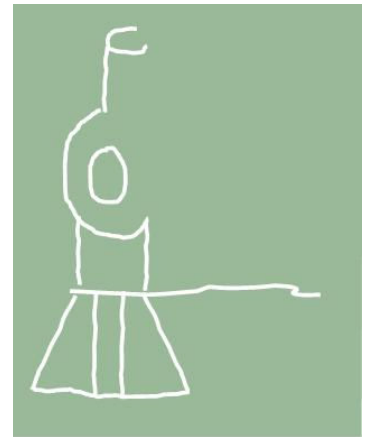


Chapter 7: Land Use and Development



All Aboard!

Land Use and Development



Photo: Town Square Park and Bay Street Presbyterian Church.

“A neighborhood is a unit that matches the daily scale of most people’s lives.”

John M. Levy, Contemporary Urban Planning

Overview

This chapter contains a description of the current land uses and development characteristics in Hattiesburg, as well as recommendations on future land use and development patterns.

Included in this section are a future land use map (also provided in Appendix C) and text describing strategies the city residents can use to achieve the overall future land use vision.

This chapter should be used to identify what land uses are desired in the city, to determine how much land should be devoted to each use, and where land uses could be located to bring the most value to the community.

Existing Land Uses

Hattiesburg has a rich and colorful history that is displayed visually through its historic buildings, neighborhoods and development patterns. The early mixed-use development patterns can be seen today in Downtown Hattiesburg and the historic residential districts. Many second-floor spaces in downtown commercial buildings housed apartments. Also, there were neighborhood corner grocery stores in the historic neighborhoods surrounding Downtown Hattiesburg.

The street patterns of older sections of the city remain unchanged. For the most part, the grid system with rear service alleys is still in place and brick underlies asphalt in many areas.

Until recently, existing land use patterns have been guided exclusively by the Euclidean form of zoning, promoting the separation of land uses and thus supporting a more automobile-dependent way of life.

Minor changes have been integrated into development policies and ordinances, though major changes are still needed to support the creation of walkable, livable neighborhoods and mixed-use districts. These qualities are characteristic of the city’s earliest neighborhoods and reflect a return to the development patterns that Hattiesburg residents treasure most.

Agricultural Lands

There are few agricultural uses in the city of Hattiesburg. Areas that have been zoned for agricultural use provide

locations for farming, livestock and very low-density residential development. In these areas, there is a desire to protect the rural character of land and to restrict urbanization and higher-density land uses.

Residential Uses

As residential development moved farther from Hattiesburg's city center, the architecture and development patterns of neighborhoods reflected the times, styles, and technologies of each successive period. Four locally-recognized historic neighborhood districts were built around the city center between the late 1800s and the 1920s.

From the 1920s through the 1950s, residential development had spread north to 7th Street and south as far as Adeline Street. Development along the city's eastern border spread from the north end at Highway 42, following the river south through the city and to the community of Palmer's Crossing. Residential development continued to move west along Hardy Street and the "Avenues" to the westernmost residential neighborhood boundaries along 40th Avenue.

Existing Residential Zones

With the city's 1988 Land Development Code, which is currently in effect, single-family residential uses were classified in three density levels: R-1A (10,000 square foot lots), R-1B (7,500 square foot lots), and R-1C (5,000 square foot lots). An R-2 classification allows two single-family units attached by a common wall.

High-density residential/multi-family zones include the R-3 and R-4 classifications. The current Land Development Code provides options for Planned Unit Developments and Planned Residential Developments to offer the developer more flexibility in site development and residential density (lot sizes). Condominiums are a new concept in Hattiesburg and are gaining in popularity for retirees and young professionals.

Commercial Uses

Commercial development in Hattiesburg also began at the city's center, supported by transportation corridors provided by the Leaf River and early rail lines. Downtown Hattiesburg was the city's retail center until the 1960s, when strip commercial development and the

Land Use and Development

Existing Land Uses



Photo: Walnut Street

Land Use and Development



Photo: Residence located on West Fourth Street.

Cloverleaf Mall began to draw businesses out of the city center.

Existing Commercial Zones

The current Land Development Code offers five commercial zoning classifications. The Professional Office district, B-1, provides a location for offices and non-retail activity with a maximum building size of 10,000 square feet. This district is suitable for the neighborhood fringe areas because these uses do not typically generate a large volume of traffic and operating hours do not extend beyond 5 p.m.

Neighborhood Business uses are classified in the Land Development Code as B-2. This district provides a location for businesses designed to cater to neighborhood residents, but is usually located at a busy node or intersection along the edge of the residential district. The Community Business district, classified as B-3, provides locations for commercial uses that serve the entire community and generate a medium to high volume of traffic. These uses typically encompass more land area than neighborhood business uses, with larger parking lots, larger business signs, and larger buildings.

The Regional Business District, classified as B-5, provides a location for the largest, most land-intensive commercial uses, including regional “big box” retail stores, large strip commercial centers, shopping malls, and automobile sales businesses. These districts are primarily located along major corridors such as U.S. Highway 49, U.S. Highway 98, U.S. Highway 11 and U.S. Highway 42. The largest regional business area within the city is in western Hattiesburg along U. S. Highway 98 in Lamar County.

Industries and Industrial Park

Industrial land uses are found in the Forrest County Industrial Park and on scattered sites in certain areas of the city. The 1988 Land Development Code established two industrial zones: the I-1, Light Industrial district and the I-2, Heavy Industrial district. Industrial corridors within the city include portions of U.S. Highway 49, Highway 42, Bouie Street, Edwards Street, James Street, and Dixie Pine Road.

The Forrest County Industrial Park and the Bobby L. Chain Municipal Airport is located in southern Hattiesburg, east of U. S. Highway 49.

Public and Quasi-Public Uses

Public land consists of areas occupied by educational and governmental facilities or land that is owned by federal, state, or local units of government. Parks and recreational facilities are also included in this category. A majority of the civic buildings for the City of Hattiesburg and Forrest County remain in Downtown Hattiesburg, with satellite city and county facilities throughout the city.

Quasi-public areas include land that is occupied by privately-owned uses that are generally open to the public, such as churches, cemeteries, lodge halls and similar uses. These land uses are located on scattered sites throughout the city.

Future Land Uses

Overview

In moving forward, the 2008-2028 future land use plan seeks to be a policy tool to be used by local property owners, developers, the Hattiesburg Planning Commission, Land Development Code Board of Adjustments, and City Council to make decisions that consider the overall benefit to Hattiesburg's residents and land owners. The future land use plan seeks to accomplish the following:

- › To promote economic revitalization and/or enhancement;
- › To protect and strengthen each district's desirable and unique history, character, and identity;
- › To reduce conflicts caused by the introduction of incompatible land uses;
- › To stabilize and improve property values;
- › To promote and strengthen civic pride; and
- › To encourage harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and development.

Land Use and Development

Future Land Uses



Photo: Masonic Lodge, Downtown Hattiesburg.

Land Use and Development

Land Use Issues and Challenges

Neighborhoods and Residential Districts

Certain neighborhoods in Hattiesburg are threatened by encroaching commercial development, unregulated student housing, landlord negligence, and/or incompatible multi-family development. The future land use plan seeks to identify neighborhoods faced with these challenges and prescribe solutions through land use planning and development regulation.

To address these threats, new land use designations have been created to attempt to resolve these issues and to stabilize neighborhoods and property values.

Commercial Districts

Land use challenges are not limited to residential areas. Many of Hattiesburg's commercial districts face distinct challenges to long-term health and viability. The improvement of certain districts is stifled by property owner negligence in allowing buildings to fall into disrepair. Unused and dilapidated buildings can blight commercial districts and stymie revitalization efforts.

Additionally, the frequent and widespread approval of variances to bypass the appropriate and beneficial site planning standards can drastically limit a commercial district's potential, perpetuate and reinforce low property values and building rents, and undermine other property owners' attempts to create attractive, viable business properties.

Lastly, certain districts of Hattiesburg have tremendous potential to create exciting, unique, attractive commercial or mixed-use centers. Without an area-specific land use plan and development regulations, the districts are unable to fulfill this potential.

A New Beginning

The future land use plan seeks to take on these challenges for residential and commercial districts by redefining the city's land use classifications. Special land use categories and descriptions have been created to provide more guidance to decision-makers, property owners, and developers.

In order for the city to realize its future vision, the city must view the future land use plan as a "new day," and funnel all efforts and actions into implementing the

comprehensive plan. This will require the creation of new district regulations and the rezoning of certain areas of the city. Additionally, the City must greatly reduce the number of variances that are issued, as the frequent use of variances can undermine the integrity of new ordinances. The result will be the creation of districts which are convenient, attractive, and a source of pride for all city residents.

Implementation Actions:

- › Revise the city's Land Development Code to address needed changes and to implement the vision, goals and strategies of the 2008-2028 Comprehensive Plan.
- › Closely consider the appropriateness of new development proposals that do not conform to the future land use plan. Require amendments to the future land use plan prior to or concurrent with zoning map amendments where proposals conflict with the comprehensive plan.
- › Ensure that any proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan and future land use plan meet strict review standards; reject any proposals that do not conform to the spirit and intent of the comprehensive plan and individual neighborhood plans.
- › Adopt design guidelines for commercial corridors.
- › Create public-private partnerships to beautify the city's gateways and corridors.

Future Land Use Plan

The future land-use plan for Hattiesburg includes two components: a narrative of the land-use classifications and policy recommendations, and a map showing where land-use policies should be applied geographically in the city.

The narrative description of future land-use policies begins on page 97. The narrative, together with the 2008-2028 Future Land-Use Map (see page 106), comprises the city's plan for governing how land should be used, re-used, and developed. The following is a description of how the map should be interpreted to develop policies, amend land use and development regulations, and guide public and private decision-making.

Land Use and Development Future Land Use Plan

Land Use and Development

What is the Future Land-Use Map?

A future land-use map depicts the long-range plan for the desirable use of land within the city. The map designates how land should be used or re-used and should serve as a guide for decision-making by property owners, developers, appointed boards (Land Development Code Board of Adjustments and Hattiesburg Planning Commission), and the Hattiesburg City Council. The future land use plan, including the narrative and map, should be the reference used to update the current land development code and the existing zoning map in order to provide the regulations needed to implement the goals and objectives of the 20 year plan.

Upon adoption of the comprehensive plan by the Hattiesburg City Council, the map and narrative become the city's guiding land-use policy. If any petitions (zoning changes, use or development permits, subdivisions, ordinance amendments, etc.) are approved by the city that are not consistent with the future land use plan, an amendment to reflect the change(s) to the future land use plan and future land use map should be adopted by the city.

How Should The Plan Be Implemented?

1. Amend the Land Development Code

The land use classifications contained in the narrative beginning on page 97 describe the desired character of the districts and the types of land uses that would be appropriate in each district. The first step toward implementing the future land use plan should be to create new development standards and to ensure that any requested re-zonings are in conformity to the Future Land Use Map.

The future land use classifications are broad and contain descriptions of the overall character of a district. The future land use classifications should be used as a guide if new zoning districts are created and for rezoning land. In most cases, more than one zoning district will be required to make up a future land use classification. For example, the following land uses are described under Neighborhood Conservation District #1 (NCD #1):

- › Single-family residential land uses;

- › Certain types of two-family and multi-family residences, subject to use, density, and design guidelines;
- › Public and quasi-public uses such as churches and schools; and
- › Small offices and retail uses clustered along collector streets or at the edges of neighborhoods and constructed to the same character as the surrounding residences.

To appropriately permit all these land uses in the NCD #1, zoning districts can be created and mapped according to the above descriptions. One district would be a single-family residential district containing lot size, setback, and building height standards that are characteristic of the existing neighborhoods.

Two-family and multi-family residences could be allowed in one of three ways: permitting two-family and multi-family residences as uses permitted upon review by the planning commission, subject to stringent review standards; creating an overlay district and identifying certain areas where two-family and multi-family residences could be allowed, subject to stringent design review standards; or creating a separate zoning district with appropriate use, development, and design standards, and mapping areas of neighborhoods for two-family and multi-family residents. Appropriate methods for permitting uses should be decided through an inclusive public process involving residents of the affected areas.

Certain public- and quasi-public uses can be permitted as of right in the land development code, subject to special lot size and street access requirements. Lastly, a special zoning district can be created for offices and retail uses that abut and serve neighborhoods. The specific uses, design of buildings, size of buildings and parcels, and pedestrian accessibility should be addressed to ensure that offices and retail uses do not have a negative impact on neighborhoods. Additionally, the zoning district description should be written to specify that vehicular access to these properties must be from collector streets or at the edges of neighborhood to protect residential streets from

Land Use and Development Future Land Use Plan

Land Use and Development

non-local traffic.

2. Amend the Official Zoning Map

After new zoning districts are created, the city's Official Zoning Map should be amended to incorporate the new districts. The future land-use map should be used as a guide for drawing new zoning district boundaries. If new issues or preferred methods are identified at any time during the process of amending the land development code, the future land use plan should be amended to incorporate those issues.

Future Land Use Classifications

Special Residential Districts

Neighborhood Conservation District 1 – Downtown/Historic Neighborhoods

This Neighborhood Conservation District is primarily a residential district located adjacent to Downtown Hattiesburg and in older, established neighborhoods east of U.S. Highway 49. In this district, predominantly-residential land uses may be found that exhibit certain types of development patterns.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: moderate-density single-family residences or residential lands along the city's original street system; certain two-family and multi-family uses constructed to the character of the surrounding neighborhood; buildings with shallow front and side yards; certain neighborhood business land uses that are compatible in design to the surrounding residential areas; and a higher overall density of development than modern or suburban neighborhoods.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: single-family residential uses; certain two-family and multi-family residences, subject to use, density, and design guidelines; public and quasi-public uses, such as churches and schools; and small offices and retail uses clustered along collector streets or at the edges of neighborhoods and constructed to the same character as the surrounding residences.

Neighborhood Conservation District 2 – Suburban Neighborhoods

This Neighborhood Conservation District is primarily a

residential district located in conventional subdivisions. In this district, large tracts of land were platted as single-family residential neighborhoods. Other than schools and churches, non-residential land uses are not typically found in these districts.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: low-density or moderate-density single-family residences; building lots with front and side yards with standard depths; and a lower overall density of development than downtown or historic neighborhoods.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: single-family residential uses; public and quasi-public uses, such as churches and schools; small neighborhood parks and tot lots.

Residential District Policies

As residential zoning district regulations are created or revised, the following considerations should be included:

1. Adopt policies for regulating the creation of new multi-family residential zoning districts. Address issues such as the proximity of new multi-family developments to single-family neighborhoods and the capacity of adjacent transportation corridors.

Commercial Land Uses

Neighborhood Business District

The Neighborhood Business District is primarily a residential district located along the city's collector, minor arterial, and certain local streets. In this district, certain residential and low-intensity business uses may be found that exhibit development patterns that complement the residential, pedestrian-oriented character of surrounding neighborhoods.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: moderate-density single-family residences and certain two-family and multi-family uses; mixed-use buildings and developments; smaller, lower-intensity business developments that provide services to the neighborhood and community; and less-intensive commercial uses than are found in the Community Business District. Site development standards should include maximum building sizes, maximum residential densities, minimum and maximum building setbacks, building and site design elements, and provisions for pedestrian comfort and accessibility.

Land Use and Development

Future Land Use Classifications

Land Use and Development

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: single-family residential uses; two-family and multi-family residences, subject to use, density, and design guidelines; public and quasi-public uses, such as general indoor retail, specialty retail, service and office land uses that do not require the outdoor storage of goods or equipment.

Community Business District

The Community Business District is primarily a non-residential district located along the city's major roadways. In this district, certain residential and non-residential land uses may be found that exhibit suburban development patterns.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: moderate-density single-family residences and certain two-family and multi-family uses; mixed-use buildings and developments; suburban-style, higher-intensity business developments that provide services to the entire community; and less-intensive commercial uses than are found in the Regional Business District.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: residential uses; public and quasi-public uses, such as churches and schools; and general indoor retail, service and office land uses that do not require the outdoor storage of goods or equipment.

