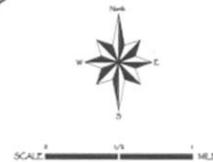


# Progressive Pell City

The Pell City Comprehensive Plan 2001-2025



Prepared by the City of Pell City Planning Commission  
with assistance from RPC-GB  
**October 2001**



---

# **PROGRESSIVE PELL CITY**

**The Pell City Comprehensive Plan**

**2001-2025**

**October 2001**

---

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

---

**Mayor**

Guin Robinson

---

**Pell City Council**

Forest A. Walls

James McGowan

Bernard White

Donnie Todd

Darrin DeLoach

*Adopted by the Pell City City Council*

October XX, 2001

---

**Pell City Planning Commission**

Bill Ervin, Chairman

*Adopted by the Pell City Planning Commission*

October 9, 2001

---

---

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**PROGRESSIVE PELL CITY**

**The Pell City Comprehensive Plan**

**2001-2025**

---

# Executive Summary

**Progressive Pell City**, the Pell City Comprehensive Plan is a guide to growth and development for the public officials and citizens who help shape the community of Pell City. The Comprehensive Plan presents a vision for future land use, and is intended to prepare the City for growth, and provide a reliable basis for public and private investment in the future. The Plan is a point of reference for evaluating all City programs and projects affecting development and a major source of guidance for private investors.

The Pell City Plan is both a comprehensive and strategic document. The Plan is comprehensive in that it balances community values and preferences with land use, economics, environment and transportation. The Plan is strategic in that it provides both short-term and long-term actions that are required if the Plan is to be implemented.

For the vision in this document to become a reality, additional steps must follow its adoption. These steps include:

**Revision of municipal ordinances and regulations** to ensure the plan's goals and policies are properly reflected, implemented and enforced;

**Development of a capital budget and program** to outline long term funding needs and commitments;

**Ongoing evaluation** of plans, policies and programs; and

**Continuing community involvement** in the planning and governing process.

Incorporated in 1891 by Sumter Cogswell, the City of Pell City is a rapidly growing community located in Saint Clair County, halfway between Birmingham and Anniston. According to the U.S. Census, the 2000 population of Pell City is estimated at 9,565 people, an increase of 13.0% from 1990. During this same period, St. Clair County's population grew by 29.5% and Alabama's population growth was 10.1%.

<b>Population Trends</b>	<b>Pell City</b>	<b>St. Clair County</b>	<b>Alabama</b>
1980(Census)	6,867	41,205	3,893,871
1990(Census)	8,117	50,009	4,040,587
2000(Census)	9,565	64,742	4,447,100
2004(Proj.)	11,361	69,632	4,532,826

Source: U.S. Census, Claritas Inc.

In 1990, the median age of residents was 38.4 years of age, whereas it was 32.4 in 1980, indicating Pell City is a maturing community. Between 1990 and 1999, the median household income increased 36.9%, going from \$26,166 in 1990, to \$35,833 in 1999.

The City of Pell City contains almost twenty-six (26) square miles of land (approximately 16,600 acres) and is bordered entirely by unincorporated county land, except for a small area in the east, that borders the Riverside community. Pell City lies along Interstate 20 to the north, and along the Coosa River to the south and east. U.S. Highway 231 runs north/south through the City, while U.S. Highway 78 runs east/west. Pell City has experienced population and commercial growth in the last ten years due to its accessibility, the available public services and the high quality of life that it offers.

---

## COMMUNITY VISION

Few things unite or divide people more than their **feelings, values, and principles**. History is the richest source of how communities, regions, countries and nations are united and divided by simple principles, which animate and force people to action, conflict or agreement. The Comprehensive Plan documents a commonly held vision, which helps to describe a preferred future for Pell City. The policies reinforce and articulate how the vision will be used by the Planning Commission and the City Council as a decision-making guide. The following are the main goals of the Plan, representing the desires and concerns of the community:

1. Maintain and achieve a strong sense of community.
2. Enhance and maintain Pell City's image and character.
3. Preserve Pell City's environmental resources.
4. Manage Pell City's growth and development to maintain and enhance Pell City's quality of life.
5. Provide adequate, high quality and well-maintained public services, amenities and facilities.
6. Support balanced, appropriate economic development.
7. Promote and sustain a progressive and positive planning process for Pell City.
8. Proactively address Pell City's housing issues.

It is a collective and individual responsibility to bring about a future vision for the City of Pell City. A vision statement was prepared to reflect the ideas and values of the residents of Pell City. When making decisions about the future of the City, the community vision should be reviewed in order to steer decisions made for the City in the positive direction that has been set forth.

## VISION STATEMENT

*To educate and disseminate information for the development of our future, using forward thinking to better the quality of life, culture, and enhancement of pride-within the vision of our forefathers.*

## NATURAL & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Development of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Pell City includes a respect and an understanding of the **natural systems** that provide the resources necessary for the City to exist and grow. These include basic functions such as clean air and water, but also include stable and fertile soils. These resources and natural systems not only provide drinking water, breathable air, habitats and agricultural opportunities, but also serve as the cornerstone to enhancing the overall quality of life, offering numerous recreational opportunities and enhancing the competitive advantage for future growth and prosperity.

Most residents of the City of Pell City enjoy the natural beauty and setting of the area. It is, perhaps, what brought them, what attracts them and what they value most in continuing to live, work and play in Pell City. The balance of protecting these natural resources while accommodating an appropriate type and quality of future development is fundamental to the Comprehensive Plan. The future of Pell City and its existing and future economic sectors will depend on its ability to preserve, protect and enhance the natural resources which attract its citizens, visitors, guests and work force.

Pell City's **built environment** – it's buildings and structures, and how they relate to the City's landscapes, layout and history – make Pell City the place it is. The City has a rich legacy that provides a foundation to its built environment. As Pell City continues to grow, this legacy must be conserved and enhanced.

This Plan addresses the unique natural and built conditions, as well as the general preservation of historic structures, neighborhoods, and open lands.

## LAND USE & ZONING

Land use patterns are almost never random occurrences, but usually reflect an underlying locational logic. When adjustments are made for the effects of local terrain, it is possible to learn a great deal about an area's historic social and economic conditions from the current land use distribution. Since Pell City's existing land use pattern has a direct impact on the community's future growth and infrastructure, an analysis of existing land use is important as a basis for the preparation of the land use plan, the **Future Growth and Development Guide**.

Pell City's existing land use pattern is oriented around the downtown and the major roadways in the City. The land area between the interstate and Cogswell Avenue (Highway 78) is the most intensely developed area of the City. Within this area, the predominant land use is medium and low density residential, with concentrations of commercial development along the major roadways and industrial development in the City's industrial park. Outside of this "downtown" area the residential development is less dense, the commercial and industrial areas are more scattered and vacant land predominates. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 64% of the residential stock in Pell City are single family detached units. Another 30% are mobile homes or trailers, and the remaining 6% are multi-family structures. There is some agricultural presence within the City. This land is predominately used as pasture land and not agricultural production.

PELL CITY EXISTING LAND USE		
LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF ACRES	% OF TOTAL ACRES
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	2,627.1	17.6%
MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	73.5	0.5%
MOBILE HOME RESIDENTIAL	313.5	2.1%
COMMERCIAL	521.9	3.5%
OFFICE	29.1	0.2%
INDUSTRIAL	310.0	2.1%
AGRICULTURAL	436.5	2.9%
PARKS & RECREATION	156.9	1.1%
PUBLIC	131.1	0.9%
SEMI-PUBLIC	125.5	0.8%
UTILITIES	212.4	1.4%
UNCLASSIFIED	7.9	0.1%
VACANT	9,940.7	66.8%
TOTAL	14,886.1	100.0%

Source: the Regional Planning Commission

The Future Growth and Development Guide is an illustration of how the City wishes to grow and develop in the future. Based on existing zoning, existing land use, natural resources, community input and other factors, the Future Growth and Development Guide represents desired land use relationships, preservation and growth areas, and other factors affecting Pell City's development future. The Future Growth and Development Guide is also an indicator of future growth projections, infill opportunities, open space areas, and infrastructure requirements for the future. The Future Growth and Development Guide is a realistic reflection of where future growth and development may occur while honoring and reinforcing community values and principles.

---

The Comprehensive Plan anticipates continued and sustainable growth in housing, services, employment, and population, while protecting the City's natural systems, maintaining its human scale and neighborhoods and celebrating its heritage. The growth that has occurred, and is anticipated, dictates the need for action on the part of the City.

Pell City's future land use pattern exhibits an understanding of the community's growth and development needs, as well as its natural and physical constraints. As Pell City grows, it will become increasingly important to recognize the places that are most significant to the community and to protect those environments.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation systems, which allow access for Pell City citizens, visitors, and its businesses, are a critical element in the planning and development process. Vitality of an area is often a direct result of vision and placement of transportation systems. Historically, land use patterns have been developed through a combination of market decisions and the availability of an adequate transportation network. By identifying the City's existing transportation network, the Comprehensive Plan can be designed to take advantage of the existing and future transportation network.

Accessibility and traffic are major issues for City residents and businesses. Residents need access with limited congestion. An equally serious concern, however, is the fact that accessibility is vital to retail sales and service. Given Pell City's dependence on retail sales and the revenue it brings, improved access management for retail business in the City must be a high priority. The City should recognize the importance of transportation and access, and emphasize the importance of transportation linkages to shape Pell City. Transportation policies focus on the creation of a comprehensive and interconnected system of roads and trails within the City. They are also intended to promote a move toward alternative modes of transportation over time.

The matrix below outlines some of the important considerations against which roadway projects will be measured:

### **Access Objectives:**

- To Downtown
- To industrial and commercial areas
- To community parks and recreation facilities

### **Neighborhood Objectives:**

- Removal of truck traffic from local streets
- Removal of commuter traffic from local streets
- Provision of safe and convenient pedestrian routes
- Provision of safe and convenient bicycle routes
- Strong linkages within and among neighborhoods

### **Design Objectives:**

- Roads that are appropriate in scale to Pell City and its neighborhoods
- Roads that are fully integrated into and designed as part of a multi-modal system including accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists
- High quality landscaping, lighting and amenities
- Underground utilities
- Cost effective solutions that meet local design standards

---

## COMMUNITY ECONOMICS

A strengthening of the City's economy can help to decrease suburban sprawl and the costs of providing additional infrastructure. The City's economic well-being is sustained through the continued generation of quality jobs through self-employment, enterprise development and small business growth. The City's quality of life is and will continue to be an important contributor to the economy. Enhancement of the downtown, cultural and recreational opportunities for residents, and promoting activities and development that are compatible with the City's neighborhoods and natural environment are all beneficial to the City's quality of life and economy.

Pell City provides jobs and services for residents of the City, county and beyond. Not only does the City host a variety of businesses within its own boundaries, but it also contributes directly to economic development activity and opportunities throughout the surrounding region. The City's overall quality of life, reputation as a forward-thinking community and host of urban amenities should be a dominating attraction to locating a business in the area.

The oldest industry and the City's largest employer is Avondale Mills – the second largest privately held company in the state. Two industrial parks in the City house 30 industries, several of which continue to expand. Benjamin Moore has expanded three times since 1986 and elected to make Pell City its Southern Regional Headquarters. The City and its industries pride themselves on their corporate-community relationship. Avondale Mills set the precedent and continues to support the community by leasing parks and recreation land to the City, as well as donating property for community facilities. Although not located in Pell City, the new Honda facility will have a tremendous impact on the City's economy, as well other aspects of life in Pell City.

Bringing in new industry or expanding existing industry, and creating jobs allows people to stay in the community. This is important to many people because it allows them to spend more time with their family or in the community, and less time in the car. By encouraging and accommodating growth in Pell City, surrounding communities and their rural working landscapes can be protected from unwanted sprawl development and supplied desired job opportunities and services. This combination of uses and landscapes provides the foundation for the region's competitive advantage.

Pell City's vitality comes from its growing mixed economy. Diversity allows the City to weather temporary weaknesses in different sectors of the economy. As the economy diversifies, employment has occurred in the areas of service, finance, insurance and real estate. Continued diversification is essential, including the development of the retiree "business".

To remain vital, Pell City should continue to provide an environment conducive to businesses, good jobs for workers and the necessary support - including good housing, childcare, access to services, educational opportunities and a healthful environment. Continued investment in the downtown is important as well. Support for the existing job base and a mix of industry, government, education, health care and tourism, and encouraging the creation of jobs that benefit the worker, the consumer and the environment should be supported. There are many groups and individuals working to make this happen in Pell City, including the Pell City Industrial Development Board and the Pell City Chamber of Commerce.

The area's economy, land use and environment are closely interconnected. Pell City intends to attract compatible industries to expand local employment opportunities, promote and maintain a more diversified economy and broaden the tax base. Pell City intends to improve its commercial environment, both downtown and its regional, highway and convenience commercial areas, as a way to broaden the economy; better serve its residents and others in the City's trade area; improve the local tax base; provide more employment opportunities; and enhance Pell City as a center of commercial activity in the region. Therefore it is critical to explore economic development options in keeping with the scale of the community and which respect the surrounding environment.

---

## **SERVICES & FACILITIES**

A leading indicator of the health and well-being of a community is the extent of its community services and facilities. With the desire to encourage a diversity of citizens, visitors and guests into the community the Comprehensive Plan evaluated what the City currently provides and what additional services and facilities could be provided. Pell City recognizes the importance of providing high quality services and facilities to the community. The availability of community services is or should be a major determinant for new residential, commercial and industrial development. Existing resources are, and will continue to be, managed and used effectively in order to sustain an appropriate level of development without necessarily burdening the taxpayers and resource base of the community.

Without adequate infrastructure and public services, the City cannot sustain its current and anticipated level of growth. The City should coordinate land use with existing facilities and utilities to minimize the costs of additional infrastructure, and ensure growth keeps pace with the City's ability to provide services. The City of Pell City will provide and promote adequate, well designed and maintained community facilities and services. Pell City intends to improve and expand the number, quality and accessibility of its community facilities to serve all residents, especially its recreation and sewer facilities. Pell City intends to provide and promote appropriate community facilities designed to meet the needs of the elderly, handicapped, very young and the community at large.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Each chapter of this Plan sets forth a vision for Pell City over the next twenty years and offers both policies and actions to implement that vision. The document by itself, however, will accomplish nothing. The City Council and Planning Commission bear a significant responsibility in ensuring that its decisions on proposed developments, land use regulations, development incentives, and capital spending are consistent with the Plan's vision and policies. The City, through its Departments, Commissions, Administration, and City Council must now implement this plan through the array of tools available, and in partnership with other governments and the private and non-profit sectors.

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	i
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	ii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	ii
<b>LIST OF MAPS</b> .....	ii
<b>I. ... INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
PURPOSE OF THE PLAN .....	3
THE PLANNING PROCESS .....	4
HISTORY OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT IN PELL CITY .....	5
PELL CITY TODAY .....	6
PELL CITY DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE .....	7
<b>II. THE COMMUNITY VISION</b> .....	10
<b>III. THE NATURAL &amp; BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b> .....	13
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT .....	13
NATURAL AREAS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE .....	16
BUILT ENVIRONMENT .....	18
BUILT AREAS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE .....	21
POLICIES .....	23
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	24
<b>IV. LAND USE &amp; ZONING</b> .....	25
LAND USE .....	25
EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS .....	27
FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE .....	31
ZONING .....	43
POLICIES .....	46
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	49
<b>V. TRANSPORTATION</b> .....	50
POLICIES .....	55
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	57
<b>VI. COMMUNITY ECONOMICS</b> .....	58
POLICIES .....	62
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	66
<b>VII. SERVICES AND FACILITIES</b> .....	67
EDUCATION .....	67
PUBLIC WORKS .....	68
SOLID WASTE .....	69
POLICE AND FIRE .....	69
PARKS AND RECREATION .....	70
GENERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES .....	72
POLICIES .....	73
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	76

<b>VIII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY</b> .....	77
<b>IX. MAPS</b> .....	82
<b>X. APPENDIX</b> .....	91
<b>XI. GLOSSARY</b> .....	95

#### LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Level of Educational Attainment Persons 25 years & Over: 1990 .....	8
1.2 Per Capita Income Comparisons: 1979-1999 .....	9
4.1 Existing Land Use Acreages .....	25
4.2 Comparison of Total Households: 1980-1999.....	28
4.3 Occupied Housing Units: 1990.....	29
4.4 Units in Structure: 1990.....	29
4.5 Future Land Use Acreages .....	32
6.1 Employment by Industry – Employed persons 16+ years: 1990.....	58
7.1 Pell City School System .....	68

#### LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Population: 1940-1999 .....	8
1.2 Percent Change Housing & Population.....	8
1.3 Population Projections: 1999-2019 .....	9
4.1 Strip Commercial Development on Major Roads.....	35
4.2 Block-style Commercial Development on Major Roads.....	36

#### LIST OF MAPS

1 Geographic Constraints.....	83
2 Hydrology .....	84
3 Existing Land Use .....	85
4 Future Growth and Development Guide Map .....	86
5 General Zoning Classifications.....	87
6 Existing Zoning.....	88
7 Transportation .....	89
8 Sanitary Sewer Facilities .....	90

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

---

Progressive Pell City, the City's Comprehensive Plan is a **guide** to growth and development for the public officials and citizens who help shape the community of Pell City. The Plan presents a **vision** for future land use, and is intended to prepare the City for new growth and development, and provide a consistent basis for public and private investment in the future.

The Plan is a **policy** document that describes Pell City's official vision of the physical form and appearance desired for the City as it continues to grow over the coming years. The Land Use Plan attempts to answer the question "what do we want Pell City to be like in ten or twenty years from now?" Thus, the Plan provides a long range vision for:

- The geographic arrangement of various land uses within the City, including the arrangement of commercial, office, industrial, institutional and residential land uses (at varying intensities of development).
- The desired characteristics and qualities of the community.
- Future roadways, pedestrian ways, and bicycle paths.

As a policy document, the Pell City Plan serves a different purpose than a City ordinance. Both ordinances and policy documents are officially adopted by City Council. However, ordinance and ordinance amendments, are legally-binding procedural rules and statues governing the municipal government and its citizens. Ordinances set forth law. A policy document, on the other hand, is not law. Rather, it is an official statement by the municipal government of its growth management vision, policies, and intentions. The Land Use Plan, then, is the City's official declaration of the desired character and pattern of future development in Pell City. But beyond being simply a declaration of the City's official vision for Pell City, the Land Use Plan is actively used to guide growth in the following ways:

- **The Land Use Plan guides application of the City's zoning, annexation, subdivision, and site plan ordinances.**

All aspects of the City's codes and ordinances dealing with growth, development, and community appearance are administered in accordance with the Pell City Plan. When a new annexation, rezoning, planned unit development (PUD), subdivision, or site plan request is filed with the City of Pell City, the city planning staff reviews and evaluates the application and prepares a formal recommendation regarding the application to the City Council. This report includes an evaluation of the degree to which the proposal conforms with the intent of the Pell City Plan.

---

This forms an important connection between the Pell City Plan and the pattern and character of development that occurs in Pell City. Only through the proper administration of ordinances in conformance with the Pell City Plan, can the community achieve the form and vision committed to by the community and the City.

- **The Land Use Plan steers growth in Pell City by guiding infrastructure improvements and public investment.**

The City of Pell City's departments use the Plan to guide planning for their own long-range public facilities, services and infrastructure needs. For example, the Public Works department and Utilities' Board use the Plan to develop plans for water and sewer service expansion and for developing the City's Thoroughfare Plan and other roadway improvements. The Parks and Recreation Department uses the Comprehensive Plan to anticipate where new growth will occur and where new parks will be needed. Similarly, the Police and Fire Departments use the Plan to anticipate where new growth will occur in order to determine staff requirements and the location of new stations.

As a result of this City-wide reliance on the Pell City Plan, development of long-range facilities, infrastructure, and services shall reflect the intent of the Plan. And, since development tends to follow infrastructure and public facilities expansion, new development will occur most readily around transportation improvements, new parks and community centers, and utility improvements. In this way, the Plan naturally influences the course of private development.

- **The Land Use Plan guides growth in Pell City through private sector use of the Plan in making investment decisions.**

The Pell City Plan is the City's strongest official statement of where future growth and development should occur and the character of development desired by the community. As such, considerable importance is placed on the Plan by landowners, the development community, businesses, and citizens alike. Landowners and property buyers rely on the Plan to inform them of what type of growth may occur around them. Businesses choose site locations and formulate business plans on the basis of the type, nature, and arrangement of future land uses delineated in the Plan. Subdivision developers and home builders select locations that will be convenient to future public facilities and complementary future land uses, such as grocery stores. Likewise, commercial developers select sites and plan projects based on the location and type of expected residential development identified in the Pell City Plan.

In this manner, the vision embodied by the Pell City Plan becomes "institutionalized" in the assumptions of the community. As more parties move forward with plans based on the intentions within the Plan, use of the Plan as a decision-making framework ensures that the community vision becomes a reality.

---

Reliance on the Plan also helps to avoid or reduce conflicts between citizens and developers, since both parties can proceed from a common vision about future development in Pell City.

- **The Land Use Plan guides growth in Pell City through its recommendations for new ordinances, policies, and studies.**

In addition to providing a clear vision for future growth, the Pell City Plan also makes recommendations for City actions that will help to make that vision a reality, including recommendations for new ordinances and improvements to existing ordinances. The Plan also makes recommendations for specific City projects, policies and initiatives that are not covered by ordinances. Lastly, the Plan makes recommendations for follow-up studies and projects that are necessary to implement the Plan.

## **PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

The Pell City Plan is both a comprehensive and strategic document. The Plan is comprehensive- in that it balances community values and preferences with land use, economics, environment, and transportation. The Plan is strategic- in that it provides both short-term and long-term actions that are required for the Plan to be implemented. For the vision presented in this plan to become a reality, additional steps must follow its adoption. These include:

**Revision of municipal ordinances and regulations** to ensure the Plan’s goals and policies are properly reflected, implemented and enforced;

**Development of a capital budget and program** to outline long-term funding needs and commitments;

**Development of area-specific plans, programs and policies** to offer more detailed and site-specific strategies for selected parts of the City;

**Ongoing evaluation** of plans, policies and programs; and

**Continuing community involvement** in the planning and governing process.

This Plan must be considered a “living document”. As a framework for growth over many years, it must be continually reviewed, modified, and expanded over time to reflect any changing circumstances and opportunities which may occur with new development or other large impacts to the community.

---

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The process for creating this Plan required research, analysis, and collaboration at all levels in the City. Development of the Plan began with the intent of developing a vision of the future of Pell City. The process started with the distribution of the *Citizen Survey*. This questionnaire presented residents an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns about the facilities and services provided by the City. Through a following series of public meetings, the needs and desires of citizens, with regard to the City, were identified. Goals and supporting objectives, that residents wish the City to achieve, were developed. The goals reflect the values of the community and have become the basis around which plan concepts were developed. The goals contained in the plan are:

1. Maintain and achieve a strong sense of community.
2. Enhance and maintain Pell City's image and character.
3. Preserve Pell City's environmental resources.
4. Manage Pell City's growth and development to maintain and enhance Pell City's quality of life.
5. Provide adequate, high quality and well-maintained public services, amenities and facilities.
6. Support balanced, appropriate economic development.
7. Promote and sustain a progressive and positive planning process for Pell City.
8. Proactively address Pell City's housing issues.

To achieve these goals, this plan offers a new direction for the City and strives to foster "neighborhood activity centers" to promote a pedestrian friendly alternative to inefficient and often unattractive strip development. These centers will include well-connected, pedestrian-friendly commercial and office cores, surrounded by residential neighborhoods that support these *nodes*, or focus areas. Neighborhoods, connected by pedestrian walkways to a node, will transition from higher-density to lower-density housing as one moves outward from the neighborhood center. The plan text describes these centers, and the accompanying Land Use Plan Map shows their desired location.

The plan provides flexibility in land uses. For example, while the proposed locations of activity centers are shown on the Land Use Plan Map, the Map does not specify the precise internal arrangement of the commercial, office, institutional and high-density residential uses which make up the activity center.

New approaches to residential neighborhood design are provided as the Plan strives to preserve and enhance the City's visual appeal and efficiency. These approaches include "Traditional Neighborhood Development" (TND), a design concept that includes relatively smaller lots and narrower street than in conventional large-lot subdivisions. Also included as crucial design features are: public open spaces that serve as the focal points for neighborhoods, homes gathered relatively close to streets, a highly-

---

connected grid road system, street trees and other landscaping, and the possible inclusion of some small-scale neighborhood commercial activities. Such development patterns help create more pedestrian-oriented activity centers and enhance the opportunities for transportation alternatives. “Cluster development,” a method of preserving open space and rural land by gathering structures on the more developable portions of a site, is also presented as an alternative, chiefly in areas where forest resources and rural open space are threatened.

The Plan provides an analysis of opportunities and constraints within the natural and built environments. This analysis include a consideration of such natural features as soils, slopes, water resources, and floodplains. In addition, the impacts on Pell City’s growth created by the nearby Honda Plant, the City’s proximity to Birmingham, and other aspects of the built environment are fully considered. An analysis of current and future land use supply and demand are included in the Plan to establish assumptions upon which the Land Use Plan is developed.

## **HISTORY OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT IN PELL CITY**

Pell City, ‘discovered’ by Sumter Cogswell, an insurance agent traveling through the area in 1890, is a rapidly growing community located in St. Clair County, Alabama. Located between Birmingham and Anniston, a small village grew around a railroad depot and the three rail lines that met in the City. The one hotel in town served the train travelers passing through the depot. When Mr. Cogswell passed through, he saw a town abundant in natural beauty and great possibility. He organized the Pell City Iron and Land Company, which bought 400 acres of land and incorporated the Town on May 6, 1891. In 1901, Cogswell again passed through the area finding the town to be virtually empty due to an economic downturn near the end of the 1890’s. Only forty residents remained in the once thriving town. Mr. Cogswell took on the task of re-establishing the town. Once again he bought and donated land to bring in a textile mill to the Town, and with it 1,500 new residents. For many years the mill was the Town, operating both the school and the hospital. This established a pattern that continues in Pell City today, with a community and a corporate base that work together to keep the community strong. The qualities that brought Mr. Cogswell and the community’s first industries to Town, continue to attract new residents, industries, and visitors today.

To deal with many of the pressures associated with a growing community, the City began land use planning in 1971 along with the creation of its first planning commission. Following completion of a Reconnaissance Survey and Program Design, a comprehensive plan for the City was completed in 1973. The 1973 Pell City Comprehensive Plan made recommendations for growth and development of the City, helping to provide a quality living environment for City residents. This Plan acknowledges and improves on those past efforts to plan for a City that continues to grow.

---

## PELL CITY TODAY

Much has changed in the 25 years since the last Comprehensive Plan for Pell City was written. The need to evaluate these changes, in addition to evaluating the broad range of issues which have come together over the past several years, has created the basic need for this plan. Today, Pell City has a population of over 10,000 residents and encompasses approximately twenty-six square miles of land. While many residents work outside the area, Pell City remains a commercial and industrial center for St. Clair County. The City will continue to experience growth over the coming years, and with the development of the new Honda facility in Lincoln, more substantial levels of growth in every area are anticipated.

The planning process identified a number of concerns to Pell City residents today. These issues are:

### ***Community***

- Existing Comprehensive Plan is outdated (1973).
- Lack of vision for the community and identity.
- Increasing community expectations regarding the City's role in addressing land use issues.
- Continuing cooperative efforts/relationship with St. Clair County.
- Need to develop appropriate entryways into the City.
- Appearance of City, especially dealing with substandard structures.
- Meeting recreation needs of community.
- Affordable housing needs of community.

### ***Land Use***

- Determining growth boundaries and defining annexation areas.
- Annexation of "islands" within the City.
- Define community expectations for development and redevelopment.
- City fragmented by incompatible uses.
- Need to anticipate and plan for future growth, development and preservation of the natural resources, especially along major roadways and interstate interchanges.
- Better management and direction for development, infill and redevelopment.
- Limiting strip development.
- Need to maintain a viable downtown, while preserving its historic character.
- Protect integrity and character of the community while accommodating growth.
- Need to enhance and protect natural resource areas.
- Enforcement and strengthening of planning and zoning regulations, including improving image of the City.

- 
- Need to deal with substandard housing throughout the community.

### ***Transportation***

- Evaluating transportation and circulation issues and their relationship to land use.
- Maintaining an acceptable Level of Service on the roadways and at the intersections.
- Access to and from Highways 231 and 78.
- Pedestrian access to public areas.

### ***Economics***

- Industrial development, including larger industrial facilities.
- Job creation and better wages.
- How to create a fiscal, sustainable and livable community.
- Need to understand effect that growth has on quality of life.
- Understand how major economic generators benefit community.
- Development of a more educated/skilled workforce.
- How to better develop Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and allocate City expenditures.
- Tourism development...Logan Martin.

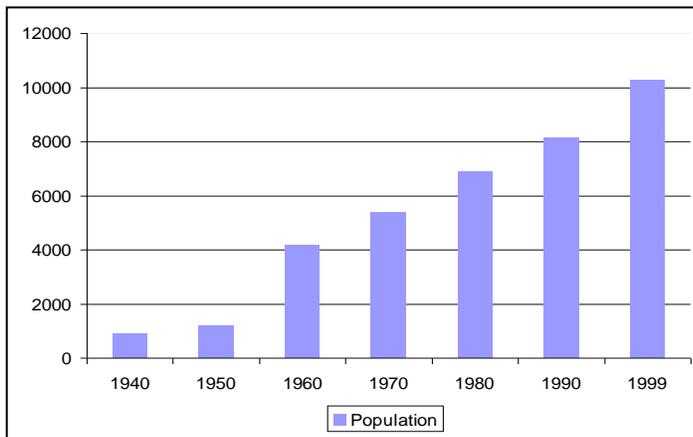
### ***Services and Facilities***

- Inadequate sewer facilities and services.
- Need to provide enhanced community services and facilities, especially parks and recreation opportunities including facilities for pedestrian and bikers.
- Improving the condition of the roadways, including curb and gutter.
- Need for improved pedestrian facilities, including installation and maintenance of sidewalks.
- Improved educational system.

## **PELL CITY DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

### **Population**

Pell City remains one of St. Clair County's most populated communities, with a 1999 estimated population of 10,267 – approximately 16% of the St. Clair County population. Pell City's population has experienced significant increases in population since 1940, a trend that is expected to continue in the future. However, Pell City's consistent population growth does not tell the whole growth story. With demographic trends towards smaller families, growth of housing must also be considered. Housing development has consistently exceeded population growth. The City continues to be an attractive place to live – especially



as people are drawn to the many amenities the City has to offer, such as access to Logan Martin Lake and the Coosa River as well as the City's community, parks, and recreation facilities.

Figure 1.1

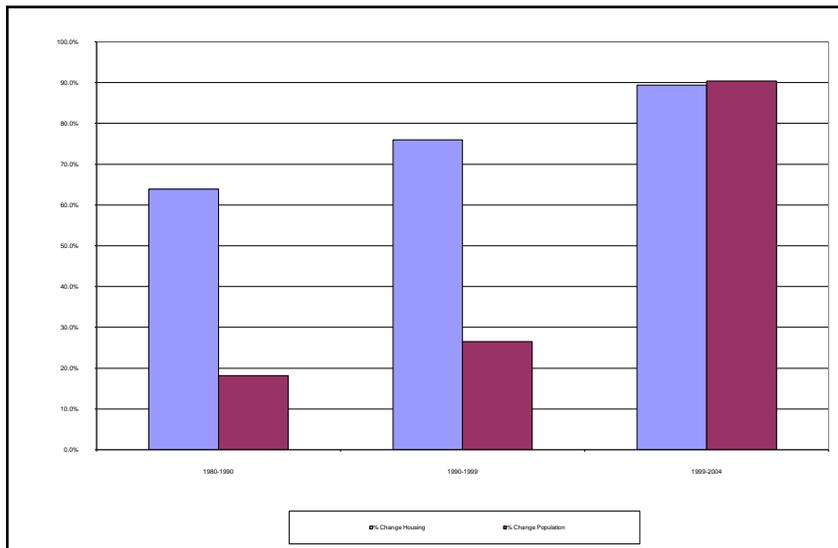


Figure 1.2

## Education

Educational attainment rates for the residents of the City of Pell City generally reflect similar trends throughout St. Clair County and Alabama. Approximately 51% of the people aged 25 years and older residing in the City of Pell City have received a high school diploma and another 14% have earned a Bachelor Degree or higher.

**TABLE 1.1 Level of Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Over: 1990**

Census Division	Less than High School Graduate	High School Graduate or Higher	Bachelor Degree or Higher
City of Pell City	34.7%	51.2%	14.0%
St. Clair County	39.0%	52.6%	8.5%
State of Alabama	33.1%	51.2%	15.6%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

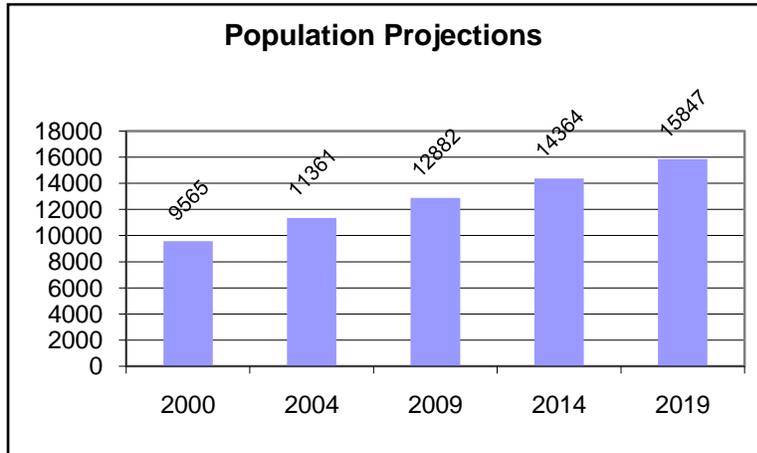
**Income**

Over the past ten years per capita income (individual income) for Pell City residents has increased 60%, nearly twice what it was in 1989. As with educational attainment, per capita income has been measured against per capita income for St. Clair County and the State of Alabama. Pell City residents' income ranks well above both the County and the State as a whole.

**Table 1.2 Per Capita Income Comparisons: 1989 - 1999**

Census Division	1989	1999	% Change 1989-99
City of Pell City	\$13,275	\$21,177	59.5%
St. Clair County	\$10,606	\$17,064	60.9%
State of Alabama	\$11,493	\$17,773	54.6%

Source: Claritas, Inc.



Source: Claritas, Inc.

**Figure 1.3**

Population projections indicate that Pell City's population will continue to increase over the next twenty year period to approximately 15,800 people by 2019, an increase of 64.9% from 1999 figures. This steady growth rate is expected to increase the community's population by 1000-1500 new residents every five years over the next twenty years.

---

## **II. COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

---

It is a collective and individual responsibility to help bring about a future vision for Pell City. The community must continue to work together by identifying common issues and needs, and pooling resources in order to improve the community. Goals and objectives were prepared to reflect the current ideas and values of the residents of Pell City. When making decisions about the future of Pell City, the community goals and objectives should be reviewed in order to steer decision-makers in the positive direction that has been set forth by the community.

As detailed in other chapters of this Plan, Pell City has tremendous historic, natural, and economic resources that provide defining characteristics for the City. Preserving these resources while supporting wise growth is of primary importance to residents. Based on citizen comments derived from community meetings, work by the Advisory Committee, and the Planning Commission, the following goals and objectives for guiding future growth were developed. These goals and objectives form the foundation upon which the Land Use Plan is built.

### **GOAL 1. Maintain and enhance a strong sense of community**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Maintain Pell City's unique character and small-town atmosphere
- Promote Pell City's positive image as a desirable community in which to live and work
- Keep and encourage a strong physical sense of both neighborhood and community
- Preserve open space(s)
- Promote Pell City's distinct heritage and traditions

### **GOAL 2. Enhance and maintain Pell City's image and character**

- Encourage and maintain landscaping of public spaces, major thoroughfares, gateways, etc.
- Encourage attractive "boulevard" medians and street landscaping
- Provide appropriate buffers as transitions between land uses
- Promote strong architectural, appearance, and landscaping standards for development
- Encourage architectural unity and continuity without sacrificing diversity
- Enforce and maintain sign control

### **GOAL 3. Preserve Pell City's environmental resources**

- Promote and preserve trees, urban forests and natural open spaces during development
- Preserve and maintain Pell City's water resources by protecting streams and watersheds
- Mitigate the adverse impacts of noise and air pollution

---

**GOAL 4. Manage Pell City's growth and development to maintain and enhance quality of life**

- Place compatible land uses next to each other
- Promote unobtrusive building height, mass and scale with respect to surrounding development and tree canopy
- Preserve, maintain and revitalize Pell City's downtown and surrounding neighborhoods
- Encourage and provide for mixed-use development with a variety of housing types, densities, nonresidential uses, open spaces and recreational amenities
- Encourage office development in campus type settings
- Promote appropriate infill development
- Concentrate nonresidential development to avoid commercial strip type development
- Encourage small-scale neighborhood oriented commercial development where appropriate
- Encourage development at a pedestrian scale
- Encourage traditional neighborhood design standards, with pedestrian-oriented, integrated neighborhood amenities: recreation and open spaces and commercial services
- Define and control suburban sprawl
- Space shopping centers and commercial growth appropriately according to development standards

**GOAL 5. Provide adequate, quality, and well-maintained public services, amenities and facilities**

- Proactively plan, in conjunction with neighboring counties, for high-quality, well-maintained, neighborhood schools, particularly with regard to development of the school system
- Provide public libraries to adequately serve Pell City's growing population
- Develop recreational, sports, and cultural facilities to provide sustained, adequate level of service
- Develop neighborhood oriented, community and regional parks, open spaces and greenways to adequately serve Pell City's growing and existing population
- Maintain and improve the current high level of public safety and emergency services
- Expand and maintain utility infrastructure to adequately serve future growth and development

**GOAL 6. Provide a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system for Pell City**

- Design a comprehensive thoroughfare system that incorporates a variety of transportation modes for adequate access, flow, connectivity, safety and mobility
- Improve thoroughfares to keep pace with new growth and development
- Proactively plan, with other agencies, for public transportation for travel both within Pell City and between Pell City and other locations
- Emphasize pedestrian-oriented development to achieve a comprehensive system of bicycle

---

lanes, greenways, and sidewalks connecting neighborhoods, parks, schools, offices, commercial areas, and other public spaces

**GOAL 7. Support balanced, appropriate economic development**

- Encourage quality, *clean*, and *green* businesses and industries to locate / expand in Pell City
- Maintain a reasonable tax rate that is attractive to the residential community and existing and potential businesses
- Promote the balanced growth of residential/non-residential land uses with respect to the economic vitality of the community and contribution to the tax base

**GOAL 8. Promote and sustain a progressive and positive planning process for Pell City**

- Equitably disperse the costs for the expansion and maintenance of Pell City's infrastructure between the public and private sectors, including the transportation system, recreational and cultural facilities, open spaces and schools
- Effectively manage long-term growth through comprehensive and proactive planning
- Master plan development under the Planned Unit Development concept
- Actively participate in regional planning efforts
- Support and enforce effective zoning, land use, and development regulations

**GOAL 9. Proactively address Pell City's housing issues**

- Maintain and protect residential property values
- Encourage the availability of housing for a wide range of income groups, including the disabled, senior citizens, and low and middle income residents
- Permit and actively encourage higher residential densities in appropriate locations to support neighborhood activity centers
- Encourage creative and innovative strategies, schemes and development that positively addresses Pell City's housing issues

These goals are the guiding principles around which the policies, design concepts, and criteria for future growth have been designed. The following chapters present the new growth model for Pell City, the **Future Growth and Development Guide**, and recommendations for implementing the community vision.

---

### III. THE NATURAL & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

---

Pell City has a strong interest in protecting its vital natural resources and many of its built resources. Preserving the significant natural and built resources is critical to the continued economic vitality and quality of life within the community. This chapter presents a brief inventory of the environmental characteristics that were evaluated in developing the **Future Growth and Development Guide**. However, a full-scale evaluation of environmental impacts of growth is not within the scope of this plan.

#### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Development of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Pell City includes a respect and understanding of the **natural systems** which provide the resources that are needed for the City to exist and grow. These include basic functions such as clean air and water, but also include stable and fertile soils. These resources not only provide drinking water, breathable air, habitats, and agricultural opportunities, but also serve as the cornerstone to enhancing the overall quality of life, offering numerous recreational opportunities and increasing the competitive advantage for future growth and prosperity.

The natural features of the community should be considered an important resource for residents and visitors. Conservation and preservation of unique lands, stream corridors, and other significant natural features are important to viability and quality of life. The City should initiate and promote long-term stewardship of clean water and air, promote energy efficiency, and create ongoing opportunities for residents and visitors to explore, learn about, and enjoy the natural beauty of the area.

**Hydrology.** Hydrology refers to the creeks, streams, drainage paths, watersheds and other water bodies located in an area. Activities dealing with water sources within a watershed can affect all waterways within the watershed. Pell City recognizes that maintenance of potable water supplies is crucial in safeguarding the health of its citizens and ensuring long-term economic prosperity.

Pell City is in the Coosa River Watershed. A watershed is a topographic drainage basin, where rainwater drains to a common destination. A water supply watershed is any watershed that serves as a source for municipally owned water supply intake. Surface water in Pell City flows in a generally southerly direction into the Coosa River. The Pell City planning area has only a few perennial creeks running through the City. These include the Easonville Creek, Blue Springs, and Cropwell Springs Branches of the Coosa River, Dry Creek, Fishing Creek and the West Branch of Fishing Creek, Wolf Creek and the Kilgore, Dunlap, and Sand Branches of Wolf Creek.

---

**Floodplain.** Floodplains are low, relatively flat-lying areas adjacent to streams that are subject to flooding during periods of intense rainfall. Floodplains are areas in which there is a one percent chance of flooding during any given year. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identifies and records areas that are prone to flooding. Floodplains, in their natural or relatively undisturbed state, are important water resource areas. They serve three major purposes: natural water storage and conveyance, water quality maintenance, and ground water recharge. Unsuitable development can harm or destroy the proper function of the floodplain. Extraneous material placed in the floodplain reduces essential water storage capacity by displacing the water that would otherwise be "stored" there during a flood, causing the water elevation to rise. In effect, this can alter floodplain boundaries and unduly expand areas where flooding may occur.

The floodplains in Pell City run along the Easonville Creek, Blue Springs, and Cropwell Springs Branches of the Coosa River, Dry Creek, Fishing Creek and the West Branch of Fishing Creek, Wolf Creek, and the Kilgore, Dunlap, and Sand Branches of Wolf Creek. Development is restricted within the floodplain. A potential use for these areas is development of recreational greenway or other open space opportunities.

Often associated with floodplains are riverine wetlands, which function as storage areas for flood waters, slowing runoff and thereby lessening flood levels downstream. These wetlands also serve as deposit areas for sediment and other material carried by flood waters. Construction in floodplains, particularly when riverine wetlands are damaged or destroyed, can lessen the storage capacity of floodplains, contribute to higher flood levels downstream, increase turbidity and increase erosion problems due to higher stream flow velocities. For these reasons, Pell City should place severe limitations on development within the 100-year floodplain. No encroachment is allowed unless a registered engineer, architect, or landscape architect certifies that encroachment will not increase flood levels above FEMA regulations.

The Clean Water Act regulates development within wetlands and requires a permit, issued by the CORE, prior to any dredge or fill carried out in isolated wetlands above one acre in size (isolated wetlands include any wetlands not adjacent to navigable waterways). These include the riverine wetlands commonly associated with streams in Pell City and the surrounding area. Landowners who are contemplating construction within local floodplains are advised to carefully inspect the site for indications of water at or near the surface, refer to available soils surveys and National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps, and seek preliminary advice from the CORE.

**Soils.** An understanding of soils found in the area is helpful in land use planning, zoning, and subdivision preparation because the type of soils, as well as slope conditions, affect lot size and density of development. In some instances, the type and character of the soils preclude certain types of development, particularly when sewer and other services are not available. The Soil Conservation

---

Service has identified 39 soil series and combinations in the Pell City planning area. Soils may be classified according to structure, texture, organic matter content and permeability. These various properties of soils are important in determining how land can be used safely and economically. The Soil Conservation Service designates the limitations of the soils according to the following:

- *Slight*: Soil properties are favorable for the rated land use. The degree of limitation is minor and adverse soil conditions can readily be corrected or resolved.
- *Moderate*: One or more soil properties are unfavorable for the rated use. The degree of limitation can be practically overcome or modified.
- *Severe*: Adverse soil conditions are difficult to correct or resolve, and in the long-term, may not be practical for development.

Although every soil association has some natural limitations for development, they are more or less suitable for most uses depending on the developer's willingness to improve soil characteristics deficient for a particular use.

It can be inferred from the Natural Resources Map (3.1) that large portions of undeveloped land in the City is not suitable for development or septic tank use due primarily to severe soil conditions. The soil limitation rating is not the sole reason whether or not an area may be used for a particular type of land use. It does, however, present general guidelines as to the relative suitability of the various soil groups for different urban activities. Site-specific tests should be required as a final determinant of soil suitability.

***Prime Farmland.*** Generally, these areas consist of soil types, such as sandy loams, that are suitable and productive for agricultural purposes and other very low intensity uses. Prime farmland soils in Pell City include the Allen gravelly sandy loam, Cane loam, Choccolocco silt loam, Emory silt loam, Holston sandy loam, Minvale cherty loam, Nauvoo sandy loam, Toccoa sandy loam, Wax loam and the Waynesboro sandy loam. While these soils are well suited for farmland, these soil areas do not always correspond with land areas that are actually used for agriculture.

It is important to remember that once paved over, these areas are gone forever. Current development patterns push farming activity onto less and less suitable land, which requires greater investment on the farmer to achieve fertility. The farming of marginal soils is not only more expensive, but it is less productive than on prime farmland. In addition, farms located in marginal soils or environmentally sensitive areas can have greater negative impacts on water quality than other types of development.

Agricultural land in Pell City occurs mostly in the southern areas of the community. The majority of agricultural land can be found on the city's perimeter. Incentives for the protection and preservation of agricultural land have not been established within the county or locally, thus the development of

---

agricultural lands into suburban land uses continues. Over the last thirty years, St. Clair County and many of its communities have unnecessarily lost a large percent of prime farmland to scattered and unplanned residential development.

**Slope.** One of the most critical factors influencing land development is slope. Slope analysis aids in determining the development suitability of land, physical hazards, potential for re-vegetation and the level of difficulty in repairing disturbed land. It becomes increasingly expensive to develop areas of greater than 30% slope. Prime land for development is considered to be land with 0 to 10% slope. The amount of land with moderate and severe slopes, therefore, is a major limiting factor in the development potential of an area. Areas with steep slopes have the greatest potential for erosion since the slopes increase the speed of water running down them, increasing the rate of soil erosion. Also, soils present severe difficulties for building and infrastructure development due to the increased tendency of soil to collapse under weight loads, or slump. Site leveling to flatten steep areas for development is expensive and often has negative impacts on natural drainage systems. In addition septic runoff from steep slopes is difficult to control.

Because mountains and hills afford excellent vistas and scenic views, they make attractive locations for residential development. Although the view from the top may be quite impressive, the view of the hillside may be ruined unless great care is taken during the development process. Areas offering scenic views should be considered potential areas for open space or passive recreation. Construction and loss of vegetation on these sites can erode the slope's stability and degrade water quality. Affected areas should be identified specifically. Pell City should consider implementing an ordinance limiting development on 30% or greater slopes or seek public acquisition to protect and preserve scenic quality and to prevent unnecessary damage to bodies of water from streambank erosion.

## **NATURAL AREAS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Pell City has an abundance of important natural resources, including several areas of special significance. These areas should be protected from the impact of development when possible. In addition to the obvious air and water resources, Pell City has wetland areas, which support a variety of important functions; soils with high agricultural potential; and forested areas, which provide oxygen and reduce soil erosion. The urban forests, which can reduce the effects of urban heat islands and which contribute to air quality, also represent a significant resource. The urban forest includes the trees, which grow in our backyards, along streets, and in natural areas, which support rich forest communities.

An essential feature of a healthy and attractive community is the presence of trees – along the streets, in public parks and private yards, and in undeveloped areas. More than simply an aesthetic amenity, trees stabilize soils, provide a filter for surface runoff and air pollutants, shade summer sun, block winter winds,

---

muffle sounds and provide habitat and refuge to birds and other small animals. Perhaps of greater importance in our automobile-dependent society, trees absorb excess carbon dioxide and pollutants from the air we breathe. Existing public trees should be maintained, and a plan for the expansion of a sustainable urban forest through a City tree planting program should be created.

Sustaining Pell City's urban forest will require a consensus regarding the goals and design objectives for the urban forest, and an understanding of the conditions necessary for a tree to survive in an urban environment. In addition to inventorying existing trees and assessing their condition, an Urban Forest Master Plan would articulate City-wide and neighborhood objectives for public trees. Also, the Plan would identify future planting sites, list appropriate species for replanting, establish site planning guidelines, and explore opportunities and mechanisms for planting on private property to expand possible planting sites within the streetscape.

Vegetation along the shoreline should be retained to prevent erosion and filter surface runoff. Lands along the streams in some areas could serve as greenways in the City. Appropriate public access should be encouraged in places that will not harm the ecology of these fragile areas. The following activities should be limited and properly regulated near waters: housing and commercial development, road construction, cultivation, dumping, filling, mowing, and herbicide application. Strips of naturally growing grasses, shrubs, and trees should be set aside to protect the health of waters. The aim is to clean up and protect the stream corridors and improve public access, thus creating an integrated environment supporting both urban and rural patterns where appropriate.

Natural areas of local significance include:

- Shorelines of perennial creeks, the Coosa River, and Logan Martin Lake
- Undeveloped lands over five acres in size with good or high potential soils
- Sustainable forest communities
- Land containing critical habitats for wildlife
- Geological features unique to Pell City
- Any established natural site providing valuable educational benefits or exceptional natural beauty
- Wetlands as defined by the Federal Wetlands Delineation Manual

The City should protect these areas with full or partial acquisition, easements, rezoning, or increased development review. Protection strategies can also include tax incentives for privately owned natural areas, and securing private and public conservation grants to purchase sensitive land.

Strategies for protection, preservation, enhancement and use of the City's natural resources include:

- Requiring a minimum setback (>50 feet) along stream corridors outside the urban core

- 
- Requiring vegetative buffers or other erosion control techniques along all stream corridors
  - Development of a public access plan along the creeks to ensure public access to the creeks at appropriate locations
  - Utilizing the floodplains and perennial creeks for recreational purposes

## **BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Pell City's **built environment** – it's buildings, transportation system, community facilities and connecting service lines, and other structures or manmade alterations to the natural landscape – and how it relates to the City's landscape, layout, and history make Pell City the place it is. The type, placement, and appearance of structures can profoundly influence the city's image and present opportunities for, or significant constraints to growth. The City's built environment is a rich legacy providing a foundation for quality future development. As Pell City continues to grow, this legacy must be conserved and enhanced.

An evaluation of the built environment should not view Pell City in isolation, but should also look beyond the City's municipal boundaries to the built environment of adjacent areas, since what is happening in these areas also influences development within Pell City. State highway construction, initiatives for a regional transit system, the proximity of major employment centers, educational centers, and an international airport each have profound effects on Pell City's growth.

### **Existing Development Patterns and Development “Magnets”**

Pell City is fortunate in being located between the Birmingham and Anniston/Oxford regions, with an economy highly connected to both. The proximity of the two areas and the new Honda plant, places Pell City in a very favorable position to receive supporting and spin-off industries and offices. Pell City serves as a convenient residential location for many employees of businesses and industries located within or in close proximity to the two metropolitan areas.

The largest type of construction in Pell City over the past 20 years has been residential, with the greater portion of this development coming from single family detached housing. In addition to residential development, Pell City has also seen the development of a number of small commercial and industrial developments. Significant retail and commercial growth is also taking place.

The City is well connected by Interstate 20 and other major transportation arteries to other cities and towns within the region, allowing its citizens access to a wide range of cultural opportunities. Significant recreational opportunities are accessible in Pell City. The Coosa River and Lake Logan Martin provide opportunities for swimming, boating, camping and hiking.

---

Pell City is a city built for people. Many of its buildings, streets, and layout are the right scale for people. To maintain this scale and character:

- In higher density areas, buildings should be close to the street, with uses and entrances at the street level that invite pedestrian activity
- Adequate green space and amenities should be provided to encourage people to be outside enjoying the City
- People should be able to move safely and conveniently throughout the City on a network of sidewalks and paths
- Streets should be easy for pedestrians to cross, with appropriate signals, signs and crosswalks
- Benches, trash, and recycling containers; public phones; public restrooms; information kiosks; public art; and drinking fountains should be added to outdoor gathering spaces
- The massing and design of large development projects should be carried out so that new buildings are compatible with their surroundings

The City's public investment in its infrastructure includes thousands of small details: street lighting, manhole covers, catch basins, curb and ramp details, sidewalks, street trees, utility lines, benches, fire alarm boxes and hydrants, traffic signs and signals, fences, and many more. The cumulative effect of those details, in conjunction with more substantial investments in public buildings, defines the standard of quality for Pell City's built environment. City officials need to recognize this role by requiring that public projects receive the same level of review for possible impacts on the built environment that private projects receive.

The private sector has an equally important role in the development of Pell City's built environment. New construction and building renovation include numerous details that impact the design quality of the City. Gas, water and electric meters, electrical transformers, heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment, refuse and recycling facilities, and other service features can detract from a building's appearance if not properly located or screened. While the nature and purpose of such equipment imposes certain requirements on their location, these details are often added to a building at the end of the process – without resolving their visual impact on the overall development. Whenever possible, these service features should be integrated into building and site design from the beginning.

**Legibility.** *"You never get a second chance to make a first impression".* Visual items in Pell City that help give the area an identity of its own consist of paths, nodes, landmarks, and gateways. These elements are important in understanding how the City functions and relates to residents, workers, visitors and the "passerby".

---

**Paths.** Paths are channels along which people move. This includes not only the streets, but also the sidewalks and trails that accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Major paths in Pell City include: Interstate 20; U.S. Highway 231; and State Highway 78. One of the most important factors affecting the quality of city life is the character of city streets. Crucial to a street's character are such things as building heights and setbacks, the planting of street trees, and the design quality of the street furniture. It is important to establish appropriate setback requirements for buildings. A neighborhood-specific, uniform front and sideyard setback along a street creates a consistent building edge and a well-defined public space. Currently, the City, through its zoning ordinance, is creating a more suburban street environment by requiring a uniform and often excessive setback in a district even when this is not in keeping with the historic, existing streetscape. Existing urban patterns should be reinforced by regulating that new buildings in commercial and residential areas be built in a manner consistent with the predominant pattern. In industrial and commercial areas, setback requirements should be examined; and, at a minimum, off-street parking should not be allowed in front of buildings. In residential areas, the design of new developments should also consider the sometimes negative impact of garages and driveways on the streetscape. The following approaches can improve the quality of the streetscape:

- New buildings or additions should be consistent with the predominant setback pattern for that street.
- Especially in downtown and commercial areas, setback requirements should reinforce an urban and pedestrian streetscape by being close to the sidewalk.
- Street-level store fronts and building entrances should be open and inviting to pedestrians,
- Service drives and entrances, garages, and outside storage areas should be located on side streets or in service alleys, not facing the public street or right-of-way.
- The scale and massing of buildings on any given street should be harmonious.
- Street width should be appropriate to the type of land uses found along the street, especially considering the width of a street affects the speed of vehicular traffic.
- Where streets have more pavement than necessary, it should be replaced by green areas, sidewalks, or other appropriate public amenities. Ordinances should be revised if necessary to discourage such construction; and site planning review of new developments should also discourage this.

While not all streets can be as inviting and accessible to the public as Cogswell Street downtown, the pattern of streets, paths, and pedestrian amenities should make walking safe and easy in all areas of the City. Residential and commercial areas should be active public places where social interactions are encouraged. People should be able to stroll, sit, pass through, look around, walk around, and enjoy neighborhoods, shopping and natural areas. Increasing pedestrian activity improves business by increasing traffic passing by storefronts, improves public safety by placing more "eyes" on the street, and enhances the sense of community by providing one-on-one interaction between neighbors, business owners, and visitors. The downtown grid is lined with sidewalks and trees in its core, but few other such sidewalks have been built outside the core to connect important nodes of activity.

---

**Nodes.** Nodes are special or unique areas where an activity or grouping of activities draws people there. Nodes are important to the area since they generate interaction between people. Nodes of activity should be linked and accessible by pedestrians, bicyclists, automobile, and transit paths. Nodes of activity include the downtown – the Courthouse, City Hall, and the Downtown shopping area – the hospital, Kmart, all City schools, the Civic Center, and the City Parks.

**Landmarks.** Landmarks are elements that are used as points of reference. They may be considered as cornerstones of an area or neighborhood, since without them an area has no identity of its own. Some landmarks in Pell City are the County Courthouse, the hospital, and the Civic Center. Downtown and the historic residential neighborhoods surrounding it are also city landmarks. Both residents and visitors tend to rely heavily on these elements for orientation.

**Gateways.** Gateways are the recognizable entry points to a city, neighborhood, or an area. Gateways create a sense of arrival; and they have a large impact on a visitor's image of the community, often being their first and lasting impression. A positive impression can be created with appropriate signs, landmarks, plantings, burying utility lines, protecting important views, and using distinctive paving and architectural details at intersections. Each gateway to the City or its neighborhoods should reflect the particular characteristics of its setting and provide a positive introduction. Where the City meets the County along Highways 231 and 78, there are major gateways which need to be enhanced and protected.

## **BUILT AREAS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The built areas of local significance include the historic structures that line the downtown streets and the adjacent residential neighborhoods. The City has conserved much of its historic legacy. Pell City residents, the business community, institutions, and local government should respect and preserve historic sites and structures. Some historic structures have been recognized on the National Register of Historic Places and the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. These registers are official lists of buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts, and include properties of national and state significance, as well as those of purely local importance. Several properties in the City of Pell City are listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. This list includes the Mays Bend Family Cemetery and the Riser House on 21<sup>st</sup> Street. In order to be considered “historic”, a structure must be more than old – it must also possess architectural merit, engineering merit, association with an important person or group, or an association with important events and patterns of history.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is

---

part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archaeological resources.

Not all sites have been identified or listed, and each year new sites become eligible. The City must ensure that this inventory is updated regularly. As the inventory is revised over time, the evaluation process must continually be refined to ensure structures that are newly eligible for inclusion in this inventory are added when appropriate. The Alabama Historical Commission accepts grant applications from local governments and other organizations to identify and gather data on the historic, architectural and archaeological resources in an area.

The City should protect historic sites and structures from unnecessary demolition or changes incompatible with their historic design. The City should also work with the private sector to promote preservation. Regardless of location, all historic buildings should be protected through reasonable regulation and an aggressive public education program. Where regulation is the chosen option, guidelines should be adopted to make the review process more understandable.

In addition to protecting historic structures, the City must conserve existing elements and design characteristics of its neighborhoods. These neighborhoods provide the context within which the importance of individual structures are defined. Working with residents, the Planning Commission should work towards developing Neighborhood Conservation Plans as the basis for future revitalization efforts. The Neighborhood Conservation Plans would identify important physical elements and design features, in addition to those noted as historic, and would define the physical characteristics worth protecting in each neighborhood, such as traditional building types, setbacks, street layout, lot size and coverage, landscaping and street details.

As Pell City adds to its inventory of restoration, adaptive reuse and appropriate renovation, it will become more obvious that preservation can be a very effective economic development strategy. Opportunities for the restoration and renovation of buildings can be found throughout the downtown area and its adjoining neighborhoods. To reinforce the economic development strategy, all policies and projects undertaken by the City should enhance the City's historic resources and neighborhood characteristics. City policy should continue to support the innovative use of historic structures. Of particular interest however, is the ability to restore and maintain historic structures while maintaining their affordability. The City should continue to pursue technical assistance programs and revenue sources, which enable the City to merge its historic preservation and housing affordability objectives.

---

## NATURAL & BUILT ENVIRONMENT POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Preserving the significant natural and built resources is critical to the continued economic vitality and quality of life within the community. The policy framework must address unique natural and built conditions, as well as the general preservation of historic structures, neighborhoods and open lands.

### POLICIES

---

#### THE CITY OF PELL CITY WILL...

- Conserve and maintain Pell City's natural resources and promote their sound and wise use in support of the local economy, as well as the health and welfare of local residents.
- Encourage planned and managed growth as a means of developing an attractive built environment and protecting and conserving the natural resources.
- Encourage development of community gateways/entryways that provide a high quality entrance to the community and an appropriate transition from rural to urban uses.
- Encourage development along the rural corridors to occur in patterns that minimize visual impacts from the roadway and maintain the rural appearance.
- Preserve unique parcels that help to define the character of the area.
  
- Encourage and promote land uses and developments that respect natural limitations of flood plains, riparian areas, steep slopes, wetlands and limiting soil types.
- Encourage conservation and maintenance of shared green spaces for recreation and natural resource preservation in all neighborhoods.
- Encourage trail connections and linkages through implementation of a greenway system.
- Encourage use of flood prone area for extensive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
  
- Promote the perennial creeks as a unique design element in the City's image.
- Protect the Coosa River Watershed.
  
- Ensure that buildings are located and designed to fit the land.
- Protect existing vegetation by minimizing disturbance in setback area.
- Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
- Encourage the use of natural buffers and landscaping, including trees, shrubs and flower beds, extensively to ease the transitions between the built and natural environments of the City.
- Improve the visual quality of the Highway 231 corridor.
- Preserve the historic structures and neighborhoods of the City.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>
<b>SHORT-TERM</b>	
Identify & map other natural areas of local significance, including appropriate buffer areas.	
Development & implement a roadway buffer plan.	
Investigate the development of an Open Space zoning district.	
Develop & implement strong erosion control measures to protect steep slopes and water quality.	
Develop & implement a Highway 231 Corridor Development and Investment Strategy and Plan, that includes access and circulation issues.	
Develop & Implement a Gateway Plan along main entry corridors to ensure that land uses support and enhance the sense of entry, and community identity should be established through landscaping and the minimal use of signage and roadway setbacks.	
<b>MID-TERM</b>	
Develop a Greenway Plan for the City that provides a framework for existing and future development.	
Develop a Creek Corridor Access & Development Plan. The plan should incorporate these concepts: annexation of all creek corridors as they pass through the City; appropriate conservation, enhancement and development standards.	
Implement measures to treat stormwater runoff from existing development, and require new development to treat stormwater through the use of acceptable best management practices.	
Development of Neighborhood Conservation Plans.	
Development of Historic Preservation Plan.	
<b>LONG-TERM</b>	
Protect all natural areas of local significance through land acquisition, conservation easements, zoning ordinances, appropriate management and education efforts.	
Development of Urban Forest Master Plan.	
Work with other local, state and regional groups on watershed policy and planning.	

---

## IV. LAND USE & ZONING

---

### LAND USE

Land use patterns are almost never purely random occurrences, but usually reflect an underlying locational logic. More often than not, little if any forethought has been given to the overall arrangement of different land uses in a community beyond the separations imposed by zoning. Just the same, when one adjusts for the effects of local terrain, it is possible to learn a great deal about an area's historic social and economic conditions from the current land use distribution and zoning pattern. This information is important because development patterns, once begun, tend to be self-perpetuating. The patterns of land use and land consumption gain momentum which is difficult to alter. The outward pattern of development from downtown Pell City is a prime example.

The existing pattern of land use is given by the following table, which indicates the total acreage for different categories of land use.

**Table 4.1 Existing Land Use Acreages**

PELL CITY EXISTING LAND USE		
LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF ACRES	% OF TOTAL ACRES
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	2,627.1	17.6%
MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	73.5	0.5%
MOBILE HOME RESIDENTIAL	313.5	2.1%
COMMERCIAL	521.9	3.5%
OFFICE	29.1	0.2%
INDUSTRIAL	310.0	2.1%
AGRICULTURAL	436.5	2.9%
PARKS & RECREATION	156.9	1.1%
PUBLIC	131.1	0.9%
SEMI-PUBLIC	125.5	0.8%
UTILITIES	212.4	1.4%
UNCLASSIFIED	7.9	0.1%
VACANT	9,940.7	66.8%
TOTAL	14,886.1	100.0%

Source: the Regional Planning Commission

Since Pell City's existing land use pattern has a direct impact on the **community's future growth and infrastructure**, the analysis of existing land use is important as a basis for the preparation of the Future Land Use Plan. The following sections include an inventory of existing land use in Pell City with statistics describing the amount of land in each land use category, and an analysis of the general land use patterns.

---

The existing land use data is classified by eight major categories. Each major category may be further divided into one or more sub-categories. The following is the description of each category of land use:

**Residential.** Land that is predominantly used for single-family, multi-family dwellings and mobile/manufactured homes, and at multiple densities.

**Commercial.** All land area where business or trade is conducted, including general retail, service and entertainment facilities, whether in one building or grouped together in a shopping center.

**Office.** All land area for office uses, whether in one building or grouped together in an office building.

**Industrial.** All land area for manufacturing, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction facilities, landfills or other similar uses.

**Public and Semi-Public.** All land area used by public and semi-public agencies of state, federal or local government and educational facilities, such as colleges, public schools, vocational schools and libraries. This also includes institutional facilities, such as hospitals, nursing homes, health care services and child care services; public agencies, such as government administration buildings, fire stations, police stations and post offices; and semi-public organizations and institutions, such as civic and religious facilities, as well as cemeteries.

**Utility.** This land use classification includes utilities such as power generation plants, radio towers, telephone switching stations, electric, gas and sanitary facilities and services, or other similar uses.

**Parks/Recreation/Conservation.** Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned or may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national and state forests, golf courses, recreation centers and similar uses.

**Agricultural/Forestry.** Land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.) aquaculture or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.

**Unclassified.** Land area where a structure exist, but is either vacant or in such a state of disrepair that the use was not able to be determined.

**Vacant.** Land not developed for a particular use or land that was developed for a particular use but that has been abandoned for that use. This category includes woodlands or pasture land (not in agricultural crop, livestock or commercial timber production), undeveloped portions of residential subdivisions and

---

industrial parks, and location of structures that have been vacant for some time and allowed to become deteriorated or dilapidated.

Pell City has approximately 16,604 acres in land area (including 1,718 acres of water), all of which is included in the land use inventory. Within the City limits, approximately one-third of the land has been developed or is being used in some way. The areas in closer proximity to the Coosa River are generally residential with a higher rate of growth. The remaining two-thirds of land consists of right-of-ways, water bodies and vacant land. Within the City limits lie several enclaves of land, approximately 3,369.6 acres that have not been annexed into the City. This land is primarily vacant with some residential and commercial uses. The City has, and should continue to, identify strategies for annexing these enclaves, including providing incentives for annexation. Annexation of these areas will allow better integration and connection of street patterns, promote better and safer accessibility, and enhance revenue where possible. Annexations that may imperil the City's long term ability to finance, maintain, and operate facilities should be discouraged.

The Comprehensive Plan anticipates continued and sustainable growth in housing, services, employment, and population, while protecting the City's natural systems, maintaining its human scale and neighborhoods, and celebrating its heritage. The growth that has occurred and is anticipated dictates the need for action on the part of the City. Without thoughtful planning, growth and development will change the character of Pell City with no regard for its important natural and historic heritage. Without proper administration of land use regulations in concert with the goals of the community, the character and quality of life existing now in Pell City will be changed and forgotten, in effect losing the very reason residents have settled in this community.

## **EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS**

### **Residential**

Pell City is home to a wide range of people. Family households and unrelated individuals sharing housing include both traditional and nontraditional families, with and without children. Elderly and those without cars choose to live in Pell City to be near jobs, services and health care. People with disabilities live here, as do people from all different income levels. Over the next ten years the median age of the population will continue to rise and Pell City will have more elderly residents. Pell City will also see an increasing number of single-parent families and two-income families.

Residential uses make up 18.1% of all land in the City and 60.9% of the developed land in Pell City. Residential lots and subdivisions in the area between the interstate and Highway 78 are predominantly high and medium density. Areas to the south are primarily low density as result of a lack of public sewer

in the area. The densest residential areas are within the established neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown area. Mobile and manufactured homes are located throughout the City.

An essential element to the City's future vitality is its diversity. A wide range of housing types and affordability to serve the needs of a diverse population should be supported within the City. In addition to various housing types, housing that serves a range of incomes must also be included and encouraged. The U.S. Census estimates indicate that Pell City had 5,154 housing units in 1999. This represents a housing stock increase of more than 31.5% from 1990 to 1999. Pell City's housing stock is approximately 62% owner-occupied and 15% rental, while 22% is vacant. The 1990 Census figures indicate that the housing stock includes about 2,500 detached single units and 200 multifamily units. In addition, there were approximately 1,200 manufactured, mobile or trailer homes. The number of manufactured, mobile homes and trailers has increased by 267.4% from 1980 to 1990. In 1998, over 57% of the Alabama's new housing starts were manufactured/mobile homes. Manufactured and mobile homes have become an acceptable way to provide affordable housing in a community; however, over time, the community loses property tax revenues, as manufactured homes depreciate rather than appreciate in value (as traditionally built homes do), creating increased burdens on the city to find revenue sources to provide adequate levels of service to residents.

Considerable housing development has occurred throughout Pell City in recent years. In the last twenty years, the City has seen a 67.9% increase in total households, or approximately 1608 new households. The increase in households ranks slightly above the household growth rate experienced by St. Clair County and well above the rate of growth for the State of Alabama.

**TABLE 4.2 Comparisons of Total Households: 1980 - 1999**

<b>Total Households (Census Tract)</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>% Change 1980-90</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>% Change 1990-99</b>
City of Pell City	2,368	3,068	29.6%	3,976	29.6%
St. Clair County	13,850	17,666	27.6%	22,727	28.6%
Alabama	1,341,847	1,506,790	12.3%	1,676,527	11.3%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Table 4.3 summarizes the percentage of owner-occupied housing units, rental property, and vacant housing units in the City at the time of the 1990 Census. The City of Pell City has a smaller percentage of housing units occupied by the owner and also a smaller percentage of units occupied by renters than the State, indicating a much higher vacancy rate than that of the State. The City also has a higher vacancy rate than the County though a similar rental rate. High vacancy rates may indicate that some portion of Pell City's housing stock is of such quality that people do not want to own or live in these homes, or it is

located in areas where people do not wish to live. Such vacancy issues should be investigated by the City to determine what is the predominant reason for this high rate of vacancy or abandonment.

**TABLE 4.3 Occupied Housing Units: 1990**

<b>Occupancy of Housing Units</b>	<b>% Owner Occupied</b>	<b>% Renter Occupied</b>	<b>% Vacant</b>
City of Pell City	62.4%	15.2%	22.4%
St. Clair County	72.0%	14.7%	13.3%
State of Alabama	63.6%	26.6%	9.8%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

The type of housing units in the City and its census tracts, St. Clair County and the State of Alabama are described below in Table 4.4. The large majority of housing units in the City of Pell City are single family structures. When compared to the County and State, the City has a high percentage of mobile homes or trailers compared to the rest of the state, and a much lower percentage of multi-family units than the state as well. This is consistent with the City's small percentage of renter-occupied housing units, as it is multi-family dwelling units that are typically rented to tenants rather than occupied by owners. In providing affordable housing to the residents of Pell City, the development of quality multi-family housing should be encouraged in appropriate and convenient locations through land use planning and regulation.

**TABLE 4.4 Units in Structure: 1990**

<b>Housing Units in Structure</b>	<b>1-Unit Detached</b>	<b>1-Unit Attached</b>	<b>2 Units</b>	<b>3-9 Units</b>	<b>10-19 Units</b>	<b>20+ Units</b>	<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>
City of Pell City	63.3%	1.5%	2.4%	2.4%	0.4%	0.2%	29.6%
St. Clair County	63.5%	0.9%	1.1%	1.8%	0.4%	0.4%	32.0%
Alabama	67.9%	1.9%	2.6%	7.2%	3.2%	2.9%	14.3%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Much of the housing in the downtown area of Pell City is quite old. Beyond what is available from the 1990 Census, little data exist on the current condition of Pell City's housing stock. Despite recent construction, almost half of the City's housing stock was built before 1970. This older housing must be properly maintained so that it will not deteriorate. Many units, both rental and owner occupied, will need substantial rehabilitation within the next ten years. In conjunction with a grant application being prepared by the City, a study is being conducted to identify housing in need of repair or demolition. This report should be used to prepare an overall housing rehabilitation plan for the City.

### **Commercial and Office**

Commercial and office land uses comprise 3.3% of the total land area and 11.1% of the total developed area in the City. Pell City's historic commercial development patterns have changed with its major transportation corridors. Upon completion of the I-20 interchange at Highway 231, strip commercial

---

development claimed much of the Highway 231 corridor running south from the interstate into the downtown area. Before the construction of the Highway 231 overpass over Highway 78, commercial activities were mostly clustered in the downtown area, in the Eden area along Highway 78, and along Highway 231 between Highway 78 and I-20. Now new strip commercial areas have developed south of the downtown along Highway 231. Some businesses have developed even further south, where Highway 231 and the waterfront converge. These businesses are generally related to services and activities associated with the Logan Martin Lake, while others serve the residential population in the southern portions of the City. In the last fifteen years, many smaller cities across America have seen a boom in commercial development at interstate interchanges. Most of this speculative development has been carried out by national corporations with travel-related markets, i.e. restaurants, gas stations, and hotels. In the late 1990s this trend has brought new businesses to Pell City; this time north of the interstate, which for many years has been an understood northern boundary to Pell City's incorporated area.

Office uses have predominantly been developed in the downtown area, located near County and City offices as well as businesses providing daytime goods and services convenient to downtown workers. The downtown commercial area consists mainly of independent retail businesses and office uses. Many banks have their main offices located downtown with branches along the Highway 231 corridor.

### **Industrial**

Industrial uses occupy 1.9% of the total land area within the City of Pell City and 6.3% of the developed area. Historically, Pell City's major industrial corridor has been along the railroad, and many industries remain in this corridor. In addition, the City of Pell City has two industrial Parks. The Industrial parks includes approximately 800 acres of land, a little more than 300 of which are developed. In total, over 2,500 acres of land are zoned for industrial use in Pell City. Industrial uses throughout the City vary and include both light and heavy industries.

The industrial corridor along the railroad includes several adjacent residential neighborhoods. Issues of particular concern to residents include the impact of through traffic, particularly trucks, on neighborhood streets, protecting neighborhood character and safety of pedestrians and children. The City should work to protect residential areas from the impacts of nearby industrial uses, and should promote commercial and industrial uses that are transportation and trucking-oriented to locate in the Industrial Park. Traffic calming techniques for residential streets should discourage through traffic and trucks, and enhance neighborhood safety and character.

### **Public and Semi-Public**

Public/Semi-Public uses comprise 1.6% of the total land area of the City and 5.2% of the developed land. Most of the lands in this category are used for educational and religious facilities. Other major facilities

---

include utilities, the hospital, and cemeteries. Major uses include the Civic Center and the City schools. School facilities are located in close proximity to downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

## **FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE- The Pell City Future Land Use Plan**

This conceptual Land Use Plan represents the vision for growth in Pell City. The Guide (on page 36) is a simple graphic which reveals the direction of growth for seven major land use categories: Site Built Residential, Manufactured Housing, Commercial/Office, Industrial, Civic, Parks/Recreation/Greenways, and Agricultural/Conservation areas. It includes recommendations for the continued growth of existing development areas as well as the development of new activity centers to serve the community. This Plan also depicts annexation areas that will be vital to the growth of the community, areas that are limited for development due to natural constraints such as flooding, and sensitive areas to be preserved as open space to maintain the character of the varied neighborhoods in the City. The following is a description of each of these categories:

**(Site Built) Residential.** Land that is used for single-family and multi-family dwellings constructed on site, including: low-density, medium density, and high density.

**Manufactured Housing.** Land that is used for manufactured housing, including manufactured home parks or subdivisions.

**Commercial/Office.** Land used for business and trade, including general retail, service and entertainment facilities, whether in one building or grouped together in a shopping center.

**Industrial.** All land area for manufacturing, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction facilities, landfills, or other similar uses.

**Civic.** All land area used by state, federal, or local government agencies and educational facilities, such as colleges, public schools, vocational schools, and libraries. This also includes public agencies, such as government administration buildings, fire stations, police stations and post offices.

**Parks/Recreation/Greenway.** Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned or may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national and state forests, golf courses, recreation centers and similar uses.

**Agricultural/Conservation.** Land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), aquaculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.

The following table represents a breakdown of the total land area by development category proposed in the Future Growth and Development Guide. The combined acreage reflects only the incorporated areas in 2001. These numbers may be compared to **Table 4.1** to relate to existing development in 2001. Overall, the residential, commercial/office, industrial, parks and recreation, and agricultural/open space categories have each expanded to nearly three times the existing acreages for those categories in 2001. The "vacant" category from **Table 4.1** is not included in the table below since the Future Growth and Development Guide is intended to show what the City would look like at full development. Though full development is not expected to be met in the lifetime of this Plan, the Guide reveals the direction the City must work in to achieve this mix of land uses as more and more of the nearly 10,000 acres of vacant land in Pell City become developed. As shown in **Table 4.5**, the area allotted for agricultural uses and open space is expanded from the existing 430 acres in 2001 to 1,270 acres. Since future agricultural development is expected to be minimal, a large percentage of this category will likely be preserved as open space. Manufactured housing acreage remains similar to the amount developed in 2001, since future development will be limited to parks and subdivisions where lot sizes are based on affordability.

**TABLE 4.5 Pell City Future Land Use Acreage (within incorporated area)**

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF ACRES	% OF TOTAL ACRES
RESIDENTIAL Low Density	3,050	20.5%
RESIDENTIAL Medium Density	6,200	41.7%
RESIDENTIAL High Density	860	5.8%
MANUFACTURED HOUSING	300	2.0%
COMMERCIAL/OFFICE	1,450	9.7%
INDUSTRIAL	1,050	7.1%
AGRICULTURAL/OPEN SPACE	1,270	8.5%
PARKS/RECREATION/GREENWAYS	500	3.4%
CIVIC	200	1.3%
TOTAL	14,880	100.0%

Source: the Regional Planning Commission

### Future Site Built Residential Development

In the Future Growth and Development Guide, site-built residential areas are subdivided into three densities: high, medium, and low. High density residential areas provide for both multi-family housing and single-family residences on small lots (0.3 acres and smaller), such as the older neighborhoods in downtown Pell City. Many affordable single-family home types can be built in these areas such as garden homes, townhouses, and other small-lot houses. These areas are closer to commercial centers and other important community nodes, making them convenient for singles, young families, and retirees. Often surrounding the high density housing areas are the medium density residential development areas. This category includes all site-built homes on lots between 0.3 and 3.0 acres. These represent the most typical family housing developments in Pell City. These areas will also develop near community nodes, near major roads, and also along the waterfront. Medium and high density residential development must be

---

guided by the City in the use of its residential zoning districts and prudent expansion of sewer and other infrastructure. Though much of the southeastern portion of the City is attractive for residential development due to its scenic quality and access to Lake Logan Martin and Coosa River, access to City sewer and other infrastructure is limited. This area should be promoted by the City for low density residential development and for agricultural uses and open space.

The City should encourage new development and infill of residential areas near existing infrastructure. The City should also plan for the gradual extension of sewer and infrastructure in appropriate areas to facilitate appropriately dense residential growth, such as the following. The area between Cropwell Road and Highway 231, due to its central location and road access is a good area for new residential development. The area between Wolf Creek and Dry Creek Roads may also be a convenient new location for new medium density housing. The undeveloped areas west of the current business area north of downtown are excellent sites for high density and medium density housing. Similarly, as commercial areas develop around the interstate interchanges and infrastructure is extended to serve these areas, both high density and medium density residential developments may take advantage of the new area businesses, infrastructure, and access to the interstate. Planning for new streets will make residential infill of areas around Eden and downtown a good possibility-especially with such good access to schools.

Low density residential areas shall consist of houses built on lots larger than three acres. This lower density also allows for development away from the sewer system, saving the City capital expenditures while still reaping the benefits of such good development of the land. Septic tank discharge from single family homes at this density can be processed by the soil without causing any sewage problems. This density supports a range of housing from large, modern estates to more modest, rural homes. These residential areas are generally furthest from the activity centers and can be considered the more expensive housing areas since the amount of land increases the price of development. This development type will contribute to the scenic, rural character of the existing neighborhoods in southeastern Pell City.

### **Future Manufactured Home Development**

Manufactured housing, shall in the future, be encouraged to develop in planned manufactured housing subdivisions and parks. In past years, the City has been lenient with manufactured housing which has caused random and sporadic development patterns to arise. Due to the limited sustainability of manufactured housing, location of manufactured homes in site-built housing areas unnecessarily affects property values. However, realizing that this is an important housing type for its affordability, growth of new manufactured housing should continue in Pell City, only however, if it is properly planned within the context of the community's existing and potential residential areas. New manufactured home subdivisions, where lots are bought, developed, and maintained by individual manufactured homeowners, and new manufactured home parks, where lots and homes can be rented, shall be encouraged to

---

develop near areas already developed with clusters of manufactured homes. As the need arises for more land for such manufactured home development, the City should encourage the expansion of existing parks and subdivisions to accommodate such a market increase.

While continued growth of Pell City's manufactured residential community is encouraged to grow in suitable areas and with an appropriate planning strategy, regulations concerning mobile homes in Pell City's R-4 and R-A Zoning districts need to be modified to reinforce site-built home construction in the R-4 district and to preserve the spacious, agricultural character of development in the R-A district. A proposal to modify housing regulations in these areas should include a "conservation" district, to be sensitive to past investments in manufactured home development. A conservation district as it applies to manufactured housing allows existing manufactured homes to be replaced by new manufactured homes as they age and deteriorate. The second and more important part of the conservation district is that it precludes new manufactured housing development (other than replacements) from occurring in the R-4 and R-A districts in the future. Such a regulation encourages manufactured homeowners to replace dilapidated units rather than abandon them. Abandonment of manufactured homes in these districts should be discouraged through time limits; i.e. if a manufactured home in an R-4 or R-A district is left unoccupied for a period of one year-the structure, the unit cannot be re-occupied.

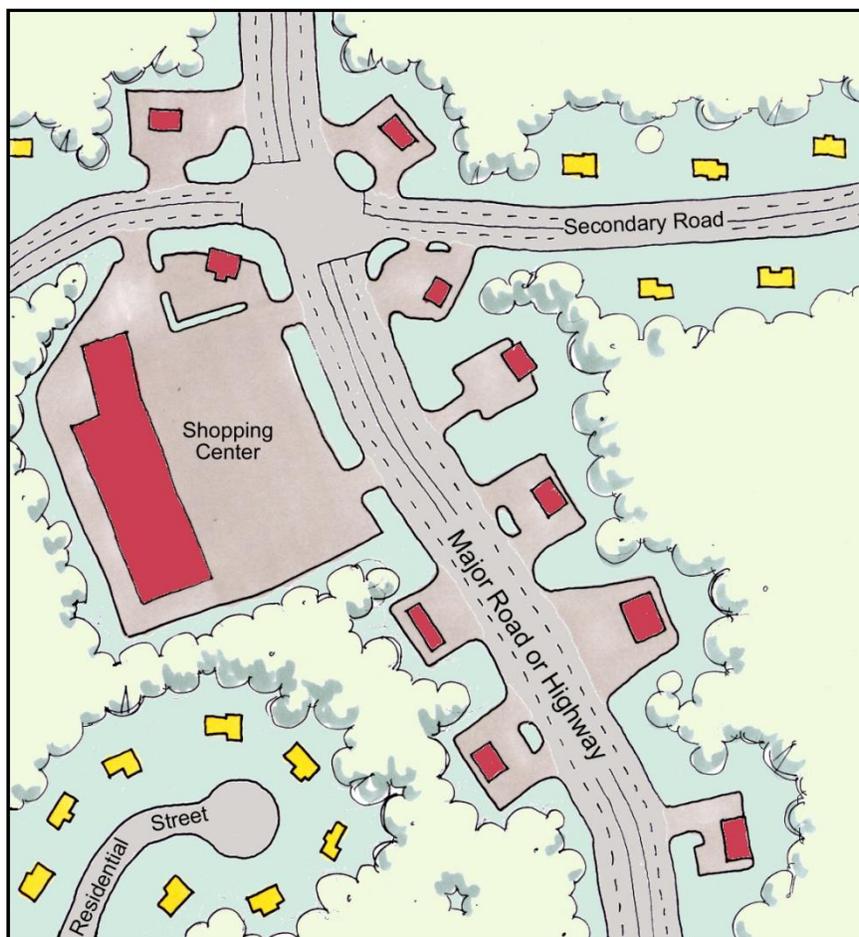
### **Future Commercial and Office Development**

Commercial growth should be encouraged in existing business areas before new areas are developed. In order for existing commercial areas to remain viable, they must be supported even as new development occurs in other parts of the City. There are several areas throughout the community where commercial buildings are not currently being used. As new areas are developed, older areas are being abandoned. Existing commercial areas **must** be supported by infill and redevelopment in the existing areas, moving to new areas only as the existing areas reach capacity. This helps promote existing business areas and keeps them from becoming abandoned and unhealthy. Abandonment and dilapidation in commercial areas can spread like cancer if not kept in check. For the City to get "more bang for the buck" in providing an adequate and well-maintained infrastructure to businesses, the City must encourage new business development in or near business areas already served by City infrastructure. This not only saves the City money in capital expenditures but strengthens existing commercial areas. This requires that the City become more judicious in the use of commercial zoning in the future.

Strip commercial development represents two inherent drawbacks that the City must take into account as it promotes these areas and works with developers to bring new businesses to these areas. First, Highways 78 and 231 will quickly become congested if development is not planned properly. Strip commercial development is a short-sighted planning pattern which emphasizes access to businesses over the needs of through traffic. This causes unnecessary congestion everywhere this development

pattern is used. Major roads **cannot** serve both as major traffic arteries and as access points to businesses. **Figure 4.1** below shows a common strip development pattern; while **Figure 4.2** represents an improved scenario. As can be seen in **Figure 4.1**, commercial development is limited to parcels fronting on the major road. Prime real estate behind these parcels are undevelopable without roads to allow access to them. Excessive curb-cuts take away from the definition of the right-of-way, increasing driver confusion and encouraging chaotic driving patterns. Combining local business traffic with higher speed through traffic increases congestion and creates a major conflict. Through traffic is slowed down by cars entering and leaving the roadway accessing businesses directly off of the main road. Walking and bicycling is nearly impossible and unnecessarily dangerous in this development pattern.

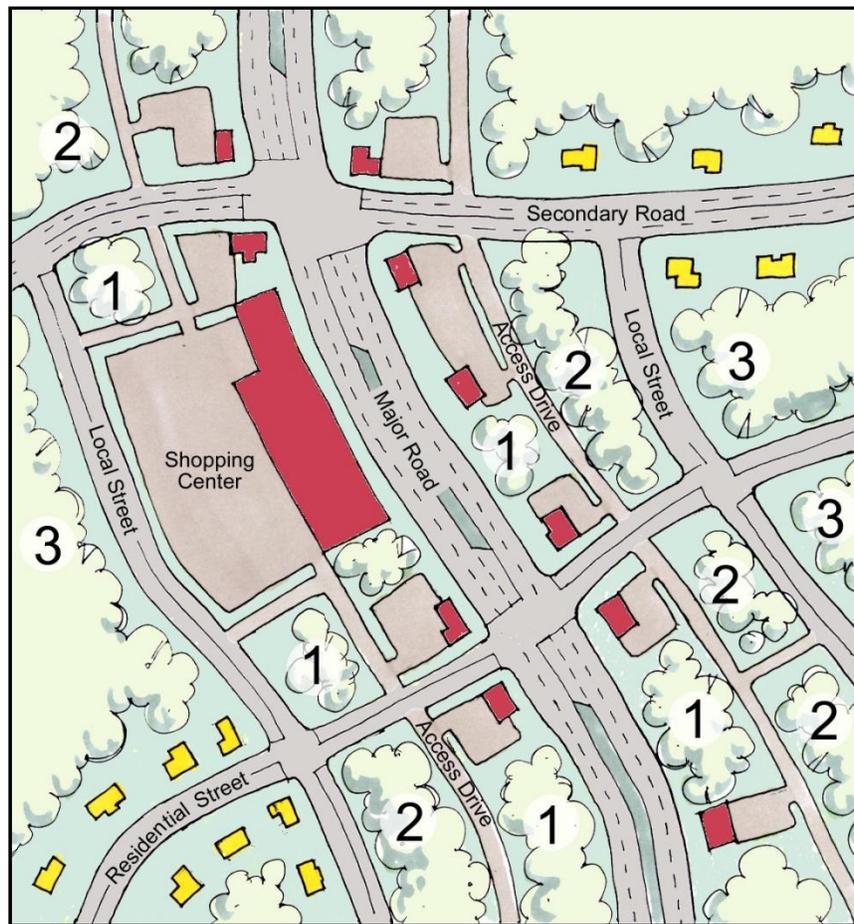
**FIGURE 4.1 Strip Commercial Development on Major Roads**



To ease traffic problems, the number and size of curb-cuts and access points to businesses must be minimized on the main road. As shown in **Figure 4.2**, the use of cross streets can guide traffic off of the highway and to businesses from local streets. By envisioning commercial "blocks", the City can work with developers to make such areas grow over time. This alleviates potential traffic problems on major roads and opens up more land for development. By planning better locations for curb-cuts and reducing their

size, safer and more efficient traffic patterns are established. This also reduces the amount of roadway pedestrians and bicyclists have to cross, making access easier and safer. The "interconnectedness" of block development allows residents to access businesses without merging onto a major road. Buildings can be closer to the main road, an important part in enhancing and stabilizing the character of the area, while their parking areas are situated to be accessed from local streets. The land made accessible by block development can be used for a variety of appropriate and compatible uses. The areas marked with the number "1" are prime commercial sites. Those marked with the number "2" can be developed for commercial, high density residential, or both. Apartment buildings, garden homes, retirement housing, and other high density residential types benefit greatly from the close proximity to businesses. This is also a more prudent financial investment than less dense development. Proximity to a major road and to a commercial core raises property values. It makes more financial sense to use such properties for a more profitable use than single family residences. However, properties further from the commercial area and from the major road (as marked with the number "3") are less expensive and are more logical to be developed for single family residences.

**FIGURE 4.1 Block-style Commercial Development on Major Roads**



---

The second issue regarding strip commercial development is that goods and services offered near the interstate and along Highway 231 will inherently pull customers away from older commercial areas. To minimize such a migration of patrons away from existing businesses, the City can use several methods to keep older business areas successful. As stated previously, the City must use commercial zoning sparingly and encourage development in existing business areas **first**. Also, the City should encourage commerce in areas that are appropriate to the nature of the business. An example of this is promoting the development of convenience stores, laundromats and cleaners, and similar businesses in centralized and convenient locations in the southern parts of the City to serve its neighborhoods. Several of these are included in the Development Guide. Over time, the City can either proactively zone these areas for such development or allow property owners to come forward with such proposals as the need for this commerce arises.

Similarly, office uses should be encouraged primarily in the downtown area. Office uses, such as realtors, law firms, insurance companies, and banks, have proven to be highly suitable to Pell City's downtown environment. This is true too of the government uses historically located in downtown Pell City. There is a reciprocal relationship between the offices and retail businesses in a downtown area. Downtown office workers can easily access a drugstore, diner, and post office or bank without ever getting in a car. By intermingling these kinds of businesses in the downtown, the daily needs of the downtown worker are answered while providing constant business to stores downtown. Encouraging this relationship also is efficient for retail parking needs, since other retail patrons may be driving to the downtown area for shopping. Parking is a serious issue in all development areas but it is of utmost importance in the viability of the downtown area. An important factor in the success of Pell City's downtown is its visual character. Vacant lots and parking lots on the main road blemish this character. In urban areas such as Pell City's downtown, parking should be encouraged *behind* buildings rather than to the side or in front lots. Keeping a consistent and appropriate urban character is essential to maintaining the healthy appearance of the downtown. As part of this, parking lots need to be well-planned, designed, and landscaped to not only be efficient and convenient, but also to be attractive and safe.

### **Future Industrial Development**

Industrial development in Pell City has been centralized into two large industrial parks in the northeastern corner of the town, north of Highway 78 and east immediately east of Comer Avenue. This development pattern has proven successful to the City and has reduced the potential impacts to its surrounding neighborhoods and business areas. A major improvement to these industries would be the opening of an I-20 interchange at the Pleasant Valley Road overpass. Currently, industrial traffic must use Hospital Road or Highway 78 to access the interstate. While these two routes are not congested, they do require extra travel time for traffic in and out of the industrial areas and bring truck traffic through areas that are less suitable for it.

---

The original Avondale Mills site is one of the only industrial installations not located in the industrial parks. It is located east of Highway 231 and north of Highway 78, adjacent to Pell City's downtown. The current level of operations in the historic facility is suitable to its surroundings. However, should the Mill operations ever be closed, the property should be rezoned by the City for non-industrial use. Reuse of the historic structure may be useful in redeveloping this central site to encourage sustained activity in the downtown. The size and condition of the structure allows for many possibilities for reuse.

Two other locations are included in the Development Guide which house existing industrial facilities. The first is southwest of downtown bordered by Dry Creek/Castleberry Road and the railroad corridor; and the other is south of the airport on Mays Bend/Airport Road. The City may encourage continued industry in these areas, but with the understanding that these two sites are extremely limited to interstate access. Further development in these areas will most likely increase truck traffic through neighboring residential areas. For this reason, only industrial businesses with minimal truck traffic should be considered. If operations in these areas move, these areas should not be continued as industrial zoning districts.

### **Future Agricultural Development and Open Space Preservation**

The agricultural areas southeastern Pell City have gradually diminished as this part of the City has become more and more popular for residential development. Much of this residential development has occurred along the waterfront near Lake Logan Martin and the Coosa River. In addition to the benefits of being on the water, residential development has also been encouraged by the scenic, rural quality of the area. This is due mostly to the historic use of this land for agriculture. The City should encourage, through zoning and limited infrastructure changes, the continued use of this area for agriculture and preservation of open space, especially undeveloped and agricultural land south and east of Golf Course Road and the Airport. If these inland areas become developed, the existing road network will not be able to handle the increased traffic flow; and the quiet, scenic appeal of the area will be gone forever. All of the farmland and open spaces, which now create the scenic, rural "small town" character and attract residents, would be lost. Once farmland and open space is built on, it cannot be brought back to its natural state except after several generations. These natural areas need to be carefully and thoughtfully preserved through zoning to protect the very reason that families have bought land and developed in Pell City.

The City should also consider annexing unincorporated areas west of Eden and Highway 78, north of I-20, and along Highway 231 south of the current City limits to protect these scenic, natural areas from inappropriate growth. Much of this land is currently undeveloped or used for agriculture and should remain so. The major roads in these areas act as gateways into Pell City and their character needs to be maintained in order to protect and enhance the image of Pell City.

---

### **Future Parks, Recreations, and Greenways**

Current parks and recreational areas in Pell City are limited mostly to southern Pell City. There is one major public park and sports complex totaling 120 acres. The remaining large recreation areas associated with the lake are privately operated campgrounds and similar development types. Lakeside Park and the Pell City Sports Complex are adjacent to the Civic Center and provide a variety of sports and recreational activities and events. The park is in a good location to serve the overall community and especially the neighborhoods in the southern portion of the City. A major private recreational area is the Golf Course, which is located in the southeastern part of the City near the airport. In northern Pell City the Avondale Mills Park, located east of the mill and north of Highway 78, acts as a neighborhood park, being centrally located to serve surrounding neighborhoods. This park, though owned by Avondale Mills, is maintained by the City and provides a walking track and other sports activities to the community. Another facility, the Recreation Hall, is located south of downtown next to the Armory building. To take better advantage of the facility, improvements to its surroundings should be considered including re-paving 19th Street and adding sidewalks and lighting for safety. The southern portion of the site crosses a floodplain, which should be preserved for use in a greenway to better connect this facility to other parts of the community. Other facilities include the Senior Center, Veterans Park, Avondale Fountain, and Glenn City Park.

In the future the City should consider acquiring land for a neighborhood park to serve the residential neighborhoods in the Eden area. The large floodplain complex in this area provides a great opportunity for development of recreational areas. Due to the limitations of development in flood prone areas, this land is more suitable for parks and recreation than for development. The City should also consider linking a potential park in this area with a greenway to the High School by way of the floodplain which parallels the railroad. The various floodplains that traverse Pell City are a major constraint to business and residential development. The federal restrictions on altering floodplains and wetlands, the high cost of special construction, and the added expense of flood insurance for commercial and residential uses deter investors from developing these lands. This however is not the case in using floodplains for parks and recreation areas. Many cities throughout America have begun transforming their floodplain areas into greenways. These greenways often can be used to connect neighborhood parks and community amenities with pedestrian and bicycle paths. These types of improvements to the City's parks and recreation system should be considered in a *Long Range Parks and Recreation or Greenways Plan*.

### **Future Civic Development**

The current locations of Pell City's civic facilities serves the community very well. Both the City and St. Clair County have government offices in Pell City's downtown, a convenient location for residents and visitors. Pell City's schools are also well-located to serve the community. As Pell City's population grows, there will be a need for additional schools. With the largest percentage of new residents moving to the southeastern portion of the City, this will likely be the best place for new schools. In selecting sites for

---

new schools, it is important to consider accessibility to the neighborhoods they serve. New schools should be sited and designed to encourage pedestrian-bicycle access and to reduce the need for vehicular traffic.

### **Neighborhood Recommendations**

Vitality and sense of community comes from the strength of the neighborhoods and the diversity of the people. While there are distinct neighborhood areas within the City, there are many smaller components within each that have their own identity and characteristics. As new neighborhoods develop, consideration must be given to the impacts of that development on the viability of existing neighborhoods.

Many neighborhoods in the City are changing, reinforcing or still establishing their own identity. The individuality of each area of the City must be respected in order to support and strengthen established neighborhood land use and design patterns. As discussed in Chapter Three, setbacks and building height should generally reflect existing street patterns – they need not be uniform throughout the City. Working with neighborhood representatives, the City should develop Neighborhood Conservation Plans which identify design features worthy of protection to improve the quality of neighborhoods.

Within each neighborhood, this plan promotes greater opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle travel, access to public transportation, traffic calming of residential streets, compact mixed-use development, and public greenspace to enhance neighborhood identity and character. Many neighborhoods, however, need improvements to existing structures and infrastructure, a greater diversity of land uses, and infill to strengthen them within the City. Opportunities include:

- Revitalization of neighborhoods and substandard structures through housing rehabilitation, concentrating development and returning residential structures back to residential uses.
- Residential uses in upper floors of commercial buildings.
- Performance standards to protect residential neighborhoods from the impacts of adjacent industry.
- Mixed uses to put daily services and jobs within walking distance of residential areas.
- Childcare facilities in all Neighborhood Activity Centers.
- Increasing density in Neighborhood Activity Centers and designated locations along major transportation corridors.
- Embarking on greening programs to replace unnecessary pavement with landscaping.
- Encouraging a diversity of open spaces within each neighborhood including pocket parks and community gardens.
- Construction of sidewalks and bicycle facilities.

Many people think of neighborhoods as the residential areas of the City, however, that is not entirely so. While it is appropriate to develop stand-alone, single-family areas, it is also appropriate for housing to be

---

integrated into other areas. The resulting mix of land uses will help to animate the community and promote a greater diversity of housing opportunities as well as bringing residents closer together.

South Pell City has become increasingly attractive for residential growth given its access to the Coosa River and Lake Logan Martin. Residential development in the area is expected to continue despite the lack of public sewer service and other public facilities such as City schools. The river amenities should be protected for both the residents of South Pell City and the community as a whole, including preserving the experience, or character of the trip, to the Lake and providing public access to the Lake.

Pell City's downtown is characterized by older homes in small neighborhoods. Areas surrounding downtown Pell City are prime for residential growth given the historic character and amenities available. However, some neighborhoods immediately west and south of downtown have suffered neglect and disinvestment over the years. There is housing stock that is decrepit, but repairable. These areas need public and private investment in infrastructure, housing rehabilitation and street amenities to improve the residential and commercial environment. In the face of many challenges, this area remains a viable residential and commercial area with many assets and opportunities, most importantly the opportunity for redevelopment. It will be a high priority of the City to actively promote development and improvements in these areas.

Pell City's downtown serves as the region's governmental services core. It is home to several offices for City and County government, as well as many of the City's financial institutions, and entertainment and community events. Commercial and industrial activities are also located in or near downtown. Opportunities exist for increased cultural and community activities, as well as increased residential opportunities. Pell City's downtown core can be more than a cultural, retail and commercial area – it should also be considered a residential neighborhood. To really become a neighborhood will require additional housing. Pell City should encourage additional housing downtown in order to bring people closer to their places of work. Additional housing in this area makes more efficient use of space and public facilities, can lessen automobile use and the subsequent need for parking, and adds vitality and an improved level of security in the evening.

The City can encourage housing downtown by offering density bonuses for providing public benefits. Such public benefits could be providing public parking and affordable housing. Bonuses could include, but are not limited to, easing parking restrictions for mixed-use development that includes housing, or allowing a higher density of development on a lot that provides amenities to residents of the neighborhood.

---

The City will continue to attract and support a range of retail and office developments in the downtown – diverse in both type and scale. As an urban neighborhood, community-oriented shopping and services must also be available to meet the needs of the people who work and live in or near downtown.

Downtown must remain an active and attractive place to visit, live, shop and work. Key elements for future development in this area include:

- Mixed uses and increased activity at the street level.
- Increased housing opportunities of mixed types and for mixed incomes.
- Urban densities and urban setbacks.
- Pedestrian and bicycle routes adjoining neighborhoods.
- Improved access and circulation, including public transportation.
- Amenities including pocket parks, trees and landscaping, street furniture, public art, bike parking, etc.
- Improved parking opportunities.
- Reinforcing commercial development downtown through the strategic planning of other commercial areas such that they will not cause detriment to the downtown.
- Land could be used more efficiently through setbacks that bring buildings to the sidewalk edge and “dual footprint” uses where parking, housing and commerce occupy the same structure.
- Parking **behind** buildings.
- Protections and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- Human-scale design and pedestrian oriented uses at street level.
- Building edges at the sidewalks with open and inviting storefronts.
- Concentration of general government services in the downtown should be considered before siting them elsewhere.

To gain a better understanding of the opportunities and obstacles for future development, the City should consider the creation of a detailed plan specific to the downtown. Such a plan would help to identify and specify the infrastructure needs, density potential, development logistics and define design standards. Such a plan would serve as a primary tool for guiding private and public investment necessary to ensure the vitality of the City’s heart well into the next century.

### **Neighborhood Activity Centers**

Neighborhood activity centers encourage small-scale commercial and mixed-use development in convenient neighborhood locations. The intent is to take underutilized commercial areas or underdeveloped, centralized nodes within residential areas, and transform them into higher-density, compact mixed-use settlements. These centers are close to where people live and are intended to serve

---

the neighborhood, thus lessening the need to drive across town for local errands and convenience shopping. They should be developed in strategic locations in southeastern Pell City.

The City can draw infill development into these areas through revised zoning that promotes neighborhood scale mixed uses, increased density, and smaller setbacks. Convenient access to transportation and bicycle and pedestrian routes should also be developed.

## **ZONING**

The power of the City to regulate the use of land is called zoning. Zoning is an important tool in implementing the comprehensive plan. It is meant to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the City's present and future inhabitants. The zoning ordinance applies only to those areas that lie within the corporate limits of the City.

Listed below is a brief description of the zoning districts in Pell City:

**R-A Residence/Agricultural District**

To provide for low density residential development while allowing continuation of residual agricultural or farm uses.

**R-A2 Residence/Estate District**

To provide for low density residential development of one-family dwelling units with appropriate recreational, educational, and religious uses.

**R-1 Low Density Residential District**

To provide for low density residential development of one-family dwelling units together with appropriate recreational, educational, and religious uses.

**R-2 Medium-Low Density Residential District**

To provide for medium-low density residential development of one and two-family dwelling units together with appropriate recreational, educational, and religious uses.

**R-3 Medium Density Residential District**

To provide for medium density residential development with controlled development of apartments and similar types of residential structures.

**R-4 High Density Residential District**

To provide for high density residential development with appropriate and controlled development of apartments and similar types of high density residential development.

**P-R Planned Residential District**

To encourage innovative facilities, use of advantageous construction techniques for residential development, and to encourage higher densities of land use, making ample provisions for use of open space, high standards in site layout, and environmentally-appropriate design.

**O-1 Office Building District**

To provide areas for office and professional buildings compatible with commercial and residential environments.

---

**B-1 Neighborhood Business District**

To reserve and protect land for business uses primarily oriented toward localized or neighborhood-scale service areas, and to discourage the encroachment of incompatible commercial uses and industrial uses on residential areas.

**B-2 General Business District**

To reserve and protect land for business uses of a community-wide or regional scale.

**M-1 Light Manufacturing District**

To provide suitable areas for firms engaged in light manufacturing and for the storage and distribution of goods and materials.

**M-2 General Manufacturing District**

To provide suitable areas for the location of heavy manufacturing plants.

**F-C Flood Plain and Conservation District**

To protect public health, safety, and general welfare: to protect persons, private and public property from the hazards of flood water inundation, and to protect the community from costs incurred when development occurs in flood plains. The areas subject to flood hazards will be conserved for open land, agricultural, recreational, and other uses not requiring building development in the flood plain.

Zoning is one of the tools to be used in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Zoning should be used to reinforce existing commercial and residential areas, and strategically locate future development. As is stated by law, **the Future Land Use Plan must be used to guide decision making as rezoning requests are made to the City.** In key areas, proactive steps should be taken in changes to existing zoning. Such areas should include open spaces, such as for buffers, greenways, and recreational areas. Proper zoning for the interchanges along I-20 is essential to achieve the highest quality and character of development. Through the proper administration of zoning, the City can control and guide the way commercial areas are developed near these interchanges, how sites are planned and developed, and how commercial development impacts existing streets, circulation, and traffic. Zoning should be used to promote carefully planned commercial cores rather than strip development patterns, which causes traffic congestion and forever erases the natural and built character which make the community unique. Strip development patterns, which are common throughout the country, often consume excessive amounts of land, because they are not planned in consideration of existing or future development. In this way, strip development creates excessive curb-cuts, parking areas, signage, circulation, and unused and unattended open areas. Such development can also needlessly increase the need for utilities expansion, an unnecessary inconvenience to the City. Zoning should set standards for new development in order to improve the appearance, efficiency, and viability of new development, in addition to the location and buffering of land uses.

In general, the current zoning allows for residential development (single and multi-family) in existing areas of or areas adjacent to residential land uses as shown on the Existing Land Use Map. Commercial uses are allowed throughout the Highway 231 corridor, downtown and along Highway 78 and the Interstate.

---

Much of the vacant land throughout the City is zoned for either agricultural, commercial, industrial and residential uses. Approximately 5,100 acres of land are zoned Residential-Agricultural (RA), which currently allows a variety of uses, including mobile/manufactured housing.

A neighborhood study to determine neighborhood specific development requirements, such as setbacks and height should be conducted. The setbacks should be determined according to dominant neighborhood character. The character of businesses along Highway 231 are different from the historic commercial structures of the downtown, and should be treated differently. Likewise, the character of neighborhoods in central Pell City are not the same as neighborhoods along the river, and should not be treated the same. In addition, zoning should be utilized in an effort to preserve historic structures.

Key elements in the review and revision of the Zoning Ordinance include:

- Implement recommendations of Neighborhood Conservation Plans.
- Establish performance standards for development.
- Develop and implement new or modified zoning districts to include: Open Space, Neighborhood Activity Center, and 'heavy' commercial district.
- Redefine Agricultural District to be limited to the use and preservation of agricultural uses.
- Require well planned/mixed use development of large vacant areas. The rural character of the outlying areas offers unique opportunities to provide open space and recreation areas near the urban population. Clustering of development in the undeveloped areas shall be encouraged to preserve open space and to minimize the costs of infrastructure improvements.
- Develop procedures for joint ownership PUD on remaining large vacant land areas.
- Utilize Residential Planned Zone District for remaining undeveloped and platted residential areas.
- Under the existing zoning ordinance, annexation of new areas should be through new PUD zone or R-A as appropriate per case.
- Establish districts for the future development of Manufactured Housing. These districts should encourage development of manufactured homes in subdivisions and in parks rather than random development in the existing R-4 and R-A districts.
- Distinguish regulations for new and used manufactured home sales and repair.
- Establish District-wide conservation areas for manufactured homes in R-4 and R-A districts to allow existing manufactured homes to be replaced but to discontinue manufactured home development in R-4 and R-A districts.

---

## LAND USE POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Land use policies are intended to provide additional guidance with regard to placement and organization of development within the City. They apply throughout the City and affect all types of development. As Pell City continues to grow, it will become increasingly important to recognize the places that are most significant to the community and to protect those environments. Having the foresight and political will to plan for both development and conservation will dictate, in large measure, the City's future image and allow the City to avoid future problems.

### POLICIES

---

#### THE CITY OF PELL CITY WILL...

- Implement the future land use plan through adoption of improved regulations and performance standards.
- Encourage all land uses to be located, sited, and designed to carefully fit local surroundings, protect and enhance the quality of the environment, and maintain the character of the area.
- Encourage a more urban configuration of mixed residential and commercial uses in appropriate locations that respond to the everyday needs of area residents.
- Encourage planned development which provides satellite commercial nodes to serve local residents' daily needs more conveniently, reducing the length of routine vehicle trips.
- Encourage infill within the existing urban area on land that is conducive to such use to help preserve open lands and agricultural uses in rural areas, to reinforce areas of mixed land uses, and to allow individuals to live in areas more convenient to work. It is critical to locate residential housing close to desired activity centers and employment areas.
- Preserve the larger environment by avoiding extensive, large scale strip development.
- Encourage the individual design and planning of business developments. It is the intent of this policy to facilitate the design of buildings that are unique and appropriate to Pell City. Buildings should not be recognizable as standardized buildings owned or operated by national retailers. This policy is not to discourage development by national retailers, but to encourage site planning and design that is more in keeping with the desired character of Pell City.
- Encourage the continuation of agricultural and low-intensity uses adjacent to the urban area.
- Maintain a strong institutional/government land use base. In a healthy community, institutional and government functions are seen as integrated uses, interspersed with residential and commercial uses. Today, various federal, state, city and county government offices act as anchors within downtown and should continue to be located downtown.

- 
- Encourage residential development designed to include adequate open spaces in common areas to provide for residents' open space and recreation needs.
  - Consider such factors as neighborhood character and identity, compatibility of land uses and impacts on livability, impacts on services and facilities including schools, water and sewer, and impacts on traffic levels on both neighborhood streets and major thoroughfares when new development is proposed.
  - Preserve and strengthen the integrity of distinct and identifiable neighborhoods and districts.
  - Protect residential neighborhoods from the encroachment of incompatible activities or land uses which may have a negative impact on the residential living environment.
  - Encourage a variety of new housing opportunities in selected, already-developed areas as well as in the newly developing areas of Pell City, consistent with the character of the City's established neighborhoods.
  - Maximize the use of existing infrastructure, at lower cost to the City, through infill development of vacant parcels within the City, in combination with annexation of strategically located developed and undeveloped parcels.
  - Locate residential development at urban densities only where services and facilities can be provided.
  - Promote more variety in the mix of housing types to allow for greater efficiencies in development of land and provision of essential public services.
  - Provide for mixed use developments that integrate commercial, housing, employment and service needs.
  - Encourage residential use of the upper stories of downtown retail and office buildings that are not well-suited for business uses.
  - Encourage an increase in the density of development within the existing City core area by revising zoning regulations to have minimal front setbacks and to promote shared-wall construction.
  - Locate housing developments designed for senior citizens in neighborhoods that are within reasonable walking distance of health and community facilities and services or accessible by public transportation.
  - Encourage redevelopment of existing substandard areas.
  - Prohibit the systematic neglect and abandonment of structures which leads to blight and decay of the community and its residential neighborhoods, business districts, and economy.
  - Continue the housing inspection and code enforcement system by which the City prohibits occupancy of substandard housing until minimum standards are met.
  - Encourage owners of substandard housing units to improve their properties through use of every available means, including providing public technical assistance and seeking public financial support.
  - Conserve existing historic housing, when practica, through rehabilitation and improvement of substandard housing units that are suitable for repair.

- 
- Promote a balance of housing opportunities to assist residents and businesses within the community. The success of a community depends upon the continued availability of adequate housing for all income groups.
  - Encourage a variety of housing types and price ranges.
  - Encourage housing for residents of all sectors of the community that is integrated into and dispersed throughout existing neighborhoods.
  - Establish a balanced program of incentive, and public and private actions, to provide affordable housing.
  - Adopt an ordinance to limit the incorporation of recently developed properties that do not meet current zoning and subdivision regulations. Such an ordinance may be written to create a five or ten year "waiting period" for properties developed within a prescribed time frame (three to five years prior to the annexation request) that do not meet the minimum requirements of Pell City's land use regulations. The intent of such an ordinance would be to encourage adjacent unincorporated property owners to develop their properties according to Pell City ordinances should they plan to become incorporated and be provided City services. The ordinance should also empower the City Council to authorize annexation requests for properties that do meet local codes without the waiting period or to annex non-conforming properties. Should annexation of a non-conforming property be deemed important to the welfare of the community, the City Council should also be allowed by a unanimous vote to authorize such an incorporation request.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>
<b>SHORT-TERM</b>	
Develop a detailed Sector Plan for Downtown.	
Revise zoning ordinance to include Open Space and Neighborhood Activity Zone Districts.	
Advocate & implement land use & development policies that limit sprawl.	
Continue to develop & implement a sign ordinance for major corridors and downtown.	
Develop & implement a Highway 231 Corridor Development and Investment Strategy and Plan, that includes access and circulation issues.	
Develop & Implement a Gateway Plan along main entry corridors to ensure that land uses support and enhance the sense of entry, and community identity should be established through landscaping and the minimal use of signage and roadway setbacks.	
Examine the desirability of reducing density allocations for natural areas, wetlands, and steep slopes, and, if necessary, amend the zoning.	
<b>MID-TERM</b>	
Develop Neighborhood Conservation Plans.	
Develop Historic Preservation Plan.	
Identify & strategically annex key parcel currently outside the City limits.	
Complete substandard housing renovations and demolitions.	
<b>LONG-TERM</b>	
Develop & implement neighborhood revitalization plans based on findings of Neighborhood Conservation Plans.	
Examine the benefits & options for increasing density along selected portions of major transportation routes.	
Study the feasibility of using transfer of development rights program for portions of the City.	

---

## V. TRANSPORTATION

---

Transportation systems that allow access for Pell City citizens and visitors and its businesses are a critical element in the planning and development process. **Vitality of an area** is often a result of the planning and placement of transportation systems. Historically, land use patterns have been developed through a combination of market decisions and the availability of an adequate transportation network. Pell City's existing land use patterns are reflective of this, where the initial growth occurred first around the railroads and then along Highways 231 and 78 and other important roads linking the various parts of the community. Without planning for changes and expansion to the transportation network in relation to existing and future development, transportation will be a major weakness in the city, limiting quality of life and causing difficulty for the City as it strives to serve its residents. Transportation and land use should be considered and planned simultaneously, as transportation decisions affect land use and land use decisions affect transportation. By analyzing the City's existing transportation network, the Comprehensive Plan can take advantage of the existing and future transportation network.

Pell City's priorities are based on the belief that Pell City's quality of life must be protected and nurtured. In transportation planning, improvements to the community's quality of life can be accomplished:

- In a more balanced and efficient use of existing built areas and road networks.
- By considering land use and transportation decisions together.
- By enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation opportunities.

Pell City also recognizes transportation as an economic issue - as it regards transportation for lower income residents. Many citizens have limited access to reliable private vehicles. Without adequate or affordable transportation, these residents are at a disadvantage because they are restricted in where they can work, where their children go to daycare, and where they can shop and recreate. For this reason, the City is committed to meeting the needs of all residents - not simply those who can afford to own cars.

Pell City's streets serve two essential purposes: access to property and mobility between destinations. While many roads attempt to serve both functions at the same time, they can't do both well. For example, traffic will be slow on a street that has a large number of driveways (access to property is high, but mobility is low). A limited-access highway, on the other hand, provides a higher level of mobility but, by definition, offers little access to adjacent property. A major problem with suburban/strip development is that major transportation routes that are used to carry vehicles from one area to another are also used to access residential areas and commercial developments. This creates a conflict between the use of the road for efficient mobility and the use of the road for accessing malls, subdivisions, gas stations, etc. This dominant development pattern has continued throughout the country for many years, until now the drawbacks to this type of development are finally being realized by communities everywhere.

---

To facilitate proper planning and decision-making, Pell City's streets are classified as arterial, collector, or local streets based on their relative importance and function within the transportation network. The functional classifications are defined following:

**Principal Arterial.** Provides high mobility (long distance trips at high speeds), but with limited land access. Serves statewide and interstate travel. Serves virtually all urbanized areas. Provides an integrated, continual statewide network. No on street parking is permitted. Provide mobility over access. Additional curb cuts are discouraged and only allowed where absolutely necessary.

**Minor Arterial.** Links cities and towns to form an integrated network that provides interstate, intrastate, inter-county and inter-city service, and are spaced at intervals ensuring that all developed areas of a county are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway. Provide mobility over access. Additional curb cuts are discouraged and only allowed where absolutely necessary.

**Collector.** Collects traffic from local road and streets to feed the arterial system. Provides a balance between land access and mobility. Serves urban areas and other traffic generators of inter-city importance that are not served by higher systems. Links these places with nearby towns and cities, or with routes of higher classification. Connects the locally important traffic generators with the less developed parts of the city. On street parking is discouraged.

**Local.** Provides high land access (short trips at low speeds), but with limited mobility, discouraging through traffic. Provides access to adjacent land. Serves travel over relatively short distances compared with collectors and other higher systems. Comprise all facilities not on higher systems. Parking, biking and other public uses of the street are encouraged. Through traffic on local streets is discouraged as are trucks, except those destined for local deliveries.

In Pell City, most streets are at least partially residential. The primary function of residential streets is to serve the land that abuts them. Yet many function as collector or major streets in the City's transportation network and are classified accordingly. Here, a conflict may arise between the presence of moving vehicles and the quiet of a residential street. This conflict is abated by properly planned circulation systems such as the street grid originally laid out when Pell City was first platted. This grid is an important asset to the City's transportation system. It creates continuous thoroughfares and eases congestion by providing route choices and distributing traffic across a broader network. Pell City's grid network of streets should be maintained and expanded whenever possible by linking dead-end streets and subdivisions. The challenge is to provide a system that balances access and mobility, moves vehicles efficiently and restores a sense of community to neighborhoods.

---

County, State, and U.S. highways pass through Pell City. These highways allow access from the rural areas surrounding the City, as well as access to areas outside of St. Clair County. U.S. Highway 78 runs east to west through Pell City, U.S. Highway 231 runs north to south through the city. The City of Birmingham is approximately 40 miles west of Pell City along Interstate 20. This road network is essential to Pell City's commuting community. Of the 3,550 people in the labor force in 1990, nearly half of them were commuting outside St. Clair County.

The matrix below outlines important considerations against which each road project should be measured:

**Access Objectives**

- To Downtown.
- To Industrial Areas.
- To Community Parks and Recreation Facilities.
- To Other Transportation Modes.

**Neighborhood Objectives**

- Removal of Truck Traffic from Local Streets.
- Removal of Commuter Traffic from Local Streets.
- Provision of Safe and Convenient Pedestrian Routes.
- Provision of Safe and Convenient Bicycle Routes.
- Strong Linkages Within and Among Neighborhoods.
- Integration of Traffic-Calming Techniques for Local Streets.

**Design Objectives**

- Roads that are appropriate in scale to Pell City and its neighborhoods.
- Roads that are fully integrated into and designed as part of a multi-modal system including accommodations for transit, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- High quality landscaping, lighting and amenities.
- Underground utilities.
- Cost effective solutions that meet local design standards.

The City may be faced with the challenge of "retrofitting" some roadways in the years ahead. This may include reducing or expanding lane widths, eliminating or adding turning lanes, adding pedestrian amenities and medians, etc. Highway projects designed in the 1970's and 1980's may not be appropriate for Pell City as we move into the next century. The City *must not* be forced to accept a project design that is outdated and not responsive to Pell City's current needs. As current roadway designs emphasize the vehicle and make walking dangerous and futile, the City must decide at what point it will undo the impact of earlier roadway designs, regardless of how well intended.

Streets are public places for many activities and functions – places of landscaped vistas, trees, and shrubs; paths for walking and biking; places for talking and playing; right-of-ways for utilities; and routes for the movement, stopping, and parking of vehicles. Residents continue to support streets that provide for diversity of activities and functions. However, past practices and roadway designs have favored a single use: motor vehicles. While this may be acceptable on limited-access highways, it is not practical on local streets to limit these other functions.

---

Biking and walking opportunities are very limited in Pell City. The City should make improvements to its pedestrian infrastructure. The City should implement a Traffic Calming Program, an important strategy for "returning" streets to residents, encouraging other uses, improving safety, and limiting the impact of busy streets on adjacent areas. Traffic entering a calmed area may be slowed by physical barriers, the width of the street, or a change in pavement texture. The intent is to affect driver behavior and expectations – causing vehicles to slow down and adopt a more pedestrian-friendly behavior. Parts of street right-of-ways can often be reclaimed for pedestrian activities or landscaping. Narrower streets, speed bumps, landscaping, and on-street parking calm traffic and should be used in all residential areas. Traffic-calming helps keep through traffic off local streets, and make collectors quieter, and easier to cross for pedestrians and bicyclists. A key component of any traffic calming program will be neighborhood support.

Although primarily for local streets, traffic calming techniques can be used on collector and major streets to enhance both safety and the quality of life on these streets. Sidewalks can be widened and bicycle lanes added where safe and appropriate. An intersection with a large curb radius invites higher speeds, therefore street entrances should be narrowed to reduce speed. Brick-paved crosswalks may be added to reinforce and acknowledge pedestrian uses. The street curb is the major defining element of any street. The alteration of the curb has definite impacts on the character and safety of traffic. On major streets, curb cuts should be kept to a minimum number and minimum width. An excessive number of access points and overly-large curb cuts increase driver confusion and the likelihood of vehicular accidents. Refer to **Figures 4.1** and **4.2** and related recommendations on development for major roads pages 35-38.

Bicycles should play an increasing role in reducing auto dependence and improving the livability of the City, in addition to recreational uses. While bicycling may not be an option every day, properly designed and maintained bicycle facilities, coupled with a well-developed transportation education program, can provide a reduction in the excessive use of cars. When a community improves bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, reducing the need for vehicular use; traffic concerns are decreased while additional options are made available for everyone, thereby enhancing quality of life.

Areas around elementary and middle schools have become increasingly congested with traffic from parents transporting children to and from school. This creates a cycle of dependence on motor vehicles to transport children. Pell City has conscientiously maintained its neighborhood schools and wisely taken advantage of the public transportation system for middle and secondary students as well as those elementary students with a long walk. Future residential development will eventually necessitate expansions to existing schools or construction of new facilities. Any new school should be centrally sited to ensure that it is accessible to the neighborhood it serves by not only car, but also public transportation, walking, and bicycling.

---

In addition, development of residential areas that are within walking distance of neighborhood businesses or services should be encouraged. Each school should be connected with adjacent neighborhoods by a network of streets, sidewalks, and bicycle and pedestrian paths to provide safe, convenient access. The Public Works department should work with individual schools and parent teacher organizations to address these issues.

The City should develop a Long Range Transportation Improvement Plan to plan for the construction of new roads to create a more efficient road system serving the neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, and community activity areas. One such route, proposed by the City Planning Commission (shown on the Transportation Map) traverses western Pell City to connect Highway 78 (between Eden and the I-20 interchange) to Highway 231 at the Cropwell Drive intersection. Such a road can alleviate future traffic congestion on Highway 231, provide multiple routes for residents and businesses in southern Pell City, and open up the western portion of the City to residential development. This proposed route is also represented in the Future Growth and Development Guide. Other similar roads are proposed in the Transportation Map to facilitate better access between residential areas and to provide more efficient access to the Airport, industrial areas, and commercial nodes. The City should require road connections between new and existing neighborhoods. Neighborhood connections allow traffic to be distributed more evenly, reducing congestion on major thoroughfares and permitting increased mobility and longer life of collector and local streets.

The St. Clair County Airport, which lies in the southeast part of the City is a general aviation airport, which offers aircraft repair, service and charter flights. Commercial air service is available at the Birmingham International Airport located approximately 40 miles from the City of Pell City. Pell City's road network and the location of the airport limits its accessibility to and from I-20. To enhance the marketability and use of the airport, long-range planning for new roads or expansion and alteration of the existing road network should be considered.

Highway 231 is a primary transportation route for residents and through traffic, as well as a primary commercial corridor in the City of Pell City. An Access Management Plan should be completed in the near future to increase mobility and provide proper access to vital commercial areas. An Access Management Plan is necessary to ensure function and growth of economic activities as well as transportation needs in the area. Direct parcel access should be discouraged through the planning and construction of new roads by the City. Before further major commercial development occurs on Highway 231, cross streets should be planned to take business traffic off of the Highway. In developing cross streets, more intense development of parcels along this corridor is made possible, and traffic accessing businesses along U.S. 231 can be taken off the Highway in a more efficient and controlled manner. See **Figures 4.1 and 4.2.**

---

## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Accessibility and traffic are major issues for City residents and businesses. Residents need access with limited congestion. An equally serious concern, however, is the fact that accessibility is vital to retail sales and service. Given Pell City's dependence on retail sales and the revenue it brings, improved access management for retail business in the City must be a high priority. The City should recognize the importance of transportation and access and emphasize the importance of transportation linkages to shape Pell City. Transportation policies focus on the creation of a comprehensive and interconnected system of roads and trails within the City. They are also intended to promote a move toward alternative modes of transportation over time.

### POLICIES

---

#### THE CITY OF PELL CITY WILL...

- Provide for safe, efficient movement of people, goods and services in and around Pell City.
- Encourage a comprehensive and balanced transportation system for Pell City.
- Minimize conflicts between local and through traffic using every available means.
- Discourage non-residential traffic from travel on primarily residential streets citywide.
- Provide for timely maintenance and improvement of City streets using current engineering practices.
- Promote clustering of development in locations that will minimize trip length between residential and commercial areas of the City.
- Discourage extension of continuous and scattered commercial development along major transportation routes.
- Implement access control improvements as development occurs such as frontage roads and combined entry points along collector and arterial roadways.
- Improve the gateways to the City, through good designs rather than reliance on additional signage, to orient through traffic around downtown, clarify the entrances, and improve the aesthetics of the approaches to downtown.
- Create a local street network that allows direct connections to local destinations without diverting extra traffic onto the arterial and highway system.
- Promote an integrated roadway network. Gaps in the existing roadway network often require individuals to increase the length of their trip and drive through congested areas as they move throughout the community. Necessary roadway connections within the community should be implemented, and an integrated roadway network should be planned for areas of new development prior to development actually occurring.

- 
- Promote street system connections between developments and promote an interconnected roadway system throughout the community, which discourages cul-de-sacs.
  - Develop enhancements for pedestrian and bicycle travel whenever possible.
  - Encourage safe and adequate pedestrian circulation adjacent to public streets or on easements between developments.
  - Require new development on unimproved lands to include construction of sidewalks or trails which link the development to surrounding areas. Within the urban core, sidewalks adjacent to public streets may be appropriate.
  - Encourage internal parking orientation within developments and strong pedestrian orientation throughout development. Urban developments should all have a strong pedestrian orientation at the street level. Encourage internal parking and the linking of office, high density, residential and other activity areas with pedestrian, trail and bus connections within the area.
  - Plan for, design and establish an appropriate landscaping system for public rights-of-way citywide to reduce maintenance of street signs, power lines and traffic signals and to create and maintain clear paths of vision and movement along all traffic arteries.
  - Encourage roadway standards that allow for preservation of distinctive landforms and significant vegetation within the right-of-way without sacrificing safety.
  - Appropriately plan for new growth areas by developing a comprehensive roadway network and a system of trails to connect these areas to the rest of the community.
  - Encourage a comprehensive and interconnected trail and open space system, which provides a framework for existing and future development.
  - Encourage the development of greenway corridors through existing developed areas and new growth areas. Greenway corridors should be utilized to link neighborhoods and commercial developments together as well as to provide separations between incompatible land uses.
  - Encourage trail connections and linkages through rural lands. While the plan encourages an interconnected open space system within both the urban and rural areas, rural connections must be sensitive to the unique land use circumstances within these areas. The majority of this land is privately owned, and it will be necessary to address potential conflicts with agricultural use and concerns associated with providing easements or access through private lands while respecting the rights of property owners.
  - Promote coordination between trail system expansion and transit system improvements. Access to bus stops should be linked to the existing trails and coordinated with future expansion of the trail system. The two modes of transportation should be viewed as interconnected pairs within the context of a broader move towards expanding alternative modes of transportation.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>
<b>SHORT-TERM</b>	
Develop a Traffic Calming Program for residential and commercial areas of the City.	
Develop & implement a Truck Route Plan to encourage trucks to use appropriately designated routes in the City.	
Coordinate the use of downtown parking.	
Implement sidewalk plan.	
<b>MID-TERM</b>	
Determine the remaining highway network capacity and calculate the amount of traffic each new development can add to the road system.	
Devise a major street plan in anticipation of development. This is critical to avoid the traffic conflicts that are now taking place. It is also a prerequisite to encourage and support a multi-centered, mixed use development pattern in this area. .	
Revise development review process to include full traffic analysis and report.	
<b>LONG-TERM</b>	
Develop & implement neighborhood revitalization plans based on findings of Neighborhood Conservation Plans.	
Examine the benefits & options for increasing density along selected portions of major transportation routes.	
Study the feasibility of using transfer of development rights program for portions of the City.	

---

## VI. COMMUNITY ECONOMICS

---

Pell City is the retail, cultural and economic center for St. Clair County. A strengthening of the City's economy can help to decrease suburban sprawl and the costs of providing additional infrastructure. The City's economic well-being is sustained through the continued generation of quality jobs through self-employment, enterprise development and small business growth. The City's **quality of life** is and will continue to be an important contributor to the economy. Enhancement of the downtown, cultural and recreational opportunities for residents, and promoting activities and development that are compatible with the City's neighborhoods and natural environment are all beneficial to the City's quality of life and economy.

Pell City provides jobs and services for residents of the City, county and beyond. Not only does the City host a variety of businesses within its own boundaries, but it also contributes directly to economic development activity and opportunities throughout the surrounding region. The City's overall quality of life, reputation as a forward-thinking community and host of urban amenities should be a dominating attraction to locating a business in the area.

Bringing in new industry or expanding existing industry, and creating jobs allows people to stay in the community. This is important to many people because it allows them to spend more time with their family or in the community, and less time in the car. By encouraging and accommodating growth in Pell City, surrounding communities and their rural working landscapes can be protected from unwanted sprawl development and supplied desired job opportunities and services. This combination of uses and landscapes provides the foundation for the region's competitive advantage. Table 6.1 (below) lists the employment sectors and the percentage of employed persons who are at least 16 years of age who work in a particular sector within the City of Pell City.

**Table 6.1** Employment by Industry - Employed Persons 16 Years and Over: 1990

Industry Type	City of Pell City
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>3552</b>
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	3.2%
Mining	0.5%
Construction	10.8%
Manufacturing	19.9%
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	9.1%
Wholesale Trade	5.4%
Retail Trade	15.7%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	6.7%
Business and Repair Services	2.8%
Personal Services	2.9%
Entertainment and Recreation Services	1.3%
Professional and Related Services	18.1%
Public Administration	3.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

---

To remain vital, Pell City should continue to provide an environment conducive to businesses, good jobs for workers and the necessary support - including good housing, childcare, access to services, educational opportunities and a healthful environment. Continued investment in the downtown is important as well. Support for the existing job base and a mix of industry, government, education, health care and tourism, and encouraging the creation of jobs that benefit the worker, the consumer and the environment should be supported.

### **Creating New Jobs Locally**

Because so few businesses relocate each year, new jobs will be created primarily by new or expanding local businesses. Locally owned and controlled businesses not only create new jobs; they keep local dollars in the City to re-invest in improvements, services, and infrastructure. The continued growth and development of small and locally owned businesses will be high priority for the future.

### **Mixed Use and Mixed Retail**

One economic strategy that will guide the City into the future is diversification. Traditional economic development has typically focused on one large industry or employer. However, when that industry experiences a downturn, or the large employer reduces or closes operations, the impact on the community is significant. One advantage of targeting a broad range of industries and businesses is diversification of risk.

Should one segment decline, the others remain to support the overall economy. Neither tourism, education, small business, health care, finance, retirees nor retail is the answer – it is all of them. The same is true within each economic sector. A range of retail from hardware to jewelry, from department stores to boutiques, will allow the City to serve the needs of its residents and workers, and remain an attraction to visitors.

### **Infrastructure Investments**

In many cases, investment in the necessary infrastructure to support future development must occur first in order to attract business growth and opportunities. Early investment demonstrates a commitment and willingness on the part of the City that business is welcome and will be supported.

### **Business Retention and Partnerships**

One of the basic tenets of sustainable development is making the best use of existing resources. It is within this context that the retention and nurturing of existing businesses must be a high priority for the future. Successful businesses already in place are the best marketing tool. The City needs to have a better understanding of the needs of existing businesses, and be in constant dialogue with them to ensure that mutual concerns and objectives can be addressed through cooperation.

---

## Supporting Targeted Industries

Pell City recognizes that in order to have successful and sustainable economic development, the City must target its energies. Without sacrificing existing businesses and economic diversity, the following areas present the greatest opportunities for future success given their growth potential, Pell City's competitive advantages, and their fit within broader community-based objectives of the City.

- **Recreation and Tourism.** Much of Pell City's reputation for a high quality-of-life is based on the recreational opportunities in the area and the City's outstanding natural setting. These advantages also serve as attractions for tourism – coupled with shopping, restaurants, arts and entertainment.
- Tourism creates many jobs in the service sector, especially hotels and restaurants, and the retail sector – bringing vitality and revenue to the area. However, Pell City can best encourage tourism by serving the needs of its residents first. A community that provides excellent facilities and services for its own inhabitants, and has a well-established sense of community, will continue to be an attraction to visitors.
- **Health, Educational and Financial Institutions.** As noted previously, service sector businesses related to health care, education and financial services play a dominate role in the City's economy. These businesses are also of the type that are in the best position to utilize available office space – both existing and potential, take advantage of emerging technology and telecommunications, and compliment an urban mixed land use pattern. The retention of existing facilities and businesses will be a high priority.
- However, health care in particular is undergoing an industry-wide restructuring. Pell City must closely monitor trends in this field, and work with the institutions to improve their ability to provide services and jobs in the community.
- **Retiree.** Often, attracting retirees is not thought of as industrial recruitment -- they should. The average retiree has a disposable income of \$31,000, most of which is spent in the community in which they live. Retirees want a good climate, safety, accessibility to major attractions (Birmingham), good medical and recreation facilities, a low cost of living, and access to rental housing. Pell City has, or is working on all of these amenities.

---

Much of Pell City is already well developed, and much that remains provides important natural, recreational and open space for City residents – factors themselves that greatly benefit Pell City's economy. However, many opportunities for new and expanded development exist. Strategic locations for

---

future development include the Downtown, the Highway 231 Core, and neighborhood activity centers in the southeastern part of the City. The area around the Hospital should be targeted for residential development to serve the retirement community.

While vacant industrial land currently exists, there may be a need for additional industrial land as the community builds out. It is the intent of the plan to support the provision of additional industrial property within the urban area and existing industrial park, rather than forcing it into rural areas, while taking into account the need to minimize land use conflicts and protect key visual corridors leading to the community. Industrial development should be located so it is buffered from incompatible uses and so it minimizes environmental impacts, including noise. Industrial development should be located close to major transportation systems, yet provide attractive landscape improvements along important corridors entering the community.

Planning for sustainable economic development in Pell City cannot occur in a vacuum. The community of Pell City is highly dependent upon a wide range of factors, partners and relationships including neighboring communities, state government and non-profit development organizations. The same holds true for development activities within the City Government. City departments and the business community must be in constant dialogue and actively cooperate in order to achieve common objectives.

Efforts to work more closely as a region, to support and attract development and protect the competitive advantages, must continue. This should include an active dialogue between the public and private sector. Cooperative relationships could be established to take care of infrastructure, services, joint marketing and financing opportunities, such as with the development of the old airport. There may be increased support for an equitable sharing of local tax revenues generated from new development through a greater appreciation of the mutual gains and benefits.

---

## COMMUNITY ECONOMIC POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

The area's economy, land use and environment are closely interconnected. Pell City intends to attract compatible industries to expand local employment opportunities, promote and maintain a more diversified economy and broaden the tax base. Pell City intends to improve its commercial environment, both downtown and its regional, highway and convenience commercial areas, as a way to broaden the economy; better serve its residents and others in the City's trade area; improve the local tax base; provide more employment opportunities; and enhance Pell City as a center of commercial activity in the region. Therefore it is critical to explore economic development options in keeping with the scale of the community and which respect the surrounding environment.

### POLICIES

---

#### THE CITY OF PELL CITY WILL...

- Plan for, encourage and promote economic development that will help Pell City to become more self-sufficient.
- Create diverse employment opportunities so that Pell City residents have adequate and appropriate job opportunities.
- Encourage environmentally clean economic development that is compatible with adjacent land uses and the natural environment.
- Establish the basis for a sound tourism market and sustainable economic climate.
- Develop eco-tourism industry, which relies on a high quality physical setting and minimal impact on the environment.
- Promote and maintain healthy and diverse industrial growth and development in Pell City.
- Encourage coordination of state, regional, county and local promotion of industrial development for the Pell City area.
- Maintain a current inventory of local industrial sites and structures.
- Encourage new and expanding industry to locate primarily in the industrial park and the railroad industrial corridor.
- Encourage location of new industries in the Pell City area that will use local raw, processed and finished materials.
- Support and maintain a vital commercial environment.
- Plan for and construct public facilities and services that are appropriate to and supportive of clustered commercial development.
- Maintain compact, distinct commercial districts and discourage additional scattered or strip patterns of commercial development and encroachment of incompatible business uses into residential neighborhoods. New commercial uses should be located in existing shopping centers or in

---

established strip commercial areas. Isolated spot commercial development and the creation of new strip commercial areas should be discouraged.

- Encourage the upgrading, beautifying, and revitalization of existing strip commercial areas and shopping centers.
- Promote and encourage relatively higher residential densities near commercial districts and lower densities further from commercial areas.
- Make all commercial districts easily and safely accessible while minimizing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, in order to enhance the safety of the street system.
- Support existing commercial cores, as additional nodes of commercial areas dilute the effectiveness of existing retail areas and their ability to create the “critical mass” of retail space necessary to be successful.
- Evaluate & approve proposals to convert residential properties along major streets to office and commercial uses only when there is a substantial non-residential character to the area and where satisfactory parking and site design can be demonstrated.
- Provide parking spaces to meet average daily demand locating on-street parking where it will not conflict with through traffic and locate parking lots where they will be convenient for pedestrians and accessible to motorists.
- Landscape and light parking areas and keep street, parking lots and sidewalks in good, clean condition.
- Minimize the impacts associated with development of new parking. Parking has historically been provided at grade, either on-street, or off-site on surface lots. Consideration should be given for at-grade lots to be converted into structured parking facilities in the future. Where feasible, structured parking should be developed with facades, which reflect the surrounding architecture and support first floor commercial uses. Where possible, off-street parking lots should be hidden by the building façade and sited away from the sidewalk.
- Develop, maintain and promote a healthy and attractive commercial image for Downtown Pell City. Within the downtown area, land use planning efforts should be focused on maintaining the scale and historic character of the existing residential neighborhood and the commercial core.
- Support and maintain the commercial vitality of downtown as the heart of the community, with high quality building and landscape design, construction and maintenance.
- Encourage the concentration of cultural uses and activities in the downtown business district.
- Encourage outdoor public spaces, including spaces for outdoor gathering, dining, nature and people watching.
- Encourage retail and service establishments to locate in the downtown core area in order to serve residential neighborhoods and employees. In this regard, consideration should be given to providing appropriate assistance to such small businesses.

- 
- Make downtown more visible and apparent to both residents and those traveling through Pell City.
  - Promote an attitude of confidence in downtown commerce and the enhancement of comparison and specialty goods shopping downtown.
  - Landscape and maintain downtown in accord with an appropriate overall design concept that fits the heritage and character of the area's physical resources.
  - Seek to conserve, promote, protect and appropriately and economically use buildings and other resources of historic interest and significance.
  - Preserve and enhance a continuous building frontage on downtown street by securing uses for empty buildings to the overall retail character of downtown business.
  - Improve and maintain the appearance of downtown buildings by encouraging owners and tenants to display the original character and beauty of their properties.
  - Encourage owners to keep their buildings in good repair and to restore those buildings that have fallen into disrepair and neglect. Eliminate those buildings beyond repair.
  - Encourage merchants to design and maintain effective, current and well maintained window displays and to use only signs that are compatible with the character and scale of their buildings and surroundings.
  - Encourage and support organized, cooperative advertising by downtown retailers as a regular activity.
  - Encourage and support coordination and lengthening of business hours by downtown merchants.
  - Regularly schedule fairs, events and promotional activities in Downtown Pell City.
  - Provide a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment that provides for pedestrian movement, areas for relaxing, gathering and window shopping.
  - Maintain lot coverage consistent with historical averages. Define maximum site coverages consistent with the neighborhood average to assist in maintaining local scale and character.
  - Discourage lot aggregation within downtown for the purposes of building larger residential structures. By defining average lot width and depth in the neighborhood, specific guidelines should be created to ensure that property subdivisions are consistent with the historical development patterns.
  - Maintain historic building height and roof slope patterns. By determining the average building height within the area, a desirable building height maximum should be developed. It is also recommended that standards for building heights be integrated with specific standards for roof slopes.
  - Sensitively locate additions. Because many of the lots in the downtown residential neighborhoods are narrow, specific attention should be given to the location of building additions or expansions. In general, additions should be located to the rear of the main structure. Additions that result in a building height taller than original structure should be stepped back in order to minimize their impact from the street.

- 
- Maintain historic street relationships. The pattern of development along the street should be reinforced and buildings should maintain a consistent façade along the front property line.
  - Maintain historic building frontages (widths). Building widths and the resulting retain frontages have a historical average. Redevelopment of existing buildings or infill on vacant sites should respect this proportional relationship. While the actual width of the building may vary significantly, the façade should be broken up into visual units.
  - Maintain pedestrian connections. Pedestrian connections within the downtown core have generally occurred along sidewalks, adjacent to streets. This historic pattern of pedestrian linkages should be reinforced, with the exception of pedestrian trails that follow streams.
  - Encourage retail specialty shops, restaurants with outdoor seating and other pedestrian/shopper-oriented businesses. Mixed use developments with a pedestrian orientation are appropriate. Retail, office accommodations or residential space is appropriate above the first story.
  - Maintain existing vegetation and streams. The streams, their vegetation, and the street trees within downtown neighborhoods have helped to create the area's character. The planning process should reinforce the preservation and reclamation of streams and existing street trees.

---

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>
<b>SHORT-TERM</b>	
Work with the BPRC to provide small businesses with new or expanded financing through the Revolving Loan Fund program.	
Develop & implement downtown revitalization plan.	
<b>MID-TERM</b>	
Infrastructure investments, especially expansion of sanitary sewer in key locations.	
<b>LONG-TERM</b>	
Develop additional cultural facilities in the Downtown area.	

---

## VII. SERVICES & FACILITIES

---

Pell City recognizes the importance of providing high quality services and facilities to the community. The availability of community services is or should be a major determinant for new residential, commercial and industrial development. Existing resources are, and will continue to be, managed and used effectively in order to sustain an appropriate level of development without necessarily burdening the taxpayers and resource base of the community.

Without adequate infrastructure and public services, the City cannot sustain its current and anticipated level of growth. The City must coordinate land use with existing facilities and utilities to minimize the costs of additional infrastructure, and ensure growth keeps pace with the City's ability to provide services.

Provision of services and facilities should be based on:

**Maintenance:** The City's existing buildings, facilities and property must be properly maintained in order to avoid costly and unnecessary capital expenses due to neglect.

**Efficiency:** Municipal services and facilities must operate at maximum efficiency towards their respective goals and objectives in order to avoid wasting scarce resources and tax dollars.

**Conservation:** The City must place a high priority on the conservation of precious resources so that they may remain available for future generations.

**Partnerships:** The City must pursue partnerships within and between neighboring communities, government departments, non-profit agencies and private businesses in order to maximize resources and talents, share responsibilities and serve the future vitality.

Pell City's services and facilities include public education, public water and sewer, police and fire protection, emergency medical services, solid waste disposal, parks and recreation, and general government services. This section discusses various services and facilities provided by or for the City.

### EDUCATION

Within the City of Pell City, there are four elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The four elementary schools, teaching kindergarten through fifth grade, are W. M. Kennedy, Lola Roberts, Eden, and Coosa Valley Elementary Schools. The middle schools are Duran Junior High South, which teaches sixth grade, and Duran Junior High, which teaches seventh and eighth grades. Pell City High School, which is located immediately west of downtown, teaches ninth through twelfth grade. Population growth in Pell City has required the system to develop plans for a new junior high school. Construction of the \$10,000,000 facility is slated for 2006. Teacher student ratios in the different schools range from about 12-22 students per teacher. The highest ratio is maintained at the junior high level. This will be

alleviated through construction of the new junior high school. **Table 7.1** summarizes the seven city schools, personnel, and number of students.

Both Eden Elementary School and Duran Junior High Schools were built in 1949, making them Pell City's oldest educational structures. The W. M. Kennedy Elementary School, Pell City's most modern facility, was built in 1998. The City School System's current plans for renovations include electrical and HVAC retrofitting at Duran Junior High (2002) and HVAC retrofitting at Duran Junior High South (2001) and Pell City High (2001). The Lola Roberts Elementary School, built in 1954, is the smallest facility in terms of number of classrooms and is proposed to be replaced. The cost of a new structure is estimated at \$5,000,000.

**TABLE 7.1 Pell City Schools**

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>Pell City High School</b> 1300 Cogswell Avenue W.	<b>Duran Junior High</b> 309 Williamson Drive	<b>Duran Junior High-So.</b> 813 16th Street South	
Grades taught	9-12	7 and 8	6	
Date of Construction	1982	1970	1949	
Renovations	1987, 1997, 2001	1974, 1989	1956, 1964, 1998, 2001	
Site Acreage	22.5 acres	22 acres	6.6 acres	
No. of classrooms	48	22	19	
No. of students	1,066	634	378	
No. of teachers (certified)	67	29	17	
No. of employees (classified)	21	11	10	
Teacher-student ratio	16:1	22:1	22:1	
<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>W. M. Kennedy Elementary</b> 250 Otis Perry Dr.	<b>Lola Roberts Elementary</b> 810 Martin Street	<b>Eden Elementary</b> 410 Wolf Creek Road	<b>Coosa Valley Elementary</b> 3609 Martin St.
Grades taught	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Date of Construction	1998	1954	1949	1964
Renovations	None	1964, 1998	1997-2001	1972, 1974, 1979, 1991, 1998, 2001
Site Acreage	43.5	18.5	10.5	20
No. of classrooms	33	25	33	34
No. of students	582	407	487	392
No. of teachers (certified)	43	34	33	29
No. of employees (classified)	19	16	13	8
Teacher-student ratio	14:1	12:1	15:1	14:1

Source: Pell City School System

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT: Water and Sewer Services**

The Public Works Department is located at 417 19th Street in downtown Pell City and manages the water and sewer services for the City. The Department employs twelve staff members including: a utility manager, supervisor, administrative assistant, four operators, four line workers, and one line locator. The Public Works Department maintains five general use vehicles, two dump trucks, and six heavy equipment vehicles and machines. Of the heavy equipment used by the Department, two backhoes, a trackhoe, and

---

a loader are leased by the City. The Department recommends a new facility for its operations including a storage area, two new service trucks, and sewer camera equipment. A detailed account of the Public Work Department's vehicles and equipment is included in the Appendix.

The Water System is operated by the Pell City Public Works Department. The system provides service throughout the incorporated area. The system includes four storage tanks with a total capacity of 3,120,000 gallons. Three of the four tanks are located on 15th Avenue and their individual capacities are: 500,000 gallons, 1,000,000 gallons, and 1,500,000 gallons. The fourth tank is located on Mays Bend Road and has a capacity of 120,000 gallons. The storage capacity of the water system is more than adequate and will only require moderate expansion to deal with population growth over the next twenty years. The Sanitary Sewer System provides service to approximately 1,730 residences and 379 businesses. The Sewer System is also managed by the Pell City Public Works Department. The sewer service includes the Dye Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant, which has a capacity of 2 million gallons per day. The Public Works Department states that the Eden area is in greatest need of repairs, while improvements are also needed at the Dye Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant. Rehab of old lines is also needed in the northern section of downtown Pell City. Public Works also recommends improvements to the following pump stations: Shadydale, Eden, Radio Station, 12th Avenue North, Harrisburg, and Industrial Park-Miles Parkway.

## **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Solid waste management in Pell City is provided by two private companies: BFI and Superior. BFI provides collection services for approximately 350 businesses in Pell City on a varying schedule that serves individual businesses as needed. Superior provides garbage collection for Pell City residences.

## **POLICE AND FIRE SERVICES**

The City provides police and fire protection throughout the incorporated areas of Pell City. The Pell City Fire Department, which maintains a current Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 4, includes four fire stations, thirty full-time firefighters, and six part-time firefighters. The main station is located at 3040 Cogswell Avenue. The Fire Department uses five apparatus pumpers, one ladder quint, and two rescues. Over half of the full time firefighters are Level III EMTs while two of the six part-time fighters are intermediates. The Department's ratio of full-time firefighters to residents is one firefighter per 360 residents is much greater than the national standard (one firefighter per one thousand residents). The oldest pumper truck is a 1970 Ward La France in "fair" condition, while the second oldest is a 1990 American La France Pioneer in good condition. All other vehicles are reported in good condition. The Fire Department recommends that the City install new hydrants in various locations throughout the City and

---

that a new station is needed at Mays Bend Road to replace the existing temporary station there. The department is also in need of Haz-Mat equipment. A detailed account of the Fire Department's vehicles and equipment is included in the Appendix.

The Pell City Police Department is located in the City Hall of in downtown Pell City. The Police Department is comprised of thirty policemen including: one chief, two captains, one detective sergeant, four sergeants, three detectives, and nineteen patrolmen. Pell City's ratio of patrolmen to residents is one patrolman per 550 residents which is markedly above the national standard (one patrolman per one thousand residents). The department maintains 23 vehicles which include: ten patrol cars; three D.A.R.E. vehicles; three investigator's cars; vehicles for the chief, two captains, detective sergeant, and two sergeants; and one Special Response Team vehicle. All vehicles are in fair to good condition with the exception two in poor condition: the oldest patrol car (a 1995 Ford Crown Victoria) and the SRT vehicle which is a 1979 GMC Bus. Patrol cars should be replaced every three to five years to insure an efficient, responsive fleet. The department currently operates an E-911 system and all equipment is in good condition. The department recommends a Firearm Training Systems simulation course for situational training. The department is also in need of additional office staff for record-keeping and some additional equipment including "stop sticks" and alcohol testers for each response vehicle. A detailed account of the Police Department's vehicles and equipment is included in the Appendix.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

In Pell City, the public parks and recreation areas are maintained and planned by the Parks and Recreation Department of the City. In addition to serving the City's residents, over 170 acres of parks and recreation areas in Pell City also serve the residents of Riverside and adjacent unincorporated communities, who have little access to these amenities in their own communities. The parks and recreation facilities maintained by the Parks Department include Lakeside Park (65 acres) and Sports Complex (55 acres), Veterans Park (0.5 acres), Glenn City Park (2 acres), Avondale Fountain (0.5 acres), the Avondale Mills Park (45 acres), Senior Center (5+ acres), and the Recreation Hall adjacent to the Armory. Of these facilities, all except the Avondale Mills Park are owned by the City. The Avondale Mills Park, which includes a walking track and other sports activities, is owned by Avondale Mills.

The Parks and Recreation Department is comprised of sixteen full-time personnel, including: the Department Director, one secretary, the civic center coordinator and custodian, athletic director and three athletic supervisors, a maintenance supervisor and maintenance staff, the senior center activities director, and the tennis complex manager. Vehicles and equipment include the director's vehicle, three maintenance vehicles, two tractors, two infield machines, and two mowers. All equipment and vehicles are reported to be in fair to good condition with the exception of one maintenance truck (Ford Ranger)

---

which is in poor condition. A detailed account of Parks and Recreation personnel and equipment is contained in the Appendix. The Parks and Recreation Department recommend the City to plan for additional greenways, sports activity space, passive green space, meeting space, and a new gymnasium. It is also noted that the Department will also need additional maintenance personnel in the future.

Parks provide a number of functions, and serve a variety of populations. District Parks serve as conservation areas and open space that benefits the entire community, while Neighborhood Parks typically offer playground equipment to serve small areas of the City. Diversity of public open spaces is an important consideration in the future planning for parks. The City must continue to provide a wide range of open space and recreational opportunities for its population, workforce and visitors. These include both developed and undeveloped sites throughout the City, and distributed within each neighborhood. Special attention must be paid to long-term protection and use to ensure these sites remain a benefit to the City into the future.

In addition, linkages between recreational facilities and parklands are critical to making the most efficient use of these spaces and maximizing their accessibility. Parks must be considered in the context of a system. These linkages, or Greenways, take the form of improved recreational paths like a Pell City Bike Path and unimproved foot trails, but also include wildlife travel corridors, streambank buffers, linear parks and public viewsheds. Pell City should continue to offer improved walking, biking, and recreational opportunities with an eye towards connecting park and recreations area, and nodes of activity in the community.

Three areas of focus for the City:

- Addressing increased demand associated with continued residential growth.
- Development of a network of pedestrian and bicycle paths throughout the City.
- Continued maintenance and enhancements to existing facilities.

Perhaps the greatest need is adequate operating funds to maintain the park system's properties and facilities. Proper maintenance is essential to ensuring that the parks adequately and efficiently serve their intended purposes. It can also prevent the need for unnecessary capital improvements to correct deficiencies, which occur as a result of neglect. Priority may be given to restoration and rehabilitation projects over new construction whenever possible. Maintenance must be a priority issue for the City's park system in the future.

---

## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

The City of Pell City has a Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor and five elected council members form the governing legislative body. The Mayor and Council appoint members to the Pell City Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment and adopt appropriate local ordinances and regulations to provide for the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. The City Hall is located at 1905 First Avenue North in downtown Pell City. Current renovations to the City Hall are expected to be completed and the Police Department and Administrative Offices of the city government will re-occupy the building in February 2002. The Administrative Offices housed in the City Hall include the Planning and Zoning Department, Municipal Court, Utilities Billing, the Finance and Revenue Department, and the Mayor, City Clerk, and support staff. The City Hall also provides meeting space for the City Council, Planning Commission, and Board of Adjustments.

---

## SERVICE & FACILITY POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Pell City intends to improve and expand the number, quality and accessibility of its community facilities to serve all residents, especially its recreation and sewer facilities. Pell City intends to provide and promote appropriate community facilities designed to meet the needs of the elderly, handicapped, very young and the community at large. In addition, the City will provide and promote adequate, well designed and maintained community facilities and services.

### POLICIES

---

#### THE CITY OF PELL CITY WILL...

- Provide an adequate and appropriate level of essential public and private community services and facilities in support of Pell City residents, commerce and industry.
- Encourage contiguous development patterns in Pell City that decrease the costs of transportation, utilities and supporting services.
- Encourage new development in Pell City in those locations where public water and sanitary sewer connections are or may economically be made available.
- Encourage infill of older core areas in order to reduce infrastructure costs and to stabilize residential neighborhoods.
- Require any development that would put local and regional facilities at or near capacity to upgrade the affected facilities.
- Ensure that the land use policy for the general plan will provide strict development controls in areas with limited local services.
- Provide needed public water and sanitary sewer service, on a priority basis, to areas of the city where early additional development is desired.
- Maintain a quality education system.
- Continue local funding in support for the city school system.
- Maintain an efficient and reliable public water system.
- Encourage those water system extensions that would support or encourage new development in areas appropriate for such activities
- Maintain an efficient and reliable sanitary sewer system.
- Encourage those sanitary sewer system extensions that would support or encourage new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of city policy and the health safety and welfare of residents and employees.
- Promote and support sanitary sewer system improvements in support of planned building and development.

- 
- Encourage the construction of the sanitary sewer improvements required for service of existing development and to support planned growth, development, and construction.
  - Maintain an efficient and reliable storm drainage system.
  - Require adequate and appropriate storm drainage systems to be constructed and maintained as a part of all development activities.
  - Improve and extend Pell City's storm drainage system to serve development districts in an orderly and progressive manner to help implement city growth and development policy.
  - Promote and support storm drainage system extension that would encourage new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of city policy and the health, safety and welfare of residents and employees.
  - Allow no significant new development that ignores the impacts of a 100 year storm and/or floodplain.
  - Install all storm drainage systems in such a manner that all storm water is led to and confined in natural drainage channels without causing erosion.
  - Allow no storm water runoff to enter the sanitary sewer system.
  - Connect all new development to existing storm drainage systems within a reasonable distance – or to locations acceptable to the city when existing systems are beyond a reasonable distance – and construct all improvements in a manner designed to properly carry the runoff water.
  - Design and construct all storm drainage systems in such a manner that natural drainage patterns are not significantly altered, erosion is not accelerated, accumulation of eroded soil particles in the drainage system is avoided, and the appropriate design storm event may be accommodated.
  - Give special consideration to innovative storm drainage designs that would meet all city policies and not adversely affect the quality of development of the area under consideration.
  - Provide quality public safety services.
  - Develop a comprehensive open lands system and expand the existing parks and recreations systems. The open lands system is intended to assist in preserving the rural character of the community and promote continued viability of an agricultural lifestyle. Park land expansion should include both active recreation facilities and passive parks, without developed facilities.
  - Promote an integrated parks and recreation system.
  - Provide Pell City residents well-designed and maintained public recreational facilities in appropriate places, designed to meet the needs of local residents.
  - Locate recreational facilities in appropriate places, designed to meet the needs of local residents.
  - Provide at least one park and one recreation facility that is fully accessible to the physically handicapped.
  - Provide more ball fields at key locations in the city.
  - Plan for and provide a citywide passive park and recreation facility.

- 
- Create a network of neighborhood, community, and regional parks and an appropriate range of recreation facilities.
  - Expand the existing parks system to include additional land and a variety of additional recreation facilities necessary as the community grows and as new areas within the community develop. Parks and the associated facilities should be planned prior to approving development and should be located in areas that best serve the community.
  - Encourage the completion of all basic services for a tract of land in conjunction with development of the property.
  - Roadways, utility systems, and trail systems should be completed for an individual tract of land as development occurs. Utilities within a tract should be installed underground.
  - Encourage the construction of all new and existing local electric, telephone, and cable system lines **underground**.
  - Make all capital improvements in accordance with an adopted Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
  - Enact an annual capital budget based on the multi-year CIP. Future capital expenditures necessitated by changes in population, real estate development or changes in the economic base will be calculated and included in capital budget projections.
  - Seek input from the citizenry each year in updating the CIP.
  - Coordinate development of the capital improvements budget with development of the operating budget. Future operating costs associated with new capital improvements will be projected and included in operating budget forecasts.
  - Maintain all assets at a level adequate to protect the City's capital investment and to minimize future maintenance and replacement costs.
  - Project equipment replacement and maintenance needs for the next several years and update this projection each year. From this projection a maintenance and replacement schedule will be developed and followed.
  - Identify the estimated costs and potential funding sources for each capital project proposal before it is submitted to council for approval.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>
<b>SHORT-TERM</b>	
Develop a long-range Municipal Building Maintenance & Improvement Program.	
Develop a financial program/grant for low income families to participate in community recreational programs.	
Develop strategies to treat stormwater runoff on-site through site design guidelines.	
Investigate use of constructed wetlands as sewer treatment facilities.	
Develop & implement Greenway Plan.	
Develop Capital Improvements Program (CIP).	
<b>MID-TERM</b>	
Infrastructure investments, especially expansion of sanitary sewer in key locations.	
<b>LONG-TERM</b>	

---

## VIII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

---

*Pell City is a community where residents participate meaningfully in decisions that affect them. Neighborhood and Citywide groups, as well as individuals and adjacent communities, have a clear voice in a City policy-making process that is open and accessible. Many issues, including those in the areas of transportation, housing, land use, solid waste, recreation, and the protection of natural areas are addressed in regional forums.*

This plan sets forth a vision for Pell City over the next ten years and offers both policies and actions to implement that vision. The document by itself, however, will accomplish nothing included here. The City, through its Departments, Commissions, Administration and City Council must now implement this plan through the array of tools available, and in partnership with other governments and the private and non-profit sectors.

This section discusses how various implementation tools relate to specific actions recommended in the plan. Each section of the Plan contains a more complete discussion of necessary actions.

### **Regional Cooperation**

Cooperation between state and federal government, neighboring municipalities, regional entities, and the non-profit and private sectors will be absolutely necessary for many of the policies in this plan to be successfully implemented. Pooling resources make regional solutions more cost efficient and effective. Regional coordination and cooperation must be an on-going process.

Many of the issues facing Pell City, such as natural resource protection, transportation, housing and waste management, must be addressed on a regional level. Pell City must continue to work with other municipalities, both individually and in collective regional forums, to seek solutions to common problems. Cooperation between the public, private and non-profit sectors plays an important role in problem solving and future planning. The City of Pell City should continue to work with the private sector to retain and expand the job base. Public/private partnership may be particularly helpful in resolving transportation issues.

### **Inter-Departmental Collaboration**

Coordination and partnerships must extend to City departments as well. While City government is separated into departments and offices, all City government serves the residents and taxpayers of Pell City. In order to serve the community most effectively, City departments must continue to search for ways to improve communication, share information and collaborate on joint projects. Planning and Zoning can share economic, demographic and geographic information with other departments, and coordinate

---

permitting processes with Public Works. Inter-departmental collaboration begins with improvements in communications between departments and how the City shares information both internally and with the public.

### **Inventories, Sector Plans, and Studies**

The policies and actions recommended in this plan originate from public input, technical information and analysis. Planning and development is an ongoing process; as conditions change, actions needed to implement policies and visions will change, and the Comprehensive Plan should be changed accordingly. Moreover, additional research is needed to implement some of the policies in this plan.

Inventories, plans, and studies are all based on relevant information. Each department in City government collects information on its projects and programs. Examples include traffic data and road conditions, building and zoning permits, land records and socio-economic data. This information should be collected in such a way that it will be useful and available to all City departments. For example, GIS is an important tool in gathering and analyzing spatially-referenced information. Nearly all data collected by the City is referenced to places on the ground. The City should encourage departments to collect information in a format compatible with a GIS database.

***Inventories and Studies.*** This plan recommends the completion of several inventories and studies that will help in formulating new regulations and programs. They will also be important tools for monitoring progress and success.

***Sector Plans.*** While the Municipal Development Plan defines general policy directions and land use for all areas of the City, more detailed sector plans are necessary to address the needs of certain neighborhoods. These include Highway 231 access and redevelopment plan.

Besides these sector plans, the City, should undertake conservation plans for each neighborhood in the City. These plans would inventory building conditions, identify important physical elements, and define the architectural characteristics worth protecting in each neighborhood. These include traditional building types, setbacks, street layout, densities, landscaping, and street details. Each plan would also include an inventory of the current level of neighborhood services. New development or changes should reinforce and enhance the existing neighborhood patterns and not diminish the current level of neighborhood services as defined in this plan. Work on the sector and conservation plans should begin shortly after the plan is adopted.

---

## **Zoning and Subdivision**

State law gives municipalities the power to regulate land use through tools such as zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations. These regulatory tools should address many different issues, among them design, historic preservation, parking and traffic, densities, land use, and cover and resource protection. While other plans, programs and policies affect development within City, the zoning and subdivision regulations are the City's principle legal means to carry out the policies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

The land use section, as well as other parts of this plan, contains more detailed recommendations regarding changes in the zoning and development regulations. While all recommended changes should be included in the revised zoning ordinance, priority should be given to protecting the natural environment, designating growth and activity centers, and redevelopment of Planned Development district requirements.

## **Process Changes**

Policies in this plan can be implemented through changes in the development and permitting process. The City should consider ways in which the development review process can be streamlined and simplified to insure that the cost of development does not rise unnecessarily. Ordinances and guidelines should be easily understood by the public, and requirements should be made clear at the outset. To accomplish this:

- The City should undertake a comprehensive review of all development permit processes to ensure consistency, compatibility and efficiency.
- The City should establish a central permit office for “one-stop shopping” in the downtown.
- The Planning Commission should establish a set of Pell City Design Principles to serve as the foundation for future public and private development.
- A Design Review section of the Zoning ordinance should be written to emphasize the integral relationship between proposed projects and neighborhood patterns.

## **Capital Improvement Program**

To provide services, the City must maintain its existing facilities and utilities, upgrade them to meet community interests and needs, and expand them as the City grows. Police and fire vehicles must be replaced regularly, sewer treatment facilities must be upgraded to improve quality, and the City must expand its park system as the number of users increase.

Capital improvements cost money. Various needs must be balanced against each other. To do this effectively, the City should implement a capital budget and program that proposes and ranks capital projects based on goals established in this plan and on established standards for the appropriate

---

provision of services. The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) outlines a schedule for the expenditure of municipal funds for public physical improvements over a six-year period. It consists of two components: a capital budget, which lists and describes the capital projects to be undertaken during the coming fiscal year, and a capital program, which lists and describes the capital projects proposed to be undertaken during each of the following five years.

Capital improvement projects are typically major expenditures, such as the purchase, construction, reconstruction, renovation, or replacement of a public building, facility, or major equipment item. The capital program gives highest priority to projects that in the long run will save the City money, especially in terms of energy efficiency, or that are necessary to protect public health and safety. Projects to expand, replace, or upgrade facilities must be based on established service standards. New projects should not be financed at the expense of neglecting existing infrastructure and facilities.

Capital improvements do not include maintenance of existing facilities, property and buildings however - perhaps the City's most pressing financial need. The City must continue to invest in maintenance, making it a high priority, in order to make the best use of existing resources and prevent unnecessary capital costs caused by neglect.

### **Program and Project Implementation**

While many of the goals of this plan can be implemented through legislation and regulation of the private sector, many other policies must be put into place by direct action of the City and its departments. These programs will need the financial support of the capital planning process, or direct budget allocation.

### **Legislative Initiative**

In some instances, implementation of this plan will require legislative initiative on the state or federal level. The City must work with the appropriate legislative groups to realize the plan's vision, including annexing county islands.

### **Evaluation**

This plan recommends ongoing evaluation of the various programs recommended to determine their effects and if they are in fact successful. This is particularly important for ordinances and zoning changes.

### **Ongoing Community Participation**

This document was shaped by the concerns of the citizens of Pell City. This process does not end with the completion of the Plan. The City must continue its policy of sharing information with the public, listening to their concerns, and acting on them. Only in this way will the Comprehensive Plan be an effective document for guiding growth and change. Community participation must include citizen

---

education and ways to encourage meaningful involvement. To improve citizen education and encourage participation, the City should:

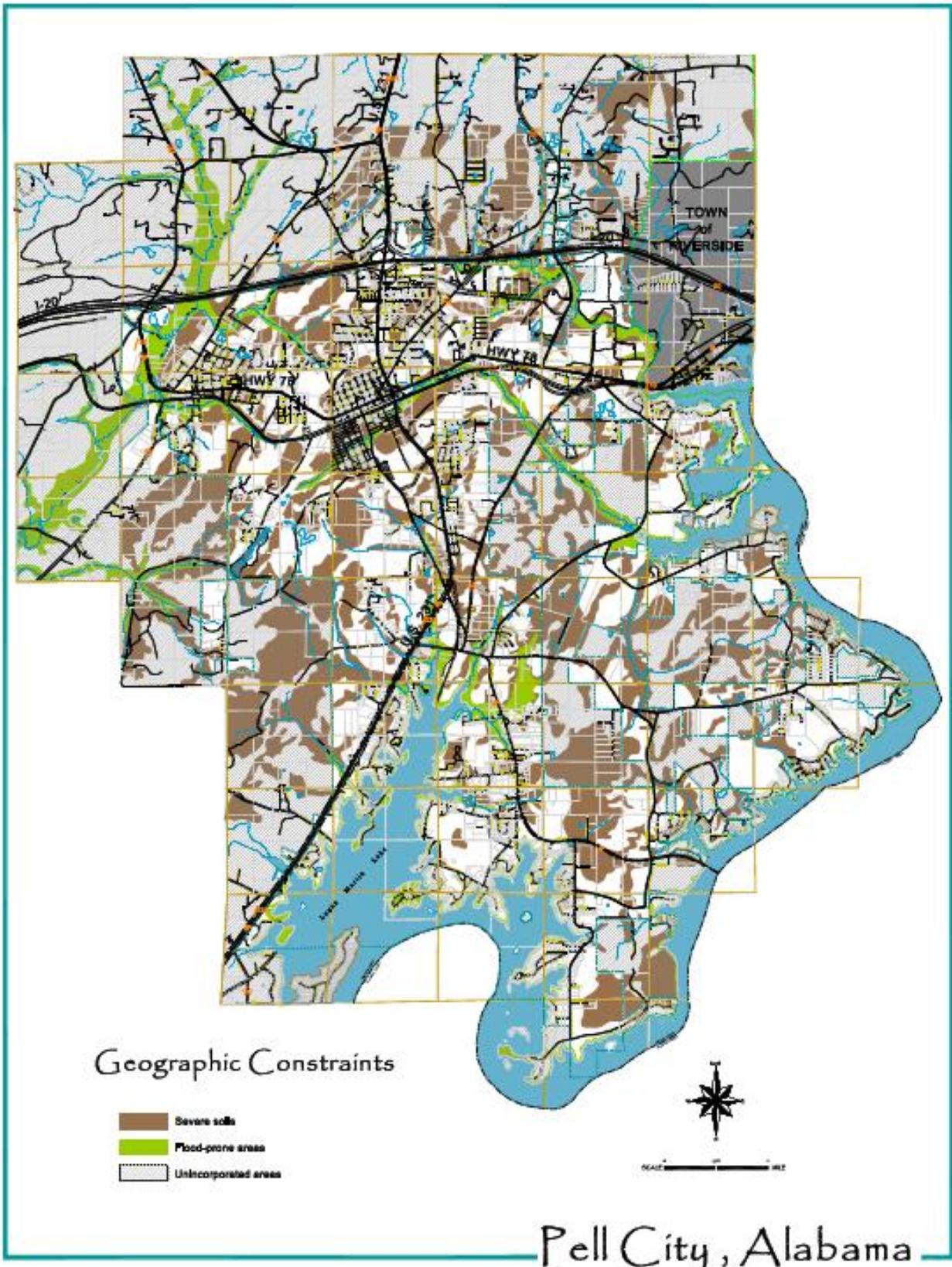
- Work with the school system to add a City government module to civics classes.
- Encourage the media to more fully cover all aspects of City government.
- Implement the City meeting television coverage of Planning Commission and City Council meetings.
- Extend the use of City meeting television to all City commissions.
- Explore ways to strengthen neighborhood planning activities and associations.
- Better publicize and advertise neighborhood planning meetings and encourage early review of major development proposals at the neighborhood level.
- Ensure neighborhood planning participation in and review of institution development plans and projects.

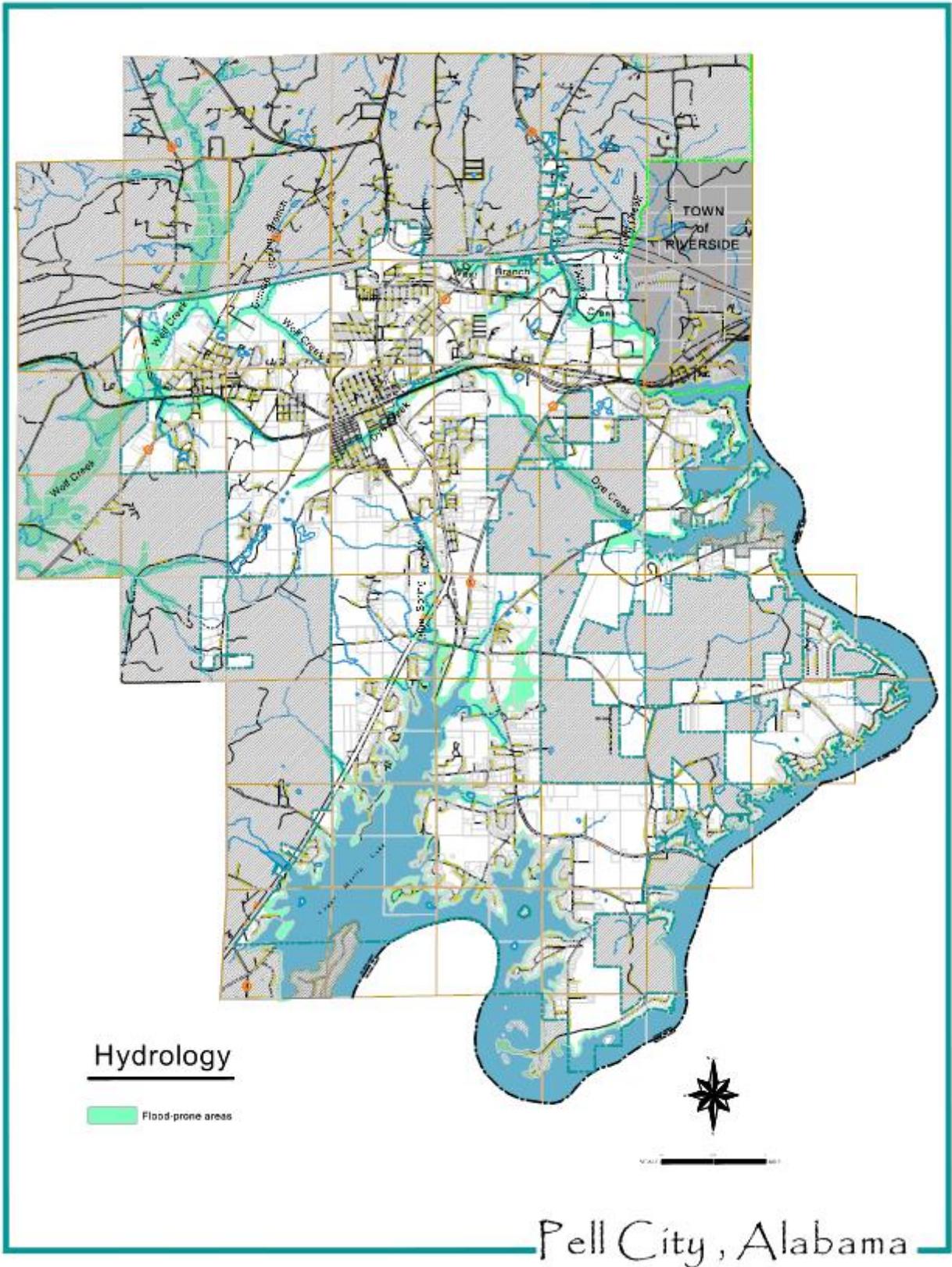
---

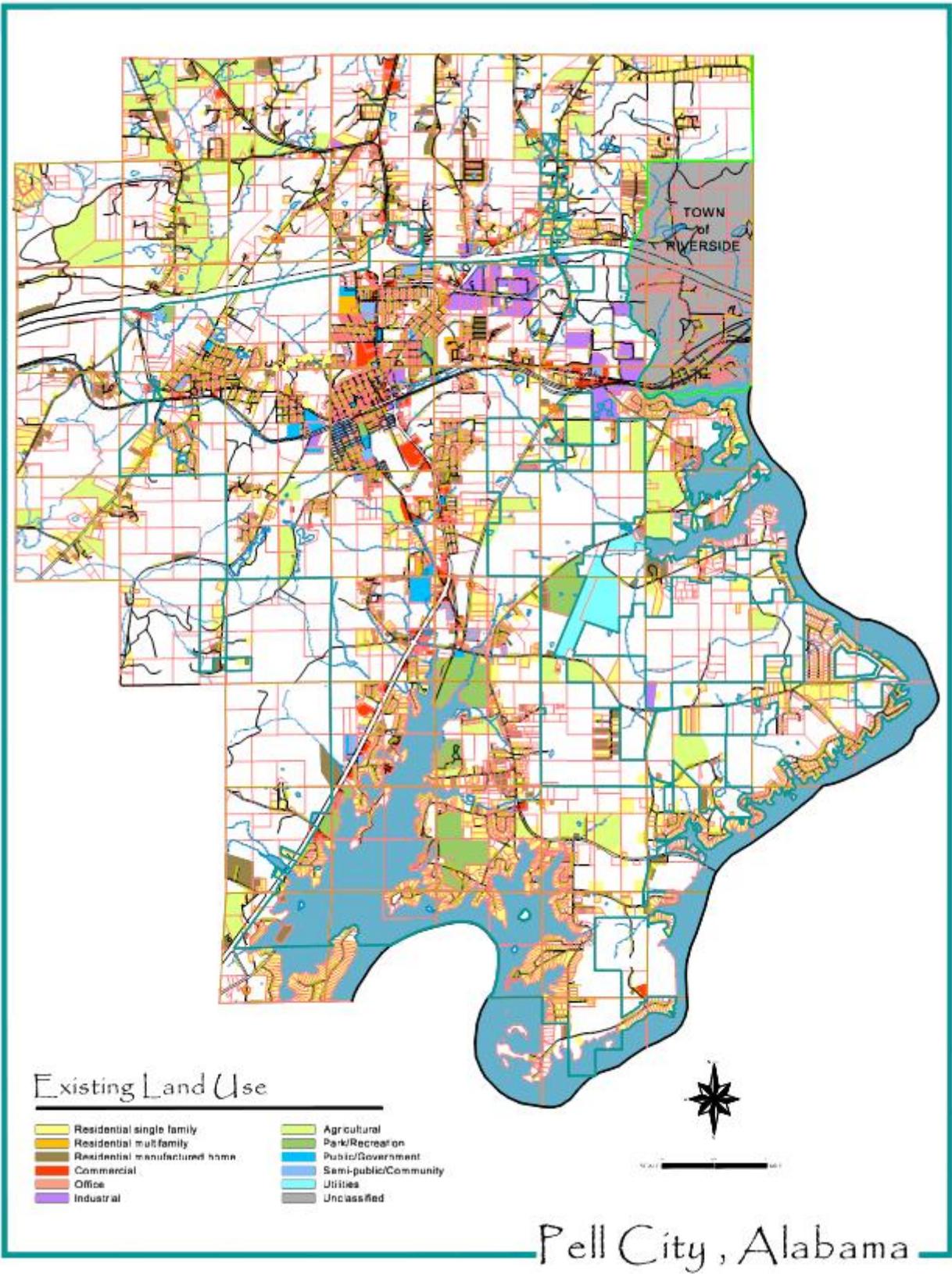
## **IX. MAPS**

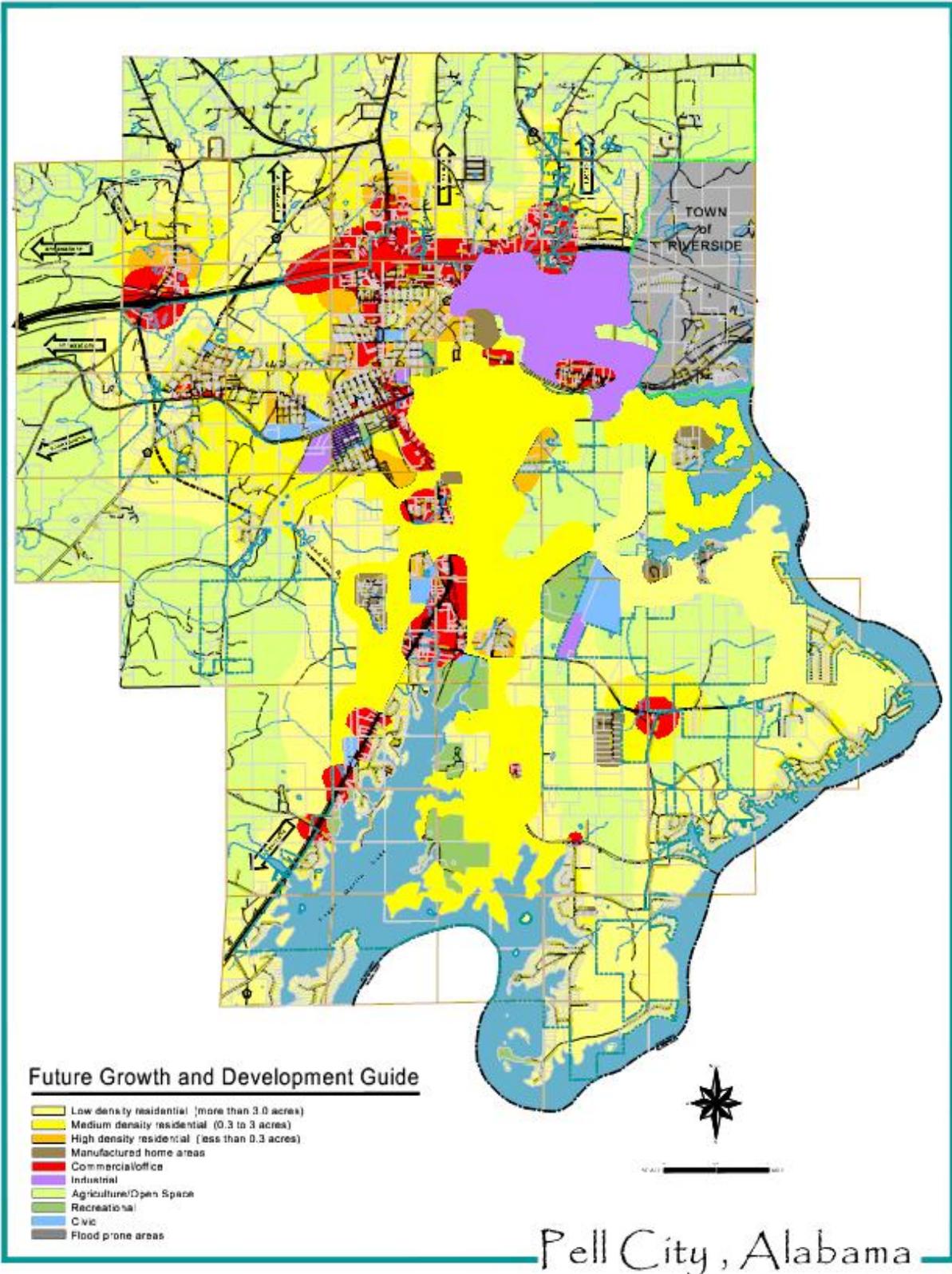
---

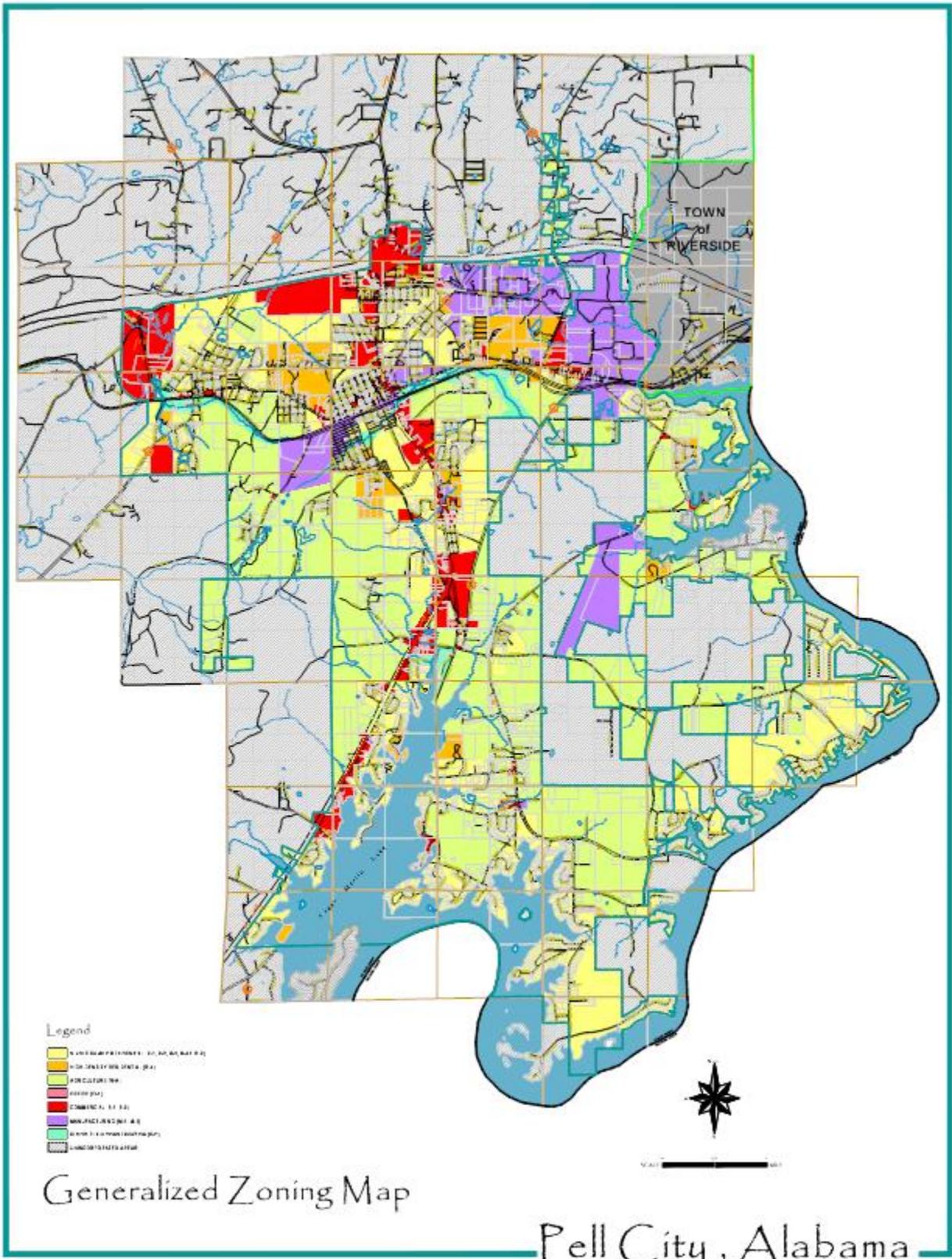
<b>9.1</b>	Geographic Constraints .....	83
<b>9.2</b>	Hydrology .....	84
<b>9.3</b>	Existing Land Use .....	85
<b>9.4</b>	Future Growth and Development Guide .....	86
<b>9.5</b>	Generalized Zoning .....	87
<b>9.6</b>	Existing Zoning .....	88
<b>9.7</b>	Transportation .....	89
<b>9.8</b>	Sanitary Sewer Facilities .....	90

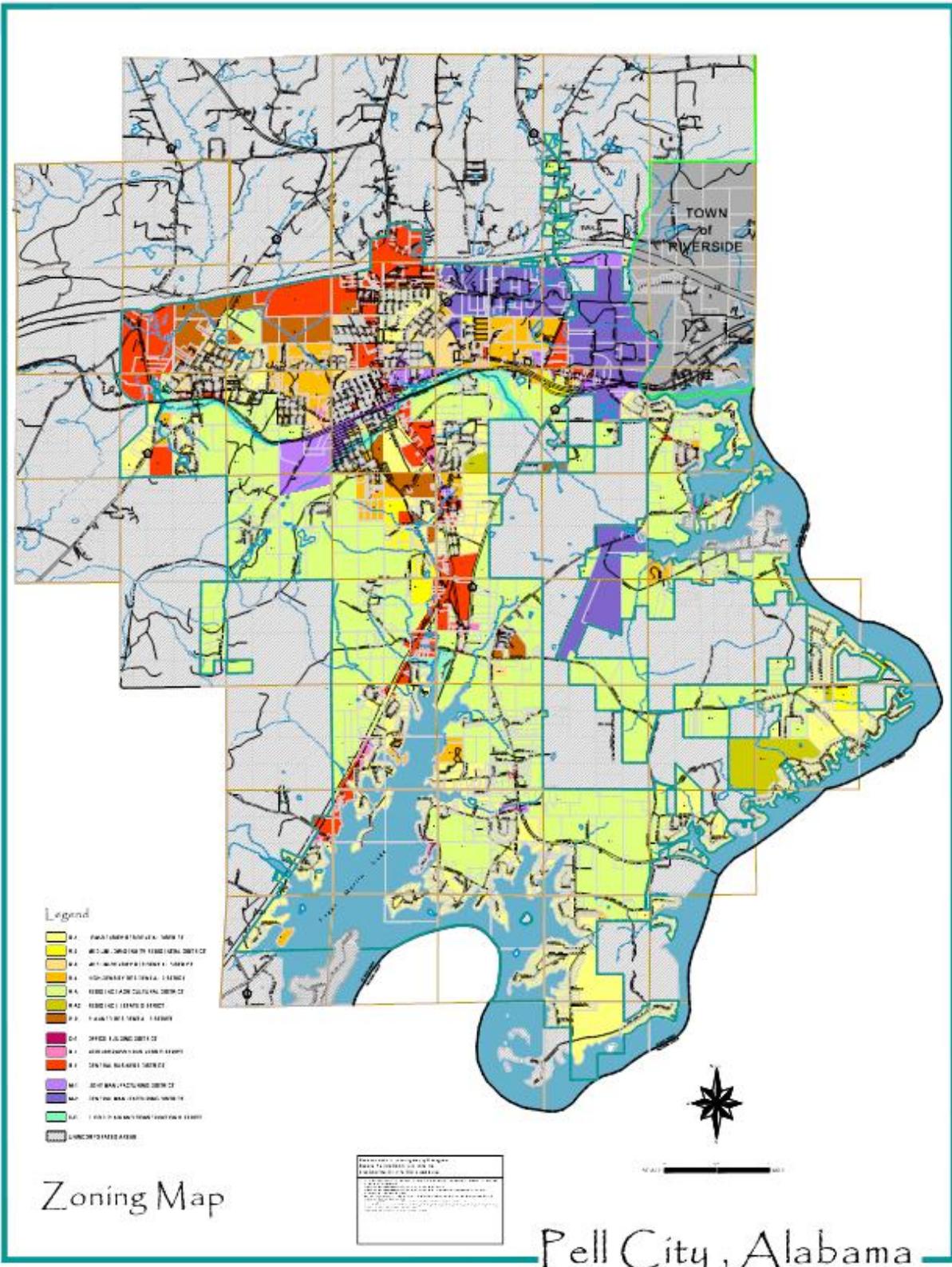


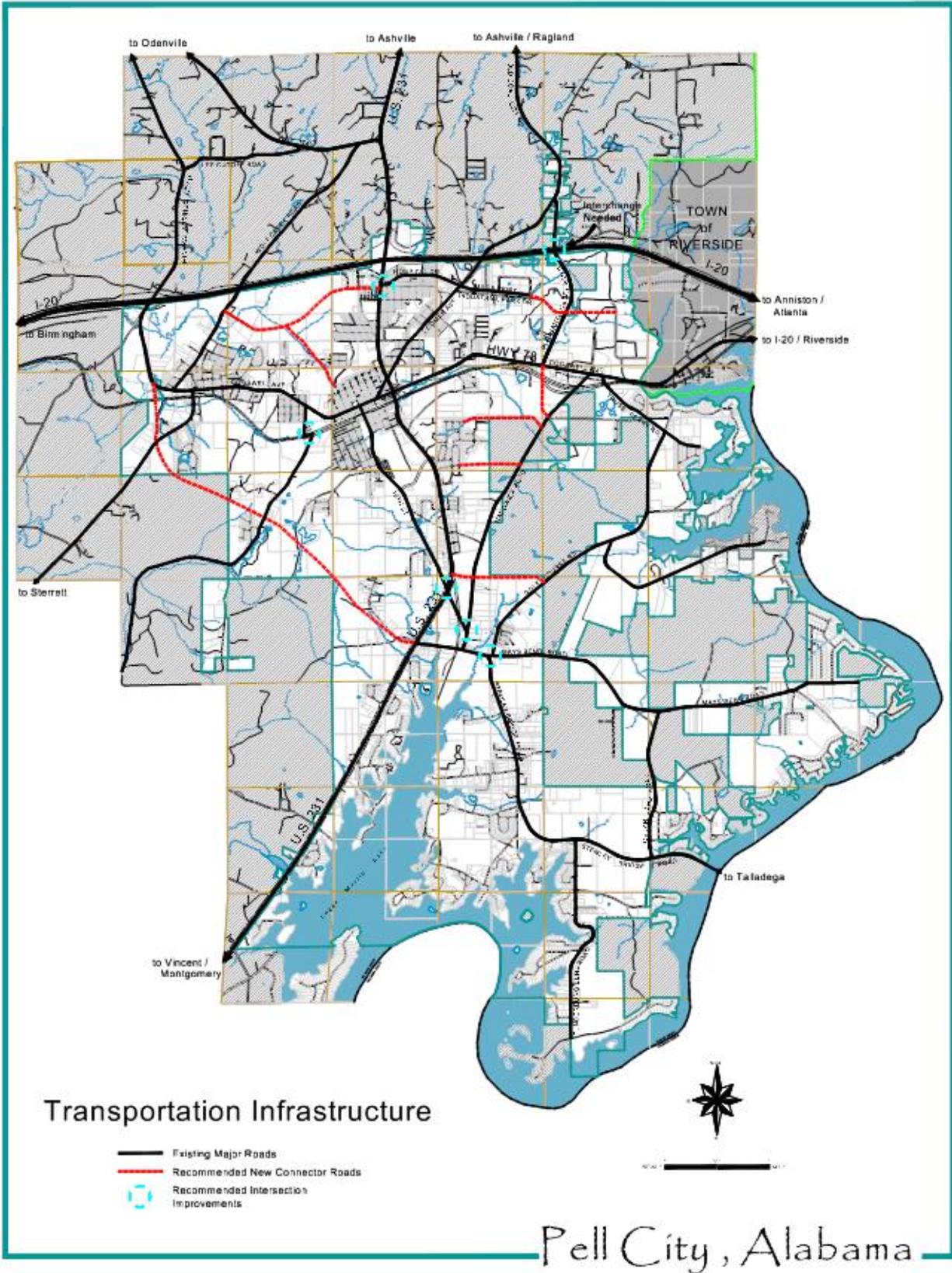












---

PAGE NOT AVAILABLE

Pell City, Alabama

---

**X. APPENDIX**

---

**10.1** Public Works Department Personnel and Equipment Inventory ..... 92  
**10.2** Police Department Personnel and Equipment Inventory ..... 93  
**10.3** Fire Department Personnel and Equipment Inventory ..... 94  
**10.4** Parks and Recreation Department Personnel and Equipment Inventory ..... 95

## 10.1 Pell City Public Works Department Personnel and Equipment Inventory

Personnel	No.
Utility Manager	1
Utility Supervisor	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Operators	4
Line Service Workers	4
Line Locator	1

Vehicle/Equipment	No.	Year	Make/Model	Condition
Supervisor's vehicle	1	1998	Chevy 3/4 ton truck	Good
Manager's vehicle	1	1998	Chevy 3/4 ton truck	Good
Operator vehicle	2	1996	Ford 250 truck	Good
Operator vehicle	1	1998	Dodge 3500 truck	Good
Dump truck	2	1974 1982	Mack Tandem Mack Semi	Fair
Trencher/backhoe	1	1995	Case 560	Good
Backhoe*	2	1999	John Deere 310SE CAT 416C	Good
Trackhoe*	1	1999	John Deere 330LC	Good
Loader*	1	1999	CAT IT-28G	Good
Sewer machine	1	-	Shamrock sewer machine	Good

\* equipment is leased (not owned) by the City

## 10.2 Pell City Police Department Personnel and Equipment Inventory

Personnel	No.
Chief	1
Captain	2
Detective Sergeant	1
Sergeant	4
Detective	3
Patrol officers	19

Vehicle/Equipment	No.	Year	Make/Model	Condition
Chief's vehicle	1	2000	Jeep	Good
Captain's vehicle	2	1999	Crown Victoria	Good
		2001	Chevy Impala	Good
Detective/sergeant's vehicle	1	2001	Chevy Impala	Good
Sergeant's vehicle	2	2001	Chevy Impala	Good
Detective's vehicle	3	1994	Chevy Caprice (1)	Fair
		1994	Chevy Suburban (2)	Fair
DARE vehicle	3	1997	Chevy Blazer	Good
		1994	Chevy Blazer	Fair
		1994	Dodge Ram	Fair
Patrol cars	10	2000	Ford Crown Victoria (4)	Good
		1998	Ford Crown Victoria (2)	Fair
		1997	Ford Crown Victoria (1)	Fair
		1996	Ford Crown Victoria (2)	Fair
		1995	Ford Crown Victoria (1)	Poor
SRT vehicle	1	1979	GMC Bus	Poor
Alcohol testers	2		Intoxilizer 300	Good
.40 caliber automatic pistol	10		Baretta .40 cal auto (SRT)	Good
Subgun impact weapon	4		Bushtach .223 (SRT)	Good
Sniper rifle	1		Savage sniper rifle (SRT)	Good
Shotgun	10		Mossberg 590	Good

### 10.3 Pell City Fire Department Personnel and Equipment Inventory

Personnel	No.	Designation
Chief	1	Administration
Full-time fire fighter	29	Level III EMT (18)
Part-time fire fighter	6	Intermediate (2)

Vehicle/Equipment	No.	Year	Make/Model	Condition
Fire Apparatus Pumper Truck	1	1995	Pierce Saber	Good
Fire Apparatus Pumper Truck	1	2000	Quality Metro Star	Good
Fire Apparatus Pumper Truck	1	1990	American La France Pioneer	Good
Fire Apparatus Pumper Truck	1	1999	Quality Metro Star	Good
Fire Apparatus Pumper Truck	1	1970	Ward-La France	Fair
Fire Apparatus Ladder Quint	1	1981	American La France Chief	Good
Rescue 10 and 12	2	1995 1992	Ford F450	Good Good
Self-contained breathing apparatus	32	1995- 1999	Surviv-Air Mark II	Good

## 10.4 Pell City Parks and Recreation Department Personnel and Equipment Inventory

<b>Personnel</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Location</b>
Director	1	Administration
Maintenance	4	General
Custodian	1	Civic Center
Maintenance Supervisor	1	General
Civic Center Coordinator	1	Civic Center
Secretary	1	General
Senior Center Activities Director	1	Senior Center
Athletic Director	1	General
Athletic Supervisor	3	Sports Complex
Athletic Maintenance	1	Ballfields
Tennis Complex Manager	1	Tennis Complex

<b>Vehicle/Equipment</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make/Model</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Maintenance vehicle	2	1996	Dodge Dakota	Fair
Maintenance vehicle	1	-	Ford Ranger	Poor
Kubota tractor	2	-	-	Fair/Good
Director's vehicle	1	1996	Chevy Truck	Good
Infield machine	2	-	Tieco	Fair
Finishing mower	1	1998	Tieco	Good
Zero turn mower	1	1999	-	Good

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Lakeside Park	65 acres
Sports Complex	55 acres
Avondale Mills Sports Park*	45 acres
Senior Center	5+ acres
Glen City Park	2 acres
Recreation Hall	n/a
Veterans Park	0.5 acres
Avondale Fountain	0.5 acres

\* Avondale Mills Sports park and Walking Track is maintained by the City, however the property is owned by Avondale Mills.

## XI. GLOSSARY

---

**Arterial Road.** Provides high mobility (long distance trips at high speeds), but with limited land access. Serves statewide and interstate travel. Serves virtually all urbanized areas. Provides an integrated, continual statewide network. No on street parking is permitted. Provide mobility over access. Additional curb cuts are discouraged and only allowed where absolutely necessary. Links cities and towns to form an integrated network that provides interstate, intrastate, inter-county and inter-city service, and are spaced at intervals ensuring that all developed areas of a county are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway. Provide mobility over access. Additional curb cuts are discouraged and only allowed where absolutely necessary.

**Capital Improvements Program (CIP).** Ranks capital projects based on goals established in this plan and on established standards for the appropriate provision of services. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outlines a schedule for the expenditure of municipal funds for public physical improvements over a six-year period. It consists of two components: a capital budget, which lists and describes the capital projects to be undertaken during the coming fiscal year, and a capital program, which lists and describes the capital projects proposed to be undertaken during each of the following five years.

A program of when, where, and how much a town plans to invest in public services over the next five to ten years. The program presents a capital budget each year which is useful in drafting the overall town budget. Items commonly included in a capital improvements program are roads and bridges, school buildings, sewer and water lines and treatment plants, municipal buildings, solid waste disposal sites, and police and fire equipment.

**Collector Road.** Collects traffic from local road and streets to feed the arterial system. Provides a balance between land access and mobility. Serves urban areas and other traffic generators of intercity importance that are not served by higher systems. Links these places with nearby towns and cities, or with routes of higher classification. Connects the locally important traffic generators with the less developed parts of the city. On street parking is discouraged.

**Comprehensive Plan.** Presents long range goals and objectives for all activities that affect growth and development in the community. The time range for a comprehensive plan is usually ten to twenty years and should be updated every three to five years. The comprehensive plan serves as a guide for public rulings on public and private development proposals and for the budgeting of public money.

**Density.** A measurement of land development intensity derived from a ratio of land area in relation to dwelling units or building floor area. Density is measured by dividing the total land area by the number of dwelling units or building floor area to arrive at a dwelling unit per land area ratio or square foot per land area ratio.

**Density Bonus.** An incentive to developers that provides the opportunity to subdivide their land into a greater number of units given they provide some public benefit in return. Such public benefits could be allowing a higher density of development on a lot that provides amenities to residents of the neighborhood, such as public open space or a new school site.

**Design Review.** A formal process for reviewing the design and aesthetics of proposed new developments and building alterations; and for determining what improvements or changes might be made to make new developments compatible with the surroundings.

**Floodplain.** An area adjacent to a watercourse, which area is subject to flooding as the result of the occurrence of an intermediate regional flood and which area thus is so adverse to past, current or foreseeable construction or land use as to constitute a significant hazard to public health and safety or to property.

**Gateway.** An arrival point followed by a zone that marks the transition between the arrival point and the objective destination.  
An entrance corridor that heralds the approach of a new landscape and defines the arrival point as a destination.

**Geographic Information System (GIS).** An organized collection of computer hardware, software, geographic data, and personnel designated to efficiently capture, store, update, manipulate, analyze and display all forms of geographically referenced information.

**Greenway.** Vegetative corridor used primarily for outdoor recreation pursuits such as walking, jogging, hiking, biking and horseback riding; and for the preservation of open space. In addition, they provide buffers to help filter storm water flowing into lakes, ponds, rivers and streams, and offer critical habitat for wildlife to dwell in and travel through. Greenways are generally located adjacent to roads, lakes, parks, streams and rivers.

**Joint Ownership PUD.** Joint plan for development and conservation of properties owned by two or more landowners. Each receives a share of the net proceeds in proportion to the number and value of units each could develop independently, irrespective of the total acreage owned by each participant.

**Land Use.** A broad term used to classify land according to present use and according to the suitability for future uses; that is, for housing, open spaces and parks, commercial, industrial, etc.

**Level of Service (LOS).** The condition of traffic flow measured as level of service, ranging from LOS A which represents unimpeded flow to LOS F which represents no flow.

**Local Road.** Provides high land access (short trips at low speeds), but with limited mobility, discouraging through traffic. Provides access to adjacent land. Serves travel over relatively short distances compared with collectors and other higher systems. Comprise all facilities not on higher systems. Parking, biking and other public uses of the street are encouraged. Through traffic on local streets is discouraged as are trucks, except those destined for local deliveries.

**Mixed Use Development.** Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A “single site” may include contiguous properties.

**Multi-Modal System.** More than one type (mode) of transportation including automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, mass transit, etc.

**Natural Environment.** Natural resources include the soils, water, forests, minerals, geologic formations, and plant and animal species found within the planning area.

**Neighborhood Activity Center.** Neighborhoods Activity Centers are a means to encourage small-scale commercial and mixed-use development in convenient neighborhood locations. The intent of the NAC is to take underutilized commercial areas within a residential area, and transform them into higher-density, compact mixed-use settlements. NAC’s are close to where people live and oriented to serving the neighborhood, thus lessening the need to drive for local errands and convenience shopping. The City will draw infill development into these areas through revised zoning that promotes neighborhood scale mixed uses, increased density, and smaller setbacks. Convenient access to transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian routes, must also be provided.

**Open Space.** A portion of a lot or parcel which shall be unoccupied and unobstructed by any structures, and used for recreation and preservation purposes.

**Performance Standards.** The purpose of performance standards is to provide detailed regulations and restrictions by means of minimum criteria, which must be met by uses in order to protect neighbors from adverse impacts of adjoining land uses and to protect the general health, safety and welfare by limiting where uses may be established, insuring that traffic congestion is minimized, controlling the intensity of use, and prescribing other such performance criteria necessary to implement the comprehensive plan. In general, the standards for open space, density, impervious surface coverage, and lot area are delineated that apply in each zoning district.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD).** A zoning development management approach to physical growth which combines housing, commercial, light manufacturing and open space uses all in the same zone, while maintaining an overall density comparable to conventional zoning.

**Strip Development.** Commercial, retail or industrial development, usually one lot deep, that fronts on a major street. See also **Figure 4.1** on page 35.

**Substandard Structures.** A broad classification for housing condition, rated in degrees of major and minor, which indicates that a certain dwelling unit is deficient for general use. Common criteria for assessing substandard housing include whether a dwelling unit is wired for electricity (or properly wired), contains plumbing and indoor flush toilet facilities, and has proper sewerage and adequate windows for light and air; the condition of exterior surfaces; and many others.

**Traffic Calming.** A set of techniques which serve to reduce the speed of traffic. Such strategies include lane narrowing, parking additions, sharp offsets, yield points, sidewalk bulge-outs, speed bumps, surface variations, and visual clues on a vertical plane.

**Transfer of Development Right (TDR).** TDR permits the transfer of development rights from one location to another where the associated development can be more appropriately accommodated. At the same time that the development rights are transferred from property, a development limitation is placed on the transferring property to control the nature and extent of its subsequent use and development, and the transferring property will normally be rezoned to reflect the absence of the rights transferred.

**Watershed.** Area of land, due to its natural drainage pattern, that collects precipitation and drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake or groundwater.

**Wetland.** Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, commonly known as hydrophytic vegetation; provided that lands which are periodically irrigated for agricultural purposes are not considered to be wetlands as the term is used herein.

**Zoning Ordinance.** A set of land use regulations enacted by the local governing body to create districts which permit certain land uses and prohibit others. Land uses in each district are regulated according to type, density, height and the coverage of buildings.