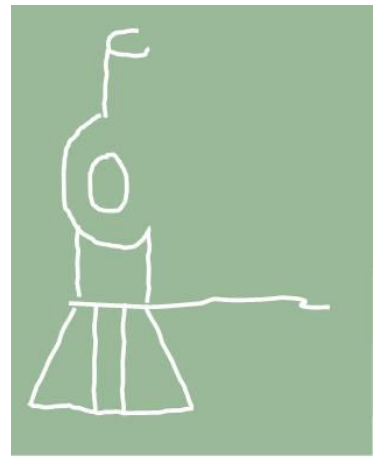


Chapter 2: Executive Summary



All Aboard!

Executive Summary



Photo: University of Southern Mississippi's Administration Building.



Photo: Hattiesburg Visitor's Center.

Overview

Hattiesburg's Comprehensive Plan 2008-2028 is the result of an 18-month grassroots planning process. This plan was citizen-driven through visioning sessions, focus group meetings and neighborhood workshops.

A Vision Advisory Team was appointed by Mayor DuPree, the City Council and the Planning Commission. The team collected technical information, opinions and ideas over a 12-month period. Team members volunteered countless hours to research, analyze, and recommend the policies that form the basis of this plan.

The *Vision Statements* contained in this section represent the collective values and desires of the citizens of Hattiesburg. More detailed plan recommendations—the goals and strategies—are included under Chapter 4 of this document.

All Aboard!

The theme for Hattiesburg's comprehensive plan is "*All Aboard! Getting on Track for Hattiesburg's Future.*"

The theme is meant to reference Hattiesburg's history as a railroad town and reflect the desire for this plan to be a collaborative effort of all residents, business-owners and community leaders.

To be *All Aboard!* in envisioning Hattiesburg's future, the appointed steering committee—the Vision Advisory Team—involved residents and business-owners through a series of stakeholder interviews, focus group meetings, and city-wide community forums. A full description of Vision Advisory Team activities appears under Chapter 3 of this document.

Vision Statements

Hattiesburg's citizens have identified 16 *Vision Statements* to serve as the foundation for decision-making. These statements seek to describe the city that Hattiesburg will strive to become in the next 15 to 20 years. The following are the city's *Vision Statements*:

Community Identity

We envision a progressive city that appreciates the best of the best and is proactive in meeting the challenges of the future. Hattiesburg is a city of neighborhoods, a city with a rich culture and history, a

center for music and entertainment, a college town, a great place to raise a family, and a great place to retire.

Community Appearance

We envision a clean city where residents appreciate the beauty of the natural and built environments. A city where residents work together to prevent littering, beautify public and private spaces, protect trees, creeks and rivers, and show visitors a well-maintained, attractive community.

Economy

We envision a diverse economy where it is desirable to locate large businesses and industries, a city that fosters a prosperous environment for small businesses and entrepreneurship. We focus on attracting and maintaining a qualified workforce for a range of industries and specialties. We understand the importance of offering a high quality of life to residents and business-owners and recognize that continued investment in public and private facilities will ensure and sustain our economic prosperity.

Historic Conservation

We envision a city that values and celebrates its unique history. A city that understands the importance of maintaining the buildings and places that record the city's past; a city that carefully preserves those places for future generations.

Health Care

We envision a city that is known throughout the Southeast as the outstanding city for health care facilities and skilled health care personnel. A city that attracts the best physicians and specialists and a city where high-quality medical services are available to all. We envision a city that understands the importance of prevention, nutrition, and fitness; a place where the city's commitment to fitness and wellness is displayed through its network of walking and biking trails.

Education

We envision a city where a high-quality education can be obtained in public and private schools, where public schools consistently attain superior ratings, and where drop-out rates decline and test scores rise. A city that

Figure 2. Examples of Comments Received at the Plan Kick-Off Event.

Below are examples of comments received at the comprehensive plan kick-off event, held June 1 and 2, 2007. Appendix B contains a complete list of all *Post-It Note* comments.

- "Better opportunities for Edwards Street-Tuscan Avenue residents—grocery store, affordable shopping."
- "Start the library-on-wheels."
- "[Need] smaller version of 'Whole Foods' on east side of town—or some mom and pop grocery store."
- "Put exercise stations in all city walking trails/parks to encourage more exercise."
- "Implement recycling program to benefit local kids/parks."
- "More arts-related programs for all ages."
- "Lets make sure the codes on the books are enforced and disseminated to all citizens."
- "Need regular transportation all over town for senior citizens who should not drive. Need more red lights in high density neighborhoods."
- "Health care in neighborhoods where people can walk to."
- "Community garden? Seniors and kids center designed for interaction?"
- "Hattiesburg needs to become more pedestrian-friendly. Therefore, it is imperative that city officials make this city more accessible for those choosing to walk or ride bicycles by providing sidewalks especially in high-traffic areas."
- "Support USM—they are the economic lifeblood to this Hub City."
- "Give another raise to police. Initiate foot and bike patrol again."
- "Connect neighborhoods to all recreation facilities by sidewalks, pedestrian paths and bike lanes."

Executive Summary



Photo: Townhouses on Second Avenue.



Photo: Gordon's Creek

offers a broad range of higher education and continuing education programs for all disciplines, ages, and income levels. A university town where students live during the week and on weekends; a city where students hope to find a job after graduation to enjoy the high quality of life.

Housing

We envision a city that offers a range of housing types in all sizes, styles and prices, where strong neighborhoods and good planning ensure stable property values, where the dream of home ownership is within reach to all residents. A city that offers high-quality rental properties that are well-maintained by the property owners.

Neighborhoods

We envision a city of safe, attractive neighborhoods that are convenient to schools, neighborhood shopping centers, and city parks. Neighborhoods where it is safe, accessible and enjoyable to walk or ride bicycles. Neighborhoods where residents watch out for one another and work together to achieve common goals.

Arts, Entertainment and Culture

We envision a city that offers the best the region has to offer in the arts and entertainment. A city where residents can take in a play, an opera, or a concert. A city that is known for its local artists and artisans. A city that honors and promotes its music history; a city that upholds that history by cultivating a wide range of music venues for all tastes.

Natural Environment

We envision a city that recognizes and protects its natural environment, a city with clean, scenic creeks, rivers, and streams. A city known for its well-managed urban forest. A city where residents understand how humans impact the natural environment; a city where residents recognize the importance of conserving natural resources.

Businesses and Services

We envision a city that offers a healthy environment for all businesses, large and small. A city that enhances the businesses environment by focusing on education, workforce training, small business development programs, business incubators, and public

partnerships. A city that attracts visitors from across the region to unique shopping and entertainment districts.

Downtown Hattiesburg

We envision a thriving, fully-revitalized downtown that is an attractive, exciting, safe, convenient, accessible place to live, work, shop, dine, and relax. A downtown that draws residents and visitors during and after the workday to active retail, entertainment, office, and public districts. A downtown where small businesses prosper; a place where downtown dwellers can live, enjoy beautiful public spaces, and walk to work, shopping and entertainment venues. A downtown with an arts and museum district that attracts visitors from across Mississippi. An energetic entertainment district that is known throughout Mississippi as a live music destination. A place where a family can walk from a downtown neighborhood to get an ice cream cone on a hot summer afternoon.

Transportation

We envision a transportation system with “complete streets” where equal importance is given to motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. A city where all modes of travel—pedestrian, bicycle and automobile—are safe and convenient. A city where sidewalks connect neighborhood residents to work, schools, and shopping districts. A city that regularly maintains and improves public streets. A city that uses *context sensitive solutions* to integrate and balance community, aesthetic, historic and environmental values with transportation safety, maintenance and performance goals.

Public Services, Utilities and Technology

We envision a city with superior access to basic services—water, wastewater, trash collection, electricity, gas and cable—and a city that provides wireless internet “hot spots,” underground utilities, and curbside recycling programs. A city that recognizes the impact of human activity on the natural environment and invests in alternative energy sources, renewable natural resources, and sustainable infrastructure to ensure that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will enjoy the same or better facilities and services.



Photo: Walnut Street Park

Executive Summary



Photo: Hattiesburg Depot Fountain.



Photo: Mural on Coney Island building in Downtown Hattiesburg.

Parks, Sports and Recreation

We envision a city that offers a variety of passive and active recreational activities for young children, young adults, families, adults, retirees and persons with disabilities. A city that offers beautiful, well-maintained park areas for the use and enjoyment of residents and visitors. A city where a public park is within a quarter of a mile of every neighborhood. A city traversed by hike-and-bike trails that connect beautiful city parks, neighborhoods, and commercial districts. A city that provides high-quality, well-maintained sports facilities that attract families with young children.

Public Safety

We envision a city with safe streets, neighborhoods, schools, and playgrounds. A city where residents and visitors are protected by a stable, strong police force, a capable, well-equipped fire department, and dedicated, trained first responders. A city where police and fire departments are well-trained, fully-staffed, and competitively compensated.

