

CITY OF IRONDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:



IRONDALE ON THE MOVE

IRONDALE

ON THE MOVE

EST. 1887

ADOPTED APRIL 2016

THE CITY OF IRONDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



This project was supported by funding from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) and the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Building Communities Program. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Birmingham MPO or the RPCGB. For more information on this program, please visit <http://www.rpcgb.org> or call (205) 251-8139.

This plan was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), MPO and RPCGB as a requirement of Title 23 USC 134 and subsequent modification under Public Law 109-59 (SAFETEA-LU) August 2005. The contents of the plan do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the USDOT.

The contents of this Comprehensive Plan are designed to serve as a guide in the public and private development of land and as such are not binding upon the City of Irondale when making specific land use decisions and public investments.

Adopted by Irondale City Council on April 05, 2016

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mayor Tommy Joe Alexander

City Clerk James Stewart

Irondale City Council

John London, District 1

Donna Pike, District 2

Craig Sanderson, District 3

Terry Bearden, District 4

Bobby Joe Wilson District 5

Project Team

James Stewart, City of Irondale

Darryl Washington, Irondale CDA

Tellis Shoemaker, Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce

Lindsay S. Puckett, RPCGB

Irondale Planning and Zoning Commission

Jimmy Snider, President

Mayor Tommy Joe Alexander

Max Bynum

Becky Chandler

Craig Sanderson

Joe Meads

Ken Miller

James Stewart

Chris Woods

Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

Charles Ball, AICP, Executive Director

Scott Tillman, Director of Planning and Operations

Lindsay S. Puckett, AICP, Project Manager

Brett Isom, GIS Manager

Marshall Farmer, Senior GIS Analyst

Mikhail Alert, Senior Planner

Maria Hines, Community Planner

Hunter Garrison, Community Planner

Anthony Alston, Urban Planner

See It Productions, LLC

Stasti Bara, Film Maker

Irondale on the Move Advisory Committee

Mary Beth Blankenship

Sandra Bonner

Alisa Burleson

Therese Bynum

Brad Doss

Sharon Graham

Scott Green

Debbie Kristofco

Warren McCullars

Steve Marino

Lynn Marino

Joe Meads

Charles Moore

Van A. Phillips

Brandon Prince

David Pugh

Lisa Rayford

Nathaniel Rutledge

Terrence Scott

Terry Spitzer

David Spivey

Aaron Sims

Carla Sims

Jerry South

Ann Steves

Beth Stewart

George Williams

Del Wilson

Special Thanks to:

All participants in the community engagement efforts throughout the Irondale on the Move planning process.

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	1
Background	2
Purpose of the plan.....	2
Legal requirements	4
Relationship of the Comprehensive Plan to the Zoning Ordinance	4
Plan organization.....	5
Public Involvement Process	9
Vision statement	12
Plan elements	13
FUTURE LAND USE.....	15
Future Land Use Principles	16
Future Land Use Map and categories.....	16
Priority Redevelopment Areas	38
COMMUNITY	41
RENEWAL	41
Gateways & Signage	42
Code enforcement	44
Neighborhood Cleanup.....	45
Safety & Security	47
LIVABILITY	51
Access To Fresh, Healthy Food Options	52
Supporting Our Schools	53
Transforming Spaces	56
GREEN SYSTEMS.....	61
Recreational Spaces	63
Stormwater Management	65
Green Design.....	70
PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE	73
Adequate Infrastructure	74
High Speed Internet	75
E-Services	76
Emergency Preparedness.....	77
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	79
Identity & Branding	80
Economic Growth.....	81
TRANSPORTATION.....	85
Transportation Maintenance	89

IMPLEMENTATION93

- Introduction.....94
- Implementation matrix94
- Implementation agencies94
- agency abbreviations95
- Financing and Investment Tools.....103
- Potential Funding Sources105
- Performance Metrics: Measuring Implementation Progress.....109

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Existing Conditions

Appendix B: Market Analysis

Appendix C: Public Involvement Summary

Appendix D: Design Recommendations For Downtown Irondale and US 78

Appendix E: Transportation Plan

All figures, tables, and images are produced by RPCGB, unless specifically noted. Findings from an extensive inventory and analysis of the natural and built environment, existing community facilities and services, demographic, economy, and housing in Irondale can be found in the [Irondale on the Move: Existing Conditions Document](#).

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Comprehensive Plan vs. Zoning Ordinance	5
Table 1.2: Plan Organization.....	6
Table 2.1: Form and Pattern of Open Space Land Uses	20
Table 2.2: Form and Pattern of Parks and Recreation Land Uses.....	21
Table 2.3: Form and Pattern of Estate Residential Land Uses	22
Table 2.4: Form and Pattern of Low Density Residential Land Uses	23
Table 2.5: Form and Pattern of Medium Density Residential Land Uses	24
Table 2.6: Form and Pattern of High Density Land Uses	25
Table 2.7: Form and Pattern of Mobile Home Land Uses.....	26
Table 2.8: Form and Pattern of Neighborhood Commercial Land Uses.....	27
Table 2.9: Form and Pattern of General Commercial Land Uses	28
Table 2.10: Form and Pattern of Mixed-use Residential Land Uses.....	29
Table 2.11: Form and Pattern of Office Land Uses	30
Table 2.12: Form and Pattern of Light Industrial Land Uses.....	31
Table 2.13: Form and Pattern of Heavy Industrial Land Uses	32
Table 2.14: Form and Pattern of Institutional Land Uses	33
Table 2.15: Form and Pattern of Public Utility Land Uses	34
Table 9.1: Implementation Matrix	96
Table 9.2: Performance Metrics.....	109

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Irondale Study Area Map	3
Figure 2.1: Future Land Use Map	17
Figure 2.2: Future Land Use Map- Downtown Portion of the City	18
Figure 2.3: Future Land Use Map- Gadsden Highway Portion of the City	19
Figure 2.4: Zoning Map	36
Figure 2.5: Priority Redevelopment Areas for Design Recommendations	39
Figure 8.1: Proposed Non-motorized Transportation System	91

1

OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

The *Irondale on the Move Comprehensive Plan* is the City of Irondale's first Comprehensive Plan, intended to encourage and direct its future growth. The plan was prepared by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB). Work on the plan began in February 2015, and an extensive public involvement process began in March 2015.

Funding for the Comprehensive Plan was provided via the RPCGB's planning assistance program, Building Communities. Under the Building Communities Program, the RPCGB provides funding at 80% of the plan's total cost; the City of Irondale provided funding in the amount of 20% of the plan's total cost.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Irondale is intended to define the city's overall vision for growth and (re)development. The Comprehensive Plan is used as a guide for decision-making about the natural and built environment. The plan is used in guiding decisions regarding land use, development, growth management and capital improvements. It provides a framework for guiding public and private decisions that will affect new

development as well as reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and business areas. A Comprehensive Plan is based on the residents' vision of how they want their city to grow in the future— it is a long-term vision.

Irondale on the Move considers a 25-year planning horizon, and looks ahead to the year 2040. Many changes happen over a 25 year time frame. Cities that look far into the future and consider what they want things to be long-term are much more likely to achieve their goals in a fiscally responsible manner. With future growth on the horizon, the elected leadership, business community, and residents ask themselves questions like:

- How can we attract more jobs to Irondale to boost the city's economy?
- What range of housing types and lifestyle options will be available to accommodate people at various stages in their lives?
- What transportation options will be available from your home and work place?
- Can new development occur to provide opportunities for more shopping, outdoor recreation, restaurants, entertainment venues and places for social interaction?

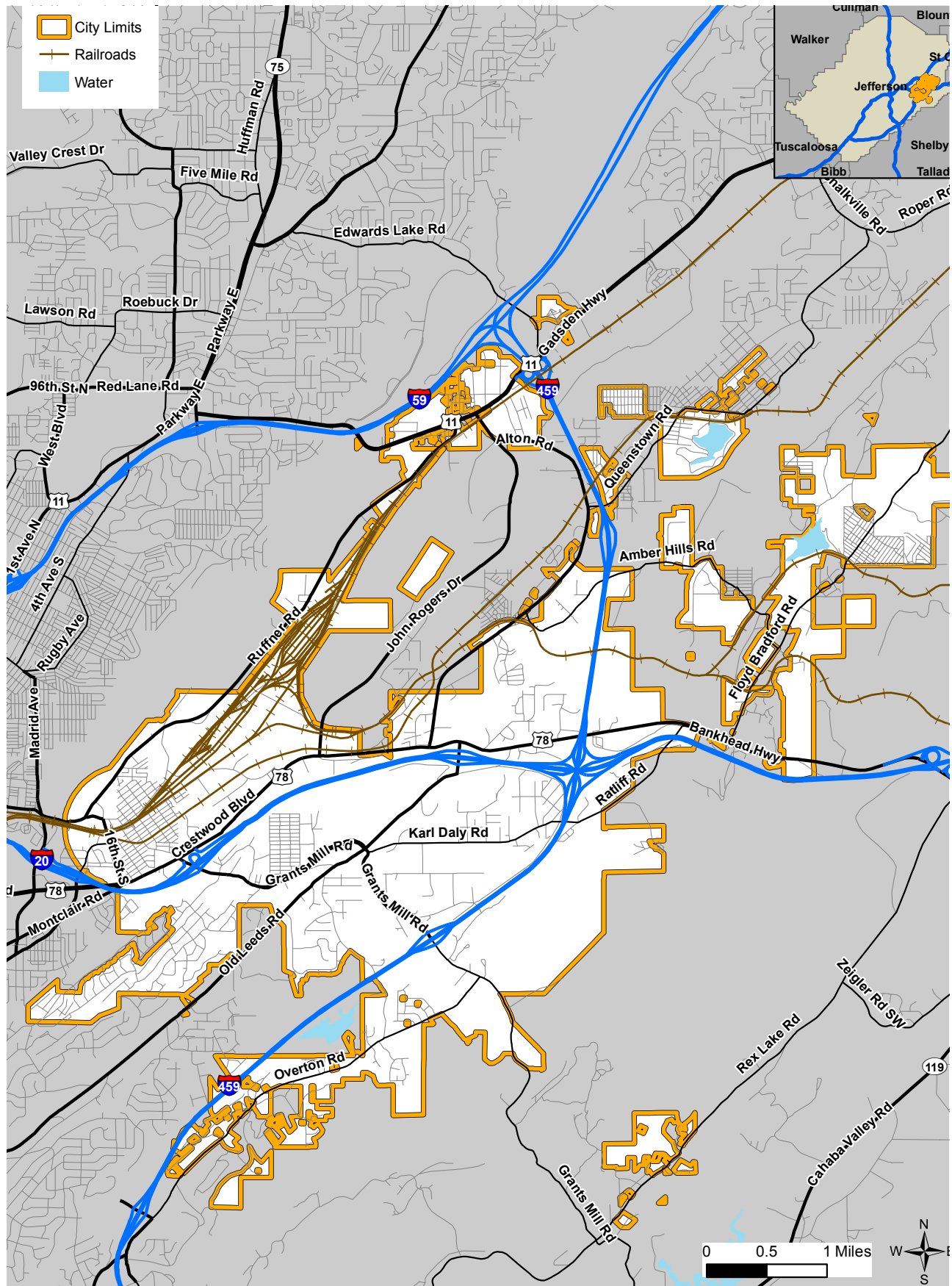
Irondale on the Move is meant to be a living document that focuses on the city's physical development, articulating the city's vision and expectations for growth. The plan keeps an eye on the long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability of Irondale while focusing on near-term planning horizons. Without losing sight of this objective for near-term success, it is important to consider long-term changes in the economy, changes in technology, and the conservation, preservation and sustainability of existing natural, historic and cultural resources. The *Irondale on the Move Comprehensive Plan* document also provides the City of Irondale with the flexibility to respond to changes in the urban environment.



LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Planning in the State of Alabama is not compulsory, and there is no specific requirement on the frequency of comprehensive plan updates.

Figure 1.1: Irondale Study Area Map



However it is strongly recommended that the City of Irondale’s Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council, regularly review and update (as frequently as every five years) the Comprehensive Plan. This is especially true if the city is experiencing rapid population and/or employment growth, major changes such as an annexation of land or a major land development decision has occurred, or the completion of another study that impacts the plan. Frequent review and updates also will help safeguard the city from legal challenges and enable them to be proactive in steering the city towards achieving its vision and goals, instead of being reactive to issues and challenges that arise because of the lack of adequate planning.

The Alabama Legislature provides guidance for municipalities that choose to exercise their ability to plan for their city’s growth and development. The Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 11-52-8 and Section 11-52-9 directs planning commissions “to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the commission’s judgment, bear relation to the planning of such municipality.” Section 11-52-8 goes further to state “Such plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts and descriptive matter shall show the commission’s recommendations for the development of said territory...” The procedure for adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is established in Section 11-52-10 of the Code of Alabama.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE

The Comprehensive Plan guides land use decisions and becomes the foundation of zoning and subdivision choices that are made by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The *Irondale on the Move Comprehensive Plan* should not be confused with the City of Irondale Zoning Ordinance. Zoning is a legal mechanism enacted by the city, whereby land is classified according to specific uses. Where the comprehensive plan is a guide for future growth and development, zoning is the tool utilized by the city to influence and direct development so that it reflects the intensity and desired form envisioned within the comprehensive plan. In short, the comprehensive plan neither changes the Zoning Ordinance, nor the zoning on any specific property. Instead, it guides the decisions of the Planning Commission and the City Council as they apply the Zoning Ordinance and make decisions about changes to zoning on individual properties. Changing the Comprehensive Plan for a parcel of land requires a Comprehensive Plan amendment, and changing the zoning for that parcel requires a rezoning application.



Table 1.2: Plan Organization

CHAPTERS		DESCRIPTION
	1 <u>INTRODUCTION</u>	This chapter includes the purpose of the plan, the legal foundation for planning in Alabama. A high level overview of the public involvement process is included, along with the overall vision statement and the Comprehensive Plan goals.
PLANNING THEMES	2 <u>FUTURE LAND USE</u>	This chapter presents the Future Land Use Map, which will guide the City’s future zoning and land use decisions. A description of the future land use categories are also provided.
	3 <u>COMMUNITY RENEWAL</u>	This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to gateways and signage, code enforcement, neighborhood cleanup and safety and security.
	4 <u>LIVABILITY</u>	This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to access to fresh and healthy food options, ways to increase support for local schools, and ways to transform underutilized spaces (such as through pop up events).
	5 <u>GREEN SYSTEMS</u>	This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to recreational spaces, stormwater management and green development.
	6 <u>PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE</u>	This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to adequate infrastructure, high speed internet / fiber optics, governmental e-services and emergency preparedness.
	7 <u>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</u>	This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to Irondale’s branding, knowing Irondale’s market availability and needs, attracting new businesses and ecotourism.
	8 <u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system, building a multi-modal transportation network (i.e. sidewalks, bicycle facilities and trails), and transportation infrastructure maintenance.
	9 <u>IMPLEMENTATION</u>	This chapter includes the detailed implementation matrix for the Plan’s recommended actions, and describes potential financing and investment tools and potential funding sources.

CHAPTERS		DESCRIPTION
A	<u>APPENDIX A: EXISTING CONDITIONS</u>	This document is an in-depth assessment of where Irondale is today and covers a range of topics: a description of the current city departments, boards and commissions, a demographic summary, existing land use, zoning and development trends, natural, cultural and historic resources, the transportation system, utilities and infrastructure and community facilities and services.
B	<u>APPENDIX B: MARKET ANALYSIS</u>	This document provides an overview of the current and emerging employment and demographic trends associated with Irondale’s retail, industrial, office and housing markets. Potential local economic development opportunity sites are identified to help position Irondale in the various markets.
C	<u>APPENDIX C: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY</u>	A detailed documentation of the <i>Irondale on the Move Comprehensive Plan’s</i> public involvement process. The range of outreach strategies are detailed (website, surveys, email, social media, events, advisory committee meetings, print media and media coverage), along with the participation rates and information gathered through the outreach activities.
D	<u>APPENDIX D: DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOWNTOWN IRONDALE AND US 78</u>	The design recommendations for Downtown Irondale and the US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard Corridor include strategies related to rebranding, urban design, economic development and land use / redevelopment. The objective of the document is to promote positive economic growth by recommending strategies for Downtown Irondale and along the US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard Corridor to generate more economic vitality than their current condition.
E	<u>APPENDIX E: TRANSPORTATION PLAN</u>	The Transportation Plan takes a comprehensive look at the city’s multi-modal transportation network and recommended improvements. The plan includes implementation guidance and potential funding sources and can be used as a guide to making policy decisions regarding transportation investments.

Highlights...

Age and Racial Composition

- The residential population of Irondale is slightly older. The median age has increased from 38.0 in 2010 to an estimated 39.8 in 2014.
- The racial composition of Irondale is growing more diverse. According to the 2010 estimates, Irondale consisted of 58.9% of residents reported as White, 32.5% Black or African American, and 8.6% making up the remaining racial categories. Persons of Hispanic origin made up 8.0% of the population.

Median Household Income

- Median household income in the City of Irondale has increased from \$39,329 in 1990, to \$46,203 in 2000 to an estimated \$52,077 in 2014, a 32% increase since 1990.
- Since 2010 Irondale residents have experienced a median household income increase of 4% while Jefferson County has decreased by 5% and the State of Alabama has essentially remained unchanged. This increase is due in part to comparably higher wage jobs, higher rates of economic mobility/ opportunity and low unemployment.

Employment

- Employment is clustered along primary transportation corridors, in particular U.S. 78 (Crestwood Boulevard), Alton Road, and Grants Mill Road near I-459, with the heaviest concentrations found in central Irondale. These concentrations, located primarily along the U.S. 78 corridor, make up 17% of all Irondale businesses and nearly 20% of all Irondale jobs.
- The residential labor force in the City of Irondale is approximately 6,600 residents in 2014. Of those labor force participants, 92.6% are employed and 7.4% are unemployed. Most of Irondale's workforce is employed within the Service industry (52.1%), Retail Trade (12.0%), and Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (10.1%).
- There are approximately 735 businesses in the City of Irondale employing over 7,300 people. The Service industry makes up 31.4% of the area jobs, followed by Wholesale Trade Industry (13.1%), Retail Trade (12.0%) and Management (11.2%).
- The largest employers include Motion Industries (639 employees), Eternal World Television Network (275 employees), Sonic – Williams Motors (240 employees), Wood Fruitticher Grocery, Inc. (215 employees) and Imaging Business Machines (200 employees). These five businesses make up approximately 16% of Irondale's total jobs.
- Commuting data indicates that 16% of employed residents of Irondale also work in Irondale (primarily in Health Care and Retail Trade), while 84% of employed residents work outside the City. Primary commuting destinations include Birmingham (47%), Homewood (10%), Hoover (5%) and Bessemer (3%).
- Average daily travel times for workers living in the City of Irondale were reported to average 24.8 minutes in 2013 with nearly 1,711 (28%) of employed residents commuting in excess of 30 minutes to work each day.

**For more demographic information see Appendix A: Existing Conditions and Appendix B: Market Analysis.*



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Effective outreach provides ample opportunity for citizens to be involved in the plan development process. It educates citizens about the purpose of the planning effort, and the important role they play in developing the plan. As a part of the *Irondale on the Move* plan development, community stakeholders were engaged in several different ways throughout the planning process. They were encouraged to actively voice their opinions about Irondale's future.

Stakeholders were actively engaged through a variety of means including the establishment of an Advisory Committee; one-on-one interviews/ conversations with key stakeholders; a community-wide visioning survey; a community wide "How do we get there?" summary; and a series of public workshops and meetings. A full public involvement summary is included in Appendix C.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An Advisory Committee was established for *Irondale on the Move* plan process. This committee played an integral role in relaying community needs to the plan development team, and communicating details of the planning efforts to the general public. The committee met five times during the *Irondale on the Move* planning process. Their meeting schedule is identified below.

- Advisory Committee Meeting 1: January 08, 2015
- Advisory Committee Meeting 2: July 13, 2015
- Advisory Committee Meeting 3: September 21, 2015
- Advisory Committee Meeting 4: November 09, 2015
- Advisory Committee Meeting 5: January 11, 2015

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Throughout the development of plan, the project team conducted informal interviews and discussion with key community stakeholders. This included local elected officials such as the City of Irondale Mayor and City Councilors, the city clerk, appointed commission and board members, City staff, business leaders, and other key organizations such as the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). Interviews and discussions helped the plan development team to better understand baseline conditions. They also assisted with identifying key community initiatives, needs, and priorities. Finally, they helped to inform key discussion points for public involvement activities.

VISIONING SURVEY

This multiple-choice and open-ended question survey was created on SurveyMonkey.com and a direct link to it was hosted on the project website. The survey included 9 questions that were intended to show the *Irondale on the Move* planning team the highest priorities and needs of the citizens of Irondale. The survey was also promoted via E-blasts, as well as promoted on the RPCGB and the *Irondale on the Move* Facebook pages. Hard copies of the survey were also made available at the Kickoff Open House on April 16, 2015, and at the City of Irondale Library. The survey was open for answers from March 24, 2015 through July 8, 2015.

“HOW DO WE GET THERE” SURVEY

As part of the *Irondale on the Move* plan development process, the project team conducted a “How do we get there Irondale?” survey. This survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey.com and included 22 questions that helped the project team identify which development types, economic development initiatives, tax increases, and City of Irondale public services residents most liked. A direct link to the survey was hosted on the project website, and it was promoted via E-blasts and through social media. The survey was open for answers from October 01, 2015 through November 18, 2015.

OPEN HOUSES AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

Obtaining input from the general public was a key component of the planning process. The following meetings were held with the general public:

A Kickoff Open House was held on April 16, 2015 between 6:30 and 7:30 pm at Shades Valley High School Cafeteria. Shades Valley High School is located at 6100 Old Leeds Road in Irondale. The Open House was intended to publicly kickoff and generate momentum for *Irondale on the Move*, allowing participants to get information on the Comprehensive Plan, to share their thoughts and ideas on what Irondale should look like in the future and to learn more ways to get involved. 46 people attended.

A series of **Town Hall Meetings and Council District Visioning Workshops** were scheduled during the *Irondale on the Move* planning process. These meetings were geared toward specific topics to give Irondale citizens, business owners, and other city stakeholders in an interactive opportunity to discuss and share ideas about important topics related to the City’s future growth and development. Full summaries of each public engagement opportunity can be found in Appendix C.

Public Meeting #2 Presenting the Draft Plan.

The public meeting to release the plan draft was held on Thursday, February 11th at 6:00 PM in the Shades Valley High School Cafeteria. The meeting had 33 attendees and was staffed by the Regional Planning Commission along with members of the Irondale On the Move advisory committee, Irondale Commercial Development Authority, and Irondale Chamber of Commerce.

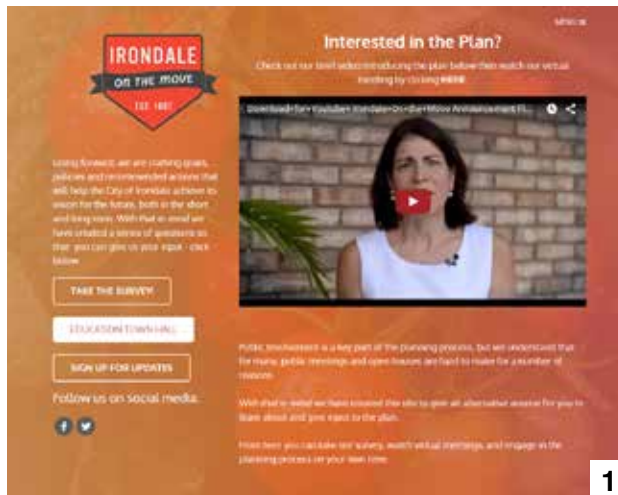
After a brief presentation highlighting some details of the plan by project manager, Lindsay Puckett, meeting attendees were encouraged to visit tables highlighting each chapter of the plan and to give any feedback they may have.

