

Amended
9-18-17

RUSSELL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

**RUSSELL COUNTY, ALABAMA
JULY 2017**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Residents, and Businesses in Russell County

Russell County Commission
Russell County Planning Commission
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Lee-Russell Council of Governments
Phenix City-Russell County Chamber of Commerce
Columbus-Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization
Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce
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Russell County, Alabama



INTRODUCTION AND PLAN SUMMARY

1

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan is to establish a guide for the long-term development of the County including location, character and extent of growth as well as a vision, goals and recommendations for realizing that vision.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Russell County is authorized by the Legislature of the State of Alabama to establish a Planning Commission, adopt a Master Plan and enact development regulations in support of such a plan that is consistent with provisions for citizen involvement, the authorizing legislation and overall county government. The County is dependent in part, however, in terms of authority and financial resources, on its legislative authority. Active support and coordination with the county's legislative delegation as well as the County's congressional representatives is an ongoing need, including financial and regulatory matters.

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process has included (1) public involvement, (2) a county assessment, (3) drafting of a plan concept, vision, goals and recommendations, (4) review and approval by the Planning Commission and County Commission.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is key to the Russell County Master Plan. The Plan was initiated through a series of town hall meetings for ideas and suggestions from citizens within the community, input from an initial coordinating committee and ongoing review with the Russell County Planning Commission. The Plan has been available for public input and consideration by the Planning Commission and County Commission.

TOWN HALL MEETING PROCESS

The Town Hall meetings held for the Russell County Master Plan were designed to seek initial ideas from county residents. The result of these meetings provides a foundation for creating and refining goals, objectives and strategies for the master plan. During the Town Hall meetings that took place, participants received an orientation to the master planning process and an exercise where citizens were asked to identify assets and opportunities for the county. Participants also worked together to brainstorm ideas for the future of the county. This was accomplished through facilitated discussions on visioning and a mapping exercise to identify strong places and weak places in the county. Separate reports on this process are available.

Figure 1.1 – Town Hall Meetings

Date	Facility	Location
June 10, 2010	Central Activity Center	Phenix City
June 10, 2010	Old Russell County Courthouse	Seale
June 24, 2010	Fort Mitchell Senior Center	Fort Mitchell
June 24, 2010	Ladonia Elementary	Ladonia

ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

As part of the Town Hall Meetings, assets and opportunities were indentified. This input, although not intended to be inclusive or capture everything, was incorporated with other planning input to confirm the following summary.

ASSETS

Two commonly noted assets within the county include (1) community facilities and services and (2) open space, natural and cultural resources. The high number of comments in these categories can be interpreted that participants in the Town Hall Meetings believe that the facilities and services provided by the municipalities, county and other agencies reflect a positive asset. Another asset noted is the public safety support provided by the Sheriff's Departments including trained personnel, despite growing needs in the county and issues of physical distances from law enforcement to more remote parts of the county. The number of comments on open space, natural and cultural resources also reflects a sense of pride and importance on the rural attributes and historical aspects of the county located on the Chattahoochee River, as well as, perhaps, the asset of available of land for development, balanced with preservation.

The presence of Ft. Benning and Troy University in Phenix City are mentioned by the citizens as significant physical assets to build upon. The emerging economic strength of the bi-state metro area is viewed as a certain and growing asset. Russell County's location on the Chattahoochee River is a unique asset, compared to many other counties, as is, the County's location relative to the Ft. Benning Military Installation. The location of Russell County near the I-85/ Atlanta corridor is an asset along with transportation access along routes like US Highway-280, US Highway-80 and US Highway-431.

Other assets reported in comments during the planning process include the presence and involvement of churches and service organizations in the county that address peoples spiritual and physical needs; strong non-profit organizations and associations; public-private economic development initiatives; and the potential for recreation, transportation, water and sewer improvements.

OPPORTUNITIES

Two commonly noted opportunities within the county during the Town Hall meetings include (1) categories of community facilities and services and (2) economic development. Because community facilities and services were highly noted opportunities, it can be interpreted that, despite deficiencies or needs, participants believe there is the

opportunity for improvements of the existing facilities and services within the county. Considering community facilities and services were highly noted as assets as well it is clear that community facilities and services is critical to the county's future development.

- Economic development was the other highly noted opportunity within Russell County. The importance of economic development to the participants suggests high priority of this important opportunity, especially as it relates to the expansion and growth at Ft. Benning and other businesses and industries in the region. The presence of Russell County within rapidly growing and multiple regions, along with and the military growth at Ft. Benning certainly reflects new opportunities expressed by participants in the planning process. The presence of Russell County in a relatively large metro area, and central cities in Phenix City and Columbus, present significant opportunities for development. Opportunities for development are also increasing as a result of transportation access provided by US-280/431, US-80 and potential for a new east-west connection into Ft. Benning. In addition, the combination of natural resources, like the Chattahoochee River, in the region suggest yet unrealized opportunities for recreation, tourism and unique commercial development within the county.

Other assets and opportunities are included throughout the County Assessment, along with various constraints to long-term development.

IDEA GATHERING AND VISIONING

As part of the Town Hall Meetings, citizens were part of "idea gathering" about the future of the county. Common themes were evident in the idea gathering and visioning discussions, including:

- • *Improved infrastructure*
Participants noted the sewer was probably the most important aspect of infrastructure needed to realize the future of Russell County. Roads and transportation were another aspect noted, specifically increasing roadway capacity in growth areas, more paving of non-paved roads and improved safety of rural roads and bridges.
- • *Protection of natural and rural environments*
It became evident through the idea gathering with citizens that the participants highly valued the natural and rural aspects of Russell County. Outside of Phenix City, the protection and preservation of land should be carefully considered based on citizen comments. Ideas on protection of the natural and rural environment can be linked back to comments on open space, historic, natural and cultural resources being important to the county's future.
- • *Increase in retail, commercial opportunities and economic development*
Citizens noted that they would like to have more access to and opportunities for retail and commercial development within Russell County without traveling to neighboring county's or long distances within the county or even "across the river" for shopping. These ideas on retail and commercial development can be linked back to the comments about economic development being an important opportunity for the county, especially with regard to retail businesses. Other thoughts about economic development had to do with existing and increasing jobs in the county and region and taking advantage of unique tourism, recreation, military workforce, higher education, workforce and other economic development resources.
- • *Improved community facilities, education and services*
Participants in the town hall meetings noted that their vision for the future of the county reflected improved access to community facilities and services. Building on similar thoughts concerning assets and opportunities, these comments clearly illustrate that community facilities and services are extremely important to the citizens and providing access to high quality facilities and services should be an important priority.

IMPORTANCE OF AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND APPROACH

Ongoing implementation, action and updating is critical in ensuring that the plan is not the end, in itself, but is rather a tool for continuous county management and improvement. Leadership and responsibilities, organization, priorities, financial resources, standardization and regulation, ongoing and more specific area planning, legislative and intergovernmental coordination are all critical to the implementation of the plan. An ongoing implementation strategy or approach incorporating these components should be adopted as a starting point for implementation. The beginning of such a strategy is reflected in the goals, objectives and recommendations of the Master Plan.

Although not specific in details relative to commercial, residential or industrial land use, it is very important, and highly recommended, that the Planning Commission and County Commission use the Comprehensive County Master Plan in the County's budgetary and planning initiatives, including long term financing, and annual budgets. It is also important that the Planning Commission and County Commission consider Master Plan Goals, Objectives and Recommendations in subdivision and building development reviews and approvals and participation in various infrastructure, facilities, and public-private projects, etc.

PLAN SUMMARY

In addition to public input and public involvement, the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan includes a county development concept; a vision for the future along with, goals, objectives and recommendations for implementation and development of the county. The plan is based on a general assessment of the County's current and future conditions which is included for reference in later sections of the plan report. The County Assessment examines the historical, current and projected situation in Russell County including population and growth trends; governmental conditions, structure and intergovernmental/regional context. The County Development Concept provides a basic direction, or framework, for growth and management. Specific studies of transportation, economic development and recommendations for water and sewer have also been incorporated into the plan report.

EARLY ACTION PROGRAM

In order to take advantage of the Master Plan and focus on some of important next steps, the following are Early Actions the Planning Commission and County Commission should consider.

1. Adopt the Plan/Utilize Plan for review of development proposals, budgeting, financial planning, infrastructure and facility planning and coordination with governments, military and private interests.
2. Implement an education program on the importance of land use; discuss with citizens, business and others initial zoning proposal and updated subdivision regulations beginning with character area guidelines.
3. Establish Phenix City/Russell County planning liaison/task force/working committee.
4. Implement critical transportation improvement projects, especially Alabama Highway-24 extension and connection to the west gate of Fort Benning and access management plans for Alabama Highway 165, US Highway-80 and US Highway-431
5. Move forward with water and sewer agreement, based on the water and sewer study conducted in the course of this Master Plan; with priority on improvements/development to support Fort Mitchell area.
6. Identify targeted development centers for master planned commercial, residential and mixed use centers with connections to schools, parks, other facilities, and design guidelines consistent with the Master Plan and character areas.
7. Support current or immediate economic and development projects; including the Riverways tourism project, Troy University.
8. Complete critical short-term school, park and other community facility improvements and renovations consistent with the Master Plan; include joint improvements of the Russell County Jail facility.
9. Work with Fort Benning and Nature Conservancy and land owners to establish agreeable land buffers and transition areas consistent with the Fort Benning Expansion.
10. Consider legislation, intergovernmental agreements or other working solutions to address annexation issues and equitable cost sharing relative to county-wide services.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2

SUMMARY REVIEW OF COUNTY ASSESSMENT

A more detailed assessment of current and future conditions is included in subsequent sections of the plan report. The following is a summary overview of certain key factors to be considered, in conjunction with the visioning process, town hall meetings, assets and opportunities, in order to guide the County Master Plan.

OVERVIEW OF KEY ISSUES

- Substantial increase in population; most of which is between 2008 and 2012 and levels off
- Growth will result in greater demands for services, but, also, opportunities for commercial and economic development
- There will be growing needs for smaller affordable homes; increase in smaller households; retirees and persons on fixed incomes
- There will be increases in accommodation, entertainment, food service, health care, real estate and financial service jobs; there has been a decline in manufacturing jobs, however, there are opportunities remaining in timber, auto suppliers and other industrial development growing out of growth in metro area; employment and economic development opportunities in military and civilian work force related to Ft. Benning will continue to create opportunities in housing and commercial development
- The overall business climate is good in the area and there are organizations and resources to support economic development
- There will be growing opportunities in recreation, tourism, especially related to the river and outdoor recreation

- Education will remain a priority for the county as population increases and educational attainment expectations will increase; workforce development is critical; growth of Troy University and Chattahoochee Valley Community College is a valuable asset
- Lack of sewer and demands for water will continue to be critical needs
- Growth and the provision of county services should be managed to maximize efficiency while improving access to public safety, utilities,, etc.
- Transportation needs will grow as population and economic development increases;
- It will be important to be an active part of regional transportation planning and improvements to federal and state routes especially related to access in the northeast sector of the county; needs and demands for improvements to safety and level of service on county roads and bridges will be increasing

DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS AND ALTERNATIVES

Based on past trends and likely prospects for the future a number of scenarios for growth in Russell County have been recommended in the past. The following generally describes these scenarios or alternative patterns for growth. These alternatives have been considered in order to establish the preferred scenario described as the basis of the County Master Plan.

SUBURBAN CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

A predominant trend of growth existing within Phenix City and Russell County is a suburban development pattern extending from the influence of Phenix City to the more rural parts of the County. This trend is characterized by scattered low density residential developments that typically occur along the edges of previous developments or "leap-frog" to current agricultural land. Commercial development within this trend typically occurs within strip shopping centers along major transportation corridors. Typical of this type of residential and commercial growth, connectivity within this pattern of development is poor, depending on the use of automobile and often resulting in congestion on major roads large amounts of traffic being generated on very few connecting roads or streets. Because of the piecemeal residential development, many neighborhoods are left separated from other neighborhoods and connections are only made along major transportation corridors. Also, walking within and between residential and commercial developments is discouraged because of the separation of land uses and emphasis on automobile-oriented corridors.

This type of development pattern requires major investments in infrastructure to support the outward expansion of needed facilities and services. Road infrastructure must be constantly upgraded for safety and to support the additional increase in traffic generated by new residential and commercial growth. A result of this development pattern is that services are typically inefficient or inconvenient in that they are spread over larger areas than necessary rather than consolidated in centralized locations. The cost for expansion of utility infrastructure can also be high because of the construction required for expansion in this suburban pattern. Finally, the suburban pattern can inhibit a sense of community in lieu of more automobile oriented communities.

CENTERS AND CLUSTERS

An alternative to a suburban growth and development pattern is to focus growth and development in activity centers and clusters of varying types. These centers and clusters include traditional small towns, neighborhoods and villages where a concentration of commercial activity and residential developments occur in close proximity with each other. This pattern of centers and clusters allows for increased preservation of agricultural land and green space throughout the county while allowing growth and development to occur as needed in centralized locations.

Services within this development pattern can be provided efficiently by consolidating facilities in activity centers, using shared property and space within the county, even forming "satellite" locations within a limited number of centers and clusters throughout the county. The distribution of county services becomes more feasible in this pattern because of the concentration of population around the centers and clusters.

Infrastructure cost can be less in a centers and clusters pattern of development because of the proximity of multiple uses within the developments. Connectivity is substantially increased because of proximity and neighborhoods can

be joined together by multiple street and roadway connections for automobile and increased walkability. The cost of utility infrastructure can be reduced by the proximity of the developments to each other, resulting in less need for expansion. In many cases, utility infrastructure might already be in place within existing centers and clusters in the county. A sense of community can be a result of such mixed use centers

PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION CONCEPT – CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

In lieu of either of the above scenarios, a third likely development pattern is a combination of centers and corridors. Such a pattern provides for a balance between continuing trends of corridor development and transition to more clustered development and centers whenever possible, and preserving natural, cultural and financial resources.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONCEPT

Given these alternatives, the plan for future development of Russell County should be based on a centers and corridors growth and development concept. Recommended policies, strategies and actions should be based on the following concept:

- Urban core and urban centers in Phenix City
- Urban neighborhoods and general urban development in Phenix City
- Suburban centers and corridors along US Highway-80 (Ladonia and Crawford), US Highway-431 and along Alabama Highway-165 towards Ft. Mitchell (possibly including the County Road 24 extension into the back gate, the Holy Trinity site and others)
- Suburban neighborhoods and general suburban development between Phenix City and Seale generally
- Special Town or Community Centers in Seale and Hurtsboro
- Rural Centers in places like Pittsview, Cottonton and Hatchechubbee
- Rural neighborhoods and rural residential development
- Rural conservation and agricultural districts
- Mixed use corridors
- Natural preservation corridor or district along floodplains, creeks and other natural resource features
- Special Regional Districts

Coincidental with the development of centers and corridors is the development of neighborhoods or Districts of varying densities and character, consistent with urban, suburban and rural characters.

The growth and development concept also recognizes the opportunities and challenges with existing corridor development; to that end, the plan concept includes the establishment of more orderly corridor development along US Highway-80, US Highway-431, Alabama Highway-165, Alabama Highway-169 and others.

These various activity centers are expected to be “connected” through mixed use and compatible transportation and natural resource corridors using planning, design and development guidelines or standards, consistent with the character areas described in the following.

A specific corridor is depicted in the plan concept along the Chattahoochee River; this special corridor recognizes the unique value of the river and recommends special consideration should be given to planning, design and development in this corridor, given the proximity to the river.

RUSSELL COUNTY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT DIAGRAM

The Growth and Development Concept Diagram for the Russell County is the heart of the Russell County Master Plan as depicted in Figure 2.1. Illustrated in the concept diagram are several different character areas. These character areas are described in the following. The County is encouraged to utilize the concept diagram as a guideline prior to any development plan approval and/or other planning and budgetary considerations by the Planning Commission, County Commission, County Departments and others.

CHARACTER AREAS

The following character areas are meant to define different types of development proposed for Russell County, and serve as an aid in defining how these areas should be developed. These areas do not specify specific land uses, but, rather describe a general character that might include a mix of commercial, residential and other uses.

URBAN CORE AND CENTERS

Urban centers are defined as the center of a municipality which contains the highest mix and density of structures. Transportation systems in Urban Centers are in a grid pattern and include a good network of sidewalks and complete streets. Structures, residential, retail, etc. are typically built in close proximity to each other and property lines. Within Russell County, downtown Phenix City is defined as an Urban Center.

URBAN GENERAL NEIGHBORHOODS

This character area includes a mix of uses developed in a lower density than Urban Centers. Urban General Neighborhoods are typically within or in close proximity to an Urban Center. They can contain a mix of residential, retail and commercial uses located along corridors and intersections. Residential uses within Urban General are typically more traditional residential neighborhoods with complete streets and sidewalks. Typical urban services that are provided within a municipality are usually provided in an Urban General Neighborhood area. The area outside of the Urban Center in Phenix City is an Urban General Neighborhood area.

SUBURBAN CENTER

A suburban center is a mixed-use center located in a larger low density residential suburban neighborhood area. Much of the pattern of development in a Suburban Center is auto dependent because of the surrounding residential development, typically in subdivisions, although pedestrian and local street connections are encouraged. Typical urban services are limited within a Suburban Center because of their distance from larger municipal infrastructure; however, some of those more urban services or facilities might be encouraged. Suburban Centers might be designed to service county wide or regional markets and, thus, designed to accommodate external traffic to the center. Within Russell County, the Alabama Highway-165 corridor has several Suburban Centers formed around Fort Mitchell and Oswichee.

SUBURBAN GENERAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Suburban General Neighborhoods are primarily low density residential areas which are dependent upon an Urban Center or Urban General Neighborhoods. They are located outside of urban areas and generally are somewhat dependent on suburban centers for commercial services on the periphery either in a municipality or in the county. Suburban General Neighborhoods should encourage appropriate mixes of residential, either single family or multi family, and limited commercial use. This type of development should be predominant in the areas between Phenix City and Seale, Crawford and Fort Mitchell.

TOWN CENTER

Town Centers are special areas of clustered commercial activities and somewhat increased density within the county. Town Centers have traditional aspects typical of historic southern rural communities such as a mix of uses, including a downtown with civic space surrounded by single family residential on smaller lots, with limited setbacks, etc. These centers include complete streets and sidewalks. Urban services are typically limited within Town Centers because of their more remote locations, however, those services that are present are ideally located in an accessible "Town Center." In Russell County, Town Centers include Seale and Hurtsboro which each have a history of serving as centers for their surroundings.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

These areas are developed in a low density residential pattern located in close proximity to Town Centers and beyond the Suburban General Neighborhoods, usually in unincorporated portions of the county. These are areas composed of large lots. They are differentiated from Suburban General Neighborhoods in that the residential pattern is usually not in such formal neighborhoods or subdivisions but might have a more "loosely" designed character. In Russell County, this type of area occurs outside of the Town Centers of Seale and Hurtsboro in the central portion of the County.

RURAL CENTER OR CROSSROAD

Rural Centers are areas of clustered commercial activities and slightly increased density that occur within the unincorporated areas of the county. Rural Centers are designed primarily to serve the lower density rural residential and agricultural areas within the County. They typically occur at significant crossroads within the county to provide easy access. Urban services are typically limited because of their location; however, if there are post offices, churches, local cafes, these should be part of the "center." These Rural Centers can certainly grow into a Town Center if planned and designed properly. Within Russell County these Rural Centers are recommended for Crawford, Pittsview, Hatchechubbee and Cottonton.

RURAL AGRICULTURE/CONSERVATION

These are areas in which the land is primarily used for agriculture or very large lot residential or land is undeveloped. Residential is very low density within this area.

NATURAL PRESERVATION

These are areas where uses needing structures are generally prohibited. Natural Preservation areas are also located along floodplains and wetlands. This area could also be used for hunting or other outdoor recreation. Preservation areas can also be used to surround noxious uses within the county such as special districts or environmentally sensitive areas.

MIXED USE CORRIDOR

A major linear transportation route that should include a mix of land uses and access management. Uses could include, but are not limited to: businesses, residential, limited light industrial, and institutional. Mixed use corridors should be used to connect centers such as urban centers and town centers.

RIVER CORRIDOR

The River Corridor area is a special designation for Russell County along the Chattahoochee River. It should be used to protect the floodplain and wetlands along the river. The River Corridor designation allows for special uses along the river including recreational, residential, commercial development and special industrial land uses, providing adequate buffers, watershed and aesthetic measures are included. Much of this designation is in the Fort Benning Military Reservation land within Russell County.

SPECIAL REGIONAL DISTRICT S

These are areas where large scale development is best located, so as not to conflict with local development patterns. These might include large utility installations, landfills, large industrial development and other developments which conflict with residential development. They could also include more compatible developments such as commercial centers and university campuses. These districts should be well planned and designed with appropriate buffers and specific design guidelines.

VISION AND GOALS

VISION

Russell County is envisioned as a growing county in a dynamic region, with geographically positive benefits, respecting its natural resources and rural character, taking advantage of its proximity to urban growth opportunities and supporting well planned community development and services.

GOALS

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

Achieve a balance of land development and conservation which is sustainable and supportive of economic development while preserving natural and cultural resources, enhancing historic assets and communities of improving quality and livability.

COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING

Support building of sustainable communities and mixed use business districts, with choices of sound housing in good neighborhoods throughout the county, consistent with land use, transportation, infrastructure and other goals.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ensure increasing opportunities for prosperity of existing and future residents of the county and increasing economic development opportunities for business development consistent with the provision of fiscally responsible public services and sustainable land use.

TRANSPORTATION

Create a multi-modal transportation system which provides for continued improvement in regional access, connections between regional communities and improves local traffic connections and safety within the county, consistent with land use and economic development goals.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Partner with providers of water, sewer and other utilities to provide cost efficient infrastructure for current and future residents in Russell County and to support economic development consistent with land use goals and smart growth planning principles.

EDUCATION, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Work with communities and other organizations in the county and region to ensure cost effective access to community facilities and services on a par with the best standards of comparable counties including public safety, schools and education, parks and recreation, special facilities like senior services, libraries, etc.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Protect and take advantage of the local, regional natural and cultural resources of the county, consistent with community and economic development, land use and other goals, especially the resources centered on the Chattahoochee River and other natural, historic and cultural resources and landscapes.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Continuously improve cooperation between state, regional, local governments, agencies and other regional partners including the Lee-Russell Council of Governments, Columbus-Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization, Valley Partnership, other counties and municipalities.

OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

OBJECTIVES

- Maintain and improve existing neighborhoods and centers as well as rural housing opportunities
- Provide for expansion of commercial development consistent with sustainable land use principles
- Grow well planned and designed sustainable communities and neighborhoods
- Protect the natural, historical and cultural assets of the county and buffer negative land uses
- Ensure proper locations of major commercial, industrial, utility, and institutional sites
- Minimize impact of development runoff into surface water
- Maintain important timber and agricultural resource lands
- Maintain scenic views and overall rural character in critical areas, per development concept

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing

- Adopt County Master Plan as a framework for growth and development including the Russell County Growth and Development Concept Diagram and character guidelines which encourages mixed used centers and corridors and limit the impact of strip development
- Enforce floodplain protection ordinance and development guidelines to protect areas along rivers and creeks
- Review development proposals for well planned mixed uses, connections and lot sizes consistent with the Master Plan
- Consider a public information program to inform citizens, businesses, and property owners about various zoning provisions
- Support the efforts of land owners to preserve hunting, fishing and natural woodlands and farmland including consideration of land trusts and conservation easements
- Work with property owners to provide for conservation and harvesting of timber which continues to protect the natural resources and scenic character of the county
- Continue to participate in regional and local watershed protection programs and cooperation
- Work with Fort Benning, Nature Conservancy and others to incorporate military base expansion and land use buffers into Russell County plans for development and include appropriate airport and military noise control provisions into standards for future development
- Identify and coordinate county support for important commercial, residential and mixed use developments at major intersections such as County Highway-24, County Highway-18 extended into AL Highway-165 and the West Gate of Fort Benning; Holy Trinity site; other sites along Alabama Highway-165 and other corridors
- Consider special signage and landscape ordinances in lieu of total zoning ordinance
- Consider some form of mixed use corridor overlay standards for major corridors; US Highway-431, US Highway-80, and AL Highway-165, including access management and context sensitive design provisions
- Work with Phenix City and support downtown and riverfront revitalization and urban redevelopment of core urban center and neighborhoods
- Consider policies for siting schools, parks, other facilities consistent with the Master Plan
- Adopt development guidelines which minimize non-point source runoff impact

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Update Subdivision Regulations to include standards for sewer connections and lot sizes consistent with recommended land use densities, requiring connections to sewer for smaller lots or larger lots, when access to sewer is not provided; adopt conservation subdivision provisions as alternative to conventional subdivision development
- Work with citizens, businesses, and property owners to consider zoning provisions and design standards for centers, neighborhoods and corridors; include traditional neighborhoods where appropriate
- Adopt complete streets policy, consistent with county standards for roads and streets
- Identify and participate in redevelopment of brownfield, grayfield and other redevelopment sites, especially in areas threatening the river and other natural resources, for example along Brickyard Road and others
- Identify important scenic corridors and adopt context sensitive design guidelines to subdivision regulations
- Identify large sites for large scale commercial and industrial development to ensure appropriate siting and development consistent with the master plan and nearby residents, etc.; include designation of industrial sites as advantage sites through EDPAs Advantage site program
- Consider landscape and signage standards as part of subdivision regulations and establish a gateway, wayfinding and corridor beautification program for major entrances, landmarks and districts; include voluntary beautification board, committees, etc.
- Include subdivision regulations for drainage, streets, sidewalks consistent with the Master Plan character areas
- Incorporate county-wide open space and parks/recreation program
- Work closely with Fort Benning and Nature Conservancy to identify and protect land use buffers and access to natural areas through the Fort Benning buffer program

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Consider establishing a special river corridor to protect river resources, promote river recreation and encourage special mixed use riverfront development consistent with white water sports, etc.
- Consider adopting more appropriate development standards for subdivisions and development consistent with Master Plan character areas; require interconnectivity and connections to major and minor thoroughfares; continue to coordinate drainage plans with plans, for adjacent properties; adopt access management standards as part of the subdivision regulations
- Adopt updated standards for location and development of mobile home subdivisions and provisions for free standing mobile homes
- Incorporate provisions for conservation subdivisions into the subdivision regulations to allow flexibility in development and protection of natural resources
- Consider conservation and mitigation banks; coordinate with land trust, Nature Conservancy, etc.

Figure 2.2 – Matrix of Future Land Use

	Single Family Residential	Multi Family Residential	Very Low Density Residential	Commercial General	Community Commercial	Industrial Light	Industrial Heavy	Agricultural	Public	Recreational/Open Space
Urban Core		•			•				•	
Urban Center					•				•	
Urban General	•	•		•	•				•	
Suburban Center		•			•				•	
Suburban General	•	•		•					•	
Rural Center	•	•			•				•	
Rural Residential	•		•						•	•
Town Center	•	•			•				•	
Community Center					•				•	•
Conservation	•		•					•	•	•
Preservation									•	•
River Corridor	•	•		•	•				•	
Mixed Use Corridor		•		•		•				
Special District						•	•			

COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure adequate housing is available for projected growth – owner/rental
- Ensure housing to meet military market – current market and future retiree market
- Encourage a diverse range of viable housing options relative to density, affordability and well designed mixed-use neighborhoods
- Maintain and revitalize existing communities and neighborhoods
- Provide for the sustainable growth of new communities and neighborhoods, consistent with Master Plan
- Provide choices in housing relative to location, types and costs, including affordable and market rate housing
- Ensure safe and sound housing conditions for all communities in the County

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing

- Enforce building and housing related code compliance for residential development
- Work with Phenix City, Hurtsboro, and others, to support a housing and neighborhood revitalization, or rehab program that could apply county-wide; focus on designated areas consistent with Master Plan
- Utilize historic preservation and conservation districts to preserve existing housing in sound neighborhoods.
- Work with municipalities, agencies and private sector to increase the availability and construction of new housing consistent with the Master Plan
- Cooperate with private developers to ensure infrastructure, school, park and related facilities to support housing, consistent with the Master Plan
- Create a housing task force to monitor and make housing recommendations
- Work with private sector, state and federal resources to ensure financing for housing, including HUD, USDA, State Housing Financing Agency

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Adopt building and/or design/development guidelines for housing in neighborhoods and centers consistent with Master Plan, including: emerging neighborhoods from vacant tracts of land; reinforcing mature neighborhoods; and carefully managing development of rural residential areas
- Work with and support the use of community or housing development corporations, housing authority, self-help agencies like Habitat for Humanity, and non profits to construct new “attainable” housing

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Support increased multi-family housing as part of mixed-use centers and neighborhoods and consistent with needs identified as the market changes
- Support projects which appeal to the needs of low-mod, minorities, senior housing and housing for the disabled in areas consistent with the Master Plan
- Update target area programs for concentrated housing improvements

Long-Term (10 or more years)

- Work with municipalities, community development corporations, agencies to increase infill of housing in vacant lots/sites in developed parts of the Russell County, Phenix City, Hartsboro, etc.
- Work with and support large land owners for development of major mixed-use market and affordable housing in parts of the County consistent with Master Plan

Figure 2.3 – Housing Recommendations by Area (Generalized)

	Rehabilitation	Code Enforcement	New Housing	Needs Public Facilities and Improvements
Cottonton	Minor	Minimal	Moderate	Minimal
Crawford	Minor	Minimal	Moderate	Moderate
Fort Mitchell	Major	Moderate	Major	Major
Hartsboro	Moderate	Moderate	Minimal	Moderate
Hatchechubbee	Moderate	Major	Moderate	Major
Ladonia	Minor	Moderate	Major	Moderate
Oswichee	Major	Minor	Moderate	Moderate
Pittsview	Major	Moderate	Major	Major
Seale	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

OBJECTIVES

- Support and grow existing business and industry
- Help create opportunities for new industry and business
- Support entrepreneurial and small business enterprises
- Promote increased retail development consistent with the master plan
- Partner with others to improve workforce preparedness and lifelong learning for residents of the County; take advantage of higher education presence and expand
- Take advantage and leverage presence of US Military, Troy University, Chattahoochee Valley Community College and government workforce
- Take advantage of construction related development opportunities resulting from increasing growth of the County
- Grow tourism, recreation, the arts and cultural resources as economic development priority
- Continue to support natural resource industries, consistent with Master Plan and natural resource and scenic protection and other business at a regional and local scale
- Improve county's fiscal conditions, consistent with meeting the county's needs and fostering growth consistent with the Master Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing

- Continue to actively participate in regional economic development initiatives, such as LRCOG and the Lee-Russell Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); The Valley Partnership; Phenix City Economic Development Authority; Phenix City and Columbus Chambers of Commerce; BRAC and Fort Benning initiatives
- Support continued re-development and infill in Phenix City, consistent with other Russell County goals, especially downtown Phenix City as a regional center
- Work with economic development organizations in Russell County, LRCOG, BRAC, and others to support improvements to industrial sites and parks in order to recruit new industry; expand number of prepared EDPA Advantage Sites/preferred sites within the County
- Support transportation improvements that serve new economic development opportunities, especially a new major east-west corridor and other improvements to existing major arterials
- Continue to work with Chattahoochee Valley Community College, Troy University, AIDT and others on workforce programs; consider a life-long learning initiative with the university, community college, high schools and business community
- Support outdoor recreation and river recreation, white water initiative, as well as hunting and fishing opportunities/events, tourism and historic preservation as an "alternative industry"
- Work with economic development organizations to utilize a small business lending program and RLF to support community and rural mixed use centers
- Promote the expansion of arts and entertainment and encourage tourism businesses to increase local and visitor investments, for example farmers/arts markets
- Take advantage of a proposed Russell County Museum, NRA Annual Banquet, connected greenways, trails, abandoned railroad lines, bed and breakfasts in centers and rural parts of the county
- Support county legislation that ensures equitable sharing of revenue and promotes county-wide economic development, consistent with services provided by municipal, county and other agencies
- Adopt and implement long-term budgeting and financially consistent with the Master Plan

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Complete a next phase expansion of sewer and water systems to serve new businesses and development consistent with Master Plan

- Work with economic development agencies to support commercial, retail and mixed use sites consistent with the strategic development concept
- Work with water and sewer authorities to complete short to long term service to priority business development sites
- Support a retail/commercial development initiative that includes unincorporated sites in the county, consistent with the strategic planning and development concept
- Work with Columbus, Phenix City and others to implement “white water” recreation and related businesses

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Work with Troy University and Chattahoochee Valley Community College to create an educational “niche,” or presence, and leverage economic development in the county
- Consider a priority infrastructure investment program to support key development projects, consistent with the Master Plan

TRANSPORTATION

OBJECTIVES

- Preservation of existing transportation facilities and future efficiency of the highway and road system
- Reduce current and future congestion and increased vehicle miles traveled through land use and transportation coordination
- Improve regional access to Russell County and the region in general
- Improve connectivity and mobility within the county and communities
- Maintain and improve road and bridge safety/security and reduce crashes and fatalities
- Increase multimodal access to include transit and bike pedestrian mobility
- Improve access for rural residents, senior citizens, disabled citizens and lower income persons etc.
- Ensure that transportation improvements continue to protect the environment, preserve historic areas and increase energy efficiency and savings for individuals in the County as well as promote economic development
- Improve economic vitality through water, rail, air and truck traffic improvements and safety
- Support prioritization of cost effective ongoing improvements to transportation system taking maximum advantage of federal and state resources

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing

- Actively participate in C-PCMPO and RPO transportation planning programs and identify projects and funding for major federal and state roadway improvements that support Russell County
- Continue to work with developers on site plans and subdivision approvals to ensure connectivity and multi-modal circulation in and between new subdivisions, including new standards and public-private financing if needed as part of subdivision regulations; include bikeways and trails as part of major developments, especially along creeks, rivers and other natural features
- Continue to support a regular schedule for maintenance and safety improvement of county roads, especially consistent with the Master Plan, as well as ongoing condition surveys
- Continue to utilize HRRR funds from ALDOT to make traffic safety and intersection improvements as a priority in locations based on best available crash data; continue to update crash data
- Work with others to support land use and economic development projects that will reduce or mitigate vehicle miles travelled, such as, but not limited to, in-fill development, brownfield development, redevelopment projects, etc.
- Support ongoing improvements to public transportation, extending LRCOG Transit, Phenix City, etc.
- Continue to review and monitor traffic volumes versus capacity

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Actively support the completion of a new east west connector into the Fort Mitchell area and Fort Benning back gate area
- Adopt a major thoroughfare plan/map of major and minor arterials, collectors and local streets coordinated with municipalities
- Adopt five year roadway and transportation improvement plan for the county based on priority needs and funding available
- Support improvements to state and federal routes that need improvement based on capacity and safety issues-includes AL Highway-165, US Highway-431, US Highway-280, US Highway-80 (especially related to truck traffic and increasing community and residential development); include access management standards and improvements to these major corridors
- Adopt modified “complete streets” policy and standards for the urbanizing parts of the county as well as “context sensitive design” guidelines for important corridors and roadways, more rural areas
- Continue to upgrade pedestrian and bike safety markings, especially incorporating such improvements in new or road widening projects
- Utilize “Safe Routes to Schools” and other bike/ped funds to improve pedestrian safety around and to schools
- Work with Phenix City to connect county trails into existing and expanded Phenix City Riverwalk or trail system
- Promote ridesharing and other para-transit initiatives supported by LRCOG, C-PCMPO to assist seniors and other transit dependent households
- Continue to support transportation technology improvements including intelligent transportation system etc.
- Support ongoing wayfinding and signage system, including right-of-way maintenance, sight distance improvements, etc.

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Continue and increase improvements to county roads consistent with a county-wide thoroughfare plan and Master Plan
- Work with ALDOT and others to adopt and implement, in some cases retrofit, major roadways to include access management standards and improvements; US Highway-80 and US Highway-431 and AL Highway-165 are priorities
- Support ongoing improvements to truck and freight movement, including the potential development or support of an intermodal center or continuously improving system for freight movement by truck, rail, water, air (consider need and potential for county airport or close relationship with Columbus, Montgomery, Auburn/Opelika, Atlanta airports)

Long -Term (10-15 years)

- Continue to support improvements to State and Federal roadways
- Continue to upgrade County roads as part of thoroughfare plan

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure safe, adequate and cost-effective water and sewer services for citizens and businesses in Russell County consistent with Master Plan
- Plan for and develop up-to-date infrastructure in cooperation with private and public entities to increase electric, gas, telecommunications, broadband and other necessary technology, consistent with the needs of the citizens and businesses in Russell County and the Master Plan
- Ensure water and sewer capacity to support economic development consistent with the County Master Plan
- Take advantage of public-private partnerships to achieve needed infrastructure consistent with master plan and other government, citizen business interests

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing

- Support the continued communication, coordination and mutual agreement on the provision of water and sewer to serve Russell County as a whole, consistent with the Master Plan; focus especially on coordination with existing water and sewer authorities in Fort Mitchell, Russell County, Hurtsboro and Phenix City
- Work with power, gas, telecommunications, and broadband providers to upgrade their capacity and availability, consistent with the Master Plan and ongoing community and economic development

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Adopt and implement recommendations from the current study for water and sewer, consistent with Master Plan, including short term provisions to serve the priority water and sewers needs in Fort Mitchell; provisions for long term water and sewer expansion to the remainder of the county such as: expansion or combining into a central water and sewer system(s), through public, and/or public/private partnership(s); connections to existing water and sewer plans/systems; temporary package plants serving multiple sites
- Adopt subdivision standards for sewer service consistent with the Master Plan including uniform regulations and installation and connections consistent with building codes, subdivision regulations

Mid- to Long Term (5-15 years)

- Continue to extend water and sewer consistent with Master Plan and Water and Sewer Study
- Expand or construct treatment plants for water and sewer as needed, subject to rate of growth

EDUCATION, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

OBJECTIVES

- Continued and improved access to excellent schools and education for all county residents and to support economic development as the county grows
- Expanding opportunities for higher education/lifetime learning
- Promote highest possible standard of public safety facilities and services for existing and future county residents
- Increased and convenient access to parks and recreation facilities and services for Russell County residents
- Increased access to county government facilities and services

RECOMMENDATIONS

Education

Ongoing

- Support regional education initiatives and financing programs for schools
- Support ongoing expansion and development of Troy Campus and Chattahoochee Valley Community College

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Continue to support renovations and improvements to county schools in locations consistent with the Master Plan and as funds are available

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Continue to evaluate needs for schools in the areas projected for growth such as, Fort Mitchell and other community/neighborhood schools in growth areas consistent with the Master Plan, and identify potential funding for renovations and additional school facilities

Long-Term (10 or more years)

- Consider construction of additional schools in high growth areas if needed and if funds are available for new construction

Public Safety

Ongoing

- Support the location and upgrade of facilities, training and equipment for fire safety in unincorporated parts of the county and continue to work on mutual agreements that can provide for coordination of such services
- Promote legislation to support financial sustainability for fire services in unincorporated areas (i.e., a fee per home and per business)

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Complete plans for expansion of County detention facility in conjunction with other jurisdictions

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Continue to monitor opportunities for mobile or satellite Sheriff's facilities to determine need or feasibility for such facilities and services

Parks and Recreation

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Develop or execute already existing specific plans for the preservation of open space and more park facilities, with accompanying recreational activities, especially in the sections of the county (southeastern and northeastern) which are expected to experience the greatest growth.
- Work with public and private entities to support a variety of parks and recreation facilities and programs, especially consistent with the Master Plan; including plans for regional, community, and neighborhood parks
- Support for river and white water recreational facilities and programs
- Support informal and accessible outdoor recreation to include birding, hunting, fishing as well as a state of the art public/private golf course in the rural part of the county, or perhaps near the river

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Develop increased access to neighborhood parks and playground facilities within walking distance of residential neighborhoods
- Begin to develop additional community and neighborhoods parks, consistent with Master Plan and continued growth of the county
- Consider a county-wide bicycle, greenway, and trails system

Long-Term (10-15 years)

- Continue the gradual expansion of the County's community and neighborhood park program

Other Community Facilities and Services

Ongoing

- Assess the needs and interests of new residents and plan for all facilities including arts and cultural facilities (Umbrella Group-Regional)
- Continue to support senior services and youth facilities, accessible to all parts of the County
- Improve the access to arts and cultural facilities consistent with County residents needs and desires

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Expand web-based library and other county facilities/services
- Support continued revitalization of core facilities in Phenix City and other county centers for art and cultural events

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Consider expansion of (satellite) county services facilities to more centrally located and readily accessible location(s), especially with respect to public safety, security, and library facilities and services requiring frequent visits to the courthouse; consider co-location of such facilities with existing or proposed school and park facilities; prioritized location for such facilities are the Fort Mitchell and Seale areas; consider multi-purpose satellite facilities in concert with Hurtsboro, subject to ongoing plans for satellite service, etc.
- Support cultural and recreational programs designed to serve a population with special needs, including physical challenges.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVES

- Protect and enhance historical character of the County
- Protect and enhance the quality of the Chattahoochee River and related tributaries, flood plains and wetlands and improve water quality discharge into surface water
- Protect/conservate important rural landscapes and woodlands
- Increase opportunities for environmental tourism, to enhance recreation and economic opportunities, especially as it relates to the river and water resources
- Protect natural habitats for hunting, fishing, birding, etc.
- Maintain a balance of natural resource protection and the use of such resources for industrial and business development

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing

- Support ongoing efforts of Historical Commission and related associations County wide and in historic communities such as Hurtsboro, Seale, as well as Phenix City
- Adopt and enforce flood plain regulations as well as development plan guidelines to protect areas along the river as well as other creeks and tributaries, incorporate community and neighborhood parts in the flood plain protection
- Support the efforts of land owners to preserve hunting and fishing sites in the county as well as conservation and or preservation of farmlands; consider cooperation with a land trust, use of conservation easements and other incentives for this purpose
- Continue to participate in regional and local watershed protection programs and plans, working with universities and others
- Support installation of and maintenance of historical markers
- Work with State and Federal preservation sites to protect, maintain, and enhance National and State historic sites
- Continue to participate in regional air quality compliance as part of C-PCMPO planning process

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Establish the Special River Corridor district as a zoning district or mutual compact of government and land owners, to include standards and guidelines for the development of this area as a unique asset
- Increase water related recreation and community development which takes advantage of and enhances the Chattahoochee River, especially as part of a regional "white water" initiative
- Consider acquisition of key open space and park areas in conservation and public access to recreation
- Work closely with Fort Benning and Nature Conservancy to identify and protect land use buffers and access to natural areas through the Fort Benning buffer program

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Consider increasing historic district and site protection standards to include architectural review in selected districts of the County such as Hurtsboro, Seale, Fort Mitchell, and others
- Increase access to natural areas through county-wide greenway system

Long-Term (10-15 years)

- Establish and support a public-private fund/foundation for raising funds and matching grants for preservation of historic structures and sites
- Consider working with others to establish a Russell County/Phenix City Museum or comparable facility

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

OBJECTIVES

- Coordination of planning, development, infrastructure and transportation between county, municipal and regional interests especially in areas of mutual jurisdiction
- Reduce duplication of services and provide cost effective and convenient services for residents and businesses in Russell County
- Support a seamless delivery of government services for residents and businesses in Russell County
- Support an adequate and equitable funding base, including increased economic development and income, consistent with the Master Plan, that provides funding for County services

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing

- Participation with LRCOG, Columbus-Phenix City MPO, Valley Partnership, Fort Benning, BRAC, and other regional agencies
- Participation in and support of multiple chambers of commerce for development and promotion of intergovernmental efforts
- Participation in other regional and cooperative economic development, environmental, transportation activities including the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) developed in conjunction with LRCOG
- Maintain and improve County relationships with state and congressional representatives for legislative and financial support, especially for major projects
- Support regional initiatives consistent with the Master Plan

Short-Term (0-5 years)

- Establish a task force or working committee across jurisdictional lines to identify new opportunities for coordinating issues of mutual interest to the county and county interests
- Establish "utility coordinating committee" to improve communication and coordination of the planning and development of infrastructure in the county
- Establish a working committee to coordinate planning, zoning, subdivision standards especially in the police jurisdiction or areas subject to annexation
- Work closely with Fort Benning, Nature Conservancy to coordinate land use, re-use and acquisition plan with Master Plan, maintained continuously in the county

Mid-Term (5-10 years)

- Create stable and equitable tax and revenue base/consistent with services required for all jurisdictional agencies
- Consider intergovernmental corporate agreements on key services and facilities such as schools, parks, etc.

Long-Term (10-15 years)

- Consider more formal intergovernmental structures, or consolidation, to be determined through ongoing communication and coordination

PLANNING AREAS

SEALE

As the historical County Seat of Russell County, the continued significance of Seale as a major community center within the County is important in component of the Russell County Master Plan. Land uses include a cluster of mixed commercial and residential developments within the core of the Seale, the area surrounding the traditional community center of Seale and along Old Seale Highway. Community design within the traditional community center should include historic preservation of existing structures and infill of compatible new residential and commercial development infill along the US Highway-431 corridor and Old Seale Highway. Housing opportunities in Seale include rehabilitation of existing historic houses, infill and new medium density residential around the center. Away from the community center, residential development should occur as neighborhood clusters which include important amenities such as sidewalks and street lighting. Major transportation improvements within the area include improved east-west connectors to the Fort Mitchell area. These connections should occur along the existing County Road-24/Ridge Road route between Seale and Fort Mitchell and along County Road-18/Oswichee Road between Seale and Oswichee. Community facilities are an important component of Seale considering the central location within the County. Continued and needed expansion should occur in conjunction with Russell County High School, Russell County Middle School and Oliver Elementary School. Other significant facilities within Seale include the Recreational Complex along Old Seale Highway and the Old Russell County Courthouse.

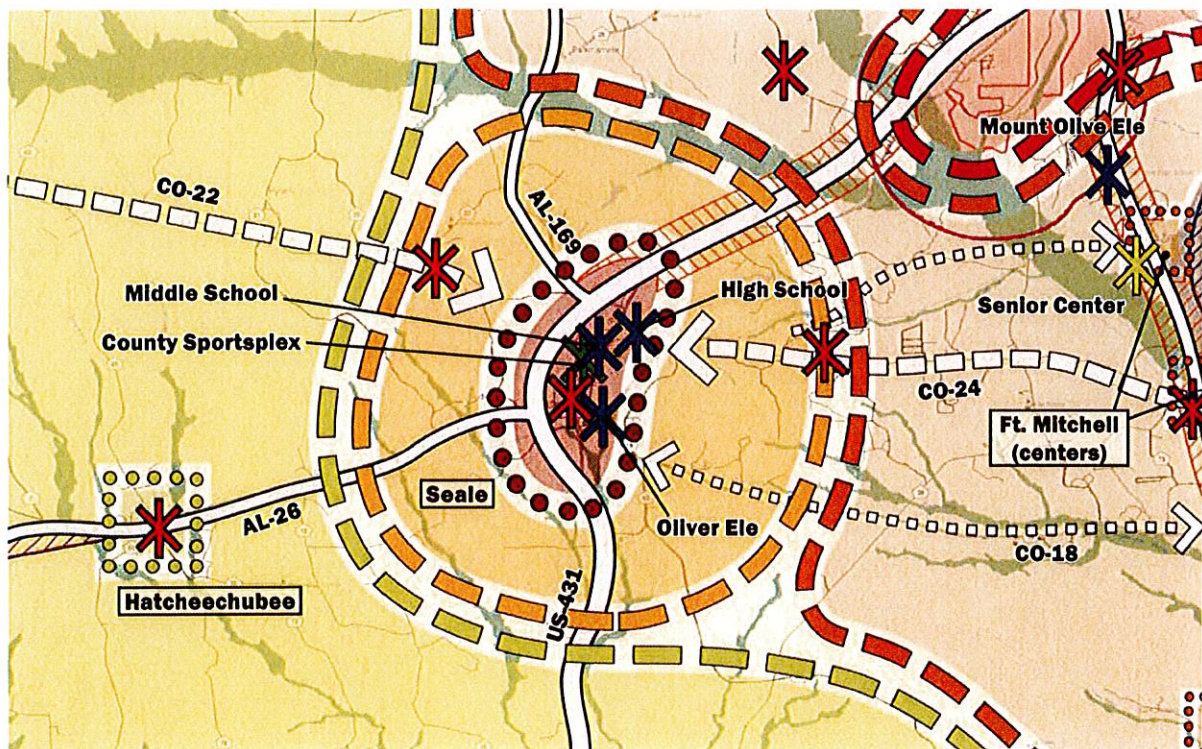


Figure 2.9 – Seale Planning Area

FORT MITCHELL

Fort Mitchell will become a series of substantial suburban neighborhoods and centers extending from Phenix City, primarily along Alabama Highway-165 toward Eufaula. The Master Plan calls for development a series of suburban centers with mixed land uses and increasing community facilities with added county services, such a potential county satellite office, etc. Transportation improvements focus on improving Alabama Highway-165 and improved east west connectors into Fort Benning and Seale. Fort Mitchell also includes an emphasis on the preservation of the Chattahoochee River with recreational and residential opportunities along the river as well.

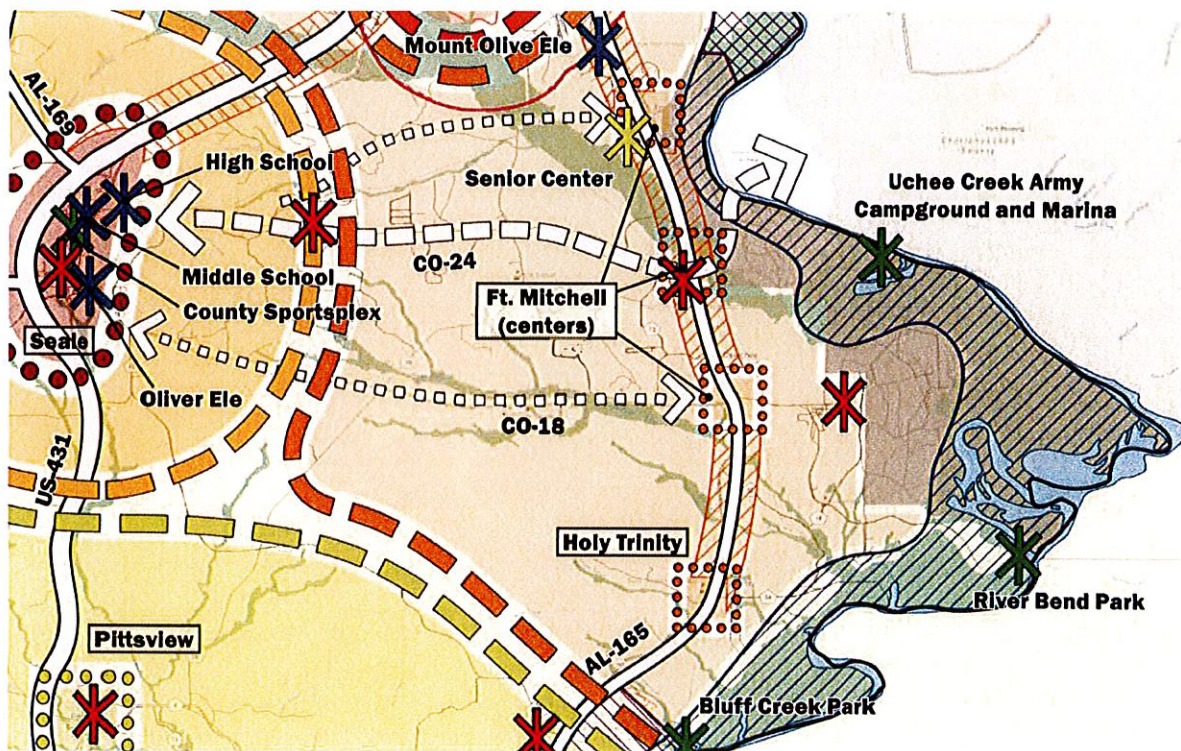


Figure 2.10 – Fort Mitchell Planning Area

HURTSBORO

The Plan encourages the redevelopment of Hurtsboro as a town center, expanding on some of the historic character and existing patterns of development. Mixed commercial and residential land uses can be concentrated in the town center, with community facilities including some combination of town and county facilities. While located at the edge of the county, access includes good state and county roads. The Plan suggests that the area around the town center will be primarily rural residential with existing homes and new housing on large lots.

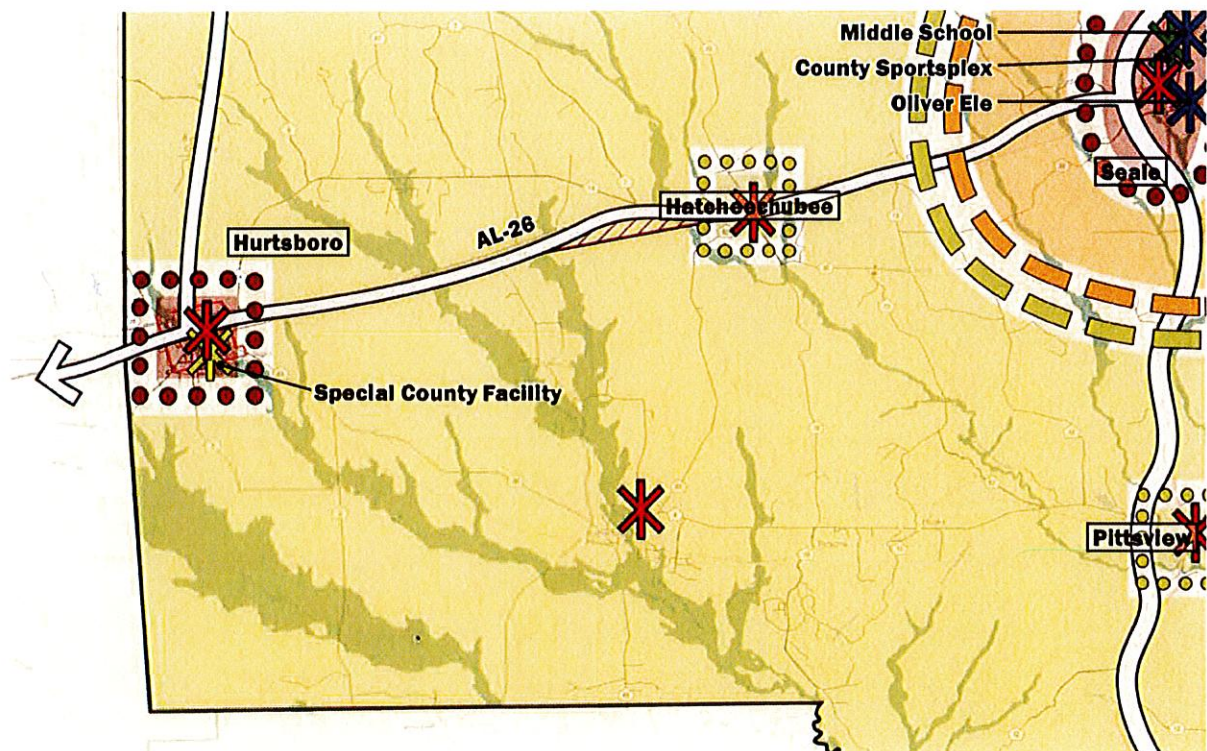


Figure 2.11 – Hurtsboro Planning Area

LADONIA/CRAWFORD

Located along US Highway-80, Ladonia is expected to be a part of the suburban neighborhoods extending from Phenix City with commercial development in centers along US Highway-80 and suburban residential neighborhoods. The Plan suggests that Crawford develops toward the end of US Highway-80 as a suburban center with a mix of commercial and higher density residential. Part of the areas around Crawford would be more suburban where the area to the west would become more conservation oriented residential. Transportation improvements focus on access management along US Highway-80.

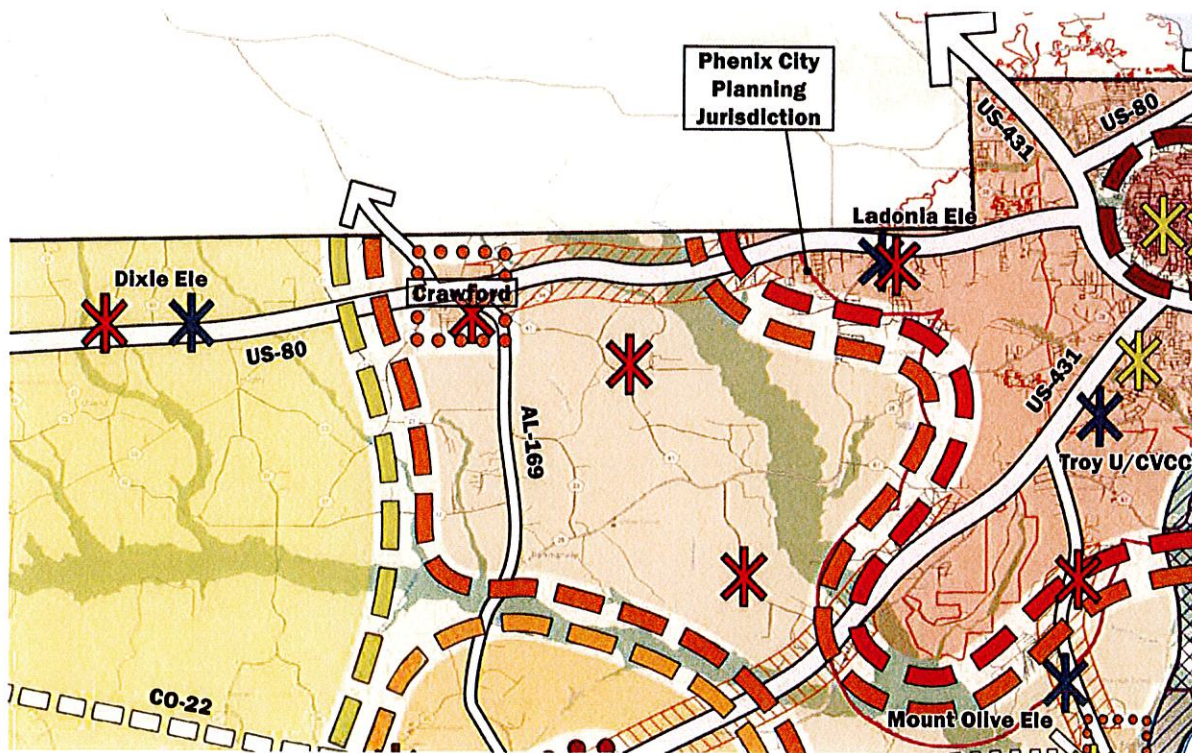


Figure 2.12 – Ladonia/Crawford Planning Area

PITTSVIEW/COTTONTON

Pittsview is designated as a Rural Center within the Rural Agriculture/Conservation character area of Russell County. Considering their location along US Highway-431 between Phenix City and Eufaula, Pittsview is not expected to see significant growth in the near future. The designation as a Rural Center though suggests that any development along the US Highway-431 corridor in south Russell County should be concentrated with other similar uses in Pittsview. As a result, Pittsview would serve as a central location of civic and commerce related activities in south central Russell County.

Located along Alabama Highway-169, Cottonton is a critical location on the eastern border of Russell County. Cottonton is the location of the only other public bridge crossing of the Chattahoochee River between Phenix City and Eufaula making it an important Rural Center to facilitate agriculture and commerce related transportation. Similar to Pittsview, Cottonton is designated a Rural Center within the Rural Agriculture/Conservation character area and not expected to see major growth in the near future. However, any future development on the southern segment of Alabama Highway-169 should be concentrated in the Cottonton area with other similar services because of their transportation related importance. The eastern edge of Cottonton may also have industrial development potential as well as the expansion of river related recreation and mixed use development.

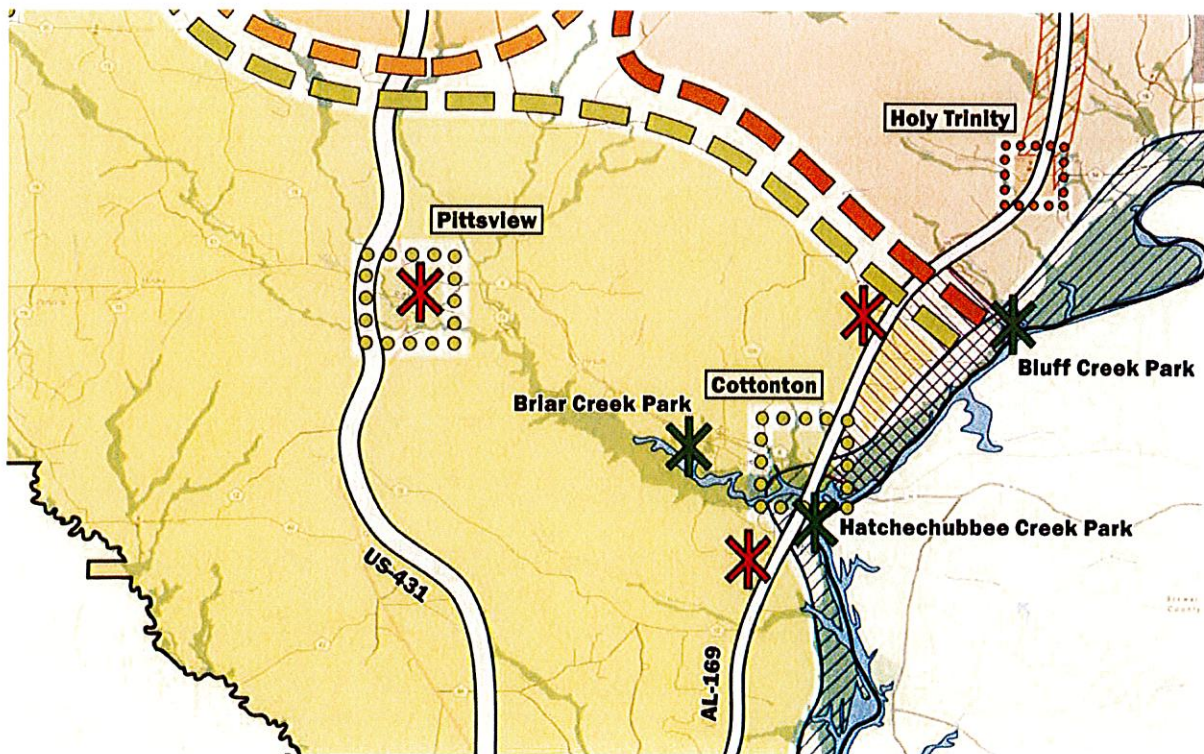


Figure 2.13 – Pittsview/Cottonton Planning Area

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

ONGOING AND PROJECT PLANNING

It is highly recommended that the planning Commission and County Commission utilize the Master Plan in conjunction with continued planning and budgeting. Continuous review of the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan is important to responsible implementation of the Plan. In addition, updating should be done as needed, and, at least every five years. Annual reports should be made by the Planning Commission to the County Commission on the status of the Plan.

More detailed district and project plans must be considered in order to implement the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan. These district plans may include entire commission districts, neighborhood, or other special district plans.

The Comprehensive County Master Plan is organized by broad goals, objectives and recommendations that may include policies and strategies for adoption and implementation of the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan. For each of the Comprehensive County Master Plan Policies and Strategies, action steps should be established in order to implement the policies or recommendations. These action items may change, over time, however it is important to identify some of these. Current plans should be continuously updated and implemented to ensure results and take advantage of momentum.

Recommendations and action items may include direct action by the County Commission or Planning Commission, however, many of the recommendations suggest cooperation, collaboration or coordination with other organizations, agencies or the private sector.

RESPONSIBILITY, GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATION AND COOPERATION

Implementation of the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan should be considered a Public-Private initiative, with organizations, business and the county working together for the good of all citizens; all departments must continue to work together; think outside the box/do things even though they have never been done before; volunteers are needed to make projects work; public and private leadership is key. The plan is structured in such a way as to foster the establishment of implementation teams to foster of the recommendations within the plan. These implementation teams may include land use and community design; streets and transportation; infrastructure; community facilities and services; education, health care; public services; neighborhoods and housing; arts and culture; natural and cultural resource preservation; economic and community development. Other implementation teams may be considered to include for example: civic participation, youth, seniors and others to work on specific projects.

PRIORITIES AND TIME FRAME

With respect to timelines and priorities, recommendations should be incorporated in short-term (0-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years), and long-term (over 10 years) horizons based on importance and funding opportunities of the county or others, and the legal authority of the county. It is important to note that many recommendations are interconnected and despite priorities/timelines, opportunities might present themselves to combine certain recommendations at a particular time.

FINANCING, FUNDING AND PUBLIC/PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

It cannot be presumed that the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan is implemented by county resources alone. In fact, many of the Plan recommendations will be implemented by others and the private sector. The county's goal is leveraging and supporting private sector resources to accomplish the desired results. Plan implementation should also be seen as a public/private investment strategy and not just the spending public of funds.

Financing and funding of county initiatives should include the use of county funds; grants; loans; other incentives and funding which can be generated through related development authorities such as a Commercial Development Authority, a Land Trust and other public-private development organizations in addition to more common development authorities such as the utility board, school board, park board, etc.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING AND BUDGETING

The financial planning for the county should include a five year capital improvement program or plan which should be consistent with the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan and be updated on an annual basis.

REGULATORY TOOLS

Certain regulatory tools are important to the implementation of the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan. These tools include a possible zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, historic districts, redevelopment and design review districts/guidelines, others. These tools should be seen as consistent with the Master Plan and amended, as needed, to further the implementation of the Plan. Specifically, zoning regulations, including special overlay districts, etc. are subject to further approval by the County Commission. In order to consider such standards, a comprehensive education program should be undertaken on the benefit, methods, etc. of such standards and regulations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Russell County, as are most counties in Alabama, is limited by its legislative authority, regulatory authority, funding sources, etc. For this reason, it is critical that the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan be continuously shared with legislative representatives for support and consideration, either for potential legislation supportive of the plan and/or funding support from the state or federal level or support the county's ability to finance projects, improvements consistent with the Master Plan.

COORDINATION OF THE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Many recommendations in the Russell County Comprehensive County Master Plan can be related to other recommendations or opportunities. The county should, on an ongoing basis, identify where these opportunities for coordination of projects can achieve plan goals. This can be done on an annual or quarterly basis, as well as, a part of project planning and budgeting of projects to take advantage of and leverage funding that is already being spent. The coordination can serve as positive added value for leveraging the use of funds for more than a single benefit. The attached implementation matrix is a guide for how this coordination should be accomplished.

Early Action Program

The County Master Plan includes recommendations as an early action program, which the County might consider for action sooner, rather than later, on items that could benefit from such action. This early action program is included in the plan summary.

FISCAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION

GENERAL TRENDS IN FISCAL CONDITIONS

Capital and operating costs will continue to increase based on growth. Balancing these costs with revenue will be based in part on increasing commercial development, taking advantage of construction related jobs and spending. Public-private financing, leveraging state and federal resources and equitable intergovernmental cost sharing are also critical.

While the County Master Plan is not intended to be a comprehensive financial plan or budget, the Plan can be used to address and help support fiscal responsibility and opportunities. Balancing revenue and the costs or needs and demands for services as a result of current development and future growth requires ongoing and long term day to day planning and coordination. Options for such balancing include: increasing existing revenue sources, increasing future revenue sources, reducing existing costs and mitigating future costs to the extent possible through good planning and coordination, including intergovernmental and cooperative agreements, regionalization and innovative public-private financing.

KEY ELEMENTS IN FISCAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION

The following are some elements to be considered as important follow ups or companions to the master plan.

- Adopting multi-year financial plans coordinated with the Comprehensive County Master Plan
- Including a five year capital improvements program
- Incorporating major ongoing capital projects into annual budgets, financing plans, bond issues, etc.
- Conducting ongoing fiscal reviews, especially at quarterly, mid-year and annually and updating the five year plan
- Continuing to focus on financing incentives for economic development that will leverage private investment and increase revenues to the county
- Continuing to be progressive in maximizing available grants and public-private incentives for implementing projects consistent with the master plan.

SOURCES OF LOCAL REVENUE

Property taxes are used largely for schools. Sales and use taxes are used for general purposes and schools. Fees collected from a variety of sources go to offset costs for specific services. Many of these taxes and fees are collected by or for the state and redistributed to the county as intergovernmental revenue.

Borrowing funds is a source of revenue, including general obligation bonds as well as revenue bonds based on returns from investments in capital infrastructure.

Potential grant and related funding sources

- ALDOT and USDOT transportation funds for US and state routes; Safety funds
- Congressional appropriations for special projects
- CDBG and HUD grants for community development
- USDA grants and loans for infrastructure and housing financing for rural housing
- Industrial revenue bonds to IDB
- Special EDA funds for economic development
- Brownfield loans and grants through EPA, ADEM and Department of Revenue
- ADEM funds for stream restoration
- ADECA and LWCF grants for parks and greenways
- Historic tax credits for restoration of historic properties (income generating)
- Special Business Improvement Districts and intergovernmental agreements

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE (SEE SEPARATE REPORT)

(See separate report on file with the Russell County Commission Office)