

CHAPTER XI: IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

In the previous chapter, goals, objectives, strategies, and projects have been presented and described for planning guidance and consideration in forming public policy and plans for the next 10 years. Goals, objectives, strategies, and projects originate from good planning principles and practices, however, attributable to the community's limited resources and time constraints, not every single goal and objective, along with their respective projects and strategies will be implemented and realized. Therefore, implementation, as this chapter presents, strives to identify and select projects and strategies from the goals and objectives which are important to the city and which the city plans to effectively implement. The tables in this chapter list the projects and strategies that the city plans to implement along with timeframes within which the city plans to conduct and complete each project/strategy. These timeframes are as follows: Immediate, Short-term, Mid-term, Long-term, and Future Consideration. The tables also show the years each timeframe encompasses. Some projects/strategies may incorporate multiple timeframes through which they will be conducted and finalized.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify some of the optional strategies and resources at the disposal of local governments to implement the general recommendations of this plan. The proposed implementation schedules are intended to serve as a general organizational strategy for plan implementation. Although specific timeframes are identified for each recommended action, actual implementation may occur under different time frames and under varying methodologies, as may be dictated by financial constraints or competing needs and priorities. This chapter also provides action plans/evaluation tables to assist city administration in tracking project progress toward completion on a yearly basis.

Successful implementation spans the work of many people often requires the cooperative action of multiple entities, some of which may have varying degrees of commitment to and responsibility for the success of the planning effort. Other common obstacles to successful plan implementation include funding constraints, insufficient access to needed technical support and resources, and conflicting interpretations of problems and needs. All of these impediments, to some degree, are relevant to comprehensive planning implementation.

This comprehensive plan acknowledges that the City of Sylacauga has limited resources and competing planning priorities. However, city administration has sufficient technical expertise and capacity to react quickly to the complex issues affecting the city. This plan also recognizes that the city must depend upon the cooperation of other independent boards and agencies to implement those aspects of the plan that the city cannot directly control. Sylacauga must respond to a wide range of changing needs, all of which must be considered when determining priorities for local action. It is difficult to foresee the critical issues that will arise tomorrow, but the comprehensive plan is useful in guiding and directing policy toward a more sustainable community. The city must retain the ability to establish its own priorities in any given year to satisfy its own needs. As a result, full implementation of this plan will not happen quickly and may take longer to achieve than initially expected.

City Administration

The City of Sylacauga has a full-time Mayor and full-time support staff to handle the city's daily administrative needs. The administrative staff can use the comprehensive plan as a general guide for coordinating expansion of the city's public facilities and services to address future growth needs. However, it must be recognized that, due to the city's relatively small size and lack of large, stable sources of revenue, the administrative staff's capacity to fully monitor and implement the plan is

somewhat constrained. Support and assistance from every level of city government will be needed to ensure that the policies and programs recommended by this plan are fully implemented. The city can also seek assistance from support agencies-such as the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, and USDA Rural Development-for technical assistance in implementing the goals and objectives of the plan.

Codes and Ordinances

Basic local development codes include zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and building codes. These codes and regulations help local governments manage growth and development and are important local tools to support plan implementation efforts. Local governments can and do adopt other special ordinances to address specific community needs, but such ordinances may require special legislation to implement. This section discusses in detail those development codes that municipalities are authorized to adopt and implement under existing state law.

Zoning

Zoning ordinances are adopted by local governments to control the location, intensity, and character of land uses in the community. They also help communities prevent conflicts between neighboring property owners resulting from land development activities, and they help protect the public from any excessive environmental impacts that may result from private development activities. Local governments derive their zoning powers from the state through the Code of Alabama (Title 11, Chapter 52, Article 4). The primary purpose of local zoning ordinances is to promote public health, safety, and general welfare by fostering coordinated land development in accordance with the comprehensive plan. Adopting a zoning ordinance is an effective means of implementing land use and development recommendations contained in the comprehensive plan. Generally speaking, zoning ordinances adopted by local governments must be prepared in accordance with a comprehensive plan, as required under Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 72 of the Code of Alabama, 1975.

Subdivision Regulations

While zoning ordinances control the nature and intensity of land uses, subdivision regulations govern the manner by which land is divided in preparation for development. Subdivision regulations contain standards for subdivision design, lot layout, and the placement and construction of public facilities within subdivisions. Although most subdivisions in small communities are residential in nature, the regulations should be developed to also address commercial or industrial subdivisions.

Municipal governments in Alabama are authorized to adopt and enforce subdivision regulations under Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 31 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. The Code further authorizes cities to enforce their local subdivision regulations within a planning jurisdiction in the surrounding unincorporated areas, up to five miles beyond the city limits. In the East Alabama region, many municipalities exercising their extraterritorial subdivision powers do so only within their police jurisdiction boundaries, which may be either 1.5 or 3 miles from the city limits.

Building Codes

Local building codes establish basic minimum construction standards for buildings, including homes and commercial and industrial buildings. The purpose of a building code is to ensure quality development and protect public safety. By adopting building codes, local governments can require developers and

contractors to secure building permits before undertaking construction activities. Applicants for building permits also can be required to provide evidence that they have received County Health Department approval for on-site septic systems, thereby providing an effective mechanism to ensure compliance with local health regulations. Cities and counties in Alabama are authorized, under Title 41, Chapter 9, Section 166 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, to adopt minimum building standards that have been adopted by the Alabama Building Commission.

Partnerships, Financing, and other Resources

Financial constraints and planning assistance can be some of the greatest obstacles to plan implementation in smaller communities. Many communities must wait for funding to become available in its entirety before a plan or project can be implemented and have no expertise or guidance in planning. Sylacauga must actively continue its efforts to secure outside financial support and assistance for plan implementation in order to meet its goals and objectives to prepare for growth and development and to promote its community vision for the future. A number of financial assistance and partnership sources exist to help small communities in terms of planning and development. The most significant sources are listed as follows:

1. Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA): The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs was created in 1983 by the Alabama Legislature as an arm of the Governor's Office, created to streamline and professionalize the management of a number of federally funded programs administered by the state. Consolidating numerous agencies into a single department considerably reduced administrative costs and ensured more effective and efficient implementation and enforcement of federal requirements for monitoring, reporting, and auditing. ADECA is composed of seven divisions and various support sections constituting—1) Communications and Information, 2) Community and Economic Development, 3) Energy, 4) Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety, 5) Office of Water Resources, 6) Surplus Property, and 7) Support Sections. One of the most widely used ADECA divisions, by communities, is Community and Economic Development. The Community and Economic Development Division provides the following program areas:

- Community Development Programs—probably the most well-known program is the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) which provides funding to improve communities in various areas through the following funds:
 - Competitive Fund—which provides funding for projects such as water and sewer line rehabilitation and extension, housing rehabilitation, neighborhood and downcity revitalization, street and drainage improvements.
 - Community Enhancement Fund—which provides funding assistance for fire protection, senior citizen centers, community centers, Boys & Girls clubs, and recreational facilities.
 - Planning Fund—provides funding to eligible communities to conduct planning activities to promote orderly growth, regional development, and revitalization efforts.
 - Economic Development Fund—provides funding to all eligible communities for projects that support the creation and retention of jobs.
 - *Note:* Communities seeking funding assistance through the CDBG Program should demonstrate 51% low to moderate income (LMI) in the community for planning grants and 51% LMI for project areas pertaining to proposed projects.
- Community Service Block Grants—assists low-income Alabama residents in gaining employment, education, and many other skills.
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)—seeks to fund projects and programs to create new jobs, spur economic development, build roads and infrastructure, advance education and promote wellness

in central and north Alabama.

- Community Stabilization Program—established to provide funding assistance with the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment.
- Disaster Recovery—funds which may be allocated after federally declared disasters and used for activities such as replacement or repair of infrastructure and housing damage resulting from the declared disaster.
- Alabama Enterprise Zones—provides tax incentives to corporations, partnerships, and proprietorships that locate or expand within designated Enterprise Zones.
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)—provides funding assistance to federal agencies, states, local governments and nonprofit organizations for the development and improvement of recreational trails.
- Alabama Advantage—provides information for people looking to relocate or retire in Alabama.
- Emergency Shelter Grant Program—grant funding is used to upgrade existing homeless facilities and domestic abuse shelters.
- Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)—administers grants funding walking and exercise trails, playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, soccer fields, baseball and softball diamonds, and other outdoor areas that improve communities.
- Delta Regional Authority (DRA)—strives to improve many aspects of communities in 20 Alabama counties of the Delta Region area of the state.

2.Connecting ALABAMA: Connecting ALABAMA is a multi-year initiative promoting the availability and adoption of broadband Internet access throughout the state. The initiative seeks to identify and leverage all available funding sources for both demand and supply side programs. Demand-side initiatives are designed to advance healthcare, education, agriculture, and other economic development opportunities and may require non-traditional funding, while supply-side initiatives for infrastructure development and service delivery in rural areas may require non-commercial sources of funding such as government and foundation grants. The Connecting ALABAMA website at: www.connectingalabama.gov contains a link to the Federal Funding Manual which serves as a guide to federal programs useful to communities seeking federal funds to deploy, use, or benefit from telecommunications networks and technologies. Other grant opportunities for the advancement and financing of telecommunication infrastructure and technology include:

- USDA's Rural Utilities Service—which provides programs to finance rural America's telecommunications infrastructure.
- The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program (DLT)—which utilizes loans and grants and loan/grant combinations to meet educational and health care needs in rural areas throughout the country.
- The Community Connect Grant Program—offers financial assistance to eligible applicants to install and expand broadband in unserved areas with the goals of enhancing public safety services and fostering economic growth.

3.Alabama Power Company Economic and Community Development: Alabama Power provides reliable electricity supply, at competitive prices, to approximately 1.4 million homes, businesses, and industries in the southern two-thirds of Alabama. The Alabama Power Company, through their department of Economic and Community Development provides services for economic development in the following areas 1) Building and Site Evaluation, 2) Labor Force Analysis, 3) Electrical Services, 4) Transportation/Logistics Analysis, and 5) Alabama Tax and Incentive Analysis. The department also offers services in community development through the following programs: 1) Advantage Site Program, 2) Industrial Site Development Program (ISDP), 3) Speculative Building Program, and 4) ACE (Alabama Communities of Excellence) Program, which uses strategic community planning in forming goals and plans for the community's future.

4.The Economic Development Administration (EDA): EDA, established under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, was formed to help communities generate jobs, retain existing jobs, and stimulate industrial and commercial growth in economically distressed areas of the United States. In continuing its mission, EDA operates on the principal that distressed communities must be empowered to develop and implement their own economic development strategies. The communities in the East Alabama Region are recognized by EDA as part of an Economic Development District, which enables them to receive EDA grant funding for infrastructure improvements, which support projects used to create new local jobs. Investment programs provided by EDA include the following: Public Works and Economic Development Program, Economic Adjustment Assistance Program, Research and National Technical Assistance, Local Technical Assistance, Planning Program, University Center Economic Development Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms Program.

5.The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC): EARPDC offers revolving loan funds to provide gap financing for local businesses. The Commission provides matching funds to member governments that use the commission's services for planning projects, such as the preparation of comprehensive plans, strategic plans, land use plans, housing studies, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations as well as mapping services. The Commission also offers grant writing and administration services to member governments to secure funding for a wide variety of community projects and for community planning.

6.The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT): which constructs new highways, offers special Transportation Enhancement Grants through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and runs a Safety Management Program.

7.The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC): which provides special grants to restore local historic buildings and structures and assists in surveying historic properties and preparing applications for inclusion in the National Historic Register.

8.The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM): which helps finance public water extensions through a special low-interest loan fund and finances special water and sewer demonstration projects.

9.The Small Business Administration (SBA): which provides technical assistance to entrepreneurs in rural areas through the local Small Business Development Centers.

10.US Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA): which offers a range of grant and loan programs to help finance housing improvement projects, economic development initiatives, infrastructure improvement projects, and city jail expansions and construction.

11.The local Community Action Agencies, which conduct a wide range of programs to assist low and moderate income households throughout the rural areas, in such areas as heating assistance, Head Start, and weatherization programs.

12.The local Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and Industrial Development Authorities (IDA), which sponsor and finance economic development efforts and initiatives within their jurisdictions.

13.Alabama Power, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA): and the Rural Electric Cooperatives

(REC), which finance and provide technical assistance for a wide range of local economic development initiatives.

14.Rural Alabama Initiative (RAI): is a grant program, funded by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and administered through the Economic and Community Development Institute (ECDI). ECDI has the mission to improve the quality of life of Alabama citizens by promoting continuing economic and community development policy and practice through communication, education, research, and community assistance. Through RAI the Institute provides a mechanism for rural communities to attain monetary assistance for community development goals. The main goal of RAI is to assist communities that seek economic prosperity and a better quality of life.

15.The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): offers grant and technical assistance to small communities through a variety of environmental preservation, protection, and education programs, fellowships, and research associateships. Grant programs administered under EPA include: The Brownfields Grant Program, Environmental Education Grants Program, Environmental Information Exchange Network Grant Program, Environmental Justice Grants Program, Environmental Justice through Pollution Prevention Program, National Center for Environmental Research, Pollution Prevention Incentives for States, Water Grants, and Watershed Funding.

16.Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): provides grants and technical assistance to small communities through a variety of emergency management, prevention, and education programs. Grant programs administered under FEMA include: The Buffer Zone Protection Program, Emergency Management Performance Grant, Homeland Security Grant Program, Intercity Bus Security Grant Program, Operation Stonegarden, Port Security Grant Program, Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program, Transit Security Grant Program, Trucking Security Grant Program, Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) Non-profit Security Grant Program.

17.Alabama Clean Water Partnership (ACWP): Alabama has more rivers, lakes, and groundwater than any other place in the country and is the richest state in the US in terms of water. Approximately 10% of all water in the US flows within the state's borders. The Alabama Clean Water Partnership is a statewide 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization comprised of a diverse and inclusive coalition of public-private interest groups and individuals working together to improve, protect, and preserve water resources and aquatic ecosystems in the state. The main purpose of the ACWP is to "make connections" in linking individuals, companies, organizations, and governing bodies in order to educate the public about the importance of clean water and to assist in projects to protect and preserve Alabama's water resources and aquatic ecosystems. This purpose is accomplished through efforts to improve communication and information sharing as well as appropriate coordination and collaboration. The ACWP, on their website, inquires "Do you know of a stream that needs help?" this link brings up an ACWP Stream Nomination Form through which an applicant may submit a stream for consideration. Each nomination is added to a priority list that will assist in directing attention and resources to Alabama watersheds. The ACWP also provides the services of one statewide coordinator and facilitators for each of the ten river basins in the state. Each facilitator coordinates basin meetings and projects in their respective basins while the coordinator supports the facilitators and transfers information between the basins.

18.The US Census Bureau: The Census provides substantial statistical information and to communities, counties, states, and the nation at large. The most significant and widely used data tools provided by the Census Bureau is the Decennial Census—which provides 100% count information and is

updated every 10 years—and the American Community Survey which provides estimate information and is updated every year for all municipalities with a one year survey period for each municipality with population over 65 K in population, a 3 year period for municipalities with between 20 K and 65 K and a 5 year period for all cities in the nation. Another significant tool offered by the Census is the Census Business Builder: Small Business Edition. The Builder is an interactive tool which allows small business owners a way to easily navigate and use key demographic and economic data to help guide research into opening a new business or expand their existing. Key features of the Census Business Builder include:

- Easy to use menus to select the owners type of business and potential business location
- An interactive map that allows selection of the area to explore for business opportunities, including comparisons to neighboring areas.
- Dynamically generated business county and city-level reports (including trend charts) that can be easily incorporated into a business plan and used for further research.

19. Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM): assists municipalities in Alabama in funding local projects and purchases. This organization has established the AM Fund, administered by the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation, to provide low-cost, tax-exempt financing to Alabama communities. Municipalities borrow from the AM Fund at a low tax-exempt interest rate to fund almost any municipal project and equipment purchase. Goals determined thorough the administration of AM Fund incorporate the following:

- Share issuance costs that reduce individual borrower’s costs
- Participate in bond issues of sufficient size to enable the borrowers to achieve attractive interest rates
- Minimize staff time by using straightforward loan documentation

Sylacauga should continue to explore project-financing opportunities with all of these entities when undertaking projects to implement this comprehensive plan. The city should also consider developing public-private partnerships. Of course, outside financing usually will not cover all of the costs associated with a project. The city must be prepared to provide local matching funds, where needed to leverage outside grants, to cost share with private partnerships, and to undertake projects that cannot be funded by outside sources.

Implementation Schedule

As previously mentioned, due to limited resources and time constraints, not all the goals, objectives, strategies, and projects outlined in this plan shall be realized. Therefore, the city must effectively identify and prioritize the most important, impactful, and feasible projects and strategies in Chapter X: Goals and Objectives and then incorporate such projects and strategies into an implementation plan. One way to form an implementation plan is to create an implementation schedule. The implementation schedule lists strategies and projects to be undertaken as On-going (1-2 years), Short-term (3-5 years), Mid-term (6-9 years), Long-term (10 to 20 years), and Future Consideration (over 20 years). The schedule formulates a specified timeframe within which each project and strategy should be undertaken, establish which local entity is responsible for carrying out the activity, and identify potential partners and funding resources (PP & FS) in implementing respective strategies and projects. Although these projects are primarily assigned to Sylacauga, the city should consult and work with outside entities to secure funding and guidance with planning and implementation efforts. Implementation schedules have been created for land use and zoning, transportation, and community facility related projects and strategies listed as follows: (see page 150)



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Implementation Matrix

#	Action	Page #	Priority	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Land Use					
Goal 1: Develop a long-range planning for the city.					
1	Update and modernize the zoning bylaw and other land use regulations	134	High	Short-term	Planning Commission, City Council
Goal 2: Downtown Revitalization					
1	Downtown Residential Neighborhood Designations.	134	Medium	Short-term	Planning Commission, City Council
2	Downtown South	135	Medium	Short-term	Planning Commission, City Council
3	Improve pedestrian connections from Downtown to other key features.	135	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council
4	Create Downtown design guidelines for major building renovations, new construction, and new signage.	135	High	Short-term	Planning Commission, City Council
5	Provide streetscape improvements and pedestrian amenities.	135	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council
Goal 3: Avondale Mills Site Reuse					
1	Adaptive Reuse Overlay District (AROD).	135	High	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, City Attorney
2	Design pedestrian linkages between the mill buildings.	135	Low	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council
3	Create and maintain a comprehensive inventory of buildings, occupancy status, tax title status, and other pertinent information within the AROD.	135	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Zoning and Code, City Council
Goal 4: Consider land development and preservation techniques that address local needs.					
1	Protecting and enjoying community character	135	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Historical Commission, Tree Commission, Beautification Coalition
2	Provide more housing options.	135	High	Long-term	Planning Commission, City Council

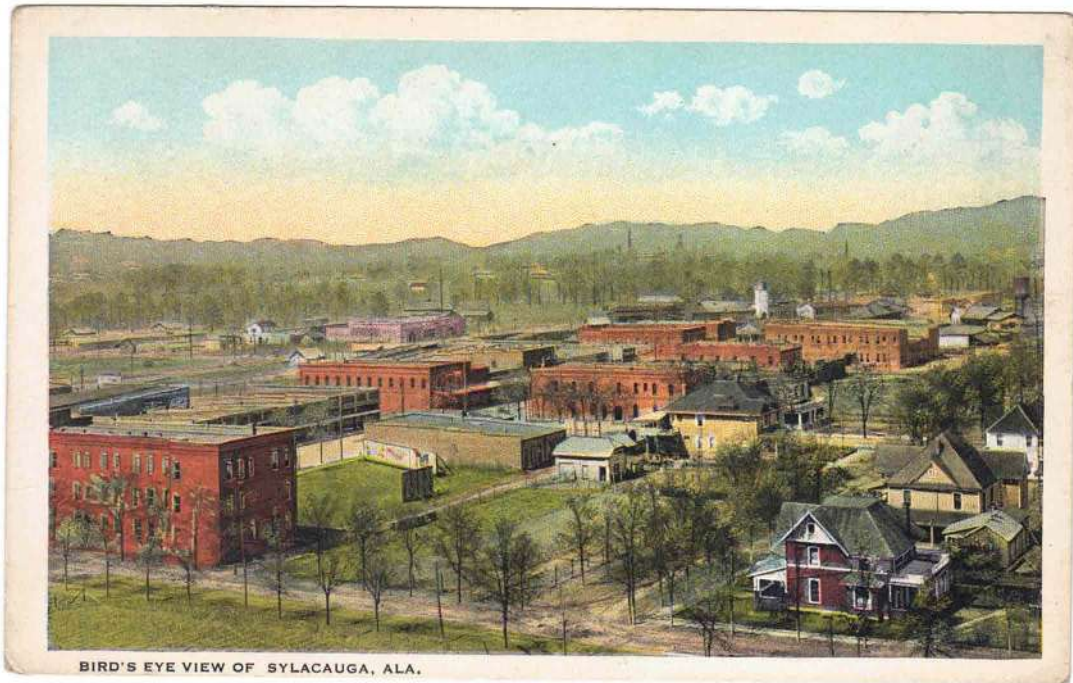
Implementation Matrix

#	Action	Page #	Priority	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Transportation					
Goal 1: Promote and Enhance Transportation throughout the City by Properly Maintaining Existing Roadways.					
1	Improve Streets and Roadway Conditions through Paving and/or Repaving Projects.	135	High	Long-term	Planning Commission, City Council, Public Works Construction Department, County Road Department, ALDOT.
Goal 2: Promote and Enhance Transportation throughout the City by Means of Improving Traffic Flow and Safety					
1	Schedule proper timings for trains to resolve the traffic issue.	135	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Public Works Construction Department, County Road Department, ALDOT, SAFE
2	Identify Safety Concerns and Issues from the General Public.	135	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Street Department.
Goal 3: Promote and Enhance Transportation by Means of Creating and Improving Alternative Forms of Transportation, such as Walking and/or Bicycling					
1	Improve and/or Install Sidewalks Where Needed.	136	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Street Department.
Community Facilities Parks and Recreation					
Goal 1: Enhance the quality of life.					
1	Increase police patrols in the community.	136	Low	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Police & Fire Department.
2	Improve quality of health in the community.	136	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council
Goal 2: Recreation and Entertainment					
1	Improve recreation for all age groups (Multipurpose recreational facility).	136	High	Long-term	Parks & Recreation, Planning Commission, City Council.
2	Develop the Sports complex/ fun park to attract the citizens.	136	Medium	Long-term	Parks & Recreation, Planning Commission, City Council.
Housing					
Goal 1: Encourage residential growth.					
1	Promote Sylacauga by providing a wide range of housing options.	138	High	Short-term	Housing Authority, Planning Commission, City Council

Implementation Matrix

#	Action	Page #	Priority	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Goal 2: Provide multi- family housing with no income cap					
1	Include a mix of housing types within neighborhoods to promote a diversity of household types and housing choices for residents of all ages and income levels to promote stable neighborhoods.	138	High	Long-term	Planning Commission, City Council
Goal 3: Senior-Citizen housing with no income cap.					
1	Encourage the rehabilitation of historical properties.	139	High	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Historical Commission
2	Integrate housing into mixed-use developments.	139	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Historical Commission
Economic Development					
Goal 1: Enhance the tourism in and around the city.					
1	Develop the available natural and historic resources.	140	High	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Historical Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Lake Authority
2	Make the city more beautiful through urban design and beautification enhancements.	140	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Historical Commission, Tree Commission, Beautification Coalition, Street Department.
Goal 2: Promote Incubator business opportunities.					
1	To establish more businesses in the city. (Merchant association)	140	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Historical Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business
Goal 3: Promote Marble festival and improve the sports complex to host more seasonal competitions.					
1	Encourage the younger generation.	140	High	Ongoing	Parks & Recreation, Planning Commission, City Council, Marble Festival Committee
2	Improve facilities to draw more visitors to the city	140	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Commission, City Council, Historical Commission, Beautification Coalition.

Potential Partners: City Agencies



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF SYLACAUGA, ALA.

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Plan Adoption and Amendment

According to Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 8 of the Code of Alabama, 1975, the municipal planning commission is authorized to prepare and adopt a local comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan can be adopted by resolution in whole or in successive chapters or elements, as provided in Title 11, Chapter 52, section 10 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. However, prior to adoption or disapproval of the plan by the planning commission, the planning commission or the city council must publish notice of and conduct a public hearing to solicit comments on the proposed plan from concerned citizens. State law does not specify the format to be used for notification or conduct of the required public hearing. However, common sense dictates that the hearing should be notified and conducted in accordance with the standard procedures used by the planning commission or city council, as may be applicable.

Once the plan has been adopted in accordance with state law, the planning commission is empowered to assume additional administrative authorities. These authorities are specified in Title 11, Chapter 52, Section 11 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. According to this statute, no street, square, public building or structure, park or other public way, ground or open space, or public utility can be constructed or authorized in the community without approval by the planning commission. The planning commission must review the proposed community facility improvement for consistency with the adopted comprehensive plan. If the planning commission determines that the proposed improvement is not consistent with the plan, it may disapprove the improvement. Such a vote can be overturned by a two-thirds majority vote of all city council members.

As this provision of Alabama law illustrates, the comprehensive plan is an important document. It serves as a legal support for local zoning authority, and it governs the expansion of public facilities and infrastructure in the community. Therefore, it is important to remember that the adoption of a comprehensive plan document is not the end of the planning process. It is merely the beginning of an ongoing dedicated planning effort. The local government must be committed to a plan monitoring, review, and implementation effort if the plan is to achieve its stated objectives. In addition, the plan should be reviewed and revised periodically in response to growth and changing conditions in the community. While Alabama law does not prescribe a revision schedule for local government comprehensive plans, communities should update the plan at least once every ten years to incorporate more recent data from the latest U.S. Census. New census data is needed to determine growth and population trends used by the plan. More frequent updates should be conducted if the community experiences rapid growth or change, or if the community proposes to undertake a significant public investment to stimulate future growth or change.



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