

Homewood, Alabama MASTER PLAN

Adopted by the
Homewood Planning Commission
October 23, 2007



THE CITY OF HOMEWOOD

Mayor:

Barry R. McCulley

City Council

J. "Ginger" Busby, President

J. J. Bischoff

Sam Brasseale

Joe Falconer

Thomas Hamner, Jr.

David Hooks

Allyn Krall

Jackie Langlow

Scott McBrayer

Anthony R. Smith

Allan Trippe

Planning Commission

Mike Brandt – Chairman

Lane Wooley-Vice Chairman

Sam Brasseale

John Bresnan, Fire Chief

John Dantzler

Billy Higginbotham

John Krontiras

Rusty McCombs

Barry McCulley, Mayor

Department of Engineering, Planning and Zoning

Greg Cobb, Manager

Vanessa McGrath, Engineer

Donna Bridges, Secretary

For copies of this document:

<http://www.homewoodal.net/departments.php>

Homewood, Alabama

MASTER PLAN

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER PLAN	1
GREATER HOMEWOOD GOALS	1
INTENTIONS OF THE PLAN.....	2
USING AND REFINING THE MASTER PLAN.....	3
II. CITYWIDE STRATEGIC CONCEPT	5
HOMEWOOD 2007.....	5
HOMEWOOD TOWN MEETING.....	7
Assets.....	7
Issues	8
Outside Forces	8
Why People Choose to Live/Work/Invest in Homewood	9
Visions for Homewood.....	9
CITYWIDE STRATEGIC CONCEPT.....	10
Major Elements of the Concept	11
III. MAJOR COMPONENTS.....	13
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	13
Green Infrastructure Components	14
Green Infrastructure Policies	16
NEIGHBORHOODS	16
Neighborhood Planning and Design Criteria.....	19
ACTIVITY CENTERS AND CORRIDORS.....	20
Citywide Activity Center and Corridor Policies.....	21
Downtown Homewood.....	23
Regional Commercial Centers.....	25
Community Commercial Centers	26
Neighborhood Commercial Centers	27
Gateways and Image Corridors	28
Employment Support Centers.....	29
Institutional Support Centers	30
Major Recreational Centers	31
CONCLUSION	32
IV. THE USE OF LAND.....	33
MAJOR DEVELOPMENT THEMES.....	33
LAND USE TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS.....	37
Parks, Recreation and Protected Areas.....	37
Residential	38
Commercial and Office	39
Industrial.....	39

Civic and Institutional	39
Mixed Use.....	40
Illustration.....	40
CONCLUSION	41
V. TRAFFIC AND ROADWAYS	43
ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.....	45
CITYWIDE MOBILITY POLICIES	46
CITYWIDE ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES	47
CITYWIDE TRAFFIC CALMING POLICIES	47
VI. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM	51
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATION	51
Zoning Ordinance and Map Considerations.....	52
Subdivision Regulation Considerations.....	52
Additional Development Review Criteria	54
PUBLIC INVESTMENT	57
Greenways and Sidewalks	57
Parks and Open Space	58
Fire Stations	59
Roadway Improvement Projects.....	60
SPECIFIC PLANS AND PLANNING	60
KEEPING THE MASTER PLAN UP TO DATE	61
VII. CONCLUSION	63
APPENDIX: TOWN MEETING NOTES.....	65
Neighborhoods.....	65
Assets.....	65
Issues	65
Outside Forces	66
Reasons to live, work or invest in Homewood.....	66
Missing from personal visions for Homewood	66
Plan Implementation Criteria.....	67
APPENDIX: SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS	69
APPENDIX: IMPLEMENTATION ACTION AGENDA.....	71
NOTES.....	73

Homewood, Alabama

MASTER PLAN

“Throw a fence around Homewood, and you could live your full life here without ever having to leave. It's unusual for a city this size to have all we do: a hospital, elementary to high schools, a college and places for shopping, dining and entertainment.”

Greg Cobb, Director of Engineering, Planning and Zoning
as quoted in the Birmingham News, May 9, 2007

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER PLAN

Homewood has, over the years, made itself into an attractive and desirable place that continues to draw more and more pressure for private investment every year. Unless the public investment and commitment that has created this place could somehow be reversed, such pressures will continue. It is also clear that Homewood is a living community that requires continual reinvestment and revitalization to maintain and improve its vitality. The city and its various neighborhoods are not static; no matter how good they may be, the status quo is never a reality—they must change and adapt to circumstances, some of which may be strictly external. Hence, it is recognized in the planning process that has led to this document that change is inevitable, and planning is about managing change in ways that are compatible with the place that is and the place that residents and property owners desire it to be.

The Homewood Master Plan illustrates and provides an overall strategy for how the city intends to shape itself over time. The plan is a guide to making decisions regarding land use, development and conservation, zoning and capital improvements. It is intended to assist Homewood residents, property owners, merchants, builders and developers as they invest in the city by providing a reasonable expectation of the city's future.

During the planning process that led to the Master Plan, the Homewood City Council on March 9, 2007 adopted the Revised Goals of the Rosedale Community, directing that they be applied to the city at large. The city's consultant, KPS Group, Inc., adapted the Rosedale goals accordingly:

GREATER HOMEWOOD GOALS

- *Maintain, protect and promote Homewood's historic character as a community.*
- *Increase the number of owner-occupied homes in Homewood without unnecessarily displacing current residents; build new homes and rehabilitate existing homes where appropriate.*
- *Create and maintain quality affordable housing in Homewood.*
- *Establish and preserve boundaries protecting single-family housing.*
- *Buffer Homewood's single-family residential areas from incompatible land uses.*
- *Encourage appropriate mixed-use and transitional development in existing commercial areas.*
- *Foster pedestrian-friendly access among and between Homewood's neighborhoods.*
- *Enhance and preserve the environmental qualities of each neighborhood and greater Homewood.*

- *Increase the overall attractiveness and visibility of each neighborhood and greater Homewood.*
- *Maintain and enhance the diversity (social, economic, racial, age, etc.) of Homewood.*
- *Improve connectivity between each neighborhood and the greater Homewood community*
- *Improve pedestrian safety.*
- *Enhance community safety.*
- *Foster open communication and dialogue between city and community leaders, residents, and business owners.*
- *Build and maintain relationships and partnerships that benefit the greater Homewood community.*

INTENTIONS OF THE PLAN

Throughout the planning process, Homewood has aimed to inform and guide decisions that will help to bring about the desired future state of the city. The plan is long-range, general, and focused on physical development. It is meant to be an aid to decision making. Consequently, it is intended to be a living document, to be updated as needed to maintain its relevance as circumstances change.

The Homewood Master Plan is an attempt to:

- *Illustrate the ways and directions in which the city should evolve over time.*
- *Provide a guide to land use and development decisions and a basis for making and revising regulations regarding type, intensity and timing of development.*
- *Ensure that, as development occurs, the city's most significant natural and cultural features are preserved or enhanced.*
- *Provide a pattern for land use and development that strives for a sustainable community that includes affordable housing for its diverse population and that will continue to enjoy a diversified tax base sufficient to support desired facilities and services.*
- *Coordinate land use and development recommendations with those for infrastructure improvements.*

The City Council, Planning Commission and citizens of Homewood intend to refer to this document in order to:

- *Visualize what may be reasonably expected to occur in Homewood as an aid to making development investment decisions.*
- *Review and evaluate development proposals—to test the fit with Homewood's vision and expectations.*

- *Review rezoning requests—as an essential part of determining appropriateness.*
- *Provide guidance regarding adoption of development regulations and amendments.*
- *Identify and advise regarding priorities for infrastructure investments—streets, greenways, parks, schools and other public facilities.*

The Homewood Master Plan recognizes the value of the city's underlying natural resource base, the history of its neighborhoods and its traditional community values. The plan balances development by balancing growth and the conservation of important natural and community resources. The city's activity centers, image corridors and gateways will concentrate a diversity of functions at appropriate locations, structured by overall citywide open space and accessibility systems. Land uses that are located, planned and designed to be compatible with these systems will be supported and encouraged to provide opportunities for creativity, efficiency, stability, image and diversity.

USING AND REFINING THE MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan is a combination of vision, maps, development policies and guidelines. It provides a framework for guiding public and private decisions that will affect the growth, development and redevelopment of Homewood. The plan is based on the community's vision for its own future—a long-term vision that may not be fully achievable in the lifetime of those participating in drafting the plan, or even of the next generation. Nevertheless, the plan looks ahead, focuses on the physical form and character of the city and its neighborhoods, and strives to shape development of public and private properties within Homewood's planning area.

The plan provides a general, long-range *guide* to future development—to assist public officials and private citizens alike as they consider making investments that may have long-term implications for the community. To be effective at this task, the plan must be continuously monitored and renewed as changes occur in physical, social, political and market conditions.

The plan will be implemented through the actions of developers and other private citizens, city staff, the Planning Commission, other boards and commissions, and the City Council. Major public actions in support of plan implementation will include adoption, revision and enforcement of various parts of the city's growth management system. These include development regulations, the capital improvement programming process and its relation to the city budgeting system, and decisions about the appropriateness of development proposals. Guidance provided by this monitoring and renewal process will assist the city in refining and detailing the Master Plan through consideration of amendments as needed.

The Master Plan is intended to be a living document, to evolve and grow in response to changes in public values and to market and physical conditions. Only through

continuing use, evaluation, detailing, reconsideration and amendment can the plan fully serve Homewood, and only then can the people of Homewood use it wisely as a creative tool as they seek achievement of its master vision for the community.

II. CITYWIDE STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Homewood is virtually landlocked—surrounded on all sides by other cities—and just about completely built out. There is very little undeveloped land, and property values are rising in response to demand. Nevertheless, this plan is concerned not about attaining so-called “highest and best use” for every parcel of land in the city. Rather, it seeks to assist residents and property owners and city officials with the much more difficult task of finding and arranging a pattern of the “most fitting and appropriate” uses and densities of whole neighborhoods that will be compatible with the residents and the overall community and the quality of life they share. The search, then, is for ways in which growth and development pressures should be channeled in a manner compatible with the vision the people of Homewood have set for themselves and their community.

HOMEWOOD 2007

The Homewood Master Plan process provides a systematic approach to thinking about a citywide vision for the future, setting long-range goals for the physical character of the city and devising policies, programs, and projects to move the city toward fulfillment of those goals. The focus of this process is dialog between and among citizens and elected and administrative officials. Its purpose is to reach consensus on policies, programs, and projects relating to that physical character and the responsibilities and areas of influence of city government. The process is largely one of discerning and coming to mutual agreement about present and future identity and character of the city and its several major areas. Hence, this chapter begins with an overview of the city as it is.

Homewood is a city of neighborhoods—a so-called “first ring suburb” of Birmingham, the state’s largest city. It is a city of places—and of historic place names—a city that was formed from three small municipalities. It is a city of multiple identities, in which the residents are passionate about where they live and about the interrelationships they have with the place. Those multiple identities form much of the city’s quality of life.

Homewood’s major commercial, industrial and institutional activity centers are located mostly toward the edges, rather than the middle, of the city. These include such diverse places as Brookwood and Lakeshore Hospitals, Wildwood, North Wildwood and Brookwood Village shopping centers, and Samford University along the south edge, a significant concentration of office, industrial and warehouse uses to the west, and commercial corridors to the east and west, in the form of US Highway 31 and Green Springs Avenue, respectively.

As noted earlier, Homewood is a first-ring suburb that is defined physically by its location between two substantial, virtually parallel ridges and punctuated by a lower

ridge in between. It is defined also by its adjacency to and between the state's largest city (and its significant concentration of white collar employment) and the burgeoning second- and third-tier suburban (and exurban) growth that continues at a rapid pace, located south of the city.

The city is separated into discrete identity areas or places by history, the low ridge between the higher ridges to the north and south, and two north-south traffic corridors. Large numbers of people pass through the city each day on their way between the central city core and the outer suburbs and exurbs—most all of them without stopping in Homewood. They inflate the traffic numbers to a significant degree and have made possible two large retail tax generators—regional commercial activity centers that are situated near the east and west edges of the city. Neither of these centers has much to do with the character or internal identity of the city's neighborhoods.

Identity of the city as a whole is strongly related to identity with the city's three or four oldest neighborhoods, plus the area known as West Homewood. Most of those attending the Town Meeting (documented in the next section) live in those areas. Interestingly, there were very few attendees from the parts of the city not identified by a local place name or well-recognized sense of place.

The symbolic heart of the city as a whole is Downtown Homewood. But, tucked away in or near the heart of each of its major identifiable places are the essentials of the city: small, internal nodes of daily and weekly activity, such as parks, neighborhood commercial centers and elementary schools. Most of these elements exist and operate on a truly neighborhood scale. In contrast, regional commerce, higher education, major employment, health care, and traffic maintain a separate coexistence, mostly apart from the daily lives of most of the city's residents. To miss this aspect of Homewood is to miss the essential character of the city entirely.

The character of these predominantly residential areas of the city is critical to its quality of life, and the character of each is intimately associated with the non-residential activities, land uses and functions located at the edges—or, in some cases, at the centers—of their daily lives. The most beloved of these incorporated functions operate at a neighborhood scale—or, in the case of Downtown Homewood, at the scale of the community, which is the collection of the city's neighborhoods and identifiable places.

Downtown may be the symbolic heart of Homewood, but neighborhood centers—those existing and those that have been lost over time—are the symbolic hearts of the city's four largest neighborhoods: Edgewood, Hollywood, Rosedale and West Homewood. As was noted in the first Town Meeting, the residents of each of these places—and other neighborhoods—seek to conserve the values associated with their own parts of the larger community that is Homewood, Alabama. This plan is largely about that quest.

HOMEWOOD TOWN MEETING

Homewood residents brought color, life and emotion to their interchange of ideas during the Homewood Town Meeting, when master planning began in earnest at City Hall on a crisp evening in late January 2007. The near-capacity crowd was provided a brief overview of the city and its resources, using maps of existing physical features, critical infrastructure, land use, zoning and traffic.

The participants were asked a series of questions designed to elicit comments and suggestions that would help the Planning Commission and City Council as they considered the future of their city. What follows below is a summation of the main themes of the responses (see Appendix for complete listing) in each of several categories.

Assets

Those attending the Town Meeting were asked first about the features they considered assets of Homewood—those special features they hold in especially high regard and that set the community apart from others. The responses are outlined here for convenience but presented in no particular order.

Feelings about community and neighborhood are important to the respondents—the ability and convenience to get out, walk around and see a diverse range of neighbors and friends. They view Homewood—and their neighborhoods—as a place that is self-contained, yet diverse, having a small town feeling, yet set in the midst of an urbanized area. They appreciate the existing scale of the place and its buildings, what they consider low-key commerce in the central retail areas, their local merchants and the relationships they share.

Homewood, to the respondents, has important local institutions and destinations. These include the schools and churches, Central Park and the many neighborhood parks and recreation facilities. The community greenway along Shades Creek offers the opportunity to walk or bike some distance. Everyone seems to like the 18th Street spine of Downtown Homewood—as a neighborhood center for some and a community-scale shopping destination for others.

The largely networked street system allows residents easy internal access within and between most of their neighborhoods. They like the ability to explore the city and they appreciate the diverse architecture in a place that is uncrowded enough that they can also see the trees. And locals appreciate also their location at the heart of Jefferson County and within the larger metropolitan area and the major institutions that contribute to their own city and to neighboring cities. These include Samford University, Lakeshore Rehabilitation Hospital and Brookwood Hospital.

Issues

On the other hand, participants in the Town Meeting were clear that work remains to be done to bring conditions up to the standards they would like to enjoy throughout the city. Again, the responses are outlined for convenience but presented in no particular order. For example, despite its overall quality, Homewood lacks clearly defined, attractive gateways and corridors. The respondents dislike the fact that the arterial streets that provide them with such good regional accessibility also funnel large amounts of traffic through the community. They also dislike the fact that large traffic volumes—and the arterial streets themselves—form barriers to interaction between neighborhoods. Respondents reported vacant lots and vacant buildings in some parts of town. Others said there is too much pavement—underutilized parking in some parts of town, and yet a lack of parking elsewhere. Some noted that Homewood lacks affordable housing.

The ability to walk around freely is interrupted by the several major traffic arteries that bisect the city, and pedestrian connections are generally not up to local standards. Participants noted the lack of sidewalks in many parts of the community, and the lack of bicycle paths and of walking and jogging trails. Lack of enough recreation fields was also mentioned.

The image of the community is very important to local people, and the respondents noted especially the overabundance of large commercial signs and the absence of wayfinding signage that would help visitors and newcomers find their way around.

An especially hot topic at this time in the life of the community seems to be land use and development density. Some said the city's regulations are not up to the task of managing development and assuring building that is compatible with the city's character and image of itself. Others simply suggested lack of enforcement of regulations currently on the books.

Outside Forces

There are always factors not subject to local control—forces that operate perhaps at metropolitan, county, regional, state or national levels—that affect every community, each in its own way. That is certainly the case with Homewood, a city like many in its metropolitan area that controls very few of its own utilities.

Announcements of redevelopment activities seem to have come to this community at a fairly rapid pace lately, and residents shared concerns about potential impacts of increasing height, bulk and density on the sense of community and quality of life they now enjoy. Participants also noted large existing and proposed commercial developments at the edges of the city, growth in general to the south of the city, plus housing and commercial development and church expansion within. All of these are helping to generate more traffic through the city and traffic cutting through some neighborhoods.

Participants cited lack of control over highways under jurisdiction of the Alabama Department of Transportation. They noted especially the recurring proposal to increase the capacity of US Highway 280—most recently the proposal to add a second deck to the highway (which the city councils of Homewood and neighboring Mountain Brook are on record as opposing).

Why People Choose to Live/Work/Invest in Homewood

Location, accessibility and open space are not the only opportunities afforded by Homewood. When those at the Town Meeting were asked to share their own personal reasons for living, working or investing in Homewood, the list grew quickly. Their responses may be organized under two major headings:

First, Homewood is a relatively small city, and it has positive, personal attributes associated with that status—hometown pride in heritage and traditions and safety—buttressed by such intangibles as strong personal values and a fairly relaxed attitude toward the pace of life.

Second, the city provides a high quality of life in an affordable, pleasant, clean environment. Homewood provides a safe place in which to live, work and invest. Recreation, jobs, commerce, medical attention and the benefits of a medium-size metropolitan area are close at hand.

Visions for Homewood

Building upon discussions of assets, issues, outside influences and the reasons people are drawn to the city, Town Meeting participants were asked to envision Homewood as they would like it to be a decade or so from now. Following a few moments in which to think about desired future conditions, each person was asked to share with the others one significant physical aspect of that future community that is perceived to be absent from Homewood as it exists today. The responses are organized into several types, but not presented according to priority.

First, local people want a unified vision for the city—an overall strategy for achieving their visions for the future. In accord with such a strategy, the city would utilize all its resources to create and seize upon a variety of opportunities. Homewood would have legible, welcoming entrances and an improved image overall.

Development would be intentional, in accord with the city's Master Plan, and adjacent land uses and densities, including those resulting from reinvestment in vacant and underutilized properties, would be compatible with one another.

Second, residents want the city to be focused on neighborhoods, with many daily needs met close by—even close enough to walk to. Residential neighborhoods would be strengthened through development of appropriately scaled destinations or focal points. The city would seek affordable housing opportunities; while at the same time provide neighborhoods protection from inappropriate development. There would be streetlights and underground utilities through the city.

Third, participants envisioned that the parks, open spaces and gathering spaces now enjoyed by city residents would grow in number even as they become more accessible. Streams would be clean and open and there would be a systematic citywide tree replacement program.

Fourth, in the visions shared in the Town Meeting, Homewood would become an even more walkable city, with a complete network of sidewalks within and between neighborhoods and nearby commercial centers. There would be safe pedestrian crossings, and neighborhood traffic would be calm by design, rather than by retrofitting. Parks and recreation areas and schools would be interconnected by greenways and trails, and the Homewood Community Greenway would be completed and interconnected to a regional trails system.

Fifth, Homewood would more obviously value its historic resources, and become adept at capturing their value for the community. This would parallel public and private efforts at neighborhood preservation and enhancement to the point that each of the city's major neighborhoods would have a restored, appropriate center, destination or focal point.

CITYWIDE STRATEGIC CONCEPT

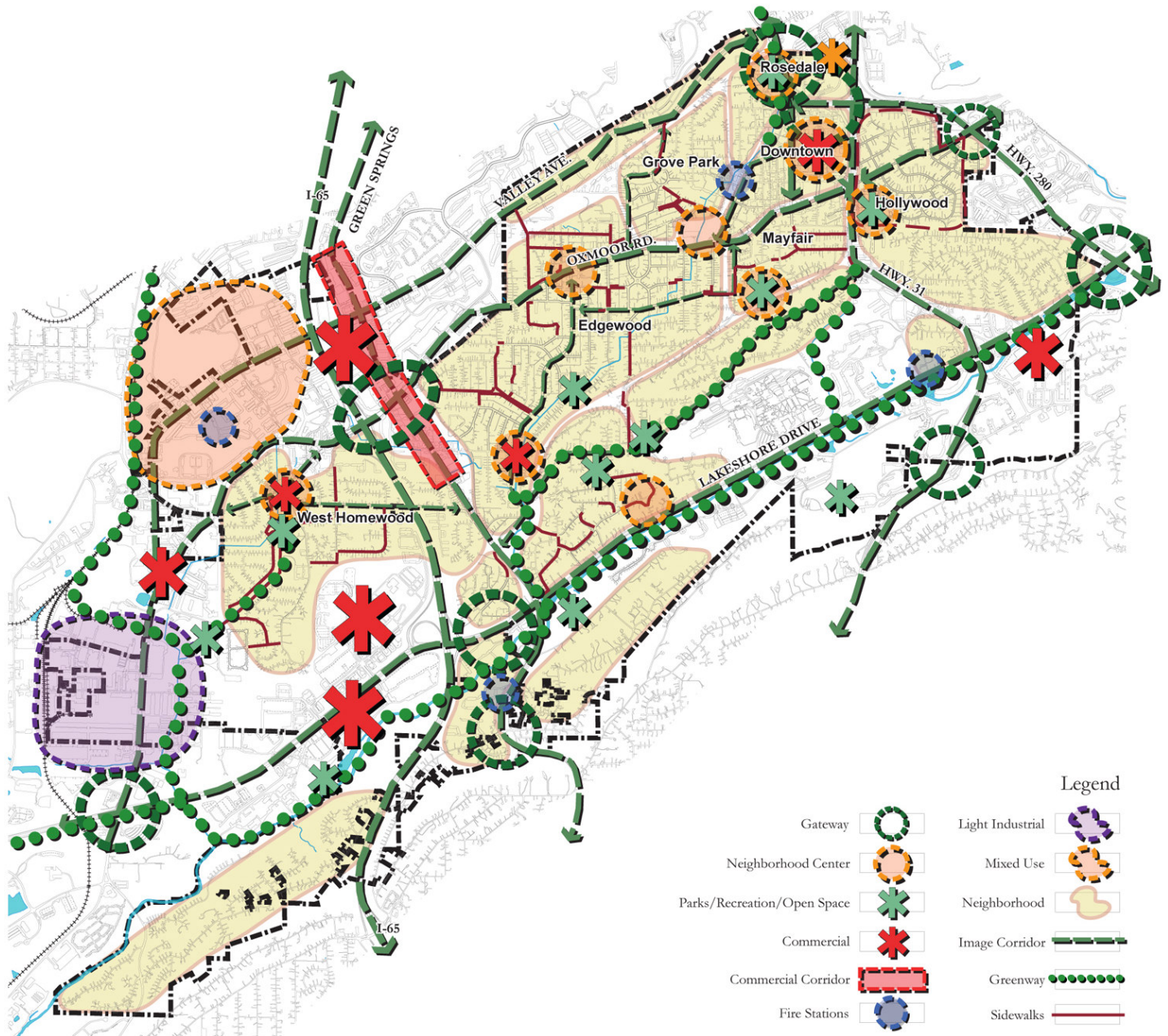
The strategy for improving and enhancing the quality of life of Homewood is based on the strong value system expressed by local residents and the positive attitudes and responses they shared with one another during the Town Meeting.

Creating and seizing upon opportunities community-wide begins with the city's core, major institutions and activity centers. It builds on the overall image of the city and the value of its physical setting. The strategy continues to support commerce, industry, recreation and institutions in locations that will be accessible to people living and working in the community and its trade area, as appropriate. It protects the city's traditional neighborhoods and streets while upgrading pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle accessibility networks. And the strategy focuses attention on upgrading the city's civic and recreation facilities and expanding its public safety facilities and services.

The community-scale activity centers and corridors—commercial, industrial, civic, institutional and recreational—support, and are supported by, the city's neighborhoods. Each of the neighborhoods will have a focus of a type and scale appropriate to its place in the community and the desires of its residents.

Major Elements of the Concept

- *An overall, global strategy will guide planning and design for development and conservation of Homewood.*
- *Homewood will be a legible city—its edges and districts will be clear and visitors will be readily able to find their destinations. City gateways will be well defined and the arterial and collector streets will reflect an appropriate overall image.*
- *The city's "green infrastructure," consisting of its park and recreation system, in combination with Shades Creek, Griffin Creek and the city's ponds, streams and floodplains, augmented by steeper slopes and major portions of its urban tree canopy, will be conserved and respected by the Master Plan and the city's development management system.*
- *Downtown will clearly remain the civic heart of the community.*
- *Neighborhoods across the city will continue to provide a strong sense of place, each containing at least one focus of appropriate scale and function.*
- *The city will have a plan and program for directing public and private investment that supports its planned image, health, safety and welfare.*
- *The city's park and recreation system of passive and active parks and outdoor recreation facilities will be enlarged, expanded and focused especially on the needs of neighborhoods.*
- *The city's pedestrian network will be expanded through construction of sidewalks to provide access between neighborhoods and nearby activity centers, and the greenway and trail system expanded to interconnect neighborhoods with the city's schools and major park and recreation facilities.*
- *Intensive development will continue to be directed toward the city's edges, to intersections of arterials and collector streets, and designated corridors.*
- *Industrial development will be directed to the existing industrial park and toward redevelopment of sites used previously for industrial purposes.*
- *All city streets will be managed to meet the needs for mobility, balanced with the need for accessibility, through careful management to conserve public resources.*
- *The city's street system quality and capacity will be upgraded through improvements to selected intersections and pedestrian crossings.*
- *Access to all arterial and collector streets will be managed carefully to conserve their capacity.*
- *Development and conservation planning and design will be managed using an overall system of regulation and public investment in accord with the Master Plan, which will be used as a guide to decision making.*



Citywide Strategic Concept

The strategic concept is designed to build on the spirit of the people of Homewood, their history and their successes. The intent is to capitalize on the city's resources, to build upon its history, traditions and institutions in combination with the physical advantages of the city's location and setting. The concept gives physical expression to a consensus citywide vision and provides a general, overall framework for the city's Master Plan.

III. MAJOR COMPONENTS

Homewood's land use and development patterns consist of several major components. The primary focus of the plan is Homewood's *Neighborhoods*, which should support and embrace the city's *Green Infrastructure*. Of secondary importance are the city's major *Activity Centers, Image Corridors and Gateways*, which are nodes or concentrations of people, activity and development that reflect Homewood's urban and landscape form and environmental quality. The city's *Neighborhoods* and *Neighborhood Destinations* are supported by these major development components, each of which should be designed, constructed and maintained in ways that balance development with conservation. The overall, community-wide balances between development and conservation, and between population and consumption of land, should be structured by and compatible with the city's *Green Infrastructure*, which is composed of critical environmental resources.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

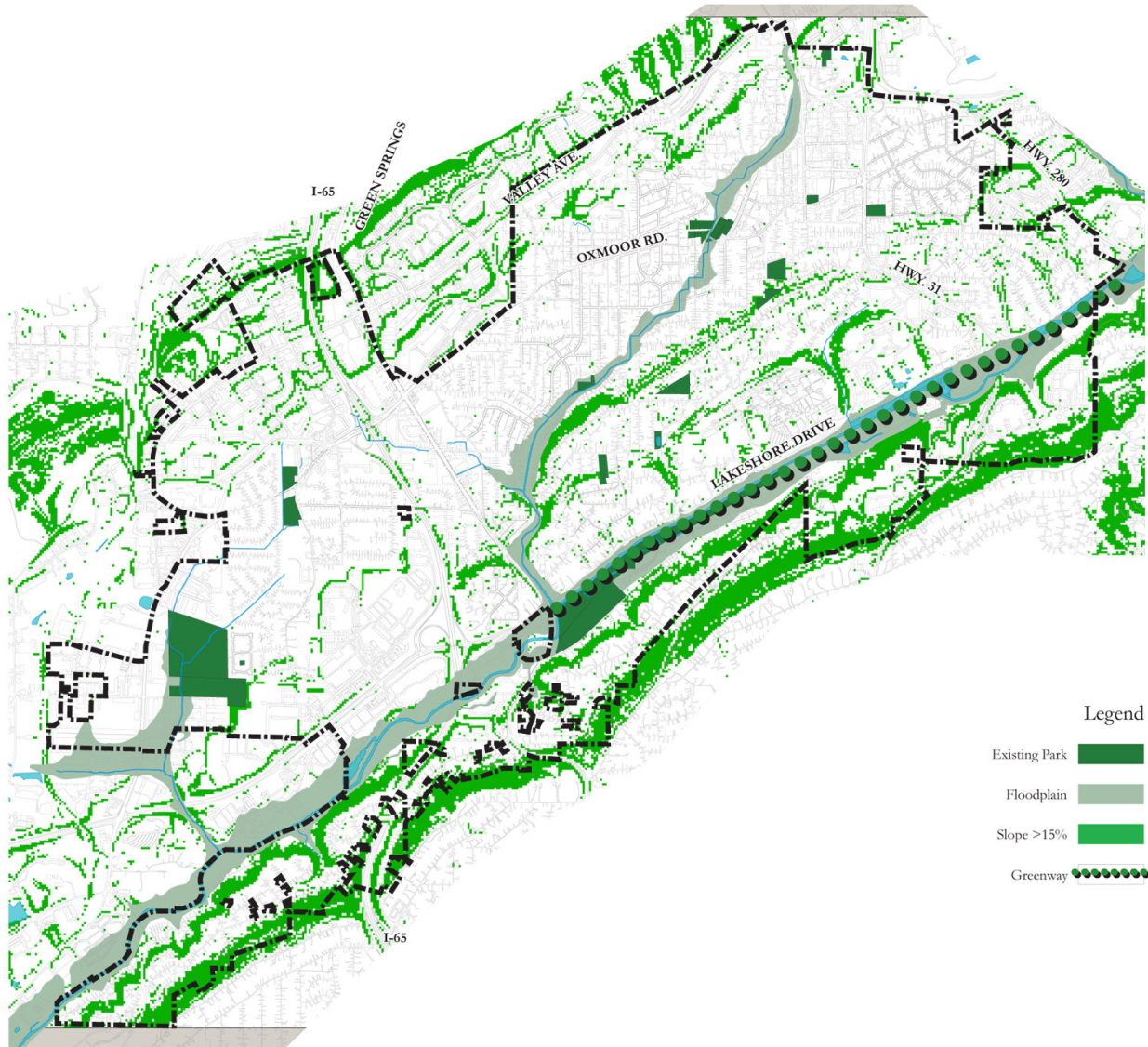
Homewood enjoys a wealth of natural resources critical to human well-being, whether the particular resource affects the economy, overall quality of life or the health and safety of residents. These natural resources vary from place to place in and around the city, but they have one thing in common: if they are surrounded and cut off from one another, diminished or depleted, the quality of life in Homewood and its neighborhoods will tend to suffer.

Natural resources have limits, and development decisions typically affect far more than the property's owner and those in the immediate neighborhood, because use, type and intensity of development ultimately affect the surroundings. Further, depending upon the approach to development, the land itself can present varying ranges of opportunities and hazards. For example, steeper slopes may provide opportunities for views, but they have a tendency to be difficult to build on. In combination with erodible soils, steep slopes can be hazardous. As floodplains are filled in and built upon, flooding is shifted to other locations and little can be done there to eliminate the problem. Once cut, forests may take decades to grow, but they may return. However, prime agricultural soils paved over are taken out of production and gone forever. Extinct species cannot be replaced.

Consequently, Homewood public officials and citizens take seriously the quality of the natural environment. As a part of the planning process they have reviewed carefully the mutual impacts of development and natural resources on one another for purposes of protection, production, health and safety, and parks and recreation. They have also considered how these natural resources opportunities together form a logical green infrastructure of open space and natural resource areas that may provide a framework or structuring system within which to organize, locate and interconnect urban development.

Green Infrastructure Components

One of the essential foundations of Homewood's Strategic Concept is that a healthy green infrastructure is critical to the community's continued quality of life. The city's green infrastructure is not and will not be merely the land and



Homewood Green Infrastructure

water areas that are left over when all the development and building has been completed. What is required to assure this outcome will be guided, sensitive balancing of conservation and development of the city's land and water resources.

The first step in this process is to discern the existing pattern of the city's green infrastructure and each of its constituent parts—the resources, sites and areas that

may be critical to the community. These are environmental conditions associated with surface water, slopes and public and semi-public parks and open space.

Homewood's open spaces—many of which may appear to be simply the city's "undeveloped" lands—include many resources that are important to the community's character and well being. Others may appropriately be set aside for reasons of health and safety, parks and recreation, and protection or preservation. The pattern illustrated on the Green Infrastructure map generally depicts these resources and places.

Local surface water resources include Shades Creek, Griffin Creek and several smaller streams and small ponds, all noted on the map in dark blue. The larger surface water resources have associated areas that are often wet and others that are intermittently flooded. The map indicates wetlands in a light green, and floodplain areas in a light gray (those mapped are so-called "100-year floodplains" or the areas having a 1% chance of flooding in any given year). Encroachment into floodplain areas reduces the flood-carrying capacity of the drainage system, increases flood heights upstream, and contributes to stream bank scouring downstream. The floodway is the stream channel and adjacent portions of the floodplain that must be kept free from encroachment to allow the 100-year flood to be carried without substantial increases in flood heights.

Steep slopes are relatively common in some parts of Homewood, and some may actually preclude development. The impact of slope upon the safety and cost of construction increases with steepness and soil erodibility. Thus, increasing steepness of slope should begin to raise what might be considered "green flags" to property owners and city officials alike as they consider the possibilities of development and construction in the areas mapped in light green.

The Green Infrastructure map shows all slopes greater than 15% in grade. Site design and grading on slopes greater than 15% should not disrupt view corridors and scenic vistas and should conserve significant natural topographic features, including ridgelines, to the extent that any portion of the ridgeline may be within a regulated steep slope area. Roads and driveways should follow natural topography to minimize cutting and grading of critical slope areas, which are defined as those in excess of 15%. The City intends to ensure appropriate design and development sensitivity to site context through detailed review and approval of proposed site plans, grading plans, erosion and sedimentation control plans, architectural plans and hydrology, drainage and flooding analysis reports.

Homewood contains several major parks and recreation areas, which are indicated on the green infrastructure map in dark green. Many of these incorporate or are located adjacent to some of Homewood's most important water resources. Others include significant areas of steep slope and the city's significant urban tree canopy.

Green Infrastructure Policies

Conserve green infrastructure and landscape form

The city hosts rather diverse landscape features in addition to its urban tree canopy. The natural woodlands along the larger watercourses are some of the city's greatest assets. Streambeds, wooded stream-banks and floodplains are linear elements of the landscape that should be conserved. Development should be planned and arranged within the landscape with all of these areas clearly in mind.

Organize development to capitalize on critical open spaces

The city's most important and scenic locations should be reserved as public open space. These places and their interconnections should be accounted for as part of a citywide open space network. Once key areas are selected, appropriate public uses should be determined—be they greenways, neighborhood parks or community parks. These open space resources should be linked together insofar as possible into an overall system, and development should be planned and designed so that buildings look into these areas rather than back up to them or otherwise wall them off from view.

Ensure green infrastructure accessibility

The city's green infrastructure—and especially its parks and natural areas—should be accessible. Parks and open spaces should accommodate both active and passive recreation uses. Walking trails, play areas, and picnic facilities should be staple components of recreation parks.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods, together with citywide open space and transportation systems, and the various activity centers, form the city. Several types of corridors—they include streets, greenways and streams—should interconnect neighborhoods. Among the city's neighborhoods, a range of housing types and price levels should bring together a diversity of people into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds that are essential to this community.



Good neighborhoods place an emphasis on community, livability, appearance, diversity, transportation opportunities, convenience and safety for all residents. To achieve this, the most successful neighborhoods in Homewood generally exhibit characteristics typically missing from many recent conventional subdivisions. The

following are several principles intended to guide planning and design for all Homewood neighborhoods—and especially those that become targets of opportunity for reinvestment or even redevelopment:

Preserve and enhance the citywide open space system

Neighborhoods should be planned and organized within and in relation to the city's green infrastructure. A neighborhood designed to conserve its natural systems will require less capital investment for earthwork, clearing and drainage, and will contribute to a healthier, more appealing community. Neighborhoods should be sensitively sited in relation to or strategically placed away from the most valuable or threatened components of the city's green infrastructure.

Enhance each neighborhood appropriate to its context

The scale and density of a neighborhood should reflect its location in the community. Scale, mix of housing types and sizes, and type of open space should be integrated into the neighborhood and fit the surroundings. More dense development will be more appropriate when focused toward commercial centers and corridors, rather than isolated among lower-density surroundings. Less-intense neighborhoods should be the rule away from such focus areas.

Design with appropriate density and community relationships in mind

Conservation subdivision techniques, through which a neighborhood is designed to conserve its natural systems and thereby require less capital investment for earthwork, clearing and drainage, streets and utilities, can add to a healthy, appealing community. Such techniques may be used to maintain allowed gross densities without negatively affecting the natural environment, which should be an important neighborhood ingredient.

Create or enhance an appropriate neighborhood destination

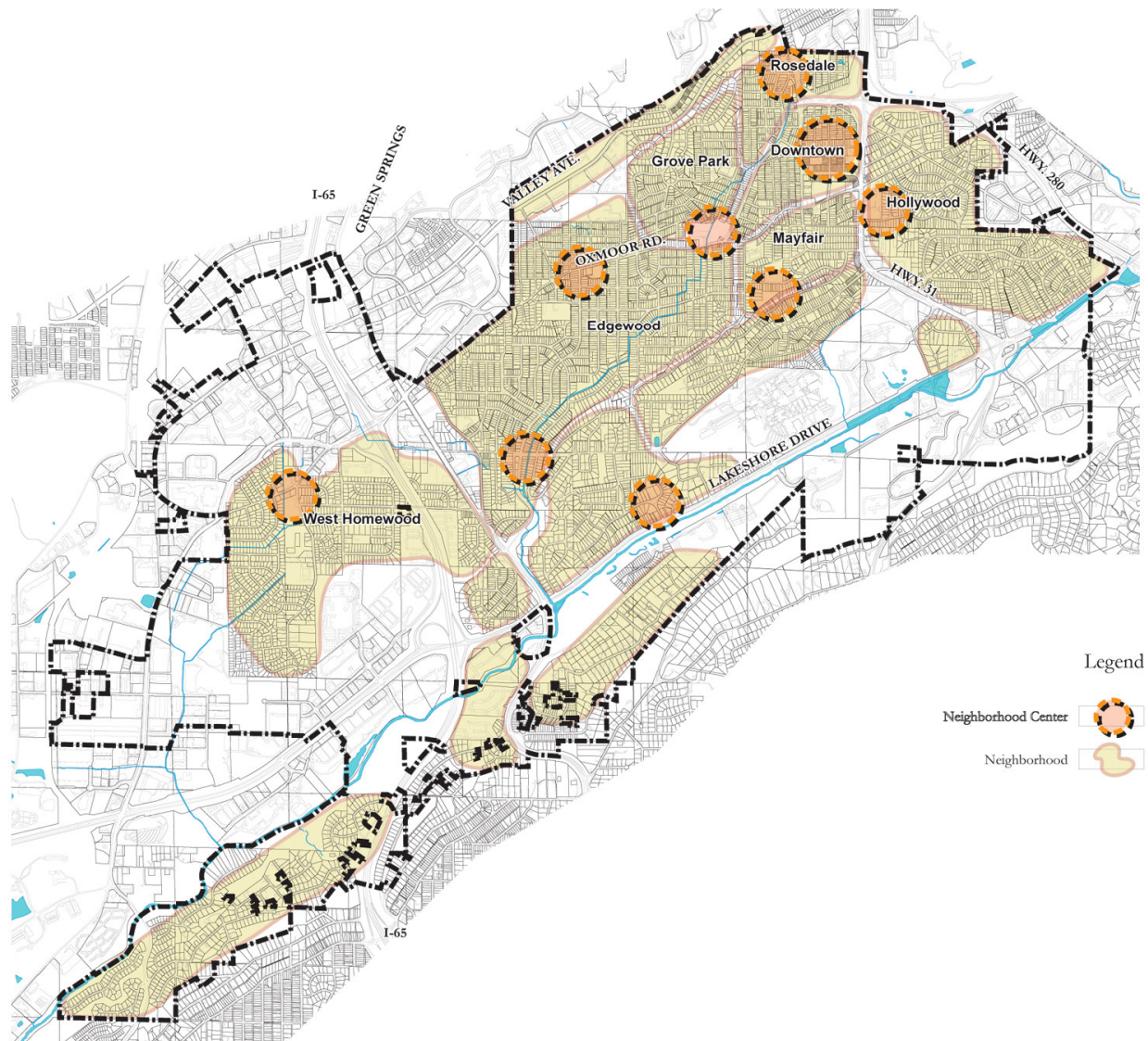
A neighborhood destination or focal point of a type and size appropriate to the needs of residents should be included to add a sense of place to each of the city's neighborhood—for example, a small commercial or mixed-use center, a school, park, playground, gazebo, institution or community facility, or open space. The destination should be pedestrian oriented and provide for easy vehicular access, with spaces and places for neighbors to venture out into the public realm without their vehicles.

Design the place for children (and seniors, too)

Places for children to play (and older people to get around) safely should be a staple item of all neighborhoods. Open spaces add to the value of the property and help to create a more livable community. Each neighborhood should have at least one special gathering place, such as a neighborhood green, near its center.

Design the neighborhood with walkable, interconnected streets

Sidewalks should provide the framework for the pedestrian system insofar as possible. The pedestrian network can be greatly improved and walking distance and infrastructure costs substantially reduced through the use of mid-block connections and cul-de-sac linkages, as well as trails within greenways or other open space areas. Creating interconnected neighborhood streets and providing alternate routes will help to diffuse automobile traffic, thus lowering traffic volumes on many city streets.



Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Destinations

Design streets appropriate to the scale and character of the neighborhood

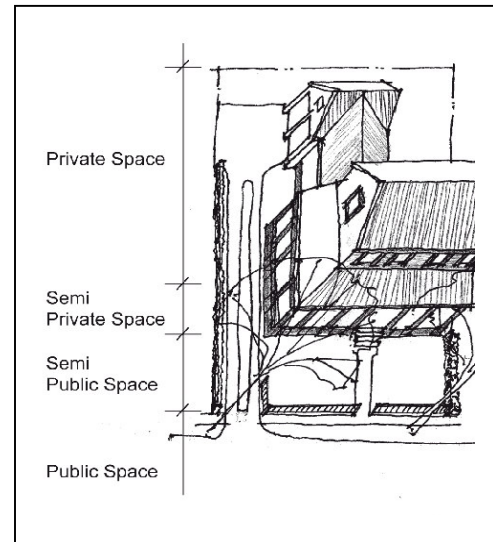
Neighborhood streets should be relatively narrow and include sidewalks, street trees, front porches and architecture that embrace the street. Instead of a single standard, the type of adjacent uses, the location of the street within the community, the desired carrying capacity and vehicle speed should be the determining factors in neighborhood street width and design. Neighborhood streets should be calmed by providing an overhead canopy of street trees, which gives the neighborhood a sense of spatial enclosure and a comfortable setting creating an environment where drivers realize that driving too fast or too aggressively is inappropriate.

Neighborhood Planning and Design Criteria

- *Identify the essential features of green infrastructure and landscape form and their interconnections as part of a larger open space network.*
- *Preserve natural and cultural features of the city's green infrastructure, such as steep slopes, stream valleys and significant trees.*
- *Determine appropriate public uses, greenways, neighborhood parks and community parks.*
- *Link green infrastructure and landscape elements together into open space systems that organize development.*
- *Plan and design the neighborhood to look into open spaces, rather than back into them.*
- *Plan and design neighborhood-scale commercial, civic and open spaces to meet the daily needs of residents and to provide a destination or focal point for the neighborhood.*
- *When commercial uses are appropriate, plan and design a walkable, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commercial center with enduring architecture that will add value to the neighborhood and community overall.*
- *Fully integrate the destination or focal element into the neighborhood so buffers are not necessary.*
- *Make all neighborhood destinations pedestrian oriented with easy vehicular and pedestrian access from within the neighborhood.*
- *Retain, and reinvest in as appropriate, medium density housing to assure a concentration of residents adjacent to neighborhood destinations.*
- *Allow for porches and courtyards—they provide shelter, seating places, and a comfortable transition from the public street to the private dwelling and are a welcoming gesture to visitors.*
- *Clearly distinguish the front door as the primary welcoming feature of each residence.*



- *Provide a perception of a strong, solid foundation, a sense of durability, strength and importance with foundation walls and raised entrances—the residence will appear to be sitting on a platform, as an important structure, separated from street level.*
- *Locate garages away from all community areas—they too often present blank walls to public view.*
- *Set the garage back from the main façade of the home—they are the most utilitarian space, and do little to foster community interaction.*
- *Retain native vegetation and woodlands along roadways wherever possible.*
- *Incorporate existing trees and shrubs into the streetscape by carefully planning alignments and grades.*
- *Plan and design neighborhood streets and buildings to appropriately incorporate all four degrees of community and privacy: public, semi-public, semi-private and private.*
- *Require internal vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections within development areas and between adjacent land uses.*
- *Provide internal connections (roads, pathways, open space, etc.), between adjacent land uses, such as residential subdivisions or commercial developments, to serve as a secondary means of emergency access, encourage more sense of community, and minimize local traffic on major roads.*



ACTIVITY CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Significant nodes or concentrations of people, activity and development are collectively designated in this plan as *Activity Centers*. The intent is that each of these be located, planned and designed to relate to, support and positively affect urban form, environmental quality, adjacent residential neighborhoods and the transportation network in a positive way. Activity centers come in a variety of types and sizes, but most display many of the following characteristics:

- *Anchor or focus of activity: Regardless of its type, every center or corridor contains some activity or function for which it is primarily and integrally known in the region, community or neighborhood, as appropriate.*
- *Compact, densely developed core: There is a relatively high density of development of the types essential to the character of the place, ideally with greater density of use toward the center and less toward the edges.*

- Internal vehicular circulation: *Once having arrived by vehicle at most any location within a center or along a corridor, a motorist may easily access most any other location within the center or along the corridor on the same side of a major street without having to re-enter that street.*
- Pedestrian and bicycle accessibility: *The center or corridor is readily accessible by pedestrians and cyclists from surrounding areas.*
- Pedestrian oriented (overall): *The center or corridor demonstrates through pedestrian density throughout that it was planned and designed with the overall needs of pedestrians given priority over those of motorists and automobiles.*
- Positive sense of place: *The average person has a good feeling about the overall character of the center or corridor—overall image of the place and its relation to the surrounding environment, feelings of safety, and sense of arrival and departure.*
- Vehicular accessibility: *The center or corridor is readily accessible by motor vehicle.*
- Visual coherence: *The average person senses that things fit together—signage, landscaping, the way the parking supports getting to one's destination, the way most of the buildings seem to relate to one another.*
- Well-defined edge: *It is clear to most everyone where the center or corridor begins and ends without having to resort to walls or signs.*

There are several types of activity center and corridors provided for by this plan. Each should be developed in accord with principles appropriate for center location, size and type.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • <i>Downtown Homewood</i> | • <i>Gateways and Image Corridors</i> |
| • <i>Regional Commercial Centers</i> | • <i>Employment Support Centers</i> |
| • <i>Community Commercial Centers</i> | • <i>Institutional Support Centers</i> |
| • <i>Neighborhood Commercial Centers</i> | • <i>Major Recreation Centers</i> |

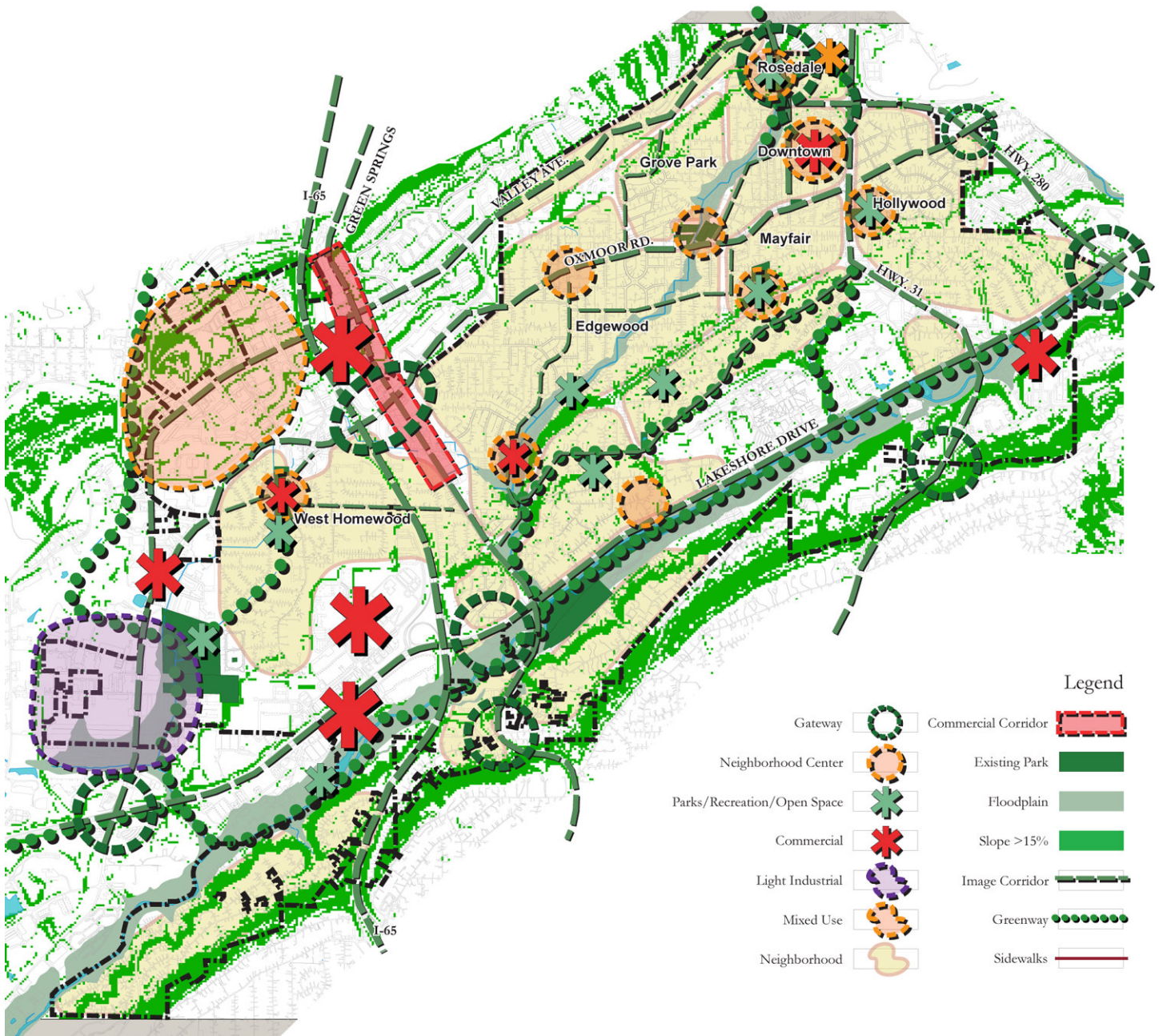
Citywide Activity Center and Corridor Policies

Preserve and enhance the city's open space system

All activity centers should be carefully planned, organized and placed appropriately within the city's green infrastructure. They should be strategically placed away from the most valuable or threatened natural resources. The natural environment should continue to be valued as an important ingredient of all the city's activity centers, which in turn should be designed to conserve and utilize natural systems to assist in filtering stormwater drainage.

Design each activity center to relate to its context

Each activity center should have an appropriate scale and mix of uses defined by its type and the population it serves—regional, citywide or neighborhood. Each of these centers should be integrated into the community, with appropriate connections and transitions made to adjacent land uses. Streets and service drives should be located



Activity Centers, Corridors and Gateways

and designed appropriate to the users, mindful of the impact on roadway capacity and safety. Vehicular access should be designed to allow motorists access to adjacent centers and neighborhoods, yet discourage through traffic while still accommodating service access and delivery.

Create discernable, compact activity centers

Each activity center should be planned and designed to have a sense of identity and place, distinguishable from one center to the next—perhaps by including a unique feature or activity. Activity centers should be compact and densely developed. Their edges should be well defined. Each center, regardless of scale, should look and feel as if it has been designed, or at least considered, as a whole, in context with its surroundings. Continuity of major design elements, such as building setbacks, height, scale, materials, landscaping and signage should be evident. Differences should not be abrupt and overwhelming, but rather provide interest and diversity.

Design each activity center to maximize accessibility

Design can greatly influence the number of people willing to walk, ride or use public transit as an alternative to driving. Development density along corridors should be kept relatively high to make transit more feasible. Appropriate linkages between residential and nonresidential uses should be provided. Pedestrians and vehicles should be separated from one another insofar as practicable, yet the length of pedestrian crossings of streets and parking lots should also be kept to a minimum. Human scale should be created through building mass and form, as well as scale and detail. Building location, setbacks and orientation should enhance pedestrian comfort.

Downtown Homewood

Downtown is the most complex and complete of the city's activity centers, despite its relatively modest scale. A well-integrated mixed-use center, it has undergone revitalization efforts over the past decade or so and recently become the focus of intense reinvestment of mixed-use development. It continues to support the mission and vision of the city and, as a result, remains the symbolic heart of the community and the home of city government.

Downtown Homewood is a high priority: citizens and city government realize that reinvestment will remain an open-ended process that will require a specific plan and continuing diligence to shape in an appropriate image. The key will remain attentive to *all* the factors of downtown's success together, rather than just some of them individually.

One of the strong sentiments expressed during the planning process is that the city's core should remain its symbolic heart and a major focus of community energy and activity. The following are general policies toward physical conditions supportive of such a vision. Fully fleshed out in a specific plan, this framework can help citizens,

merchants, investors, and government officials with decisions that will support downtown.

Promote and maintain an attractive image

- *Budget for, provide and maintain high quality public facilities.*
- *Provide and maintain an appropriate appearance and use of vacant properties.*
- *Encourage the use of attractive and effective commercial displays and signs.*

Support and maintain a vital commercial environment

- *Promote citywide land use patterns that support downtown commercial vitality.*
- *Promote a variety of activities that contribute to a healthy retail and service business environment.*
- *Assemble an appropriate and mutually supportive mix and pattern of uses, businesses and activities.*
- *Build and promote a desirable image of downtown and its access corridors.*

Make downtown easily accessible

- *Maintain and support legible vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns that are compatible with those citywide.*
- *Minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians to enhance the safety and efficiency of the street system.*
- *Provide adequate, clearly visible downtown area parking facilities.*
- *Provide adequate loading zones for service and delivery vehicles.*
- *Provide safe sidewalks and other pedestrianways that are convenient for pedestrians and will help to keep them away from their cars as long as possible on each visit to downtown.*

Every public action that is part of an attempt to solve existing problems should strive to avoid causing new problems at the same time. That's the reason for taking an overall approach to planning for downtown: everyone involved must focus on a comprehensive view of how downtown supports—and is supported by—the whole community.

Downtown Homewood

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Residential:
 - Adjacent (horizontal)
 - Integrated (vertical)
 - Diverse type and ownership
- Transit-oriented development
- Retail commercial
- Office / service commercial
- Hospitality:
 - Restaurant
- Institutional/Civic
- Recreational

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Compact, dense core
- Intensive mixed use
- Civic spaces
- Pedestrian oriented
- Pedestrian accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Required build-to lines
- Street trees
- No parking lots fronting sidewalks
- No drive-ins or drive-throughs
- Density decreases to edges

Downtown should be a model of success for reinvestment throughout the city: it should be a continuing and open-ended process. As progress is made, city policies, programs, and actions will require adjustment and amendment to continue to meet the needs and desires of local merchants as well as people in the trade area. For the reinvestment process to be successful, the right things must happen in the right places at the right times all over the community.

Downtown must maintain and enhance its position as the city's primary mixed-use activity center. It is the traditional heart of the community and should be treated with respect due its age and position. It should have a wide range of uses and activities that are compatible with its civic importance and its distinction as the most pedestrian-friendly location in the city.

- *Retail uses should be small in scale, and placed at street level and office and residential uses should be placed in upper stories or off the square as appropriate.*
- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger composition of downtown.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in similar scale, height and configuration.*
- *For the sake of variety and human scale, larger buildings should be divided into separate volumes.*
- *Building heights typically should not exceed two stories. Nevertheless, street intersections are important, and may deserve taller structures.*
- *Buildings should be placed at the back of the sidewalk, with all off-street parking situated to the rear.*
- *Parking, loading or service functions should not be located at an intersection.*

Regional Commercial Centers

These are large centers, typically dominated by regional (and citywide) retail and service uses. Primary vehicular access should be directed to local collector streets that intersect the arterial road network. Direct access to and from arterial roadways should be strictly limited to promote a safe street network and protect street capacity.

Regional commercial centers serve both citywide and regional markets, and should present a positive image to the visitor and resident alike. While these centers rely primarily on customers arriving by car,

Regional Commercial Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Transit-oriented development
- Retail commercial:
 - Largest shopping centers
 - Wide variety of goods
 - Serve regional trade area
- Service commercial:
 - Regional services
 - Auto services and dealerships
- Hospitality:
 - Restaurant
 - Accommodation
- Residential adjacent
- Institutional/Civic
- Recreational

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Compact, dense core
- Intensive mixed use
- Civic space(s)
- Pedestrian oriented (overall)
- Pedestrian accessibility
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edge

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Density decreases to edges

pedestrian access and activity should be designed for and encouraged.

Typical uses include major retail businesses, grocery and other “big box” stores and support retail and services businesses, including gas and service stations, restaurants and car dealerships. These should be organized into centers having a clear focal point rather than extended along the city’s arterial corridors.

- *There should be buildings close to the street, with off-street parking behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the area within which it is located*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in scale, height and configuration.*
- *For human scale, larger buildings should be divided into separate volumes, both horizontally and vertically.*
- *Building heights should not exceed two stories.*
- *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the site. The buildings should frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation, so that pedestrians may walk along building fronts rather than along or across parking lots and driveways.*
- *An appropriate transition should be made between the center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.*

Community Commercial Centers

Community-scale commercial areas have typically been developed at street intersections with large areas near the street devoted to off-street parking. While these centers are mostly oriented to the customer traveling by auto, pedestrian activity is appropriate and should be a part of any redevelopment, reinvestment, or infill development plans. Infill development should be placed toward the street edge to partially screen the parking lots and provide human scale for pedestrians. Typical appropriate uses would include a grocery store, supporting retail and service commercial, office, restaurant and institutional uses. Residential uses should be close by and easily accessible to these centers, which in turn should present a positive face to adjacent neighborhoods.

- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger composition of the area within which it is located.*

Community Commercial Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Retail commercial
- Office or service commercial
- Hospitality:
 - Restaurant
- Residential:
 - Adjacent
 - Diverse type and ownership
- Institutional/Civic

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Pedestrian oriented (overall)
- Pedestrian accessibility
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Stores serving the community
- Required building line
- Parking in the rear or to the side
- Street trees
- Density decreases to edges

- *Adjacent buildings should relate in similar scale, height and configuration.*
- *For the sake of variety and human scale, larger buildings should be divided into separate volumes, both horizontally and vertically.*
- *Building heights should not exceed two stories. Nevertheless, taller buildings may be appropriate at key intersections.*
- *Buildings should be close to the street, with off-street parking located behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *At street intersections especially, the main building should be placed right up next to the corner. Parking, loading or service should not be located at an intersection.*
- *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the site layout. Buildings should frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation.*

Neighborhood Commercial Centers

These should meet daily “convenience” goods and service needs of local residents. Such a center may be anchored by a small grocery or drug store and could also include a narrow variety of smaller scale shops, a neighborhood park or perhaps a small institutional use such as a fire station. The center would also serve as a social and recreational destination or focal point for the neighborhood. Access generally by local and collector streets should also provide walking and bicycling connections.

Typical appropriate uses might include a grocery store, supporting retail and service commercial, office, restaurant and institutional uses. Residential uses should be close by and easily accessible to these centers, which in turn should present a positive face to adjacent neighborhoods.

- *Retail uses should be placed at street level; office and residential uses should be placed to the rear or on the upper stories.*
- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger composition of the area within which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in similar scale, height and configuration.*
- *For human scale, larger buildings should be broken down into separate volumes, horizontally and vertically.*
- *Building heights should generally not exceed two stories, except perhaps at key intersections.*

Neighborhood Commercial

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Retail commercial
- Office or service commercial
- Restaurant
- Residential—upper story
- Small Institutional/Civic

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Pedestrian oriented (overall)
- Pedestrian accessibility
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Stores serving the neighborhoods
- Required building line
- One or two stories
- Parking in the rear or to the side
- No drive-ins or drive-throughs
- Street trees
- Density decreases to edges
- Greenway connections

- *Buildings should be close to the street, with off-street parking located behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *At street intersections especially, the main building should be placed right up next to the corner. Parking, loading or service should not be located at an intersection.*
- *Pedestrian and bicycle circulation should be an integral part of the experience, and should be connected to the citywide system of sidewalks, trails and bicycle paths and lanes.*

Gateways and Image Corridors

The city's major streets are gateways to its activity centers and neighborhoods, and consequently they convey a lasting image to residents, visitors and potential investors in business and industry. They should be safe, comfortable, shaded, calm, connected and interesting. This is not simply a matter of aesthetics; quality of life and the economy of the city are tightly linked to its physical character, and the city's image must be continually enhanced to remain competitive.

Homewood enjoys major access from every direction, and its gateways and entrance corridors form a major part of the image of the city. They should be treated as scarce assets to be enhanced. By taking appropriate care with development along these corridors and adjacent to its major gateways, Homewood intends to set itself apart in a positive manner from its neighbors and further insure marketability and prosperity.

Each gateway to Homewood, its neighborhoods, activity centers and commercial corridors should provide a welcoming introduction that reflects the best of the particular characteristics of its setting. Development planning and design should incorporate the following strategies to assure that Homewood will offer a positive image by providing easily recognizable transitions from outside to inside the city:

- *A cohesive and coordinated land use pattern for each of the city's entrance corridors and gateways should be planned, designed and implemented.*
- *Sense of place should be enhanced with strong, well-designed development that is visible from the road corridor. Appropriate lighting and tree plantings should be used at gateways and along image corridors.*
- *Scattered or strip patterns of commercial development should generally be avoided in favor of nodes or concentrations of commercial development.*
- *Retail and other non-residential uses should address the major street. Commerce should be*

Gateways and Image Corridors

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Transit-oriented development
- Retail commercial
- Office or service commercial
- Residential--adjacent

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Pedestrian accessibility
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Parking to side or rear
- Density decreases to edges
- Transition to adjacent housing

easily accessible to adjacent residential areas.

- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the area in which it is located. Adjacent buildings should relate in similar scale, height and configuration.*
- *For the sake of human scale, larger buildings should be broken down into separate volumes, both horizontally and vertically.*
- *Buildings should face and be relatively close to the street, with most off-street parking located behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *Development should be planned and designed to maximize street frontage of buildings and minimize street frontage taken up by parking lots.*
- *Pedestrian and bicycle circulation should be an integral part of the experience, and should be connected to the citywide system of sidewalks, trails and bicycle paths and lanes.*
- *When possible, direct arterial street access should be limited. Parking lots of adjacent business along the same side of an arterial or collector street should be physically and legally accessible to one another without having to re-enter the arterial or collector street.*

Employment Support Centers

These are large employment centers, dominated by light industrial, office, technology, and other job-generating land uses but containing relatively few retail and service business uses except those concentrated at strategic locations.

Each of these employment centers should convey the image of Homewood as an accessible, desirable community in which to live, work and invest. This image should be strengthened by imparting a strong sense of community to these centers, and especially for those who work or live near them. It is also important to maintain physical accessibility between these areas and the rest of the city.

- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the center and of the area in which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in similar scale, height and configuration.*
- *Street intersections are important, and may deserve taller structures located close at hand. Parking, loading or service functions should not be located at an intersection.*
- *Streets should be designed with street trees in a*

Employment Support Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Light industrial
- Warehouse and distribution
- Wholesale commercial
- Retail commercial—limited
- Support office and services

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Compact, dense core
- Pedestrian accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Landscape buffers at edges

- manner appropriate to their function.*
- *Buildings should face the street, with off-street parking located behind and/or beside buildings.*
 - *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the site. Buildings should frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation.*
 - *An appropriate transition should be made between the employment center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.*

Institutional Support Centers

These are large institutional centers, dominated by government, educational, medical and civic uses but containing relatively few other uses except those that may be accessory to the primary uses.

Each of these centers should convey the image of Homewood as an accessible, desirable community in which to live, work and invest. This image should be strengthened by a strong sense of community relationship, especially for those people who work or live near them. It is also important to maintain physical accessibility between these areas and the rest of the city.

- *Physical accessibility should be maintained between institutional facilities and the rest of the city, including by means of bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation.*
- *At street intersections, the main building should be close to the corner. Parking, loading or service should not be located at or near the intersection.*
- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the center and of the area in which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in similar scale, height and configuration.*
- *For the sake of human scale, larger buildings should be broken down into separate volumes.*
- *An appropriate transition in land use and scale should be made between the center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.*
- *Streets should be designed with street trees in a manner appropriate to their function, to complement adjacent buildings and shade the sidewalks.*
- *Off-street parking should be placed behind and/or beside buildings.*

Institutional Support Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Governmental buildings
- Medical centers
- Schools
- Colleges
- Civic centers
- Support services

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Compact, dense core
- Pedestrian accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Landscape buffers at edges

- *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the center. The buildings should frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation, so that pedestrians may walk along building fronts rather than along or across parking lots and driveways.*

Major Recreational Centers

Large recreational centers are mostly open space but often contain significant structures. They are often somewhat isolated from neighborhoods, and even from the majority of the people they are meant to serve due to the need for large spaces. This situation requires extra effort at providing community connections—automobile, bicycle and pedestrian facilities—and parking facilities are also critical. It is especially important for all of the city’s recreation centers to help convey an image of Homewood as an accessible, desirable community in which to live, work and invest. This image should be strengthened by imparting a strong sense of community to these centers, and especially for those who live near them.

Public parks and open spaces should be planned and designed to provide abundant shade and seating areas for respite during hot summer months. All park and open space elements should be designed with comfort and cooling clearly in mind. When natural tree canopies are not part of the existing site, new shade trees should be added for comfort. Seating areas at ballfields should be organized beneath mature shade trees. Playgrounds should be nestled beneath large tree canopies to provide shade for children and their parents.

- *A park or recreation center should form part of the larger physical composition of the area in which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings and structures should relate in scale, height and configuration.*
- *Streets should be designed with street trees in a manner appropriate to their function. Trees should complement adjacent buildings and shade the sidewalks.*
- *Parking lots should be planned and designed with primary access and circulation traffic located toward the outside edge rather than the edge closest to the buildings or sports fields.*
- *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the center. Pedestrians should not be forced to walk through parking lots and across driveways and traffic to reach their destinations.*
- *An appropriate transition should be made between the park or recreation center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.*

Major Park / Recreation Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Parks
- Swimming pools
- Recreation centers
- Sports fields
- Fishing

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Pedestrian accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Overall landscape concept
- Transition to adjacent housing

- *Physical accessibility should be maintained between park and recreation facilities and the rest of the city, including by means of bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation.*

CONCLUSION

Homewood intends to strategically focus population concentrations upon commercial and employment centers, supported by residential neighborhoods and interspersed with and structured by green corridors and an urban tree canopy, all interconnected by a variety of accessibility options intended to require less automobile travel, provide better opportunities for and relation to the provision of transit options, and decrease adverse environmental effects.

IV. THE USE OF LAND

The functional organization of the city has been carefully considered throughout the Homewood Master Plan process. The major land use recommendations and the key locations throughout Homewood that are planned for major investment result from analysis of environmental and physical conditions, combined with the vision for Homewood and the principles illustrated in the Citywide Strategic Concept and outlined in the Major Development Components earlier in this document.

The map of Future Land Use illustrates generally how different parts of the community should function and relate to one another—in other words, the overall physical structure of the city. The map portrays a pattern of various activity centers by type, their interrelations with each other and with the city's neighborhoods. These centers and interconnections between them are critical to integrating the city's land use, transportation, community facilities and major infrastructure. Building on this structure, Homewood intends to continue to reinvest and develop as a community where public life is encouraged and quality urban design is maintained.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT THEMES

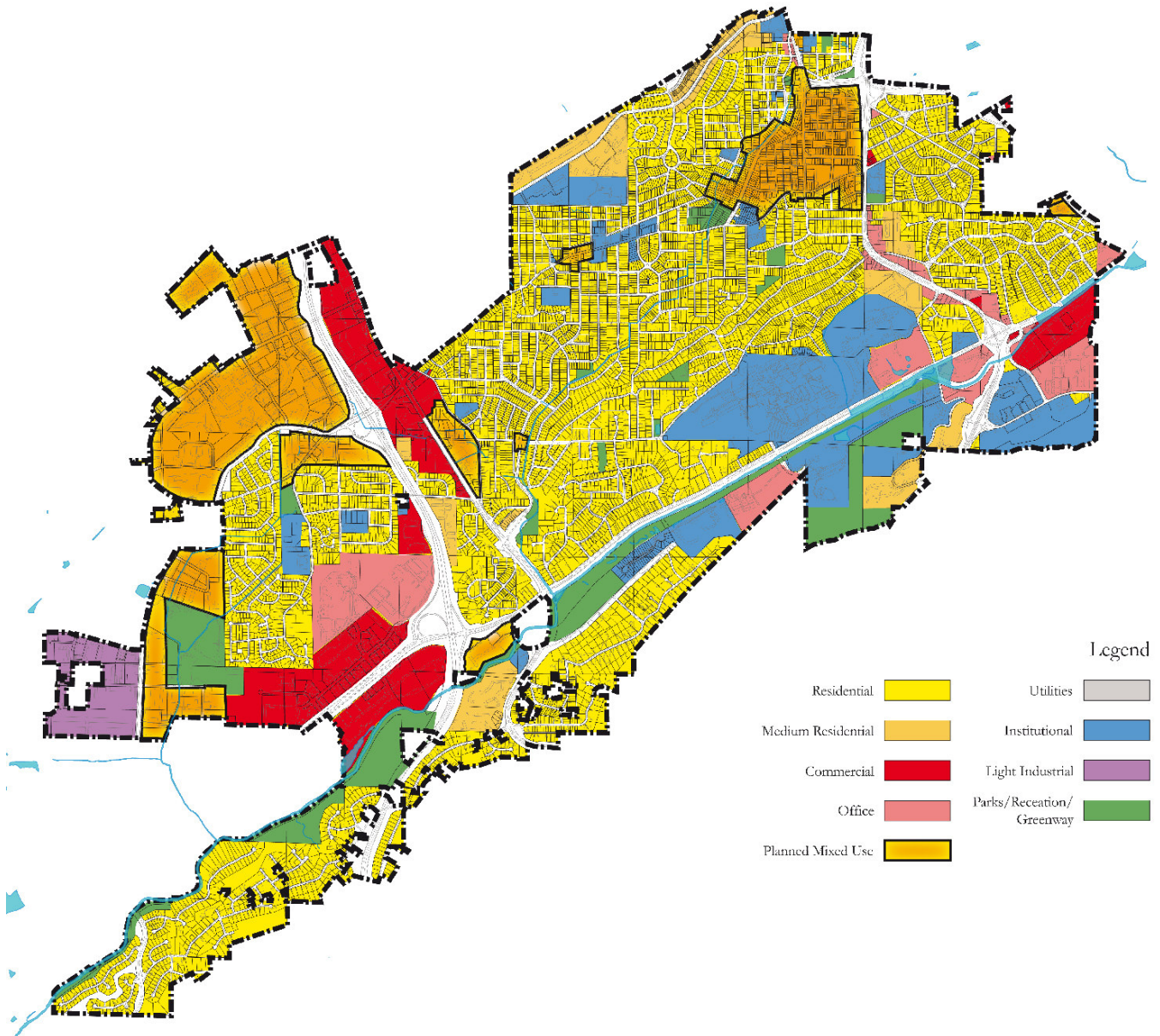
Homewood has recast its visions and a wide range of community values expressed during the Town Meeting and planning work sessions into a Future Land Use map to guide the growth, development and conservation of the city. The map projects an arrangement of land uses, in recognition of the ways in which land is presently used and the essential pattern of the city's green infrastructure.

The essential *functions* of the city are presented as they are and as they are planned to be. The map shows areas that may be generally suited to reinvestment—and even redevelopment—and where sensitive environmental features may limit development capability. The land use categories indicated on the map *should not be seen as zoning districts*, but rather as general guidelines indicating desirable land use patterns for Homewood. The map is intended to serve several related functions:

- *Avoid and resolve land use conflicts*
- *Identify and sustain desirable land use patterns*
- *Forecast infrastructure needs*
- *Provide a foundation for zoning*

It should be noted that designation of land uses on the Future Land Use map should not be interpreted to propose, approve, deny nor preclude any particular action without full consideration of all policies, principles, standards or intentions expressed in this plan document and its implementing regulations.

Site considerations relating to topography, geology, soils or hydrology will be of major importance when locating any particular new commercial center and planning and designing its uses and density. These realities, plus attitudes toward development on the part of public officials, other agencies, area residents, property owners and developers will play a large part in determining appropriate development location and design. Similarly, the presence of adequate streets as well as schools, parks and other community facilities, including water and sewer systems, should be assured before making any significant development proposals or decisions.



Future Land Use

It is important to consider how reinvestment in the city's various activity centers should be planned and designed in relation to the city's *neighborhoods*—where people live and come together away from work and commerce to form a community with one another. The Homewood Future Land Use map is based on the community's own evaluation of its assets and opportunities. It is organized into five major policy themes to recognize and capitalize on those assets and opportunities for the community at large.

I. Protect Homewood's Green Infrastructure

Homewood intends to protect, preserve and enhance important and fragile ecosystems within developed portions of the city. It will strive to use its natural and open lands for parks and for passive and active recreation.

II. Build a City of Neighborhoods Supported by Activity Centers

Homewood intends to reinvest in replicating and building upon the best characteristics of its traditional neighborhoods throughout the city. Homewood envisions its residents living in neighborhoods that focus upon and complement the city's green infrastructure in ways that reflect the human scale and pedestrian orientation of the community. Specifically, this means that Homewood intends to:

- *Support, maintain and enhance Downtown Homewood as the heart of the city.*
- *Continue to organize residential development into true neighborhoods.*
- *Plan for and support public and private investment in civic, educational, recreational, and neighborhood commercial functions in strategic locations around the city.*
- *Focus citywide and regional commerce into concentrated, highly accessible activity centers and corridors served by its highest-capacity arterial roadways.*
- *Focus industry, office uses and recreational and institutional support services into activity centers served by arterial and collector streets.*

III. Maintain and Enhance Community Character

Homewood intends to conserve and enhance its special qualities, including downtown, historic buildings, pedestrian scale, and the best of its existing streets and parks and recreation areas. Maintaining and enhancing the physical qualities of the city is an overarching consideration, incorporated in all parts of the plan.

IV. Expand Transportation and Accessibility Opportunities

Homewood intends to reduce the dominance of the automobile in development decisions and reduce the impacts of automobiles on the environment by encouraging development that will improve accessibility options for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Homewood will place great emphasis on improving its pedestrian and

bicycle facilities citywide with the intention of interconnecting its neighborhoods with one another and with its open space, park and educational resources.

V. Protect and Reinvest in the Community

Homewood intends to reinvest in Downtown, its traditional neighborhoods and the portions of its commercial arterial corridors that are not up to the standards of the community.

These five themes outline the rational framework that was used to convert the Homewood Strategic Concept into the city's Future Land Use map to allocate public and private resources for development equitably and in a manner through which cost effectiveness of city services may be achieved. It furthers the intent to take charge of the image and character of the city.

The future development pattern of the city has been organized in support of the Homewood Strategic Concept with appropriate recognition given to the city's green infrastructure, its street and utility infrastructure and major existing uses of land. The various types of commercial, employment, civic, institutional and recreational activity centers serve as magnets for activity and development. These, in turn, are intended to support the city core and the residential community of Homewood in ways that will positively affect environmental quality and the transportation network.

This is a general, long-range plan for the city. Thus, the locations of certain proposed community facilities and institutions shown on the Future Land Use map and described below are not meant to be precise. Rather, the symbols for each of these should be considered as "placeholders" until more specific planning may be undertaken to determine detailed needs and locations for each. In many cases, the symbol on the map will come to rest when either a public agency has determined to invest in a facility, or a private development project triggers the need and means for a location decision, acquisition and construction, development plans have been approved, property negotiations and construction plans have been prepared and financed, as appropriate.

LAND USE TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The following descriptions of the designations shown on the Future Land Use map proceed generally from least to most intensive uses and functions, beginning with parks and protected areas, proceeding through various types and densities of residential uses. These are followed by commercial, office and other employment uses, and are rounded out by civic and institutional uses. Activity centers and neighborhoods are to be planned and designed in accord with policy and characteristics as presented throughout this plan document.

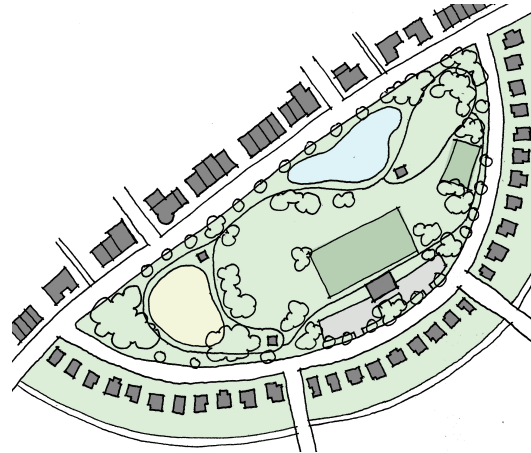
Parks, Recreation and Protected Areas

Homewood intends that the range of public holdings of park, recreation and protected open space areas include at least the following:

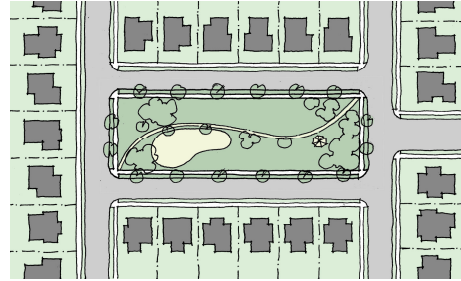
Greenways to provide opportunities for walking and bicycling, to act as wildlife corridors, development buffers, and storm water recharge areas and to provide links in the chain of the city's public park system. Ideally, they should eventually include all significant streams and appropriate portions of their floodplains. The use of greenways for multi-purpose trails should avoid redundancy with sidewalks and bikeways, but should strive to interconnect public parks and open space areas.

Major Parks to preserve the natural character of the city while providing both active and passive recreation opportunities. They may be important for the protection of historical sites, significant land features, watersheds and wildlife, and as outdoor recreation centers. Park facilities and buildings should foster a positive community image and sense of pride, which should be evident in the use of local materials and respect for local context.

Community Parks to serve a range of both passive and active recreation needs appropriate to their location and context. They may provide a mixture of activities and uses such as active sports fields, play areas, trails, informal practice fields, picnic areas, outdoor classrooms, and gathering places such as a community center. They should be carefully integrated into the natural environment, ideally with a significant portion of the land area held in a natural, tree-covered state. Park facilities and buildings should foster a positive community image and sense of pride, which should be evident in the use of local materials and respect for local context.



Neighborhood Parks to provide relatively small residential areas with opportunities for appropriate levels and types of both active and passive recreation. Neighborhood parks provide a place for unstructured, informal gatherings and neighborhood events, and may include such features as shaded paths, playground structures and open space for active play.



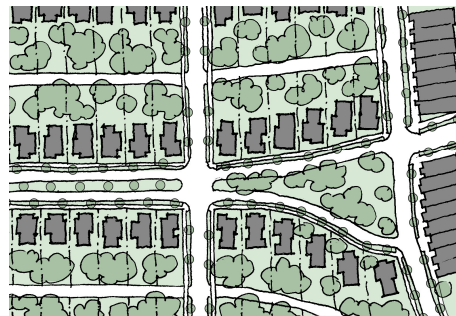
Residential

Residential uses come in many sizes, shapes, types and densities. They are noted on the Future Land Use map according to relative gross density—the relation of numbers of dwelling units to property devoted to those uses. Residential use gross densities are noted on the map as: High Density at 8 to 12 units per acre, Medium Density at 4 to 8 units per acre; and Low Density at less than 4 units per acre.

Low-density residential uses are mostly larger, single-family detached housing that currently exist and are planned for further development, located primarily around the edge of the city's core. Conservation subdivisions and low overall impervious surface ratios should be used to preserve and enhance green infrastructure elements and to ensure convenient access to natural open spaces. Blocks are generally 300 ft or greater in length, providing a moderate level of connectivity to the city street network, and include sidewalks on both sides of each street. Street runoff should be addressed by valley gutters or raised curbs.



Medium-density residential uses are mostly smaller single-family detached and attached housing presently located mostly in and near the core of the city. Most future medium-density residential uses are intended to be near the larger commercial, institutional and employment activity centers and in relatively close-in locations. These developments have a high level of connectivity to the city street network and relatively short block lengths. Local streets should accommodate on-street parking. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of streets, often separated from the street by a tree lawn. Because lots tend to be small and generally narrow, building setbacks are minimal. Green space is provided in common open spaces or neighborhood parks. Alleys provide access to parking at the rear of lots rather than side-loaded driveways and a more discrete location for overhead utility lines and garbage pick-up.



High-density residential uses describe mostly attached single-family and multi-family housing intended mostly for infill close to downtown and other parts of the city's core, but generally outside its historic areas. These core areas are the larger commercial, institutional and employment activity centers and corridors in relatively close-in locations. This residential pattern provides a logical transition between mixed-use or non-residential areas and lower density residential uses. These areas have a high level of connectivity to the city street network, incorporating short block lengths. Local streets should accommodate on-street parking and sidewalks on each side of the street. Sidewalks are generally separated from the street by a tree lawn of five feet or more in width. Green space is provided in common open spaces. Mid-block alleys provide access to internal parking areas and a discrete location for garbage pick-up and overhead utility lines.



Commercial and Office

This is a broad category of uses that typically includes retail, office, restaurant, hospitality and accommodations, either separately or as part of a mixed-use activity center. It is intended that these mostly be concentrated in downtown, commercial activity centers and as reinvestment or infill locations along commercial corridors.

Industrial

Industrial uses are typically medium to large employment centers, dominated by technology, distribution, light industrial, office, and other job-generating land uses but containing relatively few retail and service uses except those concentrated at major intersections close to the center and in other strategic locations. These uses are intended to be located in the western portion of the city in and adjacent to lands traditionally used for these purposes.

Civic and Institutional

Civic and institutional uses are a traditional land use category typically including institutional, academic, medical, governmental and community service uses and lands. More recently, the trend toward larger places of worship and major medical centers (as opposed to neighborhood places of worship and older, freestanding hospitals) has expanded the traditional definition. These uses should be located in highly legible places where access is suitable and adjacent land uses are compatible. An appropriate transition in land use and scale should be made between such major civic and institutional uses and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Mixed Use

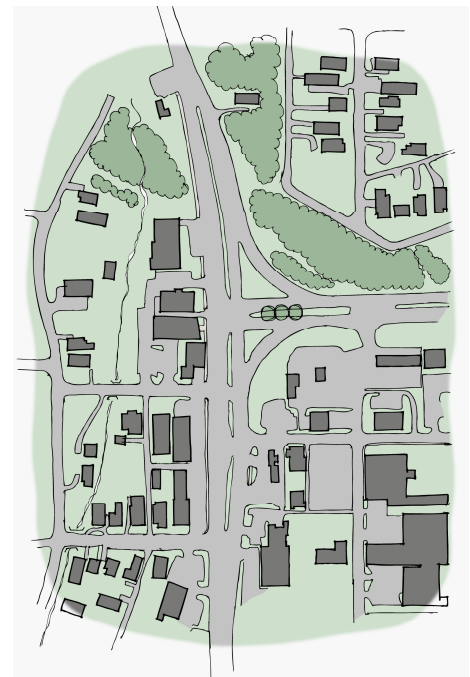
This is a development type in which various primary uses—for example, Office, Civic, Institutional, Retail and Residential—may be combined (horizontally and/or vertically) in the same building or within separate buildings on the same site or adjacent sites. This mix of uses may be suitable as part of a redevelopment strategy, especially in or adjacent to major activity centers as outlined in the previous chapter. Downtown is the city's most successful historical example of this land use type. The intention is that the particular mix of uses be mutually compatible and suitable to adjacent uses.

Downtown should continue this pattern and be a model for selected, small-scale specialty centers in other locations. The successful examples nationwide have carefully mixed together various appropriate land uses to reduce the need for motor vehicle trips and build more walkable areas of the city. These may include regional commercial, community commercial, institutional support and some employment support activity centers. This land use type tends to: increase the types of spaces available for both living and working; encourage a mix of compatible uses and promote the upgrading of existing developed areas with buildings designed to provide a high quality pedestrian-oriented street environment.

Illustration

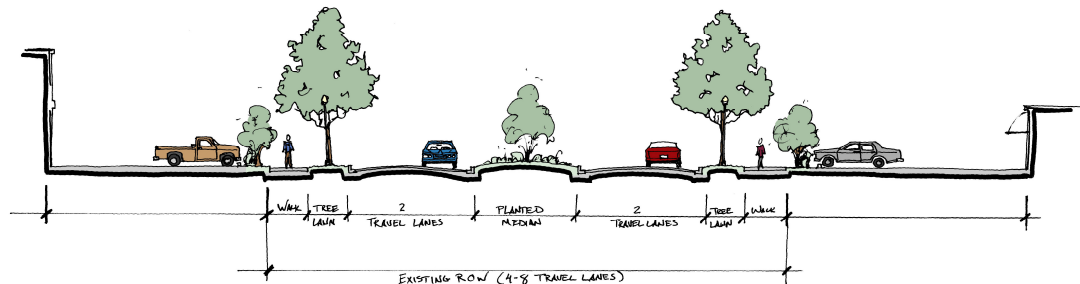
An example of many of the concepts and principles outlined throughout this master plan document is the intersection of 18th Street and Rosedale Drive. This intersection involves a major gateway to the city at the focus of two image corridors, a mixed-use retail and residential area, an existing park to the west, and Rosedale Community Center to the east. It also includes a potential redevelopment project that could directly affect the Rosedale neighborhood and its transition to Downtown Homewood.

This intersection connects Homewood to both Birmingham and Mountain Brook, and also divides the historic Rosedale neighborhood. Redevelopment of these corridors, the intersection and adjacent areas has the potential to knit together many facets of the City. The current conditions include 4-8 travel lanes that serve as a major entrance to Homewood from the north, via 18th Street, and the east via Rosedale Drive. What appears on the diagram to the right to be open space in the northeast corner of the intersection is, in fact, a no-man's land that is difficult to cross and that tends to isolate the several parts of Rosedale from one another and from the rest of the city.



Streamlining (and taming) the streets to accommodate both current and future traffic *and* pedestrian movements would help create opportunities to redevelop adjacent properties to serve gateway and image corridor needs of this major entrance to Homewood and the Rosedale neighborhood. Street realignment and improvement would provide these opportunities by recapturing land that is currently used for travel lanes for potential reinvestment to enhance the Rosedale community with new housing and safe pedestrian connectivity to Downtown Homewood.

Additional recaptured areas to the south of Rosedale would become potential infill development areas that could complement existing commercial business leading to downtown. These potential redevelopment and streetscape patterns could also provide additional means of access management along 18th Street, ensuring greater traffic flow through the area, while at the same time accommodating parking and access to new and existing business along 18th Street.



CONCLUSION

Homewood intends to direct land uses as outlined in this chapter toward lands suitable for them and for adjacent land uses in accord with the Future Land Use map and the policies of this document. The city intends that development and reinvestment should be planned, sited and designed in a manner that is compatible with the city's green infrastructure, in support of development creativity, efficiency, stability, image, diversity and control in accord with the Homewood Strategic Concept.

V. TRAFFIC AND ROADWAYS

The use of land, and physical access to that land, are both critical to the well-being of Homewood, its residents and the quality of life. The city's streets serve two essential purposes: access to adjacent property and mobility between destinations. Streets that attempt to serve both functions equally are those that tend to fail to live up to expectations. The challenge is to provide a street network that serves and supports planned development patterns, balances access and mobility, moves vehicles efficiently and lends a sense of community to neighborhoods.

To no one's surprise, local traffic and regional traffic are both expected to increase over the next twenty years. Local traffic will likely increase moderately in response to the locations and types of development indicated by the overall pattern of activity centers and residential development shown on the Future Land Use map, in combination with anticipated increases in vehicle trips driven by the typical household over what is experienced today. Regional, through traffic is likely to increase significantly due to changes in land use and development patterns outside the city's jurisdiction.

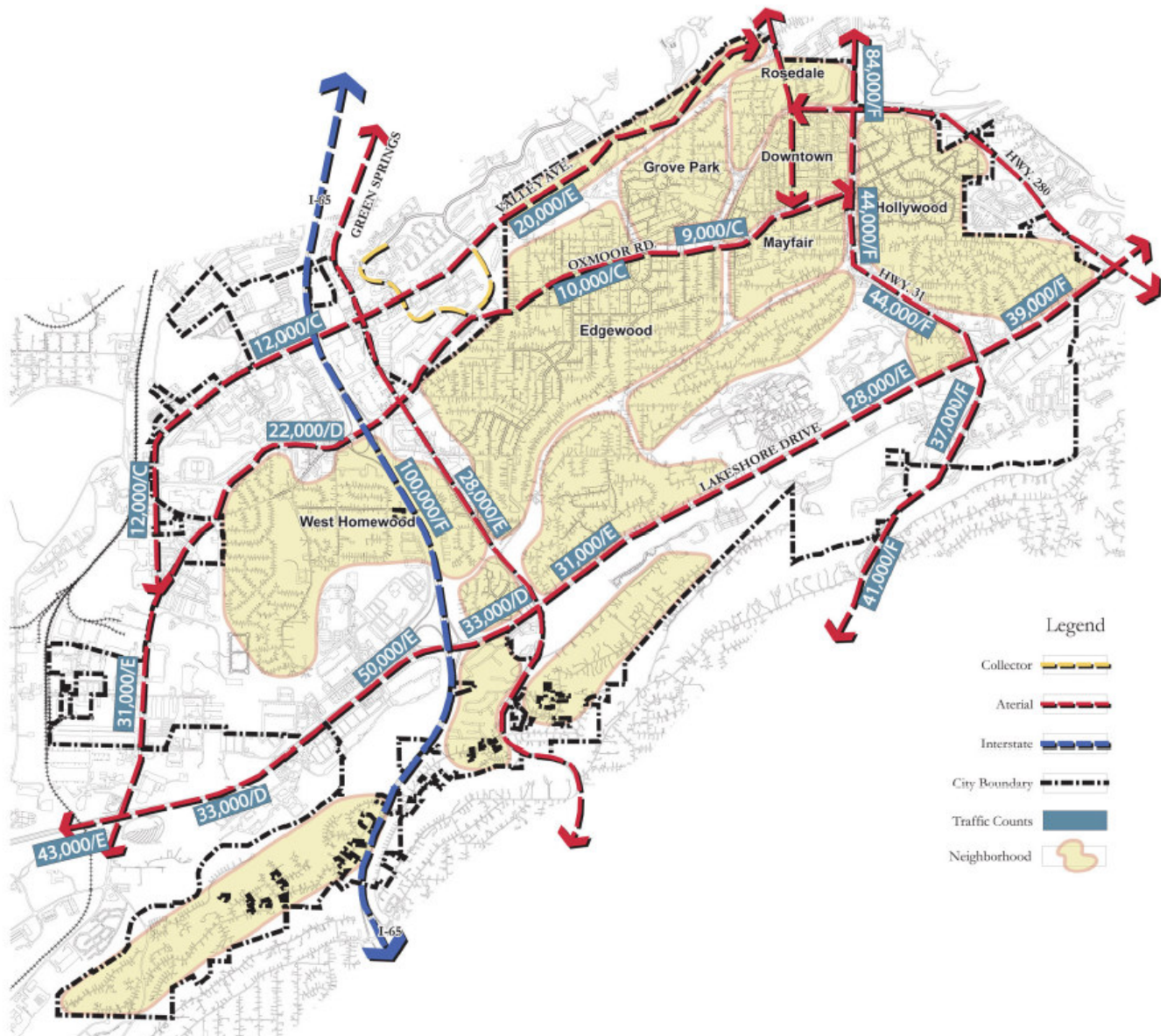
Transportation corridors are channels along which people and goods move from place to place. These corridors include not only the streets in which motor vehicles may travel, but also the sidewalks, bicycle lanes, multi-purpose trails and greenways that should accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. To facilitate proper planning and decision-making, Homewood's streets have been classified in the city's Transportation Plan as arterials, collectors, or local streets based on their relative importance and function within the transportation network. These functional classifications are defined below and shown on the Projected Traffic Volumes 2027 map, which indicates the traffic expected on area roadways by that year.

Arterial. Provides high mobility (typically long distance trips at relatively high speeds), accomplished by maintaining only limited land access. Links cities and towns to form an integrated network that provides interstate, intrastate, inter-county and intercity service. Serves virtually all urbanized areas. Provides an integrated, continual statewide network. On-street parking is generally prohibited, but cycling paths and sidewalks within the right of way are encouraged. Access management favors mobility over direct property access, meaning additional curb cuts and median cuts to serve other than street intersections are discouraged and allowed only where absolutely necessary.

Collector. Collects traffic from local road and streets to feed the arterial system. Provides a balance between land access and mobility. Serves urban areas and other important traffic generators that are not served by higher systems. Links these places with nearby towns and cities, or with routes of higher classification. Connects the locally important traffic generators with the less developed parts of the city. On-

street parking is generally discouraged, but cycling lanes and sidewalks are encouraged within the right-of-way.

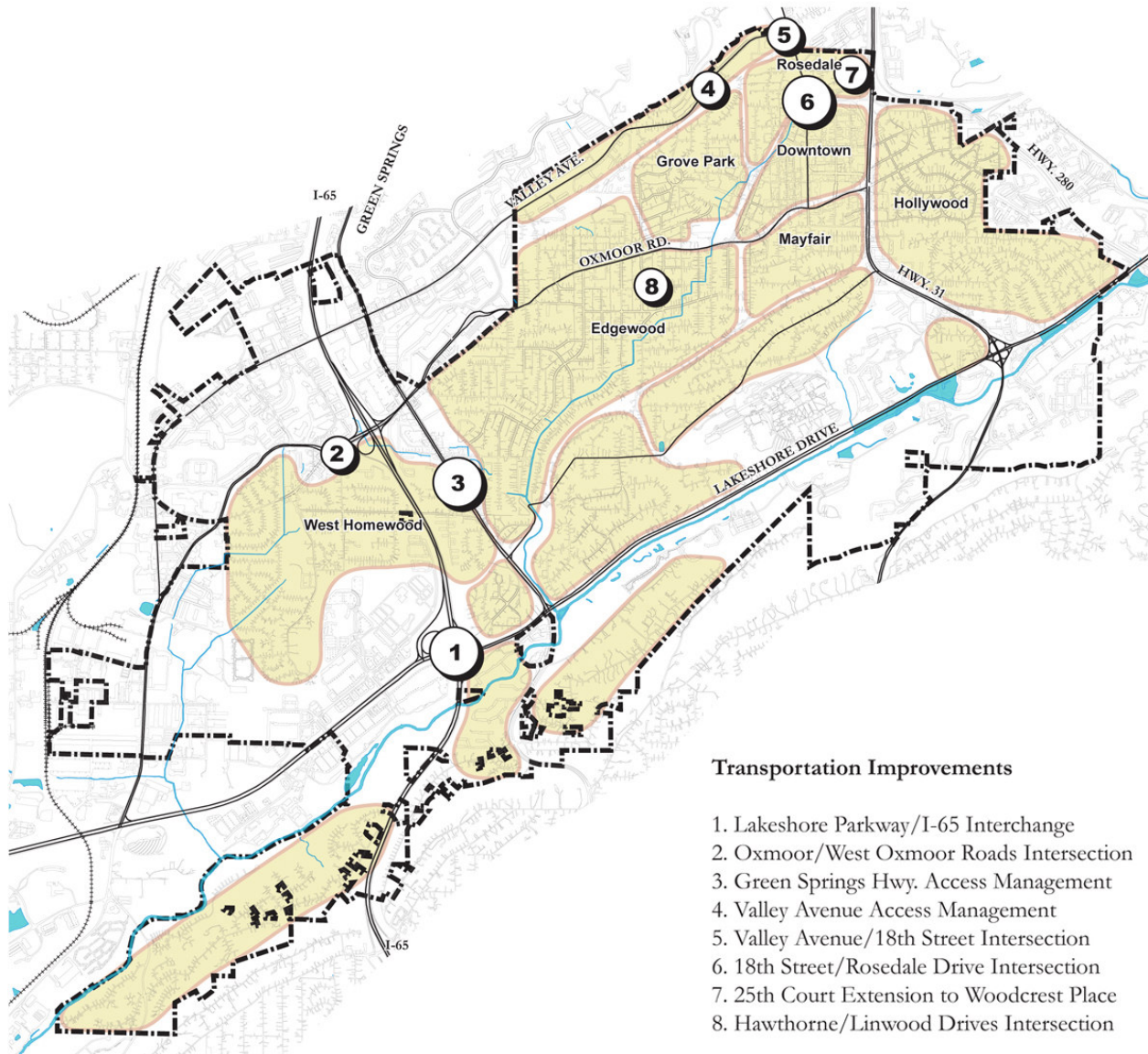
Local. Provides degree of high land access (short trips at low speeds), and thus limited mobility, discouraging through traffic. Provides direct access to adjacent land. Serves travel over relatively short distances compared with collectors and other higher systems. Comprise all facilities not on higher systems. Parking, cycling, walking and other public uses of the street and/or right-of-way are encouraged. Through traffic on local streets is discouraged, as are trucks, except those destined for local deliveries.



Projected Traffic Volumes 2027

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

To achieve the city's desired levels of accessibility and mobility, given anticipated local traffic increases and in a manner supportive of the Future Land Use map will require implementation of the following improvements to the city's roadway system. Implementation of access management standards on state routes will require cooperative preparation and implementation of an access management plan with the Alabama Department of Transportation.



Roadway Improvement Projects

CITYWIDE MOBILITY POLICIES

Mobility is in part a function of providing options for movement through the city, and that requires interconnection of most streets. Gaps in the existing local street network require individuals to increase the length of their trip and drive through congested areas as they move even short distances through the community.

An appropriately interconnected street network is one in which every street connects to at least two other streets. Thus, cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets should be used or maintained only in areas where significant environmental constraints impede connections to other streets. Moreover, internal vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections should be required within both existing and new development areas and between adjacent land uses. Developers should be required to plan for and effectively address the need for internal connections (roads, pathways, open space, etc.) between adjacent land uses, including residential subdivisions and commercial developments, to provide both primary and secondary means of emergency access. Mobility planning and design—for new development, reinvestment and redevelopment—should incorporate the following strategies for planning, designing, constructing and retrofitting streets citywide:

- *Maintain an aesthetically pleasing street network that helps frame and define the community while meeting the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.*
- *Improve the image of the city's major vehicular corridors by taking charge of them all, regardless of the state of or pressure for development.*
- *Landscape the edges and medians of major corridors to frame development and create a more positive image for the entire city by adding color, shade and visual interest.*
- *Consolidate existing driveways along arterials and collectors and require access for new development from side streets.*
- *Discourage non-residential traffic from travel on primarily residential streets.*
- *Treat residential streets as both public ways and neighborhood amenities.*
- *Seek landscaped medians and appropriate access management along arterials and selected collectors for purposes of enhancing roadway safety and capacity.*
- *Require street system connections between new and existing developments to promote an interconnected roadway system throughout the community and discourage use of cul-de-sacs.*
- *Require streets be planted with street trees appropriate to their function.*

CITYWIDE ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES

An essential way to maintain safe and reliable access and street capacity is to manage access to side streets and driveways to and from the parcels that line arterials and major collectors. Approached properly, an access management program can enhance property values while safeguarding past and future public investments in the infrastructure. Accessibility and access management planning and design should incorporate the following strategies for retrofitting and constructing arterial and major collector streets:

- *Separate conflict points – distance between major intersections and driveways should be regulated. As a general rule, driveways should not be located within the area of influence of intersections.*
- *Restrict turning movements at unsignalized driveways and intersections – the use of full directional unsignalized streets and driveways should be limited. Full movement intersections should serve multiple developments through joint use driveways or cross access easements.*
- *Establish design standards – design standards that address access spacing, the length of turn lanes and tapers and driveway dimensions should be developed for application throughout the city on arterials and major collectors.*
- *Traffic signal spacing – signals should only be installed when appropriate studies indicate their spacing and interconnection can be accomplished without significant impacts on corridor capacity.*
- *Turn lanes – left and right turn lanes should be required for all collector and arterial streets and major access points to activity centers.*
- *Shared driveways and/or inter-parcel access – joint use driveways and inter-parcel interconnections should be required to reduce the proliferation of driveways and to preserve the capacity of the corridor.*
- *Pedestrian/bicycle planning – streets should be designed, and traffic signals should be designed and timed, to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian movements in areas of significant activity.*

CITYWIDE TRAFFIC CALMING POLICIES

The City of Homewood receives frequent complaints regarding cut through traffic and speeding vehicles on area streets. Residents are often concerned about the potential for personal and property injury as a result of speeding traffic. Frequently, requests are received for multi-way stop signs to control various intersections along roadways where the public perceives speeding and cut-through traffic to be a problem.

Stop signs are high-level traffic control devices, and should only be used where warranted by traffic volumes and/or extenuating roadway geometric factors.

Consequently, it is the general policy of the City of Homewood that stop signs should not be used for speed control. Overuse of stop signs leads to general public disregard of stop signs, yielding unsafe conditions where stop signs are truly warranted. Furthermore, the city's general policy is to adhere to provisions of the Federal Highway Administration Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (latest edition). This manual does not recognize the use of multi-way stop signs except where warranted by traffic volumes.

The most effective means of reducing speeds and cut-through traffic on local roadways is the proper design, engineering, and construction of roadways to avoid residential areas where high vehicle operating speeds can be attained. The more significant roadways in newer developments are sometimes classified as residential collector roadways based on traffic volume projections; these roadways will generally have residential development restrictions, including such restrictions as no facing houses or minimum 50 foot setbacks. Such restrictions do much to alleviate speeding concerns. However, there are many residential roadways already in existence in the City of Homewood that have numerous residential units fronting them which experience higher traffic volumes and higher vehicle operating speeds. Proper posting of the speed limit and enforcement of the posted speed limit by the Homewood Police Department is the most effective means of reducing speeds on these roadways. Due to manpower, it is not always feasible to enforce the posted speed limit at all times of the day on a consistent basis. To overcome this limitation, the City of Homewood may elect to install traffic calming devices to limit vehicle operating speeds and reduce cut-through traffic.

Traffic calming involves changes in street alignment, installation of barriers, and other physical measures to reduce traffic speeds and/or cut-through volumes, in the interest of street safety, livability, and other public purposes. Traffic calming often uses a wide array of techniques and devices. The simplest and among the best involve narrowing the perceived driving area by placing buildings and trees close to the edge of the street. Alternatively, the following is a list and description of structural traffic calming devices that are often used.

- *Diagonal diverters are barriers placed diagonally across an intersection, blocking through movement; they are sometimes called full diverters or diagonal road closures.*
- *Half closures are barriers that block travel in one direction for a short distance on otherwise two-way streets; they are sometimes called partial closures, entrance barriers, or one-way closures (when two half-closures are placed across from one another at an intersection, the result is a semi-diverter).*
- *Full-street closures are barriers placed across a street to completely close the street to through-traffic, usually leaving only sidewalks open; they are sometimes called cul-de-sacs or dead-ends.*

- *Median barriers are raised islands in the centerline of a street and continuing through an intersection that block the left turn movement from all intersection approaches and the through movement at the cross street.*
- *Center Island Narrowings are raised islands located along the centerline of a street that narrow the travel lanes at that location.*
- *Chokers are curb extensions at mid-block or intersection corners that narrow a street by extending the sidewalk or widening the planting strip.*
- *Raised Intersections are flat raised areas covering entire intersections, with ramps on all approaches and often with brick or other textured materials on the flat section and ramps.*
- *Chicanes are a series of roadway narrowings or curb extensions that alternate from one side of the street to the other forming S-shaped curves.*
- *Speed Tables are long raised speed humps with a flat section in the middle and ramps on the ends; sometimes constructed with brick or other textured materials on the flat section.*
- *Speed Humps are rounded raised areas of pavement typically 12 to 14 feet in length.*
- *Roundabouts are barriers placed in the middle of an intersection, directing all traffic in the same direction.*

Statistical studies have shown that installation of traffic calming devices may be an effective means of reducing excessive vehicle operating speeds and cut-through traffic on area roadways. However, it should be noted that there are certain limitations and drawbacks to the use of traffic calming devices, which may include increased roadway noise and liability on the part of the City of Homewood. The following procedure should be utilized for analysis and evaluation of any site under consideration prior to installation of any traffic calming technique:

1. When a possible location for a traffic calming device has been determined, a preliminary field review of the roadway section should be undertaken. The purpose of this field review is to familiarize the investigator(s) with the operational and geometric characteristics of the roadway and to expedite data collection and evaluation.
2. A spot speed survey of at least 30 total vehicles traveling in both directions on the roadway section under consideration should be performed with either a radar unit or automatic traffic counter. Included in the tabulation should be the date, time, and prevalent weather of the surveys, and direction of travel and travel speed of each vehicle.
3. A 24-hour traffic count should be performed on a typical weekday, in a location at or near where the spot speed survey was conducted, using an automatic traffic counter. The data should be separated by direction of travel and tallied in periods of not longer than 60 minutes. Additional traffic counts may be performed if warranted due to the need to study diversion of traffic to other roadways. The

date and prevalent weather of the traffic count period should also be noted. Traffic calming devices should not be considered for roadways that have less than 750 total vehicles traveling in both directions on a daily basis and an average travel speed of less than 35 miles per hour. Traffic counts should be used to estimate the diversion of traffic to other roadways. Traffic calming devices should not be installed if the traffic diversion would result in a traffic increase on any residential roadway of 50% or more.

4. A summary of all traffic accident reports from the City of Homewood Police Department pertaining to the subject roadway section should for at least the three full preceding years should be evaluated.
5. Field data collection of roadway data related to vehicle operating and design speed should be undertaken This should include pavement surface and edge treatment, horizontal curvature, vertical curvature, corner sight distance, stopping sight distance, width of roadway, distance to obstructions, posted speed limit, access points, pedestrian and bicycle activities, and roadway grades.

The City of Homewood Engineering Department should analyze roadway geometric data for comparison to the following:

- Traffic calming devices will not be installed in a horizontal curve or a vertical curve where the visibility of the device is restricted, or on an approach to these curves.
- Traffic calming devices will not be installed on roadways at any location where the grade exceeds 5%, including the approaches to each traffic calming device installation.

The accident patterns should be studied by the City of Homewood Engineering Department to determine trends of accidents which: (1) might have been prevented if vehicle operating speeds were generally lower on the subject roadway, or (2) might have been more severe if traffic calming devices were in place. There are no criteria for the minimum number of accidents that might have been prevented had operating speeds been generally lower.

Use of the roadway section under consideration should be evaluated as an emergency vehicle (fire department vehicle or ambulance) route or access point. Traffic calming devices should not be utilized on roadways that serve as a primary route for emergency vehicles (an average of at least five emergency vehicles a day engaged in an emergency call) or a primary access route for emergency vehicles into an area of 100 or more residential dwelling units or ten or more businesses.

VI. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM

As stated in the Introduction, the major theme of this Master Plan is to take charge of the image and character of the city of Homewood. The city has prepared this plan as a guide to decisions regarding land use, development and conservation, zoning and capital improvements. The plan is also intended to help Homewood residents, property owners, merchants, builders, and developers invest in the city by providing a reasonable expectation of its future physical character.

The city's Master Plan is to be carried out through a combination of direct public and private investment, public decisions by the City Council, Planning Commission and other public boards and commissions. The plan's recommendations will be translated into action through revision and continued administration and enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and other regulations, through an access management program in cooperation with other agencies, through budgeting and capital improvement programming and empowerment of community and neighborhood organizations and volunteers, and through public and private decisions in support of planned annexation.

Master Plan Implementation Strategy:

- 1. Keep the public sector focused*
- 2. Get the private sector interested and involved*
- 3. Get other agencies playing on our team*
- 4. Take direct action with our own money*
- 5. Shape the actions of others with good laws*
- 6. Provide incentives for others to take the lead*
- 7. Use every power and dollar to support the plan*

Homewood is a municipal corporation, formed under powers granted by the State of Alabama. The city has used its grant of the police power to adopt and enforce growth and development regulations. The city has used its power to tax to plan for and implement a budgeting system that includes capital investments for infrastructure facilities and services that it uses to help shape growth and development. Homewood has used the power of eminent domain (the power to force sale of private property for valid public use) sparingly to enable various infrastructure investments and redevelopment actions in support of public policy and plans. All of these tools will continue to be used together to shape Homewood in accord with the city's Master Plan. The Implementation Action Agenda, included as an Appendix, provides an outline of the short-to-medium term actions essential to carrying out the Master Plan.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATION

Several of the key elements of the city's development management system—such as the zoning ordinance and map, subdivision regulations, sign regulations and landscape regulations, among others—are based on the police power. Together, the elements of this system address land use, site planning, the size and location of buildings and other structures, aesthetics and signage. Each of these regulations is

framed to account for the health, safety and welfare of the community—the so-called “valid public purposes” of the municipality—and the appropriate enabling authority in each case. Each must also respect the principles of due process of law, non-discrimination in their application, profitable use of land, freedom of speech, and the special concerns associated with balancing individual costs against anticipated public benefits.

Zoning Ordinance and Map Considerations

Homewood has adopted and enforces a zoning ordinance to regulate development within districts as shown on the city’s zoning map. The Master Plan and its Future Land Use Map should not be confused with the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. The Master Plan has been prepared as a *guide* to public and private investment in land development and infrastructure. In contrast, the *zoning ordinance* is a regulatory tool used by the city to influence and direct development of the community in ways that reflect the direction and desired form called for in the Master Plan. The following table highlights the differences:

Master Plan	Zoning Ordinance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Provides general policy guidance</i> ○ <i>Describes conditions desired in the long term – not necessarily existing or recommended use(s)</i> ○ <i>Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups</i> ○ <i>Intentionally flexible to allow responses to changing conditions</i> ○ <i>General land use categories</i> ○ <i>General land use locations</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Provides specific regulations</i> ○ <i>Describes what is and what is not currently allowed today</i> ○ <i>Deals with development issues under city control</i> ○ <i>Fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change</i> ○ <i>Zoning districts</i> ○ <i>Parcel-specific designations</i>

In addition, planned developments, requiring preparation and approval of overall master plans and similar modifications in accord with the Master Plan, are intended to allow innovative approaches to development, in recognition of the fact that livability—and good design—cannot be legislated, but can be encouraged.

As a part of the plan implementation system, Homewood intends to revise the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to reflect and incorporate the land development policy of this plan as appropriate to time, place and circumstances.

Subdivision Regulation Considerations

Homewood intends to revise the Subdivision Regulations to reflect and incorporate the land development policy of this plan as appropriate. Alabama courts have long

recognized the importance of subdivision regulation to the implementation of city master plans. For example, in *Roberson v. City of Montgomery*, 233 Sp. 2d 69, 72 (Ala. 1970), the Alabama Supreme Court determined that,

Unlike zoning, subdivision regulations relate to a systematic and orderly development of a community with particular regard for streets, parks, industrial and commercial undertakings, civic beauty and other kindred matters properly within the police power.

The Homewood Master Plan establishes a means for meeting the city's goal to create neighborhoods of distinct character, compatible with what it considers the city's "green infrastructure." The plan sets up a logical framework for growth and development of the city and its planning area while preserving its strongest assets. It also establishes standards for various design elements appropriate to context. For this reason, infrastructure requirements and design standards need not—and should not—necessarily be uniform across the entire city and its planning jurisdiction. Rather, the city's physical elements should take their cue from a combination of existing and planned development patterns.

The city's green infrastructure includes surface water resources, floodways and floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, parks and protected areas, and the urban forest canopy. Development should consist of land uses, character and overall gross densities as called for in the plan to recognize and respond appropriately to those resources and conditions. Through the use of planning and design standards geared toward that area and its resources, the city's Subdivision Regulations can help implement the Homewood Master Plan.

For example, in the case of street networks, the appropriate dimension and allocation of right-of-way space, and the size and character of the travel lanes and edge treatments, including buffer areas, drainage swales and pedestrian facilities, will affect the context of the city and its planning jurisdiction, its development patterns and anticipated future uses of land.

It is generally recognized that all open space is not equal, and that open space is not simply the space left over between the buildings when all the development is complete. There should be a reason for the open space (such as resource protection or passive recreation), a high degree of accessibility and good connectivity of its parts for the benefit of the public and wildlife. This argues strongly for placing open space and natural resource protection standards in the subdivision regulations rather than relying solely on zoning requirements, for it is in the act of subdividing that open space may be secured or lost.

By placing concerns for green infrastructure and open space early in the order of design, the intentions of the Master Plan more likely will be met. Open space can be used to improve natural drainage and infiltration, which better protects resources

when incorporated as the preferred strategy, prior to property being set out for development.

Additional Development Review Criteria

In addition to the general considerations above, development criteria for activity centers and neighborhoods may be added to the development management system during amendment of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. The following will be considered during those processes.

Green Infrastructure Management. The Planning Commission, in support of policies of the Master Plan should consider use of a checklist such as the following during the review process for all development projects requiring site plan approval:

- *Favor citywide low gross density / focused medium and higher net density development to gain useful open space, recreation opportunity and watershed protection.*
- *Design and build residential streets at the minimum width necessary for their use.*
- *Minimize the use of cul-de-sacs and set their minimum required radius to accommodate emergency and maintenance vehicles.*
- *Limit impervious parking area to that actually required for the intended use to help make shared parking solutions attractive.*
- *Reduce overall imperviousness of parking lots by permitting pervious materials in spillover parking areas.*
- *Require property owner association management of common open space.*
- *Require use of naturally vegetated buffers, including floodplains, steep slopes and wetlands, along streams.*
- *Limit clearing and grading of woodland and native vegetation to the minimum amount needed for building areas, access and fire protection.*
- *Manage community open space, street rights-of-way, parking lot islands, and other landscaped areas to promote maintenance of natural vegetation.*
- *Maintain all “blue line” streams at least at their current lengths.*
- *Prohibit new stormwater discharge of unmanaged stormwater into wetlands, aquifer recharge areas and critical water bodies.*

Residential Development and Neighborhoods. As another example of using the policies of the Master Plan as an overall guide, the Planning Commission should consider use of a checklist such as the following during the development review process for any *residential* development requiring a master development plan or site plan approval in order to encourage the development of viable neighborhoods:

- *The neighborhood should be planned and designed in a manner appropriate to its context—to reflect its location in the community and its relation to the natural environment.*
- *Neighborhoods should be designed to conserve natural systems and thereby require less capital investment for earthwork, clearing and drainage.*
- *Neighborhood development density should be allowed to increase with decreasing distance from commercial centers and corridors.*
- *Outdoor places other than private yards should be provided in the neighborhood so that children may have the opportunity to play safely away from their own homes, yet nearby.*
- *At least 15% of the total residential development should be dedicated to accessible, usable, pedestrian-sensitive open space that includes appropriate focal points.*
- *There should be provided at least one special gathering place, such as a neighborhood green or other usable community open space, near the center of each neighborhood. The gathering space should be pedestrian oriented, with easy vehicular and pedestrian access to all parts of the neighborhood.*
- *The neighborhood should be designed and built with complete, walkable, and interconnected streets. Street frontage on existing roadways should be completed with curb, gutter and sidewalks.*
- *Neighborhoods should accommodate the access needs of motorists while providing a convenient and safe environment for pedestrians.*
- *Sidewalks should be installed along all street frontages as needed for pedestrian mobility and safety appropriate to the location.*
- *Blocks longer than 500 feet should provide pedestrian cut-through paths to adjacent streets.*
- *Pedestrian-scale light fixtures—generally twelve feet in total height—should be provided along all areas accessible to pedestrians.*
- *Street trees should be planted as specified by the city and slopes should be planted, in accord with an overall landscape plan, to maximize slope stability yet optimize investments of maintenance time and labor.*
- *Neighborhood pedestrian accessibility should be enhanced through use of cul-de-sac linkages to adjacent streets, as well as trails within greenways or other open space systems, as appropriate.*
- *Interconnected neighborhood streets should be provided to assure alternate routes and thereby diffuse automobile traffic.*
- *Neighborhood street environments should feature relatively narrow driving surfaces, ample sidewalks, street trees and front porches.*
- *Neighborhood streets should be planned and designed to provide a “calm” environment where drivers realize that driving fast or aggressively is inappropriate.*

Commercial Development. As just one example regarding activity centers, the Planning Commission, using the policies of the Master Plan as an overall guide, should consider use of a checklist such as the following during the development review process for any *commercial* activity center requiring a master development plan or site plan approval:

- *Building façades should be designed and built to provide visual interest and to avoid uniform styles.*
- *A building's ground floor facing a collector or arterial street should contain a minimum of 50% unobscured windows, doors or display areas.*
- *Buildings should be oriented toward pedestrian circulation systems, with emphasis on directing people toward the public street system.*
- *Street frontage on existing roadways should be completed with curb, gutter and sidewalks as needed for pedestrian mobility and safety appropriate to the location.*
- *All streets should be designed to promote traffic movement conducive to pedestrian safety and to provide direct routes between nearby destinations.*
- *Parking lots should be designed to provide through pedestrian paths, clearly identifiable by changes in material or elevation.*
- *Street trees should be planted as specified by the city and slopes should be planted, in accord with an overall landscape plan, to maximize slope stability yet optimize investments of maintenance time and labor.*
- *Surface parking lots should include at least 5% of the total surface area devoted to landscaping to be distributed, designed, installed and maintained in accord with an overall plan approved by the Planning Commission.*
- *Surface parking lots containing 50 or more spaces should be divided into smaller areas separated by a building or a group of buildings or by landscaped areas at least 10 feet wide.*

Accessibility and Access Management. The Planning Commission, using the policies of the Master Plan as an overall guide, should consider use of a checklist such as the following during the development review process to assure appropriate consideration of any arterial or collector streets that may be included in the development:

- *The distance between major intersections and driveways should be sufficient to separate points of traffic conflict. As a general rule, driveways should not be located within the area of influence of intersections.*
- *Turning movements at unsignalized driveways and intersections should be restricted by limiting the use of full directional unsignalized streets and driveways. Full movement intersections should serve multiple developments through joint use driveways or cross access easements.*

- *Design standards for access spacing, the length of turn lanes and tapers, and driveway dimensions should be applied on arterials and major collectors.*
- *Traffic signals should only be installed when appropriate studies indicate their spacing and interconnection can be accomplished without significant adverse impacts on corridor capacity.*
- *Left and right turn lanes should be required for all public streets and major access points to activity centers.*
- *Joint use driveways should be required to reduce the proliferation of driveways and to preserve the capacity of arterial and collector corridors.*

PUBLIC INVESTMENT

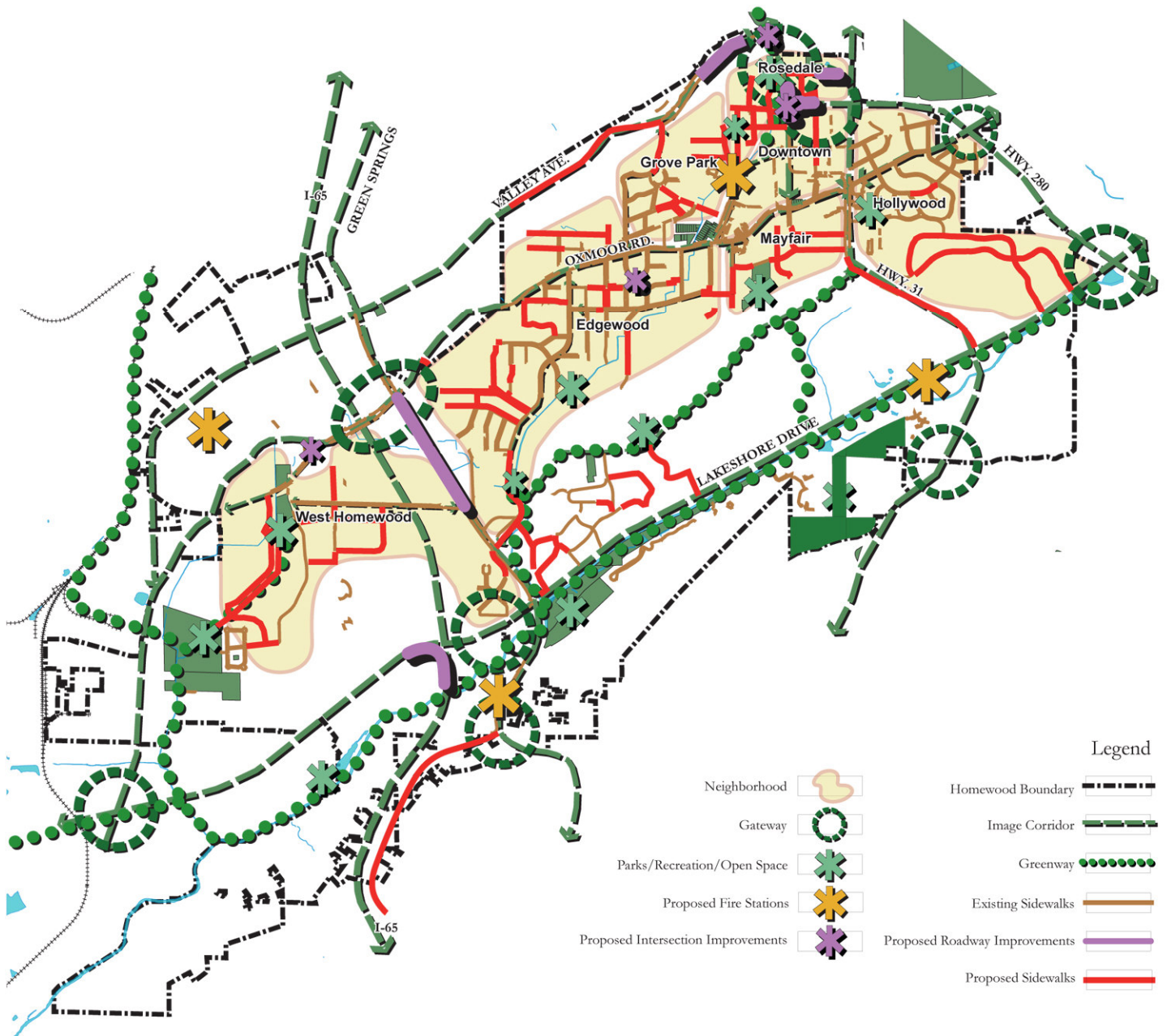
Throughout the planning process, the need for specific public investments to support implementation of the Citywide Strategic Concept has arisen. These may be divided into several categories, including: streets and intersections; greenways and sidewalks; parks and open space; and fire stations. Below are brief descriptions of the overall intent for each category, followed by a listing of the specific projects and or studies. It should be noted that project lists will change from year to year as implementation continues. The intent is that the listings be updated regularly for use during the City's annual budgeting process.

Greenways and Sidewalks

During the planning process, Homewood residents from every part of town expressed a desire for more pedestrian accessibility throughout the city. A comprehensive, primary citywide sidewalk and trail system is shown on the Public Investment map.

The Homewood Greenway System should interconnect many of the city's major recreation facilities, including the Shades Creek Community Greenway, Jemison Trail in Mountain Brook, the West Homewood Sports Park, and the Vulcan Trail system. The system should also provide future connections to the proposed Red Mountain Park facilities, and the trails and greenway planned for the Oxmoor Valley. Further the citywide greenway system should be interconnected with the city's existing and proposed sidewalks.

During the planning process, lack of sidewalks and general pedestrian accessibility were among the most pressing concerns expressed by residents. In response, significant expansion of the city's sidewalk system is proposed. To supplement sidewalk improvements that were under consideration at the start of the planning process, additional segments are proposed for many neighborhoods throughout the city. These locations are indicated on the Public Investment map, and are enumerated in the Appendix as a tool for use in determining future sidewalk projects and to budget their associated costs during the annual capital budgeting process. In addition to identifying public capital improvement projects, the list should be used to inform developers of connectivity requirements as new development is proposed.



Public Investments

Parks and Open Space

Homewood is uniquely positioned to capitalize on its existing parks and open space with additions, improvements and new resources, and to provide access and connections to regional greenway systems such as the existing Jemison and Vulcan trails, and the future Red Mountain Park. During the planning process, existing city parks were reviewed and found to be achieving the needs of the residents as expressed in the town meetings. Some parks were found to be in need of repairs or of

additional development to fully capitalize on their opportunities and fulfill the needs of residents.

The outline below identifies park needs that have arisen during the planning process. These should be used not only as a budgeting tool, but as a means of guiding future development toward providing necessary amenities to their neighbors and the city at large.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommended Action(s)</u>
733 Saulter Lane	Purchase parcel for neighborhood park/ open space - program with passive recreational uses, gardens, walking trail, etc.
Power Easement on Saulter	Potential linear park, trail connection
929 Broadway, Gazebo Park	Improve trail and sidewalk connections
Edgemont Neighborhood Center at Broadway	Improve open space and interconnect to sidewalk, trail system as needed for neighborhood center.
Overton Park	Improve trails and sidewalks; add garden features and additional benches for passive use.
Patriot Park	Improve landscaping and uses. Plan for all desired uses, walking, biking trails, additional sports fields, shaded areas using landscaping or structures. Incorporate and address the neighborhood center. Create greenway and sidewalk link to West Homewood Sports Park.
Homewood Central Park	Improve neighborhood connections to Downtown with direct sidewalk and trail access to surrounding neighborhoods for accessibility.
Western Rosedale Community Center	Expand park in coordination with neighborhood improvements. Expand park to reclaim Griffin Creek, and create direct pedestrian access and visibility to 18th Street
Soccer Fields	Provide pedestrian access to Homewood Community Greenway and Trail.
Forest / Griffin Creek Pedestrian Crossing	Connect with sidewalk system on South Forest

Fire Stations

The Homewood Fire and Rescue Service was originally organized to provide fire suppression. Over the years, its responsibilities have grown substantially. Today, the

department also deals with fire prevention, serves as a first responder for emergency medical services, deals with hazardous materials response, disaster assistance and issues involving technical rescue and homeland security. At the same time, the population and service area have both increased

To maintain Homewood's desired response times for fire and emergency medical services and to support the city's highly positive fire insurance ratings—ISO Class 2—it is recommended that the department's three stations be replaced with four stations, better situated around the city as noted on the Public Investment map. These sites were selected through balancing several fire station placement criteria, including ISO Standards, desired response times, 1.5 mile travel radius, the ability to find available property with suitable adjacent land uses.

Roadway Improvement Projects

To achieve the city's desired levels of accessibility and mobility, given anticipated local traffic increases and in a manner supportive of the Citywide Development Concept and the patterns of development shown on the Future Land Use map will require implementation of the improvements to the city's roadway system noted in Chapter V of the Master Plan and the city's 2007 Master Street Plan. These improvements are shown also on the Public Investment map. Implementation of access management standards on state routes will require cooperative preparation and implementation of an access management plan with the Alabama Department of Transportation.

SPECIFIC PLANS AND PLANNING

The Homewood Master Plan will be refined and detailed from time to time through preparation and adoption of Specific Plans. Periodic plan amendment and refinement are essential to consideration of planning for, designing, enabling and appropriately regulating the orderly development of all activity centers, focus areas and corridors. It will also be necessary for proper consideration of potential redevelopment areas in accord with Alabama law. Through this extension of the planning process, city officials and staff, residents, property owners and developers may come together, accompanied by representatives of the city at large, as appropriate, to plan in more detail for creative development, redevelopment or simply enhancement of the city.

The Specific Plan detailing and refinement process should continue to emerge naturally from the need to keep the plan current and to regulate orderly development and revitalization of the city. Upgrading of various neighborhoods and activity centers, short of redevelopment, would be appropriate subjects for the Specific Plan process. This type of planning may include special area studies and plans, as market or physical conditions or level of interest on the part of local citizens or the Planning Commission may warrant. For example, consideration of any rezoning to enable development, redevelopment or expansion of the activity centers, focus areas and corridors indicated in the plan should first require preparation and Planning Commission adoption of a Specific Plan for the area in question. Consideration by the

City Council for rezoning of the subject property should require Planning Commission review and adoption of a Master Development Plan modeled after and compatible with the adopted Specific Plan that includes the area to be rezoned. Preparation of a Specific Plan could be set in motion by direction of the Planning Commission—on its own volition, at the request of the City Council, or in response to petition by area residents, property owners and/or developers.

Specific Plans may also serve to support and detail the Homewood Master Plan through detailed planning and design within an area of interest—thematic or geographic. This should include updating the city’s Street Tree Master Plan, or perhaps preparation of a Citywide Sidewalk Plan, or an Image Gateway and Corridor Plan. It could also include plans for any or all of the city’s recommended redevelopment areas—or for its various neighborhoods (the Rosedale area is engaged in such a process as of this writing). Each Specific Plan would help to assure that the public interest in each area of interest in the community—be it geographic or thematic—and systematic reinvestment as outlined in this plan document, is kept clearly in mind and faithfully implemented through both public and private sector investments.

KEEPING THE MASTER PLAN UP TO DATE

Master Planning has been viewed largely as an occasional activity overseen by the Planning Commission, whereas budget preparation and adoption is an annual responsibility of the City Council mandated by Alabama law. As a result, Master Plans—and especially those for cities whose land is under increasing market pressures—tend to become dated. The danger is that the connections between Homewood’s master plan and its capital budget may tend to weaken over time. This may be remedied by coordinating an annual planning update component with the budgeting process to help the city reach its potential. Coordination of the planning and annual budget processes will increase the likelihood that city staff and private citizens alike will make public investment decisions in accord with the Homewood Citywide Strategic Concept.

A Master Plan update included in the annual budgeting process may be used to help the mayor and City Council better determine capital budget priorities, consider plan and development regulation amendments, and coordinate public investments toward reaching the vision set out in the Master Plan. To coordinate Homewood development policies and their implementation, each city department, board and commission (and the non-city boards, commissions, agencies and other groups that may be eligible for funding assistance from the city) should review the Master Plan and submit a report to the mayor early in the budget season, which would include the following:

- *All tasks perceived to be essential for achieving the Master Plan during the coming year that either are or should be the responsibility of the respondent.*

- *Suggested changes in city programs – to include but not be limited to regulations, capital investments, operation and maintenance, and intracity and intergovernmental coordination – the respondent perceives to be in the best interests of overall Master Plan implementation.*
- *Suggested changes in city policies toward growth and development as those are outlined in the Master Plan.*
- *Suggested changes in the respondent's responsibility or authority that would better enable implementation of any parts of the Master Plan.*
- *A preliminary budget proposal, including capital equipment and investments needed by the respondent to deal with the above, and the portion of those costs it is requested the city bear.*

The mayor's office would collect this information for consideration in formulating a draft capital budget and suggested Master Plan amendments for the coming year. Following discussions with department heads and others as appropriate, the mayor's office would forward a draft capital budget and suggested plan amendments to the Planning Commission, whose members would review it in light of the city's Master Plan. The Planning Commission would report to the mayor's office the results of its review regarding proposed capital investments, and any recommendations for Master Plan revisions, adjustments to development management system ordinance amendments and intra-governmental and inter-governmental coordination.

The mayor's office would prepare a proposed capital budget and revenue forecast, and present proposed city budgets to the City Council. The Planning Commission would act, as it deems appropriate, regarding recommended amendments to the Master Plan and subdivision regulations and suggest appropriate zoning ordinance amendments to the City Council. The City Council would hold hearings to discuss proposed amendments to city regulations prior to adoption.

Keeping the Master Plan up to date is an important task. Through the process described above, the plan would be refined and detailed on a regular basis through preparation and adoption of plan amendments. In this way, the plan amendment and refinement process will seem to be more or less automatic.

VII. CONCLUSION

This is a long-range plan, and change occurs in a more or less continuous manner. Neighborhoods, institutions, schools, parks and commercial and industrial centers are not developed overnight. Hence, the plan does not propose or provide “quick fix” solutions, nor should it be viewed simply as an economic development platform. Rather, this Master Plan is intended to strengthen, revitalize and optimize all aspects of life in Homewood over the long term. As such, the plan must remain a living document, able to grow and change as local conditions change. To do so, it must be updated and amended on a regular basis as described in the previous chapter.

Plan implementation will take time and goodwill. Homewood must strive to get even more people interested and involved in setting and implementing the community vision. City government must continue to gather other agencies, public and private, onto the same team. The city must continue to prioritize and take direct action on various recommendations of this plan by spending local tax dollars. Further, city officials must help shape the action of others with not just more regulation, but more *effective* regulation. The city must be willing to provide selected incentives to encourage others to take the lead in development activities that would further implementation of the plan’s policies. And finally, city officials must strive to use every power they have under the law in concert with every public investment they make to support plan implementation.

The Master Plan is intended to evolve and grow in response to changes in public values and changes in market and physical conditions. Only through continuing use, evaluation, detailing, reconsideration and amendment can the plan fully serve Homewood, and only then can the people of Homewood use it fully and creatively as they seek achievement of their comprehensive vision for the community.

APPENDIX: TOWN MEETING NOTES

City Hall: January 23, 2007

Neighborhoods

Hollywood
Rosedale
Edgewood
Drexel Hills
West Homewood

Mayfair
Edgemont
Grove Park
Downtown

Assets

Community
Neighborhoods
Walkability
Diversity
Convenience

Street grid
Diverse architecture
Distinct neighborhoods
Not overcrowded
We can see the trees
Age of architecture

Self-contained
Scale of buildings
Low-key commerce
Local businesses
Community relationships

Location
Samford University
Lakeshore Hospital
Brookwood Hospital
Heart of Jefferson County

Schools
Churches
Central Park
Neighborhood parks
Community Greenway
Destinations—places to go
18th Street—heart of Downtown

Issues

Pedestrian connections
Sidewalks
Lack of bike paths
Lack of walking / jogging trails

Commercial and wayfinding signage

Lack of recreation fields
Affordable housing
Vacancies in older buildings

Transportation corridors
Arterials: physical barriers

Development guidelines
Community / compatibility
Adjacent land use compatibility
New construction compatibility
Code enforcement

Too much pavement
Underutilized parking
Lack of parking

Outside Forces

Palisades
Wildwood
Growth south of the city

Major arteries / regional traffic
Cut-through traffic
US Highway 280 proposal

Developers
House flippers vs. neighbors
Mega churches
Affordable housing

Drainage
Utility systems

Reasons to live, work or invest in Homewood

Community
History
Unique
Quaint
Charm
Comfy
Small-town
Recreation
Compact
Proximity

Trees
Diversity
Pride
Schools
Churches
Quality
Community
Public safety
Don't want to go

Missing from personal visions for Homewood

Cohesive citywide vision
Clear gateways and corridors
Intentional development
Land use compatibility

Walkable commerce
Neighborhood-scale centers
Protection from developers
Affordability—proactive city
Streetlights
Underground utilities

Pristine parks
Gathering spaces
Clean, open streams
Tree replacement program

Trolley
Sidewalk networks
North south walking trail
Calm neighborhood traffic
Safe pedestrian crossings
Safe non-motorized accessibility
Greenway / trail completed
Community walking connections

Historic preservation
Capturing history / value
Neighborhood preservation
Restored neighborhood hearts

Plan Implementation Criteria

Living Master Plan

Zoning districts intact

Still living in the same house

Redefined Neighborhood Preservation District

Appropriate edges between industry and residences

Historic City Hall has been saved

Downtown landscape rivals Fairhope

No density increase in Edgewood

Historic Edgewood remains

Edgewood – not another Soho

Edgewood—an example of New Urbanism

Homewood and Rosedale merge – come together

Rosedale Historic Community intact

Griffin Creek is not a ditch

Linear Park down Griffin Creek

Oxmoor / Green Springs / 65 intersection functions on foot

Oxmoor / Green Springs / 65 intersection serves as a gateway to the city

Green Springs redeveloped to Homewood standards

Public transportation

Senior transportation to destinations and needs

APPENDIX: SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

The following sidewalks, indicated on the Public Investment map, are organized by neighborhood.

Edgewood

Dixon Avenue
College Avenue and Westover Drive
Valley Avenue starting at Mecca Drive
Roseland Drive
Shades Park Cove
Old Oxmoor District
Broadway Street
East Edgewood Drive
Valley Place
Edgewood Boulevard
Dale Avenue
Irving Road
Highland Road
Palmetto Street
Forest Drive
Morris Boulevard
Edgewood Place
Sterrett Avenue
Pedestrian Connection @ Theda Street
Hambaugh Avenue

Rosedale

25th Court South (East of 18th Street)
18th Place South to City Hall
26th Avenue to 18th/Rosedale Intersection
BM Montgomery Street
27th Avenue South
26th Avenue South
17th Street South
Central Avenue

Hollywood

Windsor Drive
Devon Drive (Northbound)
Poinciana @ La Prado

Grove Park

Clermont Drive from Valley Avenue to Belleview Circle
28th Avenue South @ Woodfern Court
Parkridge Drive
Sutherland Place
Leland Road
Woodfern Drive & Woodfern Court

Mayfair

Saulter Road (Westbound)
Ridge Road
Overton Park
Mayfair Drive on west side of Highway 31
Roxbury Road
Highway 31/Independence Drive
Whitehall Road
Lancaster Road

Lakeshore Estates

Fair Harbor Road
Eastwood Drive
Woodmont Drive & Trail Across Creek
Lucerne Boulevard
Rockaway Road
South. Shadesview Terrace
Lakeshore Drive
Cornelius Drive & Lakewood Drive

Berry Road Area

Berry Road

West Homewood

Hall Kent School District
Venetian Way
Columbiana Road
Cobb Street
Hall Avenue
Sherbrooke Drive
Hillmoor Lane
Oakmoor Drive
Trail between Hillmoor Lane & Willow Bend Road

APPENDIX: IMPLEMENTATION ACTION AGENDA

- Prepare a citywide sidewalk improvement plan and program
- Prepare a citywide greenway and trail system Master Plan and program
- Construct the Community Greenway connection to West Homewood Park
- Prepare a Green Springs Highway Access Management Plan and program
- Prepare a Valley Avenue Access Management Plan and program
- Update the street tree and landscape plan to improve the urban tree canopy
- Devise a plan and program for affordable housing
- Prepare a citywide park and greenway Specific Plan and program
- Integrate school plans and the Master Plan–neighborhood connections and park space
- Reconfigure the Valley Avenue/18th Street Intersection
- Reconfigure the 18th Street/Rosedale Drive Intersection
- Extend 25th Court to Woodcrest Place
- Reconfigure the Hawthorne/Linwood Drives Intersection
- Reconfigure the Lakeshore Parkway/I-65 Interchange
- Reconfigure the Oxmoor/West Oxmoor Roads Intersection
- Adopt and enforce a tree ordinance
- Construct fire stations to meet planned fire coverage needs
- Devise criteria and incentives as needed to induce commercial infill in planned locations
- Prepare a specific plan for Downtown Homewood
- Prepare a specific plan for the Green Springs Urban Redevelopment District
- Prepare a plan and program for interconnecting Green Springs Highway parking lots
- Prepare specific plans to guide reinvestment in West Homewood
- Prepare a specific plan for the West Homewood neighborhood commercial center
- Prepare a specific plan for the Edgewood Urban Renewal District
- Review and update the zoning ordinance to support Master Plan implementation
- Add Corridor Overlay and Transit Overlay Districts to the zoning ordinance
- Review and update the subdivision regulations to support Master Plan implementation
- Review and update the sign ordinance to support Master Plan implementation
- Adopt a historic preservation ordinance and appoint a historic preservation commission
- Designate a Downtown Historic District and adopt commercial district standards
- Designate residential historic districts and adopt residential district standards
- Adopt the ICC Existing Building Code
- Adopt and enforce ICC Building Maintenance Standards
- Add steep slope building safety amendments to city development codes

[illegible]