

# ANNISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

prepared for the

*CITY OF*  
**ANNISTON,**  
*ALABAMA*



**FINAL: May 18, 2022**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## CITY OF ANNISTON

### Mayor & City Council

- Mayor Jack Draper
- Councilman Jay Jenkins - Ward 1
- Councilman Demetric D. Roberts - Ward 2
- Councilwoman Ciara Smith - Ward 3
- Councilwoman Millie Harris - Ward 4

### Project Steering Committee

- Benjamin New - Chair
- Seyram Selase - Vice Chair
- David Christian
- Katrina Dorsey
- Sharon Dunson
- Sterling Jenkins
- Phillip Keith
- Daphne Ware Miller
- Teresa Noell
- Mindy Poe
- Bill Robison
- Ann Welch

### City Staff

- Steven D. Folks - City Manager
- Corbett Imes "Toby" Bennington, AICP - Planning & Economic Development Director
- Jackson Hodges - Public Information Officer & Main Street Director

### Planning Commission

- Ann Welch - Chair
- Seyram Selase - Vice Chair
- David Christian
- Jack Draper
- Sharon Dunson
- Lisa Huckaby
- General Jackson
- Demetric "D.D." Roberts (ex-officio)
- Jeff Waldrep (ex-officio)

## CONSULTANT TEAM

### Lead Firm

*The Walker Collaborative - Nashville, TN*

- Philip L. Walker, FAICP

### Sub-Consultants

*Common Ground Urban Design + Planning - Franklin, TN*

- Keith Covington, RA, AICP

*Skipper Consulting, Inc. - Birmingham, AL*

- Darrell Skipper, PE
- Richard Caudel, PE
- Julie LeNoir, PE

*Randall Gross / Development Economics - Nashville, TN*

- Randall Gross

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	
Community Overview . . . . .	1
Project Intent . . . . .	2
Project Approach . . . . .	3
Development History . . . . .	4
<b>EXISTING CONDITIONS</b>	
Natural Features . . . . .	7
Built Features . . . . .	10
Socio/Economics . . . . .	21
Housing . . . . .	23
Public Policies & Entities . . . . .	27
<b>PUBLIC INPUT &amp; PLANNING PRINCIPLES</b>	
Public Input . . . . .	34
Planning Principles . . . . .	41
<b>THE PLAN</b>	
Place Types Overview . . . . .	43
Place Types: Descriptions . . . . .	45
Mobility . . . . .	62
Infrastructure & Facilities . . . . .	72
Natural & Cultural Resources. . . . .	75
Public Space & Recreation . . . . .	80
Community Design . . . . .	82
Downtown . . . . .	88
Housing & Neighborhoods . . . . .	94
Economic Development . . . . .	99
Plan Implementation. . . . .	111

<u>Topic</u>
<b>APPENDICES</b>
A. Public Opinion Survey Results
B. Economic Baseline Analysis
C. Housing Market Analysis
D. Additional Downtown Design Concepts
E. Economic Development Strategies

# LEGEND

## LEGEND FOR COMMONLY-USED ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AADT: Average Annual Daily Traffic  
ACTS: Area-Wide Community Transportation System  
ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act  
AHA: Anniston Housing Authority  
AL-DOL: Alabama Department of Labor  
ALDOT: Alabama Department of Transportation  
ARC: Appalachian Regional Commission  
AWWSB: Anniston Water Works and Sewer Board  
BID: Business Improvement District  
CAMPO: Calhoun Area Metropolitan Planning Organization  
CCEDC: Calhoun County Economic Development Council  
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant  
CEBR: Center for Economic Development and Business Research (JSU)  
CLG: Certified Local Government  
DHS: U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
DoD: U.S. Department of Defense  
EARPDC: East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission  
EPA: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
ELI: Extremely Low Income  
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency  
FTA: Federal Transit Administration  
HPC: (Anniston) Historic Preservation Commission  
HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
IDB: Industrial Development Board  
JSU: Jacksonville State University  
LRTP: Long Range Transportation Plan  
MDA: McClellan Development Authority  
MSA: Metropolitan Statistical Area  
NICA: National Interscholastic Cycling Association  
NPS: National Park Service  
NR: National Register (of Historic Places)  
NRPA: National Recreation & Parks Association  
RAISE: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (federal grants)

RMC: Regional Medical Center  
SHPO: State Historic Preservation Office  
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics  
TIGER: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (federal grants)  
TIF: Tax Increment Financing  
TIP: Transportation Improvement Program  
US-BLS: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

# Anniston Comprehensive Plan

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Graphic Source: Trent Penny - The Anniston Star



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PLANNING PROJECT OVERVIEW

Located in northeast Alabama, Anniston is the county seat of Calhoun County. Its origins date to 1872 when the Woodstock Iron Company started a planned community named Woodstock, soon renamed Anniston in 1873. According to the US Census Bureau, Anniston has a total area of 45.7 square miles. The city had a 2020 population of 21,564.

### Project Intent

The City's Request for Proposals (RFP) document for this planning project summarized this plan's intent as follows:

*"The plan will be developed to address the areas of social, cultural and economic development in addition to focused areas set forth by city leaders, citizens and stakeholders within the public and private sectors. The goal is to prepare and adopt a plan leading to policy development to guide Anniston's future for the greater good and its quality of life."*

### Project Approach

The following five key steps were taken to create this Comprehensive Plan:

- Task 1.0: Project Kick-Off & Research
- Task 2.0: Visioning & Economic/Market Analysis
- Task 3.0: Charrette & Concept Plan
- Task 4.0: Draft Plan Preparation
- Task 5.0: Plan Presentation & Revisions

***"Anniston is improving, ever so slowly, but we have people with vision trying to make good things happen to improve our town."***

Stakeholder Comment

There were many opportunities for public engagement, including numerous public and stakeholder meetings, an online public opinion survey taken by hundreds of citizens, and a five-day charrette, which included an intensive brainstorming workshop engaging the public to develop key planning ideas.



## PLACE TYPES

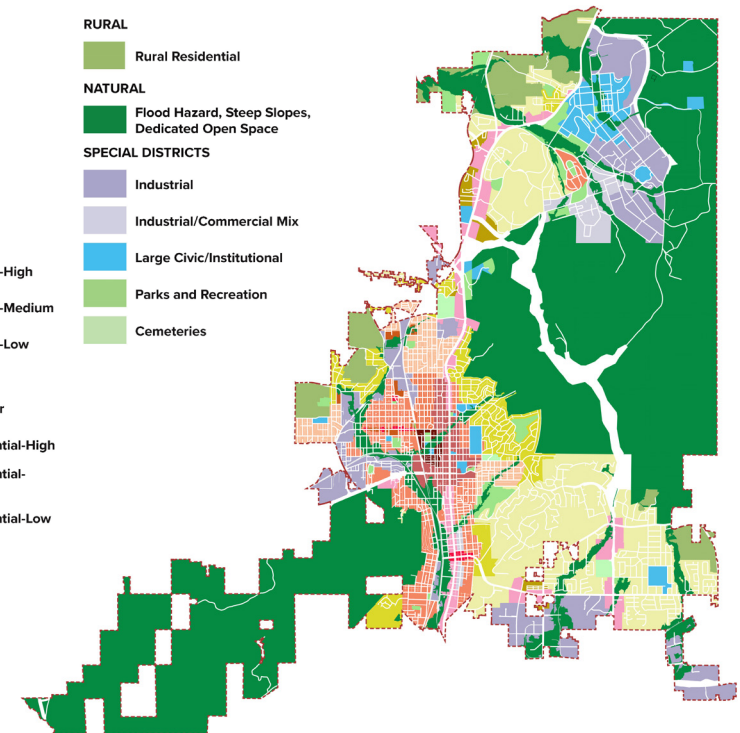
"Place Types" are determined by land uses, density, form and character. The 17 different Place Types for Anniston are mapped below (bottom) and the transect illustrating the five primary Place Types is immediately below. They are implemented through zoning.

### ANNISTON PLACE TYPES



### Key

- City Limits
- Waterbodies
- URBAN**
  - Downtown Core
  - Downtown Frame
  - Urban Center
  - Urban Residential-High
  - Urban Residential-Medium
  - Urban Residential-Low
- SUBURBAN**
  - Suburban Corridor
  - Suburban Residential-High
  - Suburban Residential-Medium
  - Suburban Residential-Low
- RURAL**
  - Rural Residential
- NATURAL**
  - Flood Hazard, Steep Slopes, Dedicated Open Space
- SPECIAL DISTRICTS**
  - Industrial
  - Industrial/Commercial Mix
  - Large Civic/Institutional
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Cemeteries



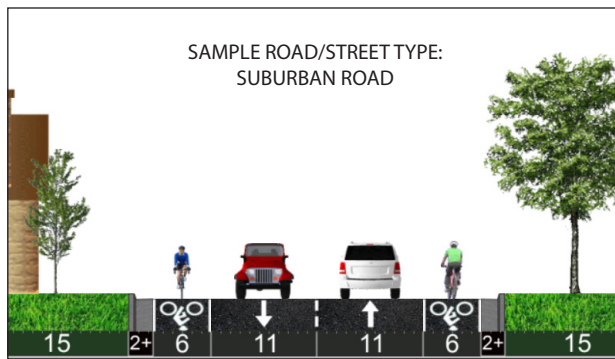
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## MOBILITY

This plan section includes a list of planning principles, a summary of “complete streets” concepts, a description and graphics for Anniston’s various Road/Street Types, proposed road/street improvements and connections, and plans for non-motorized travel, including bike lanes and greenways. As with Place Types, Road/Street Types are categorized into Rural, Suburban and Urban Types (Natural and Special are not applicable). The types include:

- Rural Roads
- Rural Parkways
- Suburban Roads
- Suburban Streets
- Local Suburban Streets
- Suburban Parkways
- Urban Streets
- Local Urban Streets
- Urban Avenues
- Urban Boulevards



## INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

This plan section addresses fire protection, sewer, water, and stormwater management. There are also recommendations for “green infrastructure,” which entails alternatives to conventional piping of stormwater by allowing natural absorption into the ground. Examples include:

- Bioswales
- Rain gardens
- Wetlands restoration
- Impervious surfaces



An initial “pilot project” to reclaim an open concrete-lined channel is recommended. This project would reclaim a natural stream bed back from the concrete lined channel and allow for an accompanying greenway. An restored creek from elsewhere is shown above.

## NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Natural Resources

Key recommendations include:

- Discourage the disturbance of floodplains
- Consider adopting a tree preservation ordinance
- Add criteria to discourage development on steep slopes as part of the City’s permitting
- Continue to pursue home pick-up service for recycling
- Continue to work with relevant agencies on environmental remediation efforts

### Cultural Resources

Key recommendations include:

- Continue the existing preservation program to retain Anniston’s CLG status
- Vigorously promote financial incentives for historic building rehabilitations
- Explore opportunities to expand the National Register and local historic districts

Because the Anniston Museum of Natural History, the Berman Museum and the Longleaf Botanical Gardens are such local treasures, the City should continue to vigorously support them.

## PUBLIC SPACE & RECREATION

The preparation of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan within the next few years is the single overarching objective for this topic. Other objectives in the meantime include:

- Ensure staff has sufficient funding for staff and park maintenance and programming
- Seek ways to be creative in programs and activities through training, networking, etc.
- Explore ways the YMCA can be expanded for the needs of young people over age 12
- Continue to upgrade facilities and equipment within current budget constraints
- Consolidate some community centers to better utilize staff and resources
- Pursue development of a skate park and a dog park

Recommendations for greenways and the proposed new Downtown plaza are provided elsewhere in the plan.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## COMMUNITY DESIGN

This plan section is grounded in the design principles of walkability, mixed uses, calming of motor vehicles, and generous landscaping. Specific concepts were developed for the redesign of Quintard Avenue, Noble Street and the West 15th Street corridor.

### Quintard Corridor

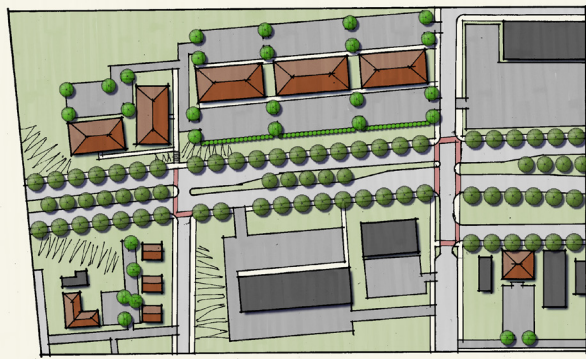
While specific recommendations depend on the segment, general ideas include:

- Require new buildings to strongly address the street
- Locate parking lots behind or beside buildings and require cross-access
- Minimize the number and width of driveways
- Provide generous landscaping
- Minimize the number and size of signs, and prohibit billboards

Quintard Avenue Corridor: Urban Segment



Quintard Avenue Corridor: Suburban Segment



West 15th Street Corridor

Key physical improvements needed for this culturally important area include streetscape enhancements, the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and compatible new infill development.

## DOWNTOWN

Downtown Anniston is strongly linked to the image and economic health of the entire community. Consequently, a focus on downtown revitalization should continue. In fact, the plan's recommendations for Downtown are organized around the Main Street "Four Point" approach, as follows:

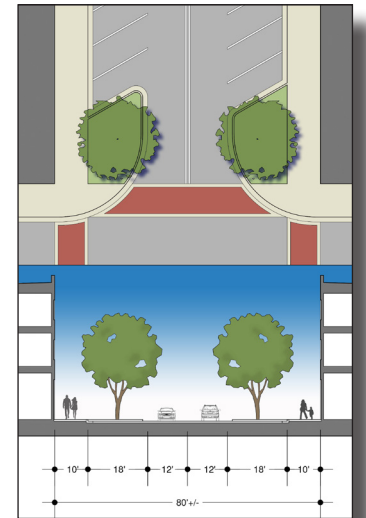
- Organization
- Design
- Economic Vitality
- Promotion

***"Downtown Anniston needs attention. We have all of those buildings that are gems, but they need to be restored."***

Stakeholder Comment

The many ideas include the following:

- Diversify the Main Street program's funding
- Pursue the employment of a full-time Manager
- Continue to pursue the establishment of a downtown development authority
- Manage on-street parking on key shopping streets with time limitations
- Pursue the development of a Downtown Plaza per the 2016 multi-modal plan
- Conduct a retail market analysis for business recruitment



One option to redesign Noble Street

## HOUSING

The following key concepts are offered based upon the housing market analysis conducted for this project and contained in the plan's appendices:

- *Marketing & Amenity Development* - conduct public relations to attract and retain residents, broadcast recent improvements in local schools, and improve amenities that impact the quality of life, such as recreational facilities.







- *Housing Rehabilitation* - tools include gap financing, partnerships, incentive programs, regulations, housing condition surveys, and home ownership initiatives.
- *New Housing Development* - identify sites, recruit developers, consider land banking and tax increment financing (TIF), and explore other recommended incentives.
- *Neighborhood Revitalization* - consolidate parcels, identify sites on high-visibility corridors, develop neighborhood amenities, improve and leverage schools, continue brownfield remediation, remove blighted housing, and address public safety through approaches such as neighborhood associations and crime watch programs.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Because of the importance of economic development for Anniston, it is the most extensive and detailed section of this plan. Since touching on the many recommendations of this section cannot be done concisely, the overall objectives are instead listed below:

### Key Objectives

- Encourage “meaningful” economic development per the “key priorities” in this plan
- Diversify the Anniston economic base, including tourism
- Strengthen Anniston’s service sectors
- Uplift Downtown’s small businesses
- Encourage industrial development of McClellan and the Airport
- Prioritize existing business retention and growth
- Address housing, equity, and poverty-related issues as part of economic development
- Prioritize pro-active marketing efforts to address negative perceptions of the schools and safety
- Enhance access to capital/ credit, jobs, and education
- Increase community pride (understanding who we are and where we are going)



*The annual Alabama Cycling Classic event checks multiple boxes to expand upon Anniston’s role as a recreation tourism destination. Anniston Star – Trent Penny*

## IMPLEMENTATION

An effective plan implementation strategy helps the community move from vision to reality. The intent of this section is for the plan to be successfully implemented through the actions of the City, including the following key actions:

### Policy Revisions

- Zoning map revisions consistent with this plan’s Place Types map
- Zoning standards revisions consistent with this plan’s Place Types
- Adoption of the road/street type standards
- Adoption of green infrastructure regulations and/or incentives
- Tree preservation ordinance
- Steep slope criteria for land disturbance permitting process
- Initiation of a recycling program with home pick-up
- Expansion of local historic districts
- Regulation of Downtown’s on-street parking with time limits
- Adoption of financial incentives for efforts of the private sector

### Primary Capital Projects

- Road and street improvements as described in the mobility section
- Non-motorized mobility facilities (bike lanes, greenways, sidewalks)
- Infrastructure improvements related to utilities, stormwater drainage, etc.
- Parks and recreation improvements
- Development of new Downtown public spaces
- New City Hall located Downtown, such as the former Federal Courthouse



This plan section features an Implementation Matrix that lists each key plan recommendation, references the page numbers for detail, indicates responsible parties, and proposes a time-frame. An annexation study is also suggested in this section, as well as some tips for successful implementation of the plan.

# Anniston Comprehensive Plan

A photograph of a residential street with large trees and houses, overlaid with the word "BACKGROUND" in large white letters. The scene is a lush, green neighborhood with mature trees and well-maintained lawns. In the background, there are several houses, including a prominent two-story house with a porch. A street sign for "6th STREET" is visible on the right side of the image. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and suburban.

**BACKGROUND**



## Local Arts & Culture

Anniston has been a cultural center for Northeast Alabama for many years. The Alabama Shakespeare Festival was established here in 1972 and remained in Anniston until moving to Montgomery in 1985. The Knox Concert Series produces “The Nutcracker” every December, and the Community Actors’ Studio Theatre (CAST) community theatre organization performs plays, musicals, and revues featuring local performers, actors, and musicians. CAST also features specially funded programs to educate area children in the arts for free. Local museums include the Anniston Museum of Natural History and the Berman Museum of World History, which feature mummies, dioramas of wildlife, prehistoric and historic artifacts, and many other themes interpreted through high-quality exhibits. The Alabama Symphony Orchestra began a summer series in 2004 of outdoor concerts - Music at McClellan - at the Former Fort McClellan, but has not performed there in several years.

## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Located in northeast Alabama, Anniston is the county seat of Calhoun County. Positioned at the southernmost length of the Blue Ridge, which is part of the Appalachian Mountains, Anniston’s environment is home to diverse species of wildlife and plants. The origins of the community date to 1872 when the Woodstock Iron Company started a planned community named Woodstock, soon renamed Anniston when it was chartered as a town in 1873. During the late-19th century, it was labeled “The Model City” by Atlanta newspaperman Henry W. Grady for its careful planning. Early into World War I, the US Army established a training camp at Fort McClellan, and the Anniston Army Depot opened during World War II. Anniston was the center of national controversy in 1961 when a mob bombed a bus filled with civilian Freedom Riders during the Civil Rights Movement, and the site is now interpreted as part of a National Monument.

According to the US Census Bureau, Anniston has a total area of 45.7 square miles, of which 45.6 square miles is land and 0.08 square miles is water. Birmingham is 65 miles to the west, Atlanta is 90 miles to the east, and Chattanooga is 125 miles to the north. A portion of Anniston’s city limits extend to Interstate 20, with access from exit 188. It is one of two key cities within the Anniston-Oxford Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The city had a 2020 population of 21,564 and an Anniston-Oxford Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) population of 116,441. Based on the 2019 American Community Survey, the city has an estimated 11,155 housing units, and the racial makeup of the city was 52% African American, 43% White, and 5% other non-White people. There were an estimated 9,277 households within the city, out of which 20% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 40% were married couples living together, 21% had a female

householder with no husband present, and 39% were non-families. The average household size was 2.22 people, and the average family size was 2.87 people. The age distribution of Anniston’s population reflects 22% under the age of 18, 8% from 18 to 24, 24% from 25 to 44, 26% from 45 to 64, and 20% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 41 years, and for every 100 females, there were 82 males.

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, the median income for Anniston’s households was \$36,051, and the median income for a family was \$46,191. Males had a median earnings of \$31,508 versus \$21,430 for females. The average per capita income for the city was \$26,677.



*Anniston is located in Calhoun County in the northeast portion of Alabama. It is 65 miles from Birmingham, 90 miles from Atlanta, and 125 miles from Chattanooga.*

Graphic Source: Amtrak



## PROJECT INTENT

Citywide Comprehensive Plans are called “comprehensive” because they are indeed comprehensive in nature by addressing a broad range of community planning issues. Issues addressed include land uses, development form and character, mobility, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resource preservation, parks and recreation, infrastructure, and similar issues. The City’s request for qualifications (RFQ) document to solicit proposals from consultants summarized this plan as follows:

***“The plan will be developed to address the areas of social, cultural and economic development in addition to focused areas set forth by city leaders, citizens and stakeholders within the public and private sectors. The goal is to prepare and adopt a plan leading to policy development to guide Anniston’s future for the greater good and its quality of life.”***

Although a variety of plans have been prepared for Anniston over the years to address a range of issues and specific places, the City did not have a citywide Comprehensive Plan prior to the creation of this plan. Any effective Comprehensive Plan should answer the following questions:

- What are the community’s current conditions?
- In what direction is the community trending?
- What is the community’s vision for the future?
- What is the blueprint for achieving the community’s vision?



Once this Comprehensive Plan is completed and adopted by the City, it can be implemented through a number of different means. One tool for shaping future land uses, densities, development forms and character will be zoning and development standards. City, state, and federal investments in infrastructure will be another means of implementation. Economic-based strategies might be implemented by the community’s economic development entities, while much of the implementation will occur through the private sector, such as real estate development and new business start-ups.

### State Requirements for a Comprehensive Plan

Section 11-52-9 of the Alabama Code is entitled “Adoption, etc., of master plan for physical development of municipality by commission - Conduct of surveys and studies; purpose of plan.” It states the following:

*In the preparation of such plans the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth of the municipality and with due regard to its relation to neighboring territory. The plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs which will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, including, among other things, adequate provision for traffic, the promotion of safety from fire and other dangers, adequate provision for light and air, the promotion of the healthful and convenient distribution of population, the promotion of good civic design and arrangement, wise and efficient expenditure of public funds, and the adequate provision of public utilities and other public requirements.”*

### Why Prepare a Comprehensive Plan?

There are numerous reasons for a community to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan, but some of the key reasons include the following:

1. **Build Consensus:** Avoid individual agendas pulling in different directions.
2. **Basis for Zoning:** The zoning map and regulations will be revised to reflect the plan.
3. **Secure Funding for Projects:** A plan makes a city competitive with other communities in securing grants.
4. **Enhance Quality of Life:** Both for citizens and for the purposes of business and industrial recruitment.
5. **Fiscal Efficiency:** Maximize infrastructure and similar public investments with in a coordinated and strategic manner.



## Media Coverage of the Plan

*"The City Council voted 5-0 earlier this month to spend \$150,000 on a comprehensive plan, along-term planning document for a city that is typically drafted over months of consultation with planning experts and groups of local residents. State law requires cities of Anniston's size and larger to create a "municipal plan," though the law has no real mechanism for enforcement. State Sen. Del Marsh, R-Anniston, last year proposed a bill that would withhold some state funds from cities that didn't plan. COVID-19 ended the legislative session before the bill had a chance to pass, but city leaders said they were committed to pursuing a plan. "It will help us decide what we want our city to look like 20 years from now. It will help us with economic development. It will help us with quality of life," Mayor Jack Draper said at Tuesday's press conference.."*

Tim Lockett  
The Anniston Star  
"Anniston Starts Work on Comprehensive Plan"  
March 23, 2021

## PROJECT APPROACH

The approach to preparing this plan is summarized below:

### Task 1.0: Project Kick-Off & Research

This initial task served as the research and diagnostic phase on which the balance of work relied. The Consultant Team performed the following sub-tasks prior to, during, and after the three (3) day Trip #1 to Anniston on May 5-7, 2021:

- Task 1.1: Kick-Off Meeting & City Tour
- Task 1.2: Physical Analysis
- Task 1.3: Existing Conditions Mapping
- Task 1.4: Public Policy & Programs Review
- Task 1.5: Future Build-Out Scenario
- Task 1.6: Public Kick- Off Meeting\*

\* Held on June 28th, 2021

### Task 2.0: Visioning & Economic/Market Analysis

Although public input was a key aspect of this project throughout its life, Task 2.0 featured a major push to solicit participation from the public. In addition to conducting a public opinion survey with 449 participants, this task included the following steps conducted by the Consultant Team as part of a two (2) day Trip #2 to Anniston on June 28-29, 2021:

- Task 2.1: Stakeholder Focus Group Meetings
- Task 2.2: Public Opinion Survey
- Task 2.3: Planning Principles
- Task 2.4: Economic & Market-Based Findings

The housing and economic development findings stemming from Task 2.4 were used as critical input into many of the plan's ideas.

### Task 3.0: Charrette & Concept Plan

A "charrette" is an intensive process in which numerous people work together over a limited period of time to develop creative ideas for solving problems. The charrette process has deep roots in the planning and design professions, and Task 3.0 offered the single greatest opportunity for meaningful "hands-on" involvement of Anniston's citizens, key community stakeholders, and City officials. The goal of the process was to provide a forum for the public to achieve a consensus. The most tangible outcome was the creation of a Concept Plan as the basis of the ultimate Comprehensive Plan. This five (5) day task comprised the Consultant Team's Trip #3 to Anniston, and the following sub-tasks were achieved on September 9-13, 2021:

- Task 3.1: Follow-Up Field Work
- Task 3.2: Public Workshop
- Task 3.3: Concept Strategy Preparation
- Task 3.4: Concept Plan Presentation

### Task 4.0: Draft Plan Preparation

Based upon the public's, Steering Committee's and City's response to the Concept Plan presented during Task 3.0, a detailed draft plan was prepared. Organized into two main sections - the Background Section and the Plan Section, the details are summarized in the Table of Contents page of this plan and will not be repeated here.

### Task 5.0: Plan Presentation & Revisions

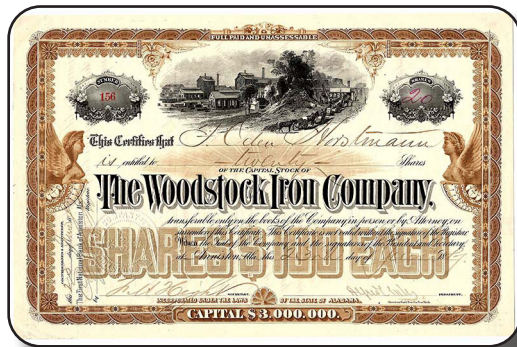
Following the City's review, key members of the Consultant Team presented the draft plan in a public forum on May 5, 2022 as part of a one (1) day Trip #4 to Anniston. Based upon a review of the draft plan by the Steering Committee and City, input from the public presentation, and the City's submission of a single "red-lined" copy back to the team for revisions, the draft plan was revised and submitted to the City as a final document.



## DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Anniston's prehistory dates back thousands of years when Native Americans occupied the area. Prior to European settlement, today's North Alabama, North Georgia, East Tennessee and North Carolina was home to the Cherokee Indians. First contact with Europeans occurred as early as 1540 when Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto met with the Cherokee on the Coosa River near the present day Town of Cedar Bluff in Cherokee County, approximately 20 miles to the north of Anniston. Calhoun County was created by a legislative act on December 18, 1832. Prior to the Civil War, iron furnaces were developed in the area, and during the war they were important to the Confederate war efforts.

Anniston, as a community, traces its roots to 1871 when Samuel Noble acquired property in today's Anniston for an iron furnace. A year later, Noble and Daniel Tyler establish the Woodstock Iron Company and the resulting community was given the same name. In 1873, the community was renamed Anniston after Tyler's daughter-in-law, Annie. Noble and Tyler establish the Anniston Manufacturing Company for cotton production in 1879, and the town was incorporated that same year. By 1880, Anniston had 942 residents.



*Woodstock Iron Company Share: International Bond & Share Society*

A major change occurred in 1883 when the Woodstock Iron Company opened the town to the public by beginning to sell lots and to function as a conventional community rather than a privately-owned company town. By 1890, Anniston had over 9,000 residents and other manufacturing plants had begun operations.

The early-20th century brought continued growth and changes for Anniston. In 1917, the US military opened an Army camp, Camp McClellan, located 5 miles north of Anniston. The Army quickly constructed roughly 1,500 wooden buildings for headquarters, mess halls, latrines, and showers, with rows of wooden-floored tents to house over 27,000 troops. A base hospital was also constructed with 118 buildings. The camp was later upgraded to "Fort McClellan," and by 1930, Anniston had 25,523 residents.

The Anniston Army Depot was established in 1940 when the US Department of the Army acquired 10,640 acres in Calhoun County to build the facility. The original purpose of the depot was to serve as an ammunition storage site to safely contain accidental explosions and facilitate weapon concealment. The depot was officially named the Anniston Ordnance Depot and employed an initial staff of only four. However, with the US entry into WWII in 1941, the need for the depot and its services increased dramatically.

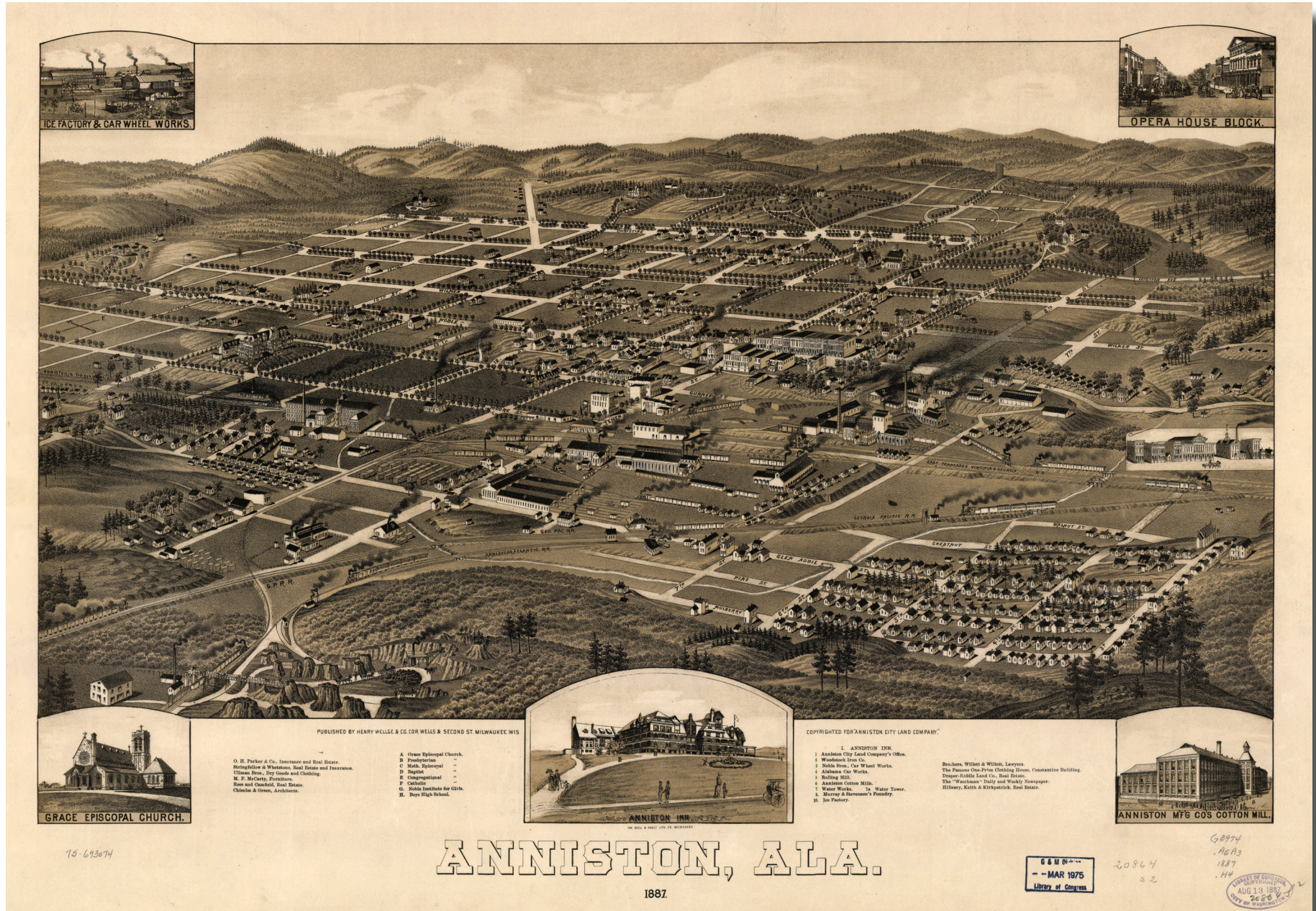
Fort McClellan was officially closed in 1999 as part of the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission base closures, thus having a significant effect on the population and employment standing of Anniston and the surrounding region as personnel and their families were forced to find employment opportunities elsewhere. Nevertheless, Anniston has continued to prosper in recent years on a range of fronts, including downtown revitalization and overall economic development. This Comprehensive Plan will only add to that momentum.

## The Civil Rights Movement

In May of 1961, area Klansmen halted and burned a Greyhound bus carrying Congress of Racial Equality Freedom Riders testing a Supreme Court decision banning segregated bus facilities along interstate routes. Following another round of racial violence in 1963, the City created the bi-racial Human Relations Council to foster better race relations. By 1965, legal segregation had ended, and several African American students had crossed the color barrier at Anniston High School. In 1971, when racial conflict surfaced again, representatives from the black and white communities formed the Community of Unified Leadership (COUL), which did much to heal the racial divide by creating job-training programs and convincing downtown shops to hire African American employees in front-end positions. Since those challenging times in the 1960s and 1970s, Anniston has made tremendous strides in racial relationships and can again confidently embrace the title of "The Model City."



# BACKGROUND

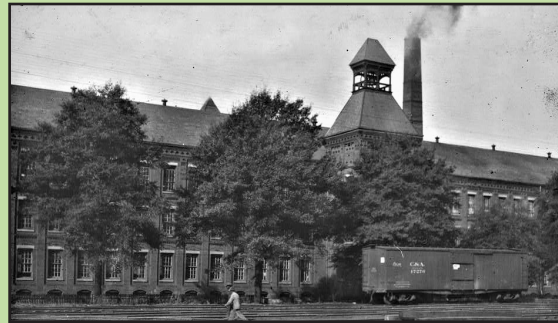




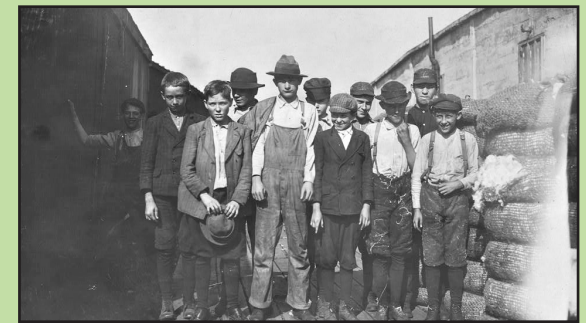
## DEVELOPMENT HISTORY IN PICTURES



Tenant farm family outside of Anniston: Library of Congress



Anniston Manufacturing Company: Library of Congress



Woodstock Cotton Mills: Library of Congress



Ollie Johnson Family: Library of Congress



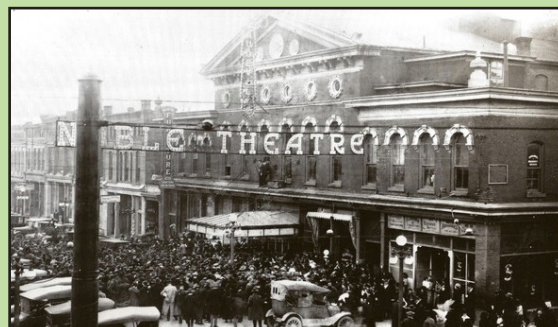
South Highland High School Class of 1933: Anniston Star



Adelaide Mill housing: Library of Congress



Electricity banner in Downtown: Pinterest - Ross Callaway



1883 Noble Theatre - demolished in 1970s: Cinema Treasures



Soldiers waiting for a bus in Downtown: Library of Congress



# Anniston Comprehensive Plan



**EXISTING  
CONDITIONS**



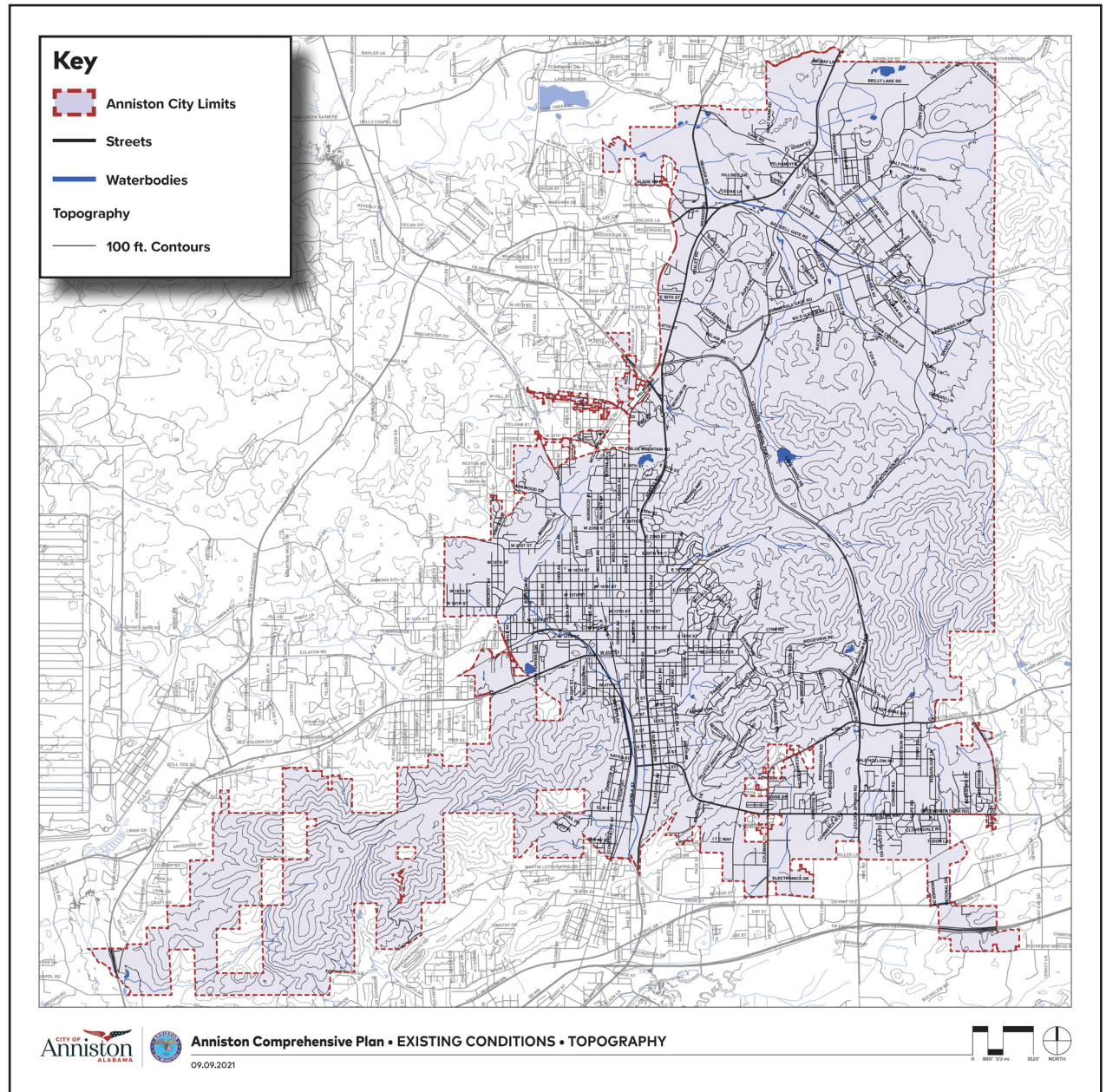
## TOPOGRAPHY

### Why Topography is Relevant

Topography is an important planning issue for two primary reasons - the development potential of land and environmental consequences. In general, the greater the slope, the less development potential due to erosion, problematic soil types, and engineering and site preparation costs. In most locales, slopes exceeding roughly 20% are avoided for development. Some of the most environmentally sensitive lands are found at either end of the topography spectrum. Steep slopes are often forested and serve as important plant and animal habitat, in addition to the air filtration and cooling benefits of trees. Likewise, flat areas are often associated with water bodies and wetlands having rich environmental value.

### Anniston's Existing Topography

Anniston is located at the south end of the Blue Ridge, which is part of the Appalachian Mountains. Blue Mountain borders on the west and the Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge is on the east. Coldwater Mountain is southwest of town. Anniston's topography primarily features gently rolling hills with some relatively flat areas, as reflected by the contour lines in the map at right. The steepest slopes are in the southeast and northern parts of the city. Anniston's topography is perhaps most noticeable when driving on Hwy. 21 and entering town either from the north or the south, as both approaches feature hilltops that, once ascended, give the rider a true sense of arrival. The city's flattest areas are associated with floodplains and bodies of water, which are addressed on the following page.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## WATER RESOURCES

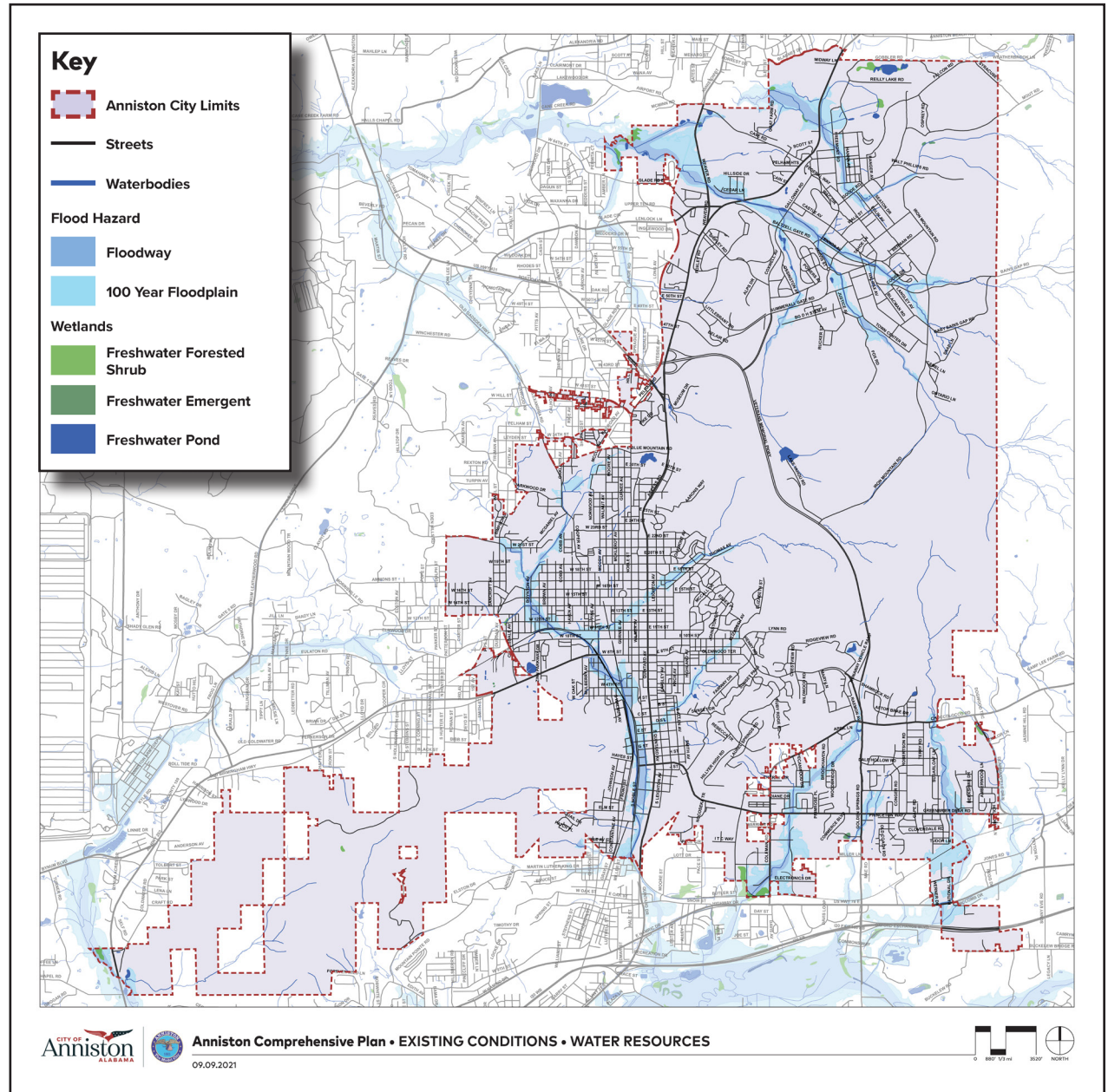
### Why Water Resources are Relevant

Anniston's water resources are significant for two primary reasons - they have a high environmental value, and some are a threat to citizens and property in the form of flooding. Of the water body types illustrated on the map at right, wetlands might provide the greatest value for the following reasons:

- *Habitat:* They are the city's richest habitat for plants and animals, including the greatest biodiversity.
- *Pollution Filtering:* Wetlands are "nature's liver" by filtering pollutants from the water, including storm-water run-off from urbanized areas. Their trees and other vegetation also help to filter the air.
- *Flood Control:* After decades of "hard" solutions (culverts, flood walls, etc.), engineers now recognize the natural flood control of wetlands as "big sponges."

### Anniston's Existing Water Resources

In addition to the various small ponds scattered throughout the city, Cave Creek, Cane Creek, and Re-mount Creek traverse the McClellan area. Most of the creeks in the southern half of Anniston, such as Snow Creek, have been channelized with concrete walls, greatly diminishing their natural values. Floodways and floodplains are associated with the various creeks, and are particularly prevalent in the west side of Downtown. Shown in green on the map at right, freshwater wetlands exist as either forested shrub or emergent wetlands. Ponds are technically considered to be wetlands.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## SOILS

### Why Soils are Relevant

Soil types are significant because some soils are much better suited for development than others. The tiny particles that comprise soil can be classified by their chemical composition (mineralogy) and their size. The particle size of a soil, which determines its texture, translates into many of the properties of the soil. Gravel, sand and silt are the larger soil particles. While gravel and sand drain very well, their mobility can create challenges for the stability of building foundations. From a development perspective, the greatest drawback of soils with high levels of clay is their inability to drain well during rainfall.

### Anniston's Existing Soils

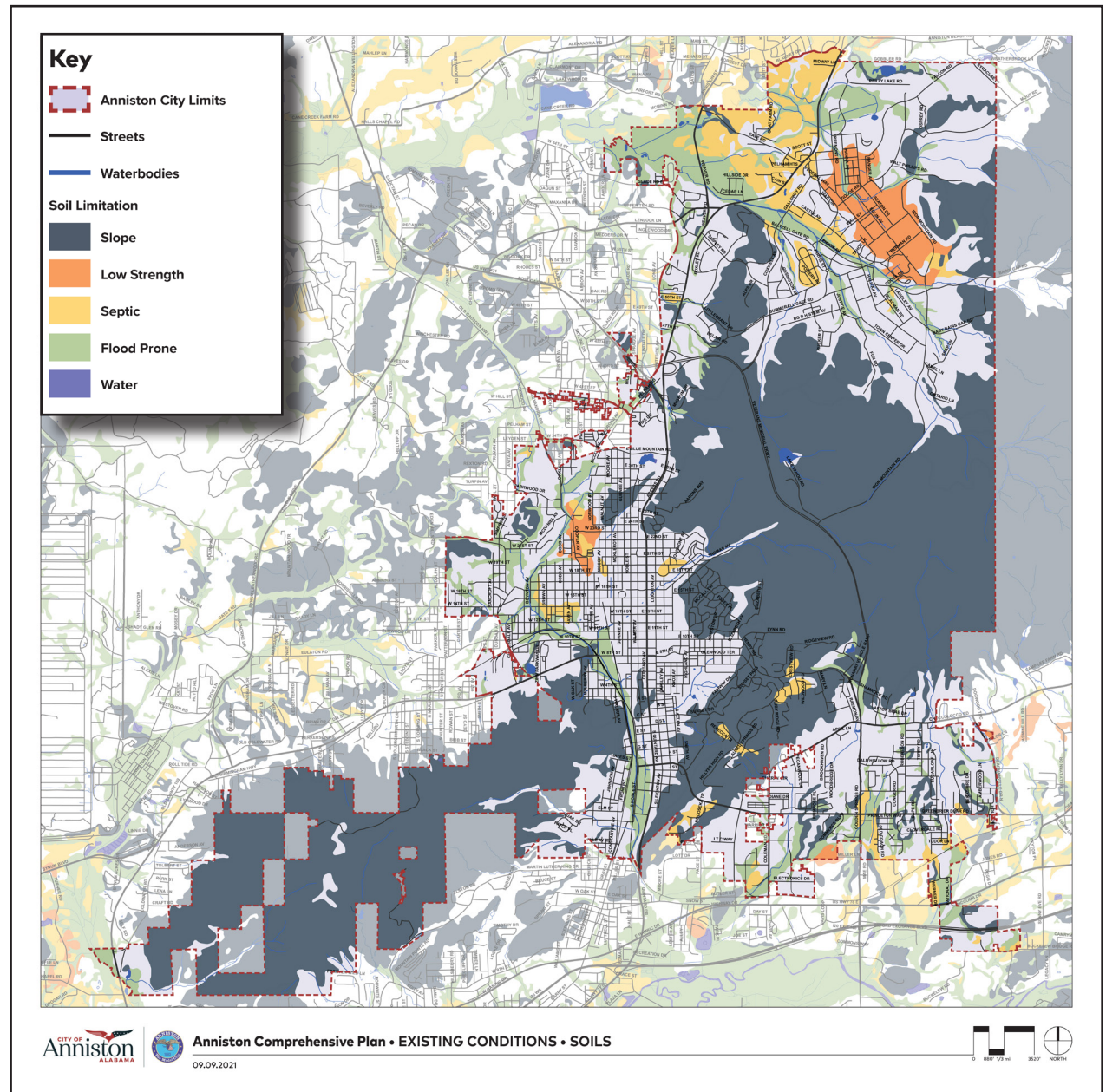
As illustrated in the map at right, here are some of the key features of Anniston's soils:

Steep Slopes: Depicted on the map in dark gray, soils associated with steep slopes are most prevalent in the southwest and northeast parts of Anniston.

Low Strength Soils: These soils are very isolated to the Fort McClellan area north of Cane Creek and a small area immediately north of Downtown Anniston.

Septic Issues: Areas with soils that do not accommodate septic systems are primarily in the northern portion of the city near Cave and Cane Creeks, as well as small areas just north of Downtown Anniston

The issues of flood-prone areas and water are addressed elsewhere in this Existing Conditions section.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## LAND USES

### Why Existing Land Uses are Relevant

Land uses are the foundation of any comprehensive plan and they must be carefully considered to insure compatibility with other land uses. While the map at right provides useful information on Anniston's existing land uses, issues such as residential densities, non-residential intensities, and development form and character are not reflected. The limitations of existing land use maps are underscored in the plan section addressing "Place Types." As an alternative to the traditional land use plans that comprehensive plans focused on in previous eras, the Place Types Plan addresses densities, intensities, form and character, in addition to land uses. This approach lends itself much more to translation into new zoning categories and zoning maps.

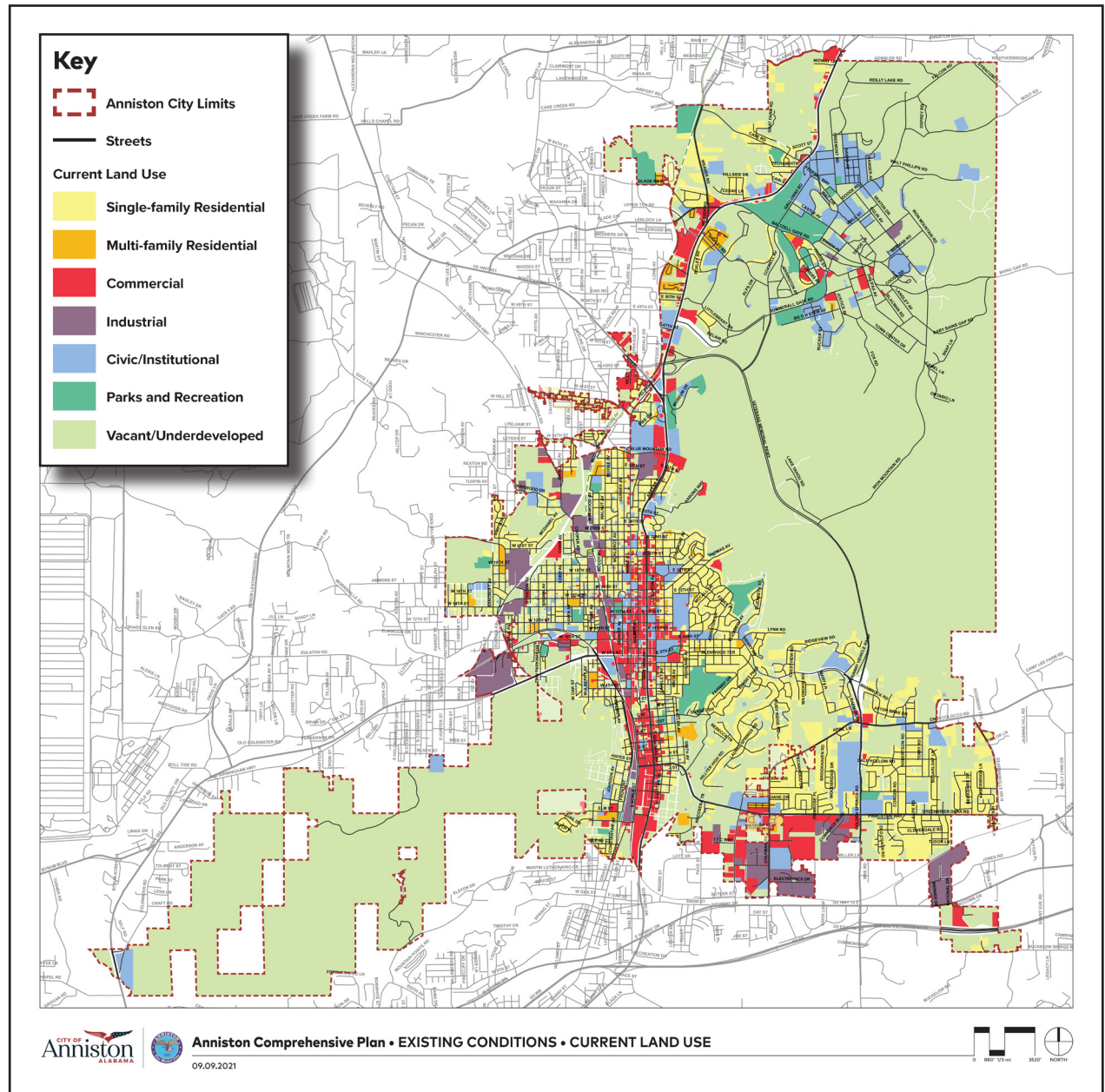
### Anniston's Existing Land Uses

As conveyed on the map at right, the most expansive existing land uses include the following categories:

**Vacant/Underdeveloped:** Depicted in green on the map at right, over 60% of Anniston's land area is undeveloped.

**Residential:** Existing residential lands, conveyed in yellow, are primarily single-family detached, but multi-family housing (in orange) is scattered somewhat randomly throughout Anniston.

**Commercial:** Commercial uses are concentrated in the core and along the full length McClellan/Quintard. There is also a cluster of commercial uses along Greenbrier Deer Road and Coleman Road. Also, areas shown as commercial in the Downtown area actually include a some mixed uses, including upper floor housing.





## MOBILITY: ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

### Why Functional Classifications are Relevant

Functional classifications are important because roadways perform a particular function in an integrated transportation network. Higher classification roadways serve a mobility function, while lower classification roadways serve an access function. The classification of each segment determines its role in the larger network, as well as its intended traffic capacity and design.

### Anniston's Functional Classifications

The roadway classifications in Anniston are adopted by the Calhoun Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Alabama Department of Transportation. The map at right illustrates those classifications:

**Interstates:** There are no Interstates in the city except where I-20 traverses the southeast corner, but direct links are provided via SR-21, SR-202, and US-431.

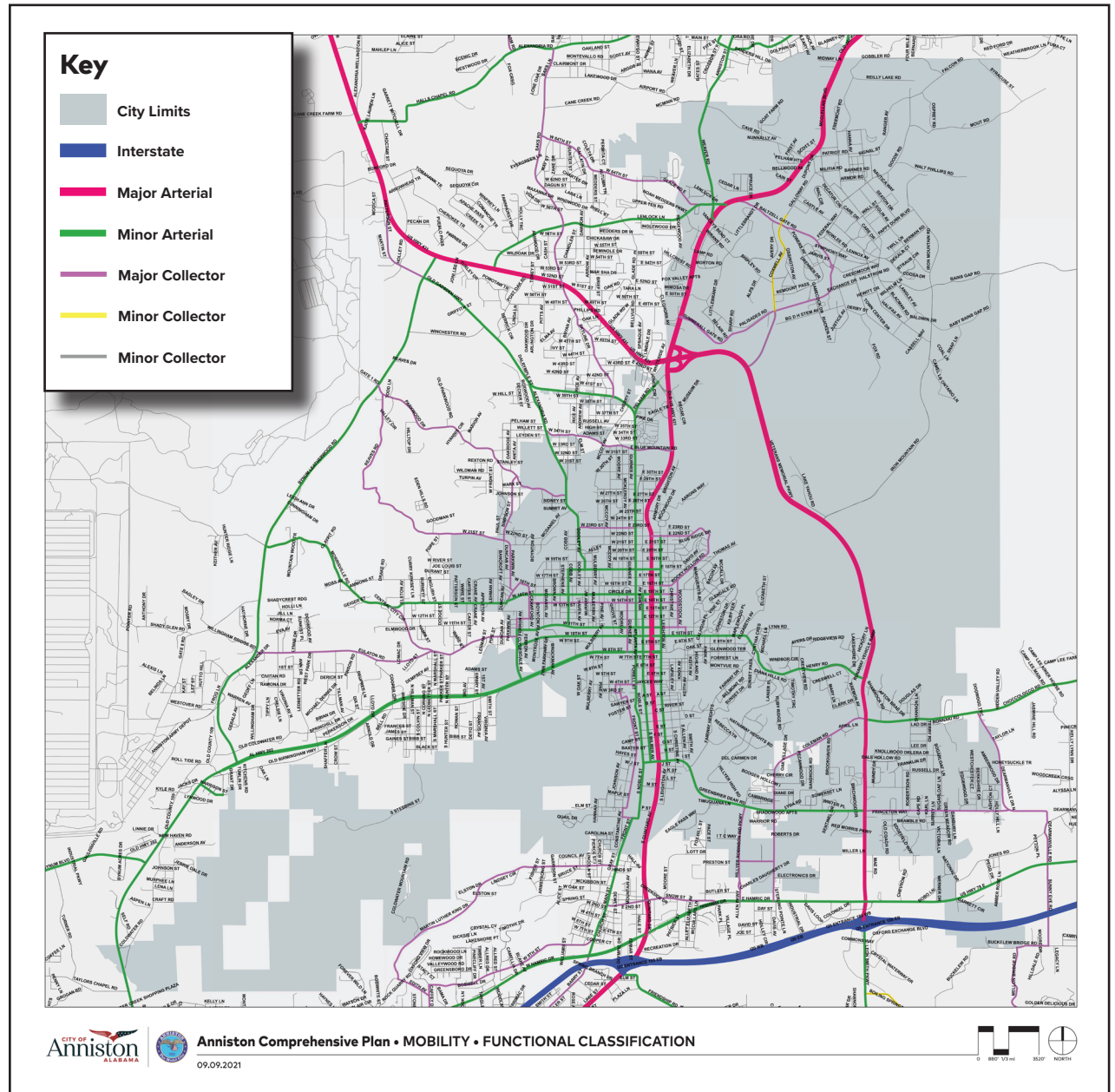
**Principal Arterials:** Two roadways have this classification, US-431 (Veterans Memorial Pkwy.) and SR-21 (Quintard Avenue/McClellan Blvd.).

**Minor Arterials:** Numerous minor arterials exist, such as SR-202, Noble St., Wilmer St., and Greenbrier-Deer Rd.

**Major Collectors:** Examples include West 14th St., Gurnee Ave., Coleman Rd., and Iron Mountain Rd.

**Minor Collectors:** Freemont Road on the McClellan reservation is the city's only designated minor collector.

**Local Roadways:** The balance of Anniston's roads and streets fit this category. They carry the lightest traffic levels and most homes are accessed by them.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



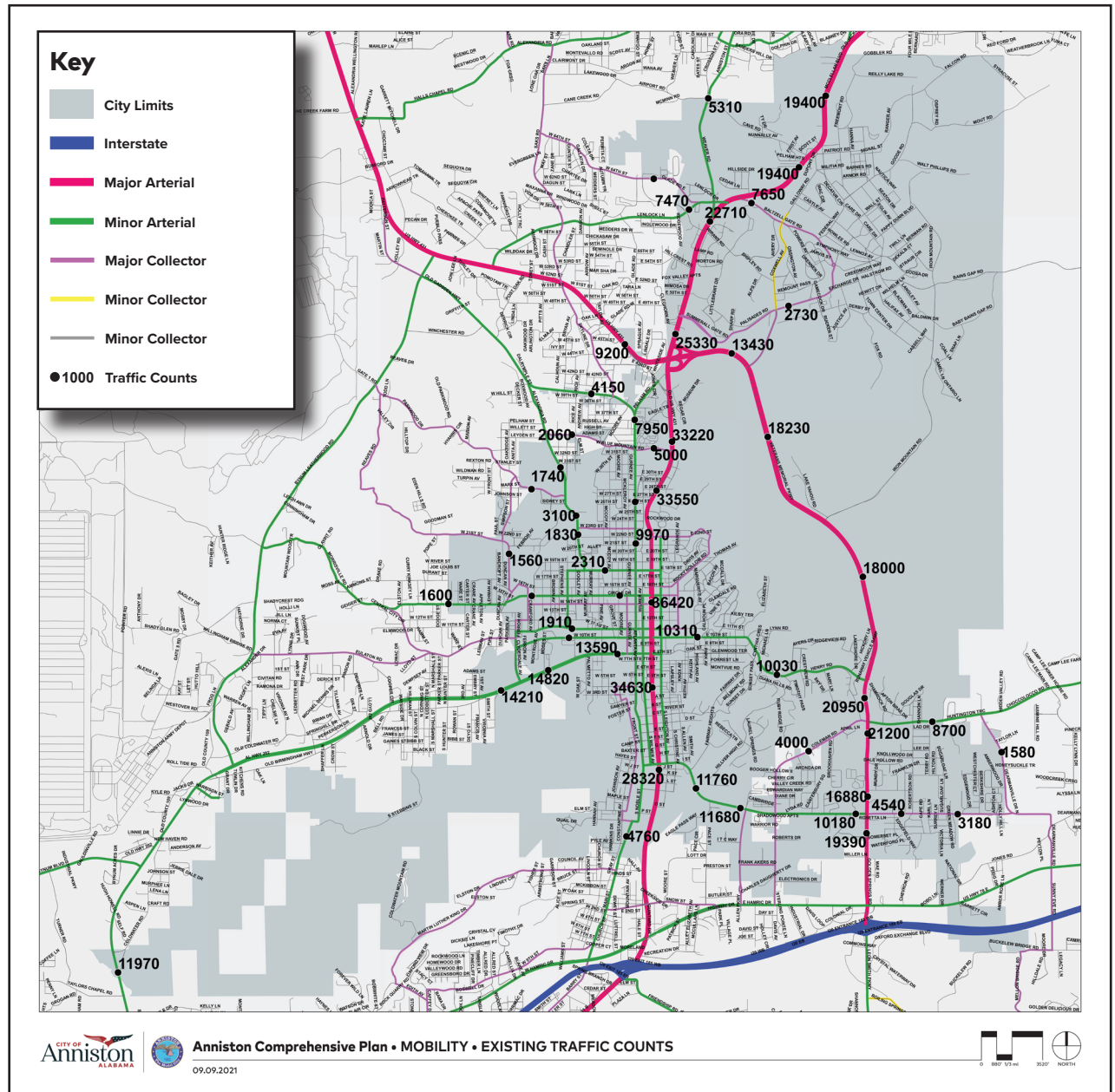
## MOBILITY: EXISTING TRAFFIC VOLUMES

### Why Existing Traffic Volumes are Relevant

Existing traffic volumes are important to understand for any comprehensive planning project so that necessary expansions of the existing transportation system can be identified. In particular, analyzing volume trends over time can be instructive for planning purposes. When correlated to the functional classification and number of traffic lanes, the need for improvements to the existing roadway network can be determined.

### Anniston's Existing Traffic Volumes

The map at right illustrates the existing (2020) traffic volumes for specific segments of Anniston's key roadways. McClellan Blvd. north of Anniston carries approximately 33,500 vehicles per day (as of 2020) and currently operates at a level of service "E." The capacity of the roadway is approximately 33,900 vehicles per day, so the existing roadway is approaching capacity. According to the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Calhoun Area MPO, the only existing deficient roadway in the City of Anniston is Quintard Ave. /McClellan Blvd. from East 15th St. to north of Summerall Gate Rd. It operates at a level of service "E" or "F."





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

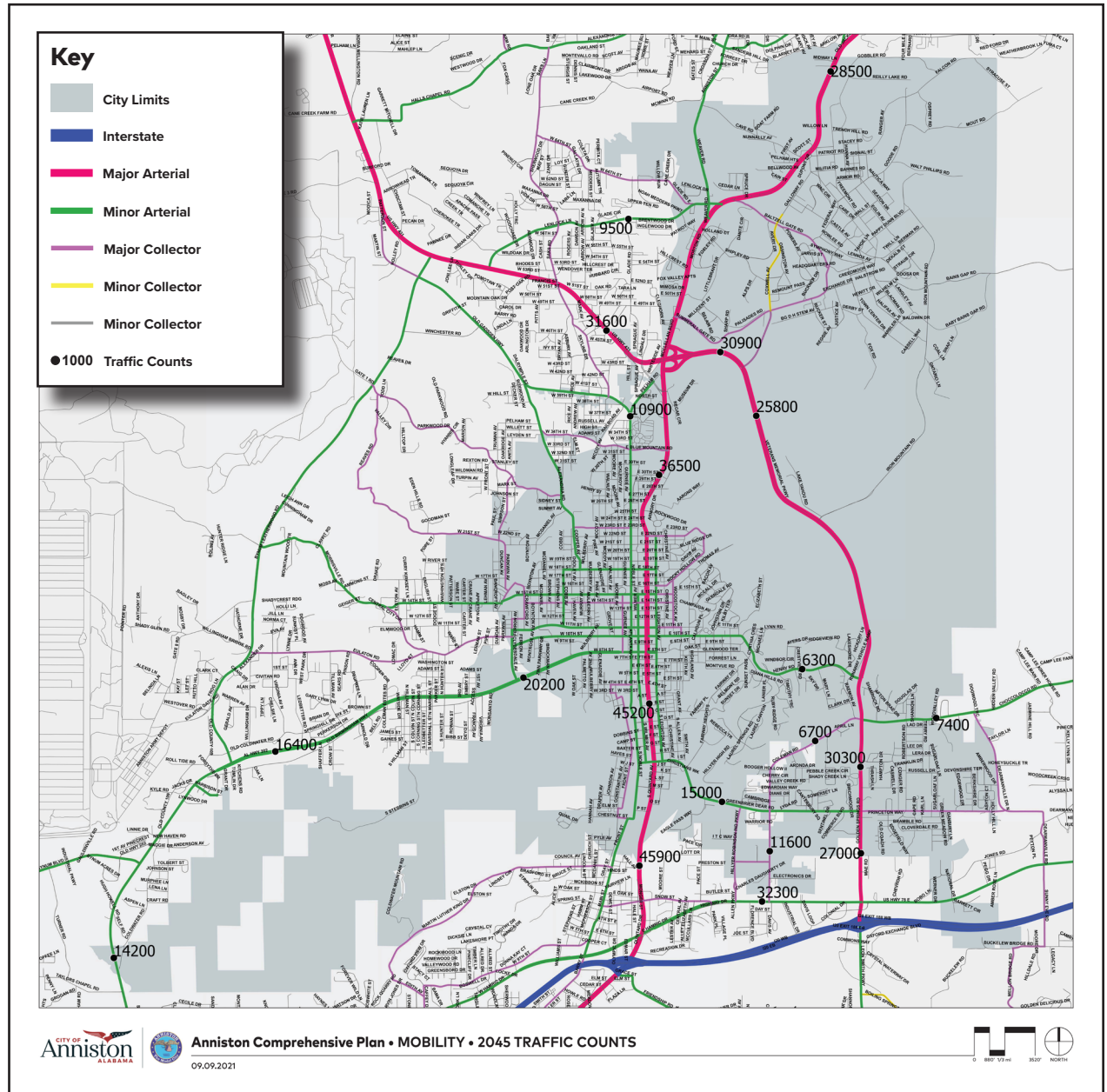
## MOBILITY: FUTURE TRAFFIC VOLUMES (2045)

### Why Future Traffic Volumes are Relevant

Future traffic volumes are important because, when correlated to the functional classification and number of traffic lanes, the need for improvements to the roadway network can be determined, even though such needs may not be readily apparent today.

### Anniston's Future Traffic Volumes

The map at right illustrates the projected (2045) traffic volumes for specific segments of Anniston's key roadways. Forecasts were based upon projected increases in housing and employment as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan for the Calhoun Area MPO. According to the Long Range Transportation Plan, the only projected deficient roadway (operating at a level of service "E" or "F") for the year 2045 in the City of Anniston remains Quintard Ave. / McClellan Blvd. from East 15th St. to north of Summerall Gate Rd.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## MOBILITY: EXISTING BIKE & PED FACILITIES

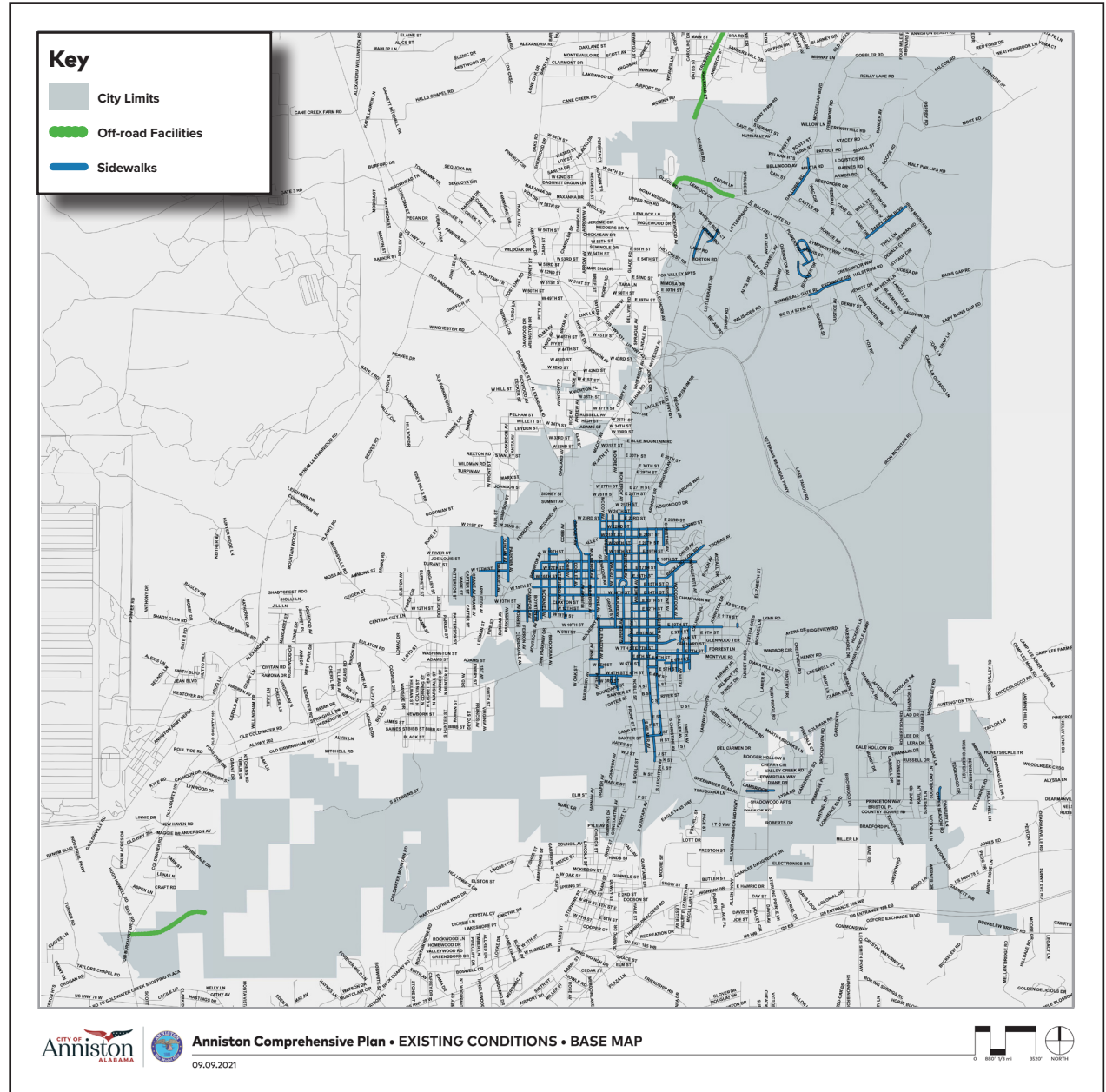
### Why Bike and Ped Facilities are Relevant

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are relevant because they are modes of transportation gaining importance and popularity. Identifying existing facilities helps to determine where improvements are needed, as well as opportunities to extend and connect new facilities.

### Anniston's Existing Bike and Ped Facilities

**Trails:** The Calhoun Area is served by the Chief Ladiga Trail, the premier rail trail in the state, following former CSX and Norfolk Southern corridors. It enters the MPO study area at its northern boundary and runs parallel to Alabama 21 for roughly 12 miles to its current terminus in Michael Tucker Park in North Anniston. The City recently obtained access to connect to Weaver, which will complete the connection to the Silver Comet Trail in Georgia. The trail serves pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchairs, strollers and inline skaters. The City will extend the trail another 5± miles south to the Amtrak Multi-modal station. In addition to the Chief Ladiga Trail, the Coldwater Mountain Bike Trail serves the area.

**Sidewalks:** Anniston's sidewalks are most generally located in the historic central business district, and are less frequent in nearby residential areas developed after the 1950s and 1960s. Several noticeable gaps in the existing network are found in West Anniston along the path of the unused rail corridor locally known as the "N line." There are also sidewalks along non-classified roads in the city, with the highest concentrations being in the Downtown area and the oldest neighborhoods.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## MOBILITY: EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE

### Why Public Transit is Relevant

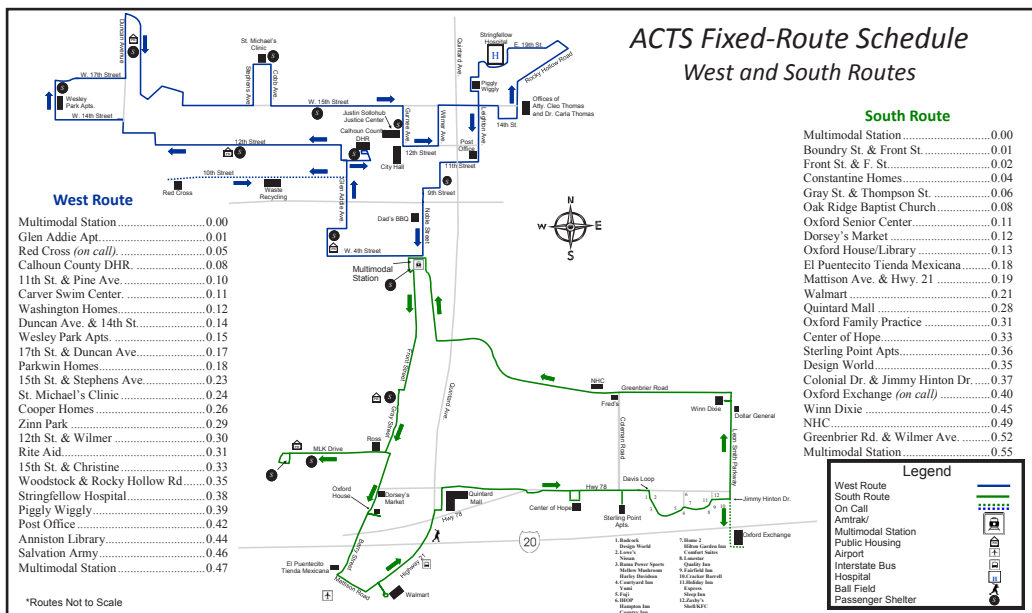
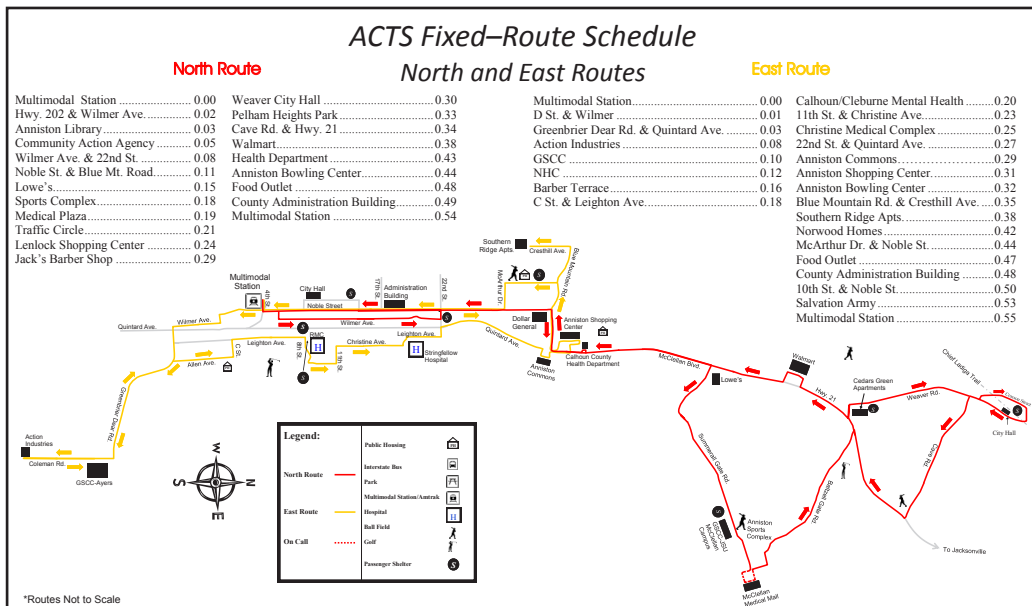
According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, the average annual cost for an Anniston citizen to own and operate a motorized vehicle is between \$9,840 and \$11,760. Given that the median annual household income in Anniston in 2010 was \$30,400, public transit is a critical alternative.

### Anniston's Existing Public Transit Service

Public transit is provided by the Area-wide Community Transportation System (ACTS), a fixed route system with a complementary Americans Disability Act (ADA) demand-response service. Maps of the existing ACTS fixed route transit service are shown at right. The system is funded by the City of Anniston and a Section 5307 grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The grant is administered by the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) and the system is operated via a contract with Anniston Limousine. The cities of Oxford and Weaver and the Town of Hobson City contribute monthly fees for the service.

The ACTS operates four routes (East, West, North and South) Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm, and on Saturdays from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm. The system has an average daily ridership of 350± passengers, with the majority of riders residing in Anniston. The West route is the most utilized, with an average daily ridership of 125 passengers, followed by the North route with 105 daily passengers, and the East route with 50 daily passengers.

Current 5307 Urban Transit projects include normal and annual administrative and operations activities, and the annual vehicle replacement schedule of two buses and two vans each year. The 5307 Urban Transit operations funding level is \$980,000, of which \$490,000 are federal funds and the remaining \$490,000 is provided by local funding. Operational expenses are shared 50/50 by federal and local sources. Federal sources fund 80 percent of capital costs, with the remaining 20 percent provided through local matching funds.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## UTILITIES

### Why Utilities are Relevant

Utilities include services such as public sewer and water, electricity, gas and telecommunications. These services are critical to the functioning of any community and their availability can greatly impact a community's future growth. Because of the critical role of utilities, they must be addressed in every comprehensive plan.

### Anniston's Existing Utilities

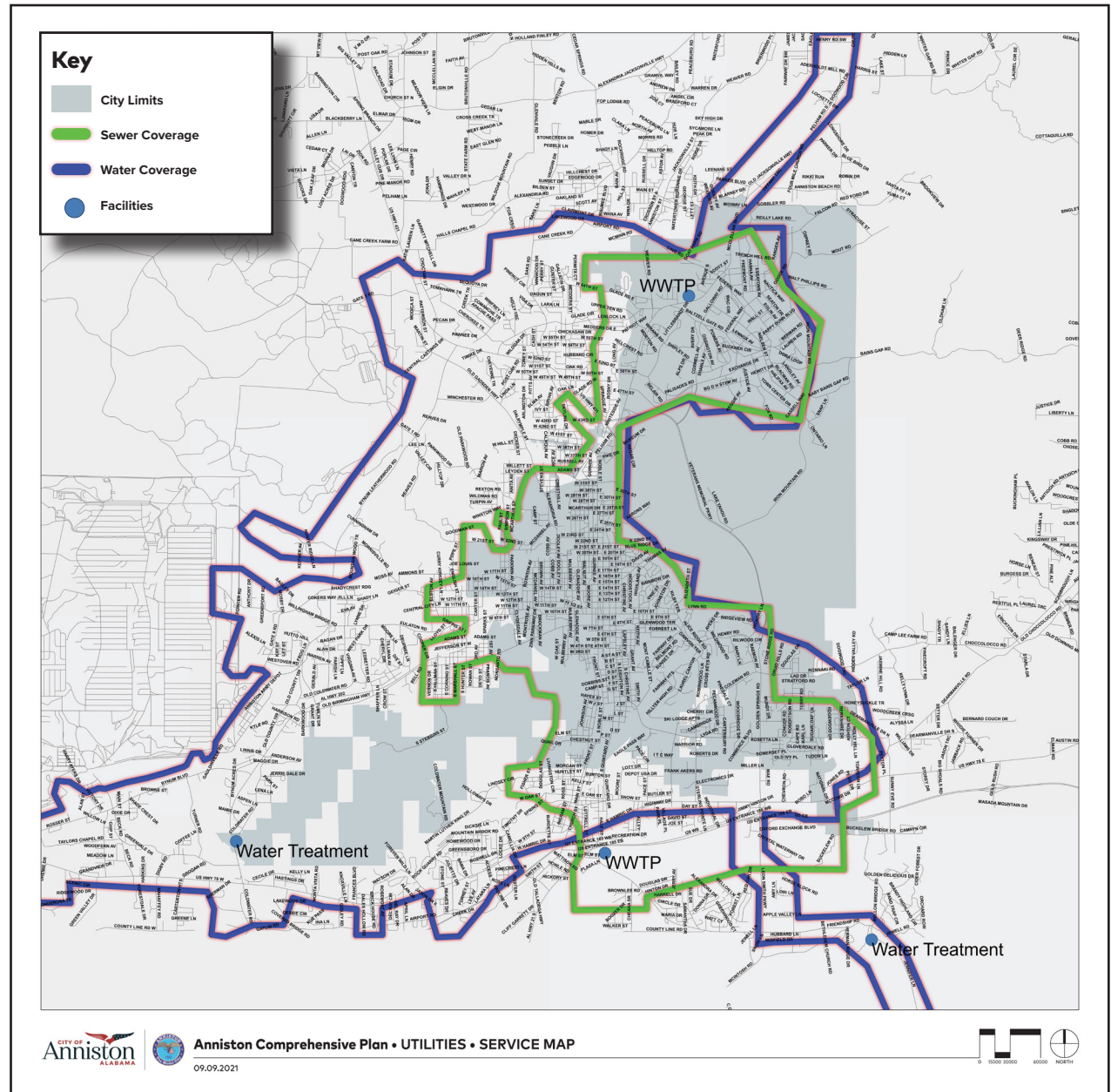
#### Sewer & Water

Anniston Water Works and Sewer Board (AWWSB) serves approximately 65,000 people across 10 jurisdictions. The system currently operates 220 miles of sewer main and two wastewater treatment plants. In addition, the system provides water through 593 miles of water main and a capacity of 19 million gallons of storage. AWWSB operates two water treatment plants. The existing water and sewer coverage areas of AWWSB and locations of major facilities are shown in the map at right.

#### Other Utilities

Other key utilities in Anniston include the following:

- *Electricity* is provided by the Alabama Power Company.
- *Natural Gas* is provided by Spire Alabama.
- *Telecommunications* is provided by Cable One/Sparklight and AT&T.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

The map at right illustrates the location of the various key facilities listed below, but the list is not exhaustive.

### Public Schools

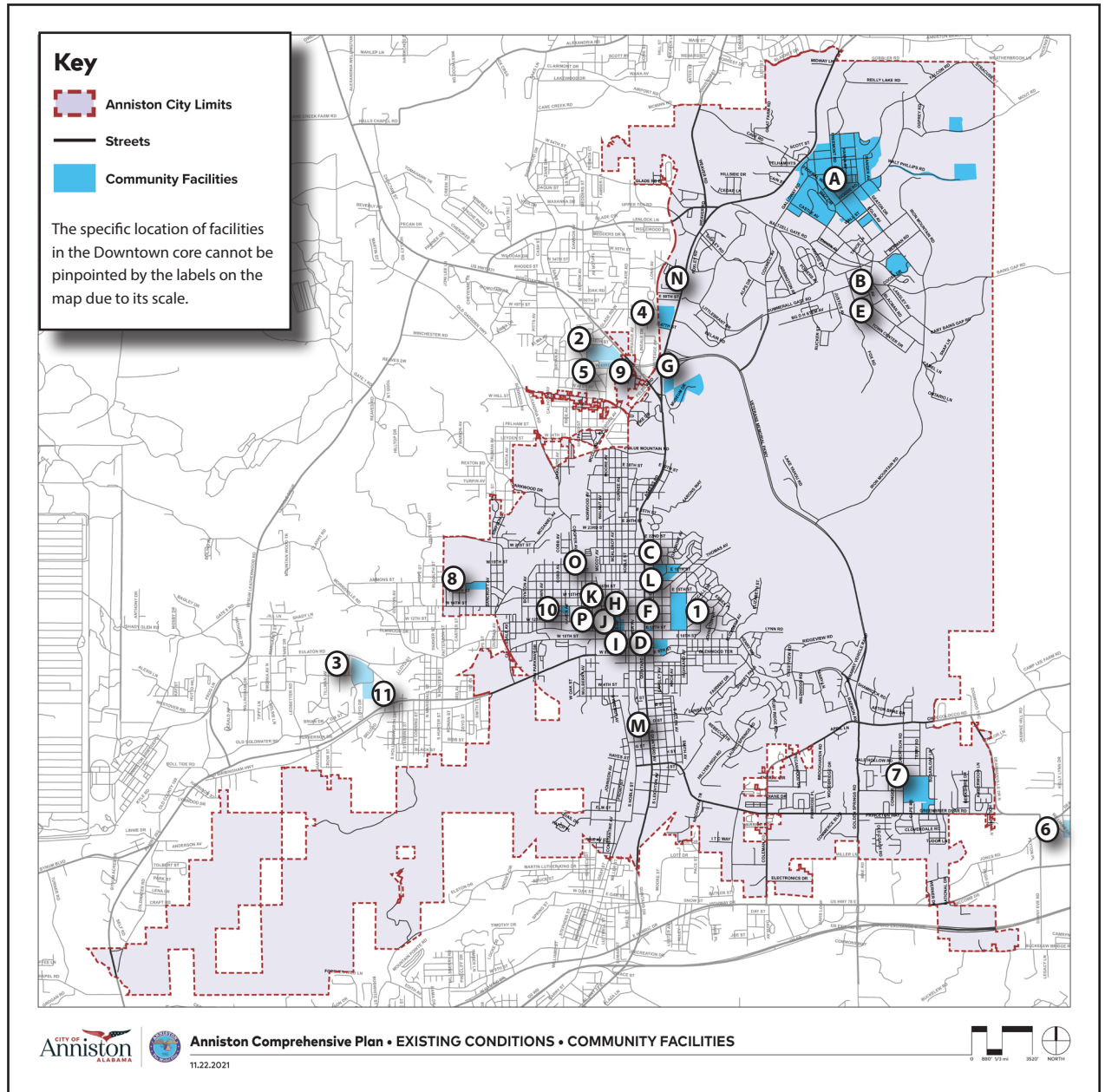
1. Anniston High School
2. Saks High School\*
3. Walter Wellborn High School\*
4. Anniston Middle School
5. Saks Middle School\*
6. DeArmanville Elementary School\*
7. Golden Springs Elementary School
8. Randolph Park Elementary School
9. Saks Elementary School\*
10. Cobb Preparatory Academy
11. Walter Wellman Elementary School\*

\* Located outside of the City limits

### Other Facilities

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| A. Fort McClellan                         |                    |
| B. McClellan Medical Mall                 |                    |
| C. Stringfellow Memorial Hospital         |                    |
| D. Regional Medical Center                |                    |
| E. U.S. Postal Service Office - McClellan |                    |
| F. U.S. Postal Service Office - Downtown  |                    |
| G. Anniston City Hall (temporary)         |                    |
| H. Anniston Municipal Court               |                    |
| I. Calhoun County Complex                 | M. Fire Station #2 |
| J. Federal Court House                    | N. Fire Station #3 |
| K. Anniston Police Dept.                  | O. Fire Station #4 |
| L. Fire Station #1                        | P. Fire Station #5 |

Facilities such as community centers, parks, rec. facilities and greenways are addressed on the next pages.





## PARKS & RECREATION

Anniston is fortunate to have a range of City-operated community centers and parks. Below is an overview of those facilities, all of which are mapped on the following page.

**A. Anniston Sports Complex:** *365 Summerall Gate Road* - Located on 68 acres at McClellan, this facility has three lighted baseball fields and two lighted softball fields with restrooms and a concession area, two batting cages, a 400-meter running track, a regulation football field, five soccer fields (two are lit) with restrooms, a concession area, a large picnic area with a pavilion, a duck pond with a playground, and two outdoor basketball courts. These facilities surround the Aquatic & Fitness Center, which houses an indoor swimming area.

**B. Benny Ray Park:** *500 Hawkins Drive* - Amenities include a shelter, baseball field, and a playground area with limited equipment.

**C. Cane Creek Golf Course:** *66 Galloway Road* - Covering 197 acres on McClellan, this property includes a bar and grill, pro shop, driving range and an 18-hole golf course.

**D. Carver Park & Community Center:** *720 West 14th Street* - This is a seven-acre park. The community center has a gymnasium with a basketball court, two meeting rooms, a computer lab and a full-size kitchen. There is also a public library attached to the center. The adjacent park has two lighted outdoor basketball courts, a picnic pavilion, and a playground. This is also the location of the new Wellness Park, which features an outdoor swimming pool operational during summer months, a refurbished 1/6-mile track, a pavilion, exercise stations and a lighted walking trail that connects to the West Anniston Wellness Trail.

**E. Centennial Memorial Park:** *1701 Quintard Avenue* - This park honors Alabama's military servicemen and women who died in the wars of the 20th century. There are walls of names for World Wars I and II, Korean, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf. In 2012, the governor signed legislation designating this park as the official location of the Law Enforcement, Firefighters, Iraq and Afghanistan memorials.

**F. Constantine Park:** *1501 Constantine Avenue* - This recently renovated community park has an outdoor basketball court, a playground, a picnic area with a pavilion, and a baseball field with covered dugouts.

**G. Gunter Park:** *1308 Boyton Avenue* - This park's amenities include a picnic area, a basketball court, and a small playground with a limited amount of equipment.

**H. Hamilton-Ballard Park:** *700 Jefferson Avenue* - This park has a large shelter, a small soccer practice area, a fenced-in picnic/playground area, and a gravel walking track.

**I. John L. Dunson Park:** *1915 Dooley Avenue* - Formerly known as Cooper Park, this park was recently renovated and has a fenced outdoor basketball court, a playground, benches, and a picnic area with a pavilion.

**J. John Nettles Park:** *214 South Christine Avenue* - This park has one shelter for gatherings, a covered entertainment area, an outdoor basketball court, a lighted walking trail, an outdoor swimming pool, a playground, a baseball field, restrooms and a concession area.

**K. LaGarde Park:** *4301 McClellan Boulevard* - Located near the Anniston Museum of Natural History and the Berman Museum, this park features two shelters with restrooms, a playground, and a pond and walking trails.

**L. Lincoln Park:** *901 Zinn Parkway* - This park features a large picnic area with two pavilions, two playground areas, a volleyball area, and ample parking area.

**M. Michael Tucker Park & Chief Ladiga Trail:** *6514 Weaver Road* - Located where the Ladiga Trail begins in Anniston, this 166.5-acre park has a .5-mile bicycling trail, a bathroom with showers, a picnic area with a shelter, and a parking area. There is also a cabin with a fire place, a meeting/sleeping area, and a kitchen. There are also restrooms and a recreational area in the park, as well as a campsite featuring sixteen primitive camping spaces, picnic tables, grills, a water supply, electricity and a fire ring.

**N. Minnie Morris Brown Park:** *130 Spruce Avenue* - This park's facilities include a small picnic area, a shelter, a small playground, and a basketball court.

**O. Norwood Hodges Community Center & Park:** *3125 Spring Valley Road* - The community center has a gymnasium, three meeting rooms and a kitchen. The adjacent park has a scenic walking trail, lighted tennis courts, a playground, and a picnic area with shelter.

**P. Norwood Park:** *515 West 28th Street* - This park has two fenced outdoor basketball courts,



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PARKS & RECREATION (CONTINUED)

a football/soccer field, a fenced baseball field with dug-outs and clock, a large picnic area and pavilion, a playground, restrooms with an attached concession stand, and a splash pad.

**Q. Pelham Heights Park:** 200 Weaver Cave Road - This park consists of a lighted softball/baseball field with dugouts, a picnic area with a shelter, a small playground, an outdoor basketball court, and restrooms with a concession area attached.

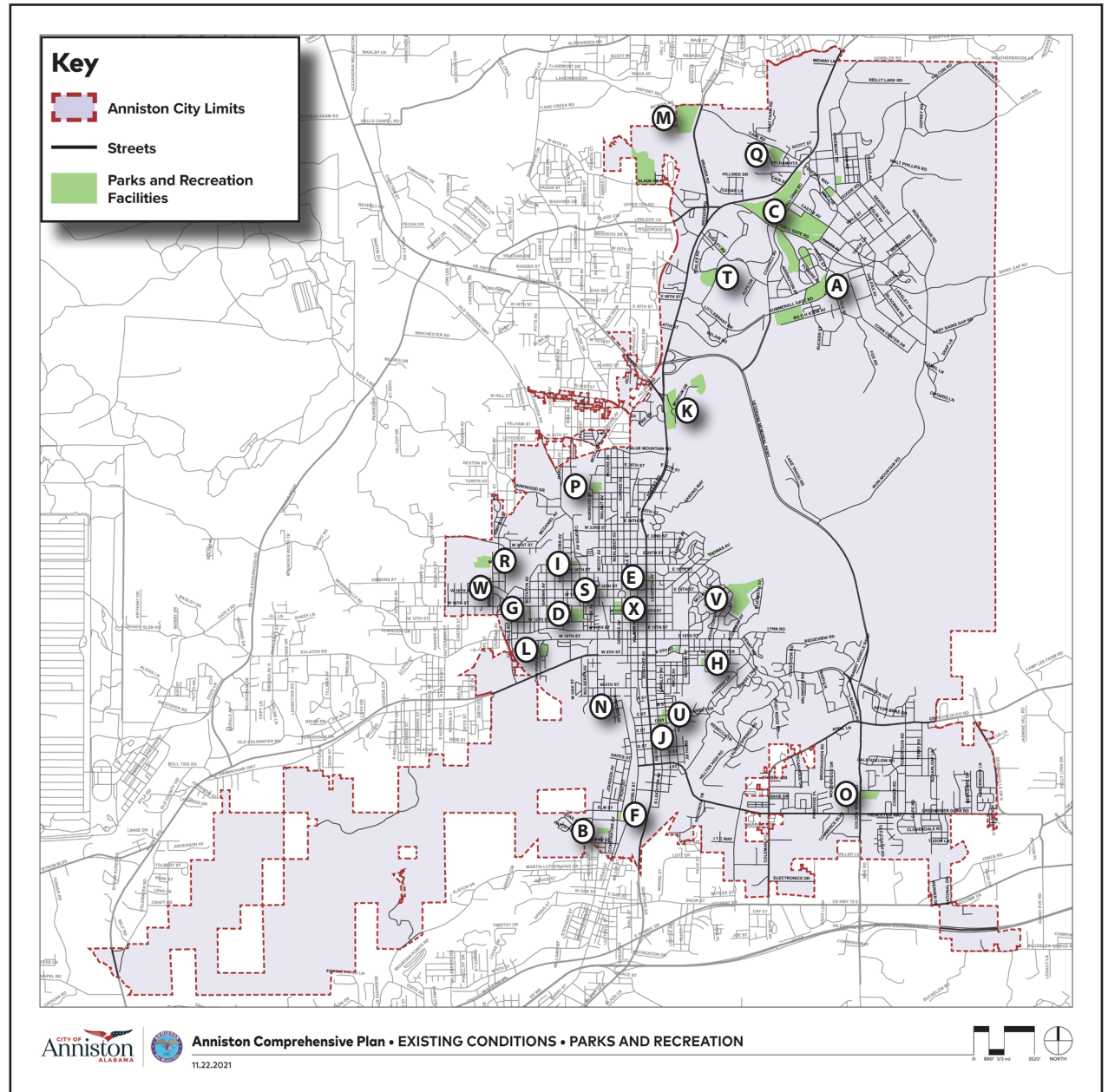
**R. Randolph Park:** 1906 Bancroft Avenue - This park has a large covered shelter with an attached picnic area and restrooms, an outdoor basketball court, a playground, and a softball field.

**S. Satcher Health & Wellness Park/Trail:** Between 15th & 17th Streets / Walnut & Pine Avenues - This two-block inner-city health trail features eight physical fitness stations. It is ADA accessible and has night lighting.

**T. Senior Citizen/Therapeutic Center:** 980 Littlebrandt Drive - Located on McClellan, it features meeting rooms, computer labs, game rooms, a dining area, kitchen and gym.

**U. South Highland Community Center:** 329 South Al-len Avenue - This facility has a meeting room, remote learning center with computers, a kitchen and gym.

**V. "The Hill" Municipal Golf Course:** 1341 Johnston Drive - Located on 54.5 acres, it features a 9-hole executive golf course.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## PARKS & RECREATION (CONTINUED)

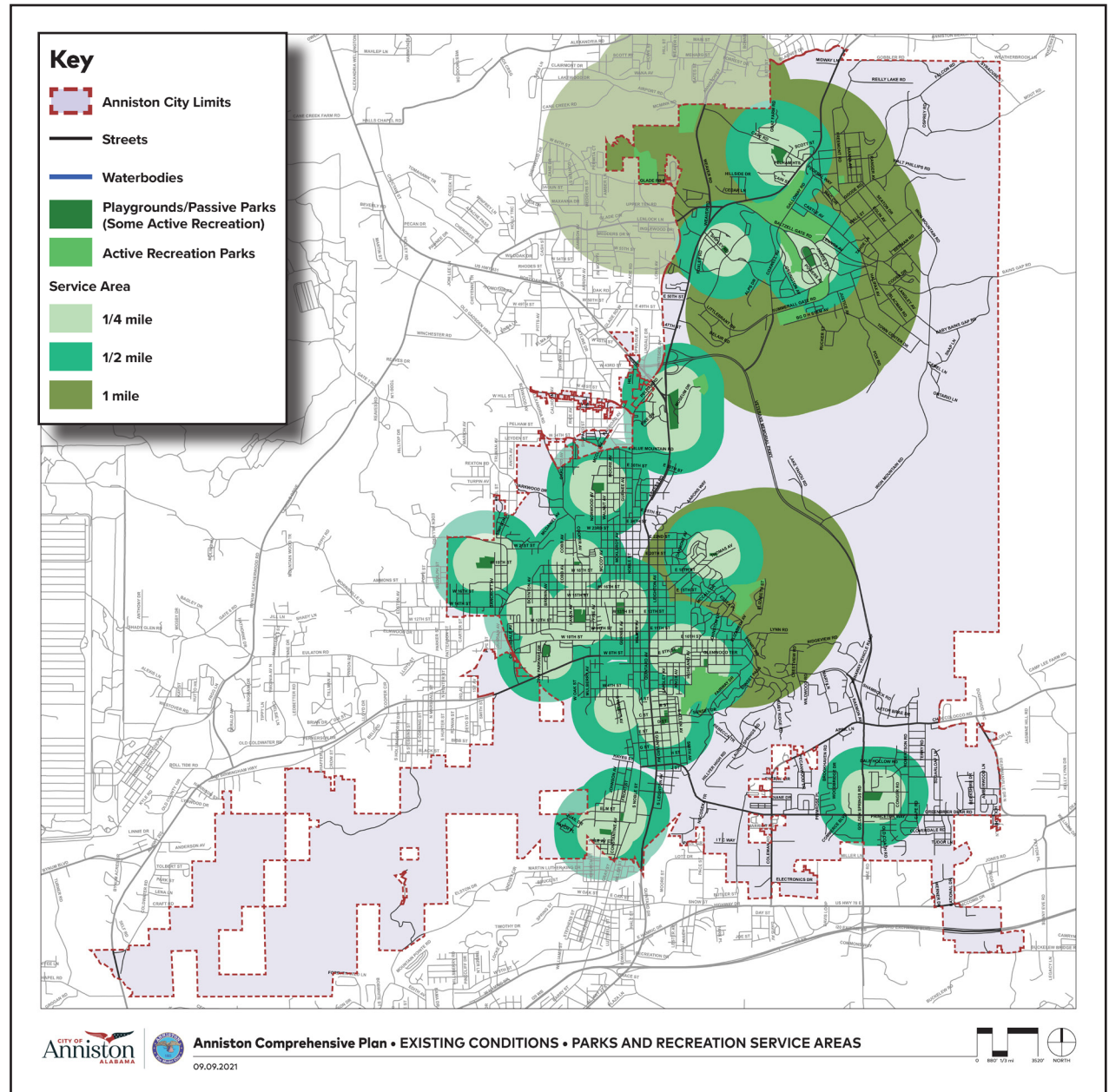
**W. Wiggins Community Center Park:** 2202 West 17th Street - Located adjacent to Randolph Park School and Wiggins Community Center, this park has a walking trail, a picnic area, and a playground and pavilion.

**X. Zinn Park:** 101 West 14th Street - This park is located in Downtown Anniston adjacent to the Justin Solohub Justice Center. It is home to the Martin Luther King Jr. Pavilion, which hosts many community events, such as the Annual Model City Music Concerts. The park also features an all-inclusive Americans with Disabilities Act playground, pavilions, splash pad and restrooms. The Unity House is also located in the park on the corner of 13th Street and Moore Avenue.



### PROXIMITY OF PARKS TO PEOPLE

The map at right illustrates how close Anniston residents are from active recreational parks in quarter mile, half mile and one mile increments. That does not include distances from playgrounds and primarily passive recreation parks.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## ECONOMIC BASE

### Existing Jobs Overview

The following is a summary of Anniston's existing jobs base:

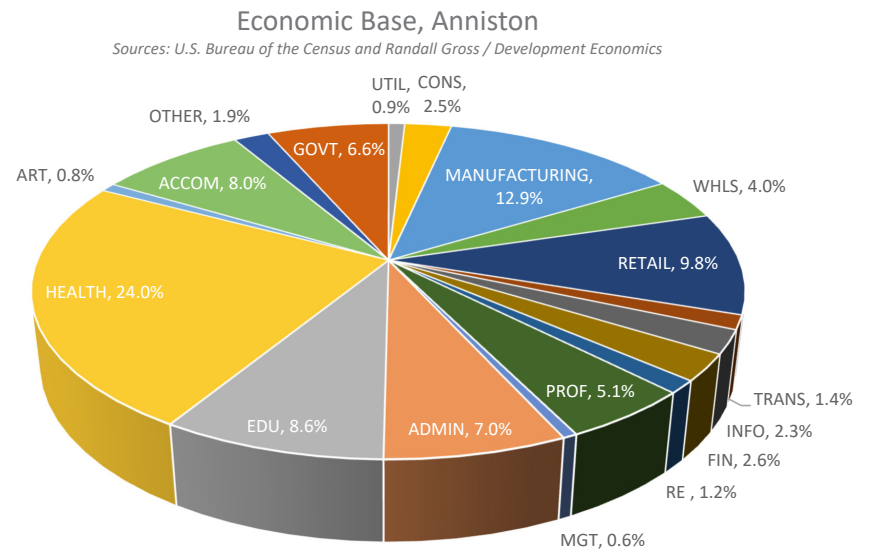
- 17,500 total jobs currently exist in Anniston
- Key Job Sectors include: Health Care (24%) and Manufacturing (13%)
- Anniston anchors the Anniston-Oxford Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
- Adjacent MSAs include the Birmingham and Atlanta MSAs

### Largest Regional Employers (200+ jobs)

Employer	Approximate # of Jobs
• Anniston Army Depot	4,300
• Honda Mfg. Alabama (Talladega)	4,200
• Jacksonville State University	2,000
• AL Regional Medical Center	2,000+ (plus 200+ physicians)
• New Flyer (N.A. Bus Industries)	750
• FEMA Center for Domestic Prep.	665 (staff + contractors)
• Calhoun County Schools	600
• Tyler Union Waterworks/UFO	485
• BAE Systems	450
• Kronospan	420
• Bridgewater Interiors	375
• International Auto Components	360
• General Dynamics Land Systems	340
• BR Williams	310
• FabArc Steel	305
• Doncasters	250
• General Dynamics OTS	230
• Anniston City School System	200
• M&H Valve	200



Tank manufacturing at the Anniston Army Depot. Source: Wikipedia



### Anniston Employment

- **Job Losses & Gains:** lost 2,500 jobs (-13%) in 2002-2010, but has regained 600 jobs (3.5%)
  - Manufacturing lost 1,600+ jobs in 2002-2010, but has since regained 540 jobs
- **Consistent Growth:** health care and wholesale trade sectors
- **Continued Losses:** information services, education and construction sectors

### Anniston Labor Force

- **Labor Force Participants:** 8,132 (17.6% of the Anniston-Oxford MSA)
- **Labor Force Participation Rate:** 44.6% (compared to the US rate of 60.2%)
- **Unemployment Rate:** 4.8% (3rd highest among Alabama cities per AL-DOL)
  - Down from 12.2% during COVID / May 2020 (4th highest among Alabama cities)
  - Anniston's rate is still lower than the national average of 5.8% (US-BLS)

### Anniston-Oxford MSA

- **Overall Job Gains:** 830 jobs (2.0%) since 2002
- **Job Losses & Gains:**
  - 2,000 mfg. jobs lost, but 900 jobs gained each in tourism and health care
- **Unemployment Rate:** 3.4% / down from 7.6% during COVID (May 2020)



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## ECONOMIC BASE (CONTINUED)

### Changes in Employment

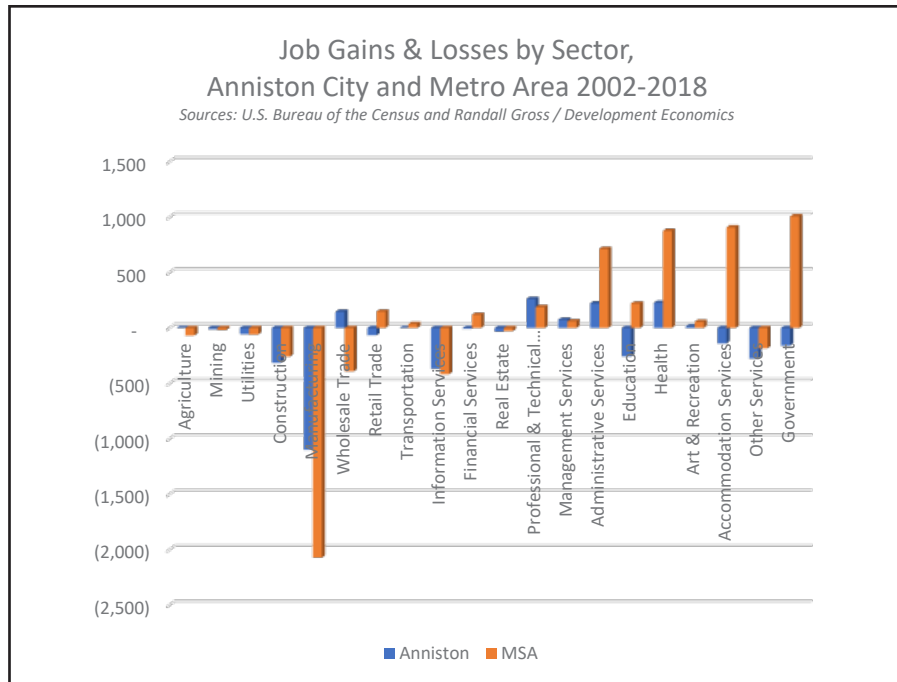
As the graph below illustrates, the following key gains and losses have occurred in employment by sector between 2002 and 2018:

#### Key Job Gains in Anniston

- “White-collar” jobs have seen the greatest growth, including: management (304%), professional services (42%) and administration (22%)
- There has also been substantial growth in wholesaling (26%)

#### Key Job Losses in Anniston

- The greatest losses have been in the following sectors: mineral extraction (-100%), information technology (-48%) and construction (-42%)



## LABOR COMMUTATION

### Commutation Out of the City

Most Anniston residents (71%) commute out of the city for work. Key destinations include:

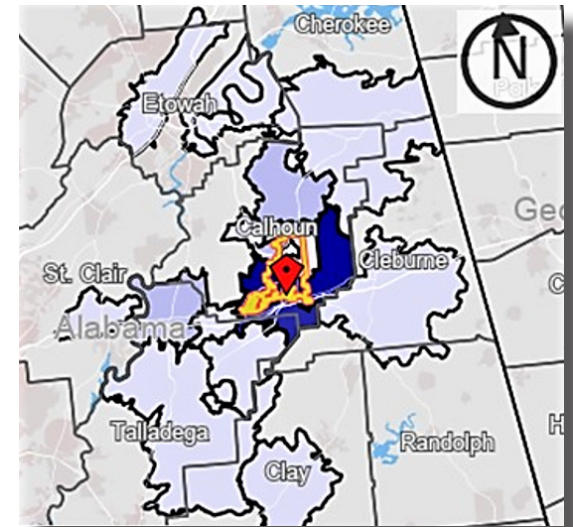
- Anniston-Gadsden corridor
- Birmingham, Talladega, Pell City, and Huntsville

There is very little commutation to Atlanta.

### Commutation Into the City

Most of Anniston’s workers (87%) commute into the city for jobs. Key sources of travel include the following:

- Anniston-Gadsden corridor
- Talladega



Map illustrating key source locations of employment commutation for Anniston. Source: US Bureau of the Census

## SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The table and graphs on the next page illustrate the details related to the following key social and economic trends for Anniston:

- The population and number of households are declining.
- Demographics are stagnant within MSA and region (Anniston-Gadsden corridor).
- Household incomes fell in Anniston in real terms (after adjusting for inflation) since 2010, but they increased within the county.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INDICATORS (CONTINUED)

### Race & Ethnicity

- Non-White Population: 57% (African-American: 52.0%)
- Minority-Owned Businesses: 24.3%

### Income & Poverty

- Average Annual Household Income: \$36,051 (compared to \$65,712 in the US)
- Average Annual Female Income: \$35,571 (compared to \$43,022 in the US)
- Poverty Level: 26.6% (compared to 12.3% in the US)

### Housing & Financial Conditions

- Estimated Vacancy Rate: 21.0% (2,418 units out of 11,695)
- Age of Housing Stock: 95 units built in 2014 or later
- Housing Valued Below \$100,000: >50%
- Paying >35% of Income on Mortgage: 26%
- Paying >35% of Income on Rent: 44%

### Notes for Table at right:

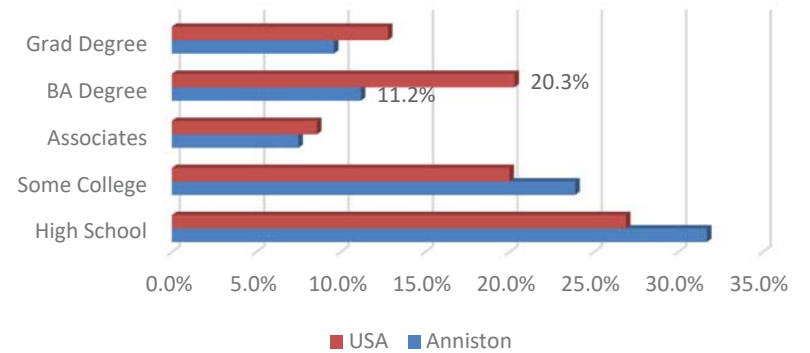
- Population estimates for 2020
- Household and income estimates for 2019
- Income adjusted for inflation

Table. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, ANNISTON AND ANNISTON-OXFORD MSA, 2010-2020				
Factor	2010	2019/20	2010-2020 Change	
			Number	Percent
<b>Population</b>				
Anniston	23,297	21,608	(1,689)	-7.2%
MSA	117,149	113,469	(3,680)	-3.1%
<b>Households</b>				
Anniston	10,072	9,277	(795)	-7.9%
MSA	46,421	48,156	1,735	3.7%
<b>HH Income</b>				
Anniston	\$ 36,854	\$ 36,051	\$ (803)	-2.2%
MSA	\$ 45,462	\$ 48,156	\$ 2,694	5.9%

Source: US Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics

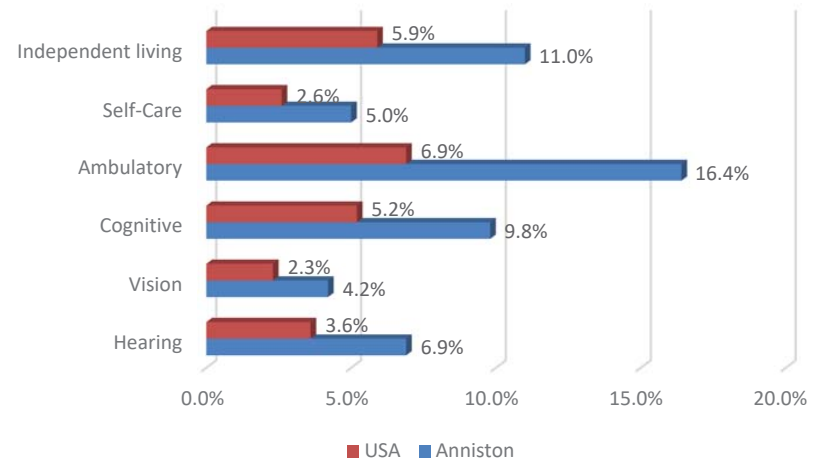
### Education Achievement, Anniston vs USA

U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics



### Health Challenges, Anniston vs USA

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

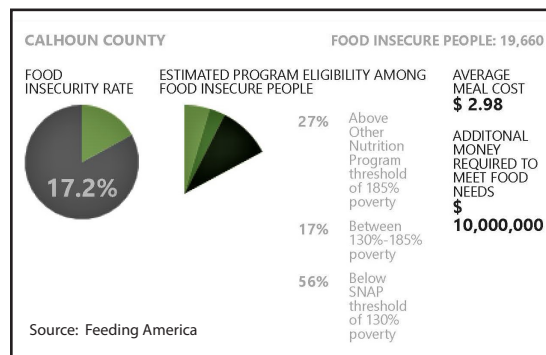
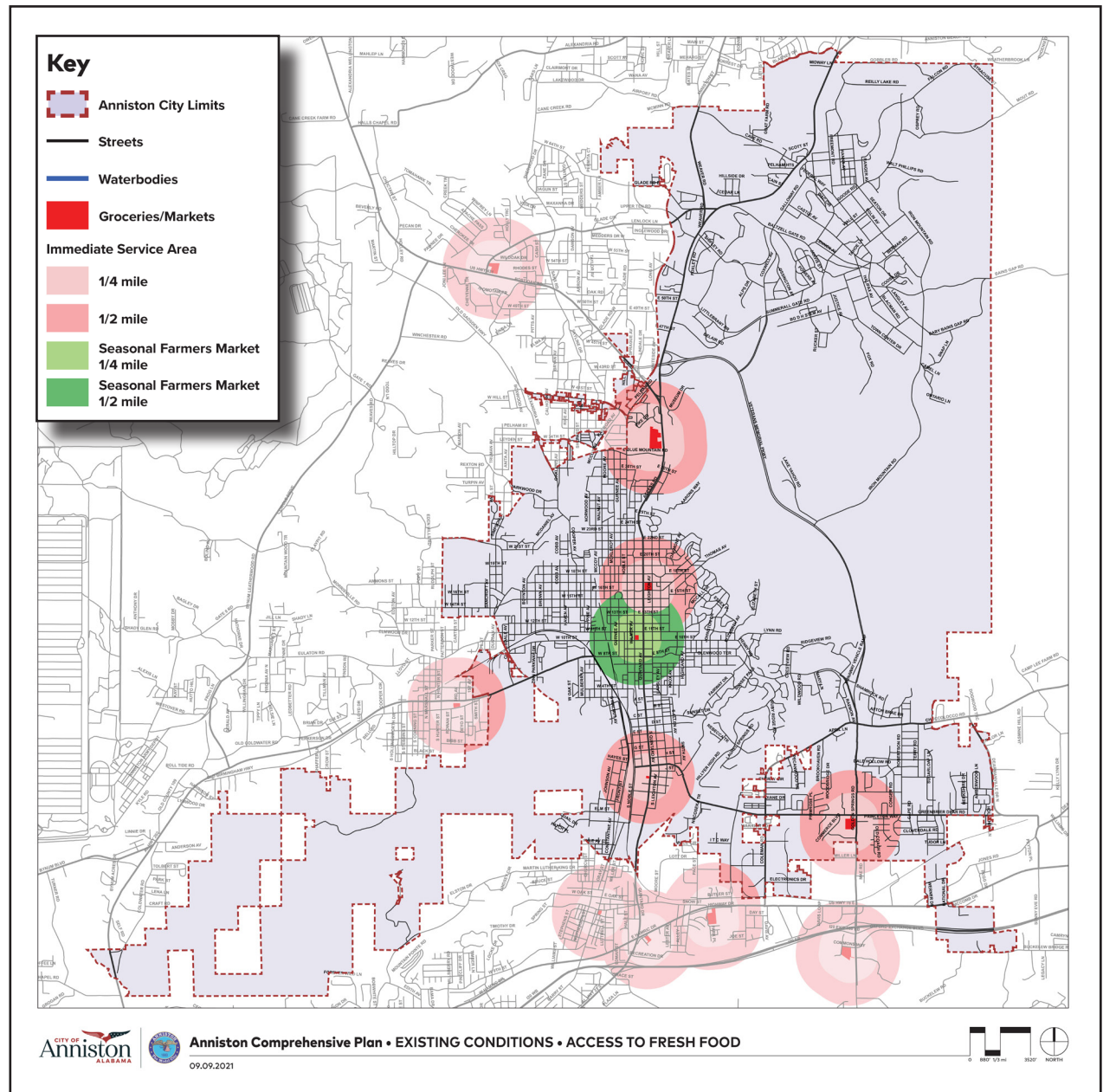


## SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INDICATORS

(CONTINUED)

### Access to Fresh Food

Access to fresh food is a topic that has only recently gained widespread attention in the city planning field. It is a problem that many economically-challenged neighborhoods face. Rather than having conveniently located opportunities for fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and similar goods, stores located in some neighborhoods offer little more than beer, soft drinks, snacks and other unhealthy and highly-processed foods. As the map at right reflects, most of Anniston's grocery stores selling fresh foods are located along Quintard Avenue. A seasonal farmers market is also located near this same corridor in Downtown. While the areas referred to as "food deserts" where fresh foods are not conveniently located tend to be along the eastern and western sides of the city, they are much more problematic in the west side of the city where relatively high-density neighborhoods occupied by low-income residents live, and many of them lack good mobility options to access the places where fresh food is sold.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## HOUSING

### Market Analysis Overview

Appendix C of this plan contains a Housing Market Analysis. It examines existing market conditions and forecasts demand and potentials for new construction and the rehabilitation of housing. The market analysis also examines the existing need for affordable housing for those working households with less than 60% to 80% of the area median income. Strategic recommendations for housing development and rehabilitation are also provided based on the findings of the market analysis.

### Existing Market Conditions

Anniston had an estimated 11,700 housing units in 2019. Roughly 75% of the city's housing is in single-family, detached units. Another 9% is in single-family attached or duplex (2-3-4-unit) buildings and 2% in mobile homes. Thus, about 14% of Anniston's housing is in multi-family buildings with five or more units. Anniston's housing stock declined between 2010 and 2019, with a decrease of about 830 units or 6.6%. Much of that decrease has been in attached units, duplexes, and larger multi-family buildings, some of which were demolished due to environmental conditions. While the city has lost some of its multi-family housing, it did add a small number (about 50) single-family detached units (0.6%) since 2010. Approximately 21% of Anniston's existing housing was estimated to be vacant in 2019. Occupancy was highest in mobile homes (100%), single-family detached houses (80%), and in duplexes (81% in 2-3-4 units). Meanwhile, occupancy was lowest in larger multi-family buildings (66%) and in single-family attached dwellings (also 66%). Roughly 57% of Anniston's occupied housing was homeowner-owned in 2019, versus 43% that was rented. The rental housing included about 28% or 2,000 of the single-family detached units. Nearly all of the city's multi-family buildings were renter occupied, although there may be about eight households who own units in a multi-family building, presumably a condominium. The overall rental vacancy rate was estimated at 9.0% in 2019, while the homeowner vacancy rate was 3.7%. Neither is unusually high, although private rental agencies tend to target a 5.0% vacancy rate to support sustainable rental housing. The number of new housing units built in Anniston has been declining overall for the last 20 to 25 years. The City has permitted construction of roughly 350 housing units since 1996, for an average of just 14 units per year. Between 1996 and 2003, the city averaged nearly 30 housing permits per year. That number dropped to approximately 20 permits between 2004 and 2008, and then to just two (2) units per year since 2009. Such low numbers are not even likely to replace housing lost due to natural or man-made occurrences including fire, storms, and demolition. The total number of housing units in Anniston has fallen by almost 7% since 2010. Further, there have been zero (0) multi-family units built since 1996, so the city has not seen the addition of new or replacement multi-family housing in at least 25 years.

The dearth of new housing has the effect of reducing Anniston's economic competitiveness. Anniston will increasingly have challenges related to the provision of housing that meets residents' needs, particularly as public and assisted housing is demolished due to environmental constraints. Additionally, the city is less able to offer sufficient choices, especially in terms of new housing stock, to attract new residents and labor force.

**Table 1. HOUSING TRENDS, ANNISTON, 2010-2019**

Units in Building	2010	2019	2010-2019 Change Number	Change Percent
1-Detach	8,771	8,825	54	0.6%
1-Attach	504	262	(242)	-48.0%
2-4	1,409	828	(581)	-41.2%
5-9	845	846	1	0.1%
10-19	279	217	(62)	-22.2%
20-49	606	487	(119)	-19.6%
Mobile/Other	111	230	119	107.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,525</b>	<b>11,695</b>	<b>(830)</b>	<b>-6.6%</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

**Table 2. HOUSING OCCUPANCY, ANNISTON 2019**

Units in Building	Owner Occupied Tenure 2019	Renter Tenure 2019	Total 2019	Occupancy
1-Detach	5,065	2,008	7,073	80.1%
1-Attach	85	88	173	66.0%
2-4	40	630	670	80.9%
5-9	-	668	668	79.0%
10-49	8	455	463	65.8%
Mobile/Other	118	112	230	100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,316</b>	<b>3,961</b>	<b>9,277</b>	<b>79.3%</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## HOUSING (CONTINUED)

### For-Sale Housing Potentials

Anniston's for-sale housing potentials were determined within the competitive context through 2026-28. The city's capture of the regional market is somewhat constrained in the short term by perceptions of the city's quality of life and the environment for residential development. A target of at least 30 to 100 net new for-sale units could be reasonably captured through concentrated development and selected infill projects located in high-value neighborhoods. Even this small amount of development at 6 to 20 units per year would exceed recent patterns, which have seen the City permit an average of only two units per year. The targeted amount of new development would allow for move-up and "churn" in the local market, as well as for opportunities to capture some non-family relocations. A longer-term opportunity exists to capture more single-family development potential as confidence in the market increases over time. Low and moderate for-sale housing potentials are summarized in the table below by price range for 2021-26.

### Rental Housing Potentials

Based on the competitive assessment, Anniston's rental housing potential was forecasted through 2021-26. This short-term potential includes 400 to 750 affordable and market rate rental housing units in multi-family and mixed-use buildings. The rental housing market would otherwise be served through single-family homes, some of which are subject to "slumlord" conditions. Rental housing potentials are summarized in the ta-

Price Point	Area Capture		Market Rate
	Low	Moderate	
\$ 106,250	2	3	-
\$ 156,250	1	1	-
\$ 218,750	5	13	-
\$ 247,500	0	0	0
\$ 288,750	3	7	5
\$ 367,500	4	10	7
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>ELI*</i>	2	3	-
<b>Job-Induced</b>	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>
<small>* Extremely Low Income</small>	Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Claritas; and Randall Gross / Development Economics.		

ble below. Anniston could capture demand for more than 300 market-rate rental units within the next five to seven years. Market rents are generated in the \$600 to \$1,500 rent range, with the largest share renting between \$600 and \$800 per month. Demand would be generated from first-time renters, those moving up or down in the market, life change event households, and (to a small extent) job relocations. There is some pent-up demand by those who otherwise have no attractive new or modern rental housing in which to live. While many will choose to rent a single-family home, there are young professionals, singles, divorcees, and others that will prefer apartment living.

Rent Range	Area Capture		Market Rate
	Low	Moderate	
\$ 300	123	154	-
\$ 500	66	94	-
\$ 600	64	104	-
\$ 700	50	89	70
\$ 800	58	112	85
\$ 1,100	36	73	54
\$ 1,200	20	49	35
\$ 1,500	11	36	23
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>267</b>
<i>ELI*</i>	188	247	-
<i>Workforce</i>	114	193	-
<b>Job Induced</b>	-	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>Vacancy Factor</i>	21	37	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>304</b>
<small>* Extremely Low Income</small>	Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Claritas; Woods & Poole; and Randall Gross / Development		



## PUBLIC POLICIES & ENTITIES: PLANS & STUDIES

As part of the process to prepare this Comprehensive Plan for Anniston, all of the key plans and studies prepared in the past decade were reviewed both to gain information and to understand the ideas proposed at the time. Those ideas still deemed viable have been adapted and incorporated into this plan, as relevant. Below is a summary of the documents, and they are organized by starting with the most recent plans and studies.

### 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2020)

This plan was prepared for the Calhoun Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by consultants (Skipper Consulting) hired by the East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission (EARPDC). The MPO represents Calhoun County and the Cities of Anniston, Hobson, Jacksonville, Oxford and Weaver. In addition to transportation modeling and travel demand forecasting, numerous roadway improvements are proposed, including expanding segments of Quintard Avenue from four lanes to six lanes. The expansion of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists is also proposed, including the incorporation of the MPO's *Calhoun Area 2012 Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan*. Because this long range transportation plan was completed so recently, no significant implementation has occurred thus far.

### McClellan Traffic Study (2020)

This recent plan was consultant-prepared for the Calhoun Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the McClellan Development Authority (MDA) and the City of Anniston. One of its starting points was making assumptions regarding future land uses in the study area, and then analyzing the existing road network to identify needed future improvements. This plan proposes several new road connections/extensions, including for Lennox Avenue, Pappy Dunn Blvd., and Castle Avenue. The plan explains on page 11 that "None of these new road segments are essential or even necessary under current traffic conditions. However, all of them will improve operations as development intensifies at McClellan." It also recommends road widenings for several road segments, including Baltzell Gate Road, Federal Way, Summeral Gate Road, Exchange Avenue and Iron Mountain Road. It also proposes expanding a multi-use path along Baltzell Gate Road and creating a "Sharrow" bike route. As with the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, this plan was completed so recently, that no significant implementation has occurred.

### Freedom Riders National Monument - various studies (2018-2020)

In addition to the economic impact study prepared by JSU (noted on the next page), the following studies were prepared for the important two sites that comprise this national monument: No significant implementation has occurred to date, but the studies include:

#### Foundation Document: Freedom Riders National Monument (2018)

This study focuses on two small areas that constitute this National Park Service (NPS) monument and are now NPS-owned: 1) the former Greyhound bus station building on Gurnee Avenue in Downtown Anniston, and 2) the 5.8-acre site of the bus burning on Old Birmingham Highway west of town. It addresses the park's purpose, historic significance, surviving resources, interpretive themes, and other related issues.

#### Freedom Riders National Monument Infrastructure Needs Assessment (2020)

Building upon the 2018 study summarized above, the primary focus of this report is way-finding, interpretation, access and parking for visitors utilizing various modes of transportation. It also makes streetscape improvement recommendations for the Downtown area around the Greyhound station.

### Main Street Refresh (2017)

Prepared by a four-person Resource Team through the State Main Street program, this 153-page document is in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. Consequently, it primarily features graphics with limited text to explain, although there are some very high quality "before"

and "after" visual simulations included. Starting with a set of vision statements, the recommendations are organized according to the Main Street program's Four Points: organization, design, economic vitality and promotion. The project also includes a branding package with logo options and a distinctive color palette. The branding package has been implemented, including the incorporation of logos and the placement of streetlight banners reflecting the branding.

Also, although it is still being developed, a *Downtown Strategic Plan* is being prepared by another consultant team parallel to this comprehensive planning project.





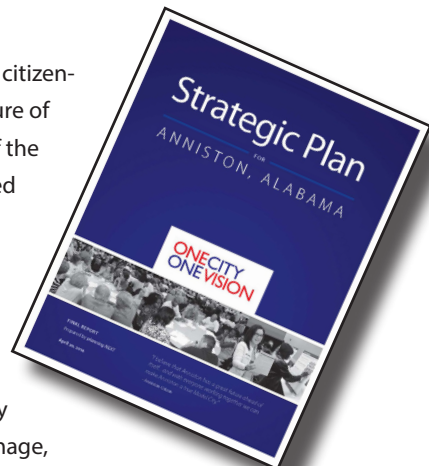
## PUBLIC POLICIES & ENTITIES: PLANS & STUDIES (CONTINUED)

### Downtown Anniston Multimodal Plan (2016)

This plan for Downtown Anniston establishes an overall framework for multimodal access, circulation, service, and parking. It provides a road map for planning, engineering, and construction of a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly transportation system that supports several community interests, including tourism, economic development, beautification, parking, service and utilitarian needs. Many of the plan's recommendations are rooted in the ideas of the City's Parks, Recreation and Beautification Board, and key examples of recommendations include the creation of gateway treatments at key entry/exit points, the installation of wayfinding and landscaping, extending the already-planned Chief Ladiga Trail, creating a park at the northwest corner of Noble and 11th Streets, and adding bike lanes to various key street segments, including on Noble Street, which would eliminate the existing turn lanes at intersections and the central paved medians. This plan was done in conjunction with a TIGER Grant that the City applied for in 2016, and components are being evaluated and utilized in the *Downtown Strategic Plan* currently being prepared.

### Strategic Plan (2014)

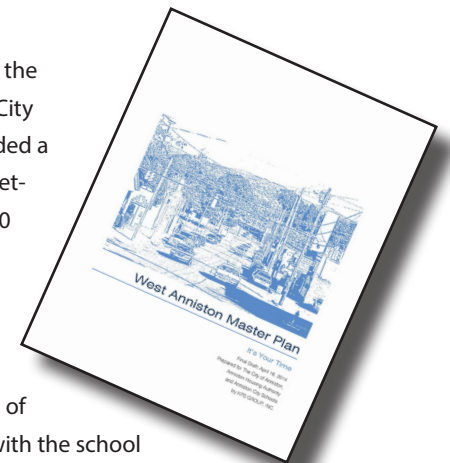
The Strategic Plan was the result of a year-long citizen-based initiative to think critically about the future of Anniston to create a plan to guide the future of the city. A series of goal statements were developed via input from the first set of public workshops. These goals, along with technical analysis and input from the second public meeting, the Community Summit, make up the action agenda for the future. Over 1,000 citizens were involved with the project and the nine key goal categories included: Arts & Culture, City Image, Community Services, Leadership, Learning, Place, Prosperity, Safety, and Transportation. The following is a list of some of the most significant items (or most relevant to this Comprehensive Plan) that have been successfully initiated and are considered to be "ongoing." However, this list is by no means all inclusive. Also, it is noteworthy that all of the items under the Learning category have been initiated and are now ongoing.



- Coordinated marketing campaign for Anniston
- Program to reduce vacant/dilapidated buildings
- More youth activities, and new arts and cultural events
- Plan to identify and protect historic resources
- Process for handling vacant lots
- New parks and trails amenities
- Police department improvements (increased visibility, pay increase, expanded force)
- More mixed-income housing
- Expanded Main Street program
- Expanded transit and improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Retirement community at McClellan and economic development staff hire

### West Anniston Master Plan (2014)

This plan was prepared for the City of Anniston, the Anniston Housing Authority, and the Anniston City Schools. The public engagement process included a project steering committee, multiple public meetings, an opinion survey completed by nearly 400 respondents, and a public charrette. There are five broad guiding policies and numerous specific recommendations, such as: establishing a framework of partnerships and volunteers, redevelopment of Cooper Homes, revitalization of housing units and new infill housing, working with the school system, PCB clean-up, business development, 15th Street streetscape enhancements, expanding public open space, and working with law enforcement. Since the plan's completion, the Anniston Housing Authority (AHA) has had the following achievements: Demolition of Cooper Homes was approved by HUD, all residents were relocated, and the buildings have been demolished; AHA has procured a developer to construct affordable housing for the elderly, but environmental remediation must occur before funding and development can occur; AHA has acquired vacant lots and property and four units have been renovated and placed in service; a new duplex is near completion; and AHA is in discussion with other developers who are interested in developing affordable housing on various lots.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PUBLIC POLICIES & ENTITIES: PLANS & STUDIES (CONTINUED)

### Anniston Area Bicycle/Pedestrian Program Integration Study (2013)

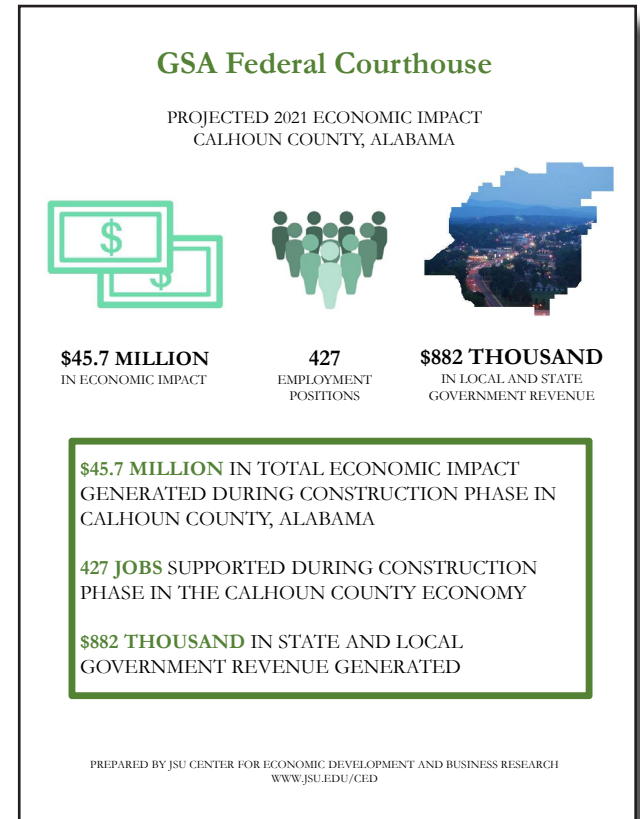
Updated in 2021, this study was prepared for the City and East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC). The stated purpose was to “develop a concept and provide guidelines with regard to the network, appropriate facility types, the relationship to the overall transportation system, and the signage...” The contents of this study have since been used for what has now been developed as a share-the-road network in Anniston, one bike lane and, along with the Design Manual, and preparations for the completion of the Chief Ladiga Trail.

### JSU’s Economic Impact Studies

Numerous economic impact studies have been prepared by Jacksonville State University’s Center for Economic Development and Business Research, including the following:

- Economic Impact of the National Park Service Freedom Riders Monument and National Historic Site on Calhoun County and the Surrounding Gateway Community (2020)
- An Economic and Impact Analysis of Expanding and Enhancing Coldwater Mountain Bike Trail (2014)
- An Economic and Impact Analysis of the Noble Street Festival, Sunny King Criterium, Cheaha Challenge, and Foothills Road Race (2013)

*These infographics are just one example of the work done by JSU’s Center for Economic Development and Business Research. They summarize the projected local economic impact of the construction of new federal courthouse in Downtown Anniston.*





# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## PUBLIC POLICIES & ENTITIES: REGULATIONS

### Existing Zoning

Anniston's current zoning ordinance was adopted in 2016, so relative to many communities, it is substantially current. The 22 different districts is a somewhat large number, but seven of those are specific to the McClellan area, which is a unique situation to Anniston. Below is a summary of the five zoning district categories:

Urban Districts – There are five Urban Districts, including three that are commercial / mixed-use, and two that are for residential-oriented neighborhoods.

Suburban Districts – There are five Suburban Districts, and like the Urban Districts, they include a range of conditions. One is for corridors, one is for neighborhood centers, two are for residentially-oriented neighborhoods, and one is peripheral suburban “edge” areas.

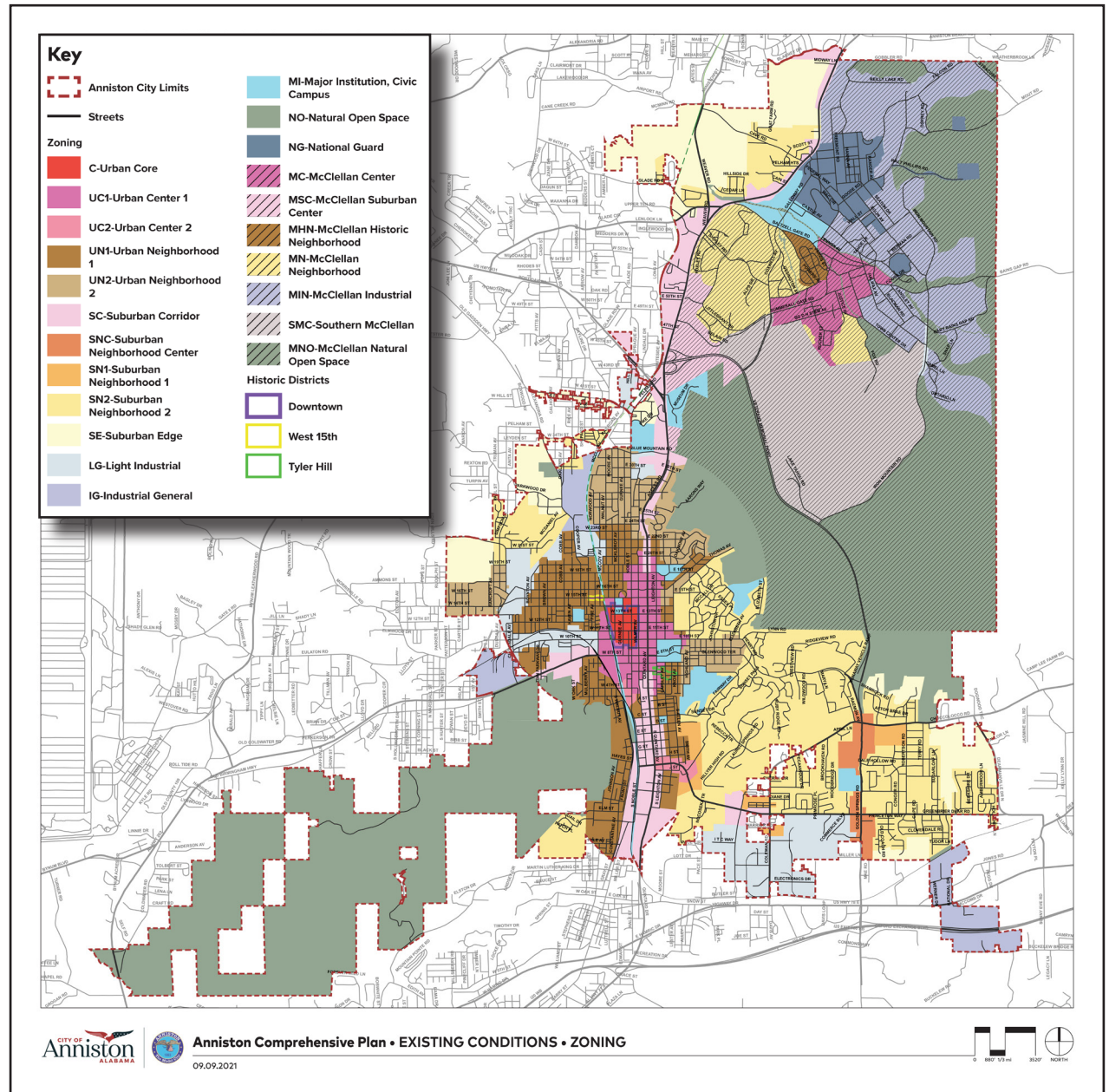
Industrial Districts – There are two industrial districts, one is a “general” industrial district, while the other is for “light” (less intensive) industrial uses.

McClellan Districts – There are eight districts specific to the McClellan area. They echo the typical districts of most communities, such as Natural / Open Space, Center, Suburban Center, and Industrial, to name a few.

Other Districts – The “other” zoning districts include:

- Major Institution / Civic Campus
- Historic Districts (overlay district)

It is noteworthy that all of the Urban districts and some of the Suburban districts are form-based.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PUBLIC POLICIES & ENTITIES: REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)

### Historic Resources

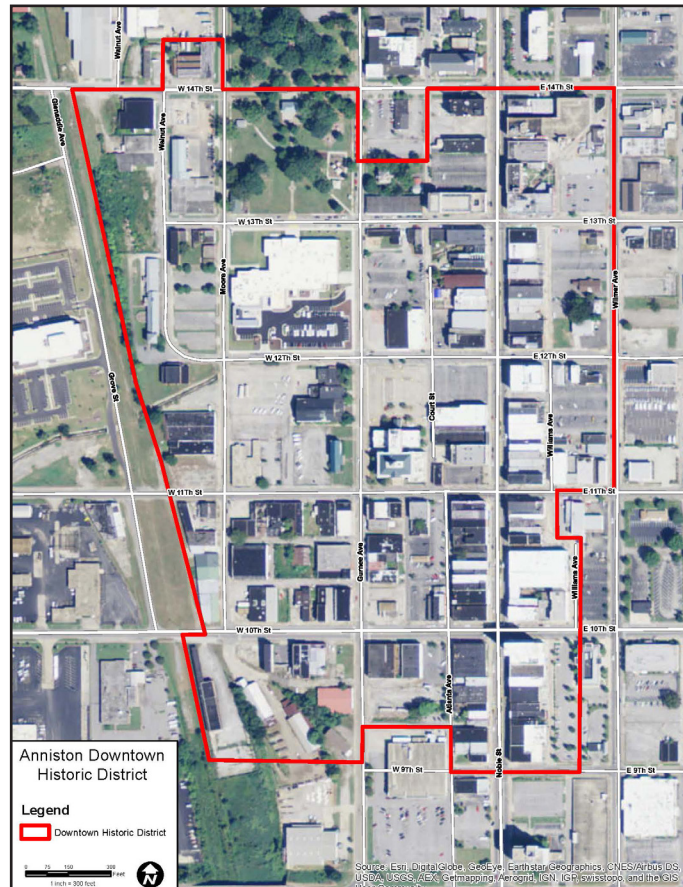
Most of Anniston’s cultural resources are in the form of historic buildings. Using National Register (NR) of Historic Places criteria, “historic” typically applies to any resource that is at least fifty (50) years old, has some level of historic and/or architectural significance, and has retained its physical integrity. NR designation offers limited benefits, such as eligibility for state and federal investment tax credits for qualified historic building rehabilitation projects. However, it offers no protections to preserve buildings and to avoid inappropriate alterations. Anniston has nine (9) existing NR historic districts, of which four (4) are associated with McClellan. There are also twelve (12) individually-designated NR properties that are not part of an NR district, although the historic structures associated with three (3) of those properties no longer exist.

### Historic Zoning Overview

As explained above, NR designation comes with some benefits, but very little in the way of protections. However, locally-designated historic districts to provide protections and have the same legal weight as land use zoning. Properties within local historic districts require review and approval for any of the following proposed actions:

- Alterations to building exteriors when visible from a street
- Additions to a building when visible from a street
- Relocation of a building
- Demolition of a building

The implementing design guidelines to address such proposed actions are described on the following page.

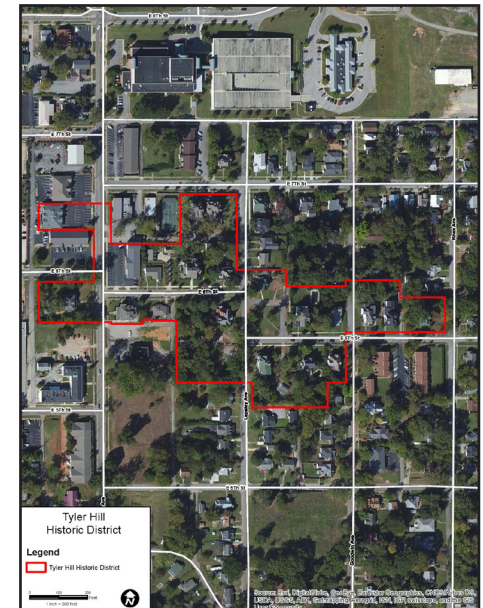


Of Anniston’s nine (9) National Register (NR) historic districts, four (4) are also locally-designated districts. One of those is part of McClellan (see the next page) and the other three are illustrated here. They include:

**Anniston Downtown Historic District:** With Noble Street is the primary north-south spine, it has 120 structures, of which 72 are “contributing.”

**Tyler Hill Historic District:** Of this residential district’s 18 structures, 15 are considered to be “contributing” to the character of the district.

**West 15th Street Historic District:** Of this mixed-use district’s 22 structures, 17 are deemed to be “contributing.”



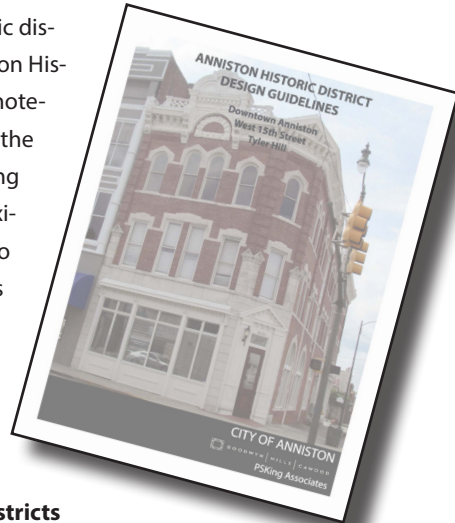
# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## PUBLIC POLICIES & ENTITIES: REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)

Anniston's historic zoning program is based upon the City's historic preservation ordinance that serves as the foundation for the program. It stipulates how historic districts are designated and establishes the Anniston Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). It is also noteworthy that, as indicated on the previous page, the HPC can review and decide on proposed building demolitions. However, it can only require a maximum demolition delay of 90 days. There are two separate sets of design guidelines for Anniston's locally-designated historic districts, one for Downtown, Tyler Hill and West 15th, and the other for McClellan. Below is a summary of each.

See Anniston Ordinance No. 91-0-18 for the City's historic preservation regulations.



### Downtown, Tyler Hill & West 15th Historic Districts

These three districts are illustrated and summarized on the previous page. Their associated guidelines contain the key components found in most effective design guidelines for historic districts, including a mission statement, an introduction and purpose section, an overview of the history of each district, and a description of the design review process to implement the guidelines. The design guidelines themselves are organized as follows:

- Rehabilitation of Commercial Structures
- Rehabilitation of Residential Structures
- New Construction and Additions to Existing Structures

They appear to be comprehensive and follow best practices.



### McClellan Historic District

The aerial photo map above illustrates this local historic district, while the blue line indicates the home owners association (HOA) boundary, which comes with additional restrictive covenants. Located in the heart of McClellan, the 63 "contributing" structures in the district were constructed between 1930 and 1941. They reflect the Spanish Colonial Revival style conveyed by white stucco walls and red tile roofs. Because the area was designed and built by one entity (US Army) with a singular design theme and in an eleven-year period, there is much less room for variation and diversity relative to the City's other three local historic districts. While it is not explicitly stated, this 14-page document is concise because it can fall back on the other guidelines for more clarity on some design issues.

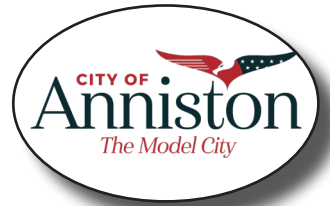


## PUBLIC POLICIES & ENTITIES: KEY ENTITIES

Although there are numerous organizations that will play into the preparation and implementation of this Comprehensive Plan, some of the primary ones are summarized here.

### City of Anniston - Mayor & City Council

In addition to the leadership provided by the Mayor, City Council and City Manager, the three most relevant City departments are the following:



#### Planning & Economic Development Department

In addition to spearheading economic development efforts, this department also leads on planning issues, including advising the Planning Commission, and it oversees the Main Street program for Downtown revitalization (see more below on this program). This department, with the help of the Steering Committee, has also led this comprehensive plan.

#### Public Works Department

This department features the following five divisions: City Cemetery, Electrical, City Garage, Engineering and Streets, with the latter two being most relevant to this plan. Obtaining input from those divisions relative to this plan's recommendations for mobility, parking and infrastructure (water, sewer, stormwater, etc.) will be important.

#### Parks & Recreation Department

PARD is in charge of 20 parks, six community centers, and two golf courses. Its primary focus areas include: athletics, the Good Choices Program for young people, and the Aquatic and Fitness Center at McClellan. Parks and recreation are an important section for this plan.

#### Main Street Anniston

While technically part of the City's Economic Development Department, the Main Street program is viewed by many as a distinct stand-alone entity. Part of the National and State Main Street programs, it follows the Main Street "four points" of organization, design, economic vitality, and promotion. It is currently staffed by a part-time Manager and Assistant.

### Calhoun County - County Commission

Governed by the County Commission, this local government's most relevant component

for the purposes of this plan is described below:

#### Calhoun County Economic Development Council

The CCEDC provides local businesses with helpful information on topics like available properties, job training programs, financial and tax incentives, infrastructure, and regulations. Their staff creates customized growth strategies to help address the topics listed above.

### Regional Agencies

Key entities whose missions extend beyond Anniston's boundaries include the following:

#### East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission (EARPDC)

EARPDC is a multi-purpose public agency providing a range of services to residents and member governments in the ten-county service area. It is designated by a number of state and federal agencies to provide services, including the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). It also provides support to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and serves as the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) providing transportation planning support for the non-urbanized areas.

#### Calhoun Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)

In cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the MPO carries out the metropolitan transportation planning process, including public participation, for the Calhoun Urbanized Area.

#### Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

The ARC is an economic development partnership agency of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 420 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth to help the Region achieve socio-economic parity with the nation.

### Other Key Entities

#### McClellan Development Authority (MDA)

The MDA is a non-profit public corporation charged with the future economic development of the former US Army Fort.

#### Jacksonville State University - Center for Economic Development & Business Research

As indicated on page 29, JSU frequently prepares economic impact studies for Anniston.

# Anniston Comprehensive Plan



**PUBLIC INPUT  
&  
PLANNING PRINCIPLES**



## Stakeholder Comments

*"There are two Annistons – the haves and the have-nots. The haves need to provide outreach and mentor the have-nots."*

*"It has a small town atmosphere (as opposed to the bigger cities of Birmingham and Atlanta) with the convenience of local shopping and dining. I love the "old world" feel, the essence of history."*

*"Downtown Anniston needs attention. We have all of those buildings that are gems, but they need to be restored. We need to bring people off the interstate..."*

*"Anniston needs to present a better first impression to visitors."*

*"Anniston has several good local restaurants downtown. The climate and geography are significantly better than most parts of Alabama. Easy access to outdoor activities (hiking, biking, fishing, boating). I like that many people who grew up here have returned."*

## INPUT FROM MEETINGS

For any comprehensive planning project, public input is an extremely important ingredient. Multiple opportunities should be available for meaningful public engagement throughout the life of the project, as was provided in this case for Anniston's Comprehensive Plan. The following pages provide an overview of the process and results of this project's public engagement.

### Meetings

Page 3 provides a description of the overall process used to prepare this Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the various meetings held with the Project Steering Committee, below is information on the key meetings that led up to the five (5) day charrette process:

*Kick-Off Meeting with City Council & Planning Commission:* May 6, 2021 - Botanical Gardens

*Public Kick-Off Meeting:* June 28th, 2021 - City Meeting Center

*Stakeholder Focus Group Meetings:* June 28-29, 2021 - City Meeting Center:

- Group #1 – Property owners, developers, and real estate professionals
- Group #2 – Business owners/operators, Chamber of Commerce, and economic development professionals
- Group #3 – Residents
- Group #4 – Current and recent high school students
- Group #5 – Institutional representatives (churches, schools, public safety, etc.)
- Group #6 – Public officials (City, County, ALDOT, etc.)

There were also numerous interviews with individuals and small groups, particularly those conducted by the Consultant Team's economist and strategic planner.

## Meeting Results

The following is a description of the very general results of the public engagement meetings organized by ten (10) broad themes. *Because this input is opinion-based, the validity of some is debatable:*

### Downtown

- There is a great deal of empty office space Downtown that could be converted to housing if it were financially viable.
- If the police department was better funded, officers could have a stronger presence Downtown.
- Young people would spend more time Downtown if there were more stores with things they like, such as sporting goods, shoes and various "pop-up stores."
- Downtown has been hurt economically by the bypasses diverting people from Downtown.

### Housing

- Housing is not being developed because a sufficient return cannot be realized on the investment, so public sector funding is needed to fill the gap for financial viability.



*Consultant team members conducting a stakeholder focus group meeting with current and recent high school students.*



# PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

## INPUT FROM MEETINGS (CONTINUED)

- Many people are unfamiliar with existing housing programs that can support housing development.
- A hurdle to some people wanting to purchase a house is their poor credit history.
- The rent levels that can be achieved are reportedly so low that development of housing often cannot pencil out.
- Some feel that the City needs to condemn more properties, clear their titles, and sell them cheaply or for no cost.
- There is a lack of new housing available in Anniston, as well as options for different types of housing.
- One problem for residents is the high cost of utilities and the lack of energy efficiency of the houses.

### Neighborhoods

- Some people feel that too much money is invested in Noble Street rather than in economically-challenged neighborhoods.
- Many people want deteriorated vacant houses in the West End area to be demolished. Crime is also cited as a problem there.
- West 15th Street needs revitalization.
- Trash and dumping is a problem for many of Anniston's poorer neighborhoods, as well as along Quintard.
- Increased code enforcement is needed in neighborhoods.
- Only two neighborhood associations exist.

### Economic Development

- The area's health care facilities are a big plus and can be leveraged to attract more people and businesses.
- Anniston's existing museums are a very positive aspect and help enhance the community's image.
- More job training is needed to make people employable.
- The Chamber has a division for small and minority businesses that sponsors seminars to land government contracts.
- A challenge for industrial development at McClellan is that

there are no large sites (over 100 acres) lacking topographic constraints. The cost of grading can be cost prohibitive.

- Many young people who leave Anniston for college or work do not return because of a lack of good job opportunities.

### Tourism

- It was stated that a museum about the area's historic iron works and/or the military history should be developed. For example, the production of army tanks could be interpreted.
- There are several existing successful special events, including the Noble Street Festival, the US Canine Biathlon, and bike races. Also, the Freedom Riders National Monument is a relatively new attraction that should attract more people.
- TOP Trails, an ATV facility, was noted as a big attraction in the region. It is located in Talladega.

### Public Safety

- Pay for Anniston police is reportedly too low, so new officers get their training in Anniston and then move on for better pay.
- It is believed that one factor contributing to crime has been the elimination of many of Anniston High School's trade programs.
- The local fire department runs a program with public schools where students can earn a certificate in fire fighting.
- Anniston has a major fire fighting training facility that draws people from all over, having a significant economic impact.
- The DA has a highly-successful first-time offenders program that clears their record if they go through a program to reform.

### Public Education

- Anniston's public schools lack a strong reputation, but achievement metrics are getting better.
- A federal court order to racially integrate the schools is still in effect, although the goal appears to have been achieved.
- Vocational training programs at AHS have been eliminated in recent years, such as cosmetology, welding, and culinary arts.

## Stakeholder Comments

*"Anniston is improving, ever so slowly, but we have people with vision trying to make good things happen to improve our town."*

*"I've lived here less than a year, but I like it so far. People are friendly, polite and helpful."*

*"I feel like Anniston can improve and will end up in the right direction. There is room for growth on the north end of Anniston/McClellan area if managed right."*

*"Anniston is beautiful and has a lot of history. Good business additions and attractions is all that Annie's Town needs to thrive."*

*"My hope is that we can have a vibrant economy with opportunities for young people to stay."*

*"We need a renewal of pride. Not just emotionally, but also physically for how we take care of the town and its infrastructure."*



## Stakeholder Comments

*"The City's Parks and Recreation department does a great job."*

*"Anniston has a rich heritage and story. It has quaint areas and a history of wealth and great planning that should be touted."*

*"A key component of any community is the school system."*

*"I like the fact that you all are taking out the time to hear and listen to whatever it is that we've got to say as the people of Anniston."*

*"Our future lies in our students."*

*"I like the potential Anniston has. It has a strong history it can build off of, and a beautiful downtown that needs a lot of TLC. I'm glad that Main Street Anniston is working to revitalize Noble Street."*

*"I love our beautiful historic areas. Please capitalize on the downtown areas specifically and bring restaurants with outdoor dining."*

## INPUT FROM MEETINGS (CONTINUED)

- Anniston's public school challenges are linked to other issues, including public safety, housing and economic development.
- Many poor kids rely heavily on schools for their meals.
- School-age kids in Anniston can pay a fee to attend Jacksonville's public schools, which are considered to be higher quality.
- The DA's office promotes the Helping Families Initiative (HFI) program to help kids avoid truancy, but Anniston's public school system is not involved.

### Youth & Recreation

- The City's "Yes" initiative is a summer program for young people and it is viewed very positively.
- Young people would like to see more "entertainment centers" in Anniston. There used to be a skating rink, but it closed.
- Some young people believe the City has enough parks and recreational facilities, but needs more programs.
- The YMCA is a tremendous resource for young people, having a pool, recreational facilities, and programs. However, because of space and staffing limitations, they can only accommodate children 12 and under.

### City's Government

- As in many communities, there is a general lack of public trust in the City government and other area institutions.
- There needs to be more coordination among the City's various departments to avoid the silo effect.
- There has historically been a lack of regionalism, but the current leaders have made great gains recently in establishing partnerships, such as Anniston and Oxford with the airport.
- Some believe that the City's approval process for development and new businesses is not very easy to navigate.
- Not everyone is supportive of the City's historic zoning.

- Some believe that the City needs to apply more equity in its approval processes for building inspections and business licenses.
- It was suggested that the City hold a meeting with local builders to figure out how they can improve their approval process.

### Other Issues

- Many see the McClellan area as a distinct community and also feel like it should see more development.
- There are stormwater problems for many streets in town, including Noble Street, where flooding regularly occurs.
- Some believe Anniston needs a mandatory recycling program.
- Some of the young people believe that more public opinion surveys should be conducted for various community issues.
- There is a belief that greater social equity needs to occur, such as in the leadership of community entities.
- Many poor people use the RMC's emergency room for basic health care since Medicaid is unavailable to most in Alabama.
- Reportedly, Anniston is ranked #1 among philanthropic communities in the state.
- There is a belief that some poor people move to Anniston because of the many resources available to them.



*Socially-distanced participants in the Public Kick-Off meeting following pandemic protocols.*





# PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

## PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

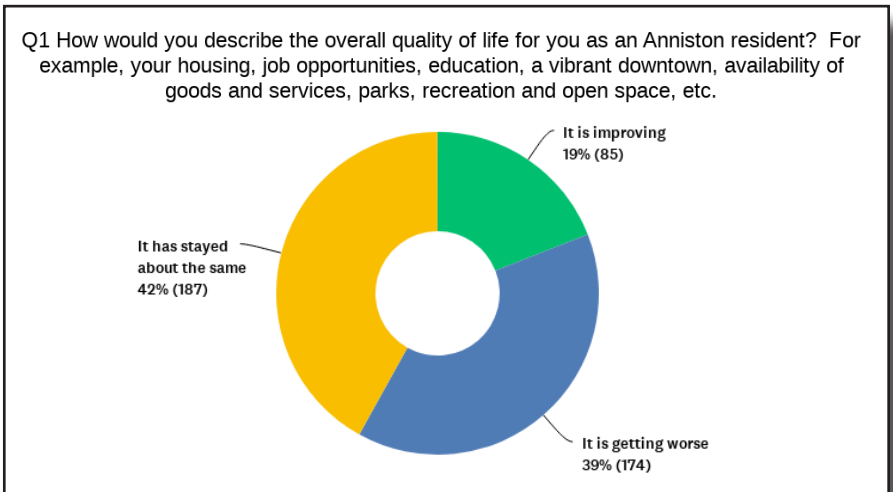
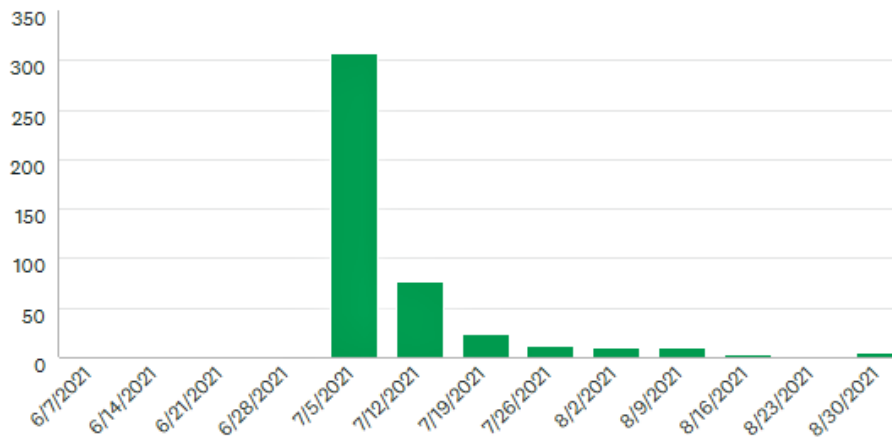
As one of several approaches to solicit public input for this plan, the City conducted a public opinion survey to gain opinions on a wide range of issues related to the plan. Nearly 450 people took the survey, which was available online. For citizens lacking computers or similar digital devices for taking the survey, the City promoted the availability of them at community centers, and staff members were available to assist those needing help. For a full copy of the survey results, see this plan's *Appendix A: Public Opinion Survey Results*.

### Respondents Demographics

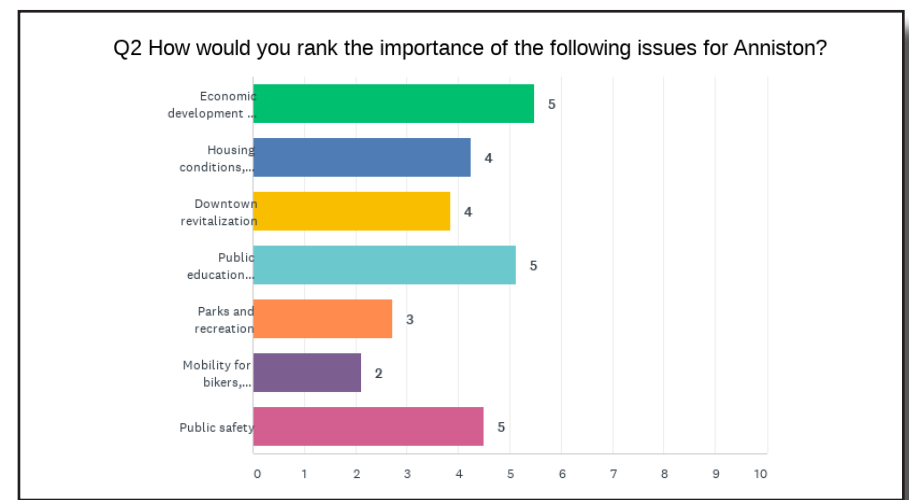
Although it was important that the survey be anonymous, below is some general information regarding the types of people who responded to the survey:

- *Gender:* 61% females / 39% males
- *Ethnicity:* 66% white / 19% black / 2% latino / 13% other or no answer
- *Age:* 2% under 18 / 3% 18-24 / 11% 25-34 / 22% 35-44 / 16% 45-54 / 21% 55-64 / 26% 65+
- *Annual Household Income:* 7% under \$15,000 / 8% \$15,000-\$29,999 / 14% \$30,000-\$49,999 / 24% \$50,000-\$74,999 / 17% \$75,000-\$99,999 / 19% \$100,000-\$150,000 / 11% over \$150,000
- *Highest Level of Education:* 1% middle school or less / 19% high school / 16% associates degree / 32% bachelors degree / 26% advanced degree / 6% other

### Survey Trend by Week: July 6th through September 3rd



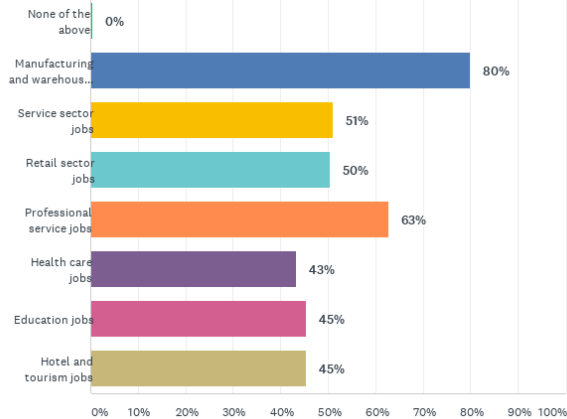
***“People seem to care about the city and improving it even if they disagree on the best way. Overall, they seem to be kind and eager to serve their community. We also love the natural beauty and ease of access to Cheaha and other outdoor recreation. We love the local restaurants that do exist and want to support those more than the chain restaurants when we can.”*** - Survey Respondent Comment





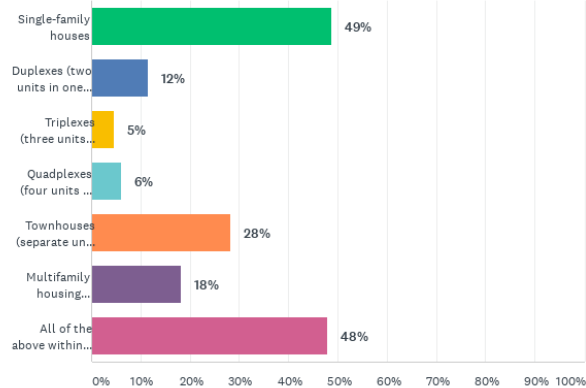
## PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY (CONTINUED)

Q3 What types of new jobs do you believe are needed in Anniston? (please select all that apply)

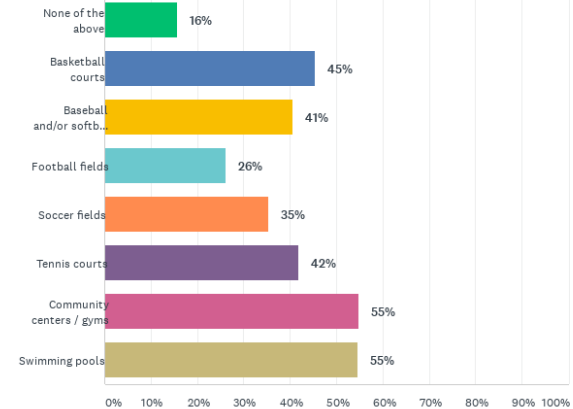


***"Anniston has the feel of a modest-sized city with a diverse population; tolerably good weather and facilities; a lot of people engaged in efforts to make the community better; better schools and public safety than it generally gets credit for..."*** - Survey Respondent Comment

Q4 What types of housing do we need more of in Anniston? (please select all that apply)

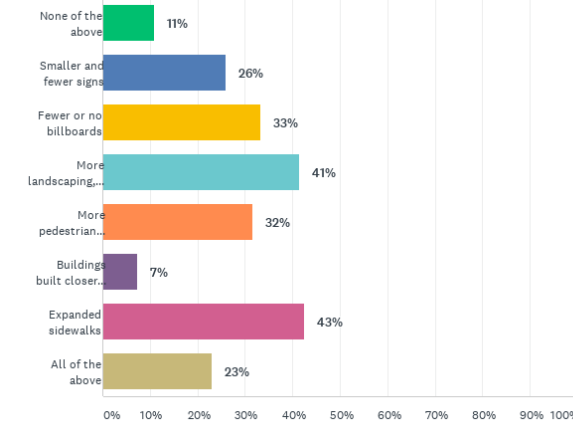


Q7 What specific types of recreational facilities are needed in Anniston? (please select all that apply)



***"I love how resilient and strong our community is. There are so many volunteer organizations that really want to make this a better place to raise your family..."*** - Survey Respondent Comment

Q8 Quintard Avenue / Hwy. 21 is a key thoroughfare for Anniston. If this thoroughfare and adjacent lands were to be physically improved, what types of specific improvements would you like to see? (please select all that apply)





# PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

## CHARRETTE

Within the context of city planning, a “charrette” is an intensive multi-day brainstorming session to generate the main ideas for a plan. It is typically conducted in a manner that engages stakeholders in a very hands-on manner. The charrette held to create the Concept Plan for Anniston’s Comprehensive Plan occurred on September 9-13, 2021. A key event was the Public Workshop held on September 9th at the City Meeting Center, as described below.

### Public Workshop

Following a presentation on the key findings of this project’s background research, as well as an orientation with Workshop instructions, the public participants were effectively “deputized” to be city planners for the evening, and the following steps occurred:

- Participants were split up into multiple teams of people.
- Each team had a base map of the city, supporting information (aerial photo maps, etc.), and colored markers.
- Each team developed a plan reflecting their vision for the future of Anniston. The marker colors were correlated to specific planning issues.
- After roughly an hour of planning, all of the participants reconvened as one group and each team presented their plan.

### Color Coding for Planning Topics

The following colors were used by the public participant teams in creating their plans for Anniston:

- Civic Facilities - arts, governmental, educational, religious, etc.
- Public Spaces - parks, plazas, trails, etc.
- Businesses – shopping, dining, entertainment, offices, etc.
- Housing - houses, townhouses, multi-family (condos & apts.)
- Transportation – streets, parking, cycling, walking, transit, etc.
- Other Issues - economic, social, cultural, public safety, etc.



# PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES



## CHARRETTE (CONTINUED)

### Key Ideas from the Workshop

Some of the primary ideas generated by the public participant teams during the charrette workshop included the following:

#### Downtown

A very strong focus should be placed on the revitalization of Downtown Anniston since Downtown greatly impacts the city's overall image and future prospects.

#### Quintard Corridor

Enhancing the function and aesthetics of this critical corridor is vital since it has such high visibility. It creates the first and last impression of Anniston for visitors.

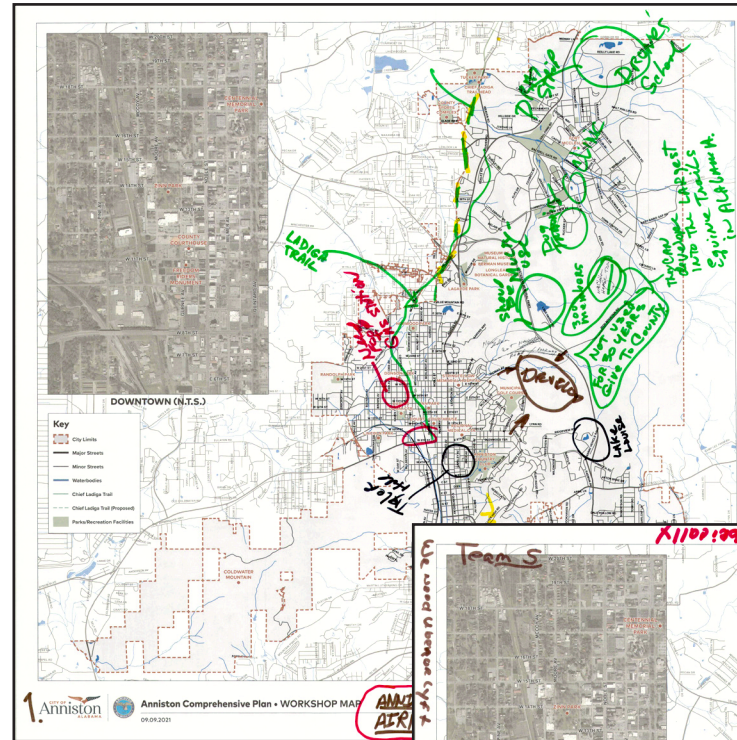
#### West Anniston Neighborhoods

This challenged neighborhood is in tremendous need of revitalization. In particular, issues such as sound and affordable housing, public safety, infrastructure maintenance, and general cleanliness must be addressed.

#### Greenway System

The current system should be expanded to create an extensive and physically integrated system both for the benefit of existing citizens and to make Anniston more attractive to people and businesses that might locate here in the future.

While *economic development* is as equally important as the other issues listed above, it is not singled out here because it is a common thread running through each of those issues. *Public education* improvements are also vital and tied to other issues such as housing, public safety and economic development. Finally, *plan implementation* will be the most important facet of this project.



***"I think we need to take one section of it at a time, I think one of the biggest problems we have is we're trying to eat the whole elephant at once. Let's get one section decent and build along those lines."***

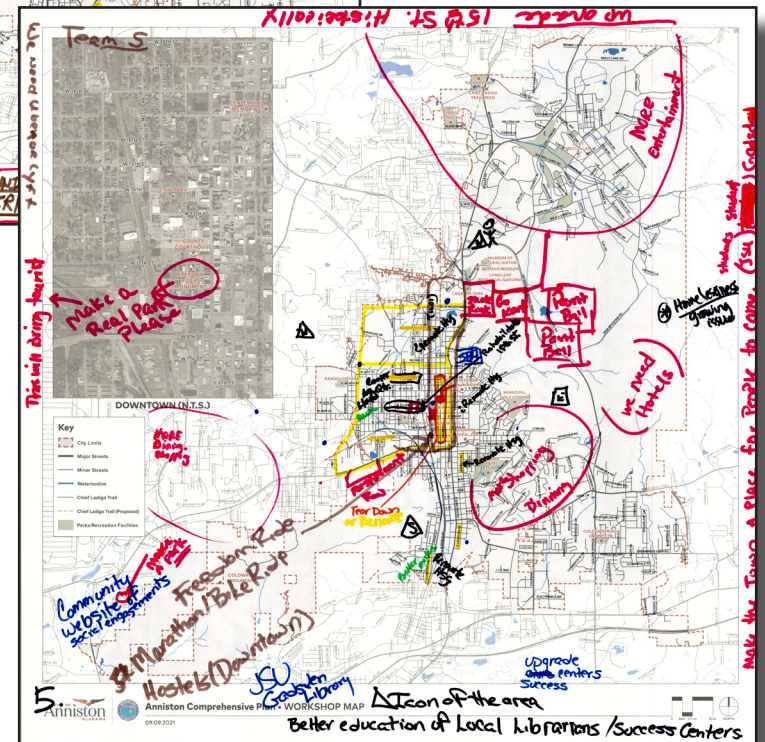
Charrette Workshop Participant

***"I think it will be very productive for the city; I've lived here basically all my life so I've seen changes."***

Charrette Workshop Participant

***"I would really love to see the city of Anniston move forward and do something better for its citizens and start to outpace Oxford."***

Charrette Workshop Participant





# PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

## EXPLANATION OF PLANNING PRINCIPLES

### Purpose of Principles

To conduct a valid, intuitive and logical comprehensive planning process, it is important to bridge the research and public input phase with the plan development phase through the creation of a set of planning principles. The adopted principles should be broad objectives for which a strong consensus of public support can be generated to help guide the more detailed planning ideas. When complex issues need to be resolved, it is helpful to step back and revisit these agreed upon planning principles.

### Creation of the Principles

These principles were created prior to the charrette based upon recognized planning “best practices” and then adjusted based upon public input to date. After being revisited by the community and revised as needed, these principles were then used by the public workshop participants during the charrette in crafting their team plans.

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

**1. Preserve open space and environmentally sensitive lands, and enhance Anniston’s overall environmental quality.** Discourage development in areas such as floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and important plant and animal habitats. Preserve trees where possible, as well as open spaces connected to a broader open space network. Enhance the natural environment through approaches such as increased tree plantings, “green infrastructure” to help absorb and filter stormwater runoff, and the continuation of brownfield cleanup efforts. Pursue opportunities for recycling services that are accessible and easy to use for residential, commercial and industrial waste generators in the City of Anniston.

- 2. Maximize and leverage Anniston’s existing community assets.** Examples of important community assets include: the historic downtown, valuable existing building inventory, existing infrastructure, cultural and historical sites, open spaces, streams, and other natural resources, including the park service and the natural beauty of the mountainous areas with its hiking, horse, and bike trails. Steer future development toward areas already developed with existing infrastructure, including the continued revitalization of the historic downtown. Leverage the city’s rich Civil Rights assets to capitalize on tourism revenue.
- 3. Foster safe, vibrant and walkable neighborhoods offering an enhanced quality of life.** Anniston’s neighborhoods should feature a variety of housing types where appropriate, parks and recreation, strong pedestrian and biking accessibility, and small commercial nodes where appropriate. The character of existing historic neighborhoods should be protected through the preservation and maintenance of existing buildings, compatible infill development, and the sensible accommodation of automobiles. Keep neighborhoods clean and free of trash, and pursue mixed-use development that benefits neighborhoods.
- 4. Create a range of housing opportunities and affordable choices for Anniston’s citizens.** While single-family detached houses will continue to dominate the community, a variety of housing types and sizes should be available, including accessory units, attached housing, and multi-family housing. Higher-density housing should be located where infrastructure can support it and where other land uses can provide needed amenities, including shopping, dining and recreation. Focus on mixed-used planning and development that will blend residential, commercial, cultural, institutional,

### Vision Statement

The first draft of the following Vision Statement was prepared by the Consultants for this project, revised with input from the Project Steering Committee, and refined with additional public input.

*Anniston strives to be a healthy community with a rich and diverse heritage that it seeks to preserve, yet it is also forward thinking and progressive in its outlook for the future. Priorities over the next twenty years include a transparent government rooted in public engagement and consensus, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, strong schools, economic development that creates opportunities for all citizens, safe neighborhoods and affordable housing in a variety of types, a vibrant downtown, a range of mobility alternatives, recreational opportunities for all ages, social equity, and a continually-improving quality of life.*



## Charrette Workshop Quotes

The following quotes are excerpted from an article by Bill Wilson entitled “Anniston residents try their hand at planning city’s future.” It appeared in the Anniston Star on September 10, 2021:

“Anniston Mayor Jack Draper welcomed the residents and said the comprehensive plan is an incredibly important process for future economic development and quality of life. *‘This comprehensive plan will ultimately be what we want our city to look like 20-30 years from now,’* the mayor said.”

“Anniston City Manager Steven Folks looked out at the various tables where everyone was working together for the common good. *‘I think this is great right here, look at how diverse the tables are, and everybody is having an open conversation, nobody’s yelling, everybody is on one accord, I think this is great,’* Folks said.”

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES (CONTINUED)

or entertainment uses into one space.

5. **Mix Anniston’s land uses to create pedestrian-friendly places.** Provide locations where a mixture of land uses can be physically integrated, including commercial, office, residential and civic uses. The integration of land uses should be both horizontal and vertical (mixed use buildings). The result should be pedestrian-friendly places that can require less driving and parking.
6. **Promote high-quality development in Anniston with a strong sense of place.** High-quality development includes attractive architectural design, quality building materials, generous landscaping, and minimal visual impacts from vehicle parking areas. Buildings should have a strong physical relationship with their street, and development should reflect Anniston’s historic development patterns and character, where appropriate.
7. **Provide ample recreational and cultural amenities for Anniston’s citizens.** For a high quality of life for Anniston’s citizens, provide sufficient recreational and cultural facilities, including performing arts, visual arts, and both passive and active recreational opportunities. The community already has top rate museums. These amenities will benefit citizens directly, and also help with economic development by attracting new job-creating businesses, as well as attracting needed employees for existing business.
8. **Provide a variety of transportation alternatives and high-quality transportation corridors within Anniston.** Anniston should be easy and convenient to navigate. Traffic con-

gestion should be minimal, and motorized traffic should be “calmed.” “Complete streets” should be context-sensitive and accommodate a range of transportation modes, including motorized vehicles, public transit, bikes and pedestrians. An extensive greenway system should also be provided that is separate from the street system.

9. **Expand economic development opportunities in Anniston.** Anniston should offer a business-friendly climate that welcomes new businesses that offer jobs and add to the City’s tax base. There should be a streamlined approval process for opening new businesses. In addition to a focus on business retention and entrepreneurship, a variety of business types should be pursued for a diversified economy, including those featuring high-technology and manufacturing jobs. High-quality job training should also be available, especially for Anniston’s young people, to ensure a ready work force to leverage new opportunities.
10. **Maintain policies and processes in Anniston that are equitable to both citizens and developers.** Encourage meaningful citizen participation in Anniston’s growth and development decisions, while making decisions for development applications predictable, fair, and cost-effective within a framework of policies that reflect the City’s adopted citywide Comprehensive Plan.
11. **Foster an atmosphere of unity and cooperation with mutual respect between citizens, business interests, and both public and private service providers.** These providers include educators, medical services, police/fire/ emergency responders, nonprofits, and houses of worship. Promote a sense of “common ownership” and “shared responsibility” for community assets, fostering a sense of civic pride.

# Anniston Comprehensive Plan





## Understanding “Urban”

The “Urban” Place Type category is only one of five key categories for Anniston, but it is perhaps the most misunderstood category. For many people, the term “urban” conjures up images of skyscrapers, honking car horns, and rat-infested alleys. However, urban areas are distinguished from suburban areas primarily by the following:

1. How buildings relate to their associated streets;
2. Where parking is located;
3. How different land uses spatially relate to one another.

Another way of thinking of “urban” is to think “pedestrian-friendly.” Even a small country crossroads village or hamlet with one-story buildings can be urban in form if the buildings are set relatively close to the street, off-street parking is located behind buildings, land uses are physically integrated, and the overall environment is walkable. In short, “urban” places should be no more feared than Anniston’s cherished historic Downtown is feared.

## PLACE TYPES OVERVIEW

In previous decades, the primary component of a comprehensive plan was the Land Use Plan. However, such an approach failed to consider important issues that go beyond the two-dimensional subject of land use. Consequently, current planning practice takes a more holistic approach and considers a wide range of issues to determine what are referred to as “Place Types.”

### Place Type Determinants

The following characteristics are considered to determine Place Types:

- Land use
- Spacial patterns
- Intensity/density
- Scale
- Form
- Character

The combination of these factors adds up to “places.” This approach differs from earlier planning practices and is a substantial improvement over those earlier approaches.

### Key Place Type Categories

The five broadest Place Type categories include the following:

- Natural
- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban
- Special Districts

Within each of those categories are a series of more specific Place Type sub-categories.

### Relationship of Place Types to Zoning

Zoning is one of many tools to implement a plan such as this plan for Anniston. Although the determination of Place Types for any given location is driven strongly by existing land uses and devel-

opment form, Place Types are recommendations for the future rather than serving as an existing conditions inventory. The Place Types map should be used in the future for zoning purposes, although the fine-grained nature of zoning may require the creation of more or fewer zoning districts than the number of Place Types in this plan.

### Factors Considered for the Place Types Map

Below are the various factors that were considered in the preparation of the Place Types map for Anniston illustrated on page 45:

1. Inherent land features, including the presence and extent of environment constraints, such as steep slopes and floodplains.
2. Existing land uses, including the area’s context.
3. Current density/intensity, form and character of development, including the area’s context.
4. Existing and potential infrastructure, including the availability of roads, sewer, water, and power.
5. Real estate market conditions based upon this plan’s market assessments and analysis.
6. Public and stakeholder preferences based upon this project’s public engagement process.
7. Current public policies, including zoning and development policies.
8. “Best Practices” for city planning, including Smart Growth and sustainability approaches in pursuit of a high quality of life for Anniston’s citizens.

***“We don’t want a plan based on land uses. We want a plan based on experiences. Who visits downtown to see land uses?”***

Mitchell Silver - Former President of the American Planning Association





## ANNISTON PLACE TYPES



### NATURAL

#### Locations

Throughout the city, but particularly in the northeast and southwest. More centrally, it is associated with creeks and related floodplains.

#### Geographic Form

Irregularly shaped expansive areas and curvilinear forms follow the natural contours of streams.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Undeveloped wooded areas and fields, outdoor passive recreation and greenways.

#### Density & Form

Not applicable because of the very limited development in such areas.

### RURAL

#### Locations

Peripheral parts of the city along the north, west and southeast boundaries.

#### Geographic Form

Nodal in form and rectilinear in shape because they are bound by property lines.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Undeveloped open space, agriculture, and low-density single-family housing.

#### Density & Form

Other than Natural areas, the lowest density for Anniston (min. 2-acre lots). Houses, outbuildings, and agricultural structures in generally informal patterns.

### SUBURBAN

#### Locations

Along key roads, with larger areas being east of Quintard.

#### Geographic Form

Based on the sub-category, as commercial and mixed-use areas are linear, while residential areas are nodal.

#### Optimal Land Uses

A wide range of residential, commercial and civic uses.

#### Density & Form

A range of residential densities, including lots with a minimum size of 5,000 sq. ft., and relatively low-density commercial. An automobile orientation with segregation of most land use types.

### URBAN

#### Locations

Much is in and around Downtown, but also areas on the west side of Noble Street, east side of Quintard Avenue and at McClellan.

#### Geographic Form

Both nodal and linear.

#### Optimal Land Uses

A wide range of residential, commercial and civic uses.

#### Density & Form

Commercial buildings fronting on streets with on-street parking, parking lots behind buildings, alleys, sidewalks, integrated land uses, parks and plazas, and relatively small residential lots.

### SPECIAL

#### Locations

Generally scattered, but particularly concentrated in the McClellan area.

#### Geographic Form

Most Special areas are nodal.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Institutional uses, industrial uses, and large community facilities. When small-scaled, they can be part of other Place Types.

#### Density & Form

Varies greatly depending upon the use. Industrial uses can be large and should be buffered at the periphery. Institutional uses are often campus-like.



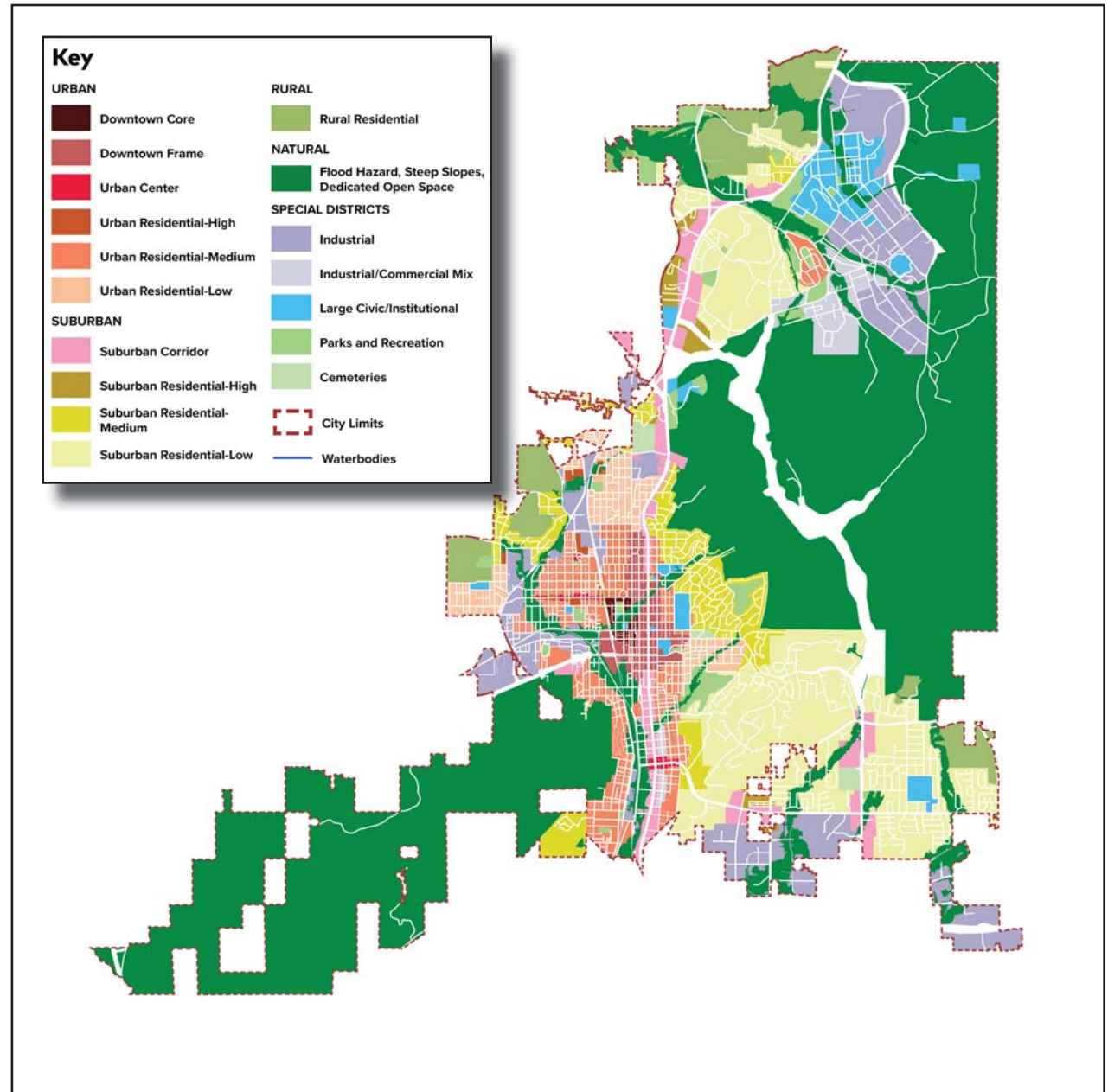
# THE PLAN: PLACE TYPES

## PLACE TYPES MAP

At right is the Place Types map that serves as the overall foundation of this Comprehensive Plan for Anniston, including the map legend indicating the various Place Type categories and sub-categories. The number of sub-category areas are listed below for each of the main Place Type categories:

- Natural - 1      • Suburban - 4      • Special - 5
- Rural - 1      • Urban - 6

The following pages explain each Place Type and their sub-categories. It is noteworthy that, if Place Types are transformed into Zoning districts at some point in the future, they would only become relevant when new development is proposed because of the “grandfathering” of all existing land uses and development. Also, new roads may change some Place Types.



*Contrasts between these two commercial / mixed use areas underscore the need to utilize place types as a means of distinguishing development densities, form, and character.*





## NATURAL AREAS

Natural Areas consist of floodplains, steep slopes and formally protected open space.

### Locations

Natural Areas are located throughout the city, but particularly in the northeast and southwest. While limited within the more central portions of Anniston, there they are associated with creeks and their related floodplains.

### Geographic Form

This place type comes in two general forms. In the northeast and southwest, it has an informal shape that is relatively extensive and contiguous. In other locations, the form consists of meandering patterns that are curvilinear and follow the natural contours of streams.

### Optimal Land Uses

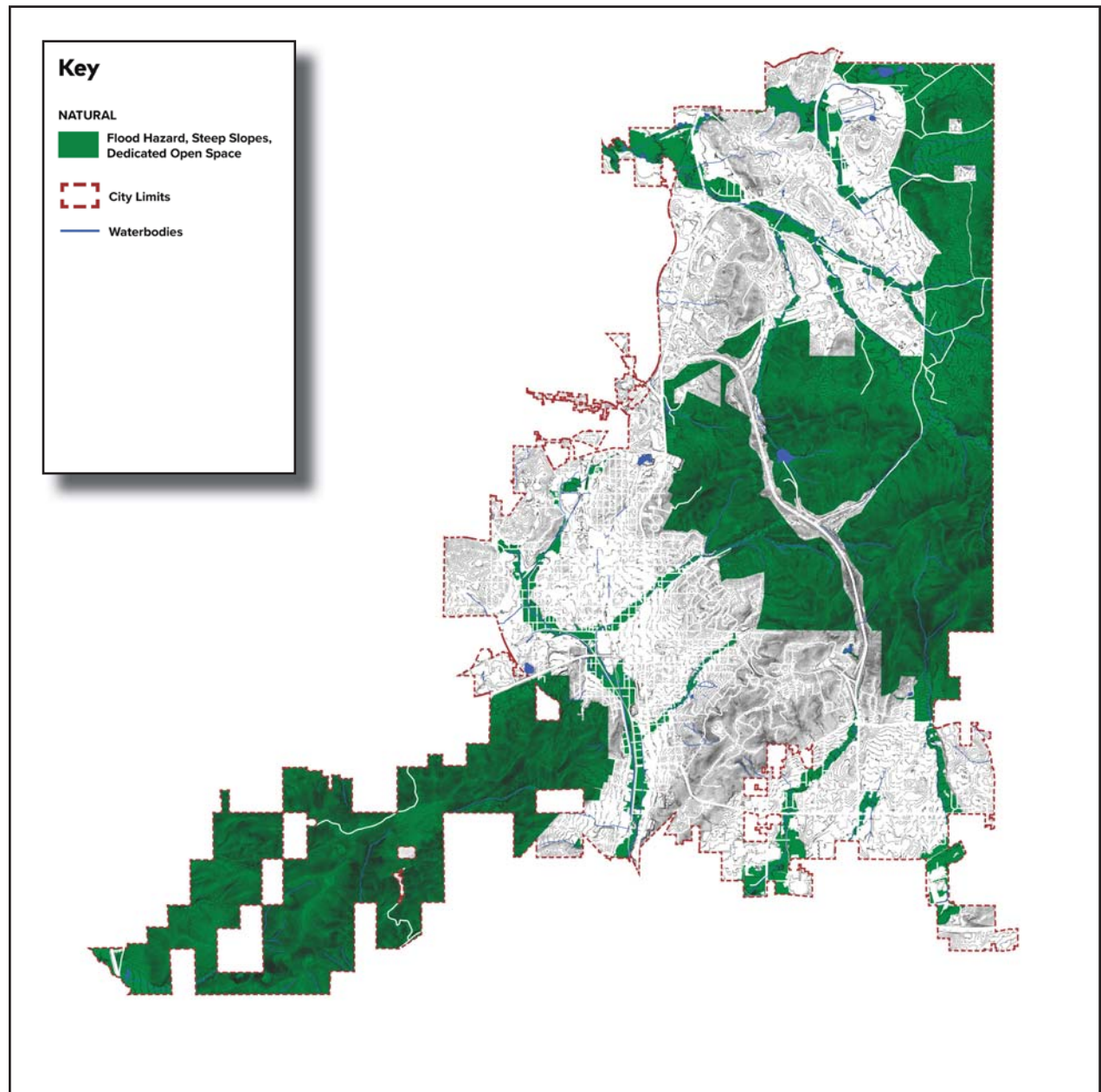
Natural Areas should be used as essentially undeveloped wooded areas and fields, outdoor passive recreation, and greenways.

### Development Form

This characteristic is not applicable because of the very limited development in such areas. The primary physical features of Natural Areas include:

- Floodways and floodplains
- Streams and wetlands
- Steep slopes

It is noteworthy that, because environmental resources are typically protected through development regulations such as floodplain regulations rather than zoning, a Natural Areas zoning district is unlikely to be designated.





# THE PLAN: PLACE TYPES

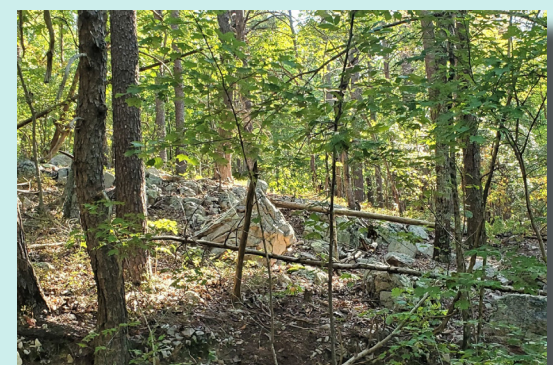
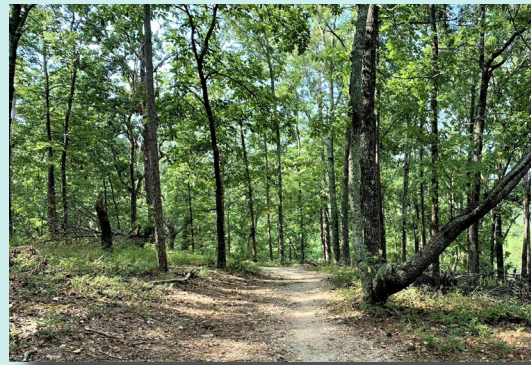
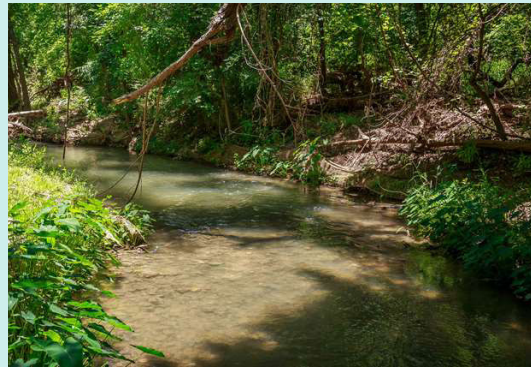
## NATURAL AREAS (CONTINUED)

Also, unfortunately, some streams have been channelized with concrete. See pages 7-9 for more information on Anniston's environmental resources.



Representative Aerial Photo

### CHARACTER IMAGERY: NATURAL AREAS





## RURAL AREAS

Rural Areas are low-density limited-development areas with single-family houses, open space and some agricultural uses. Within the broader Rural Area category is its only sub-category of Rural Residential.

### Locations

Rural Residential Areas are in peripheral parts of the city along the north, west and southeast boundaries.

### Geographic Form

These areas are somewhat nodal in form (not linear) and rectilinear in shape because they are bound by formal property lines.

### Optimal Land Uses

Land uses include undeveloped open space, agriculture and low-density single-family residential.

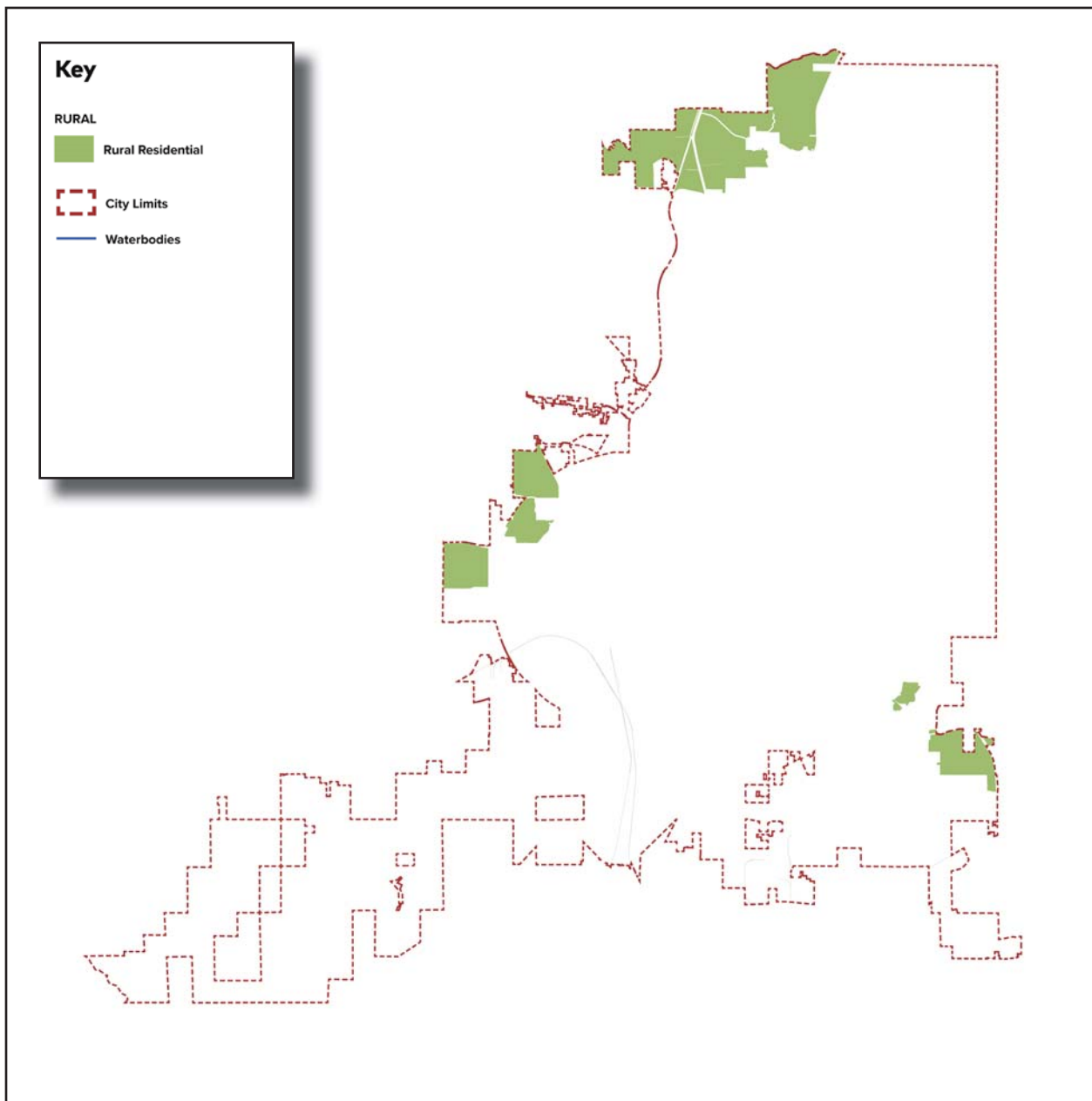
### Development Density

Other than the Natural Areas, Rural Residential Areas have the lowest density in Anniston, with most properties being greater than 2 acres in size.

### Development Form

The development form features single-family detached houses, outbuildings, and agricultural structures in low-density informal patterns.

It is recognized that Rural Areas are typically suited for agricultural uses. However, because of these lands somewhat suburban character and their limited scale, agriculture is not viable to such lands in Anniston. Therefore, in time, it is likely that these lands will transition to higher-den-





# THE PLAN: PLACE TYPES

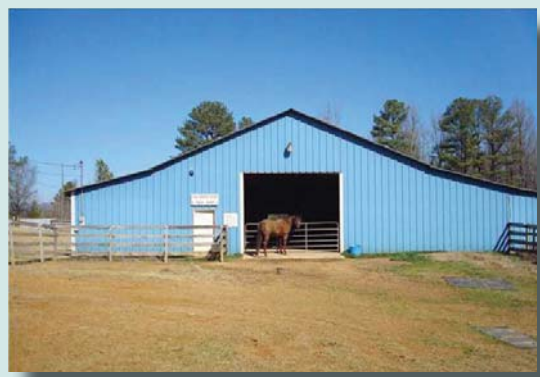
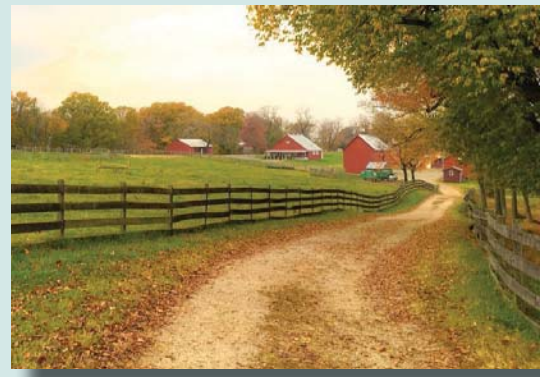
## RURAL AREAS (CONTINUED)

city developed lands as growth pressures push outward from existing developed areas. Thus, it might be viewed as a development “holding area” until market conditions become ripe for more substantial development.



Representative Aerial Photo

### CHARACTER IMAGERY: RURAL AREAS





## SUBURBAN AREAS:

### COMMERCIAL / MIXED USE

There is only one sub-category for Suburban Commercial / Mixed Use Areas, as follows:

#### SUBURBAN CORRIDORS

These areas feature primarily post-1950s development with a strong automobile orientation. Key land uses are retail, dining (including fast food with drive-thru windows), personal services, and related uses. Most buildings are one-story in height and fronted by a parking lot between the building and associated road. *Objectives include smaller and less signage, more landscaping, expanded sidewalks, and fewer and narrower driveways.*

#### Locations

This Place Type is located along key roads, particularly on Quintard Avenue, Greenbrier Dear Road, and Henry Road (Hwy. 431).

#### Geographic Form

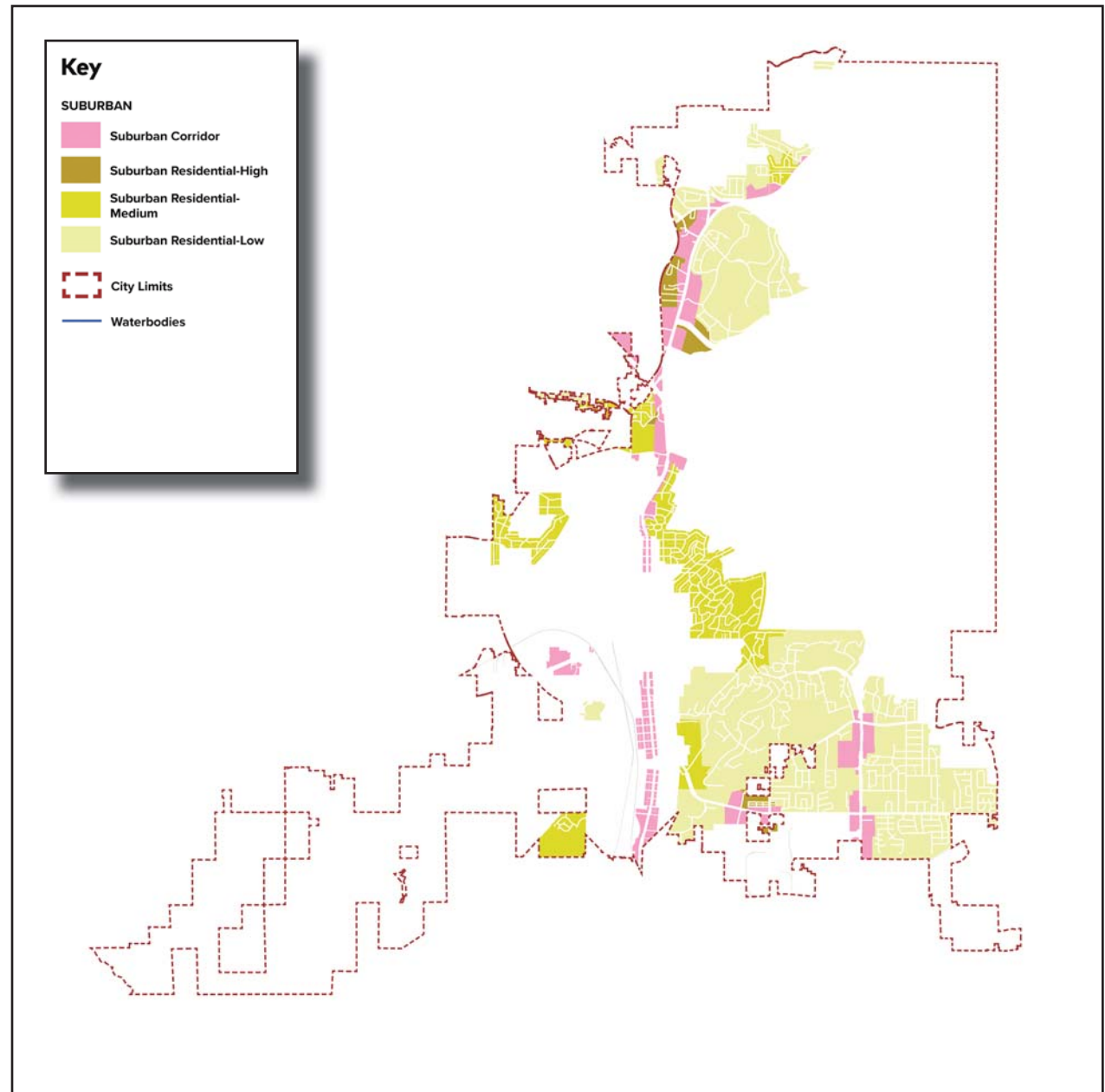
This Place Type has a linear form flanking either side of Quintard Avenue, but is more nodal at key intersections on Greenbrier Dear Road and Henry Road (Hwy. 431).

#### Optimal Land Uses

Optimal land uses include retail, dining, personal services, and offices. High-density housing can be included.

#### Development Density

This Place Type has a floor area ratio (FAR) of between approximately .10 and .25. FAR is the total building floor area (total sq. ft.) relative to the total site area.





# THE PLAN: PLACE TYPES

## SUBURBAN AREAS: COMMERCIAL / MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

### Development Form

This Place Type is generally suburban in form and character, including frequent curb cuts / driveways and parking that is typically located between the road and buildings.



Representative Aerial Photo

### CHARACTER IMAGERY: SUBURBAN AREAS - COMMERCIAL / MIXED USE







## **SUBURBAN AREAS: RESIDENTIAL**

These areas feature primarily post-1950s development with a strong automobile orientation. Key land uses include residential with various housing types, as well as relatively small-scale institutional uses and parks. The largest percentage of land is used for single-family detached houses. *Objectives include mixed housing types within walkable neighborhoods, sidewalks, conveniently-located parks, and minimizing the visual impacts of garages fronting onto streets.* There are three sub-categories for Suburban Residential Areas, as follows:

### **SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL - LOW**

#### Locations

This Place Type is located primarily in McClellan and the southeast portion of Anniston.

#### Geographic Form

This Place Type is essentially nodal, but with irregularly shaped boundaries.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Optimal land uses include single-family detached houses and ancillary uses (parks, etc.).

#### Development Density

Although the existing densities for these areas are not very low, with some lots sizes being roughly 5,000 sq. ft., an average lot size of approximately 20,000 sq. ft. is appropriate here.

#### Development Form

This Place Type is suburban in form and character, including generous front setbacks. While lots are typically accessed by a front driveway, the visual impact of garages should be minimized by: 1) placing it at the rear of a lot; 2) recessing it behind the front facade if the garage doors face the street; or 3) turn it so that the garage doors do not face the street.

### **SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL - MEDIUM**

#### Locations

This Place Type is scattered throughout Anniston, with the most extensive area being located on the easterly edge of the city in the central portion east of Downtown.

#### Geographic Form

This Place Type is essentially nodal, but with irregularly shaped boundaries.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Optimal land uses include single-family detached houses, attached houses, and ancillary uses (parks, etc.).

#### Development Density

Average lots sizes for this Place Type are 10,000 sq. ft.

#### Development Form

This Place Type is suburban in form and character, including generous front setbacks. The visual impact of garages should be minimal as described for Residential - Low Place Types.

### **SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL - HIGH**

#### Locations

This Place Type is very limited and relatively scattered, but most is in the north half of town.

#### Geographic Form

This Place Type is essentially nodal, but with irregularly shaped boundaries.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Optimal land uses include single-family detached houses, attached houses (including townhouses), multi-family housing, and ancillary uses (parks, etc.).

#### Development Density

Minimum lots sizes are 5,000 sq. ft., with the exception of townhouse lots, which are smaller.

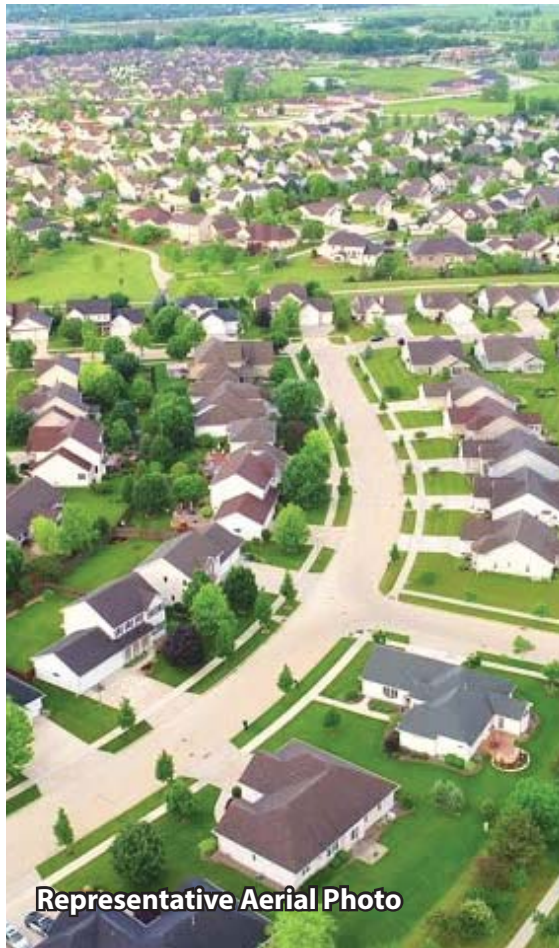
#### Development Form

This Place Type is suburban in form and character, including moderate front setbacks (with the exception of townhouses). For lots that are 50 ft. in width or less, driveways and front-loaded garages should be discouraged. Instead, on-street parking and rear alleys should be encouraged. Development should be master planned to create a network of streets and blocks, instead of one-dimensional complexes. Developments should be interconnected and parking areas located behind buildings.



# THE PLAN: PLACE TYPES

## SUBURBAN AREAS: RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)



Representative Aerial Photo

### CHARACTER IMAGERY: SUBURBAN AREAS - RESIDENTIAL





## URBAN AREAS: COMMERCIAL / MIXED USE

Unlike the more auto-oriented Suburban Areas, Urban Areas are designed to be pedestrian-friendly, they feature a physically integrated mixture of land uses, and they have higher residential densities and non-residential intensities than do Suburban Areas. There are three sub-categories for Urban Commercial / Mixed Use Areas, as follows:

### DOWNTOWN CORE

#### Locations

This Place Type features the most central portion of the historic Downtown. It is bound roughly by 15th Street at the north, 9th Street at the south, Wilmer Avenue at the east, and the rail line on the west.

#### Geographic Form

This Place Type is nodal in form and has rectilinear shaped boundaries following block and lot lines.

#### Optimal Land Uses

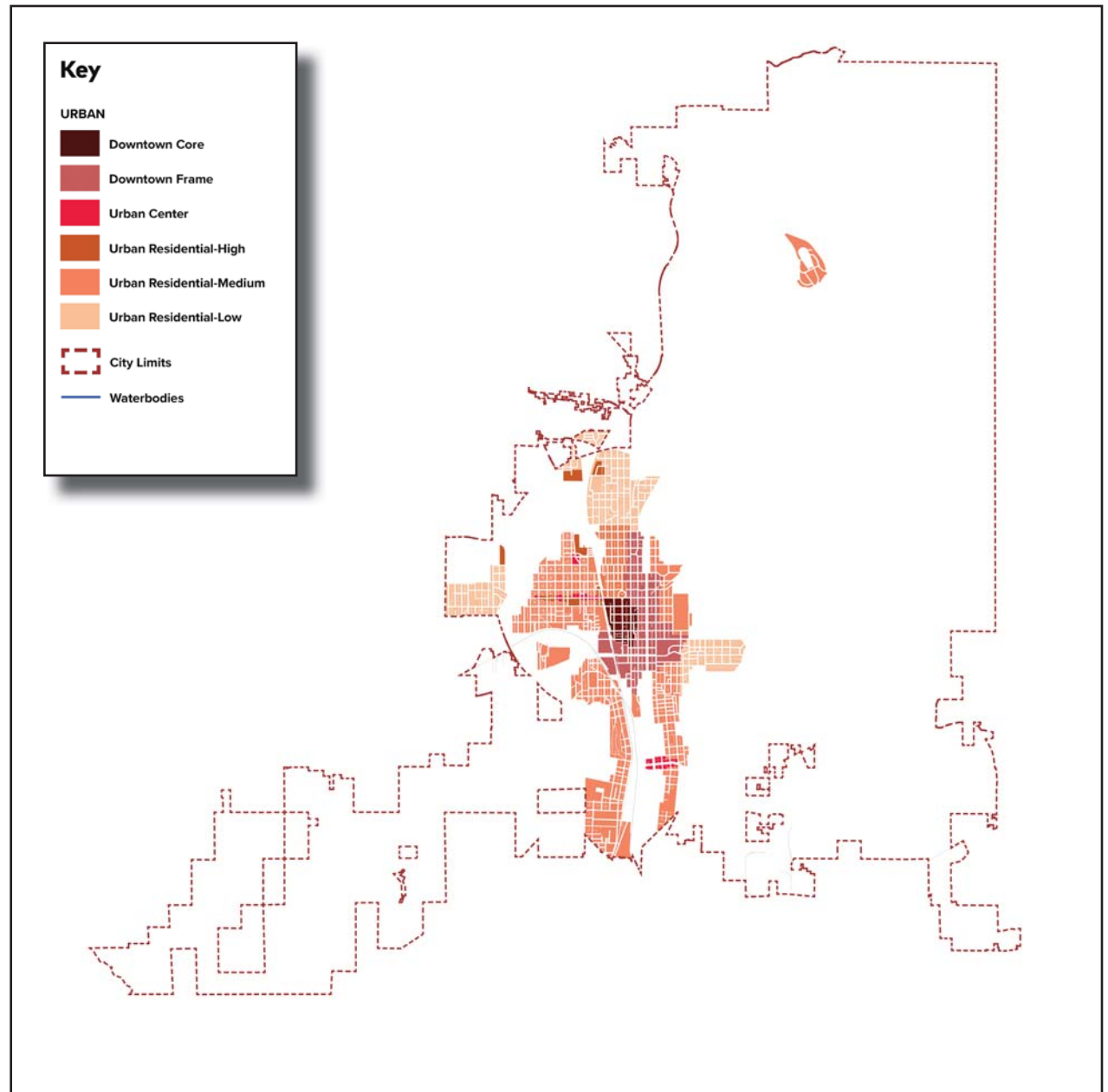
Primary uses include retail, dining, personal services, offices, institutional uses, lodging, high-density housing, and public space (Zinn Park).

#### Development Density

This Place Type is the most densely developed portion of Anniston. Building footprints occupying most of their lots, and most buildings ranging between two and four stories in height.

#### Development Form

This Place Type features buildings fronting directly onto





# THE PLAN: PLACE TYPES

## URBAN AREAS: COMMERCIAL / MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

streets, on-street parking, parking lots behind buildings, preserved historic buildings, compatible new buildings, and wide sidewalks accommodating outdoor dining.



Representative Aerial Photo

### CHARACTER IMAGERY: URBAN AREAS - COMMERCIAL / MIXED USE





## URBAN AREAS: COMMERCIAL / MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

### DOWNTOWN FRAME

#### Locations

This Place Type abuts the Downtown Core Place Type and extends approximately four to five blocks to the north, south and east. A section also extends one block in depth to the west of the rail line to the southwest of the Downtown Core.

#### Geographic Form

This Place Type is nodal in form and has rectilinear shaped boundaries following block and lot lines.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Primary uses include retail, dining, personal services, offices, institutional uses, lodging, moderate to high-density housing, and public space (Centennial Memorial Park). Some light industrial uses can also be compatible.

#### Development Density

Although this Place Type has relatively high densities, it is not as dense as the adjoining Downtown Core Place Type.

#### Development Form

This Place Type features many older buildings fronting directly onto streets, but some more recently developed properties front onto parking lots. Thus, the area has a combination of urban and suburban development forms. Nevertheless, it is generally more walkable than Anniston's more suburban areas, and even the segment of Quintard Avenue traversing this Place Type is more pedestrian-friendly than segments to the north and south.

### URBAN CENTER

#### Locations

This Place Type features three specific locations. One is located between W. 20th Street (north), W. 19th Street (south), Cooper Avenue (east) and Dooley Avenue (west). This area is currently not developed as an Urban Center, but has the potential to in the future. Another

Urban Center is located along W. 15th Street between the rail line (east) and nearly to Boynton Avenue (west). The third such area is located along Greenbrier Dear Road between S. Allen Avenue (east) to S. Wilmer Avenue (west).

#### Geographic Form

The most northerly of these three areas is nodal in form, while the other two are linear in form and have an east-west alignment along their associated streets (15th Street and Greenbrier Dear Road).

#### Optimal Land Uses

Primary uses include retail, dining, personal services, institutional uses, and public space. However, these uses are more neighborhood-oriented than those of the other two Urban Commercial / Mixed Use Place Types.

#### Development Density

Similar to the Downtown Core Place Type, this one features building footprints occupying much of their lots, but it is less dense/intense because buildings are primarily one and two-story in height.

#### Development Form

The Urban Center Place Type features buildings fronting directly onto streets, on-street parking, parking lots behind buildings, preserved historic buildings, compatible new buildings, and relatively wide sidewalks accommodating outdoor dining.

In addition to the other characteristics already summarized above, it is important to understand that the Urban Center is intended to function as a center for urban neighborhoods. In other contexts these types of places might be referred to as "Neighborhood Centers" or "Village Centers," and their relatively modest scale fits comfortably with nearby residential areas.



## URBAN AREAS: RESIDENTIAL

### URBAN RESIDENTIAL - HIGH

#### Locations

There are only two locations for this Place Type. One is located immediately north of the most northerly Urban Center and bound by W. 23rd Street (north), W. 20th Street (south), property lines and natural features forming a north-south axis (east), and Cooper Avenue (west). The other area is located along W. 15th Street and interspersed with the Urban Center properties along this corridor.

#### Geographic Form

This Place Type's northern location is nodal in form, while the southerly one is linear by following W. 15th Street. The boundaries of both areas are rectilinear.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Land uses in this Place Type are residential and feature attached housing, including townhouses, as well as multi-family housing (condominiums and/or apartments).

#### Development Density

This Place Type's residential densities are relatively high at a maximum of 20 units per acre, but a range of lot sizes should be possible to accommodate a range of housing types.

#### Development Form

This Place Type features many older buildings fronting directly onto streets, but some more recently developed properties front onto parking lots. Thus, the area has a combination of urban and suburban development forms. Nevertheless, it is generally more walkable than Anniston's more suburban areas, and even the segment of Quintard Avenue traversing this Place Type is more pedestrian-friendly than segments to the north and south.

### URBAN RESIDENTIAL - MEDIUM

#### Locations

This is a geographically extensive area located in all directions from the Downtown Core and Downtown Frame Place Types, including an isolated portion in the McClellan area.

#### Geographic Form

This Place Type's northern locations are relatively nodal, while the two southerly segments are linear, both being along a north-south axis. One is configured along the west side of Noble Street, while the other is east of Quintard Avenue.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Land uses in this Place Type are primarily residential and feature single-family detached houses, as well as some attached housing, including townhouses and small footprint multi-family designed to look like a single-family detached residence (up to 4 units).

#### Development Density

This Place Type's residential densities are moderate, with a maximum density ranging between 10 and 15 units per acre, but lot sizes can vary for a variety of housing types.

#### Development Form

This Place Type is dominated by Anniston's pre-WWII housing with primarily small lots and shallow to moderate front setbacks. Most streets are characterized by sidewalks, on-street parking, some areas have driveways, and street trees are mature.

### URBAN RESIDENTIAL - LOW

#### Locations

This Place Type is located to the immediate north, east and west of the Urban Residential - Medium areas.

#### Geographic Form

These areas are relatively nodal with rectilinear boundaries defined by block edges.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Land uses in this Place Type are primarily single-family detached houses.

#### Development Density

This Place Type's residential densities should not exceed 8 units per acre.

#### Development Form

This Place Type features much of Anniston's 1940s through 1960s single-family housing.

# THE PLAN: PLACE TYPES



## URBAN AREAS: RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

Relative to its "Medium" density counterpart, most of the lots are slightly larger and the streetscapes are less urban, including fewer sidewalks and street trees.



Representative Aerial Photo

## CHARACTER IMAGERY: URBAN AREAS - RESIDENTIAL





## SPECIAL AREAS

This category of Place Types is a “catch all” for places that do not fit nicely into any of the other categories. When they occur on a small scale, they can be part of another Place Type. For example, a small church can be part of another Place Type, but a large church that features a range of ancillary uses and activities is more appropriately designated as a Special Area. Below is a description of each Special Area category:

### INDUSTRIAL & INDUSTRIAL / COMMERCIAL MIX

These are two similar, but separate, Place Types. Any distinctions will be pointed out below.

#### Locations

These Place Types are located in three general areas: the McClellan area in the north, the northwest portions of Anniston, and the southeast part of town.

#### Geographic Form

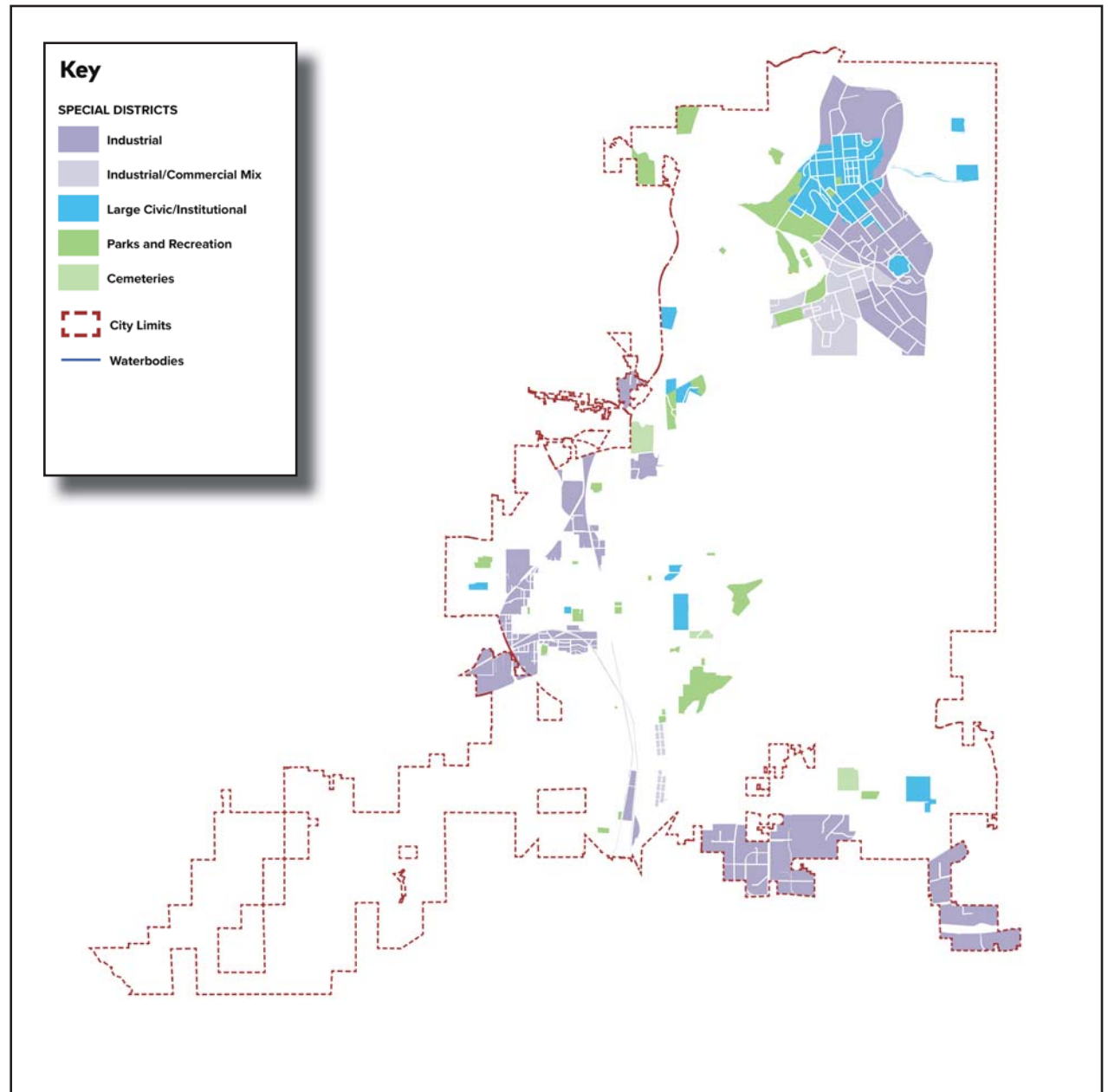
These Place Types are generally nodal and not linear.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Optimal land uses for the Industrial Place Type are industrial, while uses for the Industrial / Commercial Mix Place Type are both industrial and commercial. Commercial uses include ancillary office uses for the industrial uses.

#### Development Density

Because of the broad range of specific uses and development forms that might be part of this Place Type, no development densities are specified here.





# THE PLAN: PLACE TYPES



## SPECIAL AREAS (CONTINUED)

### Development Form

This Place Type's form can vary greatly, depending upon the specific uses. However, they are often in an insular campus-like setting that features extensive peripheral buffering to mitigate potential impacts to nearby areas.



Representative Aerial Photo

### CHARACTER IMAGERY: SPECIAL AREAS





## **SPECIAL AREAS** (CONTINUED)

### **LARGE CIVIC / INSTITUTIONAL**

#### Locations

This Place Type is scattered throughout Anniston, but the single largest such area is located in McClellan, and it features the adapted military installation.

#### Geographic Form

These Place Types are typically nodal and rectilinear in form, although the lands in McClellan include curvilinear boundaries that are bound by roads having that same form.

#### Optimal Land Uses

Optimal land uses for the Large Civic / Institutional Place Type include public safety facilities, including associated training and housing, as well as community centers, schools of all academic levels, meeting venues, and religious uses.

#### Development Density

Because of the broad range of specific uses and development forms that might be part of this Place Type, no development densities are specified here.

#### Development Form

This Place Type's form can also vary greatly, depending upon the specific uses. However, it is often in an insular campus-like setting that features peripheral buffering and is relatively self-contained, as might be found with a school's campus.

### **PARKS & RECREATION AND CEMETERIES**

#### Locations

As with most of the other Special Areas, these two specific Place Types are scattered throughout Anniston. However, the single largest such area is the Parks & Recreation Place Type located in McClellan.

#### Geographic Form

The Cemetery Place Types are nodal and rectilinear in form, while the Parks & Recreation Place Types are irregularly shaped.

#### Optimal Land Uses

As their Place Type names imply, the optimal use for the Cemetery Place Type is cemeteries and their ancillary uses, while the uses for Parks & Recreation Place Types include passive recreation parks for hiking, picnicking and similar low-impact uses, as well as active recreational facilities for organized sports.

#### Development Density

Because of the broad range of specific uses and development forms that might be part of this Place Type, no development densities are specified here.

#### Development Form

As with the other Special Area Place Type's, the form can vary greatly, depending upon the specific uses. Cemeteries have a very unique form characterized by extensive green space, burial headstones (sometimes installed to be flat with the land for easier maintenance), narrow driving lanes, and a peripheral wall or fence. The form of Parks & Recreation Place Types is driven by the particular use, but might include parking areas, public restrooms and concessions buildings, playing fields and courts, stands for spectators, and large buildings to house indoor recreational uses.



## Road & Street Type Principles

- Roads/streets will respect the natural and built contexts through which they pass, and their designs will respond accordingly.
- Roads/streets will support all modes of travel, where contextually appropriate, to foster the ability for people to choose how they move about Anniston.
- Roads/streets will strike a balance between appropriate vehicular operational efficiency and safety for all users, regardless of their choice of travel mode.
- Road/street design will support the types of development and redevelopment appropriate for the Place Type in which they occur.
- The City will work with ALDOT and the region's MPO on facilities under their jurisdictions to achieve roads/streets that are as complete as they can be within the state system.

## MOBILITY OVERVIEW

This plan section includes a list of planning principles (at left), an overview of the “complete streets” concept (below), a description and graphics for Anniston’s various Road/Street Types, proposed road/street improvements, and plans for non-motorized travel. For the purposes of this plan, the word “road” is applied for natural, rural and some suburban conditions, while “streets” applies to some suburban conditions and all urban conditions.

***“Planning of the automobile city focuses on saving time. Planning for the accessible city, on the other hand, focuses on time well spent.”***

Robert Cevero - Transportation Consultant and former faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley

## ROAD & STREET TYPES DESIGN

Road/Street Types might be viewed as the Mobility version of Place Types, which are addressed in the previous plan section. Prior to the consideration of Place Types becoming a common planning practice, the focus was on land uses, but that approach failed to consider the design and character of places. Similarly, many comprehensive plans of the past focused on the function of roads and streets by categorizing them as arterials, collectors, locals, and with various degrees in between. Road/Street Types, on the other hand, also consider the design and character of these mobility facilities and adjacent corridors. The following pages provide design parameters for the various Road/Street Types identified and proposed for Anniston. They are grouped into Rural, Suburban and Urban categories.

### COMPLETE STREETS

*“Complete Streets” is a term that has achieved widespread use in recent years to refer to streets that are designed to be used for more than only motorized vehicles. Many streets in Anniston and elsewhere feature only driving lanes for motorized vehicles. Complete streets, on the other hand, accommodate more than just motorized vehicles. They can include one or more of the following features:*

- Driving lanes for motorized vehicles
- Parking lanes for on-street parking
- Bicycle lanes for cyclists
- Sidewalks for pedestrians

*At right is an example of one of Anniston’s few existing complete streets. It is the southern leg of Noble Street just south of Downtown. While this is not a perfect example of a complete street since the sidewalk is missing for this one segment on the east side of the street and there are no street trees, it still serves as a model to build upon for the balance of town.*





## ROAD & STREET TYPES SUMMARY & LOCATIONS

As with the primary Place Types, Anniston’s Road and Street Types are categorized into Rural, Suburban and Urban Types (Natural and Special Road/Street Types are not applicable). They are listed under these three categories below and illustrated on the map at right. It is important to keep in mind that Road/Street Types are context-sensitive. Consequently, *a single road/street might feature distinct Rural, Suburb and Urban segments* based upon the specific areas through which they are traversing. Not all Road/Street Types are present in the City of Anniston at the current time because of the limited number of Complete Streets in Anniston. Additional roadway types are provided in order to direct future improvement projects to upgrade existing roadways with more Complete Streets features and construct new roadways as Complete Streets.

### Rural Road Types

- Rural Roads
- Rural Parkways

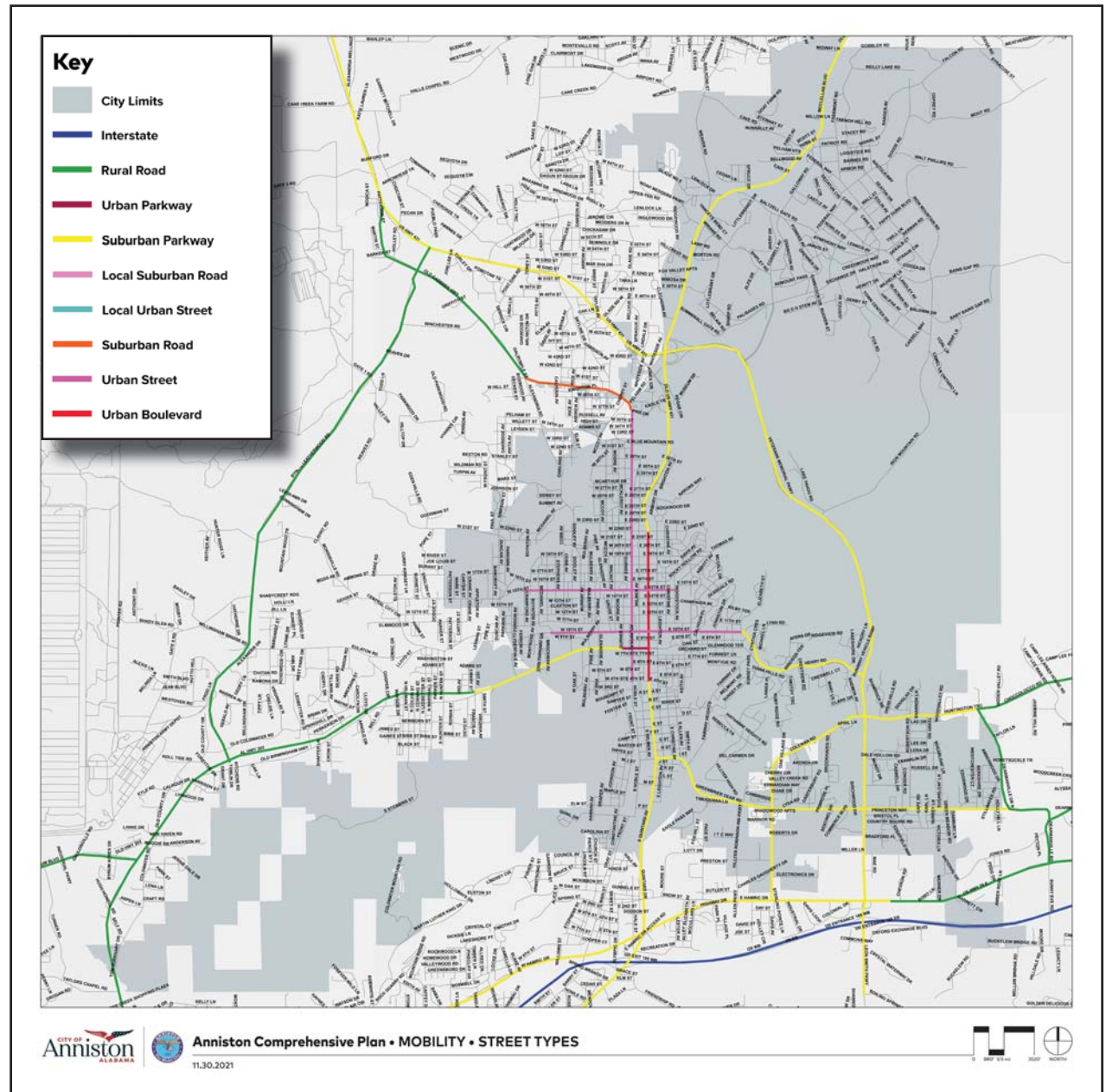
### Suburban Road/Street Types

- Suburban Roads
- Suburban Streets
- Local Suburban Streets
- Suburban Parkways

### Urban Street Types

- Urban Streets
- Local Urban Streets
- Urban Avenues
- Urban Boulevards

The abbreviation “AADT” is used on the following pages. That stands for Average Annual Daily Traffic.





## RURAL ROAD TYPES: RURAL ROADS

**Driving Lanes:** Two (2) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

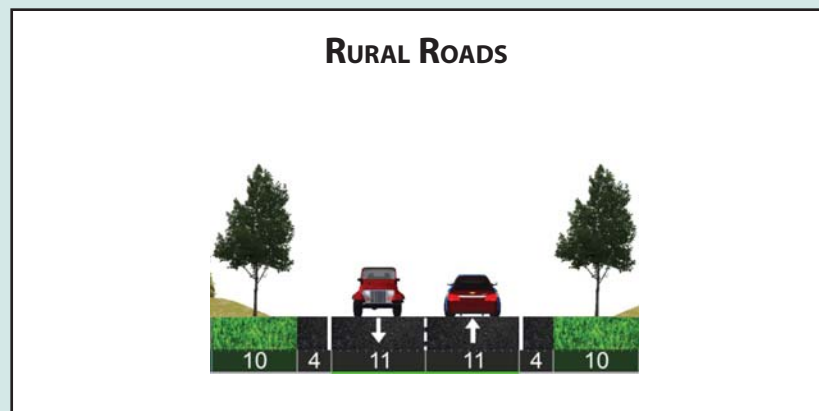
**Parking Lanes:** None

**Shoulder:** 4 ft. wide paved shoulder

**Pedestrian Accommodations:** No sidewalks

**Bicycle Accommodations:** No bike lanes

**Edge Treatment:** No curb



## RURAL ROAD TYPES: RURAL PARKWAYS

**Driving Lanes:** Four (2) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

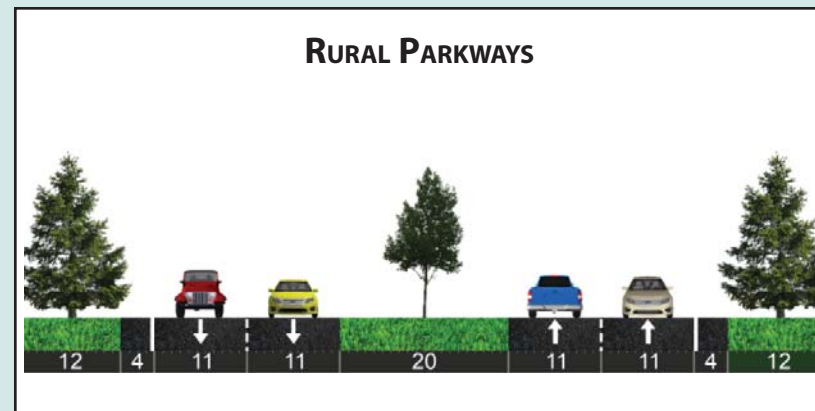
**Parking Lanes:** None

**Shoulder:** 4 ft. wide paved shoulder

**Pedestrian Accommodations:** No sidewalks

**Bicycle Accommodations:** No bike lanes

**Edge Treatment:** No curb





## SUBURBAN ROAD/STREET TYPES: SUBURBAN ROADS

**Driving Lanes:** Two (2) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

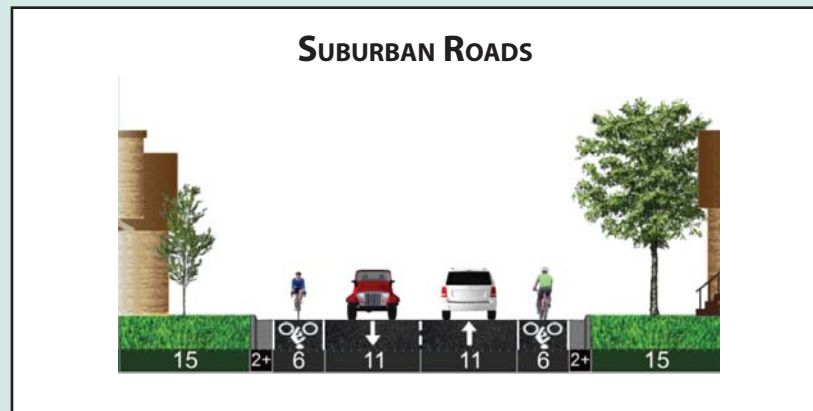
**Parking Lanes:** None

**Pedestrian Accommodations:** No sidewalks

**Bicycle Accommodations:** 6 ft. wide bike lanes

**Edge Treatment:** Curbs

**Median:** None



## SUBURBAN ROAD/STREET TYPES: SUBURBAN STREETS

**Driving Lanes:** Two (2) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

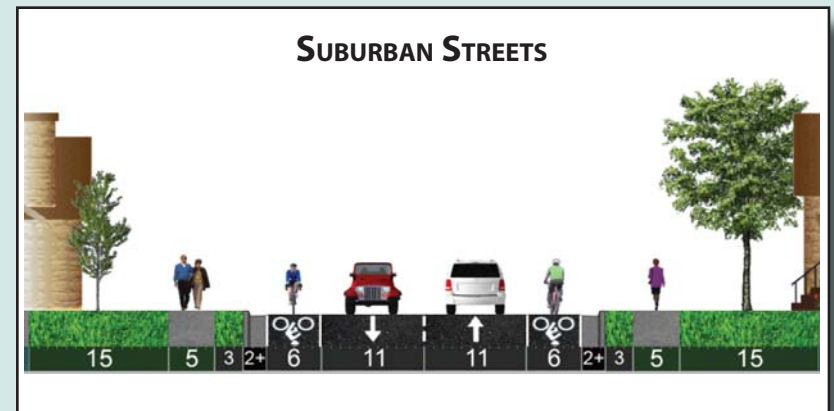
**Parking Lanes:** None

**Pedestrian Accommodations:** 5 ft. wide sidewalks with 3 ft. wide buffers

**Bicycle Accommodations:** 6 ft. wide bike lanes

**Edge Treatment:** Curbs

**Median:** None





## SUBURBAN ROAD/STREET TYPES: LOCAL SUBURBAN STREETS

### Driving Lanes: Two (2) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

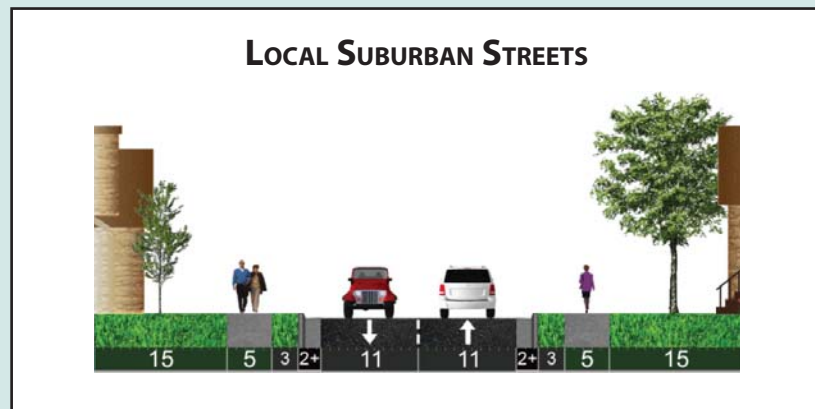
### Parking Lanes: None

### Pedestrian Accommodations: 5 ft. wide sidewalks with 3 ft. wide buffers

### Bicycle Accommodations: None

### Edge Treatment: Curbs

### Median: None



## SUBURBAN ROAD/STREET TYPES: SUBURBAN PARKWAYS

### Driving Lanes: Four (4) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

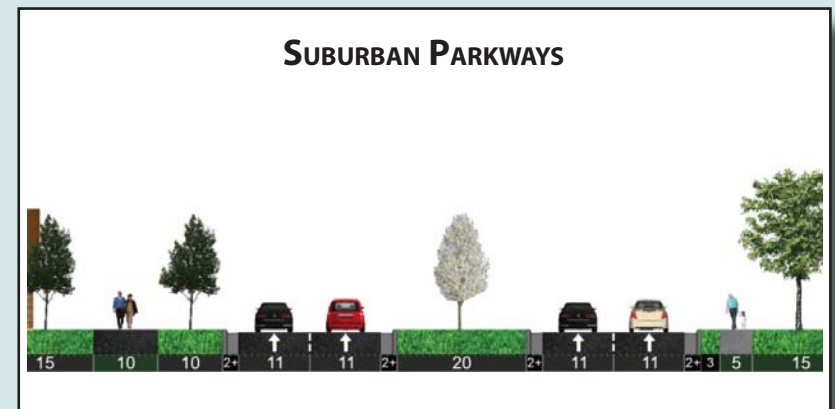
### Parking Lanes: None

### Pedestrian Accommodations: 5 ft. wide sidewalk with 3 ft. wide buffer on one side of roadway

### Bicycle Accommodations: 10 ft. wide multi-purpose path with 10 ft. wide buffer on one side of roadway

### Edge Treatment: Curbs

### Median: Landscaped median, minimum 20 ft. wide





## URBAN STREET TYPES: URBAN STREETS

### Driving Lanes: Two (2) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

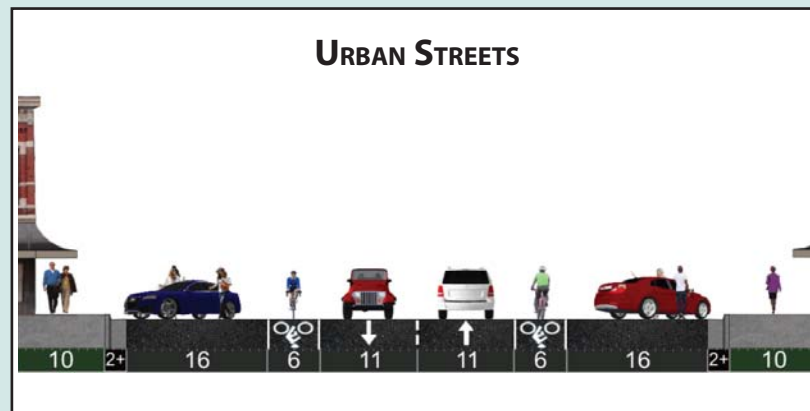
### Parking Lanes: Two parking lanes

- Angle parking up to 2000 AADT
- Parallel parking up to 8000 AADT
- No parking over 8000 AADT

### Pedestrian Accommodations: 10 ft. wide sidewalks

### Bicycle Accommodations: 6 ft. wide bike lanes

### Edge Treatment: Curbs



## URBAN STREET TYPES: LOCAL URBAN STREETS

### Driving Lanes: Two (2) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

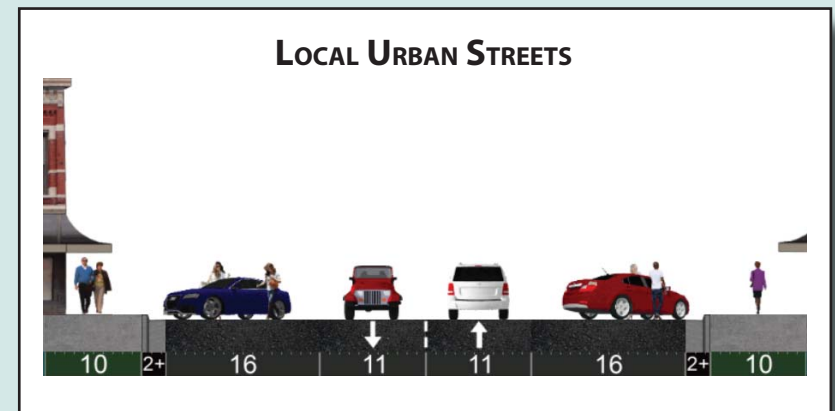
### Parking Lanes: Two parking lanes

- Angle parking up to 2000 AADT
- Parallel parking up to 8000 AADT
- No parking over 8000 AADT

### Pedestrian Accommodations: 10 ft. wide sidewalks

### Bicycle Accommodations: None

### Edge Treatment: Curbs







## URBAN STREET TYPES: URBAN AVENUES

### Driving Lanes: Four (4) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

### Parking Lanes: Two parking lanes

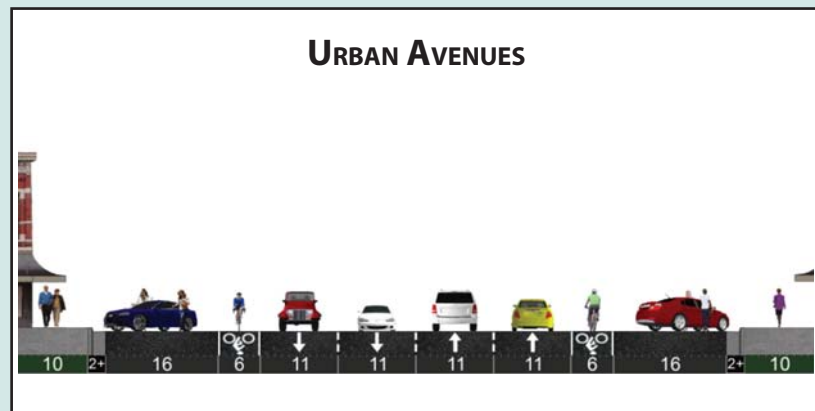
- Angle parking up to 2000 AADT
- Parallel parking up to 8000 AADT
- No parking over 8000 AADT

### Pedestrian Accommodations: 10 ft. wide sidewalks

### Bicycle Accommodations: 6 ft. wide bike lanes

### Edge Treatment: Curbs

### Median: None



## URBAN STREET TYPES: URBAN BOULEVARDS

### Driving Lanes: Four (4) 10-12 ft. wide vehicles lanes

- 11 ft. lanes are typical except as indicated below
- 10 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds under 40 and AADT under 400 vehicles per day
- 12 ft. lanes are appropriate for speeds over 50 and AADT over 2000 vehicles per day

### Parking Lanes: Two parking lanes

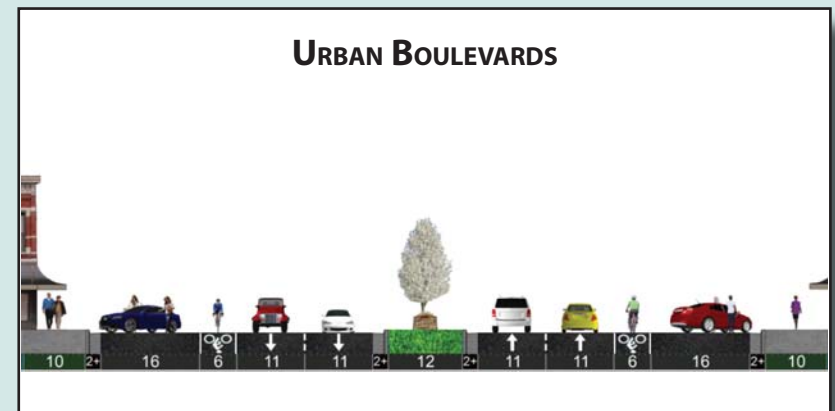
- Angle parking up to 2000 AADT
- Parallel parking up to 8000 AADT
- No parking over 8000 AADT

### Pedestrian Accommodations: 10 ft. wide sidewalks

### Bicycle Accommodations: 6 ft. wide bike lanes

### Edge Treatment: Curbs

### Median: Landscaped median, minimum 12 ft. wide





## PROPOSED ROAD & STREET IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Anniston participates in the transportation planning process of the Calhoun Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Major road and street improvements are typically coordinated through either the short term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or the long term Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP includes both fiscally-constrained and “visionary” (i.e., not constrained) elements. The current proposed improvements are listed below and keyed to the map.

### TIP Projects

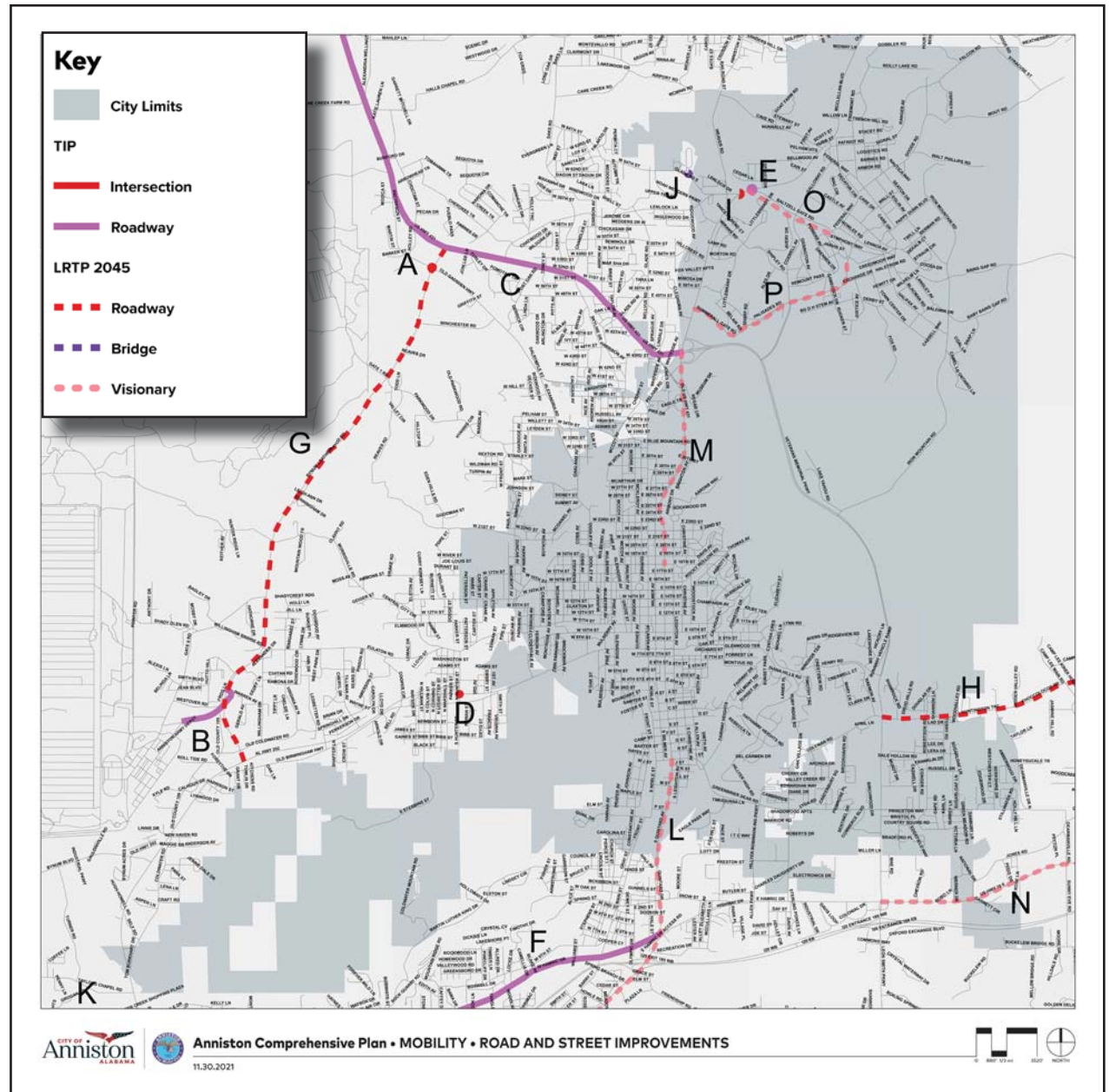
- A. Roundabout Installation - Bynum-Leatherwood Road at Old Gadsden Highway
- B. Resurfacing Eulaton Gate Road
- C. Access Management on US-431
- D. Traffic Signal Upgrade – SR-202 at N. Hunter St.
- E. Traffic Signal Upgrade – SR-21 at Baltzell Gate Rd.
- F. Resurfacing US-78

### LRTP Fiscally-Constrained Projects

- G. Four Lane Bynum-Leatherwood Road
- H. Four Lane Choccolocco Road
- I. Upgrade Traffic Signal – SR-21 at Lenlock Lane
- J. Bridge Replacement – 64th Street

### LRTP Visionary Projects

- K. Four Lane US-78
- L. Six Lane Quintard Avenue (south segment)
- M. Six Lane Quintard Avenue (north segment)
- N. Four Lane US-78
- O. Widen Baltzell Gate Road
- P. Widen Summerall Gate Road





## PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS FOR NON-MOTORIZED TRAVEL

Bicycle and pedestrian improvements for the City of Anniston are documented in the Calhoun Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (latest update June 2019). This plan should be consulted for details of all bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Certain projects have already advanced from the planning stage to the implementation stage with funding through the Calhoun Area MPO TIP. Other bicycle and pedestrian projects are included in the LRTP. The current projects are listed below and keyed to the map at the right.

### TIP Projects

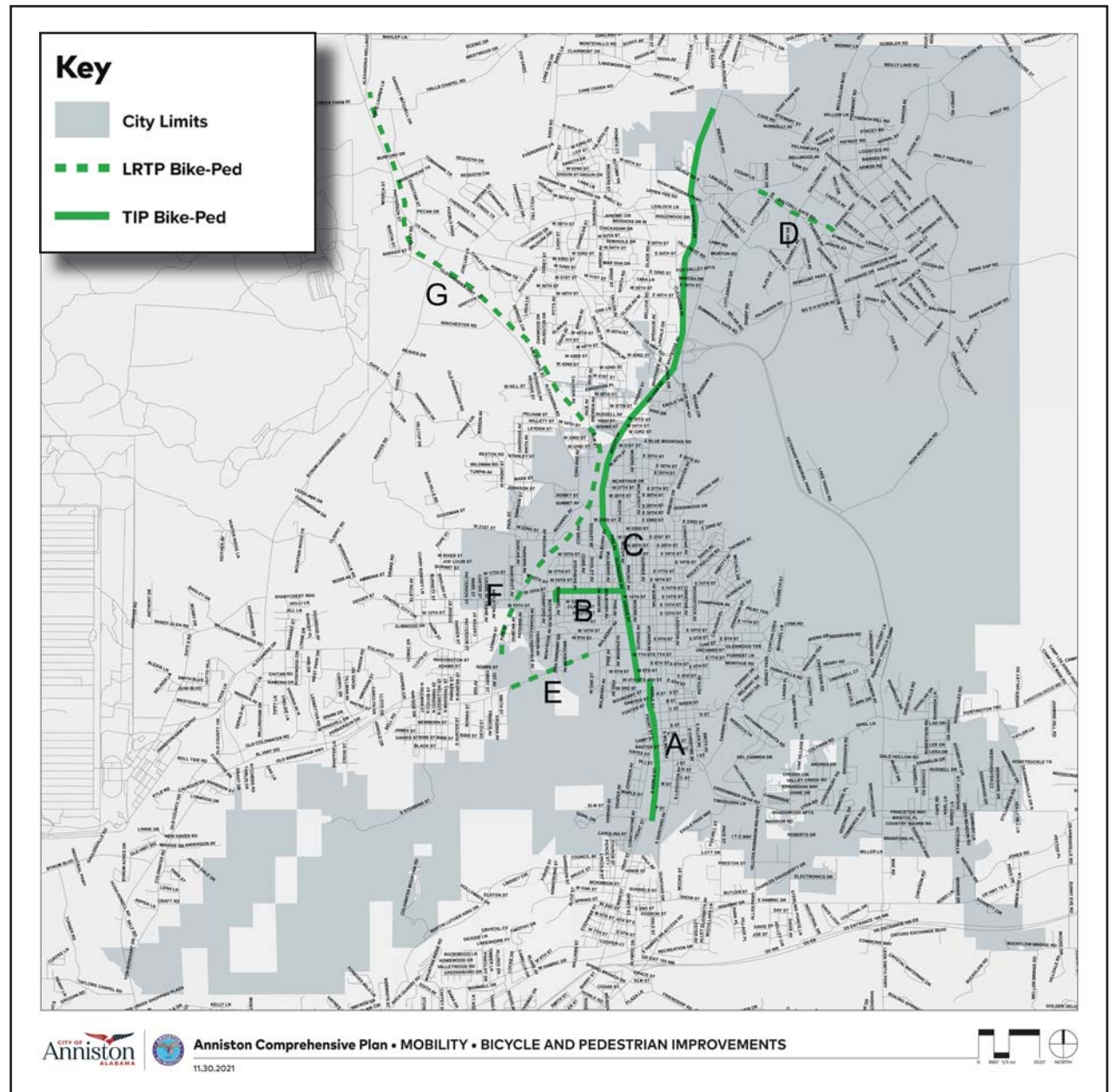
- A. Noble Street Bicycle Lane
- B. West 15th Street Sidewalk and Streetscape
- C. Chief Ladiga Trail Extension

### LRTP Projects

- D. Baltzell Gate Road Multi-Use Path
- E. SR-202 Coldwater Mountain Connector
- F. Pipeline Rail-Trail
- G. Blue Mountain Rail-Trail

Other concepts that were identified during the planning charrette which should be pursued include:

- Adding sidewalks to existing roadways in newer neighborhoods
- Improved roadway lighting
- Adding bike lanes and “sharrows” to existing roadways with “Share The Road” signs
- Extending Chief Ladiga Trail to Oxford
- Connecting Coldwater Mountain trails to McClellan trails





## PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS FOR NON-MOTORIZED TRAVEL (CONTINUED)

### Bicycle Facility Selection Guide

While there are many options and configurations for bicycle lanes, the most common treatments which are applicable to the City of Anniston are listed below, along with basic design criteria for each facility type. Illustrations for the facility types are shown to the right.

#### Shared Roadway

- Maximum Traffic Volume: 2000 AADT
- Maximum Speed: 25 MPH

#### Paved Shoulder (rural roadways only)

- Maximum Traffic Volume: 20000 AADT
- Maximum Speed: 60 MPH

#### Bike Lanes

- Maximum Traffic Volume: 4000 AADT
- Maximum Speed: 30 MPH
- Minimum Width: 5 ft.

#### Buffered Bike Lanes

- Maximum Traffic Volume: 6000 AADT
- Maximum Speed: 35 MPH
- Minimum Bike Lane Width: 5 ft.
- Minimum Buffer Width: 3 ft.

#### Separated Bike Lanes

- Maximum Traffic Volume: 10000 AADT
- Maximum Speed: 55 MPH
- Minimum Bike Lane Width: 5 ft.
- Minimum Buffer Width: 6 ft.

#### Multi-Use Path

- Maximum Traffic Volume: >10000 AADT
- Maximum Speed: 65 MPH
- Minimum MUP Width: 10 ft.
- Minimum Buffer Width: 10 ft.

### Examples of Non-Motorized Mobility Facilities

Source: USDOT / Federal Highway Administration - "Bikeway Selection Guide" (2019)



Shared Roadway



Paved Shoulder



Bike Lanes



Buffered Bike Lanes



Separated Bike Lanes



Multi-Use Path

# THE PLAN: INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES



## EMERGENCY SERVICES

### Fire Protection

Anniston already benefits from an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 2, which is extremely good and provides insurance benefits. The Fire Chief has indicated that Station #5 should be relocated roughly one mile to the southeast near the eastern bypass and Coleman Road intersection.

## SEWER & WATER

Page 16 features a map showing the current service areas for sewer and water in Anniston. Below are recommendations for both of these utility types.

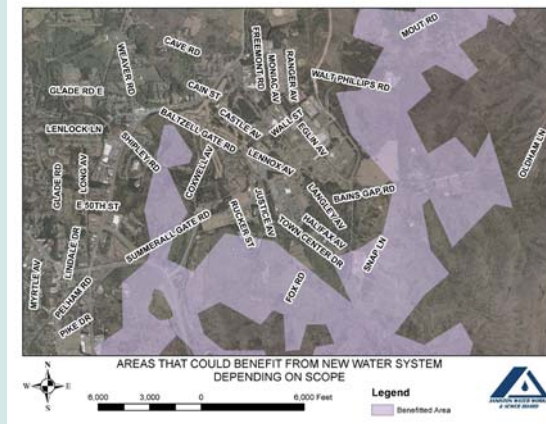
### Sanitary Sewer

No significant new infrastructure or upgrade projects for the Sanitary Sewer system are proposed by the Anniston Water Works and Sewer Board (AWWSB) at this time.

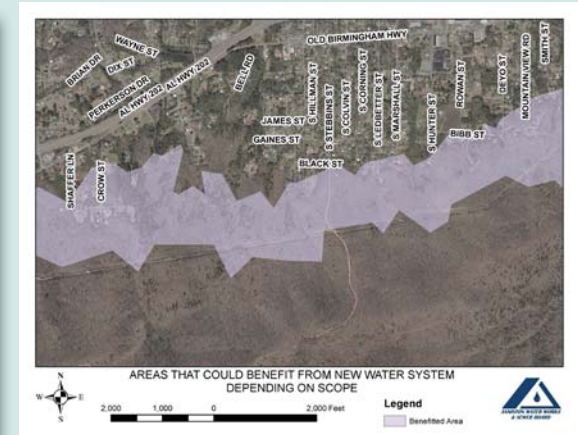
Ongoing maintenance and repairs to limit storm water infiltration into the sanitary sewer system to decrease demand on existing wastewater treatment facilities should be continued. Many municipalities are undertaking a methodical program of pipe-bursting and pipe-lining to repair aging sanitary sewer infrastructure.

### Water

In addition to routine ongoing maintenance and repairs of the existing water system and treatment infrastructure, the AWWSB has proposed two new storage tank projects. The two maps at right define areas that could benefit from new water towers, as well as a third map showing the location of these new towers within a broader geographic context.

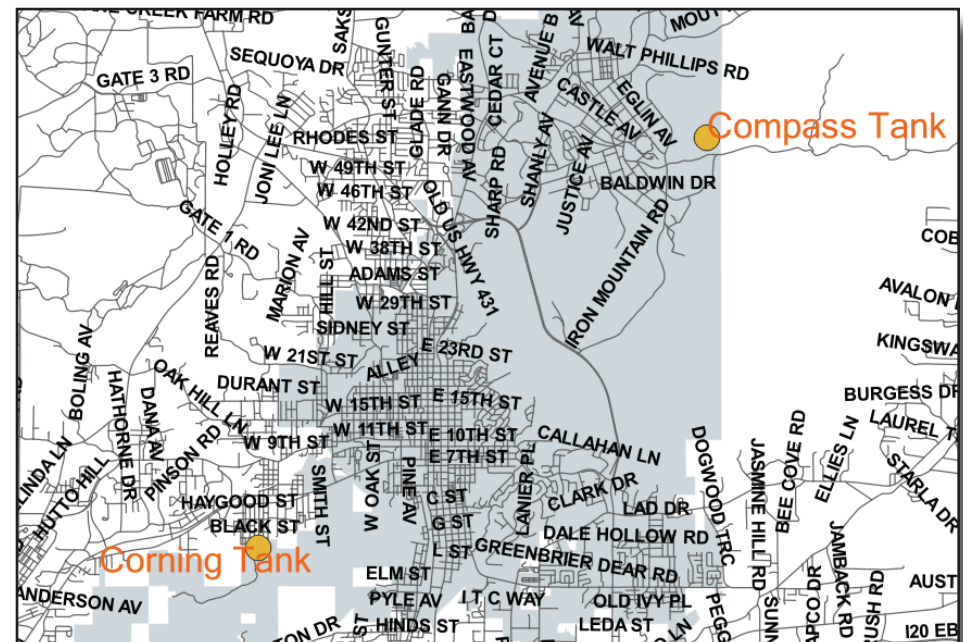


Proposed Compass Water Tower - McClellan Area



Proposed Corning Water Tower - West Anniston Area

*As the map at right illustrates, the two proposed new water tanks are located in the northeast and southwest corners of the city.*





# THE PLAN: INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

### Background

According to NASA Earth Exchange, the portion of Alabama which includes the City of Anniston is from 5% to 10% more likely to experience a 100-year flood event after the year 2010 as compared to the time period between 1980 and 2020, as illustrated on the map to the right. Significant flooding events were recorded in the City of Anniston in 2013, 2019, and May, 2021.

There are approximately 2,685 properties within the City of Anniston which have a 26% or greater probability of flooding within the next 30 years. This represents approximately 17% of all properties in the City (source: floodfactor.com). The City is considered to be in the "Major" risk level of citywide destructive flooding within the next 30 years. The areas of the City which are in "Major" to "Extreme" risk of flooding over the next 30 years are shown in the map at right below.

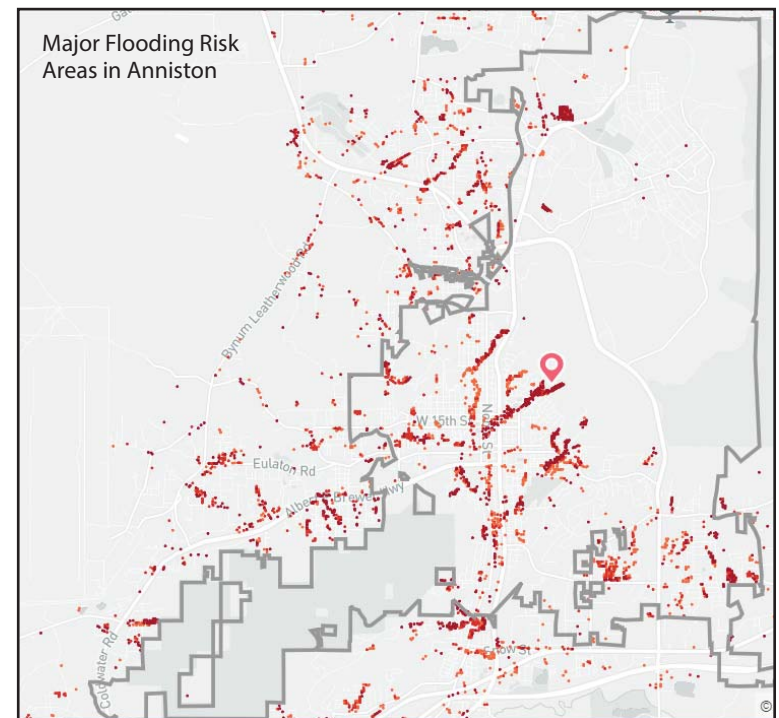
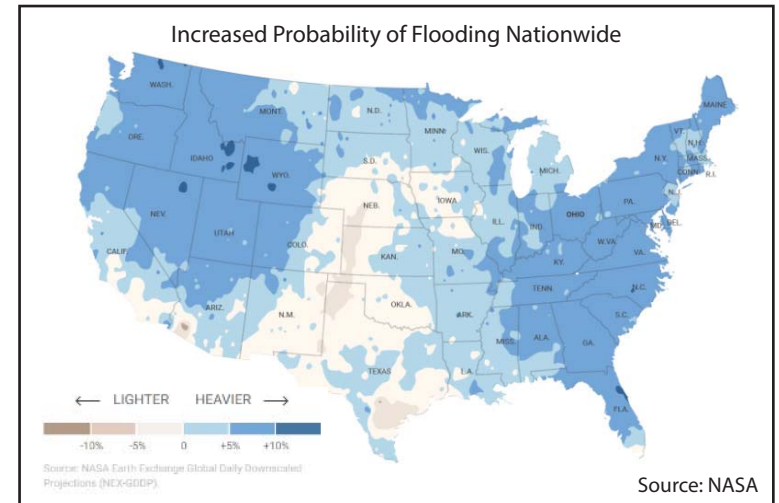
### Recommendations

The problem of localized flooding will increase as environmental changes continue to produce more flood events. It is therefore important that the City plan for the following:

- A continuing program of drainage maintenance, to include pipe cleaning, debris removal, and inlet cleaning.
- A program to increase stormwater detention.
- Review of drainage and detention design standards.
- Review stormwater ordinances for development to better address impacts.



Recent Flooding in Anniston





## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

### Green Infrastructure

Typical stormwater management in the City of Anniston has consisted of open concrete-lined ditches, closed piping system, and detention ponds. An example is shown to the right. While this treatment may have met the immediate need for stormwater management at the time it was designed and constructed, it no longer functions in a holistic manner in which modern stormwater management is expected to perform. Stormwater systems can no longer be expected to only carry water, but they must also fulfill other community objectives, such as:

- Sustaining and improving water quality through natural filtering
- Providing open space for public enjoyment
- Providing linear facilities for public recreation
- Providing environment for wildlife habits

Green infrastructure should be considered as an alternative to concrete ditches and closed piping systems. Such examples of green infrastructure include:

- Bioswales
- Rain gardens
- Wetlands restoration
- Innovation Impervious surfaces

An initial effort (a “pilot project”) to reclaim an open concrete-lined channel is recommended. This project would reclaim a natural stream bed back from the concrete lined channel and allow for an accompanying greenway. An example finished product is shown at right.

*This channelized stream segment is located at Moore Avenue and 12th Street. The view is looking west toward the proposed Chief Ladiga Trail.*



*This once channelized stream located in another community has undergone a restoration project to take it back to a more natural condition.*





## NATURAL RESOURCES

This plan section on natural resources addresses floodplains and wetlands, trees, steep slopes, contaminated sites and recycling. The map at right illustrates the combined features of water bodies, floodways, floodplains, and wetlands.

### Floodplains & Wetlands

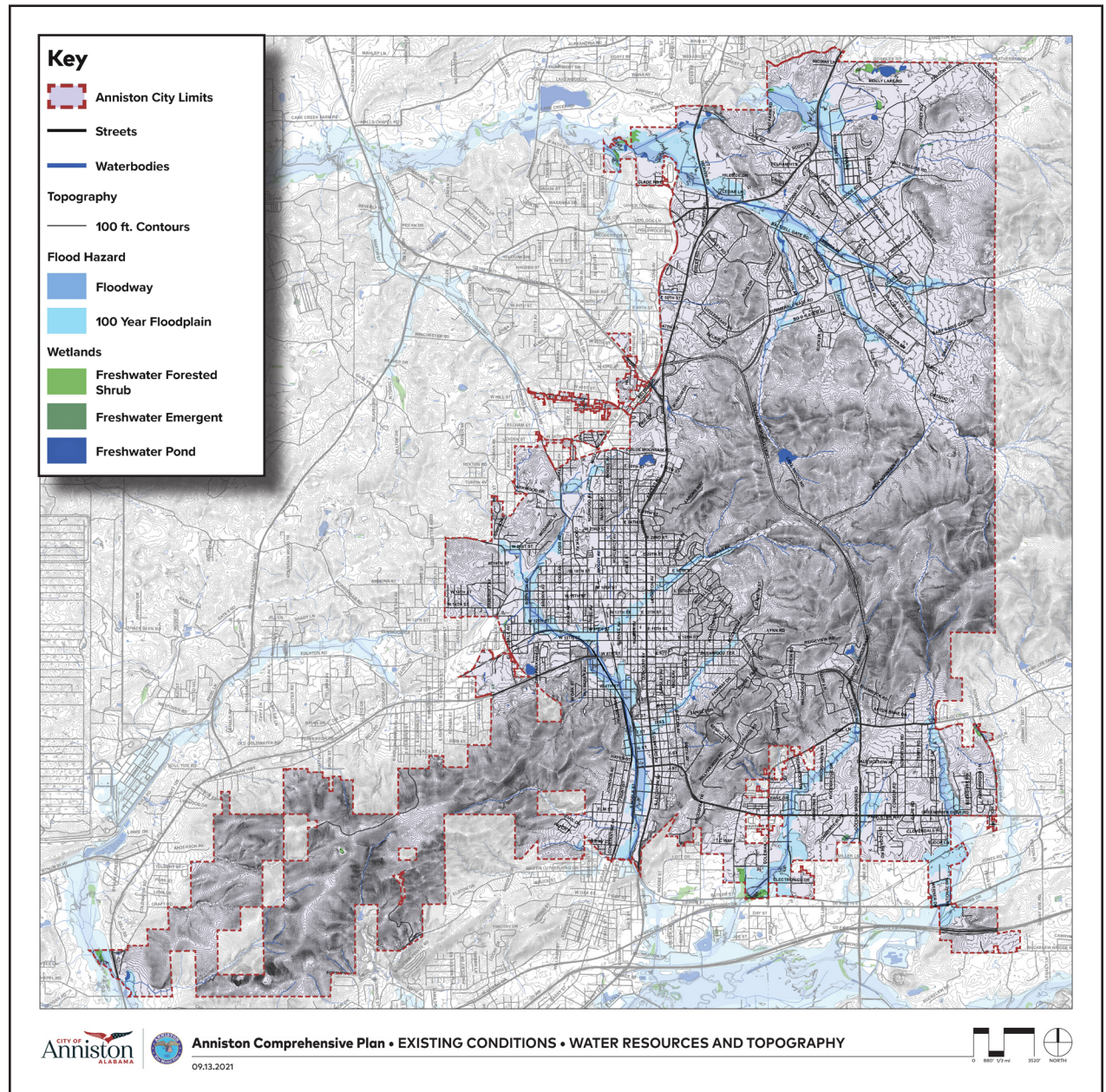
As described on page 8 of this plan, floodplains and wetlands are an important habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species that are important to a healthy natural environment, including many endangered species. Such areas can also be hazardous to development and human habitation. Because existing federal and state regulations must already be followed for any disturbance of Anniston’s floodplains and wetlands, and because Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps and regulations were updated in 2015, no regulatory recommendations are offered for this important topic. However, because “cut and fill” grading can still be conducted within floodplains with the required permitting, *it is recommended that the City strongly discourage such disturbance within floodplains.*

### Trees

Trees provide many environmental benefits, including:

- Filtering air pollution
- Mitigating “heat island” effects
- Absorbing stormwater runoff
- Providing habitat for animals

While the City presently requires street trees for subdi-







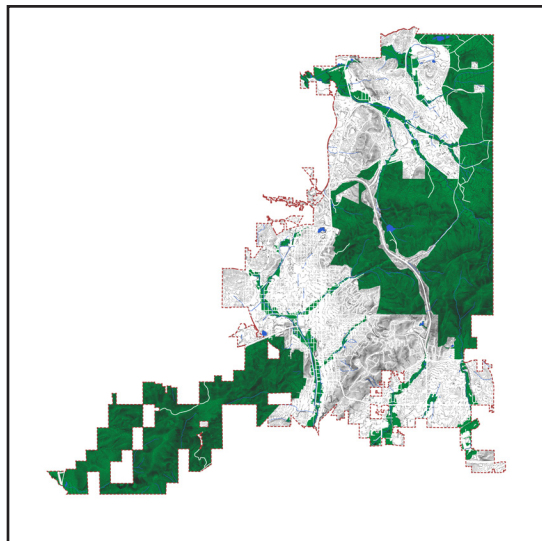
## NATURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

visions, new development typically results in a net loss of trees. Consequently, *it is recommended that the City consider adopting a tree preservation ordinance* like those adopted by many other communities and featuring the following types of features:

- Require a tree inventory for sites prior to land disturbance.
- Focus the inventory and protections on tree species considered to have environmental value and exceeding a minimum caliper (6± inches).
- Require that there is no net loss of environmentally valuable trees after development and, as with some such ordinances, perhaps even exceeding the original number.

### Steep Slopes

As explained on page 7 of this plan, some of the most environmentally sensitive lands are found at either end of the topography spectrum. Steep slopes are often forested and serve as important plant and animal habitat, in addition to the air filtration and cooling benefits of trees. The development of steep slopes can also require expensive engineering solutions and leads to soil erosion and the resulting sedimentation in streams. Some communities have strict regulations to avoid the development of steep slopes. The City



*The map at left highlights the parts of Anniston that are proposed for the Natural Area Place Type. Such areas are either environmentally constrained or have already been set aside for land conservation purposes. Because Place Types will serve as the basis for future zoning revisions, this designation will help to minimize development and protect such important areas.*

already requires a Land Disturbance Permit for land owners and developers who propose to substantially disturb their land. *It is recommended that the City add criteria to discourage the development of steep slopes as part of its Land Disturbance Permitting process.* A reasonable threshold would be slopes exceeding 20% or 25%.

### Recycling

Although the City maintains recycling bins by the Police Department Downtown, there is currently no home pick-up service for recycling. Furthermore, glass is not accepted in the bins because of the high costs of sorting glass from other materials. Consequently, very little recycling of materials occurs in Anniston, despite many citizens expressing a desire for home pick-up service. While past efforts to establish a more robust recycling program have failed in the past because people do not want to incur additional City taxes/fees, *it is recommended that recycling continue to be pursued as an objective for the City.* Future efforts might be initiated with an educational campaign on the benefits of recycling.

### Contaminated Sites

Anniston has a well-documented history of land contamination caused by polluting industries and resulting in large financial settlements and court-ordered clean-up efforts. *The City should continue to work with the relevant state and federal entities on environmental remediation efforts, including leveraging available brownfield funding.* An excellent local model for brownfield remediation projects is the Alabama Department of Human Resources property located on the west side of Downtown.



*The Calhoun County Department of Human Services, located at 415 West 11th Street, sits on what was once a contaminated industrial site.*

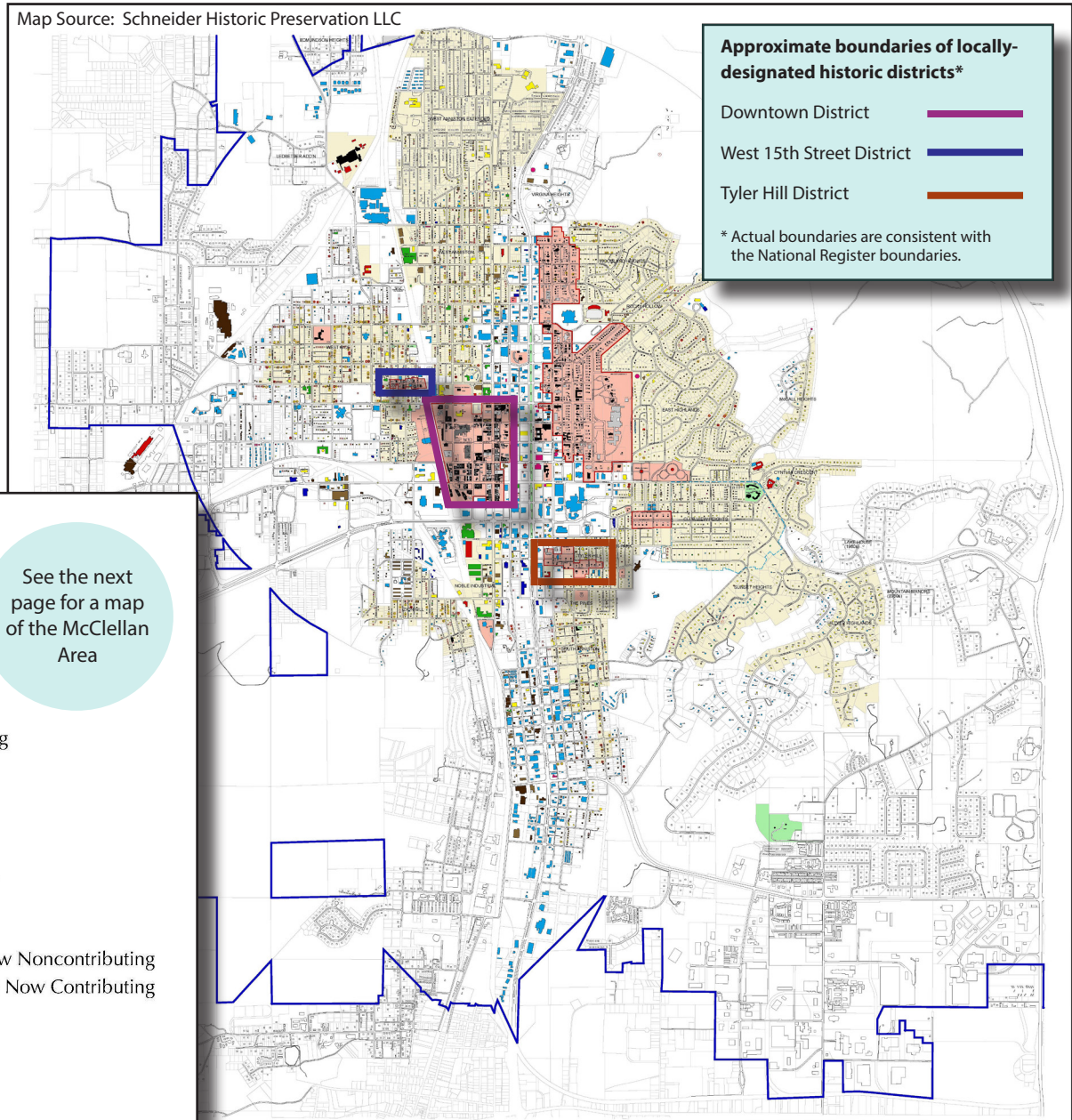


# THE PLAN: NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Pages 31-32 provide background information on Anniston's historic resources and districts. The City recently completed a historic sites inventory, and the results are conveyed by the map at right. As reflected by the legend below, it shows the status of a variety of historic resource categories regarding their significance and designation. For the purposes of this plan, two resource categories warrant particular attention:

- *Locally designated historic districts:* See the color-coded legend in the upper right corner of the map at right.
- *Eligible for listing in the National Register:* The beige color that occupies much of the north and east parts of town.



**KEY:**

- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
- Listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage
- Eligible for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places
- National Register of Historic Places to be Determined
- Existing National Register District Boundary
- Potential National Register District Boundary
- Listed/Potential National Register Historic District, Contributing
- Listed/Potential National Register Historic District, Noncontributing
- Individually NR Eligible
- Would Contribute to a Historic District, Notable
- Would Contribute to a Historic District
- Would Contribute to a Historic District, Altered
- Might Contribute to a Historic District, Research Required to Date
- Would Not Contribute to a Historic District, Altered
- Would Not Contribute to a Historic District, Age or Character
- Existing National Register Resource, Listed as Contributing but Now Noncontributing
- Existing National Register Resource, Listed as Noncontributing but Now Contributing
- Resource Evaluated in 2007 now Gone
- Resource Evaluated in 1981 now Gone
- Resource Appears to be Abandoned/Neglected
- Resource in Ruinous Condition



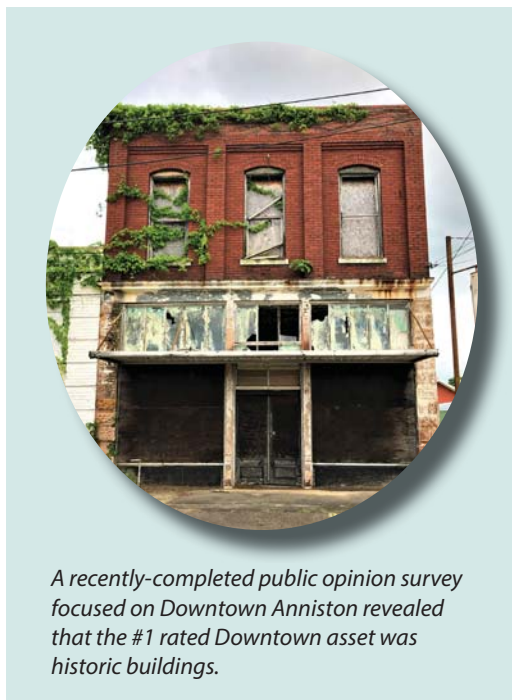
## CULTURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

Because the scale of the map on the previous page could not show the entire city in a discernible way, the area around McClellan is shown at right.

### Historic Building Recommendations

#### Certified Local Government (CLG)

CLG status is bestowed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) upon local governments that have a comprehensive historic preservation program. Such features of CLG programs include a historic preservation ordinance, locally-designated historic districts, a preservation commission, and design guidelines to apply to properties within the local districts. Anniston has achieved CLG status, making the City qualified for a special funding source that is allocated annually by the SHPO for various preservation projects. *It is important that Anniston continue its preservation program to retain its CLG status into the future.*



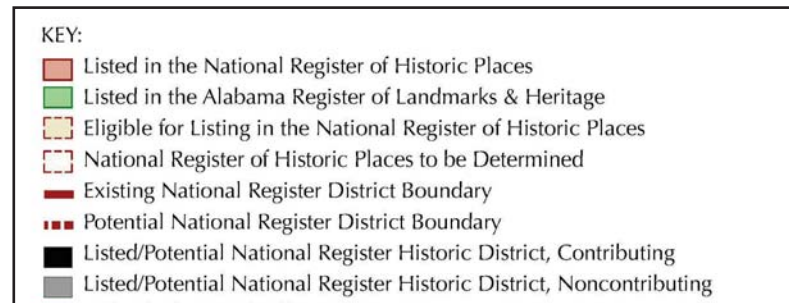
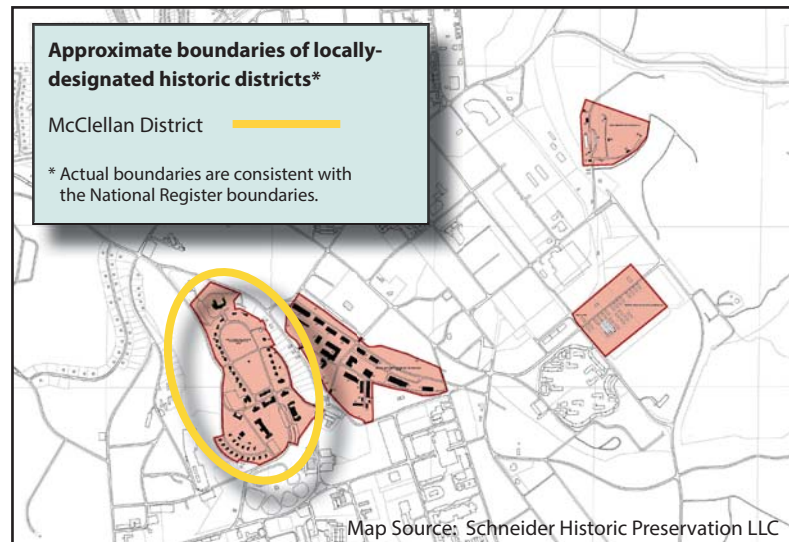
*A recently-completed public opinion survey focused on Downtown Anniston revealed that the #1 rated Downtown asset was historic buildings.*

#### Incentives for Building Rehabilitation

Owners of National Register (NR) properties (and eligible properties) in Alabama who pursue qualified building rehabilitation projects following federal preservation standards are eligible for both federal and state investment tax credits. There are also available state property tax assessment benefits for income-producing NR properties. Since many people are unaware of these types of financial incentives for historic preservation, *it is important that the City continue to vigorously promote financial incentive programs.*

#### Locally-Designated Historic Districts

Although NR designation brings awareness and helps with financial incentives, it offers no protections for historic resources, with the exception of limited protections



from federally-funded and licensed projects negatively impacting resources (road widenings, etc.). While Anniston has nine existing NR districts, it has only four local districts, the only kind of districts that provide protections from demolition, inappropriate building alterations and incompatible infill development. Based upon the recent historic resources inventory, there are expansive areas of town that are NR-eligible, but not yet designated either federally or locally (see map on the previous page). Consequently, *it is recommended that opportunities to expand the NR and local historic districts be explored by carefully following a strategic set of steps, as summarized on the following page.*



# THE PLAN: NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

## CULTURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

1. *Prepare public information districts designation:* The differences between the process and benefits of NR designation and local designation are considerable, but both should be addressed. The pros and cons of districts should be covered in an objective, clear and balanced manner.
2. *Disseminate the public information:* Once prepared, the information should be provided to the public on the City's website and in the form of hard copy brochures for people who do not utilize the internet.
3. *Hold a series of area-specific meetings:* Multiple public meeting should be held in the areas where districts are being considered. The City should solicit the attendance of SHPO staff (CLG Coordinator) to help explain NR and local district designation.
4. *Pursue NR and local designations where support exists:* District designations work best when a substantial majority of affected property owners support designation. Designation for a particular area might include only NR designation, only local designation, or both.
5. *Revisit existing design guidelines:* To the extent that new or expanded local districts occur, design guidelines will be needed for such areas. The City's two existing sets of guidelines should be reviewed to see if they can be adapted to work for the new and/or expanded districts or whether new guidelines will be necessary.

***"The greenest building is the one that already exists."***

– Carl Elefante, FAIA

### Museums

The City-operated Anniston Museums and Gardens consists of the Anniston Museum of Natural History, the Berman Museum and the Longleaf Botanical Gardens. All located together on an expansive wooded property near the current City Hall and Jaycee Park in the northeast part of town just south of McClellan, the museums have an extremely high level of quality with respect to their collections, facilities and interpretation. For a community of

its size, these are collectively tremendous resources that any community would envy. The recommendations offered for these cultural resources are limited to the following few:

- *Continue and build upon the current operations:* The current operations are clearly at a high level and only need to be continued and built upon where possible, including with fund raising, changing exhibits and promotion.
- *Maximize the leveraging of these resources for economic development purposes:* The museums and gardens are among the sort of quality-of-life benchmarks that business executives look for when considering establishing a business in a community. Thus, they should be promoted as part of the City's economic development efforts. Similarly, they can leverage tourism that brings outside dollars into the community.
- *Explore opportunities to extend Anniston's greenway system to this property:* See pages 70-71 for specific recommendations to expand the area's existing greenway network.



*This aerial photograph illustrates the potential to extend the City's existing and future greenway system to the museums and botanical garden in light of the substantial undeveloped land surrounding them, particularly to the east.*



## EVALUATION OF CURRENT FACILITIES

Pages 18-20 of this plan list and map out all 24 of Anniston's existing parks and community centers. This information also features a map showing the service area for active recreational parks in 1/4 mile, 1/2 mile and 1 mile radii relative to surrounding populations.

### NRPA Park Metrics

Until recent years, the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) maintained a set of "standards" for communities to provide parks and recreational facilities based upon their community's population. However, the NRPA recently abandoned such standards, as explained below in a 2019 article posted on their website:

*"There is not a single set of standards for parks and recreation that could possibly encompass the uniqueness found in every community across the country. Communities vary greatly by size, needs and desires; so too should their park and recreation agencies' offerings."*

Consequently, the NRPA has since steered away from standards and now speaks in terms of "metrics." The table at right details how Anniston's existing park and recreation facilities measure up against the NRPA metrics. To echo what NRPA now stresses, every community is very different and no one size fits all. Regardless, below is a summary of the key findings from the table at right.

#### Substantially Exceed

Relative to the NRPA metrics, Anniston substantially exceeds them for the following facilities:

- Park lands\*
- Playgrounds
- Basketball courts
- Baseball fields
- Softball fields

#### Substantially Short

Relative to the NRPA metrics, Anniston falls substantially short for the following facilities:

- Multiuse courts\*\*
- Multipurpose fields\*\*
- Skate parks (none)
- Ice rinks
- Dog parks (none)

\* Not including Coldwater Mountain

\*\* May be a non-issue since single-use fields and courts are sufficient

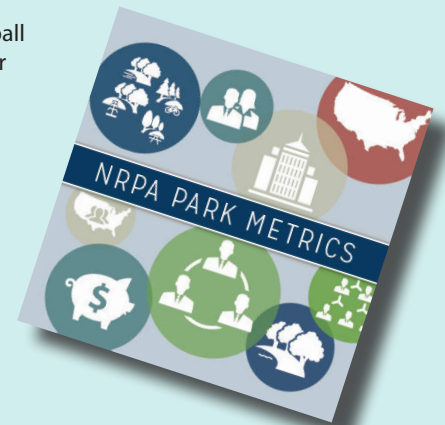
### Comparison of National Metrics vs Anniston

Below is a comparison of Anniston with the national median number for communities of 20,000 people and less. The number of park acres and facilities for an average community of 20,000 people are compared with Anniston. The actual number of acres/facilities are indicated in parenthesis ( ), while the numbers not in parenthesis represent the park acres per 1,000 people or the number of people per facility.

Resource Type	National Median #s		Anniston #s	
	Acres Per 1,000 Pop.	Total Acres	Acres Per 1,000 Pop.	Total Acres
Parks	12	(240)	22	(440)
Facilities	People Per Facility	Total Facilities	People Per Facility	Total Facilities
Playgrounds	2,523	(7.9)	1,000	(20)
Basketball courts	4,090	(4.9)	1,429	(14)
Tennis courts	2,922	(6.8)	3,333	(6)
Multiuse courts	7,866	(2.5)	NA	(0)
Baseball fields	7,804	(2.6)	4,000	(5)
Softball fields	5,072	(3.9)	3,333	(6)
Soccer fields	3,294	(6.1)	3,333	(6)
Multi-purpose fields	4,683	(4.3)	NA	(0)
Swimming pools	8,023	(2.5)	6,666	(3)
Skate parks	10,118	(2.0)	NA	(0)
Ice rinks	9,860	(2.0)	NA	(0)
Dog parks	10,000	(2.0)	NA	(0)

Although Anniston has multiple football fields, there are no national metrics for football fields.

*As with the standards used by the NRPA in earlier years, their figures above are only provided as a general frame of reference and should not be considered to be specific "standards" for Anniston.*





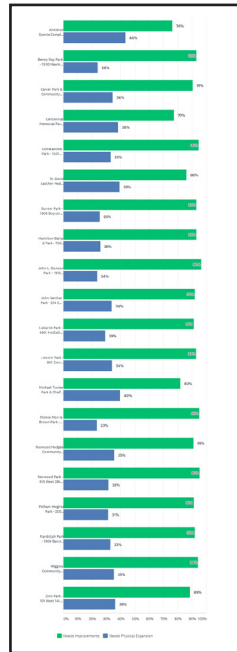
# THE PLAN: PUBLIC SPACE & RECREATION

## PUBLIC INPUT

Appendix A includes the results of the public opinion survey conducted for this plan. Two questions focused specifically on parks and recreation. Below is a summary of those results.

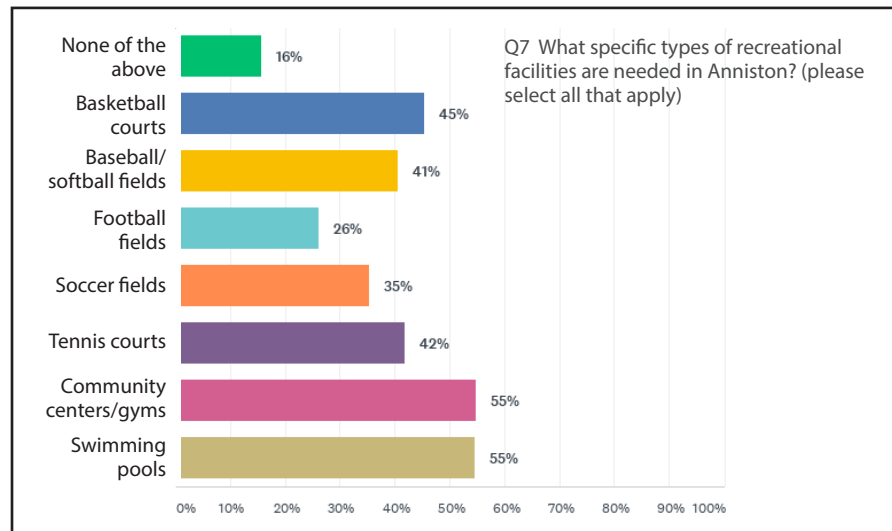
### Park Improvements vs Expansion

This question asked the respondents to indicate, for each park, if they thought physical improvements are needed and/or if the park needs to be physically expanded. Although the resulting graph at right is too small to be legible, the colors tell the story. Green represents desired improvements and blue represents desired expansions. For all of the parks listed, between 76% and 96% of the respondents believed park improvements were needed, compared to only 23% to 44% believing that expansions are needed.



### Facilities Needed

Because of its legibility, this question's results are evident.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The preparation of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan within the next few years is the single overarching objective for this topic. Other specific objectives in the meantime include:

### Staffing & Programming

- *Ensure that staff has necessary resources.* Needed resources for the City's Parks and Recreation Department include funding for sufficient staffing, ongoing professional training, and funding to adequately implement park maintenance and programming.
- *Seek ways to be more creative in programs and activities.* Examples include training, membership in the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and networking with the parks and recreation departments of other communities to learn about their creative approaches to programming and activities.
- *Explore ways that the YMCA can be expanded to meet the needs of young people over age 12.* The limited size of its building, property and staff are substantial hurdles at present.

### Parks & Facilities

- *Continue to upgrade facilities and equipment within current budget constraints.* Until a master plan can be prepared, the results of this plan's public opinion survey relative to specific parks may help to highlight what the priorities should be.
- *Consolidate some community centers to better utilize staff and resources.* Identifying the specific centers for consolidation requires further study, but objectives should include even geographic distribution of centers and leveraging the highest performing centers.
- *Pursue development of a skate park and a dog park.* Even those these park types exist in most communities, they do not presently exist in Anniston. Downtown area sites should be prioritized both to provide a central geographic location and to help leverage Downtown revitalization efforts.



Topics related to parks and recreation that are addressed elsewhere in this plan include greenways (see page 70-71) and the proposed new Downtown plaza (see pages 90-91).



Community design is a relatively broad planning issue and can encompass a range of specific subjects. However, because topics such as Downtown public space and development standards are being addressed elsewhere in this plan, corridors will be the focus here.

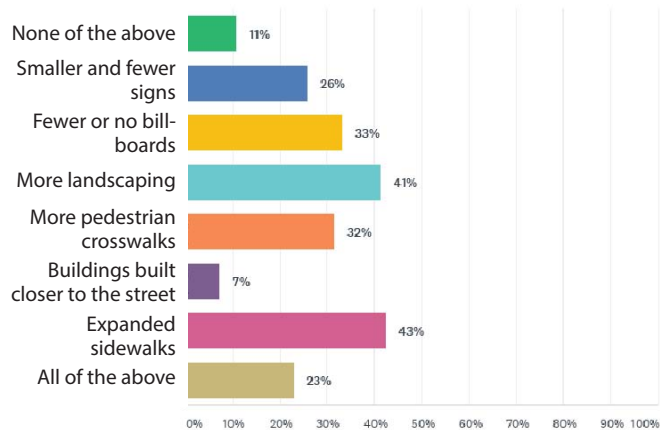
## QUINTARD AVENUE CORRIDOR

Quintard Avenue is a major corridor for Anniston. Not only is it important for transportation purposes, but it is also a first and last impression that visitors have of the community. It also has three distinct segments. The middle portion that is adjacent to the Downtown area has a very different character than the segments to the north and south, which have a strip commercial corridor character. Consequently, they will be treated separately here.

### Community Preferences for the Corridor

The results of the public opinion survey question specifically directed toward Quintard Avenue are shown below. As the graph reflects, the number one improvement sought was expanded sidewalks (43%), followed by more landscaping (41%), fewer or no billboards (33%), and more pedestrian crossings (32%). Only 7% of respondents believe that buildings need to be built closer to the road, which is likely an issue that resonates more with city planners than the average citizen.

Q8 Quintard Avenue / Hwy. 21 is a key thoroughfare for Anniston. If this thoroughfare and adjacent lands were to be physically improved, what types of specific improvements would you like to see? (please select all that apply)



The balance of this plan section on the Quintard Avenue corridor will look at the two distinct segments separately.

### Quintard Avenue Corridor: Urban Segment

#### Location

Extending from 18th Street on the north to 5th Street on the south, this is the segment of Quintard near Downtown.

#### Existing Conditions

With a 160 ft. existing right-of-way (ROW) and a wide landscaped median and sidewalks on either side, much of the adjacent development is relatively close to the street with parking lots to the side or rear. However, more recent suburban formed development also exists within this segment.



Positive features to emulate



Positive features to emulate

#### Objective

Effectively extend Downtown a half block east of Quintard for greater visibility of Downtown to the 36,000+ average daily drivers on this segment of the street.

#### Design Strategy

- Require new buildings to front onto the street with only a shallow setback
- Locate parking lots behind or beside buildings and require cross-access
- Minimize the number and width of driveways and limit much access to side streets
- Provide generous landscaping along the corridor with street trees and shrubs
- Minimize the number and size of signs, and prohibit billboards



# THE PLAN: COMMUNITY DESIGN

## QUINTARD AVENUE CORRIDOR (CONTINUED)

### Quintard Avenue Corridor: Suburban Segment

#### Location

This segment of Quintard is located north of 18th Street and south of 5th Street. It is north and south of the Downtown area.

#### Existing Conditions

With a 120-140 ft. existing ROW and little to no landscaping of the central median, this segment of Quintard Avenue has a typical strip commercial corridor character with large parking lots fronting the road, excessive signage and billboards, very little landscaping, limited sidewalks, and numerous wide driveways.



Negative features to avoid



Negative features to avoid

#### Objective

Enhance the corridor's function and aesthetics, although keeping a suburban form.

#### Design Strategy

- Prohibit new billboards and research the potential to amortize existing ones out of existence over time.
- Adopt new sign standards so there are smaller and fewer signs.
- Require shallower front parking lots with the balance beside or behind buildings
- Minimize the number and width of driveways and require cross-access
- Require and/or install sidewalks and generous landscaping with trees and shrubs

### Desired Character for Quintard Avenue

These images from other places reflect the character sought for both segments. Also, concept plans for locations on both segments are provided on the following page.

#### Quintard Avenue Corridor: Urban Segment Character



#### Quintard Avenue Corridor: Suburban Segment Character





# THE PLAN: COMMUNITY DESIGN

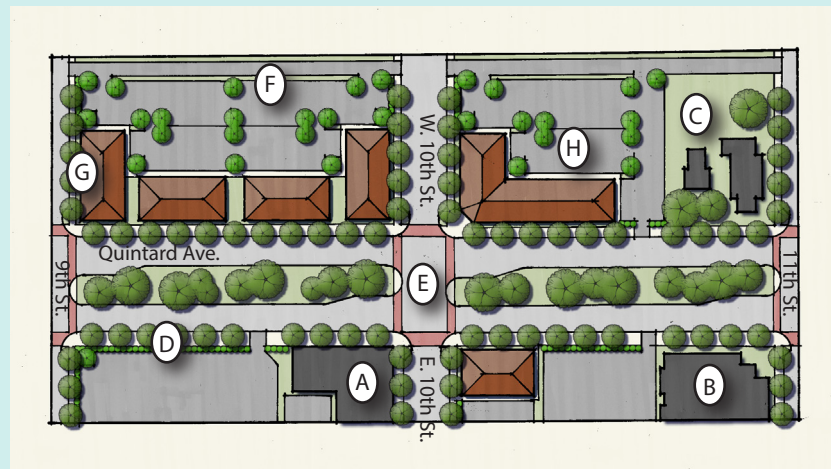


## QUINTARD AVENUE CORRIDOR (CONTINUED)

### Quintard Avenue Corridor: Urban Segment Concept Plan

#### Area Location

This area is anchored by the intersection of Quintard and 10th Street.



#### Key Design Features

- A. Alabama Power Company (existing)
- B. Salame Heart & Vascular Clinic (existing)
- C. Trinity Lutheran Church (existing)
- D. Landscape screening for parking along the street
- E. Improved intersection with pedestrian cross-walks having specialty paving
- F. Rear parking lot behind buildings and accessed by an alley
- G. Two to three-story residential or mixed use building that turns the corner
- H. Redeveloped Wells Fargo Bank site that could still be a bank or some other use (commercial or residential)

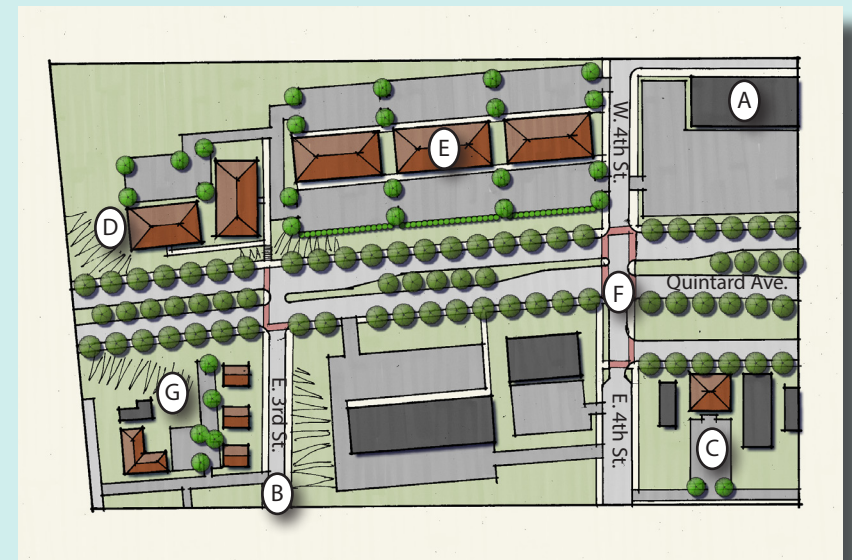
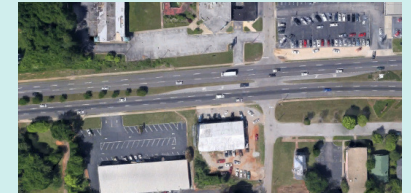
#### Key

- Existing Building
- New Infill

### Quintard Avenue Corridor: Suburban Segment Concept Plan

#### Area Location

This area is anchored by the intersections of 3rd and 4th Streets with Quintard.



#### Key Design Features

- A. Superior GMC (existing)
- B. Extended street for connectivity
- C. New residential infill with rear parking accessed by an alley
- D. New residential infill on hill and connected to the sidewalk system
- E. New commercial infill with limited front parking that is screened by landscaping
- F. Improved intersection with pedestrian cross-walks having specialty paving
- G. New neighborhood-scale residential infill along adjacent streets

#### Key

- Existing Building
- New Infill



# THE PLAN: COMMUNITY DESIGN

## NOBLE STREET CORRIDOR

As with a few other topics, this one could just as easily be contained in the Downtown section of this plan, but it is contained here to keep the corridor issues grouped together.

### Existing Conditions

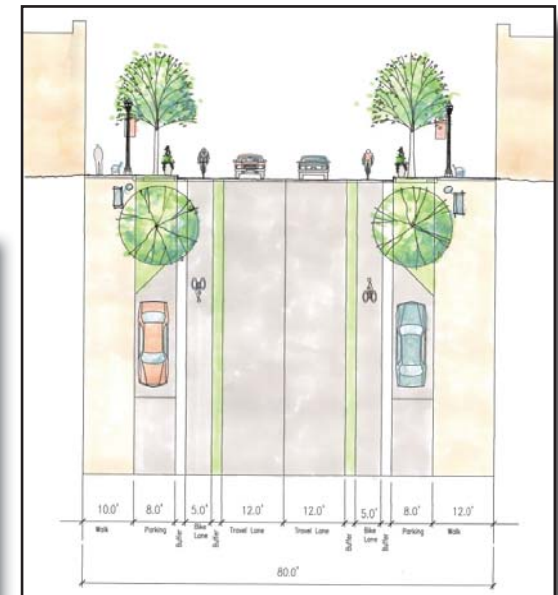
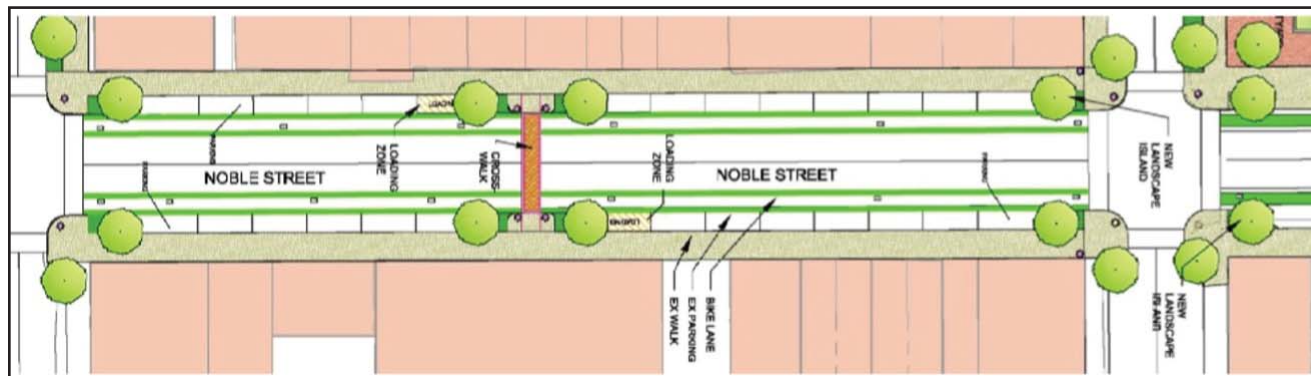
Noble Street is undoubtedly the primary spine through Downtown Anniston, serving the role of the area's "Main Street," including being flanked by Downtown's greatest number of commercial uses. Having a north-south orientation, there is one driving lane in either direction, parallel parking on both sides, and a central median that warrants explaining. Most of the median consists of cross-hatched yellow paint with left turn lanes at each block, but the median also features a mid-block pedestrian crossing with a curbed and landscaped central island. Brick paved crosswalks extend from bulb-outs and traverse the driving lanes and the islands. While these islands are effective as pedestrian refuge points, they are generally unattractive and the relatively low traffic volumes call their necessity into question. There are also sidewalks on either side of this street that are wide enough to accommodate sidewalk dining, although a very limited amount of that currently exists.

### Past Relevant Plans

The most relevant plan to the design of Noble Street is the 2016 *Downtown Anniston Multimodal Plan*. Key graphics from that plan (below and right) reflect the following main concepts:

- Remove the median, turn lanes and islands, but retain the mid-block crossings
- Add trees at the bulb-outs and crosswalks
- Add bike lanes on each side of the street between driving and parking lanes
- Designate a few truck loading areas

Existing Conditions





## NOBLE STREET CORRIDOR (CONTINUED)

With respect to the 2016 design, there are pros, cons and debatable aspects, as follows:

- *Pros:* Removal of the paint-striped median and mid-block islands improves aesthetics.
- *Cons:* Bike lanes are unnecessary for this type of urban street.
- *Debatable:* Eliminating the median and turn lanes can add to traffic congestion at intersections, but adds to “traffic calming” by slowing driving speeds.

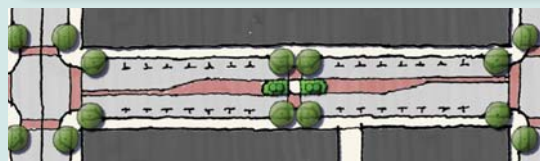
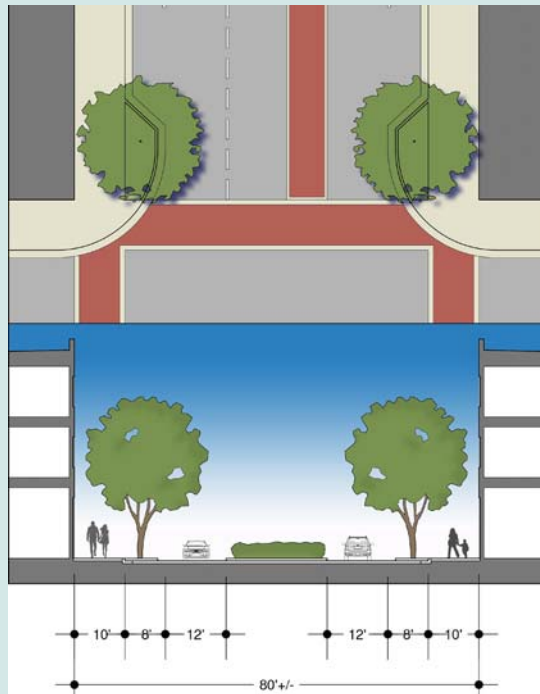
### Noble Street Corridor: Design Option A Parallel Parking

#### Key Features

- There are no designated bike lanes.
- Pedestrian islands and mid-block crosswalks are retained.
- Turn lanes are retained.
- Paint-striped medians are replaced with specialty pavers and/or landscaping.
- Street trees are added to the intersection and crosswalk bulb-outs.
- Parallel parking is retained as it exists.

#### Pros & Cons

Pedestrian islands are retained for those who like them and aesthetics are improved, and the retained turn lanes avoid traffic congestion.



## New Alternatives to Consider

As the indicated pros and cons of each scenario reflect, there is no clear and obvious option to pursue. Either of these two most recent scenarios would appear to have advantages over the 2016 concept, but it is recommended that the City study both options thoroughly. It is also recommended that the Main Street program lead a stakeholder engagement process to get input from affected property and business owners. Also, alley use must be maximized and scheduling must be carefully coordinated to avoid delivery trucks from parking in driving lanes and blocking traffic.

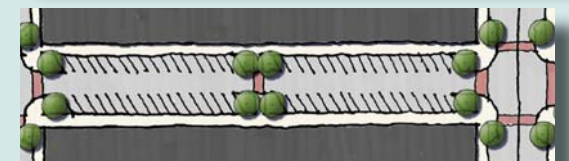
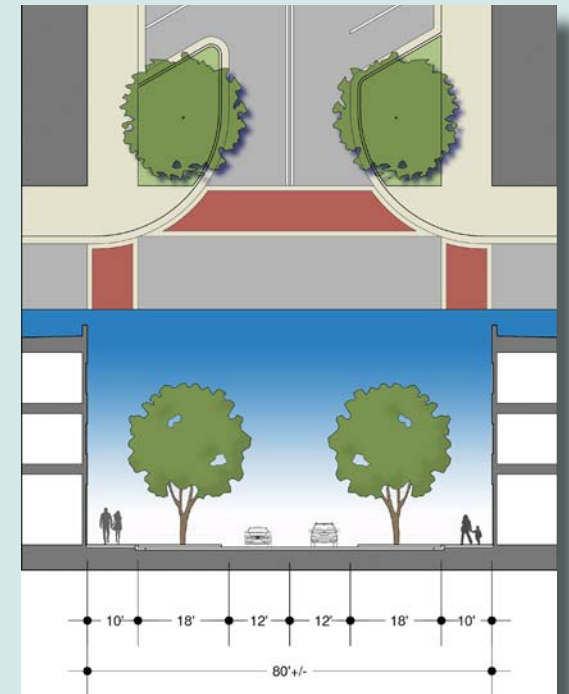
### Noble Street Corridor: Design Option B Diagonal Parking

#### Key Features

- There are no designated bike lanes.
- Pedestrian islands are removed, but mid-block crosswalks are retained.
- The median and turn lanes are removed.
- Street trees are added to the intersection and crosswalk bulb-outs.
- Angled parking is added, which increases the overall number.

#### Pros & Cons

Aesthetics are improved, but losing the pedestrian islands may disappoint some, as well as the loss of turn lanes if congestion results. However, more parking is available.





# THE PLAN: COMMUNITY DESIGN

## WEST 15TH STREET CORRIDOR

The West 15th Street corridor served as an important economic and cultural hub for Anniston's African American community for many decades. In fact, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for, in part, that very reason.

### Existing Conditions

The subject area is centered on the segment of 15th Street roughly between the Chief Ladiga Trail on the east end and Cooper Avenue on the west end. The street features one driving lane in either direction, one parking lane on both sides, a relatively wide concrete sidewalk on both sides of the street, and a combination of tall "cobra head" street lights and pedestrian-scale historic looking lights. The street is abutted by one and two-story historic brick commercial buildings, many of which are vacant, as well as other various building types (houses, churches, etc.).

### Recommendations

The City should focus on revitalizing this important corridor through the following steps:

#### Physical Enhancements

##### Within the Public ROW

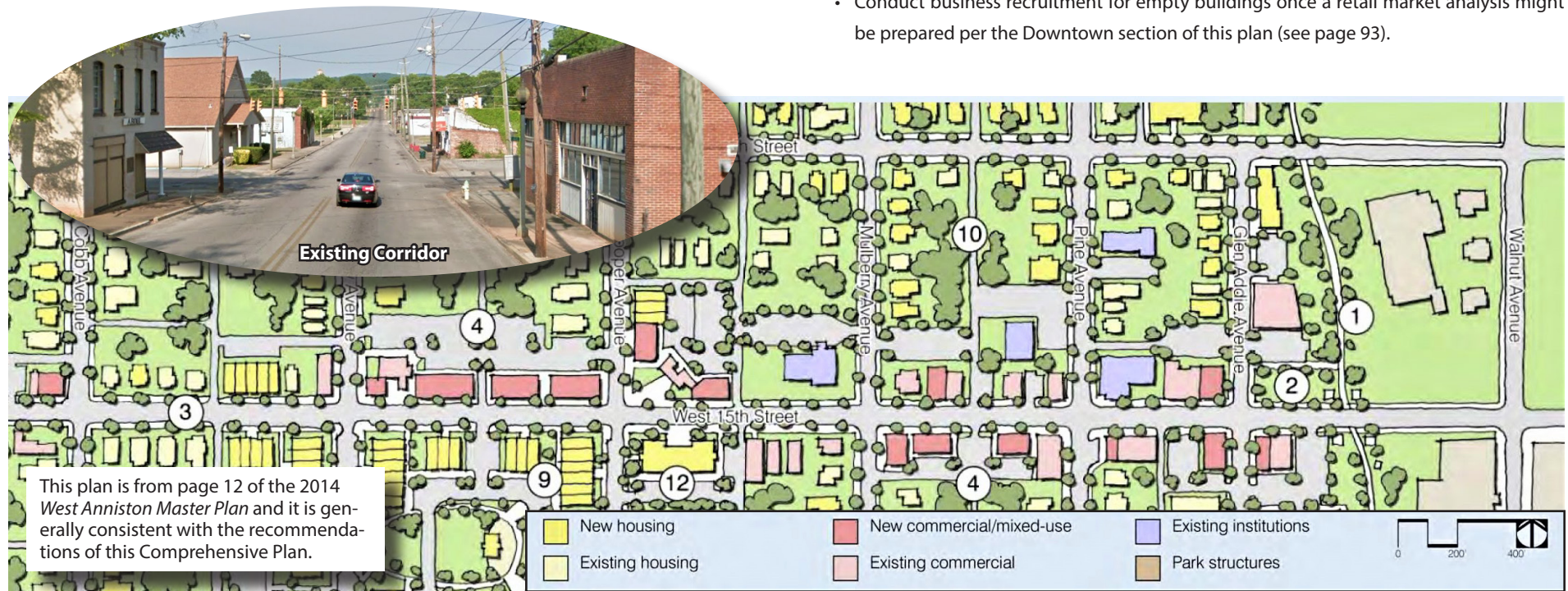
- Build pedestrian bulbs and crosswalks with special pavers at all or most intersections
- Attach to the existing human-scaled street lights festive-looking themed banners

##### Outside the Public ROW

- Rehabilitation of existing historic buildings (top priority over new infill)
- New infill development that is compatible in scale, siting and design with the context

#### Economic Strategies

- Target financial incentives to buildings for rehab - federal investment tax credits for historic rehabilitation and new local incentives (see page 78)
- Conduct business recruitment for empty buildings once a retail market analysis might be prepared per the Downtown section of this plan (see page 93).



This plan is from page 12 of the 2014 West Anniston Master Plan and it is generally consistent with the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.



*“Vibrant, attractive, user-friendly downtowns don’t just happen. They are the product of vision, dedicated leadership, effective partnerships and.... good planning. The result is a road map that can help communities get the kind of downtown that everyone needs and wants - and deserves.”*

Richard Moe - Former President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (2009)

*“In most American cities, you can sense almost instantly and instinctively whether it is living or dying by its downtown.”*

The Tennessean (2005)

*“After decades of marginally effective single-solution approaches... downtown is now viewed as a multifaceted organism of economic, physical and social elements that must be addressed in a holistic manner. In short, planning, development, and management must be integrated into a seamless process.”*

Doug Loescher - Director of the National Trust Main Street Center (2009)

This is the only section of this Comprehensive Plan that focuses on one particular place. The reason is that, based upon this project’s community engagement process and economic analysis, the Downtown area is extremely important to Anniston. With Noble Street serving as its central spine, the physical form, character and rich mix of uses make it unique. It is noteworthy that some of the recommendations in this plan section are repeated from other plan sections, such as issues tied to economic development and historic district design guidelines, which reflects the complexities of any downtown that require a multi-disciplinary perspective for planning purposes.

## MAIN STREET FOUR POINT APPROACH

The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street America program has been in the downtown revitalization business since the 1970s. Grounded in historic preservation, hundreds of local Main Street programs across the country have had great success with revitalization efforts. In fact, Anniston has such a program via Main Street Anniston. All Main Street programs follow the same “four point approach” to revitalization, which includes the following points:

- *Organization* - board, committees, staffing, volunteers, etc.
- *Design* - buildings, streetscapes, public spaces, parking, etc.
- *Economic Vitality* - business development, incentives, etc.
- *Promotion* - marketing, special events, social media, etc.



Because the four points are an effective framework for downtown planning, this plan section is organized accordingly.

## Why Downtown Anniston is Important

There are many reasons why Downtown Anniston is so important to the overall community, including the following:

Downtown is where much of Anniston’s history occurred. While significant history happened throughout the area that constitutes today’s Anniston, much of it occurred in Downtown Anniston.

Downtown is the institutional and cultural center of town. Downtown is the location of the County Courthouse, the new Federal Courthouse, the library, and various other institutional offices and facilities. It is clearly the civic heart of Anniston.

Downtown is owned by everyone.

While most areas of Anniston outside of the Downtown are only the focus of people living or working in those areas, there is a shared sense of ownership for Downtown.

Downtown has the “Smartest Growth” in Anniston.

“Smart Growth” is a nation-wide community planning philosophy that encourages environmental, economic, fiscal and social sustainability. It recognizes that downtown area growth translates to less peripheral growth encroaching on outlying rural and natural areas, leverages existing urban infrastructure, and accommodates a mixed-use walkable environment that minimizes automobile trips.

Downtown defines Anniston’s sense of place.

In light of the generic franchise architecture found in most suburban commercial corridors referred to as “strip commercial development,” including segments of Quintard Avenue, Downtown Anniston offers a rare sense of place that conveys Anniston’s unique character.

Downtown is your postcard location.

Rarely would an Anniston resident entertain out-of-town guests without taking them to Downtown Anniston.



# THE PLAN: DOWNTOWN

## EXISTING DOWNTOWN CONDITIONS

### Physical & Economic Challenges

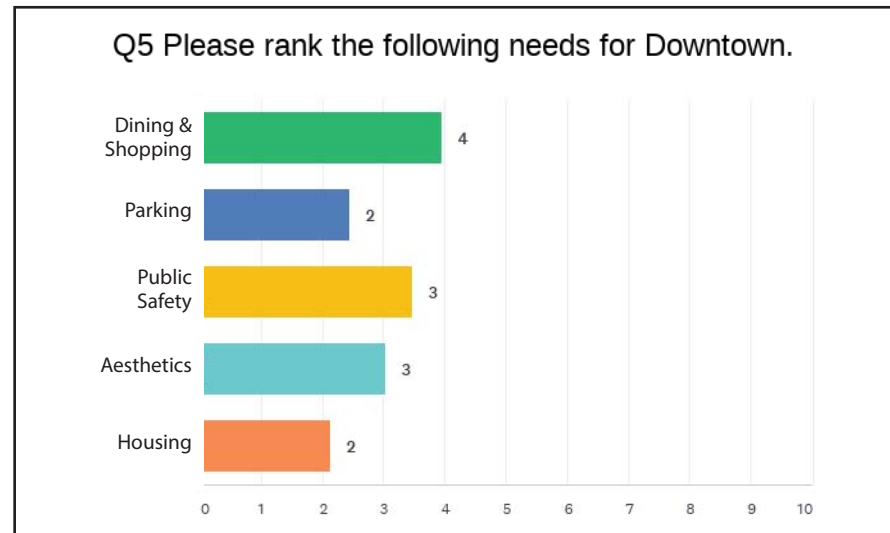
The conditions of existing historic buildings cover a wide range. While some have been well maintained or rehabilitated, others are deteriorated or have been inappropriately altered (particularly storefronts). There are also substantial groundfloor vacancies and, not surprisingly, even more upper floor vacancies. Fortunately, there is a core group of restaurants, shops and similar businesses that continue to draw Downtown visitors.

### Main Street Program Limitations

The Main Street Anniston program has financial challenges that limit it to only two part-time employees to implement the program.

### Past Plans

Key past plans for Downtown include *Main Street Refresh* (2017), the *Downtown Anniston Multimodal Plan* (2016) and the *Downtown Anniston Framework Plan* (1993).



Among the needs for Downtown, housing typically gets the lowest priority in public opinion surveys such as the one conducted in Anniston for this plan. The reason is not that housing is not an important facet of revitalization. Instead, the people taking the survey already have housing that they are content with, so it is a low priority for them.

## ORGANIZATION

The current organizational structure of Main Street Anniston is a nine-member board of directors and two part-time staff: a Director and Main Street Coordinator.

### Program Funding

The program now has an annual budget of over \$200,000, which is funded by the City. One recommendation is offered:

- *Explore options to diversify the program's funding.* It is not unusual for Main Street programs to be funded solely by the City government, although County governments often participate when the City is also the County seat. Supplemental funding should be sought from Calhoun County and private sector contributions and sponsorships.

### Organizational Structure

Consider the following recommendations for the program's organizational structure:

- *Pursue the employment of a full-time manager.* It may be more efficient to have a single full-time employee rather than two part-time employees. Also, perhaps one and a half positions might be possible, thereby keeping and expanding the current staff members.
- *Keep the program as part of the City government for the near term,* but strive for a separate 501c3 in the future. Even in that scenario, substantial City funding will still be required.
- *Continue to pursue the establishment of a Downtown Development Authority.* This objective is already in the works, and such an entity would have certain development-related powers that are beyond those of a Main Street program.
- *Consider expanding the existing "four point" committees to involve additional people.* Presently, only the staff and board members comprise the four committees.

### Annual Work Plan

Continue to prepare and adopt an annual Work Plan as a guide and benchmark from year to year. The forthcoming plan will be based on the five-year plan now being prepared.

### Achievements Since June 2019\*

- 19 Net new/relocating businesses
- 41 Net new jobs created
- \$354,642 public dollars invested
- \$3,938,573 private dollars invested
- 3,179 volunteer hours

\* Source: Main Street program website



## DESIGN

### Streets & Alleys

As the framework for Downtown, the following ideas are offered for streets and alleys.

- *Redesign and redevelop Quintard Avenue, Noble Street and 15th Street.* See pages 82-87 in this plan's Community Design section for details.
- *Manage on-street parking on key shopping streets* with time limitations (2 to 3 hours). Signage and enforcement will be needed, but parking meters will not.
- *Better utilize the alley system for truck deliveries* to avoid blocking Noble Street, particularly if a redesign of Noble makes on-street deliveries problematic by trucks blocking a driving lane. At present, most segments of the alley system function well, but dumpsters may need repositioning in a few locations to better accommodate rear deliveries.

### Buildings

Historic buildings are the most fundamental component of any downtown. Fortunately, the core of Downtown already has both National Register designation and local historic zoning to protect buildings and to insure compatible infill. Recommendation include:

- *Continue to publicize existing financial incentives* for the rehabilitation of Downtown's historic buildings. Such incentives include both the federal and state investment tax credits for historic building rehabilitation. Qualified projects require listing or eligibility for the National Register, following federal preservation standards, investing more than the property's adjusted cost basis (funds spent to date), and the property must be income producing.
- *Prioritize the rehab of existing buildings over new infill.* However, when infill is being pursued, prioritize sites located on or near Noble and 15th Streets over other locations.

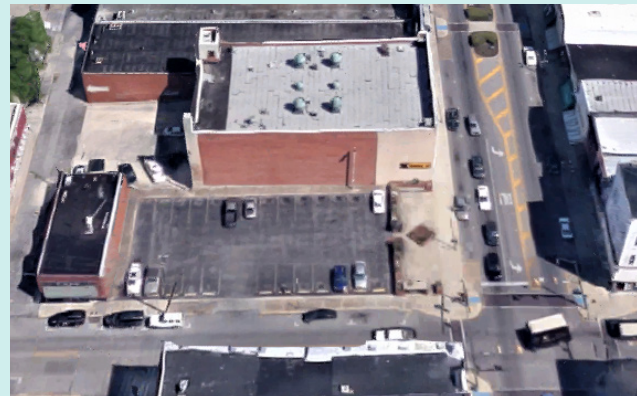


*This vacant historic building on the southeast corner of 13th and Walnut Streets has great potential for historic rehabilitation.*

### Public Spaces

Although Zinn Park is a great venue for a range of public events, a downtown the size of Anniston's can accommodate more than one public space. In particular, a space that is smaller, more hardscaped (like a plaza), and located on or near Noble Street would be a compliment to Zinn Park. Often, selecting a park site because it is vacant is not a very strategic approach. However, the vacant lot on the northwest corner of Noble and 11th Streets is a strategic and high-profile location to consider. It is jointly owned by the City and County. Information on this site is below, and a plan is on the following page.

*The northwest corner of Noble and 11th Streets features a vacant lot having strong potential for a public space.*



*The City's 2016 Multimodal Plan proposed a park on the northwest corner of Noble and 11th Streets.*





# THE PLAN: DOWNTOWN

## DESIGN (CONTINUED)

### Concept Plan for Proposed New Downtown Plaza

Building upon the 2016 plan noted on the previous page, the Main Street Anniston program has commissioned a design for this public space and is in the process of soliciting bids to determine the cost. As illustrated at right, key features of the plan include the following:

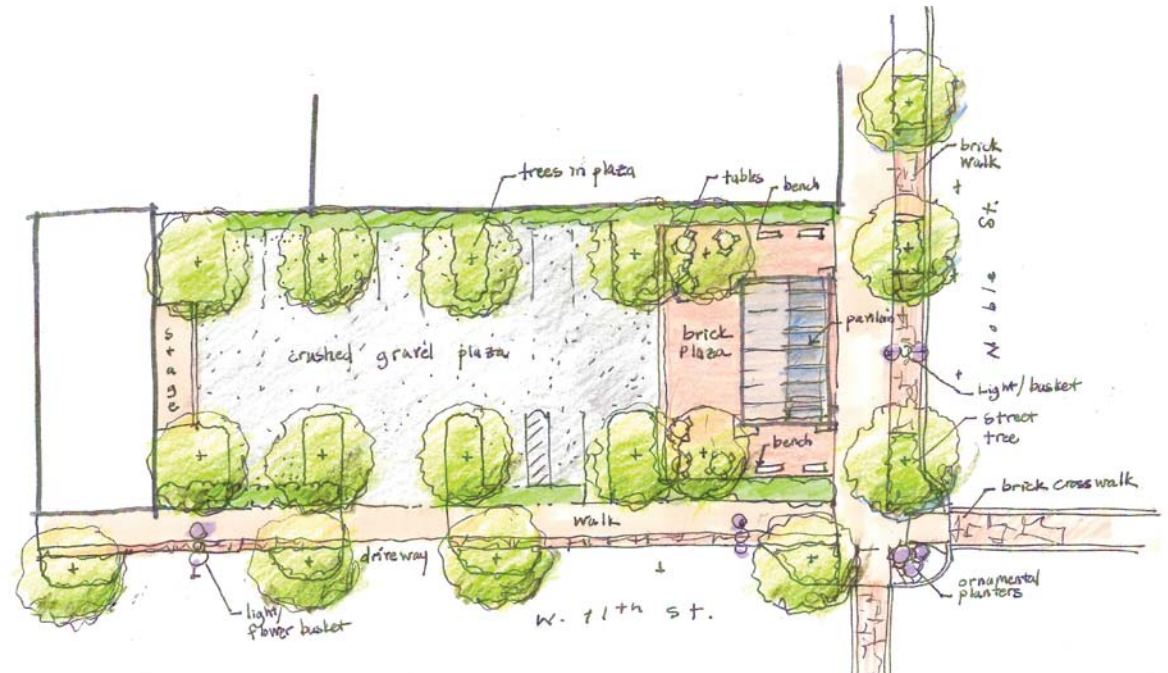
- Crushed gravel paving for the core of the space that can serve for parking when not used for events.
- A brick plaza on the east end of the site close to Noble Street that is anchored by a multi-use pavilion.
- Tables and benches throughout the plaza
- A stage on the west end of the plaza abutting the side of the building located to the immediate west.
- Shade trees planted around the perimeter of the plaza.

### Additional Downtown Design Concepts

See *Appendix D: Additional Downtown Design Concepts* for ideas proposed within the past decade that build upon ideas from a 2010 charrette held by the City, the City's 2016 Multimodal Plan for Downtown, and related efforts.

***“The more successfully a city mingles everyday diversity of uses and users in its everyday streets, the more successfully, casually (and economically) its people thereby enliven and support well-located parks that can thus give back grace and delight to their neighborhoods...”***

- Author: Jane Jacobs







## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### Financial Tools

Federal and state incentives for properties were previously addressed on pages 78 and 87. Other relevant recommendations for incentives include the following:

- *Continue to explore the designation of a tax increment financing (TIF) district* for Downtown Anniston. This concept is already being considered by the City in which the future increased tax revenues generated by a development are used to retire a loan for funding infrastructure and similar improvements tied to the development.
- *Consider a business improvement district (BID)* if there is substantial property owner interest. While the timing is likely not yet ripe to gain sufficient support for a BID, a BID features an increase in property taxes by which the additional revenues go towards various services to benefit the downtown beyond those normally provided by the City, such as increased clean-up and maintenance in ROWs, enhanced policing, marketing, and similar services. Likewise, the BID funds can support a revitalization entity such as Main Street Anniston.

### Uses

In addition to the more conventional uses already existing Downtown, such as restaurants and retail shops, the following uses should be pursued, expanded and/or leveraged:

- *Hotel* - Assist the developers in any reasonable way to build the planned hotel project on the northwest corner of Noble and 12th Streets. This site has already been cleared by the demolition of the Model City Center, a non-historic and incompatible building that recently occupied the site. The current hurdle is attracting investors for the project.
- *City Hall* - The current City Hall location just south of McClellan is a temporary situation and the City has always planned on eventually moving to another permanent location. Multiple options are being considered. The top candidate appears to be the current Federal Courthouse, which the City will own once the new Federal Courthouse is completed. Another option, though less likely, is an expansion wing onto the City Meeting Center.
- *Arcade/Entertainment Center* - Although the market and financial viability of this potential use is not known, it was specifically cited by multiple young people as a desired use.

- *Freedom Riders Sites & National Park Service (NPS) Visitors Center* - While these are important sites that have the potential to serve as future Downtown anchors, they need much greater leveraging in the meantime. The following issues should be explored: expanded physical facilities, a higher level of interpretation, and enhanced promotion.
- *Housing* - More housing in and near Downtown will support retail and dining businesses, provide Anniston with more diverse needed housing options, and will help in recruiting new businesses. More residents will also give the Downtown area a more “lived in” atmosphere to attract visitors. For more information on this concept, see pages 94-98 in this plan’s section on Housing & Neighborhoods, as well as the *Appendix C Housing Market Analysis*.
- *New Federal Courthouse* - This exciting project on West 12th Street is approaching completion and should be a substantial benefit to the Downtown economy. Fortunately, it also employs a well-designed classical architectural style that will add further to Downtown’s aesthetic.



*The proposed new hotel on the corner of Noble and West 12th Streets will not only be a huge boost to the Downtown economy, but it also eliminated a building that featured a design very incompatible with a historic downtown.*



# THE PLAN: DOWNTOWN

## ECONOMIC VITALITY (CONTINUED)

### Business Development

A key focus of Main Street Anniston should be the retention, expansion and recruitment of existing and new businesses, including restaurants, live music, theater venues and shops. Although many downtown entities focus their efforts on business recruitment, the retention and expansion of existing businesses is equally important, if not more important, to the extent that such existing businesses are consistent with the optimal tenant mix for Downtown. To achieve successful business development, it is recommended the following steps occur in the following sequencing:

1. *Conduct a Retail Market Analysis* to determine the optimal tenant mix so that business development can be extremely targeted toward the types of businesses needed in Downtown Anniston.
2. *Maintain a constant dialogue with existing business owners* to be able to assist struggling businesses and to be sure that expanding businesses remain in the Downtown area.
3. *Create marketing materials promoting Downtown's optimal tenant mix* based upon the recommended Retail Market Analysis in a manner that convincingly conveys the pent-up market demand as a powerful marketing tool for recruitment.
4. *Establish a Business Development Team* to meet with owners of businesses being recruited. It should include, at a minimum, the Main Street program Director and a current Downtown business owner.
5. *Target successful "mom and pop" businesses located in other communities* in the region and encourage them to open another such business in Downtown Anniston.

### Downtown Footprint

As indicated on page 82 of this plan in the Community Design section, Downtown's physical footprint should be extended a half block east of Quintard Avenue to increase the visibility of Downtown for through traffic traversing this key corridor.

## PROMOTION

Promotion is the fourth point of the Main Street "Four Point" approach. Big pushes in promotion are often embarked upon following an initial focus on the other three points so that a certain level of "product improvement" can first occur. The Main Street program should avoid attracting numerous first-time visitors who might be underwhelmed by their experience, thereby missing an opportunity for a more positive first impression that might have been achieved if more implementation had occurred beforehand. Below are recommended key promotional strategies.

### Digital Media

Main Street Anniston already has a very attractive and user-friendly website. As the group secures more financial resources and can achieve even more, added website content will obviously occur. The program should also continue to utilize social media effectively given the strong returns for such a relatively affordable marketing tool.

### Events

It is important that all events that currently occur in Downtown continue in Downtown, such as the Farmers Market held on Saturdays from May through October on East 10th Street. Additional events may also be needed or existing events expanded. For example, perhaps 4th Fridays could occur twice a month. Similarly, Wacky Wednesdays are limited to 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM in June and July, but might have potential for expanded hours and months.



### Other Strategies

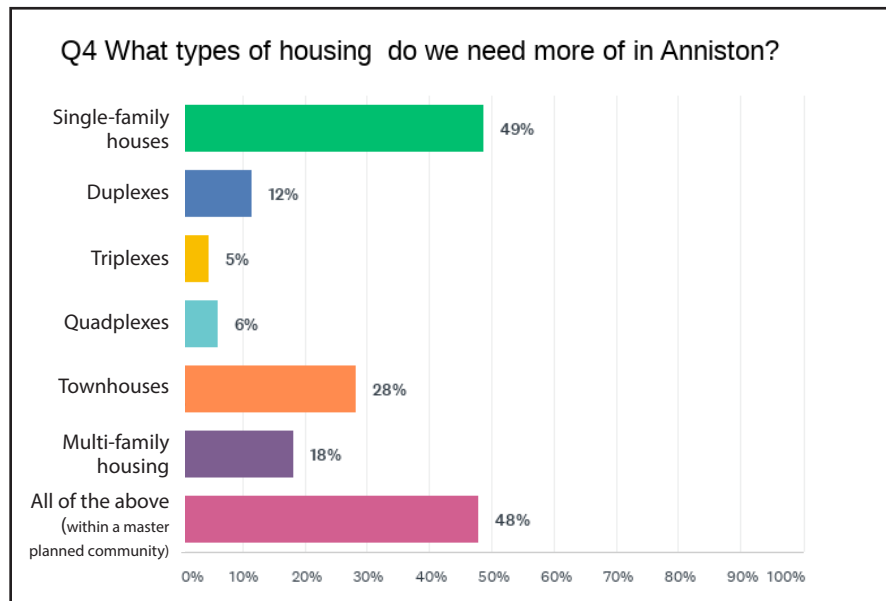
- Address both realities and perceptions related to public safety in the Downtown. Any positive crime statistics should be publicized, and tangible approaches to be considered include bicycle police and more lighting.
- Conduct a "Shop Local" campaign to be spearhead by the Chamber and Main Street Anniston.
- Encourage food trucks to operate in Downtown as a supplement the existing mix of restaurants. The City should adopt regulations and designate appropriate locations in underutilized parking lots. There are numerous model food truck ordinances, and one to consider as a starting point is Franklin, Tennessee's.



Appendix C of this plan contains the full Housing Market Analysis, while pages 25-26 within the plan's Existing Conditions section provides a summary of those key findings. This section, adapted from the Housing Market Analysis, provides strategic recommendations for marketing and amenity development, housing rehabilitation, new housing development, and neighborhood revitalization. It is based, in part, on the findings of the Housing Market Analysis, coupled with field reconnaissance and input from community stakeholders.

## MARKETING & AMENITY DEVELOPMENT

The Anniston housing market has been buffeted by declining demographics and economic base, but the city's image has also suffered due to perceptions of poor safety, schools, and services. The market potentials can be leveraged over the long term through economic regeneration, as well as through marketing and public relations that help



*A public opinion survey such as the one conducted for this plan is certainly not scientific, but it does convey the general perceptions and preferences of a self-selected group of citizens. That said, the respondents' desire for all types of new housing is reflective of the general need as determined by the Housing Market Analysis prepared for this plan (Appendix C).*

enhance the community's competitiveness in the regional market. Key elements of a strategy to accomplish this objective are outlined below.

### Public Relations and Promotions

The City and its Main Street program are engaged in a pro-active effort to promote a positive image for Downtown Anniston, but there is a need to expand promotional efforts to focus on attracting and retaining residents. The first phase market targets for such an initiative would include first-time buyers, local workers, medical professionals, retirees, and those undergoing life changes (divorce, loss of a spouse, etc.). The initiative could start by focusing on educating realtors and brokers in the area on the city's many assets and amenities, on the new Comprehensive Plan as a roadmap for a positive future, on a turnaround at Anniston City Schools, declining crime rates, and increasing amenity value.

### Schools

There is widespread agreement in the local real estate industry that the relatively poor achievement levels for City Schools have a negative impact on the housing market in Anniston, particularly for family housing. There have been positive changes at local schools, which had struggled with financial constraints, but are now nearly free of debt. So, there is the need to communicate any and all positive changes underway at the local schools. A marketing partnership should be formed between the school district and the City of Anniston to promote positive changes, not only to the general public, but also to area real estate professionals, builders, and others in the industry. There is an opportunity for Anniston's school district to form stronger partnerships with private industry in the area in order to enhance local facilities, develop exceptional programs, and sponsor sports and recreation activities (where recent success has also helped enhance perceptions of the local schools). The role of private industry in helping local schools to develop and enhance programming is important both for leveraging the housing movement and economic development in Anniston.

### Amenities

Another component of a marketing program for Anniston housing is enhancing local amenity value. Anniston has significant cultural and recreational amenities that can be enhanced further as a basis for marketing the community. Recreational amenities, including parks and trails, are important to Anniston, as they provide the community with assets of regional significance. The connectivity and access afforded by recreational trails can also



## MARKETING & AMENITY DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

provide direct asset value in the city's neighborhoods for marketing housing. The Chief Ladiga Trail and other existing and potential trail systems help establish a strong brand for Anniston. Recreational amenities are also leveraged and improved through the City's existing network of parks and community centers, which can be enhanced to offer unique recreational amenities, facilities and services that strengthen the overall Anniston recreation brand.



*The Chief Ladiga Trail is a tremendous recreational resource for the region. Once it is extended south through the balance of Anniston, it can become a vital tool to help market new and revitalized housing in Anniston's associated neighborhoods.*

Photo Source: Calhoun County Insights

Food, culture and entertainment also generate amenity value that can be woven into Anniston's narrative. The Civil Rights heritage sites and stories can be promoted more effectively, such as through a larger or more comprehensive interpretation center. Anniston's story can focus on its valid attempts to overcome a segregationist past through progressive leadership. The 15th Street Corridor and its physical assets can help leverage the interpretation of Anniston's heritage, while also generating small business development opportunities, as discussed further in the Economic Development section of this plan following this section. Similarly, Downtown can enhance its role as a hub for dining and entertainment (other than just drinking) to add amenity value that, in particular, helps attract and retain young professionals and empty nesters.

## HOUSING REHABILITATION

As noted elsewhere in this plan, there is a need for improved maintenance, rehabilitation and upgrading of the housing stock, particularly in central Anniston neighborhoods. Such efforts would both increase the city's overall competitiveness and improve the lives of residents. About one-third of the community's single-family housing is held by investors as rentals. The condition of some rental housing may be poor, in part, due to the lack of resources among small investors to maintain and manage one or a handful of scattered, aging houses. A series of "carrots and sticks" are recommended to help improve the quality of the existing housing stock in these neighborhoods, while preventing displacement.

### Incentives

There are several incentives recommended for the City to package for investors and homeowners to rehabilitate and/or otherwise improve the quality of existing housing stock.

#### Gap Financing

The most prevalent constraint on owners is the lack of financial resources to improve housing. Gap financing can be captured through federal rehabilitation loans and grants - e.g., U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 203(k), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Section 504 and Housing Preservation Grants, and other sources. The City has benefited from CDBG grant funding in the past, but there might be a more aggressive grant position taken to capture federal, state, and foundation grants to fund housing rehabilitation programs.

#### Partnerships

The City can also form partnerships with non-profit organizations, such as through the Build Healthy Places Network, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) Smarter Houses programs, Local Housing Solutions, Neighborhood Housing Services, and others. Partnerships can also be targeted with local private sector entities, similar to the Schools programming concept identified above.

#### Incentive Programs

Through these grants and partnership initiatives, the City can design incentive programs, including local grants for related to improvements for building façades, Americans with



## HOUSING REHABILITATION (CONTINUED)

Disabilities Act (ADA), energy efficiency and others. Other opportunities could include creation of a Chapter 9B Tax Abatement District program, a Local Technical Assistance Program (for small landlords), Co-operatives, and Contractor Pools among property owners to help reduce the cost of supplies and maintenance on a marginal basis. Such cooperatives and pools could also include training and education programs linked back to local schools or private industry to help enhance skills and employment opportunities in Anniston neighborhoods. “Buy Local” programs would also help to encourage local collaboration and supply chain systems.

### Other Strategies

#### Regulations

The introduction of incentives for landlords and property owners should be coupled with “Broken Window” codes enforcement. The City would respond in a targeted fashion to code enforcement issues in key districts created to offer incentives. Approved contractor programs (tied to “Buy Local”) would help funnel work orders back into neighborhood employment and training efforts.

#### Housing Conditions Survey

The City should consider conducting a professional housing conditions survey to inventory conditions and maintenance needs so that programs and services can be designed to address the very specific maintenance and upgrading needs.

#### Homeownership Initiatives

The City should offer homeownership initiatives (discussed in more detail later) to encourage move-ups and equity investment among existing residents. Such efforts would help enhance resident maintenance, upgrading and investment in aging housing stock.



## NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The market analysis identified potential for new housing development. In the short term, much of this demand would drive opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development of 400 to 700 units over the next five to seven years. A strategy is outlined below for leveraging or encouraging new housing development in the city.

### Multi-Family Rental Housing

Target sites need to be identified for multi-family housing. The new Comprehensive Plan’s Place Types section will provide direction on that front. The Housing Authority has applied several times for the HUD Choice Neighborhood grants, which would help to fund redevelopment of public housing sites where the authority is actively demolishing housing. There is a need to improve the application where possible, with the help of a professional grant writer.

The City can also take a more active role in recruiting and attracting private apartment development. Land banking and use of public land should be encouraged as a leveraging tool for multi-family and/or mixed use housing development. The City might also consider establishing a tax increment financing (TIF) district to help finance infrastructure improvements that can leverage rental apartment development. A Chapter 9B Tax Abatement District might be developed as a leveraging tool. Local businesses and government could establish a pre-leasing program that could guarantee leases, thereby improving opportunities for bank financing for private developers.

### Single Family & Townhouses

As with multi-family housing, there is a need to identify target sites for single-family and townhouse infill development. The market analysis identifies a target for construction of 30 to 100 new units in the city. A *Homeownership Initiative* should be established, perhaps in partnership with non-profit affordable housing developers, to deliver workforce housing. The Housing Authority should have assistance improving its Choice Neighborhood application to leverage federal public housing redevelopment funding. Contractor training and pool access could help reduce the cost of construction, enhancing opportunities for the delivery of affordable and workforce housing.

The City could also offer regulatory incentives, such as through a Fast Track or pre-approval



## NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

program that increases opportunities for affordable housing delivery if designed and planned according to pre-approved concept plans. City or School Board owned land can be used as part of a land-banking and incentive program to encourage new housing development at specific sites in Anniston.



*There is demand for new multi-family housing in Anniston of all types, both rental and for-purchase, and market-rate and affordable. In particular, such housing in and near Downtown would greatly benefit the Downtown economy, as well as providing many convenient amenities to the residents of this new housing.*

## NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Strategies for broader neighborhood revitalization are introduced below. Such strategies are aimed at improving opportunities for housing rehabilitation and new development through the creation of targeted sites, amenities, and remediation to help leverage positive change. Key elements include the following:

### Consolidation of Parcels

As noted previously, the City could establish a land bank as a mechanism for moving vacant or underutilized land back onto the City's tax roles through housing development. Nearby models might include the Gadsden and Birmingham land bank authorities. Overall, parcels should be consolidated to create sites that can leverage redevelopment. The City can use its regulatory powers to acquire tax delinquent properties, which can be added and consolidated with publicly-owned parcels to create larger redevelopment sites. Excess school properties should be included in this program, along with the creation of public and community assets on public land.

### Target Sites for New Housing Development

Sites should be targeted more specifically in the Downtown area, West Anniston and the 15th Street Corridor, and other commercial corridors in the community for housing, mixed-use, and amenity development. These areas have higher visibility and access, generating a potentially higher return on investment through spin-off to surrounding areas.

### Amenities Development

The neighborhood revitalization program would benefit from amenities development, including trails, cultural venues, parks, public art, community gardens, and other assets that would increase the overall attractiveness of the city's neighborhoods for outside investment, while also improving the quality of life for existing residents.

### Schools

Programmatic improvements to City Schools such as through partnerships, as discussed previously, would help leverage reinvestment in housing and neighborhoods. A focus should be given to neighborhood schools initiatives and to redevelopment of excess school property.



## NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION (CONTINUED)

### Remediation and Blight

Brownfield remediation programs should be established where appropriate to target grants for research and remediation, but also for promotion and education on environmental hazards. Mapping information collected for this Comprehensive Plan project seems to suggest that any residual contamination in the city is highly localized at specific sites. Regardless of whether sites have been remediated or not, there is a need for public education, communication, and public relations to alleviate fears and enhance the community's competitiveness for new development. See page 76 for more on this issue.

In addition to addressing hazardous brownfields, there is the need to continue removing blighted housing where it poses a severe and direct risk to community health. However, *any housing removal should be coupled with a plan for consolidation and redevelopment of parcels, rather than creating gaps in the urban fabric.*



*Located between West 20th Street and West 22nd Street, and along Cobb and Dooley Avenues in West Anniston, the Lloyd's Quarters neighborhood has declined in recent decades. However, groups such as the Lloyd's Quarters Community Project Resurrect have focused on turning the area around. At left is a photo of the annual 2016 Lloyd's Quarters Fall Festival.*

Photo Source: Anniston Star  
- Jonathan Johnson

### Community Safety

Anniston should establish more neighborhood associations and strengthen the two existing ones, perhaps modeled on Birmingham's examples, to encourage more structure and community investment in neighborhood revitalization. Some of this structure can be targeted to community safety, such as through a neighborhood watch programs, coupled with community policing to augment the resources of the City's public safety departments.

### Fresh Food Deserts

There is a need to fill gaps in access to fresh food for residents of the city. Mapping conducted for this Comprehensive Plan (page 24) identified several areas that are unserved by groceries or other fresh food markets, including West Anniston in particular. Portions of north, south, southeast, and east Anniston also lack fresh food suppliers within walking distance. Strategies to address this gap include the following (some of which is discussed further in the Economic Development section of this plan):

- *Small Business Development* - grants, loans, and technical assistance for small fresh food businesses
- *Food Trucks or Mobile Food Services* - to bring fresh food to residents
- *Community Gardens* - so residents can cultivate their own healthy food
- *Transportation Services* - to bring people to food or food to people
- *Mixed-Use Development* - which builds the rooftop densities that can support fresh food markets

Ultimately, research has shown that enhancing access alone does not solve issues with health in low-income communities. There would still be a need for strong community health education programs to be administered and coupled with any fresh food access that is provided through the aforementioned strategies. At a minimum, access to fresh food markets may not solve hunger or community health issues, but it can enhance the amenity value of communities and provide opportunities for health education.



*Although Anniston has a good model for community gardens - the Cane Creek Community Gardens - it is located in McClellan. There is also a need for gardens in more economically and socially challenged areas, such as West Anniston.*

Photo Source: Cane Creek Community Gardens facebook page



# THE PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Appendix B of this plan contains the full Economic Baseline Assessment, while pages 21-24 within the plan's Existing Conditions section provides a summary of those key findings. This plan section, adapted from the Appendix E. Economic Development Strategies report, provides strategic recommendations. Those recommendations build on this project's community engagement process, as well as on existing economic strengths and competitive advantages, assets, growth trends and forecasts, and target industry analysis. Section 1 of the full report provides findings from the Target Industry Analysis, which identified industries and sectors where Anniston could build on its competitive advantages and assets to retain, grow, develop and recruit businesses, while strengthening the city's employment base and fiscal health. Section 2 discusses a prospective set of economic development objectives, as well as a vision for Anniston's economic development based on analysis, but also on stakeholder guidance and visioning. Section 3 proposes strategies for growing and strengthening Anniston's economy, while Section 4 provides suggestions

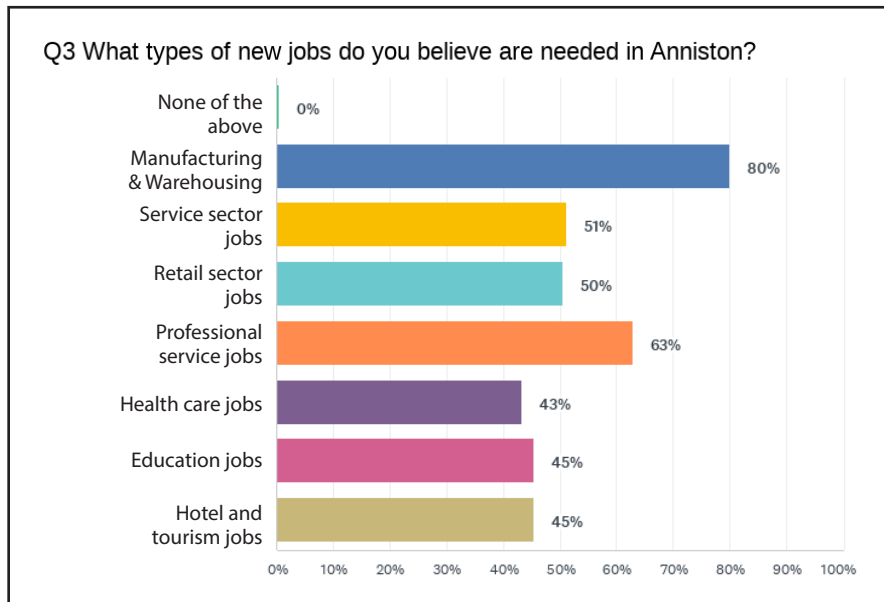
for the City government's role in the implementation of economic development efforts as part of the broader regional efforts. This strategy is meant as a starting point for discussion and action among community leaders. Some of the recommendations are meant to bolster existing efforts that are already underway, while others may introduce new concepts or programs that can strengthen the City's overall efforts.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Below are just some of the most significant findings in Sections 1 and 2 of Appendix E.

### Target Industries

- Arts, Culture and Media Services
- Repair & Maintenance Services
- Health Care (including Behavioral Health) & Associated Management Services
- Environmental Testing, Training, & Remediation Services
- Recreation Tourism
- Emergency Service & Other Training
- Administrative Support Services
- Transportation Services
- Wood Products
- Construction Trades
- Wholesale Trade



A public opinion survey such as the one conducted for this plan is certainly not scientific, but it does convey the general perceptions and preferences of a self-selected group of citizens. An analysis to quantify the demand of various job sectors was not part of this planning project's scope of work, but general potential opportunities for jobs were identified.

Although it is not located within the Anniston city limits, Jacksonville State University is an important economic asset for the area providing direct benefits to Anniston.







## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

### Key Priorities

For each of these top priorities for Anniston, challenges and opportunities are described in Appendix E:

1. Schools
2. Economic Development
3. Housing & Social Issues

### Overall Objectives

These objectives are not listed in any particular order of priority:

- Encourage “Meaningful” Economic Development (per the Key Priorities listed above)
- Diversify the Anniston Economic Base, including tourism
- Strengthen Anniston’s Service Sectors
- Uplift Downtown’s Small Businesses
- Encourage Industrial Development of McClellan and the Airport
- Prioritize Existing Business Retention and Growth
- Address Housing, Equity, and Poverty-Related Issues as part of economic development
- Prioritize Pro-Active Marketing Efforts to address negative perceptions of the schools and safety
- Enable Better Access to Capital/Credit, Jobs, and Education
- Increase Community Pride (understanding who we are and where we are going)



### Economic Development Vision

This vision statement was created as part of this project with stakeholder input:

*“Anniston is a vibrant community, energized by a strong and diverse economic base that offers a wide variety of opportunities for the city’s young people to stay and thrive. There is a renewed sense of purpose and pride across all segments and neighborhoods in Anniston; a city where resources are distributed equitably, with good-paying jobs and high-quality housing available to support the city’s families. City Schools are regarded with pride and favor, infrastructure is maintained in good condition, and safe streets attract residents and businesses. Community health and wellness is much improved. Visitors and residents alike enjoy the city’s many assets, especially the strong network of outdoor recreational trails, environmental resources, and cultural amenities. The various economic and community development organizations, institutions, and government agencies collaborate to leverage and maximize benefits to the residents of Anniston and Calhoun County.”*

### KEY STRATEGIES

Several strategies have been developed as a component of this Comprehensive Plan to guide economic development efforts in Anniston. These strategies have emerged based on inputs such as stakeholder engagement and visioning, target industry analysis, socio-economic baseline analysis, and existing strengths and challenges that need to be addressed. The key strategies revolve around Education & Training Development, McClellan and Anniston Regional Airport Assets, Anniston’s “Health Care Services Corridor,” and Recreation Tourism Destination Marketing.

### Education and Training

Several strategies are geared specifically to strengthening and enhancing the city’s education and training offering and changing perceptions about Anniston City Schools. Negative perceptions are impacting Anniston’s ability to retain and attract residents and businesses which, in turn, impacts on the city’s fiscal health and prosperity. The impact of negative perceptions of the schools cannot be understated in relation to the city’s economic development. Therefore, several of the following strategies are geared specifically to enhancing the Schools’ image in and outside of the community. Anniston City Schools



# THE PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

has already made great strides to improve its financial position which, in turn, helps free up much-needed resources to enhance school programming, academic achievement, and facilities.

### Anniston City Schools: Partnerships with Industry

There are opportunities above and beyond existing efforts to build strong partnerships between the Anniston City Schools and local employers. Such partnerships can help enhance both student performance and the image of the schools. An improved image also helps local industry, in return, by enhancing opportunities for employee retention and recruitment and by improving school programs. Several examples of areas where partnerships can be established include the following:

- *Facility Enhancement.* There are opportunities for private industry to sponsor improvements to local school facilities. Improvements to the facilities can help enhance school image, especially when residents see visible changes underway. Improvements are needed, for example, to facilities at the middle school. While the campus is well-maintained, it feels isolated from the rest of the city, and buildings offer a stark interior environment for educating children.
- *Program Development.* Anniston City Schools has the opportunity to develop and market programs that are otherwise unavailable in the county as a way of creating unique assets and resources that help to enhance the breadth of educational offerings, while also improving the image of the schools. Private industry can collaborate with the local schools in the same way that they do with community college systems to design and develop programs, especially those that offer hands-on experience and training, mentorships, and apprenticeships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) occupations. Such efforts can also help industry market their employment opportunities to young, local audiences who may otherwise not consider future jobs within those industries.
- *Sports & Recreation Sponsorship.* Sports sponsorships are not unusual, and can help enhance community spirit, pride, and image. Such sponsorships can also be applied to arts, culture, and academic efforts such as science fairs and spelling contests.

### Anniston City Schools: Magnet Program Development

- *Voc-Ed/Tech Program with Gadsden State.* Efforts to build partnerships with industry can also extend directly to development of feeder programs with Gadsden State and its Anniston Campus. Such programs might focus on vocational and tech education courses that create more job and college-ready applicants from high school level. Since Gadsden State already coordinates with local employers, there is the opportunity to plug into and extend existing vocational training programs into pre-college grades.

### Anniston Public Relations Campaign

A pro-active public relations effort is strongly recommended for the City to address perceptions of schools and safety in Anniston. Such efforts would be developed in partnership with the Anniston City Schools to ensure that there is a consistent, appropriate, and accurate message.

- *Real Estate Bus Tours.* A target audience for this campaign is the real estate community, where some brokers and others may steer prospective home buyers away from Anniston because of negative perceptions of schools and, to a lesser extent, safety. Such steering can rob the schools and the city of needed tax revenue and resources that are generated by middle class homeowners. Even where there is no such steering, there is nevertheless a need to update the real estate community on progress that is being made by the Anniston City Schools to improve their financial position and performance. Some communities sponsor an annual "Bus Tour" for real estate brokers, developers, and investors to showcase homes, assets, and neighborhoods, and to discuss the positive progress being made to address key challenges. Often, the tour can be billed around a new development of some kind, but if there is little new development, then the completion of the Comprehensive Plan may provide an excellent opportunity for discussion.
- *Employee Recruitment.* The City should also partner and work with local companies on their employee recruitment efforts. As part of that effort, the City can produce printed and virtual materials showcasing Anniston's homes, schools, downtown, neighborhoods, history, recreation amenities, and other features. Again, the City would partner with the Schools to communicate key achievements and progress accurately and positively.
- *News Stream.* The City can also support efforts by the Schools to produce content for



## KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

local television and cable channels, newspapers and social media that keep the Schools in the forefront of local news and to counter negative media coverage. Partnerships with regional media companies could also be developed to include internships with Anniston's high school students to mirror other industry partnerships. Anniston is a hub for information services, and there can be a role for the Schools in producing content and disseminating positive information, while creating new educational experiences for their students.

### McClellan: Strengthen the Training Hub

McClellan has over some years now carved out a niche as a center for training, with the home of the Department of Homeland Security's Center for Domestic Preparedness. This function could be expanded to include more training activities, which bring visitors to Anniston who, in turn, yield expenditures and benefits to the local economy. Nearby JSU already offers degrees in Emergency Management, complimenting McClellan's potential. Training related to several existing areas could be expanded or deepened, while new areas of training could be added, as follows:

- *Emergency Management / First Responder / CDP.* The facility already serves as a base for emergency management and first responder training. This activity could be expanded and deepened to include facilities and programming to accommodate first responders, as well as training that utilizes some of the same skills required for first responders. Examples might include utility line workers. Dade County, Georgia is home to the Southeast Lineman Training Center. While it would be unwise to compete against this sister facility, there may be opportunities to provide



*One potential new use for McClellan might be training for electrical linemen, which could build upon the other existing training programs and facilities in this area.*

Source: Wikimedia - public domain

local area or in Alabama. Other examples might relate more specifically to storm-related disaster relief and training, especially as extreme storm events increase in frequency and demand grows for such training, along with support activities such as temporary housing, storage, food distribution and other activities. Partnerships could be built with specific state or federal agencies, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to create a larger and more focused hub for emergency training on site.

- *Mountain Biking & Other Recreational Racing.* The site also currently accommodates bicycle racing activities such as the NICA "Melee at McClellan" and endurance running events such as "McClellan Madness." As of several years ago, racing attendance was growing at a rate of about 15% per year, according to the McClellan Development Authority (MDA). There are opportunities to expand not just the racing activity, but also training and instruction for recreational bicycle racing at the site. Having a more permanent racing center on site might draw visitors worldwide for specialized trails and instruction. Higher-quality lodging on or off-site could be geared to the racing enthusiast, much in the same way that ski lodges become hubs of activity in the mountain states.
- *Environmental Remediation.* Because of McClellan's history as an Army base with significant ordinance (and perhaps some unexploded ordinance) still on site, proximity to similar conditions at Anniston Army Depot, and the city's history with PCB and lead contamination, there are opportunities to draw scientists and environmental workers to McClellan and Anniston in general for training, workshops, and hands-on activities related to brown fields and environmental remediation. Federal brown field and Department of Defense (DoD) grants may be available to support some of this training activity, but a fee structure can also be developed to generate earned income. Proximity to environmental resources such as Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge can anchor environment training related more to conservation and species protection.

### Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development

There is both a need and an opportunity to expand on Anniston and the region's resources for training in entrepreneurship and small business development. Entrepreneurship opportunities can be tied to local workforce development initiatives, as well as to downtown and neighborhood revitalization in Anniston. The rapid growth of online business and communication systems has given rise to new opportunities for local entrepreneurs and small businesses that can access regional, national and global markets, regardless of An-



# THE PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

niston's immediate market demographics. Several concepts for expanding these opportunities are explored below.

- *Business Incubator.* Downtown Anniston is ripe for a small business incubator facility that could help nurture, mentor and grow small businesses that support revitalization. Incubators are not just buildings that offer reduced rent and low-cost services. They are programs that (in addition to real estate) provide support in the form of mentorships and partnerships, access to capital, business management and technical training, marketing services, shared technology/equipment and supply chain, and other benefits to help grow a business until it is ready to “graduate” and succeed in operating on its own. Newer incubators also incorporate social spaces that encourage collaboration between different types of businesses and technologies. Underutilized buildings could be used as a starting point for creating a space for an incubator, but as the program grows, there may be opportunities for expansion or for creation of a new facility to accommodate these programs.
- *Partnerships with JSU, Gadsden State & Private Industry.* Partnerships between the City, local schools, and area institutions of higher education (Jacksonville State University/CEBR and Gadsden State) should be strengthened to collaborate on projects such as school program development, incubator/entrepreneurship (such as through the area/JSU's Small Business Development Center and JSU's Center for Manufacturing Excellence and its applied engineering science program), and small business development. Training and mentorships can be supplied through partnerships with these institutions, as well as with private industry. Companies may also have an interest in contributing or sponsoring space or equipment, particularly where there are Downstream opportunities to establish a larger pool of local suppliers and contractors.
- *Industrial Business Targets.* There are several target industry opportunities that are well-suited to local entrepreneurial and small business development. Such opportunities include, in particular, the construction trades, transportation services, wood products manufacturing (e.g., cabinetmaking), and wholesale trade. For construction trades, the City could partner with Gadsden State and local contractors on training programs and provide access to an expansive material and equipment supply pool. Shared equip-

ment and supply resources can help significantly reduce the cost of operating a specialty trades business and increase competitiveness because of economies of scale. The City could also establish a program for contracting with small businesses and specialty trades operators through a program to rehabilitate and revitalize existing housing in target neighborhoods. Small, independent homeowners and investors could gain memberships in this pool to access contractors for maintenance and rehabilitation of individual rental properties. Such access, again, provides cost savings advantages to the small investor, while increasing opportunities for revitalization of the city's housing stock. Such pool programs can generate multiple benefits, including training and entrepreneurial development of city residents, housing rehabilitation, neighborhood revitalization, and cost savings to local homeowners and investors. Similar economies of scale can be achieved through a City program for transportation services, for example, or wholesale trade. Thus, a shared resources program (or “Co-Op,” if preferred) would enable the City to enhance economic development opportunities for its local residents and help revitalize existing communities, particularly in divested areas of West Anniston.



*Building construction training*  
Source: Humber College

- *Downtown Targets.* Retail market work has been completed separately from this Comprehensive Plan, which should identify targeted and unique retail, restaurant, entertainment, and personal service business opportunities based on projected market potentials for downtown Anniston. Aside from these opportunities and associated business development strategies, the target industry analysis conducted for this plan identified several opportunities that could be focused in the Downtown area. Among these are IT/media/communication services, administrative support services, and arts and culture.

Opportunities are increasing for entrepreneurs and small businesses to access global markets beyond a dependency on stagnant local demographics. Therefore, every effort should be made to provide access and training to existing Downtown merchants on the use of web-based portals for growing and accessing a broader market base. This is especially critical for independent local businesses that are otherwise highly dependent



## KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

on the local market and do not access regional or national marketing and supply chains. Regardless of the type of business, access to high-speed internet, website development, training and marketing is essential for today's independent businesses. Main Street Anniston is no doubt making progress on this front, so this is only a recommendation to continue to expand such access. Anniston has competitive advantages for and a concentration of media activities and information services. This sector has declined nationally as print media has succumbed to competition from web-based services. However, there are certainly opportunities for growth in information technology businesses and in businesses that utilize web-based technologies to expand their market. Similarly, Anniston has the opportunity to recruit and expand its administrative services business base since such businesses are less dependent on immediate interstate access and are in need of a large available "pink-collar" labor force. Finally, Anniston's Civil Rights heritage and local arts and cultural activities can be leveraged to grow tourism and local entrepreneurial opportunities that draw audiences from a larger destination market base.

### McClellan, Airport & Industrial Asset Marketing

There are additional opportunities for the marketing and leveraging of key Anniston-area assets for economic development, including McClellan Industrial Park and the Anniston Regional Airport. Target industrial marketing, business recruitment and business expansion opportunities have been identified through analysis and engagement as part of this planning effort. These targets are identified below along with opportunities for partnerships that can help increase the resources available to the City for marketing and development of these assets.

#### Target Markets

Several business development opportunities have been identified for the use of McClellan Industrial Park and associated lands and for the 600 acres of additional land associated with the Anniston Regional Airport. These targets are oriented to existing strengths and uses, but also to potentials identified through the target industry analysis.

- *Repair & Maintenance Services.* Both McClellan and the airport, in particular, are well-positioned to take advantage of repair and maintenance services associated with trans-

portation and other equipment. Some of this activity already exists at the airport. The airport's location between Atlanta and Birmingham allows it to operate as a supplier for aircraft maintenance, training, and freight operations that would otherwise take up expensive real estate in those larger markets. Clearly, more analysis would need to be conducted to assess the full extent of this opportunity, but the airport's location and positioning in the region, along with the local skills base in metalworking, forging, and transportation equipment manufacturing, help support such activities.



*Anniston's strategic location between Atlanta and Birmingham provides potential opportunities for it to become an airplane maintenance hub.*

Source: Wikimedia - public domain

- *Environmental Testing, Training & Remediation Services.* As discussed earlier, there are opportunities to expand McClellan's existing role in training services to include environmental and remediation training. In addition, such activities could be broadened to include business development relating to environmental testing and remediation services, above and beyond training, for some of the same reasons as those provided previously: existing history of contamination and brownfield plumes, central location, active military depot, access to environmental resources, available workforce and capacity, etc.
- *First Responder & Other Emergency Management Training.* As noted earlier, McClellan already provides a hub for first responder training through Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and associated activities. There are opportunities to expand and diversify this training envelope (such as through utility industry training), and to incorporate the Anniston Regional Airport, especially for aviation-related disaster training, supply and support, and access.
- *Recreational Sports Training.* Again, expanded training opportunities mentioned earlier for McClellan include recreational mountain bike training and expanded or unique facilities to accommodate more intensive and regular training ac-



# THE PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

tivity. Coordination could be strengthened to further incorporate the Anniston Regional Airport as a hub for charter flights to bring training participants to the city.

- *Transportation Services.* The city's competitive advantages for transportation services business development were highlighted previously, and opportunities were identified for shared training and equipment services through a City Co-Op or pool as one approach to small business and entrepreneurship development. The airport could play an important role as a hub for transportation services, adding value to the existing aviation services anchored at the airport.
- *Specialized Manufacturing.* There are several opportunities that have been identified for manufacturing that could be accommodated at the airport or McClellan Industrial Park, including production of wood products such as cabinets, furniture, and building materials. However, small businesses that need access to the inner-city labor force are better located at sites in or near residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors, such as West 15th Street, and as anchors for revitalization. Since many wood product manufacturers, such as cabinetmakers, do not generate significant effluent, they are often good neighbors for residential communities.

The airport, in particular, provides a good location for high-value, perishable, and Just-in-Time (JIT) goods production, assembly, and/or distribution. High-value manufacturing companies making products such as jewelry and specialized medical equipment that are shipped in small quantities or packets will often utilize air freight services for distribution of their goods. Anniston offers a unique advantage with a workforce skilled in metalworking and forging (which can be applied to production of certain high-value goods), coupled with an exceptional airport asset located within a short distance from Atlanta, but without Atlanta traffic. Similarly, producers of perishable goods such as fruits and vegetables or pharmaceuticals that must be refrigerated will often locate near airports to access air freight services. There are fewer existing opportunities in Anniston to cluster perishable goods production, but it is an opportunity that could be explored further. Other manufactured goods producers, such as medical equipment or replacement parts manufacturers, that require JIT shipping are also important users of air freight services.

### Strengthening Partnerships

There are opportunities to further expand partnerships to develop and market these McClellan and airport assets. Examples of where partnerships and collaboration could be increased are provided below based, in part, on stakeholder input.

- *Zoning & Regulatory Clarity.* The relationship between the City and the McClellan Development Authority (MDA) could be strengthened, particularly as it relates to clarity on zoning and regulation within the boundaries of the MDA asset. This issue was identified through focus group discussions as impacting on the fast-tracking and approval of redevelopment opportunities at McClellan and is being addressed, to an extent, through this Comprehensive Plan.
- *Training Facility Development, Marketing & Promotion Consortium.* There has been an emphasis in this strategy on training activities as a form of economic development that will bring visitors to Anniston and increase expenditures and economic impacts on the city. Thus, there are opportunities for the City to collaborate with MDA and other entities, including recreation organizations, on training facility development, marketing and promotion of these assets. Fortunately, MDA recently hired a Marketing Specialist.
- *Regional Transportation & Commuter Services.* The City could also take a lead in establishing a collaborative effort with Jacksonville, Oxford, Calhoun County, and East Alabama Works on strengthening the metro area's transportation and commuter services. Since a large share of Anniston's residents commute out of the city to work, and a comparably large share commute into Anniston from other parts of the county and region, there is a need for better coordination and services. Improved services could help reduce the opportunity costs and actual cost of commuting, which cuts into overall disposable income and reduces expenditures and tax revenues in the city and region. Since Anniston has a competitive advantage as a hub for transportation services, it is natural that the City take a lead in working with the appropriate agencies to increase and focus hubs for service in Anniston.

### Upgrading Existing Industrial Parks & Buildings

There is a need for upgrading of existing industrial infrastructure in the city to accommodate growth and development. Much of the new industrial development in Calhoun County is in industrial parks and sites located outside of Anniston. EDC operates McClellan Industrial Park, which has 200 acres for industrial development out of 2,000 acres total,



## KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

although the facility may need to update its strategic plan for development. MDA provided six acres out of 38 under a development agreement for commercial real estate. The Oxford South Industrial Park (formerly McIntosh) has 169 acres in Oxford, with about 130 acres remaining for development. The five-year old park includes a 60,000 square foot speculative warehouse building (“cold dark shell”) available for occupancy. The Oxford West Industrial Park, also located in Oxford, has another 130 acres available for industrial development. This newer park does not have development as of yet. Jacksonville and Piedmont also have some industrial development areas, albeit more limited. Anniston’s 1970s-era, CDBG-funded Greenbrier Industrial Park has roughly 15 acres remaining out of 200 acres total. Greenbrier has some manufacturing activity, but is not actively marketed. The Anniston Industrial Park is another 1970s-era park that is City-owned and fully-developed with manufacturing and other industrial users, including New Flyer. Recently, \$6.0 million in RAISE grant funding helped pay for paving of roads in the park. While these parks could continue to benefit from upgrading and improvements, there are also brown field sites and older industrial buildings around the city that could be upgraded and marketed more pro-actively for light industrial or administrative/office uses.

### Anniston’s “Health Services Corridor”

This plan has identified an existing health services cluster in Anniston, with a particular focus in the Leighton/Christine Avenue corridors. This strategy recommends that the City focus on promoting this “Health Services Corridor” as an economic development tool for attracting and retaining businesses and residents in the city. This cluster could benefit from marketing and promotion, business recruitment, partnership development, skills development, and networking to ultimately add jobs and tax base to - and enhance the image of - the city of Anniston.

#### Strategic Plan

The City should initiate a strategic planning process focused on the development of a Health Services Corridor and creation of dedicated resources for marketing and management of the health services cluster. Such a process would engage with existing stakeholders in the cluster, as well as institutions and agencies that can help leverage the cluster’s development. Elements of the plan to consider would include the following.

- *Anchor Regional Medical Center (RMC) Medical Facilities.* Stringfellow Memorial & RMC Anniston are the key anchors in this cluster, as noted previously in this plan. Thus, the City’s relationship with RMC and these institutions should be cultivated and strengthened as a first step toward creating or strengthening this health care cluster.
- *Other Existing Components.* As noted previously, the cluster already has a substantial base of health care-related entities and service providers, such as medical professionals’ offices, behavioral health facilities, public health clinics, pharmacies, home health care companies, medical supply wholesalers, medical laboratories, and others. The full envelope of potential “members” in the health services industry cluster should be inventoried as part of the initial steps towards creating and strengthening this cluster. Again, the cluster includes not only medical offices and service providers, but also businesses such as retailers and wholesalers who supply health care products, educational institutions (including local schools) that providing training in health care services and business development, technical service providers, Anniston Regional Airport (medical airlift services), real estate services such as hospital and medical building cleaners or office brokers, administrative services such as billing agencies, health insurance brokers, medical device manufacturers, and others across all economic sectors. Once an inventory and contact list is assembled, then outreach to all businesses would be accomplished to initiate a visioning and engagement process to develop a structure to market and promote the corridor. That structure might be in the form of a dedicated staff person of an existing economic development entity or even a new non-profit organization.

#### Health Care Target Industries

The City would also work with the cluster organization structure to recruit targeted businesses that would help add value, fill gaps, and strengthen the overall cluster. Such businesses might include the following, among others, to be determined as part of a more specific cluster strategy that the entity would develop:

- Additional medical services (to fill gaps)
- Insurance agencies
- Testing laboratories
- Home health care, etc.
- Nursing & residential/graduated care
- Behavioral care facilities
- Administrative support services (e.g., billing, claims, etc.)
- Medical apparatus/parts manufacturing (airport-related JIT opportunities)



# THE PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### Partnership for Marketing & Workforce Development

A partnership would be formed between City Schools, RMC, JSU, East Alabama Works, Gadsden State, and the County's EDC on workforce development and training to support the growth and strengthening of the Anniston Health Care Corridor. This partnership might function under the auspices of the new non-profit or staffed under an existing entity as described above, depending on the output of an engagement and strategic planning process. The entity would also work to promote and market the corridor as a tool for economic development. The City's role might include the creation of amenities, streetscaping and identity branding elements, along with business incentives to help in promoting the corridor as a special district. The creation of an incubator would fit well with this concept, even perhaps as a health services-focused business incubator (if there is sufficient capital and entrepreneurial support for such a program).



*The Memphis Medical District has done an effective job of packaging and branding itself through efforts such as the creation of a logo.*



*RMC (above) and Stringfellow (below)  
Anniston Star – Stephen Gross*



### **Recreation Tourism Destination**

The opportunity for expanding Anniston's emerging role as a recreation tourism destination has been identified as well. Anniston can build on its existing assets and resources, and increase opportunities through facilities development, marketing, partnerships and promotion. Recreation tourism will generate economic benefits to the city in the form of jobs, business income, and tax base. Equally important, however, is the impact that amenity development could have on improving the city's image and enhancing its appeal to prospective businesses and residents, many of whom have chosen where to relocate during the COVID Pandemic based, in part, on the availability of recreation amenities. Furthermore, the development of recreation amenities can engage directly with distressed neighborhoods to enhance their amenity value (and thus their investment value) and increase their residents' access to parks and recreational opportunities. The City has already engaged to some extent in promoting recreation tourism through collaborations with several entities, but there are opportunities to increase, diversify, and strengthen these efforts. Assets are identified below, as well as related strategic recommendations.

### Anchor Attractions

As emphasized throughout this plan, the Anniston area benefits from a number of natural and cultural assets, including the following (among others):

- Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge
- Choccolocco Wildlife Management Area
- Coldwater Mountain
- McClellan resources
- Talladega National Forest
- Civil Rights heritage sites (bus depot, etc.)
- Anniston Museum of Natural History, Berman Museum, Longleaf Botanical Gardens, etc.

The City has reached out to representatives of these assets and worked to create stronger relationships and collaborations with key management entities. There may be opportunities to expand the offerings at some of these facilities and create greater synergies through programmatic collaborations.

### Trail & Greenway System and Trailhead Development

Efforts have been made to create or expand on the trail systems that weave through the Anniston area, such as the Chief Ladiga Trail (connecting to the Silver Comet in Georgia),





## KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

McClellan trails, and various specialized and multi-use trails. These trails are discussed elsewhere in the plan (see page 70), and efforts to fund and expand these trails should continue. In addition to those efforts, it is recommended that the City purpose creation of a series of trail heads and venues that can be connected into the emerging trail network in order to increase spin-off economic impacts in the community and help spur neighborhood and Downtown revitalization. Trail heads might be co-located with Civil Rights heritage sites and near Downtown and neighborhood parks or other amenities, including visitor centers and bicycle and/or coffee shops if the market can support it.

### Recreation Events, Competitions & Training

The development of specialized training and event facilities was discussed earlier in this plan section as a strategy for McClellan, but it could also apply to other sites around Anniston. The feasibility of creating unique, regional or national bicycling and other sporting facilities should be explored further, particularly as they relate to the core bicycling and recreation tourism theme. Additional competitions and events should be added to the calendar to bring increased exposure and income to Anniston. Cultural events could be added to the recreational events to extend participants' overnight stays and bring more non-participants and spectators to town. Events that are geared to the recreational tourist, but not necessarily sporting enthusiasts, should also be included since these events will tend to bring more seniors and families with disposable income and time for non-event activities, shopping, and leisure activities.

### Resort & Training Facility Development

As noted before, there is the opportunity for developing more intensive training facilities for recreational and sporting events. Associated with this use, and with the broader recreational tourism mentioned above, is the opportunity for development of a recreation resort that caters to those who are making Anniston a destination for such events and for outdoor recreational opportunities. A market and feasibility study is recommended to examine the potential for training facilities and associated resort or other lodging development in the city.

### Positive Re-Branding of Anniston Area

Recreation tourism and amenity development provide the perfect opportunities for An-

niston to enhance its positive image both within the region and beyond. The efforts to increase physical trail capacity, develop new training or competition facilities and lodging and enhance connectivity with Downtown and neighborhoods should all be tied closely into a consistent communication strategy that highlights Anniston's increasing amenity value and attractiveness as a place to live, work, and recreate.



*The annual Alabama Cycling Classic event checks multiple boxes to expand upon Anniston's role as a recreation tourism destination, including recreation events and competitions, and positive re-branding of the Anniston area. Anniston Star – Trent Penny*



# THE PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## IMPLEMENTATION ROLE FOR THE CITY

There are a number of local, state, and federal agencies, institutions, and organizations engaged at various levels in the Anniston area's economic development, as noted in the Baseline Economic Assessment (Appendix B). This portion provides some guidance on implementation of strategies and actions recommended in the previous portion of this economic development section, with respect to the City's role specifically and opportunities for collaboration.

### Coordination and Collaboration

An important role for the City and its economic development staff is to coordinate and collaborate with other area agencies and institutions, as follows:

- *Establish an Inter-Agency/Jurisdiction Committee and Meet Regularly*
- *Collaborate on Regional Transportation Projects*
  - Recreational trails (continue implementation of the Calhoun Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan)
  - Airport infrastructure
  - Commuter transit
- *Identify Projects for Possible IDB Financing, AL Power, and Other Funding*
  - Destination outdoor recreation facilities/trailheads
  - Amtrak station environment
  - Speculative industrial building(s) at the Anniston Regional Airport
  - Upgrading of existing industrial areas (where warranted)
  - Brown field remediation (e.g., through EPA grants)
- *Provide Input to / Collaboration with MDA on Target Industries for McClellan, including the recreation concept*

### Health Services Corridor

This strategy has recommended the promotion and development of Anniston's Health Services Corridor. Key actions to implement this concept are summarized below:

- *Inventory Medical and Health-Care Related Businesses, as well as those in supply-chain, retail and associated industries.*
- *Coordinate with the Primary Institutions and Various "Members" of the Corridor*

- *Create a Strategic Plan for the Corridor*
- *Help Establish an Appropriate Structure for Marketing, Promotion, Business Recruitment, and Development*
- *Establish a Health Services Corridor Special District*
  - Plan and fund identity marketing branding, streetscaping, and physical elements for promotion
  - Incentives for business recruitment, such as tax abatement on personal property and medical equipment
  - Collaborate with JSU, Gadsden State, City schools, and medical institutions on workforce development, mentoring, and associated programs available for businesses located in the district (this might include an on-site job or training center)
  - Collaborate with institutions on the establishment of an incubator (which could have a medical services business niche)
  - Help identify potential sites and buildings for business recruitment, including anchor uses

### Airport Industrial Development

The opportunity to leverage Anniston's airport for economic development has been identified, along with several key strategies. Recommended actions for implementing this concept are provided below:

- *Complete a More Detailed Assessment of Industrial Development Market Potential at the Anniston Regional Airport*
- *Complete a broader Airport Area Master Plan* (focused on airport infrastructure to accommodate growth and land/buildings to accommodate industrial development)
- *Collaborate with Neighboring Jurisdictions and the County EDC on this Plan*
- *Create a Marketing Strategy Focused on Target Markets for Business Recruitment to the Airport*

### Marketing and Public Relations

Anniston has suffered from negative perceptions regarding its schools, safety, and other issues. As noted previously, a key strategy is to generate positive information and output on a regular basis for consumption by real estate brokers and investors, existing residents and business operators, and potential new residents and businesses.



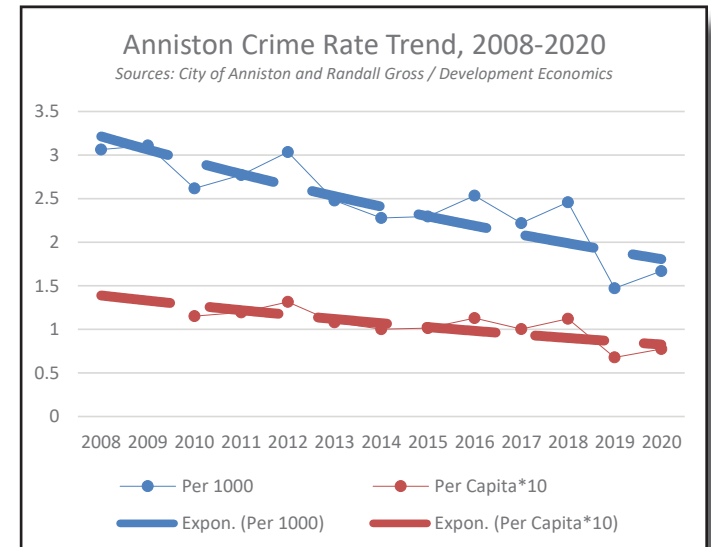
## IMPLEMENTATION ROLE FOR THE CITY (CONTINUED)

- *Collaborate with Anniston City Schools and other Local Institutions to Create a Track for Updates and Information*
  - Create a real estate education/marketing initiative focused on bus tours and regular updates on progress at schools, police, collaborations, new business initiatives, etc.
  - Create and distribute marketing materials and media content focused on Anniston's medical industries cluster/corridor
  - Create and distribute marketing materials and media content focused on regional recreation assets and Anniston's role as the hub for destination outdoor recreation tourism
- *Create a Building and Site Inventory for Business Recruitment Efforts*
  - Collaborate with property owners and real estate brokers to inventory and market sites and buildings
  - Collaborate with property owners to seek grant funding for brown field remediation and other grants to upgrade, rehabilitate, demolish, or otherwise improve the marketability of commercial and industrial properties
  - Develop direct incentive programs geared to the rehabilitation of existing properties (including a tax abatement incentive for rehabilitation and redevelopment)
- *Expand Business Recruitment Efforts Beyond Retail*
  - Expand business recruitment to include target industries defined in this plan.

As noted previously, retail is a secondary industry and its market is dependent on expanding the household, tourism, and business expenditure base that drives demand. Therefore, recruiting employment-rich businesses, overnight visitors, and residents to Anniston will generate secondary benefits in the form of retail expenditures and sales tax base.

- *Promote Destination Outdoor Recreation Tourism Opportunities*
  - Collaborate with area tourism agencies to promote recreation tourism
  - Develop Anniston's own niche marketing materials and content with a focus on adventure recreation trails and heritage tourism sites in the City (above and beyond physical improvements and facilities, as discussed previously)
  - Recruit recreation tourism operators and expand entrepreneurial opportunities for local service delivery (e.g., tour operators and guides, etc.)

*Anniston's crime rate has been falling overall since 2008, and even more rapidly since 2018. Therefore, regular updates and information that confirm this trend should be integrated into a targeted marketing effort.*



## Infrastructure Development and Enhancement

Key actions relating to infrastructure associated with leveraging economic development are summarized below (including several already noted above):

- *Seek Grants and Partners for Outdoor Recreation Master Planning*
- *Seek Grants and Partners for Recreation Trails, Trailhead, and Associated Infrastructure Development (American Trails, FHWA Recreational Trails and TAP Programs, and others)*
- *Collaborate with the County EDC/IDB on Expanding Infrastructure (including speculative building) at Anniston Regional Airport*
- *Seek Grants (e.g., CDBG, Alabama Power, Aetna Foundation, Bank of America, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, USDA Community Facilities Grants, CVS Caremark Community Grants, Finish Line Foundation, Home Depot Building Healthy Communities Grant, LL Bean Charitable Giving, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Annie E Casey Foundation, WK Kellogg Foundation, Krieger Fund, and others) and Partners for Neighborhood Revitalization Projects and Amenity Development in West Anniston and Other Distressed Areas*



# THE PLAN: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

An effective plan implementation strategy helps the community move from vision to reality. The intent of this plan section is for the plan to be successfully implemented through the actions of the City, including elected and appointed bodies (boards and commissions) and staff. Other entities and individuals will also be needed to implement the plan, including the local real estate and business community. The City's required actions may include ordinance amendments, budget approvals, capital improvements programs, and similar activities and products. Capital projects should be included in the City's capital improvements program and budgeted accordingly. Regardless of the specific responsibilities of the City government, it will take the entire Anniston community - public sector, private sector and non-profits - working together to achieve the full vision expressed in this plan. The following issues are specifically addressed here: policy revisions, primary capital projects, the plan implementation matrix and tips on applying the plan.

## **Policy Revisions**

There are multiple ways to implement a comprehensive plan, but key examples that will be needed to implement this plan for Anniston include the following policy revisions (to the extent that the City can build consensus on some of these ideas).

### Zoning Revisions

Per the recommended Place Types section of this plan, revisions will include:

- Zoning map revisions consistent with this plan's Place Types map (page 45)
- Zoning standards revisions consistent with this plan's Place Types (pages 46-61)

### Development Standards Revisions

- Adoption of the road/street type standards (pages 62-68)
- Adoption of green infrastructure regulations and/or incentives (page 74)
- Tree preservation ordinance (page 75-76)
- Steep slope criteria for land disturbance permitting process (page 76)

### Other Policy Changes

- Initiation of a recycling program with home pick-up (page 76)
- Expansion of local historic districts (pages 77-78)
- Regulation of Downtown's on-street parking with time limits (page 90)
- Adoption of financial incentives for property improvements, business development and other efforts of the private sector (pages 90, 92-93, 95-96, and 109-110)

## **Primary Capital Projects**

Capital projects of the City are another implementation method, including the following.

### Mobility Improvements

- Road and street improvements as described in the mobility section (pages 69)
- Non-motorized mobility facilities (bike lanes, greenways, sidewalks, etc. (pages 70-71)

### Other Improvements

- Infrastructure improvements related to utilizes, stormwater drainage, etc. (pages 73-74)
- Parks and recreation improvements (page 81)
- Development of new Downtown public spaces (pages 90-91)
- New City Hall located Downtown, such as the former Federal Courthouse (page 92)

## **Plan Implementation Matrix**

The Implementation Matrix on the following pages lists specific recommendations expressed throughout this plan. It provides a concise statement of the recommendation, cites the pages of the plan that provide more detail on the recommendation, indicates who will be responsible for implementation, and when the recommendation should be implemented. Below is an explanation of two of those information categories.

### Responsible Party

The "responsible party" column in the matrix identifies individuals, groups, or organizations that should implement the subject recommendation. It should not be viewed as exclusive or comprehensive in that others who have not been listed may have an interest, skill, or responsibility for assisting with the recommendation. It should also not be interpreted to be mandatory. This part of the plan should remain fluid to be responsive and nimble as needed to take advantage of opportunities and partnerships as they present themselves over the coming years. It should be noted that the alphanumeric designation of each recommendation does not reflect a sequencing of priorities.

### Time-Frames

When considering the time-frame of a particular recommendation, it is important to understand that some actions build on others and cannot occur simultaneously if they are to be effective. Therefore, actions listed as "Years 4-5" are not necessarily less important, but they often just require other actions to occur first.

# THE PLAN: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



No.	Recommendation	Page #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
<b>A. Place Types</b>				
A-1	Adopt a new zoning map to implement this plan's proposed Place Types Map.	45	City	Year 1
A-2	Adopt new zoning provisions for this plan's proposed Natural Areas.	46-47	City	Year 1
A-3	Adopt new zoning provisions for this plan's proposed Rural Areas.	48-49	City	Year 1
A-4	Adopt new zoning provisions for this plan's proposed Suburban Areas.	50-52	City	Year 1
A-5	Adopt new zoning provisions for this plan's proposed Urban Areas.	54-58	City	Year 1
A-6	Adopt new zoning provisions for this plan's proposed Special Areas.	59-61	City	Year 1
<b>B. Mobility &amp; Corridors</b>				
B-1	Adopt the Road/Street Type standards proposed in this plan.	62-68	City	Year 1
B-2	Implement the road/street improvements proposed in this plan through design and construction.	69	City, County, ALDOT	Years 2-3
B-3	Implement this plan's non-motorized mobility improvements for greenways, pathways, bikeways and sidewalks.	70-71	City, County, ALDOT	Ongoing per funding
B-4	Redevelop Quintard Ave., Noble St. and W. 15th St. for more functional and attractive streets and development.	82-87	City	Years 4-5
B-5	Manage Downtown's on-street parking to generate turnover and maximize the function of the alley system.	90	City	Year 1
<b>C. Other Physical Improvements</b>				
C-1	Implement this plan's recommended infrastructure and utility improvements over time as funding allows.	72-74	Relevant utility companies	Ongoing
C-2	Implement this plan's recommended parks and recreation improvements over time as funding allows.	81	City	Ongoing
<b>D. Natural &amp; Cultural Resources</b>				
D-1	Discourage disturbance within existing floodplains, including legal "cut and fill" to elevate buildings.	75	City	Ongoing
D-2	Add criteria to discourage the development of steep slopes as part of the Land Disturbance Permitting process.	76	City	Year 1
D-3	Adopt a tree ordinance to protect existing significant trees and avoid clear-cutting on development sites.	75-76	City	Year 1
D-4	Continue to pursue a recycling program featuring home pick-up service, including a campaign for public support.	76	City	Ongoing
D-5	Continue to work with state/federal entities on environmental remediation, including pursuing brownfield funding.	76	City	Ongoing
D-6	Integrate "green infrastructure" into development regulations, and explore reversing some channelized streams.	74	City	Year 1
D-7	Pursue the expansion of the National Register and local historic districts through a public education campaign.	78-79	City	Year 1
D-8	Continue strong support for the City's museums and gardens, including pursuing greenway connections.	79	City	Ongoing



# THE PLAN: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

No.	Recommendation	Page #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
<b>E. Downtown</b>				
E-1	Pursue more diversified funding for the Main Street Anniston program beyond sole dependence upon the City.	89	Main Street Anniston	Ongoing
E-2	Hire of a full-time Main Street Director, pursue 501c3 status, and involve more people on the committees.	89	Main Street Anniston	Year 1
E-3	Continue to pursue creating a Downtown Development Authority as a partner for Main Street Anniston.	89	City	Year 1
E-4	Continue to place a strong emphasis on Main Street Anniston's annual work plan	89	Main Street Anniston	Ongoing
E-5	Implement the mobility and corridor recommendations related to key streets, on-street parking and alleys.	82-87, 90	City, Main Street Anniston	Year 1
E-6	Continue promoting incentives for building rehabilitation, and prioritize historic buildings over new infill.	90	Main Street Anniston, City	Ongoing
E-7	Pursue the development of new public spaces in Downtown, including potential spaces on 11th and 12th Streets.	90-91	City, Main Street Anniston	Year 1
E-8	Consider financial tools for Downtown such as tax increment financing and a business improvement district.	92	City, Main Street Anniston	Years 2-3
E-9	Pursue new Downtown uses such as a hotel, new City Hall, arcade/entertainment center and housing.	92	City, Main Street Anniston	Year 1
E-10	Leverage key existing/forthcoming uses, such as the Freedom Riders sites and new Federal Courthouse.	92	Main Street Anniston	Ongoing
E-11	Conduct vigorous business development via a market analysis, marketing materials and a recruitment team.	93	Main Street program	Year 1 / Ongoing
E-12	Expand Downtown's physical footprint one block east of Quintard Avenue.	82, 93	City	Years 4-5
E-13	Promote Downtown through digital media, events, and other strategies as recommended in this plan.	93	Main Street Anniston, City	Ongoing
<b>F. Housing, Neighborhoods &amp; Economic Development</b>				
F-1	Conduct marketing and amenity development per this plan's recommendations (public relations, schools, etc.)	94-95	City, Main Street, School System	Ongoing
F-2	Implement existing housing rehabilitation through incentives, regulations, surveys and ownership initiatives.	95-96	City and others as relevant	Year 1 / Ongoing
F-3	Pursue new housing development (400-700 units) for a range of housing types and tenures per this plan.	96-97	City and others as relevant	Years 2-3 / Ongoing
F-4	Conduct neighborhood revitalization by focusing on site assemblage, amenities, schools, blight, and public safety.	97-98	City and others as relevant	Year 1
F-5	Create a robust training/education system by utilizing the schools, McClellan, JSU, small businesses and others.	100-104	City, School System and others	Year 1
F-6	Better leverage McClellan, the airport and industrial assets for economic development per this plan.	104-106	City, MDA, Airport, and others	Years 2-3
F-7	Strengthen and promote Anniston's "health services corridor" via partnerships for marketing and workforce dev.	106-107	Health care industry, City	Years 2-3
F-8	Make Anniston a recreational tourism destination by leveraging existing anchors, greenways and events/training.	107-108	City, area tourism agencies	Years 4-5



## **Future Annexations**

Determining the need for future annexations of lands that are not currently within the City boundaries is a complex issue and beyond the scope of this plan. However, it may be worth exploring the costs versus the benefits of annexing certain lands. In addition to specific peripheral lands being considered, some of the isolated “islands” within the City current boundaries might particularly have potential for beneficial annexations. It is recommended that the City contract with a firm specializing in annexation studies to explore this idea further.

## **How to Apply the Plan**

### Plan Implementation Committee

Just as the City appointed a diverse group of citizens to spearhead this comprehensive planning project through a Project Steering Committee, a similar committee should be appointed to implement the plan. The plan might be comprised with some members of the Steering Committee, along with other citizens not previously directly involved with the project. This new committee should:

- Meet periodically to review and push for ongoing implementation
- Be staffed by City planning staff to provide the needed support and implementation
- Report to the Mayor and City Council at least annually regarding plan implementation progress

### Flexibility

A Comprehensive Plan should be viewed as a living document so that its implementation can be adjusted to changing circumstances. However, regardless of revisions, the City should still stick with the plan’s Planning Principles, as listed on pages 41-42 of this plan.

### Plan Updates

As new circumstances, opportunities and challenges for Anniston arise over time, the City should periodically update the plan. It should be updated at least every five years based on new circumstances and the City’s implementation achievements for this plan. In fact, the State requires that comprehensive plans be updated at a minimum of every five years, and the community’s zoning and development regulations must be aligned with that plan.



# Anniston Comprehensive Plan





## APPENDICES

**A. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS**

**B. ECONOMIC BASELINE ANALYSIS**

**C. HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS**

**D. ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN DESIGN CONCEPTS**

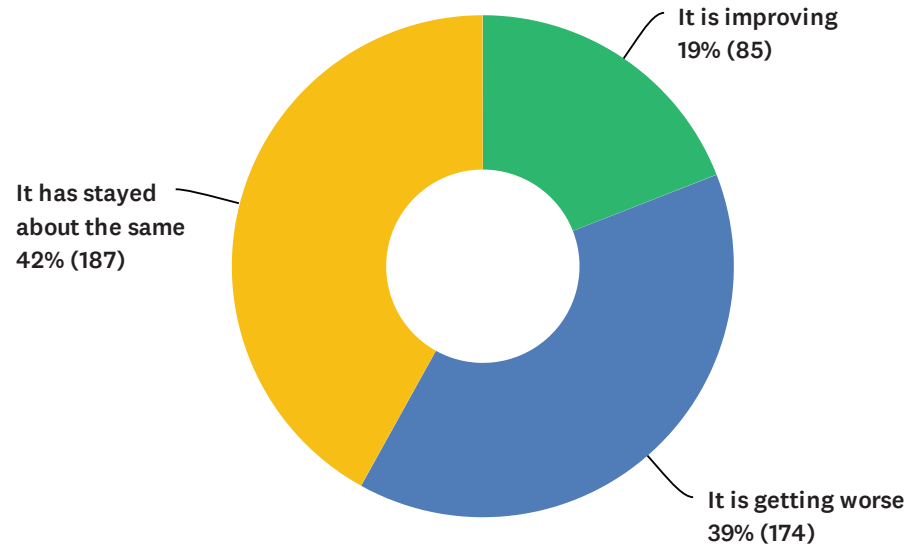
**E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

## **APPENDIX A.**

### **PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS**

Q1 How would you describe the overall quality of life for you as an Anniston resident? For example, your housing, job opportunities, education, a vibrant downtown, availability of goods and services, parks, recreation and open space, etc.

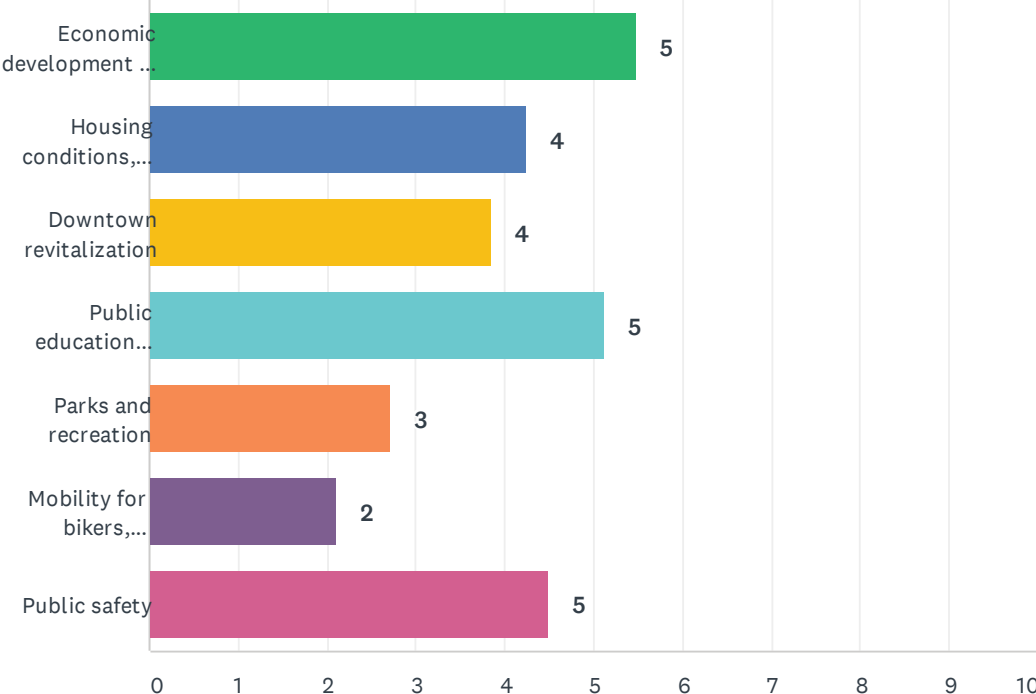
Answered: 446 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
It is improving	19%	85
It is getting worse	39%	174
It has stayed about the same	42%	187
TOTAL		446

## Q2 How would you rank the importance of the following issues for Anniston?

Answered: 447 Skipped: 2

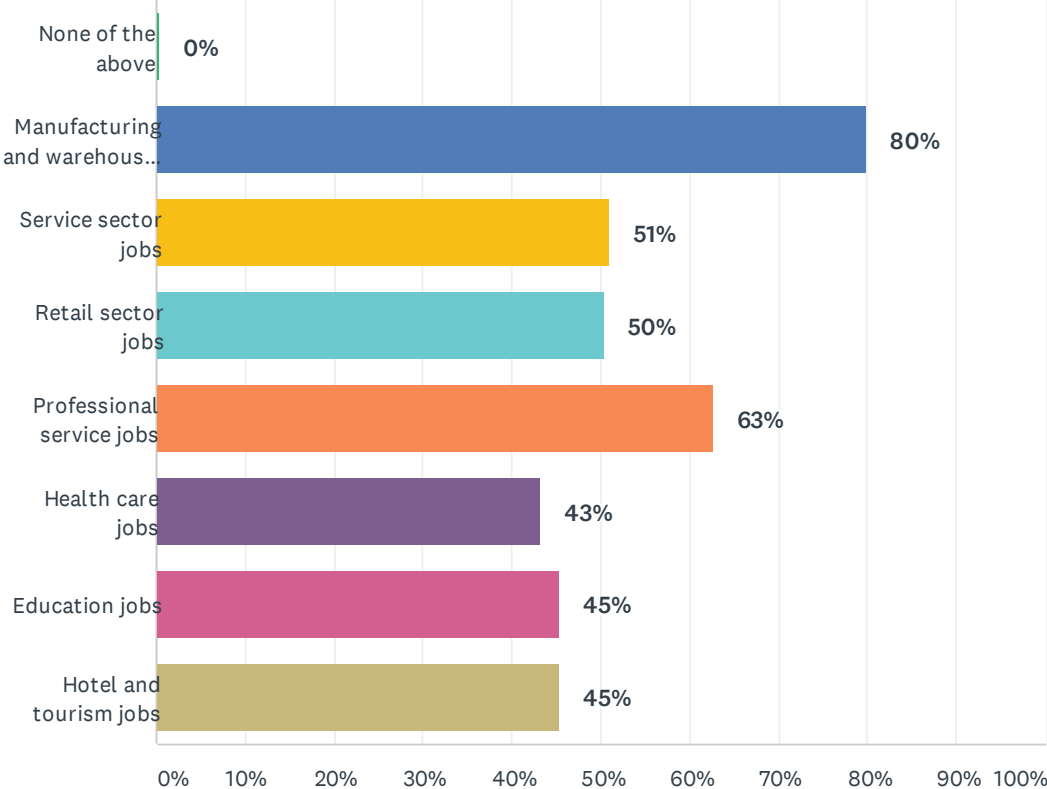


## Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
Economic development and job creation	30.02% 124	26.88% 111	21.55% 89	11.62% 48	3.87% 16	4.84% 20	1.21% 5	413	5.48
Housing conditions, choices and affordability	9.93% 41	15.01% 62	19.61% 81	23.00% 95	16.95% 70	7.75% 32	7.75% 32	413	4.24
Downtown revitalization	11.11% 46	9.42% 39	14.98% 62	17.39% 72	22.46% 93	14.01% 58	10.63% 44	414	3.85
Public education quality (elementary, middle and high school)	25.06% 105	25.30% 106	17.90% 75	14.08% 59	8.35% 35	4.30% 18	5.01% 21	419	5.12
Parks and recreation	1.21% 5	2.66% 11	6.78% 28	13.08% 54	25.42% 105	35.59% 147	15.25% 63	413	2.73
Mobility for bikers, walkers, etc. (non-motorized vehicles)	2.58% 11	3.51% 15	3.51% 15	3.98% 17	13.35% 57	25.76% 110	47.31% 202	427	2.11
Public safety	20.92% 91	16.55% 72	15.63% 68	17.24% 75	10.34% 45	7.13% 31	12.18% 53	435	4.50

Q3 What types of new jobs do you believe are needed in Anniston? (please select all that apply)

Answered: 444 Skipped: 5

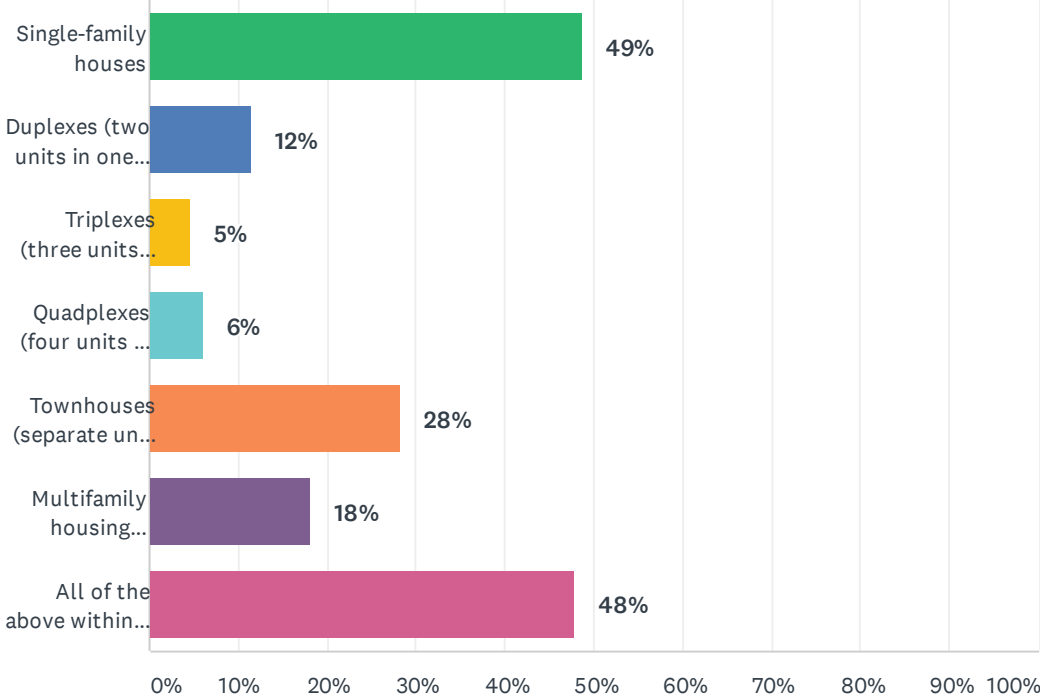


## Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	0%	2
Manufacturing and warehousing jobs	80%	355
Service sector jobs	51%	227
Retail sector jobs	50%	224
Professional service jobs	63%	279
Health care jobs	43%	192
Education jobs	45%	202
Hotel and tourism jobs	45%	202
Total Respondents: 444		

Q4 What types of housing do we need more of in Anniston? (please select all that apply)

Answered: 441 Skipped: 8



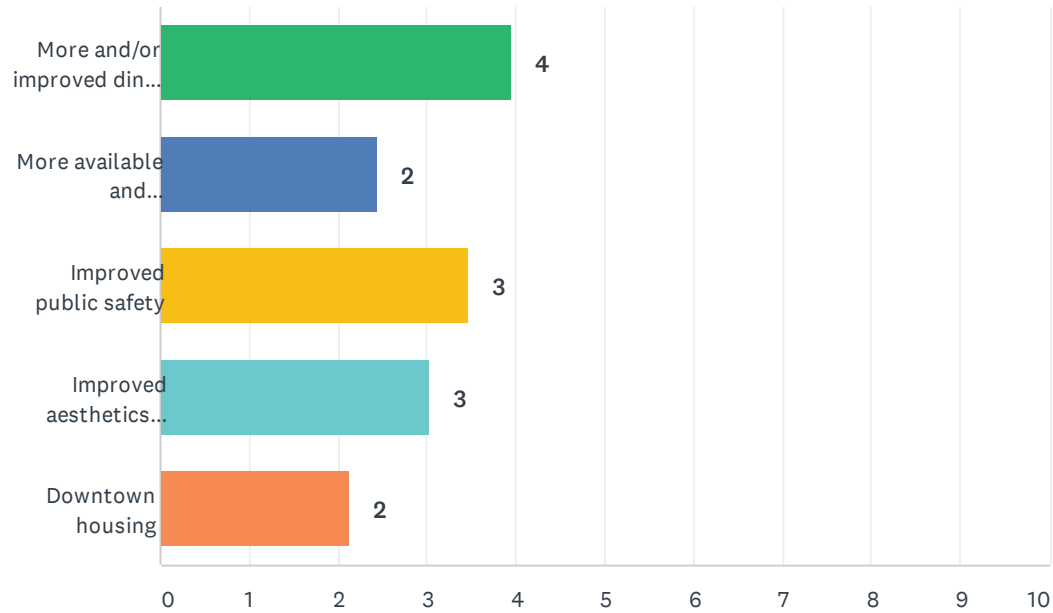


## Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single-family houses	49%	215
Duplexes (two units in one building)	12%	51
Triplexes (three units in one building)	5%	20
Quadplexes (four units in one building)	6%	27
Townhouses (separate units each on its own lot, often multi-story, with shared sidewalls)	28%	125
Multifamily housing (apartments and condominiums)	18%	80
All of the above within a master planned community	48%	211
Total Respondents: 441		

### Q5 Please rank the following needs for Downtown.

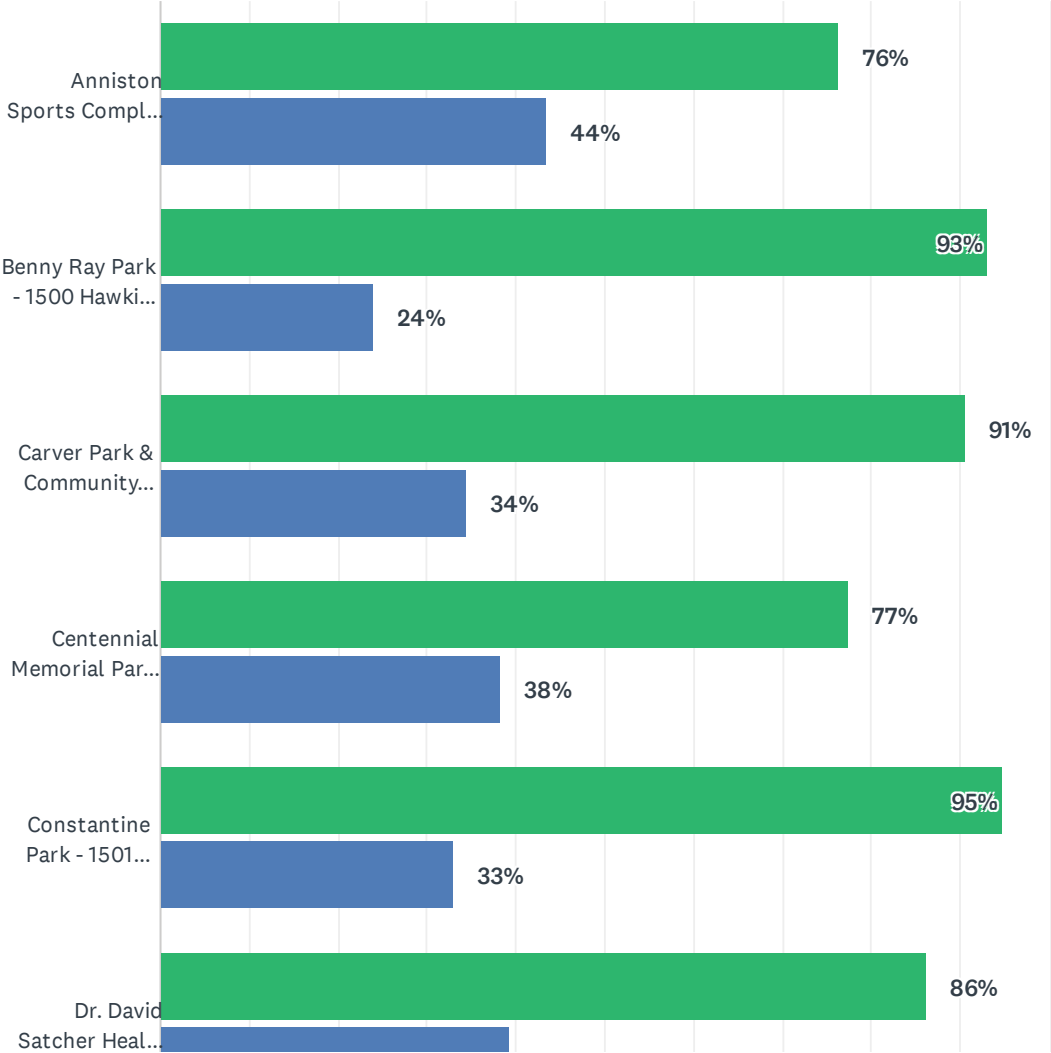
Answered: 445 Skipped: 4



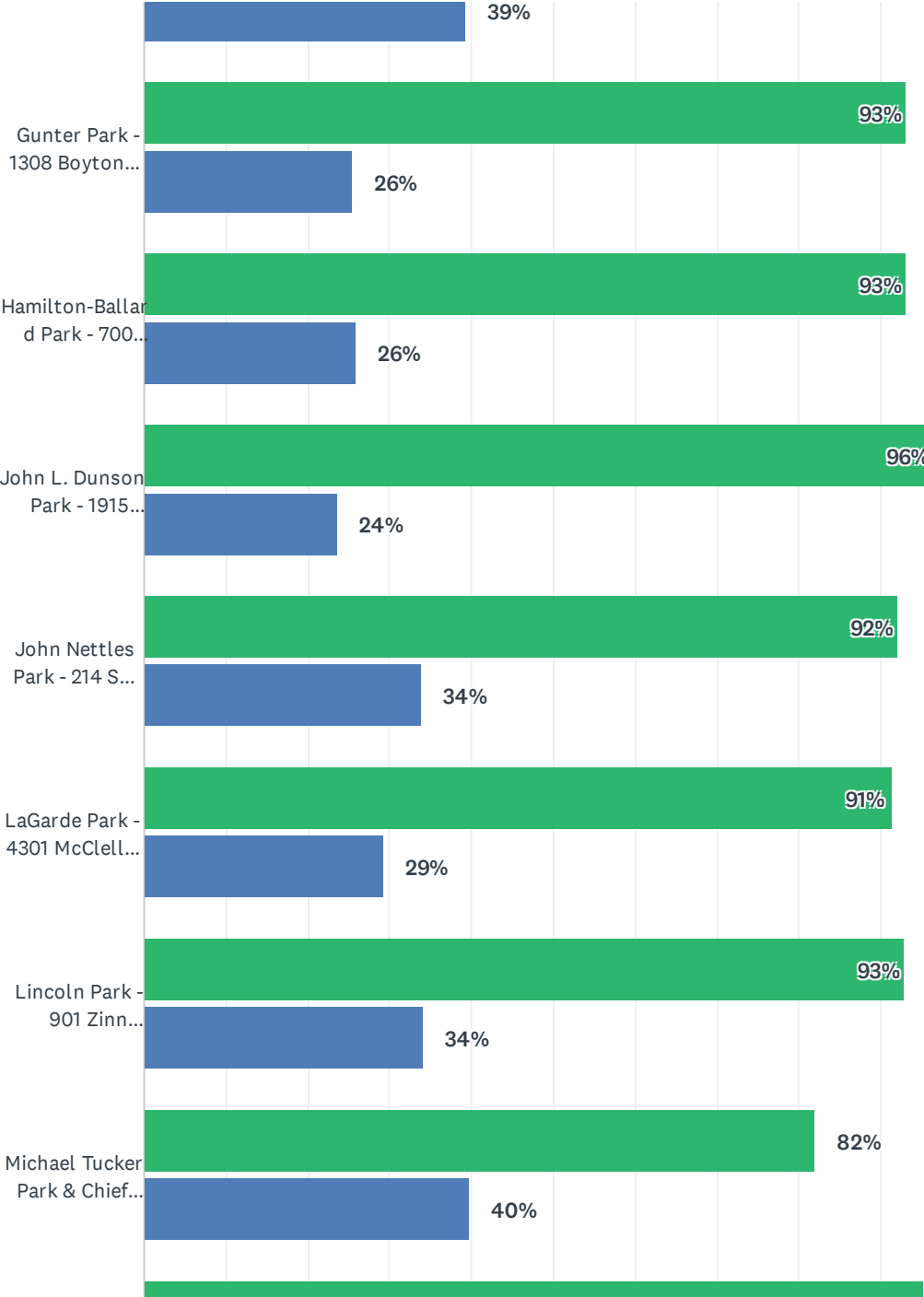
	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
More and/or improved dining and shopping	41.49% 173	28.06% 117	19.42% 81	5.76% 24	5.28% 22	417	3.95
More available and conveniently-located parking	5.10% 21	13.83% 57	23.54% 97	34.95% 144	22.57% 93	412	2.44
Improved public safety	32.62% 137	19.76% 83	20.00% 84	16.90% 71	10.71% 45	420	3.47
Improved aesthetics (landscaping, building facades, etc.)	13.57% 57	24.52% 103	24.76% 104	25.71% 108	11.43% 48	420	3.03
Downtown housing	8.51% 36	12.53% 53	13.00% 55	14.89% 63	51.06% 216	423	2.13

Q6 For each of the parks listed below, please indicate if you think improvements are needed and/or if the park needs to be physically expanded (select all that apply). If you have no opinion for one or more parks, you can leave those answers blank. Also, please provide any specific comments at the end of this question.

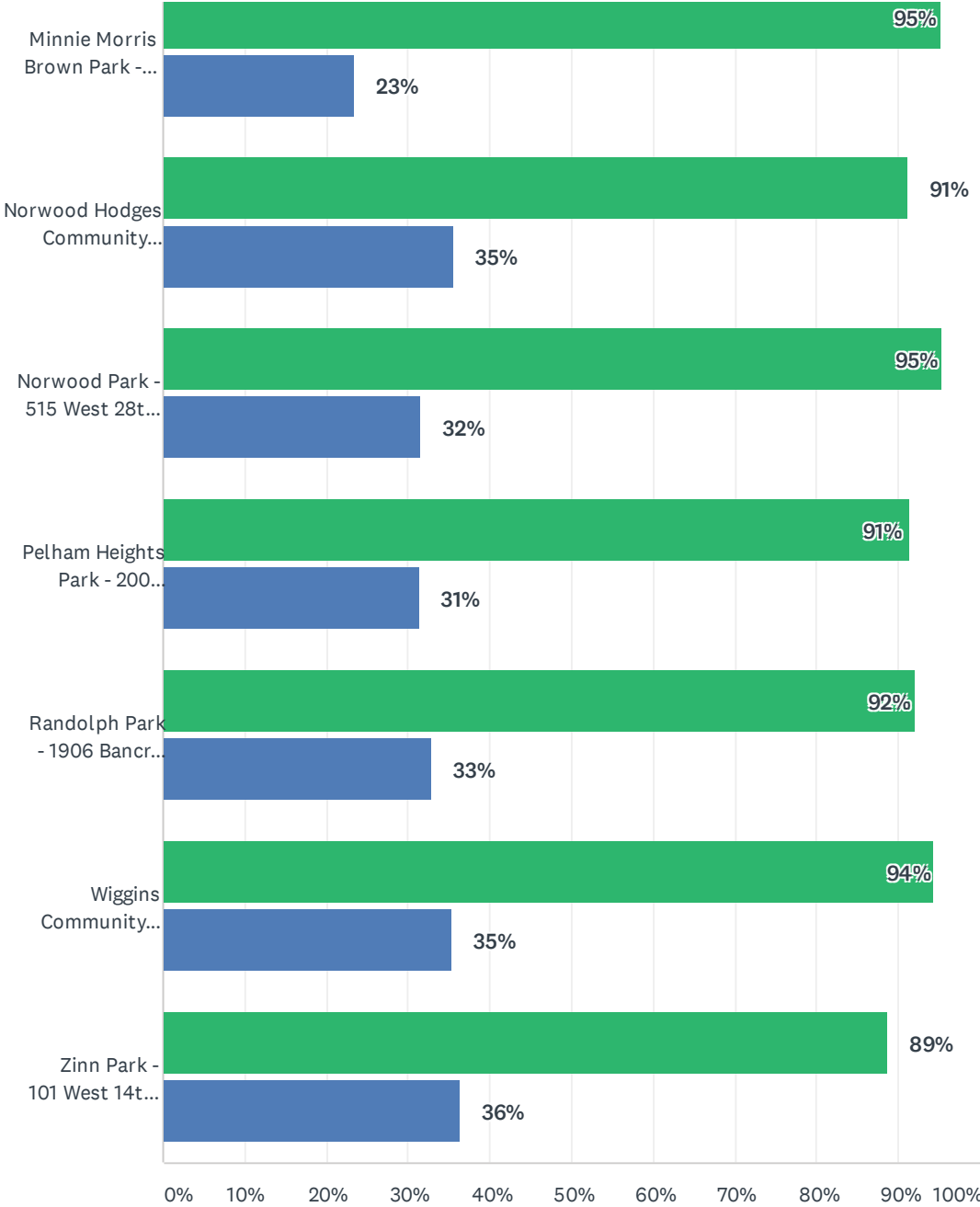
Answered: 342 Skipped: 107



# Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey



# Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey



Needs Improvements Needs Physical Expansion

# Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey

■ NEEDS IMPROVEMENTS ■ NEEDS PHYSICAL EXPANSION

## Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey

	NEEDS IMPROVEMENTS	NEEDS PHYSICAL EXPANSION	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Anniston Sports Complex - 356 Summerall Gate Road	76% 142	44% 81	186
Benny Ray Park - 1500 Hawkins Drive	93% 135	24% 35	145
Carver Park & Community Center - 720 West 14th Street	91% 184	34% 70	203
Centennial Memorial Park - 1701 Quintard Avenue	77% 123	38% 61	159
Constantine Park - 1501 Constantine Avenue	95% 178	33% 62	188
Dr. David Satcher Health & Wellness Park/Trail - roughly 15th to 17th Streets between Pine and Walnut Avenues.	86% 138	39% 63	160
Gunter Park - 1308 Boyton Avenue	93% 135	26% 37	145
Hamilton-Ballard Park - 700 Jefferson Avenue	93% 147	26% 41	158
John L. Dunson Park - 1915 Dooley Avenue	96% 135	24% 33	140
John Nettles Park - 214 S. Christine Avenue	92% 149	34% 55	162
LaGarde Park - 4301 McClellan Boulevard	91% 191	29% 61	209
Lincoln Park - 901 Zinn Parkway	93% 144	34% 53	155
Michael Tucker Park & Chief Ladiga Trail - 6514 Weaver Road	82% 136	40% 66	166
Minnie Morris Brown Park - 130 Spruce Avenue	95% 118	23% 29	124
Norwood Hodges Community Center & Park - 3125 Spring Valley Road	91% 185	35% 72	203
Norwood Park - 515 West 28th Street	95% 145	32% 48	152
Pelham Heights Park - 200 Weaver Cave Road	91%	31%	

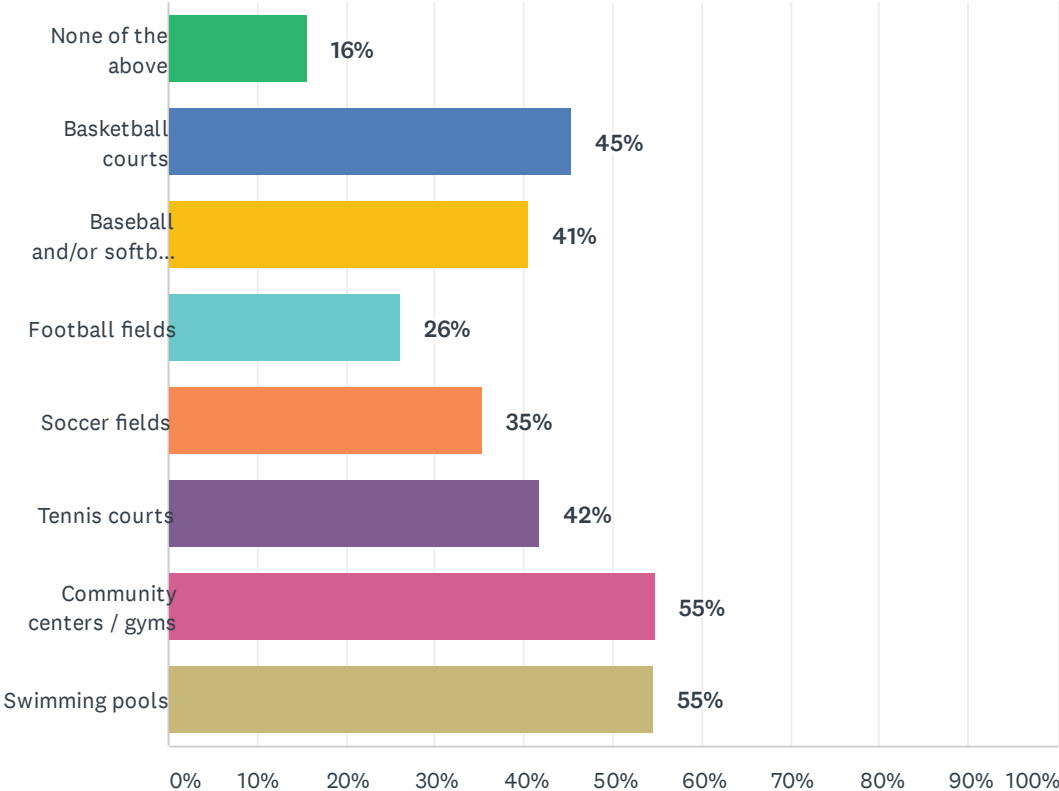
## Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey

	128	44	140
Randolph Park - 1906 Bancroft Avenue	92% 137	33% 49	149
Wiggins Community Center Park - 2202 West 17th Street	94% 149	35% 56	158
Zinn Park - 101 West 14th Street	89% 156	36% 64	176



### Q7 What specific types of recreational facilities are needed in Anniston? (please select all that apply)

Answered: 387 Skipped: 62



## Anniston Comprehensive Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	16%	61
Basketball courts	45%	176
Baseball and/or softball fields	41%	157
Football fields	26%	101
Soccer fields	35%	137
Tennis courts	42%	162
Community centers / gyms	55%	212
Swimming pools	55%	211
Total Respondents: 387		

Q9 Please tell us what you like about Anniston.

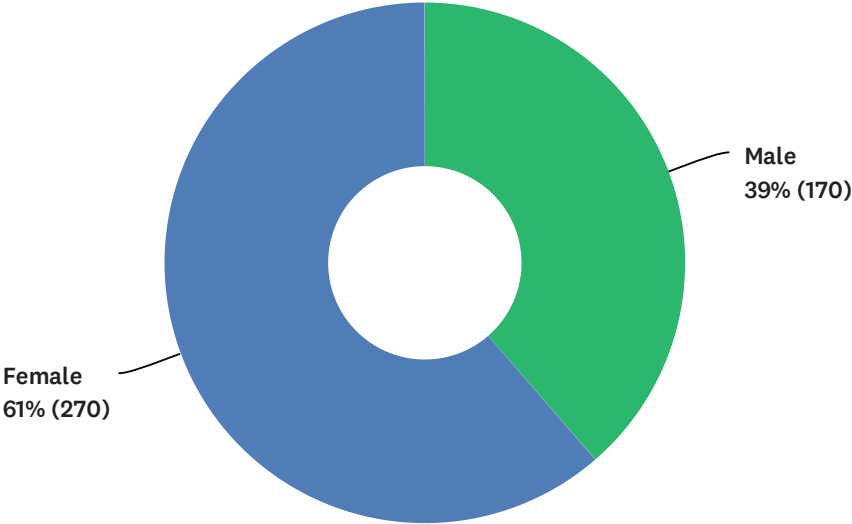
trees etc seem built make Great place live years s history work school system  
Birmingham Atlanta bike trails grow well Nothing always charm still housing keep  
Oxford nice go part mountains really Small town feel beauty restaurants  
money great business much larger cities beautiful downtown area  
location right downtown ability potential historic S life  
love Convenience need want people old Anniston  
see city local good move home thrive live everything  
community diversity area cost living history Low cost living  
Small town will feel way small museums lot care shopping many place  
neighborhood friendly McClellan love Anniston safe improve hub  
small town atmosphere natural beauty family beautiful downtown used work together  
beautiful city beautiful location enough historical quiet know close also time friendly people

Q10 Please tell us how you would like to see Anniston change.

properties revitalized home trying think incentives safe high school time West Anniston  
stop thrive homeless crime plan start children come Noble Street  
economic development many roads leadership students make services also  
system one better schools bring look area Quintard streets education  
will open clean Better school system improve families  
housing much see support better s Anniston  
development need love see city bars businesses  
neighborhoods downtown see Anniston people go  
buildings etc schools instead shops activities  
community kids places feel safe jobs walking change money  
improvement entertainment live downtown area keep Give things parking  
citizens stores great opportunities work want years public education something  
restaurants LESS care grow feel school system events take help

### Q11 What is your gender?

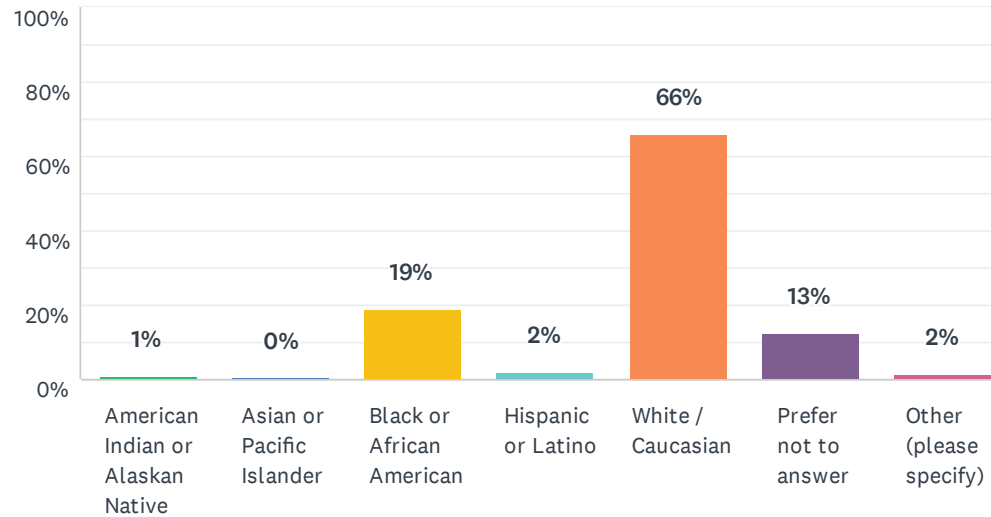
Answered: 440 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	39%	170
Female	61%	270
TOTAL		440

### Q12 What is your ethnicity? (Please select all that apply.)

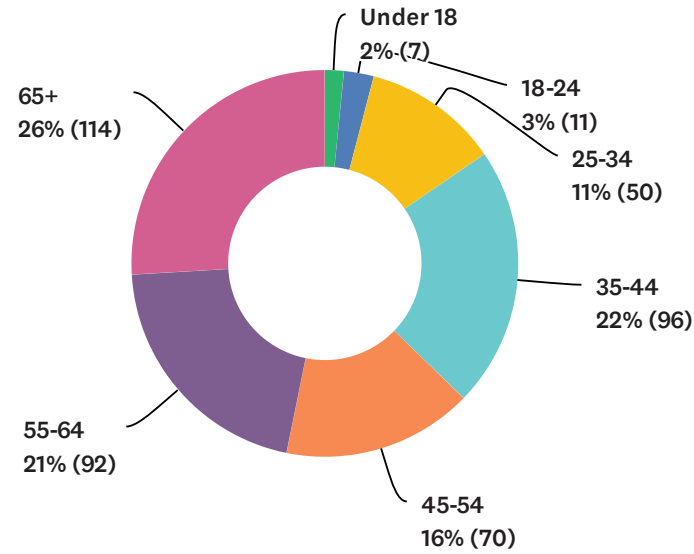
Answered: 440 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1% 5
Asian or Pacific Islander	0% 2
Black or African American	19% 84
Hispanic or Latino	2% 8
White / Caucasian	66% 291
Prefer not to answer	13% 55
Other (please specify)	2% 7
Total Respondents: 440	

### Q13 What is your age range?

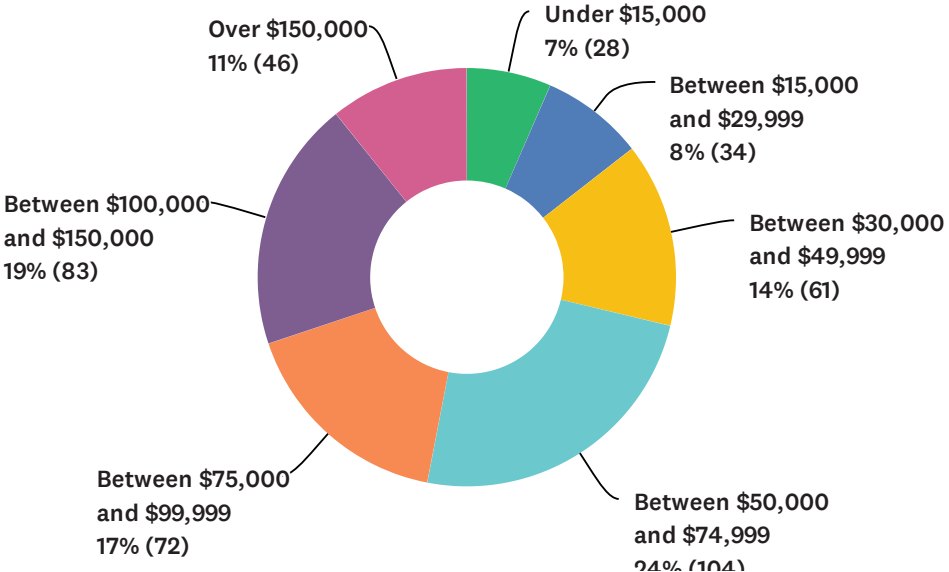
Answered: 440 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	2%	7
18-24	3%	11
25-34	11%	50
35-44	22%	96
45-54	16%	70
55-64	21%	92
65+	26%	114
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>440</b>

# Q14 What is your annual household income range during a typical recent year (not including any impacts from COVID-19)?

Answered: 428 Skipped: 21

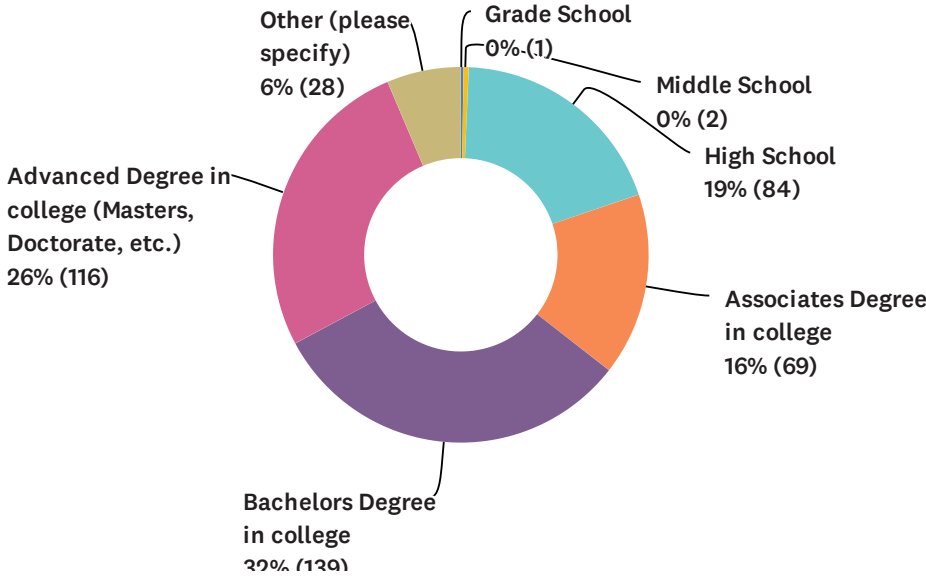


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under \$15,000	7%	28
Between \$15,000 and \$29,999	8%	34
Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	14%	61
Between \$50,000 and \$74,999	24%	104
Between \$75,000 and \$99,999	17%	72
Between \$100,000 and \$150,000	19%	83
Over \$150,000	11%	46
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>428</b>



### Q15 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Answered: 439 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Did not attend school	0%	0
Grade School	0%	1
Middle School	0%	2
High School	19%	84
Associates Degree in college	16%	69
Bachelors Degree in college	32%	139
Advanced Degree in college (Masters, Doctorate, etc.)	26%	116
Other (please specify)	6%	28
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>439</b>

Q16


Save as ▼

In what ZIP code is your home located? (enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305)

Answered: 429 Skipped: 20

[RESPONSES \(429\)](#)
[WORD CLOUD](#)
[TAGS \(0\)](#)

Cloud View
List View

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[Customize](#)

36205 36265 **36201** 36203 **36207** 36206

**APPENDIX B.**

**ECONOMIC BASELINE ANALYSIS**



# ECONOMIC BASELINE ANALYSIS

*Anniston Comprehensive Plan*

Key Inputs

Prepared for The Walker Collaborative  
And the City of Anniston  
November 24, 2021

By ***Randall Gross / Development Economics***

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

Key demographic characteristics are examined below, including trends showing how the population is changing in Anniston and throughout the Anniston-Oxford Metropolitan Statistical Area. Factors considered include population and households, income, poverty rates, education levels, and community health.

### Population and Households

Anniston had a 2020 Census population of 21,564, a decrease of about 1,730 or 7.4% since 2010. By comparison, nearby Oxford had a 2020 Census population of 20,069, and this number is up by 3.4% since 2010. Still, Oxford's growth has slowed dramatically from prior decades (when population there increased by 55.9% in the 1990s and by 46.3% between 2000 and 2010).

<b>Table. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, ANNISTON AND ANNISTON-OXFORD MSA, 2010-2020</b>				
<b>Factor</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2010-2020 Change Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Population</b>				
Anniston	23,297	21,608	(1,733)	-7.4%
MSA	118,572	116,441	(2,131)	-1.8%
<b>Households</b>				
Anniston	10,072	9,277	(795)	-7.9%
MSA	46,421	48,156	1,735	3.7%
<b>HH Income</b>				
Anniston	\$ 36,854	\$ 36,051	\$ (803)	-2.2%
MSA	\$ 45,462	\$ 48,156	\$ 2,694	5.9%
Notes:	Population estimates for 2020. Household & Income estimates for 2019. Income adjusted for inflation.			
Sources:	U. S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

Overall, the Anniston-Oxford MSA population was 116,441 in 2020, a decrease of about 2,130 or 1.8% since 2010. Growth in the Oxford and Jacksonville areas helped ameliorate some of the decrease in population experienced in Anniston and other parts of the county. Ultimately however, Anniston remains the largest city and center of a metropolitan area of more than 116,000. As such, the city provides access to a large market and economic opportunities above and beyond those contained within the city limits.

The number of households fell in Anniston since 2010 (based on the 2019 American Community Survey estimates). The city's 2019 household base was estimated at 9,277, a decrease of about 800 or 7.9% from 2010. The metro area appears to have added about 1,730 households since 2010, to a total of 48,200. The fact that households may be increasing countywide at the same time that population is declining suggests that the average household size is also declining, generating demand for housing. Households form the primary purchasing unit for retail and consumer goods, so household growth can also increase demand for retail space in those areas of the county where the household base is growing. Again, since Anniston is a major hub in the county, it can capture a portion of market growth in household expenditures regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

### **Age**

The median age in Anniston, according to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, was 40.8. This is somewhat older than the national average of 38.1. Anniston has a larger share of seniors over age 65 (20.8 versus 15.6 nationwide) and an old age dependency ratio of 34.6 (versus 25.3 nationwide). This ratio relates to the share of senior population divided by the working-age population, suggesting that Anniston's workers must support a higher ratio of seniors and elderly than the national average.

### **Ethnicity**

About 52% of residents in Anniston listed their race at "black or African-American alone" in the 2020 Census. Overall, the non-white population accounts for 57% of Anniston's total. The number of African Americans in Anniston has not changed dramatically over time, suggesting that the black community in Anniston is either stable or that economic constraints have limited the community's mobility. While African Americans account for the majority of residents in Anniston, they only account for **24.3%** of business owners, suggesting opportunities for increasing minority entrepreneurship and enterprise development and a route out of poverty, especially among those residents who have not achieved higher education (as noted later in this section).

## **Income**

The median household income in Anniston was estimated at \$36,040 in 2019, down by \$800 or 2.2% from 2010 in constant dollars (*after* accounting for inflation). This decrease is atypical of the trends nationwide, which had seen incomes rising above inflation

since the end of the 2009 recession and up to the advent of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Income in the metropolitan area was much higher, at \$48,160, and increased by 5.9% since 2010 in constant dollars. These numbers compare to the national 2019 median income of \$69,560. Thus, Anniston's income was nearly **50% lower** than the nation's median. The cost of living in Anniston is also considered to be much lower than the national average, but those costs (at 22% lower than average) are still higher relative to income, according to the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER). Housing is about 60% less expensive in Anniston than in other parts of the country; the median asking rent for apartments in the U.S. is \$1,588 per month, while it is estimated at about 52% lower (\$672) in Anniston. But some costs (like groceries) are fairly comparable and in some cases, Anniston is more expensive than the national average. For example, health care and utility costs are slightly higher than average (according to C2ER). And while housing tends to be less expensive in Anniston, fully 26% of Anniston's homeowners and 44% of Anniston's renters are paying more than one-third of their income on monthly housing costs.

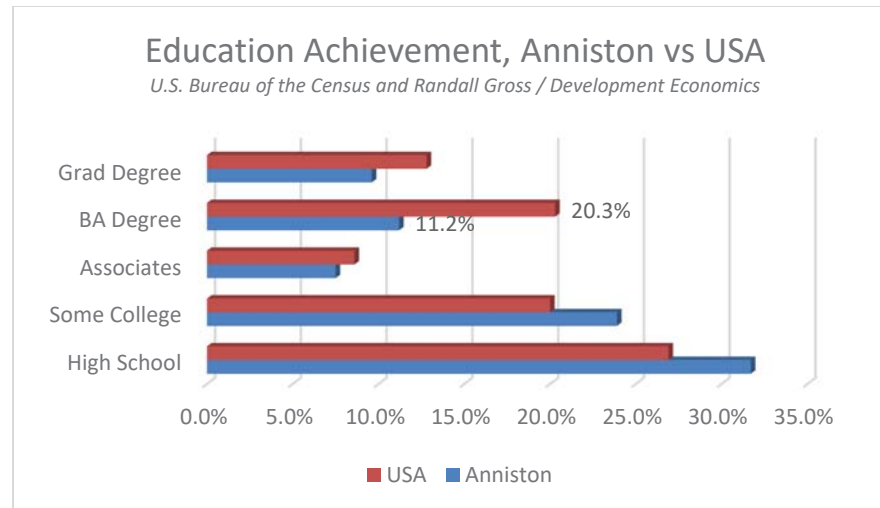
### **Poverty**

Anniston had an estimated poverty rate of 26.6%, according to the 2019 American Community Survey. This compares to a national average of 12.3%. So, the city's poverty rate is *116% higher* than the national average. Anniston's poverty rate is also about 90% higher than the statewide average (and Alabama ranks 6<sup>th</sup> nationwide in poverty). Among cities in Alabama, Selma has the highest poverty rate at more than 38%.

### **Education**

Anniston's adult residents generally have lower levels of educational achievement compared with state or national averages. For example, only about 11.2% of Anniston adults have a bachelor's degree, versus 20.3% nationally. Similarly, less than 10% of Anniston's adult residents have a graduate or professional degree, versus about 13% nationwide. On the other hand, a higher share of Anniston residents have a high school degree or have attended some college without graduating (as summarized in the chart on the following page).

Education levels are often correlated closely with income, so it is not surprising that Anniston's household incomes are also much lower than national averages. These numbers suggest that some of Anniston's successful high school graduates may leave the community for college or employment opportunities elsewhere, thereby reducing the pool of available graduates as part of the community's labor force.

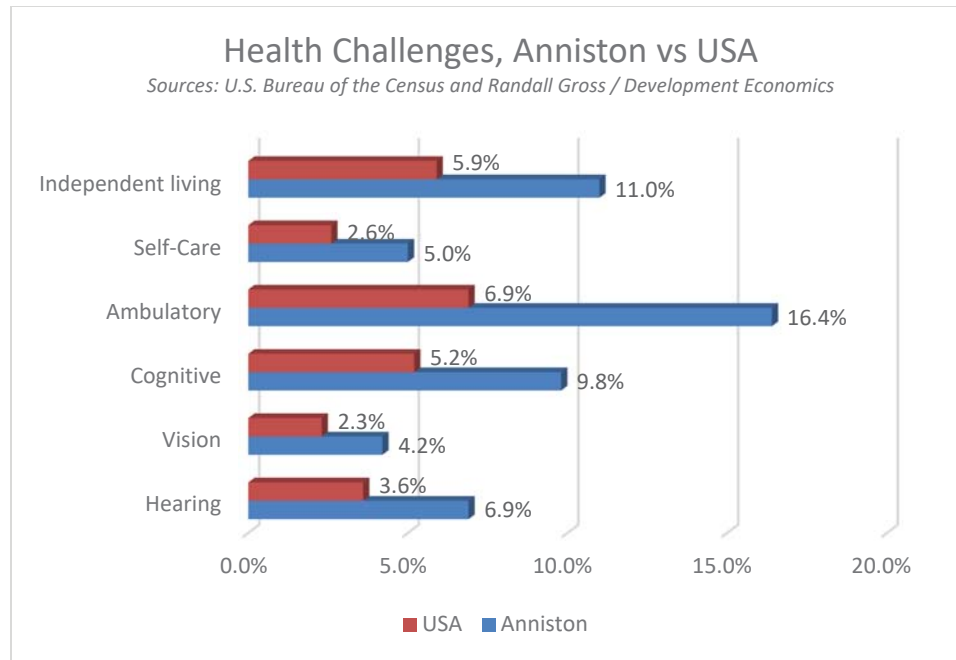


This issue might be addressed through economic development strategies aimed at retaining and attracting back exceptional Anniston natives who otherwise leave town to pursue higher education and employment opportunities elsewhere. That educated labor force is essential as a base for business growth, expansion, and recruitment.

## Health

Anniston has been an industrial and military (Fort McClellan, Anniston Army Depot) hub that, while creating essential jobs and economic prosperity, also generated downstream impacts on the local environment and on human health. While many of the causes of brown field pollutants like PCBs and Lead (Pb) have been removed or ameliorated over time, the health effects of these pollutants may linger in the population even today. These environmental health concerns are compounded by poverty and lifestyle-related (e.g., diet and exercise) health issues. Ultimately, these issues impact on the functionality of the local labor market and on Anniston's economic development. Health challenges in Anniston are compared with national averages (from the U.S. Bureau of the Census) for key indicators in the chart found on the following page.

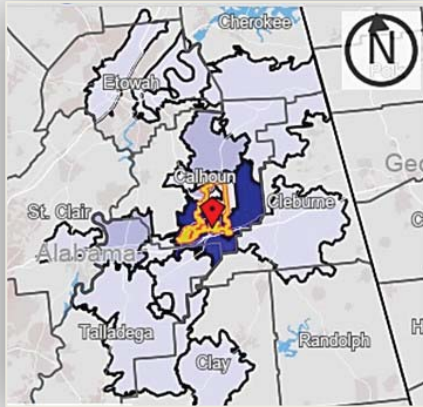




As noted above, Anniston has higher rates of health challenges related to hearing and vision impairment, cognition, ambulatory abilities, self-care, and independent living among the broad range of age cohorts.

### **Commutation Patterns**

As noted previously, Anniston is part of a metropolitan area that includes all of Calhoun County. So, many of Anniston’s residents commute out of town for work and, conversely, many of the city’s workers originate elsewhere. According to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, about 71% of Anniston’s working residents commute out of the city for employment elsewhere. The largest share commute into Oxford, Jacksonville and other parts of Calhoun County. However, there is also a large share that commute further north into the Gadsden area or west into the metropolitan Birmingham area (especially Pell City), south to Talladega, and north to Huntsville. Surprisingly few commute over the state line into Georgia or the metropolitan Atlanta area, despite the dominance of that city’s job market in the region.



An even larger share of Anniston's workforce (87%) commutes in from communities outside of Anniston. Again, many are commuting from within the Anniston-Gadsden corridor including Etowah County, but there is also a large number from Talladega, Cleburne, Cherokee, St. Clair, and Clay counties.

*Primary Commuter Shed (Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)*

Anniston is clearly producing jobs that are attracting workers from a fairly broad commuter base. With nearly nine out of ten Anniston workers commuting into the city, there are opportunities both for increasing the local employment penetration rate among local residents as well as for increasing the housing capture rate among those who are otherwise commuting to Anniston from someplace else.

## **ECONOMIC BASE**

In the past, Anniston has been a major hub for both the military (Anniston Army Depot and Fort McClellan) and the iron & steel forging industries. Fort McClellan employed 10,000 military personnel and 1,500 civilians prior to its 1999 closure through the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC); and Anniston lost most of its iron & steel forging business due to changing technologies in the production of pipes and water distribution systems.

Today, Anniston has an economic base of about 17,500 jobs among its various industries. Health care dominates the local employment base, accounting for nearly one out of four jobs in the city. But manufacturing remains important (with about 13% of Anniston's jobs), along with retail (10%), education (9%), accommodation & foodservice (8%), and administrative services (7%). About 5% of the city's jobs are in professional services and 4% are in wholesale trade. Meanwhile, the city is lacking jobs in certain sectors including management services, information, arts & entertainment, and recreation. There is also limited employment in real estate, financial services, transportation, construction, and utilities. None of these industry sectors accounts for more than about 2.5% of employment in Anniston. Government remains an important employer in the Anniston area, including federal Homeland Security training facilities at the McClellan Industrial Park (located at the former site of Fort McClellan, in northeast Anniston). The Anniston Army Depot is still operating adjacent to the city limits of Anniston.

## **Health Care Sector**

Within the city of Anniston, health care is a leading sector, with 24% of local employment. While the two major hospitals in Anniston have merged under the Regional Medical Center (RMC Health System) flag, both remain operating within a short distance of one another near downtown Anniston. RMC Anniston, a 287-bed health care center located at 400 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street, offers a 24-hour emergency room, maternity care, orthopedic & spine care, surgical care, echocardiography, heart & vascular care, radiology & imaging care, women's care, cancer care, trauma care, and rehabilitation care services. The Stringfellow Campus of the Northeast Alabama Regional Medical Center (RMC) is located at 301 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street. The 125-bed hospital also offers a 24-hour emergency room, plus complete diagnostic imaging, Holter monitoring, laser surgery, rehabilitation services, bariatric surgery, echocardiography, intensive care unit, lithotripsy, same-day surgery, case management, endoscopy, laparoscopic surgery, patient advocacy, and self-recovery services. Thus, while there is overlap between the two facilities; they also each offer specialty services. RMC employs more than 1,600 people in Anniston, including 200 physicians, plus 300 volunteers.

Other medical and health care services and related retail and service businesses have clustered around the two hospitals along the Leighton and Christine Avenue corridors. Examples include Labcorp, Anniston Dental Group, Artificial Limb & Brace Center, Home Helpers Home Care, American General Life & Accident Insurance, Walgreens Pharmacy, Stepping Stones to Success Counseling Services, Anniston Foot Clinic, Anniston Geriatrics, Wilson Psychology Group, Martin's Pharmacy, Salame Heart & Vascular Clinic, Countryside Hospice Care, Anniston Pediatric, Medlogic, AeroCare Home Medical Supply, Highland Health Systems, Alabama Anesthesiology & Pain Consultants, Calhoun Quality Health Care, Scrubs Plus LLC, Med-I-Trim Medical Weight Loss, Pediatric Care Center of North Alabama, VCA Animal Medical Center of NE Alabama, CVS Drugstore, and many others. There is also a small cluster of medical services located in the Fort McClellan area, including at the Fort McClellan Medical Mall.

## **Manufacturing Sector**

Important manufacturing employers in Calhoun County include Federal-Mogul Corporation (motor parts, Jacksonville), New Flyer (buses, Anniston), BAE Systems and General Dynamics (forged track vehicle components, Anniston), Tyler Union (waterworks products, Anniston), Kronospan (wood-based panel products, Oxford), Bridgewater Interiors (auto parts, Oxford), International Automotive Components (automobile components, Anniston), FabArc Steel Supply (steel fabrication, Oxford), M&H Valve (fire protection & water distribution equipment, Anniston), Doncasters Southern Tool (steel castings, Oxford), General Dynamics OTS (rocket projectiles, Anniston), Tapecraft (material webbing, Oxford), and Lee Brass (threaded brass fittings, Anniston), among others.

New Flyer completed a major \$50 million renovation and expansion in 2018 with total employment at 750. New Flyer produces electric transit buses and operates a vehicle innovation center (VIC) at its 400,000 square-foot, 36-acre campus in Anniston. The VIC is focused on electric, autonomous, and clean tech R&D in mass transit. BAE Systems forged track facility employs around 450 at its

390,000 square foot forge, spare parts & logistics, and office buildings. General Dynamics has similar contracts and employs 340 at its Anniston track vehicles facility (plus another 230 at its ordinance facility). Both BAE and General Dynamics are federal contractors that support the local mission at Anniston Army Depot as well as other military units with tracked vehicles, ordinance, and other products. Tyler Union is a major producer of waterworks products (pipes, valves, fire hydrants, fittings) with about 485 employees in Anniston. M&H Valve also produces fire suppression equipment (with about 200 employees), suggesting that Anniston retains a small “cluster” of waterworks companies (a shadow of the city’s former role as a leader in forging iron and steel pipes for water distribution). Also in Anniston is International Automotive Components (IAC), with about 360 employees, located on Peggy Dunn Boulevard. Lee Brass has 145 employed at its fittings plant. Auto Custom Carpets employs 175 at its Anniston manufacturing facility, one of the largest of its kind. Fitco employs 126 at its poultry-based food ingredients plant in Anniston. Honda has an automobile manufacturing facility in nearby Talladega County. With 4,200 employees, this plant has a major impact on Calhoun County, Anniston, and the regional labor market.

### **Government and Utility Employers**

Anniston Army Depot is not located in the city but is situated adjacent to Anniston and clearly has an impact on the area’s labor market, with 4,300 employees, the largest employer in Calhoun County. While Alabama Power Company only employs about 50 people in Anniston, the company has a significant footprint in the region as a major power supplier. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Center for Domestic Preparedness is an important training facility for first responders at McClellan. The federal government only employs about 22 people at the center but has a significant base of private contractors. Leidos, for example, is one such contractor, with about 220 employees providing training services at the site. Other contractors in food service, transportation, and security employ another +/-250 at the site or in support of the DHS Center. Jacksonville State University (with 850 employees), Anniston City Schools (200), Calhoun County Schools (400), and other institutions are also employment drivers for Calhoun County and for Anniston.

### **Employment Trends**

The Anniston-Oxford MSA gained about 830 jobs or 2.0% between 2002 and 2018, largely as a result of modest gains in government, health care, administrative services, and accommodation & foodservice. Aside from government, the accommodation sector (closely tied to tourism) gained the largest number of jobs since 2002 (about 900, or 22%), followed by health care (880 or 16%), and administrative services (715 or 32%). The fastest rate of growth was in management services (88%), followed by government (85%), and administrative services. Such gains overcame a significant decrease in the manufacturing sector, which lost more than 2,000 jobs (23%) over the period from 2002 to 2018. Other losses were observed in information services (about 420 jobs or 45%), wholesale trade (400 jobs, 19%), and construction (260 jobs or 18%), among others. The fastest rate of decrease was in mining (which would include quarries, for example), where employment fell by 77%.

Table. AT-PLACE EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, ANNISTON MSA, 2002-2018					
Sector	2002	2010	2018	2002-2018 Change	
				Number	Percent
Agriculture	247	135	179	(68)	-27.5%
Mining	25	12	6	(19)	-76.0%
Utilities	340	327	280	(60)	-17.6%
Construction	1,446	1,091	1,188	(258)	-17.8%
Manufacturing	8,887	6,477	6,814	(2,073)	-23.3%
Wholesale Trade	2,103	2,164	1,711	(392)	-18.6%
Retail Trade	5,823	5,843	5,970	147	2.5%
Transport	887	934	922	35	3.9%
Information	924	856	506	(418)	-45.2%
Finance	773	931	891	118	15.3%
Real Estate	419	396	391	(28)	-6.7%
Prof/Tech	1,189	1,633	1,377	188	15.8%
Management	68	151	128	60	88.2%
Admin	2,240	2,702	2,953	713	31.8%
Education	3,787	3,877	4,007	220	5.8%
Health Care	5,563	6,413	6,439	876	15.7%
Art, Entertainment	235	178	290	55	23.4%
Accommodation	4,119	4,577	5,026	907	22.0%
Other	1,187	1,007	1,004	(183)	-15.4%
Government	1,188	2,165	2,196	1,008	84.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41,450</b>	<b>41,869</b>	<b>42,278</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
Sources:	US Bureau of the Census & Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Anniston-Oxford MSA (like the country and the world as a whole) felt sudden economic dislocations that resulted in the unemployment rate skyrocketing from just 3.1% in March 2020 to 18.3% within the period of one month. Since that time, unemployment has fallen precipitously and has nearly returned to pre-Pandemic rates (at 3.9% as of September 2021).

**Anniston.** The city of Anniston saw an overall decrease in employment over the same 16-year period from 2002 to 2018. The city's employment base fell by 1,850 or nearly 10% over that period. While the city saw growth in some of the same sectors as the county as a whole, such as health care, administrative services, management, and professional/technical industries; the relative losses in manufacturing (-33%), construction (-42%), and information services (-48%) were higher. The city also lost jobs in accommodation services (-9%) while the MSA gained employment in that sector. On the other hand, the city gained 150 wholesale trade jobs (26%) even as the county lost jobs in that sector. The following table summarizes employment trends in the city of Anniston.

Table. AT-PLACE EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, ANNISTON, AL, 2002-2018					
Sector	2002	2010	2018	2002-2018 Change	
				Number	Percent
Agriculture	1	-	1	-	0.0%
Mining	12	-	-	(12)	-100.0%
Utilities	208	189	152	(56)	-26.9%
Construction	757	537	442	(315)	-41.6%
Manufacturing	3,369	1,730	2,269	(1,100)	-32.7%
Wholesale Trade	555	608	701	146	26.3%
Retail Trade	1,787	1,281	1,721	(66)	-3.7%
Transport	238	224	238	-	0.0%
Information	763	529	395	(368)	-48.2%
Finance	460	479	453	(7)	-1.5%
Real Estate	251	199	217	(34)	-13.5%
Prof/Tech	628	1,038	889	261	41.6%
Management	24	94	97	73	304.2%
Admin	1,003	976	1,224	221	22.0%
Education	1,760	1,711	1,503	(257)	-14.6%
Health Care	3,979	4,118	4,205	226	5.7%
Art, Entertainment	127	95	141	14	11.0%
Accommodation	1,538	1,384	1,398	(140)	-9.1%
Other	610	385	334	(276)	-45.2%
Government	1,312	1,357	1,152	(160)	-12.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,382</b>	<b>16,934</b>	<b>17,532</b>	<b>(1,850)</b>	<b>-9.5%</b>
Sources:	US Bureau of the Census & Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

Declining Share of MSA Employment. It's important to note that Anniston's employment fell at the same time that employment in the MSA increased (if only modestly). As a result, the city's share of the regional economic base shrank, from 47% in 2002 to 41% by 2018. That being said, the city's share actually increased slightly between 2010 and 2018, from 40% to 41%. The city also saw its share of MSA employment fall between 2002 and 2010 but increase again since 2010 in about eight of 17 main industry sectors. The city's share has fallen consistently since 2002 in eight sectors but has increased consistently in three sectors. These shifts in the city's relative economic positioning vis-à-vis the county (MSA) as a whole, are summarized below.

	<u>2002 Share</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2018</u>
<u>Sectors where Anniston has lost market share consistently since 2002</u>			
• Utilities	61%	58%	54%
• Construction	52%	49%	37%
• Finance	60%	52%	51%
• Education	46%	44%	38%
• Arts & Entertainment, Recreation	54%	53%	49%
• Accommodation & Foodservice	37%	30%	28%
• Other Services	51%	38%	33%
• Government	71%	63%	52%
<u>Sectors where Anniston lost market share but then gained some of it back</u>			
• Manufacturing	38%	27%	33%
• Retail Trade	31%	22%	29%
• Transport	27%	24%	26%
• Information	83%	62%	78%
• Real Estate	60%	50%	55%
• Administrative Services	45%	36%	41%
• Health Care	72%	64%	65%
<u>Sectors where Anniston has gained market share consistently since 2002</u>			
• Wholesale Trade	26%	28%	41%
• Professional & Technical Services	53%	64%	65%
• Management Services	35%	62%	76%

These shifts indicate where Anniston may have some relative strengths and competitive advantages for attracting and retaining industry, explored further in the target industry assessment discussed later in this plan document. Areas where the city could be performing better (in terms of market share) are also identified, namely in tourism (accommodation & foodservice), arts/entertainment & recreation services, finance, and construction. All of these are often concentrated in the largest city in a given metro area.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURE** (Policies & Entities)

There are a number of local, state, and federal agencies, institutions, and organizations engaged at various levels in the Anniston area's economic development. The **Anniston Department of Economic Development** is a primary point of contact for economic development incentives and services offered by the City of Anniston. The City is focused on assisting companies in the retail and manufacturing sectors, in particular. A special focus is given to downtown and retail development through **Main Street Anniston**. The City also has an **Industrial Development Authority** with the power to issue bonds and to "acquire, enlarge, improve, replace, own, lease, and dispose of" properties to promote industrial development and trade. The **Calhoun County Economic Development Council** assists with site and location analysis, workforce development, financial incentive facilitation, partner referrals, and entrepreneurship through a business incubator. The **McClellan Development Authority (MDA)** focuses on redevelopment of the former Fort McClellan, closed as part of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission process in 1999. Like the City of Anniston and other communities in Calhoun County, and the County's EDC, the MDA also offers its own incentives and economic development programs. The **Calhoun County Area Chamber and Visitors Center** provides information and networking relating to local businesses and with a focus on the various visitor attractions and lodging in the county. The Chamber also offers services such as a speaker's bureau, leadership and education programs.

Other agencies or organizations engaged in various aspects of economic development in Anniston and surrounding areas include the **Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Alabama Power, Alabama State Development Office, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, Jacksonville State University Center for Economic Development & Business Research, Gadsden State Community College**, and others. While each organization has its own mission and objectives, there has been some confusion among community members regarding overlap among some groups and a concern that there is not sufficient coordination and collaboration, especially between the City and the MDA, which is located in the city. There has also been some long-standing concern over competition between the various municipalities in the county, although leadership are taking steps to overcome some of these concerns and improve overall coordination.

### **Target Sectors**

As noted above, the City is highly focused on retail business development, downtown revitalization, and manufacturing development. Anniston's budget is highly dependent on revenue generated through retail sales taxes, so retail business recruitment, existing business growth, and retail retention are all paramount to the City's fiscal interests. That being said, retail is a tertiary sector that is highly dependent on local trade area household expenditures, along with inflow from tourism and daytime employment. Thus, growing the household income base, tourism, and daytime employment will naturally lead to increased demand for retail and will make



it easier for the city to attract and retain retail businesses. The County does not identify targets per se, but is concentrated on building the existing base of federal contractors, automotive suppliers and other OEMs as key employers for the region.

### **Local Incentives, Services, & Policies**

Anniston offers real estate and tax incentives on a case-by-case basis to help recruit businesses, with a particular focus on retail and restaurants as well as manufacturing concerns. Incentives have included retail sales tax rebates negotiated through project development agreements, for example. The City has industrial park land and operates an airport with a 7,000-foot runway that provides the county with service to Birmingham and Atlanta. The County EDC takes advantage of state incentives and enabling legislation to offer a menu of incentive options including sales tax abatements, use tax abatements, ad valorem tax abatements, industrial access road grants, job tax credits, State site preparation grants, corporate income tax credits, and the Alabama Industrial Development Training Program. The EDC is promoting one industrial site in Anniston, the 57-acre McClellan Advantage Site on Eglin Avenue, offered at \$25,000 per acre negotiable.

**APPENDIX C.**

**HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS**



# HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS

*City of Anniston, Alabama*  
*Comprehensive Plan*

Produced November 5, 2021  
For The Walker Collaborative  
And the City of Anniston

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## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes findings from a Housing Market Analysis conducted to help inform the Comprehensive Planning effort for the City of Anniston. The market analysis examined existing market conditions, but also forecasted demand and potentials within the city for new construction and rehabilitation of housing. The market analysis also examined the existing need for affordable housing for those working households with less than 60 to 80% of the area median income. Strategic recommendations for housing development and rehabilitation are provided based on the findings of the market analysis.

Section 1 of the report summarizes existing housing market conditions, based on field reconnaissance, review of existing physical conditions, and analysis of market indicators relating to both for-sale and rental housing in Anniston and the surrounding area. Section 2 examines housing demand generated from various sources and sub-markets within the market area that includes the Anniston metropolitan area and beyond. In Section 3, Anniston's competitiveness is assessed within the regional context and the city's capture of market area and sub-market demand is determined. Finally, Section 4 provides strategic recommendations relating to marketing and branding, development, rehabilitation and infill, neighborhood revitalization, and other components of the overall housing strategy as input to the Comprehensive Plan.

## Section 1. EXISTING MARKET CONDITIONS

This section describes existing housing market conditions in Anniston and provides context for housing supply and development in the area. Housing supply and tenure are examined, along with housing occupancy, sales, and pricing trends. A summary description of physical conditions in the city is provided as background for the market analysis and to identify key opportunities and challenges with respect to neighborhood revitalization in the city. However, no formal housing conditions assessment was conducted as part of the planning process.

### Housing Supply Trends

Anniston had an estimated 11,700 housing units in 2019, according to the American Community Survey (ACS). About 75% of the city’s housing is in single-family, detached units. Another 9% is in single-family attached or duplex (2-3-4-unit) buildings and 2% in mobile homes. Thus, about 14% of Anniston’s housing is in multi-family buildings with five or more units.

<b>Table 1. HOUSING TRENDS, ANNISTON, 2010-2019</b>				
<b>Units in Building</b>			<b>2010-2019 Change</b>	
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1-Detach	8,771	8,825	54	0.6%
1-Attach	504	262	(242)	-48.0%
2-4	1,409	828	(581)	-41.2%
5-9	845	846	1	0.1%
10-19	279	217	(62)	-22.2%
20-49	606	487	(119)	-19.6%
Mobile/Other	111	230	119	107.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,525</b>	<b>11,695</b>	<b>(830)</b>	<b>-6.6%</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

Anniston’s housing stock declined between 2010 and 2019, with a decrease of about 830 units or 6.6%. Much of that decrease has been in attached units, duplexes, and larger multi-family buildings, some of which were demolished due to environmental conditions. While the city has lost some of its multi-family housing, it did add a small number (about 50) single family detached units (0.6%), since 2010.

**Occupancy & Tenure**

About 21% of Anniston’s existing housing was estimated to be vacant in 2019, based on ACS data. Occupancy was highest in mobile homes (100%), single-family detached houses (80%), and in duplexes (81% in 2-3-4 units). Meanwhile, occupancy was lowest in larger multi-family buildings (66%) and in single-family attached dwellings (also 66%).

<b>Table 2. HOUSING OCCUPANCY, ANNISTON 2019</b>				
<b>Units in Building</b>	<b>Occupied Tenure</b>		<b>Total 2019</b>	<b>Occupancy</b>
	<b>Owner 2019</b>	<b>Renter 2019</b>		
1-Detach	5,065	2,008	7,073	80.1%
1-Attach	85	88	173	66.0%
2-4	40	630	670	80.9%
5-9	-	668	668	79.0%
10-49	8	455	463	65.8%
Mobile/Other	118	112	230	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,316</b>	<b>3,961</b>	<b>9,277</b>	<b>79.3%</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

About 57% of Anniston’s occupied housing was homeowner-owned in 2019, versus 43% that was rented. The rental housing included about 28% or 2,000 of the single-family detached units. Nearly all of the city’s multi-family buildings were renter occupied, although there may be about eight households who own units in a multi-family building, presumably a condominium, based on ACS data.

The overall rental vacancy rate was estimated at 9.0% in 2019, while the homeowner vacancy rate was 3.7%. Neither is unusually high, although private rental agencies tend to target a 5.0% vacancy rate to support sustainable rental housing.

Tenure is often correlated very closely with age. Younger householders tend to lack the resources and/or interest in purchasing housing, particularly if they are single and have not yet created family units. This correlation is characteristic of Anniston, where 98% of householders aged 15 to 24 are renters, and the share who rent declines fairly consistently with age. As such, only 77% of those in Anniston aged 25 to 34 are renters, 55% of those aged 35 to 44 are renters, and so on.

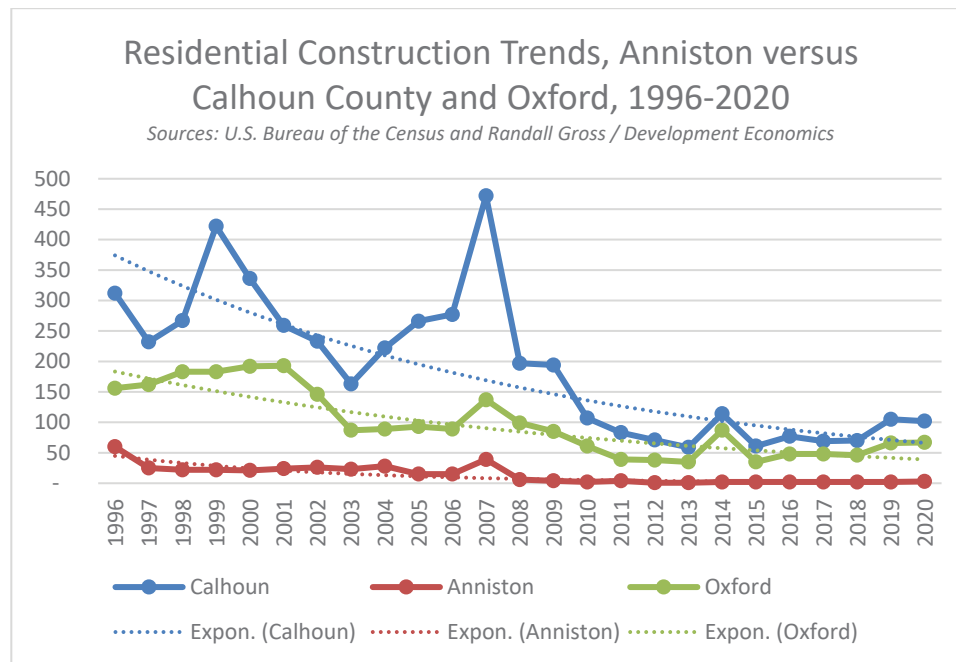
<b>Table 3. TENURE BY AGE COHORT, ANNISTON, 2019</b>				
<b>Age Cohort</b>	<b>Renters</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Share Rent</b>
15-24	374	6	380	98%
25-34	1,006	300	1,306	77%
35-44	717	595	1,312	55%
45-54	435	850	1,285	34%
55-64	838	1,397	2,235	37%
65-74	362	1,280	1,642	22%
75-84	153	578	731	21%
85+	76	310	386	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,961</b>	<b>5,316</b>	<b>9,277</b>	<b>43%</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

There is a slight “bump” in the share of those aged 55 to 64 who rent, possibly related to life changes (divorce, empty nesters, etc.). Otherwise, the trend away from renting extends to each successive age cohort in Anniston, even to those aged 85 and above (which is usually an age at which many people move into group housing or low-maintenance rental housing environments).

Overall, the largest group of renters is in the 25 to 34 age cohort (with over 1,000), followed by those in the 55 to 64 age cohort. The largest number of homeowners are aged 55 to 64 and 65 to 74, respectively. Only an estimated six householders aged 15 to 24 in Anniston own their homes.

**Construction**

The number of new housing units built in Anniston, as well as throughout Calhoun County, has been declining overall for the last 20 to 25 years.



The City has permitted construction of about 350 housing units since 1996, for an average of just 14 units per year. Between 1996 and 2003, the city averaged nearly 30 housing permits per year. That number dropped to about 20 permits between 2004 and 2008, and then to **just two (2) units per year since 2009**. Such low numbers are not even likely to



replace housing lost due to natural or man-made occurrences including fire, storms, and demolition. As noted earlier, the total number of housing units in Anniston has fallen by almost 7% since 2010. Further, there have been zero (0) multi-family units built since 1996, so the city has not seen the addition of new or replacement multi-family housing in at least 25 years. Anniston's residential permitting trends are detailed in the Appendix of this report.

Overall, there have been about 4,800 housing units permitted since 1996 in Calhoun County, for an average of approximately 200 per year. The total includes 3,700 single-family units, 200 duplex (2-3-4-unit buildings), and 860 multi-family units. Over the 25-year period, Oxford has averaged more than 100 units permitted per year. However, in Oxford as well, the numbers have fallen over time, with the city permitting more than 160 units per year between 1996 and 2003, falling to 100 units per year from 2004 to 2008, then about 60 units per year from 2009 to 2014, and 50 units per year since then. Regardless, Anniston's share of total housing construction has fallen over time, even as overall permitting has declined countywide. In 1996, Anniston constituted about 20% of all residential building permits in the county. But by 2020, Anniston's share of county permitting had fallen to just 3%. County housing permit trends are also contained in the Appendix. Construction trends are summarized above.

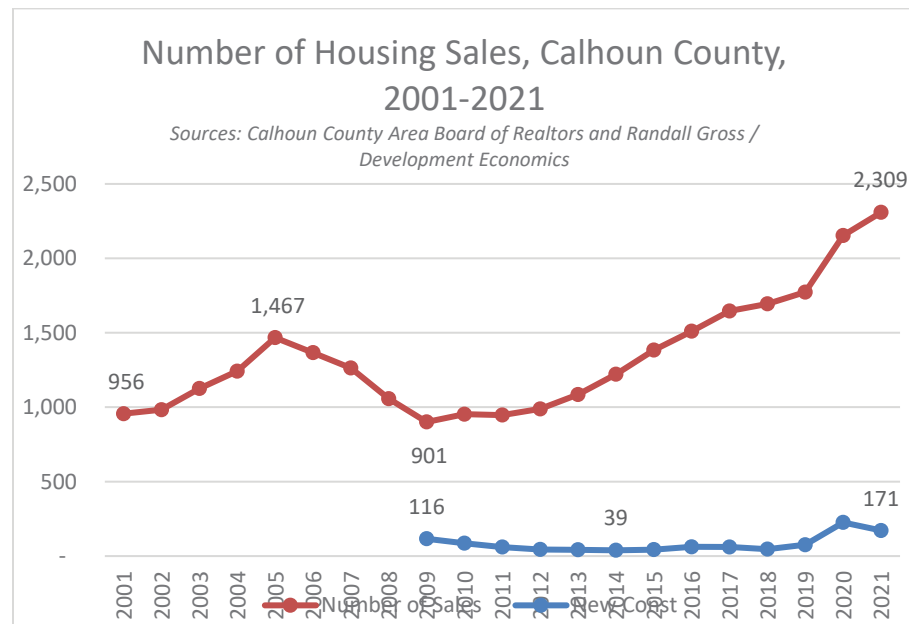
The dearth of new housing has the effect of reducing Anniston's economic competitiveness. Anniston will increasingly have challenges related to the provision of housing that meets resident's needs, particularly as public and assisted housing is demolished due to environmental constraints. But in addition, the city is less able to offer sufficient choices, especially in terms of new housing stock, to attract new residents and labor force. The city's housing offering must remain flexible to accommodate the needs of households with changing demographics, lifestyle choices, and needs. The size, format, and styles of housing change to reflect consumer behavior and demographic changes. So, as the city's housing stock ages, it becomes more rigid and less adaptable to these changing market dynamics.

## **Market Indicators**

An assessment was conducted of key market indices relating (as above) to occupancy, but also to pricing and rents, sales volumes, absorption rates, time on market, and other factors. A summary of these market indicators is provided below.

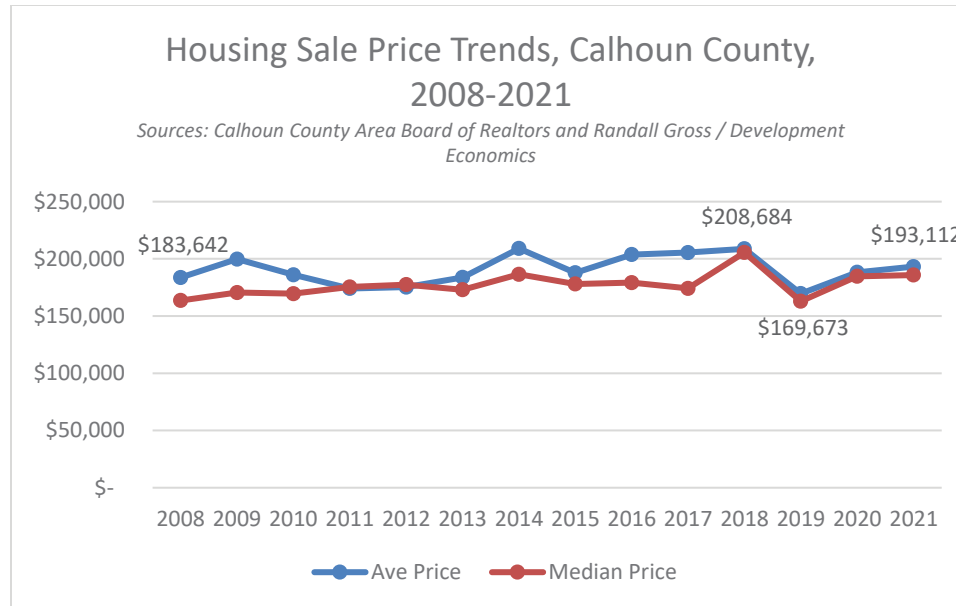
### For-Sale Housing

Data from the Calhoun County Area Board of Realtors and ACRE indicate that Calhoun County had 2,153 housing sales in 2020, an increase of 20.5% over 2019 and an increase of 34% since 2015. Sales for 2021 to-date are annualized at 2,309. Sales had been gradually increasing since the recession of 2008-09, when only 900 homes were sold in the county. But 2020 saw a spike in sales above the trend from previous years.

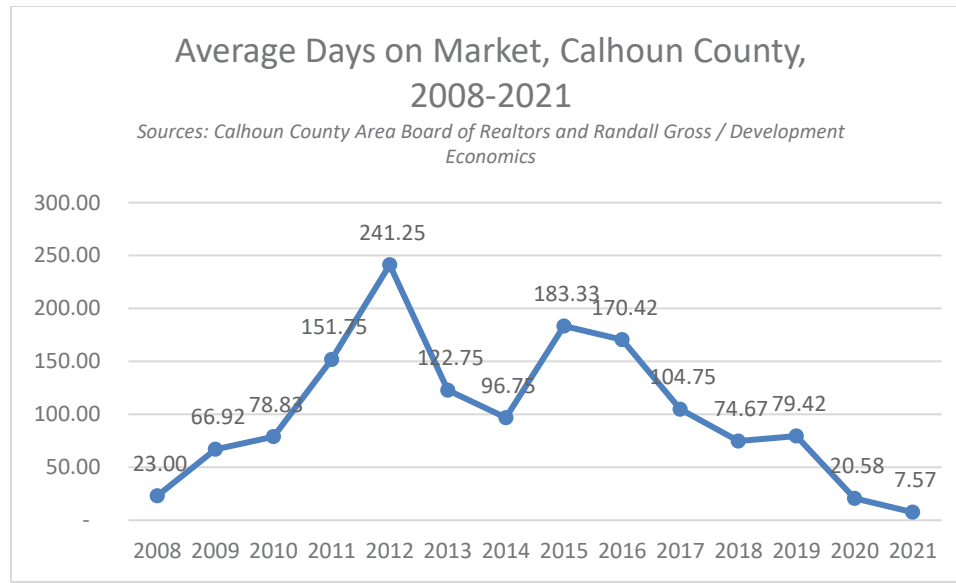


Sales of new homes have not accounted for more than about 5% of total sales on average over the past 10 or 11 years, with the exception of 2009 (13%) and more recently in 2020 at 10%. In 2014-2015 and again in 2018, new homes accounted for only 3% of total sales. As of 2021, new homes have fallen back to about 7% (about 170) of total sales, on an annualized basis.

Similarly, sales prices in the county also spiked in 2020, at \$145,238 or 8.9% over the 2019 median price. By Third Quarter 2021, median prices had increased even further to \$175,532 and average prices to \$193,112. Prices were up significantly from a low of \$169,700 in 2019. Still, prices are lower than they were in 2018 and have generally remained within a range of \$180,000 to \$200,000 since 2008.



The supply of homes listed for sale has been falling precipitously, with only about 609 homes listed in 2020, a decrease of 33% from the five-year average. There were twice that number of homes listed in 2015. A six month's supply normally indicates demand-supply balance in the market, but Calhoun County's supply had dwindled to just over three months by 2020, a decrease of 52% over the last five years. In 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021, supply had fallen again to just 2.6 months. While a rapid decrease in supply over the past five years is characteristic of many markets nationwide, the fact that new home construction has fallen over the long term in Calhoun County means that there are fewer homes in the pipeline. Correlated with this decrease in supply has been a rapid decrease in average days that a home will stay on the market before sale, falling from 183 in 2015 to just eight by 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021.



**Anniston.** As of August 2021, the median sale price for a home in Anniston was \$149,000. This is a relatively affordable price given that the national median was \$382,600 (with an average of \$453,200), according to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. The median sale price in Alabama was \$216,580. While Alabama prices are much lower than national averages, they are still 45% higher than in Anniston, where homes sell for only 39% of the nation’s median price. Anniston area home prices have been increasing at the rate of 3.9% per year since 2015, which is fairly consistent with a 3.6% long-term trend over the past 28 years.

### Rental Housing

Fair Market Rents (FMR) for a 2-bedroom apartment in Alabama average \$726, but range from \$634 in Winston County to \$1,000 in the Birmingham-Hoover metro area. Unlike with for-sale housing, however, local rents in Anniston and Calhoun County are closer to average for the state. Anniston-Oxford-Jacksonville MSA Fair Market Rent for a 2-bedroom is \$744 per month, or about 2.5% higher than the statewide average. Rents in the MSA range from \$562 for a studio to

\$565 (1-bedroom), \$744 (2-bedroom), and \$988 (3-bedroom), to \$1,111 (4-bedroom). Even though local rents are about average for Alabama, they are still 65% lower than national average rents. Rents increased by 3.29% from 2020 to 2021.

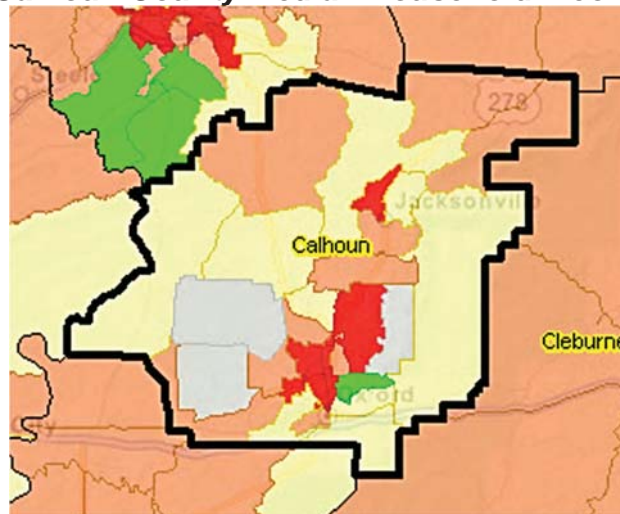
## **Neighborhoods & Housing Conditions**

Anniston has been promoted as a “well-planned” city that expanded as a result of industrial growth relating to the presence of iron ore, clay, and other natural resources. The city prospered and its neighborhoods flourished with a working population supporting its vibrant iron furnaces, resorts, military base, and Army munitions sites. West 15<sup>th</sup> Street became the economic hub and social focus of Anniston’s African-American communities. As technologies changed and Fort McClellan was retired, the city lost its economic footing and some of the city’s highly-segregated neighborhoods began a slow and steady decline.

The results of this decline are evident today, with housing in both east and west Anniston suffering from physical neglect, disinvestment, and out-migration. West Anniston, in particular, lost not only jobs associated with the city’s defense industries, but also suffered through environmental distress and through disinvestment that occurred as opportunities opened that would allow middle class African Americans to exit declining conditions in the once-segregated city. Historic housing in central Anniston was abandoned and often demolished, leaving vacant lots and lower density, lower-income neighborhoods less able to support community businesses in areas like West 15<sup>th</sup> Street and new housing development. Safety issues, both real and perceived, further impacted on the economic viability of these neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the several suburban style neighborhoods with middle-class housing in southeast Anniston, such as Golden Springs (and further east, White Plains and Choccolocco), retained their appeal for families.

As shown below, the county’s lower-income areas (household incomes below \$30,000 per year) are fairly concentrated on the west side of Anniston, as well as on the west side of Jacksonville (home to many students). Among the higher income areas (household incomes of \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year) is Golden Springs, in southeast Anniston. No census tract in Anniston or Calhoun County has a median household income of more than \$80,000 per year.

**Calhoun County Median Household Income**



Red: Less than \$30,000. Orange: \$30-\$45,000. Yellow: \$45-\$60,000  
Green: \$60-\$80,000. Grey: Not Relevant (U.S. Government)  
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census and ProximityOne

While conditions are challenging in pockets of West Anniston and other parts of the city, there is a measure of community pride and there are signs of renewed interest and reinvestment. Certainly, the downtown area of Anniston has seen reinvestment over the years, supported by the city's Main Street organization, which is promoting positive changes in the city. As such reinvestment occurs, it will spur spin-off to surrounding neighborhoods and increase opportunities for new housing and commercial infill redevelopment.

## **Section 2. HOUSING DEMAND**

Section 2 defines the Anniston housing market area and provides an indication of current and future demand within that broad market. Demographics are forecasted as a basis for assessing the overall change in demand that can be expected in the next five to ten years. Other drivers of housing demand, such as employment generators, are also analyzed and assessed with respect to their impact on the Anniston market.

### **Market Area**

The Anniston Housing Market Area and key market niches were defined in order to determine and forecast the demand for housing. The boundaries of the market area were determined based on a number of factors, including commutation patterns, school districts, employment nodes, competitive communities, potential draw area, and input from area brokers, among others. The market area includes six sub-markets, each with their own boundaries and characteristics, as follows:

- A) Anniston Zip Codes 36201, 36207; and Bynum 36260
- B) Anniston Northern Suburbs: Saks (36206), Weaver (36277) and Alexandria (36250)
- C) City of Oxford
- D) City of Jacksonville
- E) Remainder of Calhoun County: Ohatchee, Piedmont, et al
- F) Talladega County: Talladega, Munford, Mignon, Lincoln, et al

Each of these areas has a different character, historical context, transportation access, and other defining elements. Jacksonville is a university community. Oxford is largely suburban and highway-oriented. Outside of the cities, much of Calhoun County is rural in character. At present, schools are a defining factor impacting on marketing. But a shift in how schools are perceived or performing, and perceptions of Anniston's role in the market, could change dramatically.

### Selected Demographic Trends & Forecasts

The Anniston market area has seen uneven growth over the past 10 to 20 years. While Anniston itself declined by about 12% in population between 2010 and 2020 (to a total of 21,428, according to the U.S. Census), the population of Calhoun County as a whole increased by 3.9% or 4,400 during that same period.

Table 4. POPULATION TRENDS, SELECTED COMMUNITIES, ANNISTON HOUSING MARKET AREA, 2010-2020				
Area	2010	2021	2010-2020 Change Number	Change Percent
Calhoun	112,248	116,651	4,403	3.9%
Talladega	82,291	82,149	(142)	-0.2%
Anniston Area	43,181	40,738	(2,443)	-5.7%
<b>Anniston</b>	<b>24,276</b>	<b>21,428</b>	<b>(2,848)</b>	<b>-11.7%</b>
Saks	10,744	9,956	(788)	-7.3%
Weaver	3,038	3,339	301	9.9%
Alexandria	11,030	11,730	700	6.3%
West End/Cobb	3,465	3,128	(337)	-9.7%
Choccolocco	2,804	2,838	34	1.2%
Oxford	21,348	22,069	721	3.4%
Jacksonville	12,548	14,385	1,837	14.6%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>89,253</b>	<b>88,873</b>	<b>(380)</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>
Other Calhoun	22,995	27,777	4,782	20.8%
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census, Claritas, and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

The broader Anniston sub-market encompassed by zip codes 36201, 36207, and 36260 also saw a declining population over the past ten years, falling by 2,400 or 5.7%. Saks, West End / Cobb Town and some other areas lost



population since 2010. Meanwhile, Jacksonville has become a growth generator for the county, adding about 1,800 residents or nearly 15% since 2010, for a total population of 14,400. Alexandria, Weaver, Oxford, and other communities have also gained population. Because of these population shifts, Anniston fell from being the largest to second-largest city in Calhoun County, behind Oxford. Regardless of its ranking, Anniston remains the County Seat and a major economic hub for Calhoun County.

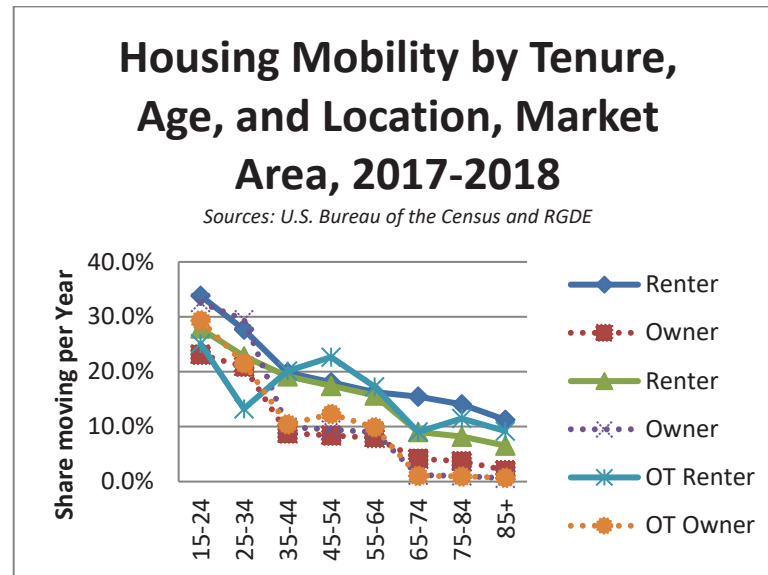
**Income**

Anniston has lower household incomes than other places in Calhoun County, with an estimated average \$44,947 in 2021. This amount is about 13% lower than the countywide average and 25% lower than in Anniston’s northern suburbs. While the city’s household incomes have increased (and are expected to continue increasing) above the rate of inflation, the city’s incomes will remain lower than those of the other parts of the housing market area.

<b>Table 5. HOUSEHOLD INCOME TRENDS AND FORECASTS, MARKET AREA, 2000-2026</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026</b>
Anniston Area	\$ 29,606	\$ 44,947	\$ 49,049
North Suburbs	\$ 37,878	\$ 59,682	\$ 63,340
Oxford	\$ 32,372	\$ 47,645	\$ 52,274
Jacksonville	\$ 32,070	\$ 46,367	\$ 50,636
Calhoun	\$ 32,827	\$ 51,614	\$ 55,632
Talladega	\$ 32,554	\$ 48,487	\$ 52,585
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census; Claritas; and Randall Gross / Development Economics.		

## Mobility

Housing mobility is highly correlated with age cohorts. Younger people tend to move more because they are more likely to be single and without children in school, and more likely to relocate for work or higher pay. Not surprisingly, householders aged 15 to 24 are most likely to move in a given year in Anniston. Nearly 35% of Anniston renters in that age cohort are likely to move within a year. By contrast, only 1-2% of Anniston’s homeowners and renters over age 64 are likely to move in a particular year, based on actual mobility patterns.



## Household Forecasts

Households were forecasted for each of the six sub-markets in the Anniston Housing Market Area, and disaggregated by age, tenure, income, education levels, and other factors to help determine housing demand. In order to provide an example of the types of analyses that were examined as input to an assessment of housing demand, several household forecasts are discussed below for the immediate Anniston Area (Sub-Market (A)) as defined above. This sub-market is

expected to lose about 320 households over the next five to seven years, according to Claritas and Census forecasts. The largest decrease will be in the age groups 25 to 34 and 55 to 64, followed by those in age cohort 45 to 54. That being said, the aging of the population will push household growth into the older age categories, especially in the 65 to 74 age cohort, which will add nearly 500 households. There will also be growth in the 75 to 84 and older age cohorts. But, there will also be an expanding group of householders in the younger 15 to 24 age cohort, signaling some longer-term household formation and growth.

<b>Table 6. HOUSEHOLD FORECASTS BY AGE &amp; TENURE, ANNISTON AREA, 2021-2026</b>			
<b>Age Cohort</b>	<b>Renters</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Total</b>
15-24	28	4	32
25-34	(164)	(64)	(228)
35-44	(29)	(35)	(64)
45-54	(46)	(128)	(174)
55-64	(94)	(289)	(383)
65-74	66	381	447
75-84	4	17	21
85+	3	25	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(233)</b>	<b>(88)</b>	<b>(321)</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census; Claritas; and Randall Gross / Development Economics.		

Thus, while the sub-market will lose household base overall, there will be shifts and growth within certain market niches that can spur demand for housing to address emerging needs and lifestyle preferences. For example, the aging of the “Baby Boom” generation will spur demand for more maintenance-free housing, particularly in safe, “walk-able”

neighborhoods with access to amenities like restaurants, recreation, and civic facilities. Meanwhile, there will be less short-term demand generated for family housing with access to good schools and playgrounds. That will change, of course, as the singles aged 15 to 24 start to “settle down” and form families.

Since incomes will continue to increase (at least in line with inflation), the affordable price of housing will also increase. There will be less housing demand generated by those with incomes below \$75,000 and more demand generated by those with higher incomes (especially among those with incomes in the \$125,000 to \$150,000 range and among those with household incomes above \$200,000). However, even with a declining household base, the immediate market within Sub-Market A will still see growing demand generated by modest-income households with incomes in the \$25,000 to \$35,000 range.

<b>Table 7. HOUSEHOLD FORECASTS BY INCOME COHORT, ANNISTON AREA, 2021-2026</b>			
<b>Income Cohort</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>Change</b>
<\$15,000	2,727	2,411	(316)
\$15-\$25,000	2,532	2,252	(280)
\$25-\$35,000	1,937	1,941	4
\$35-\$50,000	2,025	1,929	(96)
\$50-\$75,000	2,612	2,525	(87)
\$75-\$100,000	1,739	1,734	(5)
\$100-\$125,000	1,095	1,191	96
\$125-\$150,000	616	732	116
\$150-\$200,000	625	702	77
\$200,000+	585	755	170
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,493</b>	<b>16,172</b>	<b>(321)</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census; Claritas; and Randall Gross / Development Economics.		

**Employment**

The Anniston-Oxford-Jacksonville MSA had the sixth lowest employment growth of all 384 metropolitan areas designated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census between 2010 and 2018. Despite the long-term decline in the Anniston metro area economy, there has been some short-term growth in key sectors and new opportunities created to strengthen long-term employment growth. The Anniston MSA has seen positive growth coming out of the COVID Pandemic, with job growth of 3.1% between September 2020 and September 2021, roughly on par with the state of Alabama as a whole and faster than Auburn, Decatur, Gadsden, Mobile, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa. Moody's Analytics projects that the Anniston MSA will add about 2,790 jobs by 2030, for an increase of 5.9%.

<b>Table 8. EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS, ANNISON- OXFORD-JACKSONVILLE MSA, 2021-2030</b>				
<b>Major Industry Sector</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2021-2030 Change</b>	
			<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Ag, Natural Resources & Mining	844	849	6	0.7%
Construction	1,044	1,123	79	7.6%
Manufacturing	6,809	6,625	(183)	-2.7%
Wholesale Trade	1,634	1,733	99	6.0%
Retail Trade	5,927	6,049	122	2.1%
Transport & Warehousing	1,456	1,712	256	17.6%
Information Services	322	325	3	0.8%
Financial Services	1,313	1,410	97	7.4%
Professional & Business Services	4,127	4,567	440	10.7%
Education & Health	4,782	5,338	556	11.6%
Leisure & Hospitality	4,562	5,399	837	18.4%
Other Services	1,712	1,881	169	9.9%
Government-Civilian	12,410	12,738	328	2.6%
Government-Military	491	471	(21)	-4.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47,433</b>	<b>50,221</b>	<b>2,787</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census; Moody's Analytics; and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

The fastest growth sectors are projected to be leisure and hospitality (+18.4%, regaining strength after severe impacts from the Pandemic), transportation and warehousing (+17.6%, growing with web-based retail sales), and health care

(12.0%, expanding with the aging of the population). The largest number of jobs will be added in leisure and hospitality (840), followed by health care (540), and administrative support services (430). The addition of net new jobs will spur demand in the housing market, particularly for rental housing as new hires move up and into the market.

### **Market Area Housing Demand**

Overall housing demand for 2,275 units was forecasted for the market area and its various components and niches. This market “envelope” represents the total development, occupancy, and rehabilitation opportunity in the market area over the next five to seven years (2026-2028).

• Move-Up (Internal) Market Area Demand	3,490
• New Household-Generated Market Area Demand	-1,860
• Job-Induced Net New Market-Area Demand	310
• Replacement	335
<b>Total Market Area Housing Demand (2026-28)</b>	<b>2,275</b>

Clearly, the largest share of housing demand will be generated by existing households in the market that are engaged in life change moves such as recent graduates and others moving from their parents’ home, first-time renters and buyers, move-ups within the market, empty nesters seeking smaller homes or maintenance-free housing, divorcees, recently widowed, and others. Some of this represents “pent-up” demand and a need from households that have otherwise lacked resources or choices for housing.

As housing ages and becomes functionally obsolete or degraded (along with damage or destruction due to weather-related events, fire, etc.), there will continue to be a need for replacement. The need for replacement will accelerate during the next ten years since a large share of housing in the market was originally built in the 1970s and will be reaching the end of its viable age of 50 to 60 years.

Employment growth, as discussed above, will also drive some demand for housing. However, many of the jobs generated in the near term will replace those lost in the area over the last few years (including during the COVID Pandemic) and local residents who already have housing will be among the first among re-hires. Thus, the impact on housing is

dampened without a significant driver that relocates workers to the area. That being said, there is always changeover at area hospitals and other employers, which generates housing demand. A continued out-migration of people to larger metropolitan areas will drain some of this demand but, overall, the market will have positive housing demand through 2026.

Not all of this demand would drive opportunities for development of new housing. Some demand will be captured by existing vacant housing (such as in the rental market), and also for rehabilitation of existing stock. A lack of affordability is likely to prevent a share of the demand for housing from being fulfilled. (This issue is explored later). Based on historic trends, however, there will be growth in the demand for new construction that the metro area has not experienced in some years.

If 30% of demand were captured by existing units, then the remaining demand would yield development potential or a need for about 316 units per year, which is 58% more than what the region has been producing since the late 1990s on an annual basis. On the other hand, up to 60% of demand could be generated by those with household incomes below the area median and unlikely to afford new housing without some intervention. If that need for affordable workforce housing remains unfulfilled, the market-rate demand will mirror historic trends for new housing absorption in the area (at about 150 to 200 units per year). Anniston's portion of this housing demand is discussed in the following section of this report.

### **Section 3. ANNISTON HOUSING POTENTIALS**

Anniston's share of Market Area demand was forecasted within the competitive framework, but with assumptions relating to the marketing and promotion of Anniston as desirable location. Ultimately, if current conditions were to remain the same, Anniston would continue to under-perform the market, even in a relatively static regional housing market. Prospective growth in the region could generate new opportunities for Anniston to capture a larger share of the market and create new choices for both market-rate and affordable housing in the city. Overall, short-term (2026-28) housing potentials within this competitive context and under key marketing assumptions are discussed below for both rental and for-sale housing.

#### **Competitive Framework**

As noted earlier, there has not been a significant amount of new construction in the region for some time. Nevertheless, there is some new single-family development in Calhoun County as well as in neighboring counties. Much of the most competitive new construction is in communities located closer in to the Birmingham or Atlanta metropolitan areas. There is very little choice in multi-family rental housing, with few new developments in the region outside of those metros.

#### **For-Sale Housing**

Among the few new single-family developments in the area is Havens at Stony Brook, located in Jacksonville, which currently offers five new houses built by Smith Douglas Homes. The homes generally offer three bedrooms and two baths with 1,480 square feet for \$200,000. Lincoln is another area with new housing construction including two projects, both of which are being developed by Smith Douglas Homes. Lake Point (with eight homes on the market and seven plans) has 3BR/2BA homes with 1,600 square feet for \$213,000. Twin Ridge (seven homes) has 3BR/2BA homes with 1,480 square feet for \$188,900 to \$192,900.

As noted above, most of the remaining new housing in the area is located closer to the metro areas. Pell City, for example, has several new projects under development, including McKesie Crossing (19 homes in Riverside, 4BR/3BA with 2,060-2,700 sf, \$290,900-\$381,300 by Newcastle Homes), Fox Hollow (12 homes, 3BR/3BA, 2,200-2,300 sf, \$268,000 by Rausch Coleman Homes), Horizons (12 homes, 3BR/2BA, 1,640 sf, \$272,000 by Smith Douglas Homes), Easonville Park



(8 homes in Cropwell, 3BR/3BA, 1,800 sf, \$300,000 by Jones Development), and Sumter Landing (15 homes, 3-5BR/4BA, 1,600-2,500 sf, \$250,000-\$375,000 by Newcastle Homes). There is also competitive new housing in Tallapoosa Georgia, Gadsden, and other locations further afield. Existing neighborhoods and individual housing construction in Oxford and surrounding communities is also highly competitive with Anniston.



*Bayfield Plan, Lake Pointe, Lincoln*

### **Rental Apartments**

There are not many new rental apartment complexes in the region, outside of those in the Birmingham or Atlanta suburbs. But, there are existing apartment complexes, especially in Jacksonville, that cater to students, singles and others not engaged in the for-sale housing market. Cottonwood (\$475-\$675 per month) and Gamecock Village (\$455-\$540) are among the competitive rental properties in Jacksonville. That city also has a number of smaller apartment buildings with five to ten units, such as 625 Gadsden, 1010 Washington Street, 38 Quill Avenue, and others. Oxford has Sterling Pointe Apartment Homes (none available) and Mountain View Apartments (\$850/month), among others. Talladega’s rental inventory includes Woodland Hills Apartments (\$650+) and others.

### **Rental Housing Potentials**

Based on the competitive assessment, Anniston’s rental housing potential was forecasted through 2021-26. This short-term potential includes 400 to 750 affordable and market rate rental housing units in multi-family and mixed-use buildings. The rental housing market would otherwise be served through single-family homes, some of which are subject to “slumlord” conditions. Overall rental housing potentials are summarized in the following table, shown below.

<b>Table 9. RENTAL HOUSING POTENTIALS, ANNISTON, 2021-2026</b>			
<b>Rent Range</b>	<b>Area Capture</b>		<b>Market</b>
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Rate</b>
\$ 300	123	154	-
\$ 500	66	94	-
\$ 600	64	104	
\$ 700	50	89	70
\$ 800	58	112	85
\$ 1,100	36	73	54
\$ 1,200	20	49	35
\$ 1,500	11	36	23
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>267</b>
<i>ELI</i>	188	247	
<i>Workforce</i>	114	193	
<b>Job Induced</b>	-	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>Vacancy Factor</i>	21	37	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>304</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census; Claritas; Woods & Poole; and Randall Gross / Development Economics.		

As shown above, Anniston could capture demand in the market area for more than 300 market-rate rental units within the next five to seven years. Market rents are generated in the \$600 to \$1,500 rent range, with the largest share renting

between \$600 and \$800 per month. Demand would be generated, as noted before, from first-time renters, those moving up or down in the market, life change event households, and (to a small extent) job relocations. There is some pent-up demand by those who otherwise have no attractive new or modern rental housing in which to live. While many will choose to rent a single-family home, there are young professionals, singles, divorcees, and job relocations that will prefer apartment-style living, especially in a safe and secure, attractive environment with amenities.

In addition to the market-rate units, there is a need for 150 to nearly 400 affordable and workforce rental units to supply those who otherwise cannot afford market rents or whose incomes fall below 60 to 80% of the area median income (AMI). Some of these households have been displaced through attrition or redevelopment of public housing units in Anniston (with many finding housing outside of the city). Others constitute singles, young families, or seniors whose incomes just do not qualify them for market rate housing. This number includes workers in service industries, local government, and other jobs that may not generate sufficient income for a single person to afford high-quality rental housing in the right locations.

### **For-Sale Housing Potentials**

Anniston's for-sale housing potentials were also determined within the competitive context. The city's capture of the regional market is somewhat constrained in the short term by perceptions of the city's quality of life and the environment for residential development. A target of at least 30 to 100 net new for-sale units could be reasonably captured through concentrated development and selected infill projects located in high-value neighborhoods. Even this small amount of development at 6 to 20 units per year would exceed recent patterns, which have seen the City permit an average of only two units per year. The targeted amount of new development would allow for move-up and "churn" in the local market, as well as for opportunities to capture some non-family relocations.

A longer-term opportunity exists to capture greater quantified of single-family development potential as confidence in the market increases over time. The time required to build confidence depends on a number of factors, but a strong marketing effort tied to amenity development can help strengthen and leverage housing opportunities. Low and moderate for-sale housing potentials are summarized below by price range for 2021-26.

<b>Table 10. FOR-SALE HOUSING POTENTIALS, ANNISTON, 2021-2026</b>			
<b>Price Point</b>	<b>Area Capture</b>		<b>Market Rate</b>
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	
\$ 106,250	2	3	-
\$ 156,250	1	1	-
\$ 218,750	5	13	-
\$ 247,500	0	0	0
\$ 288,750	3	7	5
\$ 367,500	4	10	7
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>ELI</i>	2	3	
<b>Job-Induced</b>	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census; Claritas; and Randall Gross / Development Economics.		

Demand could be captured at all price levels, although most of the need for housing is in price ranges lower than \$300,000. As prices increase throughout the market, more of the potential demand will remain unserved.

## **Section 4. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section provides strategic recommendations for marketing and amenity development, housing rehabilitation, new housing development, and neighborhood revitalization based, in part, on the findings of the Housing Market Analysis coupled with field reconnaissance and input from community stakeholders. These strategies are meant to inform the comprehensive plan and elements relating to housing and economic development.

### **Marketing & Amenity Development**

The Anniston housing market has been buffeted by declining demographics and economic base, but the city's image has also suffered due to perceptions of poor safety, schools, services. The market potentials discussed herein can be leveraged over the long term through economic regeneration, as well as through marketing and public relations that help enhance the community's competitiveness in the regional market. Key elements of a strategy to accomplish this objective are outlined below.

#### **Public Relations and Promotions**

The City and its Main Street entity are engaged in a pro-active effort to promote a positive image for downtown Anniston. But there is a need to expand promotional efforts to focus on attracting and retaining residents. The first phase market targets for such an initiative would include first-time buyers, local workers, medical professionals, retirees, and those undergoing life changes. The initiative could start by focusing on educating realtors and brokers in the area on the city's many assets and amenities, on the new Comprehensive Plan as a roadmap for a positive future, on a turnaround at Anniston City Schools, declining crime rates, and increasing amenity value.

#### **Schools**

There is widespread agreement in the local real estate industry that the relatively poor achievement levels for City Schools have a negative impact on the local housing market in Anniston, particularly for family housing. There have been positive changes at local schools, which had struggled with financial constraints, but are now nearly free of debt. So, there is the need to communicate any and all positive changes underway at the local schools, as noted above. A marketing

partnership should be formed between the Schools and the City of Anniston to promote positive changes, not only to the general public, but also to area real estate professionals, builders, and others in the industry, as discussed above. There is the opportunity for Anniston Schools to form stronger partnerships with private industry in the area in order to enhance local facilities, develop exceptional programs, and sponsor sports and recreation activities (where recent success has also helped enhance perceptions of the local schools). The role of private industry in helping local schools to develop and enhance programming is important both for leveraging the housing movement and economic development in Anniston.

### **Amenities**

Another component of a marketing program for Anniston housing is enhancing local amenity value. Anniston has significant cultural and recreational amenities that can be enhanced further as a basis for marketing the city. Recreational amenities including parks and trails are important to Anniston, as they provide the city with assets of regional significance. The connectivity and access afforded by recreational trails can also provide direct asset value in the city's neighborhoods for marketing housing. The Chief Ladiga Trail and other existing and potential trail systems help establish a strong brand for Anniston. Recreational amenities are also leveraged and enhanced through the City's existing network of parks and community centers, which can be enhanced to offer unique recreational amenities, facilities and services that again strengthen the overall Anniston recreation brand.

Food, culture and entertainment also generate amenity value that can be woven into Anniston's narrative. The Civil Rights heritage sites and stories can be promoted more effectively, such as through a larger or more comprehensive interpretation center. Anniston's story can focus on its valid attempts to overcome a segregationist past through progressive leadership. The 15<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor and its physical assets can help leverage the interpretation of Anniston's heritage, while also generating small business development opportunities, as discussed further in the economic development element of this plan. Similarly, downtown can enhance its role as a hub for dining and entertainment (other than just drinking), again to add amenity value that, in particular, helps attract and retain young professionals and empty nesters.

### **Housing Rehabilitation**

As noted elsewhere in this report, there is a need for improved maintenance, rehabilitation and upgrading of the housing stock, particularly in central Anniston neighborhoods, in order to increase the city's overall competitiveness, but also to improve the lives of residents. About one-third of the city's single-family housing is held by investors as rentals, and

the condition of rental housing can be lower, in part, due to the lack of resources among small investors to maintain and manage one or a handful of scattered, aging houses. A series of “carrots and sticks” are recommended to help improve the quality of the existing housing stock in these neighborhoods, while preventing displacement.

### **Carrots (Incentives)**

There are several incentives recommended for the City to package for investors and homeowners to rehabilitate and/or otherwise improve the quality of existing housing stock. The most prevalent constraint on owners is the lack of financial resources to improve housing. Gap financing can be captured through federal rehabilitation loans and grants - e.g., HUD Section 203(k), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME, USDA Rural Development Section 504 and Housing Preservation Grants, and other sources. The City has benefited from CDBG grant funding, but there might be a more aggressive grant position taken to capture federal, state, and foundation grants to fund housing rehab programs.

The City can also form partnerships with non-profit organizations, such as through the Build Healthy Places Network, LISC, Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, ACEE Smart Houses programs, Local Housing Solutions, Neighborhood Housing Services, and others. Partnerships can also be targeted with local private sector entities, similar to the Schools programming concept identified above.

Through these grants and partnership initiatives, the City can design incentive programs, including local grants for façade and ADA improvements, energy efficiency, and others. Other opportunities could include creation of a Chapter 9B Tax Abatement District program, a Local Technical Assistance Program (for small landlords), Co-operatives, and Contractor Pools among property owners to help reduce the cost of supplies and maintenance on a marginal basis. Such cooperatives and pools could also include training and education programs linked back to local schools or private industry to help enhance skills and employment opportunities in Anniston neighborhoods. “Buy Local” programs would also help in encouraging local collaboration and supply chain systems.

### **Sticks (Regulatory Authority)**

The introduction of incentives for land lords and property owners should be coupled with “Broken Window” codes enforcement. The City would respond in a targeted fashion to code enforcement issues in key districts created to offer

incentives. Approved contractor programs (again tied to “Buy Local”) would help funnel work orders back into neighborhood employment and training efforts.

### **Housing Conditions Survey**

The City should consider conducting a professional housing conditions survey to inventory conditions and maintenance needs so that programs and services can be designed to address specific maintenance and upgrading needs.

### **Homeownership Initiatives**

The City should offer homeownership initiatives (discussed in more detail below) to encourage move-ups and equity investment among existing residents. Such efforts would help enhance resident maintenance, upgrading and investment in aging housing stock.

### **New Affordable Rental Housing Development**

There is a need to encourage development of new affordable rental housing in order to create more choice in the market and to meet the needs of community for workforce housing, while taking maintenance pressure off of single-family housing. (Development strategies are discussed below).

## **New Housing Development**

The market analysis identified potential for new housing development. In the short term, much of this demand would drive opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development of 400 to 700 units over the next five to seven years. A strategy is outlined below for leveraging or encouraging new housing development in the city.

### **Multi-Family Rental Housing**

Target sites need to be identified for multi-family housing. The new Comprehensive Plan’s Place Types section will provide direction on that front. The Housing Authority has applied several times for the HUD Choice Neighborhood grants,



which would help to fund redevelopment of public housing sites where the authority is actively demolishing housing. There is a need to improve the application where possible, with the help of a professional grant writer.

The City can also take a more active role in recruiting and attracting private apartment development. Land banking and use of public land should be encouraged as a leveraging tool for multi-family and/or mixed use housing development. The City might also consider establishing a tax increment financing (TIF) district to help finance infrastructure improvements that can leverage rental apartment development. A Chapter 9B Tax Abatement District might be developed as a leveraging tool. Local businesses and government could establish a pre-leasing program that could guarantee leases, thereby improving opportunities for bank financing for private developers.

### **Single Family & Townhouses**

As with multi-family housing, there is a need to identify target sites for single-family and townhouse infill development. The market analysis identifies a target for construction of 30 to 100 new units in the city. A Homeownership Initiative (as mentioned before) would be established perhaps in partnership with non-profit affordable housing developers to delivery workforce housing. The Housing Authority would have assistance improving its Choice Neighborhood application to leverage federal public housing redevelopment funding. Contractor training and pool access could help reduce the cost of construction in the city, enhancing opportunities for delivery of affordable and workforce housing.

The City could also offer regulatory incentives, such as through a Fast Track or pre-approval program that increases opportunities for affordable housing delivery if designed and planned according to pre-approved concept plans. Again, City or School Board owned land can be used as part of a land-banking and incentive program to encourage new housing development at specific sites in the city.

### **Neighborhood Revitalization**

Strategies for broader neighborhood revitalization are introduced below. Such strategies are aimed at improving opportunities for housing rehabilitation and new development through creation of targeted sites, amenities, and remediation to help leverage positive change. Key elements include the following:

### **Consolidation of Parcels**

As noted previously, the City could establish or strengthen a land bank as a mechanism for moving vacant or underutilized land back onto the City's tax rolls through housing development. Overall, parcels should be consolidated to create sites that can leverage redevelopment. The City can use its regulatory powers to acquire tax delinquent properties, which can be added and consolidated with publicly-owned parcels to create larger redevelopment sites. Excess school properties should be included in this program, along with creation of public and community assets on public land.

### **Target Sites for New Housing Development**

Sites should be targeted more specifically in the downtown area, West Anniston and the 15<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, and other commercial corridors in the city for housing, mixed-use, and amenity development. These areas have higher visibility and access, generating a potentially higher return on investment through spin-off to surrounding areas.

### **Amenities Development**

As noted previously, the neighborhood revitalization program would benefit from amenities development including trails, cultural venues, parks, public art, community gardens, and other assets that would increase the overall attractiveness of the city's neighborhoods for outside investment, while also improving the quality of life for existing residents.

### **Schools**

Programmatic improvements to City Schools such as through partnerships, as discussed previously, would help leverage reinvestment in housing and neighborhoods. A focus should be given to neighborhood schools initiatives and to redevelopment of excess school property.

### **Remediation and Blight**

Brownfield remediation programs should be established where appropriate to target grants for research and remediation, but also for promotion and education on environmental hazards. Mapping information collected for this comprehensive plan seems to suggest that any residual contamination in the city is highly localized at specific sites.

Regardless of whether sites have been remediated or addressed or not, there is a need for public education, communication, and public relations to alleviate fears and enhance the city's competitiveness for new development.

In addition to addressing hazardous brownfields, there is the need to continue removing blighted housing where it poses a severe and direct risk to community health. However, any housing removal should be coupled with a plan for consolidation and redevelopment of parcels, rather than creating gaps in the urban fabric.

### **Community Safety**

Anniston can work to establish or strengthen neighborhood associations, modeled on Birmingham's examples, to encourage more structure and community investment in neighborhood revitalization. Some of this structure can be targeted to community safety, such as through a neighborhood watch program coupled with community policing to augment the resources of the city's public safety departments.

### **Fresh Food Deserts**

There is a need to fill gaps in terms of access to fresh food for residents of the city. Mapping conducted for this Comprehensive Plan identified several areas that are unserved by groceries or other fresh food markets, including West Anniston in particular, but also portions of north, south, southeast, and east Anniston which lack fresh food suppliers within walking distance. Strategies to address this gap include the following (some of which is discussed further in the Economic Development element of this plan):

- Small Business Development (grants, loans, and technical assistance for small fresh food businesses)
- Food Trucks or Mobile Food Services
- Community Gardens
- Transportation Services (to bring people to food or food to people)
- Mixed-Use Development (which builds the rooftop densities that can support fresh food markets)

Ultimately, research has shown that enhancing access alone does not solve issues with health in low-income communities. There would still be a need for strong community health education programs to be administered and coupled with any fresh food access that is provided through the aforementioned strategies. At a minimum, access to fresh food

markets may not solve hunger or community health issues, but it can enhance the amenity value of communities and provide opportunities for health education.

APPENDIX

<b>Table A-1. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT TRENDS, CALHOUN COUNTY, 1996-2020</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>2-4 Unit</b>	<b>MF</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1996	196	4	112	312
1997	155	7	70	232
1998	166	14	87	267
1999	180	32	210	422
2000	252	39	45	336
2001	243	-	16	259
2002	215	2	16	233
2003	163	-	-	163
2004	204	2	16	222
2005	258	8	-	266
2006	232	38	7	277
2007	264	2	206	472
2008	183	8	6	197
2009	139	9	46	194
2010	99	3	5	107
2011	73	4	6	83
2012	71	-	-	71
2013	59	-	-	59
2014	102	-	12	114
2015	61	-	-	61
2016	62	15	-	77
2017	69	-	-	69
2018	66	4	-	70
2019	105	-	-	105
2020	102	-	-	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,719</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>4,770</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>191</b>
	16.4%	0.8%	3.8%	
<b>Period</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>2-3-4</b>	<b>MF</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
'96-2003	196	12	70	278
'04-2008	228	12	47	287
'09-2014	91	3	12	105
'15-2020	78	3	-	81

<b>Table A-2. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT TRENDS, ANNISTON, 1996-2020</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>2-4 Unit</b>	<b>MF</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1996	60	-	-	60
1997	25	-	-	25
1998	20	2	-	22
1999	22	-	-	22
2000	21	-	-	21
2001	24	-	-	24
2002	26	-	-	26
2003	23	-	-	23
2004	28	-	-	28
2005	15	-	-	15
2006	15	-	-	15
2007	39	-	-	39
2008	6	-	-	6
2009	4	-	-	4
2010	2	-	-	2
2011	4	-	-	4
2012	1	-	-	1
2013	1	-	-	1
2014	2	-	-	2
2015	2	-	-	2
2016	2	-	-	2
2017	2	-	-	2
2018	2	-	-	2
2019	2	-	-	2
2020	3	-	-	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Period</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>2-3-4</b>	<b>MF</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
'96-2003	28	0.3	-	28
'04-2008	21	-	-	21
'09-2014	2	-	-	2
'15-2020	2	-	-	2
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

**APPENDIX D.**

**ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN DESIGN CONCEPTS**



# APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN DESIGN CONCEPTS

## BACKGROUND

There are two design concepts that have been proposed for Downtown over the past decade that warrant inclusion within this Comprehensive Plan. The proposed Civic Mall Concept is summarized on this page and the following page, and the proposed Amphitheater & Gardens Concept is summarized on page 3 of this Appendix section.

**Initial Civic Mall Concept (2010)** - This concept is based on tying together some of Downtown's key civic buildings through a public space network that provides useful open space, improved aesthetics, and helps to underscore the significance of the associated buildings. The programming for some of the buildings was inconsistent with the ultimate decisions on that front, but the concept still holds up well. This concept was echoed and adapted six years later as part of the City's 2016 Downtown Multimodal Plan. Of the various schemes created in 2010, the one below emerged as the most viable option.



*The design team that held a planning charrette to devise multiple alternative concepts for the Civic Mall idea included Amy Smith, Cal Munroe, Jay Jenkins and Larry Watts.*





## Most Recent Civic Mall Concept (2016)

As noted on the previous page, the 2010 version of this concept was adapted into the City's 2016 Downtown Multimodal Plan. That concept was then adapted further and refined into the version illustrated on this page by an Anniston-based architect - David Christian of Christian & Associates Architects. The primary components of this concept include the following:

### Reuse of Former Federal Courthouse as City Hall

This building has the civic character worthy of a city hall and is already the frontrunner for the pending new City Hall once the current site is no longer used by the City.



Aerial photo of the overall area

### Civic Mall Green Space

This grand civic space would connect the new City Hall noted above, the new Federal Building, the existing Calhoun County Courthouse, and the existing Justice Center.

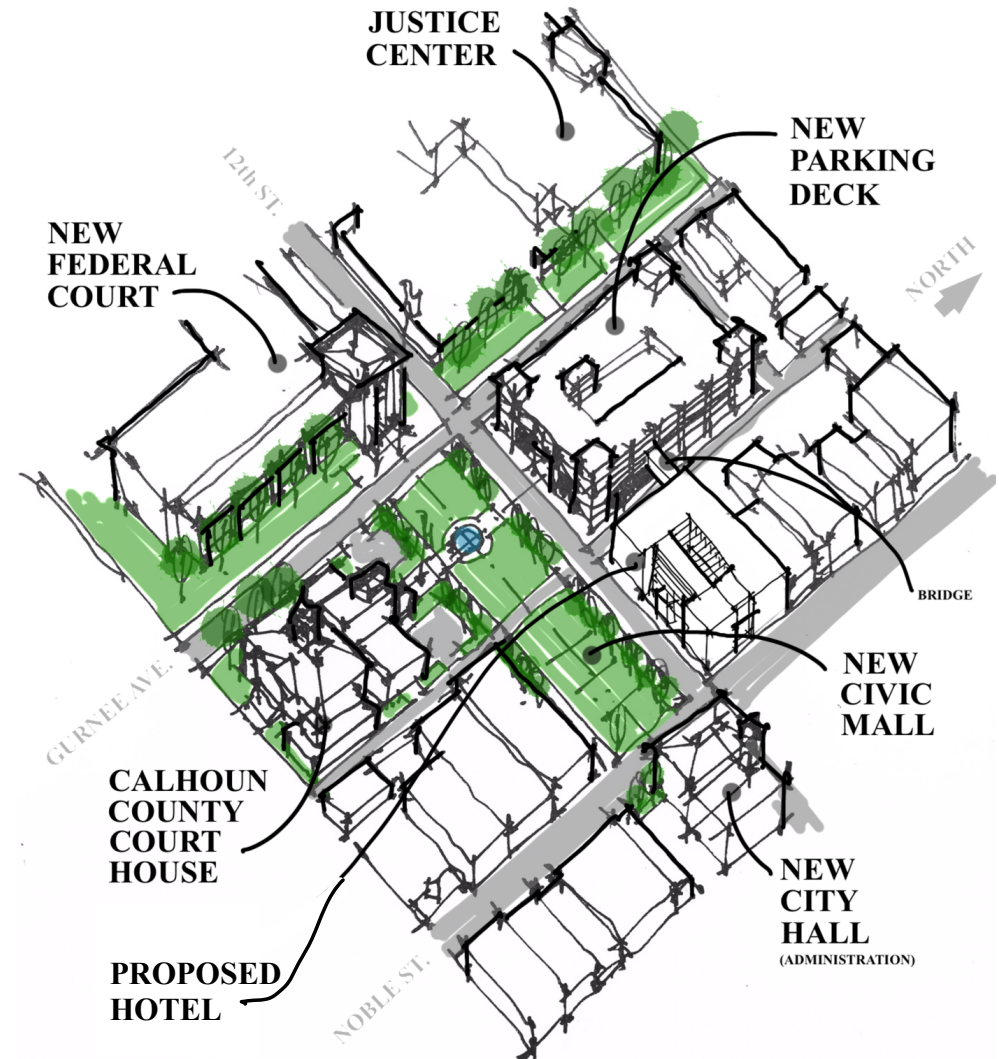


Buildings on the parking deck site

### New Parking Deck

Even though on-street parking is currently unmanaged because of the relatively low demand for Downtown parking, the development of the new Federal Courthouse and the loss of surface parking from the Civic Mall green space would likely warrant the development of a parking garage. Two historic one-story buildings on the north side of West 12th Street would be eliminated, but neither are architectural gems and one is considered a non-contributing building by the City's recent historic resources survey with respect to the Downtown National Register District.

This concept also incorporates the proposed new hotel for northwest corner of Noble and West 12th Streets, which is near fruition once additional investors are secured.



Civic Mall Concept  
courtesy of  
Christian & Associates Architects



# APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN DESIGN CONCEPTS

## Amphitheater & Gardens Concept

Prepared by David Christian of Christian & Associates Architects, this concept proposes the following ideas for the abandoned theater and adjacent empty lot on the west side of Noble Street between West 12th and West 13th Streets:

### Rehabilitation of the Theater Facade

This building has been substantially altered so as to lose its architectural integrity. Any sort of adaptation of the overall structure does not appear to be very viable. However, the front part of the building and the facade could be restored, thereby honoring that historic theater use and maintaining the cohesiveness of the streetscape.

### Development of Restrooms and an Office

The retained front portion of the building would be redeveloped into restrooms and a small office for the facility's management. Perhaps the restrooms could even be accessible at all times and become a useful new amenity for the broader Downtown.

### Creation of a Public Space & Stage

A terraced garden and seating would be developed and front onto a new covered stage with support facilities behind it. There may be potential to utilize the shell of the existing theatre building for that component. There would also be an adjoining garden area to the immediate north where the vacant lot now exists.

The theater property is currently owned by the City and the adjacent vacant lot to the immediate north is owned by a developer who recently acquired it. There are multiple challenges to this concept, as follow:

- A proposed new public space, to include a stage, is already proposed for the northwest corner of Noble and West 11th Streets. That idea has even been planned and designed for Main Street Anniston and appears likely to occur. Thus, it may be difficult to justify two such similar public spaces. At this point, the other planned public space should be prioritized.
- The design would have to accommodate a reconfigured version of the exterior stairway currently accessing the south end of the upper floor of the building to the immediate north.
- Most importantly, the vacant lot's new owner may have development plans that are inconsistent with this concept. Nevertheless, development plans do not always materialize, so it is reasonable to still keep this concept in reserve.

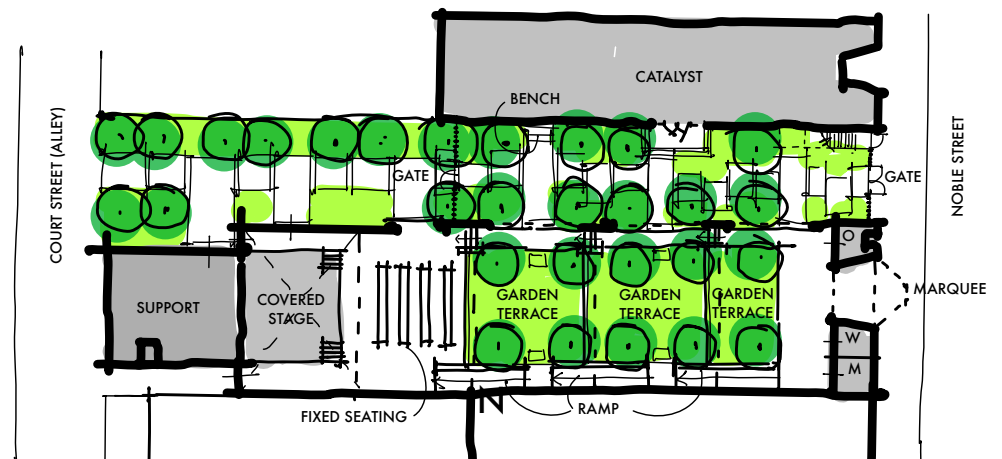
Consequently, this project would have to be considered a low priority for the near future, but it has enough potential benefits to the Downtown that it deserves to be recognized for future consideration.

*Noble Street view of subject site*



## Amphitheater & Gardens Concept

courtesy of  
Christian & Associates Architects



**APPENDIX E.**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**



DRAFT

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

*Anniston Comprehensive Plan*

Key Inputs

Prepared for The Walker Collaborative  
And the City of Anniston  
November 30, 2021

By ***Randall Gross / Development Economics***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report provides recommendations for economic development as input to the comprehensive plan for the City of Anniston. These recommendations build on a host of community and stakeholder engagement processes, as well as on existing economic strengths and competitive advantages, assets, growth trends and forecasts, and target industry analysis. Section 1 of this report provides findings from the Target Industry Analysis, which identified industries and sectors where Anniston could build on its competitive advantages and assets to retain, grow, develop and recruit businesses while strengthening the city's employment base and fiscal health. Section 2 discusses a prospective set of economic development objectives as well as a vision for Anniston's economic development, based on analysis but also on stakeholder guidance and visioning. Section 3 proposes strategies for growing and strengthening Anniston's economy, while Section 4 provides suggestions for the City's role in implementation of economic development efforts and as part of the broader regional efforts. This strategy is meant as a starting point for discussion and action among community leaders. Some of the recommendations contained herein are meant to bolster existing efforts that are already underway, while others may introduce new concepts or programs that can strengthen the City's overall efforts.

## **Section 1. TARGET INDUSTRIES**

A Target Industry Analysis was conducted to assess and identify industry sectors, and several specific industries, where the City of Anniston might focus its business retention, growth, recruitment, and development efforts. The findings are informed by an analysis of the City's competitive advantages, existing industry concentrations and clusters, fiscal and economic structure, growth trends, and industry-by-industry employment forecasts. Discussions with local stakeholders including a visioning session with representatives of various elements of the community also provided input to the assessment of target industry opportunities. The following section describes some of the input from these various sources as well as identification of and recommendations for target industry development.

### **Current Targets**

As noted elsewhere in this plan, the City of Anniston is focused on retail business development, downtown revitalization, and manufacturing development. Anniston's budget is highly dependent on revenue generated through retail sales taxes (accounting for 75.5% of all of Anniston's General Fund revenue), so retail business recruitment, existing business growth, and retail retention are all paramount to the City's fiscal interests. That being said, retail is a tertiary sector that is highly dependent on local trade area household expenditures, along with inflow from tourism and daytime employment. Thus, growing the household income base, tourism, and daytime employment will naturally lead to increased demand for retail and will make it easier for the city to attract and retain retail businesses. The County does not identify targets per se but is concentrated on building the existing base of federal contractors, automotive suppliers and other OEMs as key employers for the region.

### **Existing Industry Concentrations and Clusters**

Anniston's economic base is fairly concentrated in six industry sectors: health care (24.0% of employment), manufacturing (12.9%), retail trade (9.8%), education (8.6%), accommodation & food services (8.0%), and administrative services (7.0%). Government is also important to Anniston, with about 6.6% of the city's jobs. In order to determine where Anniston has statistically significant concentrations (and therefore some competitive advantages) relative to the region and the state, location quotients (LQs) were determined for the various sectors. This LQ analysis identified the most significant concentrations in information services (e.g., media) and health care, with some less-significant concentrations in professional & technical services and management services. These industry sector concentrations are summarized using Location Quotients in comparison so the Anniston-Oxford MSA, the East Alabama Works (EAW) region, and Alabama (AL) as a whole, as follows:

<b>Industry Sector</b>	<b>LQ (MSA)</b>	<b>LQ (EAW)</b>	<b>LQ (AL)</b>
<b>Information Services</b>	<b>188.2</b>	<b>262.4</b>	<b>194.8</b>
Management Services	<b>182.7</b>	<b>215.2</b>	61.6
<b>Health Care Services</b>	<b>157.5</b>	<b>158.3</b>	<b>173.1</b>
Professional & Tech Services	<b>155.7</b>	<b>229.8</b>	92.5
Real Estate	<b>133.8</b>	<b>144.7</b>	94.7
Utilities	<b>130.9</b>	107.1	80.7
Financial Services	122.6	119.1	68.4
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	117.2	124.5	64.8
Wholesale Trade	98.8	<b>140.2</b>	105.3

An LQ of more than **130.0** indicates a relative concentration, suggesting the city has some competitive advantages as a location for this type of activity. As shown above, Anniston has concentrations in six sectors at both the metro and regional levels, but only two at the state level – Information Services and Health Care. Still, the city can be highly competitive but under-developed for some sectors and therefore, may not exhibit concentrations within those sectors.

As noted elsewhere, the city also has several existing industry clusters. Perhaps most prominent are the military, metals, transportation, and health care-related clusters, which include a number of businesses and anchor institutions within multiple industries and sectors as follows:

### **Health Care Cluster**

Health care is a leading sector in Anniston, with 24% of local employment. Two major hospitals in Anniston have merged under the Regional Medical Center (RMC Health System) flag but both remain operating within a short distance of one another near downtown Anniston. RMC employs more than 1,600 people in Anniston, including 200 physicians, plus 300 volunteers. Medical and health care services and related retail and service businesses have clustered around the two hospitals along the Leighton and Christine Avenue corridors. An inventory of businesses and institutions by industry within the health care and medical industry cluster around these two hospitals is provided below (along with the NAICS – North American Industrial Classification System – code associated with each industry).

- RMC: General Medical & Surgical Hospitals (NAICS 6221)
- Medical & Diagnostic Laboratories (NAICS 6215)
- Retail & Wholesale Trade (NAICS 45)

- Artificial Limb & Brace Suppliers
- Pharmacies
- Home Medical Supply
- Medical Uniform Suppliers
- Medical Equipment Suppliers
- Home Health Care Companies (NAICS 6216)
- Life and Health Insurance Providers (NAICS 52411)
- Outpatient Care Centers (NAICS 6214)
  - Family Planning Centers
  - Mental Health & Substance Abuse Facilities
  - Freestanding Surgery Centers
  - Kidney Dialysis Centers
  - Weight Loss Clinics
- Nursing Care Facilities (NAICS 6231)
  - Hospice Service Providers
- Individual & Family Services (NAICS 6241)
- Animal Medical & Veterinary Clinics (NAICS 541940)
- Offices of Physicians & Medical Practitioners (NAICS 6211)
  - Heart/Cardiology & Vascular
  - Pediatric
  - Anesthesiology
  - Pain
  - Psychiatry
  - Geriatrics
  - Gastroenterology
  - Ophthalmology
  - OB/GYN
  - Ear, Nose & Throat
  - Orthopedic & Sports Medicine
  - Nephrology
- Offices of Dentists (NAICS 6212)
- Educational Services (NAICS 61)
- Offices of Other Health Practitioners (NAICS 6213)
  - Mental Health Practitioners and Counseling Services
  - Addiction Recovery and Social Services
  - Wellness Clinics
  - Optometrists
  - Physical, Occupational, Speech Therapists
  - Podiatrists



Several industries, including medical and health care, retail, wholesale trade, education, and social services are well-represented in this cluster. The cluster has gaps in other industries such as manufacturing and R&D, although there is a handful of local companies like Biomune (with 6 employees) producing or distributing pharmaceuticals and other related products.

## **Military**

Anniston Army Depot impacts on the area's labor market, with 4,300 employees, the largest employer in Calhoun County. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Center for Domestic Preparedness is an important training facility for first responders at McClellan. The federal government only employs about 22 people at the center but has a significant base of private contractors. Leidos, for example, is one such contractor, with about 220 employees providing training services at the site. Other contractors in food service, transportation, and security employ another +/-250 at the site or in support of the DHS Center. The military cluster includes the following industries and specific businesses:

- U.S. Federal Government: Departments of Defense and Homeland Security
  - Anniston Army Depot
  - DHS Center for Domestic Preparedness
- Professional & Technical Services
  - Leidos: Computer Systems Design & Related Services; Education and Training
- Manufacturing
  - BAE Systems Land & Armaments
  - General Dynamics OTS
- Military Contractors (124 in Anniston)
  - Various Industries, including utilities, transportation services, administrative services, construction and building contractors, retail/supply, automotive repair, education and training programs, wholesale trade, real estate services, industrial equipment supply and repair services, engineering and other technical services, foodservice, advertising and other business services, medical services, accommodation services, telecommunication services, local government services, and others. The largest (in terms of employment) among these contractors include BAE Systems and General Dynamics (see above), Anniston Steel & Plumbing Company, Creedmoor Sports Inc., Easter Seals Alabama, HGS Engineering, Industrial Tooling & Supply, LBC Acquisitions LLC, McCord Communication Service, and Newman Industrial Supply.

## **Metals & Transportation Equipment**

Anniston has a long history as a center for metal forging and associated industries. Even with changing technologies and foreign competition, Anniston retains a core cluster of businesses engaged in metal and metal products manufacturing, along with some associated industries including transportation equipment manufacturing. Several key industries and specific companies that help to anchor this cluster are summarized in the following list, below.

- Primary Metal Manufacturing (NAICS 331)
  - Lee Brass
  - Tyler Union Waterworks / Union Foundry Operations
- Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing (NAICS 332)
  - M&H Valve
- Transportation Equipment Manufacturing (NAICS 336)
  - Honda Manufacturing Alabama (Talladega County)
  - New Flyer
  - BAE Systems
  - International Automotive Components
  - General Dynamics OTS (rockets)
- Coating, Engraving, & Allied Services (NAICS 347)
- Metals and Minerals (NAICS 505)
  - Metals Services Centers & Offices

### Growth Prospects

The growth prospects of various industries were analyzed on a national, regional and local basis, using data generated from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and secondary sources including Moody's Analytics. Past trends in employment and establishments as well as future industry projections were analyzed for Anniston and the metro area. Several key findings from these analyses are summarized below.

### Employment Trends

As noted earlier, Anniston has experienced declining employment and establishment trends in manufacturing, construction, information services, accommodation & foodservice, and other services. Meanwhile, the city has seen overall growth in professional & technical services, wholesale trade, administrative services, health care, and management services. These trends have been uneven over time and within specific industries. For example, while the construction sector has lost employment and establishments in the city on a fairly consistent level since 2002, employment among specialty trades has actually increased since 2010. That being said, the trades have still not recovered all of their lost employment from the recession of 2008-09.

The manufacturing sector, in particular, has seen a rebound since 2010. Of the 21 manufacturing industries represented in the city that lost employment between 2002 and 2010, 15 have added jobs since 2010. The fastest growth has been in the **plastics** and rubber products manufacturing industry, which has shown consistent growth since 2002 and added about 220 jobs (130%) since 2010. While plastics showed the fastest growth among manufacturing industries, Anniston's historically important fabricated metal products industry has actually added the largest number of jobs since 2010 (about 260), but only after shedding nearly 1,150 jobs from 2002

through 2010. Aside from plastics, the manufacturing industries that have shown consistent growth in Anniston include paper, chemicals, and nonmetallic minerals. Wood product, primary metal, plastic, fabricated metals product, and transportation equipment manufacturing have all added more than 100 jobs each in Anniston since 2010.

Aside from the several manufacturing industries, the only other industries that have shown consistent (but limited) growth since 2002 in Anniston have been management services, logging, retail trade (but only for certain categories, like building materials and non-store (Internet) retailers), and State Government. The industries adding over 100 jobs since 2010 (aside from the manufacturing industries listed above) include transportation & warehousing (350), building material retailing (140), and specialty construction trades (110).

### Market Share

An analysis of Anniston's market share within the MSA was conducted, with results discussed earlier in this report. In general, Anniston's market share for wholesale trade, professional & technical services, and management services has increased consistently over time. The city now has roughly 76% of the metro area's management services employment. While the total employment in this sector is small, the city clearly has a niche within the region for such businesses. In addition, the city has regained lost market share in manufacturing, retail, transport, information services, real estate, administrative services, and health care since 2010. The city also dominates the metro in information services (media), with a 78% share of total employment. Areas where the city could be performing better (in terms of market share) were also identified, namely in tourism (accommodation & foodservice), arts/entertainment & recreation services, finance, and construction. All of these are often concentrated in the largest city in a given metro area.

### Employment Projections

A number of Anniston's economic sectors will see continued growth through 2030. Projected growth sectors and key growth industries are summarized below based on data collected and analyzed from Moody's Analytics and other sources.

<u>Sector / Industry</u>	<u>Annual Growth Rate</u>
• Natural Resources & Mining	1.4%
○ Mining (quarrying)	2.0%
• Construction	0.8%
• Manufacturing	-0.3%
○ <b>Wood Products</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
○ <b>Nonmetallic Metal Products</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
○ Transportation Equipment	0.3%

• Wholesale Trade	0.7%
• Retail Trade	0.2%
• Transportation & Warehousing	2.0%
○ <b>Transportation Services</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
• Information Services	0.1%
○ Publishing	1.7%
○ <b>Internet Services</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
○ <b>Other Information Services</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
• Financial Activities	0.8%
• Professional & Business Services	1.2%
○ Administrative Services	1.8%
• Education and Health Services	1.3%
○ Health Care	1.3%
• Leisure & Hospitality	2.0%
○ <b>Arts &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
○ <b>Accommodation &amp; Foodservice</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
• Other Services	1.1%
○ <b>Personal Services</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
• Government	0.3%

These data suggest that Anniston will experience the fastest growth in Internet and other information services, transportation services, arts & entertainment, accommodation & foodservice (a proxy for tourism), personal services, and certain manufacturing industries like wood products and nonmetallic metal products. Growth rates in some industries like transportation equipment manufacturing may be slower, but the number of jobs added will be more significant because of the size of the existing base.

## Supply Chain

Considerations were given to the supply chain for existing clusters, growth industries and sector concentrations in Anniston. Industries associated with the supply chain in these industries and sectors provide opportunities for growth and expansion. Gaps in the supply chain could be filled through business recruitment. Thus, the supply chain analysis plays a role in defining target industries for business development in the city.

## Target Industry Identification

Based on these various inputs and analyses, an “envelope” of prospective target industries was identified. These industries are listed below, followed by recommendations for target industry focusing and prioritization based partly on stakeholder input.

- Arts, Culture and Media Services
- Repair & Maintenance Services
- Health Care (including Behavioral Health) & Associated Management Services
- Environmental Testing, Training, & Remediation Services
- Recreation Tourism
- Emergency Service & Other Training
- Administrative Support Services
- Transportation Services
- Wood Products
- Construction Trades
- Wholesale Trade

The city clearly has strengths for developing each of these industries, given existing assets, clusters, and competitive advantages; growth prospects; and opportunities for downtown/neighborhood revitalization and labor force development. Several key priorities are recommended as follows:

### **Health Care**

The city is a regional hub for health care, a growing sector that provides a broad range of well-paying workforce opportunities and benefits from the clustering of businesses within a relatively narrow geographic corridor. Many of the job opportunities that are being created in health care match the labor force profile for Anniston's high school graduate-led workforce. Growing and expanding health care can generate downstream opportunities in other sectors and industries in terms of training, supply, production, and retail sales. Health care can retain and draw residents into the city, boosting the household base and opportunities for revitalization.

### **Construction Trades**

The construction trades offer growth prospects and opportunities for low- and moderate-skilled residents close to home and as part of broader housing and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Specialty trades, which may require more time in training to develop, nevertheless help create long-term skills for high-paying work. The disadvantages relate to the impacts of real estate cycles on the construction sector and employment. For the foreseeable future, however, the demand for high-quality construction trade skills is high and supply so low that opportunities are unlikely to evaporate overnight during the next down cycle.

### **Transportation Services**

Anniston is positioned to serve as a hub for transportation services within the county and surrounding areas. While lacking in interstate highway access, the city's central location and airport facilities offer opportunities for growth and development of transportation-related service industries. The skill sets from such industries can also be aligned with existing and potential resident skills developed through training programs. Federal contracting appears to also create consistent funding and opportunities for transportation services to area installations and in service to DHS and other training programs.

### **Recreation Tourism**

Anniston has access to the Chief Ladiga Trail and regional trail system that is fast-becoming a regional and national destination for bicycling and other recreation tourism. Coldwater Mountain Bike Trails, McClellan Mountain Bike Trails, Pinhoti Trail, Choccolocco (Mountain) Wildlife Management Area, Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge, Henry Farms, and nearby Talladega National Forest all present Anniston with important assets for marketing and tourism development. These assets can be expanded, enhanced, and connected in a way to engage with downtown Anniston and the city's neighborhoods to create amenity value that will attract and retain residents and support businesses. Employment opportunities can be captured both in direct trail and wildlife management as well as in spin-off retail businesses, accommodation & foodservice, and trail-head uses anchoring these trails and natural areas. Arts and cultural assets (such as the Anniston museums and Civil Rights heritage) along with web-based media services associated with heritage and tourism development can be expanded to build on Anniston's inherent strengths.

## **Section 2. OBJECTIVES & VISION**

To help guide economic development efforts in Anniston, an overall vision statement for economic development has been developed based on the analysis of Anniston's socio-economic and housing challenges, competitive advantages, growth prospects and target industries; coupled with stakeholder input and guidance. An "Economic Development Visioning Session" was held with key stakeholders and which shored up information collected through other engagement pathways, to refine objectives and provide input on challenges, opportunities, and a vision for economic development. The following output summarizes these findings as a framework for economic and community development in the city.

### **Priority #1: Schools**

Stakeholders consistently ranked schools as a high priority for improving the city's economic health and prosperity. Addressing issues such as student performance (as measured through standardized test scores), truancy, facilities and other factors is important; but the broader concern relates to how the schools are perceived. Negative perceptions of Anniston City Schools has impacted on the city's real estate and investment markets which, in turn, impacts negatively on the City's tax base and on resources to support the schools. Thus, there is a downward spiral that seems to be rooted in part in perceptions of the schools that result in a loss of confidence and resources for schools to succeed. Some of the challenges and opportunities associated with the Anniston City School System are summarized below based on stakeholder input.

#### **Challenges**

As noted above, negative perceptions of the schools have impacted on the city in a way that ultimately reduces resources that could have been used to improve the schools. Certainly the fact that the Anniston City School System has spent some time lifting itself out of debt has contributed to some of the negative perceptions, but they have now succeeded in regaining their financial footing. As such, they will be better positioned to invest in school programming, teaching, and facilities in a way that they were unable to do for several years.

#### **Opportunities**

There is the opportunity for a public relations effort to educate stakeholders about progress that is being made by the Schools to improve their position. There are opportunities for City Schools to offer career tech programs (for example in partnership with local

hospitals). There are also opportunities for further development and improvement of the City's recreation facilities, and to integrate the schools into broader outdoor recreation amenities and activities.

## **Priority #2: Economic Development**

Various economic development issues were also ranked highly by stakeholders engaged at various points during the comprehensive planning process. Within the framework of the economic development visioning session itself, stakeholders specifically prioritized the need for greater inter-agency coordination and collaboration. Some of the various challenges and opportunities relating to economic development are summarized below. Again, this list is not exhaustive, but provides an indication of the types of priorities that stakeholders may have prioritized.

### **Challenges**

Stakeholders identified issues with vacancy, brown fields, and functionally obsolete industrial buildings in the city. Retail expenditure "leakage" to other areas of the county was perceived as an important issue, since it robs the City of tax revenues generated by its own residents. It has been noted that Calhoun County is focused on industrial development, which has less of a direct benefit to Anniston or its residents. Some stakeholders noted inconsistencies (such as those relating to implementation of the inspections process) in City regulatory authority that may undermine development efforts. Transportation access (such as direct access to interstate highways) has been noted as a deficiency for economic development. The west side of Anniston (and some other areas) have experienced severe disinvestment and have been subject to environmental health and other impacts that have greatly reduced quality of life. Many stakeholders noted that it is hard to recruit and retain workers to their businesses in the city, which impacts on the growth and development of the business base. The city has also experienced a "brain drain," with successful graduates leaving the city for college or employment elsewhere. Some stakeholders suggest that "fiefdoms" and a lack of trust may exist between various competing economic development entities in the area, and these entities are not always collaborating for the benefit of residents. The labor force is weighted toward unskilled over skilled workers. The McClellan Development Authority (MDA) has industrial land available for development, but the city's industrial park is aging and largely built-out.

### **Opportunities**

Among the various opportunities for economic development in the city is the one created by new, visionary leadership. Leadership is critical for changing perceptions, building civic pride, and collaborating on economic development. Some stakeholders see the opportunity for Anniston to re-brand as the financial and/or medical hub of the region (while they see Oxford as the existing retail hub and Jacksonville as the area's hub for higher education). Stakeholders see the opportunity for all three main cities to work



together, so long as they recognize each of their relative strengths and niches, with “lines more clearly drawn” between them. Examples of successful collaboration such as in St. Clair County, where the County’s IDB presents a more diverse and comprehensive investment vehicle, were provided by stakeholders. The EDC/Industrial Development Board provides opportunities for greater investment in the city and county’s development efforts (such as through the State Amendment 772 process), but there may be a need for greater diversity in funding.

Recreational trails provide an opportunity for tourism development in Anniston and the region. Downtown and the Anniston Regional Airport are both assets that act as drivers for economic development. There are opportunities for career tech programs in the local high school. There has been collaboration between Anniston and Oxford on public safety. Such collaborative efforts need to continue and expand. There is the opportunity to promote and communicate improving conditions in education and safety, perhaps through marketing campaigns that showcase Anniston’s resiliency. By simplifying some of the regulatory processes, Anniston can improve opportunities for investment.

Anniston’s Opportunity Zone and McClellan’s “under-utilized” land both offer investment potential. Oddly, Anniston’s Opportunity Zone was not drawn to include the city’s West Side but is focused mainly on downtown and the McClellan property. The opportunities generated by Anniston’s medical institutions were identified not only in terms of generating future employment but also for enhancing the community’s quality of life and for attracting students to stay in the community such as through health services curricula in local schools correlated with hands-on experience in the health care fields through career tech programs. Opportunities in mental health services were singled out as an under-served population. Medical center partnerships for schools could help change perceptions of the city and its school systems. Downtown and Noble Street were seen as opportunities for further revitalization and development, with Main Street and strong communication efforts already in place to improve market conditions and image. However, there was also a perception of the need for stronger direct development and investment in the downtown area, above and beyond marketing, such as could be directed or leveraged by a downtown development authority.

### **Priority #3: Housing & Social Issues**

There are a number of socio-economic issues impacting on the city and relating in many cases to the city’s high poverty rate evidenced by the fact that 85 to 90% of children are enrolled in the free lunch program in Anniston City Schools and some 25% of RMC patients are uninsured. Some of the challenges identified by stakeholders, as well as the opportunities to address these challenges, are summarized below.

#### **Challenges**

Health issues like diabetes and cancer are paramount in the community, with some conditions related to lifestyle and poverty while others may exhibit from the long-term effects of environmental contamination. Mental health issues are also affecting a significant portion of residents in the community. A lack of safe, decent, and affordable housing resources is partly to blame for the presence of a large transient population in Anniston. Absentee ownership or a lack of resources among local landlords has contributed to housing conditions issues and neglected properties. A lack of fresh healthy food (“food deserts”) and childcare services may impede community development. Crime rates have been high until recently, and perceptions of safety issues remain. Geographic and/or racial disparities may exist with respect to access to high-quality public infrastructure and access to public transportation.

### **Opportunities**

Among the various opportunities identified by stakeholders were those relating to more collaboration with area organizations, and it was noted that Calhoun County is ranked among the top philanthropic communities in Alabama. There were several initiatives where there is already some effort underway, such as through the State’s Healthy Family Initiative and other efforts which have helped to lower local truancy rates; along with a local task force working on creation of a transitional facility for homeless. Engaging with the local health and medical institutions was seen as a key element of any strategy to address local socio-economic issues, since those institutions are focused on community health and wellbeing, create employment opportunities for residents, and are committed to community investment to support their mission. The opportunities associated with developing recreation amenities and trails in the city was emphasized for its benefits to health, safety, and neighborhood revitalization. Scouting and perhaps new efforts like an Anniston Youth Conservation Corps could be engaged in working on trail maintenance and recreation programming. It was noted that the Anniston YMCA already operates a youth mountain biking program, which could be easily integrated with promotion of the city’s outdoor recreation assets. Trails could also leverage better accessibility for city residents that lack motorized transportation. A needs and opportunities were identified to map the city’s neighborhoods for identity branding, to celebrate their heritage, and to encourage reinvestment. Various opportunities for housing revitalization were offered including the concept of consolidating parcels for redevelopment, and using “carrot and stick” approaches for landlords to upgrade and maintain properties through more intensive regulation coupled with incentives. Habitat for Humanity, The Right Place, and Calhoun County CDC were mentioned as being engaged in affordable housing provision.

### **Overall Objectives**

Based on these discussions on opportunities and challenges, a number of objectives emerged that could be addressed through economic development strategic planning and City efforts in collaboration with various public, private, and institutional partners. These objectives are summarized below (in no particular order).

- Encourage “Meaningful” Economic Development (Directed to Key Priorities Identified Above).
- Diversify the Anniston Economic Base, Including Tourism
- Strengthen Anniston’s Service Sectors
- Uplift Downtown Small Businesses
- Encourage Industrial Development of McClellan and Airport
- Prioritize Existing Business Retention and Growth
- Address Housing, Equity, and Poverty-Related Issues as Part of Economic Development Efforts
- Prioritize Pro-Active Marketing Efforts to Address Negative Perceptions of Schools and Safety
- Enable Better Access to Capital/Credit, Jobs, and Education
- Increase Community Pride (with an Understanding of Who We Are and Where We Are Going)

### **Economic Development Vision for Anniston**

Based on input from the various stakeholders engaged in the visioning session as well as broader community participation, a draft economic development vision statement has been crafted to represent how the community may like to see Anniston in the future.

*Anniston is a vibrant community, energized by a strong and diverse economic base that offers a wide variety of opportunities for the city’s young people to stay and thrive. There is a renewed sense of purpose and pride across all segments and neighborhoods in Anniston; a city where resources are distributed equitably, with good-paying jobs and high-quality housing available to support the city’s families. City Schools are regarded with pride and favor, infrastructure is maintained in good condition, and safe streets attract residents and businesses. Community health and wellness is much improved. Visitors and residents alike enjoy the city’s many assets, especially the strong network of outdoor recreational trails, environmental resources, and cultural amenities. The various economic and community development organizations, institutions, and government agencies collaborate to leverage and maximize benefits to the residents of Anniston and Calhoun County.*

Economic development strategies were developed, rooted in part on this vision and on the opportunities and objectives defined herein to help guide the city’s future.

## **Section 3. KEY STRATEGIES**

Several strategies have been developed as a component of the comprehensive plan to help guide economic development efforts in Anniston. These strategies have emerged based on all of the inputs described herein and elsewhere in the plan, such as stakeholder engagement and visioning, target industry analysis, socio-economic baseline analysis, and existing strengths and challenges that need to be addressed. The key strategies revolve around Education & Training Development, McClellan and Anniston Regional Airport Assets, Anniston's "Health Care Services Corridor," and Recreation Tourism Destination Marketing.

### **Education and Training**

Several strategies are geared specifically to strengthening and enhancing the city's education and training offering and changing perceptions about Anniston City Schools. Negative perceptions are impacting on the city's ability to retain and attract residents and businesses, which in turn impacts on the city's fiscal health and prosperity. So, the impact of negative perceptions of the schools cannot be understated in relation to the city's economic development. Thus, several of the following strategies are geared specifically to enhancing the Schools' image in and outside of the community. Anniston City Schools has already made great strides to improve its financial position which, in turn, helps free up much-needed resources to enhance school programming, academic achievement, and facilities.

#### **Anniston City Schools: Partnerships with Industry**

There are opportunities above and beyond existing efforts to build strong partnerships between the Anniston City Schools and local employers. Such partnerships can help enhance both student performance and the image of the schools. An improved image also helps local industry in return, by enhancing opportunities for employee retention and recruitment and by improving school programs. Several examples of areas where partnerships can

- **Facility Enhancement.** There are opportunities for private industry to sponsor improvements to local school facilities. Improvements to the facilities can help enhance school image, especially when residents see visible changes underway. Improvements are needed for example to facilities at the middle school, which is located on a campus that, while well-maintained, feels isolated from the rest of the city and buildings that offer a prison-like interior environment for educating children.

- **Program Development.** Anniston City Schools has the opportunity to develop and market programs that are otherwise unavailable in the county as a way of creating unique assets and resources that help to enhance the breadth of educational offerings while also improving the image of the schools. Private industry can collaborate with the local schools in the same way that they do with community college systems to design and develop programs, especially those that offer hands-on experience and training, mentorships, and apprenticeships in STEM occupations. Such efforts can also help industry market their employment opportunities to young, local audiences who may otherwise not consider future jobs within those industries.
- **Sports & Rec Sponsorship.** Sports sponsorships are not unusual, and can help enhance community spirit, pride, and image. Such sponsorships can also be applied to arts, culture, and academic efforts like science fairs and spelling contests.

### **Anniston City Schools: Magnet Program Development**

- **Voc-Ed/Tech Program w/Gadsden State.** Efforts to build partnerships with industry can also extend directly to development of feeder programs with Gadsden State and its Anniston Campus. Such programs might focus on vocational and tech education courses that create more job and college-ready applicants from high school level. Since Gadsden State already coordinates with local employers, there is the opportunity to plug into and extend existing vocational training programs into pre-college grades.

### **Anniston Public Relations Campaign**

A pro-active public relations effort is strongly recommended for the City to address perceptions of schools and safety in Anniston. Such efforts would be developed in partnership with the Anniston City Schools to ensure that there is a consistent, appropriate, and accurate message.

- **Real Estate Bus Tour.** A target audience for this campaign is the real estate community, where some brokers and others may steer prospective homebuyers away from Anniston because of negative perceptions of schools and, to a lesser extent, safety. Such steering can rob the schools and the city of needed tax revenue and resources that are generated by middle class homeowners. Even where there is no such steering, there is nevertheless a need to update the real estate community on progress that is being made by the Anniston City Schools to improve their financial position and performance. Some communities sponsor an annual “Bus Tour” for real estate brokers, developers, and investors to showcase homes, assets, and neighborhoods and to discuss the positive progress being made to address key challenges. Sometimes, the tour can be billed around a new development of some kind, but if there is little new development, then the completion of the Comprehensive Plan may provide an excellent opportunity for discussion.

- **Employee Recruitment.** The City should also partner and work with local companies on their employee recruitment efforts. As part of that effort, the City can produce printed and virtual materials showcasing the City's homes, schools, downtown, neighborhoods, history, recreation amenities, etc. Again, the City would partner with the Schools to communicate key achievements and progress accurately and positively.
- **News Stream.** The City can also support efforts by the Schools to produce content for local television and cable channels, newspapers and social media that keep the Schools in the forefront of local news and to counter negative media coverage. Partnerships with regional media companies could also be developed to include internships with Anniston's high school students to mirror other industry partnerships. Anniston is a hub for information services and there can be a role for the Schools in producing content and disseminating positive information while creating new educational experiences for their students.

### **McClellan: Strengthen the Training Hub**

McClellan has over some years now carved out a niche as a center for training, with the home of the Department of Homeland Security's Center for Domestic Preparedness. This function could be expanded and broadened further to include more training activities, which bring visitors to Anniston who in turn yield expenditures and benefits to the local economy. Training related to several existing areas could be expanded or deepened, while new areas of training experience could be added, as follows:

- **Emergency Management/First Responder/CDP.** The facility already serves as a base for emergency management and first responder training. This activity could be expanded and deepened to include facilities and programming to accommodate first responders as well as training that utilizes some of the same skills required for first responders. Examples might include utility line workers. Dade County, Georgia is home to the Southeast Lineman Training Center. While it would be unwise to compete against this sister facility, there may be opportunities to provide support training for linemen in the local area or in Alabama. Other examples might relate more specifically to storm-related disaster relief and training, especially as extreme storm events increase in frequency and demand grows for such training, along with support activities like temporary housing, storage, food distribution and other activities. Partnerships could be built with specific state or federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to create a larger and more focused hub for emergency training on site.
- **Mountain Biking and Other Recreational Racing.** The site also accommodates bicycle racing activities such as the NICA "Melee at McClellan," McClellan Madness, and the Alabama Cycling Classic. As of several years ago, racing attendance was growing at a rate of about 15% per year, according to the MDA. There are opportunities to expand not just the racing activity but also training and instruction for recreational bicycle racing at the site. Having a more permanent racing center on site might draw visitors worldwide for specialized trails and instruction. Higher-quality lodging on or off-site could be geared to the racing enthusiast, much in the same way that ski lodges become hubs of activity in the mountain states.

- **Environmental & Remediation.** Because of McClellan's history as an Army base with significant ordinance (and perhaps some unexploded mines) still on site, proximity to similar conditions at Anniston Army Depot, and the city's history with PCB and lead contamination, there are opportunities to draw scientists and environmental workers to McClellan and Anniston for training, workshops, and hands-on activities related to brown fields and environmental remediation. Federal brown field and DoD grants may be available to support some of this training activity, but a fee structure can be developed to generate earned income. Proximity to environmental resources like Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge can also anchor environment training related more to conservation and species protection.

### **Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development**

There is both a need and an opportunity to expand on Anniston and the region's resources for training in entrepreneurship and small business development. Entrepreneurship opportunities can be tied to local workforce development initiatives as well as to downtown and neighborhood revitalization in the city of Anniston. The rapid growth of online business and communication systems has given rise to new opportunities for local entrepreneurs and small businesses that can access regional, national and global markets regardless of Anniston's immediate market demographics. Several concepts for expanding these opportunities are explored below.

- **Business Incubator.** Downtown Anniston is ripe for a small business incubator facility that could help nurture, mentor and grow small businesses that support revitalization. Incubators are not just buildings that offer reduced rent and low-cost services. They are programs that (in addition to real estate) provide support in the form of mentorships and partnerships, access to capital, business management and technical training, marketing services, shared technology/equipment and supply chain, and other benefits to help grow a business until it is ready to "graduate" and succeed in operating on its own. Newer incubators also incorporate social spaces that encourage collaboration between different types of businesses and technologies. Underutilized buildings could be used as a starting point for creating a space for an incubator, but as the program grows, there may be opportunities for expansion or for creation of a new facility to accommodate these programs.
- **Partnerships with JSU, Gadsden State, and Private Industry.** Partnerships between the City, local schools, and area institutions of higher education (Jacksonville State University/CEBR and Gadsden State) should be strengthened to collaborate on projects such as school program development (as noted earlier), incubator / entrepreneurship (such as through the area/JSU's Small Business Development Center and JSU's Center for Manufacturing Excellence and its applied engineering science program), and small business development. Training and mentorships can be supplied through partnerships with these institutions as well as with private industry. Private companies may also have an interest in contributing or sponsoring space or equipment, particularly where there are downstream opportunities to establish a larger pool of local suppliers and contractors.
- **Industrial Business Targets.** There are several target industry opportunities that are well-suited to local entrepreneurial and small business development. Such opportunities include in particular the construction trades, transportation services, wood

products manufacturing (e.g., cabinetmaking), and wholesale trade. For construction trades, the City could partner with Gadsden State and local contractors on training programs and provide access to an expansive material and equipment supply pool. Shared equipment and supply resources can help significantly reduce the cost of operating a specialty trades business and increase competitiveness because of economies of scale. The City could also establish a program for contracting with small businesses and specialty trades operators through a program to rehabilitate and revitalize existing housing in target neighborhoods. Small, independent homeowners and investors could gain memberships in this pool to access contractors for maintenance and rehabilitation of individual rental properties. Such access, again, provides cost savings advantages to the small investor while increasing opportunities for revitalization of the city's housing stock. Thus, such pool programs can generate multiple benefits including training and entrepreneurial development of city residents, housing rehabilitation, neighborhood revitalization, and cost savings to local homeowners and investors. Similar economies of scale can be achieved through a City program for transportation services, for example, or wholesale trade. Thus, a shared resources program (or "Co-Op," if preferred) would enable the City to enhance economic development opportunities for its local residents and help revitalize existing communities, particularly in disinvested areas of West Anniston.

- **Downtown Targets.** Retail market work has been completed separately from this comprehensive plan team through Retail Strategies, which should identify targeted and unique retail, restaurant, entertainment, and personal service business opportunities based on projected market potentials for downtown Anniston. Aside from these opportunities and associated business development strategies, the target industry analysis conducted for this plan identified several opportunities that could be focused in the downtown area. Among these are IT/Media/Communication Services, Administrative Support Services, and Arts and Culture.

As noted above, opportunities are increasing for entrepreneurs and small businesses to access global markets beyond a dependency on stagnant local demographics. Thus, every effort should be made to provide access and training to existing downtown merchants on the use of web-based portals for growing and accessing a broader market base. This is especially critical for independent local businesses that are otherwise highly dependent on the local market and do not access regional or national marketing and supply chains. Regardless of the type of business, access to high-speed internet, website development, training and marketing is essential for today's independent businesses. Main Street Anniston is no doubt making progress on this front, so this is only a recommendation to continue to expand such access. Anniston has competitive advantages for and a concentration of media activities and information services. This sector has declined nationally as print media has succumbed to competition from web-based services. But there are certainly opportunities for growth in information technology businesses and in businesses that utilize web-based technologies to expand their market. Similarly, Anniston has the opportunity to recruit and expand its administrative services business base, since such businesses are less dependent on immediate interstate access and are in need of a large available "pink-collar" labor force. Finally, Anniston's Civil Rights heritage and local arts &



cultural activities can be leveraged to grow tourism and local entrepreneurial opportunities that draw audience from a larger destination market base.

## **McClellan, Airport & Industrial Asset Marketing**

There are additional opportunities for marketing and leveraging of key Anniston-area assets for economic development, including McClellan Industrial Park and the Anniston Regional Airport. Target industrial marketing, business recruitment and business expansion opportunities have been identified through analysis and engagement as part of this planning effort. These targets are identified below along with opportunities for partnerships that can help increase the resources available to the City for marketing and development of these assets.

### **Target Markets**

As noted above, several business development opportunities have been identified for use of McClellan Industrial Park and associated lands and for the 600 acres of additional land associated with the Anniston Regional Airport. These targets are oriented to existing strengths and uses but also to potentials identified through the target industry analysis.

- **Repair & Maintenance Services.** Both McClellan and the Airport in particular are well-positioned to take advantage of repair and maintenance services associated with transportation and other equipment. Some of this activity already exists at the airport. The Airport's location between Atlanta and Birmingham allows it to operate as a supplier for aircraft maintenance, training, and freight operations that would otherwise take up expensive real estate in those larger markets. Clearly more analysis would need to be conducted to assess the full extent of this opportunity, but the Airport's location and positioning in the region, along with the local skills base in metalworking, forging, and transportation equipment manufacturing help support such activities.
- **Environmental Testing, Training, and Remediation Services.** As discussed earlier, there are opportunities to expand McClellan's existing role in training services to include environmental and remediation training. In addition, such activities could be broadened to include business development relating to environmental testing and remediation services, above and beyond training, for some of the same reasons as those provided previously: existing history of contamination and brownfield plumes, central location, active military depot, access to environmental resources, available workforce and capacity, etc.
- **First Responder & Other Emergency Management Training.** As noted earlier, McClellan already provides a hub for first responder training through DHS and associated activities. There are opportunities to expand and diversify this training envelope

(such as through utility industry training) and to incorporate the Anniston Regional Airport, especially for aviation-related disaster training, supply & support, and access.

- **Recreational Sports Training.** Again, expanded training opportunities mentioned earlier for McClellan include recreational mountain bike training and expanded or unique facilities to accommodate more intensive and regular training activity. Coordination could be strengthened to further incorporate Anniston Regional Airport as a hub for charter flights to bring training participants to the city.
- **Transportation Services.** The city's competitive advantages for transportation services business development were highlighted, and opportunities identified for shared training and equipment services through a City Co-Op or pool as an approach to small business and entrepreneurship development. The Airport could play an important role as a hub for transportation services, adding value to the existing aviation services anchored at the Airport.
- **Specialized Manufacturing.** There are several opportunities that have been identified for manufacturing that could be accommodated at the Airport or McClellan Industrial Park, including production of Wood Products such as cabinets, furniture, and building materials. However, small businesses that need access to the inner-city labor force are better located at sites in or near residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors like West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, as anchors for revitalization. Since many wood product manufacturers such as cabinetmakers do not generate significant effluent, they are often good neighbors for residential communities.

The Airport in particular provides a good location for High-Value, Perishable, and JIT Goods production, assembly, and/or distribution. High-value manufacturing companies making products like jewelry and specialized medical equipment that are shipped in small quantities or packets will often utilize air freight services for distribution of their goods. Anniston offers a unique advantage with a workforce skilled in metalworking and forging (which can be applied to production of certain high-value goods) coupled with an exceptional Airport asset located within a short distance from Atlanta but without Atlanta traffic. Similarly, producers of perishable goods like fruits and vegetables or pharmaceuticals that must be refrigerated will often locate near airports to access air freight services. There are fewer existing opportunities in Anniston to cluster perishable goods production, but it is an opportunity that could be explored further. Other manufactured goods producers (such as medical equipment or replacement parts manufacturers) that require "Just-In-Time" (JIT) shipping are also important users of air freight services.

#### **Strengthening Partnerships (e.g. MDA, Oxford):**

There are opportunities to further expand partnerships to develop and market these McClellan and Airport assets. Examples of where partnerships and collaboration could be increased are provided below, based in part on stakeholder input.

- **Zoning & Regulatory Clarity.** The relationship between the City and the McClellan Development Authority (MDA) could be strengthened, particularly as it relates to clarity on zoning and regulation within the boundaries of the MDA asset. This issue was identified through focus group discussions as impacting on the fast-tracking and approval of redevelopment opportunities at McClellan and is being addressed to an extent through this Comprehensive Plan.
- **Training Facility Development; Marketing & Promotion Consortium.** There has been an emphasis in this strategy on training activities as a form of economic development that will bring visitors to Anniston and increase expenditures and economic impacts on the city. Thus, there are opportunities for the City to collaborate with the MDA and other entities (including recreation organizations) on training facility development, marketing and promotion of these assets.
- **Regional Transportation & Commuter Services.** The City could also take a lead in establishing a collaborative effort with Jacksonville, Oxford, Calhoun County, and East Alabama Works on strengthening the metro area's transportation and commuter services. Since a large share of Anniston's residents commute out of the city to work and a comparably large share commute into Anniston from other parts of the county and region, there is a need for better coordination and services. Improved services could help reduce the opportunity costs and actual cost of commuting, which cuts into overall disposable income and reduces expenditures and tax revenues in the city and region. Since Anniston has a competitive advantage as a hub for transportation services, it is natural that the City take a lead in working with the appropriate agencies to increase and focus hubs for service in Anniston.

### **Upgrading Existing Industrial Parks & Buildings**

There is a need for upgrading of existing industrial infrastructure in the city to accommodate growth and development. Much of the new industrial development in Calhoun County is in industrial parks and sites located outside of Anniston. The McClellan Development Authority (MDA) operates McClellan Industrial Park, which has 200 acres for industrial development out of 2,000 acres total, although the facility may need to update its strategic plan for development. The MDA provided six acres out of 38 under a development agreement for commercial real estate. Oxford South Industrial Park (formerly McIntosh) has 169 acres in Oxford, with about 130 acres remaining for development. The five-year old park includes a 60,000 square feet speculative warehouse building ("cold dark shell") available for occupancy. Oxford West Industrial Park, also located in Oxford, has another 130 acres available for industrial development. This newer park does not have development as yet. Jacksonville and Piedmont also have some industrial development areas, albeit more limited. Anniston's 1970s-era, CDBG-funded Greenbrier Industrial Park has just about 15 acres remaining out of 200 acres total. Greenbrier has some manufacturing activity but is not actively marketed. Anniston Industrial Park is another 1970's-era industrial park that is City owned and fully-developed with manufacturing and other industrial users including New Flyer. Recently, \$6.0 million in RAISE grant funding helped pay for paving of roads in the park. While these parks could continue to benefit from

upgrading and improvements, there are also brown field sites and older industrial buildings around the city that could also be upgraded and marketed more pro-actively for light industrial or administrative/office uses.

### **Anniston’s “Health Services Corridor”**

This plan has identified an existing health services cluster in Anniston, with a particular focus in the Leighton/Christine Avenue corridors. This strategy recommends that the City focus on promoting this “Health Services Corridor” as an economic development tool for attracting and retaining businesses and residents in the city. This cluster could benefit from marketing and promotion, business recruitment, partnership development, skills development, and networking to ultimately add jobs and tax base to - and enhance the image of - the city of Anniston.

#### **Strategic Plan**

The City should initiate a strategic planning process focused on the development of a Health Services Corridor and creation of dedicated resources for marketing and management of the health services cluster. Such a process would engage with existing stakeholders in the cluster as well as institutions and agencies that can help leverage the cluster’s development. Elements of the plan to consider would include the following.

#### **Anchor RMC Medical Facilities**

Stringfellow Memorial & RMC Anniston are the key anchors in this cluster, as noted previously in this plan. Thus, the City’s relationship with RMC and these institutions should be cultivated and strengthened as a first step toward creating or strengthening this health care cluster.

#### **Other Existing Components**

As noted elsewhere in this report, the cluster already has a substantial base of health care-related entities and service providers, such as medical professionals’ offices, behavioral health facilities, public health clinics, pharmacies, home health care companies, medical supply wholesalers, medical laboratories, and others. The full envelope of potential “members” in the health services industry cluster should be **inventoried** as part of the initial steps towards creating and strengthening this cluster. Again, the cluster includes not only medical offices and service providers, but also businesses like retailers and wholesalers who supply health care products, educational institutions (as well as local schools) that providing training in health care services and business development, technical service providers, Anniston Regional Airport (medical airlift services), real estate services like hospital and medical building cleaners

or office brokers, administrative services like billing agencies, health insurance brokers, medical device manufacturers, and others across all economic sectors. Once an inventory and contact list is assembled, then outreach to all businesses would be accomplished to initiate a **visioning and engagement process** to develop a structure (such as a dedicated staff component of an existing economic development entity, if not a new non-profit organization) to market and promote the corridor.

### **Health Care Target Industries**

The City would also work with the cluster organization structure (as suggested above) to recruit targeted businesses to Anniston that would help add value, fill gaps, and strengthen the overall cluster. Such businesses might include the following, among others to be determined as part of a more specific cluster strategy that the entity would develop:

- Additional Medical Services (to Fill Gaps)
- Testing Laboratories
- Nursing & Residential/Graduated Care
- Behavioral Care Facilities
- Administrative Support Services (e.g., billing, claims, etc.)
- Insurance Agencies
- Medical Apparatus/Parts Manufacturing (Airport-related JIT Opportunities)
- Home Health Care, etc.

### **Partnership for Marketing, Workforce Development**

A partnership would be formed between City Schools, RMC, JSU, East Alabama Works, Gadsden State, and the County's EDC on workforce development and training to support the growth and strengthening of the Anniston Health Care Corridor. This partnership might function under the auspices of the new non-profit or staffed under an existing entity as described above, depending on the output of an engagement and strategic planning process. The entity would also work to promote and market the corridor as a tool for economic development. The City's role might include the creation of amenities, streetscaping and identity branding elements, along with business incentives to help in promoting the corridor as a special district. The creation of an incubator would fit well with this concept, even perhaps as a health services-focused business incubator (if there is sufficient capital and entrepreneurial support for such a program).



*Examples of Medical District branding in Birmingham and Memphis*

## **Recreation Tourism Destination**

The opportunity for expanding Anniston’s emerging role as a Recreation Tourism Destination has been identified as well. The City can build on its existing assets and resources, and increase opportunities through facilities development, marketing, partnerships and promotion. Recreation tourism will generate economic benefits to the city in the form of jobs, business income, and tax base. But equally important is the impact that amenity development could have on improving the city’s image and enhancing its appeal to prospective businesses and residents, many of whom have chosen where to relocate during the COVID Pandemic based in part on the availability of recreation amenities. Further, the development of recreation amenities can engage directly with distressed neighborhoods to enhance their amenity value (and thus their investment value) and increase their residents’ access to parks and recreational opportunities. The City has already engaged to some extent in promoting recreation tourism through collaborations with several entities but there are opportunities to increase, diversify, and strengthen these efforts. Assets are identified and several strategic recommendations for doing so are provided below.

### **Anchor Attractions**

As noted elsewhere in this plan, the Anniston area benefits from a number of natural and cultural assets, including the following and others.

- Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge
- Choccolocco Wildlife Management Area
- Coldwater Mountain
- McClellan Resources
- Talladega National Forest
- Civil Rights Heritage Sites, e.g., Bus Depot

- Anniston Museum of Natural History, Berman Museum, Longleaf Botanical Gardens, etc.

The City has reached out to representatives of these assets and worked to create stronger relationships and collaborations with key management entities. There may be opportunities to expand the offerings at some of these facilities and create greater synergies through programmatic collaborations.

### **Trail & Greenway System and Trailhead Development**

Efforts have been made to create or expand on the trail systems that weave through the Anniston area, such as the Chief Ladiga Trail (connecting to the Silver Comet in Georgia), McClellan trails, and various specialized and multi-use trails. These trails are discussed elsewhere in the plan and efforts to fund and expand the expansion and *integration* of these trails should continue. In addition to these efforts, it is recommended that the City purpose creation of a series of “trail heads” and venues that can be connected into the emerging trail network in order to increase spin-off economic impacts in the community and help spur neighborhood and downtown revitalization. Trail heads might be co-located with Civil Rights heritage sites and near downtown and neighborhood parks or other amenities including visitor centers and bicycle/coffee shops if the market supports it.

### **Recreation Events, Competitions, Training**

Development of specialized training and event facilities was discussed earlier in this report as a strategy for use at McClellan, but could also apply to other sites around Anniston. The feasibility of creating unique, regional or national bicycling and other sporting facilities should be explored further, particularly as they relate to the core bicycling and recreation tourism theme. Additional competitions and events should be added to the calendar to bring increased exposure and income to Anniston. Cultural events could be added to the recreational events to extend participants’ overnight stay and bring more non-participants and spectators to town. Events that are geared to the recreational tourist but not necessarily sporting enthusiasts should also be included, since these events will tend to bring more seniors and families with disposable income and time for non-event activities, shopping, and leisure activities.

### **Resort & Training Facility Development**

As noted previously, there is the opportunity for developing more intensive training facilities for recreational and sporting events. Associated with this use and with the broader recreational tourism mentioned above is the opportunity for development of a recreation resort that caters to those who are making Anniston a destination for such events and for outdoor recreational opportunities. A market and feasibility study is recommended to examine the potential for training facilities and associated resort or other lodging development in the city.

**Positive Re-Branding of Anniston Area**

Recreation tourism and amenity development provide the perfect opportunities for Anniston to enhance its positive image both within the region and beyond. The efforts to increase physical trail capacity, develop new training or competition facilities and lodging and enhance connectivity with downtown and neighborhoods should all be tied closely into a consistent communication strategy that highlights Anniston's increasing amenity value and attractiveness as a place to live, work, and recreate.



## **Section 4. IMPLEMENTATION ROLE FOR CITY**

There are a number of local, state, and federal agencies, institutions, and organizations engaged at various levels in the Anniston area's economic development as noted in the Baseline Economic Assessment. This section provides some guidance on implementation of strategies and actions recommended in the previous section, with respect to the City's role specifically and opportunities for collaboration.

### **Coordination and Collaboration**

An important role for the City and its Economic Development staff is to coordinate and collaborate with other area agencies and institutions.

- Establish Inter-Agency/Jurisdiction Committee and Meet Regularly
- Collaborate on Regional Transportation Projects
  - Recreational Trails (starting with a regional bike/ped master plan)
  - Airport Infrastructure
  - Commuter Transit
- Identify Projects for Possible IDB Financing, AL Power, and Other Funding
  - Destination Outdoor Recreation Facilities/Trailheads
  - Amtrak Station Environment
  - Speculative Industrial Building(s) at Anniston Regional Airport
  - Upgrading of Existing Industrial Areas (where warranted)
  - Brown Field Remediation (e.g., through EPA grants)
- Provide Input to/Collaboration with MDA on Target Industries for McClellan, Including Recreation Concept

### **Medical Corridor/Cluster Development**

This strategy has recommended promotion and development of Anniston's Medical Services Corridor. Key actions toward implementation of this concept are summarized below.

- Inventory Medical and Health-Care Related Businesses (as well as those in supply-chain, retail and associated industries).

- Coordinate with the Primary Institutions and Various “Members” of the Cluster
- Create a Strategic Plan for the Corridor
- Help Establish an Appropriate Structure for Marketing, Promotion, Business Recruitment, and Development
- Establish a Medical Corridor Special District
  - Plan and Fund Identity Marketing Branding, Streetscaping, and Physical Elements for Promotion
  - Incentives for Business Recruitment Such as Tax Abatement on Personal Property & Medical Equipment
  - Collaborate with JSU, Gadsden State, City Schools, and Medical Institutions on Workforce Development, Mentoring, and Associated Programs Available for Businesses Located in the District. (This might include an on-site job or training center)
  - Collaborate with Institutions on Establishment of Incubator (which could have a medical services business niche)
  - Help Identify Potential Sites and Buildings for Business Recruitment, including Anchor Uses.

### **Airport Industrial Development**

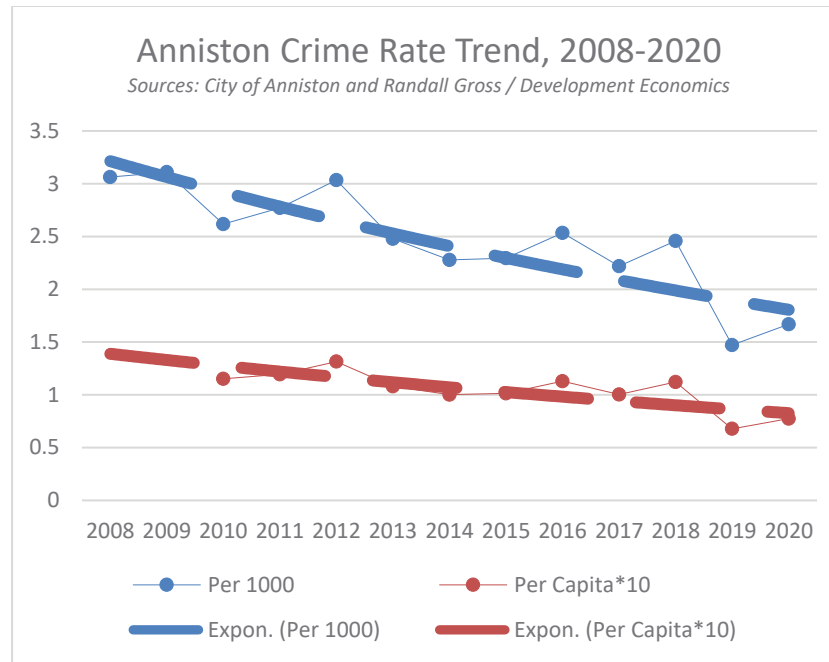
The opportunity to leverage Anniston’s airport for economic development has been identified along with several key strategies. Recommended actions for implementing this concept are provided below.

- Complete a More Detailed Assessment of Industrial Development Market Potential at Anniston Regional Airport
- Complete a broader Airport Area Master Plan (focused on airport infrastructure to accommodate growth and land/buildings to accommodate industrial development). Collaborate with Neighboring Jurisdictions and the County EDC on this Plan.
- Create a Marketing Strategy Focused on Target Markets for Business Recruitment to the Airport.

### **Marketing and Public Relations**

Anniston has suffered from negative perceptions regarding its schools, safety, and other issues. As noted previously, a key strategy is to generate positive information and output on a regular basis for consumption by real estate brokers and investors, existing residents and business operators, and potential new residents and businesses.

- Collaborate with Anniston City Schools and other Local Institutions to Create a Track for Updates and Information
  - Create Real Estate Education/Marketing Initiative, Focused on Bus Tours and Regular Updates on Progress at Schools, Police, Collaborations, New Business Initiatives, etc. (For example, Anniston’s crime rate has been falling overall since 2008 – and even more rapidly since 2018), so regular updates and information that confirm this trend should be integrated into a targeted marketing effort)



- Create and Distribute Marketing Materials and Media Content Focused on Anniston’s Medical Industries Cluster/Corridor
- Create and Distribute Marketing Materials and Media Content Focused on Regional Recreation Assets and Anniston’s Role as the Hub for Destination Outdoor Recreation Tourism
- Create a Building and Site Inventory for Business Recruitment Efforts
  - Collaborate with Property Owners and Real Estate Brokers to Inventory and Market Sites and Buildings
  - Collaborate with Property Owners to seek Grant Funding for Brown Field Remediation and Other Grants to Upgrade, Rehabilitate, Demolish, or Otherwise Improve the Marketability of Commercial and Industrial Properties.
  - Develop Direct Incentive Programs Geared to Rehabilitation of Existing Properties (including for example a tax abatement incentive for rehabilitation and redevelopment)

- Expand Business Recruitment Efforts Beyond Retail
  - Expand Business Recruitment to Include Target Industries Defined in this Study. (As noted previously, retail is a secondary industry, the market for which is dependent on expanding the household, tourism, and business expenditure base that drives demand. So, recruiting employment-rich businesses, overnight visitors, and residents to Anniston will generate secondary benefits in the form of retail expenditures and sales tax base).
  
- Promote Destination Outdoor Recreation Tourism Opportunities
  - Collaborate with Area Tourism Agencies to Promote Recreation Tourism
  - But, Also Develop Anniston's Own Niche Marketing Materials and Content, with a Focus on Adventure Recreation Trails and Heritage Tourism Sites in the City (above and beyond physical improvements and facilities as discussed above).
  - Recruit Recreation Tourism Operators and Expand Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Local Service Delivery (e.g., tour operators & guides, etc.)

### **Infrastructure Development and Enhancement**

Key actions relating to infrastructure associated with leveraging economic development are summarized below, including several already noted above.

- Seek Grants and Partners for Outdoor Recreation Master Planning
- Seek Grants and Partners for Recreation Trails, Trailhead, and Associated Infrastructure Development (American Trails, FHWA Recreational Trails and TAP Programs, and others – See Below).
- Collaborate with County EDC/IDB on Expanding Infrastructure (including speculative building) at Anniston Regional Airport
- Seek Grants (e.g., CDBG, Alabama Power, Aetna Foundation, Bank of America, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USDA Community Facilities Grants, CVS Caremark Community Grants, Finish Line Foundation, Home Depot Building Healthy Communities Grant, LL Bean Charitable Giving, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Annie E Casey Foundation, WK Kellogg Foundation, Krieger Fund, and others) and Partners for Neighborhood Revitalization Projects and Amenity Development in West Anniston and Other Distressed.