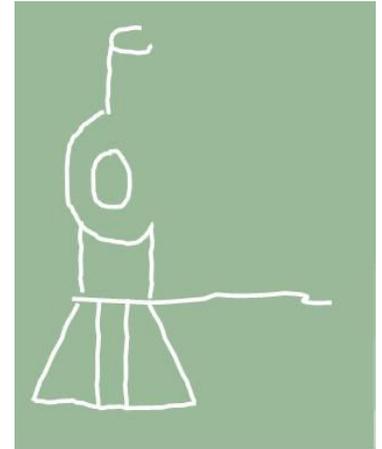


Chapter 4: Goals and Strategies



All Aboard!

Goals and Strategies

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you will probably end up somewhere else.”

Laurence J. Peter



Photo: Welcome to Hattiesburg sign.

General Description

This chapter—Goals and Strategies—sets forth guiding principles and methods that should be used in public and private decision-making and in resolving community issues. Goals are general statements that describe how community residents want the city to be in the future. Strategies are more specific statements describing the steps the community should take to achieve its goals.

Between June 2007 and January 2008, community residents were asked to describe their visions for Hattiesburg. The opinions and statements gathered at the neighborhood workshops and town meetings were used by the Vision Advisory Team to form the goals and strategies listed below. The goals and strategies should be used by city officials in day-to-day decision-making.

The Character of Hattiesburg

Character and Identity

Goal 1: *Continue to protect and enhance the city’s quality of life—stabilize and protect neighborhoods, build sidewalks and bikeways, invest in education, public facilities and spaces—in order to uphold Hattiesburg’s reputation as a great place to live, work, retire, shop, and recreate.*

Strategies:

- A. Invest in public facilities—sidewalks, bikeways, parks and recreation facilities, public spaces—to further enhance residents’ quality of life.
- B. Set a good example for property maintenance by ensuring city-owned properties are clean, attractive and well-maintained.
- C. Continue to maintain landscaped areas in public medians and along public streets; identify new areas for additional landscaping and beautification while seeking partnerships for successful maintenance programs.

Business and Industry

Goal 2: *Continue to make Hattiesburg a great place to own and operate a business, large or small; promote policies and programs to sustain and improve small businesses.*

Strategies:

- A. Improve the ease of opening small businesses by fostering policies and programs that provide accurate and timely information to prospective business-owners and simplify the start-up process.
- B. Ensure that steps to opening and operating a business in Hattiesburg are understandable and predictable. Make the permitting process—building permits, site plan approval, zoning compliance and privilege licensing—easy to understand with predictable fees and time schedules.
- C. Make public investments in infrastructure in all commercial areas to encourage new development and redevelopment. Improvements in landscaping, sidewalks, lighting and street furniture to create pleasant, safe, attractive shopping districts.
- D. Continue to promote and support business incubators through partnerships with area universities and colleges—University of Southern Mississippi, William Carey University, Pearl River Community College, Antonelli Business College, and other area institutions.
- E. Partner with area agencies to support and strengthen existing business incubators and farmers markets to ensure the success and sustainability of these endeavors.
- F. Ensure that potential business-owners receive accurate and timely information on local business development initiatives by creating a new City position to serve as a liaison to all business-interests and the Area Development Partnership. Coordinate a public information/relations campaign to help citizens understand what business opportunities and information are provided by the City.

Goal 3: *Continue to market the many qualities that make Hattiesburg a desirable place to locate a business; identify and enhance the qualities of Hattiesburg's environment that will attract a diverse, sustainable range of businesses and industries.*

Goals and Strategies

The Character of Hattiesburg



Photo: Downtown organic market.

Goals and Strategies

Strategies:

- A. Actively seek businesses that complement and utilize the educational strengths, skills and training possessed by Hattiesburg's workforce.
- B. Partner with the Area Development Partnership and Visit Hattiesburg—the area's Convention and Visitors Bureau—to market Hattiesburg as a contender in the global economy.
- C. Showcase the city's unique network of neighborhood associations to potential business interests as a demonstration of the city's commitment to livability and quality of life.
- D. Ensure that new commercial developments and redevelopments enhance the overall appearance and value of the city through building design and landscaping;
- E. Adopt design guidelines for commercial corridors as a component of the Land Development Code; development styles should reflect the architectural elements and quality materials that add value to Hattiesburg's built environment.

Education

Goal 4: *Make improvement of Hattiesburg's public schools a community-wide priority; strive to make the Hattiesburg Public School District synonymous with superior education.*

Strategies:

- A. Engage the community to find solutions to problems such as student drop-outs and discipline problems.
- B. Strengthen and expand partnership opportunities with programs such as the University of Southern Mississippi's School of Social Work to provide delinquency-prevention programs to youth in at-risk communities.
- C. Identify the reasons why Hattiesburg parents are electing to enroll children in private schools as opposed to the public school system. Undertake efforts to integrate similar advantages into the public school system.
- D. Investigate the possibility of providing a vocational high school in Hattiesburg to provide students who are not college-bound with an opportunity to obtain skills in traditional and emerging trade/technological industries.



Photo: N. R. Burger Middle School.

Goal 5: *Private schools in Hattiesburg make great investments in land, buildings and facilities and provide education and related services to many city residents. Make efforts to ensure that public facilities—utilities, streets and traffic controls, public safety, etc.—complement the efforts of private schools to create safe and pleasant learning environments.*

Strategies:

- A. Coordinate with local private schools on future facility and infrastructure planning to ensure that investments by private school entities are in harmony with public improvement programs and neighborhood enhancement efforts.
- B. Recognize and promote the benefits offered by local private schools in providing parents with a diverse range of education choices.

Town-Gown Community Relations

Town-Gown community relations programs seek to bring together community stakeholders from cities, local governments, and universities to discuss and resolve items of mutual and overlapping interest. “Town” refers to the local government or city residents and “gown” refers to representatives of the college or university.

Goal 6: *Market Hattiesburg as a college town; identify, enhance and promote the qualities that make student living outside the classroom interesting and enjoyable.*

Strategies:

- A. Make public improvements to off-campus student districts to create a unique, safe and enjoyable environment to live, study, work and play.
- B. Create partnerships between student activities administrators, business district merchant associations, the Convention and Visitors Bureau and related business and entertainment interests to offer and promote events and activities that will make students choose to spend weekends in Hattiesburg.
- C. Create open communications between the public relations coordinators for each entity; meet quarterly as a group to exchange information on upcoming community events; use websites to cross-promote activities.

Goals and Strategies

The Character of Hattiesburg



Photo: Parkhaven neighborhood entrance archway.

Goals and Strategies

- D. Aggressively market downtown entertainment events and venues.
- E. Facilitate an incubator of new ideas for downtown events and venues that would interest/attract the student population.
- F. Promote student life downtown with residential, transportation and recreational opportunities.
- G. Create public transportation connections between the two university campuses (University of Southern Mississippi and William Carey University) and Downtown Hattiesburg.
- H. Promote/create affordable student housing opportunities in Downtown Hattiesburg.
- I. Aggressively market the cultural opportunities afforded by the two universities.
- J. Partner to aggressively market the universities' athletic events.
- K. Strengthen university programs that interest/attract retirees.
- L. Encourage the extension of classrooms and studio/lab space to Downtown Hattiesburg.

Goal 7: *Promote greater collaboration between the City of Hattiesburg, the University of Southern Mississippi, and William Carey University on land use, transportation/circulation, community events, and community building initiatives.*

Strategies:

- A. Coordinate planning activities between the City and the universities so that each institution can capitalize on the capacity and strengths of partner institutions in realizing community and university goals.
- B. Expand opportunities for collaboration with universities on major projects, community initiatives, community education and empowerment.

Housing and Community Development

Goal 8: *Promote the construction of high-quality housing in a range of housing types, prices and densities. Preserve existing housing stock that is in good condition.*

Strategies:

- A. Promote the construction of high-quality, safe, clean affordable housing.



Photo: Hattiesburg Clinic Women's center.

- B. Provide incentives for high-quality infill housing construction in existing residential areas to stabilize neighborhoods and enhance property values.
- C. Ensure that housing development regulations allow and encourage the neighborhood and housing trends that are desirable to retirees, including housing on small, low-maintenance lots, condominiums, townhomes, and independent-living and assisted-living facilities.

Goal 9: *Promote home ownership opportunities and downpayment assistance programs to enable more residents to achieve the American Dream of owning a home.*

Strategies:

- A. Continue to use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investments Partnerships Program (HOME) funds to repair and rehabilitate homes and build new affordable housing.
- B. Continue to use grant and entitlement funds to offer the homebuyers downpayment assistance program to provide downpayments to eligible first-time homebuyers.
- C. Continue to partner with area social service and community housing organizations to assist low- and very low-income residents with repairs to owner-occupied homes.
- D. Inform and educate residents of public housing and the general public of the services offered to assist with home ownership.

Neighborhoods and Historic Districts

Goal 10: *Protect the value, safety and stability of neighborhoods by ensuring that local zoning and development decisions do not create potential nuisances—noises, odors, vibrations, increases in non-residential traffic—or allow inappropriate non-residential encroachments.*

Strategies:

- A. Continue to demolish dilapidated properties that are creating a blighting influence on neighborhood.
- B. Make zoning decisions consistent with the adopted future land use plan and comprehensive plan.

Goal 11: *Empower neighborhood residents to take active roles in improving neighborhood conditions and furthering neighborhood plans through participation in*

Goals and Strategies

The Character of Hattiesburg

Goals and Strategies

neighborhood associations; mobilize neighborhood residents to improve neighborhood conditions and participate in civic issues and community decision-making.

Strategies:

- A. Continue programs to help neighborhood associations mobilize residents to improve neighborhood conditions and participate in civic issues and community decision-making.
- B. Continue to work with neighborhood residents to establish new neighborhood associations and reinvigorate associations that are defunct.
- C. Include a special neighborhood section on the City's website to highlight neighborhoods and announce neighborhood activities, contact information and meeting dates.

Goal 12: *Preserve, protect, and promote officially-designated and otherwise well-recognized historic districts and resources.*

Strategies:

- A. Support existing officially-designated historic districts through enforcement of the historic conservation ordinance and the operation of the Historic Conservation Commission.
- B. Extend local historic district designation to include identified historic districts and resources to provide design review and other protections of the historic ordinance.
- C. Continue to identify and provide protection for previously unidentified historic resources, i.e., conduct new surveys of potential districts and resources.

Certified Retirement Community

Goal 13: *As a certified retirement community, provide residential development options and quality of life amenities that are attractive to retirees.*

Strategies:

- A. Provide housing options such as planned residential developments, garden or patio homes on small, low-maintenance lots, condominiums, townhomes, and independent-living and assisted-living facilities.
- B. Continue to promote Hattiesburg's state-of-the-art medical community as an amenity to retirement living.
- C. Promote Hattiesburg's health and fitness opportunities.

- D. Continue to promote the arts and cultural events, historic downtown and neighborhoods, churches, continuing education, recreational choices, shopping, restaurants, and nightlife.

Health Care and Social Services

Goal 14: *Strive to be the outstanding city in Southeast Mississippi for health care facilities and skilled health care personnel. Ensure that all residents have access to quality health care and medical services.*

Strategies:

- A. Ensure that access to emergency medical and trauma services from all areas of Hattiesburg is not inhibited by physical barriers, such as at-grade railroad crossings.
- B. Strive to meet the health care needs of all residents by supporting Southeast Mississippi Rural Healthcare Initiative (SeMRHI) and other agencies that provide services to uninsured and under-insured residents.
- C. Partner with area agencies to promote/provide information about the city's health care services and agencies to area college and university students, the military, non-English speaking, newcomers and visitors.
- D. Highlight the importance of good nutrition, healthy eating habits and walking as illness/disease prevention and wellness measures.
- E. Continue initiatives such as the smoking ban and "Get Healthy Hattiesburg" to highlight the importance of a healthy lifestyle as illness/disease prevention and wellness measures.

Civic Pride and Beautification

Goal 15: *Create and maintain clean, attractive public and private spaces in Hattiesburg; make the appearance of the city something that is recognized and admired by visitors and a source of pride for residents.*

Strategies:

- A. Promote community pride among property owners to encourage owners to maintain clean, attractive private properties.
- B. Set a good example for property maintenance by ensuring city-owned properties are clean, attractive and well-maintained.
- C. Promote a sense of pride among the owners of rental properties in Hattiesburg; impress upon owners that

Goals and Strategies

The Character of Hattiesburg

Goals and Strategies

their properties are within someone else's neighborhood and, as owners, they have a responsibility to ensure their properties are clean, well-maintained and comply with the city's codes and ordinances.

- D. Continue to maintain landscaped areas in public medians and along public streets; identify new areas, such as entrances and gateways to neighborhoods and special districts, for additional landscaping and beautification.
- E. Promote a clean city by aggressively enforcing litter laws, encouraging recycling, and establishing neighborhood and city-wide clean-up events.
- F. Aggressively enforce property maintenance codes and give neighborhood associations the tools—information, training and public support—to persuade neighborhood residents to respect their neighborhoods by maintaining clean, attractive properties.
- G. Protect the scenic character of the external gateway at U.S. Highway 11/Veterans Memorial Boulevard; utilize land development regulations and design guidelines to prevent adverse development impacts.
- H. Create a U.S. Highway 49 corridor beautification plan; involve private stakeholders, landscape architects, planners, and engineering professionals.

Goal 16: *Celebrate and promote the city's beauty, history and culture by holding community events, honoring people and events that have influenced the city's culture, and protecting the city's cultural and historic places and structures.*

Strategies:

- A. Continue to promote and strengthen community and cultural events in Hattiesburg that show the city's diversity and wealth of art, history and culture.
- B. Recognize and celebrate important people and events in the city's diverse history.

Natural Environment

General

Goal 17: *Protect the distinctive qualities of Hattiesburg's natural environment—longleaf pine trees, scenic rivers and creeks—for the use and enjoyment of future generations.*

Strategies:

- A. Ensure that the City of Hattiesburg sets a good example of stewardship of the natural environment by employing current best management practices to address stormwater management, tree planting and maintenance, chemical usage, recycling, energy usage, and other areas of environmental protection and natural resource management.
- B. Restore concrete-lined creeks and waterways to their natural state. Use modern best management practices to control velocity, reduce sedimentation and handle peak volumes.
- C. Promote policies and adopt regulations to protect the natural features of Hattiesburg's environment—the urban forest, creeks and rivers, wetlands, and topography.

Sustainability

Goal 18: *Recognize that the policies and actions undertaken today in Hattiesburg will have a lasting impact on future generations. Embrace the principles of sustainable development to conserve and protect natural resources, improve air and water quality, enhance public health and well-being, and ensure prosperity and a high quality of life for all current and future residents.*

Strategies:

- A. Research sustainable development principles and programs; evaluate how Hattiesburg can modify its policies and practices to advance those principles.
- B. Utilize an advisory board comprised of local citizens and professionals, such as the “Green Initiatives Committee,” to initiate a sustainability program, create a vision of a sustainable Hattiesburg, and collect baseline data.
- C. Identify a set of sustainability indicators (performance measures) that can be used to evaluate the city's progress in moving toward sustainability.
- D. Integrate “green design” standards into the Land Development Code.
- E. Give ecological and environmental conditions substantial weight when considering land use and zoning decisions.
- F. Identify incentives to encourage developers to integrate energy-efficiency and energy conservation features into building and site designs. Aggressively promote the use of incentives to developers and property owners.

Goals and Strategies

Natural Environment

Goals and Strategies

- G. Make sustainability and environmental considerations an important factor in rating capital improvement projects. Give preference to projects that advance sustainability goals.
- H. Evaluate the energy-efficiency of city-owned buildings and invest in energy-efficient systems.
- I. When replacing vehicles in the city's fleet, purchase hybrids or vehicles with a high rating for fuel efficiency.
- J. Expand the use of solar energy to provide electricity to City-owned properties.

Soils and Topography

Goal 19: *Hattiesburg is a city of rolling terrain covered with longleaf pines and other native trees and vegetation. Preserve and maintain the beauty and character of Hattiesburg by preserving the region's distinctive topography.*

Strategies:

- A. Require site development plans to include an analysis of pre-development topography; encourage developers and property owners to preserve the topography and mature vegetation in areas that will not be covered by buildings and parking areas.
- B. Promote best management practices in land development and the control of erosion and sedimentation.

Floodplains and Waterways

Goal 20: *Promote land use and development practices that consider the environment's natural stormwater drainage and clarification systems—creeks, streams, watercourses, wetlands, and floodplains. Discourage new development in wetlands and floodprone areas.*

Strategies:

- A. Discourage new development within the 100-year floodplain.
- B. Encourage and support the creation of recreational uses—parks, sports facilities, walking trails, campgrounds, etc.—within the 100-year floodplain.
- C. Continue the program of enclosing open ditches in residential neighborhoods. Construct curbs and sidewalks at the same time to improve the appearance and walkability of neighborhoods.

- D. Address stormwater management on a city-wide basis as opposed to development-by-development; investigate establishing a system of regional wet-pond detention basins to coordinate stormwater management, make efficient use of urban land, and ensure proper facility construction and maintenance.

The Urban Forest

Goal 21: *Hattiesburg has a well-established urban forest. Preserve and maintain the beauty and character of Hattiesburg by promoting policies to protect and preserve the city's tree canopy.*

Strategies:

- A. Restore and protect Hattiesburg's urban forest through a coordinated program of tree replanting, land use planning, development regulation, and construction management.
- B. Adequately fund, staff and equip the Urban Forestry Division; support programs and initiatives that support urban forestry best management practices and maintain and protect the city's urban forest.

Sites of Environmental Concern/Brownfields

Goal 22: *Strive to protect residents and property owners from environmental hazards.*

Strategies:

- A. Identify and remove environmental hazards from residential neighborhoods.
- B. Actively work to ensure the safety of our community from environmental hazards.
- C. Encourage the redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized industrial or commercial properties where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived environmental contamination and potential liability. Aggressively seek grant monies for the assessment, clean-up and reuse of these properties.
- D. Cross-train city employees such as code inspectors, firefighters, police officers, and street crews to recognize potential environmental hazards.

Goals and Strategies

Natural Environment

Goals and Strategies

Hazard Mitigation

Goal 23: *Protect the residents of Hattiesburg by lowering the risks and reducing the effects of disasters on critical facilities; identify and implement mitigation strategies that will reduce or prevent catastrophic damages, casualties, physical and/or financial losses.*

Strategies:

- A. Reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters.
- B. Eliminate, mitigate and minimize the impact of natural disasters on city residents.

Land Use and Development

General

Goal 24: *Plan appropriately for the orderly arrangement of land uses to create a city with safe, convenient, attractive, sustainable, healthy neighborhoods and districts.*

Strategies:

- A. Adopt, implement and regularly update the city's Future Land Use Plan.
- B. Amend the Land Development Code to address current trends in planning and development and ensure that land use and development regulations achieve the visions, goals and strategies contained in this plan.
- C. Research ordinances and best practices designed to implement Smart Growth principles.
- D. Research ordinances and best practices designed to implement well-established urban design standards to create and maintain attractive neighborhoods and business districts.
- E. Educate the local residents, children and private developers on the importance of preserving our green spaces and natural features. Promote an understanding of the value of natural areas to economic development, community quality of life, and sustainability for future generations.
- F. Continue to educate the public about Smart Growth principles and how to integrate Smart Growth policies into the city's land development code.
- G. Establish an Environmental Court system to enforce violations of the Land Development Code Ordinance

and the City's Code of Ordinances.

Residential Uses

Goal 25: *Encourage the formation and maintenance of healthy, complete residential districts with a range of appropriate housing types, public uses, and neighborhood-serving retail and service businesses; protect neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible land uses and developments.*

Strategies:

- A. Mix housing styles and densities in a manner that creates seamless, complete neighborhoods by ensuring that the physical design, appearance and intensity of higher-density residential developments is consistent with and compatible to lower-density residential developments.
- B. Consider the appearance, bulk and massing of apartments or attached dwellings that are proposed near single-family residential neighborhoods. Require building and site designs to imitate and be compatible with the character of existing neighborhoods.
- C. Identify possible locations for neighborhood-serving commercial uses, such as grocery stores, in areas that are currently underserved.

Goal 26: *Encourage a wider range of multi-family housing options, such as second-floor apartments above storefronts, townhomes, and condominiums, as alternatives to conventional apartment complexes.*

Strategies:

- A. Ensure that the Land Development Code permits mixed-use developments and non-traditional multi-family uses—townhomes, condominiums, second-floor apartments above storefronts, accessory apartments—to be located in and around commercial districts and employment centers.
- B. Establish design guidelines for multi-family uses to ensure that the appearance and impact of such uses is compatible with neighboring developments.

Goal 27: *Direct student housing to locations that are accessible to area colleges and universities without negatively impacting established, stable residential neighborhoods.*

Strategies:

- A. Encourage the construction of a wider range of student

Goals and Strategies

Land Use and Development

Goals and Strategies

housing options—including second- and third-floor apartments in mixed-use developments, townhouses and downtown dormitories—in proximity to or easily accessible to colleges and universities and student-oriented shopping and commercial districts.

- B. Update the city's apartment survey every three to five years to understand the availability and demand for student housing in Hattiesburg.
- C. Permit high-density residential land uses in community and regional commercial zones.

Mixed-Use Developments and Districts

Goal 28: *Promote high-quality, well-designed, sustainable mixed-use developments.*

Strategies:

- A. Use land use and development ordinances, tax incentives and public-private partnerships to encourage the construction of high-quality developments that provide a range of housing, business and public uses and amenities to tenants and patrons.
- B. Identify traditional mixed-use districts in Hattiesburg, such as Downtown Hattiesburg or the University of Southern Mississippi/Forrest General Hospital university-medical district, and use development ordinances, design guidelines, tax incentives, and public-private partnerships to fund improvements and ensure the sustainability of those districts.

Commercial Uses

Goal 29: *Provide a range of retail and service businesses that are accessible and convenient to all areas of Hattiesburg.*

Strategies:

- A. Ensure that new commercial developments enhance the overall appearance and value of the city through building design and landscaping; promote development styles that reflect Hattiesburg's unique identity.
- B. Identify areas that are underserved by retail and service businesses and create incentives for locating businesses in those areas.

Industrial Uses

Goal 30: Foster industrial development in industrial parks and in designated industrial districts in Hattiesburg; attract and encourage a diverse mix of research and technology enterprises and light industries.

Strategies:

- A. Provide adequate transportation and utility service to areas designated for industrial development.
- B. Market the skills, education and training of Hattiesburg's workforce to attract a diverse, sustainable mix of research and technology businesses and light industries.

Public and Quasi-Public Land Uses

Goal 31: Provide adequate space for public and quasi-public land uses in Hattiesburg. Ensure that public and quasi-public uses are appropriately sited to be accessible to city residents and visitors.

Strategies:

- A. Consider traffic generation, visual compatibility, building scale, pedestrian facilities, and location when siting public and quasi-public land uses to ensure that the facilities enhance neighborhoods and do not negatively impact neighborhood quality of life.

Downtown Hattiesburg

Goal 32: Downtown Hattiesburg is the historic center of our community's civic, banking, entertainment, and retail activity and is surrounded by the city's oldest residential neighborhoods. Promote and advance Downtown Hattiesburg as the city's central business district—the heart of civic activities, entertainment, commerce, banking, specialty retail, urban residential, arts and culture.

Strategies:

- A. Locate major civic buildings (Fire Department, Police Department, other local, state and federal offices) in and around Downtown Hattiesburg to anchor public activity in the heart of the city.
- B. Amend the Land Development Code to require appropriate design and development standards in Downtown Hattiesburg to preserve the downtown's historic character and pedestrian-friendly environment.

Goals and Strategies

Land Use and Development

Goals and Strategies

- C. Ensure the ease of traveling to, circulating around, parking in and walking around Downtown Hattiesburg. Make Downtown easy to navigate and pedestrian-friendly.
- D. Protect the quality of visitors' and residents' experiences and perceptions of Downtown Hattiesburg by ensuring a pleasant, clean, safe, and attractive environment.
- E. Promote the establishment of new housing downtown in a variety of sizes and price ranges to contribute to downtown street life, provide an attractive housing option, and strengthen the perception that Downtown Hattiesburg is a safe, exciting place to live, work, shop, and recreate.
- F. Study the land uses and transportation connections (pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular) between the center of Downtown Hattiesburg and adjacent activity centers—Mobile Street, the Hattiesburg Depot, the old Hattiesburg High School, Eureka School, the East 6th Street USO Club, the future Chain Park at Twin Forks, and the Longleaf Trace extension. Ensure that sidewalks, streets, lighting and street amenities provide desirable connections to these areas; ensure that land uses support, strengthen and ensure the sustainability of public and private investments in these locations.
- G. Continue to implement the recommendations contained in the Downtown Parking and Wayfinding Study.

Community Development Renewal District

Goal 33: *Promote and advance a Community Development Renewal District to promote a healthy balance of homes, services, and work opportunities inside the district and based on the principle that all segments of the population deserve healthy vibrant places to live and work and recreate. These urban neighborhoods, once active and vibrant by virtue of active neighborhood business districts, have fallen into disrepair or been eliminated over the past 30-40 years due to suburban sprawl and a regional economy. Some areas within these traditionally African-American neighborhoods are situated in flood plains and are now home to a diverse group of residents, mostly low to moderate income.*

Strategies:

- A. Conduct a planning study and propose a redevelopment plan for the Community Development Renewal District.

- B. Compile an inventory of the existing physical conditions within the district.
- C. Identify areas of concern and opportunities for healthy redevelopment of infrastructure, comprehensive transportation (roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, public transit, etc.), affordable housing, neighborhood services, economic and cultural development, and employment opportunities.

Goal 34: *Ensure opportunities for local cultural interaction within the Community Development Renewal District to address a variety of planning elements that bring people together in public spaces and venues.*

Strategies:

- A. Include elements in the Community Development Renewal Plan such as neighborhood parks, community centers, and neighborhood business cultivation.
- B. Acknowledge that the existing local cultural values and the diversity of the residents are crucial in addressing the unique cultural and functional needs of the citizenry.
- C. Address walkability as a major aspect of the renewal plan. Connections, both within the district and between the district and other parts of town, should be clarified and enhanced for ease and affordable mobility.

Goal 35: *Promote “Green” building and development throughout the Community Development Renewal District. Provide solutions that bring about a cleaner, healthier, and greener natural environment. Discourage activity and development that destroys, degrades, or pollutes the natural environment.*

Strategies:

- A. Educate the residents on thinking “Green”; conduct workshops for citizen to hear and see the health and economic benefits of living a greener lifestyle.
- B. Make environmental impact a prime consideration for all Community Development Renewal Plans.

Goals and Strategies Infrastructure

Goals and Strategies

Infrastructure

Transportation

Goal 36: *Maintain a safe, efficient and convenient network of streets and sidewalks that are well-constructed, well-maintained; build transportation facilities that are designed to reflect the character of surrounding land uses and provide the amenities desired by pedestrians and the motoring public.*

Strategies:

- A. Use *context-sensitive solutions* (CSS) to balance the desires of community residents and stakeholders with standard engineering practices. Identify road construction and improvement options that integrate and balance community, aesthetic, historic, and environmental values with transportation, safety, maintenance and performance goals.
- B. Install adequate street and pedestrian lighting along public streets and sidewalks.
- C. Continue to assess the condition of streets and roads in Hattiesburg; repair streets and roads that are found to be in poor condition.
- D. Make the City's street maintenance program and schedule more accessible to the public.
- E. Repair and maintain existing sidewalks; upgrade any sidewalks that are found to be inaccessible to persons with disabilities.
- F. Incorporate new sidewalks and landscaping into roadway designs when widening major city streets and highways to make the city more attractive and walkable.
- G. Promote consistent and attractive sign development that provides appropriate wayfinding for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Goal 37: *Treat walking and bicycling as viable transportation modes as opposed to amenities only to be funded when grant monies are available. Adopt a "Complete Streets" policy as a guide for all future transportation decisions.*

Strategies:

- A. "Complete" new arterial and collector streets by constructing sidewalks and bicycle lanes; ensure that existing and new facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities.

- B. Amend the Land Development Code to require sidewalks to be constructed in all new residential subdivisions and commercial developments.
- C. Construct sidewalks along existing streets where there is a demonstrated or expected high level of usage by pedestrians.
- D. Construct sidewalks to connect neighborhood streets to neighborhood shopping areas, schools, parks, public buildings, and medical facilities.
- E. Construct sidewalks from major employment centers—University of Southern Mississippi, Forrest General Hospital and Hattiesburg Clinic, Wesley Medical Center, Downtown Hattiesburg and others—and the surrounding neighborhoods to provide a safe path for pedestrians to walk to work, shopping, and medical services.
- F. Partner with area educational institutions to make traveling to school/work by bicycle an attractive option for students and employees. Identify corridors that are used to access major student housing areas, provide bicycle racks on campuses and in student activity areas, consider equipping certain building restrooms with facilities for cyclists to shower or clean-up before class/work.

Utilities

Goal 38: *Provide adequate utility service—electricity, natural gas, telephone, telecommunications, internet, and cable television services—to all residents of Hattiesburg.*

Strategies:

- A. Require underground utilities for new construction and promote the placement of utilities underground in existing sites.
- B. Coordinate with utility and communication companies to establish an annual program for placing utility lines underground in existing business and residential areas.

Technology

Goal 39: *Embrace new technologies and be proactive in using and supporting technologies and technology-based industries to enhance Hattiesburg's quality of life.*

Strategies:

- A. Maintain support of the I-59 Regional Technology

Goals and Strategies

Community Facilities and Services



Photo: William Carey University sign.

Goals and Strategies

Corridor from Meridian to NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center to encourage technology industries along Interstate 59.

- B. Support development of USM's Innovation and Commercialization Park and create an environment to support similar projects.
- C. Continue efforts to create an Internet "hot spot" in Downtown Hattiesburg to allow residents and visitors to work and access the Internet from any downtown park, public office and outdoor seating area.

Community Facilities and Services

Parks, Community Centers and Cultural Facilities

Goal 40: *Provide adequate community facilities in all areas of the city. Supply sufficient funds and personnel to ensure that adequate community services are provided in all areas of the city.*

Strategies:

- A. Provide community centers in areas of the city that do not have access to public meeting areas.
- B. Locate major civic buildings in and around Downtown Hattiesburg to anchor public activity in the heart of the city (See also Goal 31, Strategy A).
- C. Locate satellite facilities such as parks, community centers, police substations and fire stations in neighborhood centers where they are easily accessible and provide the greatest benefit to residents.

Goal 41: *Provide a wide variety of passive and active recreational activities in Hattiesburg for young children, young adults, families, adults, retirees, and persons with disabilities.*

Strategies:

- A. Provide neighborhood parks, pocket parks and tot lots that are within walking distance from all neighborhoods in Hattiesburg.
- B. Build upon the existing multi-use trails in Hattiesburg—the Longleaf Trace Rails-to-Trails and Chain Park at Twin Forks—to create an interconnected system of trails throughout the city.

Goal 42: *Realize the full potential of the Hattiesburg Zoo—the only city-owned and operated zoo in the state of Mississippi. Continue to build the zoo’s reputation as a respected environmental education center. Market and promote its educational programs and school partnerships.*

Strategies:

- A. Continue to develop and offer education and conservation programs to inform residents and visitors about the value of our natural environment and all its inhabitants.
- B. Achieve and maintain Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accreditation.
- C. Continue to upgrade and maintain all zoo exhibits to provide a clean, safe, pleasant environment for the animals and for zoo visitors.

Public Safety

Goal 43: *Ensure the safety of city residents and visitors by providing adequate police and fire protection in all areas of Hattiesburg.*

Strategies:

- A. Ensure that fire stations are appropriately located to serve all areas of Hattiesburg.
- B. Ensure that the police and fire departments are adequately staffed. Identify and resolve any challenges to hiring and maintaining qualified employees.
- C. Provide adequate police and fire department facilities and stations. Construct new facilities where existing facilities are obsolete or beyond repair; extend the useful life of facilities that are currently adequate by providing regular maintenance and upkeep.
- D. Strive to acquire the latest technological capabilities available for police operations and investigations to reduce crime.

City Services and Intergovernmental Relations

Goal 44: *Ensure that the 2008-2028 Comprehensive Plan is a living document that is implemented through day-to-day public decision-making, public budgeting, and through the actions of the many public, quasi-public*

Goals and Strategies

Community Facilities and Services

Goals and Strategies

Goals and Strategies Community Facilities and Services

and private agencies and individuals that impact the city's form and function.

Strategies:

- A. Establish a program of implementation and performance measurement to ensure that the 2008-2028 Comprehensive Plan is fully implemented and to annually review and revise goals, strategies and implementation actions as programs are implemented and new initiatives are identified.
- B. Utilize a capital improvements program to identify, prioritize and fund capital improvements. Use the CIP as an annual budgeting tool; revise and adopt the annual CIP at the time of budget adoption each fiscal year.

Goal 45: *Develop an integrated geographic information system (GIS) designed to manage geo-referenced data from all city departments and provide access to map data (zoning, flood zones, tax parcel information, etc.) to the citizens via the City's website.*

Strategies:

- A. Purchase hardware and software needed to efficiently store, manage, and retrieve GIS information on the City's website.
- B. Maintain qualified technicians to update and manage the GIS and ensure that its information is current and accurate.
- C. Link information from the GIS to the City of Hattiesburg website; provide an easy-to-use, interactive format for the public to acquire up-to-date property information and maps.