

GROW



Grow Gadsden Comprehensive Plan

www.growgadsden.com

Acknowledgments

Sowing Seeds of Progress...

Thank you to all who contributed to this collaborative effort

Citizens of Gadsden

The city would like to give a special thanks to its citizens and all that were involved in the planning process. We appreciate your invaluable contributions, cares, and concerns that were voiced throughout the development of this plan. We want you to know that you are a valued member of the Gadsden family and that you have been heard. This has truly been an exercise in democracy, giving voice and power to the people of Gadsden to chart our own destiny.

Gadsden City Council

Tonya Latham	<i>District 1</i>
Steve Smith	<i>District 2, President pro tem</i>
Larry Avery	<i>District 3</i>
Kent Back	<i>District 4, President</i>
Jason Wilson	<i>District 5</i>
Dixie Minatra	<i>District 6</i>
Chris Robinson	<i>District 7</i>

Gadsden Planning Commission

Mike Shannon III	<i>Chairman</i>	David Lawson
Chris Robinson		Buster Porch
Kathy Sission		Mark Condra
Brett Johnson		Ruth Moffatt
Tracci Cordell	<i>Zoning Administrator</i>	

Advisory Committee

Craig Ford	<i>Mayor</i>	Mandell Tillman	<i>Tillman Consulting, LLC</i>
Brett Johnson	<i>Chief of Staff</i>	Matthias Goetz	<i>Fehrer Automotive</i>
Tena King	<i>Director of City Services</i>	Jen Weathington	<i>Director of Parks and Recreation</i>
John Moore	<i>Director of Economic Development</i>	Kay Moore	<i>Director of Downtown Gadsden, Inc.</i>
Ruth Moffatt	<i>Director of Diversity, Equity, + Inclusion</i>	Heath Williamson	<i>Director of Engineering</i>
Rod Scott	<i>Director of Planning</i>	Chad Hare	<i>Gadsden Water Works Superintendent</i>
Kent Back	<i>President, City Council</i>	Tony Smith	<i>Alabama Power</i>
Steve Smith	<i>President pro tem, City Council</i>	Lori Sokol	<i>Director of East AL Regional Planning</i>
David Hooks	<i>Director of Industrial Development</i>	Tim McCartney	<i>Airport Board</i>
Kent Haney	<i>Business Consultant</i>	Jazmin Lopez	<i>Jazmin Lopez Agency</i>
Juarus Rawls	<i>Ronnie Watkins Ford</i>	Patrice Maxwell	<i>Thompson Elementary School Principal</i>
Alan Smith	<i>Gadsden State Workforce Development</i>	Jazmine Winston	<i>C&J's Crab Shack</i>
Tony Reddick	<i>Gadsden City Schools Superintendent</i>	Pudden McArthur	<i>Community Volunteer</i>

Project Team

GMC

Goodwyn Mills Cawood

*Planning
Consultants*

+



*City of
Gadsden*

Planning Commission Resolution



A Note From the Mayor



Dear City of Gadsden Stakeholder,

I am so honored to present to you, on behalf of the Gadsden City Council and the City of Gadsden Planning Commission, the GROW Gadsden Comprehensive Master Plan. For the first time since the 1970s, the City of Gadsden now has a roadmap to guide our future. After more than a year of stakeholder input meetings, community surveys, and town halls, we have identified an ambitious path toward a prosperous, growing city. This plan is designed to help us leverage our city's unique assets, its regional position, and its people to thrive once again as a regional hub of economic, tourism, industrial, and quality of life activity.

My request is that each of us ensure we do our part to help this plan live on, and that we urge the city's leadership to continually reflect upon our plan for its decision-making. Most importantly, we must never stop planning for our future. This plan should be reviewed, amended as needed, and updated to reflect the unique needs and desires of Gadsden residents as times, resources, and opportunities change for our city.

I want to say a special 'thank you' to each citizen who participated in some way in the development of the GROW Gadsden Plan. Your input and feedback were critical to creating a roadmap for our future that everyone can appreciate. We also appreciate everyone who led the technical functions of developing this plan, from our planning consultants at Goodwyn Mills Cawood to our administrative personnel at city hall.

To me, this plan reflects two things for the future of Gadsden: hope and opportunity. With your help, we will realize our city's potential as we implement as many actions as possible over the next several years together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Ford'.

Craig Ford
Mayor

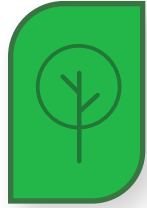




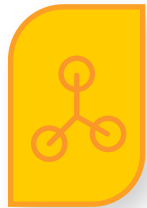
GROW

www.growgadsden.com

The City of Gadsden sits at the southernmost point of Lookout Mountain in the foothills of southern Appalachia, straddling the Coosa River between Big Wills Creek and the Coosa Ridges. It is the epicenter of a larger urban conglomeration stretching across Etowah County from Attalla to Hokes Bluff and from Southside to Reece City. The city has experienced a series of dramatic boom and bust cycles throughout its history, evolving from a small river trading post into a growing industrial company town and eventually into the largest and most dynamic urban center in northeast Alabama. Read on to discover the vision for the next chapter in Gadsden's continuing evolution.



The Natural City



The Connected City



The Growing City

Introduction

GROW Gadsden is an ambitious planning effort that will define the future of the city for generations.

Welcome to GROW Gadsden, a vision for the revitalization of the City of Gadsden, Alabama. This comprehensive plan will guide future development in Gadsden over the next 10 to 20 years. It has been 50 years since the adoption of the city's previous comprehensive plan in 1977. Much has changed in that half century, and this plan has been intentionally crafted to address the modern needs of the city's current residents. With the city's recent successes and brightening economic outlook, this plan comes at the right time to harness new growth and channel it into positive changes that elevate the quality of life for everyone in Gadsden.

The specific goals and recommendations of this plan have been developed based on extensive input from the residents of Gadsden to work toward the overall vision established by the public.



The GROW Gadsden document begins with an introduction summarizing the research and analysis as well as the public input gathered during the discovery and visioning phases of the planning process. It then organizes the plan's goals and recommendations into three chapters: 1) The Natural City, 2) The Connected City, 3) The Growing City.

Each of these chapters contains a series of general goals accompanied by a detailed list of action items to accomplish each goal. The document concludes with an implementation matrix that compiles all of the plan's goals and recommendations in one place, assigning each with a timeframe, a priority, a responsible party, and potential supporting entities to engage. This matrix is designed to facilitate active, long-term tracking of successful progress on individual goals and actions.

This vision represents the collective input of more than 2,000 Gadsden area residents from 16+ meetings over the course of a year. This statement is the direction the city has selected for itself and this plan is the compass that will guide the city toward its chosen destination, with every goal and action aimed at achieving this overarching vision.



VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to create a thriving city with a welcoming riverfront that stimulates growth, economic development, and recreational activities. We will preserve our culture by strengthening community bonds and diversifying our assets. We will invest in our future through a strong educational system and by stewarding our beautiful natural environment for future generations.



The Changing City

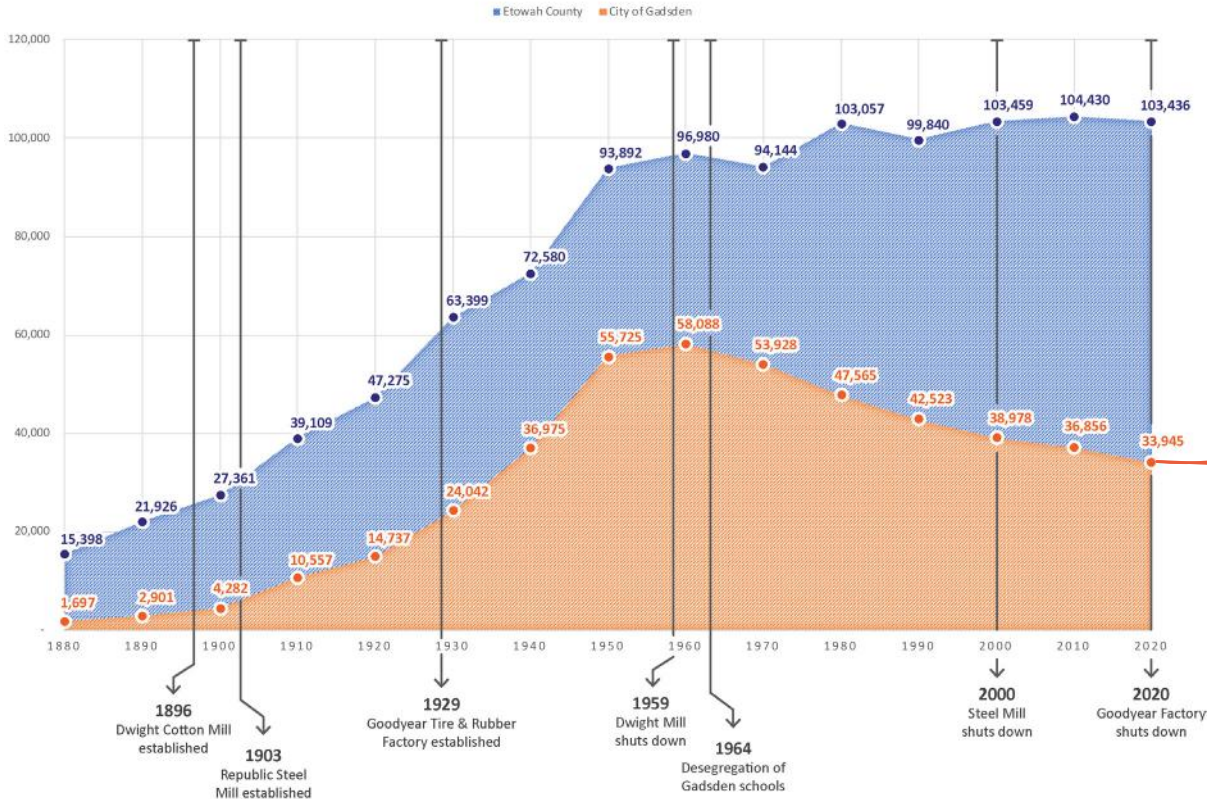
Change is part of Gadsden's DNA. This plan will embrace the city's adaptivity and capacity for change as a force for good.

Since the settlement that eventually became Gadsden was established in the 1840s, the city has experienced a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic changes that have shaped and reshaped the built environment and the lives of its citizens. Originally a tiny trading post on the Coosa River known as Lafferty's Landing, Gadsden began to develop into a major industrial center toward the end of the 19th century.

Substantial operations in the textile, steel, and rubber manufacturing industries that opened in the early 20th century brought thousands of middle-class jobs and residents to the city, transforming it into one of the largest and most significant industrial centers in Alabama. The strength of Gadsden's manufacturing economy propelled the city to its peak population of nearly 60,000 in 1960, at which point it was the sixth largest city in the state (it is now the 16th largest in the state).

Due to the national restructuring of railroads and heavy industry, many of the city's major industries shuttered in the 1970s and 1980s, taking a toll on the city's employment base. Combined with the national trends in suburbanization, the city's growth was brought to a halt as its population began to dwindle. The construction of highways and freeways in the latter half of the 20th century further altered the face of the city, dramatically restructuring the way people experience the area. Over the years, the demographic composition has also evolved, reflecting broader societal shifts. Despite these struggles, Gadsden has worked to diversify its economic base, embracing sectors like healthcare, education, and tourism. Today, the city stands as a resilient community that has navigated many difficult transitions, demonstrating its ability to adapt and remain a vital part of Alabama's economic landscape. ***With new economic developments and escalating interest in the city, change is once again on Gadsden's horizon. This plan will help ensure that change is properly managed and positively benefits for the whole city.***

METRO GADSDEN POPULATION



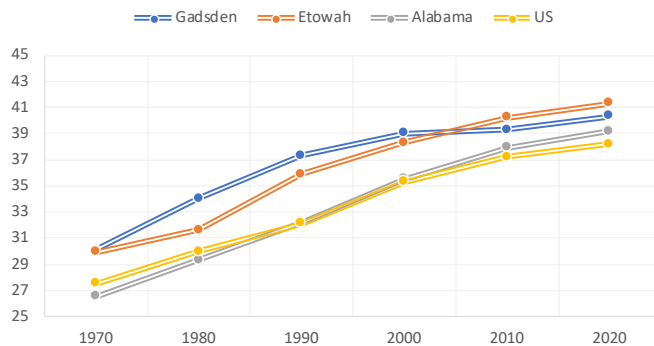
34,000

Current population of Gadsden. This number is roughly 40% of the city's peak population in 1960.

Although the population living within Gadsden city limits has been on the decline since the 1960s, the population of the Greater Gadsden metro area has remained stable. As the heart of this urban area of roughly 100,000 people, Gadsden has the opportunity to capitalize on its unique position as the urban center of a stable metro through further urbanization.

EMBRACE
CHANGE
OR
STATUS
QUO

MEDIAN AGE



40.3

Current median age of Gadsden. The city's median age has been increasing for more than 50 years.

When forecasting future development scenarios, it is important that Gadsden plans not only for its current demographic conditions but also for projected changes to its demographic conditions. Changes in population, age, income, ethnicity, etc. should be accounted for in the plan, goals, and recommendations.

Community Voice

Through a robust engagement process, the community defined its own values and priorities for the future of Gadsden.

Public input is foundational to the long-term success of the comprehensive plan. It is imperative that the goals and recommendations of the comprehensive plan adequately reflect the needs and desires of the local population. Rather than having a team of outsiders dictating how the city should improve itself, the GROW Gadsden planning process sought to empower residents to decide the change they want for themselves, with the guidance of the consultant team's professional expertise.

Public input was gathered through three primary methods: 1) a series of meetings with local officials on the steering committee, 2) a series of community meetings with the general public, and 3) an online community survey. Over the course of about a year, the

public outreach campaign engaged with over 2,000 area residents. Localized meetings were also held in various communities throughout the city. These meetings encouraged geographic representation from each of the city's distinct neighborhoods. It was through the public input process that the overall vision and individual goals and actions of the plan were developed. Some of the major findings from the community are highlighted on the following pages.

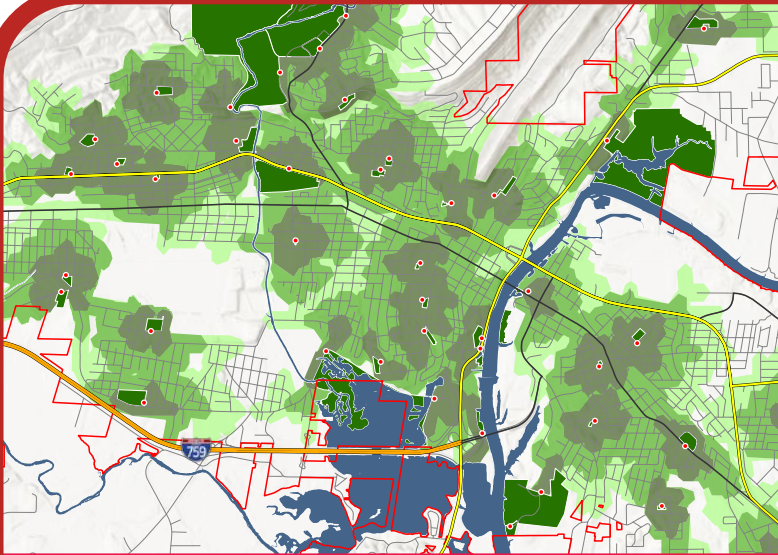
2,000+

engaged citizens and unique points of view contributed to the planning process





Data gathered...



Existing Conditions
& Needs Analysis



7 reports
+150 pages



Visioning & Goals

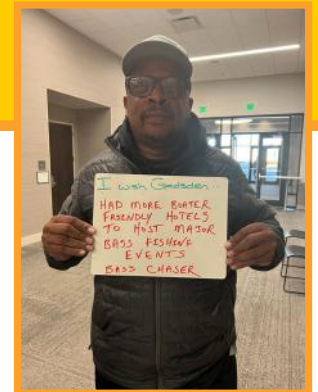
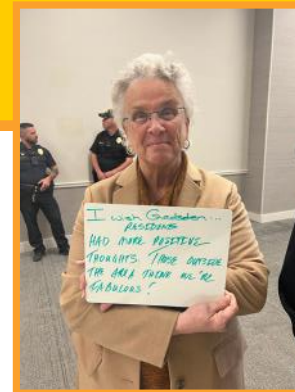
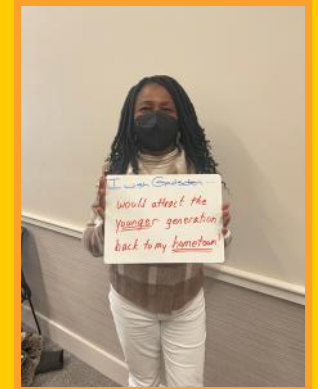
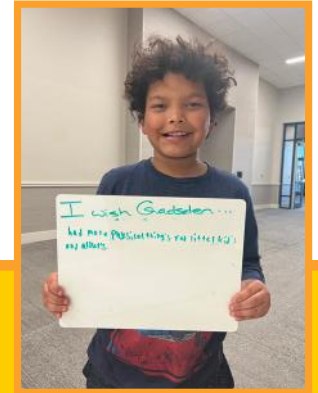


16 Meetings
+/-2,000

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to create a thriving city with a welcoming riverfront that stimulates growth, economic development, and recreational activities. We will preserve our culture by strengthening community bonds and diversifying our assets. We will invest in our future through a strong educational system and by stewarding our beautiful natural environment for future generations.

Vision is fundamental to building meaningful long-term progress in the city. Throughout numerous community meetings, the public was given the opportunity to write their own personal vision statements for Gadsden as well as working together to establish collective group visions. Common elements were extracted from thousands of responses to craft the final citywide vision stated above.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

2/13/23

2/13/23

3/14/23

4/11/23

5/9/23

5/9/23

7/18/23

8/23/23

Council
Meeting 1

Advisory
Meeting 1

Public
Meeting 1

Executive
Meeting 1

Advisory
Meeting 2

Student
Meeting

Advisory
Meeting 3

Executive
Meeting 2

3

Write a vision statement for the city

This is an exercise to create a shared, future vision for the community. Establishing this vision helps guide all decisions throughout the planning process. This not only helps build consensus but also provides accountability throughout the process, and more fully ensures that the final plan is agreed upon and implemented.

Exercise: As a group write a vision statement to describe the Gadsden that you hope to see twenty years from today.

Goals **Principles** **Themes**

Revitalize the city center *Focus on sustainability* *Revitalize the city center*

Improve the city center *Be the best place to live* *Be the best place to live*

Improve the city center *Be the best place to live* *Be the best place to live*

Improve the city center *Be the best place to live* *Be the best place to live*

INGREDIENTS OF A VISION STATEMENT

- Positive, present-tense language
- Qualities that express the city's uniqueness
- Inclusiveness of the city's diverse population and achievement
- A focus on people and quality of life
- A stated time period

Final Proposed Statement

"A vibrant, thriving Riverfront community that is accessible and growing. A city where everyone has a place to call home, a place to work, a place to play, a place to learn, a place to grow. A city where everyone has a place to call home."

"Visioning provides a tool for identifying and articulating what matters most to a community."

GROW

5

STRENGTHS

What can we build on?

Naccalula Falls

Riverfront

Coosa Landing

New downtown living opportunities

Low downtown vacancy

Historic character

Regional location

Shops/restaurants

Road network/existing infrastructure

Available grants

Vacant properties

Existing industrial framework

Lots of city parks

Museums

Ritz Theater

OPPORTUNITIES

What are we asking for?

Better housing

Business development

Entertainment

More green space

Affordable housing

Updated zoning

Performing arts center

Riverfront developed

Host athletic/music events

Lofts/downtown units

Sidewalks/bike lanes

Walkable shopping districts

Pursue grants

Enhanced gateways to the city

Beautification

Protection of green space/natural areas

ASPIRATIONS

What principles matter?

Community health

Walkability

Career opportunities

Safe streets/neighborhoods

Good schools

Connectivity

Building community

Historic preservation

Support affordability

Neighborhood revitalization

Quality of life

Improved property values

More housing types

RESULTS

What will indicate success?

New housing built in existing neighborhoods

More jobs

Population growth

Students return for jobs

Increased tourism

Improved reputation

Home renovations

Fewer vacant lots

More active retail off of Broad Street

More pedestrians

Larger tax base

More housing types

9



GADSDEN TITAN AMBASSADORS

Do you plan to live in Gadsden as an adult?

Why or why not?

Yes because Gadsden is a great place to live. It has a lot of things to offer, including a good school system, a diverse population, and a strong sense of community. I plan to live in Gadsden as an adult.

What do you like/dislike about Gadsden?

Like

- price of things is cheap
- everyone knows everyone
- places are close
- easy to get around

Dislike

- feel like everything is going downhill
- poor
- lack of stores
- lack of good parks

What's missing in Gadsden?

Restaurants

- bars
- nightlife and entertainment
- combined
- better downtown like
- cleaning it up
- it's dying

Franklin D. Roosevelt

- bars being and like
- bars restaurants
- actual community
- parks
- top golf

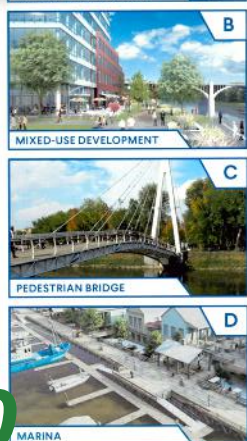
GROW
City of Gadsden
Comprehensive Plan

Timeline

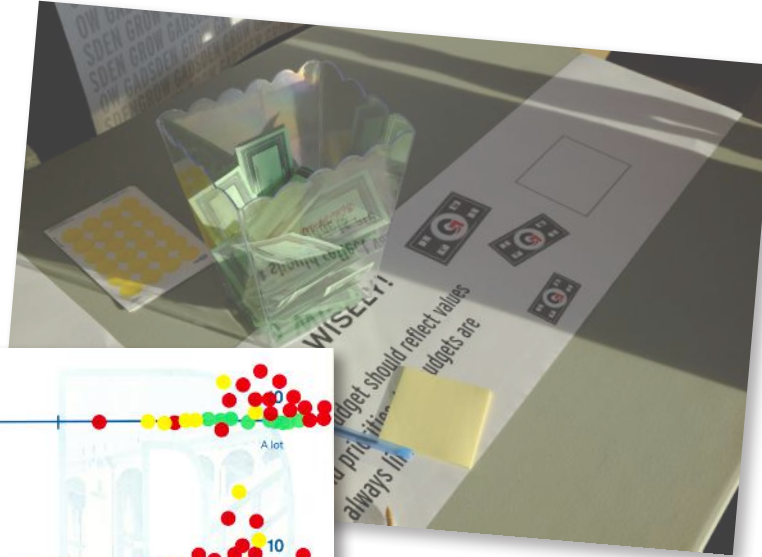
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8/29/23 9/19/23 11/30/23 12/5/23 12/5/23 1/23/24 1/29/24 1/30/24

Council Meeting 2 Public Meeting 2 Public Meeting 3 Airport Meeting Public Meeting 4 P+Z Comm. Meeting Executive Meeting 3 Council Meeting 3



13

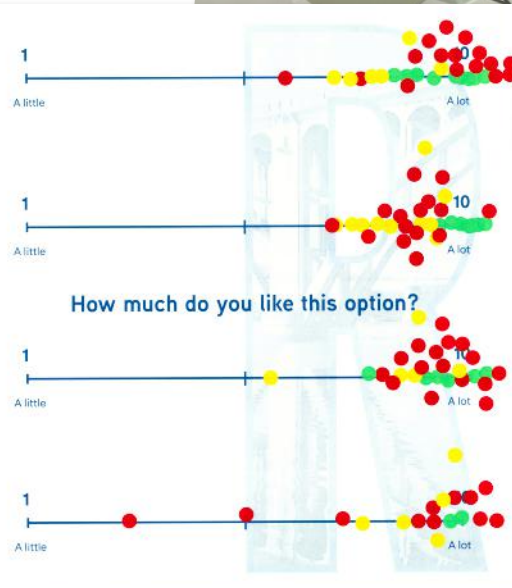


17
2/20/24

Public
Unveiling

18
2/21/24

Official
Adoption



10



The Natural City

Parks & Recreation

FEATURE PROJECTS

Noccalula Falls Improvements

Trail Networks

Meighan Sports Complex

Riverfront

FEATURE PROJECTS

Downtown Riverfront District

East Gadsden Riverfront

Martin Wildlife Park / Lake Gadsden



Nocalula Falls

Parks & Recreation

FEATURE PROJECTS

Noccalula Falls Improvements

Trail Networks

Meighan Sports Complex

One of Gadsden's greatest strengths is its wealth of natural resources and unique landscape features. The city has a well-developed system of parks that highlights the area's rich features and provides residents and visitors with a variety of recreational opportunities within minutes of downtown. The next phase in the evolution of the city's parks and rec system is to enhance regional destination sites such as Noccalula Falls and the Riverwalk with multi-use trails, creating an integrated network of green spaces that connect major parks to other key destinations. Enhancing the park system and connecting it with trails to downtown and residential neighborhoods can support new development and tourism in addition to the immediate recreational benefits.



Noccalula Falls Improvements

Continue to improve and protect Noccalula Falls Park as a cohesive experience.

Noccalula Falls is an important asset for the city and should be one of the primary catalysts for the city to establish the falls as a premiere destination for tourists and Gadsden residents. Projects with the potential to boost the Noccalula Falls district include campground upgrades, Noccalula Falls-oriented HWY 211 upgrades (including Gateway signage, beautification improvements, and pedestrian improvements), zoning updates to establish a Noccalula Village aesthetic, a stronger connection to the Black Creek Trail Nature Trail System, and the potential for an outdoor-oriented resort at the falls.

Action 1

Campground Upgrades

Action 2

Noccalula Falls Hwy 211 upgrades (Gateway signage, beautification and pedestrian improvements)

Action 3

Zoning updates to establish a "Noccalula Village" aesthetic

Action 4

A stronger more obvious connection to the Black Creek Trail system

Action 5

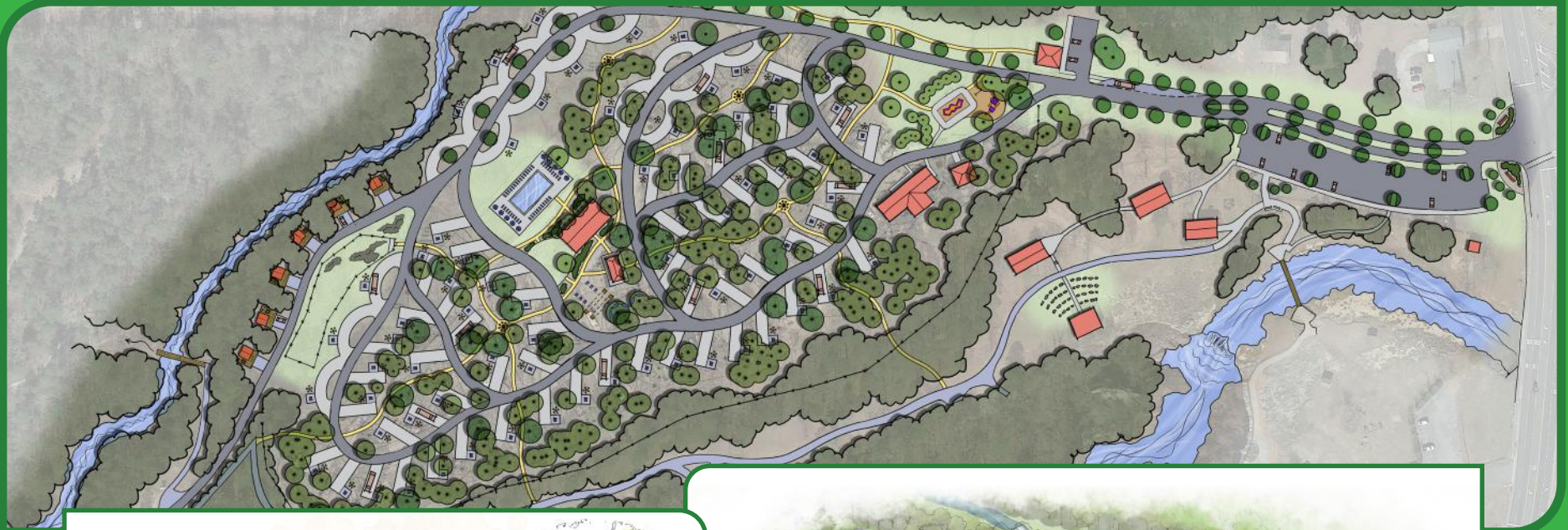
A potential outdoor-oriented resort at the falls

Action 6

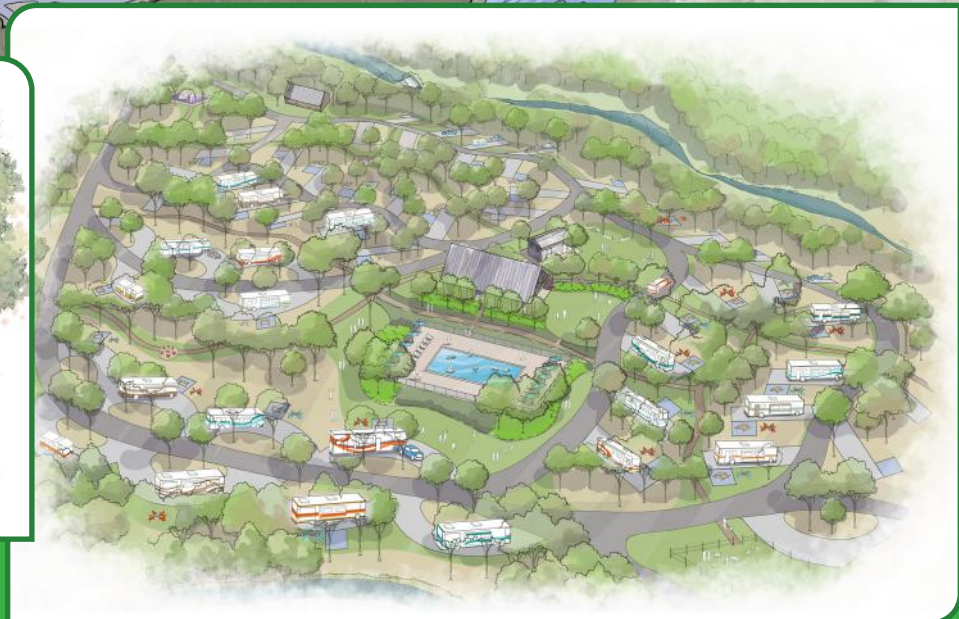
Create a protected pedestrian path on Noccalula Rd for safe travel up and down Lookout Mountain

FEATURE PROJECT

Noccalula Campground Master Plan



Campground Entrance View



View Looking South toward Black Creek

Greenway Networks

Expand greenway trail network throughout the city.

An opportunity with the most untapped potential for Gadsden is trail development throughout the city. Trails and greenways drive tourism, create a more desirable environment to live, and promote the health of citizens. The top priority for a city-wide trail system is the “rails to trails” project along the city-owned old rail line that connects the southern end of the Black Creek Trail to Downtown. As part of larger trail development efforts, the city should connect the Black Creek Trail to the Coosa Riverfront along Black Creek and eventually connect back to the Downtown and the priority rails to trails project, creating a loop. An East Gadsden trail network should be created along the Riverfront between Dub Parker Park and the Coosa Town Center, with an on-street trail along College Drive, Padenreich Avenue, and Broad Street to create a East Gadsden trail loop. Eventually, a pedestrian bridge is needed over the Coosa River to connect the city for a true city-wide trail system.

Action 1

Implement a rails to trails project on the city owned former AGS railroad line

Action 4

Build a dedicated bike/ pedestrian bridge over the Coosa River

Action 2

Extend Black Creek Trail to Martin Wildlife Preserve and across Hwy 411 to the Coosa River

Action 5

Unify the trail network into a greater inter-connected greenway project for potential funding

Action 3

Expand the East Gadsden riverwalk trail from Gadsden State to Tillison Bend

Gadsden Greenways Master Plan

FEATURE PROJECT

GADSDEN REGIONAL GREENWAY (RAILS TO TRAILS)

- A - Streetscape Connector (1st St NE + 5th Ave NW)
- B - Future AL Great Southern Railroad R.O.W. Acquisition
- C - Streetscape Connector (Cabot Ave + 27th St N)
- D - Gadsden-owned Former AL Great Southern Railroad R.O.W.
- E - Streetscape Connector (3rd St N + Broad St)
- F - Streetscape Connector (E Broad St)

COOSA-NOCCALULA GREENWAY

- 1 - Black Creek Trail (existing)
- 2 - Black Creek Greenway (future)
- 3 - James D. Martin Preserve Greenway (existing)
- 4 - Streetscape Connector (River Rd)
- 5 - Riverwalk (existing)
- 6 - Coosa River Pedestrian Bridge (future)
- 7 - Riverwalk at Coosa Landing (existing)



Conceptual Coosa River pedestrian bridge

Meighan Sports Complex

Prioritize strategic updates to improve the Meighan Sports Complex.

As Gadsden's largest urban context regional park, the Meighan Sports Complex is an important component in the city's parks and rec system. Unfortunately, the sports complex is limited in its activity offerings for the city and potential visitors. The park's programming needs a dramatic reset to become a city and regional attraction. The Meighan Sports Complex should be renovated to allow for a unique set of programming that includes an indoor/outdoor aquatic center, an ice skating rink, indoor soccer fields, covered pickleball, basketball/volleyball courts, and an outdoor site plan that highlights the site's connection to Black Creek and the surrounding residential and community assets. The newly developed sports complex behind Gadsden State Community College alleviates the need for current uses on this site, creating the opportunity to reimagine it as a more engaging recreational amenity.

Action 1

Aquatic center addition

Action 5

**Basketball/volleyball
courts additions**

Action 2

Ice skating rink addition

Action 6

BMX / Pump Track addition

Action 3

Indoor soccer field addition

Action 7

**Internal trails throughout
the complex and external
connections to adjacent
residential communities**

Action 4

Pickleball courts addition

FEATURE PROJECT



Aquatic Center Example



Conceptual BMX / Pump Track



PARKS & RECREATION GOALS

1

Reinforce regional parks in the city for citizens and visitors

Action 1

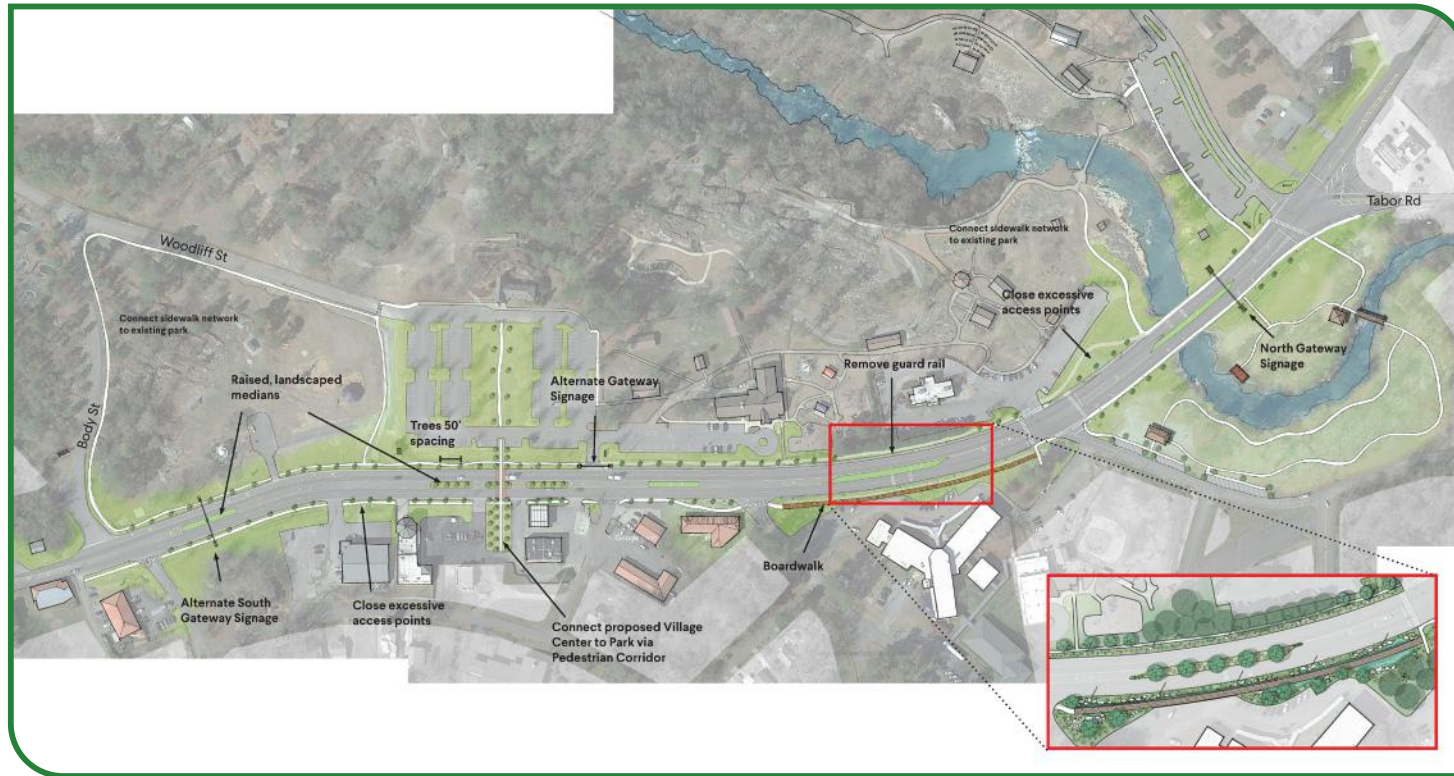
Continue to improve and protect Noccalula Falls Park as a cohesive experience.

Noccalula Falls is an important asset for the city and should be one of the primary catalyst projects for the city that would establish the falls as a premiere destination for tourists and Gadsden residents. Projects with the potential to boost the Noccalula Falls district include campground upgrades, Noccalula Falls-oriented HWY 211 upgrades (including Gateway signage, beautification improvements, and pedestrian improvements), zoning updates to establish a Noccalula Village aesthetic, a stronger connection to the Black Creek Trail Nature Trail System, and the potential for an outdoor-oriented resort at the falls.

Reinforce Black Creek Nature Park's connection to Noccalula Falls Park through improved trail heads and expanded trail connections.

Although Noccalula Falls and the Black Creek Nature Trails are technically separately designated parks, the city should work to promote a cohesive and unified user experience between these two parks. Many people who visit the attractions at Noccalula Falls may be unaware of the expansive recreational trail network located at the site. The city should work to enhance visibility and accessibility of Black Creek trail-heads within Noccalula Park. This can be accomplished through gateway art and enhanced wayfinding signage. Any new signage or artistic elements installed should match the aesthetic of the existing stone park signage.

Noccalula Rd improvements will help establish a cohesive Noccalula Village district



Action 2

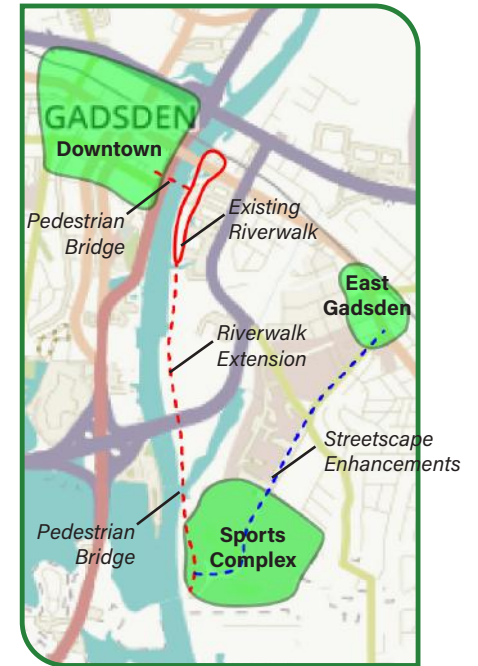
Consider an outdoor oriented resort on underutilized city land near Noccalula Falls Park.

Quality lodging is an essential factor in maximizing a destination's tourism levels and local economic impact. Although the campgrounds at Noccalula Falls are a valuable source of revenue, nearby lodging options should be enhanced to offer a wider diversity of options within walking distance of the park. The city should consider pursuing development of a resort-style lodge on city owned land near the park to attract a broader demographic of potential park users. This would elevate the quality of development around the falls and bolster the city's tax revenue from additional tourism.

Action 3

Improve the city's connection to the updated sports complex behind Gadsden State Community College.

The city and Gadsden State have recently invested millions of dollars in improvements to the Gadsden State Sports Complex in East Gadsden. The new facilities at this sports complex are a tremendous asset that will help the city capitalize on the many economic development benefits of sports tourism. Despite the substantial investment in these facilities, this growing recreational asset is set behind the school's campus and lacks meaningful visibility and connectivity to the surrounding community. The city should work with Gadsden State to make gateway improvements along College Dr including sidewalks and signage that direct and invite people into the park. Enhanced connectivity between the sports complex and the rest of the city can also be bolstered by a riverwalk trail extension that connects to the existing Riverwalk at Coosa Landing.



Action 4

Enhance amenities and facilities offered at Dub Parker Park.

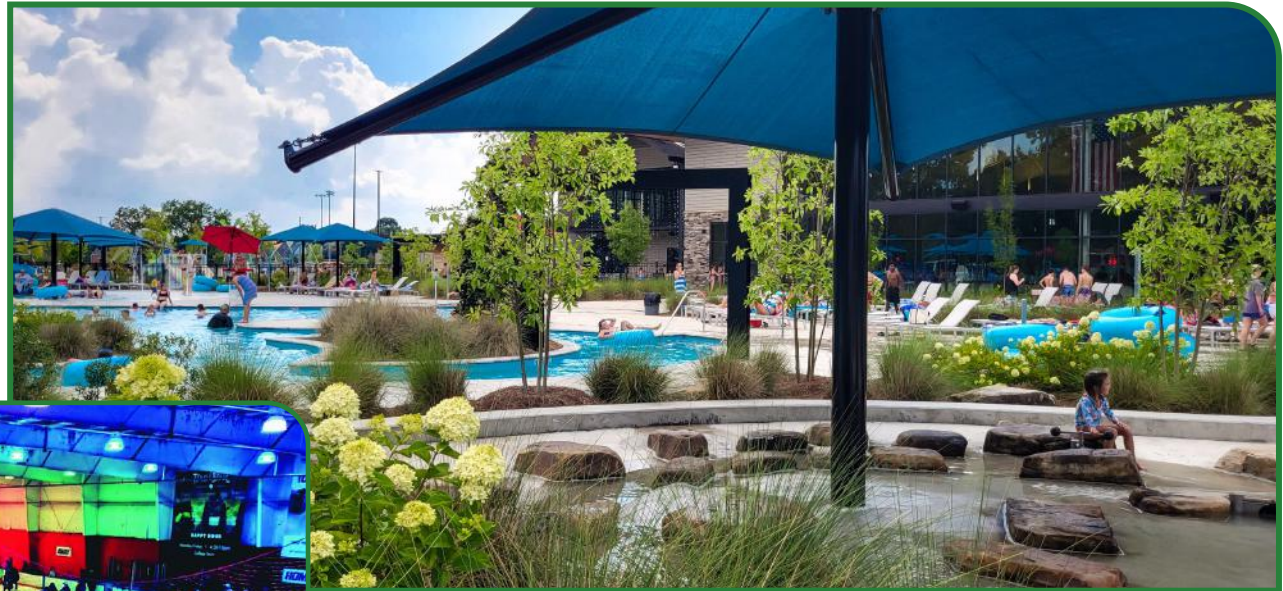
Dub Parker Park is one of the access points in the city providing boat ramp access for Coosa River recreation. The facilities at this site are outdated and in need of modernization. With the significant funds invested in the adjacent Gadsden State Sports Complex, the city should work to ensure that the quality of Dub Parker Park is more closely aligned with the high quality facilities at the Gadsden State complex. Dub Parker Park will also be the southern terminus of an expanded East Gadsden riverwalk and should serve as a quality trailhead for riverwalk users. Improvements at the park should include repairs to the pier and boat launch, upgraded bathrooms and playground, and installation of a soft launch for smaller watercraft such as kayaks and canoes. The city should also consider the addition of dining and/ or shopping amenities at this site similar to those at Coosa Landing (bait shack, Buffalo Wild Wings, etc.) with the potential for a shipping container style store/ cafe combination.

Action 5

Prioritize updates to improve the Gadsden Sports Complex on West Meighan Blvd.

As Gadsden's largest urban context regional park, the Meighan Sports Complex is an important component in the city's parks and rec system. Unfortunately, the sports complex is limited in its activity offerings for the city and potential visitors. The park's programming needs a dramatic reset to become a city and regional attraction. The Meighan Sports Complex should be renovated to allow for a unique set of programming that includes an indoor/outdoor aquatic center, an ice skating rink, indoor soccer fields, covered pickleball, basketball/volleyball courts, a BMX/ pump track, and an outdoor site plan that highlights the site's connection to Black Creek and the surrounding residential and community assets.

Indoor Skating/ Soccer



Outdoor Aquatics Center

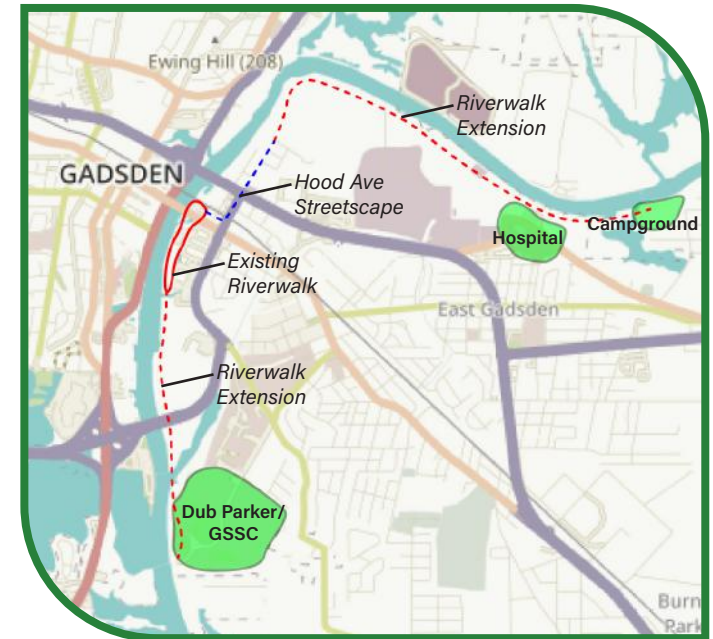
2

Enhance a recreational riverfront experience that is better connected to the city

Action 1

Work to expand the eastern riverfront recreational experience from Dub Parker Park to the Gadsden Regional Medical Center.

Unlocking the recreational potential of the Coosa River is one of the biggest strategic opportunities for the city. The riverwalk at Coosa Landing is a strong existing recreational asset for the whole city and has the potential to be expanded in order to activate additional stretches of the East Gadsden riverfront. The city should focus on creating a complete riverfront trail from the Gadsden State campus all the way to the Gadsden Regional Medical Center that ties in with the existing riverwalk trail. The expanded trail should include additional recreational amenities such as outdoor workout equipment, benches, tables, etc. Recreational improvements along the eastern riverfront should be tied into a master development plan that includes complementary development to further activate recreational use of the waterfront. Improvements to recreation on the eastern riverfront should be a more immediate priority as existing land uses and recreational infrastructure make this an easier target area than the western riverfront.



Existing East Gadsden riverwalk

Action 2

Enhance the western riverfront recreational experience from downtown to Jack Ray Park.

Since the western riverfront is hindered by the existing alignment of Hwy 411 in the downtown area, this will be a longer-term project area for the city as moves are made to expand its developable area. Enhancements to the western riverfront recreational experience should begin with expanded trail and recreational infrastructure on city-owned land south of the Gadsden Splash Pad. The city should work to acquire property or establish a trail easement at the funeral home and historic pumping house in order to establish an expansion of the western riverwalk from the splash pad to Jack Ray park. This expanded segment of the riverfront should have a direct connection across Hwy 411 to the Falls to the Mall greenway and eventually be tied into the proposed downtown riverfront district.



Existing western riverwalk docks



Existing western riverwalk amenities

Action 3

Continue to expand and redefine the Lake Gadsden waterfront experience.

Lake Gadsden provides the city with many miles of additional waterfront just off the Coosa River. Trails and the dog park at the Martin Wildlife Park have been a great first step to introduce recreational activity to this area, although the recreational experience can be enhanced still with additional amenities and placemaking. Connecting adjacent neighborhoods to the lake with trails and creating a rental operation for kayaks, paddleboards, etc. would bring new daily users into the area and support healthy commercial operations at the Gadsden Mall.



Existing trails on Lake Gadsden

Action 4

Establish non-sporting waterfront events for the community and visitors.

There is a wide variety of sporting-focused events on the Coosa River throughout the year, such as bass fishing tournaments. In order to engage a wider demographic of users with the river and build a broader base of dedicated users, the city should pursue events such as food festivals, live music, boat racing, etc. This should be a collaborative effort with Greater Gadsden Tourism as marquee waterfront events would be a huge driver of tourism, bringing many new people into the area and supporting the city's business environment.



Non-sporting events such as food truck festivals can further activate the river

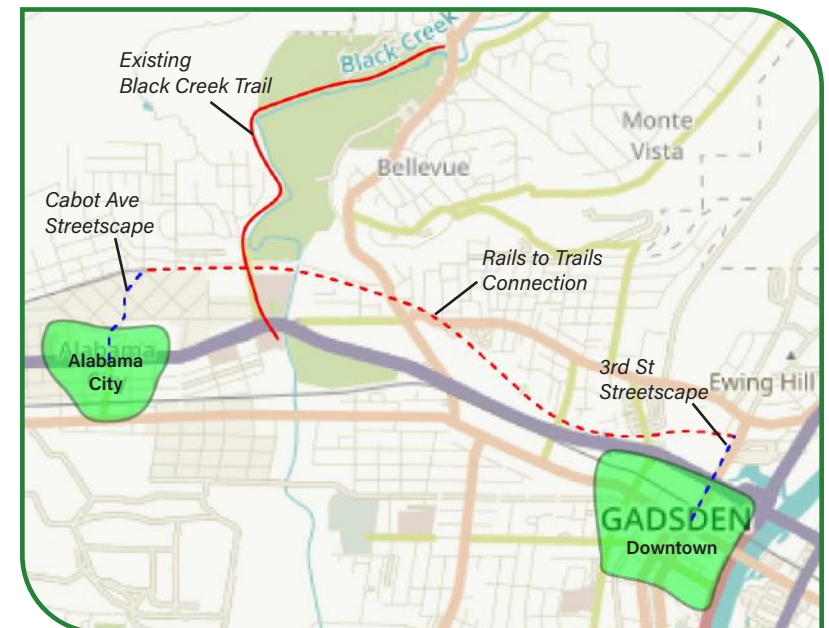
3

Become a city of trails

Action 1

Connect Downtown to Noccalula Falls and Alabama City via Rails to Trails.

Noccalula Falls and Downtown Gadsden are the city's two most popular tourist destinations. Improving pedestrian connectivity between these two destinations should be one of the highest-priority action items for parks and recreation improvements in the city. A signature greenway trail should be developed in the city-owned section of the former Alabama Great Southern rail line from 3rd St to Cabot Ave. This section of the Rails to Trails project should be completed in 2 phases. The first phase should include the section from 3rd St to Noccalula Rd, connecting the downtown area to future pedestrian improvements on Hwy 211 up Lookout Mountain. Key sites along this first phase of the project would include the oldest home in Gadsden, the Colley Housing Community, the Jacksonville Court Housing Community, and the Noccalula Gateway Plaza Shopping Center. This section may require structural improvements to the rail bridge over Town Creek. The second phase of the rails to trails project should include the remaining section of the line currently owned by the city from Noccalula Rd to Cabot Ave, extending the connection from downtown to the Black Creek Trail system and on to Alabama City. Key sites along this second phase of the project would include Floyd Elementary School, the Black Creek Trail, and the historic Dwight Mill Village. This section may require structural improvements to the rail bridge over Black Creek. The city should also consider construction of an elevated pedestrian bridge for the greenway where it crosses Hwy 211 in addition to redevelopment around the greenway's primary trailhead on 3rd St.



Conceptual Rails to Trails Pedestrian Bridge over N 12th St



Alabama City Trailhead on Cabot Ave

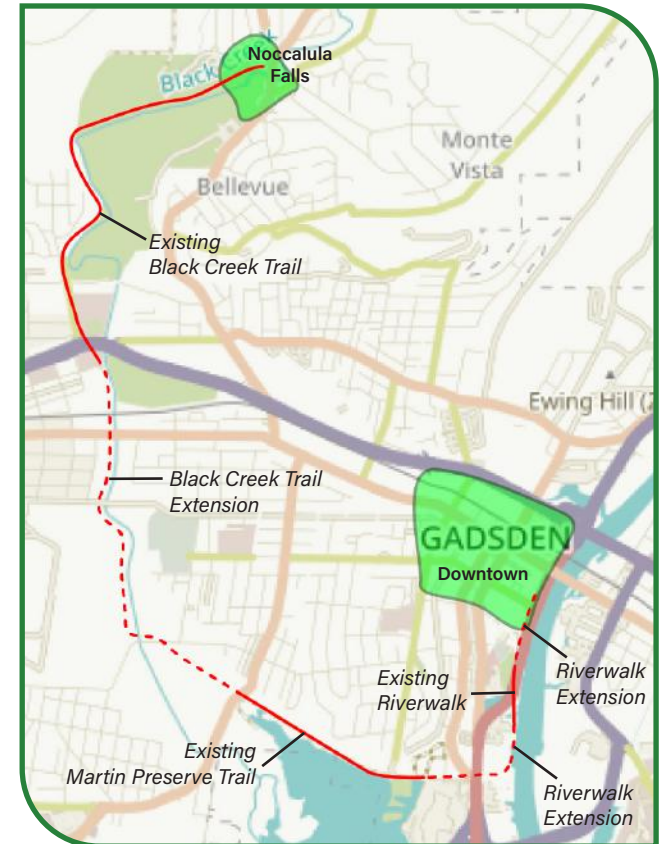


Downtown Trailhead on N 3rd St

Action 2

Connect Noccalula Falls to Lake Gadsden and the Coosa River through an extension of the Black Creek Trail.

Lookout Mountain and the Coosa River are the two most prominent geographical features in the city of Gadsden and the primary drivers of outdoor recreation in the region. Improving the connection between these two features with a multi-use trail should be a top priority for the city. A second signature greenway trail should be developed along Black Creek to complement the signature rails to trails greenway project. Pedestrian connectivity for the Black Creek Trail currently terminates on the western banks of Black Creek at the Alabama City Center on Meighan Blvd. There is also a nearly 1-mile-long greenway trail currently in place at the mouth of Black Creek within the Martin Wildlife Preserve on Lake Gadsden. The city should prioritize completion of the missing link between these two greenway trails by extending the Black Creek Trail from Meighan Blvd to Randall St along Black Creek and from Randall St to 11th St along utility access roads. Furthermore, this greenway should be extended from its current southern terminus at the Gadsden Mall eastward across Hwy 411 and northward along the western bank of the Coosa River to expand the Falls to the Mall connection to the future Riverfront District. This would establish a complete greenway trail connection linking Gadsden's two most popular recreational features for the first time. The city should work with the State of Alabama to develop this greenway connection on land owned by the state along Black Creek at the former Republic Steel site. Designs for this section should consider the potential to reclaim the underutilized easternmost portion of the industrial site for a potential urban forest that would beautify the greenway corridor and remediate environmental conditions.





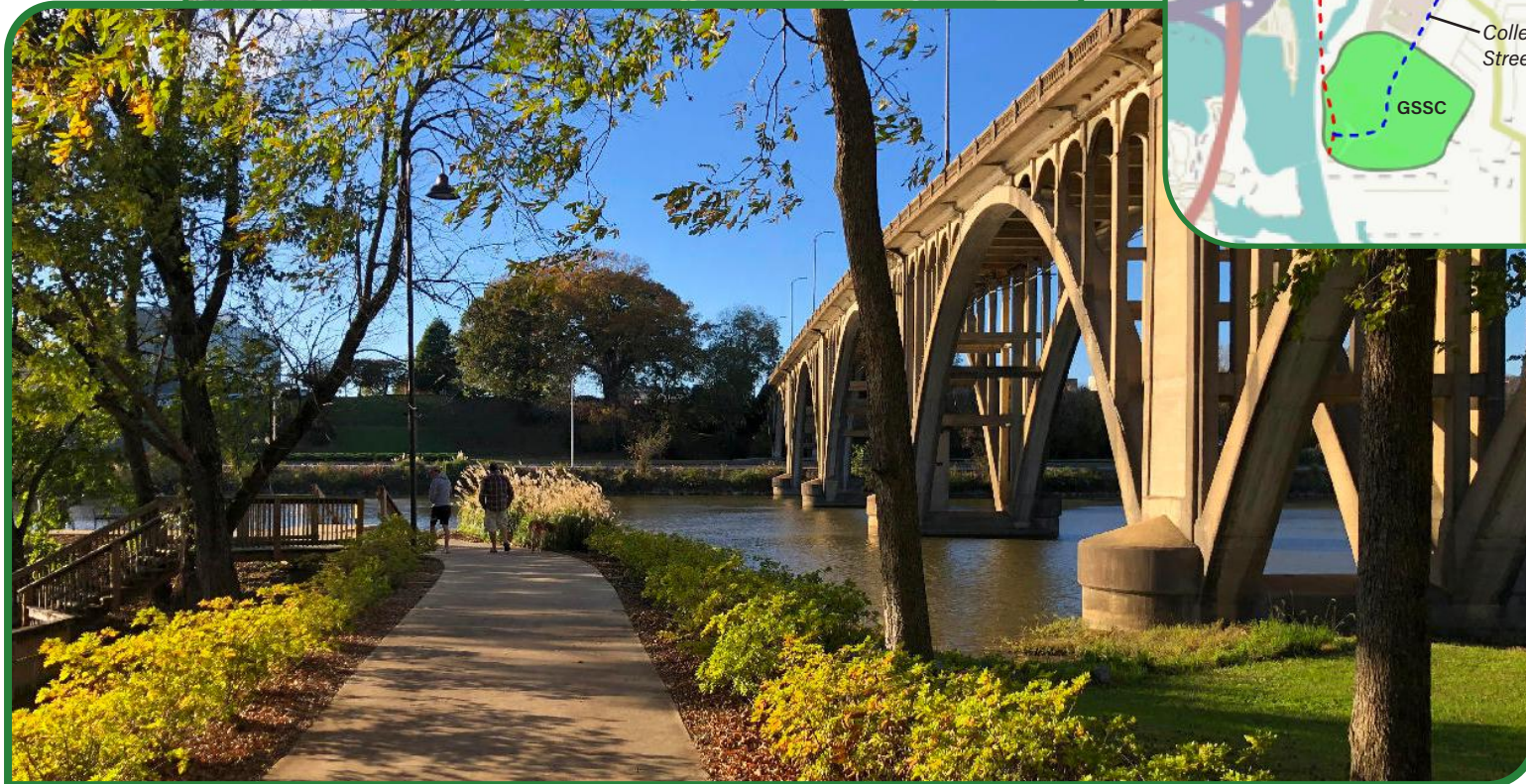
Cantilevered Pedestrian Bridge over Black Creek at Randall St, looking north

Action 3

Expand the East Gadsden Riverwalk greenway and create a neighborhood loop with on-street trails.

East Gadsden's Riverwalk at Coosa Landing is the city's premier riverfront recreational space and a significant asset for the entire East Gadsden community. However, the current extent of this riverwalk is limited to a small portion of East Gadsden's expansive riverfront. This riverwalk should be expanded to further activate additional sections of the East Gadsden waterfront and link key destinations along the Coosa River. Expansion of the riverwalk should occur in two main phases. The first phase of the expansion should be directed southward from the riverwalk's current terminus behind the Riverview Plaza Shopping Mall to Dub Parker Park. The alignment of the southward extension would travel under the Hwy 759 bridges and require a series of footbridges and boardwalks to traverse sloughs and wetlands. The southward extension will provide expanded connectivity to key sites in East Gadsden including the Summer Waters Apartments, the campus of Gadsden State Community College, the newly renovated sports complex at Gadsden State Community College, and Dub Parker Park. The second major phase of the riverwalk expansion should be directed northward from the riverwalk's current terminus at Coosa Landing to the Gadsden Regional Medical Center. The alignment of the northward extension would follow Hood Ave into the former Goodyear site and along the river through the former Gadsden Steam Plant site and on to Goodyear Ave. This phase would provide expanded connectivity to key sites such as Walmart, potential future redevelopment sites at Goodyear and the Steam Plant, and the hospital. Sidewalk construction and improvements should be implemented on College Dr, Padenreich Ave, Broad St, Hoke St, Vinson Ave, and Goodyear Ave in order to transform the expanded riverwalk into a complete loop that connects the interior of the East Gadsden Community with this new amenity.

Street based trail example for non-riverfront trails

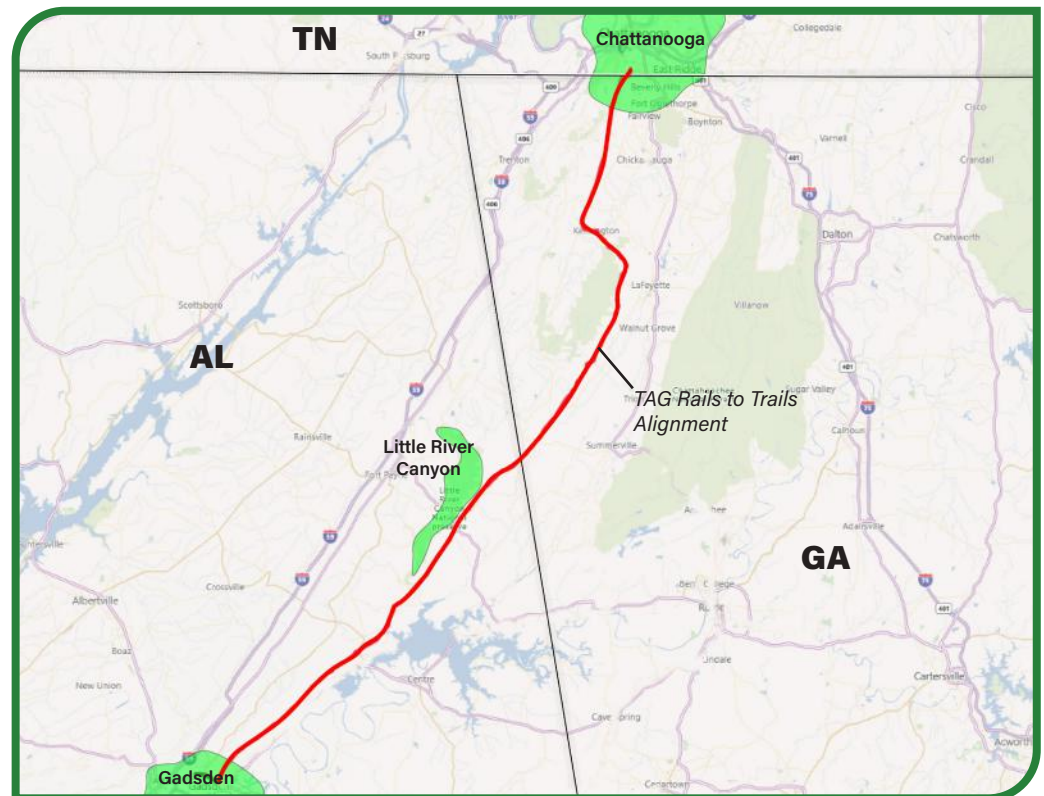


Existing East Gadsden riverfront trail typology to be expanded

Action 4

Pursue a regional rail to trail connection from Gadsden to Lake Weiss, Little River Canyon, and Chattanooga.

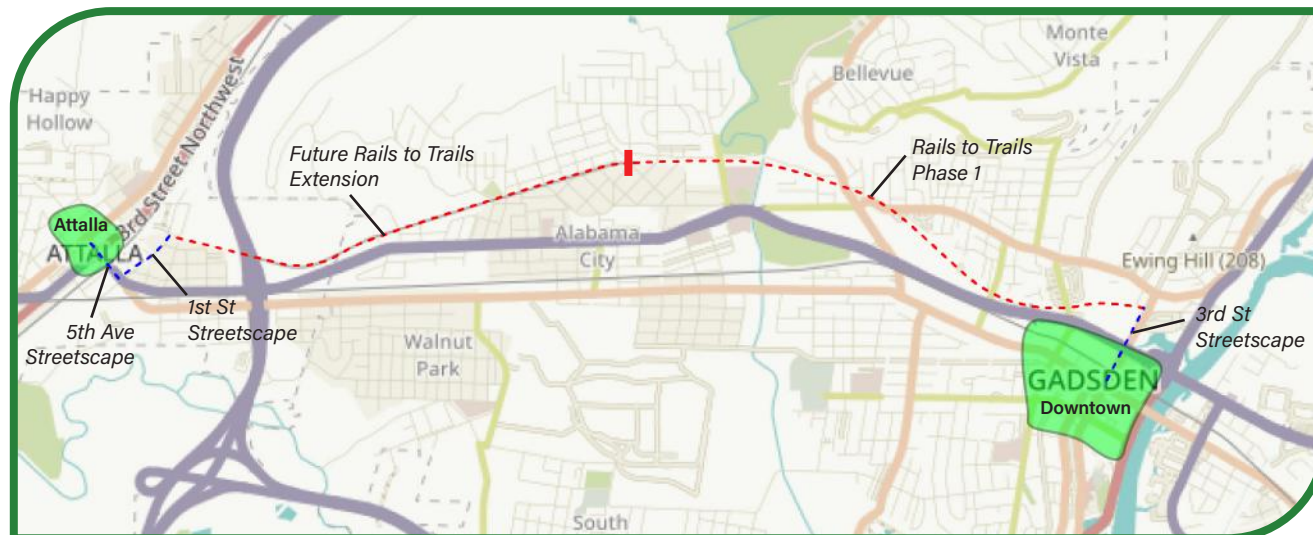
Long distance greenway trails such as the Pinhoti and Chief Ladiga trails are powerful tools for economic development through outdoor recreation. Gadsden is not currently served directly by any such regional greenway trails. The city should coordinate with the East Alabama Regional Planning Commission to establish a regional greenway trail using the decommissioned Tennessee Alabama and Georgia rail line along Town Creek and Owls Hollow Rd. This long-term project will require collaboration between the city, Norfolk Southern, Etowah and Cherokee Counties, the East Alabama Regional Planning Commission, and statewide organizations in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee such as the Alabama Trails Association. Although there are segments of the former rail line that are now under private ownership, there are also large sections of the original right of way that remain intact. This ambitious regional trail would directly connect to the rails to trails project between downtown and Alabama City, linking Downtown Gadsden with regional destinations such as Lake Weiss and Little River Canyon National Preserve. Organizations such as Sweet Trails Alabama and the Singing River Trail can serve as major technical, legislative, and funding support partners for this project.



Action 5

Connect Downtown Gadsden to Downtown Attalla.

Gadsden has the potential to significantly amplify the impact of the rails to trails project between downtown and Alabama City by pursuing an extension of the future greenway from Alabama City to downtown Attalla. Although the stretch of the former rail line currently owned by the city terminates at Cabot Ave, the city should consider acquiring the remainder of the unused trackage from the Alabama Great Southern Railroad between Cabot Ave and the city limits. Gadsden should also collaborate with the City of Attalla to consider acquire the rail line between the city limits and 1st St in Attalla to provide a complete greenway connection from 3rd St in Gadsden to 1st St in Attalla. This would link the three most substantial urban centers in the Gadsden area (downtown, Alabama City, and Attalla) with a 5 mile stretch of uninterrupted off-road trail connection and present the opportunity for trail-based redevelopment and revitalization in each of these communities.



4

Improve neighborhood parks in an effort to revitalize areas

Action 1

Strategically update park amenities to activate and support specific neighborhoods.

Parks can be powerful tools for neighborhood revitalization and help to foster a cohesive sense of community in the surrounding area. The city should focus on updating amenities for parks located in neighborhoods in need of revitalization in order to catalyze reinvestment in those areas. Amenity updates should be designed to create dynamic, attractive, and accessible spaces tailored to the distinct needs of the context neighborhood. Preference for updates should be given to medium and large-scale parks over pocket parks in order to maximize the potential impact of the city's investment. Staffing and programming should also be dedicated to engaging and activating these parks.

The Meighan Sports Complex should be the top priority for upgraded amenities due to its central location in the city and its potential to support a wide variety of activities on its 41-acre footprint. The outdated facilities at this park should be cleared and redeveloped to incorporate an aquatic center, indoor soccer fields, an ice skating rink, pickleball, indoor basketball/ volleyball courts, and a BMX course/ pump track. Additional parks that should be prioritized for amenity upgrades include **Hastings Park** (West Gadsden), **Banks Park** (South Gadsden), **North Gadsden Park** (North Gadsden), and **Adams Park** (East Gadsden). The city should seek public input from these neighborhoods to determine the improvements at each of these parks.

Action 2

Strategically approach the option of consolidating parks and recreation facilities.

Gadsden has a significant surplus of both total parks and overall park acreage for a city of its size, making it very difficult for the city to sufficiently maintain all of its parks in a state of good condition. The city also has difficulty maintaining its numerous community centers. In order to ensure a reliably high standard of maintenance at parks in each of the city's communities, the city should consider reducing its surplus of facilities to more effectively focus department resources. In navigating the delicate process of optimizing urban green spaces, Gadsden must employ strategic criteria for park consolidation. By conducting thorough assessments based on usage patterns (determined via placer software), maintenance costs, and community input, officials can identify underutilized parks that may be candidates for repurposing. Strong preference should be given to residential uses when considering redevelopment options for surplus parks, especially parks in established residential neighborhoods. The city should also consider its rec centers in any consolidation assessment. Overall, the city should promote consolidation as means to achieve a more sustainably sized network of higher quality recreational facilities.

5

Update the city's parks and recreation branding

Action 1

Build a city parks and recreation brand that reflects your current and future assets.

People are attracted to places and organizations that go above and beyond to create a great experience instead of merely providing a basic service. With a flood of entertainment options just a click or short drive away, parks must compete with major brands for consumers' attention. Parks need a strong brand to build awareness and long-term community support. Parks without a solid brand struggle to raise awareness or communicate their unique offerings. Gadsden should develop a consistent citywide brand platform for its parks and outdoor recreation opportunities that is distinct from other existing city branding. With many parks spanning various locations across the city, the new Gadsden parks brand should be prominent throughout the parks system in order to establish a consistent user experience and build user loyalty.

Action 2

Market your assets and improvements through experience-based advertising.

In order to maximize the coverage and local awareness of recreational opportunities in Gadsden, the city should commit to an ongoing regional marketing campaign that leverages local parks as the foundation of an emerging ecotourism economy. By showcasing the diverse recreational opportunities, natural beauty, and community events in Gadsden's parks, the city can stimulate interest, drawing both local residents and tourists from outside the city to spend time in these spaces and patronize area businesses. The new parks and recreation brand should be integrated into this regional marketing effort, which should be coordinated with Greater Gadsden Area Tourism.

Examples of Municipal Branding specific to Parks and Recreation



New York City, NY



Austin, TX



ROME-FLOYD
PARKS&RECREATION

Rome, GA



West Lafayette, IN

6

Define administrative parks and recreation goals and success indicators

Action 1

Create a citywide parks and rec master plan

With such an expansive network of facilities, it is important that Gadsden implements a master plan specifically tailored to the city's parks and recreation. A parks and recreation master plan would supplement the broad recommendations from the comprehensive plan, providing a more in-depth level of analysis and recommendations for department operations and capital improvements at each site in the city. A master plan for parks and recreation should incorporate a needs assessment for determining potential consolidation of underutilized parks. A community-driven process should include extensive public engagement to strategically allocate resources in a way that aligns park amenities and services with the community's recreational preferences.

Action 2

Establish an internal vision for staffing, programming, funding, and budgeting

Creating a robust internal vision will be critical to the success of the city's Parks and Recreation Department. During the parks and rec master planning process, staff with the parks department should collaborate with consultants to develop an ambitious but actionable vision for departmental operations and goals. Organizational planning should cover staffing needs such as trainings, opportunities for expanded programming, funding needs for capital projects and specification of sustainable funding sources, and methods for effective budgeting.

nrpa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=7c489194b8c049099b1ad510c8617e4d&folderid=f49102d095e445a689108609ce7862ae#

Maps MONADY | Planning UrbanFootprint Fidelity | Retirement SYNCR Employee P... Social Explorer OpenStreetMap Topo Map OnTheMap ALDOT counts Dashboard | Wix.com Survey Monkey USGS DEM Download All Bookmarks

NRPA Master Plan Case Studies

A Story Map | INRPA National Recreation and Parks Association

[Welcome!](#)
[Less than 49,999 People](#)
[50,000-99,999](#)
[100,000-250,000](#)
[More than 250,000 People](#)
[All Master Plans](#)

Chamblee, GA

2016
30,000 people
Strengths: Evaluations & Recommendations

The Chamblee Parks and Recreation Department currently has eight park locations on approximately 76.11 acres. The department's goals and objectives are to provide quality activities, programs and events that enhance the quality of life for the city. With these goals and the department's mission in mind, it was decided to embark on a master plan process which will guide the facility and its services in the future. The purpose of the *City of Chamblee Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan* is to evaluate the department's current facilities and programs to develop recommendations for a shared vision of meeting the recreation needs of Chamblee residents over the next 10 years.

Duluth, GA

2016
27,000 people
Strengths: Existing Facilities Inventory

Duluth is a city of approximately 10.35 square miles, located 25 miles northeast of Atlanta in Gwinnett County. The City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Department is considered a "turnkey" department, providing facilities and maintenance of their six parks. Duluth is a fast-growing community, attracting families and residents who appreciate the quality of life and services offered within the city. This report provides an update to the 2007 *Duluth Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. It notes completed projects, planned improvements and upcoming opportunities to expand and enhance the Duluth Parks and Recreation system. It is intended to be used as a road map of priorities to guide budgetary planning and expenditures.

Laramie, WY

2016
32,000 people
Strengths: Natural Areas & Trails

The *Laramie Parks and Recreation Master Plan* has been developed to help Laramie achieve its vision for parks and recreation in the community. The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee developed a vision for the plan that is based on the public's comments, background information, other plans/codes and the committee members' experience and expertise. The vision is intended to provide the inspiration and framework for the plan, which includes generalized goals and direction.

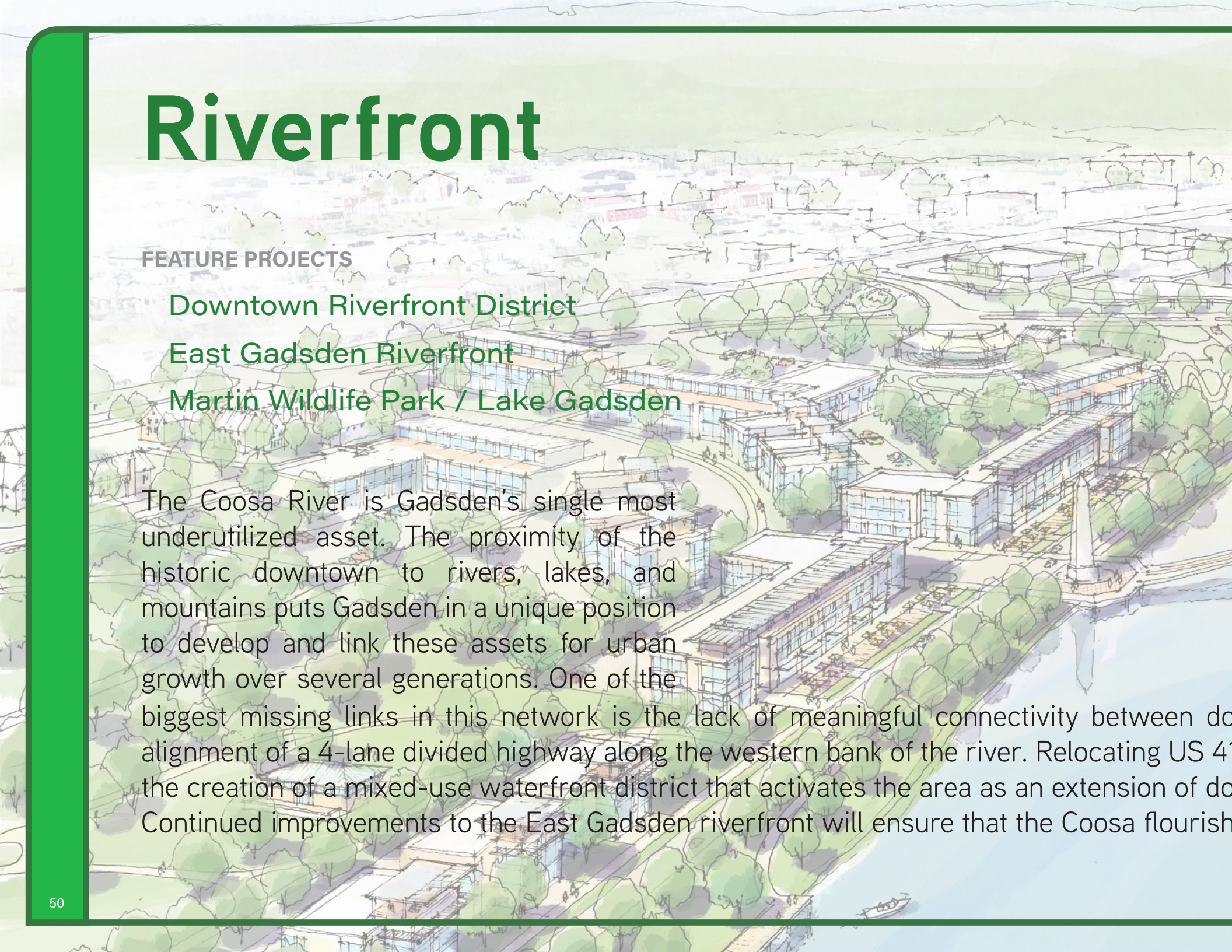
Westerville, OH

2016
39,700 people
Strengths: Holistic Community Involvement

<http://nrpa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=7c489194b8c049099b1ad510c8617e4d&folderid=f49102d095e445a689108609ce7862ae#>

The National Recreation and Parks Association maintains an online repository of case studies for Parks and Rec Master Plans. Case study examples are organized and sortable by individual strengths such as facilities inventory, community engagement, or graphics. Plans can also be sorted by population size for more accurate comparison. Gadsden's Parks and Rec department should consult this resource when developing a Gadsden Parks and Rec Master Plan.

Riverfront

An aerial sketch of a riverfront development plan. The sketch shows a river at the bottom right, with a bridge crossing it. Along the riverbank, there are several long, rectangular buildings with blue roofs and large windows. There are also green spaces with trees and a winding path. In the background, more buildings and trees are visible, suggesting a larger urban area.

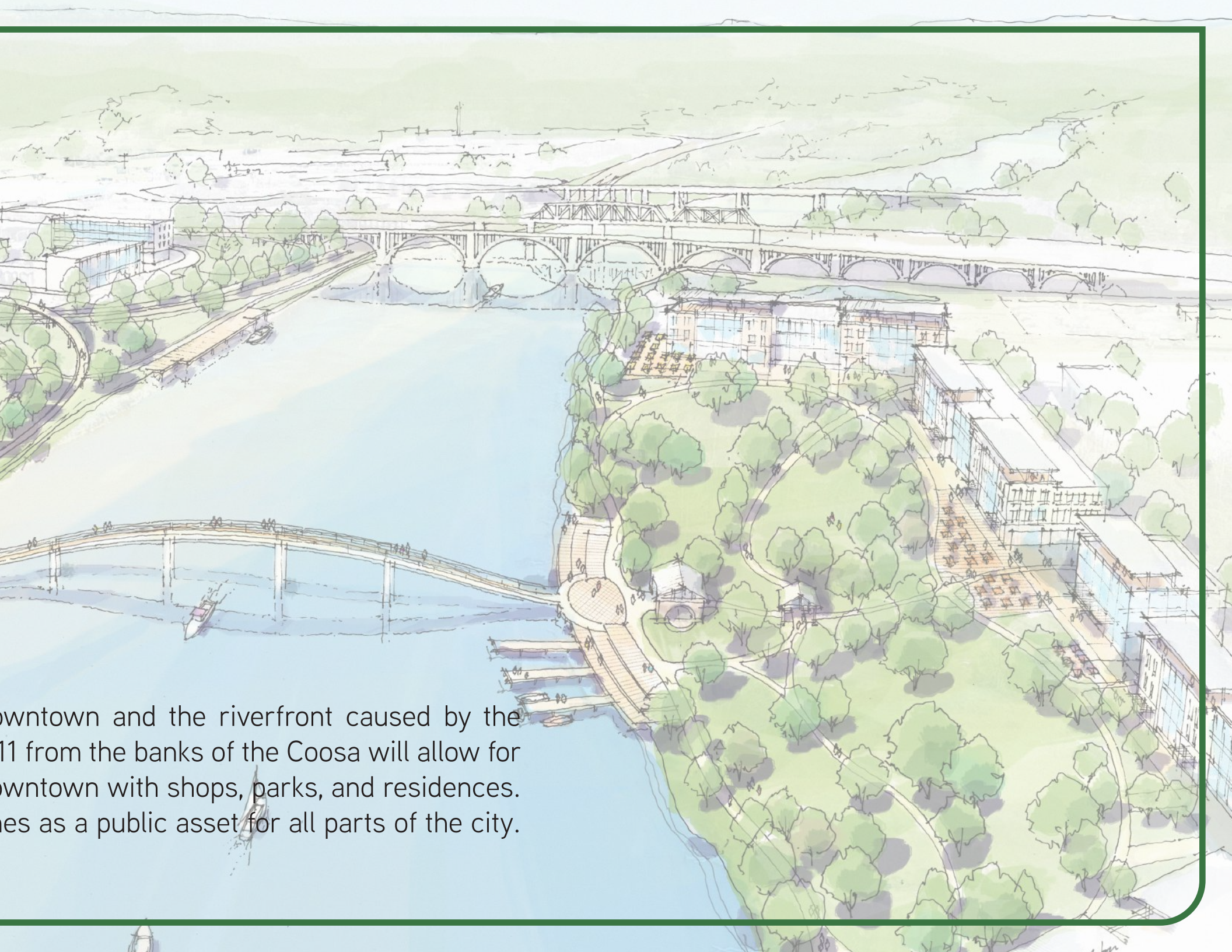
FEATURE PROJECTS

Downtown Riverfront District

East Gadsden Riverfront

Martin Wildlife Park / Lake Gadsden

The Coosa River is Gadsden's single most underutilized asset. The proximity of the historic downtown to rivers, lakes, and mountains puts Gadsden in a unique position to develop and link these assets for urban growth over several generations. One of the biggest missing links in this network is the lack of meaningful connectivity between downtown and the riverfront. The proposed alignment of a 4-lane divided highway along the western bank of the river. Relocating US 41 to the riverfront and the creation of a mixed-use waterfront district that activates the area as an extension of downtown. Continued improvements to the East Gadsden riverfront will ensure that the Coosa flourishes.



owntown and the riverfront caused by the
11 from the banks of the Coosa will allow for
owntown with shops, parks, and residences.
es as a public asset for all parts of the city.

Downtown Riverfront District

Develop a Riverfront District by realigning US HWY 411 near downtown.

Quality riverfront engagement is a critical element of a more robust future for Gadsden. The most unconnected portion of Gadsden's riverfront is the section of HWY 411 that runs along the north west edge of the Coosa River. Not only is this section of the riverfront the most disconnected from community opportunity, it is a very critical section of the city due to its untapped connections to its high value surroundings like Gadsden's historical downtown, existing parks, a performance venue, and the regional medical center. A realignment of HWY 411 should be conducted to remove HWY 411 from the river's edge to create and opportunity for a linear waterfront park, a pedestrian and parking-oriented complete street, and a mix of residential and retail development to create a riverfront district with a direct connection to Broad Street.

Action 1

Realign US HWY 411 away from the downtown riverfront.

Action 2

Work with developers to create a phased development plan.

Action 3

Build a linear riverfront park with a marina.

Action 4

Establish a complete street edge to support new riverfront development.

Action 5

Build a pedestrian bridge to connect to East Gadsden

Action 6

Recruit developers for anchor residential and retail construction, including a boutique hotel/ resort at 90 Broad St.

Action 7

Create a strong link between the new riverfront district and the historic downtown through pedestrian connections, wayfinding, and public art.

FEATURE PROJECT



Preliminary Concept Riverfront District Master Plan

East Gadsden Riverfront

Create a complete waterfront with development connecting Dub Parker Park to Gadsden Regional Medical Center.

With East Gadsden's existing riverwalk and natural riverbank, a larger vision for a comprehensive riverfront park with adjacent riverfront-oriented development for the east side of the river is easy to imagine. By developing a riverfront park and greenway that connects Dub Parker Park to the Gadsden Regional Medical Center, the city can create extensive community revitalization for this area of the city and its existing resources. A phased development plan should be created to finalize and implement the conceptual design elements detailed in the comprehensive plan, including a trail alignment, important connection points, an impacted property inventory, a phasing plan, potential development impacts, and needed zoning updates.

Action 1

East Gadsden waterfront master plan

Action 2

Design trail routes

Action 3

Waterfront park amenities adjacent to the Gadsden Sports Complex and Gadsden State Community College

Action 4

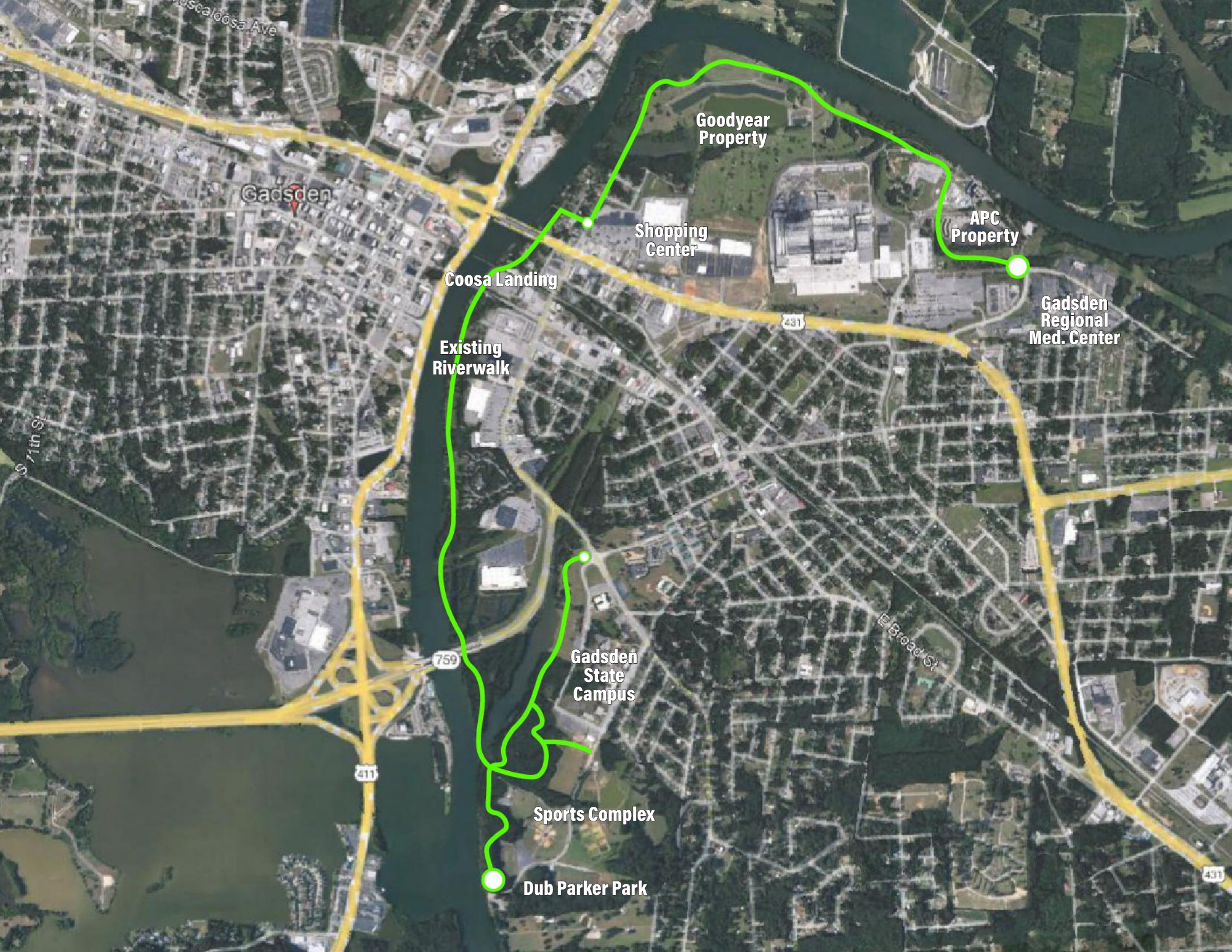
A pedestrian connection to the large retail center on E Meighan Blvd

Action 5

A development oriented master plan of the Goodyear property and the Alabama Power Plant Property

Action 6

A phasing plan for implementation



Gadsden

Goodyear
Property

Shopping
Center

APC
Property

Gadsden
Regional
Med. Center

Coosa Landing

Existing
Riverwalk

Gadsden
State
Campus

Sports Complex

Dub Parker Park

S 7th St

E Broad St

431

759

411

431

Martin Wildlife Park / Lake Gadsden

Improve and expand the community's connectivity to Lake Gadsden through the Martin Wildlife Park.

The James D. Martin Wildlife Park and its trails and park amenities are a vital but underutilized connecting point to the rest of the city. As the city's longest riverfront recreational area and trail, improving access to this existing amenity will have immediate and lasting impacts on connected residential areas and regional tourism. Undeveloped rights of way to the north of the greenway should be developed as neighborhood trailheads. Key improvements include connections to the adjacent residential neighborhoods to the north. Potential neighborhood trailheads should include existing rights of way like Oak Street and Argyle Park, and South 6th Street. A South 6th Street connection could also be a critical future on-street trail connecting the Wildlife Greenway to Downtown. Another key improvement to the waterfront park is an improved trailhead at the Gadsden Mall with a kayak and canoe launch and potentially a small-scale rental boat operation.

Action 1

Trailhead connection to the adjacent neighborhood at Oak St and Argyle Park

Action 2

Trailhead connection at S 6th Street that could eventually evolve to a larger streetscape improvement providing pedestrian and bicycle connection to Broad Street and Downtown

Action 3

Improved Gadsden Mall trailhead

Action 4

A kayak & canoe put-in at the mall trailhead with the potential for a small boat rental operation

Action 5

Enhance pedestrian experience by expanding boardwalk with lighting and seating around the mall property

FEATURE PROJECT



Boardwalk at the James Martin Wildlife Park



RIVERFRONT GOALS

1

Develop a downtown-adjacent riverfront district

Action 1

Realign US Hwy 411 away from the western bank of the Coosa River near downtown.

The current alignment of US Hwy 411 through the downtown area is detrimental to the utilization of the riverfront as an active urban amenity. In order to facilitate the creation of a downtown riverfront district, the city should pursue funding for the potential realignment of the highway based on feasibility studies. The city should coordinate with regional entities such as ALDOT and the East Alabama Regional Planning Commission to seek grant funding for this project.

Action 2

Work with developers to create a phased development plan.

Successful creation of a mixed-use riverfront district will require the development of a master plan that can be implemented in phases over several years. The city needs to work with an architectural firm to develop conceptual plans for an urban-style mixed-use district, including schematics and construction plans.

Action 3

Build a linear riverfront park with a marina.

One of the most critical elements in a future riverfront district is the expansion and enhancement of the riverfront park at the Coosa Boardwalk to beautify and activate the water's edge. This will ensure that the area immediately along the river remains a part of the public realm with access by the general public. Any design for the proposed riverfront district must maintain full public access along the entirety of the river's edge. The park should also include docks and/ or a marina to extend activity over the water's edge and more intimately engage visitors with the Coosa River.

Action 4

Establish a complete street edge to support new riverfront development

Another important element of the proposed riverfront district is the creation of a riverfront road with a complete street design. A street along the riverfront has the potential to be an exciting way to experience the riverfront park while establishing new opportunities for adjacent development. Any design for the proposed riverfront district should include an urbanized riverfront street that increases access along the water and invites people into the district.

Action 5

Build a pedestrian bridge to connect to East Gadsden.

A signature component of the reimagined riverfront will be a pedestrian bridge connecting the downtown riverfront to the East Gadsden riverfront. This will provide a scenic connection dedicated for cyclists and pedestrians, becoming an instant landmark in the city and would be the first pedestrian bridge on the Coosa River, making it a regional attraction that would support walkable tourism in the city. Any design for the proposed riverfront district must include an enhanced pedestrian connection across the river. An organic "wave" pattern is proposed for this pedestrian bridge to enhance the experience and aesthetic of this unique placemaking feature.

Action 6

Recruit developers for anchor residential and retail construction, including a boutique hotel/ resort at 90 Broad St.

A crucial element of the riverfront district will include the development of a signature hotel (possibly mixed-use) building at the site of the current city hall. In order to maximize the district's tourism potential and increase the city's tax revenue, the city should make sure that the riverfront redevelopment includes a signature lodging opportunity on the waterfront. Lodging should be included in an early phase of the development plan in order to bring in new visitors early on and help catalyze private development interests for the remaining riverfront redevelopment projects. A facility with full-service restaurant, rooftop dining/ bar amenities, and other signature business-class features will elevate Gadsden's status as a destination.

Action 7

Create a strong link between the new riverfront district and the historic downtown through pedestrian connections, wayfinding, and public art.

The new riverfront district should feel like an integral part of the downtown Gadsden experience while maintaining its own unique character and design. Although the proposed riverfront district lies adjacent to the downtown, the potential new alignment of Hwy 411 should not act as a barrier between the two districts. Every effort should be made to optimize walkable connectivity between downtown and the new district, including potential for a pedestrian bridge over the Hwy 411 and enhanced grade-level pedestrian crossings. Sidewalks should be included both along and across Hwy 411, with welcoming elements such as street trees and public art that encourage people to explore the area on foot.



Ideal boutique hotel style/ typology (Homewood, AL)

Conceptual Pedestrian Bridge



2

Expand the Riverwalk at Coosa Landing

Action 1

Develop an East Gadsden waterfront master plan.

East Gadsden has miles of expansive waterfront real estate, only a fraction of which are accessible and activated. In addition to the master plan for the downtown riverfront district, the city should also develop a master plan to further activate the East Gadsden riverfront with recreation and development. The general plan for the East Gadsden riverfront should include a mixture of both riverfront greenway trails and adjacent development that engages with the water.

Action 2

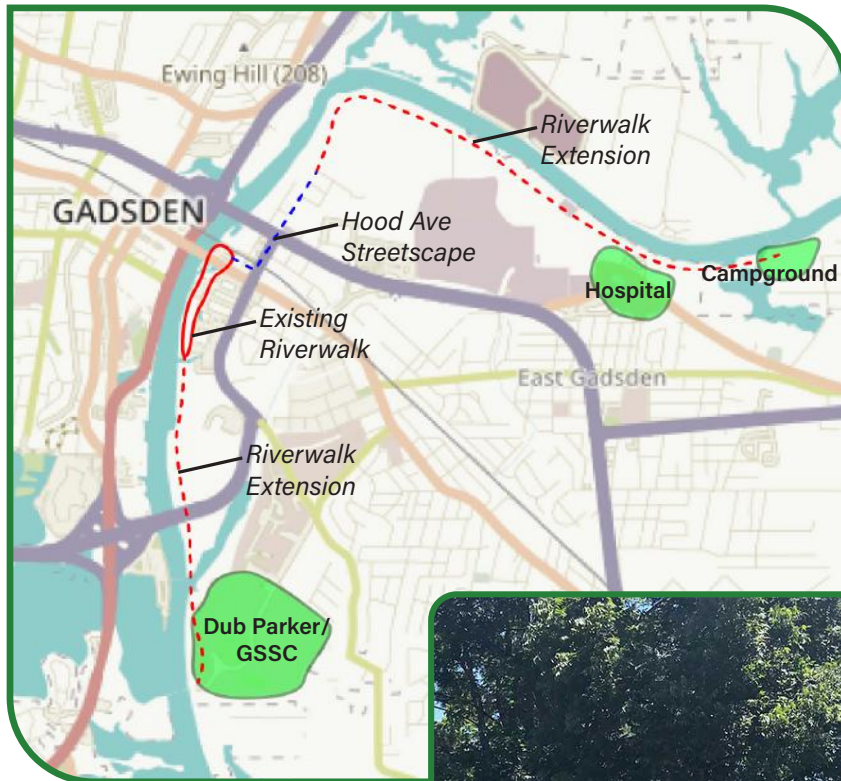
Design trail routes.

One of the most important elements of a complete East Gadsden riverfront is the inclusion of greenway trails and linear green spaces adjacent to the water's edge. This will ensure that public access is maintained along the waterfront and help tie different development areas together with walkable infrastructure. Any East Gadsden riverfront redevelopment plan should include riverfront trails from Dub Parker Park/ Gadsden State all the way to Gadsden Regional Medical Center.

Action 3

Waterfront park amenities adjacent to the Gadsden State Campus and Sports Complex.

Despite its prime location on the riverfront, Gadsden State's campus lacks a meaningful connection to the Coosa River. Amenities such as pavilions, picnic tables, a boardwalk, etc. should be added to the southern half of campus to enhance the student experience by activating the campus waterfront. The city should establish a joint partnership with Gadsden State and Alabama Power to increase connectivity to the Coosa River at Gadsden State's campus.



Tillison Bend Campground
(riverwalk's northern terminus)



Dub Parker Park (riverwalk's southern terminus)

Action 4

Streetscape enhancements on Hood Ave to connect existing riverwalk to East Gadsden's northern shore.

Most of the East Gadsden riverfront trails can be established as a true off-road greenway along the water's edge. However, there is a stretch of the riverfront between Broad St and 7th Ave where a waterfront greenway is not feasible due to the private residential properties on Lake St. For this section, the riverfront trail should divert from the off-road greenway trail at Coosa Landing to an on-street facility with sidewalks and wayfinding along Hood Ave. The riverfront trail will switch back to an off-road greenway facility at Hood Ave's northern terminus with 7th Ave, continuing along East Gadsden's northern shore.

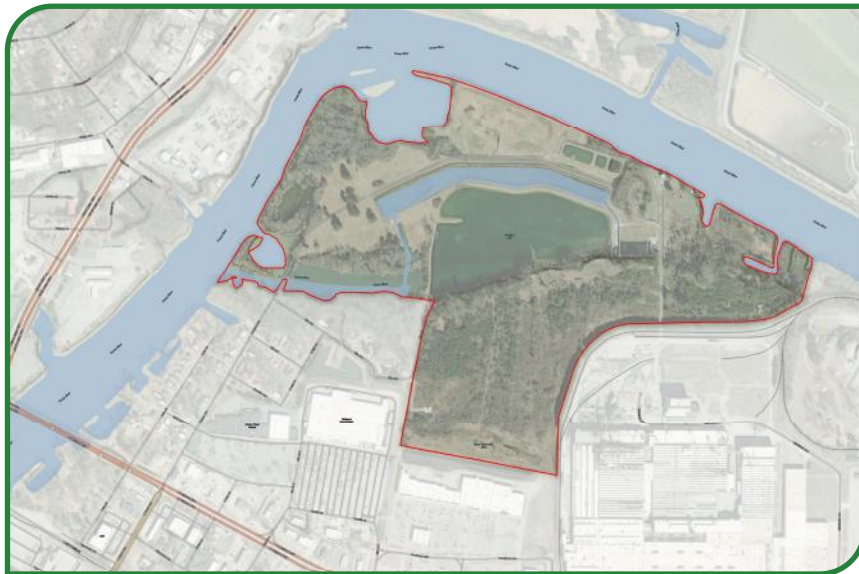


Existing Hood Ave streetscape looking north (*sidewalks/ bike lanes proposed*)

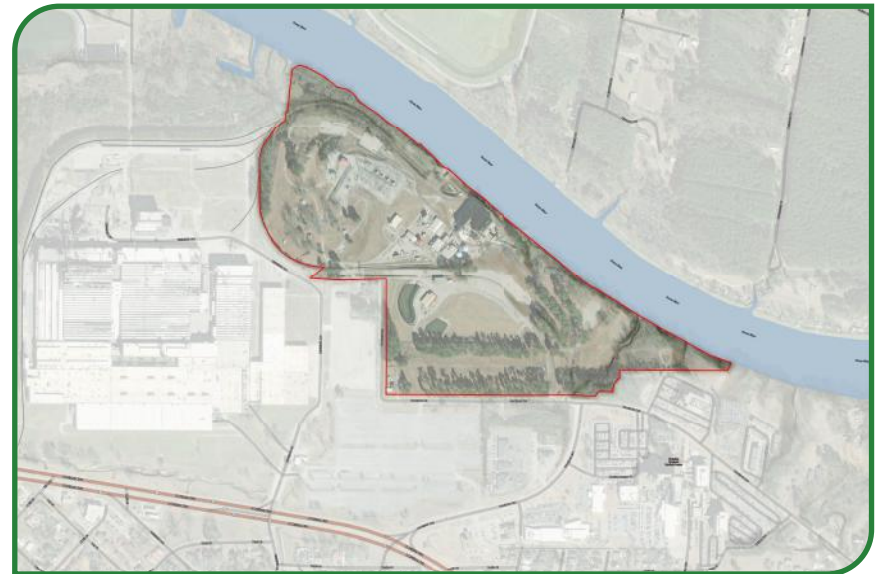
Action 5

Create phased, development-oriented master plans for the former golf course by Goodyear and the historic Gadsden Steam Plant site.

With operational changes at the former Goodyear plant and Gadsden Steam Plant, the city has the potential to redevelop hundreds of acres in East Gadsden along the neighborhood's northern waterfront. The former River Trace Golf Course and additional area around Goodyear Lake; as well as the decommissioned Alabama Power facility; are both expansive sites with the potential to support development of new uses such as waterfront housing communities. The city should work with a firm to craft redevelopment plans for both of these properties and incorporate site planning that engages new development on these sites with the expanded waterfront greenway trails.



Surplus Goodyear property/ River Trace Golf Club proposed development area



Former Gadsden Steam Plant proposed development area

3

Improve and expand the community's connectivity to Lake Gadsden

Action 1

Trailhead connection to the adjacent neighborhood at Oak St and Argyle Park.

Increasing access and connectivity between the Martin Wildlife Park and adjacent residential neighborhoods is an important step in increasing awareness and usage of this unique city park. The city should consider building a neighborhood trailhead connection at the intersection of Oak St and Reynolds Cir to connect with the waterfront greenway trail. The trailhead could also be located in Argyle Park with the park serving as a neighborhood gateway to the wildlife preserve. This would provide a more walkable connection between the historic Turrentine/ Haralson district and Lake Gadsden.

Action 2

Trailhead connection at 6th St with improved streetscape connection to Downtown/ Broad St.

Another spot for a potential neighborhood trailhead to Lake Gadsden is near the intersection of 6th St and Oak St. The undeveloped 6th St right of way can provide a dedicated pedestrian connection between the Edenwood neighborhood and Lake Gadsden. With enhanced sidewalk connections farther along 6th St, this street could become the primary pedestrian corridor between downtown and the wildlife park.

Action 3

Improved Gadsden Mall trailhead with trail extension across Hwy 411 to connect Lake Gadsden to the Coosa Riverfront.

The trailhead for the wildlife park located at the Gadsden Mall is the most prominent, publicly located access point for recreational uses on Lake Gadsden. With the amount of visitors to the Gadsden Mall, this trailhead should be enhanced with wayfinding signage to Noccalula Falls and a sculptural/ public art element. For enhanced connectivity between this important trailhead terminus and the emerging downtown riverwalk district, the city should extend the sidewalk connection from the mall trailhead eastward to link directly with the riverfront trail. It is also critical for the city to work with ALDOT to implement enhanced pedestrian crossing safety measures on Hwy 411 at the River Rd stoplight.

Action 4

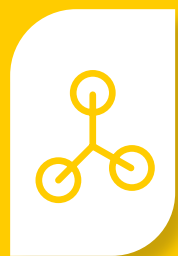
Install a kayak/ canoe put-in at the Gadsden Mall trailhead with a potential small boat rental operation.

Beyond the placemaking improvements at the mall trailhead, it would be a benefit for the area if the city took measures to help recreationally activate Lake Gadsden. The city should work to set up a small boat rental operation for visitors to rent kayaks, canoes, paddleboards, etc. for use on the lake. The city should also invest in construction of a boat launch to allow for individual usage and attract a group to set up a rental operation.

Action 5

Enhance the pedestrian experience along Lake Gadsden by expanding boardwalk with lighting and seating around the Gadsden Mall

An opportunity to expand walkability and sense of place along the lakefront is to extend the boardwalk path south along the rest of the mall property. It is important that the landscaped edge also be continued to beautify and enhance the experience at the mall and on the lake. The city should also work with the mall owners to consider converting the western overflow parking lot into a landscaped park space that would provide an additional amenity to both mall visitors and recreational visitors. With the proposed extension of I-759 and the new grocery store, fueling pumps, and traffic, this could become a prime stopping point for tourists. The site should be used to “sell Gadsden” and draw travelers into the city. EV charging stations should be considered as a potential addition to the site to draw in more visitors.



The Connected City

Mobility & Corridors

FEATURE PROJECTS

- Hwy 411 Realignment
- Noccalula Parkway Improvements
- Sidewalk Gap Connections
- Citywide Pavement Plan
- I-759 Extension
- Airport Enhancements

Arts & Culture

FEATURE PROJECTS

- Amphitheater Improvements
- Arts Commission
- Broad St Bridge Lighting
- Alabama City Arts District



Broad Street Bridge

Mobility & Corridors

FEATURE PROJECTS

Hwy 411 Realignment

Noccalula Parkway Improvements

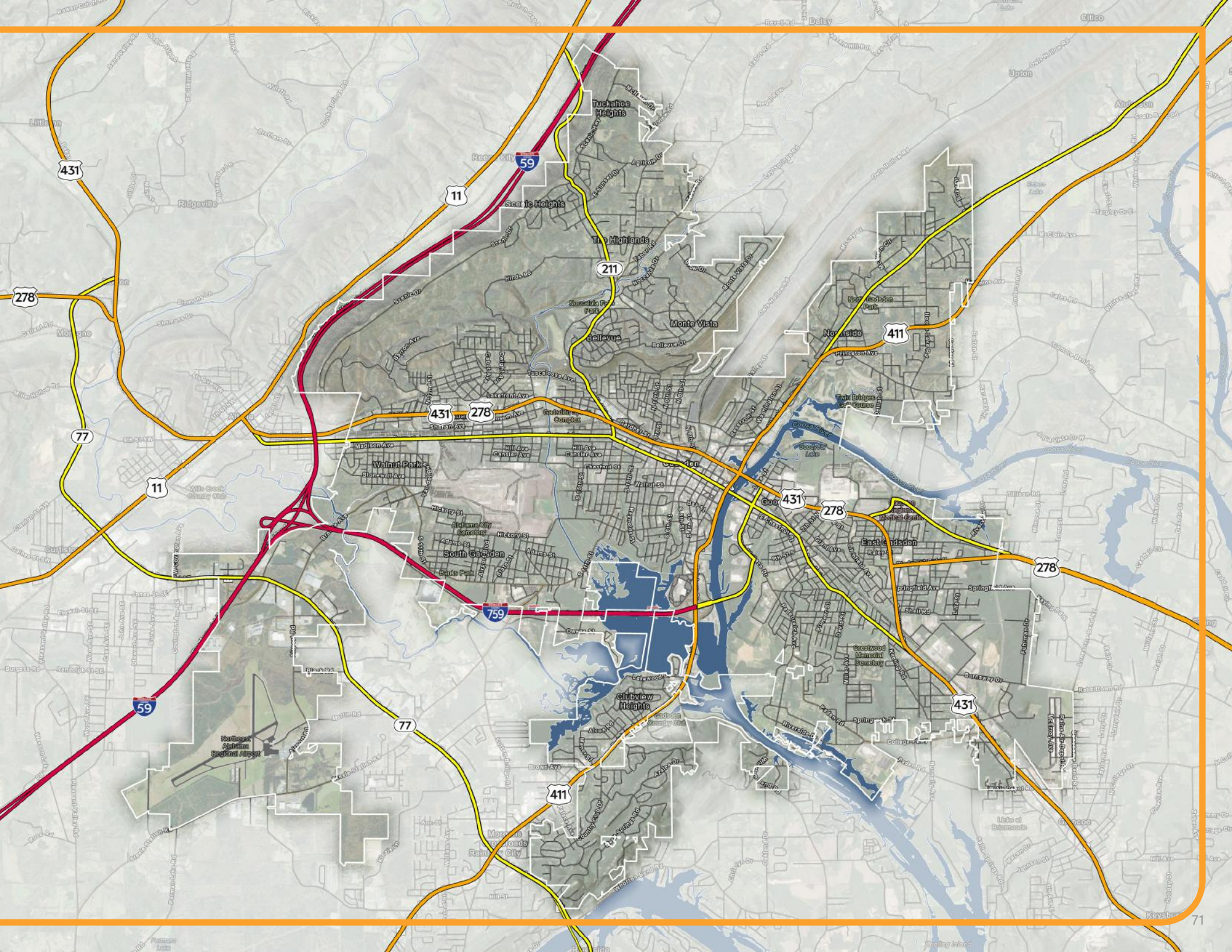
Sidewalk Gap Connections

Citywide Pavement Plan

I-759 Extension

Airport Enhancements

Transportation networks and development corridors play a fundamental role in shaping the livability and accessibility of the overall community. Highways, city streets, rail lines, waterways, and trails are all part of a multi-modal network that supports the movement of people and goods throughout the area and undergirds the local economy. Mobility networks are also a major equity concern as they connect residents to economic opportunity. ***A historic focus on moving as many cars through the area as quickly as possible has resulted in an unbalanced network with limited options and dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.*** Mobility and corridor projects in the city will focus on creating a more balanced transportation network for all modes while coordinating corridor land uses to optimize development potential.



Hwy 411 Realignment

Realign HWY 411 to allow for activation of the riverfront in this highly underutilized area.

A highway that parallels the waterfront is an obvious opportunity for the city. This underutilized land can provide Gadsden with a critical regional waterfront amenity that provides quality of life, recreational opportunities, and place-based development. The section of HWY 411 between Riverview Medical Center and City Hall is especially undervalued due to its adjacent resources, several parks, a hospital, and, most importantly, a downtown that is unconnected to the river. Steps should be taken to realign HWY 411 to provide the city with what could be its most exciting market potential for a new riverfront district that connects the Riverfront to a place-based development district that again connects a revitalized riverfront to a growing Downtown Gadsden. With the 759 extension, the performance of HWY 411's regional vehicle connectivity needs should be reduced. Steps should be taken so that the new highway alignment and design does not create another barrier to the new waterfront district. Design for the new HWY 411 section should include safety improvements such as sidewalks, a north-south crossing connecting Downtown to the Riverfront, and beautification, such as landscaped medians. Long-term improvements should include a pedestrian bridge near the amphitheater to provide an uninterrupted multi-use connection between Downtown and the new riverfront district.

Action 1

Continue realignment study for this section of HWY 411

Action 3

Continue to pursue federal and state funding for the realignment

Action 2

Establish a cost-benefit analysis beginning with a development master plan for the vacated area and its surroundings

Action 4

Ensure the realignment design does not conflict with the vision for its urban surroundings and is not a north-south pedestrian barrier

FEATURE PROJECT



Chattanooga Highway: Removed in 1990



Potential realignment plan for US HWY 411

Noccalula Parkway Improvements

Create community value improvements along Noccalula Parkway to highlight the Falls as a destination district.

With Noccalula Falls just 450 feet from the indistinct HWY 211 corridor and 500 feet from HWY 211's highway-oriented development, a larger footprint improvement strategy is needed to fully protect and build off one of Alabama's most unique natural assets, especially in this urban setting. Steps should be taken to begin to establish a Noccalula District in the encroaching 211 right-of-way and development patterns. Physical gateways should be established at both the north and south ends of this reclaimed Noccalula district with signage and landscaping. With its undeniable proximity to the falls, the 211/ Black Creek culvert bridge should be beautified both for the park patron and the driver. Safe, buffered sidewalks should be developed along this corridor to establish a walkable district for events, daily recreation, and to redefine the development of this area as a walkable district. Landscape improvements and appropriate lighting should also be added to improve the beautification of the corridor, including landscaped medians where possible.

Action 1

Noccalula-themed signage and landscape gateways

Action 3

Buffered sidewalks and pedestrian lighting and landscaping improvement

Action 2

Aesthetic improvements to the 211/Black Creek Bridge

Action 4

Updated zoning with site design and architectural standards to match the present Noccalula Park's rustic architecture

FEATURE PROJECT



Pedestrian Bridge Concept

Sidewalk Gap Connections

Prioritize, implement, and maintain strategic sidewalk connection projects throughout the city.

With the majority of development having a historic grid, the city is blessed with sidewalk coverage over several areas. However, some larger areas of the city have no sidewalk network, and critical gaps between areas in the city are missing pedestrian connections. Strategic sidewalk investments in Gadsden are an important tool in its efforts to reinforce its housing market. Strategic sidewalk projects should connect currently under-served residential areas to community destinations and commercial nodes. Current areas of the city that are underserved by sidewalks include **South Gadsden, Country Club Drive, Clubview Heights, Lookout Mountain, and North Gadsden**. Strategic sidewalk connections should be planned in these communities and others. It is also important to inventory all existing sidewalk quality to maintain the integrity and strategic improvements of all city sidewalks.

Action 1

Conduct an existing sidewalk inventory assessment and develop a maintenance plan with dedicated funding

Action 2

Lakewood Dr / Alpine View sidewalk corridor

Action 3

South 11th St sidewalk extension

Action 4

Padenreich Ave & Wallace Dr sidewalk connection

Action 5

South 6th St sidewalk extension

Action 6

South 4th St sidewalk extension

FEATURE PROJECT



Complete Sidewalk Network

Citywide Pavement Assessment

Prioritize resurfacing projects for local roads based on a citywide pavement assessment ranking.

Gadsden should conduct a citywide pavement assessment to outline the City's pavement improvement needs. This assessment study would use various forms of street analysis to produce a comprehensive assessment of all city-owned rights of way. Through a current conditions study a prioritization of pavement repair and maintenance projects is determined. Cost projections and funding strategies are developed as part of the priority improvement projects in the assessment. This project would allow the City to proactively assess, plan, improve, and fund needed city streets issues based on need and impact.

Action 1

Conduct a citywide pavement analysis of all roadways in Gadsden

Action 3

Confirm that cost estimates and funding sources are incorporated into any resurfacing plans

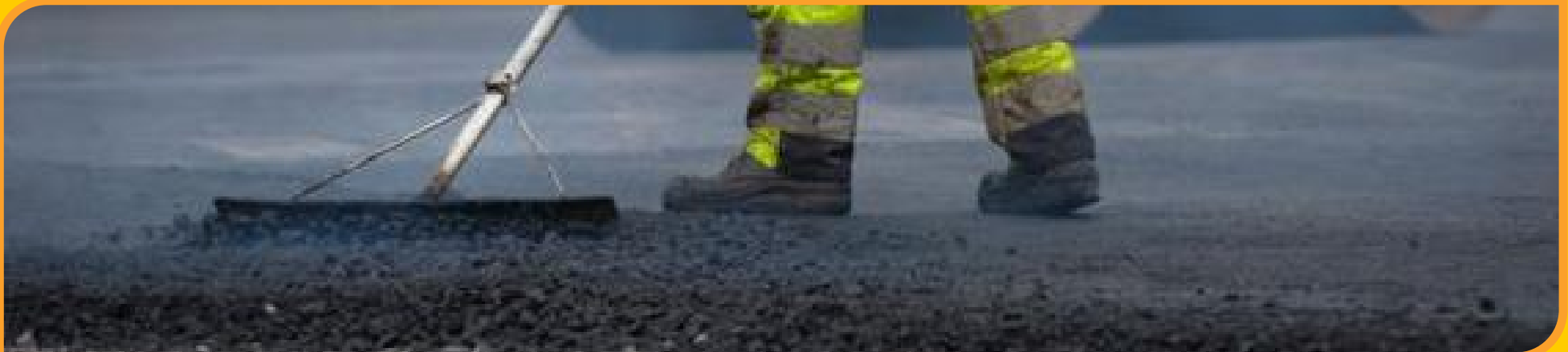
Action 2

Ensure multifaceted performance indicators are used in the conditions assessment to ensure unbiased investments that "take the politics out of paving"

Action 4

Guarantee that the repaving assessment/ plan includes a detailed implementation structure with metrics for updating and tracking of ongoing projects

FEATURE PROJECT



Street resurfacing project

East Gadsden I-759 Connector

Extend I-759 from George Wallace Drive to connect with the Hwy 278 Piedmont Cutoff.

The extension of I-759 will provide an economic boost for the city and the region while alleviating congestion in the area. It is vital that the city prepare for this large-scale change in East Gadsden with proactive zoning updates as part of the I-759 extension process that supports both East Gadsden and the City of Gadsden as a whole. Zoning should be updated to support housing development along the corridor, along with concentrated commercial/retail zoning at intersections along the new East Gadsden connector.

Action 1

Proactively update zoning as part of the extension plan

Action 2

Ensure new zoning supports the needs of East Gadsden and regional needs

Action 3

Support zoning for new housing development along the corridor

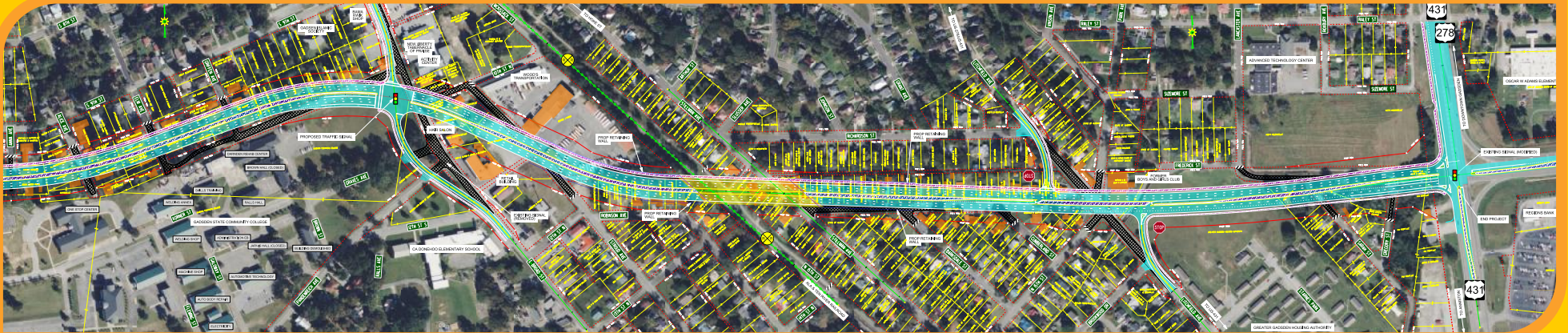
Action 4

Consider strategic commercial/ retail development at major intersections along the corridor

Action 5

Partner with developers to ensure displaced residents have options for adequate housing

FEATURE PROJECT



ALDOT proposed extension of I-759 through East Gadsden



Proposed East Gadsden Connector development typology with sidewalks and mature tree buffer

Beauford, SC

Airport Enhancements

Strategically update and secure funding for improvements to the NE AL Regional Airport.

The Gadsden Airport is an important gateway and economic operation for the City, County, and region. The City should continue to strategically enhance its facilities in order to improve the airport's impact on the City. The City should continue to pursue FAA funding to build a new terminal to replace the existing outdated and failing existing terminal. The City should also deactivate its crosswind runway. This runway is ineligible for FAA support and is rarely used, and a recent analysis indicated that deactivating it and using the area for other aeronautical business would be advantageous to the airport and local revenue and will increase the land capacity of the Gadsden Airport. More and larger hangers should be planned, and spec hangers should be constructed to stimulate this airport hanger improvement strategy. Funding for spec hangers could potentially be assisted through EDA grants, Alabama Power Company loans, and local funding.

Action 1

Procure FAA funding to construct a new Airport Terminal Facility

Action 4

Consider construction of spec hangers to support growth of on-site operations

Action 2

Decommission the cross-wind runway to increase capacity for aviation business development

Action 5

Plan for potential extension of the airport's main runway if the demand arises from new and potential tenants

Action 3

Coordinate zoning to support nearby industrial and residential development

Action 6

Explore options for 3rd party FBO services to improve pilot/customer experience

FEATURE PROJECT



Main terminal facility for the Northeast Alabama Regional Airport





MOBILITY & CORRIDORS GOALS

1

Create Balanced and Safe Streets

Action 1

Adopt a complete streets policy

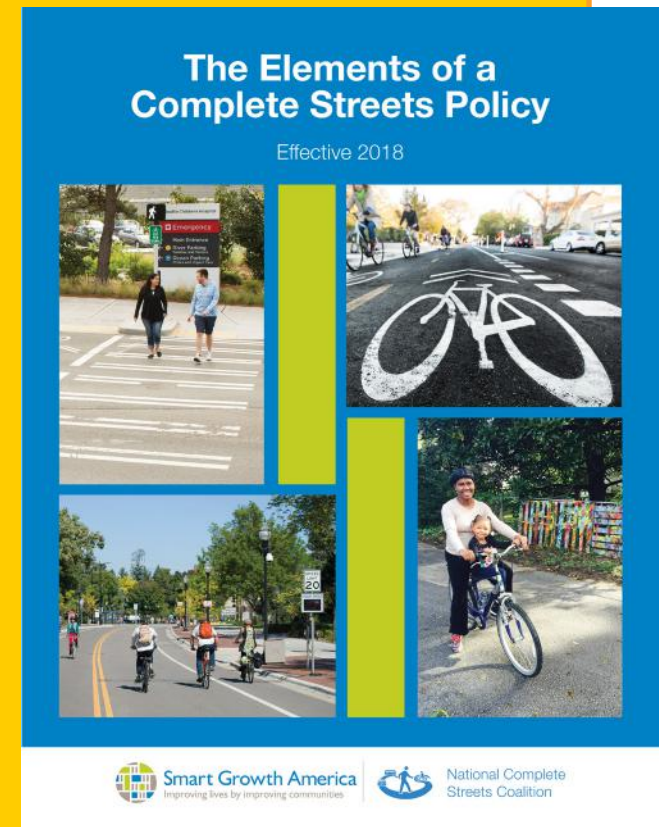
Complete streets policies require all streets to be planned and designed to consider the safety and accessibility of all users. Complete streets are designed, constructed, and operated with consideration to both use and context. They are sized appropriately to their surroundings, and they safely accommodate all modes appropriate to their role in the broader transportation network. Pedestrians, bicyclists, cars, transit, and freight are all taken into account during design and are integrated as appropriate during design and implementation. The City of Gadsden currently does not have a complete streets policy, but other urban cities in Alabama have adopted such policies, including Birmingham, Mobile, and Huntsville. Adopting and implementing a policy would help guide future decisions to prioritize space for safe cycling and walking and improve crossing facilities to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

Reference Materials:

- Adopting a strong Complete Streets policy - Smart Growth America
- CS Policy Elements



smartgrowthamerica.org



Action 2

Become a vision zero city

Vision Zero is an international road safety initiative that aims to achieve a road system with zero fatalities or serious injuries. Vision Zero policies target travel speed, road design, and pedestrian crossing enhancements to improve safety. The Vision Zero campaign first focused on major cities and has since expanded, with Huntsville being the only current city in Alabama with this policy. Gadsden would benefit from working toward the organization's minimum criteria, which include:

- A clear goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and severe injuries
- An official and public commitment from the mayor and/or city council to that goal
- A Vision Zero plan or strategy in place
- Engagement by key city departments (including police, transportation, and public health)
- Resources are available at www.visionzeronetwork.org

Action 3

Integrate transportation technologies into the system

There is a need to improve the use of technology to gain information on vehicles, driver behavior, traffic patterns, etc., for roadway efficiency and future planning. This includes technology that improves intersections for multimodal crossings, as well as digital and dynamic signage that directs people to important places and makes them aware of important transportation issues. Use the Alabama Transportation Institute as a resource, as they are affiliated with research groups aligned with emerging technologies. The city should also regularly assess (perhaps annually) and update signal timing technology. The city should revise protocols and invest in staff training to fully utilize GIS-based software (mapping) to improve the efficiency and prioritization of street maintenance, sidewalk improvements, and other infrastructure improvements.

Action 4

Proactively pursue funding for improvements of existing roadway network

Continue to work with local grant writers to pursue state and federal grants based on priority improvement needs. State grants like ALDOT's ATRIP-II, TAP, the Rebuild Program, and the Industrial Access Program should be strategically applied for annual for priority road improvements. A growing menu of federal grants should also be strategically tracked and pursued, including RAISE and the new PROJECT grant. A sample of existing city-owned right-of-way improvements include:

- East Broad Street
- South 11th Street
- Tabor Road
- Walnut Street
- Hoke Street

Action 5

Adopt local street design standards

Gadsden should adopt internal engineering standards for their streets and be sure to reference the recommendations from this plan, other relevant planning efforts in the area/region, and national resources like the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). Additionally, the city should explore opportunities in the future for updating design standards for aesthetic regulations for how certain buildings must respond visually to the street and additionally how landscaping within the right-of-way responds to the building. While the details of this effort would be decided by the appropriate parties at that time, the general need would be to refine development regulations that address building placement in relation to streets to ensure adequate space is provided for landscaping, pedestrian facilities, and parking, depending on the context of a street.

Street Design Types

This section is a guide for street design in Gadsden for both roadway functional classification and land use context. These guidelines help to create a multimodal transportation system that is consistent with and supportive of land use decisions.

The functional classification system categorizes streets along a general hierarchy that is used to identify each roadway's importance to the overall transportation system for planning purposes. A federal functional classification system typically categorizes roadways based on speeds, vehicular capacities, and relationship to adjacent land uses.

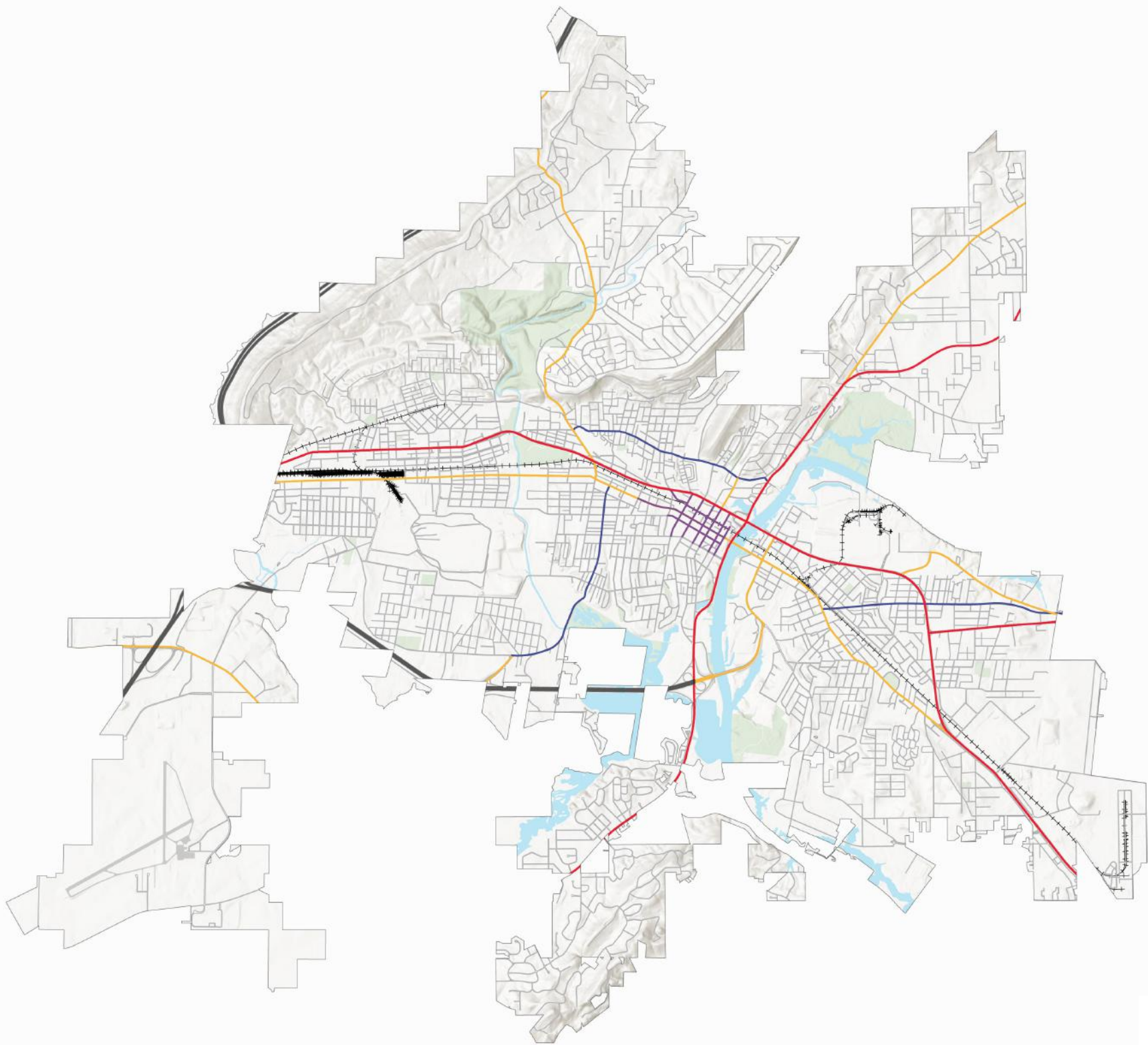
HOW STREETS ARE DEFINED

The functional classification system is used by FHWA, ALDOT, to express the hierarchy of roadways at the national, regional and local scale. These guidelines use a hybrid of national standards and classifications specific to Gadsden. These street functional classifications, coupled with the city's future land use character areas, lead to a street design matrix that provides a framework for decision making and guide for how to balance competition among travel modes, design, and prioritize the available right-of-way.

-  Major Arterial
-  Minor Arterial
-  Downtown
-  Transitional
-  Local/Neighborhood

[Design Resource: NACTO urban street design guide](#)





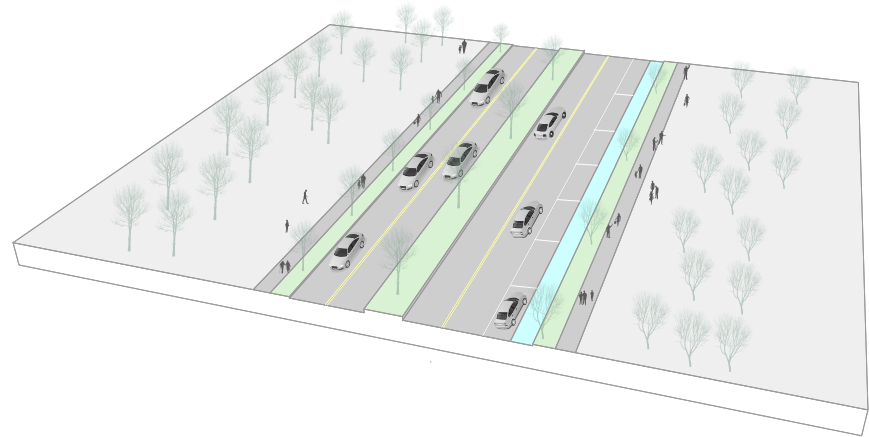
Major Arterial

Multi-lane thoroughfares that mainly serve commuting or regional travel needs

Designed to connect regional destinations with minimal travel interruption, but should respond to the surrounding context

Examples:

Typical Section: 3-4 travel lanes



Minor Arterial

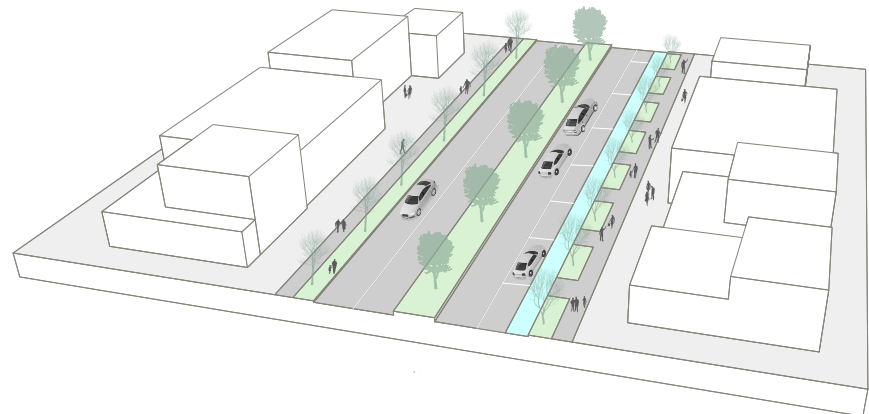
Multi-lane roadways that link local activity centers

Allows for faster travel than local roads, and typically carry transit

Offer a greater degree of connectivity than Major Arterials

Example:

Typical Section: 2-4 travel lanes

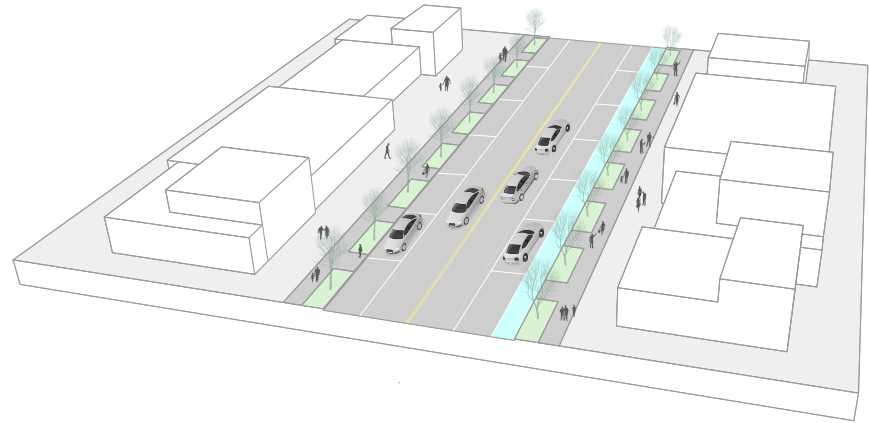


Downtown

Destination focused, slow-moving streets that are pedestrian and parking focused

Includes sidewalks and may include dedicated multimodal facilities

Example:
Typical Section: 2 travel lanes



Transitional

Connects neighborhood traffic to local destinations

Often includes slower travel speeds and on-street parking, and are excellent candidates for dedicated multimodal facilities

Example:
Typical Section: 2 travel lanes



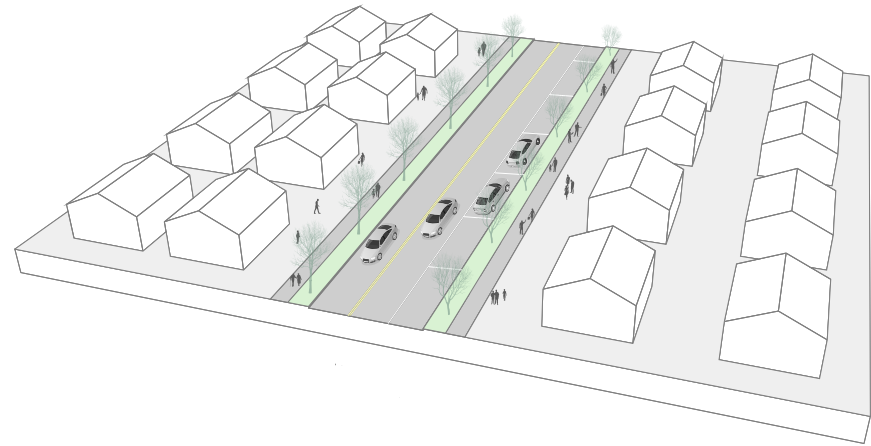
Local / Neighborhood

Destination focused, slow-moving streets in primarily residential neighborhoods

Other than sidewalks, dedicated multimodal facilities may not be necessary due to lower traffic volumes and slow speeds

Example:

Typical Section: 2 travel lanes



2

Expand mobility options in the city

Action 1

Strategically improve existing sidewalks and fill missing sidewalk gaps

Many existing sidewalks in the city's older neighborhoods are in need of repair. A city program should be established to repair existing sidewalks and prioritize new sidewalk connections. A repair program could be part of the city's regular capital improvement effort or could be a matching grant program whereby the city shares the cost with adjacent property owners. Sidewalks should also be a standard and sufficient width.

Some cities choose to designate an entity (either an internal department or a private external company) to identify sidewalk needs and schedule repairs. In these places, the city sets aside money to fund the program. Other cities, including Charlotte, N.C., have created ways for the public to request new sidewalks. These tools can be used to identify gaps in the pedestrian network and prioritize sidewalk improvements to be constructed as a standalone project or, more likely, as part of an associated roadway construction or general maintenance project.

Action 2

Systematically improve on-street bicycle connectivity.

Both routine repaving projects and major road construction/ reconstruction projects should include a bicycle component to the project. Ensure the roadway is smooth for cycling, continue improvements and additions of ramps to sidewalks for accessibility per the ADA standards, and consider adding bicycle signage and striped/protected bike lanes where possible and appropriate. Protected or separated bike lanes would offer the highest degree of safety for riders and higher usage but are more expensive and use more public right-of-way.

The map displays the City of Fall River, Massachusetts, with a focus on the proposed Rails-to-Trails Greenway. The greenway is highlighted in green, showing its path through the city. Key streets labeled include Tuscotoga Ave, Chestnut St, Hickory St, Main St, and others. The map also shows the city's layout, including the river and surrounding green spaces. The greenway route is shown connecting the city center to the surrounding areas, with a specific section labeled 'Falls to the Mall Greenway'.

Priority Sidewalk Projects

Existing Sidewalk Network

Action 3

Expand and enhance the city transit system.

The city should continue to seek ways to expand transit service in Gadsden in accordance with the coordinated plan. In addition to maintaining current service, the priority initiatives include expanding service hours (e.g., nights, weekends, and holidays), increasing the frequency of service on existing routes, and expanding services to new areas. Connecting citizens to available jobs and enhancing access to Downtown, the Riverfront, and the Gadsden State Community College are important.

Action 4

Build new pedestrian bridge to connect East Gadsden to the downtown area and beyond.

A pedestrian bridge over the Coosa River is a milestone in Gadsden's future. A pedestrian bridge will serve as a vital connector, linking neighborhoods and public spaces, and will connect a once-divided city. The presence of pedestrian bridges will help revitalize the city's local economy. By facilitating easier access to commercial areas, parks, and cultural attractions, these bridges increase foot traffic and encourage business growth with tourism and development.



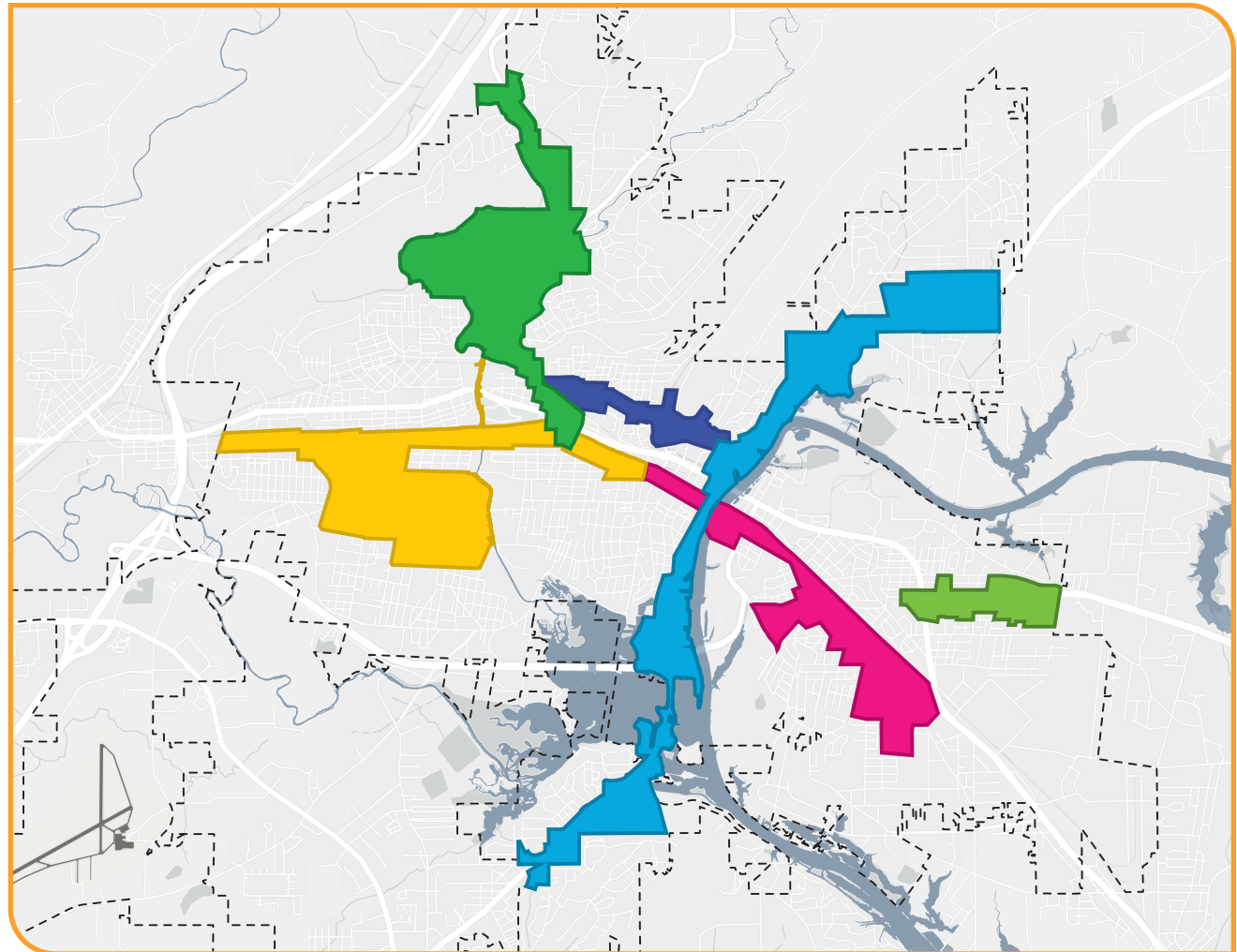
3

Create corridors that exhibit the values of the city

Action 1

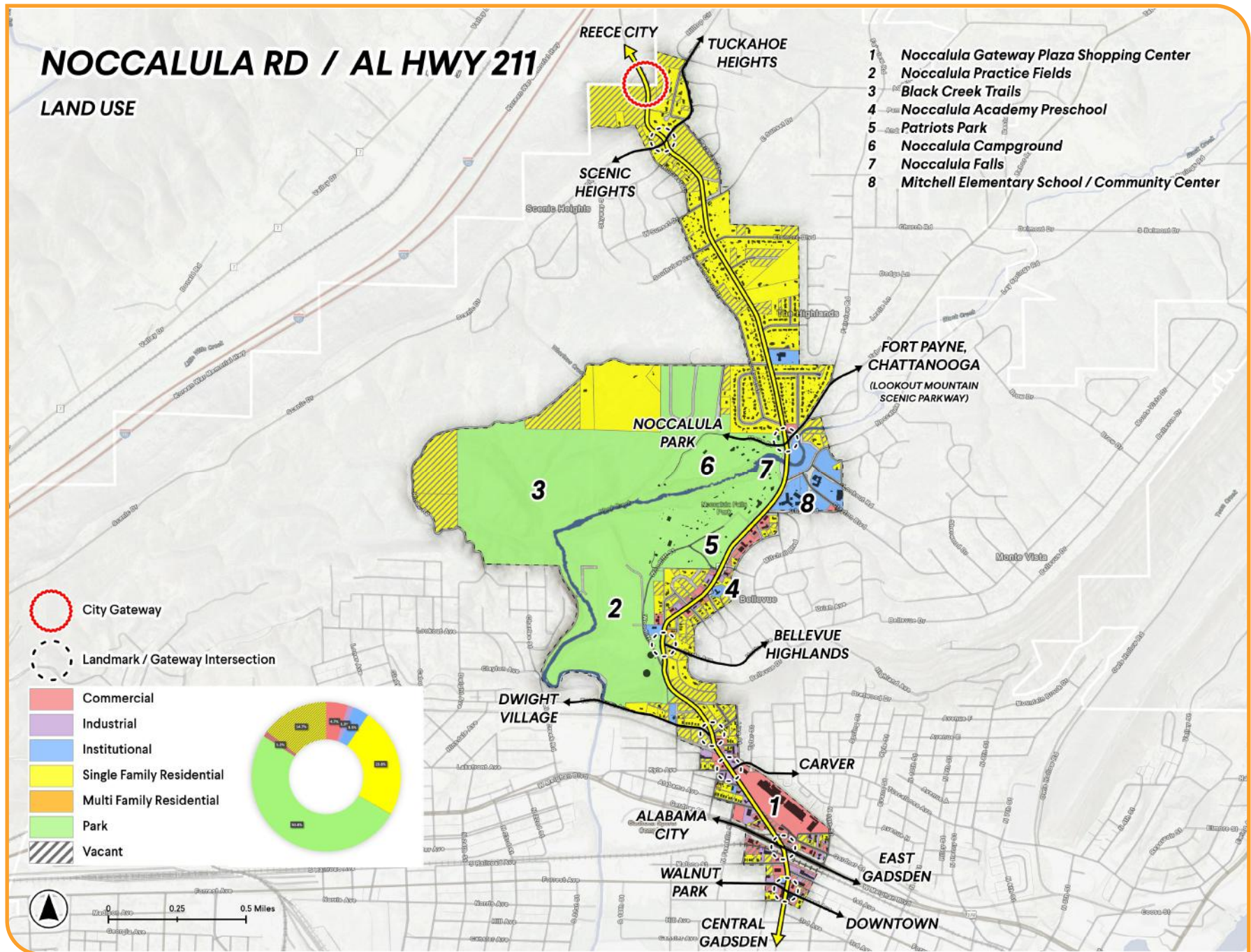
Update land use regulations on corridors

The role of Gadsden's corridors is fundamentally to move its highest number of vehicles both within the city and regionally; however, these corridors' aesthetics and functional context define the perception of the city for citizens and visitors alike. At times adverse conditions negatively affect people who live, work, and travel along and rely on commercial corridors for services and amenities to meet their daily needs. Redevelopment through infrastructure improvements, zoning district updates, new site development standards, and aesthetic enhancements will make a difference in the physical conditions along the city corridors.

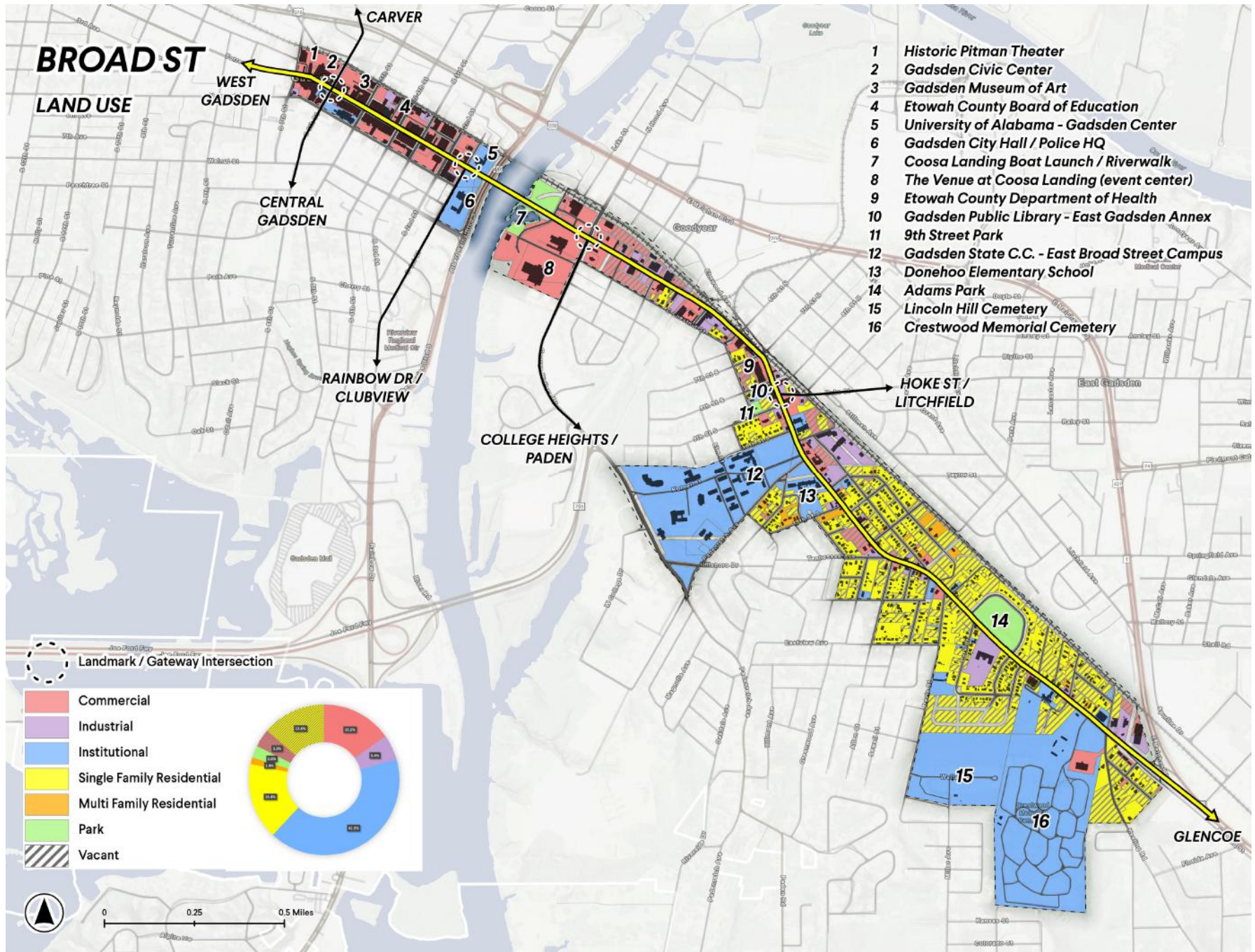


- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|---------|
| Forrest Ave | Noccalula Rd | HWY 411 |
| Broad St | Tuscaloosa Ave | HWY 278 |

Existing Corridor Highlight



Existing Corridor Highlight

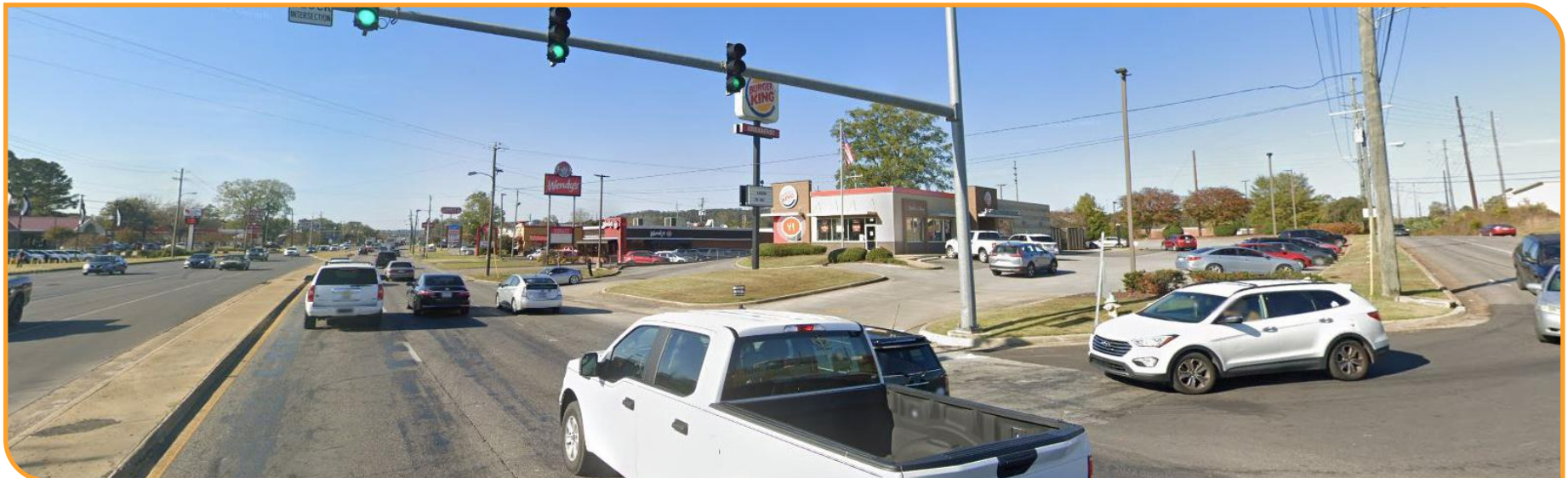


Action 2

Continue enforcing access management

The city should continue to support ALDOT access management efforts on state and federal roads, and enforce local access management standards on minor and major arterials. Thoughtful access management along a corridor can enhance safety for all modes, facilitate walking and biking, and relieve congestion. A common term for corridors with many single access points is a “stroad” a street/road hybrid, a transportation investment that attempts to simultaneously provide a high-speed connection while also attempting to build wealth. These outcomes are incompatible. Stroads are the highest cost, lowest returning of all transportation investments. They are also the most dangerous. The following access management strategies can be used individually or in combination with one another:

- Reduce commercial zoning to intersection nodes.
- Reduce turn density through driveway closure, and consolidation.
- Manage spacing of intersection and access points.
- Limit allowable movements at driveways (such as right-in/right-out only).
- Implement raised medians that preclude across-roadway movements.
- Utilize designs such as roundabouts or reduced left-turn conflicts.
- Provide turn lanes (i.e., left-only, right-only, or interior two-way left).



E Meighan Blvd Access Management Challenge

Action 3

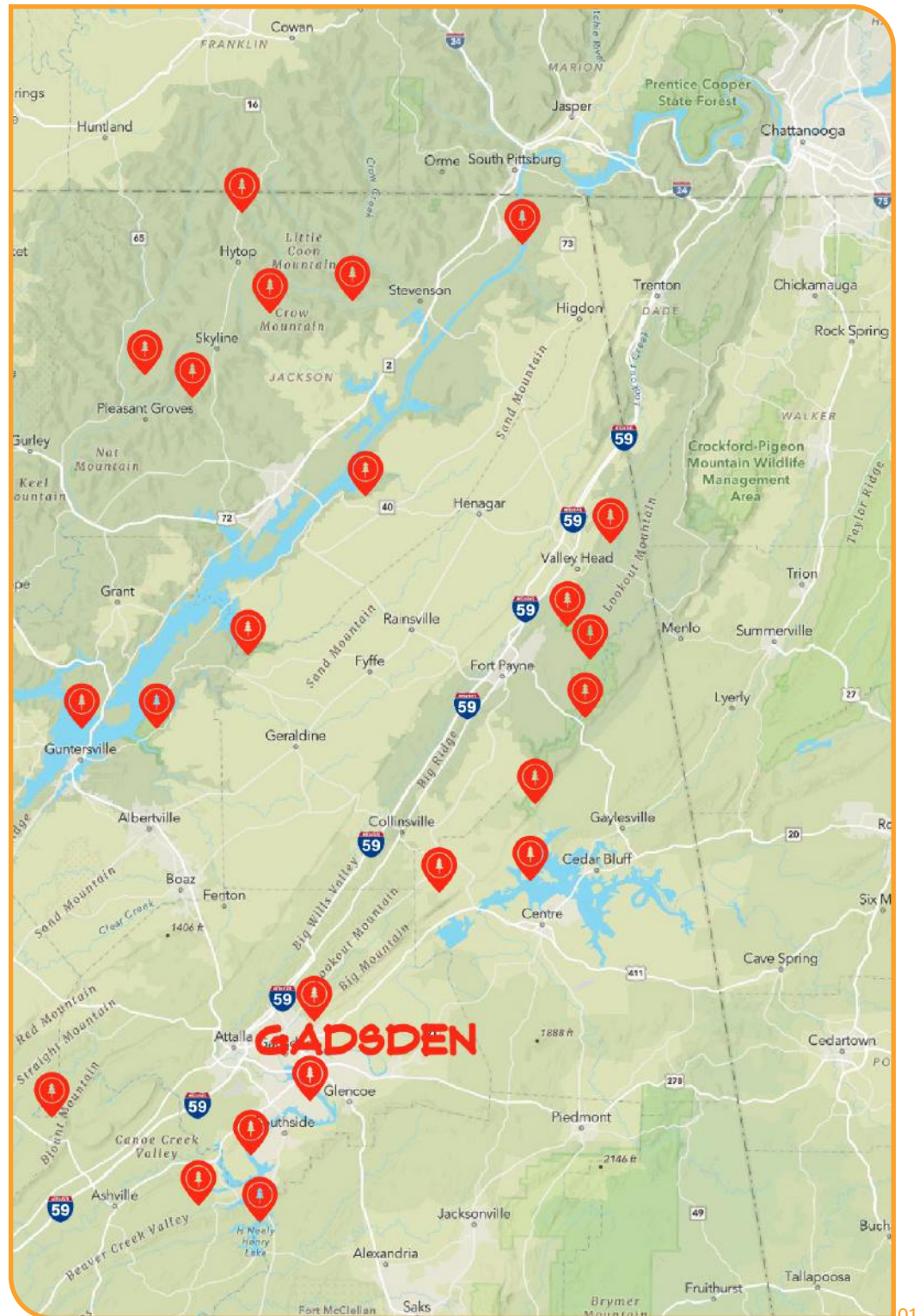
Create gateway improvements at key gateways into and within the city.

Gadsden has opportunities to consolidate a clear identity and focal point entrances into the city. A critical element of this is to create aesthetic improvements at key areas and extended sections along major corridor entrances into the city with landscaping improvements, city entrance signage with updated city branding, wayfinding signage, or public art. A visitor's initial perception of the character and livability of a community occurs along the major access corridors and entrances into a city. These corridors and entrances are gateways to the community and should be designed to create a cohesive identity and reflect the desired image of the community. Gateways can also include architecturally significant buildings, bridges, or other infrastructure improvements such as monuments, signs, and streetscapes. The city should replace all existing "Welcome to Gadsden" and "Gadsden City Limits" signs with a cohesive set of architecturally designed welcome signs and structures.

Action 4

Promote a regional I-59 branding campaign as "Alabama's Outdoor Corridor."

The City of Gadsden should champion the state and region to market the branding of the I-59 corridor as "Alabama's Outdoor Corridor," with Gadsden acting as a main hub for this larger-scale outdoor tourism initiative. From Horse Pens 40 to the south, to Gadsden's many outdoor and cultural assets, to DeKalb and Jackson County's many wonderful outdoor assets, this interstate corridor is under-marketed as a significant outdoor region for large-scale tourism.



Arts & Culture

FEATURE PROJECTS

Amphitheater Improvements
Arts Commission

Broad St Bridge Lighting
Alabama City Arts District

Gadsden is a growing hub for arts and culture. With a growing number of murals, sculptures, and other public art installations, the city should leverage its burgeoning art scene to become a destination for cultural tourism. In addition to communicating the unique history and identity of the city, public art enhances the sense of place and encourages stronger emotional connections and a sense of pride between people and the city. Beyond promoting public installations and arts education, the arts and culture strategy for the city entails supporting spaces for local artists to grow the city's creative industries, such as music venues and maker spaces. By investing in arts and culture, Gadsden will not only beautify its civic spaces but also cultivate innovation, celebrate its diversity of stories, and draw new visitors to the city.

er Gadsden
TOURISM PRESENTS



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WAH
NTY



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MAKERS
GONNA
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Amphitheater Improvements

Improve the Historic Mort Glosser Amphitheater to provide the city a needed outdoor live performance attraction.

Constructed in 1935 by the Works Progress Administration with stone quarried from Lookout Mountain, the Mort Glosser Amphitheater is a unique architectural feature that anchors a prominent location on the city's Riverfront. The site has a high level of visibility but needs to be refreshed and updated to better serve as a welcoming landmark to the redesigned riverfront district. With capacity for 1,600, the amphitheater is one of the city's largest performance venues, which, along with its riverfront location, makes it a high impact site for capital improvements.

Action 1

Updated restrooms

Action 5

Additional elevated seating

Action 2

New food/ beverage venue

Action 6

Retractable sun shades

Action 3

Renovated stage, lighting,
and sound systems

Action 7

Repair and repointing of all
stonework

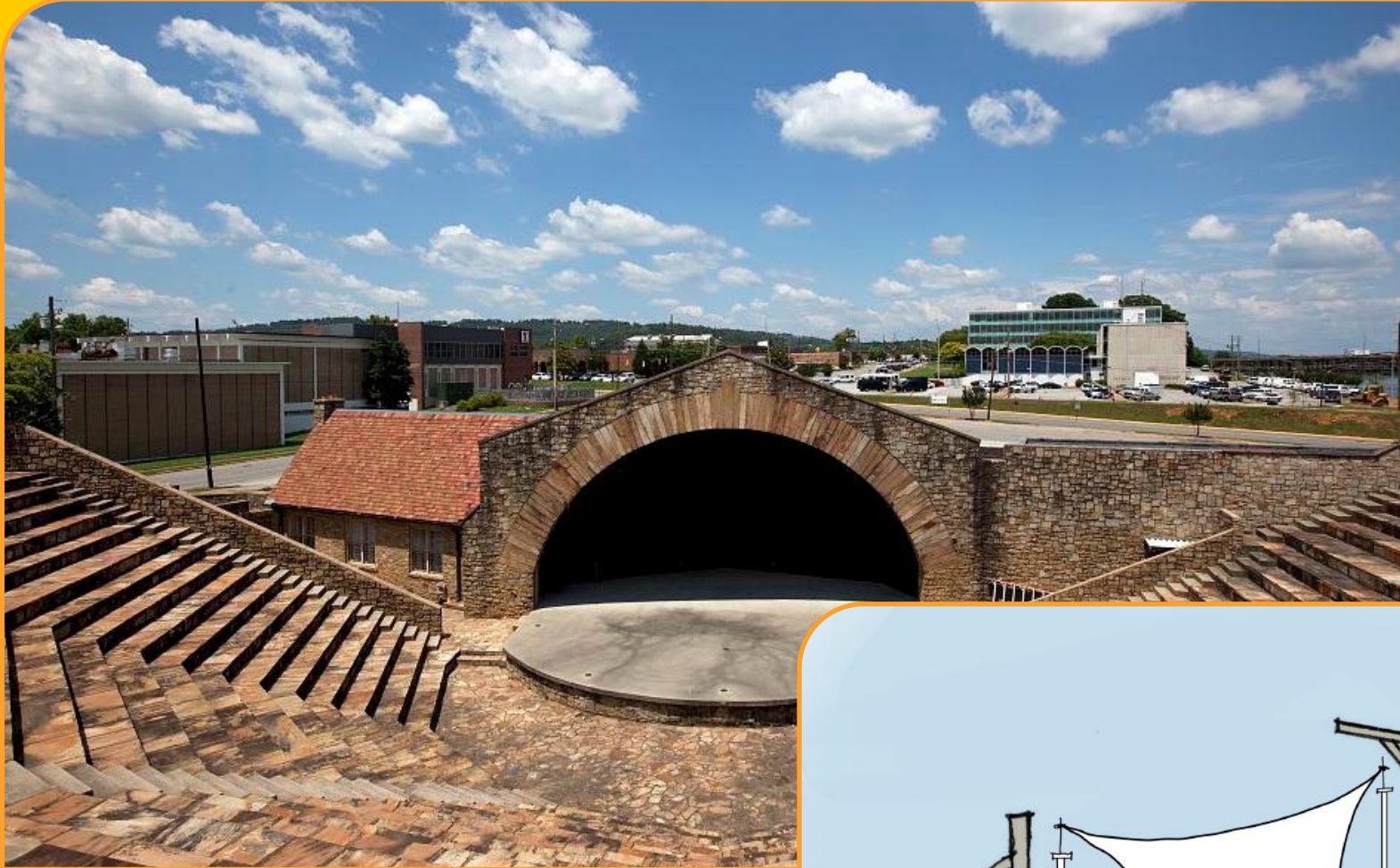
Action 4

Chair back seating and
handrails

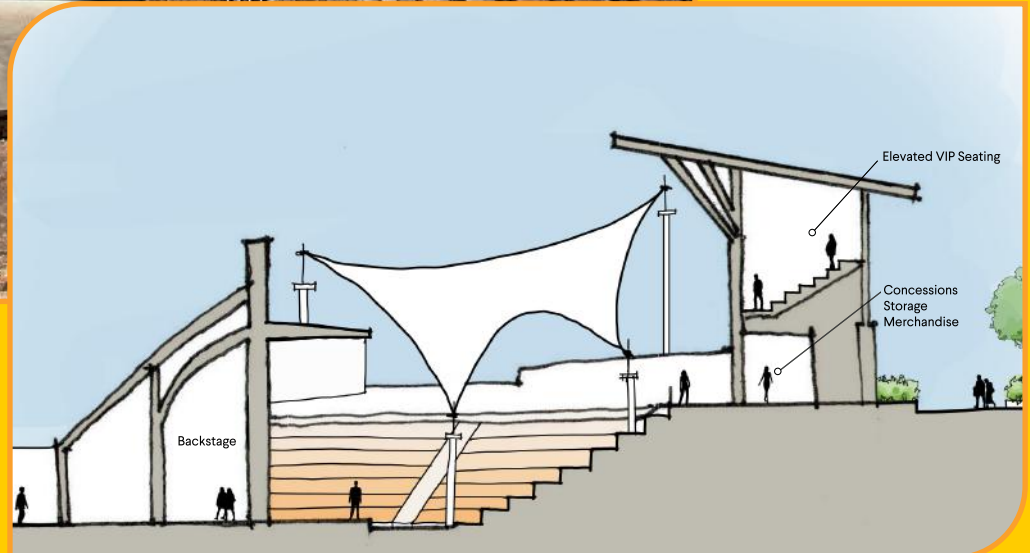
Action 8

Relocate helipad and
improve parking facilities

FEATURE PROJECT



Mort Glosser Amphitheater



Arts Commission

Create a City Arts Commission to champion and manage public arts and culture in the city.

Gadsden is a growing hub for arts and culture throughout the region. With assets such as the Hardin Center for Cultural Arts, the Gadsden Museum of Art, numerous public art installations, and several widely popular city events, Gadsden has the potential to amplify its cultural footprint and grow its creative economy with the help of an Arts Commission. Arts Commissions are common in larger cities such as Birmingham, AL and Austin, TX to act as a multidisciplinary advisory board to the city council on arts-related matters. An Arts Commission in Gadsden would coordinate various arts organizations to support the development of public art installations, plan cultural events, and promote arts education throughout the city.

Action 1

Case study research to determine the roles and duties of the Commission

Action 4

Establish an Art in Public Places Program to be overseen by the Commission

Action 2

Draft bylaws and adopt an ordinance establishing an Arts Commission

Action 5

Emphasize art projects that tell the story of Gadsden's unique history

Action 3

Commission focus on policies supporting an arts district in Alabama City

Action 6

Ensure a multidisciplinary focus by the Commission on all forms of art (public, performing, etc.)

FEATURE PROJECT



Broad Street Bridge Lighting

Artistically light the Broad Street Bridge to create an iconic visual statement in the city.

Opened in 1927, the Broad Street Bridge is one of the city's most prominent and distinctive landmarks. Spanning over 1,000 feet across the Coosa River, the bridge provides a crucial point of connectivity for both motorists and pedestrians between Downtown and East Gadsden. With popular sites such as the Riverwalk at Coosa Landing nearby, the bridge is a focal point that helps define people's visual perception of Downtown and the city at large. Throughout the public outreach campaign, artistic lighting of the Broad Street Bridge consistently garnered some of the most enthusiastic approval by residents of any proposed goal. Implementing this project is a relatively cost-effective way to demonstrate early progress by the city on popular initiatives.

Action 1

Create an RFP for artistic bridge lighting including a provision for maintenance support

Action 2

Price fixed and changing bridge lighting and work to include the project in the capital budget

FEATURE PROJECT



Bridge Lighting Example

Alabama City Arts District

Revitalize Alabama City's historic commercial district as a mixed-use arts hub.

Alabama City has the largest historic commercial district in Gadsden outside of downtown. This once-bustling and popular area lies at the heart of a formerly vibrant neighborhood now struggling with the impacts of blight and disinvestment. Focusing on the revitalization of this critically important "second center" of the city has the potential to spur positive change throughout Alabama City, one of Gadsden's core communities and largest neighborhoods. The revitalization of the Avondale neighborhood's historic commercial district in Birmingham should be studied as a helpful model for arts-based economic development centered on music venues and other artistic spaces. Gadsden can build on existing cultural assets such as the Ritz theater to grow the arts scene in Alabama City.

Action 1

Rezone the area immediately around the N 27th St historic commercial district to allow for a mixture of uses that accommodate arts venues

Action 3

Host at least one established popular city event a year on N 27th St to highlight the district to a wider audience

Action 2

Provide tax abatements, fee reductions, and expedited permitting for arts-related developments to locate here

Action 4

Establish a Redevelopment Authority to coordinate revitalization efforts and financing

FEATURE PROJECT



Existing Alabama City's Historic Wall Street Commercial District



ARTS & CULTURE GOALS

1

Continue to increase support for existing arts and culture: places, programs, and resources

Action 1

Increase marketing and recognition of Gadsden's existing artistic establishments, programs, and events

Increased awareness of exhibitions and services offered by local artistic organizations is one of the top priorities for the Gadsden Museum of Art. To maximize the impact of organizations like the Art Museum and the Hardin Center, the city should work to promote their benefits to a wider audience. One potential method of expanding awareness for local groups and events could include a targeted digital and social media campaign. Such a campaign should include both internal and regional coverage to reach a local audience while also increasing the potential for cultural tourism by visitors from outside the Gadsden area. A marketing campaign should provide coverage on events such as Art on the Rocks and services available through organizations like the Art Museum and Hardin Center, including the Etowah Youth Orchestra and the Gadsden Community School for the Arts.

Action 2

Celebrate Gadsden's existing local artists and local culture

Gadsden has a rich lineage of local artists that continues to this day. Development of the city's local arts and culture scene should focus primarily on celebrating the works of local artists and on works that communicate the city's unique history and culture. In considerations for new murals, installations, etc., preference should be given to local artists with final discretion on commissions resting with the proposed City Arts Commission.

2

Commit to increase public art in the city

Action 1

Create a public art master plan

Gadsden's cultural sense of place would benefit tremendously from a public art master plan that coordinates strategies for how public art can improve the quality of the city's public spaces. Public art is important because it humanizes the built environment and fosters a deeper sense of connection between people and the city. A potential public art master plan for Gadsden should be overseen by the proposed City Arts Commission and include provisions for location and development of new public art installations, maintenance strategies, equitable representation, and coordination of various arts related organizations.

Action 2

Identify Public art installations that can be done now

New art installations such as murals are often a cost effective and low hanging fruit for demonstrating early progress on revitalization efforts in a given part of the city. It is important for the city to show immediate progress following adoption of the comprehensive plan. One way to do this is to identify locations and support the creation of murals or other public art, especially in places like Alabama City's Wall Street district or East Gadsden. This will help kick start interest in these communities and get the ball rolling on more complex, longer-term revitalization efforts in these neighborhoods. Identifying immediate opportunities for new art installations should be the first task of the proposed City Arts Commission.

3

Improve and expand performing arts in the city

Action 1

Enhance facilities at the historic Mort Glosser Amphitheater

The Mort Glosser Amphitheater is a unique piece of Gadsden's history and a significant asset with the potential to support cultural tourism through riverfront entertainment including concerts and other live performances. Despite its historic significance and prominent placement overlooking the Coosa River, the venue is in serious need of an update to ensure that it can continue to meet the city's modern needs and reflect a higher quality of development for the proposed riverfront district. Any update to this venue should preserve the historic character of the amphitheater's stonework while incorporating modern amenities that enhance the level of service for major events. Among the needed improvements are updated restrooms, creation of a new food/ beverage space, and renovations to the stage, lighting, and sound systems. The seating should also be upgraded to include chairbacks and handrails with an additional level of new elevated VIP seating. The site would also benefit from retractable sunshades and improved parking facilities.

Action 2

Develop a state-of-the-art performing arts center

According to the Hardin Center for Cultural Arts, one of the biggest arts and culture needs in the city is a state-of-the-art performing arts center. Developing a higher quality performing arts center would allow Gadsden to host a higher caliber of plays, concerts, and other live performances. The city should conduct a feasibility study for a performing arts center to identify a potential location for the facility and determine what the local market can support. The city should then work with an architectural firm to develop a conceptual design and preliminary cost estimates for the proposed facility. An entity should also be established or designated to manage financing and operations of the facility.

4

Protect and Narrate Gadsden's Histories

Action 1

Improve the city's historic preservation efforts

The story of Gadsden's unique history is told primarily through its built environment, specifically the homes, businesses, and other civic structures that make up the city. Many of these historic structures, especially historic homes, are at risk of being lost due to neglect and decay. Gadsden needs to prioritize efforts to preserve the city's architecturally significant structures through a combination of public and private measures. The city should conduct a review of its regulations for redevelopment of historic properties and update them as needed to align with accepted best practices. Procedures for historic redevelopment should be streamlined and clearly communicated in easily accessible and easy-to-understand content. The city should also explore ways to incentivize private redevelopment of historic homes and structures, including potential local tax credits, grants, and/ or low interest loans. Financial incentives must be contingent on full compliance with the city's updated historic development guidelines. However, some flexibility should be permitted in development requirements to encourage new development in historic neighborhoods. However, regulations should be designed to protect truly historic and architecturally significant structures without making it harder to redevelop older non-contributing structures based on age alone.

Action 2

Support the telling of Gadsden's unique stories

Beyond telling the city's story through the built environment, Gadsden should promote storytelling efforts through events, tours, etc. The city should work with Greater Gadsden Tourism to set up educational events such as historic walking tours, ghost tours, etc. These efforts should be marketed as part of a larger campaign to support tourism in the area.



The Growing City

Housing

- Pre-approved Housing Catalog
- Increase Land Bank Impact
- Downtown & Riverfront Housing

Downtown

- Broad Street Streetscape
- City Hall Redevelopment
- BID District

Land Use

- Update Zoning Ordinance
- Historic Commercial Areas
- Redefine Waterfront Zoning
- North Gadsden Development

City Administration

- Consolidate City Operations
- Expand Police Substations
- Update School Branding

Economic Development

- Continue Economic Diversity
- Quality of Life / Place Economics



Housing

FEATURE PROJECTS

Pre-approved Housing Designs

Increase Land Bank Impact

Downtown & Riverfront Housing

Where people live is one of the important questions a city needs to answer. There are many factors that effect the housing dynamic in cities, from supply to market forces that cannot be controlled. What cities can focus on, however, is the quality and diversity of housing to meet the needs of an ever-changing and diverse population. Gadsden is uniquely positioned in the region to become a major hub for housing and has the opportunity to grow smartly. Because of the city's history, there is a lot of land and existing infrastructure to capitalize on to increase housing density. This increase of density will not only attract a more diverse working class but will also spur the development of more compact and walkable communities, further enhancing quality of life and promoting healthy lifestyles.



Housing Development

Pre-approved Housing Designs

Create pre-approved housing plans to jump-start infill development.

One of the challenges in many post-industrial cities is the high amount of vacant and blighted properties that exist from population decline. However, this also provides a prime opportunity to increase the city's housing stock and to begin to revitalize historic residential areas. Housing catalogs create an opportunity to identify the appropriate type of development desired by the city, while also marketing the property, and expediting the process for developers.

Action 1

Create designs that are contextually appropriate to immediate surroundings.

Action 4

Train Planning Commission and staff on expedited processing and promotion of pre-approved designs

Action 2

Determine appropriate number of designs for each housing typology.

Action 5

Research and establish a Housing Development & Oversight Commission

Action 3

Work with an architect to create a product to market to developers.

FEATURE PROJECT



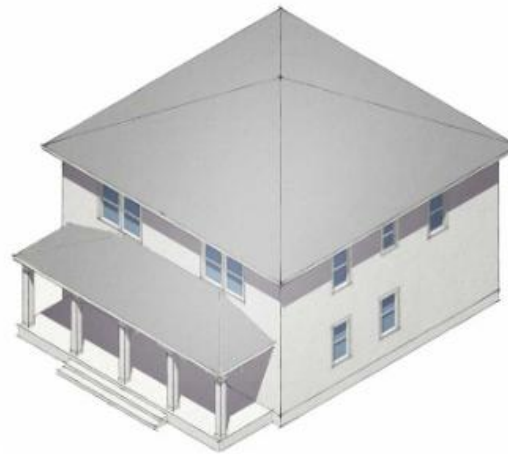
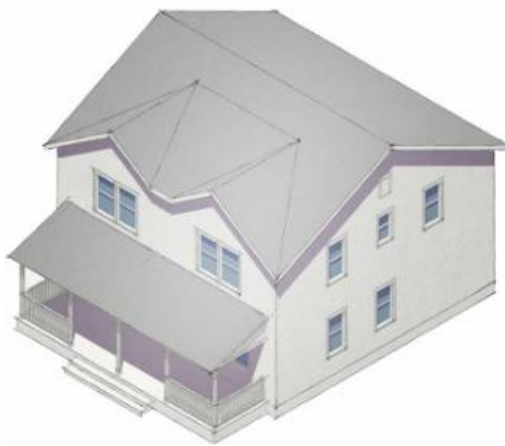
Option A



Option B



Option C



Option A



Option B



Ground Floor



Second Floor

Increase Land Bank Impact

Continue growing the Land Bank Authority's impact on housing in the community.

The Land Bank is an invaluable asset for the city that needs to be leveraged to pave the way for new growth. Land Banks aid in streamlining the renewal of abandoned properties, returning them to a state of productive use, beneficial to the city. Determining the appropriate structure and leadership for the land bank is key in determining its effectiveness.

Action 1

Evaluate current administration processes for identifying and listing property

Action 3

Audit land acquisition process for interested buyers

Action 2

Work with the Development Authority to support the establishment of a non-profit to train local developers and recruit regional developers

Action 4

Explore existing properties as opportunities for affordable housing

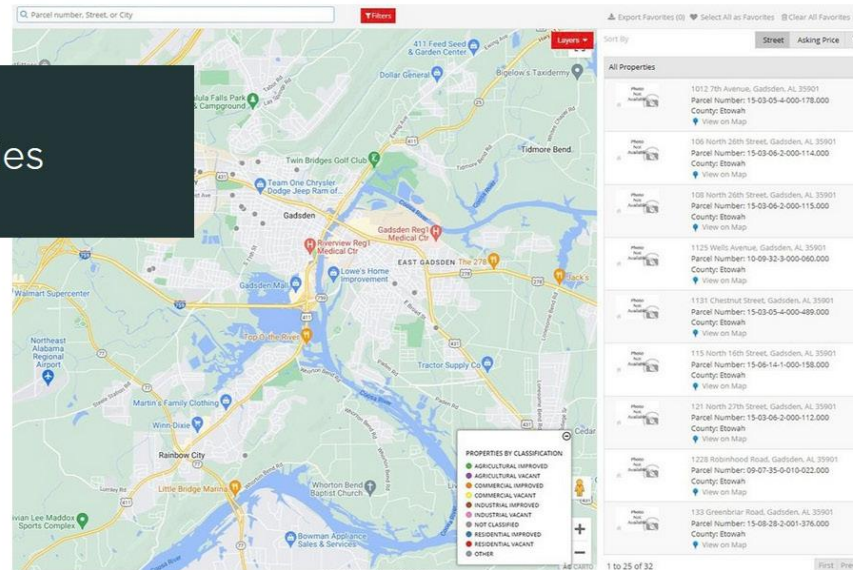
Action 5

Consult recent Land Banking surveys for best practices and recommendations

FEATURE PROJECT

[OUR GOALS](#)[OUR PROGRAMS](#)[OUR PROCESS](#)[FIND A PROPERTY](#)[APPLY](#)[HOME](#)

Map of Properties



The Gadsden Land Bank maintains an interactive map of properties in the City of Gadsden that are eligible for the land bank.

Map of Land Bank properties

Downtown & Riverfront Housing

Prioritize riverfront and downtown housing to incentivize density and growth adjacent to assets.

Increasing the priority of housing downtown and along the Riverfront will boost commercial activity and stimulate economic development opportunities for the city, creating a thriving riverfront district that taps into the city's rich natural resources and recreation opportunities. Increasing the demand for housing in this geographical region will increase the perception of the city and boost the potential for new growth.

Action 1

Redefine Riverfront overlay to only allow development plans that incorporate mixed-uses

Action 3

Proactively catalyze loft-style development and new mixed-use development with tax incentives and density bonuses

Action 2

Update zoning to allow for higher-density housing on smaller lots

Action 4

Determine housing types allowed at ground floor downtown (off-Broad)

FEATURE PROJECT



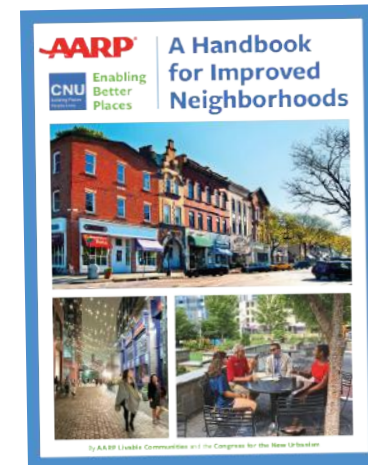
Downtown Housing Typology

1 Increase Housing Choice

Action 1

Provide appropriate housing for all income levels and all age groups

Encouraging a healthy mix of housing types ensures opportunities for people in all stages of life. Many factors affect what diverse demographics search for when trying to find housing. Giving them the most opportunity to find a place to live and call the city home should be one of the city's highest priorities. Accommodating a diversifying population aids in economic opportunities for the city.



This Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods advocates for a mix of housing types

Action 2

Increase affordable housing by requiring at least 10% affordable units in new developments

The city should prioritize making housing affordable for all demographics. One way to discourage discrimination and provide for and be inclusive of all people is to create mixed-income developments that encourage community regardless of diversity.

Action 3

Add 6-10 multi-family housing and rental complexes over the next 10 years, with 100+ total units

Defining how many units should be built and where they should go is a good step for the city to initiate. This will encourage utilization of the future land use map and housing strategy to help increase density in strategic areas and to help support new industry, commercial, and retail.

Action 4

Allow for greater density in residential areas through zoning

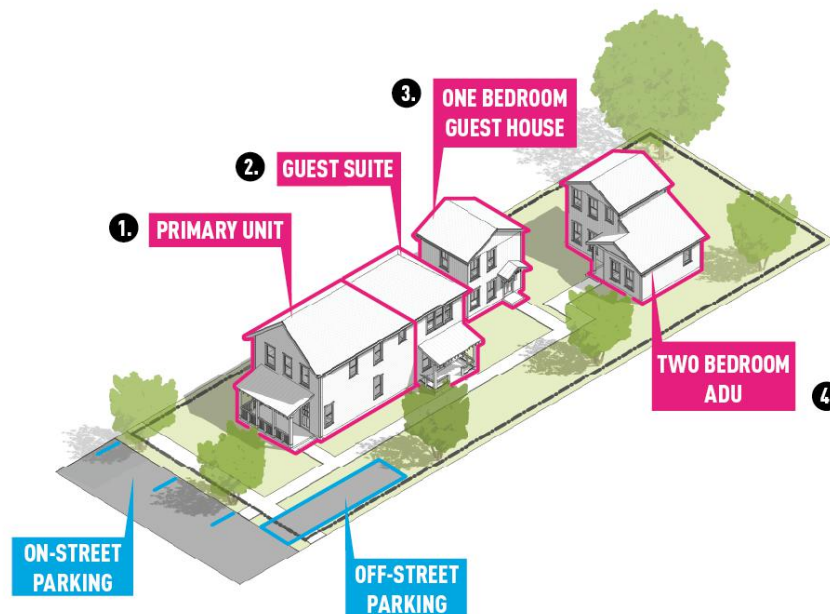
Increasing density on a moderate, contextual scale in residential areas will help support a few of actions above by allowing **"missing middle"** (duplex, triplex, quadplex) housing development on smaller lots in transitional areas around the city.

Examples like this illustration from Atlanta based Kronberg Architects + Urbanists are great examples of how zoning reform is having positive impacts on the housing market.

Older cities with large amounts of vacant properties that can be utilized for this type of infill development

ATTACHED + DETACHED ADUS = FOUR UNITS

KRONBERG
URBANISTS
ARCHITECTS



Action 3

Highlight neighborhoods with landscaping and signage

Defining place-based strategies for the historic neighborhoods of the city will be an effective strategy in the revitalization of the neighborhoods. One strategy is highlighting each of the areas with unique signage and landscaping that helps define the neighborhood. The city should facilitate this effort by obtaining easements and funding signage based on resident input in each major neighborhood.



Example signage from a historic neighborhood

3

Increase Infill Housing Opportunities

Action 1

Create pre-approved housing designs (GROW Gadsden's Housing Choice) for residential infill sites.

A housing catalog is one of the most efficient ways that cities can begin stimulating the housing market by creating pre-approved housing plans that have been designed for the city. The plans are designed to respect the local context and fit into the existing fabric of the city. The catalogs offer packages that are shovel-ready so that construction can begin immediately.

Links to resources



**Supporting Active Living
Through Mixed-Use
Developments**

**Pattern Book Homes for
21st Century Michigan**



SOUTH BEND NEIGHBORHOOD INFILL

Pre-approved, ready-to build housing

Example of catalog

Action 2

Focus on developing undeveloped lots in existing residential neighborhoods.

Maintaining a database of privately-owned, for-sale, undeveloped lots for marketing assistance and tracking is a good place for the city to begin infusing the housing market. These lots can also use the pre approved housing catalog to expedite the construction process.

Action 3

Prioritize the development of land bank properties in residential areas.

Land bank properties also need to be tracked and prioritized for development. The transfer process of acquiring the property needs to be simplified for properties that utilize the housing catalog.

Action 4

Streamline the use of land bank property by offering development incentives.

In addition to utilizing pre-approved plans, land bank property that incorporates affordable housing and/or missing middle housing should offer incentives for developers. This can come in the form of tax breaks or abatements on the property.

4

Preserve historic residential and transitional areas

Action 1

Update the historic preservation and design overlay district

Consolidate and update existing overlay districts that incorporate historical areas of the city. With a focus on historic residential housing in the city, overlays and updates should consider how to preserve the historic character of the residential neighborhoods and the housing that is downtown and adjacent to downtown in transitional areas.

Action 2

Identify properties eligible for Historic Preservation grants

Compile and keep an existing database of historic residences in the city and identify opportunities to utilize state and federal grant funding. If any structures are not currently protected, steps should be taken to have the structures added to a historic preservation database and determine if grants can be used to help rehabilitate the structures to preserve the city's history. Caution should be taken to limit historic designations to architecturally significant structures so that the redevelopment process for old but non-contributing structures is not complicated.

5

Provide more downtown housing options

Action 1

Develop higher-density housing on infill properties

Identify available properties within the downtown that support increased density and that can provide new housing options. Determine what updates to the downtown overlay district need to be implemented in order to support new housing.

Action 2

Encourage second story loft-style apartment development

Consider offering incentives to downtown owners to develop loft-style apartments to boost the economy and to offer housing in a more walkable environment.

6

Encourage Home Ownership

Action 1

Rent-to-own programs

Programs administered by the city to encourage home ownership is a recommended way to support the growth of the community.

Action 2

Home buyer assistance programs

Potential home buyers who have demonstrated a commitment to the welfare of the city should be supported by the city and should be provided with an opportunity to participate in programs that will help them remain in their homes.

7

Strengthen the connection of housing to the city's natural resources

Action 1

Evaluate zoning districts

Auditing the current zoning districts will provide insight into what type of housing is currently allowed in close proximity to natural resources, like the river. Understanding the factors that affect the impact of housing in different areas of the city is a primary factor. Consulting the Future Land Use map will guide the city in making decisions about where housing will be most effective.

Action 2

Encourage sustainable development patterns

Housing can be advantageous when leveraging the city's natural resources, but there should be some guidance when developing to aid in preserving the natural environment as much as possible. Sustainable, compact development should be the required standard when approving development in natural areas. In specific areas that are identified as reasonable for development, the city should establish guidelines to ensure land is protected.

8

Strategically redevelop the city's Housing Authority sites.

Action 1

Masterplan for all Greater Gadsden Housing Authority sites

Land is one of the city's biggest assets, and should be highly valued. There is a prime opportunity with the land that is currently managed by the Greater Gadsden Housing Authority to improve development standards and maximize the productivity of the land that contributes and gives back to the community while increasing the number of mixed-income housing units for the city. Several examples in recent years demonstrate how cities have taken proactive steps to prioritize affordable housing with an emphasis on creating complete neighborhoods. Producing studies that show the potential of existing housing authority sites is a recommended path for the city. Conceptualizing all the sites as a whole through a city-wide Greater Gadsden Housing Authority masterplan that coordinates the valuable resources is the first step to promoting change.

Action 2

Incorporate mixed-use development

While the emphasis on housing should remain, the housing authority should explore incorporating and managing a mix of uses on the property that they control. This not only increases the value and return of the sites but also brings needed amenities – such as greenspace – as a resource for those who live in the community. Creating places to live increases pride of ownership and creates unique destinations across the city that have the potential to attract new residences and businesses to the area.

Action 3

Increase the density of properties

Typically housing developments that were built decades ago reflect the patterns of sprawl that were so prevalent and defined by low densities. The units were typically spread out over large expanses of cleared property. The development patterns are easily detectable when looking at aerial photographs of the city, heavily contrasting with the historic fabric of the city. Increasing the density of development on these sites would be a more appropriate reflection of the context in which they are found, unifying the city and creating a more equitable environment.



Edgehill at Southtown

Birmingham, Alabama

A new mixed-use development that will take the place of Birmingham's former Southtown public housing community.

The development will include a mix of residential development, hotel and office space, parking garages and retail space, serving as a good example for Gadsden on how to redevelop old housing sites.



Southtown Court - AFTER



Southtown Court - BEFORE

Downtown

FEATURE PROJECTS

Broad Street Streetscape

City Hall Redevelopment

BID District

Downtown is the heart of Gadsden. It symbolizes the community both internally and externally. With the health of a downtown comes health in tourism, job recruitment and all other localized measures of city vitality, and with Gadsden's new trajectory should come a new measurable breath to downtown Gadsden. Strategies for a revitalized downtown include a Broad Street update, a downtown hotel, and creation of a potential Business Improvement District.



Downtown Gadsden

Broad St Streetscape

Implement a streetscape redesign on Broad Street to reinforce the downtown as an active destination.

Broad Street is the backbone of the entire downtown district, supporting most of the retail and restaurant businesses that bring visitors to the city. It is an important face of the city, setting people's general impression of Downtown and the city at large. It has been roughly 30 years since the city's "Main Street" has received substantial updates, and many elements of the street's design need to be updated. This 100-foot right of way needs to be redesigned to maximize safety for all modes of transit while improving the downtown pedestrian experience. This investment, while substantial, has the potential to be a legacy project that drives future growth of the downtown district as an engine for city-wide revitalization.

Action 1

Create a best-practice street design that expands tree canopy, widens sidewalks, and maximizes parking potential

Action 2

Proactively investigate funding opportunities for a streetscape improvement project

Action 3

Work with downtown owners to ensure community support

Action 4

Consider converting signalized intersections on Broad St into aesthetically enhanced 4-way stops

Action 5

Identify and improve main downtown arrival gateways with signage and landscaping

FEATURE PROJECT



Potential concept for a redesign of Broad Street

City Hall Redevelopment

Relocate city hall to Downtown proper to activate the surrounding blocks and allow a repurposing of the important site of the existing city hall.

Built in 1960, Gadsden's current city hall is outdated and occupies a prime piece of real estate that could be better utilized for riverfront redevelopment. The city should continue pursuing efforts to relocate city hall closer to Downtown to modernize the city's image and free the site of the existing city hall for hotel redevelopment. New development on this site has the potential to anchor and set the tone for a wider redevelopment of the downtown riverfront as a mixed-use entertainment district. This project is an important funding priority for the city as it would be an early-phase catalyst to generate market demand for remaining riverfront development projects.

Action 1

Work with an architect to establish a redevelopment plan for the current city hall

Action 4

Create a transition plan for the relocation and establish space limitation standards

Action 2

Work with an architect to retrofit a new City Hall complex at the current Regions and Merrill Lynch buildings

Action 5

Improve pedestrian and landscaping connections to the rest of downtown

Action 3

Plan for diversifying police operations during the move

Action 6

Consider space and feasibility of the jail, EMA, dispatch locations, and operations during the move

FEATURE PROJECT



Future City Hall Location



BID District

Create a Business Improvement District (BID) to assist in funding downtown projects.

The city should support the creation of a BID district for Downtown Gadsden. A Business Improvement District (BID) is a self-taxing (property) district established by property owners to enhance a specifically defined commercial area like downtown Gadsden. Downtown BID districts vote and support economic development and management projects, like facade improvement grants, signage, marketing, and sidewalk and landscape improvements. Many successful downtowns that are the scale of Gadsden and have regional success or recognition are a BID district.

Action 1

Support a downtown Business Improvement District (BID) campaign at a current reasonable scale to help build funding for capital improvement projects specific to downtown.

Action 3

Work with downtown community leaders to create a consensus, either pro or con

Action 2

Prioritize projects that support the development of active retail and residential spaces downtown.

FEATURE PROJECT



Broad St

➤ DOWNTOWN GOALS

1 Improve the downtown visitor experience

Action 1

Enhance key gateways into the downtown area with signage/ art

In alignment with the Arts & Culture recommendation to develop an arts masterplan, the initial emphasis should be placed on the city's gateways. Identifying the primary entrances to the city is the first step to elevating the visitor experience. Implementing monument signs featuring the city's logo and/or seal is a cost-effective and simple initiative that effectively reinforces the city's identity. Additionally, there could be an opportunity for the city to collaborate with local artists, to help make the gateways unique, adding a local touch to create spaces that demonstrate pride in the city.

Action 2

Implement a branded wayfinding and signage plan for downtown

Another vital component of creating a more seamless experience for residents and visitors is creating a city-branded wayfinding and signage package that includes signage types and standards that incorporate the city's updated branding. Facilitating easy navigation within the city not only aids in moving people around, but also offers a chance to showcase distinct districts, neighborhoods, and historical landmarks, all of which can contribute to economic benefits.



Wayfinding and Signage examples

Action 3

Implement a downtown restriping plan to increase parking on side streets

Presently, Gadsden's downtown holds significant potential. As the city considers a redesign of Broad Street, it is an opportune time to assess intersecting and parallel streets to optimize parking in the central business district. The restriping initiative not only provides a chance to enhance overall walkability but also contributes to pedestrian safety throughout downtown. By establishing robust pedestrian infrastructure along and adjacent to Broad Street, there is great potential for future economic growth, fostering new infill development and the positive influence of downtown on the city's economy. A single on street parking space is valued at \$20,000 in annual revenue to local businesses. There are currently 438 on street parking spaces in the downtown district.

Action 4

Explore the feasibility of developing a public parking deck

With the potential for increased infill development downtown, a downtown masterplan should consider the future placement of a public parking deck. Parking decks help maximize land use in downtown areas where real estate is a premium and where valuable land could be developed instead of surface lots. Numerous studies consistently demonstrate that utilizing downtown land for economic production yields exponential returns compared to the time it takes for parking facilities to generate sufficient revenue to cover their costs.



Restriping Plan



2

Support greater density in the downtown area

Action 1

Incentivize adaptive reuse of historic structures

Reusing existing, historic structures should be a priority for the city and should be incentivized as much as possible. This not only maintains the heritage of the city's historic fabric, but it is also a more sustainable practice that utilizes existing infrastructure and building envelopes and structures that have many years of life remaining, reducing new material and waste.



Action 2

Promote strategic redevelopment / infill projects

Part of a downtown area masterplan would consider existing use of property and potential for development. The city should create a phased plan to increase the density of development in downtown and consider where strategic infill projects would maximize future revitalization efforts.



Adaptive Reuse

Action 3

Consider reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements for developers

Parking minimums limit development in downtown areas by imposing overly strict parking requirements for individual developments. Eliminating minimums relies on a district plan where parking is considered comprehensively and shared across uses.

3

Reconnect downtown to the riverfront

Action 1

Improve streetscape connectivity to the waterfront

Developing the Riverfront is a major goal for the city. The river is an underutilized resource and its proximity to downtown is an untapped opportunity. Establishing a seamless, walkable connection to the river from downtown will provide a much-needed link and only increase the beauty of downtown while emphasizing the natural environment where the city is located, creating an amazing asset that will be a destination for many years to come.



Connections to river

Action 2

Incentivize redevelopment of city-owned properties adjacent to the river

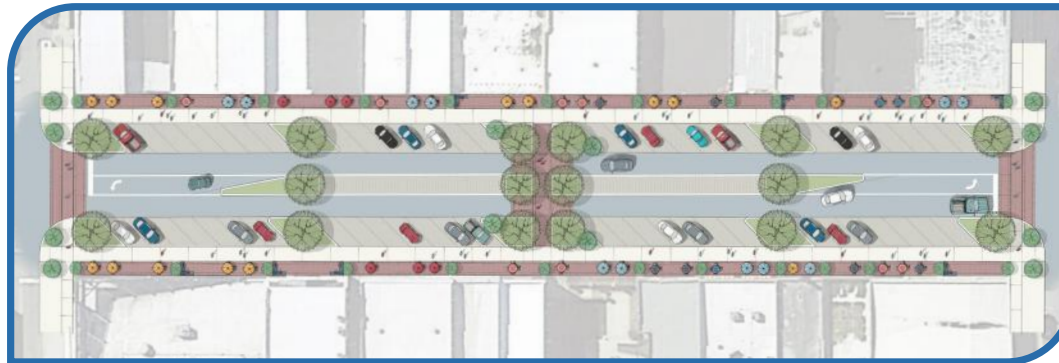
Because the city is in control of several parcels along the river, it can help facilitate development in this area by offering incentives to interested developers, or by utilizing Downtown Gadsden, INC. to create public-private partnerships to ensure the development of the property consistent with the quality of development that the city has expressed during the visioning for the comprehensive planning process.

4

Create a more walkable downtown environment

Action 1

Refresh the design of Broad St



Broad St is the heart of downtown. It is currently over-designed and allows undesirable uses, resulting in an unsafe environment. The street design should focus on pedestrians out of their vehicles, creating an environment where people want to remain, to eat, to shop, and to congregate.

To create this type of environment, the Broad St redesign should increase space for community activities, and decrease traffic flow. Traffic calming initiatives will create a safer pedestrian environment and will encourage more on-street activity. More active streets produce economic activity.

Action 2

Strategically fill in gaps in the downtown sidewalk network

In coordination with Goal 1's restriping plan, a key component is incorporating and prioritizing the completion of the downtown sidewalk network. Providing connectivity to all parts of downtown – and even the surrounding neighborhoods – is an immediate solution that will get more people into downtown. This also opens up more opportunities to create a continuous grid that encourages redevelopment and revitalization.

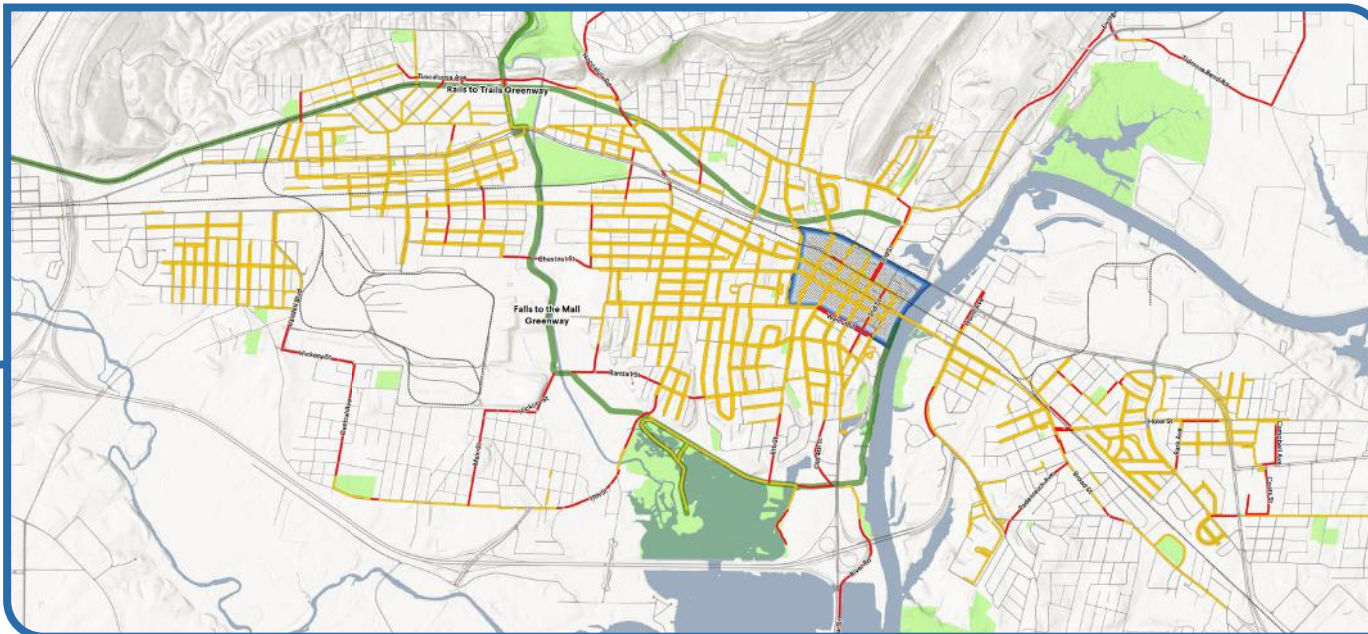
5

Foster a more active, mixed-use environment

Action 1

Update downtown zoning regulations to support mixed-use development

A zoning update is one of the primary recommendations for the city. While an update would be city-wide, there is potential to update a downtown overlay in the short-term so that progress is not being held up by lengthy delays in the planning process. This amendment to the current ordinance would allow more mixed-use (retail & housing) development by right. As mentioned in other goals, increasing the housing supply downtown will strengthen the city's housing mix and provide more support for the businesses.



Sidewalk Masterplan

Land Use

FEATURE PROJECTS

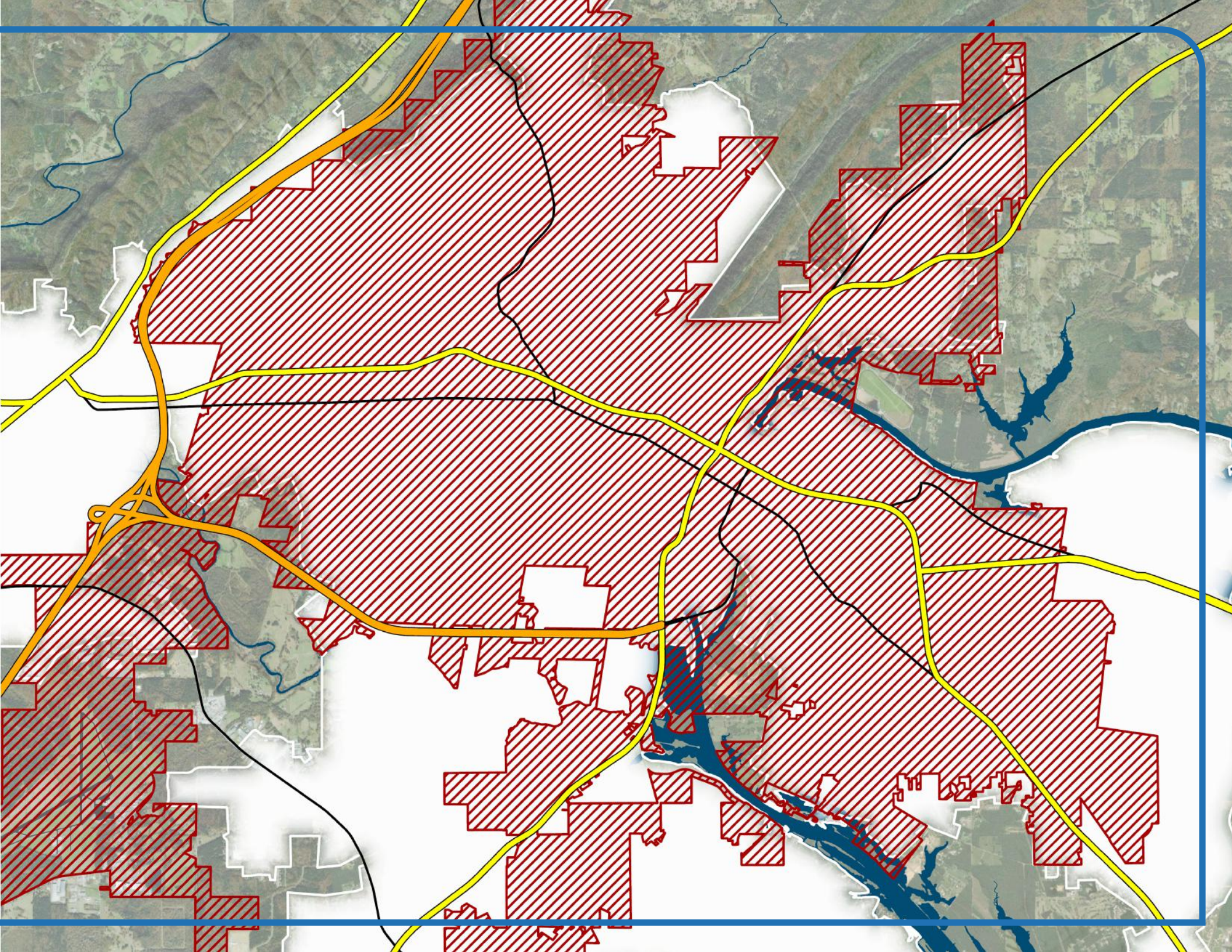
Update Zoning Ordinance

Historic Commercial Areas

Redefine Waterfront Zoning

North Gadsden Development

The City of Gadsden is blessed with Rivers, Lakes, Mountains, Historic Development, and beautiful neighborhoods. To protect the future of the city and its amenities, the city should proactively update its land use regulations and methodology based on updated community values and economic strategies. Strategies for the improvement of city-wide land use improvements begin with a zoning ordinance and map update based on this plan.



Update Zoning Ordinance

Implement a new citywide zoning ordinance and map update to activate and ensure key elements of needed development.

An updated city-wide zoning ordinance following the comprehensive plan is used to fortify the goals and actions of the plan in land use and design regulations based on the holistic needs set forth by the community's vision and the city's technical analysis. An updated zoning ordinance following the comprehensive plan would assist the city with elements like riverfront-oriented development, updated residential site standards to promote infill, up-zoning around historic commercial areas, updates to corridor zoning, and updated site design standards.

Action 1

Update city-wide zoning ordinance and map

Action 3

Work with the community during the zoning process

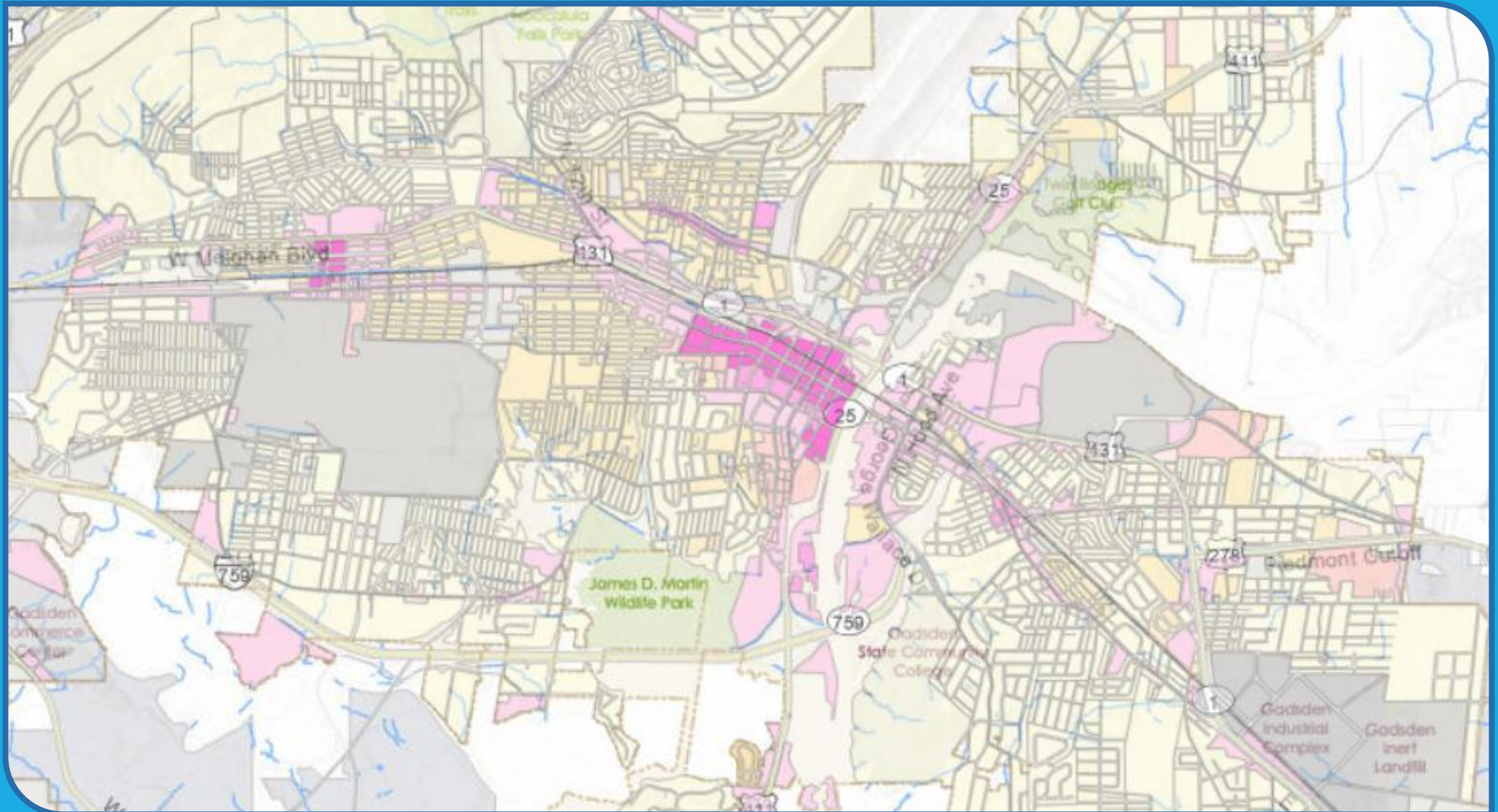
Action 2

Work with a firm to create a update with for the zoning based on the plan

Action 4

Incorporate modern best-practices in urban land use planning for innovative zoning strategies

FEATURE PROJECT



Current Zoning Map

Historic Commercial Areas

Prioritize revitalization of areas around historic commercial nodes to activate retail and increase walkability.

An underutilized resource for Gadsden that could have an important impact in the city's revitalization is its neighborhood-scale commercial areas. These historic neighborhood retail districts like Alabama City's **Wall Street, Tuscaloosa Avenue, East Broad/7th Street**, and **Forrest Avenue/South 12th Street** are important to revitalize and to use as anchors for increased residential density. These were once the heart of walkable neighborhoods, and these traditional neighborhood values are recapturing the nation. Careful consideration should be focused on these neighborhood centers to incentivize local business in these storefronts, walkability in neighborhoods surrounding these nodes, and increased residential density and demand around these historic neighborhood centers.

Action 1

Increase residential density around Gadsden's historic neighborhood retail centers

Action 3

Improved streetscapes at these businesses

Action 2

Increase walkability to these neighborhood centers

Action 4

Offer tax abatements, fee reductions, and/ or fast track permitting to incentivize commercial and residential development in designated districts

FEATURE PROJECT



Ritz Theater



East Broad St Historic Commercial District

Redefine Waterfront Zoning

Ensure the zoning update honors the economic and placemaking impact of activating the city's waterfront.

Gadsden's waterfront is a precious resource, and a zoning update should ensure the waterfront is both protected and capitalized. To redefine Gadsden's waterfront through zoning, a number of elements can be used, like buffers for greenspace, new land use districts, dictating site design that is oriented to the water, requiring visual or physical public access, and mixture of uses.

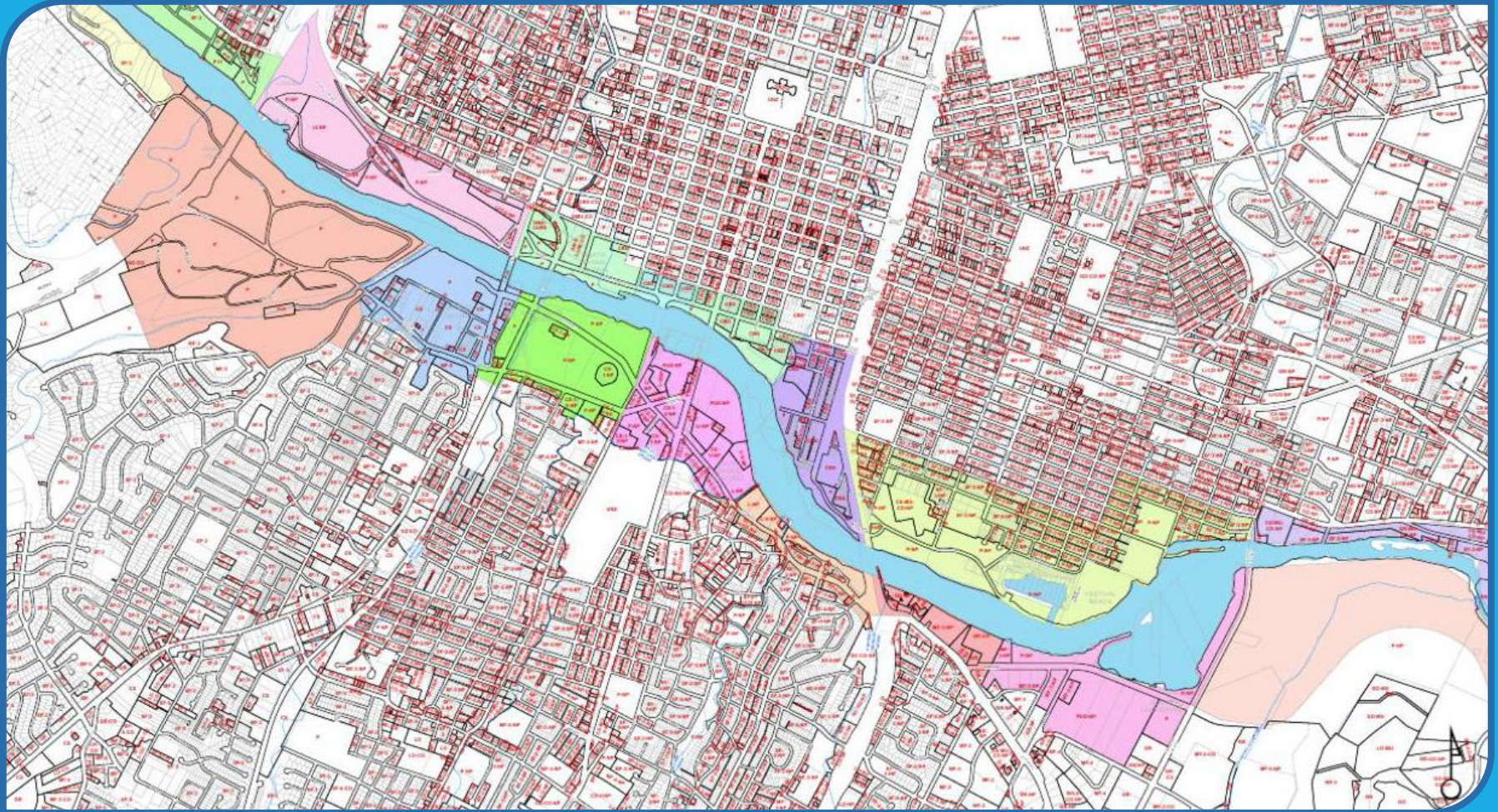
Action 1

Establish a comprehensive city rezoning effort that provides a mixture of waterfront-oriented development regulations and district

Action 2

Consider rezoning of existing or potential incompatible land uses that conflict with public interest for riverfront properties

FEATURE PROJECT



Example Waterfront Overlay

North Gadsden Development

Coordinate land uses to support continued commercial and residential development of the North Gadsden neighborhood.

With the HWY 411 widening and realignment project complete, Gadsden's northern connections to Cherokee County and Georgia have significantly improved. Directly impacted by this improved highway connection is the underutilized area of North Gadsden. The City's zoning update should highlight the new development opportunities made available by the HWY 411 improvement by strategically updating the North Gadsden area's zoning to allow for a mix of industrial, commercial, and a higher density of residential.

Action 1

Update zoning in the North Gadsden area to leverage commercial development along the US 411 corridor

Action 2

Ensure zoning updates allow for a mixture of industrial, commercial, and higher density residential infill

FEATURE PROJECT



Underdeveloped US 411 corridor in North Gadsden

1

Utilize Plan Maps to guide future development decisions

Action 1

Adopt a place-based framework to define the characteristics of places important to the character of the community.

Creating and defining a set of place types for the city will help guide the development of the specific areas. This type of design oriented approach to areas helps determine the design standards of new development, helping it more seamlessly integrate into the existing fabric and accommodate the desired style the city envisions.

Action 2

Create Small Area Plans to guide development in specific areas of the city

Small area plans are similar to comprehensive plans but are targeted at specific areas of the city that have unique needs. These are specific areas recommended in the comprehensive plan that will be developed in the future and then added to the document as amendments after they are voted on by the city. The following series of maps detail specific, small areas of the city that are being recommended for further study.

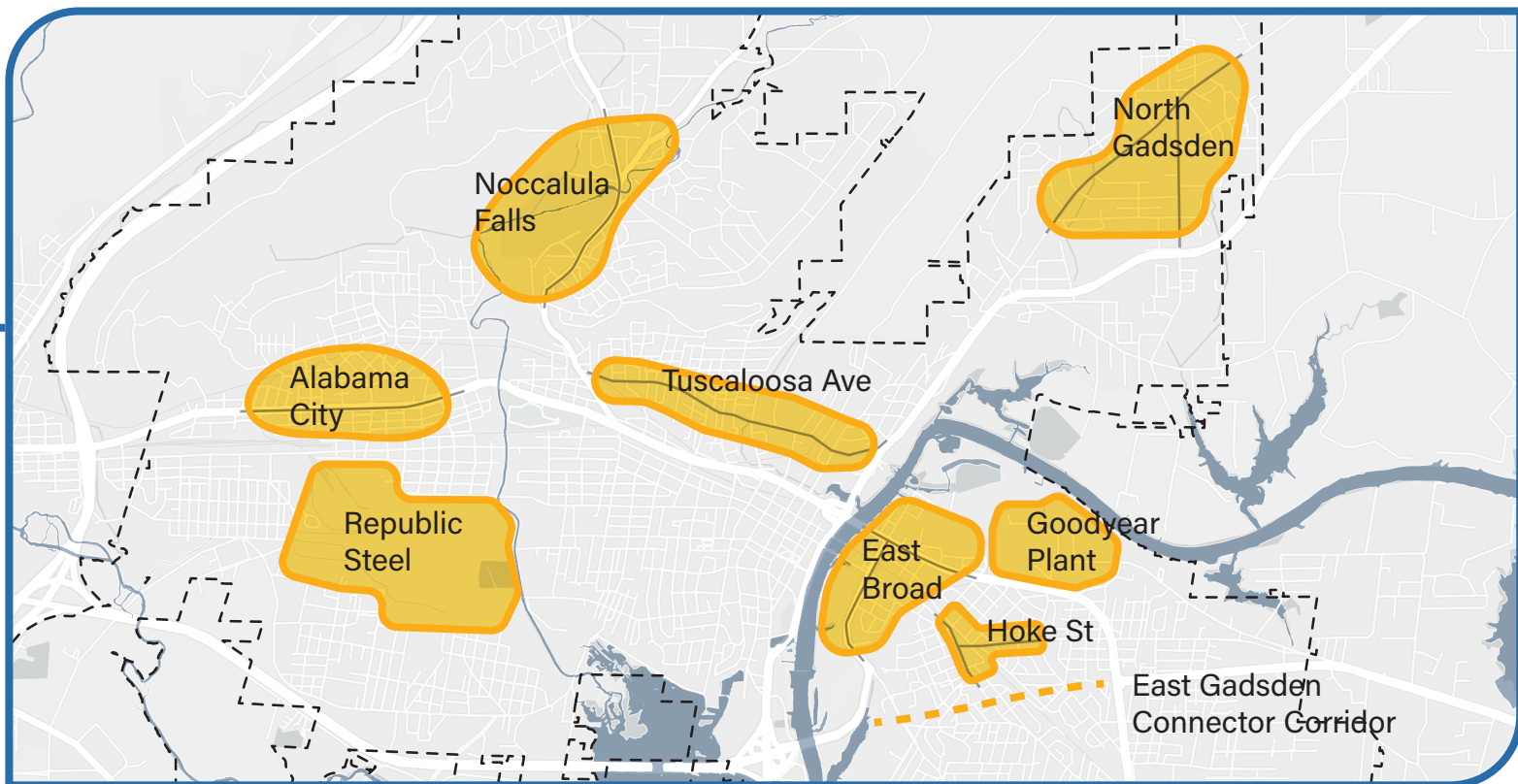
- Alabama City
- North Gadsden
- Noccalula Falls
- Republic Steel
- East Broad
- Goodyear Plant
- Hoke St
- East Gadsden Connector Corridor
- Tuscaloosa Ave

Action 3

Update BID and TIF districts to impact defined areas and maximize effectiveness

The city should work with the state to enable legislation for Class 4 cities to have the ability to create BID districts. BID districts could be implemented throughout the city so that some of the neighborhood centers highlighted in the place types section could begin the process of revitalization and improvements.

Restructuring the boundary and effectiveness of the current TIF district by setting more clear goals for the use of funds could greatly impact and help fund priority projects for the city.



Recommended Small Area Plans

Place Types

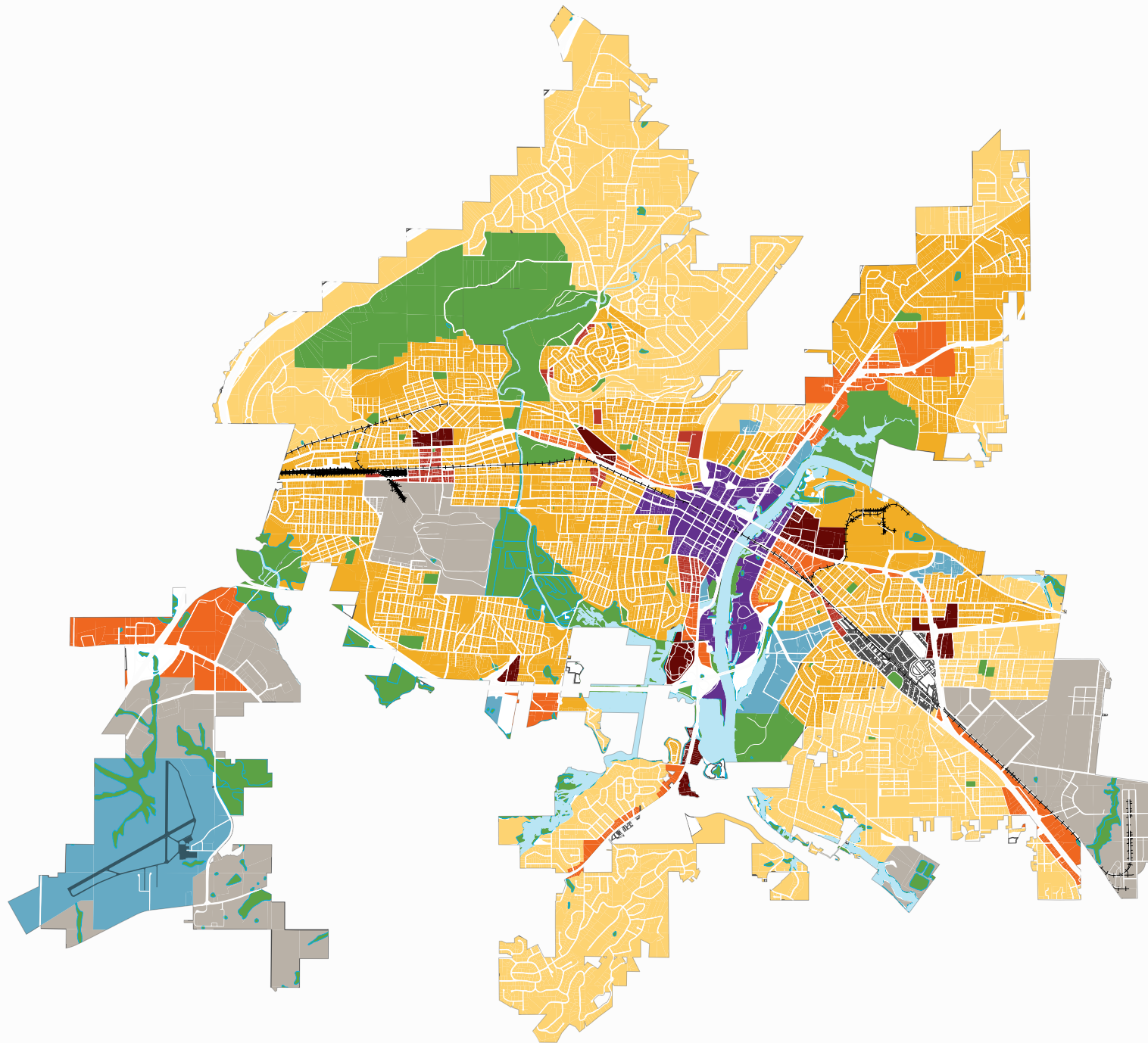
The city of Gadsden is composed of many places that are part of different districts, have diverse histories, and unique characters. Yet, each one of these places contributes to a unified community. Historically, these places have developed independently from one another because of factors of population and distance.

Typically, the city can be categorized and separated by land use—that is, what use is a particular parcel is being used for. When planning for future development, this type of approach is often out of context and in disregard of the larger whole of the city.

Adopting a Place Type approach helps the city focus on more relevant aspects of what defines communities: neighborhoods, mixed-use, areas, parks, and streets. These place types are the foundations of community interactions, and have the potential to facilitate places that flourish.

The following section defines the specific place types of the city and details the particular elements of place that can accommodate and create future places of growth. The nine types that are addressed have associated descriptions and images that show the type of design and scale that are recommended for the place type to encourage revitalization, growth, and an economically rich environment. The allowable uses are shown at the end of each section. Primary uses are shown in bold, and secondary uses regular.

	Urban Core		Historic Residential
	Neighborhood Center		Contemporary Residential
	Development Corridor		Special District
	Commercial Hub		Urban Green Space
	Industrial Zone		



PLACE TYPE

Urban Core

The urban core, or downtown, is one of the most defining areas of the city.



Typically characterized by higher density development, walkability, and a mixture of various uses, the urban core supports a concentrated network of shops, restaurants, retail, businesses, and civic institutions. This place type is a unique feature throughout the region that serves as a nucleus of employment and cultural activity for the entire Greater Gadsden area. Distinctive architecture, public art, and historical landmarks contribute to the district's unique identity, while the pedestrian-oriented layout promotes human interaction and activity. This is the oldest part of the city but it has the potential to power broader citywide revitalization through place-based improvements that make it a more vibrant environment where people choose to live, work, and play.

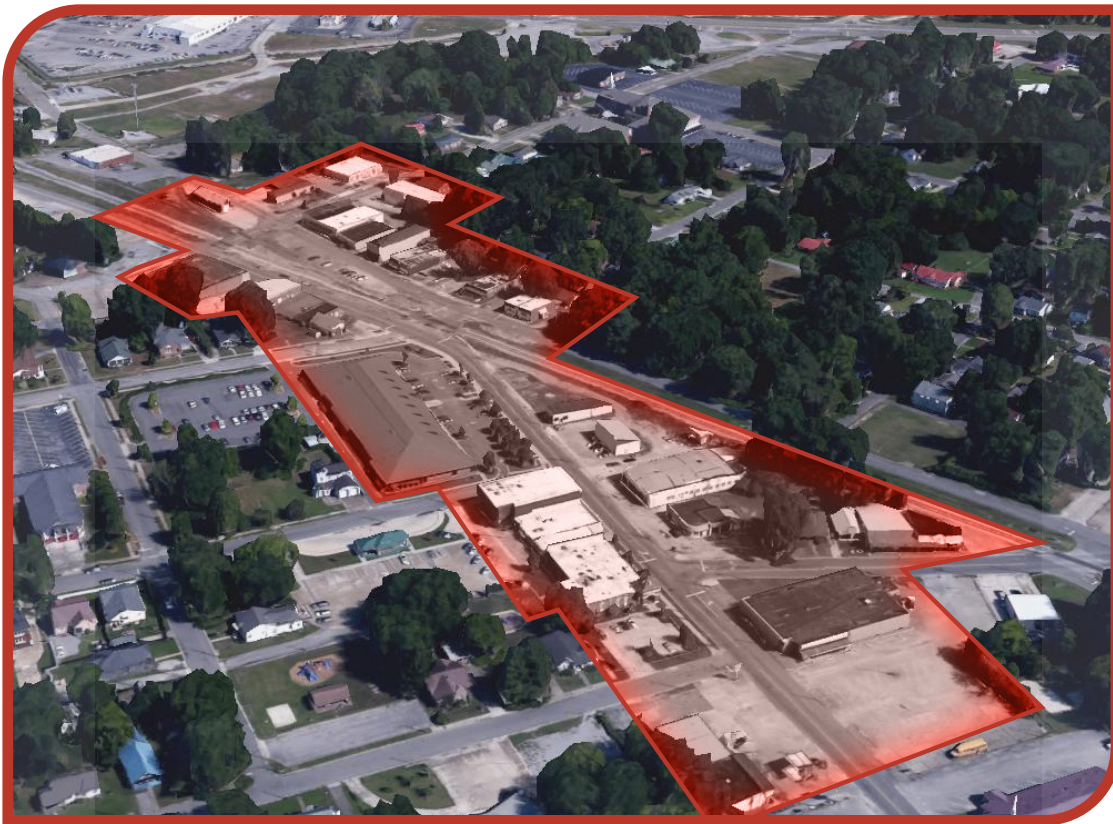
Uses: Multifamily Residential, Restaurant, Commercial Retail, Commercial Service, Entertainment & Arts, Office Institutional, Parks & Open Space



PLACE TYPE

Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood centers serve as localized economic and social hubs within residential communities.



Neighborhood centers are characterized by a concentration of retail establishments, services, and amenities catering to the immediate needs and preferences of local residents. In Gadsden, these neighborhood centers are often the historic downtown districts of smaller cities that were annexed into the City of Gadsden over time. Examples of neighborhood centers in Gadsden include Alabama City's historic commercial district on 27th St and East Gadsden's historic commercial district on Broad St and Elmwood Ave. Vibrant neighborhood centers often include establishments such as grocery stores, cafes, boutiques, and essential services. These areas are similar in nature to the urban core, but at a lower scale and density. It is critical to have pedestrian infrastructure that makes these nodes walkable to the neighborhoods they support.

Uses: Restaurant, Commercial Retail, Commercial Service, Entertainment & Arts, Multi-family Residential, Single-family attached, Office, Institutional



PLACE TYPE

Development Corridor

Development corridors are stretches of automobile-oriented developments that are located primarily along the city's major highways and arterial thoroughfares.



Development corridors feature a generally lower density of business establishments than the urban core or neighborhood centers, spread out over a greater area often with very limited or no walkability. Despite the focus on cars, development corridors should also accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and transit services. Whereas the urban core and neighborhood centers are destinations of choice, development corridors are often geared toward serving commuters and motorists.

Uses: Multi-family Residential, Restaurant, Commercial Retail, Commercial Service, Institutional, Light Industrial



PLACE TYPE

Commercial Hub

Commercial hubs are nodes of automobile-oriented commercial developments.



These commercial hubs are most commonly larger scale shopping centers or strip malls. They feature an intermediate level of business density between the higher density urban core and the lower density highway corridors. They also offer modest levels of walkability between businesses within the hub; but due to their surrounding context of highway style development, rarely offer substantial pedestrian connectivity to other areas. Commercial hubs are often regional centers of commerce with big box stores that serve motorists from both urban and suburban neighborhoods. Examples of commercial hubs in Gadsden include the Gadsden Mall and the Noccalula Gateway Plaza Shopping Center.

Uses: Restaurant, Commercial Retail, Commercial Service, Multi-family Residential, Single-family attached, Office, Institutional



PLACE TYPE

Industrial Zone

Industrial zones are designated areas within the city characterized by industrial and manufacturing uses.



Although these uses can be present in other place types, including development corridors, industrial zones are typically larger scale single-use sites like the former Republic Steel and Goodyear facilities or clusters of compatible industrial plants like the Gadsden Industrial Complex in East Gadsden. It is generally recommended that industrial uses be minimized in other place types in favor of co-location within industrial park type areas. Industrial zones are important employment centers within the city with the potential to generate high traffic volumes. These place types should be connected to a roadway network that can accommodate high traffic and efforts should be taken to buffer and minimize the potentially noxious uses from other adjacent place types.

Uses: Light Industrial/Business Parks, Heavy Industrial, Restaurant, Commercial Retail, Commercial Service, Office



PLACE TYPE

Historic Neighborhoods

Historic neighborhoods are older, established residential communities situated in close proximity to the urban core



Historic neighborhoods are older, established residential communities situated in close proximity to the city core that are more urban in nature. These neighborhoods were mostly developed prior to the post-WWII suburban boom and the widespread use of the automobile, and are situated along former streetcar lines or within walking distance of historic neighborhood commercial centers. These neighborhoods often have a mix of housing types with an abundance of classical American architecture and a high level of walkability with extensive sidewalk networks. Residents of these neighborhoods enjoy a high level of accessibility to urban amenities while retaining a distinctly residential typology with a limited mixture of other uses.

Uses: Single-Family Detached Residential, Single-Family Attached Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Restaurant, Commercial Retail, Office, Institutional, Parks & Open Space



PLACE TYPE

Contemporary Neighborhoods

Contemporary residential neighborhoods are communities situated farther out from the urban core



Contemporary residential neighborhoods are defined by a suburban nature. These neighborhoods were largely developed during the post-WWII suburban boom with residents that rely more heavily on individual automobile use. Positioned in a secondary concentric ring between inner first-ring neighborhoods and the developing rural edges of the city, second-ring neighborhoods are almost exclusively detached single-family homes with a minimal diversity of housing types and very limited walkability with sparse or no sidewalk coverage. Many second-ring neighborhoods lack the traditional grid road network characteristic of the inner city, instead dominated by winding suburban roads, cul-de-sacs, and subdivisions.

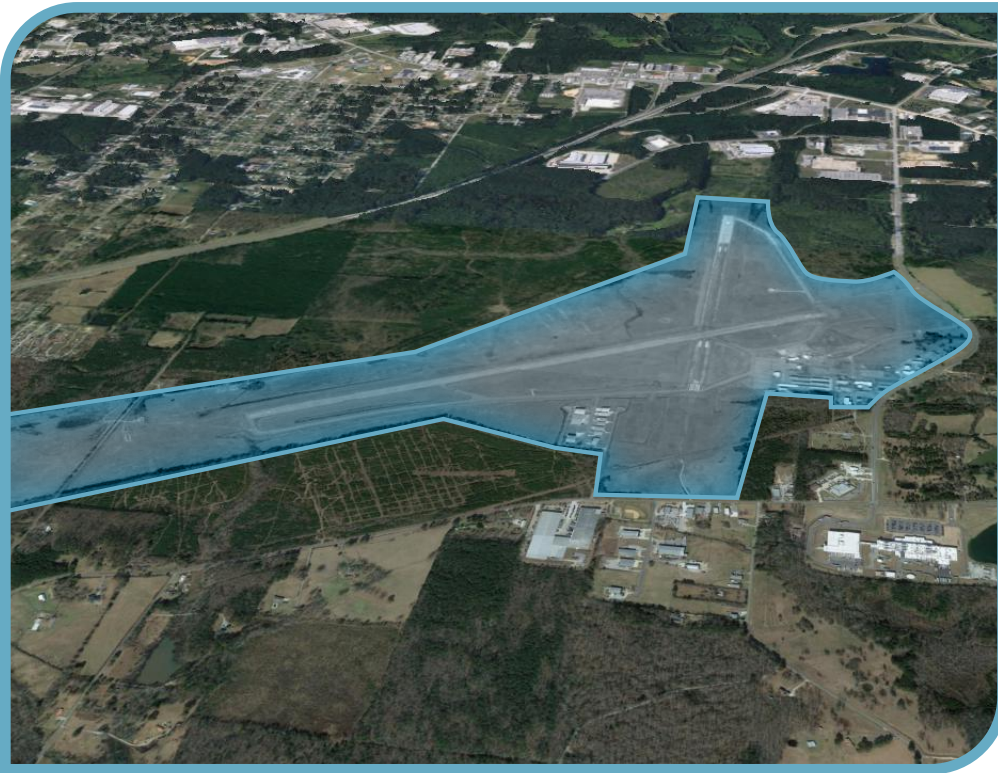
Uses: Single-Family Detached Residential, Single-Family Attached Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Restaurant, Commercial Retail, Office, Institutional, Parks & Open Space



PLACE TYPE

Special District

Special districts are primarily spaces dedicated to uses that do not fit neatly within other place types.



These are largely single-use institutionally operated spaces that serve a non-commercial public function. Gadsden's special districts are typically located along the city's major corridors. Examples of special districts in the city include hospital campuses, the airport, and the Gadsden State Community College campus. These spaces are often governed by independent boards or entities, limiting the city's direct influence on how these districts internally develop.

Uses: Institutional, Airport, Light Industrial



PLACE TYPE

Urban Green Space

Urban green spaces are a critical element of the city's social and physical landscape.



These are designated areas within the city that are intentionally preserved in their natural state or developed for outdoor recreational purposes. Urban green spaces include a variety of spaces intended for active recreational use, such as parks, or for passive preservation, such as floodplains and steep slopes. Urban green spaces offer residents and visitors access to nature in the midst of the city's urban context. They also serve a dual purpose as green infrastructure for the city, with the capacity to mitigate excess stormwater and other environmental hazards. Urban green spaces are composed of three primary land uses: parks, trails, and open space. They range significantly in size, from pocket parks such as Cherry St Park to massive regional spaces such as Noccalula Park. A critical element of successful urban green spaces will be increasing connectivity between these spaces and their surrounding communities.

Uses: Parks & Open Space



2

Reform Land Bank Authority

Action 1

Amend Land Bank Authority entitlement process to expedite quiet title timeline to 6 months – 1 year

One of the challenges of utilizing land bank property is the length of time required to acquire the property. Often interested parties lose momentum and move on to more immediate opportunities. Streamlining and creating clear guidelines can help with developing the properties for greater use. There should also be mechanisms in place to keep the Land Bank accountable to the goals of the public and community.

Action 2

Promote vacant and blighted parcels to developers

Partnering with local developers and other organizations, such as non-profits, is another avenue the city should explore to promote land bank property development. Having one entity or group take over ownership of multiple properties to develop could have a significant impact on the perception of these properties and encourage others to take action.

Action 3

Incentivize infill development

Prioritizing infill development will require making the properties more attractive to developers, this could come in the form of incentives through tax breaks, or density bonuses.

Action 4

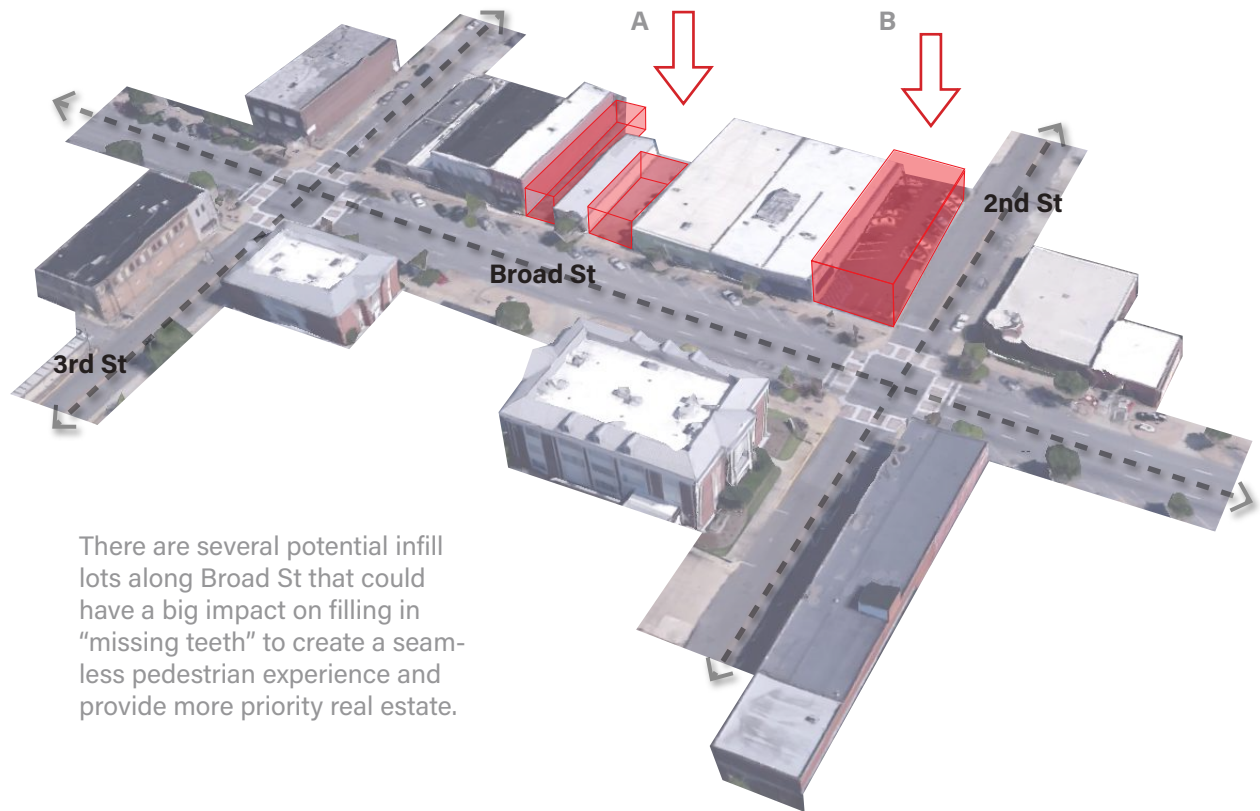
Utilize the “GROW Gadsden Housing Choice” catalog for land bank properties

Once the pre-approved housing designs are approved and implemented, coordinate a process with the land bank to bring the designs online for development, potentially working with partnering entities, such as the housing authority, to implement mixed-income housing opportunities.

A



B



There are several potential infill lots along Broad St that could have a big impact on filling in "missing teeth" to create a seamless pedestrian experience and provide more priority real estate.

3

Create a more walkable Gadsden

Action 1

Promote compact development

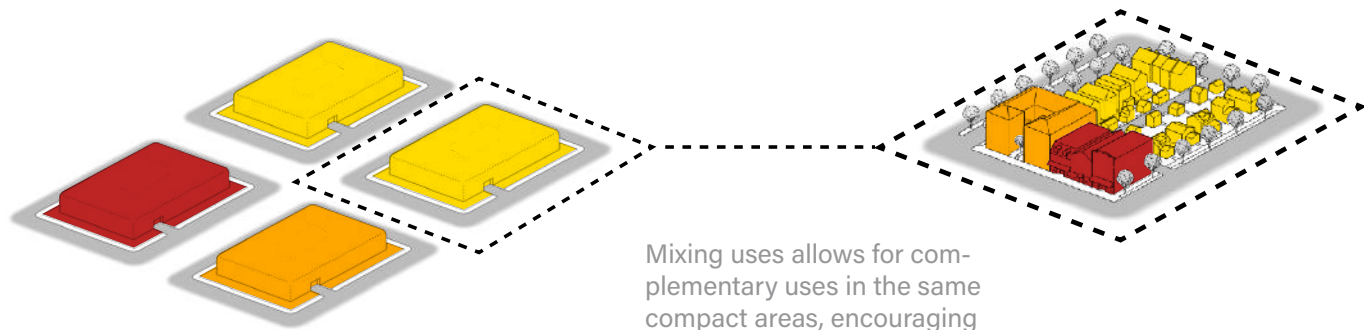
Compact development patterns facilitate walkable environments in existing areas of the city that currently have higher patterns of density. Developing in these areas would utilize land that is already serviced by infrastructure that can support growth. This type of development mitigates sprawl patterns, and is growing in popularity across the county.

Action 2

Encourage mixed-use districts

There are many benefits to incorporating mixed-use districts into the existing fabric of the city. When uses are allowed to be mixed, destinations become more convenient for citizens and businesses. There are also economic and social benefits. Mixed-use development encourages revitalization and creates community at smaller scales, encouraging more interaction, which ultimately leads to safer environments. These districts also have environmental and health benefits. People do not have to travel as far to get necessary items for daily life, and the community is encouraged to walk and bike more because destinations are closer.

Traditionally, uses have been separated on the zoning map.



Mixing uses allows for complementary uses in the same compact areas, encouraging walkability

Action 3

Focus on the core of the city

The historic core of Gadsden is well-defined, but sparsely populated, and has a lot of available real estate. A proven strategy for increasing economic opportunity as well as creating a more friendly pedestrian environment is enhancing the sidewalk infrastructure and experience of those living and visiting the downtown core. Increasing the quality of urban design, which includes landscaping, hardscape, street furniture, and environmental opportunities will attract new businesses and residents to the core of the city, contributing to the revitalization of neglected areas.

Action 4

Increase density in strategic areas of the city

Several neighborhood centers and older historic districts should focus on increasing density to draw more people to the area to support and expand the commercial base. Increased economic activity and growth are reciprocal and an increased presence of amenities would contribute to the goal of having complete neighborhoods throughout the city.



When is density good, and when is it harmful to cities?

"Providing density that supports a high quality of life requires a love for cities, putting 'urbanism' front and center, according to noted urban designers."



"Dense concentrations of people are one of the necessary conditions for flourishing city diversity!"

- Jane Jacobs

Historic Commercial Areas & Mixed-use

The image on the right shows one of many historic neighborhoods centers throughout the city. Once a vital part of local neighborhoods, they provided necessary resources for everyday life in a convenient, walkable area.

Auto-oriented development and big box retailers put strain on many of these local centers. Many communities today are realizing the benefits of revitalizing these historic nodes. They provide many benefits to the economy, opportunities for housing, and create a more walkable, healthy environment, encouraging local residents to support local businesses.

The rendering on the opposite page shows the opportunity and potential of revitalizing this intersection at Forrest and 12th. There are not only spaces for housing, offices, and business, but there are also places for the community to gather, and greenspaces.



Office

Housing

Retail /
Commercial



12th & Forrest

4

Modernize the city's zoning ordinance

Action 1

Update zoning ordinance to support plan goals and vision

Gadsden's current zoning ordinance was created in a different era for the city. Much change has occurred and the ordinance has been continually amended over the years to reflect those changes. A new ordinance needs to be developed that can aid the city's current state and prepare the city for the future. This rewrite would also simplify the ordinance and update it to modern, current practices.

5

Preservation of green space

Action 1

Identify key areas to preserve

Land use impacts the diversity of the natural and built environment of the city. Because of Gadsden's wealth of natural resources, there is a danger that – if not protected – the natural beauty of the city could be compromised. The city should aggressively take action to identify long-range preservation plans for future protection.

6

Adopt Land Use policies that promote a healthy city

Action 1

Prioritize access to parks and recreation

One fundamental aspect of an equitable city is the priority of providing access to parks and recreation for all citizens. It has been shown that parks promote a healthy lifestyle and are vital to childhood development. They are also drivers of economic activity. Parks have important environmental benefits that facilitate resilient communities, and also provide space for people to gather, while strengthening communities.

Action 2

Create opportunities for diverse modes of transportation

As cities better understand the needs of the diverse population, it is becoming more evident that diverse transportation options is a necessity. Policies should be implemented to promote alternative and multi-modal forms of transportation to create an inclusive city that values and provides access for all types of transportation and users. Moving people around the city efficiently and effectively will benefit the population and the economy. The city's ultimate goal should also include the safety of its citizens. Policies to prioritize people over transportation should also be a priority.

7

Reuse of brownfields

Action 1

Reclaim brownfields for natural landscapes and parks

As a post-industrial city, Gadsden has ample opportunity to reclaim some of its brownfields for natural uses that not only encourage activity but also help recuperate the natural environment.

Action 2

Consider creative redevelopment concepts

There are many current examples of creative reuse of brownfields and how they can contribute to the community and to the environment. Several of the worlds most populous cities have constructed natural environments in the most dense urban centers. Reclaiming these environments for future generations is one of the best ways to utilize and reclaim the land's highest and best use. Reclaiming the state property on the old steel mill site to design an urban forest would be a feature opportunity for the city to create a regional destination on the cutting edge of sustainability. Urban forests are one example of such redevelopment.



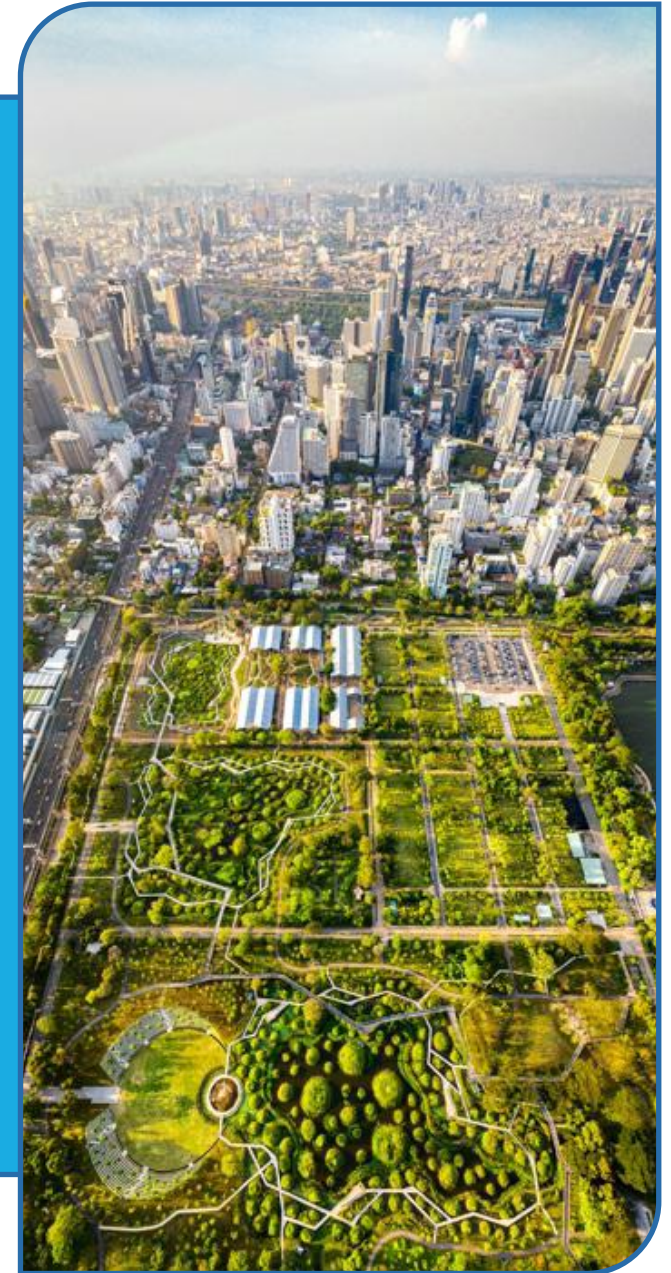
Benjakitti Forest Park

Bangkok, Thailand

This brownfield reuse project is a great example of a creative reuse of an old tobacco factory was transformed into an urban oasis. Land that would otherwise go unused are good opportunities to create greenspaces for the public, but primarily they are effective in helping remediate the environmental impact of the sites previous uses.



Republic Steel Site



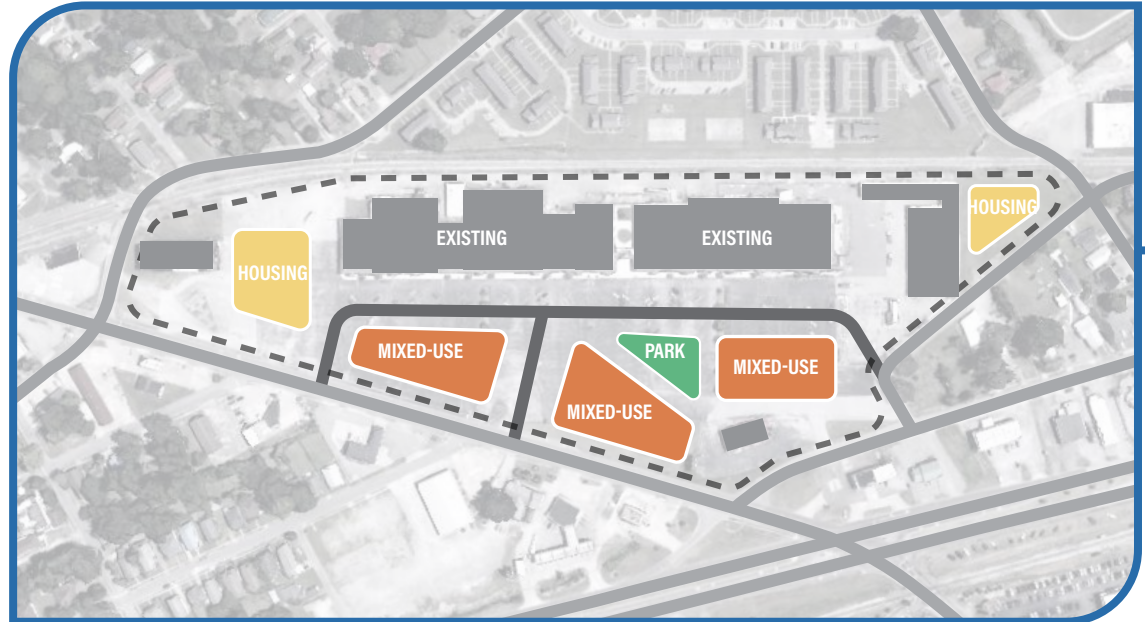
8

Retrofit patterns of suburban development

Action 1

Identify inefficient development patterns to improve

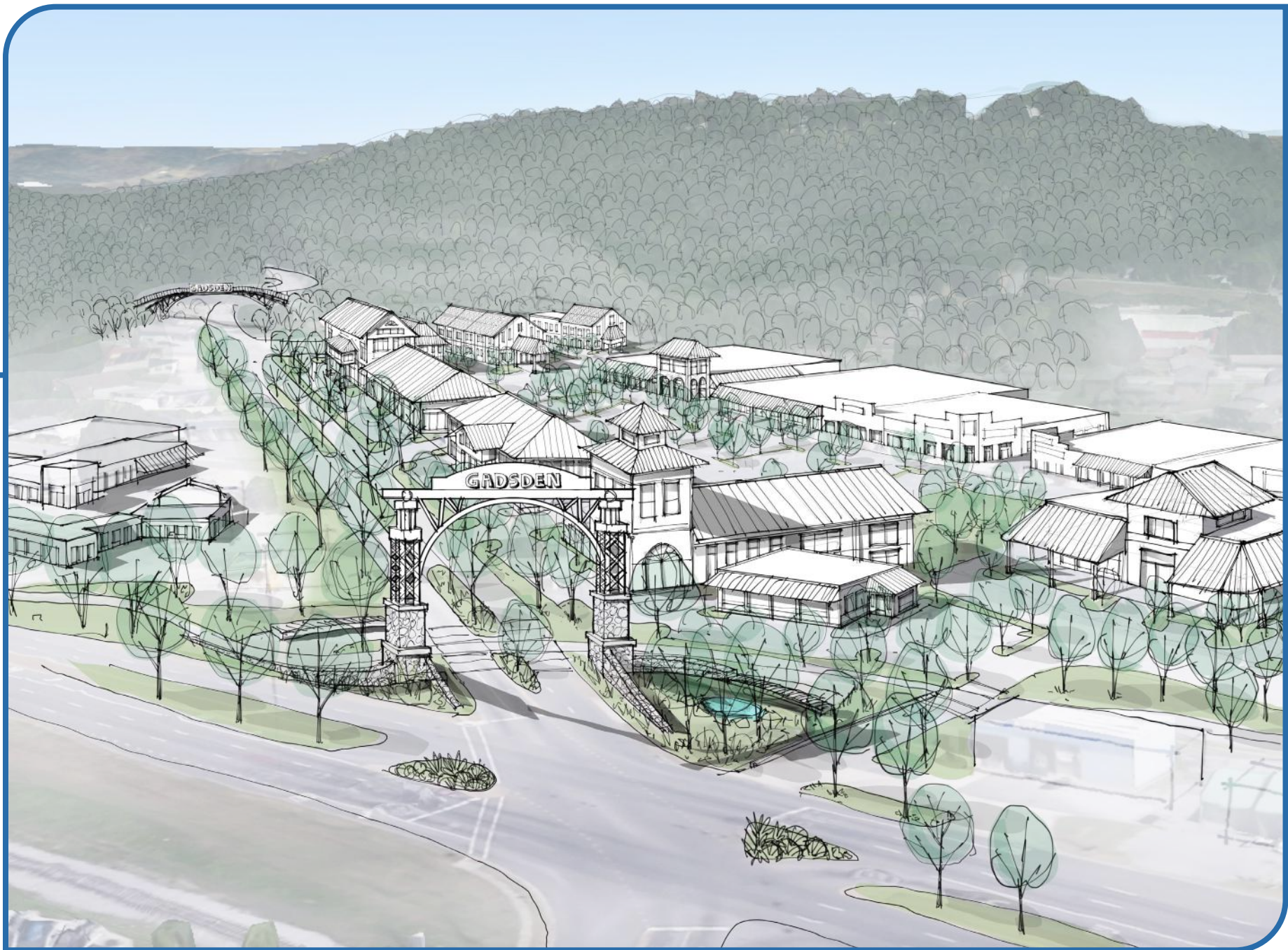
Characteristic of eras of car dependency, cities began to spread out and sprawl as a common practice where large extents of land were given over to parking and large-scale development. These areas are part of our daily experience in cities and are easily recognizable. As modern development begins to recapture a sense of place, values of community, and walkable environments, these older land practices are great opportunities to retrofit with new building types.



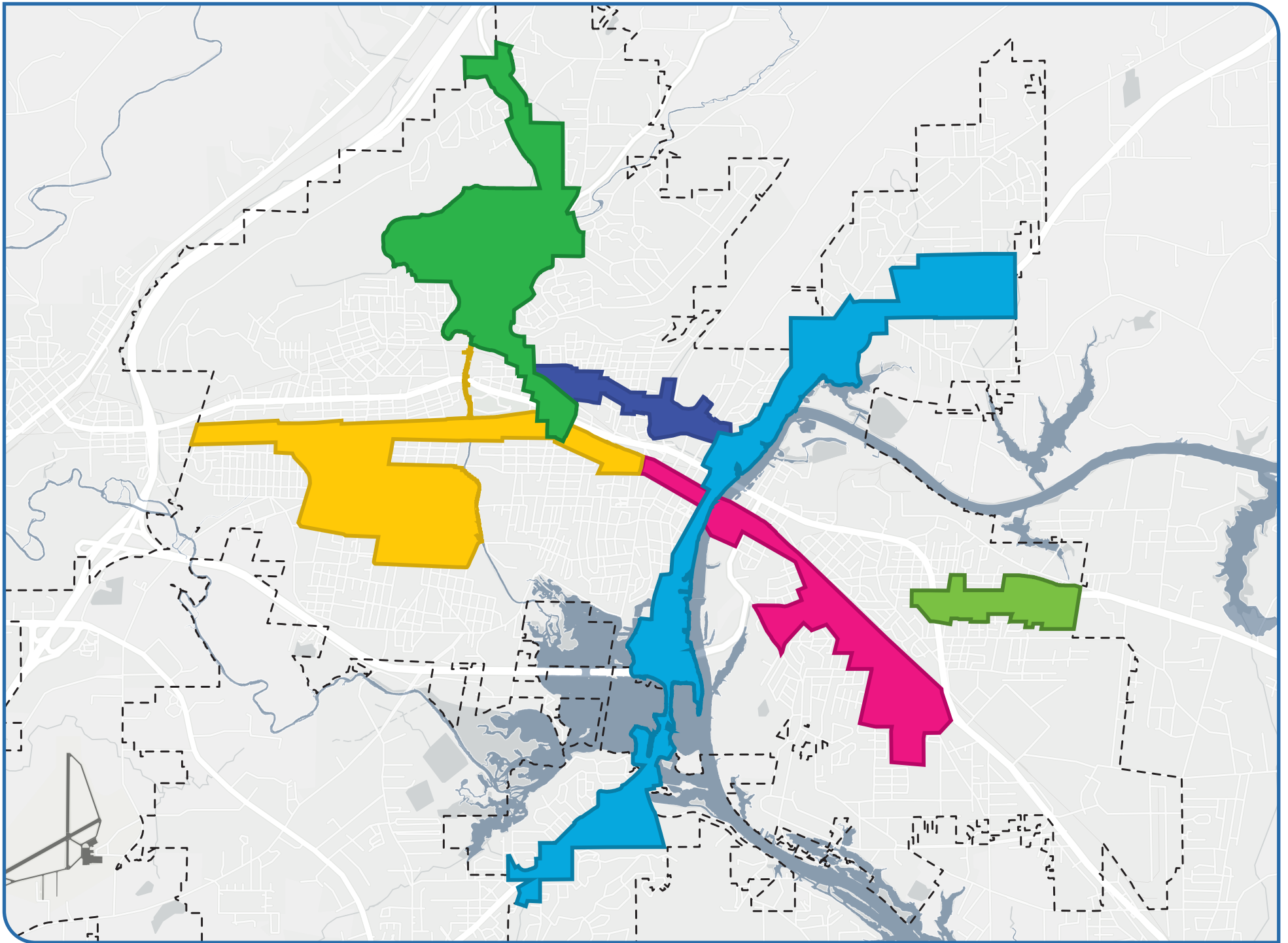
Action 2

Focus on neighborhood centers to create outparcel development

Many historic neighborhood commercial areas in the city still exist today. They are often vacant and undervalued, but have solid structures that are prime opportunities to redevelop and revitalize.



Agricola Shopping Center



9

Reimagine the city's primary corridors

Action 1

Promote the impact of the recommended zoning ordinance rewrite on corridor improvements.

Several major highways and roads bisect the city. Larger roads are focused on moving traffic in, through, and around cities. These roads should reflect the identity of the city. Many of these roads are also primary gateways, the first impression - or not - of where they are. These areas hold massive potential priority opportunities for the city. Improving corridors is a high-impact, and relatively low-cost solution for the city. Entry landscaping and gateway signage can go a long way creating an identity for the city.

Action 2

Consult corridor plans.

The corridor plans highlighted in the Mobility & Corridors section show existing land use patterns adjacent to these primary corridors and gateways across the city. The primary tool to aid in the development of these corridors is the zoning ordinance. Updated site design standards should be considered to improve the overall visual impact of these corridors. Updating these standards will also improve access management and safety for vehicles and pedestrians, reducing congestion and crashes.

City Administration

FEATURE PROJECTS

Consolidate City Operations

Expand Police Substations

Update School Branding

City operations are complex organisms. Efficient operations are necessary for the smooth functioning of a city, and it is important to take into account the understanding of a city's operation based on peer cities. Cities need to have efficient systems for the success of their future, the quality of life it offers, its services, and the health of its citizens. This section highlights some potential improvements of the city's operations in terms of facilities and the ability to measure the city's operational integrity.



Consolidate City Operations

Strategically consolidate city facilities and operations to more efficiently serve the city.

By consolidating departments like public works, fire, parks and recreation, city fleet services, etc., departments could more effectively serve the City. A consolidation of these operations would reduce operational costs, improve communication and cross-department collaboration, and allow the City to serve its citizens in a more equitable way. The City should work with its impacted department heads, an architect, and the City's GIS department to identify the specific space and functionality of the new facility, the property, and the most effective location available for a new consolidated facility.

Action 1

Conduct an internal audit to assess the operational and space needs for each of the city's departments

Action 3

Consult with a design firm to assist with facility and site design needs for any new municipal facilities

Action 2

Work with the GIS department to determine potential sites for new facilities

Action 4

Conduct analysis to ensure appropriate unit staffing levels and create a plan for right-sizing city operations to maximize resource allocation

FEATURE PROJECT



Gadsden Public Works operations



Expand Police Substations

Consider adding police substations to fire stations to improve response time and coverage.

The City should strategically add police substations to the City's fire stations. This substation approach could improve city police coverage and reduce response times. This strategy should consider existing space and the potential for existing station expansion. The police substation strategy should consider population changes by block group when selecting fire stations for this effort.

Action 1

Conduct an internal assessment to determine where additional coverage is needed and which facilities could support an operational presence by Gadsden police

Action 2

Choose locations based on proximity to population growth, crime trends, and potential expansion capacity

FEATURE PROJECT



Example fire station facility that could support a police substation

Update School Branding

Brand all middle schools as Titans to create a sense of unity throughout the school system.

Branding is an important element of a school system. A clear brand creates a collective identity and describes your system in a consistent way. More importantly it creates a statement of who you are collectively becoming in terms of a positive cultural shift. Unifying the mascot and identity of schools within the Gadsden City School system creates a stronger sense of place and unity as students develop their identity and affinity in preparation for attendance at Gadsden City High School. A sense of unity and commitment to the City of Gadsden as a Titan can instill a stronger motivation toward civic engagement and civic ownership as citizens after graduation.

Action 1

Rebrand all middle schools as Titans

Action 3

Regionally market the school branding effort in the local media

Action 2

Work with a marketing/branding consultant to define the rebranding process and coordinate the launch of the new brand

Action 4

Plan for a system-wide branding campaign as a next step

FEATURE PROJECT



Gadsden Titans school branding

➤ CITY ADMINISTRATION GOALS

1 Continue to pursue a balanced municipal operation focused on level of service and efficiency.

Action 1

Create a strategic Operation Plan for city operations

The City should conduct a municipal strategic operations plan. This plan should include technical elements like a municipal audit and technical peer municipality reviews based on populations, assets, liabilities, and department service indicators. The strategic operations plan should also include department-level SWOT analysis, and team and mission-building activities.

2

Champion a cohesive approach to addressing the City's unhoused population.

Action 2

Create a Gadsden Task Force to address the unhoused.

The City should facilitate the creation of a task force to address the issues facing the unhoused population in Gadsden. This task force should be composed of local experts and existing service providers. The goal of the task force should include the confrontation of homelessness with a collective effort by partnering with key stakeholders to address the issue efficiently and effectively. The task force should inventory and publicize existing services available to the unhoused and determine the primary causes of local homelessness to tailor relief measures to specific needs.

Economic Development

FEATURE PROJECTS

Continue Economic Diversity

Quality of Life / Placemaking

Sustained for generations by a heavy manufacturing sector, the City of Gadsden has struggled in recent decades to successfully adapt to a post-industrial economic landscape. Although industry will remain an important factor in Gadsden's economy, the city must balance its reliance on industry with growth in new sectors to diversify and fortify its well-being. Economic development initiatives in the city should focus on improving local quality of life in order to better attract a wider range of jobs and growth. These efforts should also leverage Gadsden's quality of life offerings to promote growth in the knowledge based economy.



Continue Economic Diversity

Actively recruit industries in agriculture, healthcare, technology, aviation, tourism, etc.

Gadsden should recruit a mixture of higher-paying industrial jobs while strategically focusing on the targeted recruitment of agricultural technology jobs and aviation industrial jobs. With both sectors, Gadsden should highlight its available land near the airport and in North Gadsden and the reverse osmosis facility/water capacity. The city should focus on site-ready locations near the airport, highlighting the proximity to the airport and the county mega site. The city should also partner with and support Gadsden State and Jacksonville State on curriculum to support targeted industries.

Action 1

Continue focus on healthcare industry and tourism

Action 2

Support completion of Gadsden State Community College's Advanced Manufacturing Center

Action 3

Develop a "remote Gadsden" marketing campaign to lure knowledge economy workers and entrepreneurs to Gadsden

Action 4

Continue marketing available industrial property around the Gadsden Airport for small-medium industrial operations

FEATURE PROJECT



Conceptual plan for a microreactor assembly plant recruited adjacent to the airport

Action 5

Strategically diversify the size and scope of new business and industry to avoid over-reliance on a singular company to support the city's economy

Action 6

Assist the Gadsden-Etowah IDA with promoting the county's N.E.A.R Megasite as a potential residential, commercial, and industrial boon to the Gadsden area's economy

Quality of Life / Place Economics

Focus on quality of life and placemaking as drivers of economic development.

More and more, a city's quality of life and sense of place are seen as more important factors than traditional economic development tools such as tax abatements. There are many factors of Quality of life and Place, but in Gadsden; focus can be targeted to strategic improvements to Downtown and the Riverfront, investing in more walkable areas that have a shopping component, and focusing on retail and entertainment that supports tourism.

Action 1

Improve downtown with new residential and lodging options

Action 4

Provide incentives for housing in walking distance of retail districts

Action 2

Expand riverfront recreation and mixed-use development

Action 5

Use federal funding to develop new single-family housing

Action 3

Consider establishing cooperative districts for commercial development

Action 6

Plan for modern workforce needs and priorities

FEATURE PROJECT



Conceptual mixed-use walkable riverfront development that would attract higher paying workforce industries

➤ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 Downtown Growth Plan

Action 1

Incentivize and create walkable middle class multi-family housing.

70% of disposable income is spent in walkable economies compared to 30% of disposable income spent in single-family communities. In order to attract the young professional, this has to be priority for downtown.

Action 2

Create ordinances for unoccupied or dilapidated buildings to be brought to code or city will condemn them in an effort of redevelopment.

Action 3

Downtown pedestrian plan to further seamlessly connect both ends of downtown to the River and connect trails to downtown.

Action 4

Create readily accessible and easy to understand downtown zoning regulations for mixed use developments that are proposed for the downtown area.

Action 5

Downtown traffic and pedestrian study to aid in future ideal locations for downtown parking decks and incentivize multifamily developments to add public parking component to any downtown development.

Action 6

Develop quality of life marketing campaign promoting downtown to be used in industry recruitment and site selection proposals.

Action 7

Partner with regional and state arts organizations to create a “Live Music Fund,” for downtown businesses, where the city pays for the live music of downtown businesses to create a stronger economic impact and attract young professionals for night life.

Benefits

- Attract young professionals
- Increase economic spending
- Attract tourism and visitor spending
- Increase property values

Funding sources

- USDA
- Off balance sheet bond funding
- Cooperative Districts
- Public Private Partnerships
- New Market Tax Credits
- Opportunity Zone Investment
- Historical Tax Credits
- SSBCI
- Innovate Alabama Community Partnership Grant

2

Industry Recruitment

Action 1

Focus and recruit higher-paying industry to increase mean income and attract young professionals.

Gadsden should target the following industry sectors for future growth: Aviation/ Aerospace, Tech (Cyber and Agricultural), Engineering/ Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Software, and Tourism.

Action 2

Gadsden has a major government contracting competitive advantage in that 80% of the city of Gadsden is in a Hubzone.

Over \$8 Billion in contract spending is spent with Hubzone companies, and every company that does business with government would love Hubzone certification; but in order to get Hubzone certified, your business has to be located in a Hubzone and 35% of your employees have to live in a Hubzone.

Rename and Develop portion of Industrial Park to Hubzone Business Campus to recruit high tech, aviation, aerospace and engineering companies - need to recruit from states with companies that are easily displaceable. Use SEED Act to help develop site ready campus for recruitment.

Benefits

- Diversified industry job class
- Business and job retention
- Increase median income
- Attract young professionals
- Hubzone competitive advantage for government contracting, which in turn stabilizes local economy during times of economic crisis or recession
- Create jobs
- Increase disposable income spend that in turn increases city sales tax revenue

Action 3

Work in partnership with the Gadsden-Etowah IDA and state on N.E.A.R. Mega site promotion and connectivity.

Action 4

Leverage Innovate Alabama grant programs to recruit out of state businesses to Gadsden.

Action 5

Develop a Remote Gadsden campaign with IDA to recruit workers in target industry sectors. This will aid in site selection for recruitment.

Remote programs pay around \$10K first year to recruitment remote workforce. Consider granting access to co-working space with IDA and involve them in the community so they have a sense of belonging and responsibility to stay in Gadsden.

Action 6

Promote and utilize the airport for aviation and aerospace recruitment. Hangar development for jets will place Gadsden in a highly sought after industrial area for aviation and aerospace and also increase young professional population.

Funding sources

- SEED Act
- AL State Department of Commerce
- Innovate Alabama
- USDA
- Department of Energy
- ADECA
- New Market Tax Credits
- Growing Alabama Initiative

Action 7

Market the Gadsden Water Works' reverse osmosis system for industry recruitment.

Gadsden has a large recruitment advantage by marketing the ability for companies to operate with sustainability in mind. Include federal business incentives for companies that operate with energy efficiencies. Tax credits and money through DOE to assist in company recruitment.

- Business Energy Investment Tax Credit(ITC)
- Federal government
- DOE loan guarantee or direct loan program

Action 8

Promote partnership with Gadsden State Community College on Advanced Manufacturing Facility with emphasis on industry curriculum for workforce readiness.

Use in RFP and RFQ for site selection on custom curricula.

Benefits

- Quality of Life
- Increase retail expenditures
- Increase tourism
- Attract young professionals

Funding sources

- Off book bond market with additional TIF district
- Public Private Partnerships
- New Market Tax Credits
- Alabama Tourism Grant
- Federal and State Appropriations

3

Riverfront Development Plan

Action 1

Mixed-use development plan that promotes walkability to increase tourism, increase quality of life to aid in business recruitment and attract young professionals.

Action 2

Focus on hotel development with collaboration with The Venue at Coosa Landing for conferences. Hotel should have river views and amenity offerings not already available in City. Work with a prominent hotel flag to create additional visibility for tourism.

Action 3

Create or recruit pontoon 'booze cruises' and similar water-based tourism around the city's waterfront to further activate the Coosa River.

Action 4

Work with congress and other funding sources to develop a pedestrian bridge that extends walkability across the Coosa River.

Action 5

Connect city trails to incorporate riverfront districts.

Action 6

Create additional riverfront development incentives for developers of large developments to receive half city sales tax back to the developer of tenant revenues to assist in recruitment of riverfront development.

4

Build and Expand on Tourism Assets

Action 1

Create an influencer marketing program for Noccalula Falls, River and Downtown with social media worthy photo and video opportunities to drive the new age tourist.

Action 2

Create Noccalula Falls business district that spans from Hwy 431 up to the falls, creating incentives for businesses to locate on Hwy 211 to give a business district feel similar to Asheville, NC. This will drive influencers and become an even larger tourist attraction.

Action 3

Expand Noccalula Falls to include a ledge overhang with small lodge to increase tourism and attraction.

Benefits

- Increase tourism traffic
- Increase sales tax expenditures of tourists
- Increased traffic to lead to increased retail and housing developments
- Nationwide travel exposure
- Attract and retain young professionals

Action 4

Consider a rock mural inside Noccalula Falls that requires paid entry to access for tourism photo opportunities.

Action 5

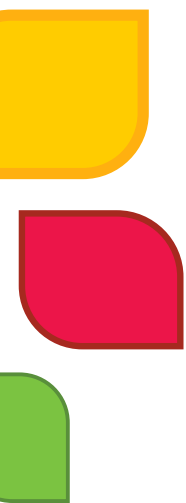
Offer citywide tours that include The Falls, a riverboat, and downtown with consideration for historic sites of interest.

Action 6

Create an entertainment retail district adjacent to current mall with river view that focuses on highest recreation expenditures for the metro area (dining out, drinking establishments, baseball, golf, and indoor gaming such as “barcades”).

Additional Initiatives

- Support and grow the city’s thriving healthcare system
- Expand and incentivize retail to continue to be retail hub of MSA
- Partnerships with Gadsden State Community College and Jacksonville State Community College on growing degree trends to aid in business recruitment to assist in student retention after graduation
- Support and grow city school curriculum and student educational assistance programs



Implementation

This comprehensive plan is a living document and should be integrated into the operation of the city and the public. This plan is intended to guide both long-term and immediate policies and actions. Implementation of this plan should involve a host of city departments, boards and commissions, non-profits, businesses, and citizens. This section provides guidance on how to use and manage the implementation of the city's defined future and a summary list of the plan's actions. As part of this process, it is important to develop a strong culture of thoughtful planning and strategic implementation with leaders who embrace collaborative implementation of this community's vision.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

This plan is intended to be used on a continuous basis as all sorts of community decisions are made, especially those regarding the built environment, capital improvements, operations, and economic development.

Collaboration

A majority of the actions listed require coordinated efforts of organizations representing the public, private, and civic sectors of the community. An active public involvement will help to ensure actions are collectively pursued for the public good.

Monitoring

The plan should be monitored on a regular basis for implementation effectiveness. It should be referenced annually in the development of departmental work programs, budgets, and capital improvement planning. A formal review of the plan's accomplishments and relevancy should occur within three-year intervals.

Updating

A major update of the plan should be scheduled by Council following a formal recommendation from the Planning Commission. The update should be considered at least every ten years. Once completed, key milestones of the plan should be celebrated, but intermittent updates to the plan should be done with caution. The planning commission should hear benchmark updates at least annually on the major goals of the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING

Below are intention methods to track and support implementation of the plan. Implementation tracking should be focused on the initiation, management, monitoring, and communication of plan progress over time.

Develop an annual progress report

An annual report provides a communication tool for sharing success and progress. The report can come in many forms, including a physical document, a website update, or an annual presentation. The latter option would provide an annual forum for leadership to communicate progress and solicit ideas around project prioritization for the coming year.

Share the Plan

Provide copies of the plan throughout the community and online. Upon adoption, the plan should be made available at multiple locations such as the library and community centers and on the city's website, and a visible executive summary should be considered.

Identify and track indicators of progress

Specific indicators should be selected and tracked. Indicators are points of data with significant relevance to community progress and growth. The data should be compared with peer communities and replicable over time. Good indicators are reliable and trustworthy data and are updated annually. This should be a component of the annual progress report. Example indicators include population growth, business license growth, and sales tax revenue growth.

Capital Improvement Plan

A multi-year Capital Improvements Plan should be adopted and maintained. This is a management document that outlines projected capital needs, priorities, funding estimates and sources, and time frames for completion. A CIP should include clearly defined projects and establish a period of three to ten years that is typically updated annually.

Create an Action Committee

An advisory committee was created to guide the comprehensive plan process. The city should create a new oversight body that would focus squarely on implementation of the plan. Like the original steering committee, this group should be made up of citizens and representatives from a wide range of public, private, and non-profit entities. The group could meet bi-annually and receive updates from staff on progress. This committee would be charged with extending the implementation process out of City Hall and engaging other connected organizations in implementation.

ACTION MATRIX

The following table includes all actions recommended in the plan. The matrix connects each action with a time frame, a priority, a responsible party, and any supporting organizations or partners who may need to be involved. This matrix should be updated and tracked over time.

TIMELINE

Immediate: Day one -1 year
Short-Term: 1-3 years
Mid-Term: 3-5 years
Long-Term: Beyond 5 years

RESOURCE IMPACT

Minimal: Policy or Staff Capacity
Low: \$0-100,000
Medium: \$100,000-500,000
High: \$500,000 +
Significant: >\$2.5 million

RESPONSIBILITY & PRIMARY SUPPORT

CC: City Council
PC: Planning Commission
HPC: Historic Preservation Commission
DRB: Design Review Board
MPO: Metro Planning Organization
CHAMBER: Chamber of Commerce
GPS: Gadsden Public Schools
GBD: Gadsden Beautification Board
GCDA: Gadsden Commercial Development Authority

CDC: Community Development Commission
CAF: Cultural Arts Foundation
HA: Greater Gadsden Housing Authority
IDB: Industrial Development Board
LBA: Gadsden Land Bank Authority
GAT: Greater Gadsden Area Tourism
DGI: Downtown Gadsden Inc.
EC: Etowah County
Other entities fully spelled out

	Gadsden GROW Implementation	Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
	The Natural City				
	Parks & Recreation				
	Feature Projects				
1	Noccalula Falls Improvements: Continue to improve and protect Noccalula Falls Park as a cohesive experience.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
2	Greenway Networks: Expand greenway connections throughout the city.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
3	Meighan Sports Complex: Prioritize strategic updates to improve the Meighan Sports Complex.	Mayor's Office City Council	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	Immediate	Significant
	Goals and Actions				
1	Reinforce regional parks in the city for citizens and visitors				
1.1	Continue to improve and protect Noccalula Falls Park as a cohesive experience.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
1.2	Consider an outdoor oriented resort on underutilized city land near Noccalula Falls Park.	Mayor's Office City Council	GAT	Mid-Term	Low
1.3	Improve the city's connection to the updated Gadsden State Sports Complex.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	Gadsden State	Short-Term	High
1.4	Enhance amenities and facilities offered at Dub Parker Park.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	Gadsden State City Council	Immediate	Significant
1.5	Prioritize strategic updates to improve the Meighan Sports Complex.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	Gadsden State City Council	Immediate	Significant
2	Enhance a recreational riverfront experience that is better connected to the city				

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
2.1	Work to expand the eastern riverfront recreational experience from Dub Parker Park to the Gadsden Regional Medical Center.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	Gadsden State City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
2.2	Enhance the western riverfront recreational experience from downtown to Jack Ray Park.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Significant
2.3	Continue to expand and redefine the Lake Gadsden waterfront experience.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Short-Term	High
2.4	Establish non-sporting waterfront events for the community and visitors.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Short-Term	High
3	Become a city of trails				
3.1	Connect Downtown to Noccalula Falls and Alabama City.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
3.2	Connect Noccalula Falls to Lake Gadsden and the Coosa River.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Significant
3.3	Expand the East Gadsden Riverwalk greenway and create a neighborhood loop with on-street trails.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Long-Term	Significant
3.4	Pursue a regional rail to trail connection from Gadsden to Lake Weiss, Little River Canyon, and Chattanooga.	Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Minimal
3.5	Connect Downtown Gadsden to Downtown Attalla.	Planning Dept Engineering Dept	EC City Council	Long-Term	Significant
4	Improve neighborhood parks in an effort revitalize areas				
4.1	Strategically update park amenities to activate and support specific neighborhoods.	Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
4.2	Strategically approach the option of consolidating parks and recreation facilities.	Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
5	Update the city's parks and recreation branding				
5.1	Build a city parks and recreation brand that reflects your current and future assets.	Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
5.2	Market your assets and improvements through experience-based advertising.	Parks and Rec Dept	GAT City Council	Immediate	Minimal
6	Define administrative parks and recreation goals and success indicators				
6.1	Create a citywide parks and rec master plan	Parks and Rec Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Low
6.2	Establish an internal vision for staffing, programming, funding, and budgeting	Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
	Riverfront				
	Feature Projects				
1	Downtown Riverfront District: Develop a Riverfront District by realigning US HWY 411 near downtown.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
2	East Gadsden Riverfront: Create a complete waterfront with development connecting Dub Parker Park to Regional Medical Center.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
3	Martin Wildlife Park / Lake Gadsden: Improve and expand the community's connectivity to Lake Gadsden through the Martin Wildlife Park.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Immediate	High
	Goals and Actions				
1	Develop a downtown adjacent riverfront district				
1.1	Realign US Hwy 411 away from the western bank of the Coosa River near downtown.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
1.2	Work with developers to create a phased development plan.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low
1.3	Build a linear riverfront park with a marina.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Long-Term	Significant
1.4	Establish a complete street edge to support new riverfront development.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Long-Term	Significant
1.5	Build a pedestrian bridge to connect to East Gadsden.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Long-Term	Significant
1.6	Recruit developers for anchor residential and retail construction, including a boutique hotel/ resort at 90 Broad St.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Minimal
1.7	Create a strong link between the new riverfront district and the historic downtown through pedestrian connections, wayfinding, and public art.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Long-Term	Low
2	Expand the Riverwalk at Coosa Landing				
2.1	Develop an East Gadsden waterfront master plan.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept Parks and Rec Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low
2.2	Design trail routes.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec	City Council	Immediate	Low
2.3	Waterfront park amenities adjacent to the Gadsden State Campus and Sports Complex.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	Gadsden State City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
2.4	Streetscape enhancements on Hood Ave to connect existing riverwalk to East Gadsden's northern shore.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	Gadsden State City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
2.5	Create phased, development-oriented master plans for the former golf course by Goodyear and the historic Gadsden Steam Plant site.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
3	Improve and expand the community's connectivity to Lake Gadsden				
3.1	Trailhead connection to the adjacent neighborhood at Oak St and Argyle Park.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec	City Council	Short-Term	High
3.2	Trailhead connection at 6th St with improved streetscape connection to Downtown/ Broad St.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec	City Council	Short-Term	High
3.3	Improved Gadsden Mall trailhead with trail extension across Hwy 411 to connect Lake Gadsden to the Coosa Riverfront.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec	City Council	Short-Term	High
3.4	Install a kayak/ canoe put-in at the Gadsden Mall trailhead with a potential small boat rental operation.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec	City Council	Short-Term	Medium
3.5	Enhance the pedestrian experience along Lake Gadsden by expanding boardwalk with lighting and seating around the Gadsden Mall.	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec	City Council	Short-Term	Medium
	The Connected City				
	Mobility & Corridors				
	Feature Projects				
1	Hwy 411 Realignment: Realign HWY 411 to allow for activation of the riverfront in this highly underutilized area.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
2	Noccalula Parkway Improvements: Create community value improvements along Noccalula Parkway to highlight the Falls as a destination district.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Significant
3	Sidewalk Gap Connections: Prioritize, implement, and maintain strategic sidewalk connection projects throughout the city.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Significant

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
4	Citywide Pavement Assessment: Prioritize resurfacing projects for local roads based on a citywide pavement assessment ranking.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low
5	East Gadsden I-759 Connector: Extend I-759 from George Wallace Drive to connect with the Hwy 278 Piedmont Cutoff.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
6	Airport Enhancements: Strategically update and secure funding for improvements to the NE AL Regional Airport.	Airport Board & Staff	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
	Goals and Actions				
1	Create Balanced and Safe Streets				
1.1	Adopt a complete streets policy.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Minimal
1.2	Become a vision zero city.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Minimal
1.3	Integrate transportation technologies into the system.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
1.4	Proactively pursue funding for improvements of existing roadway network.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Minimal
1.5	Adopt local street design standards.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Minimal
2	Expand mobility options in the city				
2.1	Strategically improve existing sidewalks and fill missing sidewalk gaps.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
2.2	Systematically improve on-street bicycle connectivity.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Medium
2.3	Expand and enhance the city transit system.	EC Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Medium

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
2.4	Build new pedestrian bridge to connect East Gadsden to the downtown area and beyond.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
3	Create corridors that exhibit the values of the city.				
3.1	Update land use regulations on corridors.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Medium
3.2	Continue enforcing access management.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
3.3	Create Gateway improvements at key gateways into and within the city.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	High
3.4	Promote a regional I-59 branding campaign as "Alabama's Outdoor Corridor."	GAT	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
	Arts & Culture				
	Feature Projects				
1	Amphitheater Improvements: Improve the Historic Mort Glosser Amphitheater to provide the city a needed outdoor live performance attraction.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	High
2	Arts Commission: Create a City Arts Commission to champion and manage public arts and culture in the city.	CAF	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
3	Broad Street Bridge Lighting: Artistically light the Broad Street Bridge to create an iconic visual statement in the city.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Medium
4	Alabama City Arts District: Revitalize Alabama City's historic commercial district as a mixed-use arts hub.	Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Medium
	Goals and Actions				
1	Continue to increase support for existing arts and culture: places, programs, and resources				

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
1.1	Increase marketing and recognition of Gadsden's existing artistic establishments, programs, and events.	GAT,DGI	City Council	Immediate	Low
1.2	Celebrate Gadsden's existing local artists and local culture.	GAT,DGI	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
2	Commit to increase public art in the city				
2.1	Create a public art master plan.	GAF,DGI	City Council	Immediate	Low
2.2	Identify Public art installations that can be done now.	GAF,DGI	City Council	Immediate	Low
3	Improve and expand performing arts in the city				
3.1	Enhance facilities at the historic Mort Glosser Amphitheater.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
3.2	Develop a state-of-the-art performing arts center.	Planning Dept, GAF	City Council	Long-Term	Significant
4	Protect and Narrate Gadsden's Histories				
4.1	Improve the city's historic preservation efforts.	GHC, Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low
4.2	Support the telling of Gadsden's unique stories.	GAT	GHP, GAF	Short-Term	Minimal
	The Growing City				
	Housing				
	Feature Projects				
1	Pre-approved Housing Designs: Create pre-approved housing plans to jump-start infill development.	Planning Dept Engineering Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low
2	Increase Land Bank Impact: Continue growing the Land Bank Authority's impact on housing in the community.	Land Bank	City Council	Immediate	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
3	Downtown & Riverfront Housing: Prioritize riverfront and downtown housing to incentivize density and growth adjacent to assets.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
	Goals				
1	Increase Housing Choice				
1.1	Provide appropriate housing for all income levels and all age groups.	Housing Auth Land Bank,	Planning Dept	Immediate	Minimal
1.2	Increase affordable housing by requiring at least 10% affordable units in new developments.	Housing Auth Land Bank	Planning Dept	Short-Term	Minimal
1.3	Add 6-10 multi-family housing and rental units over the next 10 years.	Housing Auth Land Bank	Planning Dept	Short-Term	Minimal
1.4	Allow for greater density in residential areas through zoning.	Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Minimal
2	Revitalize existing neighborhoods				
2.1	Provide improvement grants.	Community Dev	Planning Dept	Short-Term	Minimal
2.2	Create neighborhood plans.	Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low
2.3	Highlight neighborhoods with landscaping and signage.	Engineering Dept Planning Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low
3	Increase Infill Housing Opportunities				
3.1	Create pre-approved housing designs (Gadsden GROW Housing Choice) for residential infill sites.	Planning Dept Engineering Dept	Housing Auth City Council	Short-Term	Low
3.2	Focus on developing vacant lots in existing residential neighborhoods.	Housing Auth Land Bank	Planning Dept	Short-Term	Minimal
3.3	Prioritize the development of land bank properties in residential areas.	Housing Auth Land Bank	Planning Dept	Short-Term	Minimal
3.4	Streamline the use of land bank property by offering development incentives.	Housing Auth Land Bank	City Council Planning Dept	Short-Term	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
4	Preserve historic residential and transitional areas				
4.1	Update the historic preservation and design overlay district.	Historic Commission Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Low
4.2	Identify properties eligible for Historic Preservation CDBG grants.	Historic Commission Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Low
5	Provide more downtown housing options				
5.1	Develop higher-density housing on infill properties.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept	Immediate	Minimal
5.2	Encourage second story loft style apartment development.	Engineering Dept DGI	Planning Dept	Short-Term	Minimal
6	Encourage Homeownership				
6.1	Rent-to-own programs.	Housing Auth Land Bank	City Council Community Dev	Short-Term	Minimal
6.2	Home buyer assistance programs.	Housing Auth Land Bank	City Council Community Dev	Short-Term	Minimal
7	Strengthen the connection of housing to the city's natural resources				
7.1	Evaluate zoning districts.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
7.2	Encourage sustainable development patterns.	Engineering Dept	Planning Dept	Immediate	Minimal
8	Strategically redevelopment the city's Housing Authority sites.				
8.1	Masterplan for all Housing Authority sites.	Housing Auth	Community Dev	Short-Term	Low
8.2	Incorporate mixed-use development.	Housing Auth	Community Dev	Short-Term	Minimal
8.3	Increase the density of properties.	Housing Auth	Community Dev	Short-Term	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
	Downtown				
	Feature Projects				
1	Broad St Streetscape: Implement a streetscape redesign on Broad Street to reinforce the downtown as an active destination.	Engineering Dept DGI	City Council	Immediate	Significant
2	City Hall Redevelopment: Relocate city hall to Downtown proper to activate the surrounding blocks and allow a repurposing of the important site of the existing city hall.	City Council	Engineering Dept	Immediate	High
3	BID District: Create a Business Improvement District (BID) to assist in funding downtown projects.	Planning Dept DGI	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
	Goals and Actions				
1	Improve the downtown visitor experience				
1.1	Implement a downtown restriping plan to increase parking on side streets.	Engineering Dept	DGI	Immediate	Low
1.2	Explore the feasibility of developing a public parking deck.	Engineering Dept	DGI	Short-Term	Low
1.3	Implement a branded wayfinding and signage plan for downtown.	DGI	Engineering Dept	Immediate	Low
1.4	Enhance key gateways into the downtown area with signage/ art.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Short-Term	Low
2	Support greater density in the downtown area				
2.1	Incentivize adaptive reuse of historic structures.	Historic Commission DGI	Planning Dept	Short-Term	Minimal
2.2	Promote strategic redevelopment / infill projects.	Historic Commission DGI	City Council	Short-Term	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
2.3	Consider reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements for developers.	Planning Dept	DGI	Immediate	Minimal
3	Reconnect downtown to the riverfront				
3.1	Improve streetscape connectivity to the waterfront.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Mid-Term	Significant
3.2	Incentivize redevelopment of city-owned properties adjacent to the river.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
4	Create a more walkable downtown environment.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
4.1	Refresh the design of Broad St.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Significant
4.2	Strategically fill in gaps in the downtown sidewalk network.	Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	High
5	Foster a more active, mixed-use environment				
5.1	Update downtown zoning regulations to support mixed-use development.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept	Immediate	Minimal
5.2	Incentivize the development of residential uses in mixed-use spaces (density bonus).	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept	Immediate	Minimal
	Land Use				
	Feature Projects				
1	Update Zoning Ordinance: Implement a new citywide zoning ordinance and map update to activate and ensure key elements of needed development.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Medium
2	Historic Commercial Areas: Prioritize revitalization of areas around historic commercial nodes to activate retail and increase walkability.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
3	Redefine Waterfront Zoning: Ensure the zoning update honors the economic and placemaking impact of activating the city's waterfront.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
4	North Gadsden Development: Coordinate land uses to support continued commercial and residential development of the North Gadsden neighborhood.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
	Goals and Actions				
1	Utilize Plan Maps to guide future development decisions				
1.1	Adopt a place-based framework to define the characteristics of places important to the character of the community.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
1.2	Create Small Area Plans to guide development in specific areas of the city.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
1.3	Update BID and TIF districts to impact defined areas and maximize effectiveness.	Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
2	Reform Land Bank Authority.				
2.1	Amend Land Bank Authority entitlement process to expedite quiet title timeline to 6 months – 1 year.	Land Bank	City Council Community Dev	Immediate	Minimal
2.2	Promote vacant and blighted parcels to developers.	Land Bank	City Council Community Dev	Immediate	Minimal
2.3	Incentivize infill development.	Land Bank	City Council Community Dev	Immediate	Minimal
2.4	Utilize the Gadsden GROW Housing Choice catalog for land bank properties.	Land Bank	City Council Community Dev	Immediate	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
3	Create a more walkable Gadsden				
3.1	Promote compact development.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Minimal
3.2	Encourage mixed-use districts.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Minimal
3.3	Focus on the core of the city.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Minimal
3.4	Increase density in strategic areas of the city.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Minimal
4	Modernize the city's zoning ordinance				
4.1	Update zoning ordinance to support plan goals and vision.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Medium
5	Preservation of green space.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Minimal
5.1	Identify key areas to preserve.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept GHPC	Immediate	Minimal
6	Adopt Land Use policies that promote a healthy city.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Minimal
6.1	Prioritize access to parks and recreation.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept Parks and Rec Dept	Immediate	Minimal
6.2	Create opportunities for diverse modes of transportation.	Engineering Dept	Planning Dept City Council	Immediate	Minimal
7	Reuse of brownfields				
7.1	Reclaim brownfields for natural landscapes and parks.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Low
7.2	Consider creative redevelopment concepts.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept Community Dev	Immediate	Minimal
8	Retrofit patterns of suburban development.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Low
8.1	Identify inefficient development patterns to improve.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Low

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
8.2	Focus of neighborhood centers to create outparcel development.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Low
9	Reimagine the city's primary corridors				
9.1	Promote the impact of the recommended zoning ordinance rewrite on corridor improvements.	Planning Dept	Engineering Dept City Council	Immediate	Low
9.2	Consult corridor plans.				
	City Administration				
	Feature Projects				
1	Consolidate City Operations: Strategically consolidate city facilities and operations to more efficiently serve the city.	City Council		Immediate	Minimal
2	Expand Police Substations: Consider adding police substations to fire stations to improve response time and coverage.	Engineering Dept	Planning Dept	Short-Term	Medium
3	Update School Branding: Brand all middle schools as Titans to create a sense of unity throughout the school system.	GPS	City Council	Short-Term	Low
	Goals and Actions				
1	Continue to pursue a balanced municipal operation focused on level of service and efficiency				
1.2	Create a strategic Operation Plan for city operations.	City Council	All Dept	Immediate	Minimal
2	Champion a cohesive approach to addressing the City's unhoused population				
2.1	Create a Gadsden Task Force to address the unhoused.	City Council		Immediate	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
	Economic Development				
	Feature Projects				
1	Continue Economic Diversity: Actively pursue recruitment of agriculture, technology, aviation industries, tourism, etc.	CDC, GCDA	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
2	Quality of Life / Place Economics: Focus on quality of life and placemaking as drivers of economic development.	CDC, GCDA, Planning Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
	Goals and Actions				
1	Downtown Growth Plan				
1.1	Incentivize and create walkable middle class multi-family housing.	Planning Dept Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
1.2	Create ordinance for unoccupied or dilapidated buildings to be brought to code or city will condemn them in an effort of redevelopment.	Planning Dept Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
1.3	Downtown pedestrian plan to further seamlessly connect both ends of downtown to the River and connect trails to downtown.	Planning Dept Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
1.4	Create easily addressed downtown zoning ordinance when mixed use developments are presented to the city in downtown area.	Planning Dept Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
1.5	Downtown traffic and pedestrian study to aid in future ideal locations for downtown parking decks and incentivize multifamily developments to add public parking component to any downtown development.	Planning Dept Engineering Dept	City Council	Immediate	Minimal
1.6	Develop quality of life marketing campaign promoting downtown to be used in industry recruitment and site selection proposals.	GAT,DGI	City Council	Immediate	Minimal

		Lead Coordinator	Support	Timeline	Resource Impact
1.7	Utilize state funding initiative to create "Live Music Fund," for downtown businesses, where the city pays for the live music of downtown businesses to create a stronger economic impact and attract young professionals for night life.	GAT,DGI	City Council	Immediate	Minimal



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