

# VISION COLUMBIANA 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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# Vision Columbiana 2035

## Comprehensive Plan

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# CHAPTER I: Background

The City of Columbiana Comprehensive Plan ([Vision Columbiana 2035](#)) presents a vision of what kind of community the City would like to be in the future and identifies the steps required to move toward that vision. The Plan provides information about the City's current conditions, long-term goals and objectives, and recommended implementation strategies. It addresses a wide range of issues, including land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, the preservation of historic and natural resources, and economic development.

As a long-term guide for the community, the Plan helps City leaders make decisions about the location, scale, and quality of new development; the improvement of neighborhoods and commercial areas; the revitalization of downtown and surrounding historic areas; the extension and upgrade of roads and utilities; and the future of the City's parks, public spaces, and natural areas.

This plan is adopted to set the City's growth and development policies for the next five years within a long term planning horizon of twenty years. The City Planning Commission expects to consider revisions to the plan, particularly at its next review in five years. In the meantime, this plan is meant to set the City on a course toward meeting its long-term vision.

## Value and Importance of a Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is one of the most essential documents produced by a local government. Section 11-52-8 of the Code of Alabama prescribes that every community (planning commission) prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan to guide its future growth and development. ***This plan must be kept up to date;*** it is recommended that the planning commission review the plan at least once every five years. The Plan is important because it is both comprehensive and it is long term. It helps to coordinate most City activities by examining them all together at one time - a comprehensive approach. In this way, transportation is coordinated with decisions on new development, which in turn can be accommodated by planned improvements to water and sewer service. At the same time valued historic and natural resources are identified and considered. Adopting and publishing a comprehensive plan communicates the City's desires and developmental policies to the public as well as to state, federal and private agencies. A long-term view is necessary, so that short-term solutions in response to a crisis do not preclude the City from reaching its long-term goals.

In January 2004, the Columbiana Planning and Zoning Commission adopted “*A Smart Move: Columbiana Comprehensive Plan 2025*,” the second comprehensive plan for the City of Columbiana in twenty-eight years. In addition to the above



mentioned versions of its Comprehensive Plan Columbiana also adopted two other planning documents during the same period: the *2002 Columbiana Community and Policy Development Plan* in 2002 and the *Columbiana Main Street Revitalization* plan in 2003. As with other municipalities in Alabama, during this time period, Columbiana was also affected by a national recession that negatively impacted the economy, and as a result how the City views its goals for the future.

Because few, if any, updates have been made to the Comprehensive Plan since 2004, in 2015 the Commission chose to conduct an extensive update and began by reformulating their long range goals and restating the City's future vision.

## Vision Statement

The City of Columbiana has identified the following as its vision statement for [Vision Columbiana 2035](#):

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*To maintain Columbiana's small town atmosphere by preserving our unique community character, history and heritage; while improving our quality of life through economic development, transportation and walkability, cultural enrichment and outstanding public services."*

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What creates such a place? It is a city of safe and beautiful neighborhoods, where neighbors socialize and residents can safely travel down the street to worship, to play in the park, to go to school or even to shop or work. Such cities offer many housing choices so citizens have an opportunity to live in a decent home that they can afford and that is an asset to the community. Most importantly, city officials and citizens work together to achieve the goals they have set for themselves.

## The Plan as a Policy Document

It is important for citizens to realize that while the Plan is important, it is not a regulating document. Rather, it is a policy document used by the Planning Commission and the City Council to guide decisions about such issues as rezoning proposals, the location of new roads, investments in water and sewer improvements, and the development of parks. The Plan is implemented by the City through the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations, the City Code, the Capital Improvement Program, and the annual budget.



## Community Participation

The Columbiana Planning Commission held regular work sessions on the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan. These work sessions were advertised as public meetings to allow citizens an opportunity to view firsthand the deliberations that took place during the formulation of this document.

Additionally, there were two public input opportunities:

The first was an open public input session held in the City Hall Council Chambers on September 24, 2015. This meeting was lightly attended; however through a public input exercise and an opportunity to anonymously post comments regarding various elements of the Plan, quite a vigorous number of responses were obtained. *(See Appendix A – Public Input)*

The second public input opportunity was provided through an on-line survey conducted via the City's website and social media. In this survey a number of open ended questions were posed and the results tabulated to determine the number of respondents who shared the same or similar answers. *(See Appendix A)*

The final public input opportunity came at a Planning Commission meeting held **November** 10, 2016. At this meeting, which was advertised as a public hearing in the Shelby County Reporter, the floor was open for public comments, questions and observation regarding the Comprehensive Plan. The minutes of this meeting are public record stored at Columbiana City Hall.

## CHAPTER II: Physical Environment

### Location

The City of Columbiana is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Downtown Birmingham in Shelby County, Alabama. Columbiana serves as the seat of county government for Shelby County, which is the fastest growing County in the State of Alabama. Columbiana is accessible from Birmingham from either Interstate Highway 65 via State Highways 25 and 70 or U.S. Highway 280 via County Road 47. Within the confines of the County, Columbiana is centrally situated in the southern portion between Calera and Wilsonville.

### Topography

The topography of Columbiana can best be described as flat to gently rolling. Columbiana Mountain, located east of the City, rises to a height of 950 feet and presents the steepest topography in the immediate area.

Topography typically remains steady and stable. Usually topographical changes occur slowly over time due to erosion and weatherization; however, major topographical changes can occur more rapidly due to the inappropriate development of unsuitable areas. One such example is known as cut and fill or site leveling. Leveling areas with steep slopes for development is expensive and usually has a negative impact on natural drainage systems, which can lead to flooding.



## Waterways/Flood Areas

The City of Columbiana has several areas that are prone to flooding and present natural barriers to development. Beeswax Creek, Little Beeswax Creek, Camp Branch Creek and Waxahatchee Creek are depicted in Maps 1 & 1-A “*Flood Hazard Areas*” and represent the flood prone areas as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA, as part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), adopted the base flood standard. A base flood is a flood that has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded each year; otherwise known as a 100 year flood. Base flood zone designations or Special Flood Hazard Areas found on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)

The flood prone areas, as seen in Maps 1 & 1-A, surround the original city limits (the circle) of Columbiana and only encroach upon the areas of recent expansion. The reason for this anomaly is that Columbiana was never individually mapped by FEMA; however FEMA maps of Shelby County are on file through the County Planning or Engineering Departments. Flood prone areas that lie within the original circle of Columbiana do not show up in Maps 1 & 1-A. For this reason, the City needs to obtain flood mapping from FEMA as soon as possible.

**Important Definitions:** The following terms are important to be aware of when considering approval of development in or near a wetlands area. Any development proposed in these areas should be carefully studied and the City should consult with their engineer regarding necessary safeguards to be required as part of any such development approval.

***Wetlands:*** Land areas where saturation with water is the primary factor determining the nature of soil development and the types of fauna and flora living within and on top of the soil. Their common theme is that soil in these areas are periodically saturated with or covered with water.

***Emergent Wetland:*** A wetland habitat dominated by soft-stemmed herbaceous plants called emergent. Water levels can range from a few inches to a few feet. Emergent wetlands, which can occur in isolation or in association with other water bodies, include deep and shallow marshes and wet meadows.

***Forested Wetland:*** A wetland where the soil is saturated and often inundated, and woody plants taller than 20 feet dominate the vegetation, e.g. red maple, tamarack. Water tolerant shrubs and saplings often form a second layer beneath the forest canopy, e.g. red maple saplings, highbush blueberry, with an herbaceous layer below, e.g. cinnamon fern, sensitive fern. Forested wetland are also referred to as wooded swamps.

## Soils

The Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service conducted fieldwork between 1970 and 1980 to produce Soil Surveys. Although completed nearly thirty years ago, the soil characteristics have generally remained the same in undeveloped areas, following streams, and along ridges. General soil mapping, shown on *Maps 2 & 2-A "Soils"* shows broad areas that have a distinctive pattern of soils, relief, and drainage but should only be used to compare the suitability of large areas for general land uses. Detailed soil mapping can be used to determine the suitability, limitations, and potential of soils for a specific use.

The five general soil types which occur within the present boundaries of Columbiana are Nauvoo-Sunlight, Townley-Sunlight, Weogufka-Tatum, Allen-Quitman, and Nella-Mountainburg as shown on the following maps and described in more detail below.

***Nauvoo-Sunlight:*** Moderately deep and shallow, gently sloping to steep, well drained soils that have a loamy subsoil; formed in residuum of sandstone, siltstone, and shale or interbedded sandstone, siltstone, and shale. This unit consists of 51 percent Nauvoo soils, 21 percent sunlight soils and 28 percent soils of minor extent. *The suitability of these soils for woodland and as a habitat for woodland wildlife is fair. The potential for cultivated crops and pasture is poor due mainly to steep slopes. Most importantly, the soils in this unit have poor suitability for residential and other urban uses. Steep slopes and shallowness of Sunlight soils are severe limitations. Areas of Nauvoo soils where slope is not a limitation are suitable for residential uses. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to development and a detailed soils analysis should be performed to determine areas appropriate for development.* A crescent shaped area of Nauvoo-Sunlight is located in eastern Columbiana and outward towards Lay Lake. The landscape of this general soils unit generally consists of broad dissected uplands that have narrow ridge tops, steep side slopes and narrow drainage ways.

***Townley-Sunlight:*** Moderately deep and shallow, undulating to steep, well drained soils that have a clayey or loamy subsoil; formed in residuum of shale and siltstone. This unit consists of 57 percent Townley soils, 16 percent Sunlight soils and 27 percent soils of minor extent. *The suitability of these soils for woodland use and management is fair, and they are used mainly as woodland. Suitability is poor for cultivated crops because slope gradient and soil erosion are severe limitations and is fair for pasture because slope restricts the use of equipment. However, the suitability is good for this soils unit for uses as habitat for woodland wildlife. This soils unit is poorly suited for residential and other urban uses because depth to*

*rock, steep slopes and slow permeability are severe limitations.* The landscape primarily consists of dissected hills with narrow ridge tops, steep side slopes and narrow drainage ways. This general soils unit is located in northwestern Columbiana and runs in a band in a southwesterly to northeasterly direction through this portion of Shelby County. Presently, this area is sparsely populated and is largely owned by timber interests and large landowners.

***Weogufka-Tatum.*** Shallow and deep, undulating to steep, well drained soils that have a loamy or clayed subsoil; formed in residuum of slate, phyllite, or schist. This unit consists of 48 percent Weogufka soils, 19 percent Tatum soils and 33 percent soils of minor extent. Weogufkin and Tatum soils are found on ridge tops and side slopes and both are well drained. *The suitability of these soils for woodland is fair and is the main use. The suitability as a habitat for woodland wildlife is good. The potential for cultivated crops and pasture is poor due mainly to steep slopes shallowness and a stony surface. Most importantly, the soils in this unit have poor suitability for most residential and other urban uses. Steep slopes, shallowness and low strength are severe limitations. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to any development and a detailed soils analysis should be performed to determine appropriate areas for development.* Weogufka-Tatum is located in southern Columbiana and the area south towards Shelby. The landscape of this general soils unit consists of broadly dissected uplands that have narrow ridge tops, moderately step and steep side slopes and narrow drainage ways.

***Allen-Quitman:*** Deep, nearly level to sloping, well drained and moderately well drained soils that have a loamy subsoil; formed in alluvium, colluvium and limestone residuum. This unit consists of 46 percent Allen soils, 14 percent Quitman soils and 40 percent soils of minor extent. Allen soils are well drained and located on high terraces, and Quitman soils are moderately well drained and located along drainage ways. *The suitability of these soils for use as a habitat for woodland wildlife, cultivated crops and pasture is good. Suitability for residential and other urban uses is fair. This general soils unit is the most favorable of all the soils units located in and around Columbiana for development.* This soils unit is located in central Columbiana where the original development occurred in and around downtown, and another crescent shaped deposit is located northeast of Columbiana towards Wilsonville and Lay Lake along State Highway 25 and County Road 30. The landscape of this soils unit consists of broad, nearly level terraces and low, gently sloping to moderately steep hills with many drainage ways and depressional areas.

***Nella-Mountainburg:*** Deep and shallow, moderately steep and steep, well drained soils that have a loamy subsoil; formed in colluvium and residuum of sandstone. This unit consists of 48 percent Nella soils, 19 percent Mountainburg soils and 33 percent soils of minor extent. Nella soils are deep and located on toe slopes, and Mountainburg soils are shallow and located on the upper part of mountainsides and

mountaintops and both are well drained. *Suitability of this soils unit for use as woodland is fair and most of the acreage is for this use. Nella-Mountainburg is unsuitable for cultivated crops and pasture because of the severe limitations of slope gradient, large surface stones and shallowness of the Mountainburg soils. This soils unit is unsuited for residential and urban uses due to severe limitations of slope gradient and shallowness over rock.* The landscape of this soils unit consists of long parallel mountains with narrow ridge tops, moderately steep and steep side slopes, bluffs and escarpments.

As indicated above, all development review should include a consideration of soils on the property and their suitability for the development type. In many instances accommodations can be made for unsuitable soils through on-site engineering. The City should always consult with their engineers and County officials regarding development on sites with less than ideal soils and possible resolutions to development issues.



## Climate

Columbiana lies within the Humid Subtropical Climate Zone, characterized by hot, humid summers and cool winters. Columbiana averages 209 days of sunshine and 80 days of measurable precipitation, overwhelming in the form of rain, with the average annual rainfall of approximately 56 inches. The average annual temperature in Columbiana is 62 degrees Fahrenheit, with average high and low temperature ranges in January and July of 31 degrees and 92 degrees Fahrenheit, respectively. Typically, the first frost occurs in late October, to early November, while the last frost takes place in mid-March.

## Air Quality

As amended in 1990, the Clean Air Act mandated that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) devise standards to regulate air emissions from stationary and mobile sources that negatively affect the public health and the environment. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) were formulated and federal limits were set to monitor the concentrations of ground-level ozone and particulate matter (PM). In order to check compliance with the NAAQS, the State of Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) operates monitors, which collect data to document concentrations of ground-level ozone and PM, except within Jefferson County and the City of Huntsville. The Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) oversees the monitors in the county.

As set in 2008, the federal limit for ground-level ozone is 75 ppm or parts per million. A violation of the NAAQS for ground-level ozone occurs when the three year average of the fourth highest daily maximum 8-hour average ground-level ozone concentrations measured at each monitor exceeds the limit. Such a violation would cause the county to be designated as non-attainment for ground-level ozone. In January 2010, EPA proposed lowering the federal limit to at least 70 ppm.

On December 14, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) significantly tightened the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, revising the standard from 15 to 12 ug/m<sup>3</sup> (micrograms per cubic meter), averaged over a year. Upon finalizing a new standard, the Clean Air Act requires all counties in the U.S. to be formally designated by EPA as either an “attainment” area, (in compliance of the new standard) or a “non-attainment area (not meeting the standard). On March 3, 2014, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management sent a letter to EPS stating that based on recent ambient air monitoring data, all monitors in the State of Alabama meet the new annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS. This letter recommended to EPA that the entire State of Alabama be designated as “attainment” for the new standard. *(From: ADEM Memorandum dated For Immediate Release: Wednesday, March 12, 2014).*



## Other Natural Occurrences

***Earthquakes*** - With its location being in the northern half of Alabama, Columbiana lies within an area of higher probability for earthquakes than other locations further south. Although the greatest likelihood of earthquakes exist in the northeastern and northwestern corners of the state, the area within fifty miles of the Columbiana city center has had a small number of Light Magnitude Class (4.0 – 4.9) earthquakes. The most recent was a magnitude 4.4 earthquake which occurred in November 2004, over eighty miles from the city center.

***Tornadoes*** – Shelby County is a “Very High Risk” area for tornados. According to records the largest tornado in the Shelby County area was an F5 in 1977 that caused 130 injuries and 22 deaths. Tornado risk is calculated from the destruction path that has occurred within 30 miles of the location. On average there are three tornadic occurrences, and four fatalities in Shelby County annually. There have been 158 tornadoes in Shelby County since 1950.

More recent tornadic occurrences closest to Columbiana have been in the Jefferson and St. Clair Counties (2011-2014). *(For additional information consult the National Weather Service Tornado Database)*

## Resource Management & Protection

If the City desires to improve the protection and management of its natural systems, there are a number of approaches from which to choose including environmental performance standards, incentives for private actions, education and awards programs, as well as direct City actions.



Coosa River/Lay Lake

The City may want to consider environmental performance standards for new development and redevelopment, not only to ensure compliance with state and federal standards, but also to address the protection and management of important natural resources. Through the application of reasonable standards limiting the development of floodplains, wetlands and streamside steep slopes, these important resources could be preserved. Standards for the construction and maintenance of stormwater management facilities would ensure that flooding levels are kept in check and that the water quality of stormwater discharges is addressed. Of major concern is the design, quality, and upkeep of stormwater management facilities.

The City should adequately enforce post construction maintenance agreements on private stormwater best management practices to ensure that they are performing as designed. Incentives, rather than codified standards, may be more appropriate for other efforts to achieve viable development. For example, the City should continue to promote the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and offer incentives for the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites. Such incentives might include tax abatement, density/intensity increases, and contributions to infrastructure and public amenities. Density increases, or other incentives for private developers, should be available in a variety of zoning districts in exchange for the preservation of significant wooded open space, unique species areas or critical habitats, and for green building design. The City should also work with property owners desiring to participate in the stormwater credit program.

Environmental protection is an important and vital element when dealing with water, wastewater, stormwater and sanitation (solid waste). To this end, the City of Columbiana should consider implementing “Green Building” standards within departmental operational standards and the City’s development regulations, including but not limited to zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.

There are also softer techniques for natural resource protection that may be employed, such as educational programs and programs to recognize private environmental initiatives. The City should support a variety of environmental education efforts including interpretive signage, programming and design workshops.

Awards programs are also a way to promote green development. These programs could be used to highlight a variety of topics including the eradication of invasive plant species, developments that incorporates green building techniques, water conservation initiatives and various efforts to protect stream valleys and woodlands.

Finally, the City itself could become actively involved in natural resource protection and management. When the City constructs a building, a parking lot, a road, or a park, for example, it should strive to protect wooded areas, steep slopes, and floodplains to the extent feasible. The City should use green building techniques and demonstrate well-landscaped stormwater management facilities that not only serve as best management practices but also provide visually pleasing amenities.

The establishment of a greenway program connecting various parts of the community (Library, City Hall, shopping areas and parks) is another way the City can demonstrate its support of environmentally friendly development practices. Such a program should promote the purchase, and accept donations, of open space for resource protection along streams.

## A Regional Approach

Since nature does not respect political boundaries, regional cooperation is essential in addressing environmental problems and managing natural systems. The expansion of existing partnerships should be encouraged to address regional environmental issues such as stormwater, greenways, scenic resources, water and air quality, and invasive species. Collaboration between state agencies, local and regional environmental groups, and colleges and universities may prove effective in addressing resource protection and management.

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations are found throughout Section II of this Plan. You are encouraged to read the full subsection where these recommendations are made, which you will find referenced after each one.

- Obtain flood mapping specifically for Columbiana from FEMA. (*Waterways & Flood Areas*)
- Utilize detailed soil mapping to determine the suitability, limitations, and potential of soils for a specific use. (*Soils*)
- Development review should include a consideration of soils on the property and their suitability for the development type. Consult with City engineers and County officials regarding development on sites with less than ideal soils. (*Soils*)
- Consider environmental performance standards for new development and redevelopment to address the protection and management of important natural resources. (*Resource Management & Protection*)
- Monitor design, quality, and upkeep of stormwater management facilities. (*Resource Management & Protection*)
- Enforce post construction maintenance agreements on private stormwater best management practices to ensure that they are performing as designed. (*Resource Management & Protection*)
- Promote the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. (*Resource Management & Protection*)
- Consider implementing “Green Building” standards within departmental operational standards and the City’s development regulations, including but not limited to zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. (*Resource Management & Protection*)
- Support a variety of environmental education efforts including interpretive signage, programming and design workshops. (*Resource Management & Protection*)
- Become actively involved in natural resource protection. (*Resource Management & Protection*)
- Encouraged expansion of existing partnerships to address regional environmental issues. (*A Regional Approach*)

# CHAPTER III: Socioeconomic Conditions

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**Overall Population Changes:** From the 1940s – 1960 Columbiana experienced relatively rapid growth with an 89% overall growth rate during this period. During the 1960s there was a slight decrease in population; however since that time the City has shown a steady rate of growth, averaging around 17% per decade. The 2010 population of Columbiana, at 4,197, reflects an increase of 27% from the 2000 population of 3,316, and is the most significant percent change in population since 1960. The 2014 population estimate for Columbiana shows little change; however based on past trends it can be expected that the City will continue to experience moderate population growth.

In comparison, Shelby County experienced a population increase of 36% between 2000 (143,293) and 2010 (195,085). The 1990 population of Shelby County was 99,358. The State of Alabama has a 2010 population of 4,780,127, which represents an increase of 7% over the 2000 population of 4,447,100. The tables below provides detailed information of the comparative population trends of Columbiana, Shelby County and other municipalities in Shelby County from 1940 - 2000.

TABLE 1 County Population Counts by Census Year										
Location	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014 <sup>1</sup>	
Columbiana	1,197	1,761	2,264	2,248	2,655	2,968	3,316	4,197	4,198	
% Change		47.1	28.6	(0.7)	18.1	11.8	11.7	26.6	.02	
Shelby	28,962	30,362	32,132	38,037	66,298	99,358	143,293	195,085	206,655	
% Change		4.83	5.83	18.38	74.30	49.87	44.22	36.14	5.6	
Source: US Bureau of the Census <sup>1</sup> July 2014 estimate										

TABLE 2 Surrounding Municipalities Population Counts by Census Year										
Municipality	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014 <sup>1</sup>	
Alabaster	NA	NA	1,623	2,642	7,079	14,732	22,619	30,352	31,545	
Pelham	NA	NA	NA	931	6,759	9,765	14,369	21,352	22,699	
Helena	667	421	523	1,110	2,130	3,918	10,296	16,793	17,883	
Calera	1,092	1,361	1,928	1,655	2,035	2,136	3,158	11,620	12,972	
Chelsea	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	906*	2,949	10,183	11,758	*1996
Montevallo	1,490	2,150	2,755	3,719	3,965	4,239	4,825	6,323	6,601	
<b>Columbiana</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>2,264</b>	<b>2,248</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>2,968</b>	<b>3,316</b>	<b>4,197</b>	<b>4,198</b>	
Wilsonville	749	692	683	659	914	1,235	1,551	1,827	1,970	
Source: US Bureau of the Census <sup>1</sup> July 2014 estimate										

*Population Changes by Groups:* As of the US Census of 2010, there were 1,303 households, and 874 families residing in the city. The population density was 218.2 people per square mile (84.2/km<sup>2</sup>). There were 1,445 housing units at an average density of 95.1 per square mile (36.8/km<sup>2</sup>). The racial makeup of the city was 71.3% White, 25.1% Black or African American, 0.3% Native American, 0.2% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 1.6% from other races, and 1.3% from two or more races. 3.0% of the population was Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There were 1,303 households out of which 28.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 47.5% were married couples living together, 14.7% had a female householder with no husband present, and 32.9% were non-families. 29.7% of all households were made up of individuals and 15.6% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.52 and the average family size was 3.12.

In the City the population was spread out with 19.7% under the age of 18, 9.7% from 18 to 24, 32.2% from 25 to 44, 24.3% from 45 to 64, and 14.1% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 37.8 years. For every 100 females there were 121.1 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 148.9 males.

The figures which stand out are the percent changes from 2000 to 2010 of Columbiana's elderly population. With a 43% increase in the 55-64 age group and a 44% increase in the 65 and over bracket this demographic represents 24% of Columbiana's entire population. This is an indicator that Columbiana needs to work to accommodate the elderly population that it currently has, and preparing for those within the next age group down who will be part of that elderly population within the next decade. It is a well-known fact that as our nation's baby boomers enter retirement our nation's communities are under prepared for the impact this demographic will have on them.

While the population group up through 24 years of age has seen only an 8.7 percentage increase over the past decade, the adult age group of 25 to 44 experienced an increase of 29%. Members of the later age group will not only need to go where the jobs are but to find housing they can afford. While, as the County seat for Shelby County, Columbiana has a built in job generator that can only take the City so far in attracting new and younger residents. Good paying jobs; an adequate, safe and diverse housing stock and the perception of area schools will also play a role in making Columbiana a vibrant and thriving place to live.

<b>TABLE 3</b> <b>Population by Age and Gender</b>							
Age Group	Total 2000	Total 2010	Percent Change 2000-2010	Males 2000 <sup>1</sup>	Males 2010	Females 2000 <sup>1</sup>	Females 2010
Under 5 Years	193	217	12.4		111		106
5 to 14	517	445	-13.9		211		234
15 to 24	425	572	34.6		345		227
25 to 34	496	694	39.9		469		225
35 to 44	551	659	19.6		404		255
45 to 54	428	595	39.0		352		243
55 to 64	295	423	43.4		189		234
65 Years and Over	411	592	44.0		218		374
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,316</b>	<b>4,197</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>2,299</b>	<b>1,654</b>	<b>1,898</b>
<i>Sources: US Bureau of the Census</i> <i><sup>1</sup> No breakdown by age shown for 2000 Census</i>							

Members of age groups 25 and older are becoming more educated by obtaining higher degree levels than those of their predecessors. These numbers show encouraging trends in that a greater number of Columbiana's citizens are obtaining their high school diplomas and many are going on to acquire college degrees. One caution to take regarding this trend is that as higher levels of education are obtained these people will begin looking for higher paying jobs which may necessitate relocation. The pursuit of business and industry to provide these jobs should become a priority for the City.

<b>TABLE 4</b> <b>Comparative Educational Attainment Persons 25 Years and Older</b>				
Education Level	2000 Total	Percent	2010 Total	Percent
Less than 9th grade	207	9.3	78	3.2
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	465	20.9	319	13.1
High school graduate	707	32	1041	42.7
Some college, no degree	449	20.2	429	17.6
Associate degree	74	3.3	131	5.4
Bachelor's degree	209	9.4	280	11.5
Graduate or professional degree	110	4.9	160	6.6
Doctorate degree	5	0.2	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,226</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,438</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Sources: US Bureau of the Census</i> <i>*Not Reported</i>				



***Population Projections:*** The population of Columbiana is expected to continue its current growth trend of approximately 12 percent over the next 25 years according to RPCGB projections. Columbiana has experienced steady population growth in each successive Census from 1980 to 2000 and has grown from 2,655 persons in 1980 to over 3,316 in 2000. The City is expected to double in population over the next 25 years. The RPCGB projects Columbiana to have a population of approximately 5,300 by the 2020 Census and 6,000 in 2025. The table below provides a detailed look at the population projections for Columbiana between 1940 and 2025.

<b>TABLE 5</b> <b>Population Projections 1940 - 2025</b>			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>POPULATION CHANGE</b>	<b>PERCENT CHANGE</b>
1940	1,197	NA	NA
1950	1,761	564	47.1%
1960	2,264	503	28.6%
1970	2,248	-16	-0.7%
1980	2,655	407	18.1%
1990	2,968	313	11.8%
2000	3,316	348	11.7%
2010	4,197	881	26.5%
2015	4,680	483	11.5%
2020	5,264	585	12.5%
2025	5,923	658	12.5%
<i>Source: US Bureau of the Census &amp; RPC of Greater Birmingham</i>			

***Community Income:*** In 2014 the estimated median income for a household in the city was \$33,484, compared to \$34,034 in 2000. This represents only a slight decrease of \$550. The 2014 estimated median income for a family was \$45,729 as compared to \$44,798 in 2000. This represents a decrease of \$ 11,465. However, as shown in Table 6 this is only part of the story. As with most other communities across the county, the 2011 economic downturn had a significant impact on incomes, and the current 2014 figures represents a steady rebound from that event. The per capita income for the city was \$18,949 in 2014 and was \$18,086 in 2000. Based on the 2010 Census approximately 11.0% of families and 16.2% of all people were below the poverty line, including 29.1% of those under age 18 and 9.2% of those ages 65 or over.

TABLE 6 HOUSEHOLD INCOME											
Income	2000	% Chg.	2010	% Chg.	2011	% Chg.	2012	% Chg.	2013	% Chg.	2014
Less than \$10,000	185	-55	83	-13.3	72	43	103	-13.6	89	-10.1	80
\$10,000 to \$14,999	103	5.8	109	-62.4	41	53.7	63	30.2	82	2.4	84
\$15,000 to \$24,999	160	118	349	11.5	389	11.6	434	-19.8	348	-27.9	251
\$25,000 to \$34,999	203	21.7	247	-24.7	186	-5.9	175	26.3	221	.5	222
\$35,000 to \$49,999	226	-50	113	23.9	140	-5	133	8.3	144	-4.9	137
\$50,000 to \$74,999	210	46.2	307	-17.9	252	-35.3	163	-25.8	121	-14.9	103
\$75,000 to \$99,999	105	-55	47	-23.4	36	63.9	59	122	131	-3.8	126
\$100,000 to \$149,999	58	131	134	14.2	153	-11.8	135	-26.8	99	40.4	139
\$150,000 to \$199,999	11	200	33	45.5	48	-8.3	44	-45.5	24	-20.8	19
\$200,000 or more	24	137.5	57	24.6	71	11.3	79	-22.8	61	-8.2	56
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>1,285</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>1,479</b>	<b>-6.2</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>-4.9</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>-7.8</b>	<b>1,217</b>
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$34,034</b>		<b>\$31,108</b>		<b>\$35,882</b>		<b>\$29,522</b>		<b>\$30,625</b>		<b>\$33,484</b>
<b>Median Family Income</b>	<b>\$44,798</b>		<b>\$56,411</b>		<b>\$65,197</b>		<b>\$58,458</b>		<b>\$45,515</b>		<b>\$45,729</b>
<i>Sources: US Bureau of the Census, American Fact Finder</i>											

Table 7 shows a comparison between the 2010 Census data and the 2014 American Citizen Survey five year estimates for household income.

<b>TABLE 7</b> <b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b> <i>Change Between 2000 &amp; 2014</i>			
<b>Income</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Chg.</b>	<b>2014</b>
Less than \$10,000	185	-131.3	80
\$10,000 to \$14,999	103	-18.5	84
\$15,000 to \$24,999	160	56.9	251
\$25,000 to \$34,999	203	9.4	222
\$35,000 to \$49,999	226	-39.4	137
\$50,000 to \$74,999	210	-51	103
\$75,000 to \$99,999	105	20	126
\$100,000 to \$149,999	58	139.7	139
\$150,000 to \$199,999	11	72.7	19
\$200,000 or more	24	133.3	56
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>1,285</b>	<b>-5.3</b>	<b>1,217</b>
<i>Sources: US Bureau of the Census, American Fact Finder</i>			

***Business and Industry:*** As shown in the following tables, in 2010 approximately 78.9 percent of the labor force in Columbiana was employed in management, professional, sales, office, and service sector occupations. While Columbiana's labor force compares favorably with Shelby County in sales, office and service sector jobs, its management and professional sector occupations are considerably less.

TABLE 8: COMPARATIVE EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION								
LABOR FORCE DISTRIBUTION	2000 COLUMBIANA		2010 COLUMBIANA		2014 COLUMBIANA		SHELBY COUNTY	
	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	2010 % OF TOTAL	2014 % OF TOTAL
Management, professional, and related occupations	335	25.0%	225	18.5%	295	24.3%	42.5%	42.2%
Service occupations	173	12.9%	506	41.7%	207	17.5%	12.0%	14.8%
Sales and office occupations	366	27.3%	227	18.7%	488	40.3%	29.0%	27.4%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	16	1.2%	41	3.5%	25	2.0%	9.0%	7.7%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	206	15.4%	107	8.8%	*	*	*	*
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	246	18.3%	106	8.8%	197	16.3%	7.0%	7.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Source: US Bureau of the Census &amp; American FactFinder</i> <i>*Farming &amp; Construction categories combined in 2014 data.</i>								

## FISCAL

The fiscal conditions which exist within any municipality are extremely important in that adequate revenue is needed to cover both annual expenses for operations and long term savings for future capital expenditures. When municipalities experience growth, the main sources of revenue, ad valorem and sales taxes, increase and stay robust as houses are constructed and residents purchase local goods. Under these conditions, expenses are easily met and capital projects can be undertaken. However, when a recession occurs, as one did at the end of the last decade, revenues decline as construction and sales take major hits. Revenues from ad valorem taxes ultimately take a hit since they are done in arrears and properties might be revalued less than what they were prior to the recession due to lack of sales and an increase in foreclosures. In order to cover expenses with less revenue, cities are forced to put off capital projects and trim budgets. This is evident in Tables 9 & 10 which shows that since the 2011 economic downturn, neither Columbiana's revenues nor expenditures have regained the level held in 2010.

However, steady gains have been made and the City is well on its way to matching its 2010 levels.

The fiscal health of Columbiana can be examined by looking at its fiscal year departmental budgets over the past four years to examine annual expenditures and annual revenues. At nearly 43% the Fire Department by far had the biggest decrease in expenditures in 2011 or any year shown. Other large expenditure decreases include more than 12% for Sanitation in 2011 and Administration in 2012; over 13% in Parks & Recreation in 2013 and an additional 19% in the Fire Department in 2014.

Significant increases in expenditures which occur over the same period include an 18% increase in the Street department in 2011; in 2013 increases include 13%, 16% and 18% in Administration, Fire and Library expenditures respectively and in 2014 the Police Department had a 12% increase in expenditures.

While this all may seem drastic when looking at individual departments, the difference in expenditures between the 2010 budget and the 2014 budget was actually less than 1%. Due to major equipment purchases, large changes in expenditures are not unusual in departments such as Fire, Police and Streets. However, large fluctuation in budgeted expenditures across the board should be examined to determine if better long range budget planning is needed to avoid unexpected monetary outputs.

As Columbiana grows, expenditures will need to be increased in order to maintain, and improve, the standard of living desired by residents. Personnel costs, including salaries, benefits, and training, are a major component in each department's expenditure outlay. In particular, qualified, continually-trained firefighters and police officers comprise large segments of their respective department's expenses. In order to maintain the high quality public safety services Columbiana's citizen enjoy, such expenses will continue to increase as our City grows.

Additionally, annexation policies should be closely examined to ensure that the resources of all departments are not stretched beyond what the City's resources can endure. A variety of business recruitment and retention methods should be utilized to augment those already in use. Those involved in economic development for the City should take advantage of training opportunities across the state to improve their skills and establish a network of resources upon which to rely.

<b>TABLE 9</b> <b>COLUMBIANA ANNUAL EXPENDITURES</b>									
	<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>% Chg.</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>% Chg.</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>% Chg.</b>	<b>FY 2013<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>% Chg.</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>
<b>Administration</b>	\$426,624	-2.45	\$416,185	-12.16	\$365,566	13.23	\$413,920	3.25	\$427,380
<b>Environmental Services</b>	\$440,825	6.63	\$470,045	3.74	\$487,641	3.27	\$503,599	-0.47	\$501,234
<b>Fire Dept.</b>	\$374,588	-42.95	\$213,685	-6.57	\$199,630	16.60	\$232,770	-19.22	\$188,014
<b>Inspections</b>									
<b>Library</b>	\$171,943	7.67	\$185,135	-4.93	\$176,006	18.50	\$208,575	-1.37	\$205,720
<b>Parks &amp; Rec.</b>	142,290	-9.84	\$128,828	-9.49	\$116,596	-13.40	\$100,972	3.18	\$104,179
<b>Police Dept.</b>	\$767,587	-0.87	\$760,906	-6.91	\$708,317	4.97	\$743,499	11.75	\$830,867
<b>Sanitation</b>	\$218,780	-12.02	\$192,475	4.43	\$200,995	5.05	\$211,147	12.02	\$236,528
<b>Streets</b>	\$318,816	18.05	\$376,380	-0.42	\$374,802	-7.66	\$346,101	-1.49	\$340,914
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,861,453</b>		<b>\$2,743,639</b>		<b>\$2,629,554</b>		<b>\$2,760,584</b>		<b>\$2,834,835</b>
<b>Source: City of Columbiana</b>									

In the period since the last comprehensive plan was developed Columbiana has experienced a substantial change in the City's business climate; as the economy slowed during the recession the City saw many of its local businesses close their doors. This resulted in the loss of approximately 53 businesses including 24 retail establishments, 24 service businesses and 5 restaurants, which accounted for a total loss of approximately 120 jobs. As the economy began to rebound new businesses have begun to reappear these include 6 retail establishments, 4 service related businesses and 6 restaurants. These new businesses, which included a new private jail, have added 85 jobs to the community. This is an excellent example of how having the right mix of businesses, not just simply more businesses, can substantially improve the economy and the availability of jobs in the City.

When the economy and growth are strong, problems with revenue sources are almost non-existent, but in a recession the reverse is true. This proved to be the case in Columbiana during 2011 and 2012 when the City experienced two years of decreasing overall revenues. Even though some areas such as Ad Valorem Taxes and motor vehicle taxes have continued to decrease, overall revenue for 2014 had climbed to within 1% of 2010 pre-recession figures.

<b>TABLE 10</b> <b>COLUMBIANA ANNUAL SOURCES OF REVENUE</b>					
	<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY2014</b>
ABC	\$6,662	\$7,418	\$8,652	\$11,348	\$10,087
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$336,547	\$341,162	\$328,434	\$326,327	\$325,137
Boat Transfers	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Building Permits	\$7,153	\$16,536	\$1,008	\$2,080	\$5,270
Concessions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Copies/Accident/I&O Reports	\$3,731	\$4,129	\$3,489	\$3,391	\$3,138
Federal Grants (Police)	\$3,845	\$27,204	\$6,617	\$817	\$25,454
Federal Grants (Fire)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$0
Fines	\$142,606	\$106,168	\$99,564	\$105,712	\$89,388
Franchise Fees	\$310,686	\$316,297	\$318,630	\$315,748	\$319,498
Garbage Fees	\$261,615	\$262,264	\$261,976	\$261,690	\$263,138
Gasoline Taxes*	\$37,184	\$36,450	\$42,617	\$42,943	\$39,118
Interest Income	\$195,951	\$178,009	\$154,579	\$125,442	\$118,677
Miscellaneous Income	\$77,702	\$5,091	\$31,334	\$15,642	\$12,883
Motor Vehicle Taxes	\$12,607	\$11,646	\$11,499	\$9,502	\$10,597
Newsletter Ads	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Privilege Licenses	\$214,805	\$233,258	\$207,371	\$256,489	\$231,826
Rental Taxes	\$34,007	\$30,530	\$34,750	\$118,604	\$134,000
Sales/Use Taxes	\$1,302,634	\$1,348,336	\$1,388,226	\$1,322,848	\$1,330,957
Tobacco Taxes	\$35,139	\$36,357	\$35,264	\$36,749	\$31,216
Yard/Garage Sales**	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,982,874</b>	<b>\$2,960,856</b>	<b>\$2,934,012</b>	<b>\$2,961,330</b>	<b>\$2,950,383</b>
<i>*Gasoline Taxes include all Gas Tax and Motor Fuel Tax</i> <i>**Yard/Garage Sales are classified as limited business licenses therefore the revenue is included in Privilege License</i> <b>Source: City of Columbiana</b>					

In 2015 Columbiana's total general sales tax rate was at nine percent (9%), which is in line with neighboring cities in Shelby County. Given this level tax rate, it is likely that the greater variety of retail choices in surrounding communities will entice Columbiana residents to shop outside the City limits. Additionally, because many of Columbiana's residents work outside the City limits, the potential will continue to exist for them to shop in neighboring municipalities on their return trip home.

The primary issue for Columbiana in attracting more tax revenue is not that of sales tax rates. It is rather an issue of attracting a more diverse assortment of businesses to the City and recruiting more businesses and industry that pay a living wage to encourage more citizens to both live, work and shop in Columbiana.



<b>TABLE 11</b> <b>2015 GENERAL SALES TAX RATES</b> <b>SELECT CITIES IN SHELBY COUNTY</b>				
<b>SHELBY COUNTY</b>				
<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>CITY RATE</b>	<b>COUNTY RATE</b>	<b>STATE RATE</b>	<b>TOTAL RATE</b>
Alabaster	4.00%	1.00%	4.00%	9.00%
Calera	4.00%	1.00%	4.00%	9.00%
<b>COLUMBIANA</b>	<b>4.00%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>4.00%</b>	<b>9.00%</b>
Pelham	4.00%	1.00%	4.00%	9.00%
Helena	4.00%	1.00%	4.00%	9.00%
Montevallo	4.00%	1.00%	4.00%	9.00%
Pelham	4.00%	1.00%	4.00%	9.00%
<i>Source: Alabama Department of Revenue</i>				

Columbiana should continue to maintain its existing commercial and industrial base and work to attract new desirable development in areas designated by the updated Future Land Use Map. New commercial developments should be encouraged as infill and adaptive reuses in existing commercial areas such as the historic downtown, Highway 25 By-Pass and as “community appropriate” in the proposed expanded industrial, general commercial and neighborhood commercial areas.

Careful consideration should be given to how new commercial developments will impact existing businesses. While competition is good, losing existing businesses to new ones is simply exchanging revenues. The transfer of revenue generated from one location to another provides no financial benefit to the City, and the blighted appearance caused by vacant storefronts can discourage future development. Unless a planned industrial park is developed, new industrial development should only be directed to the existing industrial area and buildings west of downtown where they will have the least impact on surrounding land uses and more direct access to Interstate 65. Additionally, the economy in Columbiana benefits from the fact that it serves as the seat of county government, which provides jobs to local residents and customers to the local businesses.

Based on census and regional projections, Columbiana can expect to have steady residential development during the next 25 years. Although residential growth can be good for the economy, by creating jobs and providing the “roof-tops” that businesses require, alone it does not provide the revenue needed to support the services and infrastructure required by new residential development. Therefore, to the extent possible, new residential developments should be directed to available infill areas in and around downtown and where infrastructure already exists. This practice will have the added benefit of creating a walkable community where residents can walk to shops, schools, parks and churches. As was learned through our citizens survey and public input, above all else, residents of Columbiana value

the “small town atmosphere” of the City. To maintain this important community characteristic development patterns should emulate the small town character of Columbiana and preserve the surrounding rural landscape. In addition, Columbiana should carefully balance new residential growth with commercial development that will provide the revenue needed to support and enhance essential public services.

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations are found throughout Section III of this Plan. You are encouraged to read the full subsection where these recommendations are made, which you will find referenced after each one.

- Work to appropriately accommodate the growing aging population. (*Population Changes by Group*)
- Make the pursuit of business and industry to provide new jobs a priority. (*Population Changes by Group*)
- Large fluctuation in budgeted expenditures should be examined to avoid unexpected monetary outputs. (*Fiscal*)
- Annexation policies should be closely examined to ensure that departmental resources are not stretched beyond fiscal tolerance. (*Fiscal*)
- Utilize a variety of business recruitment and retention methods to augment those already in place. (*Fiscal*)
- Take advantage of economic development training opportunities across the state. (*Fiscal*)
- New commercial developments should be encouraged as infill and adaptive reuses in the proposed industrial, general commercial and neighborhood commercial land use areas. (*Fiscal*)
- New residential developments should be directed to available infill areas in and around downtown and where infrastructure already exists. (*Fiscal*)

# CHAPTER IV: Economic Development

## Introduction

Economic development is an essential activity of local governments. As part of this activity, local governments act to make local markets work more efficiently; supply infrastructure, such as roads, water, and sewer; collect taxes; and regulate use of the land, buildings, and activities. Economic development involves public sector collaboration with private entities to promote and improve local economies. Successful economic development requires cooperation among governments, businesses, educational institutions, and civic organizations.

Communities also compete with each other, both regionally and in an increasingly global marketplace. At one time business and industry had to locate near natural resources in order to have adequate water and transportation to meet their needs. In today's economies, businesses and industries have a wide range of choices in which to locate. As a result, in order to attract those businesses, a city must capitalize on local assets, such as a skilled workforce; quality transportation resources; telecommunications services; good climate; proximity to cultural, educational, natural, and recreational resources; and availability of attractive housing and retail opportunities. Many of these assets are interconnected, for example, a quality public educational system is an essential prerequisite for a skilled workforce. The importance of Shelby County Public Schools, as well as the close proximity of Central Alabama Community Colleges, Jefferson State Community College and the University of Alabama Birmingham cannot be understated as a means of maintaining a skilled workforce.

The goals of an economic development program include a combination of job creation, job retention, tax-base creation, increase in property values, retention of wealth, reduction of poverty, economic stability, and economic self-sufficiency. A city whose economic development objectives complement those of the surrounding localities will have a stronger base to attract new business and retain existing businesses.

## Redevelopment and Historic Preservation

As with most other communities, economic development is one of Columbiana's priorities. In a community like Columbiana, with available vacant land and some significant topographical constraints,

Economic development is one of Columbiana's priorities.

redevelopment of previously developed sites and underutilization of vacant buildings are important considerations as they relate to economic development. Closely related priorities are the preservation of Historic Downtown and the enhancement of real estate value throughout the City.

## New Business Development

The Future Land Use Map identifies several areas in which the City would like to focus on new businesses. In particular, areas shown as “Neighborhood Commercial” are positioned to serve surrounding residential development. These areas will provide opportunities for expansion of small, local businesses such as dry cleaners, beauty/barber shops, and convenience goods such as dollar stores, gasoline station, etc. Concentrating these business types in specific nodes around the City, rather than allowing them to sprawl along major corridors throughout the City, allows business users to have their needs met in areas where they live or commute. Less travel will be necessary, thereby lessening traffic congestion, and businesses in the same area can market their proximity to area residents. As part of updates to the City’s Zoning Ordinance the Planning Commission should include design criteria for these neighborhood businesses to ensure that they fit in architecturally with the surrounding residential areas.

Areas along major corridors, such as Highways 25 and 70 should be considered as potential major business/technology and employment areas. Great care needs to be taken by the City during planning for these areas to encourage the most appropriate uses based on the type of business and space needs.

*Historic Downtown Columbiana*



Development, particularly retail, has followed a pattern that reflects nationwide trends. From its founding as a City, the downtown area was the major retail location. With the development of Columbiana Square and Davis Plaza shopping center(s), and fast food restaurants along College Street the make-up of historic downtown businesses evolved into more specialty shops and offices. Unlike many other small cities, Columbiana has managed to keep its historic downtown vital and for the most part the storefronts occupied.

To support the continued vibrancy of the historic commercial center the City recently applied to, and was accepted to participate in, the Main Street Alabama program. “Main Street Alabama is focused on bringing jobs, dollars and people

back to Alabama's historic communities. Affiliated with the National Main Street Center, Main Street Alabama utilizes the proven Main Street Four-Point Approach® to help communities *organize* themselves for success, improve the *design* of their neighborhoods, *promote* their districts, and enhance their *economic* base.”<sup>1</sup> As part of the requirements for that program, a Main Street Director has been hired to help carry out this four point approach of organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring in downtown Columbiana.

Columbiana should focus on two levels of retail, based on market served: neighborhood, and community. The smallest “neighborhood businesses” would provide services to the immediate adjacent residential developments and will allow patrons to either walk or drive a short distance. Community commercial will feature those businesses that will attract customers from throughout the City; a customer might drive across town to avail themselves of their products and services.

Additionally, Columbiana has access to large tracts of land that could provide sites for new industrial development in the form of an Industrial or Technology Park. It is strongly recommended that this “park” form of industrial development be used rather than allowing these high impact developments to locate along major roadway frontages, and adjacent to the City's historic core, as has been the pattern in the past. Concentrating industrial development into “parks” allows for more efficient accommodation of their unique infrastructure requirements and safer handling of movement for both employee and transport trucks traffic. While it has been somewhat dormant in recent years, Columbiana's Industrial Development Board should be revitalized to assist in the recruitment of new industrial development as well as the development and management of future industrial park(s).

In order to make the best use of land resources, and to identify possible incentives for location and expansion of business in the City, Columbiana should prepare an Economic Development Strategic Plan. Along with the goals, objectives, and strategies, such a document will serve as the basis for sound, long term economic planning in Columbiana.

The City of Columbiana expresses its concern for the economic health of the community through its economic development programs. The promotion of business and industrial investment along with jobs retention and creation supports the City's tax base, increases property values, provides work opportunities for the citizens, helps reduce poverty, and moves the City toward economic stability and self-sufficiency.

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations are found throughout Section IV of this Plan. You are encouraged to read the full subsection where these recommendations are made, which you will find referenced after each one.

- Capitalize on local assets to attract businesses (*Introduction*)
- Utilized new “Neighborhood Commercial” land uses areas as an opportunity for expansion of small, local businesses to serve surrounding residential development. (*New Business Development*)
- Focus on neighborhood and community levels of retail development. (*New Business Development*)
- Provide design criteria for “Neighborhood Commercial” areas so they will fit in with the surrounding residential areas. (*New Business Development*)
- Carefully consider and plan for development along major transportation corridors to encourage the most appropriate uses based on the type of business and space needs. (*New Business Development*)
- Utilize a “park” form of industrial development rather than locating these high impact developments along major roadway frontage. (*New Business Development*)
- Revitalize Columbiana’s Industrial Development Board to assist in the recruitment of new industrial development and manage future industrial park(s). (*New Business Development*)
- Prepared an Economic Development Strategic Plan. (*New Business Development*)

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<sup>1</sup>mainstreetalabama.org



## CHAPTER V: Land Use

### Existing Land Use

Columbiana is comprised of approximately 15.2 square miles or 9,728 acres. Existing uses of land can be divided into the broad land use classifications of residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, utilities, recreational, mining, agricultural and undeveloped. These land use classifications and their areas have not changed significantly in Columbiana since the development of the previous Comprehensive Plan. Below a brief description of these land use classifications within Columbiana is provided based on the data gathered from the 2004 Plan. It should be noted that a land use classification should not be confused with a zoning classification as they are not necessarily the same.

Land use classifications depicted on Map 3 – *“Existing Land Use”* are defined below and a narrative description is provided of the existing land use patterns found in Columbiana.

***Residential.*** This land use classification is defined as single-family homes, multi-family dwellings, manufactured homes and housing for the elderly at a variety of densities. Residential land use represents approximately 1,770 acres or 16 percent of the total land area in Columbiana.



*Existing Residential Land Use*

***Commercial.*** This land use classification is defined as a wide range of establishments such as retail sales and service; automobile sales or service; finance and insurance; business, professional, scientific and technical services; food services and personal services. Commercial land uses represents approximately 121 acres or one percent of the total land area in Columbiana.



*Existing Commercial Land Use*

***Industrial.*** This land use classification is defined as manufacturing establishments such as plants, factories and mills that employ power driven machines, materials handling equipment and workers who create new products by hand. Differentiating industrial from commercial can sometimes be confusing. Industrial land use represents the smallest percentage of any land use at approximately 78 acres or less than one percent of the total land area in Columbiana.

***Utilities.*** This land use classification is defined as a catch-all category comprising utilities, transportation and communication for essential facilities that cannot be distinguished by a single physical location. Utilities/transportation land use represents approximately 6 acres or less than one percent of the total land area in Columbiana.



*Columbiana Water Treatment Plant*

***Recreational.*** This land use classification is defined as establishments that operate facilities or provide services for a variety of cultural, entertainment and recreational functions such as ball fields, active and passive parks, golf courses, wildlife management areas and museums. Recreational land use represents approximately 75 acres or less than one percent of the total land area of Columbiana.

***Institutional.*** This land use classification is defined as establishments used by public agencies of federal, state and local government such as administrative



*Post Office*

buildings, fire stations, police stations and post offices; educational facilities such as public schools, colleges, vocational schools and libraries, civic and religious facilities and cemeteries. Institutional land use represents approximately 393 acres or almost four percent of the total land area in Columbiana.

***Mining.*** This land use classification is defined as establishments that extract natural mineral solids, liquid minerals and gases. Mining includes quarrying, well operations, beneficiating and other preparations performed at the mine site or as a part of the mining activity. The mining land use classification is not represented in Columbiana.

***Agricultural/Forestry.*** This land use classification is defined as establishments that grow crops, raise animals, harvest timber and harvest fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, greenhouse, nursery, orchard, hatchery or their natural habitats. Agricultural/Forestry land use represents approximately 4,581 acres or 42 percent of the total land area in Columbiana.

***Undeveloped.*** This land use classification is defined as land that has not been developed for a particular use and includes woodlands not in any use and undeveloped portions of residential subdivisions, shopping centers and industrial parks. Undeveloped land use represents the approximately 3,362 acres or 31 percent of the total land area in Columbiana.

## Future Land Use

As the landscape of Columbiana continues to change between updates of the Comprehensive Plan, so too will the Future Land Use Plan need to change to reflect newly annexed areas, as well as changes to development and transportation patterns. As stated earlier “Land Use” is not zoning, and therefore it should be understood that all “Future Land Use” concepts are considered fluid in that they are recommendations of the general areas of such proposed land uses. Thus the reason for the chiefly irregular pattern of land uses shown on *Map 4 - Future Land Use* as opposed to the *Map 3 - Current Land Use* which specifically follows property boundaries.

The future land use concept for Columbiana is shown in the following *Map 4 – “Future Land Use”* and is roughly based on the some of the same land use classifications as the existing land use map including commercial, residential, institutional, industrial, and agricultural. It also incorporates secondary land uses such as the historic downtown, neighborhood commercial nodes and cultural/open space. The future land use map depicts the City’s vision for future growth and development in Columbiana over the next 20 years. The Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council should refer to this Plan as they make land use decisions to ensure that the spirit and intent of the Comprehensive Plan is followed. Additionally, as development, redevelopment and rezoning to accommodate the Future Land Use Concept are considered, the Planning Commission and Council should take into account the availability of adequate infrastructure including both utilities and transportation networks.

Descriptions of the various future land use classifications, patterns and key concepts are discussed below.

***Residential Land Uses.*** Areas represented as residential on the *Future Land Use Map* encompass all possible types of residential development. City zoning policies will determine where various development densities are appropriate. Residential areas are intended to provide the continuation of stable, healthy residential environments in all their forms. Additionally these areas will encourage the development of appropriate, and discourage the encroachment of inappropriate, commercial development through the implementation of master plan developments.

***Commercial Land Uses.*** Should be located in downtown, the proposed neighborhood commercial areas and along the Highway 25 Bypass near its intersection with State Highway 70. It should be noted that an additional area for heavier commercial development has been shown along Highway 70 near the western city limits. Additionally, areas of neighborhood commercial uses have been proposed both along the south side of Highway 25 and as a “collar” around the heavy commercial development located adjacent to historic downtown. This has



been done to provide a “buffer” of lower intensity commercial development between sensitive historic and residential neighborhoods.

Strip patterns of commercial development should be strongly discouraged in favor of development patterns with visually pleasing layouts and architectural elements. In this way Columbiana can preserve and in some instances reestablish the historic and small town atmosphere that is so strongly valued by her citizens.

***Institutional Land Uses.*** Because Columbiana is the seat of Shelby County governmental activities, institutional land uses are found primarily in the area of historic downtown near and surrounding the County Courthouse. Also located in this area is City Hall, the Library, and the Senior Center. Uses such as cemeteries, public schools, hospitals and fire stations are also included in this land use category. Several additional institutional use locations have been provided on the map for the possible future development of a new high school or other suitable institutional uses.

***Industrial Land Uses.*** Areas of industrial land uses have been shown on the Future Land Use Map as being retained in existing locations as well as provided for in an areas along Highway 70 and the railroad to the west of the City. This pattern of land use provides the most desirable access to Interstate 65, allows for the possibility of a railroad spur for industries that need rail access and limits heavy truck traffic in more pedestrian areas of Columbiana.

***Cultural/Open Space Land Uses.*** This land use category was designed to reflect Columbiana’s desire to provide not only recreational space but also opportunities for cultural enrichment and education for its citizens. The Proposed Old Mill Park Complex located between Walton Street and Mill Street, will be the site of a new City Park and Cultural Arts Center. Development plans are underway for this facility which will be focal point for passive recreation activities and cultural education and entertainment.



As the City moves forward in its development of new recreational space it should consider wetland and floodplain areas as opportunities for both passive open space and educational experiences. The development of a network of

green spaces using existing creeks and streams can serve recreational, educational and environmental functions. These networks preserves vital elements of nature in the City – the streams, floodplains, and unique wooded sites. These ribbons of green could connect the City’s parks with sidewalks and bicycle and/or shared-use paths and linear open spaces, providing protection from flooding, visual relief from urban development and an attractive recreational environment. The goal of the City should be preserve the environmental and recreational values of these lands through enlightened conservation practices on its own lands and cooperative efforts with private landowners. The latter might include the purchase, acceptance of donation, and suggestion of proffers of land and easements from willing participants

***Agricultural Land Uses.*** Large areas of agricultural land uses surround the City of Columbiana serving as a greenbelt to protect the gateways to the City and preserve the rural landscape. Those areas closest to the City limits are the most likely to annex as the City grows and future versions of the Comprehensive Plan should reflect the City’s desires regarding development patterns in these areas.

***Gateways.*** A city’s entry points or “gateways” serve as the community’s front door, establishing first impressions and reinforcing images and perceptions of Columbiana’s character, quality of life and vitality. Gateways are currently marked on Highway 47 North and South; on Highway 25 East and West and on County Road 70. Because gateways are more than just a “welcome” sign, the City should prepare an evaluation of the surrounding visual quality and entry experience at each gateway and plan for appropriate improvements. Such improvements could include updated entry signage, landscape plantings, screening of unsightly views, and new development and redevelopment recommendations. The City should consider locating gateways within the corporate limits.



The rural landscape surrounding Columbiana contributes greatly to its uniqueness, charm and small town feel. It is part of what makes Columbiana a special place and sets it apart from other more urban communities.

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations are found throughout Section V of this Plan. You are encouraged to read the full subsection where these recommendations are made, which you will find referenced after each one.

- The Comprehensive Plan should be referenced by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council during consideration of all land use decisions. *(Future Land Use)*
- Discourage strip patterns of commercial development in favor of development patterns with visually pleasing layouts and architectural elements. *(Future Land Use)*
- Consider the availability of appropriate utilities and transportation networks before considering approval of new developments, redevelopments and rezoning requests. *(Future Land Use)*
- Consider wetland and floodplain areas as opportunities for both passive open space and educational experiences. *(Future Land Use)*
- Preserve the environmental and recreational values wetlands and floodplains through enlightened conservation practices on City lands and through cooperative efforts with private landowners. *(Future Land Use)*
- Prepare an evaluation of the visual quality and entry experience at each City gateway and plan for appropriate improvements. *(Future Land Use)*



## CHAPTER VI: Community Facilities -- Municipal

Community facilities are an important element of the Comprehensive Plan and are equally important to the City of Columbiana and its residents as well. Facilities and services such as the municipal center, library, water, sewer, parks, schools and police and fire protection directly affect the quality of life of the residents in Columbiana. Quality of life, in large part determined by community facilities, can play a huge role in either attracting or discouraging new development.

This element of the Comprehensive Plan evaluates the existing facilities and services and anticipates future needs as determined by departmental surveys and projected growth in Columbiana.

### Municipal Complex

The Columbiana City Hall is located downtown at 107 Mildred Street between Main Street and Milner Street. The City Hall was constructed in 1975 and is appropriately located in Downtown Columbiana. Columbiana's City Hall provides space for the mayor, city clerk, building inspector, the police department, and various staff along with the council chambers. Additionally, the City has recently purchased a 6,000 square foot building immediately adjacent to the municipal complex at 200 Mildred Street, which will provide much needed meeting space, offices and storage.



*Columbiana City Hall*

### Library

The Columbiana Public Library is located downtown adjacent to the Shelby County Courthouse at 50 Lester Street. The library is part of the Harrison Regional Library System of Shelby County, which provides public access to the holdings of any member library within the County. The library has a great selection of books, DVD's and books-on-tape, and further offers a robust summer reading program including storytellers, crafts, and magic shows and hands on demonstrations. Additionally, throughout the year the library holds community interest events to



*Columbiana Public Library*

include Book Signings, Quilting, Knitting, Movie Nights, Bee Keeping, Gardening, ACT Prep, and weekly children’s literacy programs. Since Columbiana is the county seat of Shelby County, the library has an exceptionally high circulation for a community its size. As a result, the library has ranked second in the State for communities under 5,000 in population for a number of years.

## Police Protection

The Columbiana Police Department is located downstairs in the Columbiana City Hall and was completely renovated in 2003. The Police Department employs a total of 17 police personnel, including the Chief, of which 12 are sworn police officers and 4 are police dispatchers. The police department also provides an E-911 system to serve area residents as well as a Drug Investigation Unit, which since its inception in May 2014, has made 111 felony arrests.

<b>Table #12</b>	
<b>Police Department Personnel Data</b>	
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Chief	1
Sergeant	2
Corporal	1
Patrolman	9
Dispatcher	4
<i>Positions Covered by Patrol</i>	
Drug Investigation Unit	2
Traffic Homicide Task Force	1
School Resource Officer	1
Investigator major Crimes Task Force	1

The Columbiana Police Department maintains a fleet of 14 vehicles, 12 for patrol, 1 for investigations and 1 for administration. The majority of the police vehicles were purchased in 2013 – 2014. Overall, the condition of all vehicles is very good. The

police department also maintains other equipment essential to the performance of duty, including: handguns, rifles, body armor, alcohol testers and portable radios.

<b>Table 13</b>				
<b>Police Department Vehicles</b>				
<i>Vehicle Type</i>	<i>QTY</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Make/Model</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Chief's Car	1	2015	Chevrolet/Tahoe	Excellent
Patrol Car	3	2014	Dodge Charger	Excellent
Patrol Car	2	2013	Dodge/Charger	Excellent
Patrol Car	2	2011	Ford/Crow Vic	Good
Patrol Car	2	2010	Ford/Crown Vic	Good
Patrol Car	1	2008	Ford Crown Vic	Fair
Patrol Car	1	2008	Dodge/Charger	Poor
Investigator Car	1	2006	Dodge/Durango	Fair
Patrol Car	1	2006	Chevrolet/Impala	Fair

<b>Table 14</b>			
<b>Police Department Equipment</b>			
<i>Equipment Type</i>	<i>QTY</i>	<i>Make/Model</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Rifle	8	DPM/AR15	Good
Handgun	11	Glock/23	Good
Alcohol Tester	8	Intoximeter/Alcosensor III	Good
Portable Radio	14	Motorolla/HT12500	Good
Flashlight	14	Streamlight	Good
Body Armor	12	PACA Level III	Good
Digital Camera	8	Nikon 995	Good
Body Camera	12	Pro vision	Good
In Car Computer	8	Fujitsu Touch Screen	Good

## Fire Protection

The Columbiana Fire Department currently has one fire station located at 105 Highway 47 South. In the past few years the City of Columbiana Fire Department has improved its ISO rating from a 4 to a 3 rating. This rating is based on a 1- 9 scoring system with 1 being the best rating possible. Higher ISO ratings can negatively affect commercial and residential property insurance premiums in a city. ISO ratings are based on water supply, type and condition of fire department equipment, personnel, facilities, and the existence of a building code and properly

qualified inspection, education and prevention personnel. Also, barriers such as railways and waterways can reduce response times and raise the ISO rating in any given municipality.

The continued growth of Columbiana will increase the need for an additional fire station(s) in the future, one possible location for such a station has been proposed along Joinertown Road or Highway 70. In addition to providing fire protection to the residents of Columbiana, the Columbiana Fire Department answers mutual aid calls from other fire departments on an as needed basis.

The Columbiana Fire Department consists of 30 volunteer firefighters (6 officers and 24 firemen) and is continuously training to maintain its efficiency and protect the well-being of the community. There has been a decrease in volunteerism of qualified people to man the fire department and answer calls. This is due to an emphasis by employers on workplace production and the unwillingness of these



*Columbiana Fire Department*

employers to release their employees during the work day. As a result the Fire Department has become short-handed during daylight hours. In addition, the recent ISO regulations require that fire personnel conducting inspections and investigations, as well as those providing education and prevention details, have certain qualifications and maintain continuing education for these duties. With these factors in mind, the need to have full-time personnel has become increasingly necessary in order to maintain the City's Class 3 fire rating and to provide adequate public safety to its citizens.

<b>Table 15</b> <b>Fire Department Personnel Data</b>	
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Chief	1
Assistant Chief	1
Captain	1
Lieutenant	3
Firemen	24

The Fire Department maintains 4 pumper trucks, 1 ladder truck, 1 service truck/brush truck, 1 Chief's vehicle, 1 Assistant Chief's vehicle and 1 Captain's vehicle. The ladder truck is currently over 30 years old and is in need of replacement. Additionally, 3 of the 4 pumpers are over 20 years of age and a plan for systematic replacement needs to be instituted. Hand tools and other small equipment is consistently maintained and upgraded as needed.

Table 16 Fire Department Vehicles				
<i>Vehicle Type</i>	<i>QTY</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Make/Model</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Chief's Car	1	2006	Ford Expedition	Good
Chief's Car	1	2016	Chevy Tahoe	Excellent
Assistant Chief's Car	1	2002	Ford Explorer	Good
Captain's Car	1	1997	Chevrolet Blazer	Fair
Service Truck/Brush	1	2012	Chevy 3500	Good
Engine/Pumper	1	2010	Pierce	Good
Engine/Pumper	1	1989	Spartan DS26	Fair
Engine/Pumper	1	1998	E-One	Good
Engine/Pumper	1	1969	Chevy C-60	Fair
Ladder 46 Pumper	1	1983	Sutphen	Fair

## Environmental Services

The Environmental Services Department operates the sewer treatment plant; thirteen lift stations and maintains the collection system. The department has three employees including the department head.

***Sanitary Sewer Service:*** The Columbiana sanitary sewer system has been improved during the past 25 years. Sanitary Sewer Service is provided to all residents and businesses near downtown. The service area boundary of the Columbiana sanitary sewer system, along with the location of the treatment plant, pump stations, and sewer lines, is depicted in *Maps 5 & 5-A, "Sewer Systems"*. The sewer system consists of one wastewater treatment plant, located west of downtown off State Highway 70, with an approximately 950,000 gallon per day capacity. Additionally, there are thirteen pump stations and sewer lines ranging from four to fifteen inches located throughout the City.

The City should explore options for the repair and maintenance of sewer treatment facilities as they are needed. Insuring that these facilities are in top operating condition is paramount to attracting new business and industries. Further, as new

development is proposed the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council should ensure that waterlines are of adequate size and fire pressure is sufficient to properly suppress a fire should one occur. A long range maintenance program should be developed providing for annual repairs in those areas in the most critical need. This will enable the City to plan for such repairs rather than being placed in an emergency position for which funds were not budgeted.

<b>Table 17</b> <b>Environmental Services Department</b> <b>Personnel Data</b>	
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Department Head/State Licensed Operator	1
Maintenance Worker	1
Grade II Operator	0
Operator Trainee/Helper	1



Table 18 Environmental Services Department Vehicles/Equipment				
<i>Vehicle Type</i>	<i>QTY</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Make/Model</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Department Head Vehicle	1	2011	F150 4x4	
Service Truck	1	2006	F350	
Crane Truck	1	2005	F350	
Sewer Cleaner	1	1993	Shamrock	
Dump Truck	1	1992	F800	
Backhoe	1	1980s	John Deer 310C	
Trash Pump	1		Honda 3"	
Walk Behind Concrete Saw	1			
Farm Tractor	1		Ford 4610	
Zero Turn Mower	1		Exmark	
Golf Cart	1		EZGO Electric	

## Parks and Recreation

***Existing Conditions:*** The City of Columbiana maintains a number of parks, and recreational facilities within the city limits. Additionally, Columbiana residents have access to nearby Oak Mountain State Park, Beeswax Park on Lay Lake, The American Village educational park, Magnolia Hills Golf Course and other public and privately maintained park land in Shelby County. These facilities offer activities that include passive recreation, picnicking, walking, hiking and biking trails, ball fields, tennis courts and much more. City officials past and present have understood the role parks play in a healthy, livable and balanced city, and that preserving land for future generation should be a priority.

The Columbiana Parks and Recreation Department is presently operated by a volunteer board which meets monthly. Ball fields are currently maintained through a private contractor, while maintenance of park areas, pavilions and other recreational facilities is performed by the City's Public Works Department.

The City's recreational facilities include:

- ***Kiwanis Park:*** This is a twelve (12) acre city park on Washington Street featuring
- ***Pocket park*** on Main Street,
- ***Columbiana Sports Complex:*** Located on McDow Road featuring four (4) baseball/softball fields, a soccer/football field, covered batting cages, playground, lighted walking trail, two (2) pavilions, and concession stand.
- ***Bolton Field:*** and girl's softball (2 softball fields, concession stand, lighted field).



***Future Plans:*** A new park site identified on the Future Land Use Concept is located on the Old Mill Square site which will be the new site for a park area and pavilions as well as the new cultural arts building and city shop. Plans are to have a walking and bike trail traveling along the old rail road bed. These facilities would also be maintained by the Public Works Department.



*Downtown Pocket Park*



*Magnolia Meadows Golf Course*

## Public Works

The Columbiana Public Works Department is located in the City Hall complex. Divisions include Street and Sanitation, Wastewater Treatment and Cemetery. Presently, the Public Works Department has one (1) director and eleven (11) employees ranging from Street and Sanitation Superintendent, crew chief, workers, treatment plant operator and helper to staff these divisions. The Public Works Department appears to have an extensive fleet of vehicles and equipment of various ages with unknown condition. The City will need to continue to provide additional employees and new vehicles and equipment in the future to accommodate the projected growth in Columbiana.

***Solid Waste Collection:*** In the last few years the City has up-graded its equipment with the purchase of a brush truck, new trash truck and newer pickups. The City is presently handling its own waste collection through the Public Works Department and still provides back door service for residential solid waste collection and dumpster service for the businesses in the City.

## Stormwater Management

Stormwater management has become an increasing concern to municipalities all over the state. Questions are being asked regarding who is responsible for the management of the stormwater run-off, who created the problem, and who owns the

stormwater management systems (drainageways, ditches, inlets, and retention and detention ponds).

The City needs to examine this issue in detail and make a determination on ownership policies and regulations. These regulations should be incorporated into the subdivision regulations and/or developmental policies. As a result of any increase regulatory and stormwater infrastructure needs, the City may wish to implement a stormwater utility and associated fee in order to have a dedicated funding source to meet the stormwater program goals and requirements. The City may also want to take a comprehensive approach to managing its stormwater program and should select a consultant to assist with the development of a stormwater master plan.

## Community Facilities -- Other

### Water Service

The Columbiana water system is operated by the Columbiana Water Works Board and provides service to approximately 3,700 residential, commercial and industrial customers inside the corporate limits. In addition to covering all of the incorporated area of Columbiana, the Columbiana Water Works Board provides coverage to a large area of southeast Shelby County and has expanded in size over the last 25 years as improvements have been made to the water system. The Water Works Board moved into their new headquarters on Water Works Road in 2003. The water system currently has five wells and six tanks that provide water supply and storage capacity. The six tanks provide a storage capacity of 4.2MGD. The waterline sizes in Columbiana consist of 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14-inch lines, not including the smaller distribution lines. The location of waterlines, tanks and a generalized service area boundary is depicted in *Maps 6 & 6-A, "Water Service"*. (See Appendix B for 2015 Annual Drinking Water Report)

### Public Schools

Shelby County is recognized for its award winning schools and all schools located in the City of Columbiana are under the jurisdiction of the Shelby County school system. The Shelby County Board of Education is located in Columbiana's old elementary school on East College Street. The City of Columbiana has four schools: Elvin Hill Elementary School located at 201 Washington Street, Columbiana Middle School located at 222 Joinertown Road, Shelby County High School located at 101 Washington Street, and Shelby County School of

Technology on State Highway 70. According to the BOE, planning will continue on the renovation of areas within the schools, as well as, additional classrooms as needed.



Columbiana's schools are well located to serve the community. As Columbiana's population grows, there will be a need for additional schools. In selecting sites for new schools, it is important to consider accessibility to **all** of the neighborhoods they serve. New schools should be sited and designed to encourage pedestrian-bicycle access and to reduce the need for vehicular traffic.

<b>Table 19</b> <b>Shelby County Schools Enrollment</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Columbiana Elementary</b>	<b>Columbiana Middle School</b>	<b>Columbiana High School</b>
2006	579	500	653
2007	553	527	626
2008	558	508	611
2009	550	496	623
2010	533	498	651
2011	508	516	656
2012	509	499	623
2013	508	459	639
2014	512	439	643
2015	496	432	629
<i>Source: State of Alabama Department of Education</i>			

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations have been specifically made by the affected department or are found throughout Section VI of this Plan. You are encouraged to read the full subsection where these recommendations are discussed.

***Police Department Recommendations:***

- Replace aging vehicles to reduce maintenance costs from mechanical problems.
- Increase manpower
- Train additional personnel for evidence technician
- Improve camera system in and around City Hall

***Fire Department Recommendations:***

- Provide funds for the appropriately qualified personnel to perform firefighting, education, inspection and investigation needs of the City.
- Develop a replacement strategy for aging firefighting vehicles that will ensure adequate firefighting capabilities and reduce long term maintenance costs
- Continue evaluating the need for and location of a second fire station

***Additional Recommendations for Fire:***

- Develop a recruitment strategy to help lessen the strain on daylight hour staffing.
- Explore possibility of hiring some full-time personnel.
- Maintain continuing education standards for firefighting personnel

***Environmental Services Recommendations:***

- Provide new and updated vehicles and equipment to accommodate growth.
- Hire new employees, as needed, to accommodate growth.

***Additional Recommendations for Environmental Services:***

- Explore options for the repair and maintenance of sewer treatment facilities.
- As new development occurs ensure that waterlines are of adequate size and fire pressure is sufficient to properly suppress a fire.
- Develop a long range maintenance program to plan for needed for annual repairs.

***Parks & Recreation Department Recommendations:***

- Study the feasibility of employing a full-time Director and staff to manage and maintain all facilities.
- Identify and purchase additional park sites convenient to all residents

***Public Works Department Recommendations:***

- Provide new and updated vehicles and equipment to accommodate growth.
- Hire new employees, as needed, to accommodate growth.

***Additional Recommendations for Public Works:***

- Perform an inventory of all vehicles and equipment to determine age and condition. Surplus all obsolete or nonfunctioning equipment.

***Recommendations for Stormwater Management:***

- Develop policies/regulations regarding the ownership and maintenance of stormwater structures and incorporated these into the subdivision regulations and/or developmental policies.

***Water Service Recommendations:***

- Work with Water Board when determining appropriate line sizes for various development types and to ensure proper fire flow levels are maintained throughout development site.

***Public School Recommendations:***

- Work with Board of Educations to continue improvements to school buildings and programming for schools in Columbiana.

**Table 21**  
**ALDOT TRAFFIC COUNTS FOR**  
**COLUMBIANA, ALABAMA**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>AL-25 West</b>	<b>AL-25 West<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>AL-25 Bypass<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>AL-25<sup>3</sup> East</b>	<b>AL-25 East (a)</b>	<b>AL-25 East (b)</b>	<b>AL-70 (A)</b>	<b>AL-70 (B)</b>	<b>AL-70 (C)</b>
2004	3380		8360 / 6860	5540			11,160	8430	3890
2005	3530		8120 / 6650	5350			10,550	9660	570
2006	3680		8520 / 7240	5580			10,760	9860	5310
2007	3740		8980 / 7630	5880			11,340	9920	5560
2008	3540		8500 / 7230	5570			10,740	9390	5270
2009	3650		8770 / 7460	5750			11,080	9690	5440
2010	3570		8570 / 7290	5610			10,830	9470	5310
2011	3530		8480 / 7220	5550			10,667	9327	5020
2012	3450 <sup>1</sup>	3600	8150 / 6970	5250 <sup>3</sup>	5660 <sup>3</sup>	3960 <sup>3</sup>	10,880	7720	4150
2013	3300	3630	7850 / 6570	5530	5710	3990	10,250	7780	5420
2014	3600	3510	8100 / 6950	6630	6010	4080	11,050	10,440	6030
<i>Source: State of Alabama Department of Transportation</i>									

<sup>1</sup>Moved counter east toward city limits and added a counter between old AL-25 & AL-70

<sup>2</sup> AL-25 Bypass: top # nearer to 70 / bottom # nearer to 47

<sup>3</sup>Moved counter west closer to city limits and added two new counters: between CR-49 & CR-55 (a)  
between CR-55 & CR-431 (b)



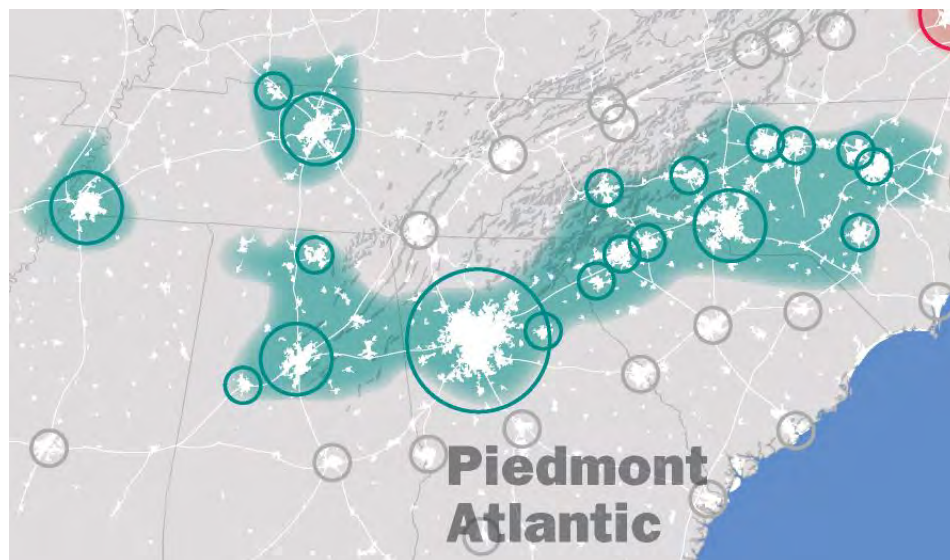
# CHAPTER VII: Transportation

## Overview of Transportation Planning

Transportation planning deals with the movement of people and goods throughout a city or a region and is not limited to automobiles and streets only. In fact, it is multi-faceted and includes several systems; a road network for motorized vehicles; pedestrian and bicycle networks; transit; and networks for rail, freight and aviation. **Vision Columbiana 2035** recognizes that all of these networks are vital to maintaining a healthy, well-connected, mobile region in the future.

While **Vision Columbiana 2035** focuses on transportation systems for the City of Columbiana, it acknowledges that the transportation systems locally are part of a larger system of transportation networks in the region. The figure below shows how Columbiana is situated at the edge of an emerging megaregion known as the Piedmont Atlantic Region. This megaregion is anchored by Atlanta, GA, but extends east to west from Raleigh, North Carolina to Birmingham, Alabama. The 14.8 million population of the region (2000 estimate) is anticipated to grow to 20.5 million by 2025.<sup>1</sup>

**Map of Megaregion - Piedmont Atlantic Region**



Source: [www.america2050.org](http://www.america2050.org)

It should be further noted that Columbiana is also centrally located along State Highway 25 which connects the City to the I-65 corridor to the west and to US Highway 280 to the east. County Roads serving Columbiana include 26, 28, 30, 34 and 47, along with many local streets. In addition to these highways, Columbiana



has access to several modes of transportation, such as air, rail and water, located within the Birmingham metropolitan area.

Passenger and cargo air services are available at the Birmingham International Airport located approximately 30 miles from Columbiana. In addition, local, regional and courier service is available at the Shelby County Airport located approximately 11 miles from the City.

The Port of Birmingham provides Columbiana access to the Warrior-Tombigbee Waterway, which connects the Birmingham metropolitan area to the Port of Mobile.

CSX railway provides rail access to Columbiana. Passenger rail service throughout the region is provided along the Amtrak Crescent line which serves stations in Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, and Anniston, as well as Atlanta.

Long distance bus service is available along the I-20, I-65 and I-85 corridors with stations in Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Anniston, Gadsden and Sylacauga.

ClasTran provides “demand response” transportation services for both Jefferson and Shelby Counties. This is a fee based, shared use curb-to-curb service that operates in response to advance reservation. A vehicle is scheduled to pick up the passenger and transport to the desired destination.

Columbiana provides sidewalks downtown and in surrounding neighborhoods to improve the City’s walkability, and a limited trolley service is also available for Columbiana citizens and visitors.

## **Transportation Planning at the Regional Level**

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) coordinates with the Metropolitan Planning Organization in the region, and maintains the region’s long range transportation plans.

The Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the group of local, elected officials, transit operators, and state officials who are responsible for the coordination of a planning process that results in a Long Range Plan (25 year) and a short term (four year) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Birmingham MPO is comprised of a Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, a Transportation Technical Committee (TTC), and a Transportation Citizens Committee (TCC). The committee process is managed by MPO Staff. The Birmingham MPO operates under federal authority as provided for in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) the federal law governing surface transportation.

The Birmingham MPO decides, in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation (DOT), what transportation projects are funded with the available local, state and federal dollars. The Birmingham MPO publishes priorities for all transportation related projects for all types of modes such as highways, transit, intermodal freight, and bicycle/pedestrian and greenways. Tools ranging from sophisticated computer models to old-fashioned town meetings are used to help determine which projects are funded.

*Planned Transportation Projects:* Transportation projects planned for Columbiana that are in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvements Plan (TIP) of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) include widening State Highway 70 to four lanes, widening County Roads 26 and 47 to four lanes, a rails-to-trails corridor from Downtown Columbiana to the Shelby Community and a multi-use trails along Big Creek.

Unfortunately for Columbiana, as well as other municipalities, the major highways that make up its transportation system are the responsibility of the county, state and federal governments, and Columbiana has no direct control over improvements made to its system and must rely on the responsible parties to sponsor projects. However, Columbiana should actively seek to partner with the county, state and federal governments along with private developers and neighboring jurisdictions on important transportation projects of mutual interest and benefit. Also, Columbiana should strive to maintain its network of local streets, which they have direct control over.

Table 20 indicates project descriptions, sponsor, scope and estimated costs of planned transportation projects over the next 25 years in Columbiana.

<b>Table 20</b> <b>Planned Transportation Projects</b>				
<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Map #</b>
<b>Capacity Projects</b>				
Widen CR-47 from US-280 south to SR-145 Widen 2 to 4 lanes Length – 9.00	Shelby County	2025	\$45,056,889	430
Widen CR-47 from US-280 south to SR-25 Widen 2 to 4 lanes Length – 11.50	Shelby County	2025	\$56,895,572	431
Widen CR-47 from SR-25 south to SR-145 Widen 2 to 4 lanes Length – 7.80	Shelby County		\$46,404,106	431
<b>Bridge Project</b>				
Bridge Replacement SR-70 over Waxahatchee Creek, Str #70-59-5.9 <i>PROJECT COMPLETED</i>	ALDOT	2007	\$2,170,611	45
<b>Intersection Projects</b>				
Turn Lanes and Intersection Improvements at SR-70 and CR-26 Length – 0.50	ALDOT	2014	\$100,000	
Turn Lanes and Intersection Improvements at SR-70 and CR-26 Length – 0.50	ALDOT	2016	\$525,200	

Source: Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

## Local

In addition to the planning efforts of the MPO and State of Alabama, the City should maintain long-range and short-range transportation plans that are administered by the Public Works Department. Programming of funds would be handled through the City's Capital Improvements Program as part of the City's Budget.

Plans that should be included are as follows:

A comprehensive transportation planning document should be developed to look locally at the various transportation networks in the city including, streets, pedestrians, bicycles and parking. It should also include a pavement management plan for local streets.

***Major Street Map.*** This is a map of the street network that shows streets in their respective classifications (arterial, collector, local), including proposed arterials and collector streets. This can be an independent document or part of the comprehensive transportation plan. *Maps 7 & 7-A, “Functional Street Classifications”.*

***Sidewalk Master Plan.*** In 2006 the City contracted with Gresham, Smith and Partners to develop a Sidewalk Master Plan for Columbiana. This plan addresses needed repairs to existing sidewalks and development of new sidewalks and sidewalk connections, as well as pedestrian trails. *Map 8 – Sidewalk Plan 2006* depicts the sidewalk network showing streets where there are existing sidewalks and where sidewalks are proposed. *(See Appendix C – Sidewalk Master Plan Doc.)*

***Sidewalk Policy Planning and Procedures.*** This is a policy document that establishes criteria for the construction or reconstruction of sidewalks in public rights-of-way in the city.

***Sign Policy.*** This policy document should set out formal policy and guidelines for the benefit of developers and their agents or other interested parties on the nature and types of street name signs and regulatory signs the City of Columbiana will accept. This policy should also outline the requirements for installation of new street name signs.

## **Local Street Network**

The City currently maintains many miles of roadway within its corporate limits. This road network is composed of streets of varying functional classifications. Functional classification can be applied in several ways including planning highway system development, determining the jurisdiction responsible for a particular system and fiscal planning. Also, functional classification is important in determining eligibility for Federal-aid funding. Locally, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) proposes changes to the functional classification of roads, and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) approves the proposals.

Urban and rural areas have obviously different characteristics with regard to density of street and highway networks, travel patterns and the relation of the elements to highway function. Because of this fundamental difference, separate classifications must be provided for urban and rural functional systems. The following is an explanation of the major functional classifications:

### ***Interstate/Expressway:***

This class is devoted entirely to traffic movement with little or no land service. Expressways or interstates are characterized by complete control of access. This classification is reserved for multi-lane, divided roads with

few, if any, at grade intersections. Expressways serve over 40,000 trips per day and are intended to serve long trips. No Interstate/Expressways are located in Columbiana.

### **Arterial:**

This class of street carries traffic to and from the expressway and serves those major movements of traffic within or through the urban area that are not served by expressways. Arterials interconnect the principal traffic generators within the city as well as important rural routes. Arterials handle trips between different areas of a city and should form a reasonably integrated system. Principal Arterials will carry between 25,000 and 40,000 vehicles per day, and Minor Arterials will carry from 10,000 to 25,000 vehicles per day. There are no Principal Arterials within Columbiana.

*Minor Arterial - State Highways 25 and 70; County Roads 26 and 47*

### **Collector:**

This class of streets serves internal traffic movements within an area of the city, such as a subdivision, and connects this area with the arterial system. Collectors do not handle long trips and are not continuous for great lengths. Collectors serve generally over 1,500 trips per day.

*Major Collector Rural – County Roads 28, 30, 55 and 61; Old Highway 25*

*Minor Collector Rural – County Roads 34, 49, 5, 37, 97 and 331*

### **Local:**

The sole function of local streets is to provide access to adjacent land. These streets contain a large percentage of the total street mileage of a city, but carry a small proportion of the vehicle miles of travel. In Columbiana, these local streets consist of all streets not classified as arterials or collectors. Local residential streets carry daily volumes of 1,000 or less in most cases.

### **Busiest Roadway Segments**

Roadway	AADT - 2014
Alabama Highway 70 (just west of AL-25)	11,440
Alabama Highway 70 (between 434 & CR26)	10,440
Alabama Highway 25 Bypass	15,050*

## Traffic Volume

Traffic volume on state routes and federal highways is monitored with annual average daily traffic counts (AADT) by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). State Routes 25 and 70 in Columbiana are the roadways for which ALDOT keeps AADT data.

Prior to 2012 there were four traffic counter locations along SR-25 as follows:

- AL-25 West of Downtown
- AL-25 Bypass
- AL-25 East of Downtown between City Limits and CR-49
- AL-25 East of Downtown at Wilsonville corporate limits

In 2012 ALDOT began recording data for three (3) additional locations along State Route 25 in or near Columbiana as follows:

- AL-25 West – original counter moved east toward city limits and an additional counter was placed between old AL-25 and AL-70
- AL-25 East – original counter moved west closer to city limits and two additional counters were placed
  - Between CR-49 & CR-55
  - Between CR-55 & CR-431

As a result of these new locations a new Traffic Count Table (Table 21) has been developed to show all counts recorded between 2004 and 2014 including those of the counters put in place in 2012. This table shows the data for all counter impacting Columbiana on both AL-25 and AL-70. See Also Map 9 “*Traffic Counters*” (*front & back*) showing ALDOT traffic counter locations.

As indicated the highest counts in the City occur at AL-25 Bypass and along AL-70. Interesting the heaviest traffic on AL-70 occurs close into the City and a large amount of that traffic disperses as it intersects with CR-26. The same occurs along AL-25 as it enters the core of the City and then disperses along several points. This high concentration of traffic at the inner core of downtown Columbiana creates traffic issues during peak travel times. Solutions to this problem will not be easy but should include the study of traffic patterns on minor and local streets leading away from the city core to determine destination patterns. In this way a plan for developing alternative routes to those destinations can begin to evolve and be included in future transportation improvement programs.

## Design Standards and Access Management

Access management deals with how transportation users gain access to the transportation system, where, and at what frequency. When looking at roads, this is often done through examination of standards for intersections, driveway placement and cross or internal access. The more access points there are on a road, the more likely conflicts arise that can affect traffic flow and safety. Columbiana should consider developing access management standards, including the development of standards for driveway spacing. The City is currently in a position such that development has not become so dense that access management would be difficult to achieve. Going forward this should be a strong consideration when reviewing new development plans.

## Pedestrian and Cycling Network

Regardless of one's mode of transportation, at some point in their trip, everyone becomes a pedestrian. Walking has been the most common mode of transportation since the city was founded. Columbiana is a city full of pleasant neighborhoods, a quaint historic downtown, and beautiful natural resources all of which lend themselves to walking and biking.

Low density, auto-centric development predominant in the 20th century provides challenges for biking and walking in any city and Columbiana is no exception. As part of this Comprehensive Plan Columbiana should formally recognize the need for a community network of sidewalks and bicycle trails that will allow citizens to utilize alternative modes of transportation.

One means of responding to this need is to update the Subdivision Regulations to require that sidewalks be included in all new subdivisions. Additionally, the City Council should support the construction of new sidewalks in areas of high pedestrian movements. With added interest and awareness of health and environmental benefits, and as gas prices continue to fluctuate, it is reasonable to expect that use of sidewalks and bikeways will increase and become part of the daily routine for many citizens.

As part of the 2006 Sidewalk Master Plan, (*Appendix C*) several sidewalk projects have been completed. In 2010 sidewalks were installed along the east side of Main Street, and in 2015 sidewalks were also placed along Pitts Drive. As part of an update to the 2006 Sidewalk Master Plan, the City should establish a policy to have sidewalks on city streets wherever needed for the benefit of health, safety, and welfare of the citizens. This policy should focus attention on areas of high pedestrian movement, particularly around schools, and on "missing links" in the sidewalk network. At the State level, the Department of Transportation has been tasked, through the Statewide Transportation Plan, with a statewide bicycle and



pedestrian planning effort that will address statewide needs as well as include each urbanized area's plan for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

At the national level, among various transportation programs, federal transportation law has introduced a Safe Routes to School Program with the primary aim of encouraging children, including those that are disabled, to walk and bicycle to school. The purpose of this program is to make walking and bicycling safer and more appealing as a means of access to school. The program apportions funds to states based on the amount of enrollment in primary and middle schools. In addition, federal legislation permits cities constructing bicycle and sidewalk facilities to dip into several funding sources including those set aside for congestion mitigation, improvements to air quality and other transportation enhancement funds. Other federal aid funds can be used as appropriate.

To be eligible for Safe Routes to School funding, a project must meet various criteria. Infrastructure projects such as sidewalks, bike paths, crosswalks and other construction or operational improvements must be located within two miles of an elementary or middle school. Projects cannot exceed a total of \$150,000, but can apply to more than one school. In order to ensure the equitable distribution of funds, applicants must define their status as either urban or non-urban.

## Connectivity

Connectivity is the overall connectedness of a street network. Are streets laid out on a grid, or do subdivisions consist of a series of loops and cul-de-sacs with one or two entrances and exits? Connectivity is important because, the more connected a street network is, the more travel options exist. This limits the strain on any particular route or intersection, and allows traffic to take alternate routes as primary routes become congested. Additionally, street connectivity provides for more efficient delivery of city services such as water, sewer, sanitation, etc.

A lack of connectedness in a street network over time forces collectors and arterials to become more congested and will often require public investment in widening or otherwise improving those routes to handle more traffic. Those improvements, through a process known as *induced demand*<sup>2</sup> will then draw new traffic to the routes, reducing the value of the improvements considerably sooner than might be expected. Providing a higher level of street connectivity as development occurs will help reduce the long-term strain on the road network.

## Transportation Choices

The automobile is the dominant form of transportation in Columbiana. While that is not expected to change now or in the future, there is no question that

Columbiana's reliability on that form of transportation will place an increasing strain on the City's transportation network over time. In a future of increasing fiscal constraints, searching for alternate ways to relieve pressure on the road network is desirable. Connectivity, mentioned earlier, is one method. Reducing vehicle trips is another. In part the plan seeks to reduce vehicle trips through reducing trip lengths and frequency. This is accomplished by providing daily needs in closer proximity to the places where people live as is supported by the establishment of the "Neighborhood Commercial" land use on the Future Land Use Map. Providing for alternate forms of transportation is another way to reduce vehicle trips. Alternate forms of transportation include walking, biking, and mass transit. Columbiana currently provides a limited trolley service for citizens.

At present, walking is a viable transportation choice in some parts of the City. A walkable community has benefits beyond providing an alternate form of transportation: walking is demonstrably good for public health; provides improved accessibility; and is necessary for the creation of the vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods discussed in the land use section. A comprehensive review and update of the 2006 Sidewalk Master Plan (*Appendix C*) should be conducted to determine what, if any, projects have been completed and of those still pending which ones are still viable under current conditions. The City should work to expand the network of sidewalks to make connections for a City-wide network of on- and off-street facilities. The on-street sidewalk network, in particular, should be expanded in and to locations where walkability is desirable. As development occurs, providing options for construction of pedestrian facilities; off-street trail networks or more limited pedestrian facilities will be more appropriate in some locations. Efforts to support pedestrian safety should also be examined.

Bicycles represent an efficient, non-polluting transportation alternative that is particularly viable in and near Columbiana central core. The bicycling community is made up of both recreational users as well as bicycle commuters. A network of bicycle facilities should be designed to accommodate both types of users, with an appropriate mix of the off-street and on-street facilities. Bicycle connectivity should be considered as part of the development review process; encouraging placement of bike racks in new non-residential development would also be positive. In the meantime a "Share the Road" policy should be adopted by the City in places where independent cycling space is not or cannot be provided.

## **Citywide Signage**

Effective signage systems help visitors and residents navigate successfully from place to place and improve safety. The City should develop a wayfinding plan aimed at designing and building a network of signs Citywide. Opportunities also exist for upgrading pedestrian signals and street lights to enhance safety on City streets.

## Land Use-Transportation Connection

One of the organizing principles of Comprehensive Planning is that land use influences the transportation network, and vice-versa. Fundamentally, traffic demand is driven by two factors: employment, and housing. All trips, vehicular or otherwise, have origins and destinations; determining where people want to go, when they want to do it, and in what order, is at the heart of traffic demand modeling. It follows, then, that employment is a function of the presence of employers, which can be commercial, industrial, or institutional establishments, or may be home occupations. The actual locations of those establishments, as well as the housing that is the second factor driving traffic demand, are determined by the market, which operates within a framework established by zoning, which is administered by local governments. Zoning should ideally reflect a jurisdiction's Future Land Use Plan, so that the locations of future development and redevelopments align with planned future investments in civic infrastructure and civic goals established in the comprehensive plan, such as promoting infill development and mixed-use centers. At present, all of those alignments do not yet exist. Completing [Vision Columbiana 2035](#) is the first step in a process of beginning to align civic investment with community vision.

The Land Use First strategy is the idea that the Future Land Use Plan should drive investment in transportation infrastructure, and not vice-versa. Changes in land use should not take place just because a new street connection is made or a new roadway alignment built. Instead those street construction projects should take place because they support the City of Columbiana's vision for the type, location, and scale of new development and redevelopment.

## Parking

A transportation network that relies on automobiles will always need a place to put them when they are not in use. It is important to balance the amount of parking provided for development, to ensure that adequate parking exists, but also so that excessive parking is not required. Excessive parking has many negative effects, including increasing impervious surfaces, thus increasing the amount of stormwater runoff. Excessive parking also reduces the amount of land available for actual development, limiting investment in that land and thus reducing tax revenue to local governments.

Stand-alone surface parking lots should be strongly discouraged, particular at street intersection corners. The use of prime developable land purely for parking is a misuse of funding. Should additional parking be needed to the extent that a parking area unattached to development must be built, a better use of funds would be to develop small vertical parking facilities which maximize the use of the land. Further parking decks in prime commercial areas should be fronted with retail or office space such that the deck is not visible from the public right-of-way. *(See Franklin, Tennessee as example)*

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations are found throughout Section VII of this Plan. You are encouraged to read the full subsection where these recommendations are made, which you will find referenced after each one.

- Actively seek to partner with the county, state and federal governments on important transportation projects of mutual interest and benefit. *(Transportation Planning at a Regional Level)*
- Strive to maintain network of local streets. *(Transportation Planning at a Regional Level)*
- Maintain long-range and short-range transportation plans administered by the Public Works Department. *(Local)*
- Consider developing access management standards, including the development of standards for driveway spacing. *(Design Standards & Access Management)*
- Formally recognized the need for a community network of sidewalks and bicycle trails that will allow citizens to utilize alternative modes of transportation. *(Pedestrian & Cycling Network)*
- Support the construction of new sidewalks in areas of high pedestrian movements. *(Pedestrian & Cycling Network) and (Transportation Choices)*
- Update to the 2006 Sidewalk Master Plan. *(Pedestrian & Cycling Network)*
- Providing a higher level of street connectivity as development occurs. *(Connectivity)*
- Efforts to support pedestrian safety should also be examined. *(Transportation Choices)*
- Bicycle connectivity should be considered as part of the development review process. *(Transportation Choices)*
- “Share the Road” policy should be adopted. *(Transportation Choices)*
- Develop a wayfinding plan *(Citywide Signage)*
- Strongly discourage stand-alone surface parking lots. *(Parking)*

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.america2050.org/piedmont\\_atlantic.html](http://www.america2050.org/piedmont_atlantic.html)

<sup>2</sup> J. J. Leeming (1969). Road Accidents: Prevent or Punish. Cassell. SBN 304932132.

## CHAPTER VIII: Quality of Life

### Introduction

The term “quality of life” is used to indicate the general well-being of people and societies. It often is associated with the term "standard of living," but the two do not necessarily mean the same. A standard of living merely is the evaluation of the wealth and employment status of a person in a society. Though both are factors to determine quality of life, these are not its sole indicator. A person’s environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation, social well-being, freedom, human rights and happiness also are significant factors<sup>1</sup>

### Healthcare

Providing good quality healthcare is a challenge for most small communities in Alabama but from the standpoint of service providers, Columbiana is more fortunate than many Alabama communities of its size. Within the City limits there are currently three physicians groups, and a professional nurse practitioners office, providing family and internal medicine services as well as several other healthcare professionals providing orthopedic, rehabilitation, dental and eye care services. While there is no hospital located within Columbiana’s city limits, there are 10 within 35 miles of the city. With good access to Interstate 65 most citizens will have relatively quick access to major hospitals in the area.

The primary weaknesses identified included the lack of emergency room care, mental healthcare and specialty care for Columbiana’s aging population. Additionally, while Columbiana has local healthcare providers, there is still a need for an “urgent care” facility to provide access to healthcare after hours and on weekends. One particular service that helps off-set this need is Southeast Shelby Rescue. They have located a station in the City and provide ACLS transport, extrication, rope rescue and first response services in South Shelby County.



*South Shelby Rescue*

## Healthy Lifestyles<sup>2</sup>

*Children:* Alabama has “the 6th highest rate of overweight and obese children” in the nation, as a result it has been recognized that the current generation of children is the first in American history to have a shorter lifespan than their parents. In order to prepare children for good jobs, they must first have a good foundation: healthy food, a healthy living environment, regular exercise, and a good education. It is well known that healthy children are better equipped to succeed in school and that translates into the fact that better educated persons tend to be healthier. It is also easier to teach children healthy habits than it is to change unhealthy habits already developed in adults. The first step to a healthier Columbiana lies in educating children to make healthy choices.

*Senior Citizens:* According to a 2010 report by The Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics People who reach age 65 will live another 18.5 years 14 years longer than in 1960.

- From 2006 to 2008, 74.5% of those 65 and older reported being in good to excellent health.
- About 22% of seniors reported regular physical activity.<sup>3</sup>

Today’s senior citizen while healthier and more active overall than those of several decades ago, need to have access to activities and resources to support and encourage healthy lifestyles. Because older adults make up the highest percentage of persons with chronic health conditions it makes sense to begin by creating healthy lifestyle programs with them in mind.

Columbiana’s new Senior Center has one full-time and two part-time employees as well as over 30 volunteers to help run programs and activities. The Center has over 180 seniors who participate in various activities offered and approximate 55 seniors who take advantage of lunch which is provided each day. For those who are unable to travel to the center, a homebound meal service is provided on a daily basis. The Center also provides an excellent assortment of ongoing activities for their seniors including Tai Chi, line dancing, arthritis exercise classes, sewing and quilting classes, and numerous interactive games. Additionally, seniors can participate in painting, pottery and singing as well as financial and Medicare workshops, and day trips.

Exercise of all types benefits people with arthritis, heart disease, diabetes or high blood pressure. Some options that might be considered for inclusion in Columbiana’s Recreation programming for seniors are: walking, jogging, swimming, aqua aerobics, cycling, yoga, Pilates, strength training, golf and volunteerism.



Overall, Columbiana has a vibrant array of senior services that provide important physical and social activities as well as lifelong learning opportunities for the City's senior population.

***Recreation:*** Parks and Recreation services play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for a city's residents. Among the benefits of a strong parks and recreation program are:<sup>4</sup>

- Improved quality of life through recreation programming, leisure activities, and resource conservation;
- Parks, recreation and leisure activities provide our youth with opportunities to develop healthy lifestyle habits and grow into strong community participants.
- Parks, recreation and leisure activities create lifelines and ongoing life experiences for older members of our community and generate opportunities for citizens to come together around common activities.
- Public parks and recreation facilities create enormous economic value through increased partnerships, which improves the job base and the economic viability of the local economy, including business relocation and expansion in the community, generation of new jobs, increasing home values and increased tourism.

A healthy lifestyle begins with physical activity. Columbiana currently provides a wide range of athletic programs for young children and youth primarily in the form of organized sports. However, additional programs and facilities should be considered for those children not interested or able to participate in the currently offered activities. Likewise, more adult and senior adult activities should be added to Columbiana's recreation program in order to provide a more well-rounded and inclusive curriculum for citizens to select from.

***Hoodlum Railway History Trail:*** One way in which the City is working to improve access to a healthy lifestyle is through walkability. In 2006 a Sidewalk Master Plan was developed to address needed repairs to existing sidewalks and development of new sidewalks and sidewalk connections, as well as pedestrian trails. (*See Appendix C – Sidewalk Master Plan*) One of the goals of this Sidewalk Plan was the development of a multi-use trail along an existing rail bed in the City. Known as the Hoodlum Railway History Trail this five (5) mile multi-use trail will provide opportunities for hiking, biking and golf cart users. The trail will connect Old Mill Square Park and the Shelby Ironworks Park and will provide historic railway and community information on kiosk signage as user travel its length.

The City has applied for grant funding to assist with this project and is working to acquire the right-of-way needed for its development. Applications for funding have

been submitted and the first set of approvals has been granted. The City is currently awaiting a second set of approvals to be processed.

***Walkability***<sup>5</sup> Recent studies show that in addition to the physical benefits associated with healthy communities, walkable communities can also provide economic and environmental benefits.

Economically, a town or city can benefit from having a more walkable environment. The presence of sidewalks and other walking facilities is shown to increase property value and promote tourism. Sidewalks and connected, well-maintained pedestrian networks allow citizens the ability to safely and conveniently patronize local shops, businesses, and restaurants.

Environmentally, increasing walkability can also have positive impacts on the community. Walking or biking can decrease car travel and thereby decrease harmful auto emissions.

In addition to economic and environmental benefits, walkable communities also provide advantages for residents. Safe, walkable, environments can provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to stay socially connected and engaged. Walking is an easy and inexpensive way to stay fit.

***Community Gardens and Farmers' Markets:*** Access to fresh food is an important element of achieving a healthy lifestyle. Community gardens are places where children and adults alike can have fun, while exercising and learning about farming, nutrition, self-reliance, and how to become entrepreneurs, through firsthand experience. There are numerous examples of community gardens across the State including Birmingham and Dothan, that may be drawn from should Columbiana wish to explore establishing a program of its own. These gardens also provide additional social opportunities, and a point of unity for local residents as well as a potential point of income to the community.

Columbiana already has an established Farmers' Market which allows citizens to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables as well as other home grown/homemade items. A market of this kind not only provides fresh produce to a community it also helps keep community dollars in the community and supports local farmers and small business. The location of Columbiana's market near the County Court House in the historic downtown also allows downtown businesses to showcase their products to market patrons. The City has also done an outstanding job of capitalizing on the Farmer's Market as a community event by hosting Columbiana Trade Days, a countywide yard sale and flea market, on the second weekend of each month in conjunction with the Farmer's Market.

As with other programs and activities mentioned, there are a large number of farmers' markets across the State from which the organizers of the Columbiana Farmers' Market can get new ideas and keep up with the secrets to a successful market program. Additionally the State of Alabama's Farmers' Market Authority can provide advice and assistance on becoming and managing a certified farmers' market should the City wish to pursue this certification for its market.

## Cultural Enrichment

**Library:** "In a larger sense, Americans strongly value the role of public libraries in their communities, both for providing access to materials and resources and for improving the overall quality of life in their communities. Many library resources are particularly valued by those who are unemployed, retired, or searching for a job, as well as those living with a disability and internet users who lack home internet access."<sup>6</sup>

The Mildred B. Harrison Regional Library, a 6,600 square foot facility located at 50 Lester Street adjacent to the Shelby County Court House, is a member of the Harrison Regional Library System. Staff consists of two full time employees, five part-time employees and two "as needed" employees as well as a number of volunteers. Columbiana's library is currently open five days per week and provides services such as a meeting room, internet access, facsimile, print, and self-service copy services.

In 2015, the library had a print inventory, which includes books, newspapers, and magazines, of 25,763 items and a non-print inventory, which consists of videos, books on CDs/tapes, DVDs, and music CDs, of 10277 items; the non-print collection is one of the largest and most diverse of any library within the Harrison Regional Library System.

Future plans for the Library include the acquisition of approximately 2800 square feet of publicly assessable area which will house the adult fiction and nonfiction sections. Additional improvements are slated to take place in the future through the assistance of the Friends of the Columbiana Public Library.

**Festivals and Museums:** Columbiana boast a surprising number of festivals and cultural enrichment opportunities. Among the many festivals and celebrations which attract both locals and out-of-towners alike are Music on Main, Cowboy Day and Liberty Day. These activities are perfect opportunities to showcase Columbiana's hometown atmosphere and outstanding quality of life. During these activities businesses and restaurants should put on their best face and welcome newcomers to their establishment and the community.



Cowboy Day

Another “showcase” opportunity for the City are the impressive cultural enrichment opportunities in the form of museums and historical archives. Places such as the Karl C. Harrison Museum of George Washington which was founded in 1982 by a Columbiana banker and philanthropist, and has become an important forum for learning about America’s first *First Family*. Occupying a wing of the Harrison Regional Library, this beautifully design museum provides just the right atmosphere for the collection of over 1,000 artifacts.



*Karl C. Harrison Museum of George Washington*

***Community Arts Center:*** “Shelby County Arts Council promotes visual and performing arts throughout Shelby County. Formerly the Columbiana Fine Arts Center formed in 2004 the vision and scope was expanded as the Academy of Fine Arts of Shelby County in 2005. As its programs and outreach grew, the name was changed in 2007 to the Shelby County Arts Council (SCAC) to more fully denote its

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*“I have seen the critical role that the arts play in stimulating creativity and in developing vital communities . . . the arts have a crucial impact on our economy and are an important catalyst for learning, discovery, and achievement in our country.”*

*--Paul G. Allen, Co-Founder, Microsoft*

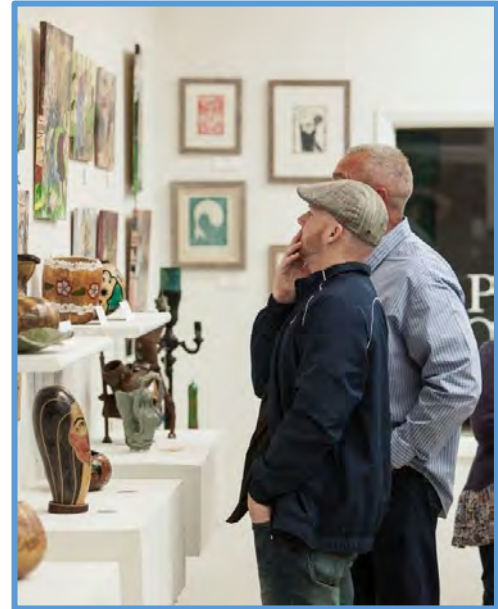
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county-wide role of promoting arts programs and assisting artists. The Arts Council is fully incorporated as a functioning 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and is governed by the decisions of a board of directors. The Council supports a staff of three, which includes a full-time executive director and two part-time office administrators.

SCAC currently occupies a 5,200 sq. ft. facility located at 104 Mildred Street in Columbiana. Their “in-house” programming includes such activities as painting, drawing, sculpture and pottery classes as well as voice, guitar and piano lessons. “The SCAC Pottery Collective” maintains a continuous exhibit in the gallery which is constantly updated with unique-functional art pieces; this pottery is always on display and for sale. In addition, the gallery rotates approximately eight (8) different exhibits during the year.

Development plans are underway for a new cultural arts facility to be housed at the proposed Old Mill Park Complex located between Walton Street and Mill Street. This facility will provide an expanded programming schedule along the lines those currently offered; however the spaces for these programs will more than double. The new facility will also contain a formal “museum quality” gallery in which to display exhibits and The Black Box Theater will double in size. As the facility is established both programming and staff will expand to accommodate its growing needs.

Since the Arts Council opened its doors in Columbiana in 2005, the organization has served over 8,000 children, youth and adults in a variety of arts education programs including oil, acrylic and watercolor painting, drawing, pottery, jewelry making, theatre camps, creative writing and guitar/ violin/ piano/ voice lessons as well as exposing the citizens of Shelby County to student, local, and visiting gallery exhibitions. The Arts Council has a growing outreach program that takes arts education to Shelby County schools and home-schooled students, senior citizen centers and juvenile detention facilities – widening the already considerable influence of the Arts Council.”<sup>7</sup>



*Arts Council Gallery*

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations are found throughout Section VIII of this Plan. You are encouraged to read the full subsection where these recommendations are made, which you will find referenced after each one.

- Consider recruitment of an “urgent care” facility (*Health Care*)
- Develop a program to educate children to make healthy choices. (*Healthy Lifestyles*)
- Continue to build Columbiana’s Recreation programming by including more activities for seniors, adults and special needs children. (*Healthy Lifestyles*)
- Explore the possibility of establishing a community garden in Columbiana. (*Community Gardens and Farmers Markets*)
- Continued to capitalizing on the Farmer’s Market as a community event by including a variety of activities in conjunction with it. (*Community Gardens and Farmers Markets*)
- Examine other successful farmer’s markets and community gardens across the state for new ideas and secrets to a success. (*Community Gardens and Farmers Markets*)
- Look into becoming a State certified farmers’ market. (*Community Gardens and Farmers Markets*)
- Consider extending hours/days Library is open five. (*Cultural Enrichment*)
- Continue to pursue improvements to Library and other City facilities. (*Cultural Enrichment*)

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<sup>1</sup>[www.wisegeek.org](http://www.wisegeek.org)

<sup>2</sup>Trust for America’s Health – [healthyamericans.org](http://healthyamericans.org)

<sup>3</sup>[www.seniorliving.org/lifestyles/active-senior](http://www.seniorliving.org/lifestyles/active-senior)

<sup>4</sup>Recognizing the importance of Parks and Recreation facilities. . . .111<sup>th</sup> Congress H.RES 288 March 26, 2009

<sup>5</sup>Institute for public administration, [www.ipa.udel](http://www.ipa.udel)

<sup>6</sup>[webjunction.org](http://webjunction.org) – Pew Report: Public Libraries’ Importance and Impact

<sup>7</sup>[shelbycountyartscouncil.com](http://shelbycountyartscouncil.com)