PROJECT WEBSITE

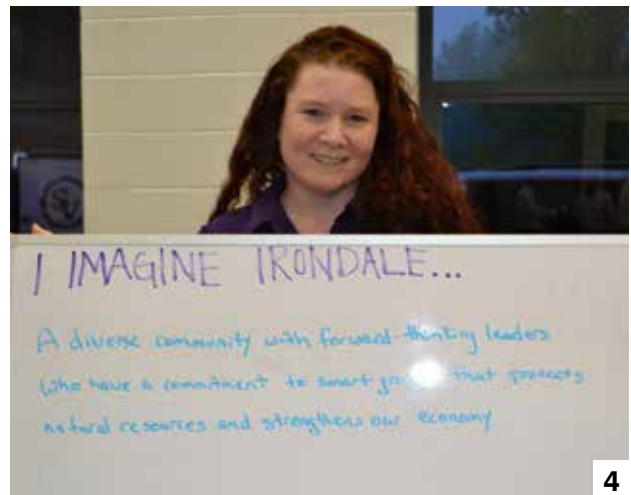
A formal website for the *Irondale on the Move* project was maintained throughout the life of the project. This website, www.irondaleonthemove.com, served as an information gateway for the plan, and provided easy access to plan documents, public meeting details, and other information.

Left:

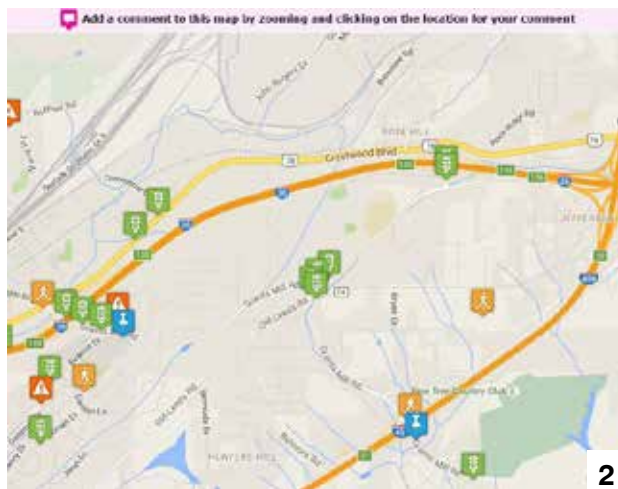
1. Project Website
2. Irondale on the Move Community Remarks
3. "How do we get there Survey?"
4. During the initial Open House, residents were asked to tell the RPCGB how they imagine Irondale in the "I Imagine Irondale" Whiteboard Activity.
5. Guests at the first Open House listen to the opening presentation.
6. Residents participate at the District Workshops.



1



4



2



5



3



6

VISION STATEMENT

“The City of Irondale desires to become a vibrant, progressive, healthy and attractive place to live, work and play. It is a place where family and diversity are highly valued, and where safe, walkable and clean neighborhoods are connected to each other and united to thriving schools, revitalized commercial areas, enhanced parks, protected natural open spaces and waterways, and cultural activities. The City of Irondale is hopeful to become the gateway to central Alabama – it is big enough to meet your needs, and small enough to care.”

VISION

2 FUTURE LAND USE

GOAL #1: Promote the redevelopment and reuse of existing buildings and sites.

GOAL #2: Plan for infill development and new mixed-use developments.

GOAL #3: Revitalize Downtown Irondale.

GOAL #4: Encourage redevelopment in the US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard corridor.

GOAL #5: Focus development in existing and emerging centers and corridors (US 78, downtown Irondale, I-459/Grants Mill Road and US 11 / Gadsden Highway)

GOAL #6: Accommodate and facilitate industrial development that positively contributes to Irondale’s economy and character

GOAL #7: Provide transitions between single-family and other uses that protect neighborhood quality of life, character and safety.

GOAL #8: Protect and restore significant natural and historic resources.

3 COMMUNITY RENEWAL

GOAL #1: Enhance the physical character and definition of the City.

GOAL #2: Ensure better code enforcement.

GOAL #3: Coordinate neighborhood improvement efforts.

GOAL #4: Encourage community outreach efforts between citizens of Irondale, and the Irondale police department.

4 LIVABILITY

GOAL #1: Ensure that all citizens have access to healthy foods.

GOAL #2: Enhance collaboration between the residential / business community and local schools in Irondale.

GOAL #3: Utilize pop up events and public art to energize and transform spaces into attractive public settings.

PLAN ELEMENTS

How do the vision, elements, goals, and actions work together?

The vision is written from the broad perspective. Each of the plan elements include goals and actions that will implement the vision over the next 25 years. The monitoring and tracking of implementation of the actions will show measurable results and progress towards making the vision a reality.

ELEMENTS

5 GREEN SYSTEMS

GOAL #1: Maintain, enhance and expand parks and recreational facilities with an interconnected system of natural resources for both conservation and public access.

GOAL #2: Restore and sustain water quality, natural habitats and groundwater by incorporating best practices for environmental site design and stormwater management in development.

GOAL #3: Promote development and redevelopment that achieves goals for environmental sustainability, natural resource protection and enhancing public access to our natural assets.

6 PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL #1: Provide necessary and efficient public infrastructure and utilities.

GOAL #2: Provide universal access to telecommunications and high speed Internet.

GOAL #3: Provide ease-of-access to public information and ease of access to city governance.

GOAL #4: Ensure the safety of all residents and citizens through comprehensive emergency preparedness training, education, and planning.

7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL #1: Refresh branding and marketing efforts to promote the uniqueness of Irondale.

GOAL #2: Know your market availability and needs.

GOAL #3: Attract new businesses.

8 TRANSPORTATION

GOAL #1: Preserve and enhance the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system.

GOAL #2: Build a multimodal transportation network to provide a wide range of transportation choices.

GOAL #3: Make infrastructure maintenance investments a priority.

2

FUTURE LAND USE

2.0 FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Plan is a long-range tool intended to guide future zoning decisions and capital investment decisions. The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. Whereas zoning maps are parcel specific and establish detailed requirements for setbacks, height, use, parking and other characteristics, the land use categories on the Future Land Use Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities.

The Future Land Use Map uses color-coded categories to express public policy on future land uses across the City. The land use designations have been drawn based on parcel lines, existing and desired development patterns, streets, environmental features and other logical boundaries.

In some cases the recommended future land use is the same as the existing land use. However, in certain locations throughout the City, the Future Land Use Map contains areas where existing uses are proposed for a change in land use, or for redevelopment. In either case, it is not the intent of this plan to place existing uses in a situation where their value or the quality of life of residents is adversely affected. Rather, the intent is to demonstrate to potential purchasers or developers the City's long range view of how particular properties should be reconfigured and used should it become feasible to do so.

FUTURE LAND USE PRINCIPLES

GOAL #1: Promote the redevelopment and reuse of existing buildings and sites.

GOAL #2: Plan for infill development and new mixed-use developments.

GOAL #3: Revitalize Downtown Irondale.

GOAL #4: Encourage redevelopment in the US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard corridor.

GOAL #5: Focus development in existing and emerging centers and corridors (US 78, Downtown Irondale, I-459/Grants Mill Road and US 11 / Gadsden Highway)

GOAL #6: Accommodate and facilitate industrial development that positively contributes to Irondale's economy and character

GOAL #7: Provide transitions between single-family and other uses that protect neighborhood quality of life, character and safety.

GOAL #8: Protect and restore significant natural and

historic resources.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND CATEGORIES

Irondale's desired future land use patterns are shown on the Future Land Use Map, which is shown in Figure 3.1, and zoomed in maps of the city are shown in Figures 3.2 and 3.3. It indicates the intended distribution and intensity of land uses over the next 20 years, and should be used as a guide to define where different development land use types should be allowed to develop in the future.

The Future Land Use Categories on the following pages describe in detail the general character of each land use type, including typical ranges for residential densities and general access and site characteristics. Each future land use category ties directly to an appropriate existing or proposed zoning district. Again, the land use categories indicated on the map must not be interpreted as zoning districts. For comparison purposes the existing land use map can be found in Appendix A, Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.1: Future Land Use Map

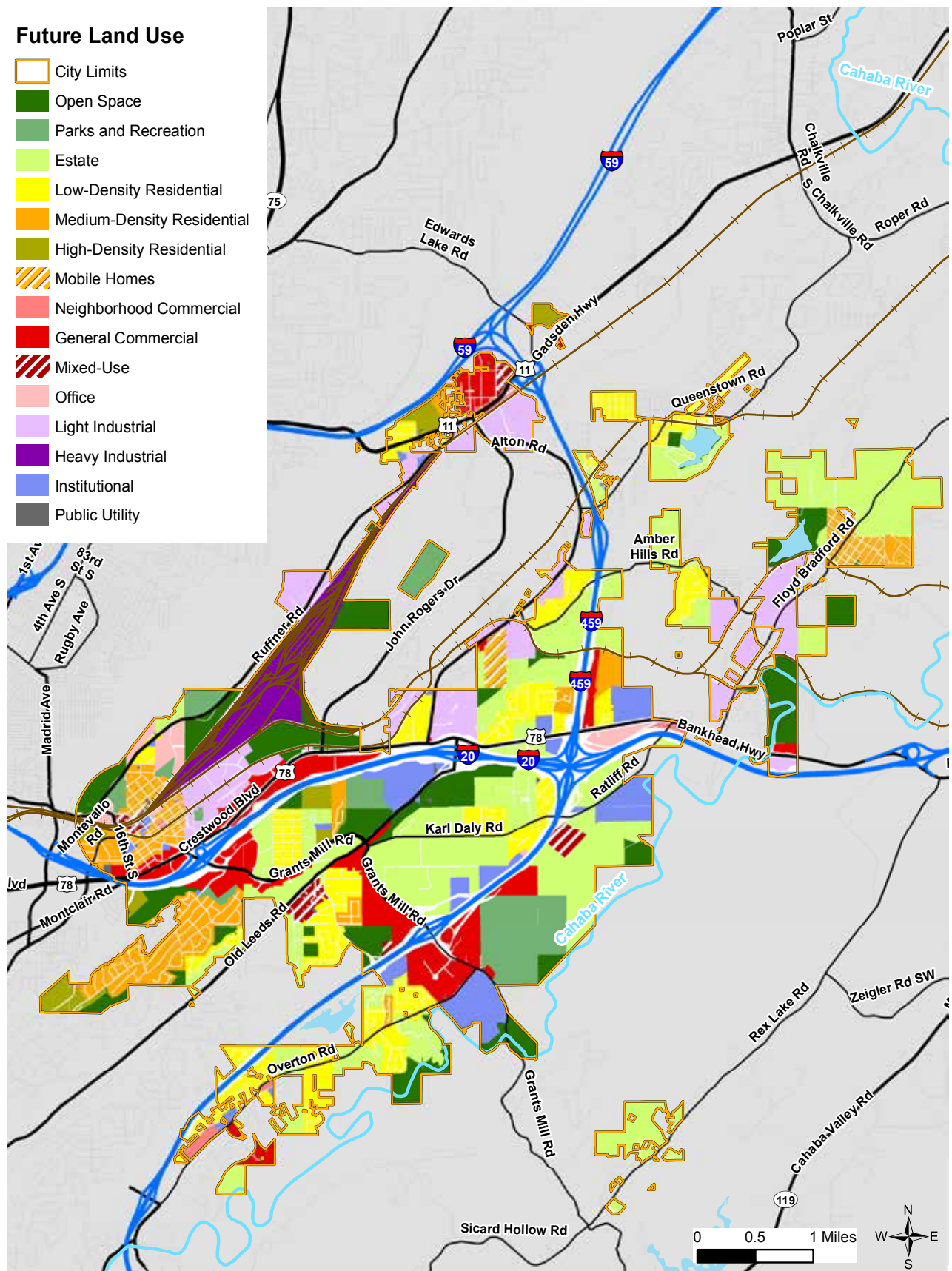


Figure 2.2: Future Land Use Map - Downtown Portion of the City

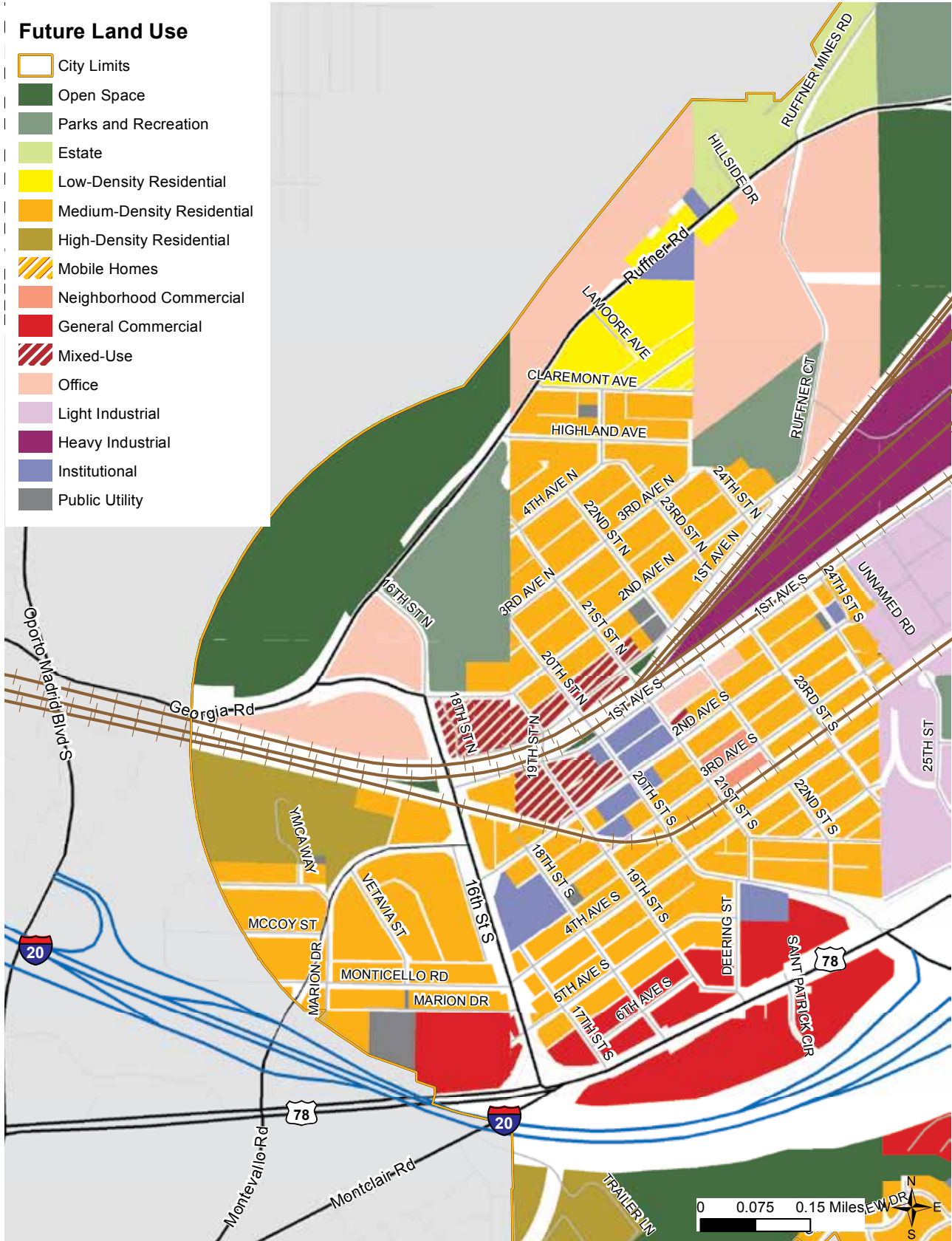
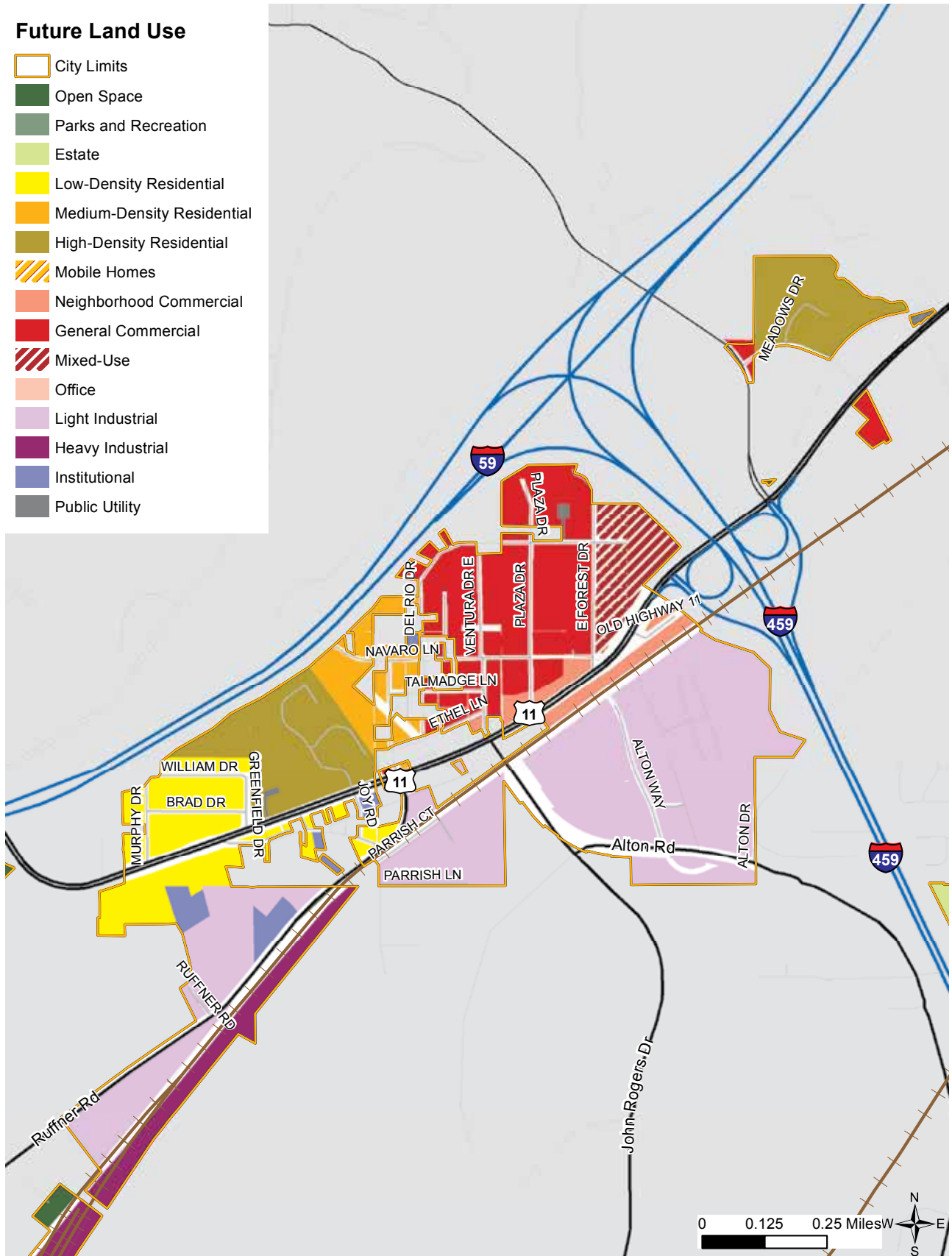


Figure 2.3: Future Land Use Map - Gadsden Highway Portion of the City



OPEN SPACE

Land Use Description

Land in the Open Space category is retained or maintained in a natural forested or grassland state. Open Space areas should be promoted for passive uses, tourism and passive recreation destinations. The vast amount of open space is intended to provide wildlife habitat and natural processes for stormwater management, flood management, erosion control, or air and water quality.



Table 2.1: Form and Pattern of Open Space Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Nature preserve, municipal reserve, wildlife management areas
Secondary Land Uses
Passive recreation, trails (natural surface)
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
Agriculture (A-1)
Building Heights
N/A
Open Space
High degree of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Undeveloped natural lands
- Environmentally sensitive areas that are not suitable for development, such as:
 - Lands with scenic views
 - Lands with steep slopes
 - Lands with floodplains
 - Wildlife management areas
 - Lands significant to conservation of the Cahaba River and Shades Creek
- Open space land should be retained or maintained in a natural forested or grassland state.
- Relatively minimal land subdivision and visible infrastructure.
- Passive recreation support facilities and trails with soft surface or location/design that has minimal impact on sensitive areas.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Land Use Description

The Parks and Recreation land use classification is defined as establishments that operate facilities, or provide services for a variety of cultural, entertainment, and recreational functions.

New Parks and Recreation areas will be created either by City land acquisition, dedication of land by a private owner (to the City or a public/non-profit agency), or direct development by the private sector. New neighborhood parks, or small scale pocket parks, should be designed with flexibility to accommodate impromptu uses and may include playgrounds for children and picnic areas. Such parks might be integrated into the design of Neighborhood Commercial centers. Some recreational areas are envisioned as linear greenways or trails.



Table 2.2: Form and Pattern of Parks and Recreation Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Multi-purpose trails, sports fields, playgrounds, golf courses, active and passive parks
Secondary Land Uses
Restrooms, parking lots, accessory structures, museums
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
Less than 0.10 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
High degree of active and passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- A primary environmental concern is the amount of impervious surfaces (buildings, pavement, etc.) near waterways, such as the Cahaba River.
- All park areas should include basic amenities such as pedestrian-scale lighting, walkways, seating, garbage receptacles, etc.
- Greenways should connect activity areas such as parks, canoe launches, neighborhoods, and schools.

ESTATE RESIDENTIAL

Land Use Description

Estate areas are intended to accommodate very low density development, including agricultural uses (forestry, farming, etc.), and unsewered, large lot residential development. Estate land uses are intended for locations along Karl Daly Drive and in the northeast and southern portions of the city limits. Many Estate homes will not require sewer services and will instead rely on septic tank systems. If the underlying zoning permits Agricultural uses, then the Estate lot may include a primary residence and any processing or outbuilding associated with activities on the working farm.



Table 2.3: Form and Pattern of Estate Residential Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Single-family detached homes
Secondary Land Uses
Agriculture
Residential Density
0 - 1 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
Estate (E-1), Agriculture (A-1)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
N/A
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Single family residences on individual large lots (clustering is encouraged).
- Each lot typically has access to the main arterial road or subdivision road.
- Low pedestrian orientation and access.
- High degree of separation between buildings.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land Use Description

Low Density Residential is characterized by an average density of 1.01 to 3 dwelling units per acre. Some grandfathered lots may be smaller. The large lots/yards are typically set in subdivisions with curvilinear cul-de-sac street networks, limited exterior connectivity and with few access points. Open space is on private lands. This type of residential development emphasizes privacy over convenience.

New Low Density Residential development should be accommodated by permitting rural clustering or conservation subdivision designs that incorporate significant amounts of open space. Compatible regional architecture styles, greater pedestrian orientation and access, clustered development, and open space should be encouraged. Low density uses can be buffered from nonresidential uses with medium and high density residential land uses.



Table 2.4: Form and Pattern of Low Density Residential Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Single-family detached homes
Secondary Land Uses
Accessory structures, schools, places of worship
Residential Density
1.01 - 3 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
Single Family District (R-1)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Active pocket parks, community gardens, regional parks
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Single family residences on individual large lots (clustering is encouraged).
- Each lot typically has access to the main arterial road or subdivision road.
- Low pedestrian orientation and access.
- High degree of separation between buildings.
- Integrate stormwater management facilities (where feasible) in landscaped environment.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land Use Description

The Medium Density Residential category is similar in character to the Low Density Residential category, but accommodates slightly higher densities on smaller lots. Medium Density Residential lots are characterized by an average density of 3.01 to 6 dwelling units per acre. Medium Density Residential properties will be found mainly to the western part of the city, with the highest concentration area around the historic downtown area and in the Holiday Gardens neighborhood.

New Medium Density Residential developments may be created when large lot residential uses are consolidated into new subdivisions. In the future, new development should be planned with a mix of uses, blending development with schools, parks, recreation, retail, and services linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking.



Table 2.5: Form and Pattern of Medium Density Residential Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Single-family detached homes
Secondary Land Uses
Manufactured and mobile homes, accessory structures, schools, places of worship, police, fire, and emergency medical stations
Residential Density
3.01 - 6 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
Single Family District (R-1, R-2)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Active pocket parks, community gardens, regional parks
Street Connectivity
Medium

General Characteristics:

- Open spaces and landscaping along the perimeter or edges of developments act as a buffer from commercial or higher intensity development, and to screen the uses from adjacent single-family residential uses.
- Individual lots are uniform in size (either rectangular or irregular in shape).
- Buildings typically are located in the center of lots with regular front and side yard setbacks.
- Streets have a narrow to moderate cross section. Sidewalks and paths are provided on at least one side of the street and paths may be provided through common open spaces.
- Integrate stormwater management facilities (where feasible) in landscaped environment.

HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land Use Description

The High Density Residential category is intended to create the opportunity for neighborhoods to offer a variety of lot sizes, housing unit types, and ownership options. The category could include garden homes, duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, apartment and senior living communities. Generally these High Density Residential areas are often found in proximity to commercial areas. High Density Residential neighborhoods should support cost effective housing, facilitate infill development, encourage multiple forms of transportation, such as walking and biking, and promote efficient use of existing infrastructure.

In order to ensure that High Density Residential areas are designed to a high standard in the future, the City should consider incorporating design guidelines into the appropriate sections of the City of Irondale Zoning Ordinance.



Table 2.6: Form and Pattern of High Density Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Garden homes, single-family attached homes (townhomes, duplexes), multi-family housing (condos, apartments, senior housing)
Secondary Land Uses
Supporting retail, schools, places of worship, other community facilities
Residential Density
More than 6 dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
R-3, R-4, RCD, R-5, R-6, R-7
Building Heights
1 - 4 stories
Open Space
Active pocket parks, community gardens, passive open space
Street Connectivity
Medium

General Characteristics:

- Buildings are oriented toward the street. Structured parking garages, when present, are located behind the main facade and are often detached.
- Open spaces and landscaping along the perimeter or edges of developments act as a buffer from commercial or higher intensity development, and to screen the uses from adjacent single-family residential uses.
- Streets often have narrower cross-sections and sidewalks creating a more pedestrian friendly environment.
- Integrate stormwater management facilities (where feasible) in landscaped environment.

MOBILE HOMES

Land Use Description

The Mobile Homes land use classification is intended for mobile home subdivisions and mobile home parks. A mobile home park has apartment house characteristics including rental of lots and provision of facilities and services to tenants by management. In mobile home subdivisions, the lots are not rented, but sold. The purchaser is not a tenant, but a land owner. Density is likely to be somewhat higher than for most single-family areas, but the use is clearly a single-family use.



Table 2.7: Form and Pattern of Mobile Home Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Pre-fabricated, permanent/semi-permanent single family structure
Secondary Land Uses
N/A
Residential Density
Maximum density of 10 mobile homes per site
Non-Residential Intensity
N/A
Related Zoning Districts
R-5A, R-5B
Building Heights
1 story
Open Space
N/A
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- There shall be roadways in each new mobile home park that reaches each mobile home lot.
- The mobile homes and functional areas on individual lots should complement and supplement those on adjacent lots. Open areas should flow into open areas, enhancing primary views.
- The mobile home subdivision should be set in its own frame, rather than merely running into surrounding uses. It is desirable that it be bordered in a manner which insulates it from surrounding uses and sets it apart as a community.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

Land Use Description

The Neighborhood Commercial land use category intends to provide spaces for small scale retail and service developments that serve the convenience needs of neighboring residents.

Irondale’s Future Land Use Plan calls for areas of neighborhood commercial to support the residential areas near downtown Irondale, to the north of Overton Road as well as Bankhead Highway.

It should be noted that development in close proximity to major intersections will become increasingly important in terms of tax revenue for the City as the local population continues to grow. Therefore, the City should protect optimal locations for Neighborhood Commercial development, as property at these locations should not be developed as just residential or commercial, when all of the characteristics of a prime retail location exist.



Table 2.8: Form and Pattern of Neighborhood Commercial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Commercial / service, general retail, office, small restaurants, pharmacies
Secondary Land Uses
Supporting retail, schools, places of worship, other community facilities
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Office District (B-1), Neighborhood Business District B-2), Planned Neighborhood Commercial (PCD-1), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Active pocket parks, community gardens, passive open space
Street Connectivity
Medium

General Characteristics:

- Neighborhood Commercial is characterized by a locally-oriented concentration of retail, office and service uses that are typically located at busy arterial intersections within neighborhoods or at their perimeter.
- Primarily intended to serve the daily needs of surrounding residential areas within a one-mile radius.
- This land use area may occupy the four corners of an intersection, or only one lot within a neighborhood.
- Neighborhood Commercial may be used as a transition between neighborhoods and more intense business districts.
- Integrate stormwater management facilities (where feasible) in landscaped environment.

GENERAL COMMERCIAL

Land Use Description

General Commercial areas are located throughout the city to serve the day-to-day commercial needs of surrounding neighborhoods, or to serve as regional commercial areas. The Future Land Use Plan designates an expansion in the current areas of General Commercial land use primarily located along Grants Mill Road and U.S. 78 / Crestwood Blvd.

In the future, existing commercial lands may need to be retro-fitted to be more aesthetically appealing and, therefore, more marketable to prospective tenants by redeveloping commercial structures to front the street. facades can be updated to reflect improvements with new architectural elements, and awnings. Shared access points and pedestrian amenities should be considered for accessibility between adjacent land uses.



Table 2.9: Form and Pattern of General Commercial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Commercial / service, general and large tenant retail, restaurants and food stores
Secondary Land Uses
Hotels, motels, movie theaters, professional offices, schools, places of worship, other community facilities
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.20 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Community Business District (B-3), General Business District (B-4), Central Business District (B-5), Planned Commercial District (PCD-2), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Small amount of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Located along a major thoroughfare.
- High degree of access to the site by vehicular traffic. Careful use of access management from the primary roadway is essential to maintain adequate traffic flow.
- Integrate stormwater management facilities (where feasible) in landscaped environment.
- Areas with potential runoff to the Cahaba River and Shades Creek should be sensitively developed with onsite stormwater management to reduce sediment pollution.

MIXED-USE

Land Use Description

The Mixed-use category is intended to provide an integrated mix of land uses either vertical (one use located above another) or horizontal (side-by-side), including a residential component. Typically mixed-use buildings feature ground-floor retail, service, and office uses, with opportunities for office and residential uses in upper floors. The term “live/work units” is applied to buildings with commercial occupancy on the ground floor and usually a single residential unit above.

The integration of a broad range of housing within downtown Irondale and new development areas will allow for greater housing choices, particularly for younger and older age groups. Mixed-use development is appropriate near or along arterials and collector streets.



Table 2.10: Form and Pattern of Mixed-use Residential Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Commercial, retail, condos, apartments, flats, offices, live/work units
Secondary Land Uses
Compatible civic / institutional, townhomes, offices
Residential Density
6+ dwelling units / acre
Non-Residential Intensity
0.25 - 1.00 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Commercial Preferred Business Zone (C-PB), Modify zoning code to create a mixed-use district
Building Heights
1 -2 stories, but 3- 5 stories might be appropriate in some locations
Open Space
Public and civic green spaces
Street Connectivity
High

General Characteristics:

- Contain public amenities such as a pedestrian plazas, sidewalks, and landscaping that help to create a walkable and cohesive development.
- The higher intensity mix of uses are intended to cater to an ‘urban’ lifestyle, providing a comfortable pedestrian environment of blocks based on a grid or intersecting perpendicular street pattern.
- Integrate stormwater management facilities (where feasible) in landscaped environment.
- Clustering of high density uses is encouraged to preserve open space, especially in Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).
- Areas with potential runoff to the Cahaba River and Shades Creek should be sensitively developed with onsite stormwater management to reduce sediment pollution.

OFFICE

Land Use Description

The Office land use designation is intended to provide areas for office uses as a transition from residential and commercial uses, and to provide area for large planned office developments. Permitted uses included business, professional, and financial offices as well as offices for individuals and non-profit organizations.



Table 2.11: Form and Pattern of Office Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Professional office, research and development, corporate centers, and technology centers
Secondary Land Uses
Commercial (primarily serving the business park), civic and institutional uses
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Office (O), Commercial Preferred Business Zone (C-PB_)
Building Heights
1 -3 stories
Open Space
Active sports fields and passive green spaces
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Office uses in park- or campus-like developments are usually located near but just off major roadways.
- Buildings tend to have large footprints.
- Integrate stormwater management facilities (where feasible) in landscaped environment.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

Land Use Description

The Light Industrial land use category is intended for lower intensity industrial uses that require a finished product consisting of small machine parts or electronic equipment, the manufacturing or assembling of small products within a business and elements of wholesale and storage of products in a manner and character that does not create significant negative impacts to the environment or surrounding area. The Future Land Use Plan shows areas of Light Industrial uses to remain largely to the west of I-20 and Grants Mill Road, as well as along the outskirts of Norris railyard.

Examples of desirable uses within the designated industrial areas include research and technology complexes. It is recommended that the City of Irondale concentrate on attracting businesses engaging in light industrial-type activities contained within a building (i.e. a minimal amount of open storage), such as high-tech services and software manufacturing. Such businesses tend to have many advantages, including employment and increased tax base.



Table 2.12: Form and Pattern of Light Industrial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Light industrial, wholesale, distribution warehouses, utility uses, manufacturing, processing, logistics operations
Secondary Land Uses
Professional offices, supporting commercial
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Light Industrial District (M-1), Planned Industrial District (PID), Office District (B-1), General Business District (B-4)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Small amount of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Medium

General Characteristics:

- Should be developed or, where possible, retrofitted as a part of a planned industrial park having adequate water, sewer, storm-water, and transportation and telecommunication infrastructure for all component uses at build-out.
- Typically located near major roads, highways, railways and other large industrial centers.
- These areas may include industrial parks, manufacturing centers, warehouse and distribution centers and assembly operations.
- They are often buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas that shield the view of structures, loading docks, or outdoor storage from nearby properties and roads.
- Way-finding signage and lighting guidelines are suggested to enhance the quality of the development.

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

Land Use Description

The Heavy Industrial classification is intended for sites that provide a full range of medium to heavy industrial uses and activities such as manufacturing, warehousing, industrial processing, resource and energy production and general service and distribution that can generate substantial impacts on the surrounding area. Noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characters are not contained on site.

The predominant Heavy Industrial area in Irondale should continue to consist of the Norris Railway and Railyard. In the long-range planning period, areas surrounding the Norris Railyard may necessitate environmental remediation if another land use is to be established. The City will need to examine the necessity of probable remediation measures as potential land use changes are initially proposed to ensure proper preparation for re-use in the long-range planning period. Having heavy industrial land usage in this one area will help contain any potential of brownfield intoxication in a single location.



Table 2.13: Form and Pattern of Heavy Industrial Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Manufacturing, fabrication, distribution and warehouses, plants, quarries
Secondary Land Uses
Supporting commercial
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.30 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Heavy Industrial District (M-2), Planned Industrial District (PID), General Business District (B-4)
Building Heights
1 - 2 stories
Open Space
Small amount of passive open space
Street Connectivity
Low

General Characteristics:

- Protect land designated for industrial development from incompatible uses using buffers and setbacks and facilitate their future development by planning and constructing necessary infrastructure, adopting appropriate economic incentives, and assisting where necessary in marking available land.
- The high volume of truck traffic contributes to congestion, as well as noise issues in some residential areas. The city should investigate designated truck routes through the city to lessen these impacts.



INSTITUTIONAL

Land Use Description

The Institutional land use classification includes both public and privately owned or operated civic uses. Current Institutional land uses in Irondale include churches, such as Church of the Highlands, the Zamora Shrine Temple, cemeteries, and public and private schools.

The intensity of new Institutional development should be determined based on use and location.

Table 2.14: Form and Pattern of Institutional Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Schools, civic and government offices, places of worship, hospitals, non-profit facilities
Secondary Land Uses
Cemeteries, utilities, educational facilities, educational campuses
Residential Density
N/A
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.60 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Planned Office and Institution District (POD), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 -3 stories
Open Space
Active sports fields and passive green spaces
Street Connectivity
Low



General Characteristics:

- With future expansions, partnerships are encouraged among the City’s many large institutions to coordinate future growth and development of these institutions with surrounding land uses and neighborhoods.
- Integrate stormwater management facilities (where feasible) in landscaped environment.



PUBLIC UTILITY

Land Use Description

The Public Utility land use classification refers to land that is used for the following purposes: public utilities such as power substations, gas peak shaving stations, water and wastewater facilities, pumping and lift stations, radio and television stations, towers or communication sites.



Table 2.15: Form and Pattern of Public Utility Land Uses

Primary Land Uses
Sewage pumping or lift stations, power substations, gas peak shaving stations, and water pumping stations
Secondary Land Uses
Radio and television stations and towers, communication sites
Related Zoning Districts
U-1
Non-Residential Intensity
0.10 - 0.60 Floor Area Ratio
Related Zoning Districts
Planned Office and Institution District (POD), Institutional (I)
Building Heights
1 -3 stories

Amending the Future Land Use Map

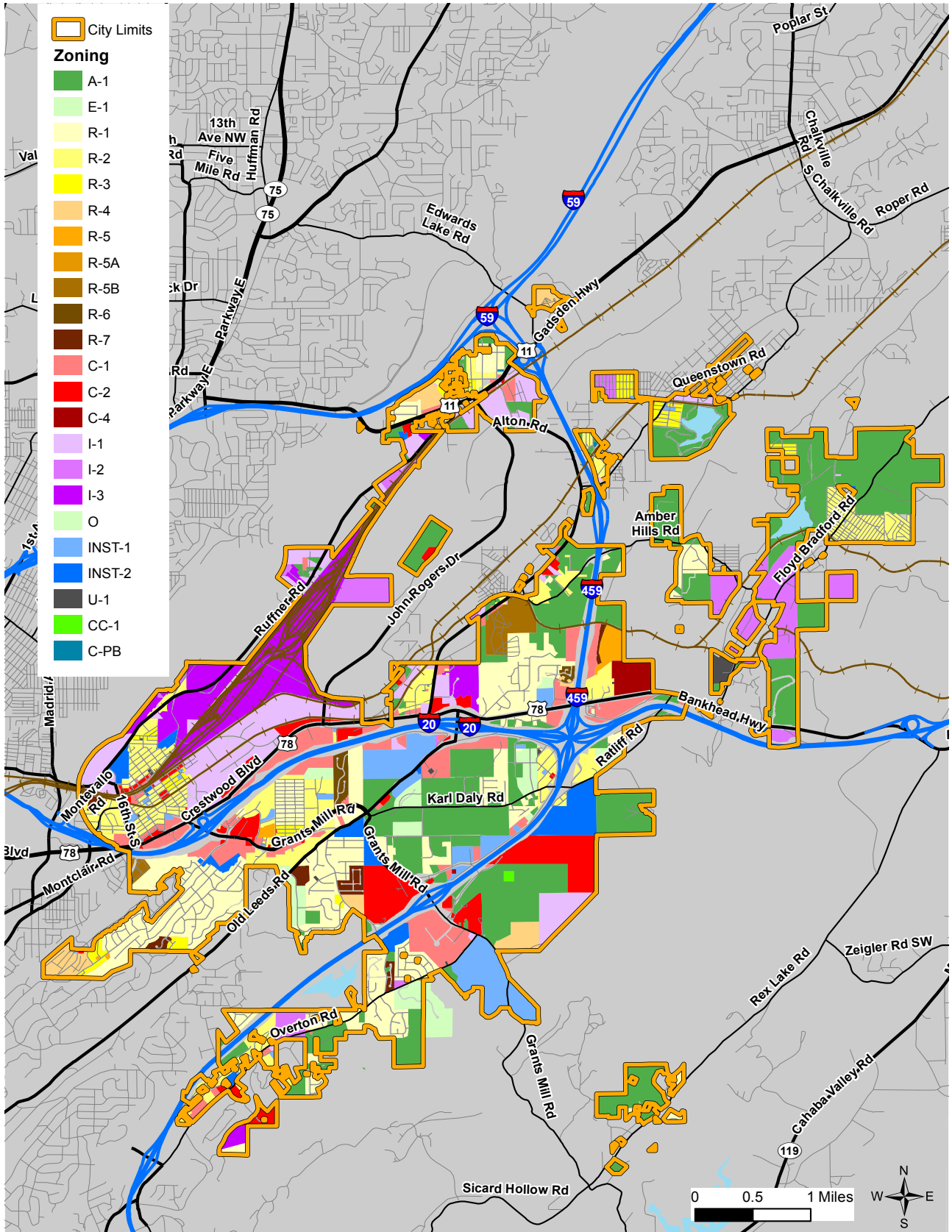
The Future Land Use map is intended to promote a logical pattern of development in the community suited to the city's natural landscape and infrastructure capacity, foster sustained economic growth consistent with the community's vision and goals, and minimize conflicts between residential, commercial and other land uses. It should not, however, be considered a static plan. From time to time it will be necessary to consider changes of varying magnitude to the Future Land Use Map. These decision points may come about in response to public investments in roads and other infrastructure, some of which may vary in scale, location or alignment from that which is forecasted in the Comprehensive Plan. In some cases it will necessary to consider amending the map in response to individual development requests that, though they do not conform perfectly to the land use designations assigned in the Future Land Use map, are otherwise consistent with the goals and policies of the city, including those within the Comprehensive Plan.

The City can institute a formal process to address these changes on a case-by-case basis, particularly when requests to change the zoning classification of properties are to be considered that do not conform perfectly to the Future Land Use Map. In this process a "change in land use designation" may be requested prior to or simultaneously with a rezoning request. At such time the Irondale Planning and Zoning Commission would review the proposed change and hold a public hearing on the matter. The Commission should evaluate each request according to an established set of criteria, such as the following, to assure that the amendment is appropriate:

- Is the proposed change in land use considered a better land use than that recommended by the Future Land Use Plan?
- Will the proposed land use be similar in nature in terms of appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects of compatibility to adjacent uses?
- Will the proposed change in land use materially affect the adequacy or availability of community facilities and services to the immediate area or to the city overall?
- Will the proposed change in land use negatively affect the city's plans for capital improvements in the area?
- Will the proposed change in land use present a significant benefit to the public health, safety and welfare of the community?
- Will the proposed change in land use contribute to the City's long-term economic well-being?
- Will the proposed change in land use meet the purposes and goals of the Comprehensive Plan?

In this process it would be the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence showing that the request meets the city's established criteria for amending the Future Land Use Map. Adjacent property owners should be notified of the request and hearing. This notice may be provided together with the notice for the zoning hearing, when applicable.

Figure 2.4: Zoning Map



Relationship of the Future Land Use Map to the Zoning Map

Consistency with the Future Land Use Map is not the only criterion that will be used to determine the reasonableness of a zoning map amendment. Other criterion include, but are not limited to, compatibility with the existing character of the surrounding area and impact on public services, infrastructure, traffic, fire, safety, parks and recreation, environmental and historic resources.

The following parameters apply to the use and interpretation of the Future Land Use Map: The Future Land Use Map is a generalized depiction of intended uses. It is not an “existing land use map,” although in many cases future uses in an area may be the same as those that exist today.

- The rezoning of any given area should be guided by the Future Land Use Map, interpreted in conjunction with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. However, the Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map.
- While the Future Land Use Map will influence future zoning, it does not alter current zoning or affect the right of property owners to use the land for its purpose as zoned at the time of this Plan’s adoption. The Future Land Use Map will not be referenced as part of the site plan review.
- Whereas zoning maps establish detailed requirements for setbacks, height, use, parking, and other attributes, the land use categories of the Future Land Use Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities.

When the Future Land Use Map conflicts with the Current Zoning Map...

While the Future Land Use Plan map was partially based on existing land use and the City’s adopted zoning map, some areas within the City of Irondale conflict in terms of the way in which they are recommended to develop based on the Future Land Use Plan map and the way in which they are currently zoned. In certain areas, such inconsistency can be in the City’s favor. For example, you have an area that is shown on the zoning map as zoned as Agriculture (A-1), yet the Future Land Use Plan shows the same area as recommended for a nonresidential use. Then when a particular proposal is before the City’s Planning and Zoning Commission that is deemed a suitable non-residential land use for the location, the commission can elect to rezone the property to allow for the nonresidential use.

PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

Through this planning process, two priority redevelopment areas within the City of Irondale were identified by stakeholders and the public. These include Downtown Irondale and the US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard Corridor (see study area boundaries in Figure 2.4). Detailed recommendations for the two areas are included in Appendix D.

Downtown Irondale has faced vacancy rates and a poor mix of retail tenants. The way a downtown looks and functions does matter to economic development. These days, an attractive, viable downtown is necessary to garner more visitor and resident dollars and send the message to potential businesses, industries, investors and residents who may locate in Irondale that the city values its downtown as the commercial, social and cultural center of the city. Hence, there is a need to make Downtown Irondale more attractive and to transition it from a daytime place of some activity into a 24/7 live, work, play environment.

The US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard Corridor has continued to suffer under economic competition. Irondale is surrounded by nearby municipalities that have more modernized retail shopping venues that are easily accessible via a fairly efficient transportation infrastructure. A significant portion of Irondale residents' retail shopping is occurring outside of Irondale. The losses of big-box retailers have been damaging to the city's retail infrastructure. Even if residents prefer to shop for some common

categories of goods in the Irondale community, no retailers are located within the community to meet those residents' needs. Further, Irondale shoppers are spending a significant portion of their incomes making retail purchases in surrounding municipalities and making substantial contributions through sales taxes to Jefferson County and those communities rather than to the City of Irondale.

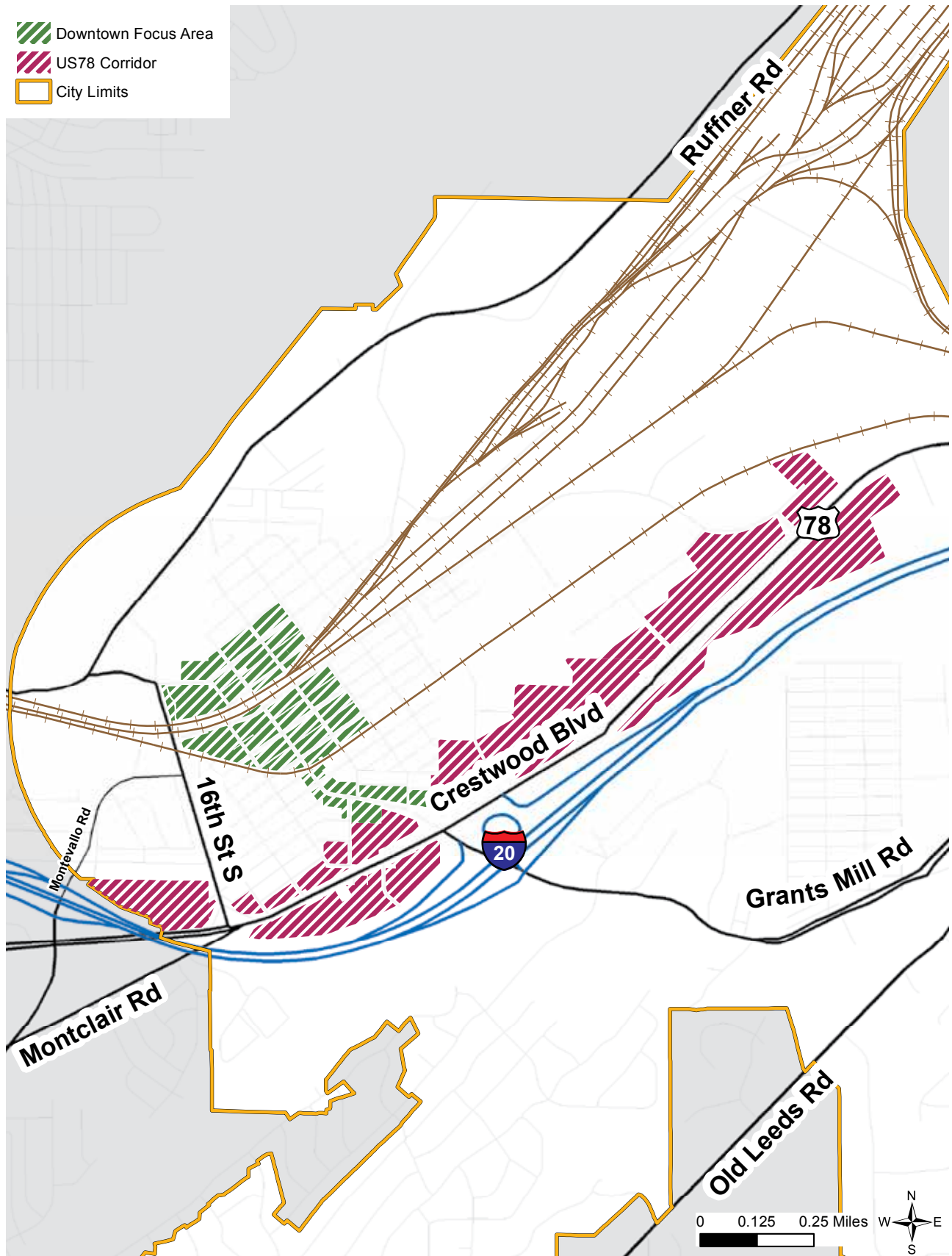
Due to their large size, any redevelopment efforts will require collaboration between the City and the private sector. It may require the City of Irondale to proactively intervene to assist potential developers to make the necessary investment for redevelopment in properties in Downtown Irondale and along the US 78/Crestwood Boulevard Corridor. The City of Irondale will need to use public policies, like tax abatements, grants, and other special incentives to promote redevelopment.

The Irondale on the Move development process created some redevelopment strategies and recommendations for both Downtown Irondale and the US 78/ Crestwood Boulevard Corridor, which took into consideration their existing land uses, demographic profile, market profile, existing traffic patterns and their need for urban design.

The recommendations presented in Appendix D are not final, or exact, and will evolve overtime when provided with the right tools and incentives as catalysts. The objective is to promote positive economic growth by recommending strategies for the areas to generate more economic vitality than their current condition, and to transform them into vibrant commercial areas.



Figure 2.5: Priority Redevelopment Areas for Design Recommendations



3

COMMUNITY RENEWAL

3.0 COMMUNITY RENEWAL

Irondale is a city of neighborhoods, but the neighborhood conditions vary widely throughout the City. Past development practices and foreclosures have had a negative impact on vulnerable and transitioning neighborhoods that were previously stable. These areas have experienced increases in vacant and abandoned housing and lower homeownership rates.

This chapter aims at strategies to provide cleaner, safer and more attractive neighborhoods in Irondale – neighborhoods that are vibrant and diverse and where residents work together on common interests and concerns.

Based on existing conditions and trends, the following are the key issues involving community renewal in Irondale:

- Updated signage is needed – many signs are fading and leaning
- Lack of attractive gateways into the city
- Need better code enforcement
- Abandoned and blighted lots need to be addressed
- Streets need resurfacing and pot holes repaired
- Crime is a concern

GATEWAYS & SIGNAGE

Irondale currently lacks a significant gateway and wayfinding system. Gateways are important elements for a successful City and its downtown. They act as signage seen from main thoroughfares such as interstates and highways, they begin to orient visitors to a downtown’s wayfinding system, and they present a unified branding and marketing effort.

The design and location of gateway and wayfinding elements could reflect the unique aspects of Irondale and concisely inform and guide motorists and pedestrians to the numerous attractions throughout the community.

GOAL #1
Enhance the physical character and definition of the City.



ACTION 1

Develop a city-wide signage replacement program.

Both residents and the City of Irondale have identified the need to replace faded and/or missing wayfinding signage that is City owned. To address this issue, the City of Irondale should work with the Public Works Department to create a signage and wayfinding replacement plan. In addition to the plan, the City should create a signage and wayfinding replacement form to enable residents to report signs that need improvement.



ACTION 2

Clearly define key gateways into Irondale through urban design and beautification enhancements.

Gateways act as signage to be seen from main thoroughfares, such as interstates and highways. They help to delineate and announce

one's arrival into a city, region, neighborhood, or unique place.



ACTION 3

Develop a city-wide wayfinding signage system to direct, orient, and inform visitors and residents as they navigate through the city.

Wayfinding systems encompass all the ways in which people orient themselves in the built environment and navigate from place to place. The City of Irondale should invest in a wayfinding system that orients residents and visitors to key sites in the City.



(Source: VIA Wayfinding Systems)

GATEWAYS & WAYFINDING

GATEWAY CONSIDERATIONS:

Gateways act as signage to be seen from main thoroughfares, such as interstates and highways. They help to delineate and announce one's arrival into a city, region, neighborhood, or unique place. Community gateways can help to shape one's first impression of Irondale, and strengthen the unique features that Irondale residents value. Gateways are simply a way to distinguish one area of the City from another.

Gateway signage can vary in scale and use, and can take the form of a signature building, welcome sign, public art, and streetscape enhancements. Gateways also help to orient visitors to a downtown's wayfinding system, and help to present a unified branding strategy.

While the use of welcome signs are the most common way to identify a community gateway, other forms of communication include: landscaped treatments at key intersections or within medians. Landscaping can also be used to screen unwanted areas, or to enhance and frame views.

WAYFINDING CONSIDERATIONS:

Wayfinding includes all of the ways in which people orient themselves and navigate through space. Creating a "user friendly" and easily accessible wayfinding system for residents and visitors is a universally accepted practice.

Wayfinding and signage best practices:

- Provide a minimum amount of information on a sign.
- Any mapping included on the sign should be a simplified version of the City's map.
- Present information logically.
- Use fonts and graphic elements that are easy to read. Bold colors and simple text are encouraged.
- Place so that the view of the sign is not obstructed by other elements.
- Be sure that no matter where signs are mounted, they have font sizes and information that are appropriate for the height.
- The system should be cohesive.
- The wayfinding system should be created by a designer well experienced in wayfinding systems.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Overgrown and vacant lots, littered properties, abandoned properties, and dilapidated structures present serious issues for residents, community stakeholders, business owners, investors, and the City. Unsound and dilapidated structures pose health and safety hazards for citizens. Abandoned structures in deteriorated and dilapidated conditions can attract criminal activity – such as prostitution, illegal drug usage, and arson – and are unsafe for children, residents, and citizens in its immediate surroundings.

Furthermore, unmaintained and blighted properties impose a burden on city services needed for additional maintenance, policing, and fire extinguishment. Consequently, the diminishment in property values for unmaintained and blighted properties and their surroundings deprive essential city tax revenues and discourage investments for improvement. In order to beautify Irondale neighborhoods, increase property values and improve safety, the prevalence of unmaintained and blighted properties needs to be reduced.



Dilapidated house in Irondale.

GOAL #2

Ensure better code enforcement.



ACTION 1

Develop a city-wide publicly accessible database with the property condition and code enforcement statuses of each property.

The database should include property conditions, code enforcement status, tax delinquency status, foreclosures and lending patterns. The creation of a property conditions link on the City of Irondale website should be considered to improve accessibility.

A comprehensive database would provide numerous uses and benefits to residents, community organizations, investors, and stakeholders in the City of Irondale.

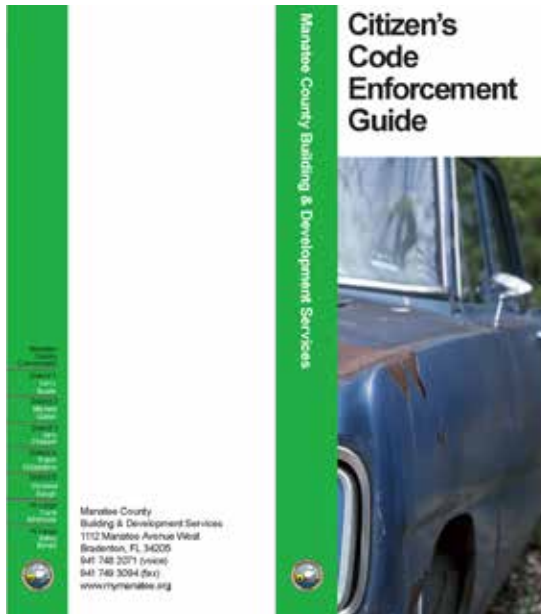


ACTION 2

Create a citizen’s guide for code enforcement that enables citizens to report code violations and blighted properties.

The code enforcement guide would help increase the City’s capacity to identify and track blighted properties by streamlining the public reporting process. One model to look at is the “Citizen’s Code Enforcement Guide” from Manatee County, Florida.

The code enforcement guide should be made available online through the city website and in hardcopy at the Irondale Public Library. Material that educates the public about what constitutes a violation of the City’s codes as well as options for resolving those violations should be included in the guide.



*Citizen's Code Enforcement Guide in Manatee County, FL
(Source: Manatee County)*



ACTION 3

Create a vacant property registration ordinance.

The ordinance would require landowners to register their vacant properties, which would augment the City's property condition database and code enforcement efforts. It would also help with identifying absentee landlords. Typically, properties that fall under these ordinances are not habitable—properties with working systems and actively being marketed for sale or rent would not be required to register. Owners are required to register and pay a fee, renewing the registration on a regular schedule. In some cities, the fees get higher every subsequent year, as an incentive for property owners to redevelop or sell their properties.

Owners are required to keep the buildings and lots secured and in good order, and in some cases, post a sign with the name and contact information of the owner and manager of the property. Failure to do so results in significant fines. In cases where an owner cannot be found, the city would place a lien on the property. Funds from the registration fees and

fines would pay for an inspection system.



ACTION 4

Dedicate more staff to code enforcement. Consider creating an additional department to handle both code enforcement and building inspection.

Additional staff would provide the City with the necessary capacity to handle code enforcement and would aid in reducing the number of deteriorated properties.

NEIGHBORHOOD CLEANUP

Neighborhood revitalization is the idea of enhancing neighborhood resources, economic development, public services, and the quality of life for residents. But neighborhood revitalization and neighborhood stabilization must begin with neighborhood cleanup. Residents in healthy neighborhoods maintain and invest in their homes and take care of their yards. Litter is picked up and controlled. Open space is used by residents and visitors, is well-landscaped and maintained, and is perceived to be a safe and welcome place.

GOAL #3

Coordinate neighborhood improvement efforts.



ACTION 1

Establish an Irondale Beautification Coalition to spearhead and conduct quality "Keep Irondale Beautiful" cleanup efforts and to identify a list of catalytic sites for cleanup.

The Irondale Beautification Coalition (IBC)

should serve as an instrument of change in the community by providing assistance to residents with unmaintained and blighted properties. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that the IBC partner with local faith-based organizations, Habitat for Humanity and other non-profits to organize volunteer efforts. With the help of its partners, the IBC could:

- ✘ Create a community equipment rental/checkout system where residents can borrow various equipment, such as lawn mowers, power tools, paint brushes, etc.
- ✘ Hold a “tool-drive” where second-hand tools are donated to help build the community’s equipment inventory.
- ✘ Establish an elderly and disabled assistance program where residents can register to receive help with maintaining their property.
- ✘ Make improvements to public spaces through monthly or bi-monthly cleanup initiatives.
- ✘ Paint exterior worn-out building facades.
- ✘ Repair broken non-structural building components such as windows, doors, gates, signs, and lighting.
- ✘ Replace damaged structural building components such as roofs, columns, and beams.
- ✘ Clear debris, mow lawns, and trim vegetation.
- ✘ Post signage and install boards on broken windows and doors of abandoned properties to prevent illegal activity and arson.



ACTION 2

Create a sidewalk inventory to help determine gaps in connectivity and areas in need of rehabilitation.

The City of Irondale should create a sidewalk inventory to identify gaps in the existing sidewalk network, to record sidewalk

conditions, and to identify priority locations for new sidewalks.



ACTION 3

Create an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan as it relates to curb ramps and sidewalk accessibility.

An ADA Transition Plan should include the following: Identification of inaccessible curb ramps and sidewalks in the complete sidewalk infrastructure; the development of a planning schedule and a budget to provide needed accessibility; the scheduled completion of the work required to provide accessibility.



ACTION 4

Acquire vacant lots for productive uses to meet the needs of the community (see Property Acquisition Strategies on pages 48-49).

Land could be assembled for private redevelopment, public facilities, trails, parks, brownfield clean up, and stormwater retrofits.



Downtown neighborhood sidewalk in disrepair.

SAFETY & SECURITY

The perception of safety is important to current and future residents, businesses and visitors to the city. The portfolio of public safety services provided by the City of Irondale includes:

- Crime deterrence, response and investigation;
- Fire prevention, suppression, investigation,
- Rescue and medical transport; and
- Emergency management, disaster planning and emergency response training.

GOAL #4

Encourage community outreach efforts between citizens of Irondale and the Irondale police department.



ACTION 1

Create a standardized Traffic Complaint Form (for speeding and traffic violations).

The traffic complaint form is intended to allow Irondale residents to report directly to the Irondale Police Department the traffic problems that are occurring either in their neighborhood or in a particular part of the City. Examples of complaints include speeding vehicles, running stop signs, making illegal turns, failing to yield at crosswalks, or other violations.



ACTION 2

Create an Irondale Citizens Police Academy.

The creation of a Citizens Police Academy would provide citizens with a firsthand look at what rules, regulations, and policies the

police follow in their city. Additionally, it allows officers and citizens to meet each other face to face in a neutral, friendly setting, and each are able to know one another better.



ACTION 3

Create a park ranger division in the City's police force to provide additional surveillance in parks during periods of low activity.

Many cities have a park ranger division as a part of the police department, or department of Parks and Recreation. In addition to policing, the park ranger division could also be trained in first aid, search and rescue, and other aspects of public assistance.

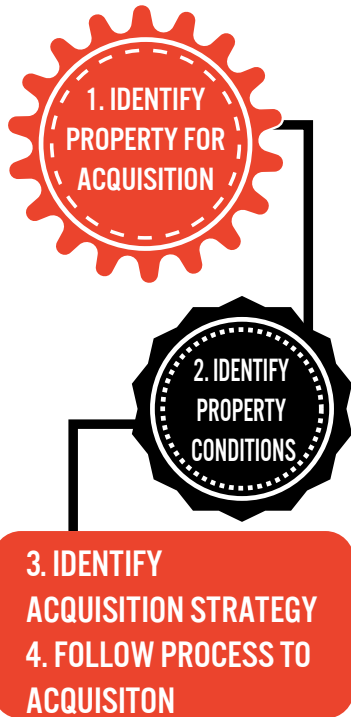


Park Ranger Program (Source: portlandoregon.gov)



Irondale Police Vehicle

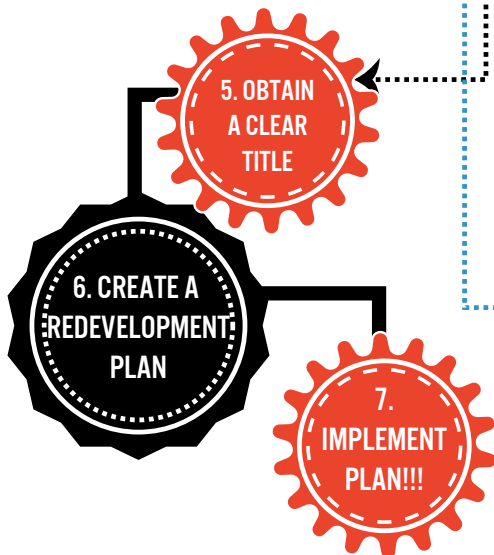
Property Acquisition Strategies



IDENTIFY PROPERTY CONDITION (RIGHT)

Abandoned a building that is deserted or not inhabited
Dilapidated a building that is in a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect
Underutilized a structure or parcel of land that is utilize less than or below its potential use in regards to its location and marketability
Vacant a parcel that is absent of any physical structure
Brownfield abandoned or underused industrial and commerical site available for re-use
Tax Delinquent a property a county probater court deems available at a tax sale
Grayfield a once viable retail or commercial shopping site that is economically obsolescent, failing, or morbid

- what are the options?*
- 1 Direct Purchase / Donation
 - 2 Purchase Tax Deed
 - 3 Acquire through Land Bank
 - 4 Eminent Domain
 - 5 Foreclose on Liens



	2. IDENTIFY PROPERTY CONDITIONS	3. IDENTIFY ACQUISITION STRATEGIES (IF OWNER DOESN'T COMPLY)				
		Purchase/Donate	Purchase Tax Liens	Acquire through Land Bank	Eminent Domain	Foreclose on Liens
1. IDENTIFY PROPERTY	Vacant	X			X	X
	Underdeveloped	X			X	X
	Tax Delinquent & Vacant	X	X	X		
	Underdeveloped & Tax Delinquent	X	X	X		
	Abandoned	X			X	X
	Underdeveloped with Dilapidated Structure	X			X	X
	Abandoned & Tax Delinquent	X	X	X		
	Underdeveloped & Tax Delinquent with Dilapidated Structure	X	X	X		

1 Direct purchase or donation

[Use this method if the property that has an identifiable owner with a Clear Title].

- Inspect property
- Follow with a letter to owner with an offer to purchase or accept donation of property
- Quiet Title is obtained

2 Purchase Tax Deed

[Use this method if the property is Tax Delinquent].

- A tax sale is completed by the Alabama Revenue Department, and the property is “sold to state”.
- Once (3) years pass, and still no private investor has purchased the tax lien, the Revenue Department can transfer the tax lien to a municipality or a non-profit; so the municipality can “purchase” the tax lien. (40-10-132).
- A judicial tax foreclosure of the tax payer’s redemption rights is done through circuit court.
- In an additional (3) years, the municipality is in possession of the property (40-10-82).
- After (3) years of actual possession, the municipality can bring a Quiet Title Action in circuit court.

3 Acquire through Land Bank

[Use this method if the property has been Tax Delinquent for at least 5 years].

- “Last Deed of Record” research is completed to categorize properties into ease of Quiet Title.
[If owner is found that has “Fee Simple Absolute” interest in the property without encumbrances, Land Bank should offer to purchase or receive donation to avoid litigation.]
- A “Certificate of Purchase” is prepared for all properties by way of the Revenue Department for Tax Delinquent Properties.
- Addresses of all interested stakeholders and parcel IDs are handed over to the circuit court. One or more petitions for Quiet Title and/or condemnation are filed with the Clerk of Probate Court and the court date is set. Notice and due process follows (24-9-8).
- Volunteer attorneys are utilized to represent interest holders, including the municipality, and court action takes place.
- Circuit court renders judgement, and deeds are prepared for the properties for the benefit of the municipality.
- The Land Bank can now sell the property, because it has a Clear Title, to redevelopers in a target area to be rebuilt/renovated; or sold to non-profits seeking properties outside the target area for renovation and reconstruction.

4 Eminent Domain

[Use this method if the property is intended for a public/ civic project, or if the property is a “health, safety, and general welfare risk”].

- Order title research for identified properties.
- Appraise identified properties.
- File complaint to acquire properties through Eminent Domain.
- Circuit court processes and orders condemnation.
- A Clear Title is given to the city to sell for redevelopment.

5 Foreclose on Liens

[Use this method if the property holds demolition and/or neglect liens].

- The City’s housing inspector, or appropriate housing official, cites that the property is not in compliance with Property Maintenance Code, or Vacant/Abandoned Building Registration code. Inspector writes formal complaint and posts a “Danger Do Not Enter” notice at each entrance of the building.
- The property is then deemed a public nuisance.
- The City has the power to place a “demolition by neglect” lien on property after property assessments have been done.
- Property ownership is researched through a title company, obtaining names for the interested parties.
- Notice is sent out by formal mail, informing owner of liens.
- Lien foreclosed upon.
- The City can bring a Clear Title Action in circuit court to gain clear title of the properties.

4

LIVABILITY

4.0 LIVABILITY

Livability is the sum of the factors that add up to a community’s quality of life—including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities. Livability promotes a cohesive, connected community where people know their neighbors, support local businesses and embrace pride in their community. Arts and culture help to reveal and enhance the identity of a community—the unique meaning, value and character of the physical and social forms. Space for arts and cultural engagement is an important part of every community.

KEY ISSUES

Based on existing conditions and trends, the following are the key issues involving livability in Irondale:

- Lack of a grocery store and a farmers market
- Need to provide more dining, restaurant and entertainment options (i.e. more sit down restaurants)
- Lack of pop-up events, food truck festivals, and community gardening
- Need to revitalize the downtown area with restaurants, bars / nightlife

ACCESS TO FRESH, HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

In the Irondale on the Move Visioning Survey, residents ranked a “grocery store” as the type of business they would like to see more of in Irondale. This was followed by “full service/sit down restaurants” and “health food stores.” Efforts must be made to expand fresh food choices to ensure that residents have easily access to quality healthy food options. Limited access to affordable food choices can lead to higher levels of food insecurity, increasing the number of low- and moderate-income families without access to enough food to sustain a healthy, active life.

GOAL #1

Ensure that all citizens have access to healthy foods.



ACTION 1

Incentivize, recruit and attract a grocery store development into the City of Irondale.



ACTION 2

Incentivize, recruit, and attract more sit-down restaurants (non fast food) throughout the city of Irondale.



ACTION 3

Create a downtown Farmers Market, and if successful, consider additional smaller farmers markets throughout the City.



ACTION 4

Create community gardens on vacant and other underutilized properties.

Community gardens could be used for growing vegetables, fruit trees, flowers, or any combination. Community gardens range in size, with some being as large as several blocks or as small as just a few raised beds. The land or space used for community gardens is often a shared space where neighbors grow and harvest food crops for personal or group

consumption.

The City should work with neighborhood organizations in Irondale to establish the community gardens. Ownership and maintenance should be shared among the local organizations that choose to participate. The gardens could be staffed by volunteers and residents.

SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS

In order for Irondale's local schools to continue to become an integral part of the City's livability, often serving as neighborhood anchors and avenues for civic involvement, they need to enjoy widespread support from all sectors of the city.

GOAL #2

Enhance collaboration between the residential / business community and local schools in Irondale.



ACTION 1

Identify ways to fill funding gaps in local schools.

Explore the possibility of expanding the impact of the Irondale Education Foundation. Intentionally connect through a set of relationships, take advantage of opportunities to act together, and exchange value between individuals and groups.



ACTION 2

Develop a School-to-Work program between local business leaders and school leaders.



ACTION 3

Promote and emphasize the Shades Valley Technical Academies.

Did you know that the Cahaba River Society offers to help strengthen offerings of the Pre-Engineering Technical Academy through a partnership with the CLEAN hands-on river education program? Environmental engineering is a growing field, and the Cahaba River is a valuable and unique outdoor classroom for exploring the importance of local water resources and current best practices for managing them towards sustainability.



ACTION 4

Increase communications about local school events (i.e. sports events, musicals, plays ect), volunteer needs, and school needs to the community.

Consider publishing a monthly newsletter of all school activities, volunteer activities and school needs.

HOW TO: BUILD A COMMUNITY GARDEN

FIND A LOCATION

Using a database of vacant/open areas that are not owned by individuals, locate an appropriate lot to develop a community garden. Use an area that receives adequate sunlight, and will do well in soil; also an area that the community will not have difficulty finding.



(Source: Highpoint Community Garden, Seattle, WA)

GAUGE/PROMOTE INTEREST

If the community garden is decided as a means of community development, gauge the interest of the garden with the community members including residents and businesses. Tell them the reason/purpose behind the garden and explain the benefits of having a community garden.



(Source: plantedcity.tumblr.com)

In many cases, the community garden is primarily used for easier food access and aesthetic appeal. However, many other benefits stem from this such as a higher sense of unity in neighborhoods, reduction of crime, and more interest in community investment. Due to easier food access, community gardens help combat health issues such as obesity, heart related illness, and diabetes.

DEVELOP A TEAM

Assemble an interdisciplinary team of people who can develop goals, timelines, and schedules of events. This team will be primarily responsible for garden operations (if needed) and maintenance. The team will also be responsible for acquiring funding for the garden (see more below). The team can be innovative in their practice and development by including residents, neighborhood associations, local schools, and local and corporate businesses. The team will also decide how to organize the garden (size, type of produce, etc) as well as budgeting.

FUNDING

There are a lot of grants available for greening and sustainability projects, especially those that promote healthy living and community building. Corporations such as Lowe's, Walmart, and Home Depot are a great place to start; some require that applicant possess a nonprofit tax status. GoFundMe.com is also a great way to spread the word and receive donations through a website.

BUILDING THE GARDEN

Start with raised beds that are about 4'x6'. This is a good size for people to reach across and walk around while also providing enough room to grow fruit and vegetables. Keep in mind how vegetable plants spread so that one plant is not smothering another. Decide how many beds are desired.

The type of wood is up to the team judgment. Choose wood that is sturdy and thick. Once bed is built, attach stakes to sides of beds (4 per bed; 1 for each side). The point of stakes should be about 6 inches below the base of plant bed. This should be hammered into the ground to secure unit to ground. Once in ground, dig soil about 6 inches away from raised bed border and 1 foot deep. Clean dirt out and fill hole with Vegetable/ Fruit Soil that contains nutrients. Plant seeds or plants as decided. Place netting/fencing around bed. Consider including a rain garden or bioswale to reduce stormwater runoff where space allows.

FINISH WITH A KICK-OFF EVENT

Once project is completed, schedule a kickoff event where community members can come and see the finished product. An ideal event is a cookout or block party (Free food is a great motivation to get people to come out). This will also be a great opportunity for the community to get to know one another as well as promote other events and plans in the works.



(Source: www2.oaklandnet.com)

RESOURCES & LINKS

Multiple Benefits of Community Gardens:

http://www.gardeningmatters.org/sites/default/files/Multiple%20Benefits_2012.pdf

10 Steps To Starting A Community Garden

<https://communitygarden.org/resources/10-steps-to-starting-a-community-garden/>

Community Garden Grants

<http://www.thegranthelpers.com/municipal-grants/community-garden-grants/>

<http://americainbloom.org/resources/Grant-Opportunities.aspx>

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/contentonly=true&contentid=grant_program_recipients.html

TRANSFORMING SPACES

There are many tired and underutilized spaces in Irondale that need revitalization. In order to transform these spaces, community partners, property owners, businesses, the City of Irondale and developers need to participate in creative placemaking. Arts and cultural events/programs have the potential to channel local energy, encourage creative expression, connect residents to their City’s history, and generate revenues for the City of Irondale.

Temporary urban developments, or “pop ups” have the potential to revitalize areas and aspects of a communities, through changing the way people use and view the built environment. Pop ups come in many shapes and sizes ranging from multi-day festivals and street closures, to small-scale art installations. Pop up developments are also very interesting as they can be officially sponsored by the city or a private business, but are often citizen led initiatives to help transform underutilized or vacant spaces that might be ignored by formal planning and development efforts.

GOAL #3

Utilize pop up events and public art to energize and transform spaces into attractive public settings.



ACTION 1

Plan pop up events in downtown Irondale.

Traditionally, pop-up events utilize empty shops or other buildings or spaces, for art exhibitions, restaurants or performances. They can last for a few hours, or a few days, and in some cases have become permanent fixtures due to their popularity. See the call-out box for more information on how to plan a pop-up event.



ACTION 2

Display more artwork in public spaces.

Utilize art from Shades Valley High School Fine Arts Department, local and regional art galleries, and other organizations as part of an artwork loan program.



ACTION 3

Explore opportunities to re-use obsolete industrial and commercial buildings for artists and other creative industries.

Establish an adaptive reuse ordinance which enables the City of Irondale to create spaces for artists in resident zones. Such an ordinance would help to retain the existing character of historical buildings, to reinforce the arts and other productive uses, and help to maintain a livable and sustainable neighborhood.



Existing Mural in Downtown Irondale.

HOW TO: POP UP

WHAT IS A POP-UP?

A pop-up is a temporary project that has the overall objective of neighborhood revitalization. Pop-ups allow citizens to join together to make small thoughtful changes to improve their community and create a sense of place. Pop ups come in many shapes and sizes ranging from multi-day festivals and street closures, to small-scale art installations. Pop up developments can also be sponsored by the city or a private business, but are often citizen led initiatives to help transform underutilized or vacant spaces that might be ignored by formal planning and development efforts.

Pop-ups can give a local gathering place a second life, transforming the area into a place to sit, shop, or eat. Essentially, no matter the scale or context, the aim is to make a place better than its current state. The idea is that these changes will “pop-up” before citizens' eyes on a temporary basis, then lead to long-term change. These initiatives can improve any combination of public health, transportation, general aesthetics, or economic development issues.

The following pages list potential pop-up project ideas.

1. STOREFRONTS:

Suppose a neighborhood is riddled with empty storefronts. Using the storefronts as temporary vendor shops or places to display art is a great way to give a street a facelift. Consider the following before planning a pop-up storefront:

- Contact the building owner or building manager for their permission.
- Inquire about plans for the space if possible.
- Advertise your need for vendors/artists using social media outlets.
- Ensure merchants have a business license. If they do not, then talk to the city's tax collector to figure out how the city can collect these funds.
- A longer setup timeframe could make it more worthwhile for vendors to participate.
- Consider a week or month long event for projects that deal specifically with economic development.



Made Here Pop- Up (Source: REV Birmingham)

POP UP IDEAS



2. TEMPORARY BIKE LANES:

To envision how a roadway could accommodate bicyclists, consider implementing temporary bike lanes to accommodate more than just the automobile. The following process can be used to create temporary bike lanes:

- Measure streets in selected project area. Cars need a minimum 9ft of room to travel, trucks at least 11ft. Any extra width could be attributed to a bike lane. Bikes need at least 4ft.
- Apply temporary bike lanes using duct tape according to new lane configuration. Alternatively, one can use spray chalk. Be careful with using paint, if the lane is applied incorrectly it could cause confusion and possibly injure someone.

Also consider:

- How many cars travel on this roadway each day? This information can be found on the Alabama Department of Transportation’s website. Aim to use streets that have Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of 20, 000 cars or less.
- Aim for streets with a posted speed limit of 35 MPH or less, these are typically more pedestrian and bike friendly.

3. BIKE RACKS:

Partner with an organization like CommuteSmart. They can help provide bike racks that will make your area a more attractive destination for cyclists. This service is free of charge but they prefer advanced notice so talk to them 2-3 months before unveiling.



4. POP-UP PARK

A pop-up park is similar to a pocket park in that the size does not need to be impressive but the scenery should be. Consider clearing out a vacant lot, several parking spots, or parking lot with the help of a landowner and transform the space with:

- Local artwork
- Donated landscape
- Temporary games
- Seating
- Vendors



5. GREENING:

Connect with landscapers, florists, etc. to see if they would be willing to provide the project with greenery. Plants and flowers can transform a space. Consider contacting nurseries for donations of older plants.



6. WAYFINDING:

Experiment with wayfinding guides that help citizens and visitors find nearby attractions like the library, school, or market.

Visit WalkYourCity.org for more detailed instructions.



(Source: Walkyourcity.org)

5

GREEN SYSTEMS

5.0 GREEN SYSTEMS

Water resources, green spaces, wildlife and the natural environment do not recognize political boundaries. Because of this, Irondale must do its part in the region to improve the environment and be a good steward of the natural resources. Irondale's special natural resources - Ruffner Mountain Nature Center, the Cahaba River, and Shades Creek - are tremendous opportunities for attracting increased residential growth and businesses related to outdoor recreation. For young professionals and families, Irondale can provide the perfect mix of easy access to downtown and metro area jobs with high quality natural areas for beauty, recreation and bikeways. Protection and sustainability of natural resources involves regional planning and cooperation among state, county, and municipal jurisdictions and among government, non-profit and for-profit entities.

Pursuing environmental sustainability, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, is the key to preserving the natural environment and preparing for potential risks posed by natural events.

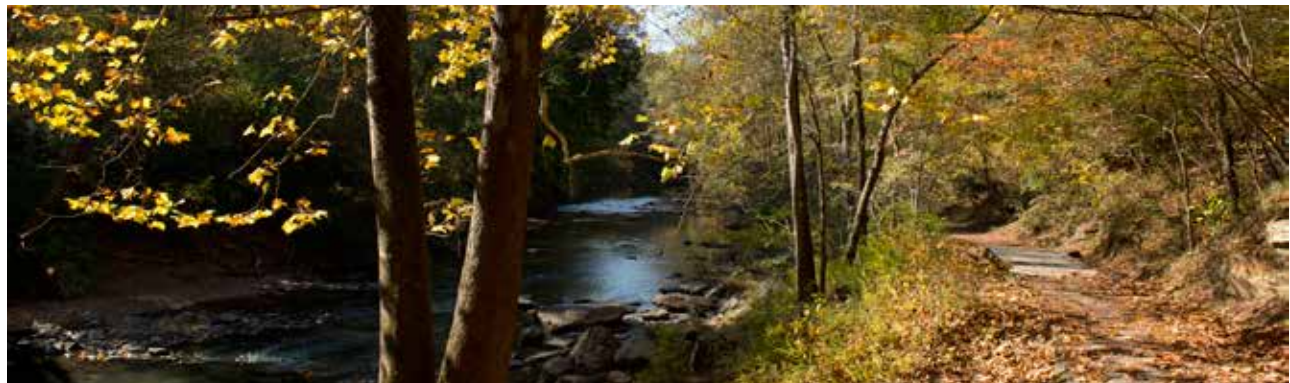
KEY ISSUES

Based on existing conditions and trends, the following are the key issues involving green systems and environmental sustainability in Irondale:

- More adequate and innovative stormwater management that reduces runoff and treats water close to the source
- Protecting the Cahaba River and its watershed, including Shades Creek
- Lack of greenways and off-road trails
- Need better education of “green infrastructure”



Beacon Park and Playground (Source: City of Irondale).



Irondale Riverwalk at the Cahaba River (Source: Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce).

RECREATIONAL SPACES

Part of improving the quality of life for current residents and attracting new residents to Irondale involves providing multiple recreational opportunities such as parks, trails and other green spaces near neighborhoods. Furthermore, the provision of recreational amenities reduces blight and increases property values.



Pocket parks can serve as spaces for recreation, relaxation, and gathering. (Source: National Landscape Department)

GOAL #1

Maintain, enhance and expand parks and recreational facilities with an interconnected system of natural resources for both conservation and public access.



ACTION 1

Acquire blighted properties to expand recreational opportunities for residents.

A number of tools are at the disposal of the City to acquire land for park sites and other recreational uses, particularly tax delinquent properties and lots in blighted areas. The City could lease or purchase vacant lots for neighborhood-serving parks, trails, greenways and open spaces.



ACTION 2

Conduct a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



ACTION 3

Explore the feasibility and funding of providing a City of Irondale recreational center and athletic complex.



ACTION 4

The City of Irondale should work with the Freshwater Land Trust to purchase clusters of land in floodplain areas to expand the City's parks and recreation system.

In addition to the land trust, other nonprofit organizations and private foundations may be of assistance in land acquisitions and park construction.



ACTION 5

Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines into the Planning Commission review process for new parks and recreational spaces and facilities.

Research has shown that decisions preceding criminal acts are highly influenced by the perceived risk of being caught (<http://www.cpted.net/>). CPTED guidelines help to deter criminal acts through natural surveillance, natural access control, territorial reinforcement and maintenance.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED):

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a set of multidisciplinary strategies and design concepts intended to deter undesirable and criminal activities through the design of the built environment. Design strategies can be used in conjunction with mechanical and organizational strategies, such as use of security cameras and the presence of legitimate users, security guards or police. The primary strategies of CPTED are:

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE:

“See and be seen” is the overall goal when it comes to CPTED and natural surveillance. A person is less likely to commit a crime if they think someone will see them do it. Lighting and landscape play an important role in CPTED.

ACCESS CONTROL:

Natural access control is more than a high block wall topped with barbed wire. CPTED utilizes the use of walkways, fences, lighting, signage and landscape to clearly guide people and vehicles to and from the proper entrances. The goal with this CPTED principle is not necessarily to keep intruders out, but to direct the flow of people while decreasing the opportunity for crime.

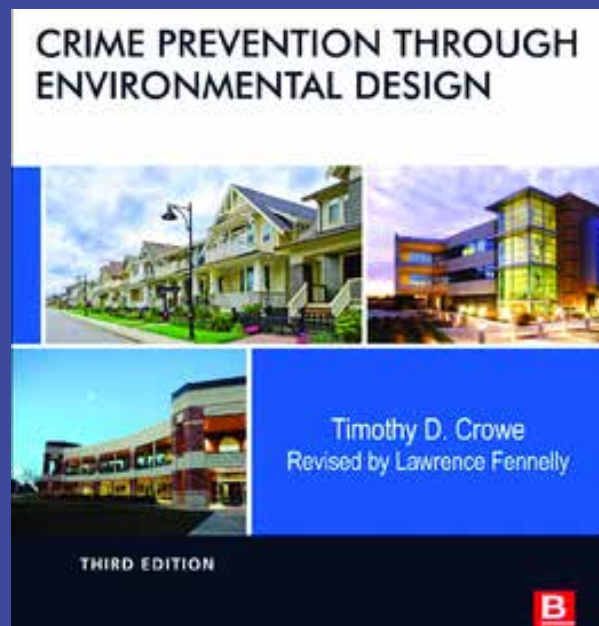
TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT:

Creating or extending a “sphere of influence” by utilizing physical designs such as pavement treatments, landscaping and signage that enable users of an area to develop a sense of proprietorship over it, is the goal of this CPTED principle. Public areas are clearly distinguished from private ones. Potential trespassers perceive this control and are thereby discouraged.

MAINTENANCE:

CPTED and the “Broken Window Theory” suggests that one “broken window” or nuisance, if allowed to exist, will lead to others and ultimately to the decline of an entire neighborhood. Neglected and poorly maintained properties are breeding grounds for criminal activity.

Source CPTED Security (http://www.cptedsecurity.com/cpted_design_guidelines.htm)



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Open space loss and development have a detrimental effect on surface water quality due to the loss of natural vegetation and increased impervious surfaces. Water quality impairments are primarily the result of stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution from both construction projects, and after development, streets, parking lots, driveways, buildings, lawn areas, and agricultural fields that lack adequate vegetative buffers. Both the Cahaba River and Shades Creek have water quality restoration plans, adopted by the State, that call for significantly reducing sediment and nutrient pollution. Irondale should do its part towards achieving those goals.

The City needs to ensure use of improved construction sediment and erosion control best practices during development. The use of Low Impact Development stormwater management best practices and tools, such as retention/detention ponds, bioretention cells, rain gardens, bioswales, infiltration trenches, pervious paving, green roofs, and stormwater capture/reuse can imitate natural processes to infiltrate stormwater, reduce the volume and erosive power of flows, improve water quality and wildlife habitat, mitigate the effects of flooding from various rain events and enhance community livability.

GOAL #2

Restore and sustain water quality, natural habitats and groundwater by incorporating best practices for environmental site design and stormwater management in development.



ACTION 1

Enforce the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on all construction sites to control soil erosion and minimize sediment runoff.



ACTION 2

Install green systems on blighted or vacant properties to reduce stormwater run-off and flooding in flood prone areas.



ACTION 3

Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to require the use of Low Impact Development (LID) or green infrastructure techniques in new developments to mimic natural hydrology where feasible and minimize impacts of stormwater runoff on the Cahaba River and Shades Creek and their tributaries.

Low Impact Development (LID) is an approach to site planning, design, and development that seeks to avoid, minimize, and manage impacts to water resources by stewarding and reintroducing natural hydrologic processes into developed watersheds.



ACTION 4

Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance to implement standards, flexibility and incentives for post-construction BMPS including Low Impact Development and Green Infrastructure.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs)

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are used to mitigate the effects of development and redevelopment (pollutants to waters, stormwater runoff, stream erosion, etc.). In developed areas, impervious surfaces, like pavement and roofs, prevent water from naturally soaking into the ground. Instead, water runs rapidly into storm drainage systems, and natural streams causing flooding, stream bank erosion, sediment, habitat destruction, sewer overflows, infrastructure damage, and contaminated streams, rivers, and other water bodies. Impervious surfaces also reduce recharge of groundwater, which, during drought, reduces the base flow discharge into rivers and streams that maintains water levels. BMPs help to mitigate this effect, by incorporating systems that allow infiltration, evapotranspiration, and re-use of stormwater to maintain natural hydrology. Careful management of BMPs that infiltrate surface runoff to groundwater should be considered to protect the City's drinking water source because they could inject pollutants. All of the BMP practices listed below are referenced from the City of Baltimore's Green Pattern Book.

RAIN GARDENS:

Rain gardens are shallow, vegetated basins that collect and absorb runoff from rooftops, sidewalks and streets. The rain gardens are used as a Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management solution that promotes evapotranspiration, which is the effort of evaporation and transpiration to remove water from the soil and vegetation. These gardens are typically smaller and simpler than a bioretention system – they are less than 2,000 square feet in size and do not include an underdrain. Rain gardens are versatile features that can be installed in almost any unpaved space.



(Source: <http://www.statecollegepa.us/>)

BIORETENTION:

The bioretention process utilizes a bed of sand, soil, and plants to filter contaminants and pollutants from stormwater runoff. Although water may briefly pond during heavy rain events, bioretention areas are designed to be dry most of the time. The filtered stormwater is either returned to a storm drain through an underdrain or partially infiltrated into the soil. Like rain gardens, bioretention areas may also be vegetated.



Shadow Glen Green Street Bioretention Swale (Source: kitsapcd.org)

GREEN PARKING:

Green parking differs from traditional asphalt parking lots by incorporating permeable paving materials, tree planting, and rain gardens that capture stormwater runoff and shade surfaces, thus improving water quality and cooling the parking areas. Green parking would provide residents, faith-based organizations, and businesses in the community additional parking that cannot otherwise be accommodated on the street or one's property.



Green Parking (Source: [Baltimore City Green Pattern Book](#))

PLANTER BOXES:

Urban rain gardens with vertical walls and open or closed bottoms that collect and absorb runoff from sidewalks, parking lots, and streets. Planter boxes are ideal for space-limited sites in dense urban areas and as a streetscaping element.



(Source: [Environmental Protection Agency](#))

BIOSWALES:

Vegetated, mulched, or xeriscaped channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another. Vegetated swales slow, infiltrate, and filter stormwater flows. As linear features, vegetated swales are particularly suitable along streets and parking lots.



PERMEABLE PAVEMENTS:

Paved surfaces that infiltrate, treat, and/or store rainwater where it falls. Permeable pavements are constructed from pervious concrete, porous asphalt, permeable interlocking pavers, and several other materials.



(Source: [Environmental Protection Agency](#))

Resources:

- City of Baltimore Green Pattern Book.
- National Menu of Stormwater Best Management Practices
- ASLA's Stormwater Case Studies by State
- ADEM's Post Construction BMPs Manual

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID) :

Low impact development (LID) uses nature to detain storm water, recharge groundwater, and reduce runoff. Effective low impact development practices includes the use of both nonstructural and structural stormwater management measures that are a part of a larger set of best management practices. The Best Management Practices (BMPs) used in LID practices focus on minimizing changes to a site's predeveloped hydrology through nonstructural practices.

Low Impact Development principals advocate:

- Minimizing site disturbance
- Preserving important site features, especially natural forest and steep slopes
- Reducing impervious area and disconnecting it from hardscape storm drainage
- Minimizing grading and land clearing
- Minimizing soil compaction
- Utilizing native plant cover
- Maintaining natural drainage features

LID practices are already being used successfully in Irondale and the Birmingham metro area. On the ground experience in the Birmingham area and throughout the US has proven that LID practices usually either save money or do not add costs over conventional stormwater infrastructure.

VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING

The management of existing and proposed landscaping can reduce the impact of a site on downstream water bodies. Vegetation creates a pervious surface for infiltration and enables pollutant removal.

Native ground cover and plants can provide a low maintenance option and help to mimic infiltration characteristics of similar natural areas. When placed downstream of impervious surfaces, they

can act as buffers to minimize sheet flow.

MINIMIZE LAND DISTURBANCE

Minimizing land disturbance at a development site can help to reduce post-development site runoff pollutants and loads and can maintain existing groundwater recharge when applied to existing site design. Consider the following practices to minimize land disturbance:

- Do not concentrate flows
- Minimize grading
- Build within the existing topography
- Do not alter existing drainage areas and provide vegetated buffers around them
- Minimize impervious surfaces
- Minimize changes to existing soil profile

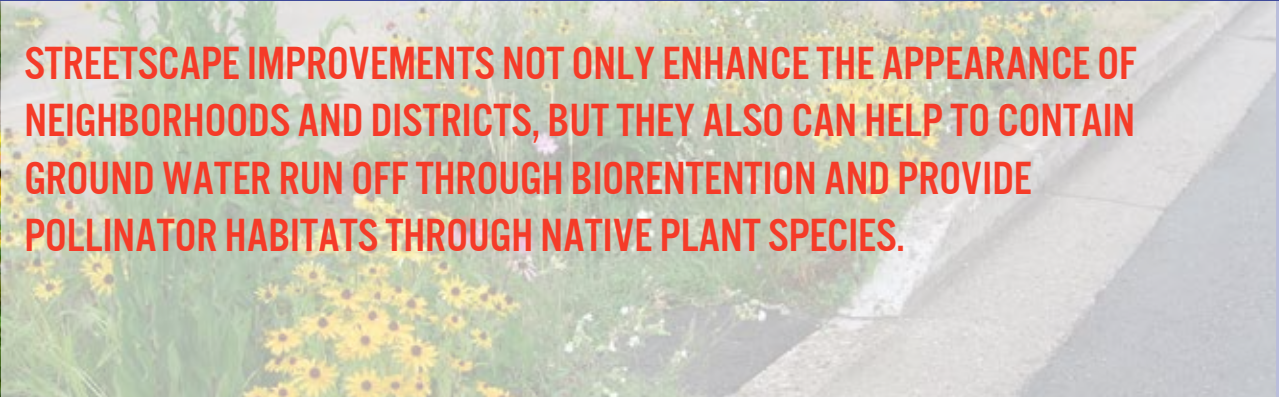
IMPERVIOUS AREA MANAGEMENT

Increased impervious surfaces are linked to degradation of water quality and increased runoff. The following practices help to reduce the volume and rate of runoff on impervious surfaces:

- Reduce pavement width when possible
- Design portions of the street to be permeable (landscape medians, circles, tree wells).
- Use pervious paving for driveways and parking lots when possible
- Encourage the use of vegetated or green roofs.
- Support the use of rain barrels and cisterns to collect runoff from local roofs to be reused.



GREEN ROOFS: GREEN ROOFS, ALSO KNOWN AS VEGETATED ROOF COVERS ARE MULTI-BENEFICIAL STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS THAT HELP TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION ON WATER QUALITY BY FILTERING, ABSORBING OR DETAINING RAINFALL.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS NOT ONLY ENHANCE THE APPEARANCE OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS, BUT THEY ALSO CAN HELP TO CONTAIN GROUND WATER RUN OFF THROUGH BIORETENTION AND PROVIDE POLLINATOR HABITATS THROUGH NATIVE PLANT SPECIES.



CISTERNS & RAIN BARRELS: A LOW COST, EFFECTIVE, AND EASILY MAINTAINABLE RETENTION AND DETENTION DEVICE SUITABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND INDUSTRIAL SITES TO MANAGE ROOFTOP RUNOFF. WATER COLLECTED CAN BE USED FOR LAWNS, GARDENS, AND OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL WATER SUPPLIES.

* LID practices usually either save money or do not add costs over conventional stormwater infrastructure.

GREEN DESIGN

Left uncontrolled, new development can increase suburban sprawl, create the need for expensive new infrastructure, and contribute to the further disappearance of open space and the depletion of Irondale’s natural resources. Protecting Irondale’s natural resources, encouraging more “green” development, and investing in “green” technologies can produce short- and long-term environmental and economic benefits for the City and the Cahaba River and its watershed.

GOAL #3
Promote development and redevelopment that achieves goals for environmental sustainability, natural resource protection and enhancing public access to our natural assets.



ACTION 3

Pursue opportunities for acquisition, conservations and restoration of open space along year-round streams and rivers and actively protect these resources through land use management and flexible zoning, and cluster development.



ACTION 4

Provide incentives to developers for green design.

The City could provide non-profits, private housing developers and public agencies with incentives for green design.



ACTION 1

Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to require more green space and buffers.



ACTION 2

Modify the Zoning Ordinance to manage development within a certain distance from the Cahaba River and other major streams to protect buffer setbacks, floodplains, and water quality/habitat.



Developers should consider consulting with the Cahaba River Society on BMP and LID practices to inform their site plans for new development. For example, the Outlet Shops of Grand River consulted to create detention ponds to offset runoff to the Cahaba River.



Stewart Perry Construction, located on Overton Road, uses natural building methods that protect the Cahaba River. LID Stormwater and drinking water conservation measures include: native landscaping, rainwater catchment system, infiltration swales, and a restored pond to capture site runoff and improve wildlife habitat.

6

PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

6.0 PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

A public facility is established for the benefit and service of residents. These may include schools, parks, libraries, streets, water and sanitary sewer, waste facilities, as well as fire and police buildings. Irondale’s public facilities should strive to meet the community’s health, recreation, social and cultural needs. They will be well-maintained, sustainable and accessible for all residents.

KEY ISSUES

Based on existing conditions and trends, the following are the key issues involving public services and infrastructure in Irondale:

- Upgrading and maintaining city parks
- Provide new facilities such as a community center or athletic complex
- Resurfacing of roads
- Provide universal high speed internet access to all residents
- Improving the city’s website, especially with posting meeting agendas and minutes
- Preparing for the consequences of natural hazards

ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

It is imperative that the City of Irondale makes efficient use of existing public services and infrastructure in order to minimize the need for costly new or expanded services. In the Irondale on the Move Visioning Survey, residents ranked “adequate infrastructure to support existing and future business” as the best way to recruit new businesses to Irondale.



ACTION 2

Create forms to enable citizens to report potholes, sinkholes, streetlights that are out and other roadway problems.

Consider placing the forms on the City of Irondale website to make it convenient for citizens to report issues.

GOAL #1
Provide necessary and efficient public infrastructure and utilities.



ACTION 3

Construct a new fire station to serve the proposed commercial growth on Highway 11.

Consider constructing a new fire station to serve the Highway 11 area and to replace the current Irondale Fire Station 3. Currently the building and property for Station 3 is owned by the Birmingham Baptist Association and it is located in the City of Birmingham. The building also has several structural issues that do not



ACTION 1

Develop a public facilities impact fee to support the establishment of municipal facilities to meet city needs.

meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) or Insurance Service Office (ISO) requirements.

HIGH SPEED INTERNET

With the relatively high cost of broadband subscriptions compared to their incomes, it is not surprising that nearly one-third of Americans do not have broadband at home. The City of Irondale should seek to create public-private partnerships to foster high-speed, affordable broadband solutions for residents, educational facilities, governmental networks and the expansion of businesses.

Job searches, communication with family and friends, information-sharing, and civic engagement all depend on having access to broadband. The unemployed relies on Internet access to search and apply for jobs. Youth need broadband access to take classes online, to apply for college, and to learn advanced digital skills. Businesses must have a web presence and many use e-commerce to connect with customers, suppliers and to expand into new markets. Senior citizens use web-based applications to keep in touch with family and friends or to look for health information.

GOAL #2

Provide universal access to telecommunications and high speed Internet.



(Source: BroadbandUSA)



ACTION 1

Incentivize fiber optic infrastructure providers to construct conduit in major corridors of the city.

Consult with BroadbandUSA, which is a new initiative of the US Commerce Department National Telecommunications and Informations Administration (NTIA). NTIA developed Broadband USA to provide assistance to communities that want to expand their broadband capacity and promote broadband adoption. See the NTIA Broadband Adoption Toolkit 2013 for more information (http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/files/NTIA_2013_BroadbandUSA_Adoption_Toolkit.pdf)



ACTION 2

Modify the existing Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to include broadband infrastructure.

Consider provisions to include fiber optic conduit or cable in the suite of infrastructure improvements that currently include water, sewer, electric utilities, etc.



ACTION 3

Provide fiber optic or “innovation infrastructure” and public service upgrades at targeted development sites that would spur innovative companies to locate to Irondale.

E-SERVICES

In order for the City of Irondale to operate for the benefit of all citizens, it must enhance its communications with the public and provide high quality electronic services (e-services). The City of Irondale should continue to update and enhance its website and online presence so that more citizens can communicate with city departments, track agendas and meeting minutes, apply for permits, and follow the news.

GOAL #3
Provide ease-of-access to public information and ease of access to city governance.



ACTION 1

Enhance the City of Irondale’s website by conducting a quarterly review of the website content to ensure information is relevant and that the website remains user friendly and informative.



ACTION 2

Ensure that the public hearing notices, along with meeting agendas and minutes from City Council and other City Board / Commission meetings, are posted in a timely fashion for the public to see (via City website, posting at City Hall, social media, etc).

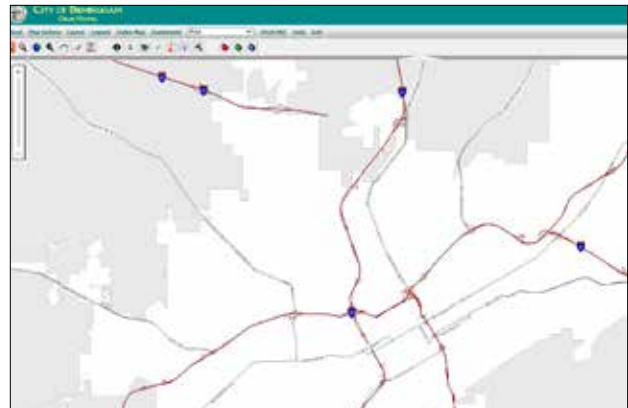


ACTION 3

Create a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) database to improve coordination across Irondale City Departments. Train a staff member to maintain the GIS database.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a computer system designed to capture, store, analyze, manage and present all types of geographical data. Users can create maps in GIS that show information relevant for planning, utilities and natural resources management.

The City needs to be able to provide the most recent GIS data available to City Departments to ensure the efficiency, accuracy, and to alleviate inquiry discrepancies. The City should consider publishing the data online for the public to view.



The City of Birmingham provides the public with free online map data, with layers such as zoning, parcels and school districts. The City of Irondale could consider a similar system. (Source: <http://gisweb.informationbirmingham.com/>)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In order for the City of Irondale to effectively respond to emergency situations, it is important that they maintain and update their Emergency Operations Plans, and continue to coordinate emergency planning efforts with other local governments in the region, non-profit organizations, and State and federal agencies. Emergency preparedness also encompasses things such as annually undertaking emergency operations drills, simulating the City's response to various emergency situations and providing residents with timely information on changing conditions during emergency situations.

GOAL #4

Ensure the safety of all residents and citizens through comprehensive emergency preparedness training, education, and planning.



ACTION 1

Revise and update the City's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan address elements of natural and man-made emergencies and disasters and presents a framework through which the City of Irondale handles such situations. The plan identifies the responsibilities of each department that comprise of the Emergency Response Team: Mayor, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, and others.



ACTION 2

Form working agreements with Irondale businesses, and provide educational materials about their role in an emergency situation.

In an emergency situation, or crisis, businesses may be called upon for assistance, either for supplies, or as their place of business as a command post, or staging area.



ACTION 3

Provide Emergency Management training and education programs for first responders, emergency workers, emergency managers, public/ private officials, and others.

Emergency Management training is provided and coordinated by the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), Alabama EMA (AEMA), and the Federal EMA.



Emergency Management Training in Livermore, CA.

7

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This chapter aims at strategies and actions for balancing the needs of existing businesses with the need to expand and diversify the City of Irondale’s employment base.

The long-term economic health of the City of Irondale should be enhanced through building a more diversified economic base that supports a wide range of employment opportunities and through the promotion of quality industrial and commercial development that matches the aspirations of the community. Irondale residents should have access to quality jobs with competitive wages and Irondale businesses should have access to a local workforce that has ongoing opportunities to develop their talents and expand their skills.

KEY ISSUES

Based on existing conditions and trends, the following are the key issues involving economic development in Irondale:

- Need to provide better tax incentives to attract new businesses
- Reinvesting, reusing, or redeveloping vacant and underutilized properties to enable economic development
- Need for more fiber optic infrastructure and universal high speed internet access
- More intern work programs and/or job shadowing opportunities for junior and senior high school students

IDENTITY & BRANDING

The perception of Irondale in the minds of both the city’s citizens and those of the broader region needs to be updated, refreshed and reinvigorated. A unique identity needs to be built upon and communicated inside the city and throughout the region. A re-branding strategy would set the foundation for a recognizable brand for the City of Irondale to sustain economic development and a community identity.

GOAL #1
Refresh branding and marketing efforts to promote the uniqueness of Irondale.



ACTION 1

Modernize and promote a consistent branding strategy with updated logos, themes, concepts, and graphics.



ACTION 2

Continue to update and publish the Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce's "Irondale City Guide".



ACTION 3

Revive the Irondale Historical Society and set up historical markers throughout the city at significant sites.

**ACTION 4**

Develop promotional brochures to promote Irondale as an Eco-tourism destination.

The brochure could include the following information: Cahaba Landing, Moon River, and other blueway/ canoe launch sites, recreational parks, bike routes, restaurants (i.e. Irondale Cafe) and festivals (i.e. Whistle Stop Festival, running and biking events).

**ACTION 2**

Create and maintain an online database of available retail, office, and industrial spaces including size, zoning, lease rates, price, utilities, condition, etc.

**ACTION 3**

Establish a single point of contact, such as a City Economic Development Coordinator.

This position would be dedicated to coordinating efforts with relevant city boards and departments, to assist businesses and industries with incentives as part of their decision making process, to serve a resource center for the distribution of site materials and to work closely with the Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

There are approximately 735 businesses in the City of Irondale employing over 7,300 people. Business and job growth, particularly those in the Service and Retail industries, typically follow residential population growth. Irondale, however, loses many of those jobs to commercial development in nearby jurisdictions. While many of the retail job opportunities are not typically high paying jobs, a greater impact to the City is felt in losses of retail sales tax revenue that could otherwise be spent in Irondale.

The City needs to take a more proactive approach to economic development. Attracting new businesses and growing local businesses, supporting entrepreneurs and encouraging new developments would help the City of Irondale to increase its tax revenue.

**ACTION 4**

Reactivate the Downtown Redevelopment Authority.

Establish a regular meeting schedule and identify new board members.

**ACTION 5**

Regularly meet with business owners.

Facilitate an ongoing dialogue with existing business owners to identify those that are struggling, those that want to expand, and those that need assistance.

**ACTION 1**

Reactivate the Irondale Industrial Development Board.

Establish a regular meeting schedule and identify new board members.

GOAL #3

Attract new businesses.

ACTION 1

Conduct a more detailed real estate market analysis for commercial development in the City.

A preliminary market study has been conducted as part of this planning process, and is presented in the Market Analysis. The study analyzes the supply and demand of the local market to determine the spending potential and retail sales of existing business groups. In addition to this study, a more detailed and focused real estate market analysis is needed to determine the market rate and appraised values for commercial properties under lease or sale, the vacancy rate, the absorption rate, and the overall stock of commercial land and spaces.

ACTION 2

Provide monetary and regulatory or other non-monetary incentives to attract new stores and restaurants.

ACTION 3

Promote and expand the resources of the Irondale Chamber of Commerce to include quarterly workshops on starting and growing business in Irondale in targeted areas.

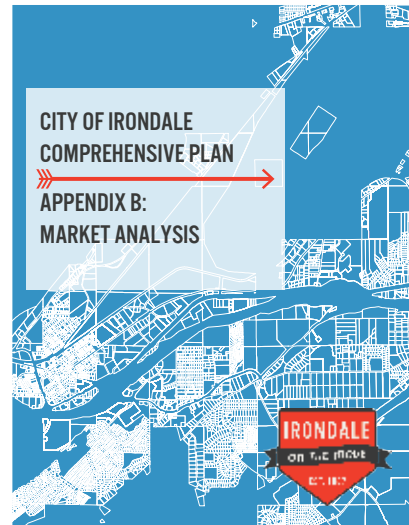
ACTION 4

Identify one or two key business clusters where combined efforts could lead to business recruitment opportunities that tie into that cluster.

Consider distribution centers, technology based businesses, micro-breweries, purified drinking water companies.

ACTION 5

Identify the infrastructure investments required to make sites in under-performing areas more competitive for economic development.



Refer to Appendix B: Market Analysis for recommendations regarding the retail, industrial, office, and housing markets.



ECOTOURISM:

Tourism is the world’s largest industry, with nature tourism as the largest growing segment. Ecotourism is a new travel ethic that has arisen as a response to tourists not wanting to impact the natural world. Ecotourism is sustainable-it differs from nature tourism in that it focuses on principals of conservation, education, traveler responsibility and active community participation.

provide much needed revenues for the protection of the Cahaba River, trail expansions, and other natural areas. Ecotourism can increase the level of education and activism among travelers, and can position Irondale as the leader in sustainable development. The differences between mass tourism and ecotourism are shown in the table below.

Ecotourism focuses on the following characteristics:

- Conscientious, low-impact visitor behavior
- Sensitivity towards, and appreciation of, local cultures and biodiversity
- Support for local conservation efforts
- Sustainable benefits to local communities
- Local participation in decision-making
- Educational components for both the traveler and local communities

Examples of Ecotourism include:

- Bicycle touring/ mountain biking
- Horseback trail riding
- Hiking
- Freshwater river rafting, canoeing, and kayaking
- Camping
- Cultural activities
- Observing wildlife and nature
- Visiting historical places and landmarks

Ecotourism can provide viable economic development strategies for Irondale, and can

Characteristics of Mass Tourism	Characteristics of Ecotourism
Large groups of visitors	Small groups of visitors
Urban	Rural
Touristic general marketing activities	Eco-marketing activities
Impact on natural environment	Little impact on the natural environment
Management based on macroeconomic principles	Management based on local economic principles
Anonymous relationship between visitors and locals	Personalized relationships between visitors and locals
General development goals	Local development objectives
Behavior-oriented leisure activities/ entertainment, opponents to education and training actions	Loyalty in the process of training and education for appropriate conduct for the natural environment



Source: M. R Dorobantu, P Nistoreanu, 2012 Rural Tourism And Ecotourism- The Main Priorities in Sustainable Development Orientations of Rural Local Communities in Romania.

8

TRANSPORTATION

8.0 TRANSPORTATION

Transportation in its various forms plays a critical role in the livability in Irondale, affecting access to education and opportunity, goods and services, worship and recreation. Circulation patterns and behaviors also affect the quality of residential streets and the safety and walkability of the area's major streets. The conception and execution of quality transportation connections has always been a precursor to growth and economic success. However, a lack of investment in the City's transportation infrastructure and services has resulted in a City that cannot support the residents desired changes. This chapter provides strategies and actions for addressing transportation system deficiencies, and improving the overall travel conditions in the City of Irondale.

KEY ISSUES

Based on existing conditions and trends, the following are the key issues involving transportation:

- Lack of a comprehensive and interconnected pedestrian, bicycle, and trail system network.
- Streets that need repaving, repairing of potholes, and repairing of sidewalks.
- Lack of a prioritized and funded transportation maintenance program.
- Lack of fixed-route public transit service.
- Prolonged train horn noise in Downtown Irondale.
- Lack of a Complete Streets policy.

The City of Irondale Transportation Plan is included in detail in Appendix E and serves as the transportation element of the Irondale on the Move Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Plan provides a vision for the future transportation network in the City of Irondale. The transportation network is a system of planned and improved vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian facilities that will assure residents, workers, and visitors high-quality mobility and access for all of their travel needs. The plan will help staff and elected officials make many decisions about future land use and transportation for the city.

Chapter 1 of the Transportation Plan provides an introduction and a gives a transportation system inventory of travel in Irondale today. Chapter 2 provides an assessment of current and future travel needs. It is important to understand what transportation projects have been recently accomplished and those that are programmed for the future. Chapter 3 of the Transportation Plan outlines the transportation goals, and goes into detail to explain project recommendations and implementation strategies (timeframe, potential funding, lead agency) as they pertain to the following types of projects:

- ✘ Roadway safety improvements
- ✘ Sidewalk development projects

- ✘ Pedestrian crossings
- ✘ On-street bicycle projects
- ✘ Off-road trail / greenway projects
- ✘ Establishing transit service
- ✘ Utilizing a Pavement Management Program
- ✘ Establishing a local transportation investment program for infrastructure maintenance
- ✘ Establishing a streetscape program for US 78
- ✘ Adopting a Complete Streets policy
- ✘ Creation of a train "Quiet Zone"
- ✘ Incorporating Access Management

Chapter 4 describes the potential funding sources available for transportation projects, at the federal state and local levels, and Appendix E-1 of the Transportation Plan gives guidance on access management practices.

GOAL #1
Preserve and enhance the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system.



ACTION 1

Conduct studies and regularly review data at high accident locations to support operational changes and designs that improve safety.

Multimodal intersections operate with pedestrians, bicycles, cars, buses and trucks. The diverse uses of intersections involve a high level of activity and shared space. Intersections have the unique characteristic of accommodating the almost-constant occurrence of conflicts between all modes, and most collisions on thoroughfares take place at intersections. This characteristic is the basis for most intersection design standards, particularly for safety. Intersection design should emphasize slow speeds and the management of conflicts through appropriate traffic control and improved visibility.



ACTION 2

Improve the safety of roadways by eliminating obstacles to vision, constructing turn lanes, installing improved signage and striping, adding lighting or providing signalization.



ACTION 3

Adopt subdivision regulations that support access management.

Access management is the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges,

and street connections to a roadway. A roadway system with effective access management serves three primary purposes: traveler safety, operational efficiency and reasonable access to adjoining property.



ACTION 4

Improve pedestrian safety by providing marked crosswalks and mid-block pedestrian crossings.



ACTION 5

Develop interlocal agreements with neighboring jurisdictions and other agencies to develop funding sources for transportation improvements.

Competing spending priorities and the need to maintain the Irondale's long-term fiscal stability means the General Fund cannot afford to shoulder the costs of all potential infrastructure investments.



ACTION 6

Continue to explore the feasibility of a train “Quiet Zone” at the 20th Street at-grade intersection.

To address noise problems from train horns, while maintaining acceptable safety levels, the Federal Railroad Administration regulations now permit the implementation of “Quiet Zones.” A “Quiet Zone” is defined by the FRA as “an uninterrupted section of railroad at least a half mile long in which trains do not routinely sound their horns at grade crossings.”

GOAL #2
Build a multimodal transportation network to provide a wide range of transportation choices.

ACTION 1

Expand sidewalk coverage in residential areas and build links from residential areas to activity centers, schools, recreational facilities, employment centers, and other major public facilities.

Sidewalk coverage in Irondale needs to be improved. There are noticeable gaps between existing sidewalk facilities that impact the continuity of pedestrian travel. In addition, the sidewalks are in various states of good repair, and most are narrow and do not meet minimum Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for accessibility.



*Bike and Pedestrian Design Concept from the RRRVT Plan
 (Source: www.freshwaterlandtrust.org)*

ACTION 2

Build an interconnected pedestrian, bicycle and trail system network.

Active transportation is growing in prominence within the Birmingham region, and neighborhoods that have embraced non-motorized travel are highly valued. Irondale is also a popular area for bicycling enthusiasts.

ACTION 3

Build out segments of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System.

The Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System (RRRVTS) is a transformative, long-term plan for greenways, bikeways, and complete streets. Centered on Jefferson County, RRRVTS is intended to be the basis of a regional non-motorized travel for the Birmingham metropolitan area. When completed, it will knit together communities across Jefferson County. A key part of the green systems network in Irondale will be consideration for how the Red Rock plan might be implemented through various partnerships.

ACTION 4

Consider the feasibility of extending public transit into Irondale.

Fixed route transit service could provide access to jobs in Irondale from other parts of the metro area as well as access to area colleges for students who live in Irondale. The closest Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) routes are located just west of the city limits, with stops at Eastwood Mall along the #17 Eastwood Mall Route and along the #44 Montclair Route. The City should consult with the BJCTA to initiate changes to the existing routes that serve the Eastwood Mall with the goal of having them extend into Irondale.



ACTION 5

Adopt a Complete Streets policy.

Complete streets are “...designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street.”

By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists – making the city a better place to live.



ACTION 6

Accommodate the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in the design and construction of all future transportation improvements.

Irondale can improve its active transportation networks by adopting policies that require pedestrian and bicycle facilities to be integrated into large-scale infrastructure projects at the planning level (e.g., evaluate opportunities to accommodate bicyclists).



ACTION 7

Develop a streetscape program and associated design standards for US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard.

In efforts to make major travel corridors more functional and aesthetically pleasing, streetscape specifications are developed. Streetscape specifications provide a common design standard for new and modified traffic signals (mast arm, not span-wire), street furniture, sidewalks, landscaping

and wayfinding/informational signage. The specifications may be incorporated into overlay districts specific to a roadway and/or corridor in order to provide guidance for retrofitting existing corridors, or can be applied to all new construction projects along the corridor. A streetscape program or plan is recommended for the US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard corridor.

TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE

Irondale residents expressed concern over transportation infrastructure maintenance. Residents identified the need for repairing and maintaining streets within existing residential neighborhoods, especially in terms of fixing pot holes and resurfacing the streets.

A number of streets and sidewalks across the City of Irondale exhibited signs of neglect and deterioration. Pavement edges were observed to be crumbling and/or deteriorated, and damage from stormwater particularly in areas where flooding is prevalent is also evident.

GOAL #3
Make infrastructure maintenance investments a priority.



Roadwork Sign (Source WCRZ.com)

ACTION 1

Develop a regular maintenance schedule for all components of the transportation infrastructure.

ACTION 2

Create and maintain a pavement management system.

It is recommended that the City of Irondale hire a consultant to conduct a citywide Pavement Management Plan (PMP) to assist the City in pavement management decision making, to implement a plan that considers both immediate and long-term needs, and to improve the quality of the City's streets in a fiscally responsible manner.

A PMP performs detailed field inspections, and provides recommendations for annual maintenance and capital improvement project funding. The PMP can also be used to promote transparency by educating the public on the decision-making process involving selection and utilization of street improvement funds

throughout the City.

ACTION 3

Identify a sustainable funding source to improve the life-cycle of city-owned roadways, such as setting up a Local Transportation Investment Program.

This plan recommends that the City of Irondale establish a Local Transportation Investment Program that will prioritize infrastructure projects, identify potential funding sources, and provide a discussion of both the costs to maintain city assets, as well as the costs/impacts of deferred maintenance.

Infrastructure investment priorities should strive to promote equity, strengthen the economy, and promote public health and safety. Developing a program also will help the city to allocate precious dollars from its General Fund, and leverage both state and federal transportation dollars as well as private investment.

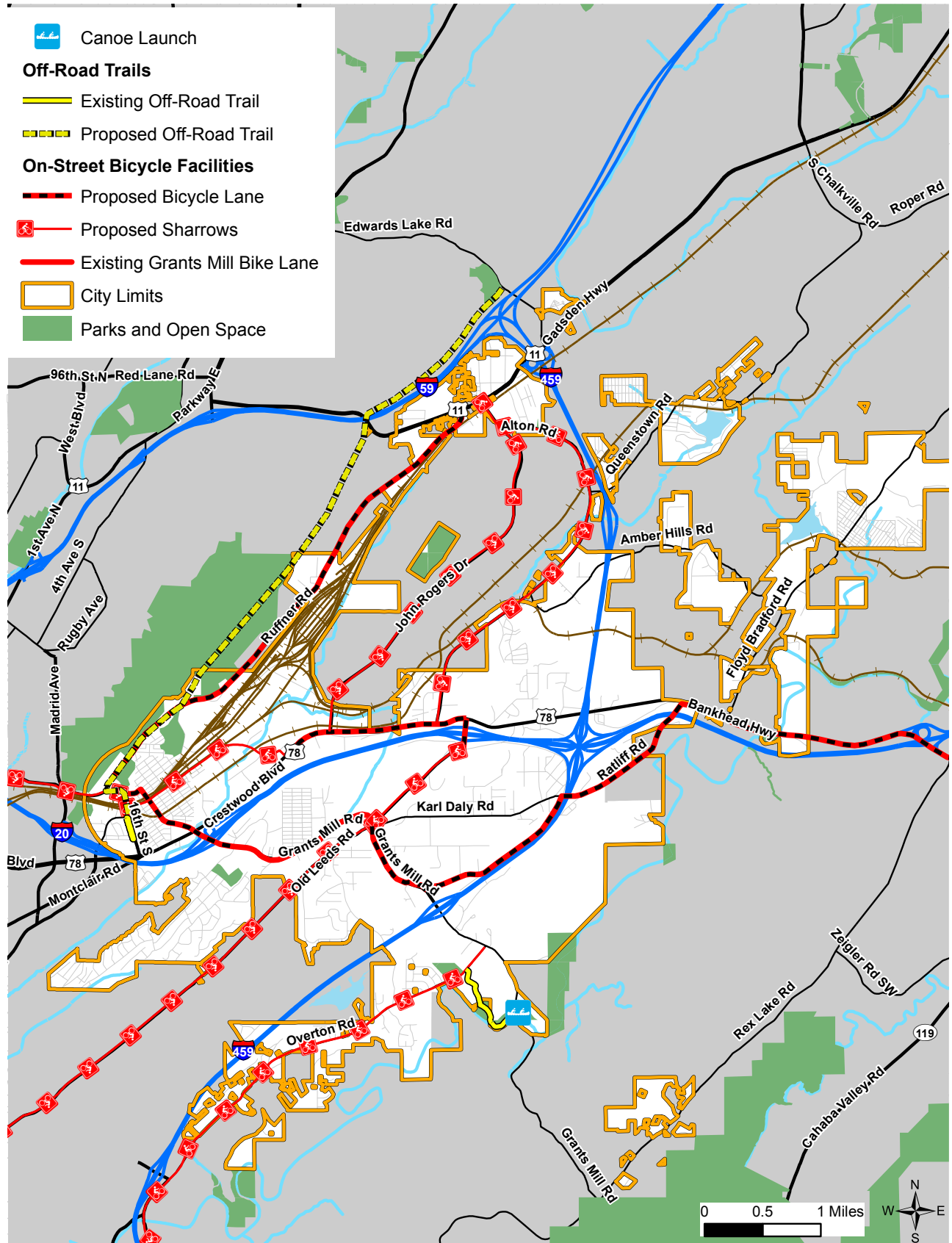
ACTION 4

Establish partnerships to advance transportation initiatives.

Competing spending priorities and the need to maintain Irondale's long-term fiscal stability means the General Fund cannot afford to shoulder the costs of all potential infrastructure investments.

In order to advance many of the Irondale transportation initiatives, the City should partner with residents, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and the private sector on the development and implementation of some key projects. Initiatives for downtown Irondale redevelopment might be spearheaded by a local merchants association. Likewise, implementation of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley trail system might be advanced by a nonprofit organization such as the Freshwater Land Trust.

Figure 8.1: Proposed Non-motorized Transportation System



Source: Irondale Transportation Plan. See Appendix E for more information.

9

IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The *Irondale on the Move* Comprehensive Plan sets forth a bold vision for the City of Irondale's' future and a set of goals and action steps to achieve these goals. The plan focuses on policy and organizational initiatives to more effectively achieve the goals, and it identifies criteria for decision making and the kinds of projects that are preferred, given the goals of the plan. The plan will require a significant commitment of time, energy and financial resources to implement and it must be implemented incrementally over time, one step at a time.

The adoption of this Irondale on the Move Comprehensive Plan is the first step in the implementation process. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the City of Irondale and its City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, as well as many other municipal departments, community leaders, and concerned citizens. Continuing action to implement the Plan will be needed for it to have lasting impact. Working with a range of implementation partners, the planning staff will be the lead facilitator to implement the Plan and coordinate consistency reviews among municipal departments.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The implementation matrix in Table 9.1 identifies how the goals and actions in Chapter 3-8 of the Comprehensive Plan should be implemented. The lead and supporting agencies and departments charged with leading the implementation are identified. The actions are assigned suggested time frames for implementation, which may vary based on economic influences, potential funding sources (described later in this chapter) and other factors:

- Short-term: Tasks that could be initiated and/or implemented within 1-5 years of the Comprehensive Plan's adoption.
- Long-term: Tasks that are on a 6 year or greater timeframe after the Comprehensive Plan's adoption.

- On-going: Tasks that may be implemented in a series of incremental steps involving numerous agencies or tasks that are ongoing, continuous efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION AGENCIES

Since the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be implemented over several years, during which administrations, departments, boards and commissions may change, it is important to identify which agency(ies) should take the lead and be in a supporting role for a particular action task. A list of agencies and abbreviations is shown on the next page. It is important to note that the policies and recommended actions outlined in the matrix are for consideration only, and do not constitute an obligation on any City department, agency or organization's part to lead, support or participate in any given activity. The implementation matrix simply identifies recommended actions and potential partners in furthering the plan's goals and policies.









Success will be achieved through contributions from all sectors of the community.




AGENCY ABBREVIATIONS




- **ALDOT** Alabama Department of Transportation
- **BMPO** Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization
- **CC** City Council
- **CDA** Commercial Development Authority
- **CE** City Engineer
- **CA** City Administration
- **CL** Community Leaders
- **CRS** Cahaba River Society
- **D** Developers
- **DRA** Downtown Redevelopment Authority
- **FBO** Faith Based Organizations
- **FD** Fire Department
- **FRA** Federal Railroad Administration
- **FWLT** Freshwater Land Trust
- **GICC** Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce
- **HCAB** Housing Code Abatement Board
- **IAC** Irondale Arts Council
- **IDB** Industrial Development Board
- **IHS** Irondale Historical Society
- **IOM** Irondale on the Move Advisory Committee
- **ISAC** Irondale Senior Activity Center
- **IYAA** Irondale Youth Athletic Association
- **JVCG** Jones Valley Community Gardens
- **L** Library
- **LBO** Local Business Owners
- **NA** Neighborhood Associations
- **NPO** Non-profit Organizations
- **NS** Norfolk Southern
- **P&ZC** Planning and Zoning Commission
- **PD** Police Department
- **PO** Property Owners
- **POA** Private Organizations or Agencies
- **PR** Parks and Recreation Department
- **PW** Public Works Department
- **R** Residents
- **RA** Recycle Alabama
- **RMNP** Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve
- **RPCGB** Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
- **SP** School Principals
- **UP** Utility Providers
- **WB** Water Board




Table 9.1: Implementation Matrix




 ACTIONS		PG. #	 TIMEFRAME	 RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
COMMUNITY RENEWAL				
GOAL #1: Enhance the physical character and definition of the City.				
1.	Develop a city-wide signage replacement program.	42	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, P&ZC, PW
2.	Clearly define key gateways into Irondale through urban design and beautification enhancements.	42	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, PW
3.	Develop a city-wide wayfinding signage system.	43	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, PW
GOAL #2: Ensure better code enforcement.				
1.	Develop a city-wide publicly accessible database with the property condition and code enforcement statuses of each property.	44	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, HCAB, PW
2.	Create a citizen’s guide for code enforcement that enables citizens to report code violations and blighted properties.	44	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, HCAB, PW
3.	Create a vacant property registration ordinance.	45	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, P&ZC
4.	Dedicate more staff to code enforcement. Consider creating an additional department to handle both code enforcement and building inspection.	45	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, HCAB
GOAL #3: Coordinate neighborhood improvement efforts.				
1.	Establish an Irondale Beautification Coalition to spearhead and conduct quality “Keep Irondale Beautiful” cleanup efforts and to identify a list of catalytic sites for cleanup.	45	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CL, FBO, HCAB, IOM, R
2.	Create a sidewalk inventory to help determine gaps in connectivity and areas in need of rehabilitation.	46	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CE, PW
3.	Create an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan as it relates to curb ramps and sidewalk accessibility.	46	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CE, PW
4.	Acquire vacant lots for productive uses to meet the needs of the community.	46	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, CC, HCAB, NA, PR, PO
GOAL #4: Encourage community outreach efforts between citizens of Irondale, and the Irondale police department.				
1.	Create a standardized Traffic Complaint Form (for speeding and traffic violations).	47	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, PD
2.	Create an Irondale Citizens Police Academy.	47	On-going	CL, PD




 ACTIONS		PG. #	 TIMEFRAME	 RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
3.	Create a park ranger division in the City's police force to provide additional surveillance in parks during periods of low activity.	47	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, PD, PR
LIVABILITY				
GOAL #1: Ensure that all citizens have access to healthy foods.				
1.	Incentivize, recruit and attract a grocery store development into the City of Irondale.	52	On-going	CA, CDA, CL, GICC, IDB
2.	Incentivize, recruit, and attract more sit-down restaurants (non fast food) throughout the city of Irondale.	52	On-going	CA, CDA, GICC
3.	Create a downtown Farmers Market, and if successful, consider additional smaller farmers markets throughout the City.	52	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, DRA, FBO, NPO, R
4.	Create community gardens on vacant and other underutilized properties.	52	Short-term (1-5yrs)	FBO, JVCG, LBO, NA, NPO, R, POA
GOAL #2: Enhance collaboration between the residential / business community and local schools in Irondale.				
1.	Identify ways to fill funding gaps in local schools.	53	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CL, SP, R
2.	Develop a School-to-Work program between local business leaders and school leaders.	53	Short-term (1-5yrs)	LBO, POA, R, SP
3.	Promote and emphasize the Shades Valley Technical Academies.	53	On-going	CL, GICC, SP
4.	Increase communications about local school events (i.e. sports events, musicals, plays ect), volunteer needs, and school needs to the community.	53	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CL, GICC, L, SP
GOAL #3: Utilize pop up events and public art to energize and transform spaces into attractive public settings.				
1.	Plan pop up events in downtown Irondale.	56	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, DRA, GICC, IAC
2.	Display more artwork in public spaces.	56	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CL, IAC, LBO
3.	Explore opportunities to re-use obsolete industrial and commercial buildings for artists and other creative industries.	56	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CDA, IAC, NPO, LBO
GREEN SYSTEMS				
GOAL #1: Maintain, enhance and expand parks and recreational facilities with an interconnected system of natural resources for both conservation and public access.				
1.	Acquire blighted properties to expand recreational opportunities for residents.	63	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, HCAB, NA, PR, PO

 ACTIONS		PG. #	 TIMEFRAME	 RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
2.	Conduct a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	63	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, CC, PR, P&ZC
3.	Explore the feasibility and funding of providing a City of Irondale recreational center and athletic complex.	63	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, CC, ISAC, IYAA P&ZC, PR
4.	Work with the Freshwater Land Trust to purchase clusters of land in floodplain areas to expand the City's parks and recreation system.	63	On-going	CA, CC, FWLT, IPC, PR
5.	Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines into the Planning Commission review process for new parks and recreational spaces and facilities.	63	Short-term (1-5yrs)	PR, P&ZC
GOAL #2: Restore and sustain water quality, natural habitats and groundwater by incorporating best practices for environmental site design and stormwater management in development.				
1.	Enforce the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on all construction sites to control soil erosion and minimize sediment runoff.	65	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CE, D
2.	Install green systems on blighted or vacant properties to reduce stormwater run-off and flooding in flood prone areas.	65	Long-term (6-25yrs)	D, PO, PR
3.	Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to require the use of Low Impact Development (LID) or green infrastructure techniques in new developments to mimic natural hydrology where feasible and minimize impacts of stormwater runoff on the Cahaba River and Shades Creek and their tributaries.	65	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CRS, CC, P&ZC
4.	Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance to implement standards, flexibility and incentives for post-construction BMPS including Low Impact Development and Green Infrastructure.	65	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CRS, P&ZC
GOAL #3: Promote development and redevelopment that achieves goals for environmental sustainability, natural resource protection and enhancing public access to our natural assets.				
1.	Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to require more green space and buffers.	70	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, P&ZC

 ACTIONS		PG. #	 TIMEFRAME	 RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
2.	Modify the Zoning Ordinance to manage development within a certain distance from the Cahaba River and other major streams to protect buffer setbacks, floodplains, and water quality/habitat.	70	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CRS, P&ZC
3.	Pursue opportunities for acquisition, conservations and restoration of open space along year-round streams and rivers and actively protect these resources through land use management and flexible zoning.	70	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, FWLT, P&ZC
4.	Provide incentives to developers for green design.	70	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CDA, D, P&ZC
PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE				
GOAL #1: Provide necessary and efficient public infrastructure and utilities.				
1.	Develop a public facilities impact fee to support the establishment of municipal facilities to meet city needs.	74	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, PW
2.	Create forms to enable citizens to report potholes, sinkholes, streetlights that are out and other roadway problems.	74	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, PW
3.	Construct a new fire station to serve the proposed commercial growth on Highway 11.	74	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, CC, FD
GOAL #2: Provide universal access to telecommunications and high speed Internet.				
1.	Incentivize fiber optic infrastructure providers to construct conduit in major corridors of the city.	75	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, CDA, IDB, UP
2.	Modify the existing Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to include broadband infrastructure.	75	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, P&ZC
3.	Provide fiber optic or “innovation infrastructure” and public service upgrades at targeted development sites that would spur innovative companies to locate to Irondale.	75	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, CC, IDB, CDA, UP
GOAL #3: Provide ease-of-access to public information and ease of access to city governance.				
1.	Enhance the City of Irondale’s website by conducting a quarterly review of the website content to ensure information is relevant and that the website remains user friendly and informative.	76	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, IOM

 ACTIONS		PG. #	 TIMEFRAME	 RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
2.	Ensure that the public hearing notices, along with meeting agendas and minutes from City Council and other City Board / Commission meetings, are posted in a timely fashion for the public to see (via City website, posting at City Hall, social media, etc).	76	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA
3.	Create a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) database to improve coordination across Irondale City Departments. Train a staff member to maintain the GIS database.	76	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA
GOAL #4: Ensure the safety of all residents and citizens through comprehensive emergency preparedness training, education, and planning.				
1.	Revise and update the City's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.	77	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, PD, FD
2.	Form working agreements with Irondale businesses, and provide educational materials about their role in an emergency situation.	77	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, LBO, FD, PD
3.	Provide Emergency Management training and education programs for first responders, emergency workers, emergency managers, public/ private officials, and others.	77	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, FD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
GOAL #1: Refresh branding and marketing efforts to promote the uniqueness of Irondale.				
1.	Modernize and promote a consistent branding strategy with updated logos, themes, concepts, and graphics.	80	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, CDA, GICC, IDB, IOM
2.	Continue to update and publish the Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce's "Irondale City Guide".	80	On-going	GICC
3.	Revive the Irondale Historical Society and set up historical markers throughout the city at significant sites.	80	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CL, IHS, IOM, R
4.	Develop promotional brochures to promote Irondale as an Eco-tourism destination.	81	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CRS, FWLT, GICC, IOM, PR
GOAL #2: Know your market availability and needs.				
1.	Reactivate the Irondale Industrial Development Board.	81	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, CL, IDB, IOM
2.	Create and maintain an online database of available retail, office, and industrial spaces including size, zoning, lease rates, price, utilities, condition, etc.	81	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CDA, GICC, IDB

 ACTIONS		PG. #	 TIMEFRAME	 RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
3.	Establish a single point of contact, such as a City Economic Development Coordinator.	81	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, CDA, GICC, IDB
4.	Reactivate the Downtown Redevelopment Authority.	81	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, CL, IOM
5.	Regularly meet with business owners.	81	On-going	CDA, GICC
GOAL #3: Attract new businesses.				
1.	Conduct a more detailed real estate market analysis for commercial development in the City.	82	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CDA, IDB
2.	Provide monetary and regulatory or other non-monetary incentives to attract new stores and restaurants.	82	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC, CDA, IDB
3.	Promote and expand the resources of the Irondale Chamber of Commerce to include quarterly workshops on starting and growing business in Irondale in targeted areas.	82	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CL, GICC, LOB
4.	Identify one or two key business clusters where combined efforts could lead to business recruitment opportunities that tie into that cluster.	82	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CDA, IDB
5.	Identify the infrastructure investments required to make sites in under performing areas more competitive for economic development.	82	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CDA, GICC, IDB
TRANSPORTATION				
GOAL #1: Preserve and enhance the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system.				
1.	Conduct studies and regularly review data at high accident locations to support operational changes and designs that improve safety.	87	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CE, PW
2.	Improve the safety of roadways by eliminating obstacles to vision, constructing turn lanes, installing improved signage and striping, adding lighting or providing signalization.	87	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, PW
3.	Adopt subdivision regulations that support access management.	87	Short-term (1-5yrs)	P&ZC
4.	Improve pedestrian safety by providing marked crosswalks and mid-block pedestrian crossings.	87	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CE, PW
5.	Develop interlocal agreements with neighboring jurisdictions and other agencies to develop funding sources for transportation improvements.	87	On-going	CA, CC

 ACTIONS		PG. #	 TIMEFRAME	 RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
6.	Continue to explore the feasibility of a train “Quiet Zone” at the 20th Street at-grade intersection.	87	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CC, DRA, FRA, NS, R
GOAL #2: Build a multimodal transportation network to provide a wide range of transportation choices.				
1.	Expand sidewalk coverage in residential areas and build links from residential areas to activity centers, schools, recreational facilities, employment centers, and other major public facilities.	88	On-going	CA, CC, NA, PW
2.	Build an interconnected pedestrian, bicycle and trail system network.	88	On-going	CA, CC, PR, PW
3.	Build out segments of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System.	88	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CL, FWLT, PR, RMNP
4.	Consider the feasibility of extending public transit into Irondale.	88	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, CC
5.	Adopt a Complete Streets policy.	89	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CC, P&ZC
6.	Accommodate the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in the design and construction of all future transportation improvements.	89	On-going	CA, CE, PW
7.	Develop a streetscape program and associated design standards for US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard.	89	Long-term (6-25yrs)	CA, CC, D, LBO, P&ZC, PW
GOAL #3: Make infrastructure maintenance investments a priority.				
1.	Develop a regular maintenance schedule for all components of the transportation infrastructure.	90	On-going	CA, PW
2.	Create and maintain a pavement management system.	90	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CE, PW
3.	Identify a sustainable funding source to improve the life-cycle of city-owned roadways, such as setting up a Local Transportation Investment Program.	90	Short-term (1-5yrs)	CA, CC
4.	Establish partnerships to advance transportation initiatives.	90	On-going	CA

FINANCING AND INVESTMENT TOOLS

The following is a description of a number of financial tools and investment tools that the City of Irondale can use to encourage development that aligns with the vision set forth in the *Irondale on the Move* Comprehensive Plan. Financing tools do not generate new revenue, but allow leveraging of existing resources to accelerate the construction of projects.

ALABAMA SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Alabama has a number of special districts in the Code of Alabama that may be useful in financing the development within a municipality or county. They do rely on existing forms of taxation and the value generated is in some cases dependent upon the bonding authority of the government entity involved in the process. Typical eligible costs include roads, water, sewer, storm sewers, drainage, curb and gutter, docks, harbors, flood control, dams, berms, sidewalks, parks, schools, athletic facilities, fire and police protection facilities, mass transit facilities, air transport, business and industrial recruitment, hospitals and medical facilities, and planning activities are also permissible within some districts.

Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts (CICD) (Code of Alabama: §11.99B)

A Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts (CICD) is formed through a combination of public entities. It is intended to encourage and facilitate cooperative efforts by public entities to provide projects for their own use and for the use and benefit of their citizens and users. The public entities bring with them their individual authorities. In one county, the county combined the industrial development authority (that could build industrial parks) with the water authority (that could levy water rates) and they raised the capital to build an industrial park that provide employment base for the county. On its own the county would have lost the opportunity

because they did not have the funding to proceed with the development of the industrial park. All obligations created or assumed and all bonds issued or assumed by the district shall be solely and exclusively an obligation of the district and shall not create an obligation or debt of any member of the district.

Alabama Improvement District (AID) (Code of Alabama: §11.99A)

An Alabama Improvement District (AID) is where property owners in a designated geographic area can make improvements to the property, issue bonds and secure the bonds through liens on the property. Developments may be residential, commercial, or industrial. Generally private roads will not qualify for tax exempt financing. The municipality assesses the lots to pay principal and interest on the bonds. Assessments are payable over the term of bonds. No 10-year limit as under prior law.

A district may borrow money by the issuance of bonds, which bonds shall be revenue obligations, payable exclusively out of assessments levied on land within the district, and the bonds shall not be supported by the full faith and credit of the appointing government. However, the bonds may be secured by additional revenues, guarantees, pledges, letters of credit, or other credit enhancements as may be provided by the district or the owner of any property within the district.

Tax Increment District (TID) (Code of Alabama: §11.99)

Tax Increment District (TID) is a procedure whereby a municipality can issue bonds to provide infrastructure for private development projects. The incremental increase in tax revenues from the higher property base resulting from private development is pledged to the payment of municipal bonds. Tax Increment Districts are permitted under Alabama law, Code of Alabama 11-99. The local governing body may issue tax increment obligations payable out of positive tax increments. Such tax increment obligations shall not be included in the computation of the constitutional debt limitation of the public entity unless they are also secured by a pledge of the full faith and credit

of the public entity. Tax increment obligations may not be issued in an amount exceeding the aggregate project costs of a project.

Commercial Development Authority (CDA) (Code of Alabama: §11.54.170 through §11.54.192)

It is the intent of the Alabama State Legislature to authorize the incorporation in any municipality of commercial development authorities to acquire, own, and lease projects for the purpose of promoting trade and commerce by inducing commercial enterprises to locate new facilities in any municipality and expand existing facilities in any municipality. It is intended that each project be self-liquidating. It is not the intent of the State Legislature to authorize any authority itself to operate any commercial enterprise. This article shall be liberally construed in conformity with the intent. All bonds issued by an authority shall be payable solely out of the revenues and receipts derived from the leasing or sale by the board of its projects or of any thereof as may be designated in the proceedings of the board under which the bonds shall be authorized to be issued.

Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA): (Code of Alabama: §11.54A)

A Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA) is intended for the revitalization and redevelopment of any business district of any city in Alabama. Revitalization and redevelopment of a business district by financing projects under the chapter will develop and promote for the public good and general welfare trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities and will promote the general welfare of the city and state. It is therefore in the public interest and is vital to the public welfare of the people of Alabama, and it is hereby declared to be the public purpose of this chapter, to so revitalize and redevelop any business district of any city in the state.

All bonds issued by the authority shall be payable solely out of the revenues and receipts derived from the leasing or sale by the board of its projects or of any thereof as may be designated in the proceedings of the board under which the bonds

shall be authorized to be issued. All bonds issued or assumed by the authority shall be solely and exclusively an obligation of the authority and shall not create an obligation or debt of the state or of any county or of the city.

Redevelopment Projects and Urban Renewal Projects (Code of Alabama: §24.2 & §24.3)

The powers conferred in these two sections of the code have been used since 1979 to justify design standards and design review committees.

MAXIMIZING STATE AND FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING WITH A STRATEGY TO FUND MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Although federal and state funding grants are available to municipalities in the Birmingham region for infrastructure expenses, many municipalities have not taken advantage of the funding because of an inability or unwillingness to meet the match requirements. Strategies to address this problem could include the creation of a “sinking fund,” and public information and communication campaigns around high-priority projects and programs to create a consensus to support contributions for match requirements.

INFRASTRUCTURE TAX CREDITS

Infrastructure tax credits provide a tax incentive for builders and developers to invest in neighborhoods with either existing or planned infrastructure in a designated growth center. The credit is applied for neighborhood infrastructure projects such as improved outdated sewer or roads.

TAX ABATEMENT PROGRAMS

In an abatement program, property taxes can be reduced or eliminated for a number of years, followed by gradual increases in taxes until a certain period in time. Such abatement programs are locally

mandated. Sales and Use Tax Abatement guidelines are found in Code of Alabama 40-23-et al.

Qualifying industries may abate all state and the local non-educational portion of construction related transaction (sales and use) taxes associated with constructing and equipping a project.

(Mortgage and recording taxes can also be abated, but only when title is conveying into or out of a public authority, county government, or city government.) The local granting authority must grant the abatement for the qualifying project before the abatement can be used.

Statutory Requirement(s): The qualifying project must constitute an “industrial, warehousing, or research activity” defined as any trade or business described in the 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code, as: Major Groups 20 to 39, inclusive, 50 or 51, Industrial Group Number 737, or Industry Numbers 0724, 4613, 8731, 8733, or 8734. Expansion projects may qualify for an abatement under a major addition provided the project meets an additional investment threshold requirement of: the lesser of 30% of the original cost of the industrial development property, or \$2 million.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

This section is meant to jump-start a discussion of potential funding sources on how to pay for the improvements that are needed to address identified needs and move Irondale closer to achieving its vision.

STATE AND REGIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

Recreation Trails Program (RTP) Fund

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a funding program established by the federal government and administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). The RTP Fund was created to assist in the development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail related facilities for motorized and non-motorized uses. Each year ADECA holds a pre-application meeting

to discuss the available funding and maximum grant values. This meeting is not mandatory but is encouraged. The 2015 meeting was held on June 30, 2015 and pre-applications were due July 31, 2015.

A project will not be considered if a pre-application was not submitted. The timeframe for the 2016 grants should be similar to the 2015 dates.

Currently, ADECA has approximately \$1,153,278 in RTP funds available and there are four funding categories: non-motorized, single-use trails; non-motorized, diverse-use trails; motorized, diverse-use trails; and education. Maximum grant funded depends on the trail type, the activity proposed, or the resources required. The current maximum grant amount that can be applied for is:

- \$35,000 for non-motorized, single-use trails
- \$100,000 for non-motorized, diverse trails; approximately
- \$330,000 for motorized, diverse use trails
- \$58,246 for education

The federal share for the RTP grant is 80% of the total eligible project costs up to either \$35,000 or \$100,000. The non-federal share is 20% and may come from state, local, or private sources. It is important to note that the Recreational Trail Program operates as a reimbursement funding source – applications must prove whether actual leveraging is assured, or the potential for leveraging is good; prior to being accepted for funds.

While the RTP Fund is competitive (approximately 12 grants are awarded a year), the Recreational Trail Program may be utilized as an implementation tool for future elements in Comprehensive Plans. RTP funds cannot be used solely for the design of a trail. Given the funding requirements, the RTP Fund would be best utilized for improving trail and trail-related resources including:

- Educational projects
- Developing training on trail accessibility and sustainability
- Producing trail-related educational materials
- Trail protocols to monitor use, safety, conditions, and environmental impacts
- Maintenance of existing recreational trails.
- Restoration of areas damaged by usage of

- recreational trails and back country terrain
- Development of trailside and trailhead facilities that meet goals identified by the National Recreation Trails Advisory Committee
- The provision of features which facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities.
- Development of urban trail linkages near homes and workplaces (where an existing trail system is established)

It is important to note, the following:

- The RTP Fund would be best utilized if matched with additional funding sources, not as the primary funding source for a project;
- The RTP Fund functions through reimbursements;
- Extra consideration is given to applications that request far less than the maximum funding source (\$35,000 for non-motorized single use trails; \$100,000 for non-motorized diverse use trails); and
- Extra consideration is given for non-motorized diverse use trails.

For more information about the Recreational Trail Program, as well as links to all documents needed for application, go to <http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/ced/Recreation/Pages/Programs.aspx> or http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The National Park Services' Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is another funding program established by the federal government and administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). During its lifetime, the LWCF matching program has provided over 40,000 grants to state and local governments. These grants have been applied to small recreation projects as well as significant state and national parks. Projects include parks, playgrounds, forest and wildlife refuges, recreational lakes and ponds, outdoor playing fields, and picnic and camping areas. The amount of each grant varies. As part of the requirements set forth by LWCF, ADECA prepares a five-year planning document called the Statewide Comprehensive

Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). This plan provides various agencies with a guide on how to plan for recreation and natural resources. The current SCORP was adopted in 2013 and remains applicable until it is revised in 2018.

At the time this plan was prepared, 2015 numbers including the total amount of available funding and individual grant ceiling was unknown. However, it is assumed that these numbers would be fairly close to the 2014 numbers. In 2014, ADECA had an estimated \$570,000 in available funding, setting the maximum amount for an individual grant at \$50,000. Since LWCF is a 50/50 matching program, this means that for a project receiving the maximum \$50,000 grant, the sponsoring agency would be responsible for \$50,000 in order for a \$100,000 project to be completely funded. Local project costs can be paid through in-kind services or cash. If the project exceeds \$100,000 the sponsoring agency would be responsible for funding the excess. LWCF grants are used by communities to build a variety of park and recreation facilities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. It should be noted that securing LWCF funds for a trail would require the City to agree to manage and operate the trail indefinitely.

http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/fed_state.html
<http://adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/ced/Recreation/Pages/Programs.aspx>

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham operates a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) that provides supplemental financing for expanding and new businesses located in Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby and Walker Counties whose projects will result in the creation of new permanent jobs. RLF funds may be used in conjunction with SBA 504 and 7(a) guarantees, commercial loans, mortgage loans and other public sector revolving loans. The advantages of using RLF funds are:

- Flexible terms
- Fixed interest rates
- Up to 90% financing

Eligible uses include the purchase and development of land and buildings, the renovation or modification of existing buildings, purchase of machinery and equipment and the provision of permanent working capital. The following repayment terms are considered appropriate for most RLF projects:

- Building and Real Estate: 5 year term with up to 20 year amortization
- Machinery and Equipment 5-8 years or useful life
- Working Capital 1-5 years

Eligible businesses targeted for RLF financing are:

- Manufacturing and distribution type businesses
- Manufacturing and distribution related services
- Developing businesses that have uniqueness or technology that will add value to the region's economy
- Other businesses that may help a community improve its development potential
- Businesses must be located in Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, or Walker Counties
- Businesses that contribute to a historic preservation project

RLF guidelines include creating one new job for every \$35,000 of RLF assistance and loans are to be secured by lien positions on collateral. For more information go to: <http://www.rpcgb.org/economic-development/loan-programs/revolving-loan-fund/>.

Cawaco Challenge and Educational Grants
The Cawaco Resource Conservation and Development Council (CAWACO) offers three types of small competitive grants:

- Education Grants – grants up to \$5,000 for projects that provide information and/or educational instruction that meets Cawaco goals and objectives to children and/or adults. Example eligible projects include: books and materials, programs and field trips, or job development / skills.
- Challenge Grants – grants up to \$5,000 to assist public and other 501 (c)(3) agencies in their efforts to serve community needs, and can cover materials, infrastructure and

educational equipment. Projects funded should support Council goals and promote economic, community development and/or responsible use of the area's resources. Example eligible projects include: rain barrels / cisterns, parks and recreation, first responders and historic preservation.

- Community Development Grants – grant amount varies and comes through the State RC&D, but awards are generally \$10,000-\$25,000. A local legislature must approve the project.

For more information visit <http://www.cawaco.org/grants-programs/> or <http://www.cawaco.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/THE-CAWACO-RCD-GRANT-PROGRAM.pdf>.

LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Local governments in the Birmingham MPO area utilize locally generated revenues such as sales taxes, property taxes, franchise fees, business taxes, etc. to assist them in funding for local transportation improvements. These funds typically go directly into the local government general fund and transportation improvements are funded from this overall pot of money. Revenues generated are utilized mostly for local roadway resurfacing projects, and to a lesser degree to provide match to federal funds for intersection and signal improvements road widening, and routine maintenance.

Below are some examples of potential local funding sources: :

General Obligation Bonds

Using debt to build infrastructure and make other necessary capital improvements is standard practice and an integral part of municipal fiscal sustainability. This is particularly the case when the assets will be used by both current and future residents and businesses. That is, those paying for the improvements will enjoy and benefit from the capital improvements. General obligation bonds and revenue bonds are the most common options, and can be used for specific projects or to fund activities in a special district. General obligation bonds are

paid back from general tax revenues and require voter approval, and revenue bonds are paid back from specific revenues, such as utility rates or user fees.

Sales Taxes

Irondale's current sales tax is 4%, which, when added to the state sales tax of 4% and Jefferson County's 2%, totals a 10% sales tax experienced by the consumer. When spending by residents, workers, and visitors generates revenue, a small increase in sales tax can result in a significant amount of new revenue for specific projects or improvements.

Lodging Taxes

Lodging taxes are common revenue generating mechanisms employed by municipal and county governments. These are applied as a sales tax on the cost per room, and revenues are often dedicated to tourism or to the development of tourism-related facilities. Its application to transportation is very limited, although some local governments have enacted this type of tax to support transportation investments where infrastructure improvements or transportation services are needed to enhance visitor experience, accessibility and mobility. Irondale's current lodging tax is 6% and the state lodging tax is 4%.

Public Private Partnerships (P3)

In recent years, there has been an increase in private equity investment in public infrastructure through Public-Private Partnerships (P3), with financing packages that combine public and private debt, equity, and public funding. Plain and simple, the private sector provides an infusion of much needed cash, and in return the public sector agrees to repay the private investment with interest. P3s are contractual agreements between a public agency and a private entity, which allows greater private sector participation in the delivery and operation of transportation projects and facilities. P3s involve a sharing of responsibilities, risks, and rewards between public sector owners of transportation facilities and a private sector partner(s), but the public partner retains full ownership of the facility. In other words, P3s are a procurement strategy that allow for the transfer and/or sharing of risks associated with project delivery.

P3s have been extensively used in many industry areas to provide infrastructure such as utilities, water/wastewater, and health care. In the transportation sector, P3s can be applied across modes, including transit and structures (such as bridges), and are not exclusively used for roadways or toll roads. While the use of P3 as a potential source for funding major transportation improvements has merit and is certainly applicable in the metropolitan planning area, it should be viewed cautiously and not relied upon as a primary funding source. Typically, private sector participation involves taking on project risks, such as design, finance, long-term operation, and traffic revenue.

Development Fees / Impact Fees

Development fees are levied on developers as a condition of real estate construction. Such fees (also called impact fees) may be levied on commercial, industrial, or residential development; they may be assessed on a per-unit or per-square foot basis. While taxes can be used for general purposes without any link between the taxpayer and the outcome, fees must be shown to have a link with the purposes on which they are being spent. Impact fees must therefore only be used to mitigate the impacts of particular developments (for example, if a commercial development will cause more traffic at a particular intersection, the impact fees can be used to improve the intersection).

Development fees can be levied on the construction of new parking, whether in the form of entirely new facilities or expansion of existing parking lots or garages. This could serve an important secondary effect of steering development to infill areas, if parking construction in outlying areas carried heavy development fees.

PERFORMANCE METRICS: MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

This Comprehensive Plan is a comprehensive summary of where Irondale is today, where Irondale wants to be tomorrow, and what Irondale needs to do to get there.

But how can Irondale leaders track implementation progress? Many of the actions and paradigm shifts discussed in the plan may take years to develop, fund and implement. Some short-term impacts are likely to be subtle. Some will be more noticeable. Over time, however, smart decisions and the cumulative

effects of implementing the recommended actions will result in the future that the plan envisions.

Performance metrics provide a measure of progress toward meeting a goal: whether it is improving, declining, or staying the same. In order to track progress in achieving the goals set forth in this Comprehensive Plan, a set of performance metrics has been developed to provide a data-related indication of change from the existing conditions in Irondale today. Some performance metrics may not be available for an update on an annual basis, but they can provide relevant information for assessing the city's quality of life and progress toward implementing the Irondale on the Move Comprehensive Plan.

Table 9.2: Performance Metrics

FUTURE LAND USE	
1.	Increase in total number of building permits issues annually. Average change in average amount of time required for development approvals. Number of new cases for developments that comply with the Future Land Use Map.
2.	Average change in average amount of time required for development approvals.
3.	Number of new cases for developments that comply with the Future Land Use Map.
COMMUNITY RENEWAL	
GOAL #1: Enhance the physical character and definition of the City.	
1.	Number of city-owned signs replaced.
2.	Number of new or replaced gateway signs / monuments.
GOAL #2: Ensure better code enforcement.	
1.	Tracking of top five most frequently encountered violations each year.
2.	Number of code violations resolved and brought into compliance each year.
3.	Number of vacant property registrations.
4.	Development and use of a city-wide database which lists information including: property condition, occupancy status, and code violations.
5.	Development and use of Citizens Guide for Code Enforcement.
GOAL #3: Coordinate neighborhood improvement efforts.	
1.	Increase in the number of coordinated clean up days by neighborhood organizations.
GOAL #4: Encourage community outreach efforts between citizens of Irondale, and the Irondale police department.	
1.	Reduction in the number of traffic complaints (i.e. speeding).
2.	Increase in graduates from the Irondale Citizens Police Academy.
3.	Downward trend in the crime rate per capita – report by district and by type (property, violent, hate)

LIVABILITY	
GOAL #1: Ensure that all citizens have access to healthy foods.	
1.	Increase in residential proximity to grocery stores, farmers markets and community gardens.
GOAL #2: Enhance collaboration between the residential / business community and local schools in Irondale.	
1.	Increase in educational attainment (Share of adult population with high school, college, and graduate education)
2.	Increase in the number of students in Irondale who are trained for and placed in local jobs.
3.	Increase in participation in local school events (sports events, musicals, plays) and volunteer efforts.
4.	Increase communications about local school events (i.e. sports events, musicals, plays ect), volunteer needs, and school needs to the community.
GOAL #3: Utilize pop up events and public art to energize and transform spaces into attractive public settings.	
1.	Number of pop-up events held each year.
2.	Number of public art installations.
3.	Increase in the number of retail / arts venues.
4.	Increase in participation in city and non-city funded cultural events.
GREEN SYSTEMS	
GOAL #1: Maintain, enhance and expand parks and recreational facilities with an interconnected system of natural resources for both conservation and public access.	
1.	Percent change (by year) in the number of complaints about maintenance of city owned park space.
2.	Increase in acreage of public and private parkland (or number of acres of parkland per 1,000 residents).
3.	Increase in residential proximity to parks.
GOAL #2: Restore and sustain water quality, natural habitats and groundwater by incorporating best practices for environmental site design and stormwater management in development.	
1.	Increase in the percentage of impervious area treated by best management practices.
2.	No reduction in water quality or quantity from monitored wells in the City.
GOAL #3: Promote development and redevelopment that achieves goals for environmental sustainability, natural resource protection and enhancing public access to our natural assets.	
1.	Increase in number of building permits issues for projects employing “green” building techniques.
2.	Number of Certified Green Businesses.
PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE	
GOAL #1: Provide necessary and efficient public infrastructure and utilities.	
1.	No increase in the average emergency response times for public safety vehicles (i.e. fire and police).
2.	Meet or exceed service delivery standards for library.
3.	Percent change (by year) in the number of complaints for trash collection.
4.	Amount of public funds spent on public infrastructure improvements.
GOAL #2: Provide universal access to telecommunications and high speed Internet.	
1.	Percentage of the population with access to high speed internet.

GOAL #3: Provide ease-of-access to public information and ease of access to city governance.	
1.	Information on the City's website is relevant and up-to-date (government officials and staff directory, online resources for access to open meetings and records, document library, archives of meetings, ordinances, links to public notices, access to budget and financial information, maps and data)
GOAL #4: Ensure the safety of all residents and citizens through comprehensive emergency preparedness training, education, and planning.	
1.	Number of emergency training sessions attended by city staff each year.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
GOAL #1: Refresh branding and marketing efforts to promote the uniqueness of Irondale.	
1.	Development and use of updated City logos, themes, concepts, and graphics.
2.	Development and use of promotional materials to advertise Irondale as an Eco-tourism destination (access to Ruffner Mountain, biking, canoing, etc.)
3.	Number of historical markers placed at significant Irondale sites.
4.	Develop promotional brochures to promote Irondale as an Eco-tourism destination.
GOAL #2: Know your market availability and needs.	
1.	Reinstatement of the Irondale Industrial Development Board.
2.	Creation and appointment of a City Economic Development Coordinator (or similar position), to oversee and coordinate economic development efforts.
GOAL #3: Attract new businesses.	
1.	Number of new business licenses issued annually.
2.	The number, size, and valuation of newly constructed non-residential buildings.
3.	Increase in the number of jobs in target sectors.
4.	Decrease in commercial / office / industrial vacancy rate.
5.	Annual increase in sales and use tax revenues.
6.	Number of meetings per year by the Irondale Industrial Development Board.
7.	Upward trend in the percent of Irondale employees who also reside in Irondale.
8.	Increase in the ration of jobs to housing units in Irondale.
TRANSPORTATION	
GOAL #1: Preserve and enhance the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system.	
1.	Downward trend in the number of annual collisions (vehicle to vehicle, vehicle to pedestrian, vehicle to bicyclist).
GOAL #2: Build a multimodal transportation network to provide a wide range of transportation choices.	
1.	Increase in linear feet of public sidewalk constructed.
2.	Increase in linear feet or miles of bicycle facilities constructed.
3.	Increase in linear feet or miles of off-road trails / greenways constructed.
4.	Increase in linear feet or miles of trails that connect parks.
5.	Increase in numbers of residents who walk or bicycle to work.
6.	Adoption of a Complete Streets policy.
GOAL #3: Make infrastructure maintenance investments a priority.	

1.	Total linear feet or miles of sidewalks repaired.
2.	Total linear feet or miles of streets resurfaced and repaired.
3.	Creation of a Pavement Management Program.
PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT AREAS	
Downtown Irondale	
1.	Number of properties re-zoned to mixed-use district.
2.	Increase in number and acreage of mixed-use developments with two or more different uses.
3.	Number of building permits issues in Downtown Irondale.
4.	Number of meetings per year by the Irondale Downtown Redevelopment Authority.
US 78 Corridor	
1.	Increase in number of new businesses and/or total square feet of non-residential developments located along the US 78 Corridor.
2.	Increase in number and acreage of mixed-use developments with two or more different uses.
3.	Increase in number of newly developed or redeveloped sites with relegated parking (i.e. parking areas are located behind or to the sides of buildings).
4.	Creation and adoption of design guidelines and standards for the US 78 Corridor.

ANNUAL REPORT & 5-YEAR UPDATE CHECKLIST

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">ANNUAL REPORT</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">5-YEAR UPDATE</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>	<p>Update the Implementation Matrix indicating the status of each action.</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">ANNUAL REPORT</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">5-YEAR UPDATE</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>	<p>Highlight the successes of the past year / 5 years.</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">ANNUAL REPORT</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">5-YEAR UPDATE</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>	<p>Note any necessary changes to the actions within the plan.</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">ANNUAL REPORT</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">5-YEAR UPDATE</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>	<p>Summarize the next year’s priorities and work program and assign responsibilities.</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">ANNUAL REPORT</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">5-YEAR UPDATE</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>	<p>Define the ongoing role for the Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Committee or other vehicle for continuous citizen participation and dialogue.</p>

**CITY OF IRONDALE:
COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN**