

Town of Walnut Grove

Comprehensive Plan



NOV 2018

Prepared by

EAST ALABAMA REGIONAL PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



**TOWN OF WALNUT GROVE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This document was prepared under the direction of the

WALNUT GROVE TOWN 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 Town of Walnut Grove, 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 town's population.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
Comprehensive Planning.....	1
Planning History	4
Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan	5
The Benefits of the Comprehensive Plan.....	5
Legal Authority	6
Planning Process	7
Location.....	8
General Information.....	9
Historical Background.....	9
CHAPTER II: POPULATION	15
Population Trends.....	15
Historic Population Trends	15
Place of Birth	16
Population Composition	17
Age Distribution.....	17
Marital Status	19
Race Distribution	19
Gender Distribution	20
Analytical Summary	21
CHAPTER III: ECONOMY	25
Education	25
Educational Attainment.....	25
Income	26
Household Income	26
Commuting Patterns.....	27
Place of Work	27
Travel Time to Work	28
Labor Force Participation and Unemployment.....	28
Labor Force Participation	29
Unemployment.....	29
Occupational Status	30
Industrial Composition.....	31
Change in Industry	31

Industrial Composition.....	32
Poverty Status.....	33
Sustainable Economic Development	34
Sustainable Economic Development—For Business.....	34
Sustainable Economic Development—For Communities	37
Analytical Summary	40
CHAPTER IV: HOUSING.....	43
Housing Inventory.....	44
Units by Type.....	44
Tenure and Occupancy Status.....	45
Vacancy Status.....	46
Household Size	47
Housing Conditions.....	47
Housing Stock Age	47
Physical Housing Conditions	48
Housing Value	49
Housing Affordability	50
Rental Costs	50
Affordability of Owner-occupied Housing	51
Affordability of Renter-occupied Housing	51
Analytical Summary	53
CHAPTER V: COMMUNITY FACILITIES	59
Town Administration.....	59
Town Council.....	59
Public Safety	60
Law Enforcement.....	60
Fire and Rescue.....	60
Educational Facilities.....	61
West End High School.....	61
Westside Public Library.....	62
Senior Center.....	63
Parks and Recreation.....	63
Utilities	64
Water Utilities.....	64
Analytical Summary	65
CHAPTER VI: TRANSPORTATION.....	71
Definitions	71

Interstates	71
Arterial Streets	71
Collector Streets.....	72
Local Streets.....	72
Administrative Street Classification	72
Federal Highways	72
Other Federal Roads	72
State Highways	72
County Roads.....	72
Municipal Streets	73
Private Roads	73
Traffic Volumes and Capacity.....	73
Federal Highway 278.....	74
Traffic Projections	74
Highway Access Management	75
Placement of Commercial Activity Centers	76
Corner Parcel Access	76
Throat Length.....	77
Grid-pattern Connectivity	78
Connectivity in Local Neighborhoods	78
Frontage Roads	79
Transportation Plan.....	79
Analytical Summary	80
CHAPTER VII: ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES.....	83
Overview of Natural Resources and Constraints	83
Soil Characteristics	84
Steep Slopes	85
Floodplains.....	86
Water Resources	87
Wetlands.....	87
Wildlife Habitats	87
Threatened and Endangered Species.....	88
Analytical Summary	92
CHAPTER VIII: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT.....	97
Definitions	97
Single-family Residential.....	97
Multi-family Residential.....	97
Manufactured Home Park.....	97
Commercial.....	97

Industrial	97
Public and Semi-Public.....	97
Parks and Recreation.....	98
Agriculture	98
Undeveloped/Forestry.....	98
Existing Land Use	98
Agricultural.....	98
Commercial.....	99
Industrial	99
Residential.....	99
Public/Parks and Recreation	99
Undeveloped	99
Land Use Plan.....	99
Analytical Summary	101

CHAPTER IX: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 105

Vision Statement	105
Mission Statement	105
Goal-Setting Process	105
Goals and Objectives	106
Definitions	106
Goals	106
Objectives	106
Projects/Strategies.....	107
Rationale	107
Additional Recommendations.....	107
Notation.....	107
Economic Development	108
Section 1: Maintaining Existing Business	108
Section 2: Expanding Existing Business.....	109
Section 3: Business Recruitment	109
Section 4: Education and Workforce Development.....	110
Housing.....	110
Section 1: Existing Housing Stock	110
Section 2: Housing Development	111
Community Facilities and Utilities	111
Section 1: Town Administration.....	112
Section 2: Public Safety	112
Section 3: Educational Facilities and Services	112
Section 4: Public Library	113
Section 5: Senior Center	113
Section 6: Parks and Recreation	113
Section 7: Water Utilities.....	114

Transportation	114
Section: Existing Roadway Improvements	114
Environment	115
Section: Environmental Preservation.....	115
Land Use	115
Section: Land Use Planning and Preservation	115
CHAPTER X: IMPLEMENTATION& EVALUATION	117
Town Administration.....	117
Codes and Ordinances	118
Zoning	118
Subdivision Regulations	118
Building Codes.....	119
Partnerships and Financing and other Resources	119
Implementation Schedule.....	124
Action Plan and Evaluation	125
Plan Adoption and Amendment	125
APPENDICES.....	I
APPENDIX A: POPULATION STATISTICS	III
APPENDIX B: ECONOMY STATISTICS	IX
APPENDIX C: HOUSING STATISTICS	XV
APPENDIX D: TOWN HALL MEETING NOTES.....	XXIII
APPENDIX E: RESOLUTIONS	XXV

TABLES

Population Tables

Table P-1. Historical Population Trends..... 16

Community Facilities Tables

Table CF-1. Water Line Size and Distribution..... 64

Transportation Tables

Table T-1. Traffic Volumes: US Hwy. 278 74

Table T-2. Traffic Projections..... 75

Environmental Features Tables

Table EF-1. Environmental Features 84

Land Use Tables

Table LU-1. Existing Land Use Acreage..... 98

Implementation Tables

Table I-1. Implementation Schedule..... 159

Table AP-1. Action Plan/Evaluation Table 160

FIGURES

Population Figures

Figure P-1. Place of Birth 16

Figure P-2. Percent Change in Age Distribution (2009-2015)..... 17

Figure P-3. Age Distribution 18

Figure P-4. Marital Status 19

Figure P-5. Race Distribution 20

Economy Figures

Figure E-1. Educational Attainment	25
Figure E-2. Household Income	26
Figure E-3. Commuting Patterns	28
Figure E-4. Labor Force Participation and Unemployment	29
Figure E-5. Occupational Status	30
Figure E-6. Percent Change in Industry (2009-2015)	31
Figure E-7. Industrial Composition	32
Figure E-8. Poverty Status	33

Housing Figures

Figure H-1. Housing Unit Types	45
Figure H-2. Tenure and Occupancy.....	45
Figure H-3. Vacancy Status	46
Figure H-4. Household Size.....	47
Figure H-5. Housing Stock Age	48
Figure H-6. Physical Housing Conditions	49
Figure H-7. Housing Value.....	50
Figure H-8. Median Gross Rent.....	50
Figure H-9. Monthly Owner-Costs as a Percentage of Household Income	51
Figure H-10. Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	52

Transportation Figures

Figure T-1. Improper Commercial Node.....	76
Figure T-2. Proper Commercial Node	76
Figure T-3. Improper Corner Parcel Access.....	77
Figure T-4. Proper Corner Parcel Access	77
Figure T-5. Proper Throat Length.....	77
Figure T-6. Street Network With and Without Proper Access Management.....	78
Figure T-7. Improper Connectivity.....	78
Figure T-8. Proper Connectivity	78
Figure T-9. Minimum Separation for Frontage Roads	79

Environmental Features Figures

Figure EF-1. Threatened and Endangered Species in Etowah County	90
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MAPS

Map 1. Location	11
Map 2. Base Map.....	13
Map 3. Housing Conditions	57
Map 4. Community Facilities.....	67
Map 5. Water Utilities	69
Map 6. Transportation Plan.....	81
Map 7. Environmental Constraints.....	95
Map 8. Existing Land Use.....	103

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive Planning

Comprehensive Planning strives to guide city officials and the general public in making decisions for the future growth and development for their community through a Comprehensive Plan. The Local Comprehensive Plan, according to the American Planning Association's *Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook*, is defined as: "The adopted official statement of a legislative body of a local government that sets forth (in words, maps, and illustrations, and/or tables) goals, policies, and guidelines intended to direct the present and future physical, social, and economic development that occurs within its planning jurisdiction and that includes a unified physical design for the public and private development of land and water." The overall process of the Comprehensive Plan, and in comprehensive planning in general, is to determine important community goals and aspirations and establish a format which takes into account all planning aspects of the community such as transportation, land use, utilities, community facilities, housing, recreation, and economic development in order to build an all-encompassing plan for the community. From this plan, local government, along with resident support, may properly build, zone, establish policies, and develop their community in accordance with a wide variety of community needs.

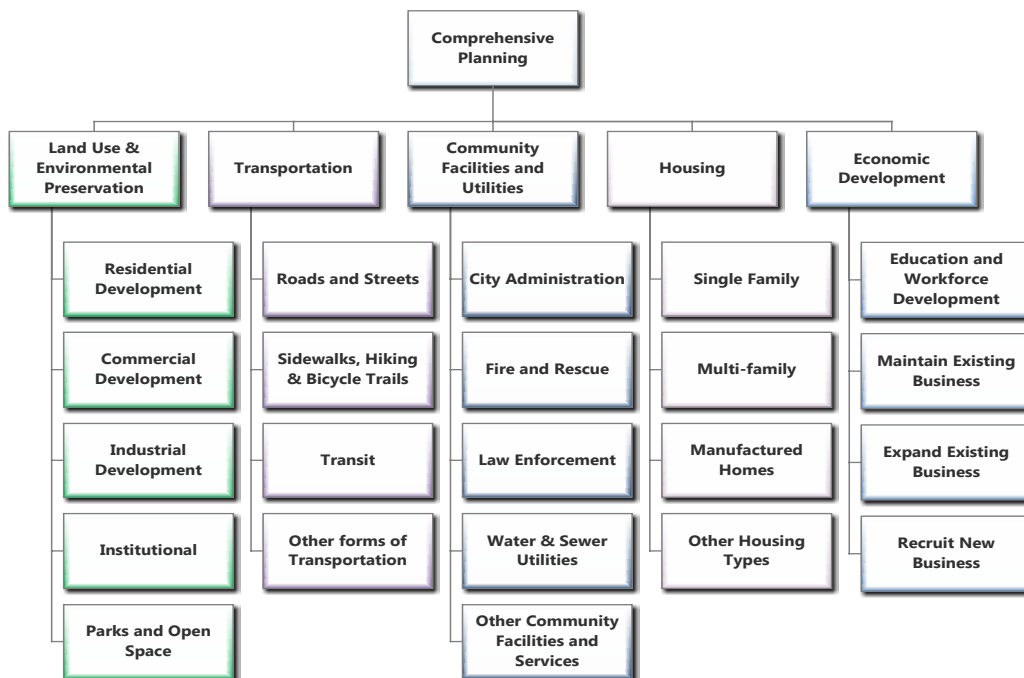
Overall, comprehensive planning strives to account for the complete set of topic areas in which the entire city is comprised of and make goals and plans for each in accordance with community needs, hence the term *comprehensive*. In short, comprehensive planning focuses on making communities, as a whole, better places to live. As a general practice, a comprehensive plan may be organized into five comprehensive planning topic areas. These five areas constitute the following:

- ❖ **Land Use and Environmental Preservation**—entails the proper use and management of existing land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and open space. Land use needs should be planned for and managed through zoning districts and the administration of a city's zoning map and zoning ordinance. Environmental preservation should also be considered for areas most suited for open space and wildlife conservation in accordance with the comprehensive plan and city zoning.
- ❖ **Transportation**—primarily constitutes the building, expanding, and repaving improvements to our city's streets and roadways, but also sidewalks, hiking and bicycling trails, and transit. Other forms of transportation planning could include airports, trains (mass transit), and subway systems in larger communities. Land use and transportation planning in the comprehensive plan should be considered together due to their close influence and overlap with one another.
- ❖ **Community Facilities and Utilities**—include facilities such as city administration, law enforcement, fire protection, parks and recreation, community centers, libraries, senior centers, educational facilities, and utilities services such as water, sewer, and gas infrastructure provision. The community facilities and utilities element plays a crucial role in the proper growth and development of neighborhoods and of the city in general.

- ❖ **Housing**—comprises, in general, single family, multi-family, and manufactured housing, however, other types of housing could include RV parks and houseboats. A community should provide and make plans to provide quality housing and different housing options in order to meet the housing needs of a diverse and often changing population.
- ❖ **Economic Development**—which is often spurred from proper planning with the other elements, could comprise four different approaches such as: education and workforce development, maintaining existing business, expanding business, and recruiting new business. Economic development plays a crucial role in planning simply because a community needs to provide good jobs and employment opportunities for their residents, which in turn draws in more population and a steady revenue stream in which to properly run city government and provide community services.

Figure INTRO-1. *Comprehensive Planning Topic Areas* shows the five topics and their accompanying aspects of influence.

Figure INTRO-1. Comprehensive Planning Topic Areas.

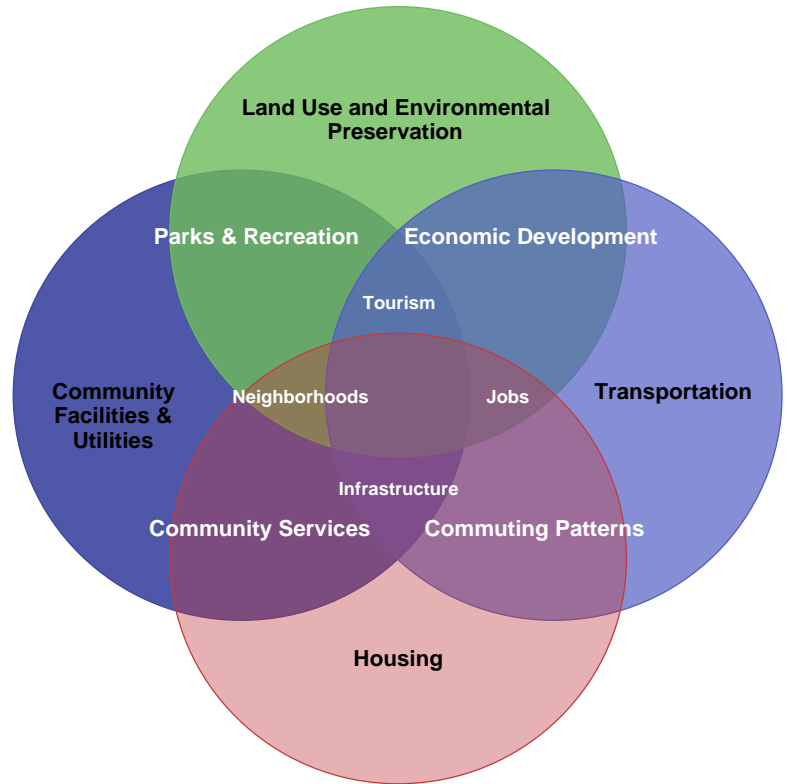


A comprehensive plan could be formatted and organized into these five topics and plans made for each category, however, in the case of planning for these different areas there is considerable and common overlap—that is, something that is planned in one area could have various and significant effects on other areas. For example, the extension of new roads into a residential neighborhood could open opportunities for new housing development and other land uses such as commercial, which would additionally result in economic development, improved commuting patterns, new jobs, enhanced infrastructure, and possibly tourism. On the other hand, the closure of a public school could have a substantially declining effect on

nearby land use, housing, parks and recreation, and neighborhood attractiveness. Figure INTRO-2 *Comprehensive Planning Overlap* illustrates how these topic areas overlap and have influence on one another throughout the planning process and in implementation.

Figure INTRO-2. Comprehensive Planning Overlap.

As previously mentioned, overlap within the planning topics is common and considerable. Land use planning certainly overlaps with transportation as land use needs are defined and orchestrated by road carrying capacities and vice-versa. Community facility needs overlap housing as existing housing and potential housing developments must receive city services in the form of garbage collection, fire and police protection, and water and sewer service.



The overlapping areas furthest inside the circle—tourism, jobs, infrastructure, and neighborhoods further indicate enhancement in these areas when the overlapping services are properly provided for or decline when not adequately provided for. For example, neighborhoods may either decline or grow when provided or not provided with nearby parks and recreation and community services while jobs may decline or grow as influenced by economic development and commuting patterns.

Planning topics are the vitally important parts of the Comprehensive Plan. The Walnut Grove Comprehensive Plan follows the format of the five topics as follows:

- ❖ ***Demographics***—data and analysis of population, economy, and housing.
- ❖ ***Community Facilities and Utilities***—provisions and needs assessment.
- ❖ ***Transportation***—examination, analysis, and plan.
- ❖ ***Environmental Constraints***—examination and analysis.
- ❖ ***Land Use and Zoning***—examination, analysis, and plan.

The following chapters of the plan take into consideration how these topics overlap and make goals, objectives, strategies, and projects for prioritization, implementation, and evaluation.

- ❖ ***Goals and Objectives***—listing along with strategies and projects.

- ❖ **Implementation and Evaluation**—which puts forth an implementation plan for prioritizing and accomplishing the most important projects and strategies and an evaluation procedure for tracking progress on each project/strategy.

Planning History

The need for comprehensive planning first arose in the 1840s, out of demand for city services such as water and sewer, during the industrial revolution, when cities began to grow dramatically and centralize (urbanize) population and housing into dense clusters around industrial areas. This was done in order to provide homes and living arrangements for the working class in close proximity to their jobs. Prior to this turn in American history, most jobs focused on agriculture and clearing of large expanses of wilderness lands for farming and livestock raising. There was no practicality or need for cities to provide services to subsistence farmers in the open country. The industry era quickly ushered in the Sanitary Reform Movement in newly developed industrial cities as overcrowding and improper disposal of waste in streets lead to social disorder and wide-spread infestations of deadly disease. Accordingly, the movement showed a clear and strong connection between disease and the lack of a quality sewer system in which to dispose of waste in concentrated population areas. This forced

The Sanitary Reform Movement, although not comprehensive in nature, was considered by many as the beginning of comprehensive planning.

public officials to plan for the extension of sanitary services to the dirtiest and most infected parts of the city. People began to understand the environmental and social impacts of building cities and developing in ways to slow or cease the spread of disease in already crowded communities. The Sanitary Reform Movement, although not comprehensive in nature since it only focused on sewage disposal and not on the community as a whole, was considered by many as the beginning of comprehensive planning.

In further response to overpopulation, crowding, the spread of diseases in confined areas, and increased importance placed on planning, the City Beautiful Movement was born. The movement, which began in Chicago in 1890 with the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and lasted until the 1920s, showcased



through beautification, design, and neoclassical architectural grandeur what a city could look like if created to be a work of art—providing an attractive alternative to the overcrowded and dirty nature of cities at the time. The City Beautiful Movement took hold and spread across the U.S., influencing the design of many major American cities such as Cleveland, Detroit, Baltimore, Denver, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. (Axial Plan for the Mall) thus illustrating the importance of planning and opening possibilities as to what can be done to make cities better places to live.

Figure INTRO-3. Axial Plan of Washington D.C.

From these movements, and after the turn of the 20th century, as cities continued to grow and develop, the American people began to more fully understand the need for local development and growth plans,

looking at the city as a whole, and in which many aspects play important and overlapping roles in their community. Once again, Chicago led the way when Daniel Burnham created the 1909 plan of Chicago. Although Burnham re-created the city plan for Washington D.C., originally created by Pierre Charles L'Enfant for Paris in 1791, and city growth plans for Cleveland and San Francisco, the Chicago Plan was the first comprehensive plan because it not only focused on beautification, but also on ways to make the city function better in its entirety.

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:

- ❖ an inventory and assessment of population, housing, and economic trends and community resources (such as schools, roads, public buildings, undeveloped land, constrained land, and natural resources);
- ❖ a summary of community needs and goals; and
- ❖ 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. In looking to the future, the comprehensive plan should strive to anticipate and properly plan to meet community needs, thus reaping the benefits associated with success and prosperity for the people. Benefits of a comprehensive plan may include the following:

- ❖ draw attention to important community problems or needs;
- ❖ promote the city to outside development interests;
- ❖ communicate public policies to residents of the community;
- ❖ help prioritize and coordinate investments in public improvements;
- ❖ help minimize wasteful spending of tax dollars;
- ❖ identify sources of funds that can be used to address local needs; and

- ❖ 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

The Comprehensive Plan should serve as the primary guide for the formulation of local public policy and for coordinating the future growth and development of the community.

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.

State Law requires local zoning to be prepared in accordance with the comprehensive plan. However, this does not mean the zoning map and future land use map need to be identical.

Planning Process

In the June of 2016 the Town of Walnut Grove contracted with the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) to create a comprehensive plan for Walnut Grove in order to guide and direct land use and development in a logical manner, consistent with the goals and objectives of the town.

To initiate the planning process, an initial public hearing was called and conducted on October 3, 2016 in the Town of Walnut Grove Town Hall. The hearing was used to inform the town 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 town. The hearing also was used to gather public input about community strengths and assets. This information was recorded by staff for future use.

After the initial public hearing, EARPDC staff conducted a series of community conversations and working sessions with the Walnut Grove Town Council on a bi-monthly basis in order to keep the town updated on the plan progress and for EARPDC staff to receive guidance and direction on the plan. Conversations and 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 Town of Walnut Grove. The EARPDC cartography staff provided mapping services for practical land use research and applications.

The planning process involved in the Walnut Grove Comprehensive Plan utilized five planning steps to gather necessary information and formulate goals, objectives, strategies, and projects as well as implement and evaluate the plan. These steps are listed and described as follows:

1. **Inventory and Analysis**: As the first step in the planning process, inventory and analysis posed and answered the question: “Where are We Now?” The town began this step at the initial public hearing with a community assessment of the town’s resources and improvements needed. Next

town council met with EARPDC staff, in community conversations, to analyze and discuss information collected on the town’s population, economy, housing, community facilities, transportation, environmental constraints, and land use. To determine community facilities resources and needs, town staff sent community facilities surveys to various department heads, which were collected and discussed at a the meetings. Additionally, the maps needed for the Comprehensive Plan in this analysis were completed at this time.

2. **Strategic Planning:** In this second step, the town asked and answered the question: “Where Do We Want to Be?” which submitted a vision for the community’s future described in a vision and subsequent mission statement.

3. **Goals and Objectives:** Goals and objectives were established immediately following strategic planning which answered the question: “How Will We Get There?”. Goals and objectives are described in Chapter IX: Goals and Objectives, along with their respective projects and strategies.

4. **Implementation:** In this step the question under consideration was, “How Will We Get There?” In other words, how will the town complete the goals and objectives set forth and advance the town toward its mission and vision. This was done by prioritizing projects and strategies and listing them in an Implementation Schedule where each item was assigned a timeframe for completion, an implementing agency, and potential partners and funding sources.

5. **Evaluation:** As the final step in the planning process, evaluation measures progress with each project and strategy established in implementation through an Action/Evaluation Plan. As a highly important tool, evaluation should be conducted during the planning process and updated periodically after the plan is complete. Both the Implementation Schedule and Action/Evaluation Plan are shown in Chapter X: Implementation and Evaluation. Figure INTRO-4 illustrates the planning process for the town’s Comprehensive Plan.



Figure INTRO-4. The Planning Process.

Location

The Town of Walnut Grove is located in western Etowah County, bisected by U.S. Highway 278 and County Road 39, bordering the Appalachian foothills of northeastern Alabama. Nearby cities and towns include the Town of Altoona, 2 miles south, and the City of Attalla, about 10 miles east. The Town of Walnut Grove is located in close proximity to the City of Gadsden, approximately 12 miles to the east with access to Interstate 59, connecting the Cities of Birmingham and Chattanooga, TN. For more details on Walnut Grove’s location in relation to other Alabama communities see Map #1: *Location*.

General Information

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Town of Walnut Grove reported a population of 698, making the town one of the smallest communities in Etowah County. Although small, the town lies in close proximity to the City of Gadsden and is within range of somewhat large metro markets, providing employment opportunities for those living in town, and commuting to larger economic areas. Residents who prefer the calmer, and more relaxed lifestyle, along with the charm of small-town Alabama living find Walnut Grove a logical choice to live and raise a family.

In terms of parks and recreation, Walnut Grove provides recreational facilities which include four baseball fields, tennis courts, a basketball court, a children's play area and a senior center. For nearby attractions outside the town, Guntersville Lake, Alabama's largest lake with 75 miles of shoreline and 69,000 acres of water, rests about 20 miles to the north, of Walnut Grove, which provides great natural beauty as well as numerous outdoor recreational opportunities. In addition to the lake, Guntersville State Park provides 6,000 acres of natural woodlands for camping and hiking. Guntersville State Park also offers an 18-hole championship golf course, a beach complex, an outdoor nature center, 36 miles of hiking and biking trails, and weekly guided hikes. Thanks to conservation efforts to protect the Bald Eagle, the park has become a focal point of Eagle Awareness in the state and offers programs each year in January and February to educate and entertain the public about our national symbol.

Historical Background

Prior to European settlement the lands of north Alabama, north Georgia, east Tennessee and North Carolina was home to the Cherokee Indians. First contact with Europeans occurred as early as 1540 when Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto met with the Cherokee on the Coosa River near the present day Town of Cedar Bluff in Cherokee County, approximately 40 miles to the east of Walnut Grove. In 1816, as the United States began to settle Indian land, General Andrew Jackson met with representatives of the Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw nations to ratify a peace treaty and establish territorial boundaries with the Indian Nation. Members of the Cherokees built allies with Jackson and fought with him in his victory over divisive Creeks in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, near present day Alexander City, thus strengthening the bond with the United States. In 1826 the Cherokee began emulating western influence, forming a democratic government with a written constitution, two representative assemblies, regular elections, and a sophisticated court system. By 1835 the Cherokee had agreed to and signed over 30 treaties, however the U.S. broke all of them. In that same year action was taken to permanently remove the Cherokee from their land, as missionary and government agent J.F. Schermerhorn drew up a treaty ceding all Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi River to the U.S. and moving the Indians to the Territory of Oklahoma. In a vote at Red Clay, Tennessee this treaty was rejected by ninety-five percent of the voting Cherokee, but ratified by the U.S. Senate nonetheless. Government opposition arose with the help of Samuel Worcester, missionary to the Cherokee Nation, and Chief John Ross who carried the decision to the Supreme Court in the case Cherokee Indians vs. the State of Georgia. First Chief Justice John Marshall ruled in favor of the Indians with the dissent that the Indians who entered the initial agreement were not legally empowered to do so. Ironically, the treaty was forced on them by their old ally, President Andrew Jackson, who made

the statement, “John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it!” With no policing power the Supreme Court could not act and the illegal treaty passed through. In 1838, just two years after Cherokee County was created, the U.S. Army forced the Cherokee, consisting mainly of women and children, from their homes and marched them west to Oklahoma on the infamous “Trail of Tears.” Many, due to sickness and old age, died along the way. These actions opened up much of the present northern Alabama and Georgia lands for European settlement.

Originally settled in the early 1810s Walnut Grove was initially known as Thomas Cross Roads, then around 1813 the Cornelius family settled in the area and built a two-story building which served as a community meeting place and a schoolhouse for area students. In 1848 the settlement’s name was changed to Cornelius, after the prominent member of the family Cornelius Harvey Cornelius. The first post office was established in 1848 and housed in the Cornelius general store. In September of 1849 Cornelius was changed to Walnut Grove. Near the end of the Civil War the entire settlement was burned by a gang alleged to be Union sympathizers, but was quickly rebuilt.

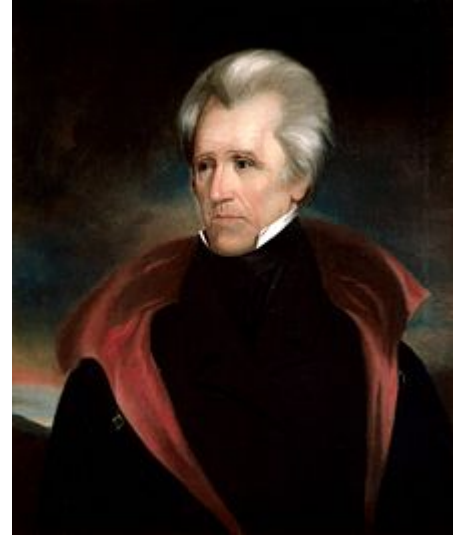


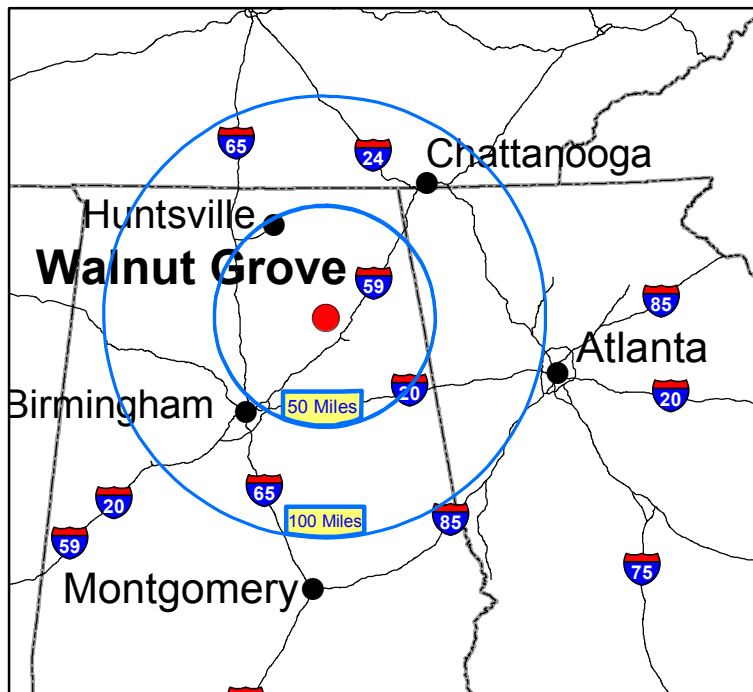
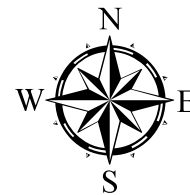
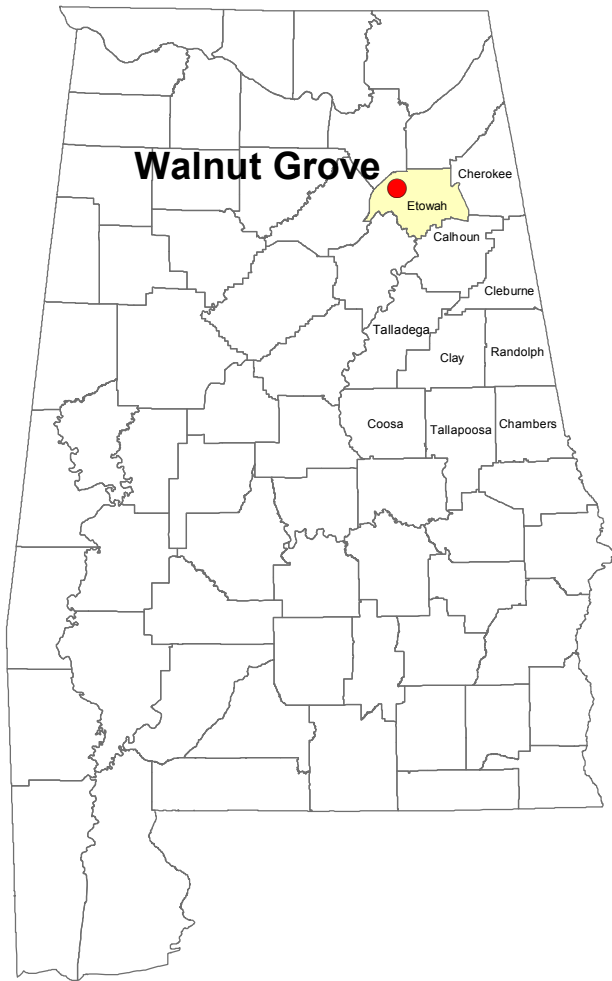
Figure INTRO-4. President Andrew Jackson.

Walnut Grove’s first free-standing school was built in the 1870s. In 1884, a larger school was built and became Walnut Grove College, also known as Walnut Grove Baptist College, the first college preparatory school for males and females in northeast Alabama. The school attracted students throughout the area, however, it was closed in 1899 when Y.A. Adams, the school’s founder, moved away and high schools were being established in other places in Etowah County. The town began construction of a new ten-room school building in 1923, but was burned shortly before completion. The school was rebuilt, burned again in 1940, and rebuilt once again.

The Town of Walnut Grove was finally incorporated in August 1886. A separate building for the post office was constructed in 1900. In 1922 a new post office was built, but burned in 1922. The town’s current post office was built in 1935. A new water system began operation in 1962. Colonel W. T. Murphree was the town’s first mayor.

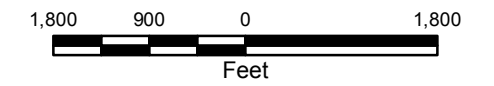
In 1917 magnesium was discovered near Silver Gap at Red Mountain, in the western part of town, and was mined and refined throughout the 1930s and 1940s by Bessemer Mills in Birmingham and Eastman Corporation in Kingsport, TN.

MAP 1 LOCATION

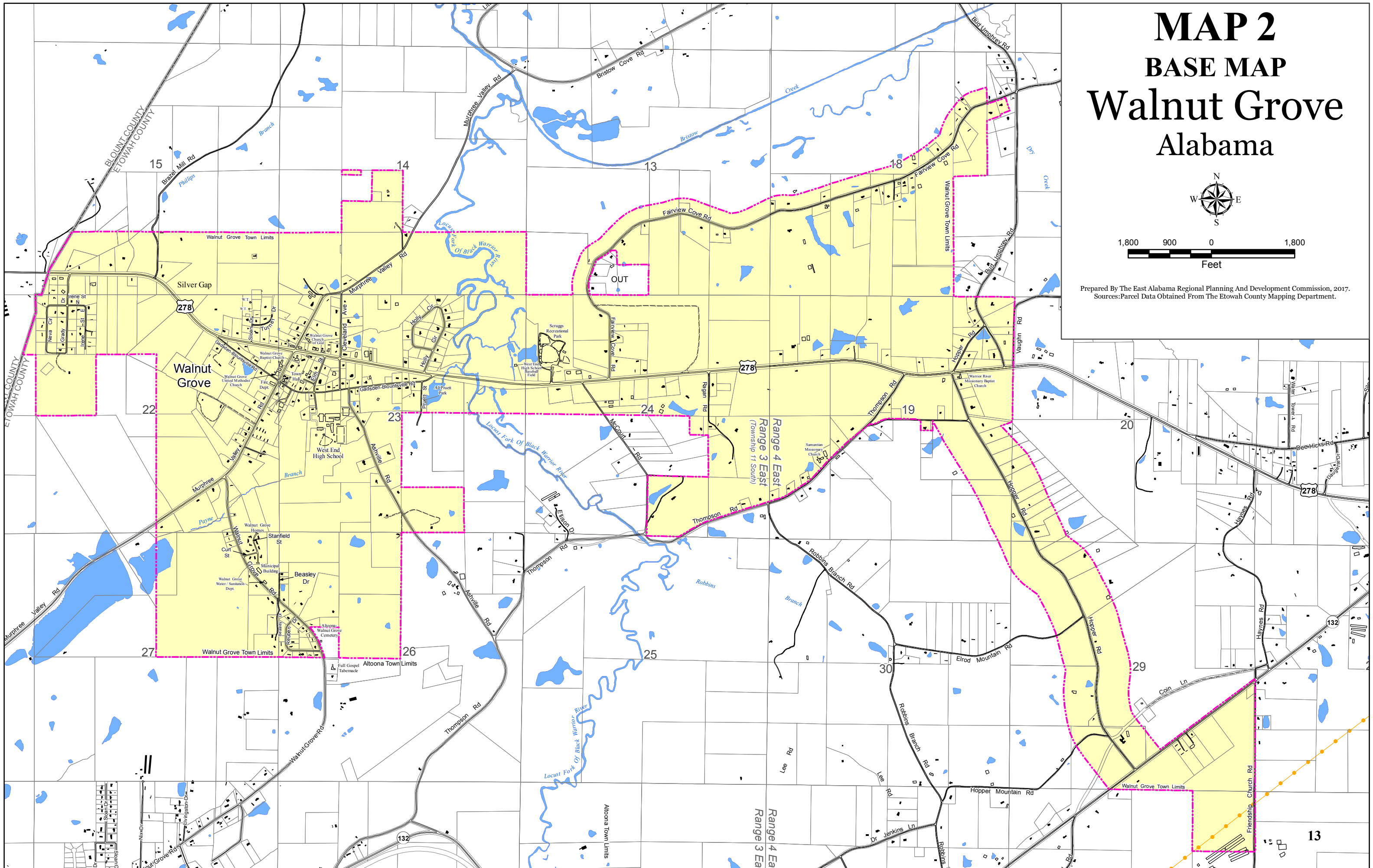


SOUTHEASTERN U.S.

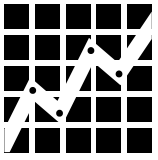
MAP 2 BASE MAP Walnut Grove Alabama



Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2017.
Sources: Parcel Data Obtained From The Etowah County Mapping Department.



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 Town of Walnut Grove 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 trends. Population composition includes characteristics such as age, racial, 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.

Walnut Grove showed significant changes in historic population trends from its founding in 1880 to recent change in 2015. In its early history, between 1880 and 1900 the town grew by a significant 99%. Then in both 1910 and 1920 the Walnut Grove decreased in population by -18% while Etowah County grew by a combined 63%, Alabama 26%, and the US 36%. Such drop in population for the town could be attributed to the closing of Walnut Grove College in 1899 as more high schools were being established in other places in Etowah County. Then Walnut Grove increased again in population between 1920 and 1930, which might be due to the 1917 discovery of magnesium near Silver Gap at Red Mountain, in the western part of town. Similarly, increases and decreases in population for Walnut Grove could be attributed to demand for magnesium, which could have declined in the 1930s, resulting in employment and population loss, but a resurgence of demand with the US entering WWII in the 1940s brought in more employment and population for the town, as indicated by the slight increase in population between 1940 and 1960.

Walnut Grove's most substantial increase in population occurred from 1970 to 1980 with a 127% climb in population. Such growth for the town might be attributed to accompanying growth in the county and state, which grew by 9% and 13%, respectively during that time. Consequently, the 1970s and 1980s was a period of substantial industrial growth for the nation, particularly in Alabama with iron ore and steel. Etowah County and the City of Gadsden, along with Birmingham, were primary producers of the steel industry in the state. Growth in this industry lead to increases in population in the county as more workers were demanded to run these operations. However, in the 1990s, increases in foreign competition forced

many of these industries to scale back production, thus reducing employment. This and other factors could be attributed to population loss in Walnut Grove and other small towns in Etowah County in the 1990s and on through 2015. Table P-1 displays historic population trends for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US from 1880 to 2015. No Census information was given for Walnut Grove in 1890.

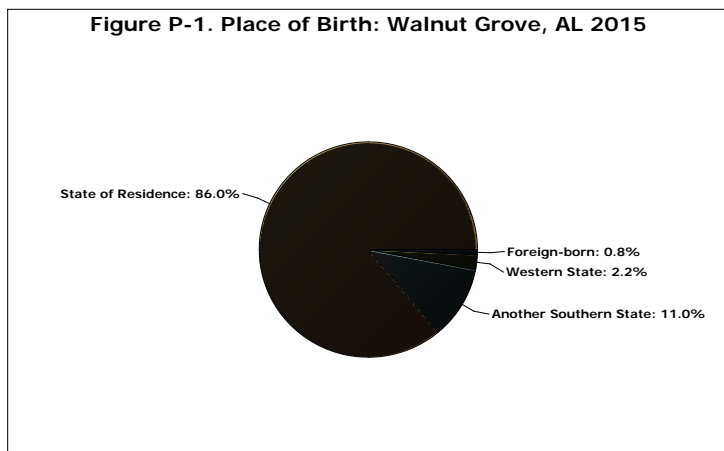
Year	Walnut Grove	% Change	Etowah Co.	% Change	Alabama	% Change	US	% Change
1880	126	N/A	15,398	N/A	1,262,505	N/A	49,371,340	N/A
1900	251	99.2%	27,361	77.7%	1,828,697	44.8%	76,212,168	54.4%
1910	204	-18.7%	39,109	42.9%	2,138,093	16.9%	92,228,531	21.0%
1920	167	-18.1%	47,275	20.9%	2,348,174	9.8%	106,021,568	15.0%
1930	216	29.3%	63,399	34.1%	2,646,248	12.7%	123,202,660	16.2%
1940	206	-4.6%	72,580	14.5%	2,832,961	7.1%	132,165,129	7.3%
1950	222	7.8%	93,892	29.4%	3,061,743	8.1%	151,325,798	14.5%
1960	237	6.8%	96,980	3.3%	3,266,740	6.7%	179,323,175	18.5%
1970	224	-5.5%	94,144	-2.9%	3,444,165	5.4%	203,302,031	13.4%
1980	510	127.7%	103,057	9.5%	3,893,888	13.1%	226,542,199	11.4%
1990	717	40.6%	99,840	-3.1%	4,040,587	3.8%	248,718,301	9.8%
2000	710	-1.0%	103,459	3.6%	4,447,100	10.1%	281,421,906	13.1%
2010	698	-1.7%	104,430	0.9%	4,779,736	7.5%	308,745,538	9.7%
2015 est.	685	-1.9%	103,057	-1.3%	4,858,979	1.7%	324,227,000	5.0%

Source: US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010 SF 1. Population Estimates 2015, Wikipedia.

Place of Birth

Place of birth data is useful in determining population trends through migration patterns in the community's population. Examination of this data will show if the community is drawing population from other states and other countries or if the population is predominantly Alabama-born.

Place of birth patterns show that the substantial majority (86%) of Walnut Grove's residents were born in Alabama or born in another Southern state (11%) indicating minor in-migration from other places around the country or from another country. Walnut Grove also showed a few residents born in a Western state at 2% and some foreign-born at 0.8% in 2015. The town reported little representation of residents born in



other states such as Midwestern or Northeastern states. In 2009 the town reported 8% of residents born in another state being born in a Northeastern state and 9% born in a Midwestern state. However, in 2015 the town recorded no residents born in a Midwestern or Northeastern state. Also in 2015 the town reported a substantial drop (-41%) in residents born in another Southern state and a 38% increase in residents born in Alabama. This information indicates a transition from residents moving in from other areas of the country to residents migrating in from areas of closer

proximity in Alabama. Figure P-1 illustrates place of birth for the Town of Walnut Grove in 2015. Notice from the chart the substantial majority of residents born in Alabama and also the considerable representation of residents born in another Southern state for the town. For more information, see Table P-2: *Place of Birth* in Appendix A.

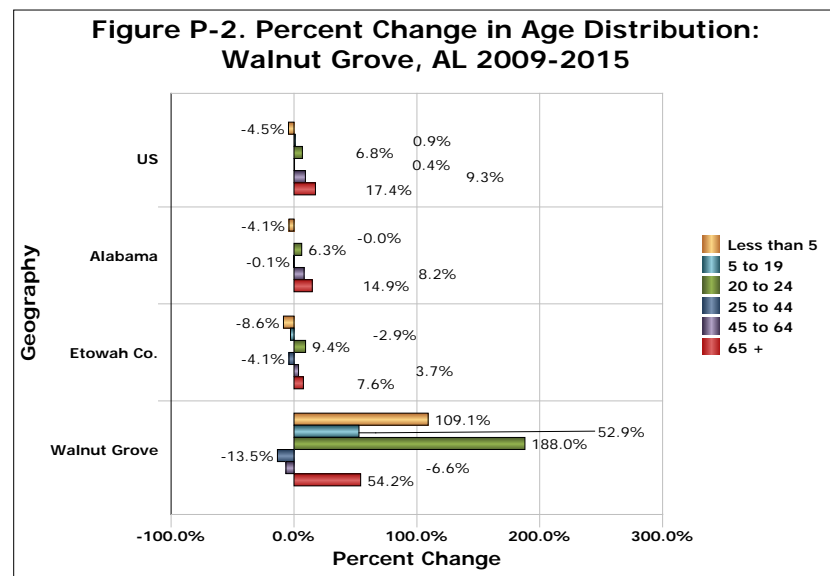
Population Composition

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+).

Change in Age Distribution

Walnut Grove exhibited some differing trends in age change compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015 population within the ages 5 to 19 rose by 52% while both the county at -2% and state at -0.02% showed a slight decrease and the US grew by a minor 0.9% in this age category. Walnut Grove also reported some growth in Young Adult/College Age (age 20-24) population with an increase of 188%, as Etowah County increased by 9%, and both Alabama and the US by 6%. However, these numbers for the town were small to start with, causing larger percent changes than usual, thus holding less representation for the community overall. Meanwhile Walnut Grove’s population in Young Adult/Beginning Worker (age 25-44) dropped by -13% as did Etowah County (-4%) and Alabama (-0.1%) while the nation grew by a minor 0.4%. The town also declined in Middle Age/Working Adult (age 45-64) by -6% while the county (3%), state (8%) and nation at 9% increased in this category.



by -6% while the county (3%), state (8%) and nation at 9% increased in this category. This information indicates that the town increased in younger population to a somewhat substantially greater amount than the county, state, and nation but declined in older population to a greater degree during this time. However, Walnut Grove increased somewhat considerably in Senior/Retired (65+) population by 54% as Etowah County, Alabama, and US increased to a lesser degree at 7%, 14%, and 17%, respectively. Figure P-2 illustrates percent change in age distribution for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US between

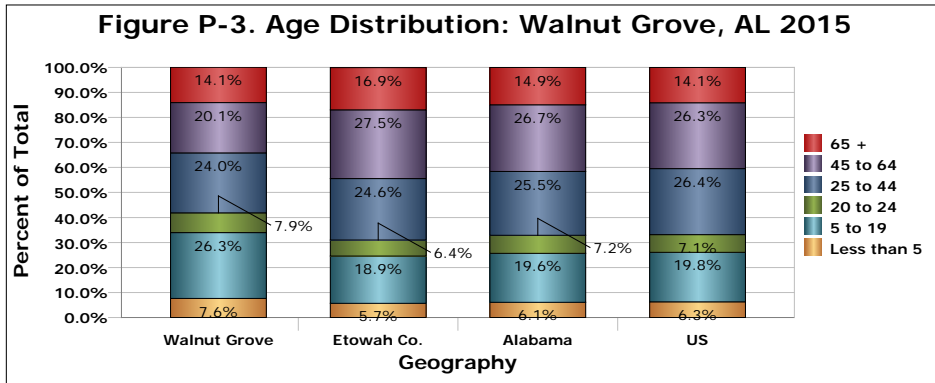
2009 and 2015. Notice from the chart the town’s considerable increase in younger populations and seniors and decline in older populations compared to the county, state, and nation. Such growth in younger

population for Walnut Grove could be attributed to new and younger families locating in town with more children than average while decline in older populations could be due to working families leaving the community to find employment in other places as indicated in the economy chapter.

Age Distribution

Age distribution for Walnut Grove, from 2009 to 2015, was also examined and compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. According to the American Community Survey, in 2009 the town’s most dominant age group was Young Adult/Beginning Worker (age 25-44), accounting for 33% of the population. However, in 2015 that trend changed and Youth/K-12 (age 5 to 19) became the dominant group at 26%, indicating a transition in age distribution from working adults to youth and children. Etowah County and Alabama showed little change in these age groups during this time with both the county and state declining slightly from 19% to 18% and 20% to 19%, respectively in Youth/K-12 and showing some slight drop in Young Adult/Beginning Worker at 25% to 24% for the county and 26% to 25% for the state. For comparison, the US, in 2015, reported 19% for Youth and 26% for Young Adult/Beginning Worker. This information indicates that originally Walnut Grove held a considerably

higher portion of young adults starting out in the workforce than Etowah County and Alabama, but later declined to county and state levels. At the same time the town increased in children and youth populations to a somewhat considerably greater degree than the county and state and even surpassed the nation in



the portion of young adult. Such decline in young adult and increase in youth for the town could be attributed to new and young families in the community with more children than average and also West End High School. Figure P-3 illustrates age distribution for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice from the chart the somewhat considerably larger portion of Youth/K-12 (age 5-19) for the town compared to the county, state, and nation. Also notice the somewhat substantially smaller representation in Middle Age/Working Adult (age 44-64) in the town contrasted to the county, state, and nation in 2015. For more information see Tables P-3 and P-4 *Age Distribution* in Appendix A.

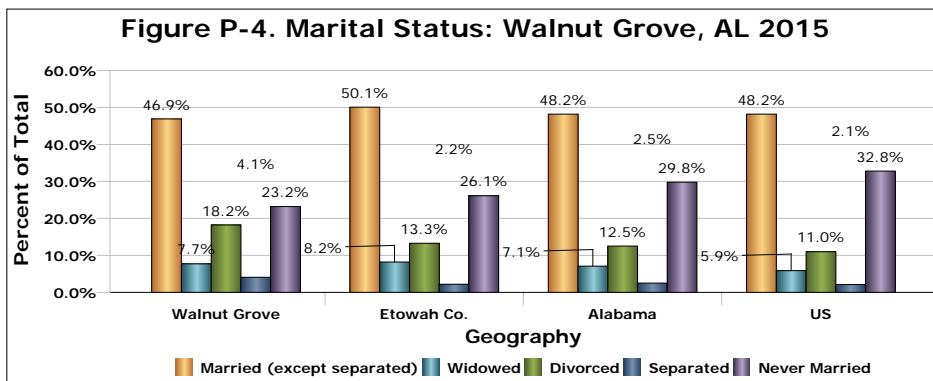
Median Age

Median age for Walnut Grove further verifies larger representation in younger populations compared to Etowah County, Alabama and the US and smaller portion of older population. Between 2009 and 2015 the town’s median age decreased considerably from 39.8 to 33.3 while the county increased slightly in median age from 39.3 to 40.8 and Alabama increased slightly from 37.2 to 38.4. The US, for comparative purposes reported 36.5 in 2015. As previously mentioned, the town could be growing in youth due to new young families locating in the community with more children than average. For more information see Tables P-3 and P-4 *Age Distribution* in Appendix A.

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) separated, 3) divorced, 4) widowed, 5) married (except separated). Separated was pulled from “married” status and placed in a separate category.

Marital status for Walnut Grove showed similar trends compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US, with some slight differences. The substantially most dominant marital status for the town was married (except separated) which dropped from 58% of the population aged 15 and older in 2009 to 46% in 2015. Similar results were shown in the county with a decline from 55% to 50%. The state declined slightly from 51% to 48% as did the nation from 50% to 48%. This information indicates a common trend in the



town, county, state, and nation of an increase of people who had never been married or others who had divorced, widowed, or been separated. Figure P-4 illustrates marital status for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice from the chart that the town, county,

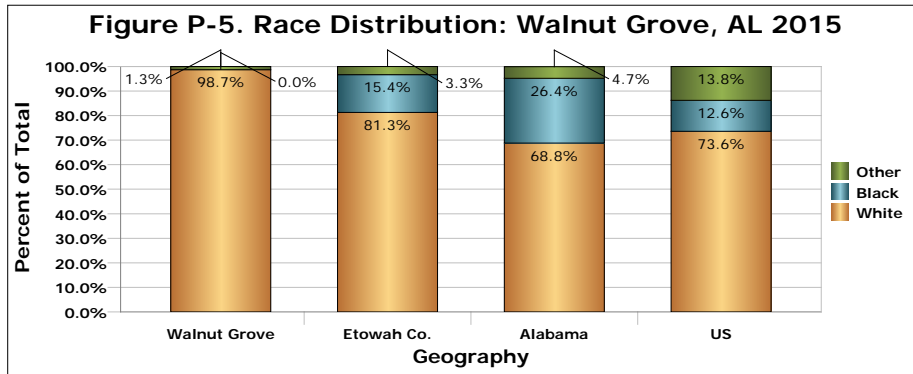
state, and nation all show similar patterns in marital status, however, Walnut Grove exhibited a slightly smaller portion of married and a somewhat considerably larger representation of divorcees. For more information see Table P-5 *Marital Status* in Appendix A.

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. For the purpose of this examination, race has been grouped into three categories: White/Caucasian, Black/African American, and Other—which includes all other races and combinations thereof.

Walnut Grove showed substantially different patterns in race distribution compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. According to the American Community Survey, between 2009 and 2015 the town increased in white population by 21% while the county declined by -0.9%, the state grew by a minor 2% and the nation by 3%. Walnut Grove showed no increase in black population while Etowah County increased by 6%, Alabama 5%, and the US 7%. Other populations in town accounted for only 1% and would therefore not constitute a significant portion to the overall population. White population comprised the substantially largest portion of the overall population in Walnut Grove accounting for 99% in 2009 and

98% in 2015. Etowah County, Alabama, and the US also showed white as the most dominant race group in 2015 accounting for 81%, 68%, and 73% respectively. Black population was not recorded in Walnut Grove in 2015 while Etowah County reported 15%, Alabama 26%, and the US 12% indicating



considerably more race diversity in the county, state, and nation during this time. Figure P-5 displays race distribution for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice from the chart almost all the population in town being white while the county, state, and nation showed a

considerably larger portion of black and other populations. For more information see Table P-6 Race Distribution in Appendix A.

Gender Distribution

In typical American communities females tend to slightly outnumber males, due primarily to higher male mortality rates and longer female life expectancy.

Walnut Grove showed different trends in gender distribution compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015, the town reported a slightly higher portion of males to females with 52.5% male and 47.5% female in 2009 and in 2015 with 50.2% male and 49.8% female. Meanwhile the county reported more female in both years at 52% and 51%, respectively, as did the state and nation. This information indicates an interesting trend, with Walnut Grove holding higher representation in males in contrast to females. Despite higher representation in males, the female population, during this time, increased to a somewhat larger degree at 28% compared to 16% in male population. For more information see Tables P-7 and P-8 *Gender Distribution* in Appendix A.

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

Walnut Grove's most substantial increase in population occurred from 1970 to 1980 with a 127% climb in population. Such growth for the town might be attributed to accompanying growth in the county and state, which grew by 9% and 13%, respectively during that time. Consequently, the 1970s and 1980s was a period of substantial industrial growth for the nation, particularly in Alabama with iron ore and steel. Etowah County and the City of Gadsden, along with Birmingham, were primary producers of the steel industry in the state. Growth in this industry led to increases in population in the county as more workers were demanded to run these operations. However, in the 1990s, increases in foreign competition forced many of these industries to scale back production, thus reducing employment. This and other factors could be attributed to population loss in Walnut Grove and other small towns in Etowah County in the 1990s and on through 2015.

Assessment: Walnut Grove's population has, historically, fluctuated up and down. Recently, between 2000 and 2015, Walnut Grove's population has dropped slightly. In comparison, Etowah County's population declined slightly in 2015 while Alabama and the US grew slightly.

Place of Birth

Place of birth patterns show that the substantial majority (86%) of Walnut Grove's residents were born in Alabama or born in another Southern state (11%) indicating minor in-migration from other places around the country or from another country. Walnut Grove also showed a few residents born in a Western state at 2% and some foreign-born at 0.8% in 2015. The town reported little representation of residents born in other states such as Midwestern or Northeastern states.

Assessment: Place of birth for Walnut Grove indicates little in-migration from other states and other countries. The considerable majority of town residents were born in Alabama.

Age Distribution

Change in Age Distribution: Walnut Grove exhibited some differing trends in age change compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015 population within the ages 5 to 19 rose by 52% while both the county at -2% and state at -0.02% showed a slight decrease and the US grew by a minor 0.9% in this age category. Walnut Grove also reported some growth in Young Adult/College Age (age 20-24) population with an increase of 188%, as Etowah County increased by 9%, and both Alabama and the US by 6%. However, these numbers for the town were small to start with, causing larger percent changes than usual, thus holding less representation for the community overall. Meanwhile Walnut Grove's population in Young Adult/Beginning Worker (age 25-44) dropped by -13% as did Etowah County (-4%) and Alabama (-0.1%) while the nation grew by a minor 0.4%. The town also declined in Middle Age/Working Adult (age 45-64) by -6% while the county (3%), state (8%) and nation at 9% increased in this category.

Age Distribution: Age distribution for Walnut Grove, from 2009 to 2015, was also examined and compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. According to the American Community Survey, in 2009 the town's most dominant age group was Young Adult/Beginning Worker (age 25-44), accounting for 33% of the population. However, in 2015 that trend changed and Youth/K-12 (age 5 to 19) became the dominant group at 26%, indicating a transition in age distribution from working adults to youth and children. Etowah County and Alabama showed little change in these age groups during this time with both the county and state declining slightly from 19% to 18% and 20% to 19%, respectively in Youth/K-12 and showing some slight drop in Young Adult/Beginning Worker at 25% to 24% for the county and 26% to 25% for the state. For comparison, the US, in 2015, reported 19% for Youth and 26% for Young Adult/Beginning Worker.

Median Age: Median age for Walnut Grove further verifies larger representation in younger populations compared to Etowah County, Alabama and the US and smaller portion of older population. Between 2009 and 2015 the town's median age decreased considerably from 39.8 to 33.3 while the county increased slightly in median age from 39.3 to 40.8 and Alabama increased slightly from 37.2 to 38.4. The US, for comparative purposes reported 36.5 in 2015.

Assessment: Walnut Grove showed growth in youth population from 2009 to 2015 and youth population comprised the single largest portion of the town's population in 2015, somewhat considerably higher than the county, state, and nation. This could be attributed to new families with children locating to the community and West End High School, which provides education for the youth.

Marital Status

The substantially most dominant marital status for the town was married (except separated) which dropped from 58% of the population aged 15 and older in 2009 to 46% in 2015. Similar results were shown in the county with a decline from 55% to 50%. The state declined slightly from 51% to 48% as did the nation from 50% to 48%. This information indicates a common trend in the town, county, state, and nation of an increase of people who had never been married or others who had divorced, widowed, or been separated. Walnut Grove, in 2015, also reported a somewhat substantially higher portion of divorcees than Etowah County, Alabama, and the US.

Assessment: Walnut Grove reported a slightly smaller portion of married people compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US and a slightly higher portion of divorcees, indicating some concern for families in the community.

Race Distribution

According to the American Community Survey, between 2009 and 2015 the town increased in white population by 21% while the county declined by -0.9%, the state grew by a minor 2% and the nation by 3%. Walnut Grove showed no increase in black population while Etowah County increased by 6%, Alabama 5%, and the US 7%. Other populations in town accounted for only 1% and would therefore not constitute a significant portion to the overall population. White population comprised the substantially largest portion of the overall population in Walnut Grove accounting for 99% in 2009 and 98% in 2015. Etowah County, Alabama, and the US also showed white as the most dominant race group in 2015 accounting for 81%, 68%, and 73% respectively.

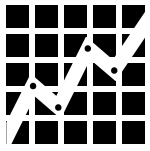
Assessment: In 2015, Walnut Grove reported almost all the population (98%) being white while Etowah County at 81%, Alabama (68%), and the US (73%) showed substantially greater diversity.

Gender Distribution

Walnut Grove showed different trends in gender distribution compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015, the town reported a slightly higher portion of males to females with 52.5% male and 47.5% female in 2009 and in 2015 with 50.2% male and 49.8% female. Meanwhile the county reported more female in both years at 52% and 51%, respectively, as did the state and nation.

Assessment: Walnut Grove showed a slightly higher portion of males compared to females, in 2015, while Etowah County, Alabama, and the US reported slightly more females to males.

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. The Town of Walnut Grove desires to grow and prosper in economic development, drawing in new small businesses while maintaining and expanding present business establishments.

This chapter of the comprehensive plan examines the following economy related characteristics: educational attainment, income, commuting patterns, labor force participation and unemployment, occupational status, industrial composition, and poverty. These characteristics 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 entirely from the 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey, which has been used to provide economic trend information and analysis. The previous chapter on population introduces and discusses the American Community Survey—that is how and when data is collected and its uses for the plan.

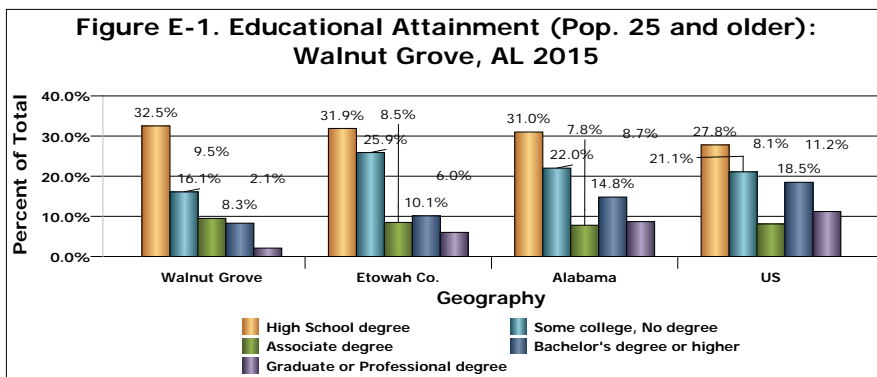
Education

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.

Educational Attainment

Walnut Grove educational attainment ranked fairly low compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015 the town declined in residents having received a high school diploma by -11%, while the county declined by -1%, Alabama grew by 3%, and the US climbed by a slight 1%. Walnut Grove, did however, increase in residents having earned a bachelor’s degree by 100%, increasing

from 22 persons to 44. The considerable majority (66%) of town residents, however, only reported some college, no degree or a high school diploma, or less, similar to Etowah County at 69%, and Alabama at 71%. Although the town reported slightly less educational attainment in the low attainment categories, the county,



state, and nation showed higher representation in the higher attainment groups. Between 2009 and 2015, the portion of Walnut Grove residents holding a bachelor’s degree increased from 4% to 8% while Etowah County increased from 9% to 10%. Alabama climbed slightly in this attainment category from 13% to 14% as did the nation, increasing from 17% to 18%. Walnut Grove showed only a minor portion of the population having received a graduate or professional degree, in 2015, at 2%, as Etowah County reported 6%, Alabama 8%, and the US 11%. Figure E-1 exhibits educational attainment, in the portion of residents aged twenty-five and older, for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice, from the figure that the town held a slightly smaller portion of residents having some college, no degree and also less representation in residents holding a more advanced degree such as a bachelor’s, graduate, or professional. For more information on educational attainment see Table E-1: *Educational Attainment* in Appendix A. Due to lower educational attainment for the Walnut Grove, in general, as a planning consideration, the town should explore means to promote and encourage new small business development within the community in order to maintain competitiveness with other small towns and grow the local economy.

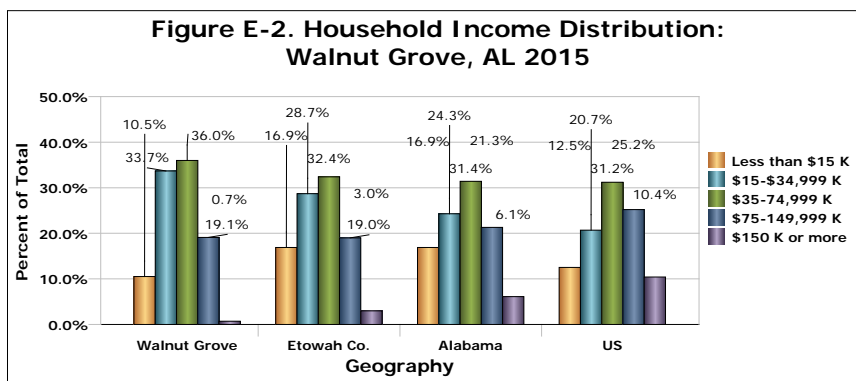
Income

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 household income is the accumulation of all income generated within a specified household. Median household income (MHI), which is characterized as the exact middle (median) point monetary amount of household incomes collected and has been examined as the primary focal point.

Walnut Grove, ranked low in household income in comparison to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015, the town declined substantially in households earning less than 15 K by -61%



while the county reported a considerably smaller drop of -13%, more in line with the state at -5% and the US at -0.4%. Walnut Grove also declined somewhat significantly in households earning between \$15 K and \$34 K, as Etowah County decreased by -11%, Alabama -2%, and the US increased by 0.1%. Despite a drop in

households earning lower incomes, almost half (44%) of the town's households earned less than \$35 K, similar to the county (45%) and the state (41%), but the nation reported higher incomes with 33% in this earning bracket. In 2015, the town reported somewhat considerably less households earning lower incomes with 10% earning less than \$15 K while both the county and state recorded 16% and the nation 12%. This information indicates that although Walnut Grove declined in lower income households to a significantly greater degree than Etowah County and Alabama, between 2009 and 2015, town incomes remained fairly on par with the county and state, but substantially lower than the nation. Figure E-2 shows household income distribution for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice that the town held a smaller portion of households earning less than \$15 K and a slightly larger portion earning between \$35 K and 75 K in the mid-range bracket. For more information, see Table E-2: *Household Income Distribution* in Appendix B.

Furthermore, median household income shows Walnut Grove with similar income to Etowah County and Alabama, but considerably lower than the US. Between 2009 and 2015 Walnut Grove median household income increased from \$30,132 to \$38,846 while Etowah County grew to a lesser extent from \$36,378 to \$39,220. Alabama increased in median household income from \$41,216 to \$43,623 and the US reported \$53,889 in 2015.

As a planning consideration, Walnut Grove should promote and encourage small business development in order to increase incomes and grow the local economy.

Commuting Patterns

Commuting patterns can be used to gauge how far away people in a community live from their place of work and how much time was spent in transition to and from home and the workplace. These patterns are useful in recognizing places for job development and retention as well as alleviating long commuting time and travel distances in the city and its surrounding municipalities, thus advancing the local economy. This section of the economy chapter will examine such commuting information as place of work, commuting travel time, and means of transportation to give a complete picture of commuting within the Town of Walnut Grove and provide suggestions for improving travel to and from work.

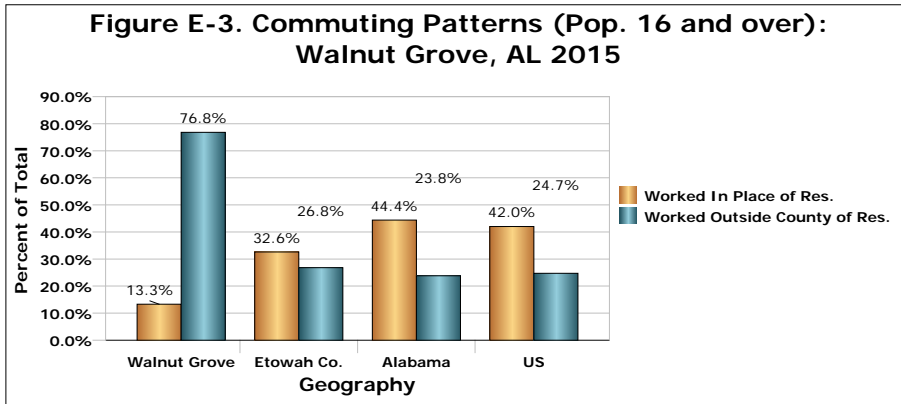
Place of Work

Place of work was the major component in understanding commuting patterns with the two variables examined being those residents (workers 16 and older) who live in their place of residence (town) and work in their respective town along with those who live in the town, but commute outside the town to work, whether their work is in the same county or outside the county.

In terms of commuting patterns, Walnut Grove showed high commuting rates outside place of residence with only 13% of workers commuting to their work destination in town and 86% commuting out of town for work. Such out-of-town commuting for Walnut Grove commuters was substantially higher than commuting in Etowah County at 67%, Alabama at 55%, and the US at 58% in 2015. Furthermore, Walnut

Grove reported that the significant majority (76%) of commuters worked outside the county of residence, while Etowah County reported 26%, Alabama 23%, and the US 24%, indicating that the town’s labor force needed to travel further to find employment than the average worker in the county, state, and nation. Many of these workers in town could be traveling to such out-of-county destinations such as Boaz, Albertville, or Guntersville in neighboring Marshall County, or Oneonta in Blount County. Other

commuters might be traveling further to the Birmingham metro area for work. Figure E-3 displays commuting patterns in the form of work in place of residence for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice from the chart Walnut Grove holding a substantially higher portion (76%) of commuters traveling



outside the county to work than Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015 and, consequently, a significantly smaller portion of commuters living and working in town. For more information see Table E-3 *Place of Work* in Appendix B.

Travel Time to Work

Travel time to work is an important factor in determining commuting patterns. The amount of time a typical drive spends on the road gives some indication of access to employment opportunities from any given community. In alignment with place of work information, Walnut Grove commuters reported considerably higher commute times compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Mean travel time to work information for Walnut Grove, between 2010 and 2015, records average travel time increasing from 28.6 minutes to 38.3 minutes while Etowah County showed a slight decrease from 23.6 to 23.4 and Alabama a slight climb from 23.7 to 24.4. The US reported 25.9 minutes in 2015 for comparison. This information further verifies longer distances traveled for town commuters than for the average commuter in the county, state, and nation. As a planning consideration, Walnut Grove should promote and encourage new small businesses to locate in the community in order to spur economic development and provide commuters with more opportunities to live and work in town as opposed to driving long distance.

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 search for communities with a strong labor force in which to draw qualified employment. To do this they must estimate approximately how many candidates are available to fill positions required to perform necessary company operations. Therefore, a proper understanding of a community’s labor force is critical to a comprehensive planning effort.

While labor force participation examines the total number of people aged 16 and older who are available in the workforce, unemployment focuses on those individuals who are eligible, yet are currently not employed in the civilian workforce. For the purposes of this study, unemployment trends are not based on the unemployment rate, since armed forces is not accounted for, but rather the portion of persons ready for civilian labor force work. This information is useful in understanding the town’s employment patterns in relation to county, state, and national trends and in establishing priorities for employment in the community.

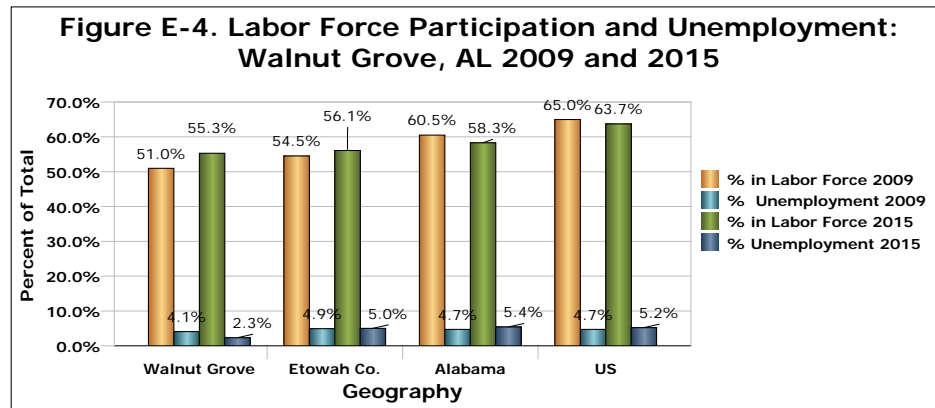
Labor Force Participation

Concerning Walnut Grove’s labor force, the town ranked on par with Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in terms of participation. Between 2009 and 2015 the town declined by -10% in its labor force while both the county and state grew by a minor 1% and the nation by 4%. However, the portion of residents in the town’s labor force grew from 51% to 55% and remained on par with the county (56%), state (58%) and, to some degree, the nation at 63% in 2015. This information indicates that although the town declined considerably in its labor force, participation remained competitive with the county, state, and nation.

Unemployment

Walnut Grove also rated well in terms of unemployment, declining by -43% from 2009 to 2015, with unemployment decreasing from 4% to 2%. Etowah County, during this time, increased in unemployment by 2%, climbing slightly from 4.9% to 5.0% and Alabama increased by 14%, increasing from 4.7% to 5.4%, while the US increased 10%. This information indicates that town unemployment rated well

compared to the county, state, and nation. Figure E-4 displays labor force participation and unemployment for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2009 and 2015. Notice from the chart that the town’s labor force participation remained fairly on par with the county,



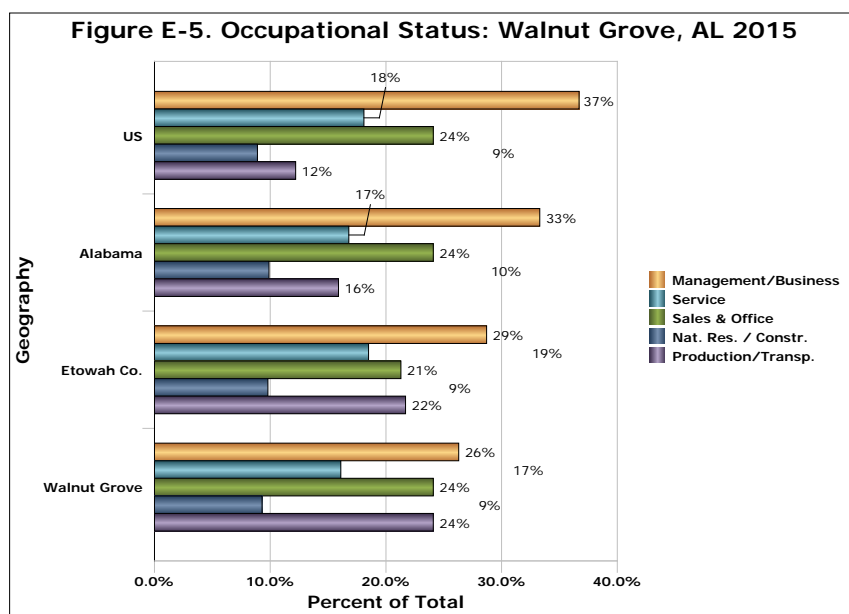
state, and somewhat with the nation in 2009 and 2015 and unemployment rated slightly lower than the county, state, and nation. For more information see Table E-4 *Labor Force Participation and Unemployment* in Appendix B.

Occupational Status

Every economically viable community has a variety of 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 information is useful for determining where job opportunities exist and where job growth is most or least likely to occur. Occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job. For people working two or more occupations during the reference week data was collected the occupation in which the employee worked the greatest number of hours was accounted as the person’s occupation.

In order to categorize occupations, occupational status has been divided into 5 categories, which include: 1) Management / Business Related—which constitutes business and financial operators and specialists, architects, engineers, legal occupations, computer specialists, social services, and technical healthcare occupations, 2) Services—consisting of healthcare support, firefighting and law enforcement, ground and building maintenance, hotel and food accommodation, arts, entertainment, education, recreation, and personal care services, 3) Sales / Office—sales and related, and administrative, 4) Natural Resources / Construction—which includes fishing, farming, and forestry operations, 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.

Walnut Grove, showed some significant changes to occupational status, which differed from patterns displayed in Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015 the town declined considerably in Natural Resources / Construction related occupations by -57%, while the county reported a drop of -15%, the state a decline of -14% and the nation -9% indicating less employment in agricultural and construction trade operations overall, but to the greatest degree in town. However, the town, during



this time, recorded a significant increase in Production / Transportation at 66% as the county showed a 9% increase in these occupations, the state a slight drop of -2%, and the nation a -0.02% decline. This indicates that the town compensated job loss in Natural Resources / Construction with increase in jobs pertaining to Production / Transportation.

In 2015, the single largest occupation for Walnut Grove was in Management / Business, similar to Etowah County at 29%. However

Walnut Grove showed a somewhat substantially lower portion of Management / Business occupations than Alabama (33%) and significantly lower representation than the US at 37%. Consequently, both the

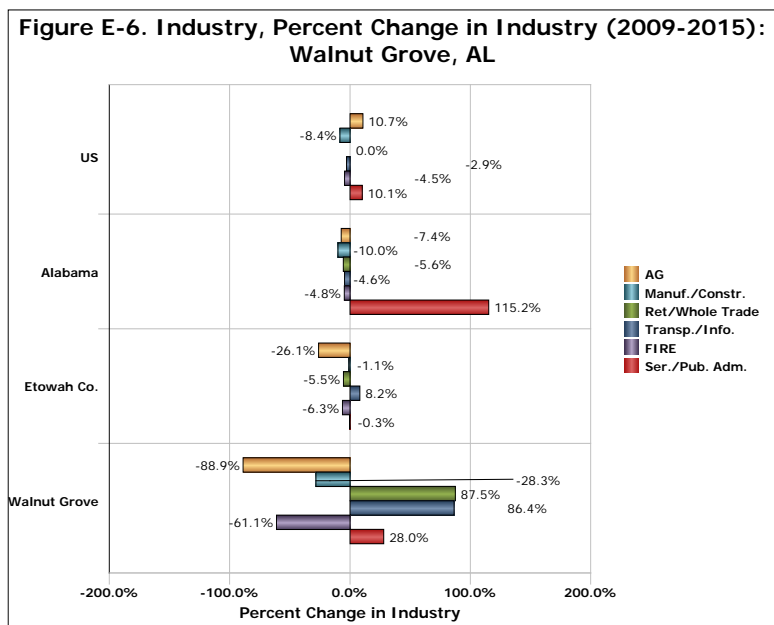
town at 24% and county at 22% reported considerably higher portions of Production / Transportation related jobs compared to the state (16%) and nation at 12%, indicating proportionately more blue collar professions than white collar overall. Figure E-5 displays occupational status for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice from the chart the smaller portions of Management / Business occupations in the town and county compared to the state and nation and the larger representation of Production / Transportation jobs in the town and county as contrast. For more information see Table E-5 Occupational Status 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 and trends is necessary to plan for economic development and opportunities. This section of the economy chapter focuses on industrial composition and changes by industry employment.

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) Retail and Wholesale 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.

Change in Industry

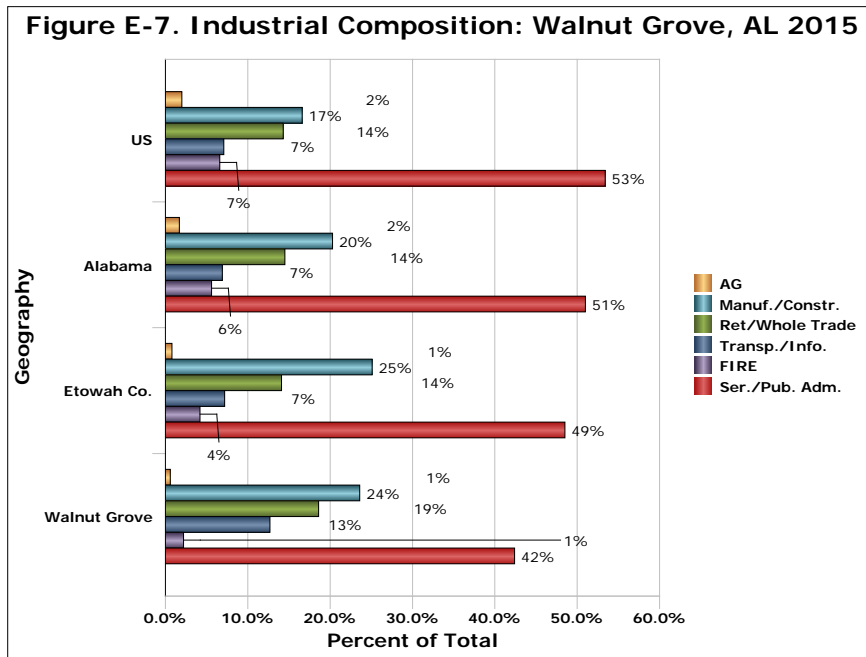


Walnut Grove exhibited some substantially different trends with industrial change compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015 the town increased in Retail/Wholesale Trade by 87% and Transportation/Information by 86% while the county declined in Retail/Wholesale Trade by -5% and increased in Transportation/Information by 8%. Such growth in retail and transportation for Walnut Grove could be due to a few new small businesses in the area, which tend to affect the town’s overall industrial composition to a significantly greater degree than shown in the county, state, and nation. Both Alabama and the US

declined slightly in these sectors or showed zero gain during this time. Despite higher growth in retail and transportation related professions for Walnut Grove, the town declined considerably in AG by -88% and FIRE by -61%, thus indicating considerable drop in blue collar employment and increase in white collar, as previously discussed. Meanwhile, Etowah County reported slight drops in agriculture, retail, and FIRE related professions with slight increase in transportation and Alabama recorded slight decrease in every sector with the exception of Services/Public Administration, which grew by a significant 115%. Figure E-6 displays percent change in industry for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US between 2009 and 2015. Notice in the chart the significant change in agriculture, retail, transportation, and FIRE related industries for the town compared to the county, state, and nation.

Industrial Composition

Despite differing trends in industry, Walnut Grove showed similar industrial composition compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2009 and 2015. The most substantial change in industrial composition in Walnut Grove, between 2009 and 2015, was in Manufacturing/Construction which declined significantly from 35% of all occupations to 23% while Etowah County showed no change at 25%, Alabama a minor drop from 22% to 20%, and the US also reported a minor drop from 18% to 16%. Such decline in manufacturing for the town could be attributed to foreign competition and industrial companies moving to larger communities where demand for services is greater. Contrary to manufacturing, Walnut Grove increased substantially in Services/Public Administration related professions growing from 35% to 42% while Etowah County remained at 48%, Alabama increased slightly from 46% to 51%, and the US climbed from 50% to 53% indicating a national trend of growth in



this sector. Retail/Wholesale Trade also reported significant growth in Walnut Grove, increasing from 10% to 18% between 2009 and 2015. Etowah County reported no growth in this sector, remaining at 14% while Alabama declined from 25% to 14% and the US stayed at 14% both years. This information indicates that Services/Public Administration remained the single largest sector in Walnut Grove, comprising almost half the jobs in town, similar to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. However, the town showed slightly more representation in manufacturing

than the state and nation and slightly more representation in retail related occupations than the county, state, and nation during this time. This information indicates that the town held a larger portion of blue collar jobs than average and less white collar. Figure E-7 illustrates industrial composition for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice from the chart the slightly smaller

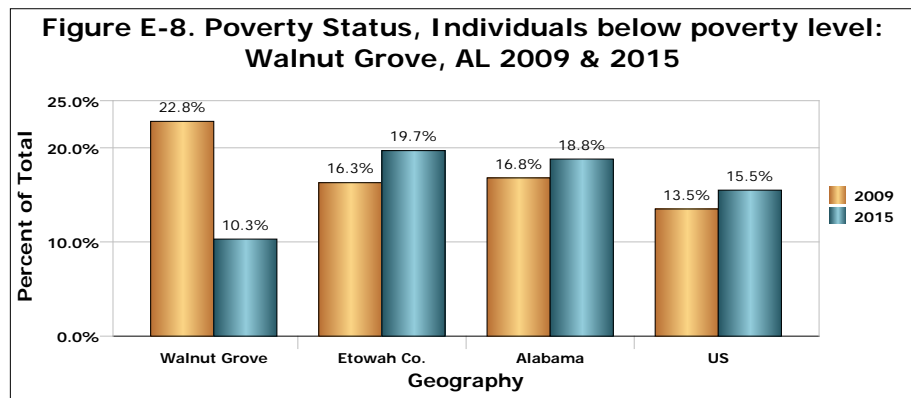
representation of Services/Public Administration for the town and slightly more Manufacturing/Construction and Retail/Wholesale professions compared to the county, state, and nation. Etowah County, however, showed slightly more manufacturing than Walnut Grove, which could be attributed to the industrial focus and development in the nearby Gadsden metro area. For more information see Table E-6 *Industrial Composition* 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, the 2015 poverty threshold for a single person was an annual earnings of \$12,082, for two persons—\$15,391, three persons—\$18,871, and 4 persons—\$24,257.

In terms of poverty, Walnut Grove showed different trends compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2009 and 2015 the town declined considerably in the portion of individuals below poverty level from 22% to 10% while the county increased slightly from 16% to 19%, Alabama increased from 16% to 18%, and the US climbed from 13% to 15%. Walnut Grove, during this time, also declined substantially in the portion of families below poverty level decreasing from 12% to 3% as Etowah County increased from 16% to 19%, Alabama climbed slightly from 16% to 18%, and the US grew from 13% to

15%. This information indicates that the town declined in overall poverty, while the county, state, and nation increased slightly. Such decline for the town could be attributed to lower income individuals and families moving out of the community, as discussed in the population chapter, and also, to a degree, the drop in unemployment. Figure E-



8 displays poverty status for individuals for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2009 and 2015. Notice from the chart the town’s substantial drop in individual poverty status to a level considerably below the county, state, and nation. For more information see Table E-7. *Poverty Status* in Appendix B.

Sustainable Economic Development

Sustainability, along with sustained growth and expansion, is the ultimate goal of economic development. Any company—from the smallest start-up to the largest conglomerate—desires to maintain, grow, and prosper in local, regional, national, and world markets. Similarly, all communities—even cities and towns which desire to keep the status quo—strive to provide the necessary infrastructure, services, and policies to existing businesses and draw in companies which would benefit and compliment current productivity and enhance economic well-being.

This section of the economy chapter examines sustainability and offers step-by-step guidance for businesses and communities to understand and practice “sustainable growth” strategies, in the form of seven fundamental practices. Consequently, these seven fundamental practices may be utilized by both businesses and communities through various similar and different means.

Sustainable Economic Development—For Businesses

Sustainable business growth and development is the goal for any business. Companies desire to grow and expand in a way which creates increased value with customers yet does not exhaust finite resources at their disposal. What is sustainable growth and how does a company achieve it for long-term productive means? According to *Inc.com Sustainable Growth Encyclopedia* their definition of sustainable growth is simply: “*the realistically attainable growth that a company could maintain without running into problems.*” If a business grows too quickly it may find it difficult to fund the growth, yet if the business grows too slowly or not at all it may stagnate and die. As to how a company may achieve long-term sustainability and productivity, according to an article in *fastcompany.com*, *7-fundamentals of sustainable business growth*, there are seven universal fundamentals which may apply, even though circumstances may differ from time to time. These seven fundamentals are listed as follow and in no particular order:

- 1. Authentic Purpose:** Purpose is something that every company needs to understand and take action on. The purpose, “why we do what we do” is central to the company’s core being. Having a strong purpose drives growth and profitability. In order to achieve sustainable success a company must have a purpose and make their purpose well known to employees. The company must also continuously reexamine their purpose. An authentic and inspiring purpose allows for:

- A constant, consistent sense of focus,
- A strong emotional engagement both within the company and with its customers and partners, and
- Continuous pragmatic innovation.

When a company has a clear vision its easier to create products and services of value.

For example, here are a few takes from Apple Computers vision statement:

- ✓ *We believe we exist to make great products.*
- ✓ *We believe in the simple, not the complex.*
- ✓ *We participate only in markets where we can make a significant contribution.*

- ✓ *We believe in saying no to thousands of projects, so that we can really focus on the few that are truly important and meaningful to us.*
- ✓ *We don't settle for anything less than excellent in every group in the company.*
- ✓ *We have the self-honesty to admit when we're wrong and the courage to change.*

- 2. A Powerful Brand:** In order to maintain a scalable and connect with customers a company must create a powerful brand. A powerful brand will make special attachments that link customers to a business and keep them returning. The following are some general guidelines:
- A company should choose a target audience. The surest road to product failure is to try to be all things to all people.
 - A company should make their audience feel an emotional attachment to the brand which is grounded in confidence.
 - A simple, inspirational message is far more influential than a complex one which highlights too many products, features, functions, or ideas.
 - A company should have a marketing plan—which may entail creating compelling content for publisher and social media sites in order to generate awareness among target customer bases.

According to marketer Marc Gobe, author of *Emotional Branding* and principal of d/g worldwide, emotional branding has three things in common—and he uses Apple Computers for examples:

- ✓ Projection of a humanistic corporate culture and strong humanitarian ethics. Apple's founding was based on power to the people through technology and education.
 - ✓ A company should have a unique visual and verbal vocabulary expressed in product design and advertising—that is its products and advertising need to be clearly and unmistakably recognizable. Apple, as well as Target and Wal-Mart portray this uniqueness in their marketing.
 - ✓ A company should establish and maintain a “heartfelt connection” with its customers. In Apple's case, the product is designed around people—for example, the iPod brings emotional and sensory experience to computing. Apple's design is people-driven.
- 3. Partnership and Collaboration**—should be considered once a company has a purpose and branding. A business should strive to form partnerships and collaborate with other companies which would benefit from and use their products and services, forming a mutual relationship for increased productivity and growth. Such companies, under partnership and collaboration, could provide assistance and guidance in areas such as design, sales, finance, legal services, and banking which may be available at little to no cost. Companies should also strive to learn from and form relationships with existing and potential competitors in order to enhance their products and services. No company should continuously try to “do things on their own” partnerships are often keys to success.
- 4. Customer Retention:** Oftentimes companies do not realize the value in present customers, compared with attaining new customers in terms of costs involved. According to Emmet and Mark Murphy in their book *Leading on the Edge of Chaos*, acquiring new customers may cost

an organization around five times more than retaining current ones. They site that, in fact, a 2% increase in customer retention can have the same effect as decreasing a company's cost by 10%. In addition, reducing customer defection rates by just 5% could increase profitability by 25% to 130% depending on the industry. Furthermore, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the U.S Small Business Administration site the following information:

- The average business in the U.S. loses around 50% of its customer base every five years.
- Companies are four times more likely to do business with an existing customer than a new customer.
- The likelihood of selling to an existing customer is 60-70%, whereas it's just 5-20% for a new customer.

5. Community (Economic Ecosystems): In terms of community, the business environment could be viewed as an economic ecosystem with many organizations and individuals that interact in countless ways. Ecosystems encourage companies to evolve capabilities in order to compete in their respective markets. Economic ecosystems or communities are crucial to sustainable growth because they provide the structure that surrounds and supports the businesses within them. In order to form a business which will be sustainable and thrive, there must be community support or high potential community support for products and services offered. A plant cannot grow without good and properly maintained soil.

6. Repeatable Sales—are needed to create sustainability. Unique products and branding is important, but not enough for a business to be sustainable beyond the immediate future. A repeatable sales process, one that can be successfully deployed again and again at an even greater scale, is needed to create a scalable business. According to Fast Company a business has created a scalable sales model when:

- A business can add new hires at the same productivity level as the entrepreneur or the sales leader.
- A business can increase the sources of their customer leads on a consistent basis.
- A business has a sales conversion rate and revenue that can be consistently forecast.
- The cost to acquire a new customer is significantly less than the amount you can earn from the customer over time.
- Customers get the right products in the right place at the right time.

A repeatable sales model builds the platform to scale, but it can take a lot of experimentation and research to find a platform that is sustainable over time.

7. Flexible, Adaptive Leadership—is needed to continue a successful business and mold to changing circumstances and times. A company's leaders, whether they be entrepreneurs, managers, or business owners must lead by properly directing and managing continuously changing and evolving company needs at every stage of development and growth. Such leadership requires introspection, self-awareness, and a keen sense of long term and short term strategy. A truly adaptive and flexible style of leadership comes from being mindful in and in

understanding worker needs—from the needs of the base worker to top management officials. This in turn allows workers to create value within the company. The most sustainable way to create value is to continuously invest in company capabilities, both in individuals and as an organization.

Sustainable Economic Development—For Communities

Sustainable business growth and development for towns and cities, fundamentally, also follows the same guidance and direction for individual business growth and sustainability as previously discussed. For sustainable economic community development, a city/town needs to establish, develop, and maintain:

- ❖ A purpose for driving economic development (vision and mission),
- ❖ A branding of business to connect with residents and visitors,
- ❖ Partnerships and collaboration with businesses to provide guidance, services, and promotion of business,
- ❖ A plan/policy to retain and possibly expand existing business as first priority, before recruiting new business,
- ❖ An understanding of and utilization of the entire community or economic ecosystem (even entities outside the city in the county and in the larger regional area) in order to promote and enhance business growth and development,
- ❖ A means of continually providing adequate and efficient facilities and services to a growing and changing community over time.
- ❖ Flexible and adaptive leadership which strives to meet continuously changing and evolving city needs—from the needs of base workers to top company officials.

The following describes in more detail how cities and towns could address these guiding principles for community-wide economic development:

- 1. Authentic Purpose**—is the guiding light “so to speak” for economic development. The purpose for a community to strive for sustainable economic development should be explained in the vision and mission statements of the comprehensive plan or economic development plan. Such purpose could be stated, in general terms, to be economically competitive with other nearby communities and to increase revenue—which in turn provides avenues of funding for more and better community facilities and services to the public, thus drawing in more businesses and resident population. However, the purpose could go much deeper. For example, the City of Asheville, NC recently (2016) completed their *Strategic Operating Plan/Vision 2036* in which they outlined the City Council’s 2036 vision as follows: *Asheville is a great place to live because we care about people, we invest in our city, and we celebrate our natural and cultural heritage. Our city is for everyone. Our urban environment and locally-based economy supports workers, entrepreneurs, and business owners, families and tourists, and people of all ages. Cultural diversity and social and economic equity are evident in all that we do. Our neighborhoods are strong, participation in civic life is widespread, and collaborative partnerships and the foundation of our success.*” Notice the major focal points which are similar to the guiding business principals mentioned prior such as—caring about people, celebrating natural and cultural heritage, a local-based economy, strong

neighborhoods, and collaborative partnerships as the foundation of success. Success for a community in economic development and in keeping a sustainable economy is dependent on a wide variety of factors, which figure into the equation, and must be considered as playing important roles. Asheville NC maintains 8 things that make them special, in addition to economic development, listed as follows:

- A diverse community,
- A well-planned and livable community,
- A clean and healthy environment,
- Quality affordable housing,
- Transportation and accessibility,
- Thriving local economy,
- Connected and engaged community,
- Smart city—Asheville has an AAA bond rating, which is due to the city using debt capacity and revenue wisely in order to maintain and improve the city’s infrastructure and invest in public employees.

2. A Powerful Brand: Similar to individual business, communities should brand themselves in order to create powerful connections and relations, in marketing their offerings, to residents and visitors—who may be potential residents. Branding for a community could also be through vision and mission statements by focusing time and efforts on connecting with resident desires and needs. For example, Asheville NC brand could be found in their vision statement as, “we care about people”. Such brand or motto can be shown in the previously discussed things that make the city special, namely diversity, planning for a livable community, a clean and healthy environment, affordable housing, thriving local economy, connected and engaged community, and by being a “smart” city.

3. Partnership and Collaboration: Communities may seek advice, guidance, direction, and assistance with economic development by developing partnerships and collaborating with businesses, neighborhoods, educational institutions, and other entities within the city that would provide mutual benefit through such type of relationship and interaction. A city should also consider what other communities have done to build partnerships and improve collaboration in striving to promote and enhance economic development in their own community. Much business collaboration may be conducted through the local Chamber of Commerce, however, other sources and avenues may also be available and/or opportunities realized and established. For example, in 2010 the City of Asheville, the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, Buncombe County (the county in which Asheville resides) and nearly 80 local investors and organizations worked together to establish a 5-year economic development plan around five strategic target clusters—1) Advanced Manufacturing, 2) Science and Technology, 3) Healthcare, 4) Arts and Culture, and 5) Entrepreneurship to create their own AVL 5X5 strategic plan. The plan, since, 2015 surpassed its goal to add 5,000 new jobs and \$500 million in capital investment within the 5 clusters, due to each agency working together on a common vision and doing their share of the work.

- 4. Business Retention:** While businesses have customers they want to retain and attract new customers to their business, towns and cities have businesses and companies they want to retain as well as attract in new business. Business retention and expansion is one of the major economic development priorities in towns and cities and possibly their single largest priority because job growth and expansion is such a vital component for community success. When a business is lost in a community, the community loses as well. Towns and cities may assist local companies with business retention by paying careful attention to business needs within their community and taking necessary actions for their continuance. This is often done through provision of community infrastructure (water, sewer, and roads) and services such as law enforcement, fire protection, street maintenance, and garbage pick-up. However, many companies, particularly in internet technology and telecommunication, demand high-speed broadband infrastructure, just as much as water and sewer to run their business. Since business retention plays such a vital role in economic development, municipal governments should work and coordinate with their local businesses, utility boards, educational institutions, and local chamber of commerce to develop plans and policies to meet business needs both presently and in the future.
- 5. Community Ecosystems**—incorporate the complex and diversified workings of all entities within a community which must be considered both on an individual level and as a whole. This is due to the fact that, as previously described with comprehensive planning, each entity plays an important role within the larger framework of the community (for more detail see Chapter I: Introduction). Economic development is influenced by quality of life assets and issues. For example, new businesses seeking to expand or locate might not only be searching for a city with the necessary infrastructure and services, but also one that provides good healthcare for their residents and opportunities for recreation.
- 6. Facilitation of Growth and Development:** Similar to sustainable business growth and development, a city should not take on more projects and services than present resources allow, or without a plan to pay back debt involved. Communities should make plans and policies to prioritize the most important projects and properly weigh out the pros and cons of potential projects and services provided. The city, ideally, should be able to duplicate projects and services on a larger scale, provided increases from revenue as developments are established. A city should never rely completely on bonds or loans, to bail out of debt should potential projects not be completed, but should establish funds to assure that growth and development can be sustained from present revenue or reserves.
- 7. Flexible and Adaptive Leadership**—is also needed to assure community needs are met in a continuously growing and changing environment, both for business and for the city as a whole. Similar to leadership exemplified in business, a government leader needs to properly direct and manage city resources in a way that meets the needs of government owned and operated entities and pays close attention employee priorities, from the base worker to department leadership.

Analytical Summary

The analytical summary provides a general review of the topics discussed in each chapter and gives a broad assessment of the information provided.

Education—Educational Attainment

Between 2009 and 2015, the portion of Walnut Grove residents holding a bachelor's degree increased from 4% to 8% while Etowah County increased from 9% to 10%. Alabama climbed slightly in this attainment category from 13% to 14% as did the nation, increasing from 17% to 18%. Walnut Grove showed only a minor portion of the population having received a graduate or professional degree, in 2015, at 2%, as Etowah County reported 6%, Alabama 8%, and the US 11%.

Assessment: Walnut Grove showed slightly lower educational attainment than Etowah County and considerably lower attainment compared to Alabama and the US considering recipients of a bachelor's degree or higher.

Income—Household Income

Between 2009 and 2015, the town declined substantially in households earning less than 15 K by -61% while the county reported a considerably smaller drop of -13%, more in line with the state at -5% and the US at -0.4%. Walnut Grove also declined somewhat significantly in households earning between \$15 K and \$34 K, as Etowah County decreased by -11%, Alabama -2%, and the US increased by 0.1%. Despite a drop in households earning lower incomes, almost half (44%) of the town's households earned less than \$35 K, similar to the county (45%) and the state (41%), but the nation reported higher incomes with 33% in this earning bracket.

Median Household Income: Median household income shows Walnut Grove with similar income to Etowah County and Alabama, but considerably lower than the US. Between 2009 and 2015 Walnut Grove median household income increased from \$30,132 to \$38,846 while Etowah County grew to a lesser extent from \$36,378 to \$39,220. Alabama increased in median household income from \$41,216 to \$43,623 and the US reported \$53,889 in 2015.

Assessment: Household income for Walnut Grove ranked comparable to Etowah County and Alabama, but substantially lower than the US.

Commuting Patterns

Place of Work: In terms of commuting patterns, Walnut Grove showed high commuting rates outside place of residence with only 13% of workers commuting to their work destination in town and 86% commuting out of town for work. Such out-of-town commuting for Walnut Grove commuters was substantially higher than commuting in Etowah County at 67%, Alabama at 55%, and the US at 58% in 2015.

Out-of-County Commuting: Walnut Grove reported that the significant majority (76%) of commuters worked outside the county of residence, while Etowah County reported 26%, Alabama 23%, and the US 24%, indicating that the town's labor force needed to travel further to find employment than the average worker in the county, state, and nation.

Travel Time to Work: Walnut Grove commuters reported considerably higher commute times compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Mean travel time to work information for Walnut Grove, between 2010 and 2015, records average travel time increasing from 28.6 minutes to 38.3 minutes while Etowah County showed a slight decrease from 23.6 to 23.4 and Alabama a slight climb from 23.7 to 24.4. The US reported 25.9 minutes in 2015 for comparison.

Assessment: Walnut Grove commuters tended to travel longer distances, spend more time in the car, and travel out of the county to their place of work to a substantially greater degree than commuters in Etowah County, Alabama, and the US.

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment

Labor Force Participation: Between 2009 and 2015 the town declined by -10% in its labor force while both the county and state grew by a minor 1% and the nation by 4%. However, the portion of residents in the town's labor force grew from 51% to 55% and remained on par with the county (56%), state (58%) and, to some degree, the nation at 63% in 2015.

Unemployment: Walnut Grove declined in unemployment by -43% from 2009 to 2015, with unemployment decreasing from 4% to 2%. Etowah County, during this time, increased in unemployment by 2%, climbing slightly from 4.9% to 5.0% and Alabama increased by 14%, increasing from 4.7% to 5.4%, while the US increased 10%.

Assessment: Walnut Grove's labor force rated on par with the county, state, and nation and rated somewhat better than the county, state, and nation in unemployment.

Occupational Status

Between 2009 and 2015 the town declined considerably in Natural Resources / Construction related occupations by -57%, while the county reported a drop of -15%, the state a decline of -14% and the nation -9% indicating less employment in agricultural and construction trade operations overall, but to the greatest degree in town. However, the town, during this time, recorded a significant increase in Production / Transportation at 66% as the county showed a 9% increase in these occupations, the state a slight drop of -2%, and the nation a -0.02% decline.

In 2015, the single largest occupation for Walnut Grove was in Management / Business, similar to Etowah County at 29%. However Walnut Grove showed a somewhat substantially lower portion of Management / Business occupations than Alabama (33%) and significantly lower representation than the US at 37%. Consequently, both the town at 24% and county at 22% reported considerably higher portions of

Production / Transportation related jobs compared to the state (16%) and nation at 12%, indicating proportionately more blue collar professions than white collar overall.

Assessment: Walnut Grove reported similar representation in white collar occupations such as in business management compared to Etowah County, but lower white collar compared to the state and nation. Similarly, the town and county showed a larger portion of blue collar workers in production and transportation than the state and nation.

Industrial Composition

Change in Industry (2009-2015): The most substantial change in industrial composition in Walnut Grove, between 2009 and 2015, was in Manufacturing/Construction which declined significantly from 35% of all occupations to 23% while Etowah County showed no change at 25%, Alabama a minor drop from 22% to 20%, and the US also reported a minor drop from 18% to 16%.

Walnut Grove increased substantially in Services/Public Administration related professions growing from 35% to 42% while Etowah County remained at 48%, Alabama increased slightly from 46% to 51%, and the US climbed from 50% to 53% indicating a national trend of growth in this sector. Retail/Wholesale Trade also reported significant growth in Walnut Grove, increasing from 10% to 18% between 2009 and 2015. Etowah County reported no growth in this sector, remaining at 14% while Alabama declined from 25% to 14% and the US stayed at 14% both years.

Industrial Composition 2015: Walnut Grove's most dominant industry in 2015 was in Services/Public Administration accounting for 42% of the town's economy, similar to Etowah County (48%), Alabama (51%) and the US at 53%. The town's second most dominant industry was in Manufacturing/Construction comprising 23%, similar to the county, state, and nation.

Assessment: Walnut Grove showed similar trends in industrial composition compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US with services and manufacturing being the major sectors of the economy.

Poverty Status

Individual Poverty: Between 2009 and 2015 the town declined considerably in the portion of individuals below poverty level from 22% to 10% while the county increased slightly from 16% to 19%, Alabama increased from 16% to 18%, and the US climbed from 13% to 15%.

Family Poverty: Walnut Grove, during this time, also declined substantially in the portion of families below poverty level decreasing from 12% to 3% as Etowah County increased from 16% to 19%, Alabama climbed slightly from 16% to 18%, and the US grew from 13% to 15%.

Assessment: Walnut Grove declined substantially in both individual poverty and family poverty while Etowah County, Alabama, and the US all showed some slight increase in both.

CHAPTER IV: HOUSING



Housing is one of the most fundamental topics in relation to 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 housing needs. As a community grows and develops the need for quality, safe, and affordable housing, increases, along with the need for a variety of housing type options to meet the demands of residents in different stages of life and with changing preferences.

Some common benefits and impacts of properly planned housing improvements and development include the following:

- ❖ **Economic Impact**—Economic developers and workforce employers seek communities from which to draw their labor force. Employment from new home construction and improved housing creates economic ripples throughout the community. According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), in their analysis of the broad impact of new construction, the building of 1,000 average single-family homes generates approximately:
 - 2,970 full-time jobs
 - \$162 million in wages
 - \$118 million in business income, and
 - \$111 million in taxes and revenue for state, local, and federal governments.
- ❖ **Community Health**—Home is where we spend most of our lives. For most Americans, the home represents a place of safety, security, and shelter where families come together to live. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Commission to Build a Healthier America, September 2008 article on housing and health, most Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors, and an estimated two-thirds of that time is spent in the home. Potential health risks in association with poor housing conditions needs to be properly assessed and addressed in neighborhoods of concern.
- ❖ **Reductions in Foreclosure**—According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, households who pay more than 30% of their annual income on housing costs are considered cost burdened and might have substantial difficulty affording basic necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. HUD estimates approximately 12 million renter and homeowner households paying more than 50% of their annual income on housing costs. In order to alleviate housing burdens HUD provides grants to states and local governments to fund building, buying, and rehabilitating housing for rent or ownership and also provides direct rental assistance to low-income families who qualify. Reducing foreclosures by providing affordable housing and housing assistance, in a community will, in effect:
 - Stabilize neighborhood housing value,
 - Enhance tax collections,
 - Increase utility revenues,
 - Mitigate health and security hazards in association with empty structures,
 - Lessen court and legal expenses in connection with demolition, and

- Provide for more attractive and enduring housing developments
- ❖ Environmental Conservation—Quality housing with increased energy efficiencies preserves the environment by driving down demand for energy from power plants and other power facilities, thus lessening the amount of waste byproduct generated from power production. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the total energy production in the US, about 40% is used to generate electricity while the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimated 37% of electrical consumption used in the residential sector, as of December 2014.

The Town of Walnut Grove recognizes the benefits of quality, safe, and affordable housing, as well as housing needs, and has taken action to address concerns. This chapter examines the town’s housing inventory in characteristics such as units by type, tenure and occupancy status, vacancy status, and household size. The chapter also examines housing conditions with housing stock age and physical conditions. An analysis of housing value and affordability along with an analytical summary round out the study.

Housing information was collected and examined using the US 2000 Census and US 2010 Census as well as the 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) for more recent data analysis. Decennial Census and American Community Survey data were examined for tenure and occupancy, vacancy status, household size, housing value, and rental costs, while housing unit type, housing stock age, owner-occupied affordability, and renter-occupied affordability only used ACS information. The town’s physical housing conditions were obtained from a special EARPDC observational survey conducted in 2017.

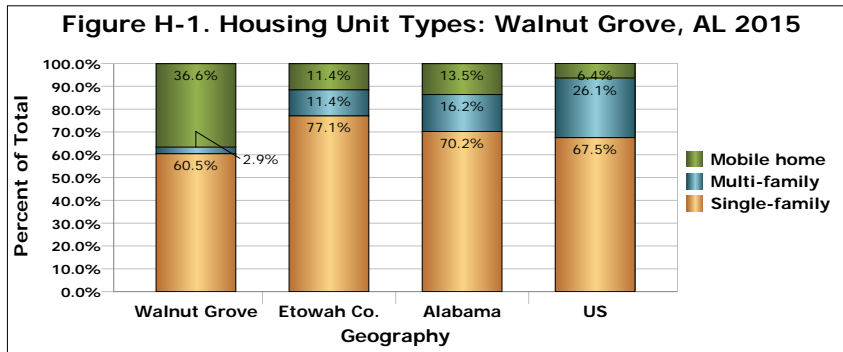
Housing Inventory

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. Walnut Grove 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 two hundred fifty-six 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.

Housing unit type for Walnut Grove, in 2015, differed significantly from Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Single family residential, for Walnut Grove, was the single most dominant housing type, accounting for 60% of the town’s total housing stock, while manufactured housing (mobile homes) comprised 36% and multi-family a minor 2%. Etowah County reported different findings with 77% of the housing stock constituting single-family and both manufactured housing and multi-family recording 11%.

Alabama showed similar results to Etowah County with 70% in single-family homes, 16% multi-family, and 13% manufactured homes, while the US reported 67%, 26%, and 6%, respectively. This information indicates that the town, during this time, held substantially more manufactured housing development than the county, state, and nation and somewhat significantly less single-family. Such housing development



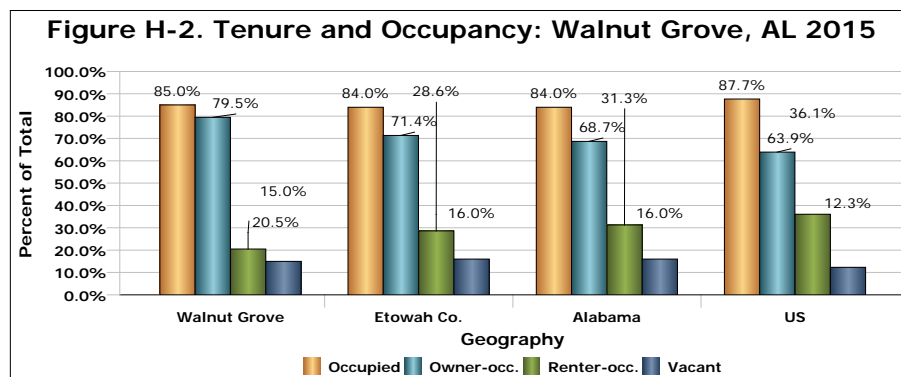
patterns could be attributed to lower incomes, as manufactured housing generally costs less and is more affordable than typical single-family homes. Multi-family housing is generally most prevalent in communities with more population density than Walnut Grove, thus explaining such small representation. Figure H-1 illustrates housing unit

types for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015 in accordance with 2011-2015 American Community Survey. The figure shows the town with significantly more manufactured housing development than the county, state, and nation. For more information consult Table H-1 *Housing Unit Types* in Appendix C.

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. The Census Bureau recognizes tenure as referring to the distinction between owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units while occupancy is defined as a housing unit classified as occupied if it is the usual place of residence of the person or group of people living in it at the time of enumeration—that is when the Census counts were made. A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of enumeration, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. Units temporarily occupied at the time of enumeration entirely by people who have a usual residence elsewhere are also classified as vacant.

Tenure and occupancy patterns for Walnut Grove tended to follow somewhat similar trends to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Between 2000 and 2010, the town increased in occupied homes by 4%, while the county increased by 1%, the state 8%, and the nation 10% indicating growing occupancies as a common trend. Owner occupancy, during this time, declined in the county by a minor -2%, yet increased in the town by a slight 6%, as well as in the state (4%) and nation at 8%. A slightly differing pattern for Walnut Grove comprised of a slight -3% decline in renter-occupied housing while Etowah County grew by 9%, as did Alabama at 19% and the US at 14%. This could be attributed to substantially lower



in the town by a slight 6%, as well as in the state (4%) and nation at 8%. A slightly differing pattern for Walnut Grove comprised of a slight -3% decline in renter-occupied housing while Etowah County grew by 9%, as did Alabama at 19% and the US at 14%. This could be attributed to substantially lower

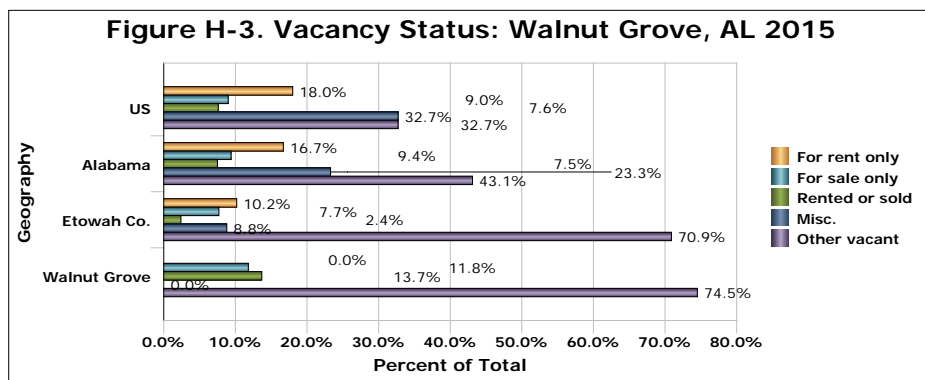
representation in multi-family housing for the town compared to the county, state, and nation as previously discussed in housing unit types. Such rental property is most likely developed and utilized in areas of higher population densities than Walnut Grove provides.

Representation in tenure and occupancy for Walnut Grove also showed somewhat similar results to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US, with the exception of renter-occupied housing. In 2015, the town showed only 20% renter-occupied housing, while the county reported 28%, the state 31% and nation 36% indicating considerably less occupied homes being rented in town and more homes owner-occupied by comparison. Also in 2015, occupancy for Walnut Grove at 85% followed a similar pattern to Etowah County and Alabama, both at 84%, and the US at 87%. Figure H-2 displays tenure and occupancy for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice the substantially smaller portion of renter-occupied housing in the town, compared to the county, state, and nation and the higher representation in owner-occupied housing. For more information see Table H-2: *Tenure and Occupancy (2000-2010)* and Table H-3: *Tenure and Occupancy (2011-2015 ACS)*.

Vacancy Status

Vacancy status is useful in determining how vacant housing has been utilized. A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of enumeration, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. Units temporarily occupied at the time of enumeration entirely by people who have a usual residence elsewhere are also classified as vacant. Occupants classified as having a “usual residence elsewhere” are counted at the address of their usual place of residence. Therefore, vacancies can 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.

Walnut Grove’s vacancy status followed somewhat similar trends to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. According to the American Community Survey, between 2009 and 2015, the portion of the town’s units listed as “other vacant” decreased considerably from 100% of all units to 74%, composing the single-largest vacancy status in the town. Meanwhile, the county increased in the portion of “other vacant”, during this time, from 55% to 70% while the state declined slightly from 44% to 43%. The nation also rose slightly from 29% to 32%. This information, however, indicates a similar pattern, showing that “other vacant” units composed the single-largest group of vacant housing units in the town, county, state, and nation. Vacant units rented or sold represented a distant second to “other vacant” in Walnut



Grove, growing from 0% to 13% in 2015 while Etowah County reported a slight decline from 6% to 2%, Alabama remained at 7% and the US declined slightly from 8% to 7%. Figure H-3 displays vacancy status for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. The figure demonstrates the substantial

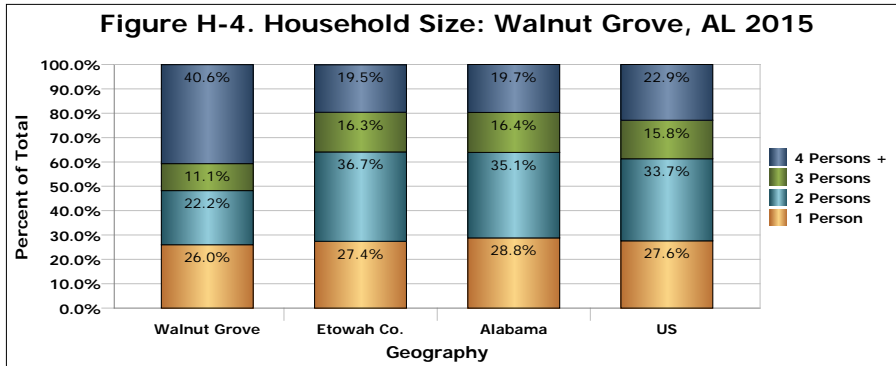
Grove, growing from 0% to 13% in 2015 while Etowah County reported a slight decline from 6% to 2%, Alabama remained at 7% and the US declined slightly from 8% to 7%. Figure H-3 displays vacancy status for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. The figure demonstrates the substantial

majority (74%) of vacant units in town listed as “other vacant” similar to the county at 70%, while the state and nation showed significantly less representation in these groups. For more information see Table H-4: *Vacancy Status (2000-2010)* and Table H-5: *Vacancy Status (2011-2015 ACS)*.

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. For the purposes of a household size study, four household sizes were examined which include the following: 1 person households, 2 person households, 3 person households, and households occupied by 4 or more persons. For more information, particularly on households holding 5 persons or more, see Table H-4 Household Size with figures from the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census. In order to analyze more recent information on household size only 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey information is examined in this report.

Walnut Grove showed somewhat considerably different trends in household size. According to the American Community Survey, between 2009 and 2015 Walnut Grove increased considerably in the portion of households holding 4 or more persons from 25% to 40% while Etowah County increased minimally from 18% to 19%. Both Alabama and the US decreased slightly in this household size from 20% to 19% and 23% to 22%, respectively. In contrast to significant growth in 4 person households the town declined substantially in 2 person households from 35% in 2009 to 22% in 2015, while the county, state, and nation maintained consistent portions in this size category.



Such decline in 2 person households and increase in 4 person or more households could be due to new and younger families leaving the community to find employment in other places, as suggested in the economy chapter, and older and more established families sharing

homes to reduce housing costs. Figure H-4 illustrates household size for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice the substantially higher representation of 4 person households and more for the town as compared to the county, state, and nation. For more information see Tables H-6 Household Size (2000-2010) and Table H-7 Household Size (2009-2015).

Housing Conditions

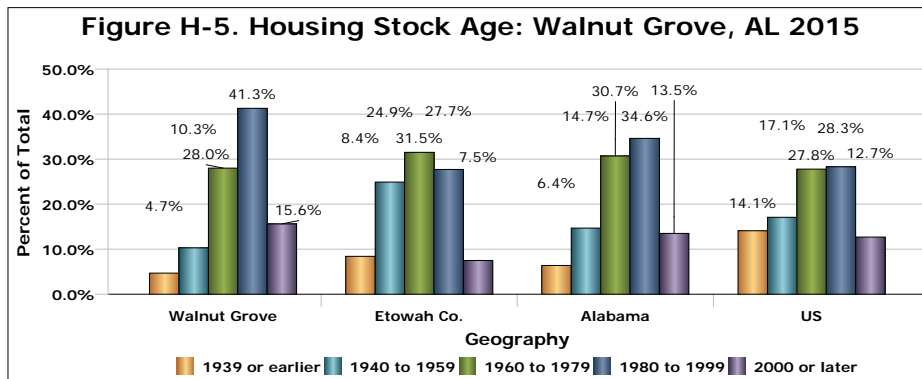
Housing Stock Age

Housing stock age is a good indicator of current housing conditions and needs. A thorough examination of housing age can be used to assess probable housing conditions and needs for improvements within the community. In general, older homes, homes aged 40 years or older, show signs of wear and more

improvements and/or more significant improvements might be needed to provide adequate living conditions for occupants. Therefore, homes predating 1980 should require significant attention and homes built prior to 1960 special attention. New homes have been identified as homes built post 2000. Information for housing stock age was obtained from the 2011-2015 American Community Survey.

According to the American Community Survey, Walnut Grove’s housing stock comprises somewhat newer homes. The slight majority (56%) of homes in Walnut Grove were built post 1979. Etowah County reported 35% of homes built during this time while Alabama and the US showed 48% and 41%, respectively. Approximately 41% of the town’s homes were built from 1980 to 1999 while the county showed 27%, the state 34%, and the nation 28%. Furthermore, only a minor 15% of the town’s housing

stock was built prior to 1960, which was substantially less than the county at 33%, the state (21%) and nation at 31%. Median year structure built for Walnut Grove in 2015 was 1980 while Etowah County reported 1972, Alabama 1979, and the US 1975. Figure H-5 illustrates housing stock age for



Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. As demonstrated, the town built the majority of homes post 1980, with approximately 41% built between 1979 and 2000, while the county, state, and nation built considerably less homes during this time and more homes in previous years.

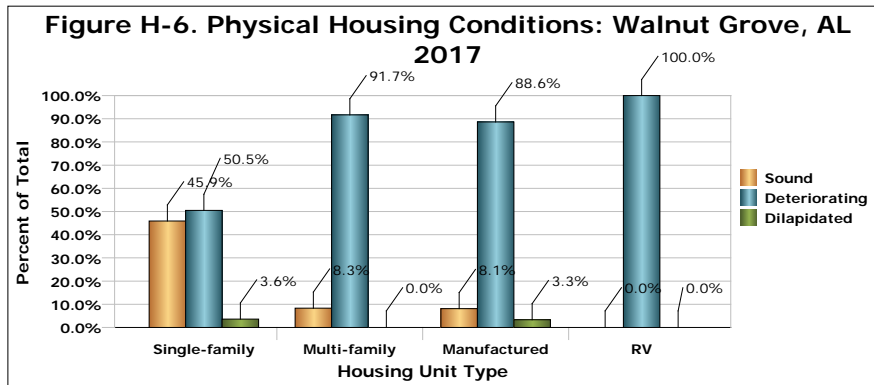
Physical Housing Conditions

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 2017, EARPCD cartography staff conducted a field check of the city to inventory housing improvement needs (See Maps 4A and 4B: *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.

Although older homes tend to show more signs of wear, Walnut Grove’s housing stock was considerably younger compared to the county, state, and nation. Still the town exhibited somewhat significant needs for housing improvements. Physical housing conditions, obtained from the EARPDC housing conditions inventory reported that the considerable majority, approximately 66%, of all homes in the community were in deteriorating condition, 30% were in sound condition, and 3% dilapidated. Figure H-6 examines physical housing conditions for each housing type in Walnut Grove in 2017, along with 3 homes used for recreational vehicles.



physical housing conditions for each housing type in Walnut Grove in 2017, along with 3 homes used for recreational vehicles.

In 2017, manufactured homes for Walnut Grove exhibited the most needs for improvements with approximately 109 structures (88%) in deteriorating condition.

Homes serving as recreational

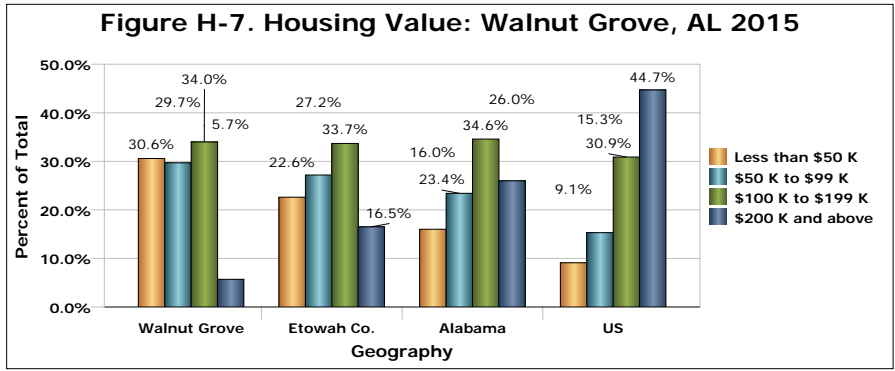
vehicles (RV) only accounted for 3 structures and multi-family 12 units. Single-family homes also showed signs of needed improvements with 99 (50%) structures in deteriorating condition, 90 (45%) in sound condition, and 7 (3%) dilapidated. As a planning consideration, Walnut Grove should strive to find a means of improving housing conditions throughout the community in order to better compete with other small towns in the county and surrounding areas for quality housing.

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. Walnut Grove recognizes the need to promote and encourage quality housing development and has been active in preparing for such growth.

In terms of housing value Walnut Grove rated considerably low. According to the American Community Survey, in 2015, approximately 30% of homes in Walnut Grove were valued less than \$15 K, while Etowah County reported 22%, Alabama 16%, and the US 9%. Homes valued \$100 K and above for the town accounted for 39% of the housing stock, while the county, in this value category, showed 50%, the state 60%, and nation 75%. This information indicates that housing values for Walnut Grove, in 2015, were substantially lower than Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Lower housing values for the town could be attributed to poor housing conditions, as previously discussed, and also the higher portion of manufactured housing, which tends to price lower than traditional single-family housing. Figure H-7 exhibits housing value for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. See from the figure that the town’s portion of homes valued less than \$50 K ranked substantially higher than the

county, state, and nation. In contrast, homes valued \$200 K and above showed much lower representation in town compared to the county, state, and nation. For more information see Table H-11 Housing Value of



Owner-occupied units (2000 and 2010 Decennial Census) and Table H-12 Housing Value of Owner-occupied units (2011-2015 American Community Survey).

Median housing value for Walnut Grove in 2015 was \$83,400. In comparison, Etowah County showed \$100,400, Alabama

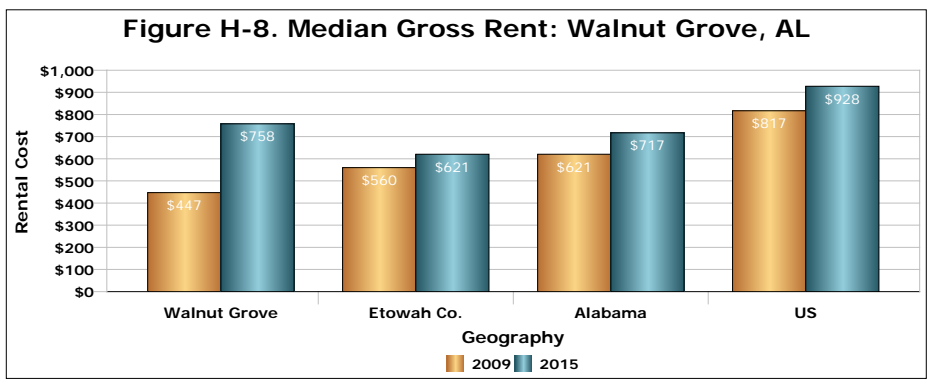
\$125,500 and the US \$178,600, further indicating lower housing value for the town.

Housing Affordability

Walnut Grove 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. The city’s housing substantially 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.)”.

Rental Costs

In terms of rental costs, in 2015, Walnut Grove reported renters paying considerably less than average with median contract rent at \$340. For comparison, Etowah County showed median contract rent at \$427, Alabama \$520 and the US \$776. However, for the purpose of this study, median gross rent was the primary focus since this includes other factors affecting affordability such as utility costs. In contrast to contract rent, Walnut Grove showed significantly high gross rent, with median gross rent increasing from



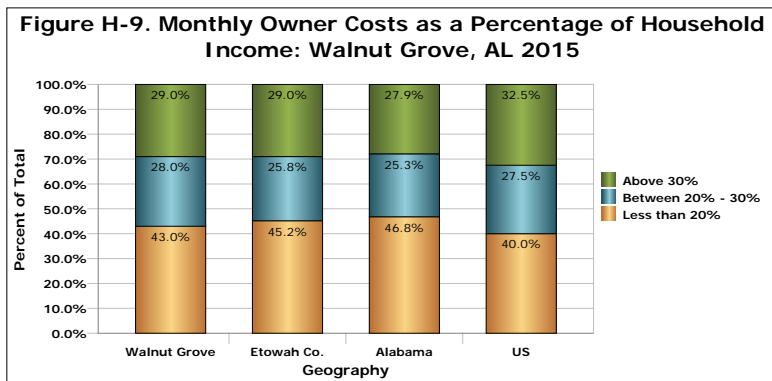
\$447 in 2009 to \$758 in 2015, an increase by \$311. Etowah County reported higher median gross rent at \$560 in 2009, compared to Walnut Grove, yet lower median gross rent at \$621 in 2015. Similarly, Alabama exhibited significantly higher median gross rent at \$621 in 2009 yet somewhat lower rent

at \$717 in 2015. For comparison, the US showed higher median gross rent in both 2009 and 2015 than the town, county, and state during this time. Such a rise in gross rent for the town could be attributed to higher costs in utilities. From previous housing information discussed, homeowners of manufactured housing in deteriorating condition with higher household size could be exceeding average gross rental costs. Subsequently, these structures might cost more to heat and cool than a more energy efficient home with less occupancy. Figure H-8 illustrates median gross rent for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2009 and 2015. From the chart, notice the town's significant growth in median gross rent compared to the county, state, and nation. For more information see Table H-13 Housing Value/Cost 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.

Walnut Grove showed reasonable affordability in owner occupied housing and similar trends to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, town reported



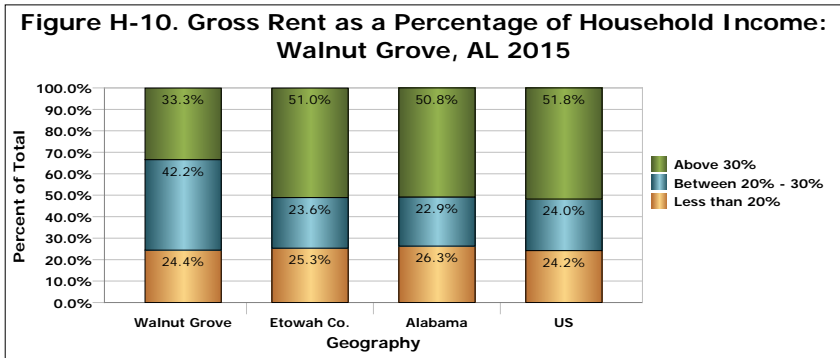
approximately 71% of all households spending less than 30% of their household income on housing costs, while the county also recorded 71%, the state 72%, and the nation 67%. In 2015, approximately 29% of all households in Walnut Grove spent more than 30% of their household income on housing costs, similar to Etowah County at 29%, and comparable to Alabama at 27% and the US at 32%. This information

indicates that owner-occupancy for the town is reasonably affordable and should not be a consideration for improvement in the near future. Figure H-9 illustrates monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015.

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.

In terms of renter-occupied affordability, in 2015, Walnut Grove showed considerably higher affordability with approximately 66% of renter-occupied households spending less than 30% of their household income



on housing costs. Both Etowah County and Alabama, during this time, reported 49% of renters spending less than 30% of their household income on housing costs and the US slightly less at 48%. Such high affordability could be attributed to larger household size, as previously discussed, since more people occupying a home could be

contributing to the overall household income, thus off-setting high rental costs. Figure H-10 examines gross rent as a percentage of household income for Walnut Grove, Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015. Notice from the chart that the town held a considerably smaller portion of households spending more than 30% of their household income on housing costs compared to the county, state, and nation. For more information on housing affordability see Table H-14 *Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income* and Table H-15 *Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income* in Appendix C.

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 residential, for Walnut Grove, was the single most dominant housing type, accounting for 60% of the town's total housing stock, while manufactured housing (mobile homes) comprised 36% and multi-family a minor 2%. Etowah County reported different findings with 77% of the housing stock constituting single-family and both manufactured housing and multi-family recording 11%. Alabama showed similar results to Etowah County with 70% in single-family homes, 16% multi-family, and 13% manufactured homes, while the US reported 67%, 26%, and 6%, respectively.

Assessment: Single-family, in 2015, was the single most dominant housing type in Walnut Grove. However, manufactured housing, at 36%, comprised a significantly larger portion of the town's housing stock than shown in Etowah County, Alabama, and the US.

Tenure and Occupancy

In 2015, the town showed only 20% renter-occupied housing, while the county reported 28%, the state 31% and nation 36% indicating considerably less occupied homes being rented in town and more homes owner-occupied by comparison. Also in 2015, occupancy for Walnut Grove at 85% followed a similar pattern to Etowah County and Alabama, both at 84%, and the US at 87%.

Assessment: In terms of tenure and occupancy, Walnut Grove reported similar patterns to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US.

Vacancy Status

Walnut Grove's vacancy status followed somewhat similar trends to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. According to the American Community Survey, between 2009 and 2015, the portion of the town's units listed as "other vacant" decreased considerably from 100% of all units to 74%, composing the single-largest vacancy status in the town. Meanwhile, the county increased in the portion of "other vacant", during this time, from 55% to 70% while the state declined slightly from 44% to 43%. The nation also rose slightly from 29% to 32%. This information, however, indicates a similar pattern, showing that "other vacant" units composed the single-largest group of vacant housing units in the town, county, state, and nation. Vacant units rented or sold represented a distant second to "other vacant" in Walnut Grove, growing from 0% to 13% in 2015 while Etowah County reported a slight decline from 6% to 2%, Alabama remained at 7% and the US declined slightly from 8% to 7%.

Assessment: Walnut Grove's single largest use for vacant homes was "other vacant" similar to Etowah County, yet exceeding Alabama and the US which showed considerably larger portions of miscellaneous and for rent only.

Household Size

Walnut Grove showed somewhat considerably different trends in household size. According to the American Community Survey, between 2009 and 2015 Walnut Grove increased considerably in the portion of households holding 4 or more persons from 25% to 40% while Etowah County increased minimally from 18% to 19%. Both Alabama and the US decreased slightly in this household size from 20% to 19% and 23% to 22%, respectively. In contrast to significant growth in 4 person households the town declined substantially in 2 person households from 35% in 2009 to 22% in 2015, while the county, state, and nation maintained consistent portions in this size category.

Assessment: Household size for Walnut Grove, in 2015, reported a considerably larger portion of 4 person or more households than shown in Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. Decline in 2 person households and increase in 4 person or more households could be due to new and younger families leaving the community to find employment in other places, as suggested in the economy chapter, and older and more established families sharing homes to reduce housing costs.

Housing Stock Age

According to the American Community Survey, Walnut Grove's housing stock comprises somewhat newer homes. The slight majority (56%) of homes in Walnut Grove were built post 1979. Etowah County reported 35% of homes built during this time while Alabama and the US showed 48% and 41%, respectively. Approximately 41% of the town's homes were built from 1980 to 1999 while the county showed 27%, the state 34%, and the nation 28%. Furthermore, only a minor 15% of the town's housing stock was built prior to 1960, which was substantially less than the county at 33%, the state (21%) and nation at 31%. Median year structure built for Walnut Grove in 2015 was 1980 while Etowah County reported 1972, Alabama 1979, and the US 1975.

Assessment: Walnut Grove reported, in 2015, a larger portion of newer homes, built post 1980, than Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. This could be attributed to new manufactured housing built during this time.

Physical Conditions

Physical housing conditions, obtained from the 2017 EARPDC housing conditions inventory, reported that the considerable majority, approximately 66%, of all homes in the community were in deteriorating condition, 30% were in sound condition, and 3% dilapidated. Manufactured homes for Walnut Grove exhibited the most needs for improvements with approximately 109 structures (88%) in deteriorating condition. Homes serving as recreational vehicles (RV) only accounted for 3 structures and multi-family 12 units. Single-family homes also showed signs of needed improvements with 99 (50%) structures in deteriorating condition, 90 (45%) in sound condition, and 7 (3%) dilapidated.

Assessment: Walnut Grove shows considerable need for housing improvement, particularly with manufactured homes.

Housing Value

In terms of housing value Walnut Grove rated considerably low. According to the American Community Survey, in 2015, approximately 30% of homes in Walnut Grove were valued less than \$15 K, while Etowah County reported 22%, Alabama 16%, and the US 9%. Homes valued \$100 K and above for the town accounted for 39% of the housing stock, while the county, in this value category, showed 50%, the state 60%, and nation 75%.

Assessment: Walnut Grove housing value rated substantially lower than Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015.

Housing Affordability

Walnut Grove showed significantly high gross rent, with median gross rent increasing from \$447 in 2009 to \$758 in 2015, an increase by \$311. Etowah County reported higher median gross rent at \$560 in 2009, compared to Walnut Grove, yet lower median gross rent at \$621 in 2015. Similarly, Alabama exhibited significantly higher median gross rent at \$621 in 2009 yet somewhat lower rent at \$717 in 2015. For comparison, the US showed higher median gross rent in both 2009 and 2015 than the town, county, and state during this time. Such a rise in gross rent for the town could be attributed to higher costs in utilities.

Assessment: In 2015, Walnut Grove exhibited significantly higher gross rent than Etowah County and Alabama, yet considerably lower gross rent than the US.

Affordability of Owner-occupied Housing

Walnut Grove showed reasonable affordability in owner occupied housing and similar trends to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US. According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, town reported approximately 71% of all households spending less than 30% of their household income on housing costs, while the county also recorded 71%, the state 72%, and the nation 67%. In 2015, approximately 29% of all households in Walnut Grove spent more than 30% of their household income on housing costs, similar to Etowah County at 29%, and comparable to Alabama at 27% and the US at 32%.

Assessment: Walnut Grove, in 2015, showed similar owner-occupied housing affordability compared to Etowah County, Alabama, and the US.

Affordability of Renter-occupied Housing

In terms of renter-occupied affordability, in 2015, Walnut Grove showed considerably higher affordability with approximately 66% of renter-occupied households spending less than 30% of their household income on housing costs. Both Etowah County and Alabama, during this time, reported 49% of renters spending less than 30% of their household income on housing costs and the US slightly less at 48%. Such high affordability could be attributed to larger household size, as previously discussed, since more people occupying a home could be contributing to the overall household income, thus off-setting high rental costs.

Assessment: Walnut Grove showed substantially more renter-occupied housing affordability than Etowah County, Alabama, and the US in 2015.

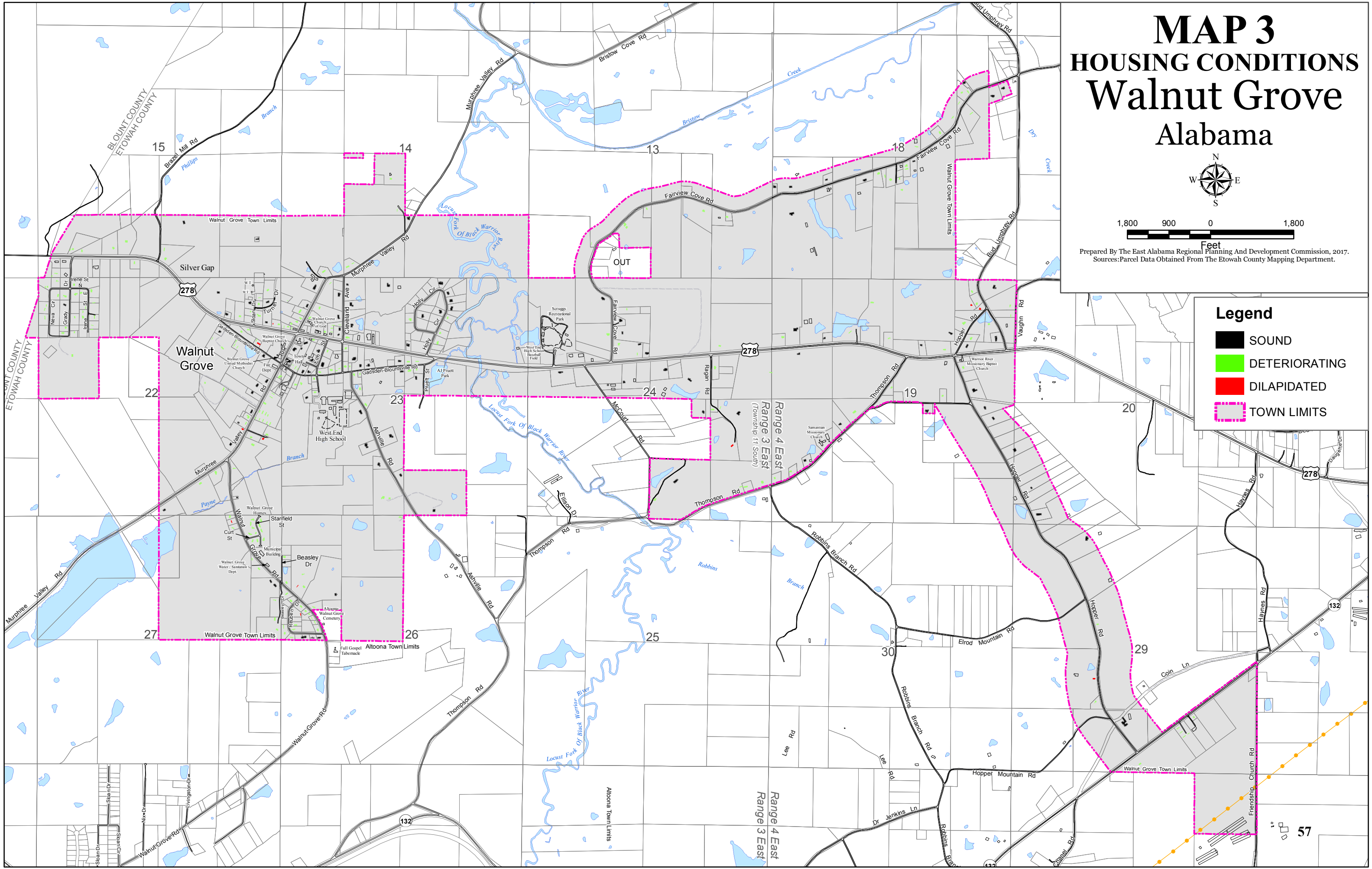
MAP 3 HOUSING CONDITIONS Walnut Grove Alabama



Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2017.
Sources: Parcel Data Obtained From The Etowah County Mapping Department.

Legend

- SOUND
- DETERIORATING
- DILAPIDATED
- TOWN LIMITS



CHAPTER V: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are crucial to the planning effort, affecting growth and development throughout the town. 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 town. 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 town or community creates additional opportunities for growth and development by upgrading and extending their services to other areas of town. 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 eight community facilities have been identified and discussed in this chapter. These include: town administration, law enforcement, fire and rescue, education, public library, parks and recreation, senior center, and water utilities.

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 Walnut Grove town administration. This chapter reviews these findings in context and as a needs summation in the analytical summary at the end of the chapter.

Town Administration

Town administration for the Town of Walnut Grove oversees the daily tasks and functions needed to operate and maintain town owned public facilities and services throughout the community. Offices located in Walnut Grove Town Hall include the Town Clerk, Mayor's Office, and Water Clerk. The Town of Walnut Grove also oversees municipal water service, garbage collection, police and fire protection. Aside from town council, Walnut Grove town government maintains no other boards, committees, or organizations. The municipal building is currently adequate for meeting the town's administrative needs and no improvements are scheduled for the near future. At present there are no needed improvements for city administration.

Town Council

The Town of Walnut Grove Town Council consists of five council members and the Mayor. Elected officials serve 4-year terms (not staggered), elected at the same time and running consecutively. In addition to determining the town budget, Town Council also makes decisions regarding town 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 Town Clerk is to arrange the council's agenda for meeting, determine rules of order, keep records of meetings, and sit in on budget meetings. Council meetings are conducted in the Town Hall Council Chamber on the first Monday of each month at 6:00 pm.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

Walnut Grove's Police Department maintains the goal of serving and protecting the residents of Walnut Grove. Department staff currently consists of one part-time officer and one security guard, which is adequate in meeting needs since the Etowah County Sheriff deputy responds to 911 calls when the officer is not on duty. The town's police jurisdiction extends 1 ½ mile past the town limits. At present there are no plans to expand the police jurisdiction. The most frequent crimes in town involve domestic violence.

The Walnut Grove Police Department currently owns and maintains the following vehicles:

- 1-2015 Chevy Impala – Police.
- 1-2009 Ford Crown Victoria – Security.

Currently there are no needed improvements for the police department.

Fire and Rescue

The Walnut Grove Fire Department was founded in 1989 with the goal to protect life and property of town residents of the Town of Walnut Grove. Department staff currently comprises 18 volunteer fire fighters, which is not deemed adequate in meeting protection needs. According to professional opinion, 25 volunteer fire fighters are needed to better serve the community. In addition to fire protection, Walnut Grove's Fire Department offers medical services with three fire fighters having completed paramedic training. Emergency calls are dispatched from Etowah County 911 and available volunteers respond accordingly. The fire department's jurisdiction covers 22 square miles of town and the surrounding county area.

Current vehicles used by the Walnut Grove Fire Department include:

- 1-1995 Ford F800 E-One C803 Pumper Fire Apparatus.
- 1-1997 GMC Sierra 3500 One-ton GMC with utility bed.
- 1-1989 Pearce Dash Pumper.
- 1-2006 Ford F550 Truck.

The fire department should work with the town to create 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. For departments that protect properties in areas both with and without hydrants, such as Walnut Grove, ISO may assign two ratings. The ISO defines any property within 1,000 feet of a hydrant as "city" and any property further than 1,000 feet from a hydrant as "rural". Thus a dual rating is assigned with the first rating being the city rating (area with hydrants) and the second

the rural rating (area without hydrants). ISO criteria are based on three major evaluated categories which include:

- Fire alarms—communications center, telephone service, emergency listings in phone book, and dispatch circuits,
- 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.

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. Walnut Grove’s Fire Department ISO rating was 6/8, which is a below average score. According to professional opinion, the two most important action items the fire department could do to improve ISO is to improve the water system and E-911 communications.

Educational Facilities

Educational facilities and services play a major role in community development by preparing and training individuals and youth for the competitive workforce and life-long learning. The town’s education system comprises one school—West End High School.

West End High School

West End High School was founded around 1966-67 when Altoona High School was combined with Walnut Grove High School. The school’s mission is to educate and inspire every student to think, to learn, and to succeed. West End High School is accredited with the Alabama Department of Education. Furthermore, West End High School is part of the Etowah County School system. The mission of the Etowah County School system is as follows: *“To provide a rigorous, relevant education in a safe, student-centered environment that produces college and career ready graduates who contribute responsibly in a global community.”* Etowah County Schools seek to achieve this mission by offering the following programs at the High School level:

- ACCESS—is a Distance-Learning Program which provides all high school students web-based and/or video conferencing courses through a state-of-the-art fiber optic network.
- Advanced Placement courses—which offer high-achieving students the opportunity to prepare for higher coursework in college.

- Duel enrollment—allows students to receive early college credit by enrolling in courses offered by the University of Alabama (Early College), Gadsden State Community College, Snead State, and Jacksonville State University.
- Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative (AMSTI)—allows students to learn advanced skills in such professions through hands-on approaches and incorporates real-world applications in the classroom.

Presently, school staff at West End consists of 24 full-time teachers and 4 part-time, serving an enrollment of 401 students. The Student/Teacher ratio is 17:1, which is deemed sufficient for minimum educational offering. The school needs two more teachers to provide a more competitive class schedule and enhance teaching.

School facilities include 28 classrooms with a Band Room, Agricultural Classroom and Laboratory, Library, 2-Computer Labs, 2-Gyms, a Home Economics Room, Weight Room, and Science Lab. In terms of improvements to school facilities, West End needs a renovated dining area for the lunch room and a renovated Home Ec. facility. Expansions to school facilities are scheduled for calendar 2020 capital outlay for the Etowah County Schools system budget.

Additional items that West End High School needs to provide students with a better education and prepare them for today's workforce include the following:

1. Add two teacher units to allow more flexibility in scheduling the electives needed for today's workforce.
2. Receive funding to allow students to see and experience current workforce opportunities outside the Altoona/Walnut Grove area.
3. Offer job/workforce skill development in the higher end computer skills such as programming, code writing etc.

Westside Public Library

Walnut Grove's Westside Public Library was founded in 1991 with the goal to enable patrons served to become information literate. Information literate, as defined by the American Library Associations' Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, Final Report is: *"To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."*

In order to meet these requirements, Westside Public Library currently provides the following information resources: 11,913 volumes, 8 periodicals, 30 audio tapes, 106 video cassettes, and 127 video DVDs. The average monthly circulation is 65 and the library presently serves 1,289 members. Membership has been stable over the past 5 years. Library staff comprises 1 part-time worker.

Programs offered by the library include the following:

- Summer reading—on a yearly basis.
- Preschool reading—on a weekly basis.

- Community services—such as flu shots, voter registration, Medicare insurance sign-up, and income tax services.

Additional items that Westside Public Library needs to provide better services to the community and advance its goal comprise the following:

1. Increase hours of operation—to increase patronage.
2. Add a certified librarian—which would be needed to increase hours of operation.
3. Install a security system with locking cabinets and video surveillance.

Senior Center

Senior services and related facilities also play an important role in the community. The Walnut Grove Senior Center was established in 1978 with the goal to serve all seniors in the town limits of Walnut Grove and the neighboring town of Altoona. The center strives to meet senior needs and keep them active. Recreational activities and programs provided by the center includes games, trips, educational activities, and nutrition education.

Meals are provided to seniors on a daily basis at a present cost of \$3.36 per meal. Additionally the center requests a \$1.00 donation. The center serves around 20 meals at the facility and 7 meals are delivered to homebound at the same price. Seniors must be 60 years or older to receive a meal.

There are currently no plans for improvements to the Senior Center.

Parks and Recreation

The Town of Walnut Grove provides parks and recreation facilities and services for town residents and visitors to the community. Parks and recreation facilities for the Town of Walnut Grove include the following:

- WT Scruggs Ball Park—located on Hwy. 278 the park offers a paved walking track and 4 fenced in baseball fields.
- Walnut Grove Park—situated on Elm Street, provides playground equipment, tennis court, basketball goals, and the Community Center.
- AJ Pruett Park

Walnut Grove also offers a Recreational Building which is rented by community members for events such as showers, parties, and reunions. The town maintenance crew maintains all grounds. Sports leagues sponsored by the town consist of youth baseball leagues, youth football, cheerleading, and soccer. In terms of park facility expansion, the town could build a soccer field in the near future.

Utilities

Water service to Walnut Grove is provided by the Walnut Grove Water Board. Sewage disposal for Walnut Grove is conducted through individual septic systems on an as needed basis.

Water Utilities

The Walnut Grove Water Board currently serve 22 commercial establishments and 358 residential. Presently there are no plans to extend the town's water system to other places. The town's primary water source is the Walnut Grove well which provides a capacity of 200,000 gallons per day and has been deemed adequate in meeting the needs of the general public. The well uses a Chlorine based water filtration system and, as of recently, a new pump and motor was installed to service the well. Average daily water use is 78,900 gallons per day with an average monthly water rate of \$23.67. Table CF-1 displays water line size and distribution for Walnut Grove in 2017.

Water Line Size (Inches Diameter)	Linear Distance (Feet)	Percent Distribution
Less than 3	11,844	14.2%
3	1,473	1.8%
4	639	0.8%
6	58,929	70.6%
8	10,592	12.7%
Total	83,477	100.0%

Source: EARPDC Water Line Inventory, 2017.

The town'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 lines, 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. Since the considerable majority of the town's land use is residential, water lines of 6 inches or larger should suffice to provide adequate water service throughout the community. However, the town has plans to upgrade 2 inch lines to 6 inch in a few needed areas.

In terms of fire protection, the town provides 57 fire hydrants placed in strategic locations throughout the community, serving 360 residential units. According to professional opinion, the town should install five more hydrants to better serve the community.

Analytical Summary

This analytical summary outlines the top needs determined by each community facility department/organization in the Town of Walnut Grove in 2017. Results were based on the 2017 Community Facilities Survey distributed and collected by town administration.

Town Administration

- Currently no improvements needed.

Law Enforcement

- Currently no improvements needed.

Fire and Rescue

- Improved water system—upgrade from 2 inch lines to 6 inch in various areas.
- Improved E-911 communications (conducted through Etowah County).
- Install 5 new fire hydrants in the town.

Education

- Add two teacher units to allow more flexibility in scheduling the electives needed for today's workforce.
- Receive funding to allow students to see and experience current workforce opportunities outside the Altoona/Walnut Grove area.
- Offer job/workforce skill development in the higher end computer skills such as programming, code writing etc.

Westside Public Library

- Increase hours of operation—to increase patronage.
- Add a certified librarian—which would be needed to increase hours of operation.
- Install a security system with locking cabinets and video surveillance.

Senior Center

- Currently no improvements needed.

Parks and Recreation

- Build a new soccer field.

Water Utilities

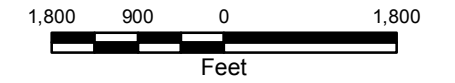
- Update water lines from 2 inch lines to 6 inch in various areas.
- Establish a new Water Well.
- Install 5 new fire hydrants in the town.

MAP 4

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Walnut Grove

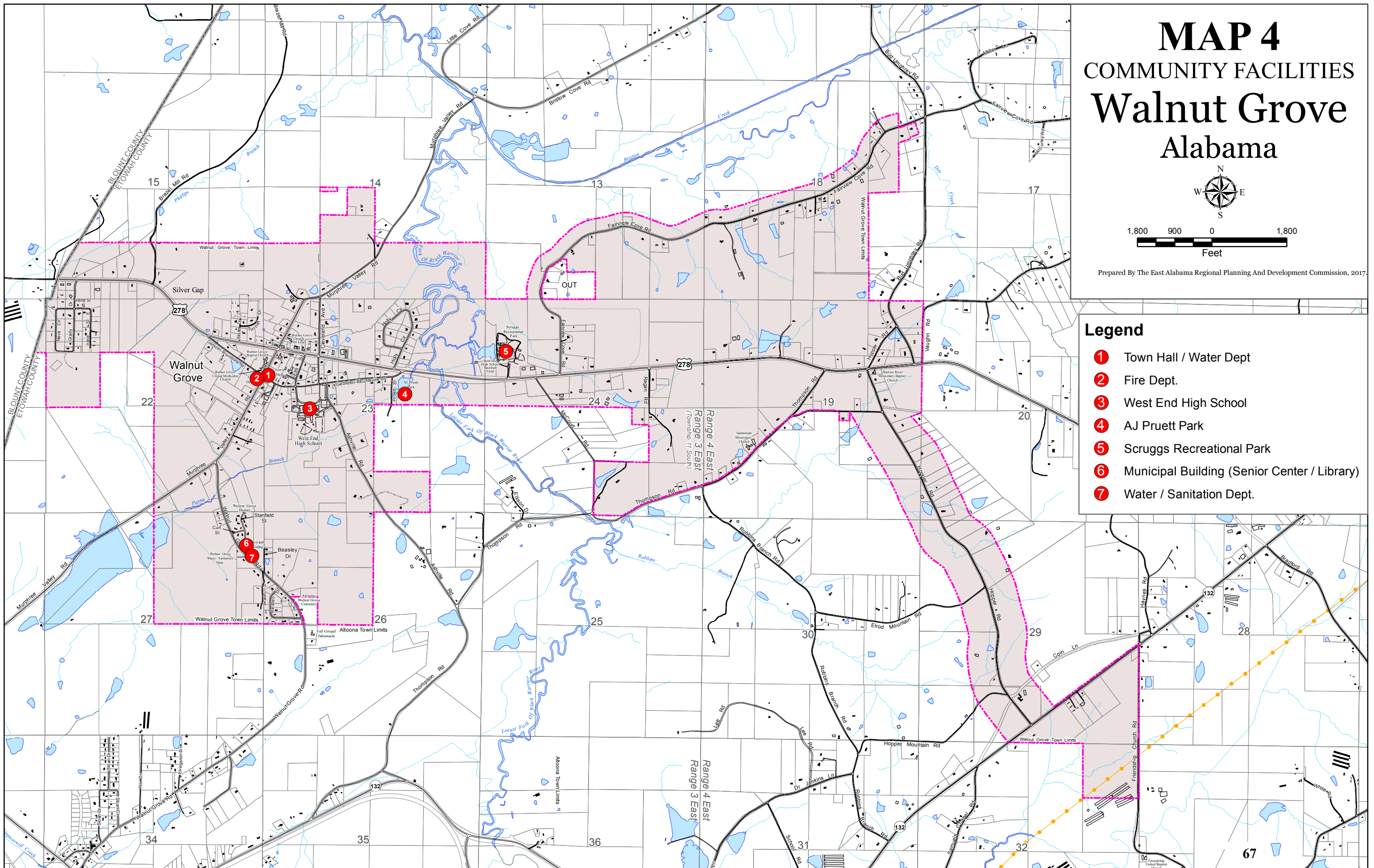
Alabama



Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2017.

Legend

- 1** Town Hall / Water Dept
- 2** Fire Dept.
- 3** West End High School
- 4** AJ Pruet Park
- 5** Scruggs Recreational Park
- 6** Municipal Building (Senior Center / Library)
- 7** Water / Sanitation Dept.

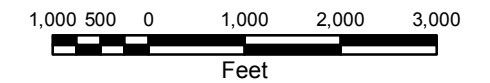


MAP 5

WATER UTILITIES

Walnut Grove

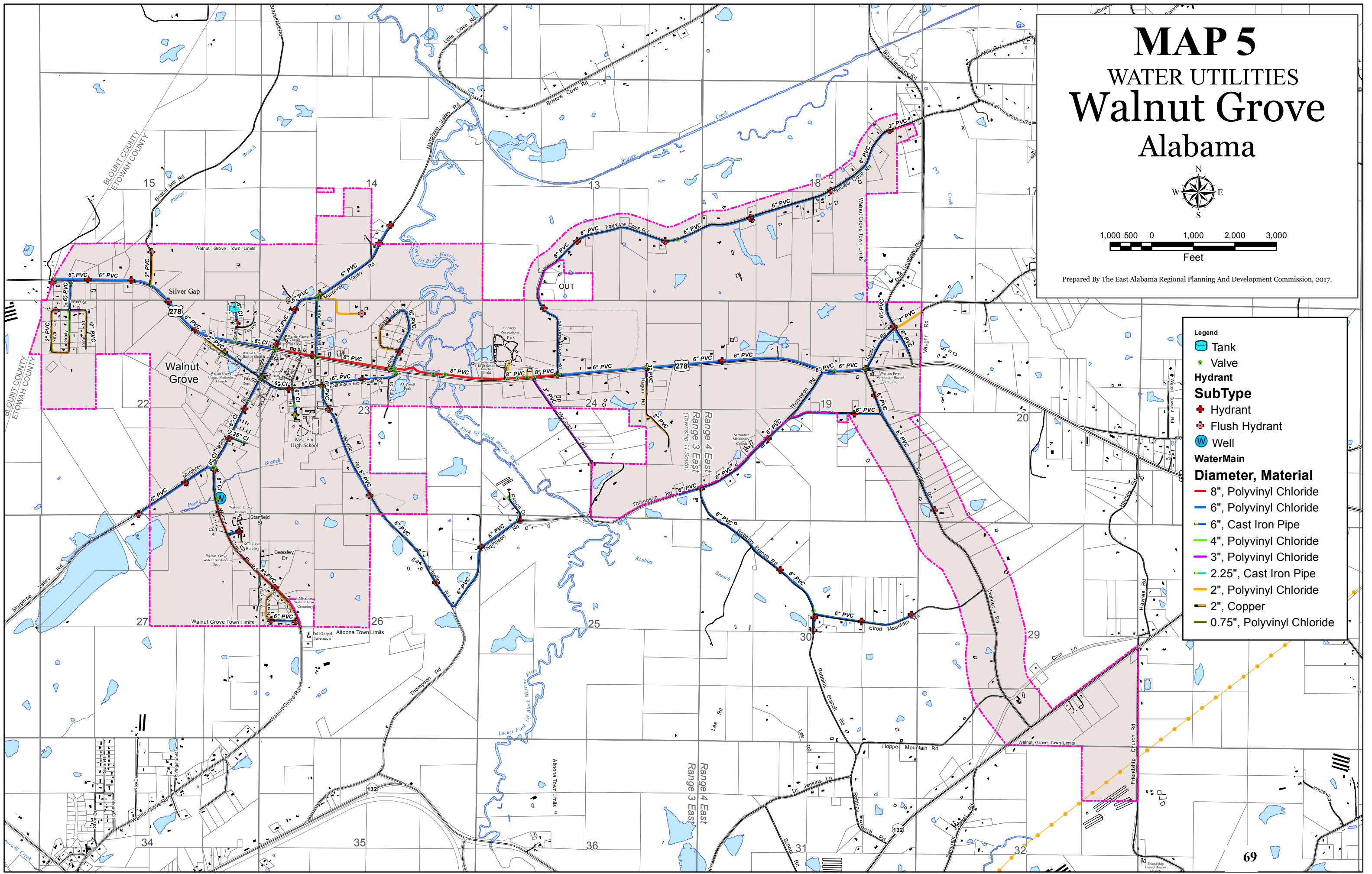
Alabama



Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2017.

Legend

- Tank
- Valve
- Hydrant**
- SubType**
- Hydrant
- Flush Hydrant
- Well
- WaterMain**
- Diameter, Material**
- 8", Polyvinyl Chloride
- 6", Polyvinyl Chloride
- 6", Cast Iron Pipe
- 4", Polyvinyl Chloride
- 3", Polyvinyl Chloride
- 2.25", Cast Iron Pipe
- 2", Polyvinyl Chloride
- 2", Copper
- 0.75", Polyvinyl Chloride



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 community'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 Town of Walnut Grove. Traffic volumes along US Hwy. 278 (AL Hwy. 74) through the town 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. Walnut Grove is located approximately 12 miles west of the nearest interstate, Interstate 59, which extends from the major cities of Birmingham to the southwest and Chattanooga TN in the northeast.

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. Federal Highway 278 is the only arterial

roadway in Walnut Grove, extending the entire length of the town traversing east and west, making connections to the cities of Cullman (Cullman County) and Interstate 65 in the west and Attalla and Interstate 59 in the east.

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. Walnut Grove Road and Murphree Valley Road are the two collector streets in Walnut Grove.

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 is one federal road in Walnut Grove, US Hwy. 278.

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 town.

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. There are no stand-alone state roads in Walnut Grove.

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 town boundaries (excludes private roads). All roads in town 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 town 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, Walnut Grove 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 town 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 6: *Transportation Plan*. Stations are marked in parentheses with 2015 traffic counts and LOS identified below.

Federal Highway 278

Federal Highway 278 serves as the main transportation route through Walnut Grove, connecting the town to the cities of Attalla and Interstate 59 to the east and Cullman (Cullman County) and Interstate 65 to the west. The route traversing through Walnut Grove is classified as a 2-lane undivided rural principal arterial. Table T-1 shows traffic volumes and level of service along US Hwy. 278 in the Town of Walnut Grove from 2006 to 2015.

Traffic Count Location	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	%Change	LOS
AL 74 West of McCourt Rd. (807)	5,880	4,720	5,380	5,250	5,000	5,040	5,040	-14.3%	A
AL 74 at Blount County Line (519)	5,170	4,820	4,910	4,790	4,950	4,990	4,990	-3.5%	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 principal arterial highway is set at 17,800 AADT, indicating that traffic volumes at 4,000 and 5,000 AADT could increase substantially, even triple, before reaching maximum capacity. Level of service A, free flow, traffic was recorded at every traffic count station along the route, indicating that no significant highway widening projects need be considered in the future at this time. Furthermore, decreases in traffic volumes by -14% and -3% indicate that major construction projects may be limited to repaving instead of widening and adding turn lanes.

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 $2.2 \times 10,230$ 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 2024 as well as probable Level of Service at these count stations in the city at this time. Traffic volumes for 2006 and 2015 have been used for point of reference data. Table T-2 displays AADT for the Town of Walnut Grove in 2006 and 2015 as well as 2024 traffic projections and accompanying LOS for the city’s major roadways.

Roadway	Location of Traffic Count	2006	2015	2024	LOS
US Hwy. 278	AL 74 West of McCourt Rd. (807)	5,880	5,040	4,200	A
	AL 74 at Blount County Line (519)	5,170	4,990	4,810	A

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

Traffic projections indicate that Walnut Grove should maintain free traffic flow into 2024 with Level of Service A, free flow traffic. Given the current information, the Town of Walnut Grove should not need to consider any major traffic improvement projects in the near future. However, as a planning consideration, the town should consider plans and policies which promote and enhance traffic safety and access management along US Hwy. 278 as well as other roads in the community.

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 Walnut Grove 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.

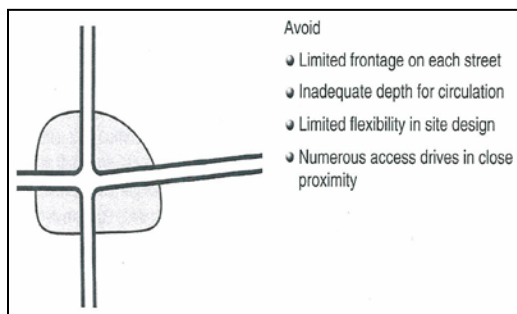


Figure T-1. Improper Commercial Node.

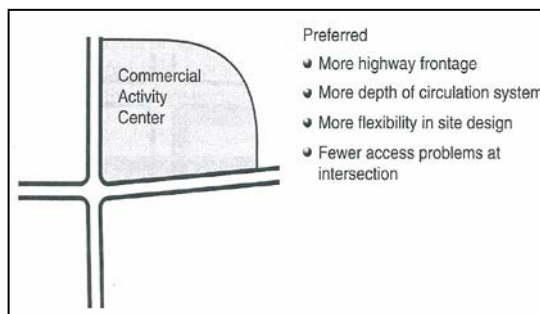


Figure T-2. Proper Commercial Node

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.

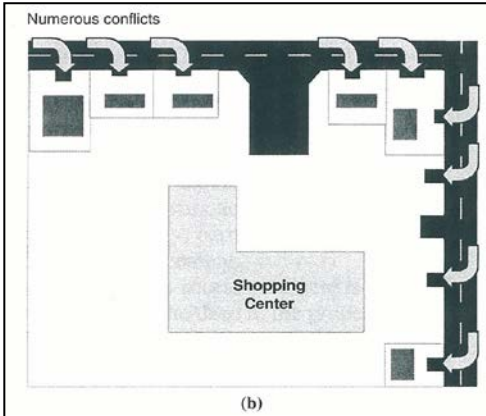


Figure T-3. Improper Corner Parcel Access

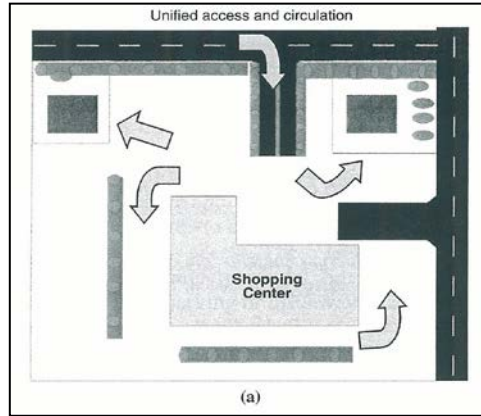


Figure T-4. Proper Corner Parcel Access

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.

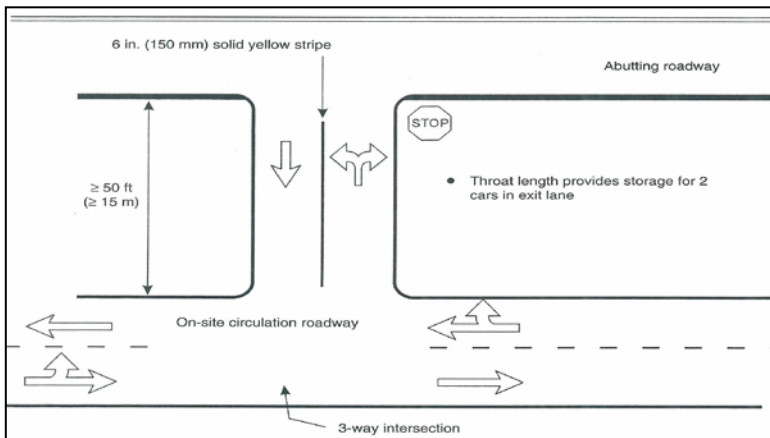
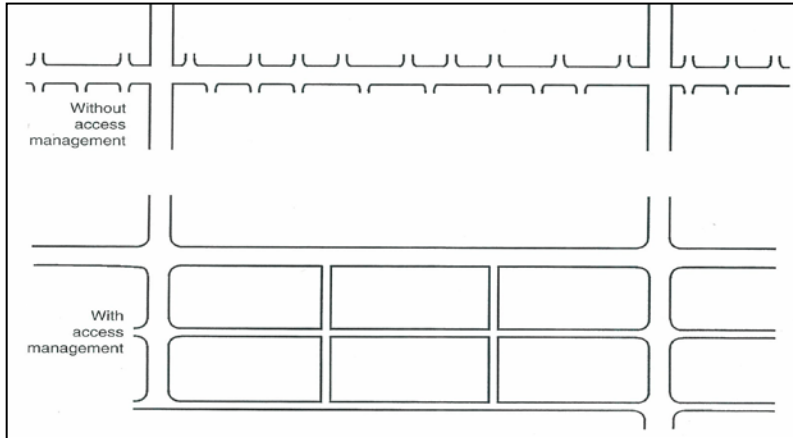


Figure T-5. Proper Throat Length

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.

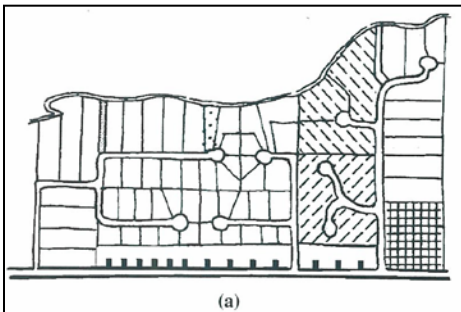


Figure T-7. Improper Connectivity

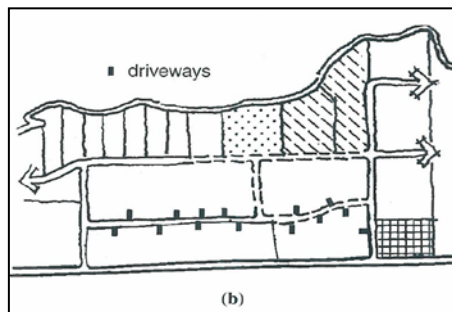


Figure T-8. Proper Connectivity

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.

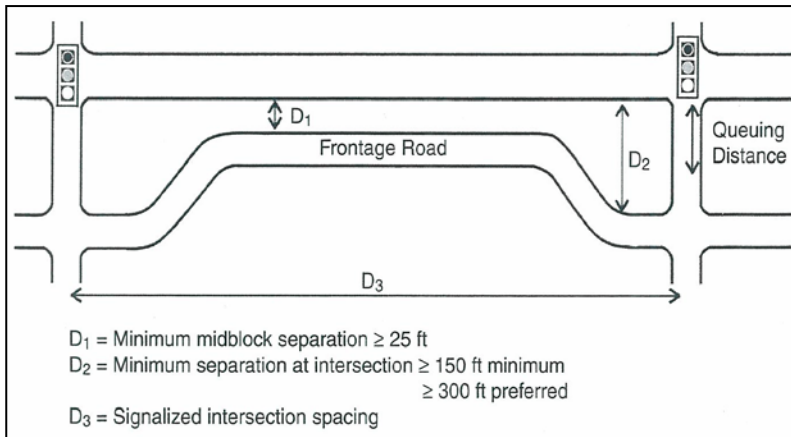


Figure T-9. Minimum Separation for Frontage Roads

Transportation Plan

As a growing and thriving community, the Town of Walnut Grove needs to plan for effective and efficient transportation. The primary form of transportation throughout the town is personal vehicular with most traffic generation along US Hwy. 278, Walnut Grove Road, and Murphee Valley Road. Although the Walnut Grove reports level of service A, free flow traffic, throughout the community, the town 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 Hopper Rd. from US Hwy. 278 to Co. Rd. 132. Timeframe 1-2 years.
2. Repave Ragan Rd. from US Hwy. 278 to dead end ½ mile. Timeframe 1-2 years.
3. Repave Murphee Valley Rd. from town limits to US Hwy. 278. Timeframe 1-2 years.
4. Repave Walnut Grove Rd. from Murphee Valley Rd. to town limits. Timeframe 3-5 years.
5. Repave Grady Drive from US Hwy. 278 to Irene Str. Timeframe 3-5 years.

For improvement locations see Map 6: *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 town:

US Hwy. 278

Classification: 2-lane undivided rural principal arterial.

Maximum Capacity: 17,800 AADT

Capacity Assessment: Traffic volumes at 4,000 and 5,000 AADT along this route could increase substantially, even double, before reaching maximum capacity.

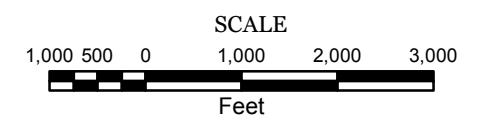
Recommendations: No significant plans for roadway expansion need to be made at this time or in the near future.

MAP 6

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Walnut Grove

Alabama



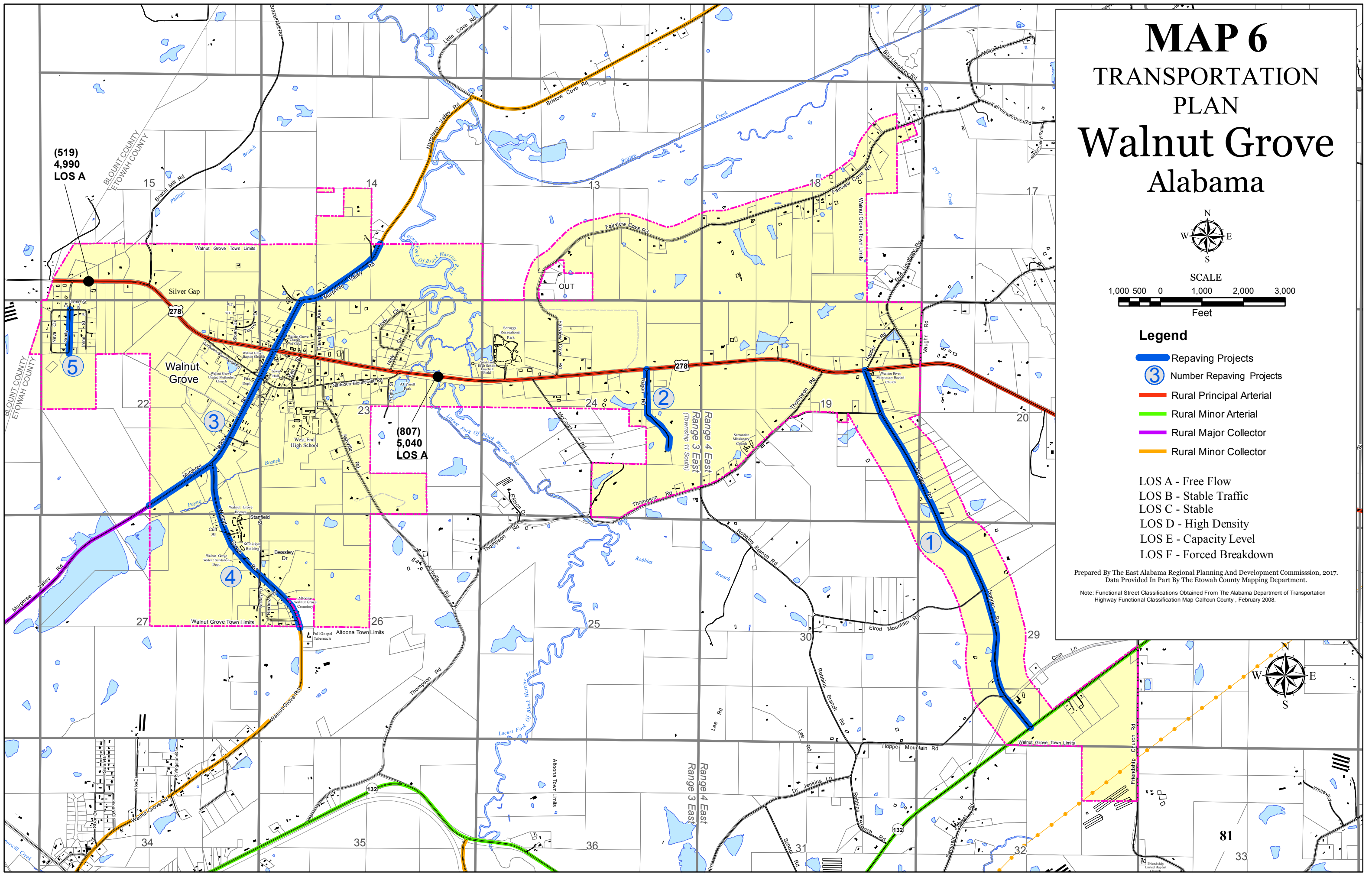
Legend

- Repaving Projects
- Number Repaving Projects
- Rural Principal Arterial
- Rural Minor Arterial
- Rural Major Collector
- Rural Minor Collector

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

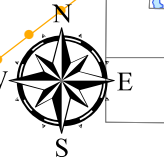
Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2017.
Data Provided In Part By The Etowah County Mapping Department.

Note: Functional Street Classifications Obtained From The Alabama Department of Transportation
Highway Functional Classification Map Calhoun County , February 2008.



81

33



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 eco-tourism. 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 Walnut Grove'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 soil characteristics, 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 Town of Walnut Grove is located in the western edge of Etowah County bordering Blount County and nestled in the southwestern portion of the Appalachian mountain chain. Nearby natural resources include Guntersville Lake, Alabama's largest lake with 75 miles of shoreline and 69,000 acres of water, which sits about 20 miles to the north of town. Additionally, Guntersville State Park provides 6,000 acres of natural woodlands for camping and hiking and 36 miles of hiking and biking trails. Thanks to conservation efforts to protect the Bald Eagle, the park has become a focal point of Eagle Awareness in the state and offers programs each year in January and February to educate and entertain the public about our national symbol.

According to soil inventory data, Walnut Grove showed mostly flood prone areas as the most substantial environmental constraint throughout the town, covering 818 acres and 25% of the total area acreage. Most of these areas are located in the central and western parts of town along 100-year floodplains on the Black Warrior River, which comprise 300 acres and 9% of the total acreage. 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. Septic restrictive areas or areas requiring sewer are also an environmental constraint consideration with 477 acres and 14% coverage. These areas consist of soils unfit for septic system percolation and drainage, located in the eastern portion of town. Additionally, steep slopes compose 585 acres and 18% coverage in town, mostly located at the western and eastern edge. Substantial development in steep slope areas should take

necessary precautions in order to prevent erosion and water run-off which could cause structural instabilities. Wetlands encompass only a minor portion of town with 3 (0.1%) acres being emergent and 20 acres (0.6%) forested/shrub. The National Wetlands Inventory, under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, generally describes freshwater emergent wetland (Map Code: PEM) as herbaceous march, fen, swale, and wet meadow. These wetlands are characterized by erect and rooted herbaceous hydrophytes (plants that grow only in water), excluding moss and lichens, with vegetation present for most of the growing season, usually dominated by perennial plants, which die off each year. Freshwater forested/shrub wetland (Map Code: PFO, PSS) is described as forested swamp or wetland shrub bog or wetland. These wetlands are generally denser in plant life than emergent and provide woody vegetation 6 meters tall or taller. Table EF-1 shows environmental features/constraints and distribution for Walnut Grove in 2017.

Table EF-1. Environmental Features: Walnut Grove, 2017		
Environmental Feature/Constraint	Acreage	Percent Distribution
Steep Slopes	585.08	18.1%
Septic Restrictive (Areas Requiring Sewer)	477.57	14.8%
Flood Prone Areas	818.17	25.3%
Freshwater Emergent Wetlands	3.74	0.1%
Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands	20.70	0.6%
Floodplains (100 yr.)	300.37	9.3%
Floodplains (500 yr.)	5.63	0.2%
Total Area Acreage	3,234.99	100.0%

Source: EARPDC database, 2017.

Soil Characteristics

Proper knowledge and understanding of soil characteristics is useful in determining environmental constraints and land suitability for specified development intensity. Soil types and classifications are extensively numerous and any given community could discover a myriad of samples to categorize. Therefore the scope of this soil characteristics study is to examine only the most commonly associated soil types, distinguishing environmental constraints such as steep slopes, floodplains and wetlands, flood-prone, and areas unfit for septic systems (septic restrictive). Walnut Grove's land use constraints are generally composed of four broad soil classifications/series: 1) Minvale Series 2) Townley Series, 3) Chewacla Series, and 4) Cloudland Series. The *Environmental Constraints Map* (Map 7) identifies and locates the town's environmental constraints based on these and other soil classifications in order to guide and direct land use and development decisions accordingly. Soil information was made available through the *Soil Survey of Etowah County, 1977*. The following highlights list environmental constraints in Walnut Grove along with their associated soil series or classifications, characteristics, and pertaining development limitations:

- **Steep Slopes**—Minvale—characteristic of deep, well-drained, moderately permeable soils with moderate water capacity. Soils are formed on uplands in residuum weathered from cherty limestone. Slopes range from 2 to 45 percent, but dominantly 6 to 15 percent. Potential for urban

uses is poor due to steep slopes and severe limitation for septic tank absorption fields and dwellings. Soils have fair potential for woodland wildlife habitat.

- ***Septic Restrictive***—Townley Series—comprise of moderately deep, well drained, slowly permeable soils with moderate available water capacity. Soils provide fair to poor potential for most urban uses. Low strength, depth to bedrock, and slow permeability are severe limitations to significant development. Slopes range from 15 to 30 percent. Sewer lines need to be extended into these areas to support development since septic fields are not feasible.
- ***Floodplain and wetlands***—Chewacla Series—constitute deep, somewhat poorly drained soil on bottoms and drainage ways on low terraces in the Appalachian Ridges and Valleys. Water capacity is high and soil is moderately permeable. Soil has poor potential for most urban uses due to flooding and wetness, but provides a good source of top soil. These areas should be preserved and planned for parks and recreation, open space, or low density residential development where feasible.
- ***Floodprone***—Cloudland Series—consist of deep, moderately drained soil formed in alluvium material on terraces and upland depressions in Appalachian Ridges and Valleys. Soil is slowly permeable with moderate available water capacity. Potential for most urban uses is poor with this soil due to slow permeability in the subsoil, flooding, and wetness. Similar to floodplains and wetlands, floodprone areas would best be suited for parks and recreation, open space, or low density residential development where feasible, however, these areas could sustain slightly more intensive development in locations which do not overlap floodways and wetlands.

Step 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.

Walnut Grove has holds some steep slope coverage, as previously discussed, with approximately 585 acres and 18% land coverage within the town limits, located primarily in the western portion of town. Most of this area should be preserved for parks and recreation, with low density residential development where feasible.

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.

Walnut Grove’s 100-year (Zone A) floodplains and 500-year floodplains (Zone B) are located primarily along the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River and Payne Branch both of which extend through the central portion of town. Floodplain acreage constitutes 300 acres of 100-year (9% of the total land area)

and 5 acres of 500-year (0.2%). Floodplains and flood prone areas are shown on the *Environmental Constraints* Map (Map 7) and may overlap each other at particular locales.

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. Walnut Grove's local water resources include the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River and the Payne Branch.

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.

Walnut Grove determined wetland areas cover approximately 20 acres (0.6% of the total land), of freshwater forested/shrub and 3 acres (0.1%) freshwater emergent located the central part of town. Freshwater forested/shrub wetlands are situated in the central portion of town along the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River. For more detail see Map 7: *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. Walnut Grove should consider identifying lands sensitive to environmental degradation and work with the Georgia-Alabama Land Trust to adequately reserve and manage land for wildlife preservation. The Georgia-Alabama Land Trust is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) conservation organization 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 2017, the Georgia-Alabama Land Trust has safeguarded more than 350,000 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 Walnut Grove. As a planning consideration, Walnut Grove should promote and encourage land and wildlife preservation in order to enhance the town's draw as an outdoor recreational community. Wildlife preservation could be promoted through designation of conservation easements in floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and other areas where development is already substantially limited, for example, designation of floodplains and wetlands along US Hwy. 278 in the center part of town. Although easements reduce property values and decrease its market value, resource conservation, even on private land, is considered a charitable donation by the IRS and qualifies land owners to take an income tax deduction for as much as the full value of the donation, limited to 50% of the donors adjusted gross income, over the course of 15 years. The conservation value of a particular property depends on the character of the property and the needs of the landowner. An example of such value may include any one or more of the following (According to the Georgia-Alabama Land Trust):

- Maintain and improve water quality
- Perpetuate and foster the growth of healthy forest
- Maintain and improve wildlife habitat and migration corridors
- Protect scenic vistas visible from roads and other public areas
- Ensure that lands are managed so that they are always available for sustainable agriculture and forestry

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 Etowah County, conducted in April 2011 have been listed as follows:

Flowering Plants—Flowering plants reported as endangered in Etowah County constituted

- the Green Pitcher plant *Sarracenia oreophila*
- Harperella *Ptilimnium nodosum*
- Tennessee Yellow-eyed grass *Xyris tennesseensis*
- Alabama leather flower *Clematis socialis*

Threatened species included:

- Mohr's Barbara's buttons *Marshallia mohrii*,
- White fringless orchid *Platanthera integrilabia*

Clams—Clams listed as endangered consisted of:

- Southern Acornshell *Epioblasma othcaloogensis*
- Upland Combshell *Epioblasma metastriata*
- Ovate Clubshell mussel *Pleurobema perovatum*
- Southern Clubshell *Pleurobema decisum*
- Coosa Moccasinshell mussel *Medionidus parvulus*
- Triangular Kidneyshell mussel *Ptychobranchus greenii*,
- Southern Pigtoe *Pleurobema georgianum*
- Georgia Pigtoe *Pleurobema hanleyianum*

Threatened species included:

- Fine-lined Pocketbook mussel *Lampsilis altilis*
- Alabama Moccasinshell *Medionidus parvulus*
- Orangenacre mucket *Lampsilis perovalis*

Fish—Fish listed on the endangered species list comprise of:

- Cahaba Shiner *Notropis cahabae*
- Rush Darter *Etheostoma phytophilum*

Mammals—Mammals listed as endangered include:

- Indiana bat *Myotis sodalis*
- Gray bat *Myotis grisescens*

Threatened species consist of:

- Northern Long-eared bat *Myotis septentrionalis*

Snails—Snails listed as endangered consist of:

- Georgia Rocksnail *Leptoxis foremani*

Threatened snails comprise:

- Painted Rocksnail *Leptoxis taeniata*

Reptiles—Reptiles listed as threatened comprise:

- Flattened Musk Turtle *Sternotherus depressus*

Amphibians—Amphibians proposed endangered include:

- Black Warrior Waterdog *Necturus alabamensis*

Illustrated below in Figure EF-1 are a few of the threatened and endangered species in Etowah County.
Figure EF-1. Threatened and Endangered Species in Etowah County



Mohr's Barbara Buttons



Gray bat



Green Pitcher Plant



White Fringeless Orchid



Tennessee Yellow-eyed Grass



Flattened Musk Turtle



Indiana bat

As a part of policy to preserve the natural environment and inherent species diversity, the town 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

Walnut Grove has holds some steep slope coverage, as previously discussed, with approximately 585 acres and 18% land coverage within the town limits, located primarily in the western portion of town. Most of this area should be preserved for parks and recreation, with low density residential development where feasible.

Floodplains

Walnut Grove's 100-year (Zone A) floodplains and 500-year floodplains (Zone B) are located primarily along the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River and Payne Branch both of which extend through the central portion of town. Floodplain acreage constitutes 300 acres of 100-year (9% of the total land area) and 5 acres of 500-year (0.2%).

Flood Prone Areas

According to soil inventory data, Walnut Grove showed mostly flood prone areas as the most substantial environmental constraint throughout the town, covering 818 acres and 25% of the total area acreage. Most of these areas are located in the central and western parts of town along 100-year floodplains on the Black Warrior River, which comprise 300 acres and 9% of the total acreage.

Septic-Restrictive (Areas Requiring Sewer)

Septic restrictive areas or areas requiring sewer are also an environmental constraint consideration with 477 acres and 14% coverage. These areas consist of soils unfit for septic system percolation and drainage, located in the eastern portion of town.

Water Resources

Walnut Grove's local water resources include the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River and the Payne Branch.

Wetlands

Walnut Grove determined wetland areas cover approximately 20 acres (0.6% of the total land), of freshwater forested/shrub and 3 acres (0.1%) freshwater emergent located the central part of town. Freshwater forested/shrub wetlands are situated in the central portion of town along the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River.

Wildlife Habitats

Opportunity exists for wildlife habitat preservation in Walnut Grove. As a planning consideration, Walnut Grove should promote and encourage land and wildlife preservation in order to enhance the town's draw as an outdoor recreational community. Wildlife preservation could be promoted through designation of

conservation easements in floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and other areas where development is already substantially limited, for example, designation of floodplains and wetlands along US Hwy. 278 in the center part of town.

Threatened and Endangered Species

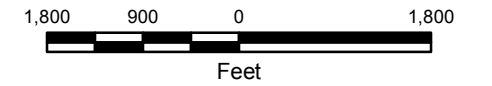
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MAP 7

Environmental Constraints

Walnut Grove

Alabama



Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2017.

Legend

Flood Zones (FEMA NFHL)

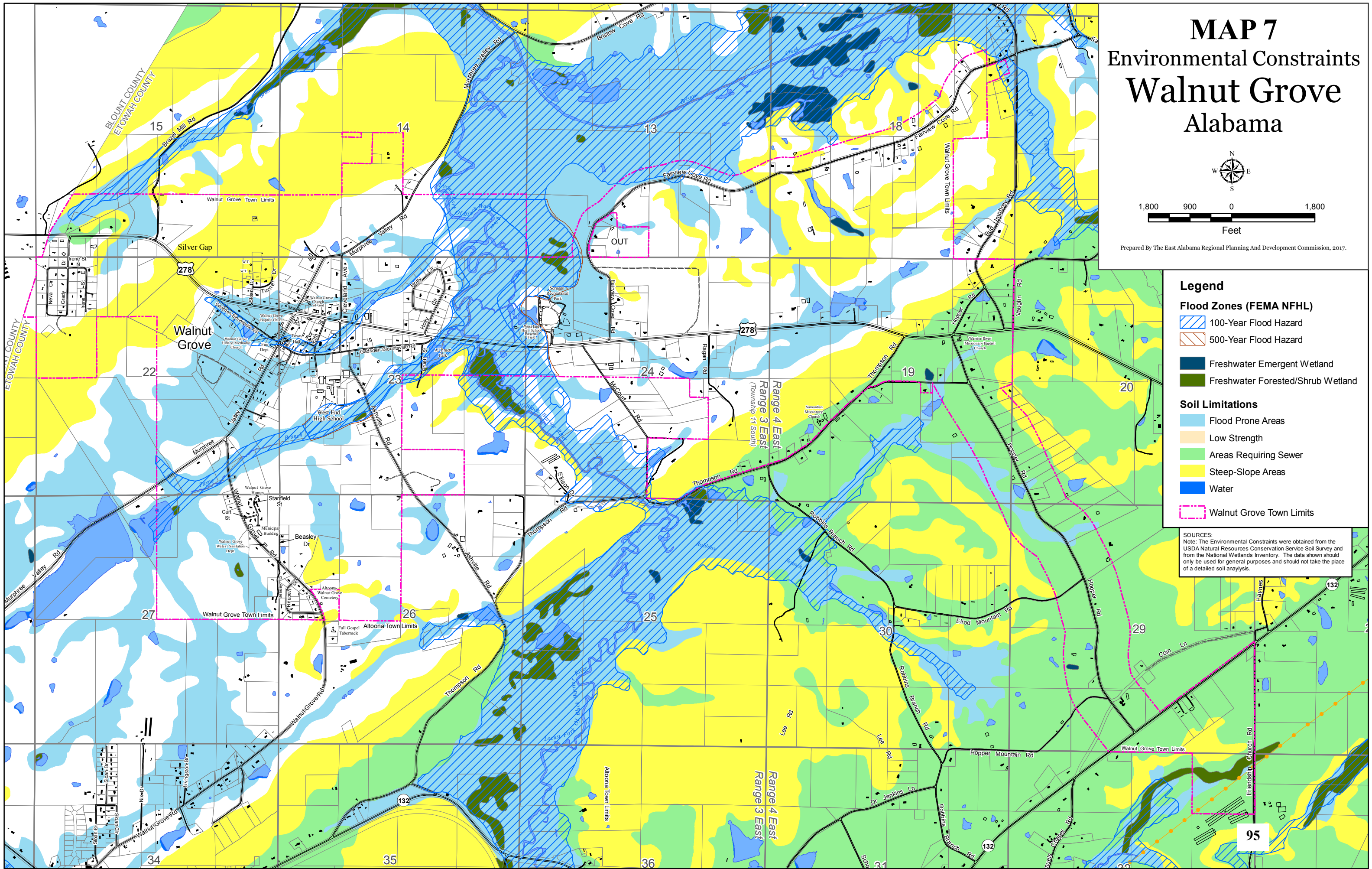
- 100-Year Flood Hazard
- 500-Year Flood Hazard

- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland

Soil Limitations

- Flood Prone Areas
- Low Strength
- Areas Requiring Sewer
- Steep-Slope Areas
- Water
- Walnut Grove Town Limits

SOURCES:
 Note: The Environmental Constraints were obtained from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey and from the National Wetlands Inventory. The data shown should only be used for general purposes and should not take the place of a detailed soil analysis.



CHAPTER VIII: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive plan must explore existing land use and development trends, in order to understand how the town 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 and development patterns allows officials to make informed decisions affecting the orderly growth and development of their community.

The purpose of the land use chapter is to guide and direct land use 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 and gives recommendations for coordinating better land use and development within the town.

Definitions

The following land use categories are described below for use in the Walnut Grove 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 community 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. Walnut Grove has approximately 3,234 total acres within the town limits, which includes right-of-ways and bodies of water and 3,029 land use acres, which does not include right-of-ways and water. Approximately 1,724 acres in town are undeveloped leaving room for development as environmental constraints allow. For more detail on existing land use see Map 8: *Existing Land Use*. Table LU-1 shows existing land use acreage for the Town of Walnut Grove in 2017.

Land Use Category	Acres in City	% of Total Land Area	% of Developed Land Area
Agricultural	906.70	28.0%	60.0%
Commercial	21.24	0.7%	1.4%
Industrial	0.33	0.01%	0.02%
Single-Family Residential	304.68	9.4%	20.2%
Multi-Family Residential	10.28	0.3%	0.7%
Parks and Recreation	4.06	0.1%	0.3%
Public	57.33	1.8%	3.8%
Undeveloped	1,724.52	53.3%	N/A
Total Land Use Area (minus water &ROW)	3,029.15	100.00%	N/A
Total Developed Land	1,510.47	49.86%	100.0%
Total City Acreage	3,234.99	N/A	N/A

Source: EARPDC database, 2017.

Agriculture

Agriculture constitutes the single largest portion of land use within the town limits, accounting for 906 acres (28% of the total land area) and 60% of the developed land within the town limits. Much of this land is scattered fairly extensively throughout town, but primarily located in the southern, northern, and eastern sections.

Commercial

Approximately 21 acres (0.7% of total land and 1.4% of developed land) in Walnut Grove is dedicated to commercial development. The significant majority of this land is located directly adjacent US Hwy. 278, extending east and west through town and in the downtown area. A substantial goal for Walnut Grove should be to promote and encourage new businesses to locate downtown or along US Hwy. 278 where traffic volumes are higher than on minor roads.

Industrial

Less than one acre of land in Walnut Grove is dedicated to industrial development, located in the downtown area. Should the town desire to attract industrial development in the future, the best location might be on large tracts of land located in close proximity to US Hwy. 278 so as to provide convenient access to the major transportation route in town.

Residential

Residential land use in the form of single-family housing is spread fairly consistently throughout town, with the largest concentrations in the downtown, along US Hwy. 278, and along other minor roadways extending out into the countryside. Single-family residential is the second largest land use in town with approximately 304 acres within the town limits, accounting for 9% of the total land area and 20% developed areas. Multi-family residential in town comprises 10 acres, located in small pockets in the central area with one larger area to the south of town.

Public/Parks and Recreation

Provision of public land use plays an important role in community services. Walnut Grove's public land use, accounting for 57 acres, is situated primarily in the central portion of town at West End High School and accompanying recreational ball fields. Land dedicated to parks and recreation accounts for 4 acres located as open space downtown.

Undeveloped

The single most dominate land use in Walnut Grove is undeveloped, consisting of 1,724 acres and 53% of the total land use area, allowing considerable room for new development. The majority of undeveloped land is located along steep slopes in the western part and in floodplain and flood-prone areas along the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River.

Land Use Plan

As a community grows and expands, a plan for land use and development is critical for guiding the town in a manner that logically and efficiently meets town goals and objectives. The Town of Walnut Grove

desires to grow in a manner that effectively and efficiently utilizes land and community resources. The following highlights are general recommendations for land use planning and development in the town:

- **Single-family:** Single-family residential should be promoted as the major residential use throughout town and development should utilize potential infill in established neighborhoods, outside of steep slope and floodplain areas, in order to spur renewal and increase housing values.
- **Multi-family:** Multi-family should be promoted and encouraged to locate in the central portion of the city near the downtown where road infrastructure and utilities would support increased traffic volumes and more intensive residential land use.
- **Commercial:** Compact commercial development should be promoted in the downtown area with more intensive commercial along US Hwy. 278 extending through the western, central, and eastern portions of town.
- **Industrial:** Industrial development should be promoted and encouraged to locate on large tracts of land in close proximity to US Hwy. 278 in order to provide convenient access to a major highway transportation route.
- **Public and Semi-public:** Adequate expansion land should be reserved for important community facilities such as schools and other 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

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Undeveloped

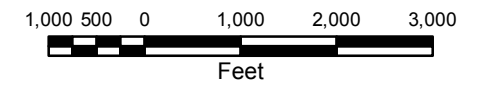
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MAP 8

Existing Landuse

Walnut Grove

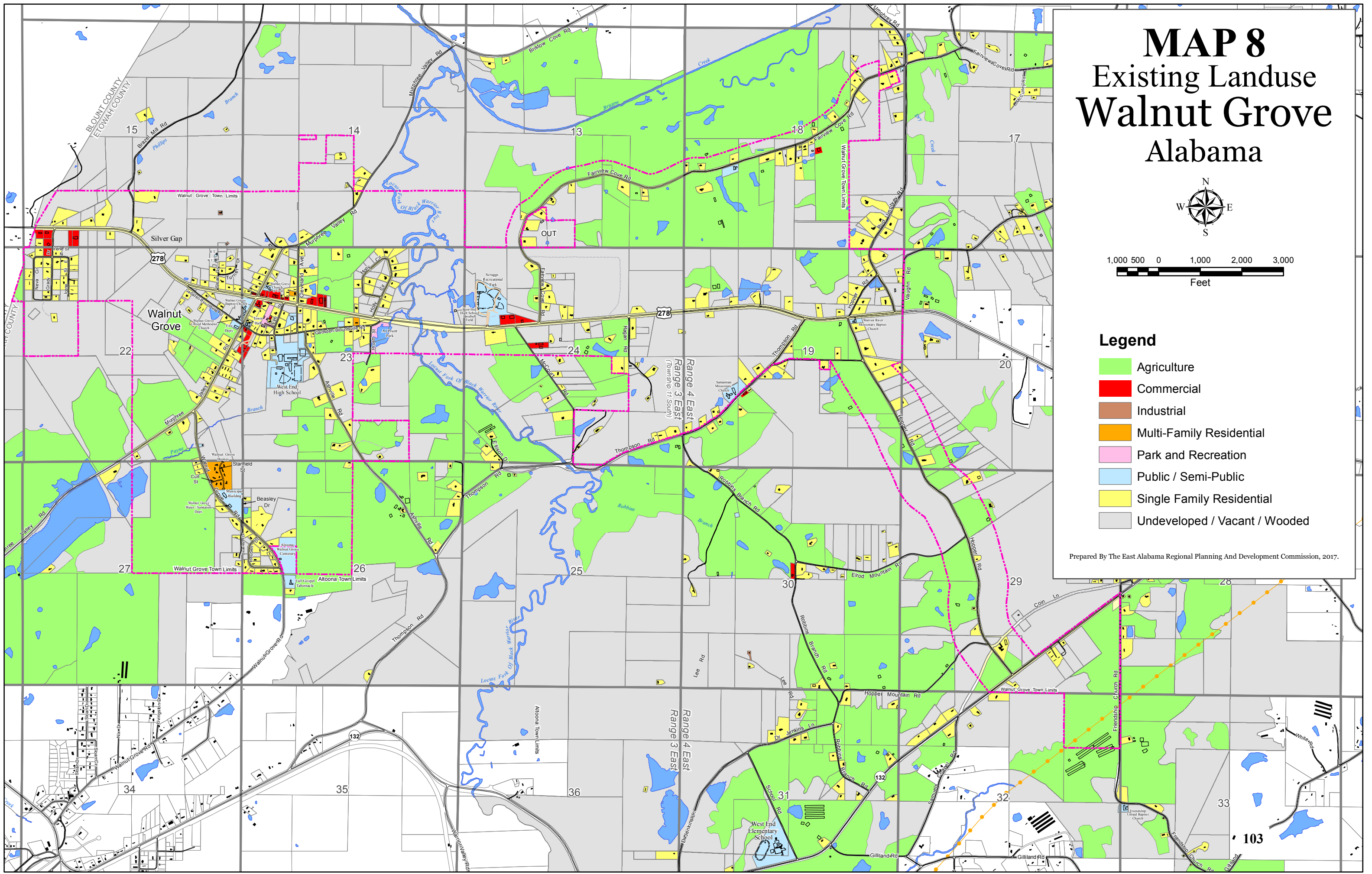
Alabama



Legend

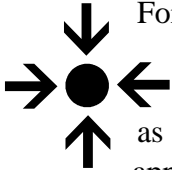
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Multi-Family Residential
- Park and Recreation
- Public / Semi-Public
- Single Family Residential
- Undeveloped / Vacant / Wooded

Prepared By The East Alabama Regional Planning And Development Commission, 2017.



CHAPTER IX: 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 Town of Walnut Grove has a vision of growing and prospering as a successful Alabama community. This vision can be expressed and encompassed in a town approved vision statement which reads as follows: *“The Town of Walnut Grove is a diverse and welcoming community that celebrates our small town character and environmental stewardship.”*

Mission Statement

The mission statement describes what the town 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. Walnut Grove’s mission statement reads as follows:

“The Town of Walnut Grove 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. With convenient access to a major transportation route and metro market areas, the Town of Walnut Grove will prepare for commercial growth, primarily along the US Hwy. 278 and downtown, and plan appropriately for residential development in the surrounding areas, in order to manage progress in a positive direction. Furthermore, the mission of Walnut Grove is to provide leadership and effective services that enhance quality of life and achieve the vision.

In order to achieve this vision and mission, Walnut Grove 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 town improvements, growth, and expansion. Since the town 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 principals for properly maintaining town resources and preparing the community for future growth and development. The following implementation chapter lists and describes specific projects and strategies which the town 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 October, 2016 the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) and the Town of Walnut Grove began work on the Walnut Grove Comprehensive Plan Update. At the first meeting, on October 3, 2016, a general assessment of community resources and needs/improvements was

conducted. From this assessment, EARPDC and the town formed a basis in which to identify further community needs and in determining goals and objectives.

From the meeting, Walnut Grove identified the following community resources:

- Good schools
- Good public services—police and fire departments
- Community parks.
- Senior Center
- Public Library
- Volunteer services through local churches

Community needs/improvements are listed as follows:

- FEMA Storm Shelter
- Upgrades to water system
- Establish back-up well
- Purchase new equipment for fire department

EARPDC and the planning commission then met on a bi-monthly or tri-monthly basis as needed in order report and discuss information pertaining to population, economy, housing, community facilities, environmental constraints, and land use, establish and prioritize goals and objectives, and determine projects for consideration and implementation in the future.

Goals and Objectives



The primary directive of the comprehensive plan is the formation of goals and objectives for town 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 town 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 enhance economic development throughout the community, while an objective for this goal may be to redevelop the downtown. Although downtown redevelopment by itself will not enhance economic development throughout the community, it does serve in making progress toward the goal of enhancing economic development 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 town. In other words, goals answer the question of what is going to be done, while objectives answer who is going to do it and how. Objectives may also address where the goal shall be accomplished, if applicable, and when the goal shall begin and be completed as to a particular timeframe.

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 town hall while strategies are specific and measurable tasks, such as hiring a new position on town 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 and evaluated accordingly in the 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 their respective strategies and projects have been established by the Town of Walnut Grove. However, due to limited human and financial resources, the town acknowledges that not all the goals, objectives, projects, and strategies listed in this section may be realized and implemented, but could be should circumstances permit. Therefore, the next chapter on implementation will draw, from this chapter, the projects and strategies that the town submits to plan for and implement accordingly.

Economic Development

The Town of Walnut Grove desires economic growth and prosperity, strengthening existing businesses while attracting new business to the community. The town shall also promote and encourage new commercial development along Hwy. 278 and other potential commercial areas of the town. 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: Education and Workforce Development

Section 1: Maintaining Existing Business

Goal: Maintain and Strengthen Existing Business throughout the Community.

Objective 1: Maintain and Strengthen Existing Business by Providing and Maintaining an Attractive, Healthy, and Thriving Business Environment in the Downtown area.

Rationale: The downtown area is of premiere importance in the preservation of community character and quality of life for the residents and visitors of Walnut Grove.

Projects and Strategies:

- Project 1: Conduct an inventory and assessment of downtown business resources and needs.
- Project 2: Create and implement a downtown revitalization plan.
- Project 3: Create and implement a downtown beautification and/or street scape improvement plan.
- Project 4: Create and implement a community gateway project/plan for the section of US Hwy. 278 traversing through the downtown area.
- Project 5: Create an economic development plan for the downtown.
- Project 6: Conduct roadway improvements downtown.
- Strategy: Identify business owners and other stakeholders (schools, churches, community organizations, etc.) available in forming an organization or committee to determine the most important business resources and needs in the community and prioritize accordingly.

Objective 2: Town to Prepare for Quality, Accessible, and Sustainable Business Management along Major Highway Commercial Corridors.

Rationale: Business maintenance and growth along the town's major commercial corridors such as US Hwy. 278, Walnut Grove Rd. and Murphree Valley Rd. are of substantial importance to community growth and development.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy 1: Conduct a signage inventory and assessment and identify potential aesthetic issues.
- Strategy 2: 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 1: Create and implement a commercial highway corridor beautification and/or street scape improvement plan.
- Project 2: Conduct a highway corridor study and develop a plan for improving highway commercial corridors throughout the town.

Section 2: Expanding Existing Business

Goal: Promote and Encourage Expansion of Existing Business in the Community and Provide a Means for Proper and Efficient Business Growth and Development.

Objective: Expand Commercial and Industrial Land Use.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Prepare for appropriate and necessary infrastructure (i.e. roadways and utilities) expansion into planned growth areas which support respective land uses.
- Project: 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 and Provide Proper and Efficient Methods to Accommodate and Expand New Enterprises.

Objective: Develop Plans and Policies to Make New Business Location and Start-ups Convenient, Affordable, and Sustainable.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy 1: Provide incentives (i.e. tax reductions, and reduced start-up fees) for new businesses to locate in the community.
- Strategy 2: Create an economic development organization.
- Strategy 3: Create a One-Stop-Shop for new business to secure needed requirements.
- Strategy 4: Market town business accommodations and opportunities to outside interests.
- Strategy 5: Provide adequate transportation, utility infrastructure, and land for new business recruitment in accordance to an economic development plan or other planning document.

Section 4: Education and Workforce Development

Goal: Improve and Strengthen Economic Development through Educational Training and Workforce Development.

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

Rationale: Education and workforce training are critical components for a community to maintain and strengthen the local economy.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy 1: Conduct job fairs at local schools.
- Strategy 2: Schools to work with local businesses to develop curriculum and training in meeting local workforce needs.
- Strategy 3: Businesses and schools create a local network to market and advertise job openings and opportunities in nearby cities and counties.

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 town should also make plans and policies to preserve housing values and increase its housing stock in appropriate residential areas.

Section 1: Existing Housing Stock

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

Objective 1: Maintain Attractive, Safe, and Stable Housing Conditions throughout the Community.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy 1: Utilize the EARPDC housing inventory to identify homes in need of improvements and areas of the community in need.
- Strategy 2: Conduct a town-hall meeting to assess resident support for a housing improvement plan.
- Strategy 3: Conduct a housing abatement process (if needed) to identify homes in need of repair, notify property owners, and acquire and improve properties in non-compliance situations.

Objective 2: Promote and Encourage Quality Affordable Housing.

Projects and Strategies:

Strategy 1: Identify areas where affordable housing could be improved.

Strategy 2: Identify areas of the community where quality affordable housing would be most feasible for new construction.

Section 2: Housing Development

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

Objective: 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: Identify and Inventory Residential Areas in Proximity to Supporting Infrastructure.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy 1: Conduct an assessment of housing in close proximity to needed infrastructure and create a plan to build new homes near current supportive infrastructure where necessary water service and roads are planned for.
- Strategy 2: 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.

Community Facilities and Utilities

The Town of Walnut Grove strives to provide quality community facilities and services for residents and visitors to the town. In order to promote and enhance important community facilities and services, Walnut Grove 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 7 sections listed as follows: 1) Town Administration, 2) Public Safety—Police Department and Fire Department, 3) Educational Facilities and Services, 4) Public Library, 5) Senior Center, 6) Parks and Recreation 7) Water Utilities.

Section 1: Town Administration

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

Section 2: Public Safety—Fire and Police Departments

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

Objective 1: Enhance Fire Department Services through Infrastructure Improvements.

Projects and Strategies:

- Project 1: Improve water system throughout the community, upgrading 2 inch lines to 6 inch.
- Project 2: Establish a new well.

Objective 2: Enhance Fire Department Services through Improved Communications.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Improve E-911 communications.

Objective 3: Enhance Fire Department Services through Equipment Updates.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Purchase new equipment.

Rationale: Purchasing new equipment and improving E-911 communications would also improve the fire department's ISO rating, which was determined slightly below average.

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: Improve Education Services and Job Training for West-End High School.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy 1: Add two teacher units to allow more flexibility in scheduling the electives needed for today's workforce.

- Strategy 2: Receive funding to allow students to see and experience current workforce opportunities outside the Altoona/Walnut Grove area.
- Strategy 3: Offer job/workforce skill development in the higher end computer skills such as programming, code writing etc.

Section 4: Public Library

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

Objective 1: Enhance Library Services.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy 1: Increase hours of operation—to increase patronage.
- Strategy 2: Add a certified librarian—which would be needed to increase hours of operation.

Objective 2: Improve Library Facilities.

Projects and Strategies:

- Project: Install a security system with locking cabinets and video surveillance.

Section 5: 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.

Section 6: Parks and Recreation

Goal: Promote and Enhance Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Facilities and Services and Provides an Attractive and Enjoyable Environment for Community-wide Recreation.

Objective: Expand Recreational Facilities.

Projects and Strategies:

- Project: Build a new soccer field.

Section 7: Water Utilities

Goal: Promote and Enhance Water Utility Infrastructure and Services in a Manner which Properly Maintains Existing Infrastructure and Services and Prepares the Town for Future Growth and Expansion.

Objective: Improve Water Utilities Services to Enhance Fire Protection.

Projects and Strategies:

- Project 1: Install 5 new fire hydrants in the town.
- Project 2: Establish a new well.

Transportation

In order to promote and enhance transportation, the Town of Walnut Grove needs to provide basic maintenance of existing streets and highways throughout the community.

Section: Existing Roadway Improvements

Goal: Promote and Enhance Transportation by Properly Maintaining Existing Roadways.

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

Projects and Strategies (Transportation Plan):

- Project 1: Repave Hopper Rd. from US Hwy. 278 to Co. Rd. 132.
- Project 2: Repave Ragan Rd. from US Hwy. 278 to dead end ½ mile.
- Project 3: Repave Murphree Valley Rd. from town limits to US Hwy. 278.
- Project 4: Repave Walnut Grove Rd. from Murphree Valley Rd. to town limits.
- Project 5: Repave Grady Drive from US Hwy. 278 to Irene Str.

Additional Recommendation: Concerning road repaving, Walnut Grove 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

Environment

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

Section: Environmental Preservation

Goal: Promote and Enhance Environmental Preservation by Sustaining Unique Natural Environments.

Objective: Protect and Preserve Wildlife Habitats.

Projects and Strategies:

- Strategy: Identify sensitive lands such as wetlands, floodplains, and steep slope areas which could be preserved for parks and wildlife protection.

Land Use

In order to promote and enhance planning for land use, Walnut Grove must utilize the appropriate town 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 town 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 town as a whole.

Section: Land Use Planning and Preservation

Goal: Promote and Enhance Land Use Planning by Utilizing Town Departments and Local Groups to Identify and Meet Land Use Needs and Establish Land Use Policies and Plans to Benefit the Community as a Whole.

Recommendation: Land use and development for Walnut Grove should follow guidance in the Land Use Plan outlined in Chapter VIII: Land Use.

CHAPTER X: 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 town and which the town plans to effectively implement. The tables in this chapter list the projects and strategies that the town plans to implement along with timeframes within which the town 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 town 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 Town of Walnut Grove has limited resources and competing planning priorities. However, town administration has sufficient technical expertise and capacity to react quickly to the complex issues affecting the town. This plan also recognizes that the town must depend upon the cooperation of other independent boards and agencies to implement those aspects of the plan that the town cannot directly control. Walnut Grove 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 town 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.

Town Administration

The Town of Walnut Grove has a part-time Mayor and full-time support staff to handle the town's daily administrative needs. The administrative staff can use the comprehensive plan as a general guide for

coordinating expansion of the town's public facilities and services to address future growth needs. However, it must be recognized that, due to the town'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 town government will be needed to ensure that the policies and programs recommended by this plan are fully implemented. The town 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 town 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 town 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. Walnut Grove 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 town 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, Intertown 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 town-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

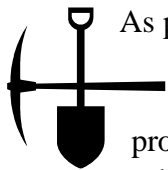
19. Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM): assists municipalities in Alabama in funding local projects and purchases. This organization has established the AM Fund, administered by the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation, to provide low-cost, tax-exempt financing to Alabama communities. Municipalities 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

Walnut Grove should continue to explore project-financing opportunities with all of these entities when undertaking projects to implement this comprehensive plan. The town should also consider developing public-private partnerships. Of course, outside financing usually will not cover all of the costs associated with a project. The town 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 town 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.

Walnut Grove Implementation Schedule, 2018-2026.

	Task	Assigned To	PP&FS	Start	End	Dur	%	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Projects/Strategies			1/1/18	12/31/26	2349										
1	Improve Water System	Town of Walnut Grove	ADECA/ARC	1/1/20	12/31/22	783										
2	Establish new Water Well	Town of Walnut Grove		1/1/20	12/31/22	783										
3	Install 5 new Fire Hydrants	Town of Walnut Grove	FEMA	1/1/23	12/31/26	1044										
4	Repave Hopper Rd. from US Hwy. 278 to Co. Rd. 132	Town of Walnut Grove	ADECA/ARC	1/1/18	12/31/20	784										
5	Repave Ragan Rd. from US Hwy. 278 to dead end 1/2 mile	Town of Walnut Grove	ADECA/ARC	1/1/18	12/31/20	784										
6	Repave Murphree Rd. from town limits to US Hwy. 278	Town of Walnut Grove	ADECA/ARC	1/1/18	12/31/19	522										
7	Repave Walnut Grove Rd. from Murphree Valley Rd. to town limits	Town of Walnut Grove	ADECA/ARC	1/1/20	12/31/21	523										
8	Repave Grady Drive from US Hwy. 278 to Irene Street	Town of Walnut Grove	ADECA/ARC	1/1/20	12/31/22	783										

Table I-1. Implementation Schedule: Walnut Grove, AL 2018.

Table I-1 examines Walnut Grove’s implementation schedule for projects pertaining to the community facilities and utilities and road improvements for 2018 to 2026. Although these projects are primarily assigned to Walnut Grove, the town should consult and work with outside entities to secure funding and guidance with planning and implementation efforts.

Action Plan and Evaluation



For every project and strategy the town 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 town 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 2018, and in each subsequent year. The action plan table has also been combined with evaluation. For the evaluation process, town 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.

Walnut Grove Action and Evaluation Plan, 2018-2026.

	Task	Inactive	Administration	Complete	Start	End	Dur	%	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Projects/Strategies				1/1/18	12/31/26	2349		[Gantt chart bars for all projects]								
1	Improve Water System				1/1/20	12/31/22	783				[Bar]						
2	Establish new Water Well				1/1/20	12/31/22	783				[Bar]						
3	Install 5 new Fire Hydrants				1/1/23	12/31/26	1044							[Bar]			
4	Repave Hopper Rd. from US Hwy. 278 to Co. Rd. 132				1/1/18	12/31/20	784		[Bar]								
5	Repave Ragan Rd. from US Hwy. 278 to dead end 1/2 mile				1/1/18	12/31/20	784		[Bar]								
6	Repave Murphree Rd. from town limits to US Hwy. 278				1/1/18	12/31/19	522		[Bar]								
7	Repave Walnut Grove Rd. from Murphree Valley Rd. to town limits				1/1/20	12/31/21	523				[Bar]						
8	Repave Grady Drive from US Hwy. 278 to Irene Street				1/1/20	12/31/22	783				[Bar]						

Table AP-1. Action Plan/Evaluation Table: Walnut Grove, AL 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 town 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 town 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 town 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

Year	Walnut Grove	% Change	Etowah Co.	% Change	Alabama	% Change	US	% Change
1880	126	N/A	15,398	N/A	1,262,505	N/A	49,371,340	N/A
1900	251	99.2%	27,361	77.7%	1,828,697	44.8%	76,212,168	54.4%
1910	204	-18.7%	39,109	42.9%	2,138,093	16.9%	92,228,531	21.0%
1920	167	-18.1%	47,275	20.9%	2,348,174	9.8%	106,021,568	15.0%
1930	216	29.3%	63,399	34.1%	2,646,248	12.7%	123,202,660	16.2%
1940	206	-4.6%	72,580	14.5%	2,832,961	7.1%	132,165,129	7.3%
1950	222	7.8%	93,892	29.4%	3,061,743	8.1%	151,325,798	14.5%
1960	237	6.8%	96,980	3.3%	3,266,740	6.7%	179,323,175	18.5%
1970	224	-5.5%	94,144	-2.9%	3,444,165	5.4%	203,302,031	13.4%
1980	510	127.7%	103,057	9.5%	3,893,888	13.1%	226,542,199	11.4%
1990	717	40.6%	99,840	-3.1%	4,040,587	3.8%	248,718,301	9.8%
2000	710	-1.0%	103,459	3.6%	4,447,100	10.1%	281,421,906	13.1%
2010	698	-1.7%	104,430	0.9%	4,779,736	7.5%	308,745,538	9.7%
2015 est.	685	-1.9%	103,057	-1.3%	4,858,979	1.7%	324,227,000	5.0%

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

Place of Birth

Born in	2009	% of Total	2015	% of Total	#Change	%Change
Native	741	99.3%	903	99.2%	162	21.9%
State of Residence	566	75.9%	783	86.0%	217	38.3%
Another State	175	23.5%	120	13.2%	-55	-31.4%
A Northeastern State	15	8.6%	0	0.0%	-15	-100.0%
A Midwestern State	16	9.1%	0	0.0%	-16	-100.0%
A Southern State	141	80.6%	100	83.3%	-41	-29.1%
A Western State	3	1.7%	20	16.7%	17	566.7%
Born outside U.S.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Puerto Rico	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
U.S. Island Areas	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Abroad of U.S. Parents	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Foreign-born	5	0.7%	7	0.8%	2	40.0%
Total	746	100.0%	910	100.0%	164	22.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Age Distribution

Table P-3. Age Distribution: Walnut Grove, AL 2000 and 2010										
Age Group	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	%Change	2015
Less than 5	54	33	-38.9%	6,611	6,140	-7.1%	295,992	304,957	3.0%	20,201,362
% of Total	7.6%	4.7%		6.4%	5.9%		6.7%	6.4%		6.5%
5 to 19	170	151	-11.2%	20,778	20,669	-0.5%	960,177	971,355	1.2%	63,066,194
% of Total	23.9%	21.6%		20.1%	19.8%		21.6%	20.3%		20.4%
20 to 24	48	34	-29.2%	6,253	6,070	-2.9%	306,865	335,322	9.3%	21,585,999
% of Total	6.8%	4.9%		6.0%	5.8%		6.9%	7.0%		7.0%
25 to 44	197	168	-14.7%	28,311	26,002	-8.2%	1,288,527	1,228,423	-4.7%	82,134,554
% of Total	27.7%	24.1%		27.4%	24.9%		29.0%	25.7%		26.6%
45 to 64	179	201	12.3%	24,946	29,041	16.4%	1,015,741	1,281,887	26.2%	81,489,445
% of Total	25.2%	28.8%		24.1%	27.8%		22.8%	26.8%		26.4%
65+	62	111	79.0%	16,560	16,508	-0.3%	579,798	657,792	13.5%	40,267,984
% of Total	8.7%	15.9%		16.0%	15.8%		13.0%	13.8%		13.0%
Total	710	698	-1.7%	103,459	104,430	0.9%	4,447,100	4,779,736	7.5%	308,745,538
Median Age	33.8	41.6	N/A	38.3	40.2	N/A	35.8	37.9	N/A	37.2

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

Age Distribution (Cont.)

Table P-4. Age Distribution: Walnut Grove, AL 2009 and 2015										
Age Group	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	%Change	2015
Less than 5	33	69	109.1%	6,518	5,956	-8.6%	307,795	295,054	-4.1%	19,912,018
% of Total	4.4%	7.6%		6.3%	5.7%		6.6%	6.1%		6.3%
5 to 19	157	240	52.9%	20,159	19,584	-2.9%	948,385	948,171	-0.02%	62,536,249
% of Total	21.0%	26.4%		19.5%	18.9%		20.5%	19.6%		19.8%
20 to 24	25	72	188.0%	6,066	6,635	9.4%	327,517	348,044	6.3%	22,604,232
% of Total	3.4%	7.9%		5.9%	6.4%		7.1%	7.2%		7.1%
25 to 44	252	218	-13.5%	26,579	25,500	-4.1%	1,232,745	1,231,007	-0.1%	83,533,559
% of Total	33.8%	24.0%		25.8%	24.6%		26.6%	25.5%		26.4%
45 to 64	196	183	-6.6%	27,546	28,575	3.7%	1,190,787	1,289,018	8.2%	83,313,486
% of Total	26.3%	20.1%		26.7%	27.5%		25.7%	26.7%		26.3%
65+	83	128	54.2%	16,282	17,516	7.6%	626,131	719,326	14.9%	44,615,477
% of Total	11.1%	14.1%		15.8%	16.9%		13.5%	14.9%		14.1%
Total	746	910	22.0%	103,150	103,766	0.6%	4,633,360	4,830,620	4.3%	316,515,021
Median Age	39.8	33.3	N/A	39.3	40.8	N/A	37.2	38.4	N/A	36.5

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015

Marital Status

Table P-5. Marital Status (pop. 15 and over): Walnut Grove, AL								
Marital Status	Walnut Grove		Etowah County		Alabama		US	
	2009	2015	2009	2015	2009	2015	2009	2015
Married (except separated)	58.2%	46.9%	55.3%	50.1%	51.0%	48.2%	50.3%	48.2%
Widowed	6.4%	7.7%	9.1%	8.2%	7.5%	7.1%	6.3%	5.9%
Divorced	23.3%	18.2%	12.7%	13.3%	11.7%	12.5%	10.4%	11.0%
Separated	2.8%	4.1%	2.7%	2.2%	2.5%	2.5%	2.2%	2.1%
Never Married	9.3%	23.2%	20.2%	26.1%	27.3%	29.8%	30.8%	32.8%

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Racial Distribution

Table P-6. Racial Distribution: Walnut Grove, AL										
Race	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2015
White	740	898	21.4%	85,078	84,312	-0.9%	3,256,941	3,325,464	2.1%	232,943,055
% of Total	99.2%	98.7%		82.5%	81.3%		70.3%	68.8%		73.6%
Black	0	0	0.0%	15,094	16,025	6.2%	1,209,938	1,276,544	5.5%	39,908,095
% of Total	0.0%	0.0%		14.6%	15.4%		26.1%	26.4%		12.6%
Other	6	12	100.0%	2,978	3,429	15.1%	166,481	228,612	37.3%	43,663,871
% of Total	0.8%	1.3%		2.9%	3.3%		3.6%	4.7%		13.8%
Total	746	910	22.0%	103,150	103,766	0.6%	4,633,360	4,830,620	4.3%	316,515,021

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Gender Distribution

Table P-7. Gender Distribution: Walnut Grove, AL										
Geographic Area	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2010
Male	344	361	4.9%	49,433	50,626	2.4%	2,144,463	2,320,188	8.2%	151,781,326
% of Total	48.5%	51.7%		47.8%	48.5%		48.2%	48.5%		49.2%
Female	366	337	-7.9%	54,026	53,804	-0.4%	2,302,637	2,459,548	6.8%	156,964,212
% of Total	51.5%	48.3%		52.2%	51.5%		51.8%	51.5%		50.8%
Total	710	698	-1.7%	103,459	104,430	0.9%	4,447,100	4,779,736	7.5%	308,745,538

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

Gender Distribution (Cont.)

Table P-8. Gender Distribution: Walnut Grove, AL										
Geographic Area	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change	2015
Male	392	457	16.6%	49,448	50,207	1.5%	2,244,273	2,341,093	4.3%	155,734,280
% of Total	52.5%	50.2%		47.9%	48.4%		48.4%	48.5%		49.2%
Female	354	453	28.0%	53,702	53,559	-0.3%	2,389,087	2,489,527	4.2%	160,780,741
% of Total	47.5%	49.8%		52.1%	51.6%		51.6%	51.5%		50.8%
Total	746	910	22.0%	103,150	103,766	0.6%	4,633,360	4,830,620	4.3%	316,515,021

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

APPENDIX B: ECONOMY STATISTICS

Educational Attainment

Table E-1. Educational Attainment: Walnut Grove, AL												
Education al Level	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US		
	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change
Pop. 25 +	26	74		4,365	4,540		195,519	166,885		12,550,193	12,093,869	
% of Total Pop. 25 Years +	4.9%	14.0%	185%	6.2%	6.3%	4%	6.4%	5.2%	-14.6%	6.4%	5.7%	-3.6%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	159	93	-42%	9,365	8,014	-14%	388,689	343,006	-11.8%	17,894,984	16,135,225	-9.8%
% of Total Pop. 25 Years +	29.9%	17.6%		13.3%	11.2%		12.7%	10.6%		9.1%	7.6%	
High School Graduate	194	172	-11%	23,112	22,869	-1%	971,298	1,005,295	3.5%	57,861,698	58,722,528	1.5%
% of Total Pop. 25 Years +	36.5%	32.5%		32.8%	31.9%		31.8%	31.0%		29.3%	27.8%	
Some College, No Degree	79	85	8%	17,103	18,570	9%	631,854	711,180	12.6%	40,105,283	44,529,161	11.0%
% of Total Pop. 25 Years +	14.9%	16.1%		24.3%	25.9%		20.7%	22.0%		20.3%	21.1%	
Associate Degree	42	50	19%	5,579	6,113	10%	205,605	251,335	22.2%	14,663,437	17,029,467	16.1%
% of Total Pop. 25 Years +	7.9%	9.5%		7.9%	8.5%		6.7%	7.8%		7.4%	8.1%	
Bachelors Degree	22	44	100%	6,844	7,210	5%	418,343	478,812	14.5%	34,384,717	39,166,047	13.9%
% of Total Pop. 25 Years +	4.1%	8.3%		9.7%	10.1%		13.7%	14.8%		17.4%	18.5%	
Graduate or Professional	9	11	22%	4,039	4,275	6%	238,355	282,838	18.7%	19,980,460	23,786,225	19.0%
% of Total Pop. 25 Years +	1.7%	2.1%		5.7%	6.0%		7.8%	8.7%		10.1%	11.2%	
Number of Persons 25 Years and Over	531	529	0%	70,407	71,591	2%	3,049,663	3,239,351	6.2%	197,440,772	21,146,2522	7.1%

% of Persons 25 years and over	71%	58.1%	-18%	69.7%	70%	0.4%	67.5%	68.7%	1.8%	67.3%	68.5%	1.8%
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Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Household Income

Table E-2. Household Income Distribution: Walnut Grove, AL												
Income Level	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US		
	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change
Less than \$15 K	78	30	-61.5%	7,757	6,727	-13.3%	328,457	311,855	-5%	14,634,799	14,582,959	-0.4%
% of Total	23.9%	10.5%		18.1%	16.9%		18.0%	16.9%		13.0%	12.5%	
\$15 K - \$34,999	125	97	-22.4%	12,917	11,460	-11.3%	460,877	450,386	-2%	24,157,285	24,171,142	0.1%
% of Total	38.3%	33.7%		30.2%	28.7%		25.4%	24.4%		21.4%	20.7%	
\$35 K - \$74,999	93	104	11.8%	13,540	12,948	-4.4%	588,724	580,937	-1%	37,117,434	36,499,670	-1.7%
% of Total	28.6%	36.1%		31.7%	32.4%		32.4%	31.4%		33.0%	31.2%	
\$75 K - 149,999	30	55	83.3%	7,455	7,567	1.5%	355,356	392,963	11%	27,432,508	29,523,078	7.6%
% of Total	9.2%	19.1%		17.4%	19.0%		19.5%	21.3%		24.4%	25.2%	
\$150,000 or more	0	2	200.0%	1,018	1,194	17.3%	86,027	112,218	30%	9,269,000	12,149,456	31.1%
% of Total	0.0%	0.7%		2.4%	3.0%		4.7%	6.1%		8.2%	10.4%	
Total Households	326	288	-11.7%	42,687	39,899	-6.5%	1,819,441	1,848,325	2%	112,611,029	116,926,305	3.8%
Median HH Income	\$30,132	\$38,846	28.9%	\$36,378	\$39,220	7.8%	\$41,216	\$43,623	6%	\$51,425	\$53,889	4.8%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Commuting Patterns

Table E-3. Place of Work: Walnut Grove, AL										
Geographic Area	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change	2015
Worked in Place of Residence	22	42	90.9%	10,913	11,547	5.8%	595,165	586,519	-1.5%	45,151,051
% of Total	7.3%	13.3%		36.8%	32.6%		46.8%	44.4%		42.0%
Worked outside Place of Residence	278	272	-2.2%	18,721	23,825	27.3%	676,171	735,016	8.7%	62,242,805
% of Total	92.6%	86.6%		63.2%	67.4%		53.2%	55.6%		58.0%
Total Place	300	314	4.7%	29,634	35,372	19.4%	1,271,336	1,321,535	3.9%	107,393,856
Worked in County of Residence	114	73	-36.0%	28,952	29,411	1.6%	1,453,006	1,450,267	-0.2%	103,991,263
% of Total	38.0%	23.2%		71.3%	73.2%		76.7%	76.2%		75.3%
Worked outside County of Residence	186	241	29.6%	11,679	10,766	-7.8%	440,873	453,632	2.9%	34,200,371
% of Total	62.0%	76.8%		28.7%	26.8%		23.3%	23.8%		24.7%
Total County	300	314	4.7%	40,631	40,177	-1.1%	1,893,879	1,903,899	0.5%	138,191,634
Mean Travel Time to Work (Minutes 2010 and 2015)	28.6	38.3	N/A	23.6	23.4	N/A	23.7	24.4	N/A	25.9

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Labor Force and Unemployment (Pop. 16 and over)

Labor Classification	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US		
	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change
Total Persons 16+ In Labor Force	688	571	-17.0%	83,390	81,798	-1.9%	3,639,386	3,846,845	5.7%	235,871,704	251,221,309	6.5%
% in Labor Force	351	316	-10.0%	45,419	45,929	1.1%	2,202,079	2,242,401	1.8%	153,407,584	159,913,288	4.2%
	51.0%	55.3%	8.4%	54.5%	56.1%	2.9%	60.5%	58.3%	-3.6%	65.0%	63.7%	-2.0%
Armed Forces	0	0	0.0%	92	64	-30.4%	18,206	12,979	-28.7%	1,134,555	1,015,464	-10.5%
% in Armed Forces	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	-40.0%	0.5%	0.4%	-20.0%
Civilian Labor Force	351	316	-10.0%	45,327	45,865	1.2%	2,183,873	2,229,422	2.1%	152,273,029	158,897,824	4.4%
Employed	323	303	-6.2%	41,236	41,762	1.3%	2,013,755	2,022,325	0.4%	141,303,145	145,747,779	3.1%
Unemployed	28	13	-53.6%	4,091	4,103	0.3%	170,118	207,097	21.7%	10,969,884	13,150,045	19.9%
% Unemployed	4.1%	2.3%	-43.9%	4.9%	5.0%	2.0%	4.7%	5.4%	14.9%	4.7%	5.2%	10.6%
Not in Labor Force	337	255	-24.3%	37,971	35,869	-5.5%	1,437,307	1,604,444	11.6%	82,464,120	91,308,021	10.7%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Occupational Status

Occupational Status	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US		
	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change
Management / Business	96	85		12,377	11,820		622,980	673,400		141,303,145	53,433,469	
% of Total	31.7%	26.3%	-11.5%	29.6%	28.7%	-4.5%	30.9%	33.3%	8.1%	34.8%	36.7%	-62.2%
Service	21	52		6,764	7,637		311,135	339,082		23,859,762	26,446,906	
% of Total	6.9%	16.1%	147.6%	16.2%	18.5%	12.9%	15.5%	16.8%	9.0%	16.9%	18.1%	10.8%
Sales and Office	68	78		9,627	8,770		515,001	488,066		36,203,679	35,098,693	
% of Total	22.4%	24.1%	14.7%	23.1%	21.3%	-8.9%	25.6%	24.1%	-5.2%	25.6%	24.1%	-3.1%
Nat. Resources / Construction	71	30		4,786	4,045		234,481	200,200		14,377,196	13,038,579	
% of Total	23.4%	9.3%	-57.7%	11.5%	9.8%	-15.5%	11.7%	9.9%	-14.6%	10.2%	8.9%	-9.3%
Production / Transportation	47	78		8,208	8,964		330,158	321,577		17,732,919	17,730,132	
% of Total	15.5%	24.1%	66.0%	19.7%	21.7%	9.2%	16.4%	15.9%	-2.6%	12.5%	12.2%	-0.02%
Total	303	323	6.6%	41,762	41,236	-1.3%	2,013,755	2,022,325	0.4%	141,303,145	145,747,779	3.1%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Industrial Composition

Table E-6. Industrial Composition: Walnut Grove, AL												
Industry	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US		
	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change
Agriculture	18	2		444	328		36,896	34,153		2,576,402	2,852,402	
% of Total	5.9%	0.6%	-88.9%	1.1%	0.8%	-26.1%	1.8%	1.7%	-7.4%	1.8%	2.0%	10.7%
Manufacturing/ Construction	106	76		10,473	10,357		457,054	411,236		26,408,021	24,198,651	
% of Total	35.0%	23.6%	-28.3%	25.1%	25.1%	-1.1%	22.7%	20.3%	-10.0%	18.6%	16.6%	-8.4%
Retail/Wholesale Trade	32	60		6,158	5,821		311,962	294,429		20,794,435	20,804,569	
% of Total	10.5%	18.6%	87.5%	14.8%	14.1%	-5.5%	25.5%	14.5%	-5.6%	14.7%	14.3%	0.0005
Transportation /Info.	22	41		2,750	2,976		146,406	139,642		10,623,375	10,320,206	
% of Total	7.2%	12.7%	86.4%	6.6%	7.2%	8.2%	7.3%	6.9%	-4.6%	7.5%	7.1%	-2.9%
FIRE	18	7		1,857	1,740		118,122	112,398		10,033,714	9,578,175	
% of Total	5.9%	2.2%	-61.1%	4.4%	4.2%	-6.3%	5.9%	5.6%	-4.8%	7.1%	6.6%	-4.5%
Services/Public Administration	107	137		20,080	20,014		943,315	2,030,467		70,867,201	77,993,776	
% of Total	35.3%	42.4%	28.0%	48.1%	48.5%	-0.3%	46.8%	51.0%	115.2%	50.1%	53.4%	10.1%
Total	303	323	6.6%	41,762	41,236	-1.3%	2,013,755	2,022,325	0.4%	141,303,145	145,747,779	3.1%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Poverty Status

Table E-7. Poverty Status (Percent of Total): Walnut Grove, AL								
Poverty Status	Walnut Grove		Etowah County		Alabama		US	
	2009	2015	2009	2015	2009	2015	2009	2015
Individuals 18 years and older	24.5%	13.0%	14.1%	19.7%	14.6%	16.3%	11.8%	13.5%
Individuals 65 years and older	22.9%	0.8%	12.1%	11.3%	12.3%	10.7%	9.8%	9.4%
Related children under 18 years	17.6%	2.6%	22.7%	31.7%	23.4%	27.0%	18.2%	21.4%
Related children 5 to 17 years old	17.5%	3.4%	19.4%	30.4%	21.6%	25.6%	16.9%	20.3%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and older	63.7%	49.3%	30.5%	31.0%	30.4%	31.8%	24.5%	26.9%
Total Individuals below poverty level	22.8%	10.3%	16.3%	19.7%	16.8%	18.8%	13.5%	15.5%
Total families below poverty level	12.0%	3.6%	12.8%	15.4%	12.9%	14.5%	9.9%	11.3%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

APPENDIX C: HOUSING STATISTICS

Housing Unit Types

Table H-1. Housing Unit Types: Walnut Grove, AL										
Housing Types	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change	2009	2015	%Change	2015
Single-family	211	205	-2.8%	36,664	36,607	-0.2%	1,486,000	1,543,733	3.9%	89,951,211
% of Total	61.2%	60.5%		75.9%	77.1%		69.4%	70.2%		67.5%
Multi-family	39	10	-74.4%	5,871	5,392	-8.2%	341,633	356,380	4.3%	34,811,233
% of Total	11.3%	2.9%		12.2%	11.4%		16.0%	16.2%		26.1%
Mobile home	95	124	30.5%	5,744	5,417	-5.7%	310,721	297,217	-4.3%	8,478,334
% of Total	27.5%	36.6%		11.9%	11.4%		14.5%	13.5%		6.4%
Other	0	0	0.0%	25	84	236.0%	1,616	1,999	23.7%	111,062
% of Total	0.0%	0.0%		0.1%	0.2%		0.1%	0.1%		0.1%
Total Units	345	339	-1.7%	48,304	47,500	-1.7%	2,139,970	2,199,329	2.8%	133,351,840

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015.

Tenure and Occupancy Status

Table H-2. Tenure and Occupancy: Walnut Grove, AL 2000-2010										
Tenure & Occupancy	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2010
Occupied	273	285	4.4%	41,615	42,036	1.0%	1,737,080	1,883,791	8.4%	116,716,292
% of Total	92.9%	88.8%		90.5%	88.6%		88.5%	86.7%		88.6%
Owner-occupied	207	221	6.8%	30,957	30,348	-2.0%	1,258,686	1,312,589	4.3%	75,986,074
% of Total	75.8%	77.5%		74.4%	72.2%		72.5%	69.7%		65.1%
Renter-occupied	66	64	-3.0%	10,658	11,688	9.7%	478,394	571,202	19.4%	40,730,218
% of Total	24.2%	22.5%		25.6%	27.8%		27.5%	30.3%		34.9%
Vacant	21	36	71.4%	4,344	5,418	24.7%	226,631	288,062	27.1%	14,988,438
% of Total	7.1%	11.2%		9.5%	11.4%		11.5%	13.3%		11.4%
Total Units	294	321	9.2%	45,959	47,454	3.3%	1,963,711	2,171,853	10.6%	131,704,730

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

Tenure and Occupancy (Cont.)

Geography	Walnut Grove		Etowah Co.		Alabama		US	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Occupied	288	85.0%	39,899	84.0%	1,848,325	84.0%	116,926,305	87.7%
Owner-occ.	229	79.5%	28,472	71.4%	1,269,145	68.7%	74,712,091	63.9%
Renter-occ.	59	20.5%	11,427	28.6%	579,180	31.3%	42,214,214	36.1%
Vacant	51	15.0%	7,601	16.0%	351,004	16.0%	16,425,535	12.3%
Total Units	339	100.0%	47,500	100.0%	2,199,329	100.0%	133,351,840	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Vacancy Status

Vacancy Status	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change	2010
For rent, only	3	10	233.3%	1,239	1,542	24.5%	64,037	79,265	23.8%	4,137,567
% of Total	14.2%	27.8%		28.5%	28.5%		28.3%	27.5%		27.6%
For sale, only	4	5	25.0%	781	812	4.0%	31,121	35,903	15.4%	1,896,796
% of Total	19.0%	13.9%		18.0%	15.0%		13.7%	12.5%		12.7%
Rented or sold	1	1	0.0%	655	350	-46.6%	18,507	12,988	-29.8%	627,857
% of Total	4.8%	2.8%		15.1%	6.5%		8.2%	4.5%		4.2%
Miscellaneous	2	2	0.0%	322	356	10.6%	54,593	63,890	17.0%	4,649,298
% of Total	9.5%	5.6%		7.4%	6.6%		24.1%	22.2%		31.0%
Other Vacant	11	18	63.6%	1,347	2,358	75.1%	58,373	96,016	64.5%	3,676,920
% of Total	52.4%	50.0%		31.0%	43.5%		25.8%	33.3%		24.5%
Total Vacant	21	36	71.4%	4,344	5,418	24.7%	226,631	288,062	27.1%	14,988,438

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

Vacancy Status (Cont.)

Vacancy Status	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2009	2015	% Change	2015
For rent, only	0	0	0.0%	769	772	0.4%	57,008	58,464	2.6%	2,949,366
% of Total	0.0%	0.0%		13.7%	10.2%		17.8%	16.7%		18.0%
For sale, only	0	6	600.0%	821	588	-28.4%	30,265	33,089	9.3%	1,492,691
% of Total	0.0%	11.8%		14.6%	7.7%		9.4%	9.4%		9.1%
Rented or sold	0	7	700.0%	364	180	-50.5%	24,578	26,351	7.2%	1,244,535
% of Total	0.0%	13.7%		6.5%	2.4%		7.7%	7.5%		7.6%
Miscellaneous	0	0	0.0%	526	672	27.8%	67,670	81,867	21.0%	5,364,605
% of Total	0.0%	0.0%		9.4%	8.8%		21.1%	23.3%		32.7%
Other Vacant	19	38	100.0%	3,137	5,389	71.8%	141,008	151,233	7.3%	5,374,338
% of Total	100.0%	74.5%		55.8%	70.9%		44.0%	43.1%		32.7%
Total Vacant	19	51	168.4%	5,617	7,601	35.3%	320,529	351,004	9.5%	16,425,535

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Household Size

Household Size	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change	2010
1 Person	59	79	33.9%	10,973	11,809	7.6%	453,927	516,696	13.8%	16,453,569
% of Total	21.6%	37.0%		26.4%	28.1%		26.1%	27.4%		21.7%
2 Persons	93	100	7.5%	14,577	14,430	-1.0%	579,355	632,291	9.1%	27,618,605
% of Total	34.0%	27.8%		35.0%	34.3%		33.4%	33.6%		36.3%
3 Persons	50	51	2.0%	7,546	7,135	-5.4%	315,083	322,941	2.5%	12,517,563
% of Total	18.0%	11.5%		18.1%	17.0%		18.1%	17.1%		16.5%
4 Persons	48	27	-43.8%	5,552	5,145	-7.3%	245,005	245,326	0.1%	10,998,793
% of Total	17.6%	9.5%		13.3%	12.2%		14.1%	13.0%		14.5%
5 Persons or more	23	28	21.7%	2,967	3,517	18.5%	143,710	166,537	15.9%	8,397,544
% of Total	8.4%	9.8%		7.1%	8.4%		8.3%	8.8%		11.1%
Total Households	273	285	4.4%	41,615	42,036	1.0%	1,737,080	1,883,791	8.4%	75,986,074

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

Household Size (Cont.)

Table H-7. Household Size: Walnut Grove, AL								
Household Size	Walnut Grove		Etowah Co.		Alabama		US	
	2009	2015	2009	2015	2009	2015	2009	2015
1 Person	26.7%	26.0%	27.4%	27.4%	27.9%	28.8%	27.3%	27.6%
2 Persons	35.9%	22.2%	36.0%	36.7%	34.6%	35.1%	33.4%	33.7%
3 Persons	12.3%	11.1%	16.7%	16.3%	16.9%	16.4%	15.9%	15.8%
4 Persons +	25.2%	40.6%	18.4%	19.5%	20.5%	19.7%	23.4%	22.9%

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Housing Stock Age

Table H-8. Housing Stock Age: Walnut Grove, AL								
Housing Stock	Walnut Grove		Etowah County		Alabama		US	
	Number	%Change	Number	%Change	Number	%Change	Number	%Change
1939 or earlier	16	N/A	3,997	N/A	136,806	N/A	18,348,998	N/A
% of Total	4.7%		8.4%		6.4%		14.1%	
1940 to 1959	35	118.8%	11,808	195.4%	316,165	131.1%	22,181,223	20.9%
% of Total	10.3%		24.9%		14.7%		17.1%	
1960 to 1979	95	171.4%	14,940	26.5%	659,668	108.6%	36,162,027	63.0%
% of Total	28.0%		31.5%		30.7%		27.8%	
1980 to 1999	140	47.4%	13,156	-11.9%	743,576	12.7%	36,789,342	1.7%
% of Total	41.3%		27.7%		34.6%		28.3%	
2000 to 2005 or later	53	-62.1%	3,542	-73.1%	290,298	-61.0%	16,556,490	-55.0%
% of Total	15.6%		7.5%		13.5%		12.7%	
Total Units	339		47,443		2,146,513		130,038,080	
Median Year Structure Built	1980		1972		1979		1975	

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Physical Housing Conditions

Table H-9. Physical Housing Conditions: Walnut Grove, AL 2017										
Housing Conditions	Single Family		Multi-Family		Manufactured		RV		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sound Condition	90	45.9%	1	8.3%	10	8.1%	0	0.0%	101	30.2%
Deteriorating	99	50.5%	11	91.7%	109	88.6%	3	100.0%	222	66.5%
Dilapidated	7	3.6%	0	0.0%	4	3.3%	0	0.0%	11	3.3%
Total	196	100.0%	12	100.0%	123	100.0%	3	100.0%	334	100.0%

Source: EARPDC housing inventory, 2017.

Selected Housing Conditions

Table H-10. Selected Physical Housing Conditions: Walnut Grove, AL										
Conditions	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2010
Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	3	0	-100.0%	386	216	-44.0%	11,005	8,848	-19.6%	602,324
% of Total	1.1%	0.0%		0.8%	0.5%		0.6%	0.5%		0.5%
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	3	0	-100.0%	549	288	-47.5%	9,660	12,054	24.8%	899,189
% of Total	1.1%	0.0%		1.2%	0.7%		0.6%	0.7%		0.8%
Total Occupied Units	3	0	-100.0%	45,959	41,584	-9.5%	1,737,080	1,821,210	4.8%	114,235,996

Source: US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010 STF 3.

Housing Value

Housing Value	Walnut Grove			Etowah County			Alabama			US
	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2000	2010	%Change	2010
Less Than \$50,000	31	65	109.7%	7,673	7,469	-2.7%	176,187	217,761	23.6%	6,203,294
% of Total	31.6%	31.4%		32.5%	24.6%		19.2%	16.8%		8.2%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	50	51	2.0%	9,649	7,962	-17.5%	392,400	335,324	-14.5%	11,301,615
% of Total	51.0%	24.6%		40.8%	26.2%		42.7%	25.9%		14.9%
\$100,000 to \$199,999	17	66	288.2%	5,226	10,085	93.0%	264,879	439,418	65.9%	22,669,355
% of Total	17.3%	31.9%		22.1%	33.2%		28.8%	33.9%		29.8%
\$200,000 and above	0	25	250.0%	1,089	4,832	343.7%	85,104	302,817	255.8%	35,915,386
% of Total	0.0%	12.1%		4.6%	15.9%		9.3%	23.4%		47.2%
Total Units	98	207	111.2%	23,637	30,348	28.4%	918,570	1,295,320	41.0%	76,089,650
Median Value (dollars)	\$69,200	\$91,100	31.6%	\$71,200	\$98,200	37.9%	\$85,100	\$117,600	38.2%	\$188,400

Source: US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010 STF 3.

Housing Value (Cont.)

Housing Value	Walnut Grove		Etowah Co.		Alabama		US	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Less Than \$50,000	70	30.6%	6,429	22.6%	202,946	16.0%	6,768,763	9.1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	68	29.7%	7,751	27.2%	297,069	23.4%	11,461,502	15.3%
\$100,000 to \$199,999	78	34.0%	9,599	33.7%	440,235	34.7%	23,265,568	30.9%
\$200,000 and above	13	5.7%	4,693	16.5%	328,899	26.0%	33,611,997	44.7%
Total Units	229	100%	28,472	100%	1,269,145	100%	74,712,091	100%
Median Value (dollars)	\$83,400.00		\$100,400.00		\$125,500.00		\$178,600.00	

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Housing Costs

Table H-13. Housing Value/Cost: Walnut Grove, AL							
Ownership Status	Walnut Grove		Etowah County		Alabama		US
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2010
Median Contract Rent	N/A	N/A	\$280	\$383	\$339	\$452	\$699
Median Gross Rent	\$313	\$283	\$395	\$587	\$447	\$644	\$841
Median Value Owner-Occupied Housing	\$69,200	\$91,100	\$71,200	\$98,200	\$85,100	\$117,600	\$188,400
Total Housing Units	299	376	45,959	47,454	1,963,711	2,171,853	131,704,730

Source: US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010 STF 3.

Owner-occupied Housing Affordability

Table H-14. Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income: Walnut Grove, AL				
Percent of Income	Walnut Grove	Etowah Co.	Alabama	US
Less than 20%	43.0%	45.2%	46.8%	40.0%
Between 20% - 30%	28.0%	25.8%	25.3%	27.5%
Above 30%	29.0%	29.0%	27.9%	32.5%

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

Renter-occupied Housing Affordability

Table H-15. Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income: Walnut Grove, AL				
Percent of Total	Walnut Grove	Etowah Co.	Alabama	US
Less than 20%	24.4%	25.3%	26.3%	24.2%
Between 20% - 30%	42.2%	23.6%	22.9%	24.0%
Above 30%	33.3%	51.0%	50.8%	51.8%

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

APPENDIX D: TOWN HALL MEETING NOTES

**Walnut Grove Town Hall Meeting:
Comprehensive Plan
10/3/16**

What are some things you like about your community?

- Small town atmosphere
- Good schools—Elementary School (in Altoona) and High School
- Top rate water system
- Good public safety services—police and fire departments
- Community Parks are clean and in good working condition
- Senior Center
- Public Library
- Housing in good condition
- Volunteer services through community churches
 - Prayer drive through
 - Food bank

What are some potential projects and improvements for the community?

- Building a storm shelter at the Senior Center—secure and utilize FEMA funding.
- Possible upgrades to the sewer system.
- Upgrade some sections of the water system.
- Establish a back-up well for situations where the present water well goes bad.
- Purchase new equipment for the fire department—secure and utilize FEMA funding.

List of Community Facilities and Services

Walnut Grove Town Hall
Police Department and Jail
Fire Department
Utilities Department
County Revenue Office
Post Office
West Side Library
Walnut Grove Senior Center
Parks and Ball fields
Walnut Grove High School

APPENDIX E: RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION # 2018-01

**TOWN OF WALNUT GROVE
COUNTY OF ETOWAH COUNTY
STATE OF ALABAMA**

A RESOLUTION BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WALNUT GROVE APPROVING THE 2018 TOWN OF WALNUT GROVE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS AN ADVISORY POLICY DOCUMENT.


WHEREAS, Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 8 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended, authorizes the Town Council to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the Town Council'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 Town of Walnut Grove, 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 Town of Walnut Grove Town Council conducted a public hearing on November 5, 2018 to solicit final public comments on the 2018 Town of Walnut Grove Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 10 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended, and adopted a resolution adopting the aforementioned plan, providing an effective date thereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WALNUT GROVE, ALABAMA that the 2018 Town of Walnut Grove Comprehensive Plan, and all maps contained therein, are hereby approved as an advisory document to guide the Town in policy formulation and implementation.

ADOPTED, this 5th day of November, 2018.



Autry Works, Mayor

ATTEST:



Kelly Hollingsworth, Town Clerk