



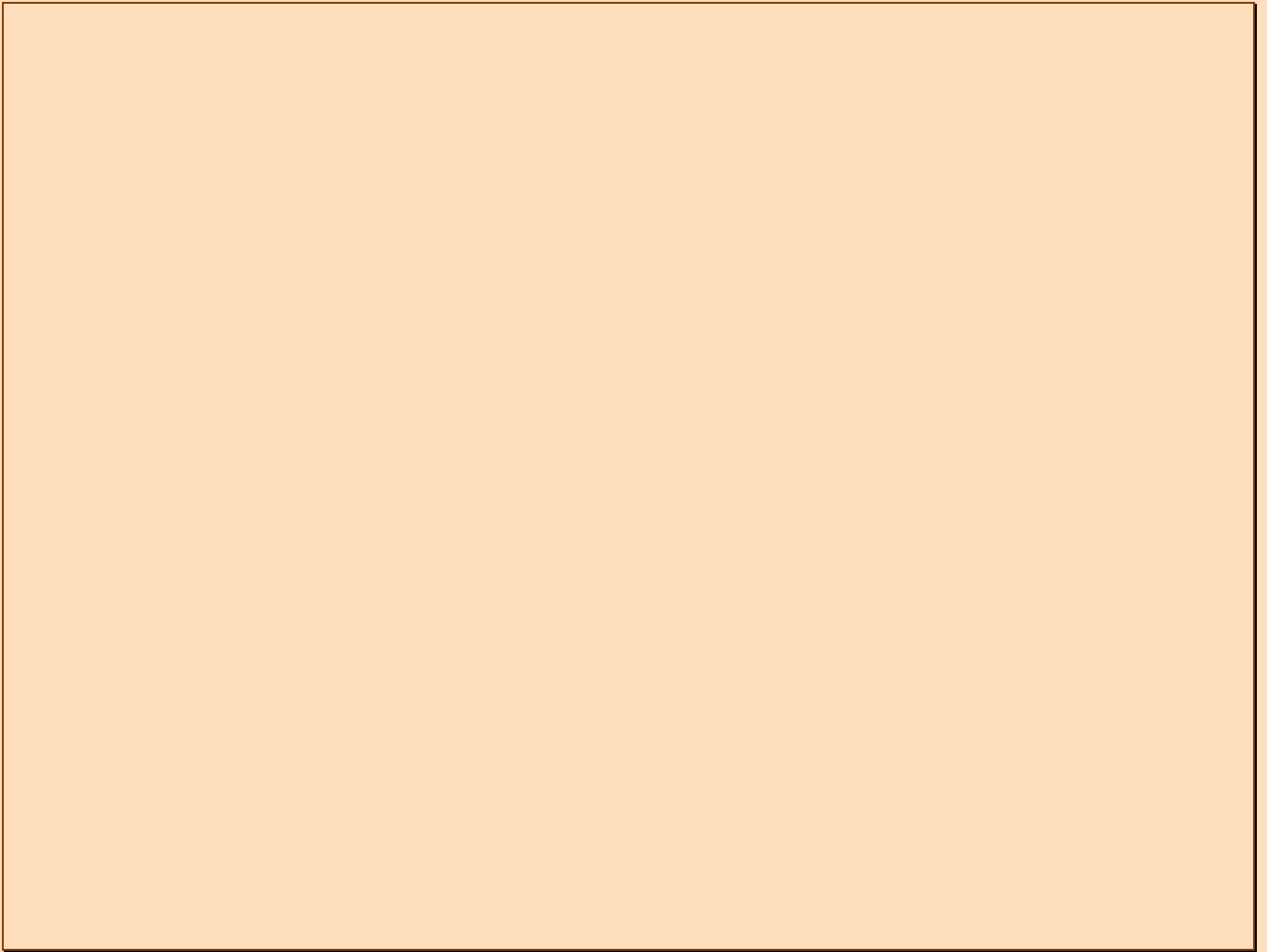
GROW CREOLA 2035

CITY OF CREOLA, ALABAMA
COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED MAY 16, 2017 ~ CREOLA PLANNING COMMISSION



FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT WAS PROVIDED BY THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES, STATE LANDS DIVISION, COASTAL SECTION, IN PART, BY A GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, OFFICE OF OCEAN AND COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, AWARD NUMBER # 15NOS4190159.



CITY OF CREOLA, ALABAMA

CITY HALL
190 Dead Lake Road
Creola, AL 36525

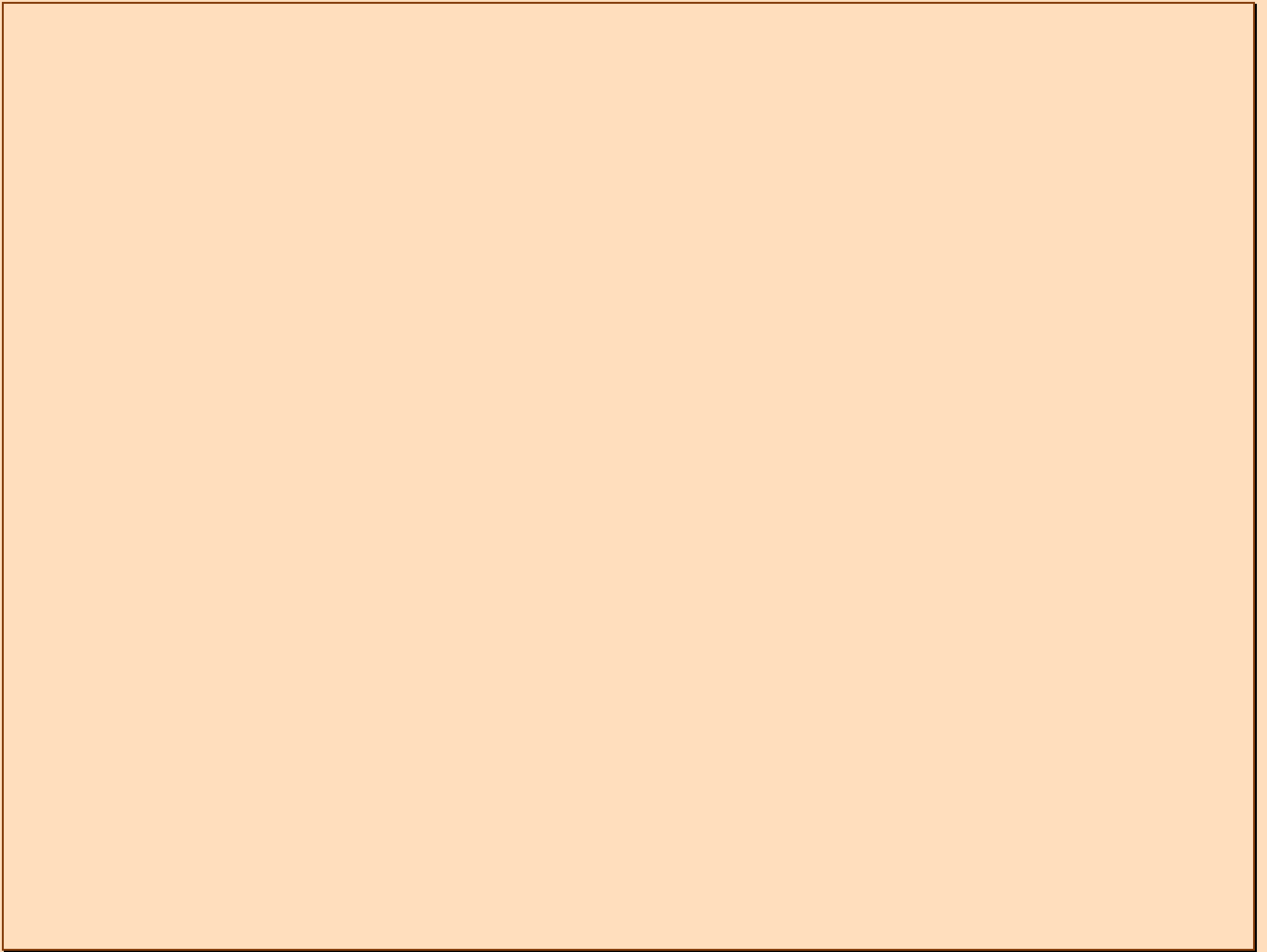
CITY OF CREOLA ~ 2017 ADMINISTRATION

CREOLA MAYOR
William Criswell

CITY CLERK
Carolyn Cain

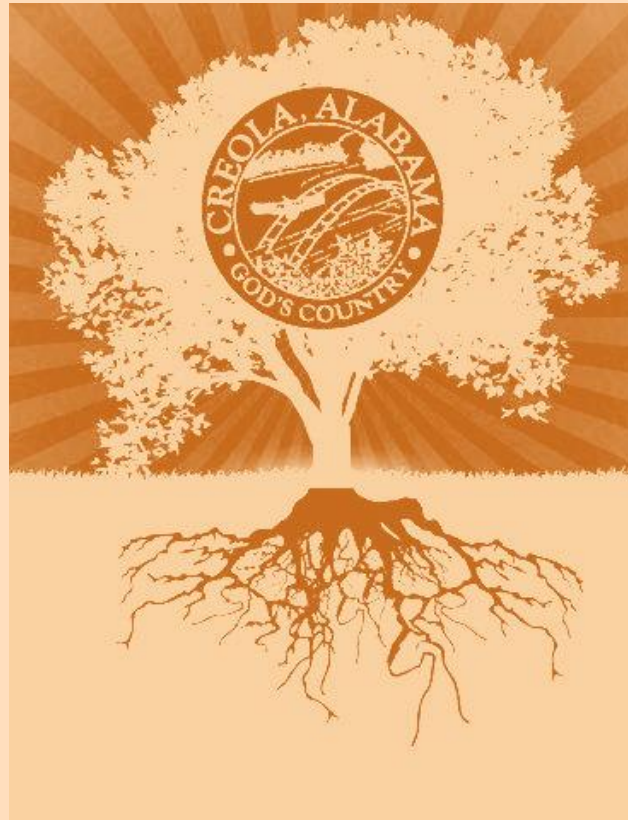
CREOLA CITY COUNCIL
William Criswell ~ Mayor
Lee Anne Greene ~ Place 1
Harold Martin ~ Place 2
Ralph Avis Walker ~ Place 3
Tonya Moss ~ Place 4
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CREOLA PLANNING COMMISSION
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Don Moss ~ Building Official
Lee Anne Greene ~ City Council Representative
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Venus Davis
Eddie Duke
Lorrie Lister



The City of Creola and the Creola Planning Commissioners express a sincere “Thank You” to all who supported and generously contributed their time and efforts to the creation of the

CREOLA COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN 2035



I, William Chambers, Chairman of the Creola Planning Commission, do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the City of Creola's Comprehensive Master Plan, Adopted May 16, 2017.

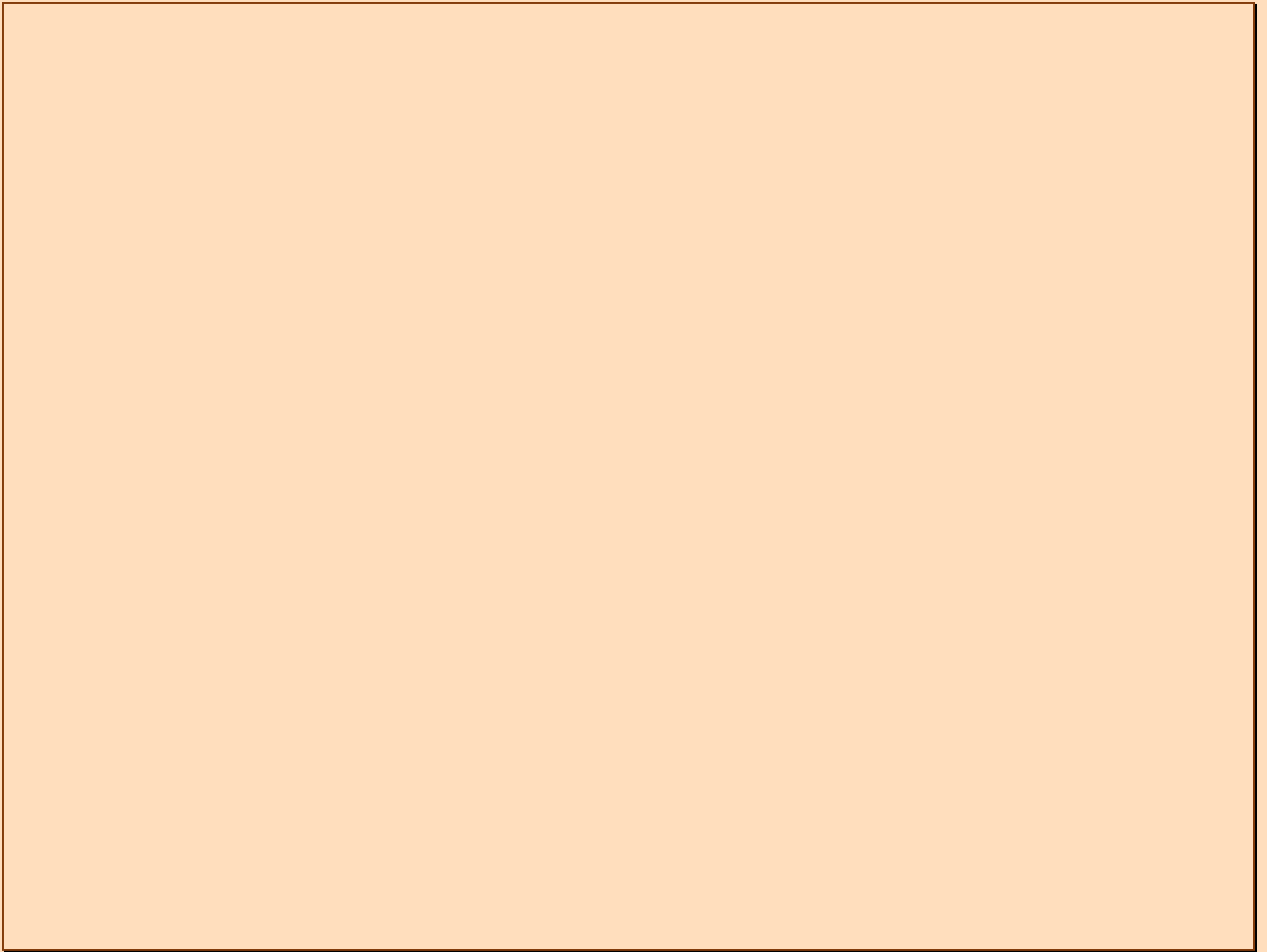
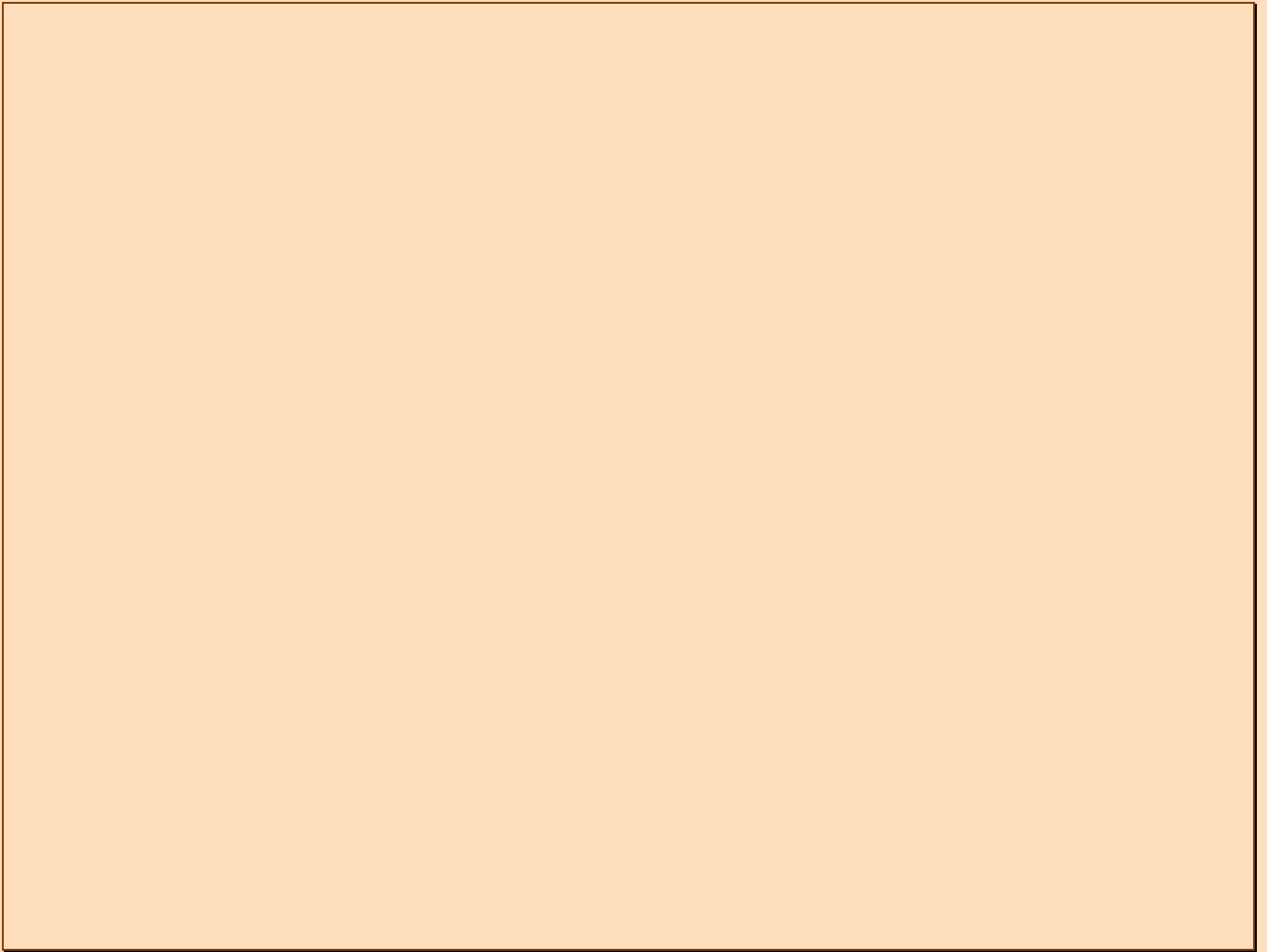


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

- Municipal Planning in Alabama
- What is a Comprehensive Plan
- Creola's Vision & Mission Statement
- The Planning Process



MUNICIPAL PLANNING IN ALABAMA

Authority, Purpose & Process

In early spring of 2015, the Creola Planning Commission voted to pursue the creation of the City's first Comprehensive Master Plan. City officials and residents reached this decision due to increasing development pressures of neighboring municipalities and the need to implement a directed path for growth that would create a civic identity and sustainable community for Creola.

Alabama State Code 11-52-8:

The City of Creola exercises authority granted under State Code; Title 11, Chapter 52.

The Planning and Zoning enabling Legislation requires the Planning Commission of an incorporated municipality to create and adopt a Comprehensive Master Plan for the physical development of the municipality. The Plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding future development, which will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Creola.

Growth enables a range of opportunities available for a community. However, if that growth is not properly planned for, the benefits of growing will be overshadowed by problems associated with land use conflicts, overextended city services, and wear and tear on infrastructure. The purpose of this Plan is to guide the physical development of Creola with regard to the best possible placement and development of transportation, utilities, land use, recreation, and housing, in efforts to make Creola an exceptional community and the premier choice for residential living in North Mobile County.

CREOLA'S FUTURE

A great city doesn't just happen.....it requires PLANNING. Proper planning requires considerable time, technical studies, discussions, citizen involvement, creativity, and leadership. Change is inevitable and will constantly occur. It is better to PREPARE FOR change, rather than REACT TO change. Now is the time for Creola to prepare for change.

Why plan?

In order to effectively plan for the future growth of Creola, a Comprehensive Master Plan must first be in place to guide the physical development of the city. In the past, the city has made an attempt to create development plans; however, **GROW CREOLA 2035** is the first official Comprehensive Master Plan the city has published since its incorporation in 1978.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN?

The Plan is the product of extensive public engagement, developed with the guidance of professional planners, public officials, and technical studies. It is a major step forward in the building of a brighter and better future for Creola.

Capturing the wants, needs, and aspirations for Creola's future is the main objective of the Planning Commission in the development of the Plan. Public involvement and input is essential when creating the foundation for the Plan to ensure the Plan remains consistent with the public's vision for the city.

The Plan will be organized by key development topics that include Land Use Design, Transportation, Economic Development, Housing, and Community Development. Each chapter of the Plan will cover broad functional aspects of the city. It will offer ideas and suggest recommendations that city officials can use to make policies that will provide a coordinated approach for the appropriate types of growth that will provide the most benefit to the city. The City will use the Plan as a resource guideline prior to any development approval and/or other planning and budgetary

considerations by the Planning Commission, Council, City Departments, and others. It is the responsibility of the Creola Planning Commission to review the Comprehensive Master plan annually to ensure development projects listed in the Plan are being recommended to City Council for implementation. Additionally, as time passes and circumstances change, the Planning Commission will amend the Plan to coincide with the changing conditions of the City if necessary.

MASTER PLAN

- 20-year long range plan
- Guides growth & development
- Assesses present conditions
- Identifies issues & needs
- Addresses citizen input
- Lists goals & strategies
- Sets project timelines
- Created by the citizens, for the citizens
- Comprehensive & general
- Also known as Comprehensive Plan

CREOLA'S VISION

Creola is more than just another city in Alabama. It's a special place with a loving community that provides peaceful country living. The vision of Creola is a general statement of aspiration and desire. It acts as the foundational statement for the Creola Comprehensive Master Plan,

GROW CREOLA 2035. It is the culmination of numerous community meetings and discussions with city leaders and community members. The time and effort put forth from the residents throughout the planning process represents their dedication and interest in wanting to see Creola grow and prosper, and to also ensure that the community will sustain for many generations to follow them.

VISION STATEMENT

We are a community who treasures our past and anticipates our future. Our roots run deep and our branches grow strong. Committed to achieving our united goals for the common good, we are determined to provide the best community services and opportunities for our local residents and our neighbors of North Mobile County.

~ Come Grow Creola With Us ~

MISSION STATEMENT

REACH ~ to reach new families to live in our community for growth and prosperity; to be

prosperous in faith, family, and freedom

PLANT ~ to plant new businesses in our city and recruit new development

TRAIN ~ to train and instruct our employees and volunteers to work with the community to gain the respect of our fellow man

SERVE ~ to serve our citizens to the best of our abilities and be a part of our community;

"My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done".

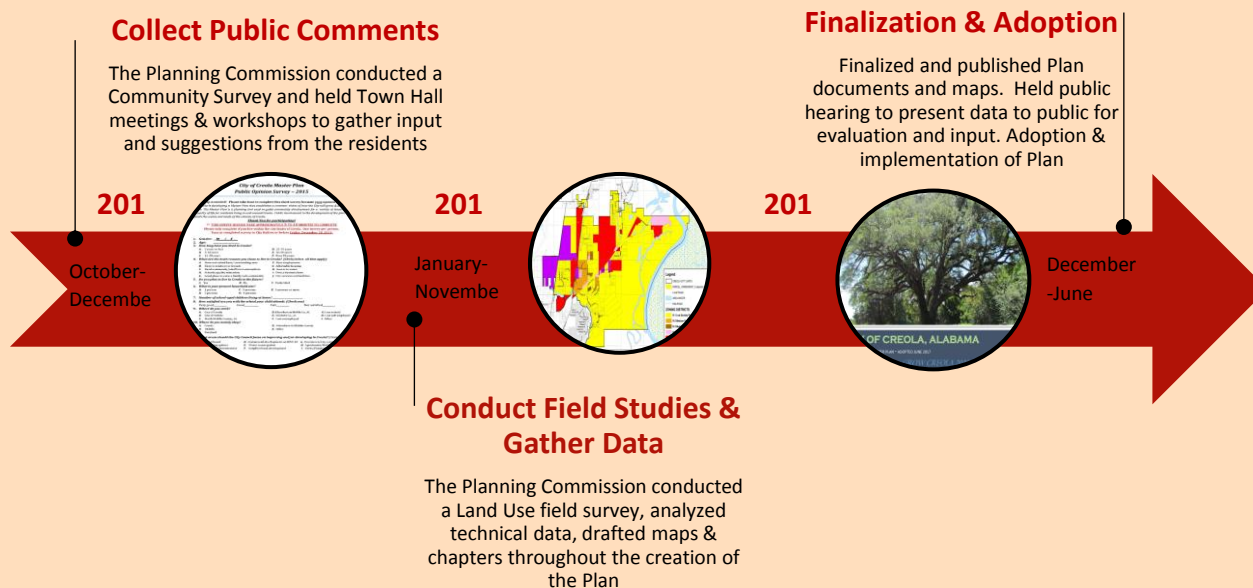


PLANNING PROCESS

In efforts to determine what the citizens of Creola want for their city's future, the Creola Planning Commission gathered public input and opinions through community workshops, held interviews with key community groups, and conducted a public opinion survey that was available to all residents of Creola.

The Creola Planning Commission held many public workshops and Planning Commission meetings during the development of the Plan. Many citizens attended these meetings during the planning process and provided valuable input towards the Plan. Additionally, the Planning Commission was on-hand at many community-wide events in efforts to educate the public to the planning efforts, so all citizens could have an opportunity to be involved in the development of the Plan.





PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

In the fall of 2015, the Creola Planning Commission asked citizens to participate in a Public Opinion Survey in efforts to find out what Creolans wanted for their city over the next 20 years. Paper copies of the survey were available at City Hall and the community's SAIL center for several months. Approximately 100 citizens participated in the survey to give feedback on their opinion of Creola. Overall, the survey yielded a 5.19% return rate, which is considered an average return. The Planning Commission used these survey results, along with all the public feedback collected through workshops and community meetings, to develop a list of goals and strategies to implement the Plan, which also established the eight Guiding Principals that identify the foundation of the reasoning behind the planning. The City of Creola and the Planning Commission would like to thank all the citizens who participated in the planning process for their valuable input.

**City of Creola Master Plan
Public Opinion Survey ~ 2015**

What help is needed? Please take time to complete this short survey because your opinion matters!
The City of Creola is developing a Master Plan that will establish a common vision of how the City will grow & develop over the next 20 years. The Master Plan is a planning tool used to guide community development for a variety of issues that directly affect the quality of life for residents living in and around Creola. Public involvement in the development of the plan will ensure that it reflects the needs and desires of the citizens of Creola.

Thank You for participating!

PLEASE PRINT NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, & E-MAIL ADDRESS TO COMPLETE

Please only complete 11 questions within the city limits of Creola. One survey per person.
Turn in completed survey to City Hall on or before **Friday, December 18, 2015.**

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Age:
a. How long have you lived in Creola?
A. 5 years or less B. 6-10 years C. 11-15 years D. 16-20 years E. 21-25 years F. 26-30 years G. 31-35 years H. 36-40 years I. 41-45 years J. 46-50 years K. 51-55 years L. 56-60 years M. 61-65 years N. 66-70 years O. 71-75 years P. 76-80 years Q. 81-85 years R. 86-90 years S. 91-95 years T. 96-100 years

3. What are the most common reasons you choose to live in Creola? (Check all that apply)
A. Jobs and career opportunities B. Family and friends C. Schools D. Safety E. Cost of living F. Quality of life G. Other (specify): _____

4. How do you feel about the current state of Creola?
A. Excellent B. Good C. Fair D. Poor E. Very Poor

5. How do you feel about the future of Creola?
A. Excellent B. Good C. Fair D. Poor E. Very Poor

6. What is your greatest concern about Creola?
A. Crime B. Traffic C. Schools D. Safety E. Cost of living F. Quality of life G. Other (specify): _____

7. Number of school-aged children living at home?
A. None B. 1 C. 2 D. 3 E. 4 F. 5 or more

8. How satisfied are you with the school your child attends? (Check one)
A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Dissatisfied D. Very dissatisfied

9. Where do you work?
A. City of Creola B. Private business C. Self-employed D. Unemployed E. Other (specify): _____

10. Where do you usually shop?
A. City of Creola B. Private business C. Self-employed D. Unemployed E. Other (specify): _____

11. What areas should the City Council focus on improving and/or developing in Creola? (Check top 3 answers)
A. Infrastructure B. Economic development C. Safety D. Education E. City services F. Housing G. Parks and recreation H. Transportation I. Other (specify): _____

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE CITY OF CREOLA AT 205-338-2222 OR VISIT US AT www.cityofcreola.org

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

- Favorite thing about Creola is the SMALL TOWN ATMOSPHERE
- Most needed outdoor recreation was COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOL, PICNIC & PLAYGROUND AREAS, AND TRAILS
- Most needed community development was MORE SHOPPING & RETAIL, AND MORE RESTAURANTS
- City services improvements that were most needed were MORE LIGHTING, DOG LEASH LAW, SIDEWALKS, BETTER CITY COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS & CLEANLINESS
- The following city services received a **GOOD** ranking: WATER/GAS/ELECTRIC UTILITIES, POLICE & FIRE PROTECTION, CITY HALL FACILITIES, AND OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE IN CREAOLA
- The following city services received a **POOR** ranking: DRAINAGE, EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, BUSINESS ACTIVITY, SCHOOLS, HEALTH CARE OPTIONS
- The following city services received an **AVERAGE** rating: TRAFFIC FLOW, SEWER, PEDESTRIAN NEEDS, ROAD CONDITIONS, SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY, CITY LEADERSHIP, HOUSING, GARBAGE SERVICE, PARKS, SPORTS FACILITIES, SERVICES FOR THE YOUTH, CIVIC EVENTS

CREATING A PLAN FOR CREOLA

A plan for the future of a community is an expression of its hopes and dreams. But these must be based in fact and reality. The first phase in the city planning process is collecting and analyzing population, economic, development, and other data to understand past and current realities. This first phase is a process of “discovery”. It must be accomplished with the goal of gaining an understanding of the fundamental reality of a community.

The second phase, “direction”, involves the critical step of creating a community vision and mission. From its vision of the future, informed by current realities, a community is able to establish specific, measurable goals and objectives. These goals may answer questions such as:

- Where and how will the community grow?
- How will we seek to preserve and redevelop older areas?
- What transportation improvements are needed?
- What are the priority development needs of the community?

The ultimate product in the second phase is a comprehensive plan for achieving a better community over time. Successful planning in this phase includes a sincere and thorough effort at citizen engagement through public events like town hall meetings, work sessions, and survey questionnaires.

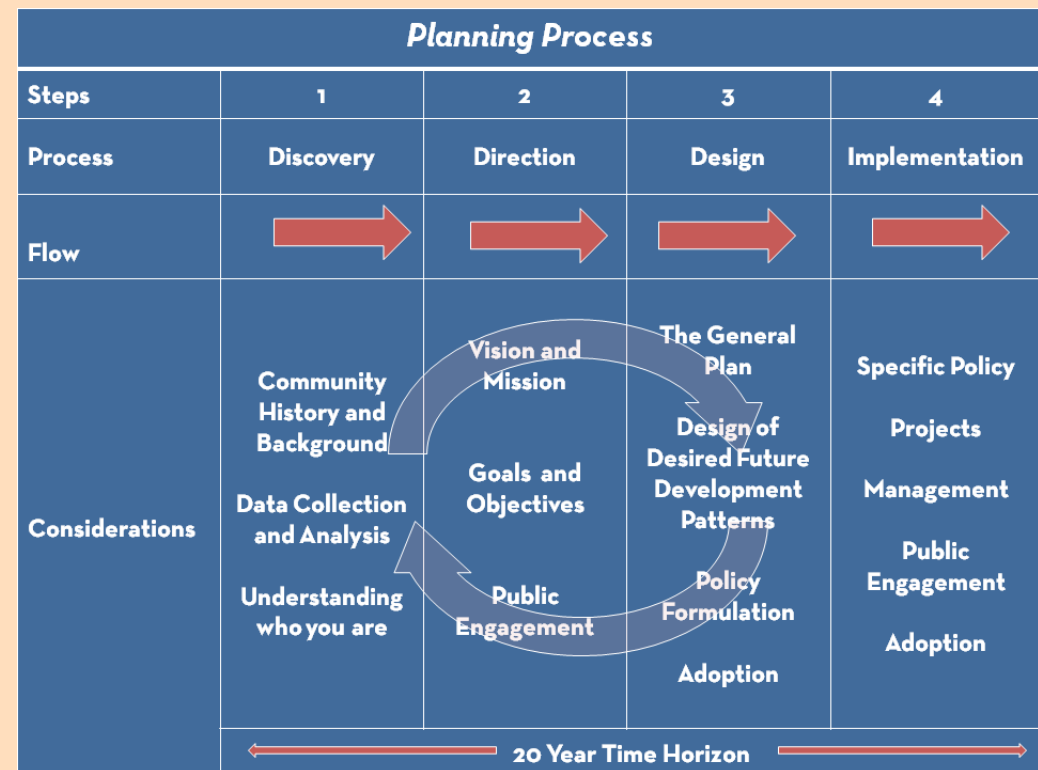
The third phase, is “design”. This phase the creation of the plan based on phases 1 and 2. Sound plan creation involves the use of narrative, graphics, and mapping. Under Alabama Planning law, a comprehensive plan must address set forth goals that address land use, housing, transportation and community facilities. However, other elements such as environmental protection, economic development, and community design may be included, or any other planning element that fits the community.

Lastly, a successful, process includes the final phase of “implementation”. Implementation is the step translating plans into policies and projects

CREOLA

~ God’s County ~

Home of the Gateway to the Mobile River Delta



that will achieve plan goals. Implementation of a community's plan includes the identification of appropriate policies, projects, administrative and management provisions. It ensures that projects listed in the plan will be executed in a timely manner.

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

Funding for the Comprehensive Master Plan, **GROW CREOLA 2035**, was provided by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) and administered by the State Lands Division, Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM). This Plan's mission, vision, and goals were developed by the Creola Planning Commission and City Council members, and the citizens of Creola. Technical assistance was provided by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC).

“Thank you to our funders for their generous support that enabled the creation of this Plan that will guide Creola’s future developments”.

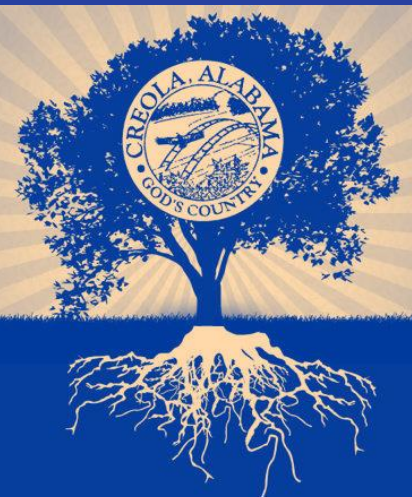


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CHAPTER 2

PAST & PRESENT

- History & Background of Creola
- Environmental Setting
- Population Demographics
- Economics & Housing



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Background History

Creola's background is rich in Native American history. The original settlement, known as St. Phillipe, was established in the early 1800's by the Choctaw Tribe, who dominated the area until the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Through the years, Creola has been occupied by descendants of French, Spanish, and English origins, who became known as "Creole" people. Creole originally meant a person of French and Spanish ancestry, but today is more commonly defined as a person of mixed African-French or African-Spanish heritage. In 1915, these "Creole" people migrated to Creola first from Nimes, France, then to Canada, then on to Louisiana, and finally settling in Creola. Pioneer Creoles lived around the coastal areas and on the bluffs, many of which lived "out there," on the twenty-one-mile bluff. Others made their homes under a grove of moss-laden Live Oaks (a hammock of oaks) in the area known today as Dead Lake Road in Creola. People considered the area to be a peaceful place to live and their lifestyles were centered around the abundant nature. It is from these Creole descendants that the community of Creola was named for. It was not until the late 1900s that the name of the area was changed from St. Phillipe to Creola.



Live Oaks in Creola

Source: SARPC

Founding Families

Some of the first families listed in the 1900 and 1920 censuses were Bru, Chastang, Hudgens, Lister, Lewis, Ellison, Payne, Coleman, Hatter, Mays, Burrage, Edgett, Jackson, Hall, Myers, and Poe. These families made up the majority of the Creola's population. Descendants of some of these families still live in Creola today. Some who traveled to Mobile from the Old Country remember how they were looking for a cool spot along the Mobile River to camp beside the big oak trees. They found what they were looking for in Creola.

Early Industry

The 1920s through the 1940s was a time of farming, sharecropping, logging, milling, canning, salting pork in large barrels, banking potatoes, and checking woodpiles before winter set in. People had no electricity, running water, telephone, or other modern conveniences. Range riders herded cattle that roamed freely throughout the City.

In 1820, three sawmills were located in Creola. Two were located on Gunnison Creek and one was on Saw Mill Creek. They were often called the "peckerwood sawmills" because there were so many woodpeckers in the area. They would peck into the lumber and leave sawdust on the ground. A man from Virginia named T.A. Hatter owned hundreds of acres of pine forest in Creola. He built a sawmill and a turpentine still, which would later supply lumber to naval stores for Admiral Raphael Semmes' Confederate Navy.

The Southern Railroad ran through Creola daily, providing passenger service and freight for local businesses. The passenger train traveled north in the mornings and south in the afternoons. A depot station was located across Highway 43 in front of a

trucking company. It was named Penn Station. It is told that one could flag down a steam engine with two or three train cars and pay twelve cents to ride the rail to Buck's Crossing. The mail bag that serviced the Creola Post Office was delivered by train every day in the mornings and afternoons.

The Creola Mercantile, also known as the old country store, was the local business that provided goods for the Cityspeople. In 1974, the Platt family purchased Creola Mercantile. The store was renamed to Platt's Grocery and it remains in its original location, still serving the citizens of Creola.

Religious Establishments

Churches are an important part of Creola's history. In 1902, a church was built on the banks of Gunnison Creek, but burned shortly afterward, destroying all the church records in the fire. St. Luke's Chapel was built in Creola over one hundred years ago for area loggers and farmers. The church was dedicated in 1906 and remains an active, non-denominational church in Creola, located on Dead Lake Road.



St. Luke's Chapel

Source: SARPC

Creola has a total of 14 churches that provide a variety of denominations and places of worship to the residents of Creola and surrounding communities. The following is a list of the six founding churches located throughout the Creola community.

- [Creola First Baptist Church](#)
- [Creola United Methodist](#)
- [Creola Assembly of God](#)
- [Mt. Olive African Methodist Episcopal \(AME\) Church](#)
- [Strlight Baptist Church](#)
- [Life of Christ Chapel](#)

The one room Creola Grammar School was located at the corner of Old Highway 43 and Dead Lake Road. It served as a local church and Sunday school as well in the early 1900s.

Creola Cemetery has existed for more than one hundred years. The property for the cemetery was donated by the Davis family and is located on the west side of Highway 43 south of Radcliff Road. There are several cemeteries in the Creola community that date back to the 1800s including the Lister Cemetery located on Lister Dairy Road. Many residents and founding pioneers of Creola are laid to rest at these cemeteries.

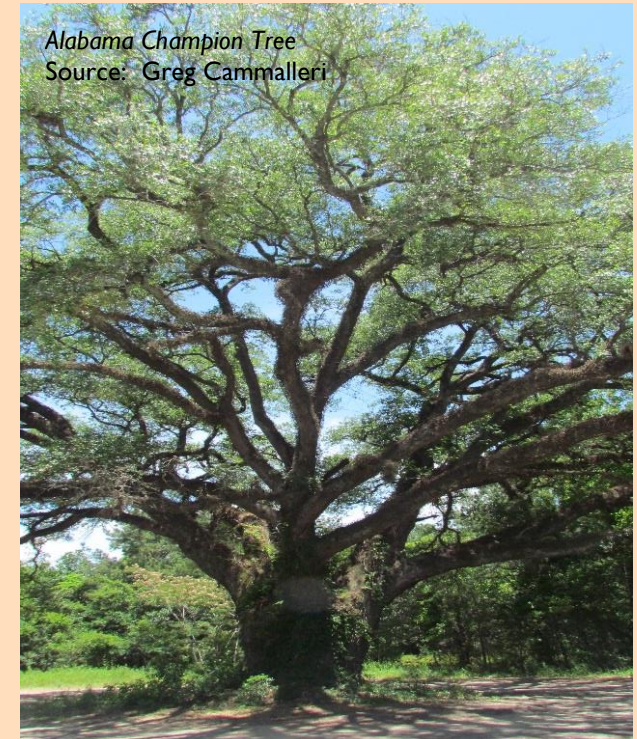
Official Incorporation

Creola incorporated in 1978 as a town and elected a mayor and a five member city council. James W. "Jim" Smith was elected the first mayor of Creola and served the community for 2 years. Due to illness, Mayor Smith resigned in 2000 and Kenneth Moss was appointed and served for the next twenty years. Creola

became a city in 1985 when the City's population exceeded 2,000 residents. City offices were established on Dead Lake Road, where they still are located today.

THE COLOSSAL TREE OF CREOLA

The largest Southern Live Oak, *Quercus virginiana*, in the State of Alabama grows right here in Creola. This majestic tree is approximately 300 years old and stands at a towering 82 feet. Its trunk has a circumference of over 30 feet and branches that span out over an impressive diameter of 136 feet. On July 1, 2013, a proclamation ceremony was held to designate the mighty oak as an "Alabama Champion Tree" by the Alabama Forestry Commission. This award-winning tree sits at the intersection of Highway 43 and Dead Lake Road in Creola.



Alabama Champion Tree
Source: Greg Cammalleri

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Geography

The city of Creola is a small, family-oriented community located in north Mobile County, Alabama. It is approximately 15 miles north of the city of Mobile, within close proximity to major businesses, hospitals, and entertainment. With two convenient Interstate access points inside the city limits, travelers can reach Interstates 65 and 10 in a short amount of time, and be on their way to their destination. With a total land area of 19.5 miles and a density of approximately 130 square miles, most of Creola is primarily rural; however, approximately 1 mile of the land mass is made up of water, the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, which is adjacent to the city limits.



Known as the “Gateway to the Mobile River Delta” Creola is one of the few places in the region that provides direct water access to the Delta and Mobile Bay.

The community offers quiet, country living on largely platted subdivisions where huge Live Oaks are scattered about. Here, residents know their neighbors and local public safety officials by name and enjoy the security of living in a safe area. Housing is abundant and affordable. Competitive employment opportunities are within a short, convenient commuting distance.

Climate

General climate for the area is described as humid and subtropical with extended summers, which are tempered by breezes from the Gulf of Mexico. Winters are relatively short and moderate, with only occasional subfreezing temperatures. The average annual temperature ranges from 50 degrees during the winter to 80 degrees during the summer. Annual rainfall averages are approximately 67 inches.

Natural Resources

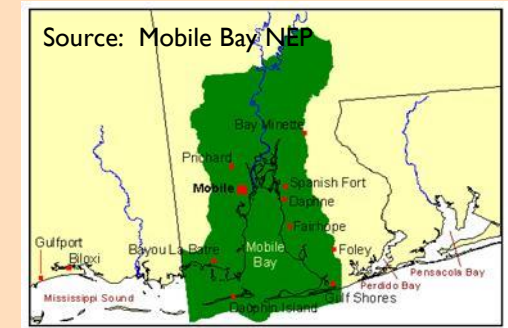
Natural resources are dynamic, environmental functions, which provide critical habitat, clean air and water, along with fertile soils.

They are as important economically as they are ecologically by offering a variety of eco-tourism, such as fishing, bird watching, and boating. These natural features are an important resource for sustaining the environment, as well as attracting residents and visitors alike. Conservation and preservation of these sensitive lands, waterways, and creek corridors, as well as all other significant natural features, are important to sustain the environment for generations to come. Encompassed in and around the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, Creola has some of the most ecologically diverse and pristine habitat found in and around the Mobile Bay Estuary. Bordering the Mobile River on the east and Gunnison Creek on the west, Creola has numerous water bodies within the corporate limits, including Dead Lake Bayou and Creola’s very own man-made lake, Ski Chaste Lake.

ESTUARY

The Mobile Bay Estuary includes waters within Mobile and Baldwin Counties and Mobile Bay. Creola borders the Mobile River, which is part of the estuary. These waters provide some of the finest fishing and boating opportunities in the state. The Mobile Bay Estuary is

greatly affected by upstream waters that flow into it from the expansive Mobile Bay Watershed.



Estuaries represent some of the most sensitive and ecologically important habitats on earth. They provide sanctuary for many species of waterfowl, store nutrients for larval and juvenile marine life, and serve as breeding grounds for many desirable species of marine life. Alabama’s estuaries are considered environmentally and economically important because of their exceptional biological diversity and productivity. These estuaries, where the fresh water from several rivers meets the salt water of the Gulf of Mexico, support both fresh and saltwater species and serve as nursery habitat for many commercially and recreationally important fish and shellfish.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are a vital element of the natural ecosystem and provide

valuable habitat for many types of plants, animals, and migratory birds. They serve as natural water filters by removing pollutants picked up on the land by stormwater run off before they are washed into rivers, bayous, streams, and lakes. There are approximately 10,000 acres of wetlands within the incorporated area of Creola. Much of these environmentally sensitive lands are not suitable for development, but can be utilized for protection and sustainability purposes.



Development adjacent to wetlands may be outside the jurisdiction of Federal agencies and can have significant impacts on the health of the wetlands. For this reason, it is highly encouraged that Creola's local government provide wetland protection standards through wetland buffers and other requirements in the city's Subdivision Regulations. It is also encouraged that the city develop a Wetlands Ordinance.

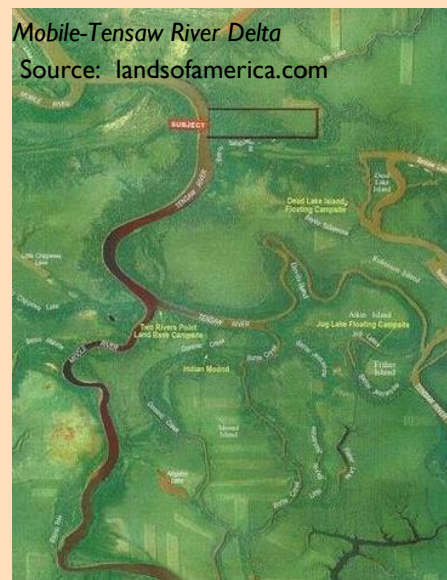
MOBILE-TENSAW RIVER DELTA

The Mobile-Tensaw Delta is Alabama's largest wetland ecosystem and the second largest river delta in North America. It encompasses a vast wetland characterized by estuarine marsh, cypress-tupelo swamp and bottomland hardwood ecosystems. The Delta has over 50 rare and endangered plant and animal species known to inhabit its wetlands and waterways. The region encompasses 250,000 acres, of which 100,000 are publicly owned and managed. It is approximately 45 miles long, eight miles wide and contains over 400 square miles of wetland and associated upland ecosystems. The Delta is characterized by a large number of tributary rivers, streams, bayous and creeks which form a maze of waterways, including the waters of the Tensaw, Mobile, Tombigbee and Alabama rivers. Habitats include: Bogs, bottomland hardwoods, freshwater and hardwood swamps, freshwater wetlands, maritime forests, mesic flood plains, pine savanna, riparian buffers, submerged aquatic vegetation and tidal brackish water marshes.

- It contains one of the most extensive and significant wetlands in the United States and represents

one of Alabama's most intact preserved areas.

- It is one of the few breeding localities in the state for the Mottled Duck and Purple Gallinule.
- The Delta plays a vital role in maintaining the area's ecological balance by filtering impurities from up to approximately 15% of the nation's fresh water.



WATERSHED

A watershed is defined as any area of land that water flows across or through. Simply stated, all lands are considered part of a watershed. During a rainfall event, gravity and water flow cause access storm waters from a watershed to migrate and flow toward a common nearby body of water, such as a stream, bayou, river, bay,

gulf, etcetera. Essentially, watersheds capture water, store it and eventually release it farther downhill. Runoff from fields, lawns, and pavement can carry potentially harmful materials from the watersheds to nearby bodies of water. It is important to consider land use activities occurring in a watershed when planning for a community's development and zoning classifications, because it is frequently impossible to separate down stream effects from upstream causes. Two watersheds are found within the corporate limits of Creola. They are the Tensaw Apalachee Watershed and the Gunnison Creek Watershed. Topography is key when understanding impacts to watersheds and future land use planning.

ELEVATION

Overall, Creola is classified as flat terrain with gentle to moderate slope. Creola's elevation ranges from sea level up to 52 feet above sea level. Mobile County has a varied topographic pattern and lies in the east Gulf Coastal Plain. The county has distinguishing surface features that occur in belts that stretch from east to west, conforming to the shorelines. These belts range from large expanses of nearly level terrain to

hilly areas. The county's elevations range from below sea level to 300 feet above sea level. Sea level wetlands that range from to 10 feet above sea level, covers 40% (1,163 acres) of our municipality. Chickasaw's topography can be seen illustrated on the map in *Figure 1.24*.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

The total number of acres encompassed within the city limits of Creola is 10,081. Of that, approximately 5,226 acres or 52% of lands lie within the current FEMA floodplain boundary, most of which is considered the 100-year flood zone, which is the area that is at the greatest risk of flooding. The community is vulnerable to riverine flooding caused by storm surge and low lying topography. Most of the floodplain is associated with the Mobile River bordering the corporate limits. FEMA is expected to release updated Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) panels in the near future, which could possibly reveal an expansion of the floodplain boundary within the city limits and adjacent areas. In efforts to be proactive and prepared for the next flooding event and to help protect housing values, the city should coordinate with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to implement standards

that could reduce and help off set the rising cost of flood insurance premiums and aid in flood prevention projects. