increased in homes valued between \$100 K and \$200 K by 35% while the county reported a 447% growth and the state at 66% incline. The city also grew in homes valued \$200 K and above by 866% while the county grew by 1532% and the state by 275% between 2000 and 2013. Both the city and the state declined in homes valued between \$50 K and \$100 K at -5% and -21%, respectively, while the county increased in this category by 19%. In 2013 slightly more than half (51%) of homes in Ashland were valued less than \$100 K while Clay County reported 58%, Alabama 40%, and the US 24%, indicating slightly lower housing value in the county compared to the city, yet the city held considerably lower housing value in contrast to the state and nation. As a planning consideration,



the city should seek to promote and encourage the types of housing developments which would add value to the housing stock, yet maintain quality affordable housing for families and individuals in substantial need. Figure H-8 illustrates housing value for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2000 and 2013. The Figure shows that in 2000 nearly 74% of the city's housing was valued less than \$100 K but then in 2013 housing values increased and

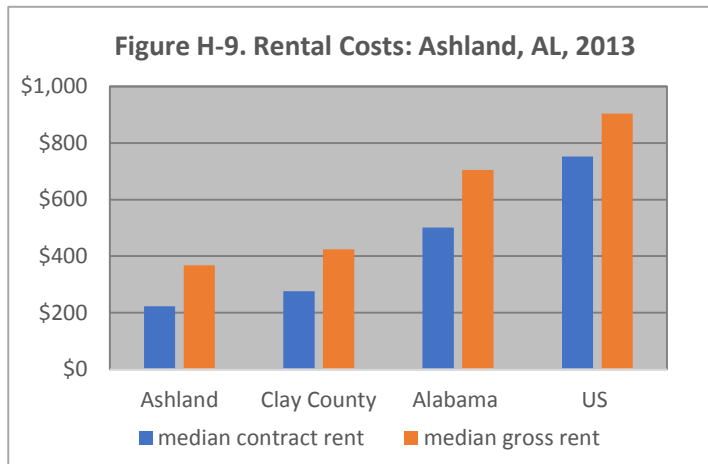
the portion of homes valued less than \$100 K decreased to 51%. A similar pattern is shown in the county with 87% of homes valued less than \$100 K in 2000 and a decline to 58% in 2013. Notice the similar trends in the state and nation as well. Also notice that the city and county reported considerably lower housing values than the state and nation during this time. Lower housing values could be attributed to lower population in rural areas and less of a demand and market for high priced homes in rural counties. As a planning consideration, the city strive to promote and encourage quality housing development and building standards in order to increase housing values and create more housing options and opportunities for people with various housing desires and needs. For more information see Table H-8 in Appendix C.

Housing Costs and Affordability

Ashland recognizes the need to establish and maintain housing, which is affordable and suitable to its residents. According to the Alabama Housing Finance Authority, the generally accepted affordability standard for housing cost is no more than 30 percent of household income. Lineville housing satisfies this requirement. Housing affordability is examined through changes in contract rent, gross rent, and housing value. Contract rent is, as described in the 2010 Census, “The monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings, utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included”. Gross rent is also defined in the 2010 Census as, “The amount of the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid for by the renter”. According to the Census Bureau, contract rent, gross rent, and affordability data from Census 2000 and ACS may not be compared, thus only 2013 data from the ACS 2009-2013 has been examined in this section.

The cost of living by rent, in 2013, for Ashland and Clay County was considerably low compared to Alabama and the US. In 2013 median contract rent (MCR) in the city was \$223 and median gross rent (MGR) \$368 while the county reported slightly higher MCR at \$276 and slightly higher MGR at \$424. Alabama reported considerably higher MCR at \$501 and MGR at \$705 while the US showed even higher rates at \$752 and \$904, respectively.

Figure H-9 displays rental costs for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2013. The information in the Figure exhibits that Ashland and Clay County rental costs are similar but rental costs in Alabama are considerably higher and costs in the US generally much higher than the state. Such low rental costs could be associated with low rental rates in affordable rental housing. As previously mentioned, the city holds a considerably larger portion of multi-family units compared



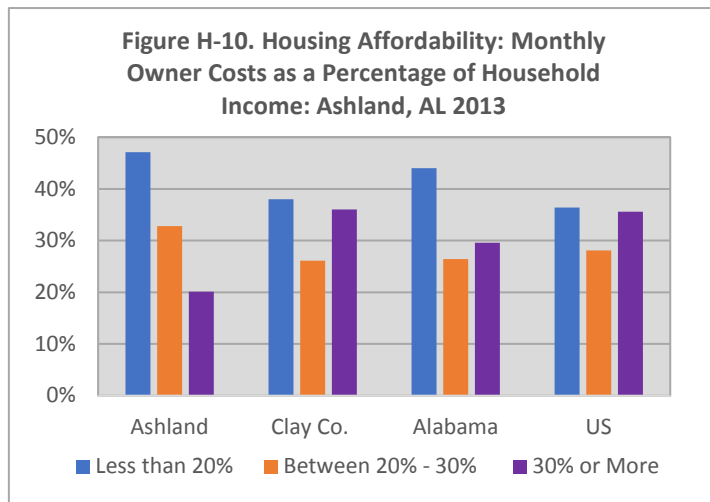
to the county and state. These lower rates could be applied more frequently and to a larger extent with low income rental housing as opposed to single-family rental housing. Figure H-9 shows rental costs for Ashland in comparison to Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2013. Notice that the city and county show comparable rates, yet the state and nation substantially higher housing rental costs. As a planning consideration, the city should strive to guide and encourage affordable housing rent yet plan for

increases in rates in rental homes and units increases in value. The next section of this chapter examines housing affordability. For more information on rental costs see Table H-9 in Appendix C.

Affordability of Owner-occupied Housing

Affordability of owner-occupied housing is vitally important in maintaining housing occupancy and population growth within the community. The relative affordability of owner-occupied housing was determined by examining selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income. As a common goal, communities should strive to make housing more affordable to their residents without sacrificing structural quality, working facilities, and aesthetic appeal.

For owner occupied housing affordability Ashland showed higher affordability than Clay County, Alabama, and the US. In 2013, approximately 79% of owner occupied households in the city spent less than 30% of their household income on housing costs while the county showed 64%, the state 70% and US 64%, indicating more affordability in the city. Approximately 47% of owner



occupied households in the city spent less than 20% of their household income on housing costs compared to 38% in the county, 44% in the state, and 36% in the nation, further indicating more affordability for the city. Figure H-10 illustrates owner occupied housing affordability through monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2013. The figure shows that a somewhat significantly larger portion of owner occupied households in the city spent less than

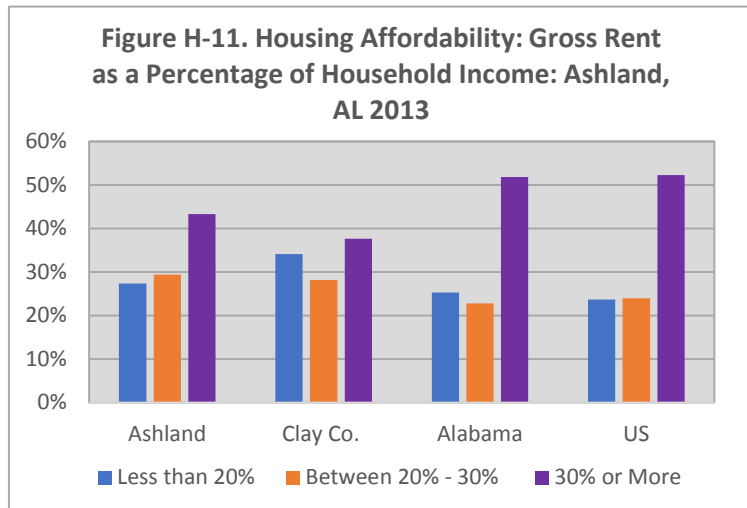
30% of their household income on housing costs compared to the county, state, and nation. Such high affordability could be attributed lower housing costs and affordable housing development. As a planning consideration, the city should strive to promote and encourage quality affordable housing throughout the community in order to meet existing community needs and remain competitive for new residents with the county, state, and nation. For more information see Table H-10 in Appendix C.

Affordability of Renter-occupied Housing

Renting has often been an attractive alternative to owning a home. Home ownership is generally more expensive and houses often require greater maintenance than apartments, town homes, or condominiums. Although home ownership, nationally, is much more popular and highly regarded, renter-occupied housing is needed to meet the needs of a diverse population, requiring a variety of housing choices and thus is essential to remain affordable to the general population.

According to Census data, renting in Ashland is relatively affordable compared to Alabama, and the US, but somewhat less affordable compared to Clay County. In 2013 approximately 56% of Ashland renter households spent less than 30% of their household income on rental costs and Clay County 62%, while Alabama reported 48% and the US 47%. However, Clay County showed approximately 34% of renter households spending less than 20% of their household income on

rental costs while Ashland reported 27%, indicating more affordability in the county than in the city in this category. Ashland showed approximately 43% of renter households spending 30% or more on housing and Clay County recorded 37%. Alabama and the US reported 51% and 52%,



respectively. Figure H-11 illustrates renter occupied housing affordability with gross rent as a percentage of household income for Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2013. Notice, in the Figure, the substantially larger portion of renter occupied households spending more than 30% of their household income on housing costs in the state and nation compared to the city and county. Also notice that the county showed a somewhat larger portion of renter households spending less than

20% of their household income on housing costs than the city indicating more affordability in the county than in the city. For more information see Table H-11 in Appendix C.

Housing Development Potential

The City of Ashland has significant potential for housing development and desires to pursue quality, affordable housing in the form of “tiny home” construction and living for its residents as well as serve as a tiny home “hub” for Clay County and the East Alabama Region. Tiny homes are housing units comprising 400 square feet or less, excluding loft areas, as defined by the American Tiny Home Association (ATHA). Under the International Residential Code (IRC) a tiny home may be permitted as small as 70 square feet while the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) minimum standards for manufactured homes is currently 400 square feet, allowing for substantially smaller homes than would normally be allowed under typical mobile home codes. Standard IRC regulations for tiny homes typically specify 70 to 400 square feet of living area, 6 ½ ft. minimum ceiling height, loft spaces for sleeping with stairs or ladders, a metal chassis and tie-downs, and inspection and certification by the National Organization of Alternative Housing (NOAH).

The American Tiny Home Association was established in 2015 with a mission to promote the tiny house as a viable, formally acceptable dwelling option for a wide variety of people. The overall goal of the ATHA is to support tiny home enthusiasts who are seeking creative and affordable housing as part of a more sustainable and self-reliant lifestyle—the motto being “Live a Big Life. Go Tiny”. The ATHA seeks to represent the needs and values of the tiny house community in a variety of ways such as: promote simplicity and sustainability, enhance creativity, offer the option of an affordable lifestyle for all people, keep autonomy, build community, maintain safety, and gain formal recognition across the globe. ATHA provides support and assistance to communities with the following purposes:

- to gather and provide information regarding the building of and dwelling in tiny houses,

- to promote a healthy social and political environment conducive to tiny house building and dwelling,
- to educate members regarding tiny house quality and safety, and
- to network and cooperate with related government agencies, educational institutions, and development organizations, and private industry to address these stated purposes.

As a part of its endeavor to become a “tiny home” community, in 2016, the Ashland Housing Development Corporation (AHDC) engaged entrepreneurs Thom and Midge Stanton to establish the Housing Development Institute (HDI) with plans to use “tiny houses” as a platform for future success and recognition. In that year, Ashland hosted the Southeast Tiny Home Festival in order to showcase tiny homes and kick-start momentum for the tiny home movement in Clay County. The HDI will strive to promote the region as a destination for people seeking to “go tiny” as students, homeowners, and professionals in the following ways:

- **Build**—Design and build small structures for commercial, residential, and recreational use.
- **Market**—Sell new and pre-owned tiny homes, rustic cabins, garden sheds, and related products.
- **Educate**—Host programs on building techniques for students, professionals, and DIYers.
- **Incubate**—Assist new construction businesses through their initial start-up phase.
- **Advocate**—Pursue use of “tiny houses” as safe, efficient, and affordable dwellings.
- **Advance**—Build communities including pocket neighborhoods and recreational resorts.

In addition, support from municipal planners and administrators can help introduce tiny houses as permissible secondary dwelling units, primary residences, and village-like communities to serve the region’s aging population, low income residents, and others seeking safe, efficient, and affordable housing in a smaller footprint.

As a start to the process of becoming a “tiny home” community, the AHDC provides a 10,000 square foot facility dedicated to the cause and to align the following goals with market needs:

- 1) **Building Brands**—Creation of revenue, job skills training, employment opportunities, community support, national notoriety, and press promotions.
- 2) **Market Retail Outlet**—Designing and building highly visible products serving local, regional, and national markets.
- 3) **Academy Education**—Introduce and enhance green-building techniques, housing authority skills, and incubator prospects.
- 4) **Incubation**—Creation of small-business support, economic development, cottage industry foundation, and employment opportunity.
- 5) **Advancement of Public and Private Development**—Formation of partnerships, donations, housing inventory, and community and economic development.

The facility will be used by the AHDC as a job training and skills development building to produce a variety of constructed products, including tiny houses on wheels (THOWs) which will be used as model homes for marketing materials, prospect demonstrations, and trade shows.

Ashland has developed a unique position to adopt tiny homes for a variety of beneficial purposes such as:

- **Permanent Dwellings**—with low cost, low maintenance, and good resale value.

- **Enhancement of Job Skills**—Introduce instructional aid for building its local workforce.
- **Business Development**—Establish incubation of self-supporting business to create a new cottage industry.
- **Economic Development**—Increase local revenue from new business and home ownership.
- **Community Development**—Bolster efforts to develop sustainable growth in the community.

Opportunities and ideas for tiny home development include the following:

- **Tryouts**—Units used to encourage prospective tiny house owners to “try before you buy”.
- **Guest Houses**—Private use by homeowners (single unit) for guests or rental income as single units.
- **Tiny House Hotel**—Develop in clusters as a commercial enterprise for hospitality inventory and/or temporary housing inventory.
- **Dwellings**—Allow as a permanent residence on private parcels of land.

Other places around the country which have been active in tiny home development:

- **California:** Several counties in California allow a tiny house on wheels in a backyard if it is a caregiver cottage.
- **Fresno, CA:** allows a tiny house on wheels in a backyard without requiring it to be a caregiver cottage.
- **Kentucky:** Pulaski County allows a tiny house on wheels on your own land.
- **Maine:** North Yarmouth and Richmond allow a tiny house on wheels on your own land.
- **Massachusetts:** Nantucket voters approved tiny houses on wheels on private property.
- **Oklahoma:** Unincorporated areas of Logan County allow a tiny house on wheels on your own land.
- **South Carolina:** Aiken County allows tiny houses on wheels on their own land. The lot must be at least 2 acres and 50 feet from a public road.
- **Texas:** Spur TX allows tiny houses on wheels on their own land outside city limits.

Analytical Summary

The analytical summary provides a statistical review of the information discussed in each chapter and analyzes the data through a general assessment.

Units by Type

Single-family: Single-family housing for Ashland was the substantially dominant housing unit, although declining slightly from 584 units (60% of the housing stock) in 2000 to 577 units in 2013 (57% of the housing stock), a minor 1.2% decrease. Meanwhile Clay County increased in single-family homes by 11% as did Alabama by 14%. Single-family housing, in 2013, was also the dominant housing type in the county at 62% of all housing unit types and the state (70%) and nation at 67%.

Multi-family: Multi-family was also a significantly popular housing unit type in the city. Between 2000 and 2013 Ashland increased in multi-family housing by 47% while Clay County reported a similar increase of 48% and Alabama showed a substantially smaller climb of 15%. In 2013 the city recorded a substantially larger portion of multi-family housing at 35% than the county at 10%, state (15%) and nation (26%) suggesting proportionately more rental housing and possibly smaller families than average, common characteristics of multi-family housing.

Manufactured Housing: From 2000 to 2013 Ashland exhibited a somewhat significant decline in mobile homes, decreasing from 14% to 6% of the housing stock and a -55% drop in units. Meanwhile the county increased in mobile homes by 22% and the state showed a -5% decline. In 2013 Clay County showed a significant 27% of all housing units as mobile homes while Alabama reported 13% and the US 6%.

Assessment: Ashland reported substantially more multi-family housing than Clay County, Alabama, and the US and slightly less mobile homes and single-family units.

Tenure and Occupancy Status

Occupancy: Between 2000 and 2010 home occupancy decreased in Ashland by a slight -0.6% and also in Clay County by -1% while Alabama increased occupancy by 5%. The city and county declined most significantly in owner-occupied housing, dropping by -2% and -4%, respectively while the state increased by 2%. Meanwhile rental home occupancy increased in the city by a slight 1%, county 6%, and state 14%, indicating that rental housing became increasingly popular while owner-occupied declined in the housing of choice, particularly in Ashland and Clay County.

Tenure: Owner-occupied units comprised the substantially dominant housing preference, accounting for 51% of occupied units in the city, county (75%), state (70%), and nation (65%) in 2010. Also in 2010, renter-occupied housing showed a substantially higher portion of occupied homes in the city at 48%, than in the county (24%), and state (29%), and the nation at 34%.

Assessment: Occupancy rates for Ashland rated on par with the Clay County, Alabama, and the US, while renter-occupied housing was considerably more prominent in the city, than in the county, state, and nation.

Vacancy Status

Between 2000 and 2010 the city increased in total vacant housing units, climbing from 121 units to 137, a 13% increase, while the county increased from 91 to 1,106, a 1,115% increase, and the state grew by 27%. Ashland increased in every type of vacancy to a greater or lesser degree, with the exception of for rent only units, and both Clay County and Alabama increased in every type, with the exception of units rented or sold, but not occupied, which dropped by -29% in the state.

Assessment: Ashland showed an increase in vacant units with a considerably high portion of “for rent only” units, similar to Alabama and the US.

Household Size

Between 2000 and 2013 the city increased in 1 person households by a somewhat considerable 13%, while the county showed a 3% climb, and the state grew by 15%. In 2013 approximately 39% of city households were 1 person homes and 30% were 2 person homes, accounting for 69% of total city households. The county recorded 64% of homes being either 1 person or 2 person, while the state showed 63% and the nation 61%. The county, state, and nation, between 33% and 35%, reported a slightly larger portion of 2 person households than the city at 30%.

Assessment: Ashland recorded slightly smaller household size compared to Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2013.

Housing Stock Age

Approximately 66% of the Ashland’s housing was built prior to 1980 while the Clay County showed 53%, Alabama 49%, and the US 56%. Furthermore, approximately 33% of the city’s housing was built prior to 1960, as the county showed 28%, the state 19%, and the nation 29%. Ashland reported a considerably larger portion of homes built between 1940 and 1980 at 56%, compared to the Clay County (42%) and Alabama and the US both at 43%, which primarily accounts for the city’s older housing stock.

Assessment: Ashland showed a considerably older housing stock than Clay County, Alabama, and the US.

Physical Conditions

Based on the 2014 EARPDC housing conditions inventory, approximately 316 (39% of the total) homes were found to be in deteriorating condition and 34 (4%) dilapidated. Single-family homes reported the most substantial need with 350 homes (44%) in either deteriorating or dilapidated condition, followed distantly by manufactured housing with 87 (84%) in need of some repair. Multi-family homes reported minor need with on 5% in deteriorating condition and no units showing as dilapidated.

Assessment: Single-family homes comprised the largest portion of homes in deteriorating condition, followed distantly by manufactured homes. Multi-family homes showed little need for improvements.

Selected Physical Conditions

In 2013 approximately 4.4% of the city's homes lacked complete plumbing facilities, while the county reported 2.2%, and the state and the nation 0.5%. In a similar manner, the city and county reported more homes in need of complete kitchen facilities at 4.4% and 1.9%, respectively, while the state showed 0.8% and the nation 0.9%.

Assessment: In 2013, Ashland showed a considerably larger portion of homes in need of both complete plumbing and kitchen facilities than Clay County, Alabama, and the US.

Housing Value

Between 2000 and 2013 median housing value (MHV) for Ashland increased from \$64,900 to \$89,300 while Clay County MHV grew from \$62,200 to \$79,900. Alabama MHV climbed from 85,100 to \$122,500 and the US MHV in 2013 was \$176,700

Assessment: Median housing value for the city, in 2013, exceeded the county somewhat considerably, but fell substantially short of the state and nation during this time.

Housing Cost

The cost of living by rent, in 2013, for Ashland and Clay County was considerably low compared to Alabama and the US. In 2013 median contract rent (MCR) in the city was \$223 and median gross rent (MGR) \$368 while the county reported slightly higher MCR at \$276 and slightly higher MGR at \$424. Alabama reported considerably higher MCR at \$501 and MGR at \$705 while the US showed even higher rates at \$752 and \$904, respectively.

Assessment: Cost of living by rent for the city was somewhat substantially lower than the county, and significantly lower than the state and nation.

Affordability of Owner-occupied Housing

In 2013, approximately 79% of owner occupied households in the city spent less than 30% of their household income on housing costs while the county showed 64%, the state 70% and US 64%, indicating more affordability in the city. Approximately 47% of owner occupied households in the city spent less than 20% of their household income on housing costs compared to 38% in the county, 44% in the state, and 36% in the nation, further indicating more affordability for the city.

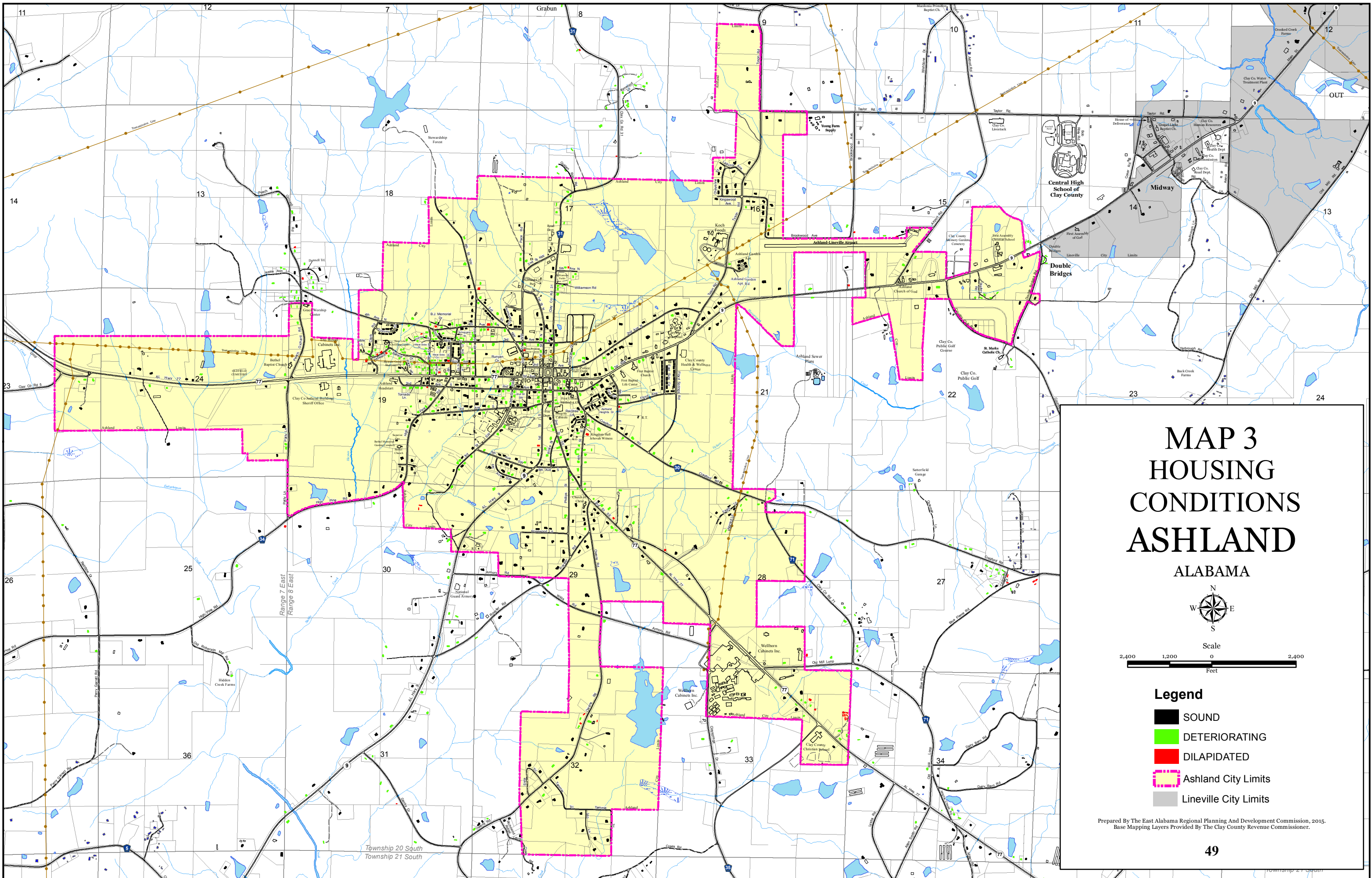
Assessment: In 2013, Ashland showed higher affordability of owner occupied housing than Clay County, Alabama, and the US with a higher portion of households spending less than 30% of their household income on housing costs.

Affordability of Renter-occupied Housing

In 2013 approximately 56% of Ashland renter households spent less than 30% of their household income on rental costs and Clay County 62%, while Alabama reported 48% and the US 47%. However, Clay County showed approximately 34% of renter households spending less than 20%

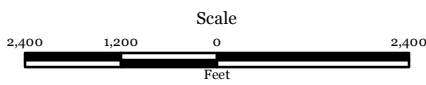
of their household income on rental costs while Ashland reported 27%, indicating more affordability in the county than in the city in this category. Ashland showed approximately 43% of renter households spending 30% or more on housing and Clay County recorded 37%. Alabama and the US reported 51% and 52%, respectively.

Assessment: Ashland reported higher affordability in renter occupied housing compared to Alabama and the US, but Clay County showed higher affordability than the city, state, and nation.



MAP 3 HOUSING CONDITIONS ASHLAND

ALABAMA



Legend

- SOUND
- DETERIORATING
- DILAPIDATED
- Ashland City Limits
- Lineville City Limits

Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2015.
Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.

CHAPTER V: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are crucial to the planning effort, affecting growth and development throughout the city. Accessibility to community facilities and the extent to which they serve the community has direct influence on land use patterns and development trends within the city. Properties with direct access to utilities such as municipal water, sewer, and gas can develop at reduced costs and safely support greater developments than properties in more remote and unserviceable areas. Also, a city creates additional opportunities for growth and development by upgrading and extending their services to other areas of the city. Community facilities must have plans for conducting continued maintenance while ensuring quality service, meeting the needs of a diverse and changing population. A total of 10 community facilities have been identified and discussed in this chapter. These include: city administration, law enforcement, fire and rescue, education, city library, housing authority, county hospital, senior center, city maintenance, and utilities such as water, sewer, and gas. See Map 4: *Community Facilities* for facility locations.

The purpose of this chapter is to inventory existing community facilities and services, assess their capacity to serve existing and future needs, and suggest improvements and expansions for meeting these needs. In order to determine current community facility goals and needs, surveys were distributed to facility and department leaders and collected by the City Administrator. This chapter reviews these findings in context and as a needs summation in the analytical summary at the end of the chapter.

City Administration

City administration for the City of Ashland oversees the daily tasks and functions needed to operate and maintain city owned public facilities and services throughout the community. Offices located in Ashland's City Hall include the Mayor's Office, City Clerk's Office, and the Court Clerk's Office, City administration oversees and maintains City Council and the Planning Commission.

City Council

Ashland's city government consists of five council members and the Mayor. Elected officials serve 4-year terms, elected at the same time and running consecutively. In addition to determining the city budget, city council also makes decisions regarding city departments. An ordinance or resolution must have the Mayor's signature to be adopted. Should the Mayor decide not to sign an ordinance or resolution the council may still adopt it with a second vote. The role of the City Clerk is to arrange the council's agenda for meeting, determine rules of order, keep records of meetings,



Ashland City Hall and Police Department, 2016.

and sit in on budget meetings. Council meetings are conducted in City Hall on the first and third Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Agenda items must be submitted no later than 3:30 pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting.

Planning Commission

Ashland's Planning Commission primary directive is to serve the community by promoting and guiding development in accordance with city policy and plans. The commission gives final approval or denial of subdivision plats and other development plans and makes recommendations for rezoning to city council. Commission representation consists of nine (9) members, six (6) of which are appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council, one (1) Council member ex-officio, one (1) Administrative ex-officio, and the Mayor or the Mayor's designee. Terms are served in staggered one to six year duration for the six members appointed by the Mayor while the Mayor, Council member, and Administrative official serve during the Mayor's tenure. In addition, the Planning Commission may elect members currently serving within the Commission as Chairman (to serve for 1 year), Chairman Pro-tempore (1 year), and Secretary (to serve at the pleasure of the Commission). Meetings are held as called.

Industrial Development Board

The primary directive of the Ashland Industrial Development Board is to recruit new industries to the city and assist industries with expansion plans. Board members must be qualified electors and taxpayers of the municipality. A total of seven members are appointed by the Mayor to serve six-year staggered terms. Should a local Chamber of Commerce exist at the time of election members must be chosen from the Chamber, unless deemed unsuitable or unavailable. No board member may be a member of the municipal governing body or of the county, or state, or a city employee. Board meetings are called as needed.

Water Works and Sewer Board

The Water and Sewer Board holds the authority to operate municipal water and sewer systems for the city as well as maintain and upgrade lines as needed. Board membership consists of three (3) members, appointed by the Mayor, each serving six-year staggered terms.

Ashland Housing Authority Board

The mission of the Ashland Housing Authority is to provide safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing for low income families and economic development within the community. The Housing Authority Board comprises five (5) members, appointed by the Mayor, each serving five- year staggered terms.

The Ashland City Administration identified two items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. More events to sponsor gatherings.
2. Better Technology—new debit/credit card machine for court.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

Ashland's Police Department mission to provide safe and stable neighborhoods for the residents and visitors of the City of Ashland through various department programs and community policing efforts. This goal is attained through mutual cooperative relationship between the Department and the resident and business community served.

Department staff currently consists of 7 full-time officers, 4 full-time dispatchers, 1 part-time dispatcher, and an administrator. The current ratio of residents to officers is approximately 3 officers to 1,000 residents. According to professional opinion this ratio is adequate to serve needs. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics 2003 report, a city the size of Ashland reported 2.6 to 1,000. However, a sustained ratio of 3 to 3.5 to 1,000 would better aid the Department in providing more coverage for a small population which is spread out over a large area.

Emergency calls are handled through Clay County E-911 which handles 911 calls and relays such calls to officer dispatch. E-911 dispatchers also push out calls for medical services, fire reports, and vehicle accidents. The city's police jurisdiction extends 1 ½ miles outside the city limits. At present there are no plans to expand the police jurisdiction. The most frequent crimes in the city comprise assaults, which includes domestic violence, harassing incidents, harassing communications, menacing, and reckless endangerment. The number of thefts has declined in recent years, which may be attributed to more random patrols by officers.

The Ashland Police Department currently owns and maintains the following vehicles:

- 1- 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe PPV 4WD
- 1- 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe PPV 2WD
- 1- 2012 Dodge Charger
- 1- 2011 Dodge Charger
- 1- 2010 Ford Crown Victoria
- 2- 2007 Chevrolet Impalas
- 1- 2006 Chevrolet Impala
- 1- 2005 Chevrolet Tahoe

Programs in which the police department is involved include the following:

- Yellow Dot—The “Yellow Dot” program, the first of its kind in the state of Alabama, is operated and funded through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) and is designed to assist Alabama citizens and first responders in the event of an automobile crash or other medical emergencies involving the participant's motor vehicle. The program provides participants with a yellow dot sticker/decal to be placed in the driver's side rear window which notifies first responders of corresponding medical information in the driver's passenger glove box. Provision of this information helps responders positively identify the person, contact family and/or emergency contacts, and ensures the participant's current medications and pre-existing medical conditions are considered when administering treatment for injuries. The “Yellow Dot” program is a free

service, provided to individuals of all ages, but especially encouraged for senior citizens. Lineville Police Department has been a participant in the program since 2010.

- Someone Cares—is a program designed for senior citizens and/or disabled residents who live alone and may not have a family member or friend living locally that can check on them every day. For those signed up a dispatch officer will call them every day or every other day to make sure they are okay. If they do not answer, an officer will be dispatched to the residence to perform a welfare check. The service is available to all residents living within the City’s police jurisdiction and is offered free of charge by the Ashland Police Department,

Note: The Ashland Police Department is also working on starting a program for at-risk youth, but are presently in the planning phase.

The Ashland Police Department identified three items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. Better technologies—the department has good technology with computers in cars, cameras, and other technologies, however, an upgrade systems for the department would be beneficial, providing officers with real-time information while on calls. Additional improvements include installing cameras in the police department, thus making the facility more open to the public, and purchasing less lethal weapons for officer use. The department should pursue grant opportunities and minor purchases over time in order to acquire items and advance technology.
2. Better public facilities—the city is in the process of relocating the police department to a new building in order to provide a better location and open doors for better communication with the community.
3. Better radio technologies—the department currently has good radios, however, the public would be better served with continued upgrades to the system. The department plans to seek grant opportunities to fund this effort.

Fire and Rescue

The Ashland Fire Department was established in 1953 with the commitment to serve the citizens of the City of Ashland, providing the best fire protection as possible. Department staff presently comprises 16 volunteer firefighters and 1 part-time firefighter. According to professional opinion firefighting staff is sufficient to adequately serve the community. Emergency calls are handled through Clay County E-911 and 911 dispatches by pager. The fire department jurisdiction covers approximately 8 square miles. In addition to fire protection and suppression, the department provides basic life support and vehicle extraction service.

Current vehicles and equipment used by the Ashland Fire Department include 2- Fire trucks with equipment, 1- rescue truck with rescue tools, 1- Chief truck with extinguishers, 1- air compressor, 1- power generator, 1- gear washer, 1- Cascade system to fill air bottles. Furthermore, the department plans to purchase a tanker/pumper through grant funding.

Fire protection and prevention efficiency and effectiveness is based on criteria, classified into a rating system, developed by the International Standards Organization's (ISO) Public Protection Classification Program (PPCP). This rating system ranks approximately 44,000 fire department jurisdictions across the country on a scale of 1 to 10. A rating of 1 signifies exemplary fire protection while a 10 indicates that the department does not meet minimum ISO standards and stronger measures must be taken. Criteria are based on three major evaluated categories which include:

- Emergency Communications—emergency reporting system, communications center (including the number of telecommunicators), computer-aided dispatch (CAD) facilities, dispatch circuits (how the center notifies firefighters about the location of the emergency), and emergency listings in phone book.
- Fire Department—type and extent of fire personnel training, number of people in training, emergency response time, maintenance and testing of fire-fighting equipment,
- Water Supply—available water supply exceeding daily consumption, components of water supply system such as pumps, storage, and filtration, water flow rate, fire hydrant condition, maintenance, and distribution.
- Community Risk Reduction—fire prevention, fire safety education, and fire investigation.

These ISO measures, through the PPCP, give communities an objective approach in evaluating fire suppression services by establishing country-wide standards that help its departments plan and budget for facilities, equipment, training, water infrastructure, and emergency communication. In addition to mitigating fire damage and loss of lives, an improved ISO rating benefits communities through reduced insurance premiums to home owners and businesses, saving of taxpayer dollars, and in enhancing an overall prestige component to the community and its fire department.

Ashland's Fire Department ISO rating was Class 4/4x with Class 4 rating for all homes within 5 road miles of the station and 1,000 ft. from a fire hydrant and Class 4 rating for homes within 5 road miles of the station but more than 1,000 ft. from a fire hydrant. This rating for the department indicates above average service for homes within 1,000 ft. of a fire hydrant as well as service for homes more than 1,000 ft. from a hydrant, which may be attributed to a good water supply and new equipment recently purchased by the department. However, the department could improve its ISO rating by purchasing a new pumper/tanker in order to have a more adequate water supply at the scene of a fire.

Ashland's Fire Department identified three items needed to provide better services to the community. These include the following:

1. Purchase of a new pumper/tanker truck.
2. New equipment—hand tools for the trucks.
3. Updated hoses, various water supply tools, and equipment that could be used to draft from a body of water.

Educational Facilities

Educational facilities play a major role in community development by preparing and training individuals and youth for the competitive workforce and life-long learning. Ashland provides two schools—Ashland Elementary School, and Central High School of Clay County. The High School

is owned and operated by Clay County, while the Elementary School is city-based. Table CF-1 displays educational facilities and resources for Ashland in 2016.

Table CF-1. Educational Facilities: Ashland, 2016								
School	Teachers Available		# Students	# Classrooms	Programs			
	Full	Part			Band room	Gym	Library	Computer Lab
Ashland Elementary School	38	0	500	38	1	1	1	2
Central HS of Clay County	40	0	770	40	1	0	1	2

Source: Ashland Community Facilities Survey, 2016.

Ashland Elementary School

Ashland Elementary School was established in the early 1939. The school’s mission statement is as follows: “*educating everyone takes everyone.*” The Clay County Schools mission statement reads: “*to provide an educational program that meets the needs of all students.*” This mission can be accomplished through the recognition of individual differences, socio-economic conditions, expectations of parents, and an understanding of the school system’s financial ability. Ashland Elementary is presently not accredited by AdvancEd, formerly known as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, however, information is being gathered to begin the process.

School staff consists of 38 full-time teachers currently serving 500 students. The student teacher ratio for the school is 18 to 1, which is deemed adequate in meeting educational needs. Grade count fluctuates from 60 – 80 students per grade level. School’s facilities constitute 38 classrooms, 1 gymnasium, 1 library, 1 band room, and two computer labs.



Ashland Elementary School, 2016.

There currently are no plans for renovations or expansion of school facilities.

Ashland Elementary School identified three items needed to provide better services to the community. These include the following:

1. Resources to lower student teacher ratio.
2. Resources to manage operations and programs within the school (maintenance, technology, administrative assistants, and instructional people).
3. Time built in for staff development.

Central High School of Clay County

Central High School of Clay County was founded in 2012 with the mission statement “*To provide a safe environment for the invigoration of the student learning experience so that students’*

achievements can grow in a manner that promotes success for their futures and our own.” The mission statement of the Clay County School System is as follows, *“To provide an educational program that meets the needs of all students.”* This can be accomplished through the recognition of individual differences, socioeconomic conditions, expectations of parents, and an understanding of the school system’s financial ability. The school is accredited with the Alabama Department of Education.

School staff comprises 40 full-time teachers, currently serving 770 students. The present student teacher ratio is 25 to 1, which is deemed inadequate to meet quality educational needs. A ratio of 15 to 1 would better meet educational needs.

School facilities include 40 classrooms, a band room, physical education room, 2 computer labs, Ag shop, and kitchen for Home Economics classes. The school is in need of an auditorium. There are no planned expansions and additions to the school.

Central High School of Clay County identified four items needed to provide better services to the community. These include the following:

1. More teachers—the school needs more teachers in order to lower the student teacher ratio as well as offer a wider range of classes to students.
2. Trade School—the high school student body would be considerably more prepared to enter the skilled workforce with a trade school offering courses in construction, welding, mechanics, cosmetology, nursing, and other technical skills. The high school, however, has formed working partnerships with the county hospital and nearby colleges to provide technical training to students interested in such professions such as nursing, and EMT.
3. New textbooks—currently, in most classes, the school uses textbooks which are old and worn out.
4. The School Board needs more money.



Central High School of Clay County, 2016.

City Library

The Ashland City Library was established in 1978 with the purpose to provide materials and services for the educational, informational, and entertainment needs of the people of the Ashland area. Funding for the library for staff, the building, utilities, and maintenance is obtained through the City of Ashland while funding for materials and library supplies is secured through State Aid, the Alabama Public Library Service and Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) federal funds. The library also receives financial income through fines, copies, and donations, which are added in daily.

Staff comprises of 1 full-time librarian, 2 part-time librarians, and 1 volunteer. Library material provided for public use constitute 16,830 volumes, 11 periodicals, 491 audio tapes, 1,161 video

cassettes, 627 video DVDs, and 26,420 e-book subscriptions available through Camellia.net. Average circulation for the library is 979 in-house and around 45 ebooks and audio per month. The library serves approximately 3,700 members.

The library is a part of the Cheaha Regional Library system, a multi-library system established to expand and enhance local library services in the east Alabama region. Being part of the regional library system ensures free access to services to all residents living in the area of the system. The major service provided by the system is the Bookmobile, which offers book delivery to various places throughout the counties of Clay, Cherokee, Cleburne, Randolph, and Talladega. Cheaha Regional Library is based in Heflin, AL in neighboring Cleburne County.



Ashland City Library, 2016.

Programs offered by the Ashland City Library include the following:

- Daily computer service
- Passive program—daily for children 5-12.
- Elementary tutoring—weekly basis
- Storytime
- Summer Reading & Outreach—to schools, nursing homes, and Head Start

The Ashland City Library identified three items needed to provide better housing services to the community, which include:

1. New computers for the public.
2. Genealogy Section upgrade—storage for personal family, civic, and community files
3. Separate space for young adults.

Note: For more information on goals for the library consult the Ashland Public Library Five-Year Plan (FY 2015-2019) which lists goals and objectives for this timeframe.

Housing Authority

The Ashland Housing Authority was established in 1957 with the goal to provide safe, decent, sanitary, and affordable housing primarily for low-income households and economic development within the community. Presently, 17 people are on the waiting list for public housing with approximately 4 percent of applicants being single mothers with children. Current capital improvement needs are estimated at \$3,764 per unit, or \$943,272. The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) most recent Capital Fund Grant for 2015 was \$232,000 which falls well short of the needed funding. Additional funding sources have presently not been identified. Table CF-2 examines housing projects and modernization updates for Ashland in 2016.

Table CF-2. Ashland Housing Projects 2016			
Housing Projects	Year Constructed	# of Units	Year of Modernization
East Side, West Side	1961	28	On-going
East Side, West Side	1963	30	On-going
West Side, North Side	1966	36	On-going
East Side, Runyan Court, Northside	1970	60	On-going
Clay, Pineview	1974	45	On-going

Source: Ashland Housing Authority Community Facility Survey, 2016.

The Ashland Housing Authority identified three items needed to provide better housing services to the community, which include:

1. Workforce/Skills Training Center—The Ashland Housing Development Corp. (AHDC) is presently planning to develop a Technical Training Center to provide skills training and job opportunities to area residents. The goal is to partner with local industries, Community Colleges, and local and state government to develop a program offering residents paid skills training while producing goods that will be marketed to help offset the cost of operation. The long term plan is for the program to become financially self-sufficient.
2. Community Recreation Center—AHDC seeks to secure funding to construct a Community Recreation Center which would benefit the entire community. AHDC plans to partner with local governments to seek funding, and develop a plan of action to provide ongoing support.
3. Modernization of existing housing units—the AHDC is seeking a new funding platform that will allow for a move from the Public Housing Program to the Multi-family Program. The move will ease administrative burdens and costs associated with public housing and allow more flexibility with resources and assets.



Ashland Housing Authority, 2016.

Clay County Hospital

Clay County Hospital is owned and operated by the Clay County Healthcare Authority (CCHA), located in Ashland, AL. Other facilities owned and operated by the Healthcare Authority include the Clay County Nursing Home and the Clay County Health and Wellness Center, both located in Ashland. Clay County Hospital is an acute care hospital facility with 53 licensed beds. The vision of CCHA is to: *“become the facility of choice by our communities for those services offered by increasing its market share by at least 10% by the end of 2017.”* The mission statement, for achieving this vision, reads as follows: *“to provide quality healthcare services based on health status needs of our communities and the availability of sustainable resources to meet those needs.”*

The Clay County hospital is funded through patient and insurance payments for health services rendered and the facility also receives a ½ cent county sales tax.

Current hospital staff comprise 4 general physicians, 148 full-time staff (including nurses and office administration) and 52 part-time. Approximately 102 patients are received at the hospital each month, 450 to the ER, and 985 operated, while around 1,225 patients are received each year, 5,400 to the ER, and 11,820 OP. Approximately 350 prescriptions are filled each month and 4,165 per year.

Clay County Hospital provides programs such as diabetic teaching as well as educational material, per diagnosis, while in-house and on discharge for conditions such as CHF, asthma, and diabetes.

The hospital does not provide transportation services and there are presently no plans to renovate or expand the facility or services.

The Clay County Healthcare Authority identified three items needed to provide better healthcare services to the community, which include:

1. Increase reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid by political support to increase the return on Wage Index for rural hospitals.
2. Increase patient payments of co-pays and deductibles.
3. More qualified licensed personnel to fill staff positions in clinical departments. The hospital supports the Health Science Program “Opening Doors” in cooperation with Clay County BOE and Southern Union State Community College.



Clay County Hospital, 2016.

Senior Center

The main goal of the Ashland Senior Center is to provide seniors (age 65 and older) in the community with a variety of programs and services to keep them active in life. The senior center was established in the 1973 to assist seniors in being more active. The Center currently serves meals to 11 seniors. Seniors must be 60 years old or older to receive a meal. Meals are delivered to homebound residents as well, however, the recipient must be 60 years or older or be the spouse of



The Wynn Building: Ashland Senior Center, 2016.

a homebound client. Programs and activities offered through the Senior Center include: Rook, Dominos, Bingo, Chair Exercise, and Public Education—provided for Monday through Friday each week. No improvements to the Senior Center are needed at this time.

Maintenance Department

The Ashland Maintenance Department was established with the goal to continue to grow and prosper, always working to make the community better than before. Ashland currently provides a 5 man crew to clean streets and provide basic maintenance for the city, as well as limb and debris clean up.

Solid waste collection is conducted by AGL Solid Waste Disposal Authority, which provides residential and commercial waste disposal services for customers in the communities of Ashland, Goodwater, Lineville, and Wadley, as well as customers in rural Clay County. Waste is disposed of at a site in Tallassee, AL to the south in Elmore County. No improvements to the Maintenance Department are needed at this time.

Utilities

The Ashland Water and Sewer Board was established in 1960 with the goal to provide quality water and sewer to Ashland customers at reasonable rates. The board's water system serves approximately 800 residential customers, 153 commercial, and 4 industrial while sewer services are provided for approximately 400 residential, 153 commercial, and 4 industrial. The water system provides service to customers outside the city limits while the sewer system does not. There are currently no plans to expand water and sewer lines in the Ashland area. Gas services are also provided to businesses and residents.

Water Utilities

The Clay County Water Authority is the primary water source for Ashland, maintaining a combined capacity of three million gallons per day (MGD) which is adequate to meet the city's water needs. The water treatment plant utilizes a coagulation extended settling basin and a chlorine gas high rate filtration system to treat water for potable uses. The average daily use in the water system is 1.4 million gallons per day, indicating that water usage could double and the plant would still maintain capacity for continued use. Storage capacity for the treatment plant water tanks is 500,000 gallons, which is also adequate to serve the community as reserves. The average water rate for the utilities board was, as of 2016, \$21.00 a month per customer, which is an increase from \$18.00 the previous year, and a steady increase from the past 5 years. In addition to water provision, the city currently provides 230 fire hydrants, protecting approximately 700 homes, which is adequate for fire suppression.

Ashland maintains approximately 208,121 linear feet of water lines, located within the city limits. There are some other lines which extend outside the city limits to serve other customers. Water lines sizes in the city range from less than 4 inches diameter to 18 inches diameter. The city's water system has been determined to provide adequate service in sustaining needs. Water line size of 6 inches is, in general, the minimum required line diameter for general use and fire protection in areas zoned for agriculture and single-family residential while water lines 8 inches or larger are usually required in multi-family and commercial areas. Twelve inches diameter is generally the minimum size required for light industrial and 16 inches for heavy industry. Table CF-3 displays water line size and distribution for the City of Ashland in 2016.

Table CF-3. Water Line Size and Distribution: Ashland, AL 2016		
Water Line Size (Inches Diameter)	Linear Distance (Feet)	Percent Distribution
Less than 4"	16,848	8.1%
4"	18,282	8.8%
6"	128,841	61.9%
8"	2,791	1.3%
10"	12,881	6.2%
12"	22,674	10.9%
18"	5,804	2.8%
Total	208,121	100.0%

Source: EARPCD Water Line Inventory, 2016

Given the information, Ashland's water system should provide adequate service for residential uses with approximately 83% of lines existing as 6 inch or larger. Commercial uses may be provided with 8 to 10 inch lines which comprise approximately 7% of line distribution while industrial uses may be properly served with the 10% of 12 inch lines. Some heavy industry may be properly served with 18 inch line. See Map 5: *Water Utilities* for water line distribution and location.

The Ashland Water and Sewer Board identified two items needed to provide better water services to the community, which are listed as follows:

1. Install additional valves
2. Install Radio Read Meters

The Board could meet these needs by applying for grants from a variety of funding sources.

Sewer Utilities

Waste water for the City of Ashland is piped to and treated at the Ashland Wastewater Treatment Plant. The facility maintains a capacity of 1 million gallons per day (MGD) and an average daily flow of 800,000 (GPD), which provides adequate performance, even during peak flow periods. Treated sewage is disposed of in Horsetrough Creek, on the eastern edge of the city. The Plant is currently in compliance with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for standard sewage treatment and discharge. The average monthly residential sewer rate, as of 2016, was \$14.00 per month per household, which was an increase from \$11.00 the previous year.

Ashland maintains approximately 84,643 linear feet of sewer lines, ranging in size from 4 inches diameter to 8 inch. Gravity mains comprise 6, 8, 12, and 15 inch lines while pressurized mains compose 4 and 6 inch only. Sewer line size of 6 inches is the generally accepted minimum standard diameter for private land use. Eight inch lines are acceptable for public land use, while 12 inches and above should support light to moderate industry. Heavy industry may require 16 inch diameter line. Table CF-4 shows sewer line size and distribution for the City of Ashland in 2016.

Table CF-4.Sewer Line Size and Distribution: Ashland, AL 2016		
Sewer Line Size (Inches Diameter)	Linear Distance (Feet)	Percent Distribution
Gravity Mains - 6"	1,259	1.5%
Gravity Mains - 8"	52,782	62.4%
Gravity Mains - 12"	1,755	2.1%
Gravity Mains - 15"	3,451	4.1%
Pressurized Mains - 4"	3,607	4.3%
Pressurized Mains - 6"	21,789	25.7%
Total	84,643	100.0%

Source: EARPCD Sewer Line Inventory, 2016

Ashland provides adequate sewer services to residents with approximately 68% of sewer lines being 8 inch or larger gravity mains and 30% serving as 4 or 6 inch pressurized mains. According to sewer line mapping, the substantial majority of sewer lines only serve the central area of the city and therefore residents located on the outskirts must use septic systems for waste water disposal. In order to accommodate industrial uses, the city has extended 6 inch pressurized sewer mains from the Tru-Wood Cabinet facility and Wellborn Cabinets to the Ashland Sewer Treatment Plant with 8 inch gravity mains connecting the facilities to the pressurized mains. As a planning consideration, the city should consider extending sewer lines of 6 inches or larger into residential areas in order to better serve residents of the community. See Map 6: *Sewer Utilities* for sewer line distribution and location.

Ashland’s Water and Sewer Board identified two improvements needed to provide better sewer services to the community. These include the following:

1. Rebuild sewer lift stations
2. Extend sewer distribution lines.

The Board could meet these needs by applying for grants from a variety of funding sources.

Gas Utilities

The East Central Alabama Gas District (ECAGD) operates and maintains Ashland’s gas infrastructure. The District was incorporated in 1954 and serves three communities in the East Central Alabama area which includes Lineville, Ashland, and Goodwater as well as three unincorporated areas of Millerville, New Site, and Kellyton. The mission of ECAGD is to provide the distribution and sale of natural gas and natural gas services for the three municipalities and the surrounding territory.

As a general rule, gas line size needed for specific uses is determined by the distance from the nearest meter to the appliance use, since gas pressure diminishes over distance. Most residential uses require lines ½ inches diameter in typical service lines while commercial may require 1 inch lines. Heavy industry may require 6 inch lines depending on line distribution and the use involved.

Distribution lines or “mains” form the second highest tier of gas lines which carry gas from the gate station to the consumer’s home or business, connecting to service lines. These main lines may range in size from less than 2 inches to 4 inches depending on the use entailed. Ashland maintains

approximately 156,820 linear feet of gas mains extending throughout the city, with the majority (62%) of lines being 2 inch low pressure, most likely used for residential purposes. For better service provision, ECAGD plans to extend additional gas lines to the Wellborne Cabinets facility. For gas line distribution and locations see Map 7: *Gas Utilities*. Table CF-5 displays gas line size and distribution for the City of Ashland in 2016.

Table CF-5. Gas Line Size and Distribution: Ashland, AL 2016		
Gas Line Size (Inches Diameter)	Linear Distance (Feet)	Percent Distribution
Steel - High Pressure (Less than 3")	3,299	2.1%
Steel - High Pressure (3")	13,210	8.4%
Steel - High Pressure (4")	17,625	11.2%
Steel - Low Pressure (Less than 2")	1,122	0.7%
Steel - Low Pressure (2")	62,548	39.9%
Steel - Low Pressure (3")	6,123	3.9%
Plastic - Low Pressure (Less than 2")	1,309	0.8%
Plastic - Low Pressure (2")	35,456	22.6%
Plastic - Low Pressure (3")	16,128	10.3%
Total	156,820	100.0%

Source: East Central Alabama Gas District, Ashland, AL 2016

In addition, the Utilities Board plans to relocate water, sewer, and gas lines to accommodate road relocation near the Wellborne Cabinets facility. The timeframe for completion of this project is the end of 2016.

Utility Costs and Affordability

Utility companies, departments, and organizations across the nation maintain utility rates for the distribution of services within their respective service areas. Such rates are determined by the utility providers' ability to provide adequate service to customers and the customers' ability to pay for these services. For the most part, utility providers set rates based on current service generated. Should utilities need to expand to serve other areas rates are raised but then passed on to additional customers served, thus leveling the rates as a whole. Utility providers must continually work to maintain the proper balance of service and affordability in order to operate most effectively both presently and in the future, should maintenance situations and expansion demand additional costs. Since rates and services need to be closely monitored and adjusted accordingly, assistance for such monitoring and similar data collection may be useful to the utility provider. One organization providing this type of assistance is the University of North Carolina (UNC) Environmental Finance Center (EFC) operated through the UNC School of Government. The EFC is an interdisciplinary group which works collaboratively with partners within and outside the University to assist communities and organizations with increasing capacity to address the financial aspects of environmental protection and service delivery. One of the environmental programs offered through EFC is Drinking Water and Wastewater which works to promote smart management and resilient business models for drinking water and wastewater utilities. The EFC, with cooperation with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), conducted a water and wastewater rates survey of nearly all local government and other categories of utilities (regional authorities, non-profits, for-profits, etc.) in Alabama in 2014 in which over 450 utilities across the state

participated in the survey. This information has been provided on the EFC website in the Alabama Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboard. Information for this utility rate and affordability study of Clay County Water Authority has been obtained from the Dashboard. Figure C-1 displays rate comparison with bill comparison, conservation signal, cost recovery, and affordability for the Clay County Water Authority in 2014.

The following definitions apply in measuring water rates and affordability for Clay County:

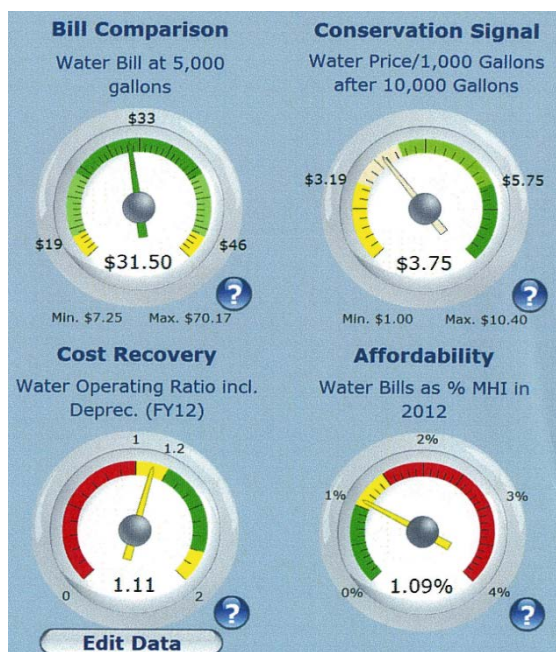


Figure CF-1. Rate Comparison: Clay County Water Authority, AL 2014.

Bill Comparison—shows what a residential customer is charged monthly for 5,000 gallons in their water bills, relative to what is charged by other utilities in the same comparison group. Notice that Clay County, at \$31.50, charges fairly average price compared to other similar utility services in Alabama.

Conservation Signal—is the charge for the next 1,000 gallons beyond 10,000 gallons per month used as one of several pricing signals the utility sends to their customers to encourage conservation. It mostly affects residential customers with high discretionary consumption. Notice that Clay County charges somewhat reasonable low rates for consumption over 10,000 gallons per month at \$3.75, compared to other utilities in the same comparison group. The utility could charge more for consumption over 10,000 per month in order to further encourage conservation.

Affordability—shows the percentage of Clay County’s Median Household Income (MHI), in accordance with the American Community Survey 2008-2012 estimates, spent annually on water bills for 5,000 gallons. There is no net measure for affordability, however, a rating of less than 1.0% of MHI is considered affordable, while 1.0% to 1.5% is somewhat affordable, and over 1.5% unaffordable. This information shows that water rates for the average county household (1.09%) are somewhat affordable.

Cost Recovery—is an operating ratio used to measure whether the utility’s rates are sufficient to cover the cost of operations and capital (in the form of depreciation). It measures operating revenues divided by operating expenses (including depreciation) in Fiscal Year 2012. A ratio of less than 1.0 could be a sign of financial concern. In general, this ratio should be higher than 1.0 in order to accommodate future capital investments. Notice that Clay County cost recovery at 1.11 rates slightly higher than 1.0, which is acceptable, however, since affordability ranks well, the county might consider charging higher rates for overconsumption in order to better assure sufficient operation and prepare for future expansion.

In addition to rate comparisons and affordability, the EFC also surveyed financial benchmarks which measure utility’s financial ability to cover operations and debt service. Financial benchmarks for measurement identified and surveyed in 2014 were: Operating revenue generated

and expended, debt service coverage ratio, and measures of liquidity. Cost recovery is also a financial benchmark but was examined in rate comparisons.

The following definitions apply in measuring financial benchmarks for Clay County:

Operating Revenue / Operating Expenditures—Non-capital operating ratio which measures the ability to cover day-to-day expenditures, excluding depreciation, using operating revenues (mostly charges to customers). A ratio of less than 1.0 indicates that revenues were insufficient to cover the utility’s day-to-day expenditures, let alone debt service of future capital expenses. This indicator does not include considerations for depreciation or capital costs. In general, this ratio should be significantly higher than 1.0 to accommodate capital investments. Notice that Clay County, at

1.33, only slightly exceeds 1.0 in operating revenue and operating expenditures. This ratio should be raised in order to prepare for future growth and utility expansion.



Debt Service Coverage Ratio—Measures the ability to pay for debt service and day-to-day expenditures using operating revenues (mostly charges to customers). A ratio of less than 1.0 indicates that revenues were insufficient to cover the utility’s day-to-day expenditures and payments on principal and interest on existing long-term debt, and the utility runs the risk of going into default. In general, this ratio should be higher than 1.0 in order to set money aside for future capital investments. EFC information at 2.25, shows relatively good debt service coverage for Clay County.

Figure C-2. Financial Benchmarks: Clay County Water Authority, AL 2014.

Measures of Liquidity—which are also known as days cash on hand, measures the level of unrestricted cash (reserves) the utility maintains relative to day-to-day expenditures. This estimates the number of days the utility can pay its daily expenditures with no revenue coming in. Generally, a utility should aim to maintain several months’ worth of cash on hand, and at the very least exceed the length of the billing period (usually 30-60 days). A typical AA-rated utility maintains over a year’s worth of cash on hand. Clay County ranks substantially well with liquidity, at 601, and could continue operating with cash on hand for several months. Figure C-2 displays financial benchmarks with operating revenue and operating expenditures, debt service coverage, measure of liquidity, and cost recovery for Clay County in 2014.

For more information consult the University of North Carolina Environmental Finance Center online at www.efc.sog.unc.edu

Disclaimer: Water rates and affordability in this section pertain solely to Clay County and not water utilities for the City of Ashland. Water rates for the city are determined by the Ashland Utilities Board.

Analytical Summary

This analytical summary outlines the top needs determined by each community facility department or organization in the City of Ashland in 2016. Results were based on the 2016 Community Facilities Survey distributed and collected by the City of Ashland.

City Administration

The Ashland City Administration identified two items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. More events to sponsor gatherings.
2. Better Technology—new debit/credit card machine for court.

Law Enforcement

The Ashland Police Department identified three items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. Better technologies—the department has good technology with computers in cars, cameras, and other technologies, however, an upgrade systems for the department would be beneficial, providing officers with real-time information while on calls. Additional improvements include installing cameras in the police department, thus making the facility more open to the public, and purchasing less lethal weapons for officer use. The department should pursue grant opportunities and minor purchases over time in order to acquire items and advance technology.
2. Better public facilities—the city is in the process of relocating the police department to a new building in order to provide a better location and open doors for better communication with the community.
3. Better radio technologies—the department currently has good radios, however, the public would be better served with continued upgrades to the system. The department plans to seek grant opportunities to fund this effort.

Fire and Rescue

The Ashland Fire Department identified three items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. Purchase of a new pumper/tanker truck.
2. New equipment—hand tools for the trucks.
3. Updated hoses, various water supply tools, and equipment that could be used to draft from a body of water.

Education

Ashland Elementary School

Ashland Elementary School identified three items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. Resources to lower student teacher ratio.
2. Resources to manage operations and programs within the school (maintenance, technology, administrative assistants, and instructional people).

3. Time built in for staff development.

Central High School of Clay County

Central High School of Clay County identified four items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. More teachers—the school needs more teachers in order to lower the student teacher ratio as well as offer a wider range of classes to students.
2. Trade School—the high school student body would be considerably more prepared to enter the skilled workforce with a trade school offering courses in construction, welding, mechanics, cosmetology, nursing, and other technical skills.
3. New textbooks—currently, in most classes, the school uses textbooks which are old and worn out.
4. The School Board needs more money.

City Library

Ashland City Library identified three items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. New computers for the public.
2. Genealogy Section upgrade—storage for personal family, civic, and community files
3. Separate space for young adults.

Housing Authority

The Ashland Housing Authority identified three items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. Workforce/Skills Training Center—The Ashland Housing Development Corp. (AHDC) is presently planning to develop a Technical Training Center to provide skills training and job opportunities to area residents. The goal is to partner with local industries, Community Colleges, and local and state government to develop a program offering residents paid skills training while producing goods that will be marketed to help offset the cost of operation. The long term plan is for the program to become financially self-sufficient.
2. Community Recreation Center—AHDC seeks to secure funding to construct a Community Recreation Center which would benefit the entire community. AHDC plans to partner with local governments to seek funding, and develop a plan of action to provide ongoing support.
3. Modernization of existing housing units—the AHDC is seeking a new funding platform that will allow for a move from the Public Housing Program to the Multi-family Program. The move will ease administrative burdens and costs associated with public housing and allow more flexibility with resources and assets.

Clay County Hospital

Clay County Hospital identified three items needed to provide better services to the community, which include the following:

1. Increase reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid by political support to increase the return on Wage Index for rural hospitals.
2. Increase patient payments of co-pays and deductibles.

3. More qualified licensed personnel to fill staff positions in clinical departments. The hospital supports the Health Science Program “Opening Doors” in cooperation with Clay County BOE and Southern Union State Community College.

Senior Center

No improvements to the Senior Center are needed at this time.

City Maintenance

No improvements to City Maintenance are needed at this time.

Utilities

The Ashland Water and Sewer Board identified items needed to provide better water, sewer, and gas utilities to the community, which include the following:

Water Utilities

1. Install additional valves
2. Install Radio Read Meters

Sewer Utilities

1. Rebuild sewer lift stations
2. Extend sewer distribution lines

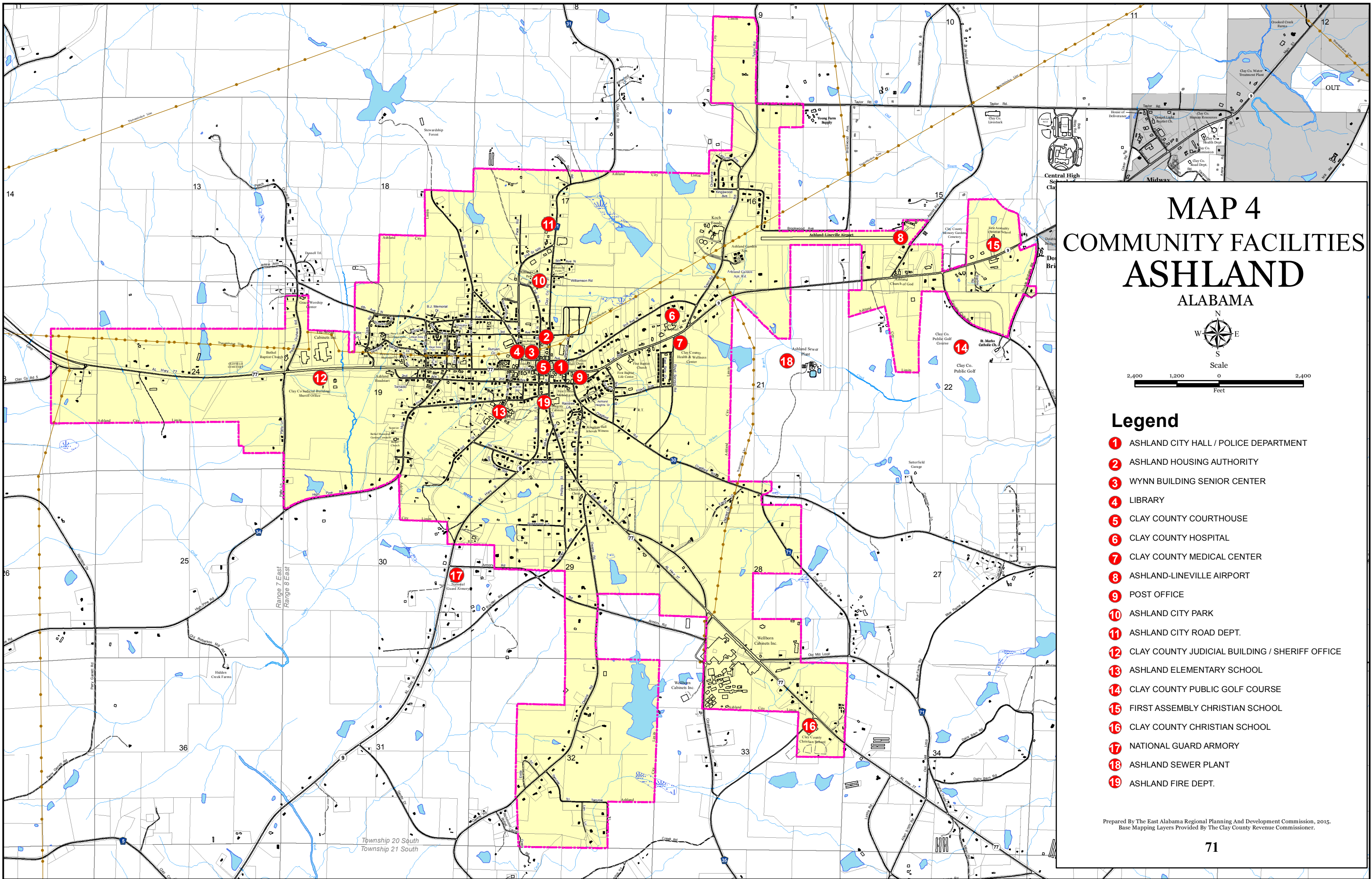
Gas Utilities

1. Extend gas lines to Wellborn Cabinets facility

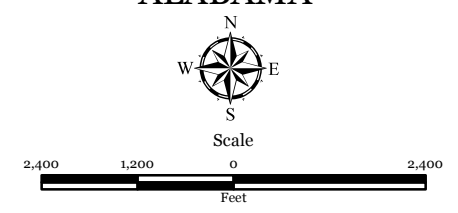
Water Utility Rates and Affordability

According to a water rate survey conducted by the University of North Carolina Environmental Finance Center the Clay County Water Authority showed a fairly average price (rate) compared to other similar utility services in Alabama and good affordability. Water Authority cost recovery at 1.11 rates slightly higher than 1.0, which is acceptable, however, since affordability ranks well, the county might consider charging higher rates for overconsumption in order to better assure sufficient operation and prepare for future expansion.

Disclaimer: Water rates and affordability in this section pertain solely to Clay County and not water utilities for the City of Ashland. Water rates for the city are determined by the Ashland Utilities.

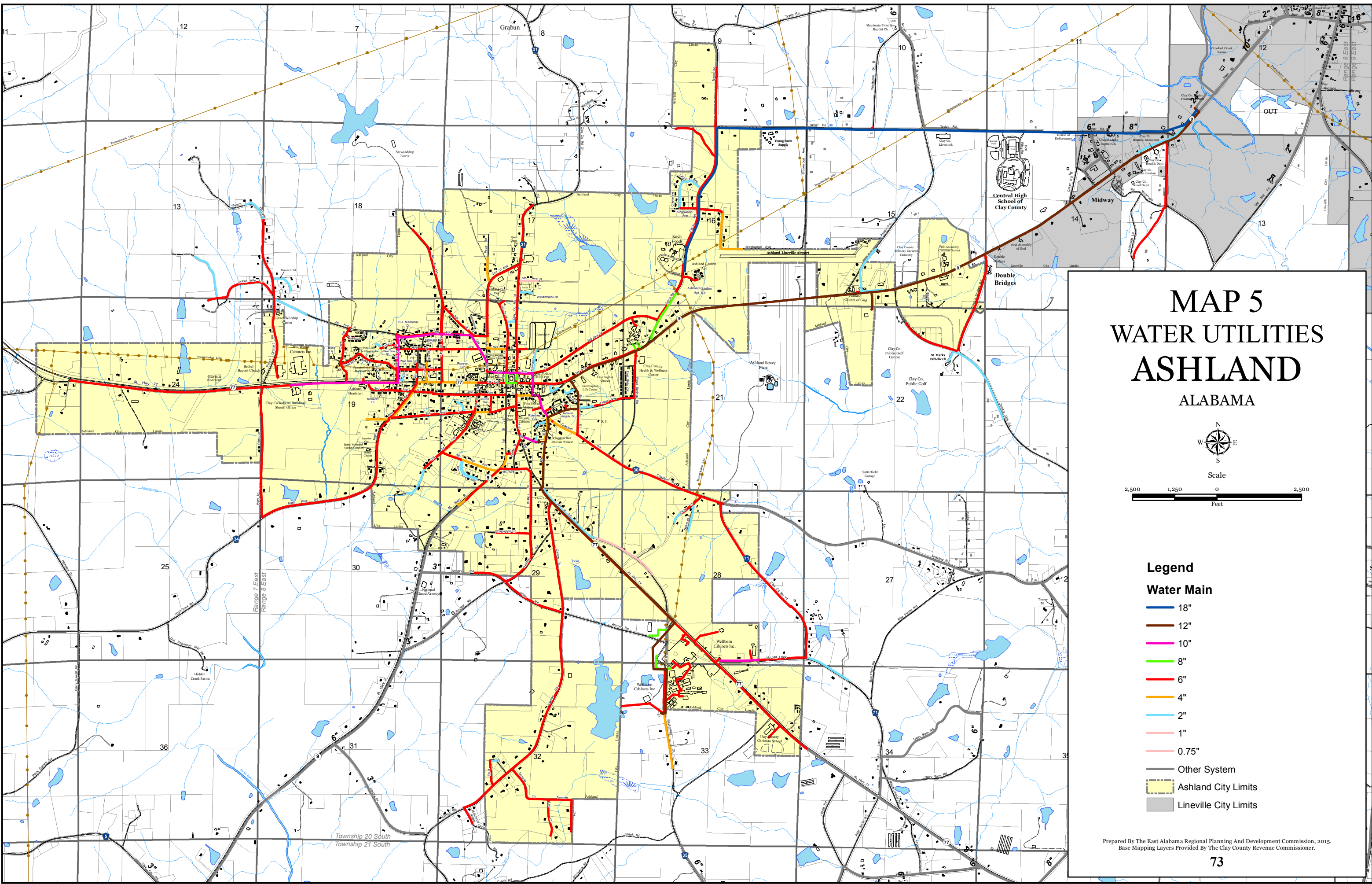


MAP 4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES ASHLAND ALABAMA

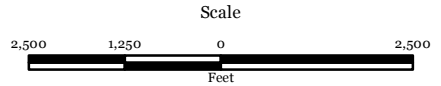


- Legend**
- 1** ASHLAND CITY HALL / POLICE DEPARTMENT
 - 2** ASHLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY
 - 3** WYNN BUILDING SENIOR CENTER
 - 4** LIBRARY
 - 5** CLAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE
 - 6** CLAY COUNTY HOSPITAL
 - 7** CLAY COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER
 - 8** ASHLAND-LINEVILLE AIRPORT
 - 9** POST OFFICE
 - 10** ASHLAND CITY PARK
 - 11** ASHLAND CITY ROAD DEPT.
 - 12** CLAY COUNTY JUDICIAL BUILDING / SHERIFF OFFICE
 - 13** ASHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 - 14** CLAY COUNTY PUBLIC GOLF COURSE
 - 15** FIRST ASSEMBLY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
 - 16** CLAY COUNTY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
 - 17** NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY
 - 18** ASHLAND SEWER PLANT
 - 19** ASHLAND FIRE DEPT.

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Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.



MAP 5 WATER UTILITIES ASHLAND ALABAMA



Legend

Water Main

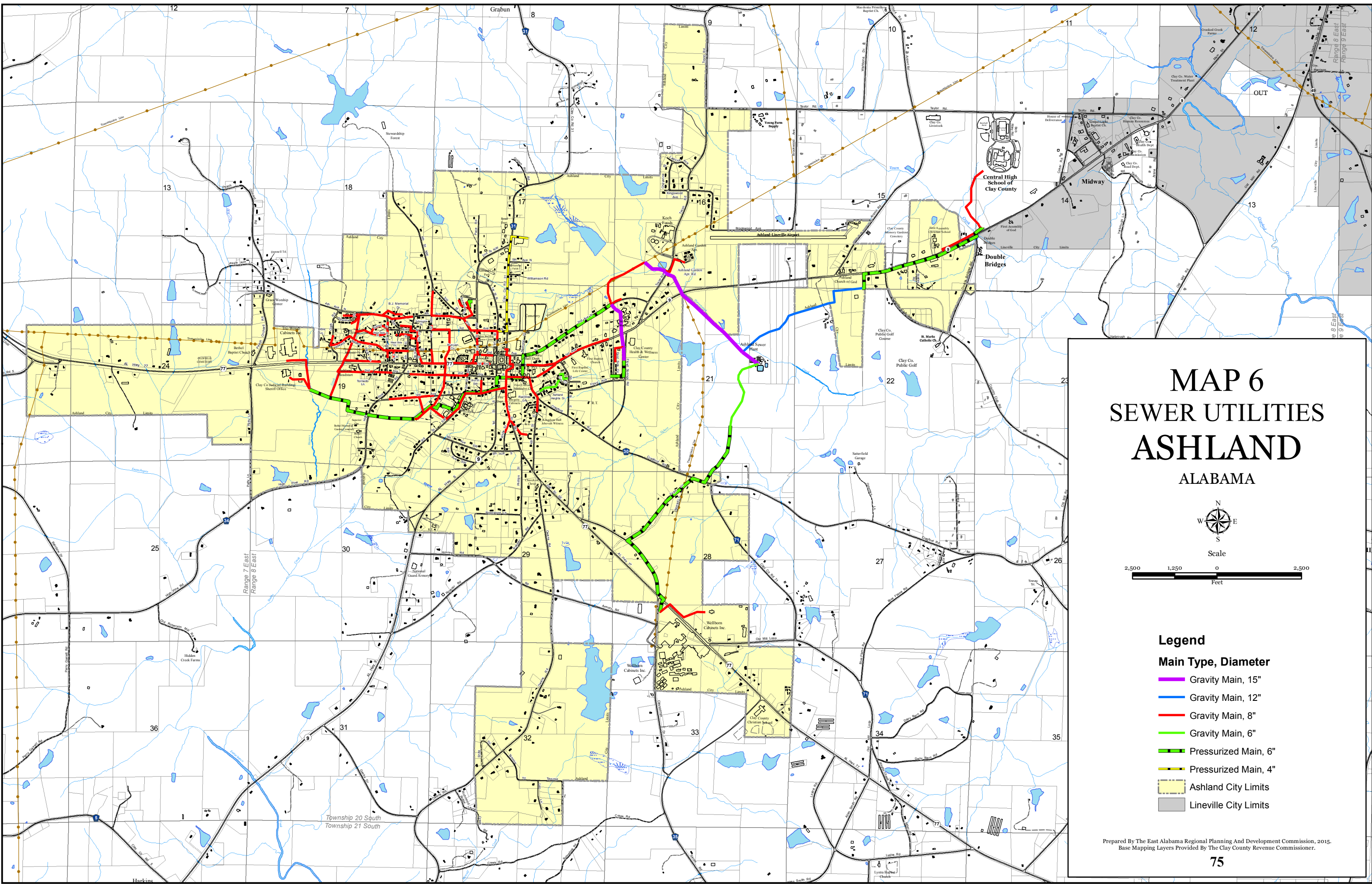
- 18"
- 12"
- 10"
- 8"
- 6"
- 4"
- 2"
- 1"
- 0.75"

— Other System

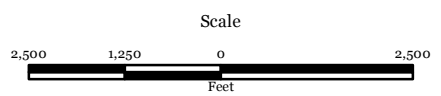
- - - Ashland City Limits

▒ Lineville City Limits

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Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.



MAP 6 SEWER UTILITIES ASHLAND ALABAMA



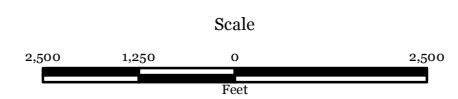
Legend

Main Type, Diameter

- Gravity Main, 15"
- Gravity Main, 12"
- Gravity Main, 8"
- Gravity Main, 6"
- Pressurized Main, 6"
- Pressurized Main, 4"
- Ashland City Limits
- Lineville City Limits

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Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.

MAP 7 GAS UTILITIES ASHLAND ALABAMA



Legend

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gas_FarmTap | 2"and below, LP |
| Gas_RegulatorStation | 2"and below, PE |
| Gas_Valves | 3", HP |
| Gas_Main_Legend | |
| Diameter, Material | |
| 1.5"and below, LP | 3", LP |
| 2"and below, HP | 3", PE |
| | 4", HP |
| | 4", PE |
| | Ashland City Limits |
| | Lineville City Limits |

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Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.

CHAPTER VI: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is an essential element and must be carefully planned and developed to best meet the needs of the community. As America continues to grow in population and more people rely on vehicular travel, transportation planning for the automobile will continue to be of major importance. Efficient traffic flow and mobility influences the economic welfare and overall quality of life within a community. Routes with high traffic concentrations need to be identified and properly planned in order to accommodate present conditions and anticipated future growth. Traffic patterns also direct locations for growth and development. Industries and businesses wishing to be made visible and accessible to the public and to their suppliers tend to locate along major traffic routes. A well-planned transportation system should save business and the general population time and money by allowing its users to deliver goods, services, and other resources as efficiently and safely as possible. Therefore, it is important to analyze a city's existing transportation infrastructure and outline efforts for improving their local transportation network.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on existing traffic conditions and recommend actions to further enhance the transportation infrastructure within the City of Ashland. Traffic volumes along two major routes through the city have been used to calculate maximum capacity and future growth projections.

Definitions

When studying road transportation it is useful to classify roads and streets according to their function. Road classifications can be used to identify road characteristics and whether or not these roads are eligible for federal funding. The highway functional classification system is organized into a hierarchical structure with interstates exhibiting the highest traffic volumes, followed by arterials—principal and minor, collectors—major and minor, and local roads. The following roadway definitions of the functional classification of roads and streets are described by the Alabama Highway Department of Transportation.

Interstates

Interstates are divided highways with full control of access and grade separation at all intersections. The controlled access inherent in interstates results in high-lane capacities, enabling these roadways to carry up to three times the amount of traffic per lane as arterials. Interstates move traffic at relatively high speeds. Ashland is located approximately 23 miles south of the nearest interstate, Interstate 20, which extends from Kent, Texas in the west to Florence, SC in the east.

Arterial Streets

Arterial streets are designed to handle large volumes of traffic. Arterials serve primarily as feeders to the interstate system and act as major connectors between land-use concentrations. With a suggested lane width of twelve feet, this class of roadway may be separated by a median. A secondary purpose of an arterial is to provide some access to adjacent property. The use of a curb lane for parking, loading, and unloading should not be permitted due to interference with the flow of traffic. There are two classifications of arterials: principal and minor. Principal arterial highways

connect communities to freeways and expressways while minor arterial highways join with principal arterial highways and collectors. Arterials could also be urban or rural in character. Minor arterial roads in Ashland constitute AL Hwy. 9, extending the entire length of the city from northeast to southwest and AL Hwy. 77 extending northwest to southeast. Both routes traverse through the central part of the city in the downtown area and serve as major connectors to other communities in Clay County and counties Alabama.

Collector Streets

Collector streets serve the purpose of collecting and distributing the traffic from the local streets to the arterials. With a suggested lane width of twelve feet, collectors are important for serving adjacent property and loading and unloading goods. Typically, collectors have lower volumes of traffic to accommodate shorter distance trips. The single collector street in Ashland is High Pine Road which runs southwest and northeast connecting to AL Hwy. 77 in the west-central part of the city.

Local Streets

Local streets, designed to provide access to abutting property, are usually no wider than twelve feet. Most residential streets and alleys are considered local streets.

Administrative Street Classification

Streets are not classified by function only, but also by which entity owns and maintains them. Through an administrative street classification system, governments are able to identify which entity is responsible for a particular roadway and designate funding for projects accordingly. The Administrative Street classification categories are as follows:

Federal Roads

Federal highways are owned and funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation; the State Department of Transportation coordinates improvements on these roadways. There are no federal roads in Ashland.

Other Federal Roads

These roads are owned and maintained by other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of the Interior. Examples of these roadways include national forest roads and national park service roads. There are no federal roads of this sort the city.

State Highways

State Highways are owned and maintained by the State Department of Transportation both in unincorporated portions of a county and within municipal corporate boundaries. State Highways in Ashland include AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77.

County Roads

County roads can be divided into two types: (1) roads owned and maintained by the county; and (2) roads owned by the county but maintained by the municipality under written agreement with

the county.

Municipal Streets

Municipal streets consist of all other public roads inside city boundaries (excludes private roads). All roads in the city not listed in the other classifications fall into this category.

Private Roads

Private roads are not publicly funded but should be considered when planning future municipal street network expansions. This classification includes subdivision roads that have not been dedicated to the city and substantially long, shared driveways.

Traffic Volumes and Capacity

Traffic volumes are useful to determine traffic flow throughout a community, identify areas of high, medium, and low traffic volumes, and how traffic flow has been directed and changed over time. This data can be used to direct where road improvements, property access, and land developments should occur and the extent to which these occurrences should be administered. Data was collected from strategically placed traffic counters, which are identified by their mile marker positions. Traffic volumes are measured from Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts at these positions. Annual Average Daily Traffic is simply an indicator of the number of vehicles traveling on a particular section of roadway on any particular day for a given year. AADT is calculated by totaling all traffic counts for a given year, at a particular station, and dividing that number by 365.

After AADT is determined, it is compared to practical capacity to check if present volumes can adequately serve the public or not. Capacities are calculated by ALDOT using three data inputs: functional classification, number of lanes, and type of developments adjacent to the roadway.

In order to determine how many more vehicles a particular portion of roadway can adequately serve the formula V/C (V = Traffic Volume and C = Traffic Capacity) is calculated to produce a ratio. If the ratio is less than 1 then capacity is adequate for that road and improvements are not mandatory. However, if the ratio is 1 or more than 1 then capacity is surpassing or has surpassed the maximum number of vehicles the road is designed to properly serve. For example, a rural principal arterial in an undeveloped area may adequately serve up to 32,500 vehicles per day. Should the AADT be 25,000 then: V/C calculates as 0.76. Next subtract the V/C of 0.76 from 100. Then $100 - 0.76 = 0.24\%$ which is the capacity available.

Another method used to determine if present volumes are adequate or not is to compare traffic volumes along a road type with Level of Service (LOS). The Alabama Department of Transportation has provided definitions for LOS, which are as follows:

Level of Service A	Free traffic flow
Level of Service B	Stable traffic flow
Level of Service C	Stable traffic flow
Level of Service D	High-density stable traffic flow

Level of Service E Capacity level traffic flow
 Level of Service F Forced or breakdown traffic flow

Ideal traffic flow is Service level A, but B and C permit adequate traffic flow as well. Service level D is high-density stable traffic flow. When traffic volumes reach level D, plans to accommodate higher traffic volumes should be taken into consideration. Plans to accommodate more traffic are mandatory should traffic volumes meet or exceed levels E and F.

According to Level of Service information, Ashland showed Level of Service A throughout all traffic count stations in the vicinity, indicating free flow traffic along all major roadways. Given this information, along with traffic projections, the city should not need to consider road widening projects in the near future. Locations for traffic stations and accompanying traffic counts and LOS in the city can be seen on Map#8: *Transportation Plan*. Stations are marked in parentheses with 2014 traffic counts and LOS identified below.

AL Hwy. 9

Alabama Highway 9 is a major state route in Ashland, connecting the community to the nearby City of Lineville and further along the route to the City of Heflin and Interstate 20 in the northeast. Traveling to the southwest the highway connects with the City of Goodwater and US Hwy. 280. This route may be used by drivers traveling from US Hwy. 280 and Sylacauga area to and from the Anniston/Oxford metro area. The road is classified as a 2-lane undivided rural minor arterial on the outskirts of the city, then transitions to a 3-lane undivided urban minor arterial at Clay County Hospital, extending and ending in the downtown area where it turns back to a 2-lane heading south and then southwest. Table T-1 shows traffic volumes and level of service along US Hwy. 9 in the City of Ashland from 2006 to 2014. Increments of 2 years were adjusted to skip 2012 and instead include 2013 since little data was reported for various count stations in 2012.

Table T-1. Traffic Volumes, AL Highway 9: City of Ashland, AL								
Location of Traffic Count	2006	2008	2010	2013	2014	# Change	% Change	LOS
AL Hwy. 9 N. of Double Bridge Rd. (531)	6,150	5,650	5,780	6,380	5,330	-820	-13.3%	A
AL Hwy. 9 N. of Tyson Rd. (530)	6,490	6,210	6,350	6,340	5,890	-600	-9.2%	A
AL Hwy. 9 S. of Floyd Springs (529)	8,270	7,200	7,310	7,750	7,380	-890	-10.8%	A
AL Hwy. 9 N. of Memorial Drive (528)	8,140	7,130	7,220	7,220	6,930	-1,210	-14.9%	A
AL Hwy. 9 S. of 3rd Ave. S. (539)	3,140	2,860	2,960	2,930	3,560	420	13.4%	A
AL Hwy. 9 N. of Royster Rd. (540)	0	0	0	2,650	2,950	2,950	11.3%	A
AL Hwy. 9 N. of CR5 (541)	2,930	2,560	2,720	2,600	2,810	-120	-4.1%	A

Source: ALDOT website: Traffic Data, Statewide Traffic Volume Map.

According to the Alabama Department of Transportation approved roadway capacities, maximum capacity for a 2-lane undivided rural minor arterial highway is set at 17,800 AADT, indicating that traffic volumes at 6,000 and 7,000 AADT could increase substantially, even double, before reaching maximum capacity. Level of service A, free flow, traffic was recorded at every traffic count station along the route, further indicating that no significant highway widening projects need be considered in the future at this time. In addition, traffic volumes at most stations along AL Hwy. 9, from 2006 to 2014, show a somewhat substantial decrease in traffic flow. Only the counts

stations located at Royster Rd. and 3rd Ave South reported somewhat substantial increase during this time.

AL Hwy. 77

Alabama State Route 77 also traverses through the middle of Ashland, connecting to the City of Talladega in the northwest and, further along, to the City of Lincoln and Interstate 20. Finally the route terminates in the City of Attalla in central Etowah County. Extending southeast from Ashland, AL Hwy. 77 traverses through Randolph County and ends in the City of LaFayette in central Chambers County. Alabama Highway 77 is classified as a 2-lane undivided rural minor arterial highway on the city outskirts in the west part of the city, then transitions to a 4-lane undivided rural minor arterial at Tru Cabinetry, then back to a 2-lane in the downtown. Extending further southwest to the edge of the city, AL Hwy. 77 then turns back to 4-lane at Wellborn Cabinetry and returns to 2-lane approximately half a mile further southwest. Such widening in these areas could have been attributed to the need for turning lanes at these major employment establishments in order to accommodate highway access and mitigate traffic congestion. Table T-2 examines traffic volumes and level of service along AL Hwy. 77 in the City of Ashland from 2006 to 2014.

Location of Traffic Count	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	# Change	% Change	LOS
AL Hwy. 77 SE of CR130 (536)	2,860	2,840	3,050	2,990	3,060	200	7.0%	A
AL Hwy. 77 W. of Clark Street (535)	4,000	3,750	3,930	3,880	3,670	-330	-8.3%	A
AL Hwy. 77 N. of Runyan Ct. (534)	6,300	5,830	6,030	6,150	5,740	-560	-8.9%	A
AL Hwy. 77 S. of 3rd Ave. S. (527)	3,890	3,380	3,490	3,470	3,850	-40	-1.0%	A
AL Hwy. 77 N. of Gaither Cline Rd. (526)	3,650	3,530	3,610	3,370	3,510	-140	-3.8%	A
AL Hwy. 77 S. of CR35 (803)	2,250	2,160	2,210	2,150	2,270	20	0.9%	A

Source: ALDOT website: Traffic Data, Statewide Traffic Volume Map.

Alabama Department of Transportation approved maximum roadway capacity for a 2-lane undivided rural minor arterial is set at 17,800 indicating that traffic counts along AL Hwy. 77 at 3,000 and 5,000 could increase considerably, even double multiple times, before capacity is reached. Level of service A, free traffic flow, further indicates that no roadway expansions are needed in the near future. Additionally, AL Hwy. 77, from 2006 to 2014, reported substantial decrease in traffic volumes at each traffic count station along this route, with the exception of two stations on the eastern and southern edges. This information indicates that traffic counts at most places in the city will most likely decrease, thus further mitigating the need for substantial expansions and improvements.

Traffic Projections

Traffic projections are used to give an indication of future traffic counts given current conditions occurring at the same rate for the same span of time. It is important to remember that these projections are not used to predict future traffic volumes. They only provide an expectation of what could happen if current trends and conditions remain the same.

An example of how traffic count projections are calculated for a 10-year period is shown below:

1. Calculate the difference between the traffic volumes in the past 10 years.
2005 AADT is 10,230 - 1995 AADT is 10,010. $10,230 - 10,010 = 220$.
2. Second, the difference is divided by the earliest AADT examined, which is 1995 data.
Difference is 220/ AADT 1995 is 10,010. $220 / 10,010 = .0219$ or 2.2%, which is the growth rate for the 10-year period.
3. Third, the growth rate is multiplied by the traffic volume of the most recent year.
Growth rate is 2.2 x 10,230 AADT 2005. $.0219 \times 10,230 = 224.84$. This calculation produces the estimated increase over the next 10-year period, which is 224.84.
4. Lastly, the estimated increase and the most recent AADT are summed.
Estimated increase 224.84 + 10,230 AADT 2005. $224.84 + 10,230 = 10,455$. This calculation gives us the projected traffic count on this section of road for 2015, which is 10,455.

Traffic projections have been calculated for the year 2022 as well as probable Level of Service at these count stations in the city at this time. Traffic volumes for 2006 and 2014 have been used for point of reference data. Table T-3 displays AADT for Ashland in 2006 and 2014 as well as 2022 traffic projections and accompanying LOS for the city’s major roadways.

Roadway	Location of Traffic Count	2006	2014	2022	LOS
AL Hwy. 9	AL Hwy. 9 N. of Double Bridge Rd. (531)	6,150	5,330	4,510	A
	AL Hwy. 9 N. of Tyson Rd. (530)	6,490	5,890	5,290	A
	AL Hwy. 9 S. of Floyd Springs (529)	8,270	7,380	6,490	A
	AL Hwy. 9 N. of Memorial Drive (528)	8,140	6,930	5,720	A
	AL Hwy. 9 S. of 3rd Ave. S. (539)	3,140	3,560	3,980	A
	AL Hwy. 9 N. of Royster Rd. (540)	0	2,950	N/A	A
	AL Hwy. 9 N. of CR5 (541)	2,930	2,810	2,690	A
AL Hwy. 77	AL Hwy. 77 SE of CR130 (536)	2,860	3,060	3,260	A
	AL Hwy. 77 W. of Clark Street (535)	4,000	3,670	3,340	A
	AL Hwy. 77 N. of Runyan Ct. (534)	6,300	5,740	5,180	A
	AL Hwy. 77 S. of 3rd Ave. S. (527)	3,890	3,850	3,810	A
	AL Hwy. 77 N. of Gaither Cline Rd. (526)	3,650	3,510	3,370	A
	AL Hwy. 77 S. of CR35 (803)	2,250	2,270	2,290	A

Source: ALDOT website: Traffic Data, Statewide Traffic Volume Map.

Traffic projections indicate that Ashland should maintain free traffic flow into 2022. However, due to substantial declines in traffic volumes at most stations, as shown in and around the city and in projections, Ashland should consider policies and plans to draw in more traffic to the community. One means of accomplishing this is to bring in more jobs and employment opportunities.

Highway Access Management

Highway access management plays an important role in transportation efficiency, management, and safety. Many communities and other developed areas throughout the country have neglected proper access management standards, resulting in mismanaged traffic coordination and

unnecessary congestion and gridlock at major intersections. As the community promotes development along the major highway corridors Ashland would benefit substantially from logical and practical highway access management guidelines, serving to ease access and enhance traffic flow at important intersections and other access points. Once established, these guidelines could be used to create a practical set of access management regulations to be included in the city’s zoning ordinance and implemented through lawful enforcement of zoning codes.

The basic purpose of highway access management is to improve traffic flow along the highway while maintaining efficient, adequate, and safe vehicular accessibility. Highway access management guidelines included herein comprehensive plan format must not be enforced as law, but are useful in providing basic direction and guidance in establishing practical and effective highway access throughout the city street system. The comprehensive plan is not intended to serve as an exhaustive and complete guidebook or manual for access management, rather it offers a set of basic planning principals drawn in as a basis for more in depth study. These guidelines and subsequent figures selected from the *Highway Access Management Manual*, produced by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, are listed as follows:

Placement of Commercial Activity Centers

As a common pattern in commercial development, commercial activity centers tend to locate around major street corners and intersections. These commercial activity centers, also known as commercial nodes, begin with a location at the corners of intersections and can significantly inhibit traffic flow and access if all four corners are developed with entrance and exit points.

In planning for proper access management, concentration of development on all four corners of the focal intersection should be avoided. Commercial property should be promoted and encouraged to develop as commercial activity centers at only one corner of the intersection, undivided by the major roadway, instead of on all four corners and spread out along the highway. This type of access management permits more highway frontage due to proper separation and distance from the major intersection, better traffic circulation throughout the commercial area, flexibility in site design, and fewer access problems at the intersection. Figure T-1 shows improper placement of commercial activity centers at all four corners of the intersection. This causes a major hindrance to traffic flow through limited frontage, inadequate circulation depth, limited site design, and numerous access drives in too close a proximity. Figure T-2 illustrates proper commercial node placement at just one corner in the form of a commercial activity center. This development allows more highway frontage for businesses, depth of circulation, flexibility in site design, and fewer access problems at the major intersection.

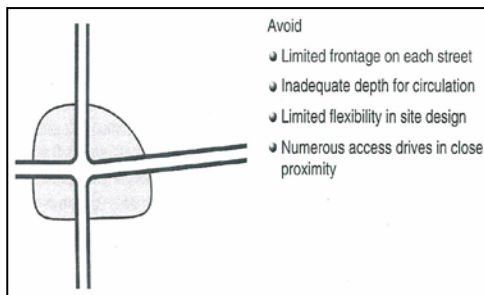


Figure T-1. Improper Commercial Node.

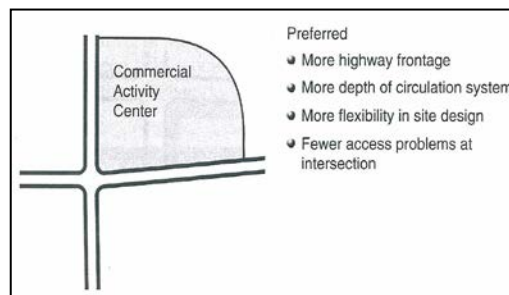


Figure T-2. Proper Commercial Node

Corner Parcel Access

Corner parcel lots, also known as outparcels, enlist high priority and value to businesses due to efficient access and convenient visibility along two major roads instead of a single road. In order to avoid access management problems and congestion at the intersection these parcels need to be tightly regulated with limited access. As a sustainable traffic management practice the preferred strategy is to permit a maximum of two access points, one located on each intersecting highway, into a collectively shared parking area, as opposed to allowing several access points, each with single access into individual parcels with separate parking. This preferred strategy enhances traffic flow and access by utilizing shared parking and keeping access to a minimum along the major roadway, while the non-preferred strategy produces numerous traffic access conflicts and unnecessary congestion. Figure T-3 shows improper corner parcel access with multiple single access points for each parcel and non-shared parking, while Figure T-4 illustrates proper access management with two major access points and shared parking.

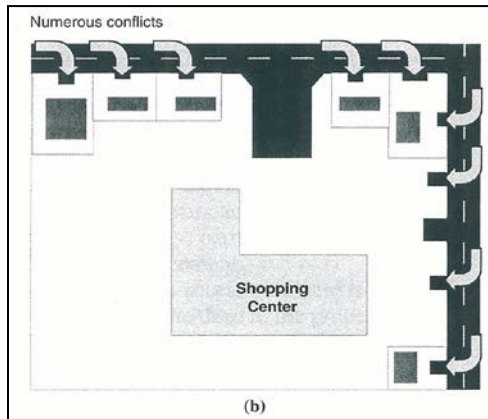


Figure T-3. Improper Corner Parcel Access

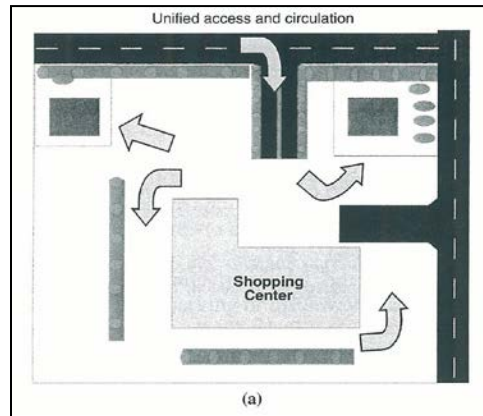


Figure T-4. Proper Corner Parcel Access

Throat Length

Throat length is characterized as the length of roadway or driveway used to connect the highway intersection to the on-site traffic circulation intersection, namely a parking lot parcel or another parallel roadway. Proper throat length is necessary to provide safe vehicular clearance at both intersections and mitigate bunching of vehicles at these access points. Adequate throat length should allow left-turning vehicles sufficient clearance of traffic, in the opposing right hand lane, before meeting on-site circulation. As a general rule, a minimum of two vehicles should be able to remain safely stationary within the throat at any given moment. In practice, a minimum throat length of 50 feet should be given to allow for sufficient vehicle clearance between the parking lot and roadway. This practice should substantially reduce congestion and crash rates on the abutting roadway and circulation site. Figure T-5 demonstrates proper throat length between the abutting roadway and on-site circulation.

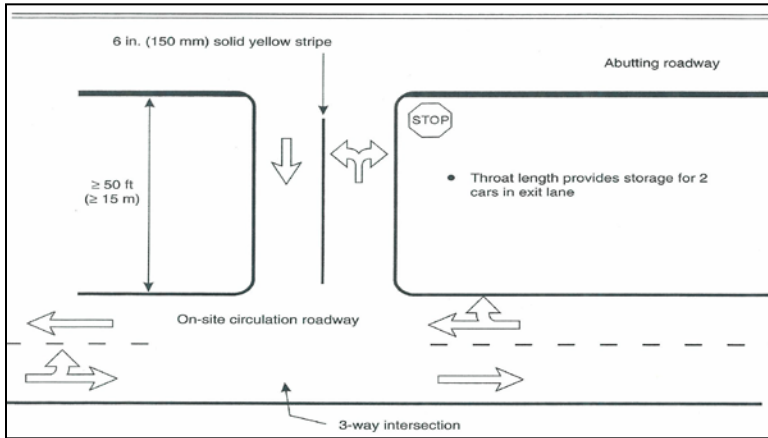


Figure T-5. Proper Throat Length

Grid-pattern Connectivity

The most critical component of highway access management is a unified and well integrated roadway network system. Without such a system, street connectivity fails and the result is increased traffic congestion and reduced safety. The common grid-pattern system is the most basic, yet efficient, safe, and overall useful road network strategy available. This pattern should be the basis for street networking and accompanying city development. Grid pattern connectivity is designed to promote and encourage access to major thoroughfares through connector routes and the local road system instead of giving direct access to individual parcels. In order to free traffic flow and reduce congestion individual parcels should be accessed directly only through connector and local roads, not arterial roads. Figure T-6 illustrates two street systems—one without access management and numerous direct access points to individual parcels, and the other with access management showing a supporting street system with direct access only at connector and local street intersections.

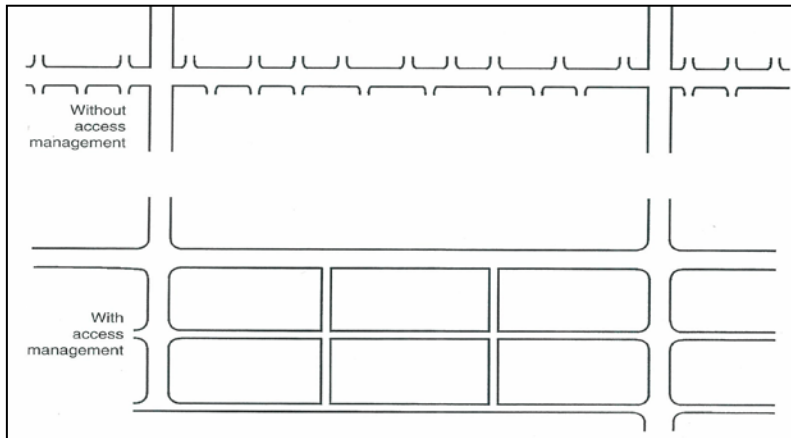


Figure T-6. Street Network With and Without Proper Access Management.

Connectivity in Local Neighborhoods

Grid pattern connectivity should also be promoted and encouraged in local neighborhoods in order to create safe and efficient transportation throughout the community. Connectivity hindrances such as dead-ends, cul-de-sacs, and gated communities force drivers to use major roadways for even short trips, thus adding to congestion. A fragmented street system will also increase length of trip and time driving, as well as impede emergency access. Figure T-7 shows improper connectivity, heightening demand for arterial access, while Figure T-8 illustrates proper and efficient connectivity, creating less demand for arterial access.

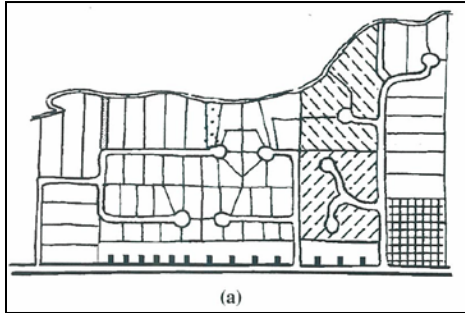


Figure T-7. Improper Connectivity

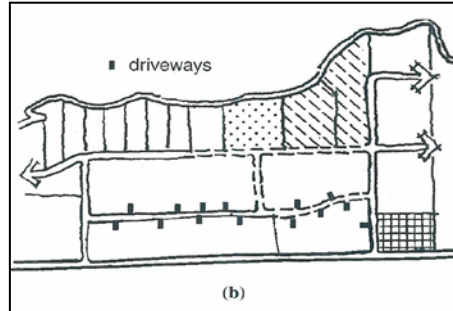


Figure T-8. Proper Connectivity

As a basic connectivity strategy, cities should create transportation plans and policies to mitigate the use of connectivity hindrances and promote and encourage an integrated vehicular transportation network.

Frontage Roads

Common alternatives to direct grid access roads consist of frontage roads and service roads. These roads run parallel to the major highway, providing access points only along connectors to the major road. The two main goals of this strategy is 1) to decrease direct access along the major route, thus creating and sustaining uninhibited traffic flow along the major route and 2) diverting and separating business oriented traffic from through routing traffic. The only barrier to using frontage roads is highly limited access, which is itself the basis. Figure T-9 shows minimum separation between the frontage road and the major roadway.

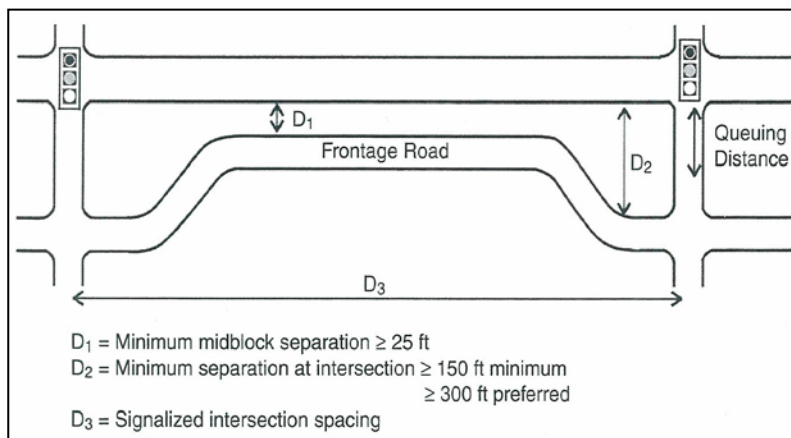


Figure T-9. Minimum Separation for Frontage Roads

Transportation Plan

As a growing and thriving community, Ashland needs to plan for effective and efficient transportation. The primary form of transportation throughout the city is personal vehicular with most traffic generation along AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77. Although the city reports level of service A, free flow traffic, throughout the community, the city should consider plans to maintain existing roadways through properly planned paving and re-paving projects. In order to properly maintain existing roadway infrastructure, the following paving projects are planned:

1. Repave 5th Avenue SW from 3rd Street SW to AL Hwy. 9
2. Repave 6th Avenue SW from 5th Avenue SW to AL Hwy. 9
3. Repave 4th Street NW from AL Hwy. 77 to 3rd Avenue N.

For improvement locations see Map 8: *Transportation Plan* at the end of this chapter.

Analytical Summary

The analytical summary for transportation provides a general outline describing road classifications, maximum capacity, capacity assessment and additional recommendations for the following major routes in the city:

AL Hwy. 9

Classification: The road is classified as a 2-lane undivided rural minor arterial on the outskirts of the city, then transitions to a 3-lane undivided urban minor arterial at Clay County Hospital, extending and ending in the downtown area where it turns back to a 2-lane heading south and then southwest.

Maximum Capacity: 17,800 AADT

Capacity Assessment: Traffic volumes at 6,000 and 7,000 AADT along this route could increase substantially, even double, before reaching maximum capacity.

Recommendations: No significant plans for roadway expansion need to be made at this time or in the near future.

AL Hwy. 77

Classification: Alabama Highway 77 is classified as a 2-lane undivided rural minor arterial highway on the city outskirts in the west part of the city, then transitions to a 4-lane undivided rural minor arterial at Tru Cabinetry, then back to a 2-lane in the downtown. Extending further southwest to the edge of the city, AL Hwy. 77 then turns back to 4-lane at Wellborn Cabinetry and returns to 2-lane approximately half a mile further southwest.

Maximum Capacity: 17,800 AADT

Capacity Assessment: Traffic counts along AL Hwy. 77 at 3,000 and 5,000 could increase considerably, even double multiple times, before capacity is reached.

Recommendations: No significant improvements needed.

MAP 8 TRANSPORTATION PLAN ASHLAND ALABAMA



Legend

- Ashland City Limits
- Lineville City Limits

Functional Street Classifications

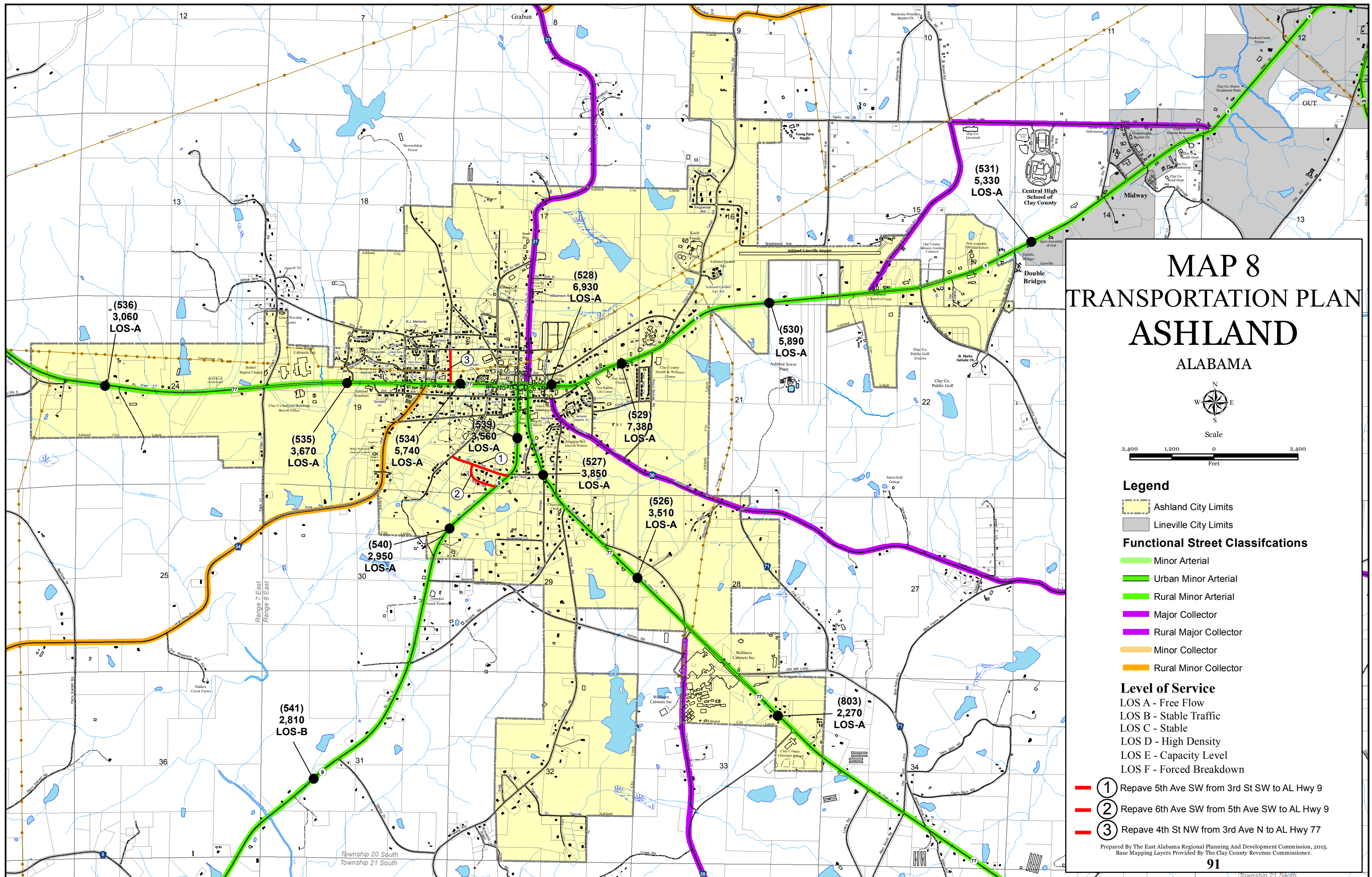
- Minor Arterial
- Urban Minor Arterial
- Rural Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Rural Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Rural Minor Collector

Level of Service

- LOS A - Free Flow
- LOS B - Stable Traffic
- LOS C - Stable
- LOS D - High Density
- LOS E - Capacity Level
- LOS F - Forced Breakdown

- ① Repave 5th Ave SW from 3rd St SW to AL Hwy 9
- ② Repave 6th Ave SW from 5th Ave SW to AL Hwy 9
- ③ Repave 4th St NW from 3rd Ave N to AL Hwy 77

Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2015.
Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.



CHAPTER VII: ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The natural landscape and its features play an important role in the development and planned growth of any community. Features such as floodplains, wetlands, threatened or endangered species habitats, steep slopes, sensitive and rocky soils can be a hindrance to development. Other features such as lakes, streams, rivers, mountains, mineral resources, caves, and forests can act as economic catalysts in the form of resource harvesting, recreational opportunities, and/or ecotourism. Good planning should recognize these benefits natural amenities provide, utilize them to their full extent, and minimize ecological damages in the process. Misguided and unmitigated development on sensitive lands often results in ecological and economic disasters in the form of landslides, sinkholes, and increased flooding. Through prior identification of these hazards and proper guidance of development, many disasters can be avoided, and community enhancements realized. Sensitive lands could be preserved for parks and open space, adding amenities and character to the community. It is in Ashland's best interest to guide and direct what kinds of developments are most suitable for any given area and how much building is feasible. With modern engineering and construction equipment, building in areas once thought impossible are now possible, however, this often is costly and not always the best and most effective option. The natural environment will always be a pivotal factor in development decisions. This chapter examines environmental features such as steep slopes, floodplains, water resources, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and threatened and endangered species, in order to identify areas sensitive to development and to give general guidance on assessing their development feasibility.

Overview of Natural Resources and Constraints

The City of Ashland is located in the east-central portion of Clay County near the eastern border of Talladega National Forest and approximately 15 miles south of Cheaha Mountain, Alabama's highest peak. Approximately 13 miles to the east, sits the R.I. Harris Reservoir (Lake Wedowee). These natural amenities, located near Ashland, provide numerous opportunities for the city in forms of outdoor recreation and tourism. Approximately 20 miles to the south sits Lake Martin, which is considered by many to be the most beautiful lake in the south.

According to soil inventory data in 2016, Ashland showed very few environmental constraints throughout the city. The most prevalent constraint was flood prone, with 326 acres, accounting for 6.9% of the 4,744 total acres in the city limits. Flood hazard (100-yr.) areas comprised 142 acres, which accounted for 3% of the total city limits area, while wetlands and steep slopes reported 1.9% and 1.3% respectively. Water area within the city limits constituted 1.6% of the total. Most flood prone and flood hazard areas extend together, along small streams, through the western and northeastern parts of the city, with some floodplains in the south city limits. In general, land deemed as floodplains tend to flood more rapidly and excessively than flood prone areas due to the nature of the soils, low elevations, and close proximity to water bodies. Data pertaining to floodplain areas have been obtained in accordance with FEMA floodplain FIRM (Federal Insurance Rate Maps) maps and flood prone areas as identified by the USDA's National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) maps. Table EF-1 shows environmental features for Ashland in 2016. For more information on locations of constraints consult Map 9: *Environmental Constraints* at the end of the chapter.

Table EF-1. Environmental Features: Ashland, 2016		
Environmental Feature/Constraint	Acreage	Percent Distribution
Steep Slopes	60.42	1.3%
Flood Prone	326.56	6.9%
Wetlands	92.30	1.9%
Flood Hazard (100 year)	142.10	3.0%
Water (Lakes and Ponds)	74.81	1.6%
Total City Acres	4744.11	100.0%

Source: EARPDC database, 2016.

Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are an environmental constraint worthy of attention. Many slopes have weak or loose soils unfit for development. Modern engineering practices may be able to overcome these obstacles, but not without major costs, significant time, and careful planning. Development along steep slopes also exacerbates storm-water runoff, as paved ground is less capable of absorbing rain and other water based elements. Although criterion for slope development varies, the following general thresholds are used in planning and engineering to determine acceptable and non-acceptable developments:

3 percent

Generally accepted limit for railroads

8 percent

Generally accepted limit for highways, although grades of 6 percent or less are desirable for highways intended to accommodate heavy truck traffic.

10 percent

Generally accepted limit for driveways

15 percent

Point at which engineering costs for most developments become significant and extensive anchoring, soil stabilization, and stormwater management measures must be applied.

25 percent

Generally accepted limit for all development activity.

Ashland has very little steep slope coverage with a minimal 60.42 acres, accounting for 1.3% of the total land area, located as small patches at the in the western, northern, and southern edges of the city. The city should not be concerned with steep slopes as a setback to development, unless plans are made to annex large sections of the western and northern sections where more steep slopes are situated.

Floodplains

Floodplains are areas highly susceptible to flood conditions occurring during extreme rainfall and should thus be reserved for minimal development. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service a floodplain is defined as, “the nearly level plain that borders a stream and is subject to inundation under flood stage conditions unless protected artificially.” Buildings constructed in floodplains should be placed on significantly tall foundations or built so as to redirect water flow into more suitable areas of the floodplain. As a general rule, development in floodplains should be avoided so as to allow the floodplain to absorb water and in turn recharge groundwater resources. If properly maintained and preserved floodplains can be a valuable resource. Floodplains are rich in nutrients continually cycled through rivers, streams, and lakes, which makes the land primarily suitable for farming and pastureland. The floodplain, secure in its natural state, serves to protect our drinking water, conserve the beauty of our natural resources, and sustain our local ecosystems.

Floodplains are divided into three zones determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). According to FEMA, zones for floodplains are specified as followed:

Zone A

Areas of 100-year base flood elevations and flood hazard factors not determined. These areas are of dark color on the FEMA floodplain map.

Zone B

Areas between limits of the 100-year flood and 500-year flood, or certain areas subject to 100 year flooding with average depths less than one (1) foot or where the contributing drainage area is less than one square mile, or areas protected by levees from the base flood. These areas are of a lighter color than Zone A on the floodplain map.

Zone C

Zone C areas are areas of minimal flooding. These areas are not indicated by color on floodplain maps.

Ashland’s most substantial environmental constraints are flood prone areas and floodplains, however, these areas account for only 9% of the total land area, extending through the western and northeastern parts of the city, with some floodplains in the south city limits. Floodplains and flood prone areas should be preserved in their natural state as much as feasibly possible. The city could protect these areas as open space, parks and recreation, and farmland with some reasonable low housing development.

Water Resources

Water resources serve a variety of positive functions for the community. A clean and beautiful aquatic environment not only benefits residents environmentally, but also economically. Eco-tourism adds to local revenue and attracts businesses. Developing in a manner that best utilizes this

highly valued resource is in the best interest of any community. Overall, quality water resources enhance quality of life. The City of Ashland receives water from the Clay County Water Authority which takes water from the watershed reservoir at the Earl C. Knowlton Water Treatment facility in the City of Oxford, AL. Nearby Lake Wedowee is also a substantial water resource for outdoor recreation and tourism.

The Alabama Environmental Management Act authorizes the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) to establish and enforce water quality standards, regulations and penalties in order to maintain state and federal water quality provisions. From this authorization, the ADEM Administrative Code prohibits the physical, chemical, or biological contamination of state waters through source and non-point source pollution. Point source pollution is defined as pollution originating from a definable source such as a ditch, pipe, concentrated animal feed lot, or container. Non-point source pollution does not originate from a defined source, but can be attributed to agricultural and construction related runoff, and runoff from lawns and gardens.

Wetlands

Since the passage of the Clean Waters Act (CWA) in 1977, wetland preservation has gained in national attention. More than 100 million acres of wetlands in the continental U.S. and Alaska have been preserved. Wetlands function as a vital aquatic system contributing to habitat diversity, flood control, and recharging and cleaning of polluted water. They also provide green space for communities, which drive up neighboring property values. There currently is no solid definition of a wetland. Environments such as ponds, bogs, marshes, swamps, estuaries, or bottomland forest could be considered wetlands, however, identification can also be based on hydrology, soil conditions, and vegetation types. Such a broad understanding has led to the protection of many normally “dry” lands as wetland in numerous preservation efforts.

Wetlands are protected nationally under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which requires permits for the discharging and dredging of defined “wetlands.” Section 404 is jointly administered by the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Corps administers permits, while the EPA sustains the right to veto any permit issued. Developers should always contact the nearest Corps officials before disturbing considered wetland areas.

Ashland determined wetland areas cover approximately 92 acres (1.9% of the total land), located in the northeastern and southern parts of the city. For more detail see Map#10: *Environmental Constraints*.

Wildlife Habitats

Every year millions of people across the U.S. spend time and monetary resources viewing wildlife and enjoying the great outdoors. Nature serves as an escape and refuge from the busy and congested urban environment. Ashland should consider identifying lands sensitive to environmental degradation and working with the Alabama/Georgia Land/Chattowah Open Land Trust to adequately reserve and manage land for wildlife preservation. The Alabama/Georgia Land

Trust/Chattowah Open Land Trust are non-profit 501 (c)(3) conservation organizations dedicated to protecting land for present and future generations by helping private land owners protect land through conservation easements and manage their land through Land Protection and Land Stewardship Programs. Conservation easements allow land owners to set aside or protect areas from encroaching development, protecting valuable farm and forestland, ecologically significant areas, water sources, and natural view-sheds. As of 2011, the Alabama/Georgia Land Trust/Chattowah Open Land Trust have safeguarded more than 193,000 acres of open space throughout Alabama and Georgia with more than 560 conservation easements, making the Land Trust the leader in land protection in the southeastern US.

Opportunity exists for wildlife habitat preservation in Ashland. As a planning consideration, Ashland should promote and encourage land and wildlife preservation in order to enhance the city's draw as an outdoor recreational community. Habitat preservation could be promoted and encouraged along identified floodplain and flood prone areas, extending through the eastern and western parts of the city, as well as in designated wetlands.

Threatened and Endangered Species

National environmental policies protect this country's natural resources and amenities. The Endangered Species Act (ESA), passed by Congress in 1973, was established to protect species of plants and animals from extinction. Plants and animals listed as threatened or endangered species by the U.S. Department of Interior are to be protected on both public and private land. Endangered species are defined, according to the ESA, as: "any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range." Threatened species are defined as: "any species that are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future." Plant and animal species may be placed on the threatened and endangered species list if they meet one or more of the following scientific criterion: (1) current or threatened destruction of habitat, (2) overuse of species for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes (3) disease or predation, (4) ineffective regulatory mechanisms, and (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting the species' chances of survival. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is charged with the responsibility of enforcing ESA regulations. Although most forest and lake related activities would not affect endangered species, developers, loggers, and other land-owners should review their plans with the USFWS or the Alabama Department of Natural Resources to verify ESA compliance.

Alabama is an ecologically diverse state with a significant amount of threatened and endangered species. Only the States of California at 309 and Hawaii (329) have more plants and animals than Alabama (117) placed on the threatened and endangered species list. According to the USFWS Alabama Ecological Services Field Station, the latest listing for threatened and endangered species in Clay County, conducted in April 2011 have been listed as follows:

Birds

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Picoides borealis* was listed as endangered in Clay County as well as in Alabama in general and several other southeastern states. Broadly described, the bird has a longish bill, black barred white with a black crown, nape, and moustachial stripe border white cheeks and side of neck. The male shows a small red mark on the side of nape.

Flowering Plants—Flowering plants reported as threatened in Clay County constituted the Little amphianthus *Amphianthus pusillus*, Kral’s water-plantain *Sagittaria secundifolia*, and White Fringless orchid *Platanthera integrilabia*.

Clams—Clams listed as endangered consisted of the Southern Acornshell *Epioblasma othcaloogensis*, Upland Combshell *Epioblasma metastriata*, Ovate Clubshell mussel *Pleurobema perovatum*, Coosa Moccasinshell mussel *Medionidus parvulus*, Triangular Kidneyshell mussel *Ptychobranthus greenii*, Southern Clubshell mussel *Pleurobema decisum*, Southern Pigtoe *Pleurobema georgianum*. Georgia pigtoe *Pleurobema hanleyianum*. The Fine-lined Pocketbook mussel *Lampsilis altilis* was listed as threatened.

Mammals—Mammals listed as endangered included the Indiana bat *Myotis sodalis* and the Gray bat *Myotis grisescens*.

Illustrated below are a few of the threatened and endangered species in Clay County.



As a part of policy to preserve the natural environment and inherent species diversity, the city should implement best management practices for forestry, maintained and updated by the Alabama Forestry Commission, taking the above mentioned species into account. These management practices are not regulations, but rather general guidelines for development and construction which best manages environmental protection and impact mitigation. The *Best Management Practices for Forestry* guidelines include preservation and maintenance procedures for the following amenities and tactics: 1) Streamside Management Zones, 2) Stream Crossings, 3) Forest Roads, 4) Timber Harvesting, 5) Reforestation/Stand Management, 6) Forested Wetland Management, 7) and Revegetation/Stabilization.

Analytical Summary

The analytical summary provides a general review of the topics discussed in each chapter.

Steep Slopes

Ashland has very little steep slope coverage with a minimal 60.42 acres, accounting for 1.3% of the total land area, located as small patches at the in the western, northern, and southern edges of the city. The city should not be concerned with steep slopes as a setback to development, unless plans are made to annex large sections of the western and northern sections where more steep slopes are situated.

Floodplains and Flood prone Areas

Ashland's most substantial environmental constraints are flood prone areas and floodplains, however, these areas account for only 9% of the total land area, extending through the western and northeastern parts of the city, with some floodplains in the south city limits. Floodplains and flood prone areas should be preserved in their natural state as much as feasibly possible. The city could protect these areas as open space, parks and recreation, and farmland with some reasonable low housing development.

Water Resources

The City of Ashland receives water from the Clay County Water Authority which takes water from the watershed reservoir at the Earl C. Knowlton Water Treatment facility in the City of Oxford, AL. Nearby Lake Wedowee is also a substantial water resource for outdoor recreation and tourism.

Wetlands

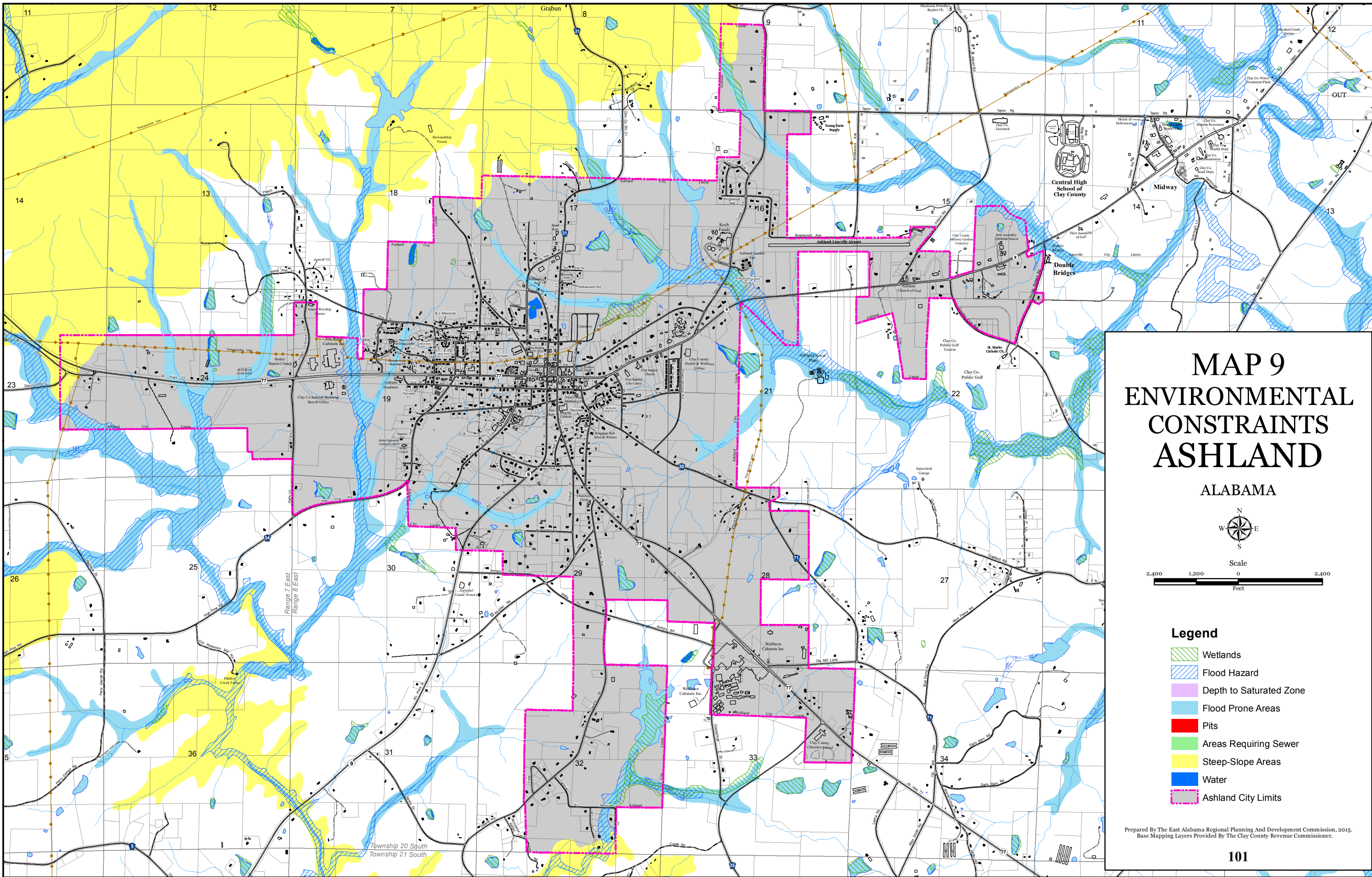
Ashland determined wetland areas cover approximately 92 acres (1.9% of the total land), located in the northeastern and southern parts of the city. For more detail see Map#9: *Environmental Constraints*.

Wildlife Habitats

Opportunity exists for wildlife habitat preservation in Ashland. As a planning consideration, Ashland should promote and encourage land and wildlife preservation in order to enhance the city's draw as an outdoor recreational community. Habitat preservation could be promoted and encouraged along identified floodplain and flood prone areas, extending through the eastern and western parts of the city, as well as in designated wetlands.

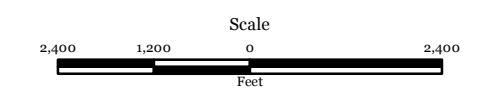
Threatened and Endangered Species

As a planning consideration, in order to protect and maintain plant and animal species, Ashland could implement Best Management Practices for Forestry. The *Best Management Practices for Forestry* guidelines include preservation and maintenance procedures for the following amenities and tactics: 1) Streamside Management Zones, 2) Stream Crossings, 3) Forest Roads, 4) Timber Harvesting, 5) Reforestation/Stand Management, 6) Forested Wetland Management, 7) and Revegetation/Stabilization. These practices are regularly maintained and updated by the Alabama Forestry Commission.



MAP 9 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS ASHLAND

ALABAMA



Legend

- Wetlands
- Flood Hazard
- Depth to Saturated Zone
- Flood Prone Areas
- Pits
- Areas Requiring Sewer
- Steep-Slope Areas
- Water
- Ashland City Limits

Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2015.
Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.

CHAPTER VIII: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive plan must explore existing land use, development trends, and zoning patterns in order to understand how the city has developed, why it developed as it did, and what development will most likely occur given the current trends. A proper understanding of land use, zoning, and development patterns allows officials to make informed decisions affecting the orderly growth and development of their city.

The purpose of the land use chapter is to guide and direct development with the goal of sustaining orderly and coordinated development in accordance to changing needs, presently and in the future. This chapter examines existing land use, zoning patterns, compares existing land use and zoning patterns, and proposes a future land use plan which gives recommendations for coordinating better land use within the city. The future land use plan and accompanying *Future Land Use Plan Map* (Map#12) is a conceptual future plan to be used in guiding zoning and development decisions. It is not intended to be used as a zoning map or even to reflect similarities to districts on the *Zoning Map* (Map#11), rather it is to be used as a conceptual vision for the community's future.

Definitions

The following land use categories are described below for use in the Ashland Comprehensive Plan.

Single-Family Residential

Areas intended for a detached residential dwelling unit, other than a mobile home, designed for and occupied by one family only.

Multi-Family Residential

Areas intended for detached residential units containing two or more dwelling units such as duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, dormitories, and apartments.

Manufactured Home Park

Areas intended for mobile homes, in which any plot of ground upon which one or more mobile homes occupied for dwelling purposes are located, regardless of whether or not a charge is made for such accommodations.

Commercial

Areas intended for shopping centers, free-standing stores, service establishments, offices, and in some cases residential uses.

Industrial

Areas intended for manufacturing and research and development facilities.

Public and Semi-Public

Areas intended for public and semi-public uses including city governmental offices, public schools, churches and cemeteries.

Parks and Recreation

Public areas intended for recreational use including athletic fields, playgrounds, and nature areas.

Agriculture

Areas actively engaged in or suited for farm production under specified conditions.

Undeveloped/Forestry

Includes private and vacated land upon which no development or active use is apparent. Included in this category is roadway, railroad, and utility rights-of-way and forested land, which may or may not be actively engaged in timber production.

Existing Land Use

Existing land use data helps communities determine how a city will develop and what types of development it favors and does not favor. The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission maps and records data on land use in the city limits. Ashland has approximately 4,744 total acres within the city limits, which includes right-of-ways and bodies of water and 4,394 land use acres, which does not include right-of-ways and water. Approximately 1,886 acres in the city are undeveloped leaving room for development as environmental constraints allow. For more detail on existing land use see Map#10: *Existing Land Use*. Table LU-1 shows existing land use acreage for the City of Ashland in 2016.

Table LU-1. Existing Land Use Acreage: City of Ashland, 2016			
Land Use Category	Acres in City	% of Total Land Area	% of Developed Land Area
Agricultural	1,217.85	27.7%	48.6%
Commercial	76.83	1.7%	3.1%
Industrial	275.87	6.3%	11.0%
Single-Family Residential	632.65	14.4%	25.2%
Multi-Family Residential	42.16	1.0%	1.7%
Park and Recreation	32.02	0.7%	1.3%
Public	230.80	5.3%	9.2%
Undeveloped	1,886.67	42.9%	N/A
Total Land Use Area	4,394.85	100.0%	N/A
Total Developed Land	2,508.18	57.1%	100.0%
Total City Acreage	4,744.11	N/A	N/A

Source: EARPDC database, 2016.

Agriculture

Agriculture constitutes a considerably large portion of land within the city limits with 1,217 acres and 27% of the total land use area. Approximately 48% of the developed land in the city is currently used for agricultural purposes. The largest sections of agricultural land in Ashland are located in the northern and western parts with some in the south and eastern portions.

Commercial

Approximately 76 acres (3% of the developed land and 1% of the total) in Ashland is dedicated to commercial development. The significant majority of this land is located in the downtown area and along AL Hwy. 9 in the eastern part of the city and along AL Hwy. 77 in the western section. A substantial goal for the city is to promote and enhance commercial development through small business establishments in the downtown and more intensive highway commercial use along AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77.

Industrial

Ashland uses about 275 acres for industrial development (11% developed land use and 6% of the total). Much of the Ashland's industrial land is used by the city's major employers such as Wellborn Cabinets in the south along AL Hwy. 77, Tru-Wood Cabinets in the west on AL Hwy. 77, and Koch Foods on Tyson Rd. in the eastern part. As a general goal the city desires to promote and encourage industrial development in areas zoned with convenient access to major highways.

Residential

Residential land use in the form of single-family housing is spread fairly consistently throughout the city, with the largest concentrations in the central area of the city and in the south. Other smaller pockets of single-family uses are located on major and minor roadways. Single-family residential is substantially the largest residential use in the city constituting 632 acres, accounting for 25% of developed land use and 14% of total land use in the city. Multi-family land use (accounting for a minor 1% of total land use) in the city is located entirely in the central part of the city in apartment and townhome developments.

Public Land

Provision of public land use plays an important role in community services. Ashland's public land use, accounting for 230 acres (9% developed and 5% total land use) is spread throughout the city with most of the land serving facilities such as Clay County Hospital, Clay County Medical Center, Clay County Sheriff's Office, Clay County Christian School, the Ashland-Lineville Airport, various churches, and the Cemetery. Central High School of Clay County and the Clay County Public Golf course are also significant facilities which utilize extensive land acreage, however, these uses are located outside the city limits and are therefore not factored into the land use figures for the city.

Parks and Recreation

Land dedicated to parks and recreation account for 32 acres with most of this land situated in Ashland City Park in the north-central part of the city.

Undeveloped

The single most dominate land use in the city is undeveloped, consisting of 1,886 acres and 42% of total land use. Much of this land is located in and around the central part of the city, separating

single-family residential uses from agricultural. As a planning consideration, the city could rezone these areas, along minor and major roadways for single-family uses in order to prepare for future growth and development.

Zoning Patterns

Zoning plays an important role in the growth and development of the city and its citizens. The zoning ordinance is created to promote desirable standards in land use, prevent land use conflicts, and maintain and guide growth and development in accordance to the comprehensive plan and its goals and objectives for the city. A properly prepared zoning ordinance clarifies to property owners what can and cannot be developed on their property, so as not to interfere with the rights and privileges of their neighbors. The city’s zoning ordinance and zoning map (Map#11: *Zoning*) should be periodically updated to insure it represents the goals, objectives, and policies best suited for the future growth and development of the community as a whole.

The City of Ashland provides approximately 4,744.11 acres of zoning, which includes right-of-ways and bodies of water and 4,691.76 total acres, excluding rights-of-ways and bodies of water. The substantially dominant zoning district in Ashland is agriculture with 2,756 acres, accounting for slightly over half (58%) of the total zoning acreage. Most of the agriculturally zoned land in the city is located in the northern, southern, and western portions of the city. The distant second largest zoning district is single-family situated in the central part of the city and accounting for 995 acres and 21% of the total zoning acreage. Table LU-2 examines zoning acreage and percent of total for Ashland in 2016.

Table LU-2. Zoning Acreage: City of Ashland, 2016					
Zoning	District Classification	Acres Zoned	% of Total	Acres Zoned	% of Total
AG	Agriculture	2,756.26	58.7%	2,756.26	58.7%
R-1	Single-Family Residential	995.44	21.2%	1,408.24	30.0%
R-2	Multiple and Single-Family Dwellings	332.79	7.1%		
R-MH	Residential-Manufactured Home	80.01	1.7%		
B-1	General Business	194.67	4.1%	201.46	4.3%
B-2	City Square Commercial	6.79	0.1%		
IND	Industrial	318.01	6.8%	318.01	6.8%
Totals		4,691.76	100.0%	4,691.76	100.0%
Special Districts					
ACZ	Airport Clear Zone	7.79	0.2%	7.79	0.2%

Source: EARPDC database, 2016.

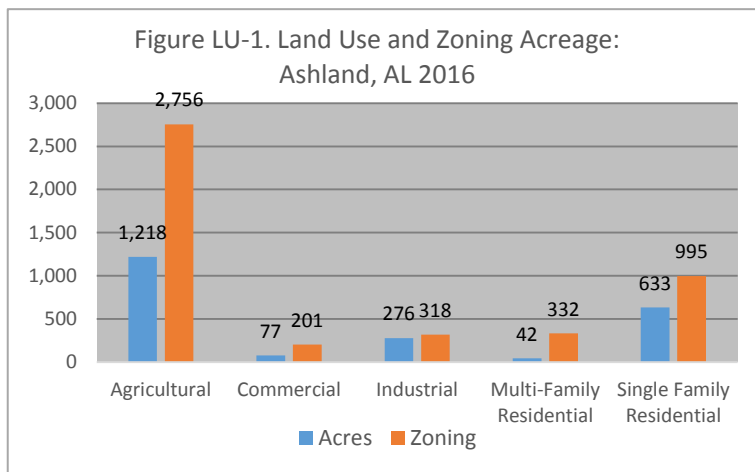
In addition to single-family residential zoned districts, Ashland provides an R-2: Multiple and Single-Family Dwellings zoning district which allows for a combination of multi-family and single-family homes. This district accounts for 332 acres (7% of the total land area) located in the central portion of the city with the largest section in the north-central area. The city’s business districts, which comprise 201 acres (4% of the total land area), are located in the downtown area and along the major highway routes of AL Hwy. 77 and AL Hwy. 9 while industrial zoned land is situated mostly on the city’s outskirts where more open space is available. Ashland also permits a

special district, the ACZ: Airport Clear Zone, which constitutes 7 acres, on both sides of the airport runway to allow for airplane clearance while taking off and landing.

Existing Land Use and Zoning Patterns

A comparison of land use and zoning is beneficial in determining land use and zoning patterns. Zoning should reflect community needs and guide land use and development throughout the city. Comparing these elements of the plan based on percent of land used and land zoned for specific purposes is useful in determining current development patterns and directing how the city should grow.

Ashland presently reports enough land zoned to support expansion of every land use in the city. Substantially, the most dominant land use within Ashland’s city limits is agriculture with 1,218 acres (27% of the total land area in the city). Agricultural zoning is also the most dominant zoning district with 2,756 acres (58% of the total zoning area) indicating that the city holds enough agricultural zoned areas to expand agricultural uses well into the future. Single-family is the second most common land use with 633 acres (14%) and 995 acres (21%) zoned for this use, showing that single-family could also extend into unused areas zoned as such. Industrial areas



show some concern for any type of major expansion, since 276 acres (6.3%) are used for industrial and 318 acres (6.8%) have been zoned for such purpose. Industrial zoned land may support some light and minor expansion, but not major expansion if a substantial industry should propose locating in the city or if many small industries build establishments within the city limits. Figure LU-1 compares land use acreage with zoning acreage for the City of Ashland in 2016.

Notice the significantly larger amount of acres zoned for agriculture compared to the amount of acreage currently used for agriculture. Also notice that land used for industrial purposes almost equals the amount presently zoned for such use. Given this information, the city should consider expanding industrial zoned areas along major highways on the city outskirts where more open land is available in preparation for industrial growth and development. Ashland could also expand single-family uses closer into the central part of the city in order to build upon existing residential and further support nearby small business in this area.

Future Land Use Plan

As a community grows and expands, a plan for land use and development is critical for guiding the city in a manner that logically and efficiently meets city goals and objectives. The City of Ashland desires to grow in a manner that effectively and efficiently utilizes land and community resources. The future land use plan and accompanying map (See Map#12: *Future Land Use Plan*) provides

general guidance in this directive. The following highlights are general recommendations for land use planning and development in the city:

- **Single-family:** Single-family residential should be promoted as the major residential use throughout the city and development should utilize potential infill in established neighborhoods, outside of floodplain areas, in order to spur renewal and increase housing values. Ashland could also expand single-family uses closer into the central part of the city in order to build up existing use and further support nearby small businesses.
- **Multi-family:** Multi-family should be promoted and encouraged to locate in the central portion of the city near existing multi-family facilities with some access and close proximity to major roadways in order to alleviate potential traffic congestion in the denser residential areas.
- **Commercial:** Compact commercial development should be promoted in the downtown area with more intensive commercial along AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77 or within convenient access to these major roadways.
- **Industrial:** Light industrial could be established along minor roads in the central area of the city where less land is needed, with buffering for residential areas in order to reduce noise, sight, and other industrial impacts. However, ideally, industrial uses should be located along major roadways and in areas where potential industrial expansion may occur in a safe and convenient manner. Heavy industrial uses must be established along major roads on the city outskirts to mitigate impacts on residential areas and maintain access to additional land for future expansion.
- **Public and Semi-public:** Adequate expansion land should be reserved for important community facilities such as schools and other city service buildings.
- **Environmental Constraints:** Accommodations for environmental constraints must be taken into consideration in a land use plan. Constraints such as steep slopes should be reserved for parks and recreation or low density residential development where water and sewer is feasible. Wetlands and extreme flood prone areas should also be reserved for parks and recreation and where feasible, low-density residential. Intensive commercial and industrial developments locating in these areas need to first conduct substantial flood hazard mitigation procedures in accordance with ADEM regulations.

Analytical Summary

The analytical summary provides a general review of the topics discussed in each chapter.

Agriculture

Agriculture constitutes a considerably large portion of land within the city limits with 1,217 acres and 27% of the total land use area. Approximately 48% of the developed land in the city is currently used for agricultural purposes. The largest sections of agricultural land in Ashland are located in the northern and western parts with some in the south and eastern portions. Since Ashland has an abundance of agriculture and unused agricultural zoned areas, the city could rezone much of this land along major and minor roadways to more intensive uses such as residential and commercial in order to prepare for future growth and expansion.

Commercial

Approximately 76 acres (3% of the developed land and 1% of the total) in Ashland is dedicated to commercial development. The significant majority of this land is located in the downtown area and along AL Hwy. 9 in the eastern part of the city and along AL Hwy. 77 in the western section. A substantial goal for the city is to promote and enhance commercial development through small business establishments in the downtown and more intensive highway commercial use along AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77.

Industrial

Ashland uses about 275 acres for industrial development (11% developed land use and 6% of the total). Much of the Ashland's industrial land is used by the city's major employers such as Wellborn Cabinets in the south along AL Hwy. 77, Tru-Wood Cabinets in the west on AL Hwy. 77, and Koch Foods on Tyson Rd. in the eastern part. As a general goal the city desires to promote and encourage industrial development in areas zoned with convenient access to major highways and on the city outskirts where more land is available for this type of development and expansion.

Residential

Residential land use in the form of single-family housing is spread fairly consistently throughout the city, with the largest concentrations in the central area of the city and in the south. Other smaller pockets of single-family uses are located on major and minor roadways. Single-family residential is substantially the largest residential use in the city constituting 632 acres, accounting for 25% of developed land use and 14% of total land use in the city. Multi-family land use (accounting for a minor 1% of total land use) in the city is located entirely in the central part of the city in apartment and townhome developments. Ashland could consider expanding single-family residential land use in the central portion of the city and near the downtown area in order to build up existing residential and further support small business in this part of the city.

Public

Provision of public land use plays an important role in community services. Ashland's public land use, accounting for 230 acres (9% developed and 5% total land use) is spread throughout the city with most of the land serving facilities such as Clay County Hospital, Clay County Medical Center, Clay County Sheriff's Office, Clay County Christian School, the Ashland-Lineville

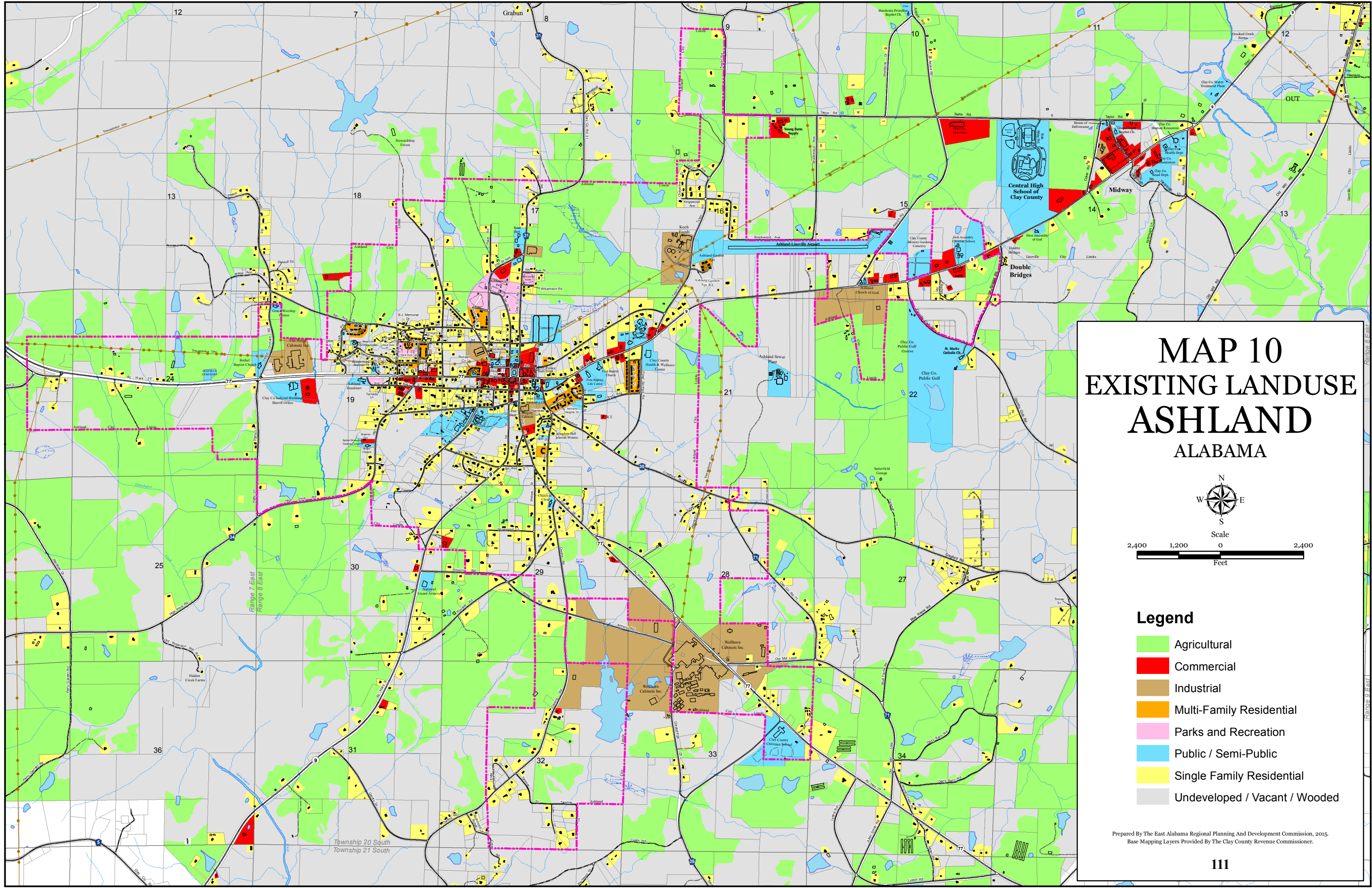
Airport, various churches, and the Cemetery. Central High School of Clay County and the Clay County Public Golf course are also significant facilities which utilize extensive land acreage, however, these uses are located outside the city limits and are therefore not factored into the land use figures for the city. Areas zoned for public uses should be placed near existing uses in order to accommodate and support growth and expansion of these facilities.

Parks and Recreation

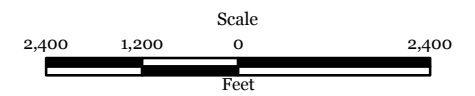
Land dedicated to parks and recreation account for 32 acres with most of this land situated in Ashland City Park in the north-central part of the city. Ideally, land for expansion of parks and recreation should be reserved for areas with limited development such as wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes in order to mitigate potential environmental hazards and serve preservation.

Undeveloped

The single most dominate land use in the city is undeveloped, consisting of 1,886 acres and 42% of total land use. Much of this land is located in and around the central part of the city, separating single-family residential uses from agricultural. As a planning consideration, the city could rezone these areas, along minor and major roadways for single-family uses in order to prepare for future growth and development.



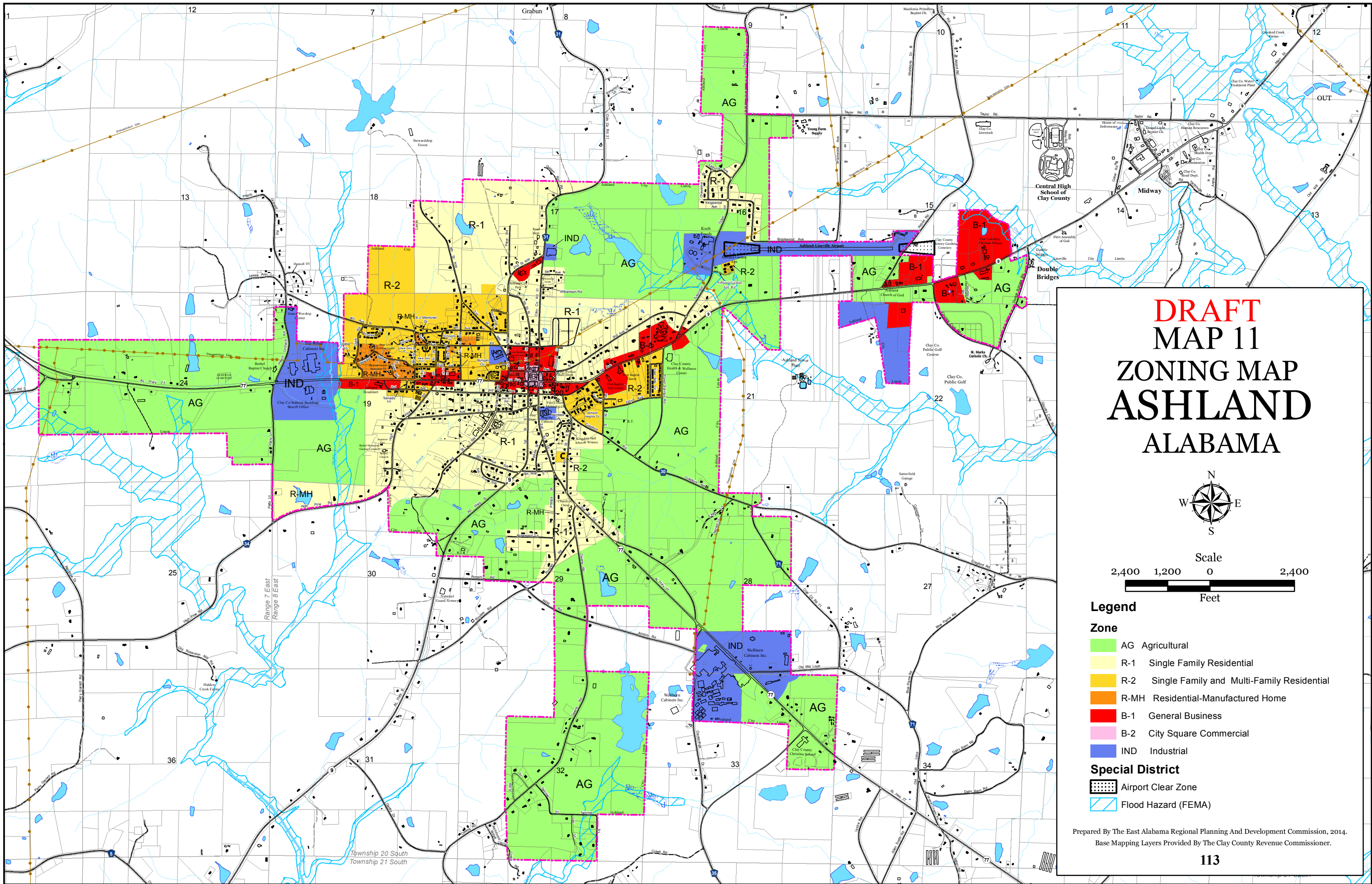
MAP 10 EXISTING LANDUSE ASHLAND ALABAMA



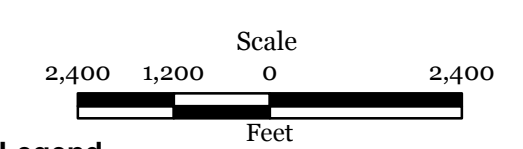
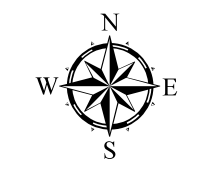
Legend

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Multi-Family Residential
- Parks and Recreation
- Public / Semi-Public
- Single Family Residential
- Undeveloped / Vacant / Wooded

Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2015.
Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.



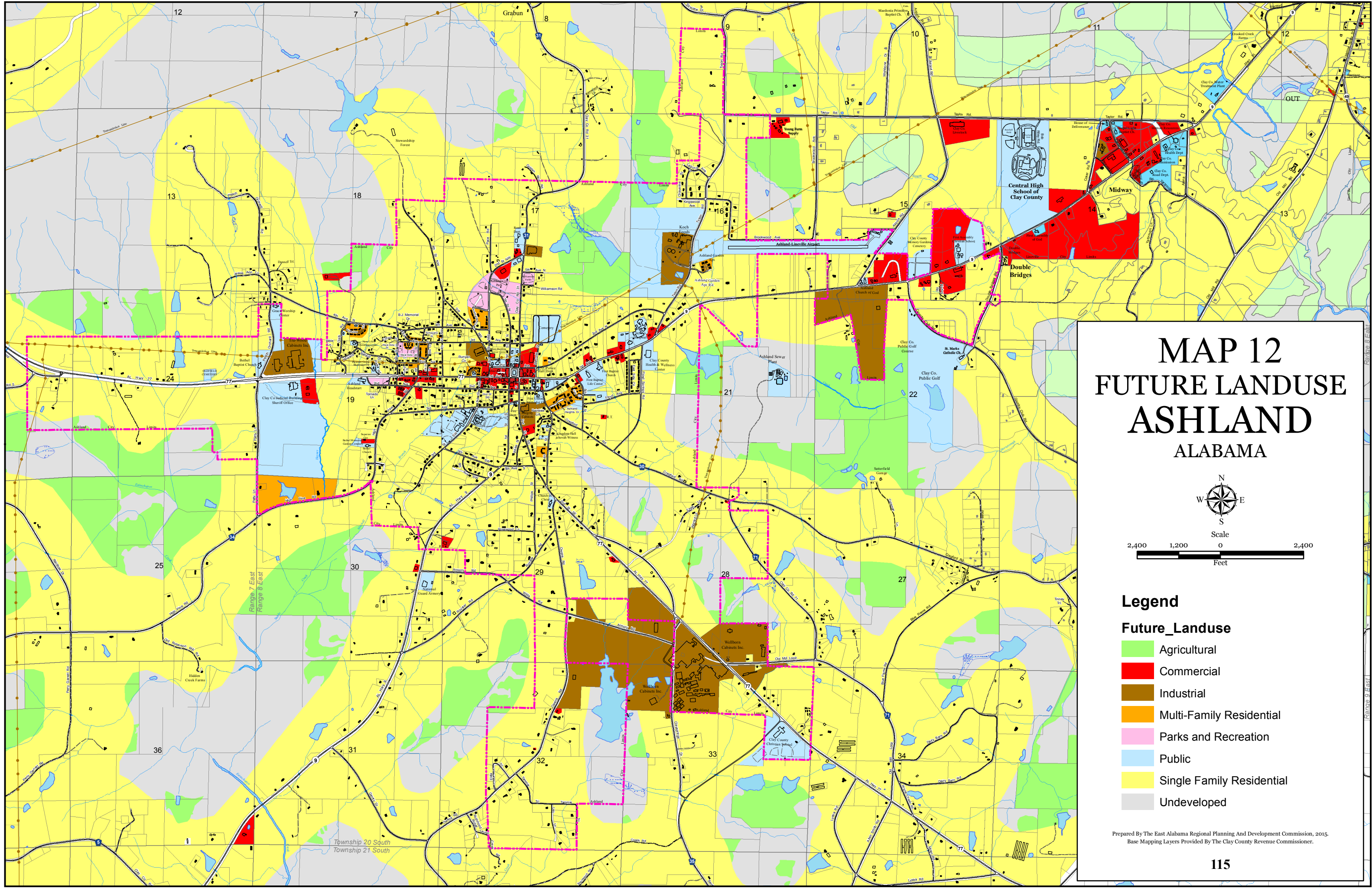
DRAFT MAP 11 ZONING MAP ASHLAND ALABAMA



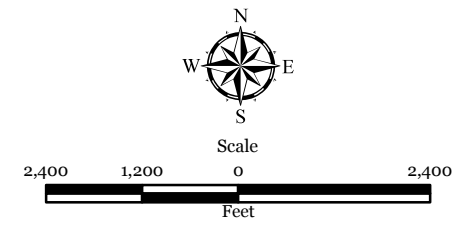
Legend

- Zone**
- AG Agricultural
 - R-1 Single Family Residential
 - R-2 Single Family and Multi-Family Residential
 - R-MH Residential-Manufactured Home
 - B-1 General Business
 - B-2 City Square Commercial
 - IND Industrial
- Special District**
- Airport Clear Zone
 - Flood Hazard (FEMA)

Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2014.
Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.



MAP 12 FUTURE LANDUSE ASHLAND ALABAMA



Legend

Future_Landuse

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Multi-Family Residential
- Parks and Recreation
- Public
- Single Family Residential
- Undeveloped

Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2015.
Base Mapping Layers Provided By The Clay County Revenue Commissioner.

CHAPTER IX: STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning has many broad definitions and applications and may be used at discretion in a wide variety of organization fields and practices to formulate the goals, objectives, strategies, and projects needed in achieving a desired end result or state. The term “strategic” according to Webster’s Dictionary is, “skill in managing or planning” and the related term “stratify” means “to form in layers or strata”. Together these definitions emphasize a skilled planning and management process conducted through a series of steps, or layers, which build upon each other. Here are a few more definitions of strategic planning:

Strategic Planning—*“an organization’s process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy.”* Wikipedia.

Strategic Planning—*“a systematic process of envisioning a desired future, and translating this vision into broadly defined goals or objectives and a sequence of steps to achieve them.”*
BusinessDictionary.com

Strategic Planning—*“is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization’s direction in response to a changing environment.”* Balanced Scorecard Institute.

One common thread in the definitions is that strategic planning is a process, sequence of steps, or activity used to meet a common goal or vision. The strategic planning strategy may be useful to an organization or agency in order to “connect the dots” for achieving an end result where the lines themselves are unclear, as Henry Mintzberg, an internationally renowned academic and author on business and management states about strategy formation. Mintzberg explains that strategic planning, “dot connecting” is an inherently creative activity, which cannot be systematized. In other words, strategic planning can assist in coordinating planning efforts and measure progress on strategic goals, but it must occur “around” the strategy formation process rather than within it, as systemization dictates. Systemization is a rigid and unyielding framework which must be based entirely in the system operated in. The strategic planning process must provide a framework in which to work, but it also must be flexible enough to adequately respond to and accommodate changes of ideas or functionality which may often occur. This “around” type of strategic planning shall be further described and exemplified later in this chapter.

Strategic Planning Process—Stages

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance and direction through the strategic planning process. The Comprehensive Plan then uses this strategic planning to formulate the goals, objectives, strategies, and projects needed to achieve a community vision of the City’s desired future, which are described and discussed in the subsequent chapters. The strategic planning process is organized into a series of five steps which constitute the following:

1. Inventory and Analysis—gathering Census data and building a City Profile on population, economic, and housing information, conducting community surveys, mapping, and receiving public views and opinions on assets and issues affecting community growth and development.
2. Visioning Process—Establishment of a community approved “Vision Statement” and “Mission Statement”. The vision statement is conceptually an ideal future state for a community, while the mission statement describes what the community is doing to achieve the vision and why it is doing it.
3. Goals and Objectives—Establishment of goals, objectives, strategies, and projects which agree with, support, and advance the community vision and mission. Goals and objectives should be prioritized at this stage as well.
4. Implementation—Establishment of implementation tables which lists specific projects and strategies along with their respective timeframes for completion. The implementation portion also identifies implementing agencies, potential partners and funding sources, and discusses past efforts in working toward project and strategy completion. Project prioritization should also be conducted at this stage.



Figure SPP-1 Planning Process Stages

5. Evaluation—Establishment of action plan and evaluation tables listing projects and strategies along with their respective completion timeframes and completion status. Evaluation should be conducted during the planning process and updated periodically after the plan is complete.

Figure SPP-1 illustrates the strategic planning process “connecting dots” through all the stages involved. The process begins with inventory and concludes with evaluation, however, final evaluation may also proceed, full circle, to the beginning inventory and analysis as evaluation may reveal a need for more recent and updated information about the community.

Strategic Planning Process—Inquiries

Along with the stages involved, the strategic planning process acknowledges the need to inquire of necessary information to determine what is being searched for and to focus efforts. Therefore, specific questions have been posed at each stage, tailored to gather the information and ideas needed at every point and in the subsequent stages of the process, thus keeping with “skilled planning” and building upon or “stratifying” upon previous work. The following lists the stages of the strategic planning process and questions posed at each stage.

1. Inventory and Analysis—Where Are We Now?
2. Visioning Process—Where Do We Want to Be?
3. Goals and Objectives—How Will We Get There?
4. Implementation—How Will We Get There? (Same as Goals and Objectives)
5. Evaluation—How Will We Measure Progress?

Figure SPP-2 displays the strategic planning process stages along with inquiries at each stage and the tasks involved at each stage. Notice how these stages build upon each other in a “stratifying”

fashion. This chapter on strategic planning shall provide a review of the information already collected and analyzed in the Inventory and Analysis (Chapters on Population, Economy, Housing, Community Facilities, Transportation, and Land Use) section of the plan, with a discussion of the most significant findings in the community, and then proceed with establishing Vision and Mission Statements for the community. This shall answer the questions: Where Are We Now? And Where Do We Want to Be? The remaining questions and stages shall be discussed in the following Chapters (Goals and Objectives, Implementation, and Evaluation).



Figure SPP-2. Strategic Planning Process Stages along with Inquiries and Tasks involved.

Strategic planning may function reasonably well in the previously described method, however, Mintzberg explains that strategic planning cannot be systematized and that it must occur “around” the strategy formation process rather than within it. Thus, planning may occur at various different stages at once in order to provide more flexibility for ideas and functionality throughout. For example, a community may have established community projects and strategies for implementation before its goals and objectives and vision and mission statements are created. This may be allowed, however, the goals, objectives, strategies, and projects must be in agreement with and serve to advance the vision and mission statements established altogether at the end. Ideally, the strategic planning process should be conducted sequentially along the stages given, however, the final product of the strategic plan is what counts, not necessarily the process itself.

Inventory and Analysis

The purpose of the inventory and analysis stage is to collect and analyze data and community input in order to establish a foundation upon which the plan shall make informed decisions for goals, objectives, strategies, and projects, and form benchmarks upon which community progress is measured. Products produced in this beginning phase include the following:

- Significant Findings from US Census and 2008-2012 ACS
- SWOT Analysis
- Ashland 2015 Community Survey
- Ashland Business Owners Survey

Significant Findings

The significant findings highlight important community data (at the township, county, state, and national level) extracted from the 2010 Census and the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, for comparison and analysis. The community statistical profile examines important population, economic, and housing information to be used to determine priorities and establish benchmarks

from which the community can track progress when future statistics are collected and made available. Table SP 1 displays a city profile chart comparing Ashland data with that of Clay County, Alabama, and the US in 2010. The chart has been color-coded to reflect data comparisons between the city and the county, state, and nation, which may be interpreted as follows:

- Green—City data is at or above the given geography.
- Yellow—City data is somewhat below (Not more than 10%) the given geography.
- Red—City data is significantly below (More than 10%) the given geography.

Table SP 1. City Profile Comparison Chart: City of Ashland, AL 2010					
	Ashland	Clay County	Alabama	US	Comments
Population Growth (2000-2010)	3.8%	-2.3%	7.5%	9.7%	Pop. growth exceeded the county but remained below the state and nation
Educational Attainment (Bachelors +)	7.2%	9.2%	22.7%	28.8%	slightly higher ed. attainment in the county and considerably higher in state and nation
Median Household Income	\$24,512	\$34,002	\$43,253	\$53,046	Considerably higher MHI in county, state, and nation
Labor Force Participation (Pop. 16+)	44.5%	53.6%	59.4%	64.3%	Considerably higher participation in county, state, and nation
Unemployment Rate (Pop. 16+)	2.3%	6.9%	6.4%	6.2%	* Lower Unemployment is rated Green, Higher Yellow and Red
Overall Business Growth (2000-2012)	8.8%	-12.7%	4.3%	9.4%	Higher growth than county and state and similar growth compared to US
Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)	32.4	30.7	24.2	25.5	* Lower Mean Travel Time to Work is rated Green, Higher Yellow and Red
Poverty Status (Individual)	26.7%	19.0%	18.6%	15.4%	* Lower Poverty Status is rated Green, Higher Yellow and Red
Poverty Status (Family)	22.7%	16.8%	14.3%	11.3%	* Lower Poverty Status is rated Green, Higher Yellow and Red
Occupied Housing Units	86.1%	83.7%	84.6%	87.5%	Higher occupancy than county and state, on par with nation
Median Housing Value	\$89,300	\$79,900	\$122,500	\$176,700	Higher value than county, significantly lower value than state and nation
Owner-occupied HH Affordability (Less than 30%)	79.9%	64.1%	70.4%	64.5%	Higher affordability than county, state, and nation
Renter-occupied HH Affordability (Less than 30%)	56.8%	62.3%	48.1%	47.7%	Somewhat lower affordability than county but higher than state and nation
Median Year Structure Built	1969	1977	1981	1976	Older homes than county, state, and nation
Homes Built Prior 1980	66.8%	53.9%	49.1%	57.0%	Substantially older homes than county and state

Source: US Census of Population 2010 STF and American Community Survey 2008-2012.

Upon examination of the comparison chart, the City of Ashland should prioritize to improve in a few areas, particularly median household income, educational attainment, labor force participation,

and median housing value, all of which the city reported substantially lower levels than the state and nation. The city could prioritize to raise income levels by bringing more skilled labor professions and job training opportunities, which may, in turn, reduce poverty and increase housing value throughout the community. The city could also promote and encourage housing improvements and new housing development in much of the undeveloped residential zoned areas of the community and rezone much of the agricultural zoned land to R-1 single-family residential in order to spur housing development in various areas and preserve housing values throughout the city. Although Ashland gained only slightly (3.8%) in population from 2000 to 2010 the city increased somewhat significantly (8.8%) in overall business growth. This could be attributed to business growth and new business establishments locating along AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77, which is the city's commercial corridor, drawing in traffic along these major north/south and east/west routes.

SWOT Analysis

The initial phase of the community visioning process for the City of Ashland involved engaging community participation in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis (See Appendix A for complete details.) These items are listed in Figure SPP-3 as shown below:

Figure SPP-3. City of Ashland SWOT Analysis



A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted, at the initial public hearing, as a means of gathering public input and in the form of opinions and views, for the comprehensive plan. Overall, the city showed considerable strengths and opportunities compared to weaknesses and threats. One of the major strengths which was emphasized at the hearing was the city's beautiful and charming downtown square and the courthouse, which brings many people into the city and provides an attractive and friendly environment for residents and visitors. The downtown also offers numerous quality restaurants and gathering places for people to shop, socialize, and conduct daily business.

The downtown square also provides a suitable and pleasing place for social gatherings and community-wide events.

Known as the "City of Friends", Ashland takes pride in its community spirit and orientation toward family growth and development. The city provides many organizations and community-wide activities and events for families and people of all walks of life seeking social interaction and involvement. In addition, the city supports an active county-wide Arts League and offers residents the opportunity to worship at a variety of local churches. Events and activities include the

Christmas Parade, Trunk or Treat on the Square, Second Saturday on the Square, SGA Clean-up Day, and the Veteran's Day Program. The city also provides excellent schools, a newly remodeled library, a community hospital and wellness center, nursing home, and senior center. Like any community, there are, however, some significant weaknesses and threats to the city. One of the major weaknesses is loss of business in the downtown and empty storefronts. Although the city, as shown in the Census, has grown in business overall, many small businesses establishments have closed their doors, resulting in empty stores. In addition, due to local economic downturns, many store owners might not be able to afford repairs to their storefronts. However, the city may consider grants and capital improvements for downtown revitalization, historic preservation, and establishment of a Merchants Association to gather the needed the support and resources to improve upon downtown business and strengthen the local economy.

Overall, the SWOT analysis shows Ashland as a good community to live in with charming, peaceful neighborhoods and friendly people, natural beauty of the mountains, good schools, an attractive downtown, business opportunities, numerous special events to build community, and a rich and unique celebrated history.

***Disclaimer:** The SWOT Analysis was conducted and recorded as a survey based on community perception and opinion and is not intended, by itself, to be solidly grounded with factual information. The information presented therein was used only as a basis for determining community understanding and in establishing a platform for further research.*

Community Survey

In order to provide further public input and direction for the Comprehensive Plan a community survey was distributed throughout the city and also posted through Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is an on-line survey system used to collect, report, and analyze survey data for communities on a wide variety of topics. Through Survey Monkey residents could access and fill out the survey on-line, mark questions, and post their thoughts and opinions directly into the system. A link to Survey Monkey was provided on the City of Ashland website and residents were notified of the posting on their water utility bill for the month of July. The on-line survey opened in July, 2015 and closed in April 2016. A total of 57 surveys were collected through this method, representing approximately 3% of the city's total estimated 2015 population of 2,321 therefore this survey only uses community opinion as a general guide for planning and policy formation and not as a representative sample of community viewpoints.

On the survey a total of 10 questions were inquired of residents, which are listed as follows:

1. *Are you a resident of Ashland?*—Yes or No.
2. *What is your age?*—24 or under, 25 to 49, 50 or over
3. *Please let us know how you feel about the following*—School System, City Utility Services, Police Dept., Fire Dept., etc.
4. *Are you concerned about the following items?*—Business Loss and Unemployment, Dilapidated Housing, Empty Storefronts, etc.
5. *Please rank what you feel are the most important needs for the City of Ashland, with 1 being the most important or urgent need, and 10 being the least urgent or important need*—Job Opportunities, Housing Improvements, Downtown Beautification, Public Safety, etc.

6. *What opportunities do you think the city should make a priority?*—Downtown Beautification, Provide Incentives for New Business to Locate Downtown, Improve Recreational Opportunities, etc.
7. *How satisfied are you with the city’s communication with residents?*—Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Don’t Know.
8. *Have you contacted the City of Ashland in the last year?*—Yes or No. If No skip to question 10.
9. *How would you rate the city’s customer service?*—Exceptional, Good, Fair, Poor.
10. *If things were to continue the same as usual in the City of Ashland, how do you think the city would stand in 10 years?*—Very good, Good, Fair, Bad, Very Bad.

The following is an analysis of responses for each question asked on the survey in order ascertain public views and opinions:

Are you a resident of Ashland?

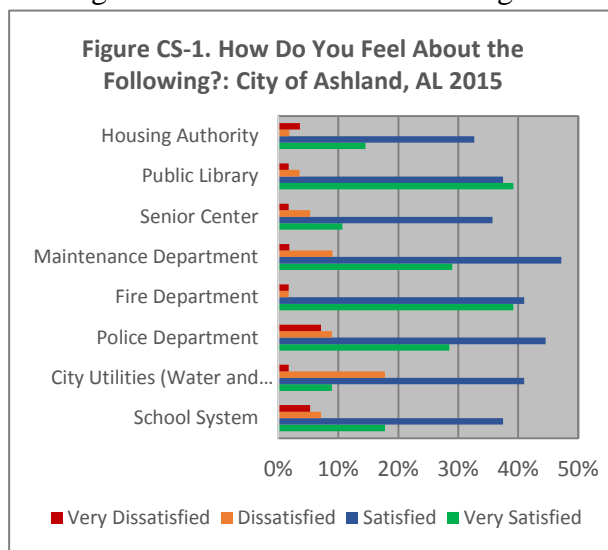
Results from the survey showed 57 respondents with 32 (56.1%) being Ashland residents and 25 (43.8%) being non-residents. Ashland residents were considered persons living within the city limits of Ashland at the time the survey was conducted.

What is your age?

In terms of age, the slight majority of survey respondents at 32 persons (56.1%) were within the 25 to 49 years age range along with 20 (35%) aged 50 years or older and 5 (8.7%) at 24 or under. This information was needed in order to better understand demographics of respondents and how different age groups responded to the questions inquired.

Please let us know how you feel about the following:

Respondents were asked how they felt about the following facilities and services—School System, City Utilities (Water and Sewer), Police Department, Fire Department, Maintenance Department, Senior Center, Public Library, and Housing Authority. Respondents chose how they felt by marking their choice from various categories—Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, and Don’t Know.



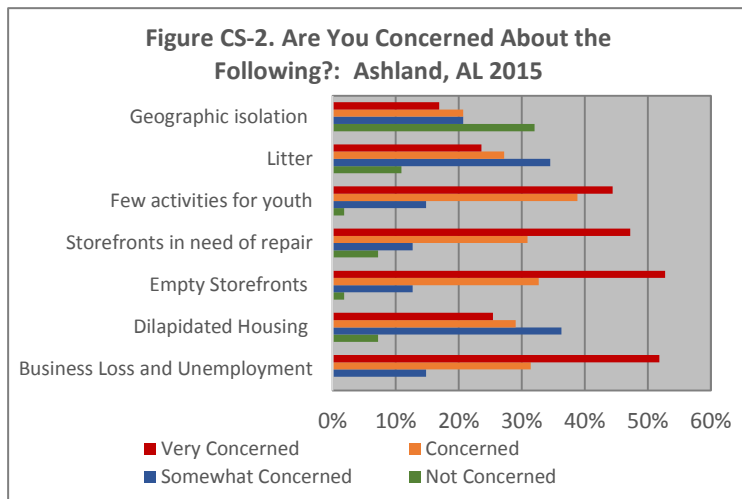
Very Dissatisfied, and Don’t Know. In general, the substantial majority of respondents to the survey were satisfied with city facilities and services, reporting either satisfied or very satisfied to all those examined. Services and facilities garnering 40% or more of satisfied responses from respondents included the police department, fire department, maintenance department, and city utilities. Also, some of these same entities gathered 25% or more responses of very satisfied from respondents such as police department, fire department, maintenance department, and public library. These departments accounted for at least 70% or more of respondents being either satisfied or very satisfied with these services and facilities, with the exception of city utilities which scored 49%.

Facilities and services which ranked lower than others in terms of satisfactory service comprised the school system, housing authority, and senior center. However, many respondents marked either neutral or don't know either because they may not have used these facilities and services or have no opinion. Figure CS-1 examines how respondents felt about Ashland facilities and services in 2015. Notice that the substantial majority of responders indicated either satisfied or very satisfied responses for each service and facility examined. This information indicates that, although improvements should always be considered, Ashland services and facilities adequately meet resident needs and will most likely continue to do so in the future.

Are you concerned about the following items?

Survey respondents were asked if they were concerned about the following items—Business Loss and Unemployment, Dilapidated Housing, Empty Storefronts, Storefronts in Need of Repair, Few Activities for Youth, Litter, and Geographic Isolation. Once again respondents chose how they felt by marking their choice from a series of categories—Not Concerned, Somewhat Concerned, Very Concerned, and Don't Know.

The majority of survey respondents felt significant concern for the potential items to choose from, particularly with business loss and unemployment, empty storefronts, and few activities for youth. The largest majority of respondents, at over 80%, were either concerned or very concerned about these items, followed closely by storefronts in need of repair at 78%. Slightly over half of respondents were very concerned about business loss and unemployment (51%) and empty storefronts at 52%. Storefronts in need of repair and few activities for youth also reported very concerned for approximately 47% and 44% of respondents, respectively. Figure CS-2 displays results for responses over concerns in Ashland in 2015. The figure shows that concerns for empty storefronts, business loss and unemployment, storefronts in need of repair and few activities for youth were significantly higher concerns than such items at geographic isolation, litter, and dilapidated housing. Geographic isolation (that is the considerable distance from interstate and metro areas) did not rank high as a major concern for Ashland, even though many new businesses tend to locate in more developed areas. The city relies on a few major manufacturers for employment opportunity. Diversifying the city's economy through by boosting small business startups and expansion of existing small business could, in the long-run, become more effective in strengthening the local economy, however, the city should encourage and promote existing industries which have been a major asset for job growth and development.



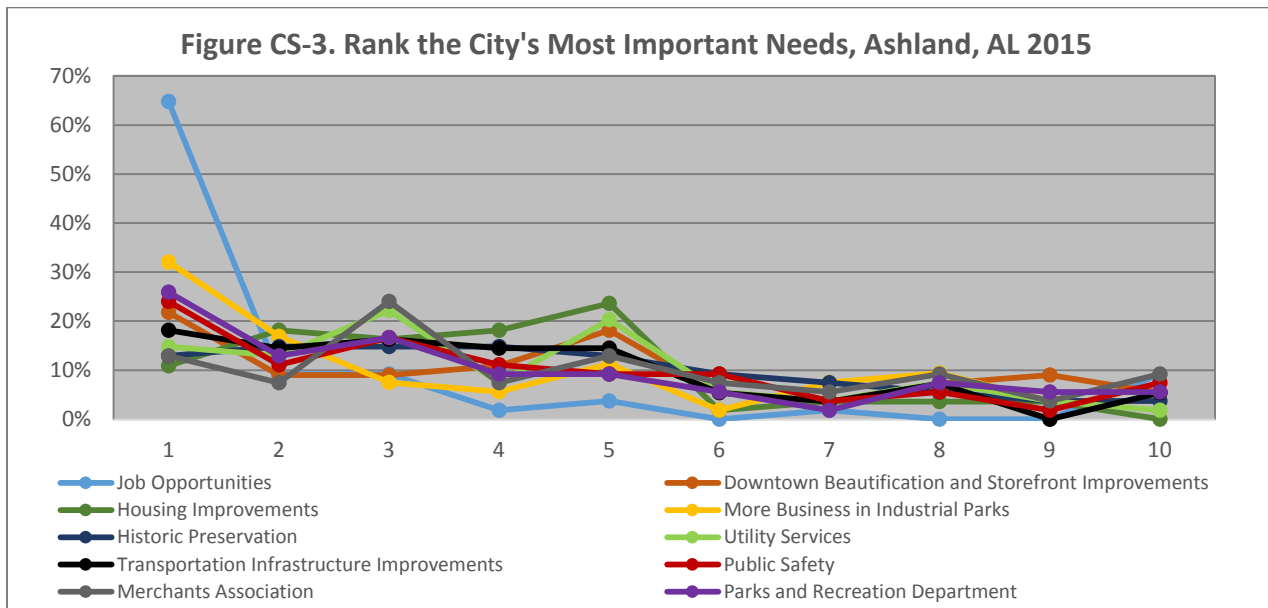
empty storefronts, business loss and unemployment, storefronts in need of repair and few activities for youth were significantly higher concerns than such items at geographic isolation, litter, and dilapidated housing. Geographic isolation (that is the considerable distance from interstate and metro areas) did not rank high as a major concern for Ashland, even though many new businesses tend to locate in more developed areas. The city relies on a few major manufacturers for employment opportunity. Diversifying

the city's economy through by boosting small business startups and expansion of existing small business could, in the long-run, become more effective in strengthening the local economy, however, the city should encourage and promote existing industries which have been a major asset for job growth and development.

Please rank what you feel are the most important needs for the City of Ashland, with 1 being the most important or urgent need, and 10 being the least urgent or important need.

This question was meant to gather more detailed community input on concerns, priorities, and needs within the city. Respondents were asked to rank the following needs as instructed—Job Opportunities, Downtown Beautification and Storefront Improvements, Housing Improvements, More Business in Industrial Parks, Historic Preservation, Utility Services, Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements, Public Safety, Merchants Association, Parks and Recreation Department.

According to respondent input, job opportunities rated the most important or urgent need with 35 (64.8%) respondents marking this choice as a number 1, the most important or urgent need, and 48 (84%), out of 57 respondents, marking any choice number between 1 and 5 on the scale. The need for more business in the Industrial Park ranked a fairly distant second with 17 (32%) respondents marking number 1 and 39 (68%) marking any number from 1 through 5. Figure CS-3 exhibits ranking of the community needs, in terms of importance and urgency, among ten rankings with 1 being most urgent/ important and 10 least urgent/ important. Notice that the need for job opportunities ranked the substantially highest of any of the needs on the chart. Although Census data shows an increase in overall business growth, the community may need additional higher skilled and professional jobs than currently available to meet public demand. Other needs such as the need for a Parks and Recreation Department ranked high with 25% expressing this item as a number 1 need, as well as public safety at 24% and downtown beautification and storefront improvements at 21%.

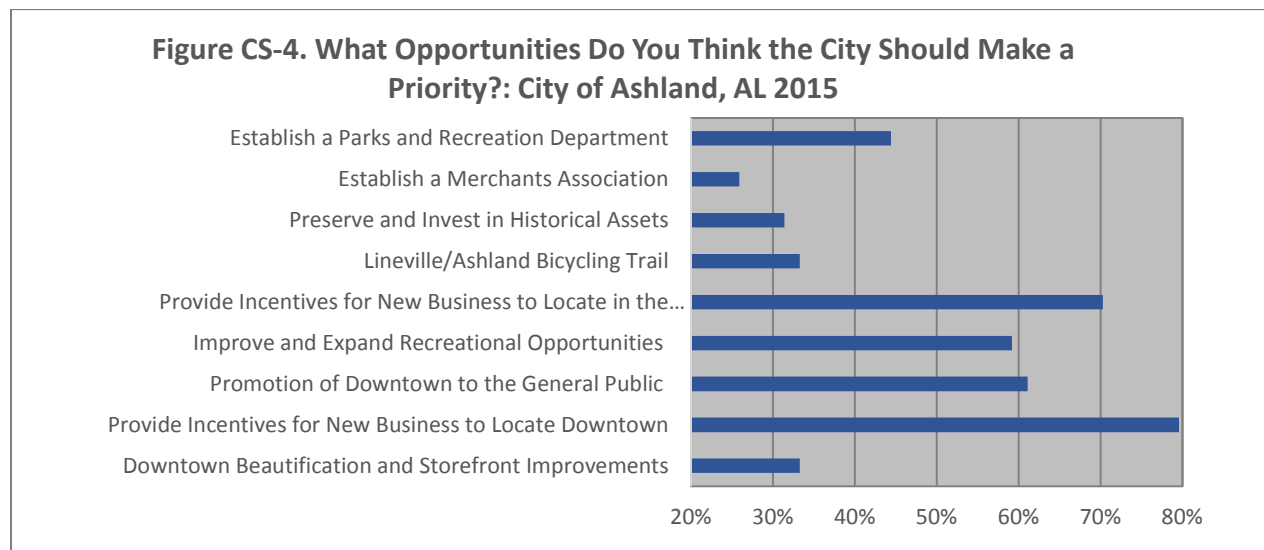


What opportunities do you think the city should make a priority?

This question was designed to establish priorities for future improvements and growth in the city. Respondents were instructed to check which opportunities the city should make a priority, as many as they felt necessary (all opportunities could be checked or none at all). These opportunities included—Downtown Beautification and Storefront Improvements, Provide Incentives for New Business to Locate Downtown, Promotion of Downtown to the General Public, Improve and

Expand Recreational Opportunities, Provide Incentives for New Business to Locate in the Industrial Parks, Lineville/Ashland Bicycling Trail, Preserve and Invest in Historical Assets, Establish a Merchants Association, Establish a Parks and Recreation Department.

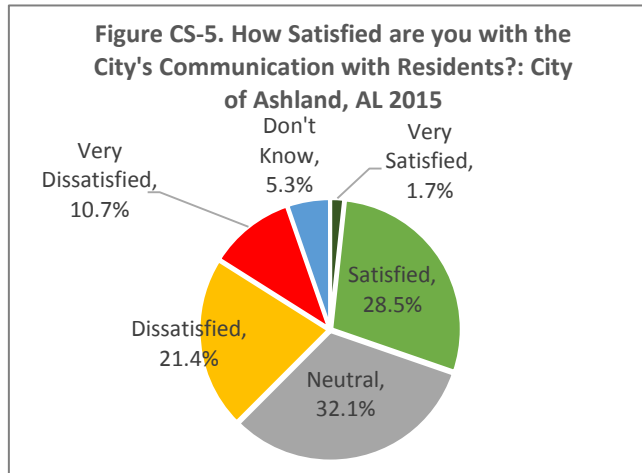
According to the survey the top opportunity that the city should make a priority, as indicated by 43 (79.6%) respondents, was to provide incentives for new business to locate downtown, followed somewhat closely by the priority to provide incentives for new business to locate in the industrial parks with 38 respondents (70.3%). Approximately 61% of respondents felt the city should promote the downtown to the general public and 59% expressed that the city should improve and expand recreational opportunities. These priorities fall in line with the urgent need to create more job opportunities and concerns of empty storefronts and storefronts in need of repair. Priorities such as the Lineville/Ashland bicycling trail, preserving and investing in historical assets, and establishment of a Merchants Association ranked considerably lower than other priorities more directly associated with economic development and job growth. Figure CS-4 shows which opportunities respondents felt the most strongly and least strongly that the city should make priorities. Notice that the majority of respondents felt that the city should provide incentives for new business in the downtown, provide incentives for new business in the industrial parks, promote downtown to the general public, and improve and expand recreational opportunities.



How satisfied are you with the city’s communication with residents?

The City of Ashland strives to announce public meetings and keep open communication to residents for information and input on city events, plans, and developments. This question seeks to ascertain public input on how well the city handles communication with residents. Respondent choices comprised of Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, and Don’t Know.

According to the survey, approximately 28.5% of respondents were satisfied with the city’s communication with residents and 1.7% were very satisfied for a total of 30.2% of respondents being either satisfied or very satisfied with the city’s communication with residents. However, the majority of residents at 32.1% remained neutral on this question and 5.3% responded with “Don’t Know”. Approximately 32.1% of respondents were dissatisfied with the city’s communication



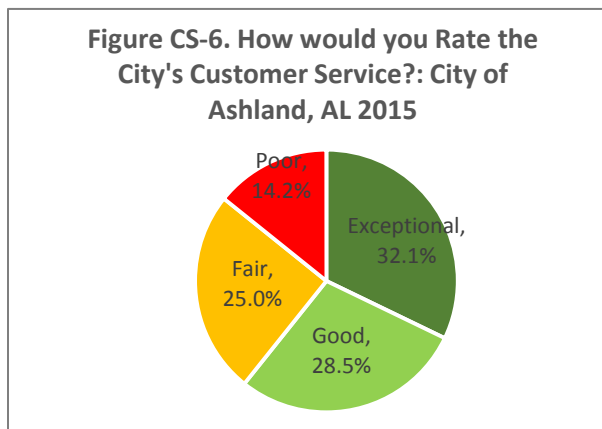
with residents of which 10.7% were very dissatisfied. Figure CS-5 shows respondents satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the city's communication with residents. These results indicate that the city should consider ways to more effectively communicate with residents. Neutral respondents could have marked such response due to a lack of need to contact the city or having no preference either way. Only 5% of responders marked "Don't Know".

Have you contacted the City of Ashland in the last year?

Approximately 35.1% of respondents had contacted the City of Ashland in the last year and conducted business of some type with a city department, while the somewhat considerable majority at 64.8% had no contact with the city in the last year. Only respondents who had contacted the city within the last year were asked how they rated the city's customer service, while respondents who had not contacted the city within the last year were instructed to skip the question on customer service and proceed to the final question.

How would you rate the city's customer service?

This question was meant only for respondents having contacted the city in the last year, pertaining to the previous inquiry. Service rating choices comprised of—Exceptional, Good, Fair, and Poor. Approximately 32.1% of respondents rated the city's customer service exceptional, while 28.5%

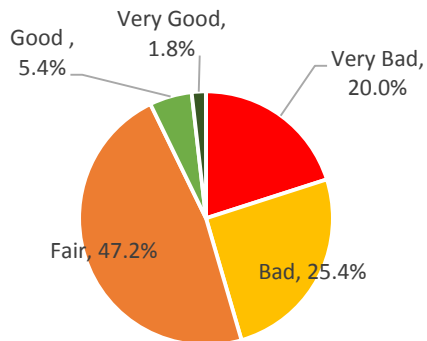


rated city service good, 25% fair, and 14.2% poor, indicating that the somewhat considerable majority (60.6%) of residents consider the city's customer service good to exceptional. This information indicates that the city should not have major concern improving customer service, although enhancement could always be considered. Figure CS-6 displays respondents rating of the city's customer service. Notice that the significant majority of respondents felt customer service was fair, good, or exceptional and only a minor portion rated poor service.

If things were to continue the same as usual in the City of Ashland, how do you think the city would stand in 10 years?

The final question in the survey was intended to ascertain the community's outlook on Ashland's future. Respondents were given the following choices in their rating—Very Good, Good, Fair, Bad, Very Bad, Very Bad. The slight majority (54%) of survey respondents to this question felt the city would be in fair to very good condition if things were to continue on as usual over the next 10 years. However, approximately 25% felt the city would be in bad condition and 20%

Figure CS-7. If Things were to Continue the Same as Usual in the City of Ashland, How Do you Think the City Would Stand in 10 Years?: City of Ashland, AL 2015



very bad, compared to only 5% who responded “good” and 1% “very good to Ashland’s future. Given this information, the city needs to consider how to properly address concerning weaknesses and potential threats and build upon positive strengths and opportunities. Figure CS-7 illustrates how respondents felt the city would stand in 10 years given that things were to continue the same as usual. Notice the slight majority felt that the city would rate fair to very good in 10 years while negative views comprised a slightly smaller, but quite substantial portion (almost half of responses).

Summary of Community Survey Results

The community survey represents only a minor portion of the Ashland population, meaning the information gathered and analyzed from the results of this survey should not be used as a completely accurate picture of residents’ views and opinions for the entire community. This information, however, may be somewhat useful in guiding and directing city policies and development plans based on priority and importance to the community. The formulation of goals, objectives, and strategies in this Comprehensive Plan and in future planning endeavors may also utilize community responses indicated in this survey.

The major concerns for the city was business loss and unemployment, empty storefronts, storefronts in need of repair, and few activities for youth. Given this information the city should consider plans and policies to spur economic growth and development in the community, starting with the downtown, while maintaining economic stability in other parts of the city.

Considering planning for Ashland, many of the important needs and top priorities expressed overlap in terms effecting one another. For example, the need for jobs could be addressed by providing incentives for new businesses to locate in the downtown and establish new industries in the industrial park and industrial zoned land. In addition, making improvements to the downtown would improve community aesthetics as well as health and safety and potentially attract new business, fill empty stores, spurring business expansion in the area. Making improvements to and expanding recreational opportunities would enhance quality of life, which is a considerable draw for businesses and private investment in the community.

Based on community survey results, in 2015, the City of Ashland should, as top priorities, strive to promote and encourage the following:

- Provide incentives for new business to locate downtown.
- Provide incentives for new business to locate in the industrial park.
- Improve and expand recreational opportunities.
- Promote downtown to the general public.

***Disclaimer:** The Community Survey was conducted and recorded as a survey based on community perception and opinion and is not intended, by itself, to be solidly grounded with factual information. The information presented therein was used only as a basis for determining community understanding and in establishing a platform for further research. Furthermore, the portion of the population surveyed cannot be used as a basis for determining the views and opinions of the City's majority.*

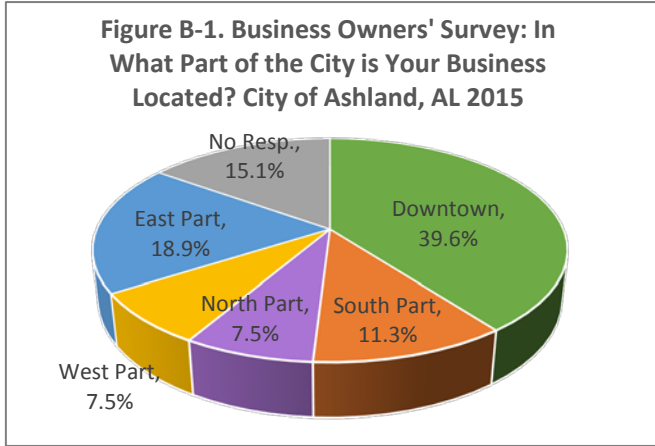
Business Owners' Survey

To gather further input and direction for the City of Ashland a survey of business owners was conducted. The business owners' survey was designed to determine the types of businesses in the city, business priorities, and business needs in order to better understand the local business environment and establish necessary improvements. There were a total of 47 surveys received from the businesses in the City of Ashland with one business maintaining establishments in every part of the city for a total of 53 establishments. On the survey a total of 10 questions were inquired of business owners, which are listed as follows:

1. *In what part of the city is your business located?*—Downtown, South, North, West, East
2. *What type of business do you own?*—AG, Manuf., Constr., Retail, etc.
3. *Do you feel the city provides adequate infrastructure utilities to your business?*—Yes, No
4. *How satisfied are you with the city's utility services?*—Water, Sewer, Gas, Electric, Roads, Parking
5. *Do you feel businesses in the city are* (Check one)—Declining Significantly, Declining Somewhat, Stable, Growing Somewhat, Growing Significantly, No Opinion.
6. *Do you think the city should make it a top priority to renovate and redevelop the downtown area?*—Yes, No, No Opinion.
7. *Does your business have plans to expand?*—Yes, No.
8. *If your business has plans to expand, will your expansion be:* (Check one)—In the city, outside the city, or both.
9. *Does your business have enough employees to adequately conduct daily operations?*—Yes, No.
10. *Do you think the city should establish an economic development organization in order to update, implement, and evaluate economic strategies, activities, and the economic development process in accordance with business needs and community values and direction?*—Yes, No, No Opinion.
11. *Would you be willing and available to sit on an economic development committee?*—Yes, No, Don't Know

In what part of the city is your business located?

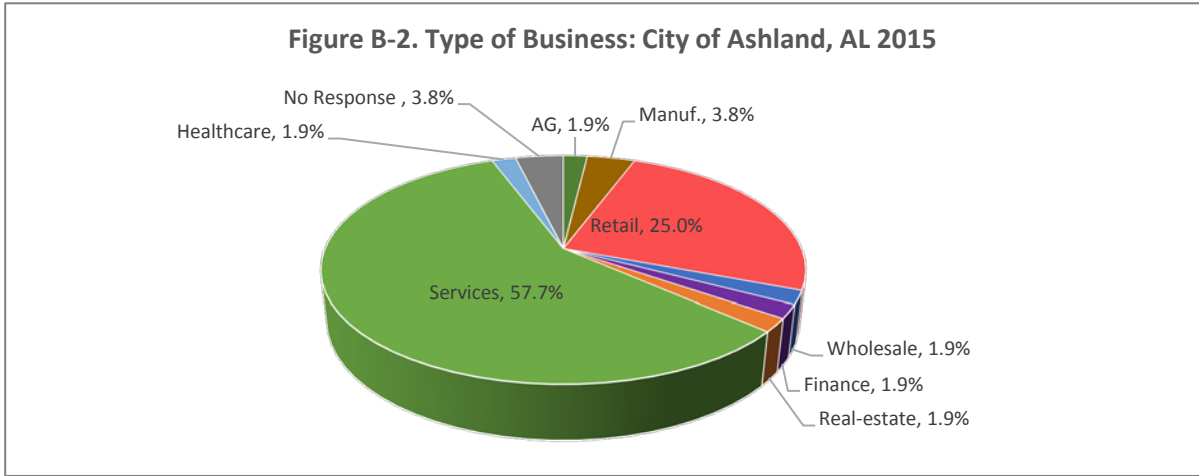
The first question in the survey was meant to ascertain the general location of the business establishments responding to the survey given. This information is needed in order to determine businesses areas with the most important needs. The single largest portion of surveys received were from business owners in the downtown area at 39%, followed distantly by business owners with establishments in the east part of the city at 18%. Figure B-1 displays the portion of city



business locations from which the most and the least surveys were received. As a special note, this figure is not a representative assessment of where businesses are located in the city, but rather where surveys were received from. Notice that surveys were received from areas throughout the city, in every part of the city, giving a wide representation from the different parts, although most businesses responding to the surveys were located in the downtown area. Approximately 15% of survey respondents did not respond to this first question.

What type of business do you own?

Type of business is also an important factor for an assessment of city businesses and needs. Examining and understanding the industrial composition of the city allows for determination of which industries the city is strong in and which industries the city is weak and needs develop in order to create and sustain a diverse economy with a wider variety of job opportunities. In general, a diverse local economy is considerably stronger than a less diverse one in terms of job opportunities, sustainability, and growth within its various industrial sectors. For categorization purposes, industries have been separated into 6 industrial sectors, which include: 1) Agriculture—consisting of such industries as agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining, 2) Manufacturing/Construction, 3) Wholesale and Retail Trade, 4) Transportation/Information—including warehousing, utilities, and communications 5) FIRE (Finance, Insurance, Real-Estate), 6) Services/Public Administration—which entails professional, scientific, administrative, waste management, arts, education, healthcare and social assistance, food accommodation, and other services. Healthcare has been acknowledged in its own section due to the presence of Clay County



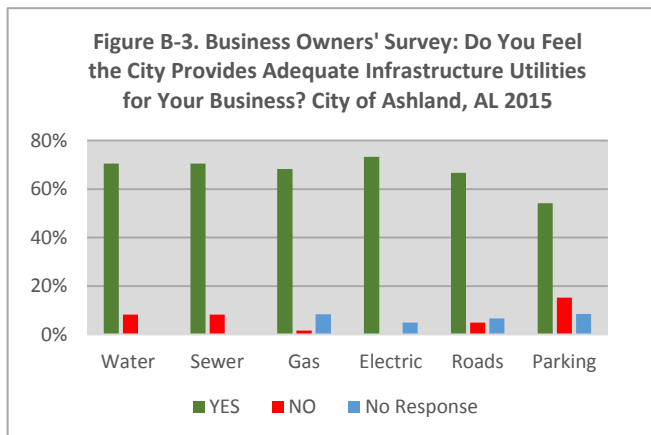
Hospital and the Health and Wellness Center in Ashland. Figure B-2 shows the portion of types of business located in Ashland for those businesses who responded to the business owners’ survey. Notice that the somewhat considerable majority of businesses (57%) were associated with services, while retail followed at a distant second with 25% and manufacturing with 3%. Approximately 3%

of businesses did not respond to this question. As a planning consideration, the city should strive to promote and encourage business growth in other industries than services in order to better diversify the economy and create a stronger and more stable business environment.

Do you feel the city provides adequate infrastructure utilities for your business?

Proper utility provision for business in the city is necessary for economic stability and future growth and development. Therefore, an examination of infrastructure utility provision for businesses was addressed in the survey. Utility provision was comprised of infrastructure services and facilities such as: water, sewer, gas, electric, roads, and parking. Business owners were asked if the city provides adequate service for each of the above mentioned items and to respond as “Yes” or “No”.

According to the survey, the considerable majority (around 60 to 70%) of business owners felt the city provided adequate infrastructure utilities to their respective businesses, with the exception of parking, which scored 54%. Figure B-3 illustrates the portion of business owners who felt the city



the city did and did not provide adequate infrastructure for their business establishments in 2015. The figure shows that the significant majority of business owners felt the city provided adequate infrastructure to their business, particularly with electric (73%), water (70%), sewer (70%), gas (68%), and roads at 66%. Although the city could strive to provide better infrastructure services to local business, the information indicates that the city should not need to give top priority to infrastructure improvements to

business in the near future. The city could focus on better utility provisions to residential areas and expand services into areas suitable for growth and development.

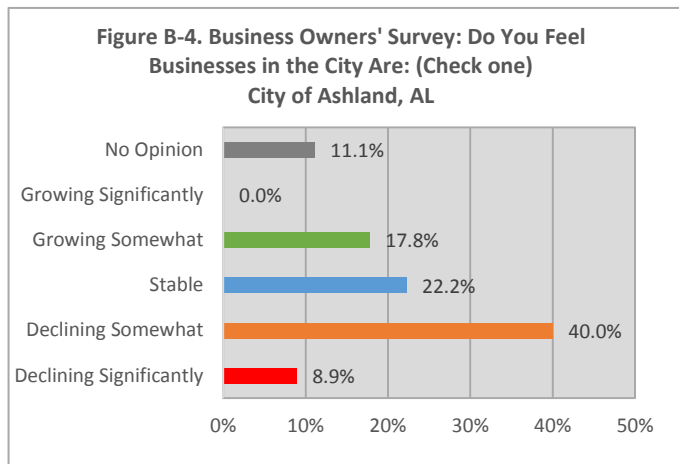
How satisfied are you with the city's utility services

As previously mentioned, the significant majority of city business owners felt the city provided adequate utility service to their business. The next question on the survey was meant to determine how satisfied business owners were with city utility services in more specific terms. Responders were asked if they were very satisfied, satisfied, not satisfied, or held no opinion. According to the survey, approximately 50% of business owners were very satisfied, 35% were satisfied, 4% were not satisfied, and 10% reported holding no opinion. Since approximately 85% of business owners were either satisfied or very satisfied with city utilities serving their business, the city should not need to consider significant infrastructure improvement projects to serve businesses in the near future.

Do you feel businesses in the city are....

A proper assessment of the business community needs to address how business owners view the overall business environment of the city. Survey respondents were asked if they felt businesses in the community were—Growing Significantly, Growing Somewhat, Stable, Declining Somewhat, Declining Significantly, or held No Opinion.

According to the business owners' survey almost half of the survey respondents felt city businesses in decline, either declining somewhat (40%) or declining significantly. Approximately 22% felt businesses were stable while 17% responded that businesses were growing somewhat and



11% held no opinion on the matter. No respondents felt the city was growing significantly in business. Figure B-4 examines how business owners felt the about the overall business growth and development of the city. Notice that almost half of the survey respondents reported they felt that the city is declining in business. This indicates that the city should consider plans and policies to promote and enhance economic development, and identify areas where revitalization may be needed. The city should also consider how to support

and enhance economic development for its major industries and bring new businesses into the industrial park.

Do you think the city should make it a top priority to renovate and redevelop the downtown area?

Downtowns are important places for city investment, growth, and development. As commercial development tends to shift to the outskirts of cities and along major highways, many downtowns have felt the substantial impact to these development patterns. In the business owner survey respondents were asked if they thought the city should focus efforts to revitalize the downtown area as a top priority, in the form of a “Yes”, “No” or “No Opinion” question.

According to the survey, approximately 59% of business owners thought the city should make it a top priority to renovate and redevelop the downtown area while 18% thought the city should not and 22% held no opinion on the subject.

Does your business have plans to expand? If so, where will your expansion be?

Approximately 10% of the businesses surveyed had plans to expand their business, of which 50% reported plans to expand outside the city and 33% had plans to expand both inside and outside the city.

Does your business have enough employees to adequately conduct daily operations?

In accordance with survey results, the substantial majority of business owners (89%) have enough employees to adequately conduct daily operations in their establishment, while 10% reported not currently having enough employees.

Do you think the city should establish an economic development organization in order to update, implement, and evaluate economic strategies, activities, and the economic development process in accordance with business needs and community values and direction? If so, would you be willing and available to sit on an economic development committee?

This question was asked to get a better understanding of business owner support for a specific type of community business strategy for local economic development and growth—that involving the establishment of an economic development organization. The city currently utilizes an industrial development board to assist local industries with growth and development and to recruit new industries into the community. However, this new organization would be established to focus on meeting community business needs overall and bring new business to the city.

According to the survey, approximately 35% of business owners felt the city should establish such an organization, while 11% responded that the city should not and 53% held no opinion. Of the 35% that felt the city should establish the organization 26% responded that they would be willing and available to sit on an economic development committee. Given this information, with such a small portion of support for this strategy, the city should probably seek other means to improve the local economy and keep track of economic progress.

Summary of Business Owners' Survey Results

Similar to the Community Survey, the Business Owners' Survey represents only a small portion of the business owners in the community, not the majority, and should only be used for minimal guidance purposes. The information may be somewhat helpful in the formulation of goals and objectives for economic development and growth within the community.

According to the survey the slight majority (57%) of businesses (those responding to the survey) were service oriented and another 25% were in retail. The considerable majority of business owners felt satisfied with city utility provision (water, sewer, gas, electric, roads, and parking) to their establishment, however, there was somewhat considerable dissatisfaction with parking, which the city may consider gathering more information on. Overall, approximately 85% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with city utility provisions, indicating the city might not need to make infrastructure improvements to businesses in the community in the near future.

On the other hand, almost half of the business owners surveyed did not have a positive feel about business growth in the city. Approximately 40% felt business was declining somewhat, while 8% felt the city was declining significantly. About 22% felt business establishments were stable. Approximately 59% of business owners felt the city should make it a top priority to improve and/or revitalize the downtown. Given this information, the city should seek policies and plans to improve the downtown business environment and seek to maintain existing business while drawing new business owners in.

The considerable majority of business owners felt they currently had enough employees to adequately conduct daily operations and a small portion of owners had plans to expand outside the city.

Based on business owners' survey results the City of Ashland should, as top priorities, strive to:

- Gather more information on parking needs for business establishments.
- Consider plans and policies to improve the downtown business environment.

***Disclaimer:** The Business Owners’ Survey was conducted and recorded as a survey based on business owner perception and opinion and is not intended, by itself, to be solidly grounded with factual information. The information presented therein was used only as a basis for determining community understanding and in establishing a platform for further research. Furthermore, the portion of the population surveyed cannot be used as a basis for determining the views and opinions of the majority of business establishments in the city.*

Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

For any community to thrive and prosper there needs to be a vision for the future. A vision is the collective understanding of the ideal future of where a community wants to go and what it wants to be. Ashland has a vision of growing and prospering as a successful Alabama community. This vision can be expressed and encompassed in a city approved vision statement which reads as follows: “*City of Friends*”

Mission Statement

The mission statement describes what the city is doing to attain the established vision and why it is doing that. A mission statement is more action-oriented than a vision statement and, as the mission is exercised, should result in an achieved vision. Ashland’s mission statement reads as follows:

“The City of Ashland promotes and maintains itself as an attractive, successful, and highly sustainable Alabama community offering a safe and friendly environment where residents live, work, learn, play, and invest in the local economy. As the City of Friends, Ashland will strive to maintain a strong community spirit by providing social and recreational opportunities for its people and visitors in all walks of life. The City will commit resources to preserving its historical heritage and natural amenities as well as promoting and enhancing quality education, skilled workforce development, and important community facilities and services in order to compete in the larger regional economy and provide a higher quality of life for residents and visitors to the city. The City of Ashland will prepare for substantial commercial growth along major highways, for small business growth in the downtown, plan appropriately for residential development in the surrounding areas, and preserve the city’s scenic natural environment, in order to manage progress in a positive direction.”

Goals and Objectives

In order to achieve the community vision and mission statement, Ashland needs to establish appropriate goals and objectives, a means of attaining the most important goals and objectives, and a methodology to evaluate progress. The following chapter, Chapter X: Goals and Objectives, identifies goals, objectives, strategies, and projects to be used as guidance in good planning principles. However, Chapter XI: Implementation establishes prioritized goals and projects and strategies for implementation.

Implementation

This chapter identifies and prioritizes specific projects and strategies for planning and guiding city improvements, growth, and expansion. Implementation schedules with strategy and project listings and their respective timeframes for completion are provided. A discussion of implementing agencies, potential partners and funding sources, and past efforts follows each schedule in order to provide further assistance.

Action Plan and Evaluation

The final stage of the Comprehensive Plan is the action plan and evaluation. In this chapter, projects and strategies are listed along with their respective timeframes for completion and completion status in order to continue strategy and project updates during and after the Comprehensive Plan is finished.

CHAPTER X: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Vision Statement

For any community to thrive and prosper there needs to be a vision for the future. A vision is the collective understanding of the ideal future of where a community wants to go and what it wants to be. The City of Ashland, AL has a vision of growing and prospering as a successful Alabama community. This vision can be expressed and encompassed in a city approved vision statement which reads as follows: “*City of Friends*”

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In order to achieve this vision and mission, Ashland needs to establish appropriate goals and objectives, a means of attaining those goals and objectives, and a methodology to evaluate progress. This chapter identifies goals, objectives, strategies, and projects for planning and guiding city improvements, growth, and expansion. Since the city possesses limited resources for improvements, not every goal, objective, strategy, and project in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan may be accomplished, rather the overall purpose of this chapter is to list and describe practical and achievable planning guidance and principles for properly maintaining city resources and preparing the community for future growth and development. The following implementation chapter lists and describes specific projects and strategies which the city plans to pursue and accomplish within given timeframes for completion along with a discussion of implementing agencies and potential partners and funding sources for further assistance.

Goal-Setting Process

In April of 2015 the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) and the Ashland Planning Commission began work on the Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update. The first meeting, conducted on July 23, 2015, was an initial public meeting in which the planning process was introduced and a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis for the community was performed. From this analysis, EARPDC and the planning commission formed a basis in which to identify community needs and in determining goals and objectives. EARPDC and the planning commission then met on a monthly or bi-monthly basis as needed in order to establish and prioritize goals and objectives, determine projects for implementation, and to subsequently generate a future land use plan and map to guide land use and development.

Goals and Objectives

The primary directive of the comprehensive plan is the formation of goals and objectives for city improvement, growth, and expansion, and the development of a plan in which to accomplish them. The purpose of this chapter, and the subsequent implementation chapter, is to provide a methodological planning roadmap with practical applications for attaining established city goals and objectives. The following definitions provide a framework through which goals and objectives can be achieved and evaluated.

Definitions

Goals

Goals in this chapter have been identified with the purpose of promoting community vision, through considerably broad-based perspectives. The definition of a “goal” in accordance with *businessdictionary.com* is, “an observable and measurable end result having one or more objectives to be achieved with a more or less fixed timeframe.”

Objectives

Objectives define, in more specified terms, how goals are to be accomplished. The definition of objectives as described by *businessdictionary.com* is, “A specific result that a person or system aims to achieve within a time frame and with available resources.” As a general understanding, objectives are basic tools that underlie all planning and strategic activities and serve as a basis for creating policy and evaluating performance. While goals are often broad-based in nature, objectives are more specific and easier to measure. Goals usually have long-term and possibly continuous timeframes, while objectives function as a series of smaller, shorter-term steps needed along the way toward goal completion and continuation. For example, a common goal in planning might be to strengthen existing business throughout the community, while an objective for this goal may be to redevelop the downtown. Although downtown redevelopment by itself will not strengthen existing business throughout the community, it does serve in making progress toward the goal of strengthening existing business on a community-wide scale. Goals express broad actions directed at the community level, while objectives express more specific actions, addressing

how to attain the goal and directed at specific places, organizations, or other entities within the city.

Projects/Strategies

These actions are specifically defined, applicable, practical, and measurable steps to be performed or activated throughout the implementation process. Such projects/strategies are to be understood as viable actions working for goal attainment and thus are substantially more specified than goals and objectives. Projects are defined as actual and tangible “on-the-ground” activities, such as conducting a road repaving project, planting trees in the downtown, installing new water lines, or building/expanding city hall while strategies are specific and measurable tasks, such as hiring a new position on city staff, conducting a survey, purchasing equipment, or creating a downtown revitalization plan. Projects and strategies have been listed in this chapter in order to identify the goals and objectives they support and serve as candidates for consideration, but prioritized as actual planned actions for completion in the Implementation Schedule and evaluated in an Evaluation Table of Chapter XI: Implementation and Evaluation.

Rationale

The rationale or importance for any given goals, objectives, strategies, and projects is explained under the subheading entitled as such. Rationale can be justified through significant findings in statistical analysis, community survey, or as an established community priority.

Additional Recommendations

Additional recommendations are advocated as useful and complementary implementation tools which may enhance projects and strategies.

Notation

Additional notes which describe and/or explain current work and progress in relation to a specific strategy or project.

The goals and objectives listed below, in no particular order of priority, as well as proceeding strategies and projects have been established by city departments and citizen input. These goals, objectives, strategies, and projects shall be reviewed, revised, and approved by the Ashland Planning Commission and the Ashland City Council as a practical methodology for the future improvement, growth, and development of the City of Ashland:

Economic Development

The City of Ashland desires economic growth and prosperity, strengthening existing businesses while attracting new business to the community. Ashland seeks to promote and encourage business prosperity in the downtown and also expand business in commercial and industrial zoned areas throughout the city, particularly in the city’s industrial park and along AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77. Economic development is organized into four categories of equal importance which, when planned and directed together, serve to enhance the overall business climate and economic success of the community. These categories (listed below as sections) are as follows:

- Section 1: Maintaining Existing Business

- Section 2: Expanding Existing Business
- Section 3: Business Recruitment, and
- Section 4: Workforce Development

Section 1: Maintaining Existing Business

Goal: Maintain and Strengthen Existing Business throughout the Community

Objective 1: Maintain and Strengthen Existing Business in the Downtown by Providing and Maintaining an Attractive, Healthy, and Thriving Business Environment and Preserve the Historical Character of this Area

Rationale: Based on the Community Survey, approximately 57% of 88 respondents felt the city should renovate and reuse buildings in the downtown and 72% felt the city should make a priority to provide incentives for new business to locate downtown. Approximately 28% would like the city to preserve and invest in historical assets. In all, residents felt that downtown redevelopment was the top priority for the city.

Projects and Strategies:

- Project: Conduct an inventory and assessment of downtown business resources and needs.
- Project: Create and implement a downtown revitalization plan.
- Project: Create and implement a downtown beautification and/or street scape improvement plan.
- Project: Create an economic development plan for the downtown.
- Strategy: Identify business owners and other stakeholders (banks, schools and training centers, investment firms, etc.) available in forming an organization or committee to determine the most important business resources and needs in the community and prioritize accordingly.
- Strategy: Establish a downtown merchants' association.

Objective 2: Prepare for Quality, Accessible, and Sustainable Business Management along AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77 and other Major Highway Commercial Corridors

Rationale: Since the city is a crossroads for two major rural highways, AL Hwy. 9 and AL Hwy. 77, the potential for economic development in the city, along these routes, is significant and should be capitalized on.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Conduct an access management study of business access points and traffic flow along major commercial corridors in the city to determine needed access improvements.
- Strategy: Conduct a signage inventory and assessment and identify potential aesthetic issues.

- Strategy: Conduct an inventory and assessment of existing infrastructure, such as water and sewer lines, along major highway commercial corridors to determine needed repairs and upgrades.
- Project: Create and implement a commercial highway corridor beautification and/or street scape improvement plan.
- Project: Conduct a highway corridor study and develop a plan for improving highway commercial corridors throughout the city.

Section 2: Expanding Existing Business

Goal: Promote and Encourage Expansion of Existing Business in the Community

Objective: Provide a Means for Proper and Efficient Business Growth and Development throughout the Community

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Designate land and conduct annexations in accordance to a future land use map.
- Strategy: Prepare for appropriate and necessary infrastructure (i.e. roadways and utilities) expansion into planned growth areas which support respective zoning districts.
- Strategy: Conduct an inventory of existing infrastructure and prepare a growth plan for the community.

Section 3: Business Recruitment

Goal: Attract and Recruit New Business to the Community

Objective: Provide Proper and Efficient Methods to Accommodate, Promote, Market, and Expand New Enterprises in the City Industrial Parks, in the Downtown, and throughout the Community

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Provide incentives (i.e. tax reductions, and reduced start-up fees) for new businesses to locate in the community.
- Strategy: Create a One-Stop-Shop for new business to secure needed requirements.
- Strategy: Market city business accommodations and opportunities to outside interests.
- Strategy: Provide adequate transportation, utility infrastructure, and land for new business recruitment in accordance to an economic development plan or other planning document.

Section 4: Workforce Development

Goal: Improve and Strengthen Workforce Development through Educational Training

Objective: Develop Partnerships with Local, County, or Regional Schools to Prepare Students for Workforce Positions

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Conduct job fairs at local schools.
- Strategy: Schools to work with local businesses to develop curriculum and training in meeting local workforce needs.
- Strategy: Businesses and schools create a local network to market and advertise job openings and opportunities in nearby cities and counties.
- Project: Build a career placement and development center.
- Project: Build a vocational training school.

Housing

Housing is a vitally important element in every community in meeting resident needs. A well-planned community will have a variety and substantial mix of housing choices available such as single-family, multi-family, and mobile home, maintained in good condition, as well as quality affordable housing. The city shall also make plans and policies to preserve housing values and increase its housing stock in appropriate residential areas.

Goal: Maintain and Strengthen the City's Existing Housing Stock and Provide Attractive, Safe, Stable, and Affordable Housing throughout the Community

Section 1: Housing Development

Goal: Promote and Encourage New Housing Development in Strategic Areas Well Suited for Residential Growth

Objective #1: Create More Housing Choices in Order to Meet the Needs of a Diverse and Changing Population

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Identify housing needs pertaining to housing conditions, type, value, and affordability and make plans and policies to promote and encourage the kind of housing most needed throughout the community.

Objective #2: Identify and Inventory Residential Areas with Proper Zoning and Infrastructure Support for Low, Medium, and High Density Housing Development

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Conduct an assessment of housing in close proximity to needed infrastructure and create a plan to build new homes near current supportive infrastructure or where necessary water and sewer service lines and roads are planned for.
- Strategy: Plan for and build new housing developments in areas close to or adjacent land designated for or as parks and recreation, bicycle and hiking trails, environmental preservation, and other low-impact uses complimentary to residential development.

Section 2: Alternative Housing Options**Goal: Promote and Encourage Tiny Home Development as a Viable Housing Option**

Objective: Promote and encourage tiny houses (homes with 70 to 400 square feet of living space) as permissible secondary dwelling units, primary residences, and village-like communities to serve the region’s aging population, low income residents, and others seeking safe, efficient, and affordable housing in a smaller footprint.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Building Brands—with the creation of job skills training and employment opportunities.
- Strategy: Market Retail Outlet—design and build highly visible products serving local, regional, and national markets.
- Strategy: Academy Education—Enhance housing authority skills and green-building techniques.
- Strategy: Incubation—Creation of small-business support, economic development, cottage industry foundation, and employment opportunities.
- Strategy: Advancement of Public and Private Development—Formation of partnerships, donations, housing inventory, and community and economic development.

For more information see Housing Development Potential in Chapter 4: *Housing* of this Comprehensive Plan.

Community Facilities and Utilities

The City of Ashland strives to provide quality community facilities and services for residents and visitors to the city. In order to promote and enhance important community facilities and services, Ashland needs to determine and meet priority maintenance for existing facilities and service needs and identify future priority facilities and services needed for growth and expansion. Community facilities and utilities have been organized into 9 sections listed as follows: 1) City Administration, 2) Public Safety, 3) Educational Facilities and Services, 4) City Library, 5) Housing Authority, 6) County Hospital, 7) Senior Center, 8) City Maintenance, 9) Utilities.

Section 1: City Administration

Goal: Promote and Enhance City Administration Facilities and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Facilities and Services and Prepares the City for Future Growth and Expansion

Objective 1: Promote and Enhance Community Involvement and Community Spirit

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Plan and organize more events to sponsor gatherings.

Objective 2: Provide Better Technology for City Administration

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Purchase a new debit/credit card machine for court.

Objective 3: Improve and Expand City Administration Facilities

- Project: The City of Ashland is planning to relocate City Hall and the police department to a renovated building located on AL Hwy. 9 in order to provide new offices for City Hall and the police department as well as record storage and a community storm shelter.

Section 2: Public Safety

Goal: Promote and Enhance Public Safety Facilities and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Facilities and Services and Prepares the City for Future Growth and Expansion

Objective 1: Provide Better Technology for the Police Department

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Upgrade technologies systems with real-time information on calls.
- Strategy: Install cameras in police department facility
- Strategy: Purchase less lethal weapons
- Strategy: Continued upgrades to radios
- Strategy: Seek grant opportunities

Objective 2: Provide New and Updated Equipment for the Fire Department

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Purchase new pumper/tanker truck
- Strategy: Purchase new hand tools for the truck
- Strategy: Update hoses, various water supply tools, and equipment

Section 3: Educational Facilities and Services

Goal: Promote and Enhance Educational Facilities and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Facilities and Services and Prepares Youth for Success in the Workforce and Life-long Learning

Objective 1: Improve Facilities and Services at Ashland Elementary School

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Provide resources to lower student teacher ratio
- Strategy: Provide resources to manage operations and programs within the school (maintenance, technology, administrative assistants, and instructional people).
- Strategy: Time built in for staff development

Objective 2: Improve Facilities and Services at Central High School of Clay County

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Hire more teachers in order to lower the student teacher ratio and offer a wider range of classes to students.
- Strategy: Establish a Trade School in order to better prepare students entering the skilled workforce.
- Strategy: Purchase new textbooks.

Section 4: City Library

Goal: Promote and Enhance Library Facilities and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Facilities and Services and Adequately Assists and Encourages Users to Read, Study, Research, and Grow in Learning

Objective: Upgrade Library Technology and Provide More Activity Space

- Strategy: Provide new computers for the library
- Strategy: Genealogy section upgrade—storage for personal family, civic, and community files
- Strategy: Provide a separate space for young adults

Section 5: Housing Authority

Goal: Promote and Enhance Housing Authority Facilities and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Housing and Services and Provides Equal Opportunity for Safe, Decent, and Affordable Housing to Residents in Substantial Need

Objective: Improve and Enhance Authority Housing Units in Order to Provide a Decent and Affordable Standard of Housing for Residents

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Build or Renovate a Workforce/Skills Training Center—The Ashland Housing Development Corp. (AHDC) is presently planning to develop a Technical Training Center to provide skills training and job opportunities to area residents. The goal is to partner with local industries, Community Colleges, and local and state government to develop a program offering residents paid skills training while producing goods that will be marketed to help offset the cost of operation. The long term plan is for the program to become financially self-sufficient.
- Strategy: Community Recreation Center—AHDC seeks to secure funding to construct a Community Recreation Center which would benefit the entire community. AHDC plans to partner with local governments to seek funding, and develop a plan of action to provide ongoing support.
- Strategy: Modernization of existing housing units—the AHDC is seeking a new funding platform that will allow for a move from the Public Housing Program to the Multi-family Program. The move will ease administrative burdens and costs associated with public housing and allow more flexibility with resources and assets.

Section 6: Clay County Hospital

Goal: Promote and Enhance Healthcare Facilities and Services by Providing Quality Healthcare Services Based on Health Status Needs of our Communities and the Availability of Sustainable Resources to Meet those Needs

Objective 1: Improve Hospital Worker Wages

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Increase reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid by political support to increase the return on Wage Index for rural hospitals.
- Strategy: Increase patient payments of co-pays and deductibles.

Objective 2: Increase Hospital Service Personnel

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Provide more qualified licensed personnel to fill staff positions in clinical departments. The hospital supports the Health Science Program “Opening Doors” in cooperation with Clay County BOE and Southern Union State Community College.

Section 7: Senior Center

Goal: Promote and Enhance Senior Center Facilities and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Facilities and Services and Provides Productive and Enjoyable Programs and Activities for Senior Residents

Objective: Improve and Enhance Senior Citizen Facilities and Programs at the Ashland Senior Center

Projects and Strategies: (No Projects and Strategies at this time)

Section 8: City Maintenance

Goal: Promote and Enhance City Maintenance Facilities and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Facilities and Services and Provides for an Attractive, Safe, Clean, and Well-maintained Community

Objective: Improve and Enhance Street and Sanitation Services throughout the City

Projects and Strategies: (No Projects and Strategies at this time)

Section 9: Utilities

Goal: Promote and Enhance Water, Sewer, and Gas Utility Infrastructure and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Infrastructure and Services and Prepares the City for Future Growth and Expansion

Objective 1: Improve Existing Water Lines and Service throughout the City

Projects and Strategies:

- Project: Install additional valves
- Project: Install Radio Read Meters

Objective 2: Improve and Expand Sewer Service

Projects and Strategies:

- Project: Rebuild sewer lift stations
- Project: Extend sewer distribution lines

Additional Recommendation: For new sewer lines Ashland could use high density Polyethylene pipe (HDPE). High density Polyethylene pipe line provides significant benefits to the community. Unlike conventional cast iron piping, which is highly susceptible to corrosion, abrasion, and rusting over time, particularly along joints and fittings, HDPE is highly resistant to corrosion, abrasion, and rust. HDPE also maintains structural strength better than cast iron under external pressures which

may otherwise cause the pipe to crack or fracture. These characteristics of HDPE piping attribute to lower maintenance, substantially reducing the likelihood of water leaks and breaks. Also, the smoothness of the inner and outer pipe walls significantly lowers buildup of scum and sedimentation, creating better flow performance throughout the system. Furthermore, HDPE is cheaper and easier to install than other types of piping, such as cast iron, GRP, and PVC, because it is highly flexible and more easily bends around obstructive objects as needed, thus reducing the necessity for joints and fittings.

Although HDPE piping was first introduced in the 1950s, the option is growing in popularity due to significant progress in production. Many project managers have approved HDPE as the perfect alternative because of its strength, durability, and easy installation. The estimated design life of HDPE pipe is 75 to 100 years, which is a somewhat substantially longer lifespan than that of cast iron at 60 to 80 years.

Objective 2: Relocate Infrastructure

Projects and Strategies:

- Project: Relocate road and gas, water, and sewer infrastructure near Wellborne Cabinets.

Transportation

In order to promote and enhance transportation, Ashland needs to provide basic maintenance of existing streets and highways as well as sustaining effective access between roadways and properties. The city should make plans for future roadway development and accompanying access, and properly accommodate opportunities for alternative modes of transportation such as bicycling, hiking, and transit.

Section 1: Existing Roadway Improvements

Goal: Promote and Enhance Transportation by Properly Maintaining Existing Roadways and Access and Continuing Effective Planning for Expansion, and Accommodating Alternative Modes of Transportation

Objective: Improve Existing Street Conditions in Accordance with the Transportation Plan

Projects and Strategies:

- Project: Repave 5th Avenue SW from 3rd Street SW to AL Hwy. 9
- Project: Repave 6th Avenue SW from 5th Avenue SW to AL Hwy. 9
- Project: Repave 4th Street NW from AL Hwy. 77 to 3rd Avenue N.

Objective: Plan for Effective Road Expansions and Connections in Accordance with the Transportation Plan

Additional Recommendation: Concerning road repaving, Ashland could use a new and innovative road paving technique called Full-Depth Reclamation (FDR), in which existing worn out asphalt is recycled back into base material along with Portland Cement to create a new roadway base. With FDR, there is no need for hauling in new aggregate or hauling out old material for disposal, thus greatly reducing transportation and disposal work and enhancing cost effectiveness. This cost effectiveness leads to the ability to create a greater area of dependable and stable roadbed for the same amount of money as traditional asphalt patching. As an additional incentive, the recycled base produced is stronger, more uniform, and more moisture resistant than the original base, resulting in a longer and lower maintenance life cycle than traditional patch and overlay. FDR with cement, as the project proposes, adds approximately 5 more years to the roads life cycle than would traditional asphalt patching. The FDR technique is typically the best option for all road repaving projects in which more than 20% of the base and subgrade below the pavement are seriously damaged and cannot be rehabilitated with simple asphalt overlay.

Although the FDR technique may appear to be the best option all around for road repaving, only roads which exhibit one or more of the following characteristics should be considered candidates:

- The pavement is seriously damaged and cannot be rehabilitated with simple repaving.
- Existing pavement distress indicates the problem is likely in the base or subgrade.
- The existing pavement requires patching in excess of 20%.
- The pavement structure is inadequate for current or future traffic.

For more information on full-depth reclamation contact: www.strongroads.info

Section 2: Alternative Forms of Transportation

Goal: Promote and Enhance Transportation by Accommodating Alternative Forms of Transportation such as Bicycling, Walking, and Transit

Objective 1: Consider the Construction of a Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Connecting Ashland to Lineville

Environment

In order to promote and enhance the natural environment, Ashland should identify unique natural areas sensitive to development pressures and preserve these areas in accordance with species needs.

Goal: Promote and Enhance the Natural Environment

Objective 1: Protect and Preserve Wildlife Habitats, particularly Threatened and Endangered Species

- Strategy: Utilize Best Management Practices in Accordance to *Best Management Practices for Forestry* Guidelines (Regularly Maintained and Updated by the Alabama Forestry Commission)

Land Use and Zoning

In order to promote and enhance planning and zoning, Ashland must utilize the appropriate city departments and local groups to identify existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas with substantial maintenance needs and make plans to provide the appropriate maintenance. The city must also utilize the appropriate departments and groups to determine growth policies, recognize associated opportunities, and direct new development on a course beneficial to the city as a whole.

Goal: Promote and Enhance Planning and Zoning by Utilizing City Departments and Local Groups to Identify and Meet Land Use and Zoning Needs and Establish Policies and Plans to Benefit the Community

Objective 1: Promote and Enhance Residential Land Use and Development

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Designate land for residential development on the Future Land Use Plan Map in the Comprehensive Plan and plan city growth accordingly.

Objective 2: Promote and Enhance Commercial Land Use and Development

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Designate land for commercial development on the Future Land Use Plan Map in the Comprehensive Plan and plan city growth accordingly.

Objective 3: Promote and Enhance Industrial Land Use and Development

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Designate land for industrial use on the Future Land Use Plan Map in the Comprehensive Plan and plan city growth accordingly.

Objective 4: Promote and Enhance Land Use for Parks and Recreation

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Designate land for parks and recreation on the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan and plan city growth accordingly.

Objective 5: Promote and Enhance Agricultural Land Use and Development

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Designate land for agricultural use on the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan and plan city growth accordingly.

CHAPTER XI: IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

In the previous chapter, goals, objectives, strategies, and projects have been presented and described for planning guidance and consideration in forming public policy and plans for the next 10 years. Goals, objectives, strategies, and projects originate from good planning principles and practices, however, attributable to the community's limited resources and time constraints, not every single goal and objective, along with their respective projects and strategies will be implemented and realized. Therefore, implementation, as this chapter presents, strives to identify and select projects and strategies from the goals and objectives which are important to the city and which the city plans to effectively implement. The tables in this chapter list the projects and strategies that the city plans to implement along with timeframes within which the city plans to conduct and complete each project/strategy. These timeframes are as follows: Immediate, Short-term, Mid-term, Long-term, and Future Consideration. The tables also show the years each timeframe encompasses. Some projects/strategies may incorporate multiple timeframes through which they will be conducted and finalized.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify some of the optional strategies and resources at the disposal of local governments to implement the general recommendations of this plan. The proposed implementation schedules are intended to serve as a general organizational strategy for plan implementation. Although specific timeframes are identified for each recommended action, actual implementation may occur under different time frames and under varying methodologies, as may be dictated by financial constraints or competing needs and priorities. This chapter also provides action plans/evaluation tables to assist city administration in tracking project progress toward completion on a yearly basis.

Successful implementation spans the work of many people often requires the cooperative action of multiple entities, some of which may have varying degrees of commitment to and responsibility for the success of the planning effort. Other common obstacles to successful plan implementation include funding constraints, insufficient access to needed technical support and resources, and conflicting interpretations of problems and needs. All of these impediments, to some degree, are relevant to comprehensive planning implementation.

This comprehensive plan acknowledges that the City of Ashland has limited resources and competing planning priorities. However, city administration has sufficient technical expertise and capacity to react quickly to the complex issues affecting the city. This plan also recognizes that the city must depend upon the cooperation of other independent boards and agencies to implement those aspects of the plan that the city cannot directly control. Ashland must respond to a wide range of changing needs, all of which must be considered when determining priorities for local action. It is difficult to foresee the critical issues that will arise tomorrow, but the comprehensive plan is useful in guiding and directing policy toward a more sustainable community. The city must retain the ability to establish its own priorities in any given year to satisfy its own needs. As a result, full implementation of this plan will not happen quickly and may take longer to achieve than initially expected.

City Administration

The City of Ashland has a part-time Mayor and full-time support staff to handle the city's daily administrative needs. The administrative staff can use the comprehensive plan as a general guide for coordinating expansion of the city's public facilities and services to address future growth needs. However, it must be recognized that, due to the city's relatively small size and lack of large, stable sources of revenue, the administrative staff's capacity to fully monitor and implement the plan is somewhat constrained. Support and assistance from every level of city government will be needed to ensure that the policies and programs recommended by this plan are fully implemented. The city can also seek assistance from support agencies-such as the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, and USDA Rural Development-for technical assistance in implementing the goals and objectives of the plan.

Codes and Ordinances

Basic local development codes include zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and building codes. These codes and regulations help local governments manage growth and development and are important local tools to support plan implementation efforts. Local governments can and do adopt other special ordinances to address specific community needs, but such ordinances may require special legislation to implement. This section discusses in detail those development codes that municipalities are authorized to adopt and implement under existing state law.

Zoning

Zoning ordinances are adopted by local governments to control the location, intensity, and character of land uses in the community. They also help communities prevent conflicts between neighboring property owners resulting from land development activities, and they help protect the public from any excessive environmental impacts that may result from private development activities. Local governments derive their zoning powers from the state through the Code of Alabama (Title 11, Chapter 52, Article 4). The primary purpose of local zoning ordinances is to promote public health, safety, and general welfare by fostering coordinated land development in accordance with the comprehensive plan. Adopting a zoning ordinance is an effective means of implementing land use and development recommendations contained in the comprehensive plan. Generally speaking, zoning ordinances adopted by local governments must be prepared in accordance with a comprehensive plan, as required under Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 72 of the Code of Alabama, 1975.

Subdivision Regulations

While zoning ordinances control the nature and intensity of land uses, subdivision regulations govern the manner by which land is divided in preparation for development. Subdivision regulations contain standards for subdivision design, lot layout, and the placement and construction of public facilities within subdivisions. Although most subdivisions in small

communities are residential in nature, the regulations should be developed to also address commercial or industrial subdivisions.

Municipal governments in Alabama are authorized to adopt and enforce subdivision regulations under Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 31 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. The Code further authorizes cities to enforce their local subdivision regulations within a planning jurisdiction in the surrounding unincorporated areas, up to five miles beyond the city limits. In the East Alabama region, many municipalities exercising their extraterritorial subdivision powers do so only within their police jurisdiction boundaries, which may be either 1.5 or 3 miles from the city limits.

Building Codes

Local building codes establish basic minimum construction standards for buildings, including homes and commercial and industrial buildings. The purpose of a building code is to ensure quality development and protect public safety. By adopting building codes, local governments can require developers and contractors to secure building permits before undertaking construction activities. Applicants for building permits also can be required to provide evidence that they have received County Health Department approval for on-site septic systems, thereby providing an effective mechanism to ensure compliance with local health regulations. Cities and counties in Alabama are authorized, under Title 41, Chapter 9, Section 166 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, to adopt minimum building standards that have been adopted by the Alabama Building Commission.

Partnerships, Financing, and other Resources

Financial constraints and planning assistance can be some of the greatest obstacles to plan implementation in smaller communities. Many communities must wait for funding to become available in its entirety before a plan or project can be implemented and have no expertise or guidance in planning. Ashland must actively continue its efforts to secure outside financial support and assistance for plan implementation in order to meet its goals and objectives to prepare for growth and development and to promote its community vision for the future. A number of financial assistance and partnership sources exist to help small communities in terms of planning and development. The most significant sources are listed as follows:

- 1. Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA):** The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs was created in 1983 by the Alabama Legislature as an arm of the Governor's Office, created to streamline and professionalize the management of a number of federally funded programs administered by the state. Consolidating numerous agencies into a single department considerably reduced administrative costs and ensured more effective and efficient implementation and enforcement of federal requirements for monitoring, reporting, and auditing. ADECA is composed of seven divisions and various support sections constituting—1) Communications and Information, 2) Community and Economic Development, 3) Energy, 4) Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety, 5) Office of Water Resources, 6) Surplus Property, and 7) Support Sections. One of the most widely used ADECA divisions, by communities, is Community and Economic Development. The Community and Economic Development Division provides the following program areas:

- Community Development Programs—probably the most well-known program is the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) which provides funding to improve communities in various areas through the following funds:
 - ✓ Competitive Fund—which provides funding for projects such as water and sewer line rehabilitation and extension, housing rehabilitation, neighborhood and downtown revitalization, street and drainage improvements.
 - ✓ Community Enhancement Fund—which provides funding assistance for fire protection, senior citizen centers, community centers, Boys & Girls clubs, and recreational facilities.
 - ✓ Planning Fund—provides funding to eligible communities to conduct planning activities to promote orderly growth, regional development, and revitalization efforts.
 - ✓ Economic Development Fund—provides funding to all eligible communities for projects that support the creation and retention of jobs.

Note: Communities seeking funding assistance through the CDBG Program should demonstrate 51% low to moderate income (LMI) in the community for planning grants and 51% LMI for project areas pertaining to proposed projects.

- Community Service Block Grants—assists low-income Alabama residents in gaining employment, education, and many other skills.
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)—seeks to fund projects and programs to create new jobs, spur economic development, build roads and infrastructure, advance education and promote wellness in central and north Alabama.
- Community Stabilization Program—established to provide funding assistance with the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment.
- Disaster Recovery—funds which may be allocated after federally declared disasters and used for activities such as replacement or repair of infrastructure and housing damage resulting from the declared disaster.
- Alabama Enterprise Zones—provides tax incentives to corporations, partnerships, and proprietorships that locate or expand within designated Enterprise Zones.
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)—provides funding assistance to federal agencies, states, local governments and nonprofit organizations for the development and improvement of recreational trails.
- Alabama Advantage—provides information for people looking to relocate or retire in Alabama.
- Emergency Shelter Grant Program—grant funding is used to upgrade existing homeless facilities and domestic abuse shelters.
- Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)—administers grants funding walking and exercise trails, playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, soccer fields, baseball and softball diamonds, and other outdoor areas that improve communities.
- Delta Regional Authority (DRA)—strives to improve many aspects of communities in 20 Alabama counties of the Delta Region area of the state.

Contact Information: Phone (334) 242-5099 Website: www.adeca.government.gov

2. Connecting ALABAMA: Connecting ALABAMA is a multi-year initiative promoting the availability and adoption of broadband Internet access throughout the state. The initiative seeks to identify and leverage all available funding sources for both demand and supply side programs. Demand-side initiatives are designed to advance healthcare, education, agriculture, and other economic development opportunities and may require non-traditional funding, while supply-side initiatives for infrastructure development and service delivery in rural areas may require non-commercial sources of funding such as government and foundation grants. The Connecting ALABAMA website at: www.connectingalabama.gov contains a link to the Federal Funding Manual which serves as a guide to federal programs useful to communities seeking federal funds to deploy, use, or benefit from telecommunications networks and technologies. Other grant opportunities for the advancement and financing of telecommunication infrastructure and technology include:

- USDA's Rural Utilities Service—which provides programs to finance rural America's telecommunications infrastructure.
- The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program (DLT)—which utilizes loans and grants and loan/grant combinations to meet educational and health care needs in rural areas throughout the country.
- The Community Connect Grant Program—offers financial assistance to eligible applicants to install and expand broadband in unserved areas with the goals of enhancing public safety services and fostering economic growth.

Contact Information: Email info@ConnectingALABAMA.gov

Website: www.connectingalabama.gov

3. Alabama Power Company Economic and Community Development: Alabama Power provides reliable electricity supply, at competitive prices, to approximately 1.4 million homes, businesses, and industries in the southern two-thirds of Alabama. The Alabama Power Company, through their department of Economic and Community Development provides services for economic development in the following areas 1) Building and Site Evaluation, 2) Labor Force Analysis, 3) Electrical Services, 4) Transportation/Logistics Analysis, and 5) Alabama Tax and Incentive Analysis. The department also offers services in community development through the following programs: 1) Advantage Site Program, 2) Industrial Site Development Program (ISDP), 3) Speculative Building Program, and 4) ACE (Alabama Communities of Excellence) Program, which uses strategic community planning in forming goals and plans for the community's future.

Contact Information: Phone 1-800-718-2726 Website: www.amazingalabama.com

4. The Economic Development Administration (EDA): EDA, established under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, was formed to help communities generate jobs, retain existing jobs, and stimulate industrial and commercial growth in economically distressed areas of the United States. In continuing its mission, EDA operates on the principal that distressed communities must be empowered to develop and implement their own economic development strategies. The communities in the East Alabama Region are recognized by EDA as part of an Economic Development District, which enables them to receive EDA grant funding for infrastructure improvements, which support projects used to create new local jobs. Investment programs provided by EDA include the following: Public Works and Economic Development Program, Economic Adjustment Assistance Program,

Research and National Technical Assistance, Local Technical Assistance, Planning Program, University Center Economic Development Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms Program.

- 5. The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC):** EARPDC offers revolving loan funds to provide gap financing for local businesses. The Commission provides matching funds to member governments that use the commission's services for planning projects, such as the preparation of comprehensive plans, strategic plans, land use plans, housing studies, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations as well as mapping services. The Commission also offers grant writing and administration services to member governments to secure funding for a wide variety of community projects and for community planning.
- 6. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT):** which constructs new highways, offers special Transportation Enhancement Grants through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and runs a Safety Management Program.
- 7. The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC):** which provides special grants to restore local historic buildings and structures and assists in surveying historic properties and preparing applications for inclusion in the National Historic Register.
- 8. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM):** which helps finance public water extensions through a special low-interest loan fund and finances special water and sewer demonstration projects.
- 9. The Small Business Administration (SBA):** which provides technical assistance to entrepreneurs in rural areas through the local Small Business Development Centers.
- 10. US Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA):** which offers a range of grant and loan programs to help finance housing improvement projects, economic development initiatives, infrastructure improvement projects, and city jail expansions and construction.
- 11. The local Community Action Agencies,** which conduct a wide range of programs to assist low and moderate income households throughout the rural areas, in such areas as heating assistance, Head Start, and weatherization programs.
- 12. The local Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and Industrial Development Authorities (IDA),** which sponsor and finance economic development efforts and initiatives within their jurisdictions.
- 13. Alabama Power, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA):** and the Rural Electric Cooperatives (REC), which finance and provide technical assistance for a wide range of local economic development initiatives.
- 14. Rural Alabama Initiative (RAI):** is a grant program, funded by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and administered through the Economic and Community Development

Institute (ECDI). ECDI has the mission to improve the quality of life of Alabama citizens by promoting continuing economic and community development policy and practice through communication, education, research, and community assistance. Through RAI the Institute provides a mechanism for rural communities to attain monetary assistance for community development goals. The main goal of RAI is to assist communities that seek economic prosperity and a better quality of life.

- 15. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** offers grant and technical assistance to small communities through a variety of environmental preservation, protection, and education programs, fellowships, and research associateships. Grant programs administered under EPA include: The Brownfields Grant Program, Environmental Education Grants Program, Environmental Information Exchange Network Grant Program, Environmental Justice Grants Program, Environmental Justice through Pollution Prevention Program, National Center for Environmental Research, Pollution Prevention Incentives for States, Water Grants, and Watershed Funding.
- 16. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):** provides grants and technical assistance to small communities through a variety of emergency management, prevention, and education programs. Grant programs administered under FEMA include: The Buffer Zone Protection Program, Emergency Management Performance Grant, Homeland Security Grant Program, Intercity Bus Security Grant Program, Operation Stonegarden, Port Security Grant Program, Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program, Transit Security Grant Program, Trucking Security Grant Program, Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) Non-profit Security Grant Program.
- 17. Alabama Clean Water Partnership (ACWP):** Alabama has more rivers, lakes, and groundwater than any other place in the country and is the richest state in the US in terms of water. Approximately 10% of all water in the US flows within the state's borders. The Alabama Clean Water Partnership is a statewide 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization comprised of a diverse and inclusive coalition of public-private interest groups and individuals working together to improve, protect, and preserve water resources and aquatic ecosystems in the state. The main purpose of the ACWP is to "make connections" in linking individuals, companies, organizations, and governing bodies in order to educate the public about the importance of clean water and to assist in projects to protect and preserve Alabama's water resources and aquatic ecosystems. This purpose is accomplished through efforts to improve communication and information sharing as well as appropriate coordination and collaboration. The ACWP, on the homepage of their website: www.cleanwaterpartnership.org inquires "Do you know of a stream that needs help?" this link brings up an ACWP Stream Nomination Form through which an applicant may submit a stream for consideration. Each nomination is added to a priority list that will assist in directing attention and resources to Alabama watersheds. The ACWP also provides the services of one statewide coordinator and facilitators for each of the ten river basins in the state. Each facilitator coordinates basin meetings and projects in their respective basins while the coordinator supports the facilitators and transfers information between the basins. For more information contact the website or phone: (205)266-6285.

18. The US Census Bureau: The Census provides substantial statistical information and to communities, counties, states, and the nation at large. The most significant and widely used data tools provided by the Census Bureau is the Decennial Census—which provides 100% count information and is updated every 10 years—and the American Community Survey which provides estimate information and is updated every year for all municipalities with a one year survey period for each municipality with population over 65 K in population, a 3 year period for municipalities with between 20 K and 65 K and a 5 year period for all cities and towns in the nation. Another significant tool offered by the Census is the Census Business Builder: Small Business Edition. The Builder is an interactive tool which allows small business owners a way to easily navigate and use key demographic and economic data to help guide research into opening a new business or expand their existing. Key features of the Census Business Builder include:

- Easy to use menus to select the owners type of business and potential business location
- An interactive map that allows selection of the area to explore for business opportunities, including comparisons to neighboring areas.
- Dynamically generated business county and city-level reports (including trend charts) that can be easily incorporated into a business plan and used for further research.