Regional Business District

The Regional Business District is primarily a non-residential district located along major arterial streets and highways. Limited types of residential uses—apartment complexes and second-floor housing in strip commercial or lifestyle centers—are allowed and encouraged to locate in this district. The nature and volume of traffic along these corridors are different from the traffic along other commercial corridors, and therefore, the land uses require special consideration. The land uses in this district may generate a higher volume of regional traffic and/or require frequent access by large trucks and commercial vehicles.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: suburban-style commercial centers and big-box buildings; well-positioned and screened outdoor uses; mixed-use buildings and developments; high-density residential developments such as apartment complexes; large, private parking areas; and light industrial

campuses and employment centers. Regulations should be established to promote development patterns for these uses that enhance the streetscape, screen outdoor storage and equipment areas from public view, and enable safe circulation among neighboring properties without requiring travel on the street or highway corridor.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: high-density residential uses; public and quasi-public uses; hotels and motels; general indoor and outdoor retail uses; heavy commercial and light industrial uses; service and office land uses; and light industrial campuses and corporate offices.

Commercial District Policies

As commercial zoning district regulations are created or revised, the following considerations should be included:

1. Establish policies and regulations to improve interconnectivity between commercial developments on linear community and regional business corridors. Create incentives in the Land Development Code for connecting off-street parking facilities, sharing off-street parking, and providing pedestrian and bicycle connections between developments.
2. Integrate form-based standards into the Land Development Code; address such elements as streetscape, density, building mass, building form, pedestrian comfort and accessibility, and on-street and off-street parking.

Special Mixed-Use Districts

Mixed-Use Districts provide locations where complementary residential, public, and commercial properties can locate in a manner that creates complete, livable, walkable “neighborhoods.” To be successful, site development and urban design standards must be adopted to enable a single developer or many individual property owners to coordinate the arrangement of buildings, parking areas, streets and sidewalks. Buildings and land uses in the district should relate to one another and to the streets and pedestrian corridors. The comfort and accessibility of all users—residents, shoppers, diners, employees, and visitors—should be considered when designing site development plans and individual site elements.

Four mixed-use districts—the Downtown District, Medical District, Neighborhood Center Mixed-Use District, and Planned Mixed-Use District—are defined as follows:

Land Use and Development Future Land Use Classifications

Land Use and Development

Downtown District

The Downtown District is the historic central business district. In this district, land uses are promoted that are consistent with the special character and quality befitting the historic center of commerce and public activity. The historic development patterns and building arrangements are promoted and should be reinforced through amendments to the Land Development Code.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: buildings that are constructed to the front property line and share common walls with adjacent buildings; on-street parking areas or shared parking in public lots; mixed land uses, including residential uses, within the same building; a higher percentage of publicly-owned buildings and lands; public parks and small private courtyards and green spaces; and an overall higher density of development.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: various types of retail and service businesses, such as specialty shops and restaurants; anchor businesses, such as grocery stores, that draw residents to the district; public uses, such as city, county, state and federal offices, public parks and community centers; higher density residential uses, including condominiums and second-floor apartments; arts-related businesses, museums and cultural centers; and offices and employment centers.

Medical District

Medical districts provide locations for high-quality medical-related development and have site development and land use regulations designed to ensure compatibility between medical uses and adjacent residential and non-residential uses.

In this district, a limited mix of land uses may be found that complement and support primary medical and health care industry uses.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: a mix of building types, sizes and heights; large private parking areas serving individual buildings or groups of buildings; parking garages; linear green space along roadways and driveways, walking trails between business entrances or connecting to public use areas; landscaped buffers, increased building setbacks, and special site development requirements between medical uses and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: hospitals; clinics, medical and dental offices and laboratories; compatible retail and service businesses that serve the employees and patients of the medical district, such as restaurants or drug stores; hotels and motels; and public offices.

Neighborhood Center Mixed-Use District

Neighborhood Mixed-Use Districts provide locations for a range of compatible uses that primarily serve neighborhood residents, area businesses and employment centers, and visitors drawn to the special district. In this district, a mix of land uses may be found that complement the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and/or employment centers, and allow the extension of certain non-residential land uses to properties that had previously been used as residences.

Areas with this designation contain residential properties in transition and a mix of existing types. Residential properties in transition are considered to be properties that are vacant, abandoned, or temporarily rented until a viable use is identified. Minor changes in these areas, such as increases in traffic, encroachment of non-residential uses, and high vacancy rates, give the perception that single-family, owner-occupied housing is no longer sustainable.

This description does not include areas characterized as follows: a majority of the properties are occupied as residential properties; non-residential uses have not yet penetrated the residential block; and non-residential uses are only proposed to satisfy the desires of the owner(s) of a single property.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: a mix of building types; residential buildings that have been converted to non-residential uses, such as offices; buildings with shallow front and side yards; small private parking areas and shared parking in public lots; green space in the form of smaller private yards and courtyards; and buildings with both residential and commercial uses.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: single-family residential uses; accessory apartments; small townhome developments (six to eight units per acre; development sizes no greater than two acres); second-floor apartments over retail or service businesses; smaller, low-intensity retail and service businesses, such as specialty shops, delis and cafes; public and quasi-public uses, such as churches, schools

Land Use and Development

Future Land Use Classifications

Land Use and Development

and public offices; arts-related businesses; and small offices in converted residences or new buildings constructed to the same character as the surrounding neighborhood.

Planned Mixed-Use District

Planned Mixed-Use Districts provide locations for a range of compatible uses that are planned and constructed as a single, cohesive development. This district includes planned unit developments and any other mixed-use properties planned and constructed in a similar manner. In this district, a mix of residential, office, public and commercial land uses may be found that create a unique destination for living, working and shopping.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: a mix of building types; single-family and multi-family residences; buildings and uses connected with sidewalks and pedestrian pathways; shared parking in public lots; green space in the form of smaller public parks, plazas and courtyards; and buildings with both residential and commercial uses.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: single-family residential uses; townhomes; second-floor apartments over retail or service businesses; apartment buildings integrated into the fabric of the development (as opposed to being positioned on out-parcels); low-intensity retail and service businesses, such as specialty shops, delis and cafes; public and semi-public uses, such as churches, schools and public offices; arts-related businesses; and anchor businesses such as grocery stores, movie theaters, and department stores.

Industrial Districts

Industry and Corporate Office District

The Industry and Corporate Office District is a district suitable for locating industrial campuses, corporate offices or major employment centers. The land uses in this district may generate a higher volume of regional traffic and/or require frequent access by large trucks and commercial vehicles.

› *District Characteristics*

The characteristics of this district include the following: *campus-style* development patterns—landscaped sites with well-positioned, visually-compatible planned building groups—should be promoted for this district. The desire for this district is to include a range of land uses and amenities that will attract and sustain

businesses and employers. Therefore, certain retail, service and residential land uses may be considered to enhance the use and enjoyment of employees in the district.

› *District Land Uses*

The following land uses should be found in this district: general industrial uses; industrial parks; light industrial and corporate office campuses; and certain residential, public, retail, service and office land uses.

Industrial Land Uses

Industrial land uses include properties where the principal use of land is to operate manufacturing, production or assembly activities and related businesses. These lands may also include warehousing and wholesaling activities, businesses with outdoor storage of products and materials, and uses that produce noises, vibrations, dust and odors that are not typically found in neighborhoods or business districts.

Industrial District Policies

As industrial zoning districts are created or revised, the following considerations should be included:

1. Enhanced landscaping and buffering provisions be created to provide protection to adjacent land uses from noise, dust and other nuisances.
2. Adjacent or on-site creeks and waterways should be protected from all types of contamination, including sedimentation.
3. Any new heavy industrial uses and districts that require access by large trucks and/or that produce noises, vibrations, dust and odors should be located along principal arterial streets and highways and buffered from neighborhoods and residences by commercial land uses and business districts.

Other Districts

Rural Residential/Agricultural

Lands designated as Rural Residential/Agricultural are sparsely developed residential lands or undeveloped lands. Properties in this district are expected to transition from undeveloped or very low-density residential lands to large estate residences or suburban neighborhood residential developments.

Open Space Lands

Lands designated as permanent open space or areas protected from development. These lands may be located in the floodway (see Figure 16) or in a special hazard AE

Land Use and Development Future Land Use Classifications

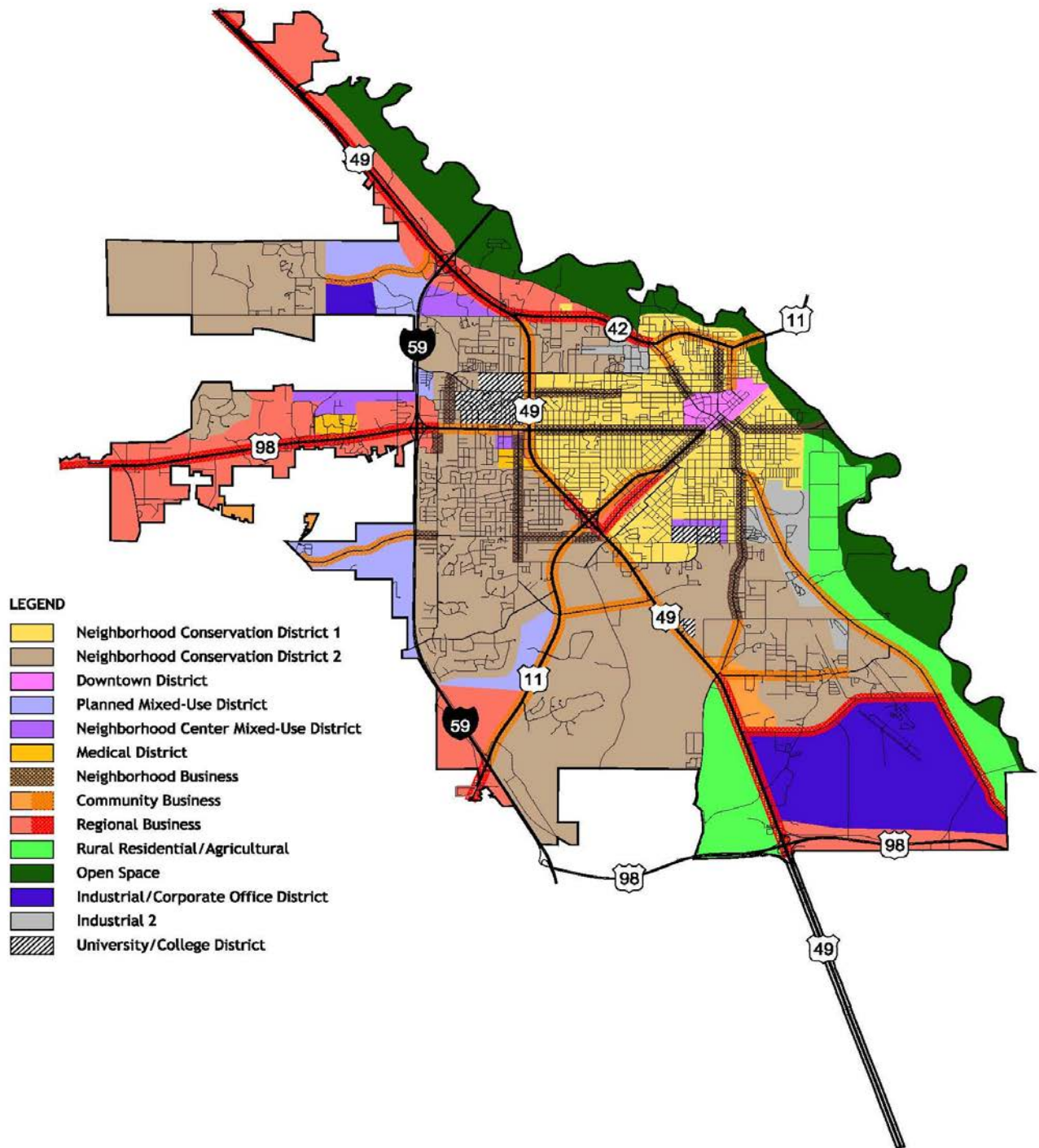
Land Use and Development

Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). Development should be restricted to non-residential and passive recreational spaces.

University Districts

This includes properties owned or controlled by colleges or universities, both public and private.

Map 2. Future Land Use



See Appendix C for larger view.

Land Use and Development

Hattiesburg's Districts and Corridors

Hattiesburg has a number of important districts and corridors that create places for residents to work, shop, recreate, and live. Each district and corridor has its own character and unique set of opportunities and challenges.

For the purpose of this plan, districts are considered to be areas of the city that have some or all of the below characteristics:

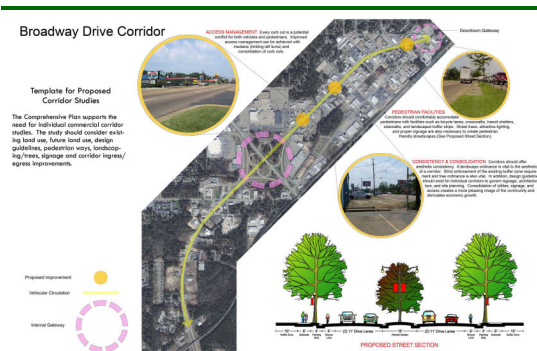
- › Areas identified by a distinct character or history;
- › Areas where properties that are used for similar purposes—residential properties, businesses, etc.—face the same issues and challenges; and
- › Places where positive or negative impacts to either group—residences or businesses—have an impact on the other.

Corridors are considered to be groups of commercial properties that are identified by the street or highway along which they are located. Corridors are defined and influenced by geography—where they are located in the city—and the character and condition of the road or highway. The quality of a corridor influences the experience of human movement, the value of real estate, and the day-to-day perception of the city by its residents and visitors.

A snapshot of the issues facing many of these districts and corridors is included in this chapter of the plan. Districts and corridors with special challenges/opportunities created by the presence of both residential and non-residential uses were selected to be described in the plan. Though, to effect meaningful change in these areas, a detailed study of each district and corridor should be conducted.

Additionally, there are many other neighborhoods and special districts in Hattiesburg that warrant a detailed study. These district, corridor, and neighborhood studies should be conducted using an open, participatory process involving all neighborhood residents, property owners, and stakeholders. Techniques such as neighborhood surveys, visioning sessions and workshops, and charrettes should be used to develop specific recommendations. Using graphic imagery to illustrate improvements to a study area (see template in Appendix C) will generate more visioning

Figure 17. Template for Corridor Studies



Template Design by Russ Bryan, ASLA
Neel-Schaffer, Inc.

and enthusiasm for the participants. Studies should include at a minimum the following:

- › A detailed description of the area's history, existing conditions, land uses, and structures;
- › An evaluation of current trends, challenges, and opportunities; and
- › Specific land use, streetscape, building design, and development policy recommendations.

Downtown Hattiesburg District

General Description

The downtown district is located in the northeast quadrant of the city. Downtown Hattiesburg is bordered by the Leaf River to the east, the North Main Street Historic Neighborhood to the north, Hattiesburg Historic Neighborhood to the south, and The Oaks Historic District to the west.

History

This area was first recognized as a point of commerce along the Leaf River and quickly grew into a railroad hub for South Mississippi. The settlement known as Twin Forks, later to be called Gordonville, continued to grow due to the lumber industry, medical field and opportunities for higher education.

During the early 1900s, commercial and residential structures were built with the quality and architectural flair befitting that era. Today, many of the buildings are well-maintained or are being restored to their original state.

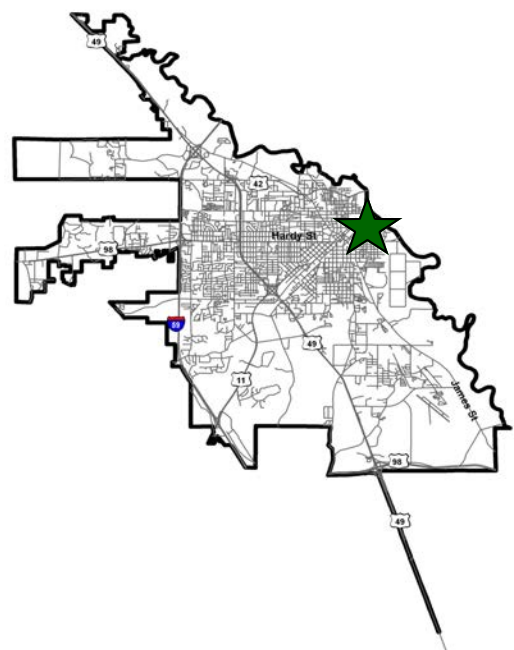
Downtown Hattiesburg was the foremost shopping destination for over sixty years. As the population grew, new neighborhoods were created and expanded north, south and west of the downtown area. In the 1950's, retail strip centers like the Broadway Drive Shopping Mart—the “new” trend—located near the newer neighborhoods along commercial corridors such as Broadway Drive, West Pine Street, Hardy Street and U. S. Highway 49.

By the 1970s, residential growth had continued in a southwesterly pattern to Interstate 59. Cloverleaf Mall—Hattiesburg's first enclosed, air-conditioned shopping mall—opened in 1974 at Broadway Drive and U.S. Highway 49. Major downtown anchor stores such as Sears, J. C. Penney's, Fine Brothers, Waldoff's

Land Use and Development

Hattiesburg's Districts and Corridors

Location: Downtown Hattiesburg



Land Use and Development

and The Vogue moved to the new shopping mall. Without retail activity, Downtown Hattiesburg became a district of banks, government offices, limited eateries, and personal service businesses.

Current trends

Revitalization efforts have created a renewed interest in all that Downtown Hattiesburg has to offer, attracting new restaurants, entertainment venues, specialty retail and arts-related businesses. The renaissance is a result of the efforts of the Mississippi Main Street Program, the City of Hattiesburg, private investors/entrepreneurs, and most importantly, the Historic Hattiesburg Downtown Association (HHDA).

The downtown district is currently a destination for the arts, specialty shops, fine dining and night life. Vacant second stories have been turned into residential lofts to promote downtown living. Between 2000 and 2007, over \$60 million in public and private funds has been spent toward downtown improvements and the renovation/restoration of historic downtown buildings.¹

What is working

The HHDA Executive Director, a full-time, paid position, plays a major role in the success of the district. The day-to-day tasks of maintaining and promoting existing businesses while seeking new business interests is a full time effort.

HHDA also benefits from the support of active directors, members, and volunteers. The HHDA website (www.downtownhattiesburg.com) provides an event calendar, information on businesses, downtown events, night life, availability of downtown real estate, and links to individual association members.

Additionally, the City of Hattiesburg uses certain Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds received each year to provide grants for façade restoration. The Façade Improvement Program has been a vital tool to enhance the appearance and values of properties in Downtown Hattiesburg and spur economic growth. See Downtown Façade Improvement Grant boundaries map in Appendix C.

Challenges

Downtown Hattiesburg has enjoyed many recent successes, including the renovation of the Hattiesburg Depot and a commitment from the City to install new pedestrian lighting. The main challenges for future revitalization include the following:

- › Improving circulation around Downtown Hattiesburg and the surrounding neighborhoods by constructing two railroad overpasses;
- › Increasing the number of parking spaces by constructing a third parking garage;
- › Creating incentives for the owners of vacant and deteriorating buildings to sell or renovate their properties;
- › Expanding downtown housing opportunities;
- › Eliminating through truck traffic on Main, Front and Pine streets; and
- › Continuing to educate area residents about the value of the downtown in terms of historic preservation and economic development.

Implementation Actions

- › Seek and select a design and obtain funding for wayfinding signage to be placed in Downtown Hattiesburg and at internal and external gateways to ensure that visitors are able to locate Downtown Hattiesburg and travel to needed or desired services and facilities.
- › Install and maintain landscaping and entrance signage at internal gateways to Downtown Hattiesburg.
- › Remove parking meters in Downtown Hattiesburg. Allow visitors to park free of charge for the time limit specified (30 minutes, 1 hour or 2 hours) in each parking zone.
- › Investigate the conversion of Pine and Front Streets from one-way to two-way traffic.
- › Amend the designated truck route ordinance to eliminate through-travel by commercial and industrial trucks.
- › Establish and implement a Downtown Traffic Calming program to ensure that Downtown Hattiesburg is a safe and pleasant environment for walking, shopping, and outdoor dining and recreating.

Land Use and Development

Hattiesburg's Districts and Corridors

Land Use and Development

- › Identify a location for a downtown plaza to hold community civic and cultural events and allow places for residents and visitors to gather.
- › Install and maintain appropriate pedestrian lighting, landscaping and street furniture.
- › Identify a location and funding source for construction of a new parking garage east of Main Street. Use a cooperative finance agreement between several stakeholders (City of Hattiesburg, downtown business and property owners).
- › Improve existing parking areas with landscaping, new surfacing, pedestrian connections, and lighting; complete construction of proposed new parking areas.
- › Partner with the Historic Hattiesburg Downtown Association, Forrest County, and other downtown property owners to fund public improvements and amenities; partner with property owners to establish a business improvement district (BID) to provide additional funding for improvements and maintenance.
- › Designate Downtown Hattiesburg a local conservation district or adopt design guidelines.
- › Identify Hardy Street and/or Broadway Drive/U.S. Highway 11 as main corridors to Downtown Hattiesburg and seek funding for improvements such as sidewalks, landscaping, signage, and boulevards.

Mobile Street District

General Description

Historic Mobile Street is located in the northeast quadrant of the city. The street connects U. S. Highway 42 to Downtown Hattiesburg. It lies between Main Street and Bouie Street in the northeast quadrant of the city.

History

Mobile Street has played a significant role in the lives of African-American residents, not only at the local level, but at the national level as well. The early twentieth century found a thriving black business community along Mobile Street with residences and neighborhood businesses radiating out for several blocks.

In the 1960s, Mobile Street became famous on the national scene for the role it played in the Civil Rights movement. In 1964, Mobile Street residents welcomed

local and outside supporters from other states, north and south, to register African-American voters during the Freedom Summer campaign. The success of this event is a landmark, even though some of the contributing buildings are gone. The special places, people, and the oral history of this district are a notable treasure for all city residents.

Current trends

Today the Mobile Street area is primarily a residential district. There are only a few clusters of neighborhood businesses (like beauty and barber shops, cafes) left to serve the residents.

What is working

Many of the district's successes are due to the actions and involvement of area residents. Within the last ten years, the Mobile-Bouie Street neighborhood association was organized, empowering residents to collectively plan for the future and speak in a unified voice. The historic character of the district brought opportunities like Mississippi State University's Carl Small Town Center study and plan. Having a plan in place elevates a potential funding recipient to the top of the list.

Additionally, a Freedom Summer Trail brochure was created by the 2004 Leaders for a New Century class. District residents should seek partnerships with the City, the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and other tourism and historic preservation entities to implement programs or projects that capitalize on the area's unique past.

Lastly, Chain Park at Twin Forks (see description on page 169) will be constructed along the eastern boundary of the Mobile-Bouie neighborhood. This will be an incredible asset not only for the neighborhood and district, but for the entire city.

The current and future endeavors of the residents, entrepreneurs, city officials, and investors should prove positive for energizing and revitalizing this unique district.

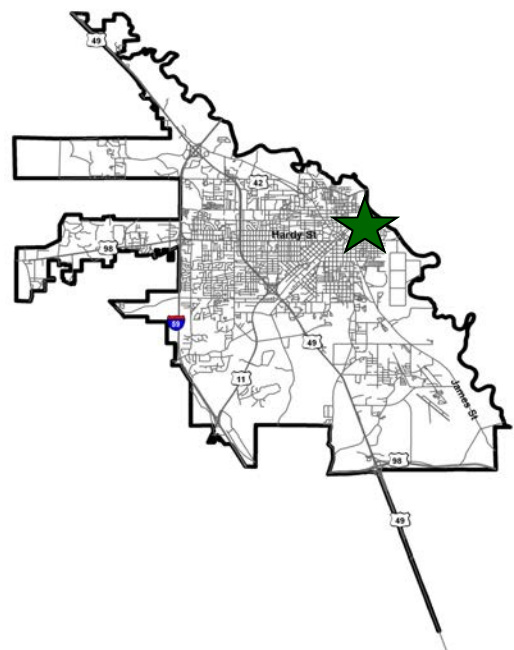
Challenges

The Mobile-Bouie District faces a number of challenges to future enhancement and sustainability. One major issue that has hindered redevelopment efforts is the district's flood classification. According to the area's

Land Use and Development

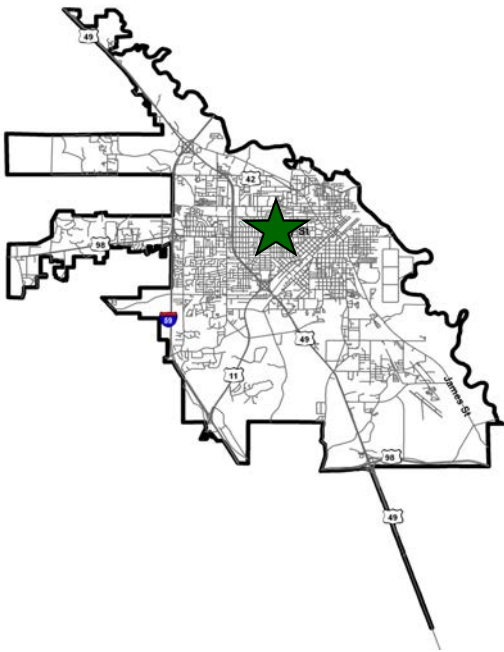
Hattiesburg's Districts and Corridors

Location: Mobile Street District



Land Use and Development

Location: The Avenues/
Hardy Street District



Flood Insurance Rate Map, much of the district is located within the AE flood zone. Construction is permitted in this flood zone, provided the finished floor is one foot above base flood elevation. The City expects to receive new flood maps before the end of 2008, and residents of the district are hopeful that the City's stormwater management efforts will have improved the district's classification.

Additionally, Mobile-Bouie District residents must deal with the many nuisance issues—noise, dust, vibrations—associated with the presence of heavy industrial businesses operating adjacent to residences.

The Avenues/Hardy Street District

General Description (Location)

The Avenues/Hardy Street District is located along the north and south sides of Hardy Street, between U.S. Highway 49 and Downtown Hattiesburg. The district is compact and walkable, though many streets lack sidewalks, curbs and gutters. There are many retail businesses, restaurants, and personal service business located along this segment of Hardy Street, making it very convenient for neighborhood residents.

History

The “Avenues”—between U.S. Highway 49 and West Pine Street—were subdivided between the 1920s and the 1940s. A majority of the streets were laid out on a traditional “grid” system with service alleys. Subdivision lots were platted in 50-foot wide lots with sizes ranging from 6,000 to 8,000 square feet.

Gordon's Creek meanders through the Avenues both north and south of Hardy Street, interrupting the interconnectivity of certain neighborhood street grids.

Kamper Park and the Hattiesburg Zoo are located between South 17th and South 19th avenues, and there are a number of churches located both north and south of Hardy Street. The Avenues have a diverse housing inventory dating from the late 1920s to the 1950s.

Current trends

Houses in the Avenues are being purchased and remodeled as owner-occupied homes and as rental properties. Rental properties—especially homes rented to university students—are a source of great

concern for many neighborhood residents (See Appendix D, Neighborhood Profiles).

Overall, the housing stock has been well-maintained and is in good condition. A majority of residents maintain clean, landscaped yards with mature trees. Single-family homes have been converted to rental properties in the Avenues north and south of Hardy Street. Many of these serve as student housing.

Existing neighborhood associations in the Avenues are growing stronger and new associations are forming. Active neighborhood associations are an asset to attract potential homeowners and reinforce the trend for maintaining owner-occupied residential dwellings.

What is working

Certain commercial properties on Hardy Street have made significant investments in landscaping and the appearance of buildings and site features. This will help sustain the health of the commercial district and provide stability to adjacent neighborhoods.

The continued mobilization of residents in neighborhood associations is a great benefit to this district. Neighborhood residents realize that they can have more input and influence by working together as associations. The associations strive to stay informed about any upcoming zoning issues that may impact the neighborhood's quality of life, such as the encroachment of inappropriate commercial uses.

Existing neighborhood associations in this district include the following: Parkhaven Neighborhood Association; Kamper/Avenues Neighborhood Association; The Oaks.

Challenges

As with certain other neighborhoods in Hattiesburg, the Avenues face challenges to improvement and sustainability. Because only one of the neighborhoods in the district —The Oaks—has the benefit of design guidelines, the quality of the district is threatened by the following:

- › Disconnected strip commercial development that is inconsistent with the character of the district;
- › Inappropriate encroachment of non-residential uses, such as stand-alone surface parking lots in interior residential blocks;

Land Use and Development Hattiesburg's Districts and Corridors

Land Use and Development

As new development continues to be drawn westward to the fringes of the city limits, extra efforts should be made to stabilize and revitalize Hattiesburg's core business districts.

- › The conversion of single-family residential housing to student rental housing; and
- › A perception of an increase in crime.

To address these challenges, neighborhood associations must partner with business owners to envision a plan for the future enhancement of the district. In addition, business and property owners along Hardy Street should organize a *business district association*, similar to a neighborhood association, to address issues and challenges specific to this corridor.

At a minimum, design guidelines should be adopted for this segment of Hardy Street. This area is important not only to its business owners and adjacent neighborhood residents, but it also serves as a major gateway to Downtown Hattiesburg. As new development continues to be drawn westward to the fringes of the city limits, extra efforts should be made to stabilize and revitalize Hattiesburg's core business districts.

In addition, adjacent neighborhoods should seek protection from deterioration by continuing to pursue historic district designation and partnering with the City to ensure that land use and development regulations stabilize neighborhoods and enhance property values.

Palmer's Crossing Community District

General Description

The Palmer's Crossing community is located in southeastern Hattiesburg, encompassing an area south of Barkley Road and north of the Forrest County Industrial Park. The main east-west thoroughfare through the community is Old Airport Road/Tatum Road. Old Airport Road intersects with U.S. Highway 49 and extends eastward to connect with Tatum Road as it intersects with James Street. The primary land use is low-density to moderate-density single-family residential dwellings. Commercial uses are limited to small neighborhood services. A relatively new medical facility offers primary health care to the community and region.

History

Annexed in 1991, the community of Palmer's Crossing is an area rich in African-American history, a thriving

rural quality of life, and a community with opportunities for commerce and recreation.

In earlier days, prior to the 1970s, the Hudson's Salvage Stores opened in the heart of Palmer's Crossing. Each building provided a different category of upscale, brand name "smoke damaged" merchandise, such as food, clothing, dry goods, furniture, and appliances. Clientele came from all over the region to shop at the bargain center. In late 1970s, the Hudson's stores moved into the city, leaving empty buildings and a loss of economic opportunity for the residents.

This corridor would benefit from a study of the condition of existing structures and buildings and a market study to provide an economic analysis based on current land use.

Current trends

Very little new commercial development is occurring. The medical industry is providing quality buildings and services to the area. There has been moderate activity for new residential construction. New techniques using modular construction have created a monotonous streetscape appearance due to the repetition of a single house plan. This type of neighborhood development style does not add value to adjacent properties nor does it reinforce the upward trend pursued by other residential developments in Palmer's Crossing.

What is working

This community's greatest strengths are its active, dedicated residents and organized neighborhood associations. Continued public involvement and attention to community issues will enable the residents to make the most of available opportunities. There are a number of other benefits for Palmer's Crossing, including the continued upgrading of public infrastructure, the expansion of medical services, and increasing employment opportunities.

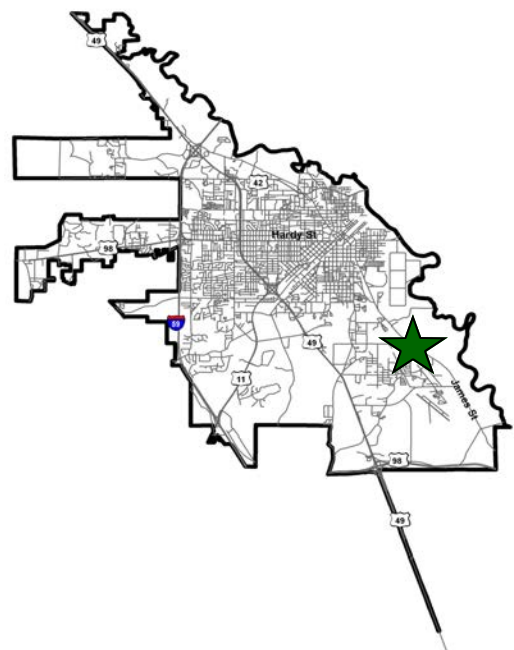
Challenges

Neighborhood residents are ready to meet challenges and ensure that they have a voice in community issues. Residents wish to ensure that new housing adds value to the community and is constructed to minimum standards in terms of appearance and quality. In addition,

Land Use and Development

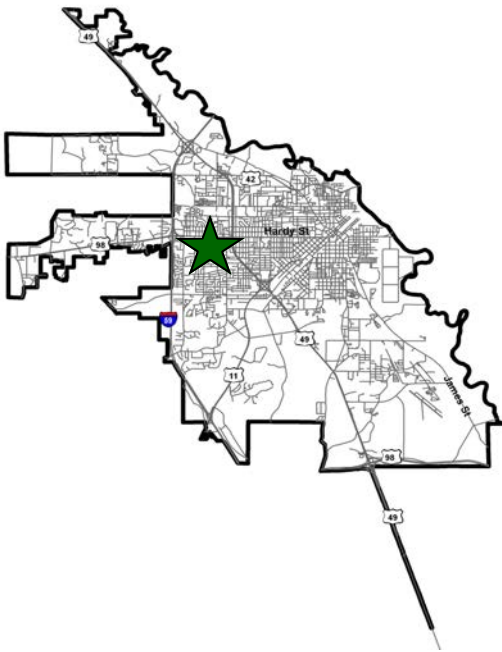
Hattiesburg's Districts and Corridors

Location: Palmer's Crossing
Community District



Land Use and Development

Location: University of Southern Mississippi/Medical District



residents desire to be served by retail and service businesses, such as grocery stores and drug stores, as residents must drive to other areas of Hattiesburg for basic goods and services.

More mass transit opportunities are desired, especially for elderly and disabled residents. Finally, residents realize they have a great opportunity with the location of vacant commercial buildings along Tatum Road. Revitalization efforts—tax incentives, grant opportunities, and streetscape improvements—should be targeted to this “community center” to fulfill its tremendous potential.

University of Southern Mississippi/ Medical District

General Description

This district is bounded to the north by Hardy Street and the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), to the east by U.S. Highway 49, to the south by Arlington Loop, and to the west by South 31st Avenue. The area includes a mix of single-family and multi-family residences, private commercial uses, and university-owned properties.

History

Forrest General Hospital opened in 1952 at the intersections of U.S. Highway 49, Mamie Street, and South 28th Avenue. Much of the area was originally residential and, over time, business uses and multi-family properties began to extend into single-family neighborhoods.

Current trends

The northern campus boundaries of Forrest General Hospital and Hattiesburg Clinic are enlarging through property acquisitions of existing businesses and residences. The structures are renovated or razed for new construction. New commercial strip developments have been constructed to cater to university employees and students, medical district employees and patients, and neighborhood residents.

What is working

In October 2006, a visioning workshop was held by the Mississippi Chapter of the American Planning Association during the group’s state conference in Hattiesburg. Details of the workshop are included

under Chapter 3 (The Planning Process). The workshop concluded with three concepts for a mixed-use overlay district. These concepts can be used to create a master plan for a prosperous, attractive, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use district. A summary of the workshop, design concepts, and policy recommendations was published in a document entitled 2006 Charrette Exercise Report.

Challenges

The challenges for this area include maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in the adjacent neighborhoods, agreeing on boundaries for a new mixed-use district, educating and informing stakeholders about urban design principles, and reaching consensus among residents and property owners for an overall plan.

As a result of the visioning workshop, common elements have been identified that would add value to the district:

- › Creating and improving sidewalks and pedestrian corridors;
- › Encouraging mixed-use buildings with two and three stories;
- › Initiating and coordinating street tree planting/landscaping;
- › Installing pedestrian and street lighting;
- › Creating a multi-use path for walking and biking;
- › Strengthening district identity through design standards;
- › Protecting waterways and adopting sustainable land use and development practices;
- › Beautifying gateways and entrances with landscaping and signage;
- › Placing utilities underground; and
- › Developing a district-wide plan for on-street and off-street parking that supports the needs of businesses.

Policy Recommendations

The following policies were recommended in the 2006 Charrette Exercise Report to be included in the comprehensive plan:

- › Encourage and foster development and redevelopment that contains a compatible mix of residential and nonresidential uses within close proximity to each other, rather than separating

Land Use and Development

Figure 18. Gateways

Gateways are key entrances into Hattiesburg and its unique districts and neighborhoods. Hattiesburg's external and internal gateways are listed below.

External gateways are entrances in and out of the city. These locations inform visitors that they are entering the city of Hattiesburg.

1. U.S. Highway 49 at north city limits
2. Interstate 59 at U.S. Highway 49
3. U.S. Highway 49 at U.S. Highway 98
4. Interstate 59 at U. S. Highway 11
5. U. S. Highway 98 at Old Highway 11/ King Road
6. MS Highway 42/U.S. Highway 11 at Leaf River
7. East Hardy Street at Leaf River
8. U. S. Highway 98 at southeast city limits

Internal gateways are entrances to Hattiesburg's unique districts and neighborhoods. Internal gateways guide visitors to districts such as Downtown Hattiesburg, university campuses, residential neighborhoods, or other special districts.

9. Interstate 59 at U.S. Highway 98 West/ Hardy Street
10. U.S. Highway 49 at 4th Street
11. U.S. Highway 49 at Hardy Street
12. U. S. Highway 49 at Broadway Drive
13. U. S. Highway 49 at Edwards Street and Old Airport Road
14. U. S. Highway 49 at J.M. Tatum Industrial Drive
15. Lincoln Road Extension at intersection with Sandy Run Road.

uses.

- › Enhance the business economy by strengthening and protecting the image, identity, and unique character of the university, medical district, and neighborhood areas.
- › Promote building design that complements surrounding developments and streets in an effort to create a cohesive visual identity.
- › Create a unique streetscape with trees, sidewalks, attractive buildings, underground utilities, lighting and signage/gateway markers.
- › Construct an efficient pedestrian and bicycle network that connects the university, hospital, residences and business uses.
- › Ensure vehicular parking and connectivity that supports a pedestrian environment and does not inhibit walkability.
- › Promote and market workforce housing.
- › Enhance natural features and sustainability.

Gateways and Corridors

Gateways

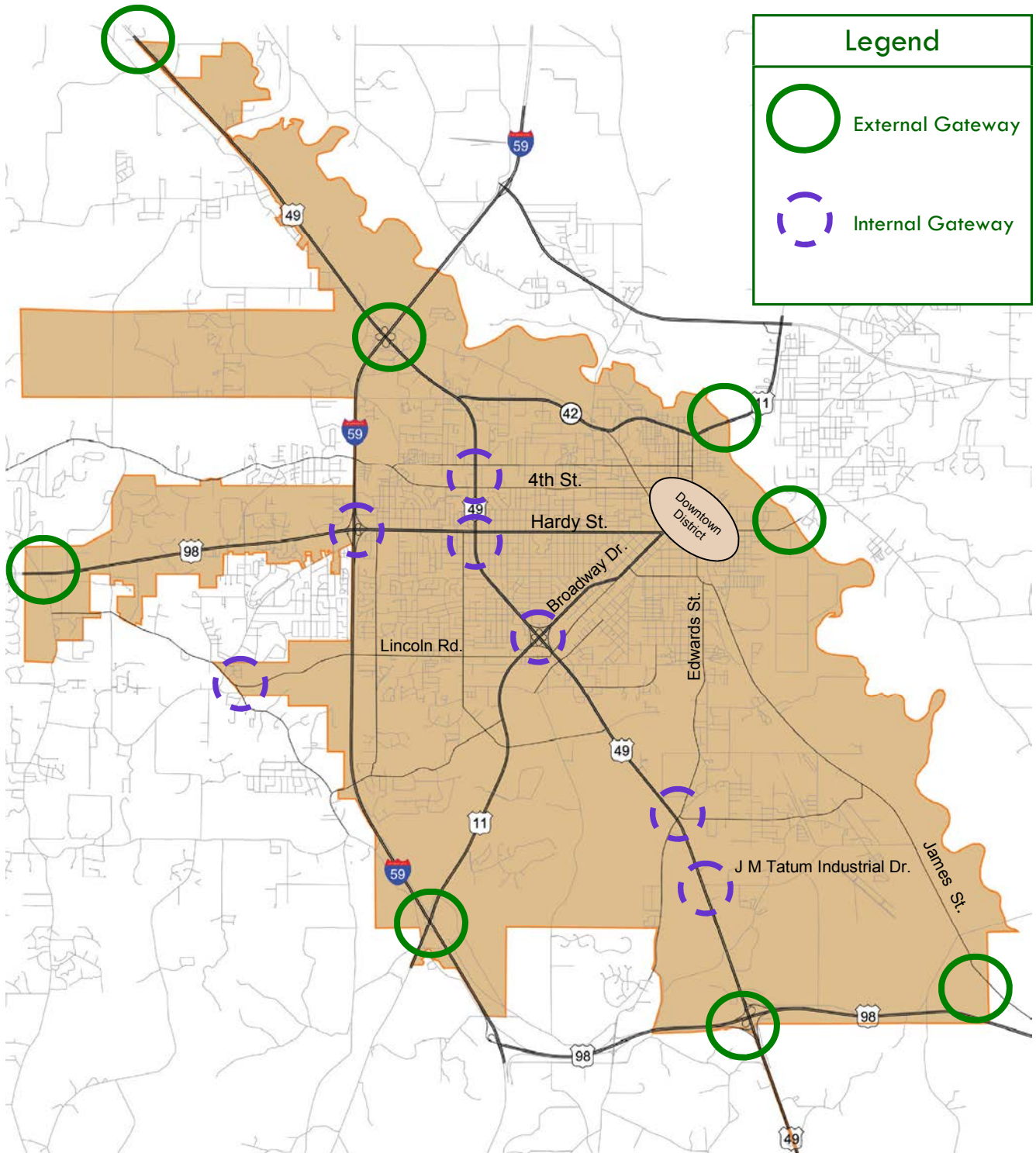
Gateways are key entrances into Hattiesburg and its unique districts and neighborhoods. Typically, gateways are architectural features or landscaping that signify a transition between one place and another. These areas of a city set a tone, create a positive, recognizable identity, and communicate to both residents and visitors that they are in Hattiesburg, Mississippi—a *special and unique place*.

Hattiesburg should be creative in designing external and internal gateway features that celebrate and express the pride we have in our city. The following elements should be considered when designing gateways: landscaping, signage, water features, lighting, banners or seasonal decorations, and public art or sculptures.

Gateway Policies:

- › Promote the city's gateways as our "front porch" to receive all of our visitors and potential business interests.
- › Initiate a study to identify existing conditions and opportunities for improvements to all internal and external gateways.

Map 3. City Gateways



Land Use and Development

- › As part of the study, identify individual design elements/icons for each gateway, in addition to trees and landscaping.
- › Encourage public-private partnerships to construct improvements and implement the recommendations contained in the gateway study.

Corridors

For the purpose of this plan, corridors are considered to be linear commercial districts within the city that have some or all of the below characteristics:

- › Share a distinct character or history;
- › Function as gateways—internal or external—into the city or its individual districts;
- › Are threatened by potential loss of greenspace, trees and landscaping due to over-development; and
- › Face the same issues and challenges as neighboring residential districts and where positive or negative impacts to either area have an impact on the other.

Neighborhood Business Corridors

The following should be considered the city's neighborhood business corridors (see *Neighborhood Business District*, page 100):

- › *Hardy Street*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 49 easterly to intersection with West Pine Street in Downtown Hattiesburg.
- › *Main Street*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 42 south to intersection with West 4th Street.
- › *Mobile Street*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 42 south to intersection with East 4th Street.
- › *East Hardy Street*: From intersection at Williams Street eastward to city limit.
- › *Edwards Street (north)*: From intersection at James Street south to Barkley Road.
- › *North 38th Avenue*: From Hardy Street to West 4th Street.
- › *West 4th Street*: From U.S. Highway 49 to Hutchinson Street.
- › *South 40th Avenue*: From intersection at Hardy Street to Mamie Street.
- › *South 28th Avenue*: From Hardy Street to McInnis Loop.

- › *Lincoln Road*: From South 28th Avenue to U.S. Highway 49.
- › *Lincoln Road*: From South 40th Avenue to Interstate 59.

Community Business Corridors

The following should be considered the city's community business corridors (see *Community Business District*, page 99):

- › *U.S. Highway 49*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 42 southward to intersection with Edwards Street.
- › *U.S. Highway 42*: From intersection at Main Street eastward to city limit.
- › *Bouie Street*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 42 south to intersection with East 4th Street.
- › *Hardy Street/University*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 49 westward to Interstate 59.
- › *Lincoln Road Extension*: From intersection at South 40th Avenue westward to city limit.
- › *Classic Drive*: From U.S. Highway 49 North.
- › *Broadway Drive*: From intersection at West Pine Street southwesterly to intersection with U.S. Highway 49.
- › *U.S. Highway 11—Veteran's Boulevard*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 49 southward to city limit.
- › *Airport Road*: From intersection at Edwards Street eastward to intersection with Tatum Road.
- › *Edwards Street (south)*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 49 northerly to intersection with County Drive.
- › *James Street (north)*: From the intersection at Edwards Street south to intersection with J. M. Tatum Industrial Drive.
- › *WSF Tatum Boulevard*: From U.S. Highway 11 to U.S. Highway 49.
- › *Bouie Street*: From U.S. Highway 42 to East 4th Street.

Regional Business Corridors

The following should be considered the city's community business corridors (see *Regional Business District*, page 99):

- › *U.S. Highway 49 North*: From Northern city limit southward to intersection with U. S. Highway 42;
- › *U.S. Highway 49 South*: From intersection at Edwards Street and Elk's Lake Road southward to southern city limit.

Land Use and Development Gateways and Corridors

Land Use and Development

Figure 19. The Twelve Indicia of Reasonableness

Without exception, legal counsel should be sought when considering whether to expand city boundaries.

Below are listed the factors that have been considered by the Mississippi Supreme Court in determining whether an annexation is reasonable.

1. Need to expand.
2. Path of Growth.
3. Health Hazards.
4. Financial ability to provide municipal services.
5. Zoning and planning.
6. Municipal Services.
7. Natural barriers.
8. Past Performance.
9. Economic or other impact on residents and property owners.
10. Impact on minority voting.
11. Enjoyment of economic and social benefits of the municipality without paying a fair share of taxes.
12. Any other factors that may suggest reasonableness vel non.

Source: *Bassett v. Town of Taylorsville*, 542 So.2d 918, 921 (Miss. 1989).

- › *U.S. Highway 42*: From intersection with U.S. Highway 49 eastward to intersection with Main Street.
- › *U. S. Highway 98 West*: From intersection at I-59 westward to city limit.
- › *J. M. Tatum Industrial Drive*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 49 easterly to James Street.
- › *West Pine Street—U.S. Highway 49*: From intersection at U.S. Highway 49 northeasterly to intersection with Broadway Drive.
- › *James Street—Industrial*: From the intersection at J. M. Tatum Industrial Drive south to city limit.
- › *U. S. Highway 98 East*: From intersection at U. S. Highway 49 eastward to city limit.

Expansion of City Boundaries

Today, the City of Hattiesburg represents a regional economic center in Mississippi between Jackson and the Gulf Coast. The early path of growth to the south incorporated areas for industrial growth, airport acquisition, major transportation corridors and low-density residential uses. Subsequent incorporations have expanded the western borders of the city into Lamar County.

Hattiesburg is a progressive city that thrives on economic, physical, political, and social diversity. Without timely and properly planned annexations, the city will be burdened with tax inequities, municipal service inefficiencies, political fragmentation, and a disorderly, sprawling growth pattern. The rise in the number of residential subdivisions adjacent to the corporate limits provides evidence that the county residents are enjoying many of the benefits of city services without any equitable retribution.

The decision to incorporate more land requires an understanding of the present and future conditions as supported by professional research and statistical data. A proactive growth management plan can provide a basis for making sound decisions on why, when, and where to grow.

In the coming 20 years, city officials will be faced with decisions of whether or not to annex property. Certain property owners may petition to have lands incorporated into the city; other properties may be

considered because they lie in the city's path of growth.

To assist with future growth management, the city should identify areas where the city's boundaries may be expanded and identify criteria for making annexation decisions. The following elements should be considered: existing and proposed transportation facilities, topography, existing land uses, the condition of existing infrastructure, the need for public services, and the availability of vacant land for development.

Annexation of land into the Hattiesburg city limits is inherently a land use matter and, therefore, requires consultation with the city's planning staff and the Hattiesburg Planning Commission. The commission and staff should have an important role in evaluating annexation petitions and interpreting the policies contained in the comprehensive plan. Following the annexation of land, the comprehensive plan must be amended to establish policies for land use, transportation, and community facilities in the newly annexed area.

Sources

1. "New Businesses Downtown Growth Continues." Andrew Williams, The Times News. HQ Hattiesburg. November/December 2007 issue. Volume 1 Number 6.

Land Use and Development Expansion of City Boundaries