Contact information: Website www.census.gov

19. Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM): assists municipalities in Alabama in funding local projects and purchases. This organization has established the AM Fund, administered by the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation, to provide low-cost, tax-exempt financing to Alabama communities. Municipalities borrow from the AM Fund at a low tax-exempt interest rate to fund almost any municipal project and equipment purchase. Goals determined through the administration of AM Fund incorporate the following:

- Share issuance costs that reduce individual borrower's costs
- Participate in bond issues of sufficient size to enable the borrowers to achieve attractive interest rates
- Minimize staff time by using straightforward loan documentation

Ashland should continue to explore project-financing opportunities with all of these entities when undertaking projects to implement this comprehensive plan. The city should also consider developing public-private partnerships. Of course, outside financing usually will not cover all of the costs associated with a project. The city must be prepared to provide local matching funds, where needed to leverage outside grants, to cost share with private partnerships, and to undertake projects that cannot be funded by outside sources.

Implementation Schedule

As previously mentioned, due to limited resources and time constraints, not all the goals, objectives, strategies, and projects outlined in this plan shall be realized. Therefore, the city must effectively identify and prioritize the most important, impactful, and feasible projects and strategies in Chapter X: Goals and Objectives and then incorporate such projects and strategies into an implementation plan. One way to form an implementation plan is to create an implementation schedule. The implementation schedule lists strategies and projects to be undertaken as Immediate (1-2 years), Short-term (3-5 years), Mid-term (6-9 years), Long-term (10 to 20 years), and Future

Consideration (over 20 years). The schedule formulates a specified timeframe within which each project and strategy should be undertaken, establish which local entity is responsible for carrying out the activity, and identify potential partners and funding resources (PP & FS) in implementing respective strategies and projects.

Table I-1 examines Ashland’s implementation schedule for projects pertaining to the public improvements to be implemented from 2016 through 2018 and later. In planning for the collective entirety of the city, these projects and strategies encompass not only plans and budgetary items for the city itself, but also for entities outside city ownership and operation.

Table I-1. Implementation Schedule: Ashland, AL 2018.

	Task	Assigned To	PP&FS	Start	End	Dur	%	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	Projects/Strategies			9/1/16	12/30/20	1118		[Gantt bar spanning 2016-2020]				
1	Relocate Police Dept. to newly renovated building on AL Hwy. 9	City of Ashland		9/1/16	5/31/18	444		[Gantt bar from 2016 to 2018]				
2	Relocate road infrastructure near Wellborn Cabinets	City of Ashland		9/1/16	7/31/18	487		[Gantt bar from 2016 to 2018]				
3	Re-pave 5th Ave. SW from 3rd Str. SW to AL Hwy. 9	City of Ashland	ADECA	1/1/17	12/30/20	1035		[Gantt bar from 2017 to 2020]				
4	Re-pave 6th Ave. SW from 5th Ave. SW to AL Hwy. 9	City of Ashland	ADECA	1/1/17	12/30/20	1035		[Gantt bar from 2017 to 2020]				
5	Re-pave 4th Str. NW from AL Hwy. 77 to 3rd. Ave. N.	City of Ashland	ADECA	1/1/17	12/30/20	1035		[Gantt bar from 2017 to 2020]				

Source: City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan, 2018.

Action Plan and Evaluation Tables

For every project and strategy the city administers, an action plan and evaluation process should be established to track the tasks needed for completion. Similar to the implementation schedules, action plan evaluation tables have been provided to assist city administration in keeping track of respective strategies and project status throughout their implementation, however, instead of organizing the tables into planning element categories, the action plan table shows which projects should be started on beginning with all the projects scheduled to start in 2016, and in each subsequent year. The action plan table has also been combined with evaluation. For the evaluation process, city administration may mark where each project stands toward completion in their respective status column. The following Action Plan/Evaluation Table (AP-1) may be utilized for such purpose. Project status has been identified in three categories which are listed and described as follows:

- Inactive—projects and strategies which are planned for but have not yet been initiated.
- Administration—projects/strategies which have been initiated by administration.
- Complete—project/strategy is complete, approved, and administration closed out.

Table AP-1. Action Plan/Evaluation Table: Ashland, AL 2018.

Task	Inactive	Administration	Complete	Start	End	Dur	%	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Projects/Strategies				9/1/16	12/30/20	1118		[Progress bar from 2016 to 2020]				
1 Relocate Police Department to newly renovated building on AL Hwy. 9				9/1/16	5/31/18	444		[Progress bar from 2016 to 2018]				
2 Relocate road infrastructure near Wellborn Cabinets				9/1/16	7/31/18	487		[Progress bar from 2016 to 2018]				
3 Re-pave 5th Ave. SW from 3rd Str. SW to AL Hwy. 9				1/1/17	12/30/20	1035		[Progress bar from 2017 to 2020]				
4 Re-pave 6th Ave. SW from 5th Ave. SW to AL Hwy. 9				1/1/17	12/30/20	1035		[Progress bar from 2017 to 2020]				
5 Re-pave 4th Str. NW from AL Hwy. 77 to 3rd Ave. N.				1/1/17	12/30/20	1035		[Progress bar from 2017 to 2020]				

Source: City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan, 2018.

Plan Adoption and Amendment

According to Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 8 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, the municipal planning commission is authorized to prepare and adopt a local comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan can be adopted by resolution in whole or in successive chapters or elements, as provided in Title 11, Chapter 52, section 10 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. However, prior to adoption or disapproval of the plan by the planning commission, the planning commission or the city council must publish notice of and conduct a public hearing to solicit comments on the proposed plan from concerned citizens. State law does not specify the format to be used for notification or conduct of the required public hearing. However, common sense dictates that the hearing should be notified and conducted in accordance with the standard procedures used by the planning commission or city council, as may be applicable.

Once the plan has been adopted in accordance with state law, the planning commission is empowered to assume additional administrative authorities. These authorities are specified in Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 11 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. According to this statute, no street, square, public building or structure, park or other public way, ground or open space, or public utility can be constructed or authorized in the community without approval by the planning commission. The planning commission must review the proposed community facility improvement for consistency with the adopted comprehensive plan. If the planning commission determines that the proposed improvement is not consistent with the plan, it may disapprove the improvement. Such a vote can be overturned by a two-thirds majority vote of all city council members.

As this provision of Alabama law illustrates, the comprehensive plan is an important document. It serves as a legal support for local zoning authority, and it governs the expansion of public facilities and infrastructure in the community. Therefore, it is important to remember that the adoption of a comprehensive plan document is not the end of the planning process. It is merely the beginning of an ongoing dedicated planning effort. The local government must be committed to a plan monitoring, review, and implementation effort if the plan is to achieve its stated objectives. In addition, the plan should be reviewed and revised periodically in response to growth and changing conditions in the community. While Alabama law does not prescribe a revision schedule for local government comprehensive plans, communities should update the plan at least once every ten

years to incorporate more recent data from the latest U.S. Census. New census data is needed to determine growth and population trends used by the plan. More frequent updates should be conducted if the community experiences rapid growth or change, or if the community proposes to undertake a significant public investment to stimulate future growth or change.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: POPULATION STATISTICS

Historic Population Trends

Table P-1. Historic Population Trends: Ashland, Clay County, Alabama, US								
Year	Ashland	% Change	Clay Co.	% Change	Alabama	% Change	US	% Change
1910	1,062	N/A	21,006	N/A	2,138,093	NA	92,228,531	N/A
1920	1,655	55.8%	22,645	7.8%	2,348,174	9.8%	106,021,568	15.0%
1930	1,476	-10.8%	17,768	-21.5%	2,646,248	12.7%	123,202,660	16.2%
1940	1,608	8.9%	16,907	-4.8%	2,832,961	7.1%	132,165,129	7.3%
1950	1,593	-0.9%	13,929	-17.6%	3,061,743	8.1%	151,325,798	14.5%
1960	1,610	1.1%	12,400	-11.0%	3,266,740	6.7%	179,323,175	18.5%
1970	1,921	19.3%	12,636	1.9%	3,444,165	5.4%	203,302,031	13.4%
1980	2,052	6.8%	13,703	8.4%	3,893,888	13.1%	226,542,199	11.4%
1990	2,103	2.5%	13,252	-3.3%	4,040,587	3.8%	248,718,301	9.8%
2000	1,963	-6.7%	14,254	7.6%	4,447,100	10.1%	281,421,906	13.1%
2010	2,037	3.8%	13,932	-2.3%	4,779,736	7.5%	308,745,538	9.7%
2013 est.	1,980	-2.8%	13,486	-3.2%	4,833,722	1.1%	316,128,839	2.4%

Source: US Census of Population 2010, 2000, STF 1 and Wikipedia.

Place of Birth

Table P-2. Place of Birth: Ashland, AL 2013 (ACS 2009-2013)				
Geography	Ashland	Clay County	Alabama	US
Born in State	75.1%	79.5%	70.0%	58.7%
Northeast State	2.6%	1.3%	2.5%	6.4%
Midwest State	0.2%	3.5%	5.0%	7.3%
South	10.1%	11.6%	15.9%	8.4%
West	0.0%	1.8%	2.2%	4.8%
Born Outside US	0.2%	0.2%	0.8%	1.4%
Foreign Born	11.7%	2.2%	3.5%	12.9%

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Place of Residence

Table P-3. Place of Residence (1 yr. prior to 2012 residence): Ashland, AL 2012								
Residence	Ashland		Clay County		Alabama		US	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 1 year and over	2,653	100.0%	13,717	100.0%	4,720,103	100.0%	305,340,618	100.0%
Same house	2,310	83.5%	11,930	87.0%	4,005,867	84.9%	258,887,555	84.8%
Different house in the US	343	12.9%	1,787	13.0%	698,628	14.8%	44,633,635	14.6%
Same county	77	2.9%	1,011	7.4%	429,927	9.1%	27,998,595	9.2%
Different county	266	10.0%	776	5.7%	268,701	5.7%	16,635,040	5.4%
Same state	149	4.1%	475	3.5%	155,210	3.3%	9,661,677	3.2%
Different state	117	6.4%	301	2.2%	113,491	2.4%	6,973,363	2.3%
Abroad	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	15,608	0.3%	1,819,428	0.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Age Distribution

Table P-4. Age Distribution: Ashland, AL 2000				
Age Status	Ashland	Clay Co.	Alabama	US
Under 5	116	877	295,992	19,175,798
% of Total	5.9%	6.2%	6.7%	6.8%
5 to 19	351	2,877	960,177	61,297,467
% of Total	17.9%	20.2%	21.6%	21.8%
20 to 24	104	790	306,865	18,964,001
% of Total	5.3%	5.5%	6.9%	6.7%
25 to 44	508	3,901	1,288,527	85,040,251
% of Total	25.9%	27.4%	29.0%	30.2%
45 to 64	437	3,450	1,015,741	61,952,636
% of Total	22.2%	24.2%	22.8%	22.0%
65 +	449	2,359	579,798	34,991,753
% of Total	22.8%	16.5%	13.0%	12.4%
Total	1,965	14,254	4,447,100	281,421,906

Source: US Census of Population, 2000 STF 1.

Table P-5. Age Distribution: Ashland, AL 2010				
Age Status	Ashland	Clay Co.	Alabama	US
Under 5	113	801	304,957	20,201,362
% of Total	5.5%	5.7%	6.4%	6.5%
5 to 19	385	2,685	971,355	63,066,194
% of Total	18.9%	19.3%	20.3%	20.4%
20 to 24	120	747	335,322	21,585,999
% of Total	5.9%	5.4%	7.0%	7.0%
25 to 44	495	3,310	1,228,423	82,134,554
% of Total	24.3%	23.8%	25.7%	26.6%
45 to 64	508	3,940	1,281,887	81,489,445
% of Total	24.9%	28.3%	26.8%	26.4%
65 +	416	2,449	657,792	40,267,984
% of Total	20.4%	17.6%	13.8%	13.0%
Total	2,037	13,932	4,779,736	308,745,538

Source: US Census of Population, 2010 STF 1.

Marital Status

Table P-6. Marital Status (pop. 15 & older): Ashland, AL 2013				
Geography	Ashland	Clay Co.	Alabama	US
Never Married	20.0%	21.0%	29.1%	32.2%
Married (except separated)	46.8%	53.6%	48.7%	48.8%
Separated	4.1%	3.3%	2.6%	2.2%
Widowed	13.2%	9.1%	7.2%	6.0%
Divorced	15.9%	13.0%	12.4%	10.8%

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Race Distribution

Race	Ashland	Clay Co.	Alabama	US
White Alone	1,449	11,776	3,162,808	211,460,626
% of Total	73.7%	82.6%	71.1%	75.1%
Black or African-American	497	2,238	1,155,930	34,658,190
% of Total	25.3%	15.7%	26.0%	12.3%
Some other race	6	128	84,183	28,476,862
% of Total	0.3%	0.8%	1.9%	10.1%
Two or more races	13	112	44,179	6,826,228
% of Total	0.7%	0.8%	1.0%	2.4%
Total	1,965	14,254	4,447,100	281,421,906

Source: US Census of Population, 2000 STF 1.

Race	Ashland	Clay Co.	Alabama	US
White Alone	1,456	11,380	3,275,394	223,553,265
% of Total	71.5%	81.7%	68.5%	72.4%
Black or African-American	491	2,066	1,251,311	38,929,319
% of Total	24.1%	14.8%	26.2%	12.6%
Am. Indian and Alaska Nat.	7	55	28,218	2,932,248
% of Total	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.9%
Asian	15	24	56,652	15,214,265
% of Total	0.7%	0.2%	1.2%	4.9%
Some other race alone	41	172	96,910	19,107,368
% of Total	2.0%	1.2%	2.0%	6.2%
Two or more races	27	235	71,251	9,009,073
% of Total	1.3%	1.7%	1.5%	2.9%
Total	2,037	13,932	4,779,736	308,745,538

Source: US Census of Population, 2010 STF 1.

Gender Distribution

Geography	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2010
Male	887	935	5.4%	6,952	6,833	-1.7%	2,146,504	2,320,188	8.1%	151,781,326
% of Total	45.1%	45.9%		48.8%	49.0%		48.3%	48.5%		49.2%
Female	1,078	1,102	2.2%	7,302	7,099	-2.8%	2,300,596	2,459,548	6.9%	156,964,212
% of Total	54.9%	54.1%		51.2%	51.0%		51.7%	51.5%		50.8%
Total	1,965	2,037	3.7%	14,254	13,932	-2.3%	4,447,100	4,779,736	7.5%	308,745,538

Source: US Census of Population, 2000 & 2010 STF 1.

APPENDIX B: ECONOMY STATISTICS

Educational Attainment

Table E-1. Educational Attainment (Pop. 25 and over): Ashland, AL										
Educational Level	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2013	%Change	2000	2013		2000	2013	%Change	2013
Less Than 9th Grade % of Total Pop. 25 Years +	194 14.1%	128 8.5%	-34.0%	1,197 12.3%	902 9.4%	- 24.6%	240,333 8.3%	180,671 5.7%	-24.8%	12,272,805 5.9%
9th to 12 Grade, No Diploma % of Total Pop. 25 Years +	245 17.8%	219 14.5%	-10.6%	2,125 21.8%	1,360 14.1%	- 36.0%	473,748 16.4%	358,529 11.2%	-24.3%	16,614,916 8.0%
High School Graduate % of Total Pop. 25 Years +	508 36.9%	464 30.6%	-8.7%	3,690 37.8%	3,621 37.6%	-1.9%	877,216 30.4%	991,730 31.1%	13.1%	58,084,465 28.1%
Some College, No Degree % of Total Pop. 25 Years +	209 15.2%	507 33.5%	142.6%	1,521 15.6%	2,055 21.3%	35.1%	591,055 20.5%	703,243 22.0%	19.0%	43,896,733 21.2%
Associate Degree % of Total Pop. 25 Years +	62 4.5%	87 5.7%	40.3%	471 4.8%	806 8.4%	71.1%	155,440 5.4%	236,473 7.4%	52.1%	16,135,795 7.8%
Bachelors Degree % of Total Pop. 25 Years +	73 5.3%	39 2.6%	-46.6%	486 5.0%	578 6.0%	18.9%	351,772 12.2%	458,393 14.4%	30.3%	37,286,246 18.0%
Graduate or Professional % of Total Pop. 25 Years +	85 6.2%	70 4.6%	-17.6%	277 2.8%	309 3.2%	11.6%	197,836 6.9%	264,299 8.3%	33.6%	22,296,892 10.8%
Persons 25 Years and Over	1,376	1,514	10.0%	9,767	9,631	-1.4%	2,887,400	3,193,338	10.6%	206,587,852

Source: US Census 2000 STF 1 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Household Income

Table E-2. Household Income Distribution: Ashland, AL										
Income Level	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	%Change	2013
Less than \$15 K	290	278	-4.1%	1,487	1,235	-17.1%	391,406	131,525	-66.4%	14,594,912
% of Total	35.2%	29.9%		25.8%	21.9%		22.5%	10.6%		12.6%
\$15 - \$34,999 K	234	280	19.7%	2,060	1,641	-19.0%	494,125	258,420	-47.7%	24,398,365
% of Total	28.4%	30.1%		35.7%	29.0%		28.4%	20.8%		21.1%
\$35 - \$74,999 K	219	247	12.8%	1,822	1,694	0.5%	584,959	421,970	-27.9%	36,467,193
% of Total	26.6%	26.6%		31.6%	30.0%		33.7%	34.0%		31.5%
\$75 - 149,999 K	81	106	30.9%	366	1,023	152.3%	220,122	333,087	51.3%	28,965,270
% of Total	9.8%	11.4%		6.3%	18.1%		12.7%	26.8%		25.1%
\$150 K or more	0	18	100.0%	35	56	0.0%	46,773	96,684	106.7%	11,184,476
% of Total	0.0%	1.9%		0.6%	1.0%		2.7%	7.8%		9.7%
Total Households	824	929	12.7%	5,770	5,649	-0.6%	1,737,385	1,241,686	-28.5%	115,610,216
Median HH Income	\$23,469	\$24,512	4.4%	\$27,885	\$34,002	23.9%	\$34,135	\$43,253	26.7%	\$53,046

Source: US Census STF 1 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment

Table E-3. Labor Force Participation & Unemployment: Ashland, AL										
Labor Classification	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2013	%Change	2000	2013	%Change	2000	2013	%Change	2013
Total Persons 16+ In Labor Force	1,578	1,767	12.0%	11,243	11,005	-2.1%	3,450,542	3,806,434	10.3%	246,191,954
% in Labor Force	719	787	9.5%	6,284	5,903	-6.1%	2,061,169	2,259,344	9.6%	158,197,577
	45.6%	44.5%	-2.4%	55.9%	53.6%	-4.1%	59.7%	59.4%	-0.5%	64.3%
Armed Forces % in Armed Forces	9	5	-44.4%	11	10	-9.1%	14,069	15,251	8.4%	1,083,691
	0.6%	0.3%	-50.0%	0.10%	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%	0.4%	-41.4%	0.4%
Civilian Labor Force	710	782	10.1%	6,273	5,893	-6.1%	2,047,100	2,244,093	9.6%	157,113,886
Employed	681	741	8.8%	5,930	5,132	-13.5%	1,920,189	2,002,163	4.3%	141,864,697
Unemployed %	29	41	41.4%	343	761	121.9%	126,911	241,930	90.6%	15,249,189
Unemployed	1.8%	2.3%	27.8%	5.5%	6.9%	25.5%	6.2%	6.4%	3.2%	6.2%
Not in Labor Force	859	980	14.1%	4,959	5,102	2.9%	1,389,373	1,547,090	11.4%	87,994,377

Source: US Census STF 1 and American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Industrial Composition

Industry	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change	2013
Agriculture	6	8		242	240		37,310	35,552		2,731,302
% of Total	0.9%	1.1%	33.3%	4.1%	4.7%	-0.8%	1.9%	1.8%	-4.7%	1.9%
Manufacturing/ Construction	231	253		2,534	1,835		498,375	412,817		23,731,904
% of Total	33.9%	34.1%	9.5%	42.7%	35.8%	-27.6%	26.0%	20.6%	-17.2%	16.7%
Retail/Wholesale Trade	104	66		731	434		303,797	293,290		20,353,093
% of Total	15.3%	8.9%	-36.5%	12.3%	8.5%	-40.6%	15.8%	14.6%	-3.5%	14.3%
Transportation /Info.	40	76		320	405		144,342	139,196		10,066,955
% of Total	5.9%	10.3%	90.0%	6.3%	7.9%	26.6%	7.5%	7.0%	-3.6%	7.1%
FIRE	19	37		242	155		110,743	112,778		9,469,756
% of Total	2.8%	5.0%	94.7%	4.1%	3.0%	-36.0%	5.8%	5.6%	1.8%	6.7%
Services/ Public Administration	281	301		1,811	2,063		825,622	1,008,530		75,511,687
% of Total	41.3%	40.6%	7.1%	30.5%	40.2%	13.9%	43.0%	50.4%	22.2%	53.2%
Total	681	741	8.8%	5,880	5,132	-12.7%	1,920,189	2,002,163	4.3%	141,864,697

Source: US Census STF 1 and American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Poverty Status

Poverty Status	Ashland		Clay County		Alabama		US	
	2000	2013	2000	2013	2000	2013	2000	2013
Individuals 18 years and older	18.0%	28.4%	15.5%	18.3%	14.3%	16.0%	10.9%	13.4%
Individuals 65 years and older	23.4%	22.9%	19.0%	9.0%	15.5%	10.8%	9.9%	9.4%
Related children under 18 years	27.2%	18.8%	21.6%	21.4%	21.2%	26.7%	16.1%	21.3%
Related children 5 to 17 years old	25.2%	13.3%	21.9%	21.4%	20.3%	25.0%	15.4%	20.0%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and older	39.5%	45.7%	36.3%	33.1%	30.3%	31.1%	22.7%	26.5%
Total Individuals below poverty level	19.9%	26.7%	17.1%	19.0%	16.1%	18.6%	12.4%	15.4%
Total families below poverty level	12.2%	22.7%	12.9%	16.8%	12.5%	14.3%	9.2%	11.3%

Source: US Census STF 1 and American Community Survey 2009-2013.

APPENDIX C: HOUSING STATISTICS

Housing Unit Types

Table H-1. Housing Unit Types: Ashland, AL										
Housing Types	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2013	%Change	2000	2013	%Change	2000	2013	%Change	2013
Single-family	584	577	-1.2%	3,780	4,205	11.2%	1,338,832	1,527,243	14.1%	89,145,936
% of Total	60.6%	57.9%		65.5%	62.3%		68.2%	70.1%		67.5%
Multi-family	243	358	47.3%	452	673	48.9%	300,569	346,685	15.3%	34,276,747
% of Total	25.2%	35.9%		7.9%	10.0%		15.3%	15.9%		26.0%
Mobile home	137	61	-55.5%	1,533	1,870	22.0%	319,212	302,004	-5.4%	8,525,947
% of Total	14.2%	6.1%		26.6%	27.7%		16.3%	13.9%		6.5%
Other	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	5,098	2,184	-57.2%	109,174
% of Total	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%		0.3%	0.1%		0.1%
Total Units	964	996	3.3%	5,765	6,748	17.1%	1,963,711	2,178,116	10.9%	132,057,804

Source: US Census of Population STF 3 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Housing Occupancy and Tenure

Table H-2. Housing Occupancy and Tenure: Ashland, AL										
Housing Units	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	%Change	2010
Occupied	854	849	-0.6%	5,765	5,670	-1.6%	1,737,080	1,837,576	5.8%	115,226,802
% of Total	87.6%	86.1%		87.2%	83.7%		88.5%	84.6%		87.5%
Owner Occupied	451	439	-2.7%	4,452	4,266	-4.2%	1,258,705	1,289,324	2.4%	75,484,661
% of Total	52.8%	51.7%		77.2%	75.2%		72.5%	70.2%		65.5%
Renter Occupied	403	410	1.7%	1,313	1,404	6.9%	478,375	548,252	14.6%	39,742,141
% of Total	47.2%	48.3%		22.8%	24.8%		27.5%	29.8%		34.5%
Vacant	121	137	13.2%	847	1,106	30.6%	226,631	335,071	47.8%	16,415,655
% of Total	12.4%	13.9%		12.8%	16.3%		11.5%	15.4%		12.5%
Total	975	986	1.1%	6,612	6,776	2.5%	1,963,711	2,172,647	10.6%	131,642,457

Source: US Census of Population STF 1 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Vacancy Status

Table H-3. Vacancy Status: Ashland, AL										
Vacancy Status	Ashland			Clay Co.			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2010
For Sale, only	15	15	0.0%	13	82	530.8%	31,121	35,903	15.4%	1,896,796
% of Total	12.4%	10.9%		14.3%	7.4%		13.7%	12.5%		12.7%
For Rent, only	64	38	-40.6%	21	184	776.2%	64,037	79,265	23.8%	4,137,567
% of Total	52.9%	27.7%		23.1%	16.6%		28.3%	27.5%		27.6%
Rented or Sold, not occupied	0	6	600.0%	5	62	1140.0%	18,507	12,988	-29.8%	627,857
% of Total	0.0%	4.4%		5.5%	5.6%		8.2%	4.5%		4.2%
Miscellaneous	5	12	140.0%	4	316	7800.0%	54,593	63,890	17.0%	4,649,298
% of Total	4.1%	8.8%		4.4%	28.6%		24.1%	22.2%		31.0%
Other Vacant	37	66	78.4%	48	462	862.5%	58,373	93,016	59.3%	3,676,920
% of Total	30.6%	48.2%		52.7%	41.8%		25.8%	32.3%		24.5%
Total Vacant Units	121	137	13.2%	91	1,106	1115.4%	226,631	288,062	27.1%	14,988,438

Source: US Census of Population STF 1 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Household Size

Table H-4. Household Size: Ashland, AL										
Household Size	Ashland			Clay Co.			Alabama			US
	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change	2013
1 Persons	320	363	13.4%	1,538	1,590	3.4%	453,898	522,010	15.0%	31,778,729
% of Total	37.5%	39.1%		26.7%	28.1%		26.1%	28.4%		27.5%
2 Persons	276	285	3.3%	2,001	2,030	1.4%	579,336	641,274	10.7%	38,743,858
% of Total	32.3%	30.7%		34.7%	35.9%		33.4%	34.9%		33.5%
3 Persons	137	209	52.6%	1,059	1,076	1.6%	314,914	308,747	-2.0%	18,307,171
% of Total	16.0%	22.5%		18.4%	19.0%		18.1%	16.8%		15.8%
4 Persons	73	52	-28.8%	756	608	-19.6%	245,212	227,352	-7.3%	15,355,819
% of Total	8.5%	5.6%		13.2%	10.8%		14.1%	12.4%		13.3%
5+ Persons	48	20	-58.3%	411	345	-16.1%	143,720	139,300	-3.1%	11,424,639
% of Total	5.6%	2.2%		7.1%	6.1%		8.3%	7.6%		9.9%
Total Persons	854	929	8.8%	5,765	5,649	-2.0%	1,737,080	1,838,683	5.8%	115,610,216

Source: US Census of Population STF 3 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Housing Stock Age

Housing Stock	Ashland		Clay County		Alabama		US	
	Number	%Change	Number	%Change	Number	%Change	Number	%Change
2000 or later	114	N/A	855	N/A	373,974	N/A	20,157,262	N/A
% of Total	11.4%		12.7%		17.2%		15.3%	
1980 to 1999	217	90.4%	2,250	163.2%	734,614	96.4%	36,735,368	82.2%
% of Total	21.8%		33.3%		33.7%		27.8%	
1960 to 1979	330	52.1%	1,704	-24.3%	640,110	-12.9%	35,676,691	-2.9%
% of Total	33.1%		25.3%		29.4%		27.0%	
1940 to 1959	237	-28.2%	1,197	-29.8%	303,328	-52.6%	21,696,093	-39.2%
% of Total	23.8%		17.7%		13.9%		16.4%	
1939 or earlier	98	-58.6%	742	-38.0%	126,090	-58.4%	17,792,390	-18.0%
% of Total	9.8%		11.0%		5.8%		13.5%	
Total Units	996		6,748		2,178,116		132,057,804	
Median Year Structure Built	1969		1977		1981		1976	

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Physical Housing Conditions

Housing Conditions	Single Family		Multi-Family		Manufactured		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sound Condition	326	55.9%	102	94.4%	16	15.5%	444	55.9%
Deteriorating	235	40.3%	6	5.6%	75	72.8%	316	39.8%
Dilapidated	22	3.8%	0	0.0%	12	11.7%	34	4.3%
Total	583	100.0%	108	100.0%	103	100.0%	794	100.0%

Source: EARPDC windshield survey, 2015.

Selected Physical Housing Conditions

Conditions	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2013	%Change	2000	2013	%Change	2000	2013	%Change	2013
Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	5	41	720.0%	80	122	52.5%	11,005	8,516	-22.6%	572,007
% of Total	0.6%	4.4%		1.4%	2.2%		0.6%	0.5%		0.5%
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	5	41	720.0%	74	107	44.6%	9,660	14,028	45.2%	1,025,964
% of Total	0.6%	4.4%		1.3%	1.9%		0.6%	0.8%		0.9%
Total Occupied Units	842	929	10.3%	5,765	5,649	-2.0%	1,737,080	1,838,683	5.8%	115,610,216

Source: US Census of Population STF 3 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Housing Value (Owner-occupied Units)

Housing Value	Ashland			Clay County			Alabama			US
	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change	2010
Less Than \$50 K	156	76	-51.3%	708	1,293	82.6%	176,187	212,117	20.4%	6,758,685
% of Total	34.7%	15.9%		36.1%	30.5%		19.2%	16.6%		9.0%
\$50 K to \$99,999	179	170	-5.0%	1,008	1,201	19.1%	392,400	308,930	-21.3%	11,667,301
% of Total	39.8%	35.6%		51.4%	28.3%		42.7%	24.1%		15.5%
\$100 K to \$199,999	106	144	35.8%	208	1,139	447.6%	264,879	441,271	66.6%	23,455,038
% of Total	23.6%	30.2%		10.6%	26.9%		28.8%	34.4%		31.2%
\$200 K and above	9	87	866.7%	37	604	1532.4%	85,104	319,286	275.2%	33,194,676
% of Total	2.0%	18.2%		1.9%	14.3%		9.3%	24.9%		44.2%
Total Units	450	477	6.0%	1,961	4,237	116.1%	918,570	1,281,604	39.5%	75,075,700
Median Value	\$64,900	\$89,300	37.6%	\$62,200	\$79,900	28.5%	\$85,100	\$122,500	43.9%	\$176,700

Source: US Census of Population STF 3 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Rental Costs

Ownership Status	Ashland		Clay County		Alabama	
	2000	2013	2000	2013	2000	2013
Median Contract Rent	\$176	\$223	\$188	\$276	\$339	\$501
Median Gross Rent	\$249	\$368	\$272	\$424	\$447	\$705

Source: US Census of Population STF 3 & American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Affordability (Owner-occupied)

Percent	Ashland		Clay County		Alabama		US	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Less Than 20%	122	47.1%	793	38.0%	333,289	44.0%	18,028,668	36.4%
Between 20-30%	85	32.8%	544	26.1%	200,361	26.4%	13,904,592	28.1%
30% or more	52	20.1%	751	36.0%	224,482	29.6%	17,636,343	35.6%
Total	259	100.0%	2,088	100.0%	758,132	100.0%	49,569,603	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013.

Affordability (Renter-occupied)

Table H-10. Selected Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income: Ashland, AL 2013								
Percent	Ashland		Clay County		Alabama		US	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Less Than 20%	110	27.4%	372	34.1%	121,576	25.3%	8,871,045	23.7%
Between 20-30%	118	29.4%	307	28.2%	109,633	22.8%	9,000,113	24.0%
30% or more	174	43.3%	411	37.7%	249,583	51.9%	19,581,493	52.3%
Total	402	100.0%	1,090	100.0%	480,792	100.0%	37,452,651	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013.

APPENDIX D: SWOT ANALYSIS

City of Ashland, AL

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- The Downtown Square is beautiful and welcoming
- Restaurants in the downtown—6 restaurants within walking distance
- Walkable downtown
- City is the County Seat—brings people into the City
- Courthouse—brings people into the City
- Two major state highways run through the City
- Industrial Park
- Wellborn Cabinets—major employer
- Friendly people
- Community Organizations—Arts League, Civic Clubs
- Sound Water, Sewer, Gas Infrastructure
- Destination for bikes
- Good sidewalks
- Wellness Center and Hospital
- Central HS of Clay County
- Elementary School, Day Care, Head Start, and private schools in the area
- Walking and Birding Trails
- Nice parks, soccer field, lighted stadium

Weaknesses

- Litter
- Dilapidated Housing
- Empty Storefronts
- Storefronts in need of repair
- Loss of Business
- Few activities for youth

Opportunities

- Litter cleanup, recycling program, paper drives (Currently the Local Waste Authority is establishing a school for a recycling program)
- More business in Industrial Park
- Historic Preservation
- Downtown Revitalization—new facades and awnings for business on the Square and beautification as well as downtown promotion
- Downtown Merchants Association

Threats

- Continued loss of business downtown
- Continued housing deterioration
- Continued issues with litter and litter buildup
- Community youth continuing to move to new communities for education, employment and recreational activities

APPENDIX E: RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION 04-24-2018-01

A RESOLUTION BY THE ASHLAND PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPTING THE 2018 CITY OF ASHLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF SAID PLAN, AND FORWARDING SAID PLAN TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR ITS CONSIDERATION AS AN ADVISORY POLICY DOCUMENT.

WHEREAS, Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 8 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended, authorizes the Planning Commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the Planning Commission's judgment, bear relation to the planning of the municipality and, from time to time, to amend, extend or add to the plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ashland, Alabama recognizes the vulnerability of its resources, property and operation to the potential impacts of future growth and development and, therefore, desires to exercise its planning powers in accordance with Alabama law; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on April 24, 2018 to solicit final public comments on the 2018 City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 10 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, ALABAMA:

SECTION 1. That the 2018 City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan, and all maps contained therein, is hereby adopted in accordance with the authority granted to the Planning Commission by Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 8 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended.

SECTION 2. That the aforementioned plan shall become effective upon the date of approval by the Planning Commission.

SECTION 3. That an attested copy of the aforementioned plan shall be certified to the Ashland City Council and to the Clay County Probate Judge.

SECTION 4. That the Planning Commission requests that the Ashland City Council consider approving the aforementioned plan, by resolution, as an advisory policy document.

ADOPTED, this 24th day of April, 2018.



Chair, Ashland Planning Commission

ATTEST:



Secretary, Ashland Planning Commission

RESOLUTION 05-07-01-2018

**CITY OF ASHLAND
COUNTY OF CLAY COUNTY
STATE OF ALABAMA**

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, APPROVING THE 2018 CITY OF ASHLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS AN ADVISORY POLICY DOCUMENT.


WHEREAS, Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 8 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended, authorizes the Planning Commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the Planning Commission's judgment, bear relation to the planning of the municipality and, from time to time, to amend, extend or add to the plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ashland, Alabama recognizes the vulnerability of its resources, property and operation to the potential impacts of future growth and development and, therefore, desires to exercise its planning powers in accordance with Alabama law; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on April 24, 2018 to solicit final public comments on the 2018 City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 10 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended, and subsequently adopted a resolution adopting the aforementioned plan, providing an effective date thereof, and forwarding the plan to the City Council for its consideration as an advisory policy document.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, ALABAMA that the 2018 City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan, and all maps contained therein, are hereby approved as an advisory document to guide the City in policy formulation and implementation.

ADOPTED, this 2nd day of May, 2018.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk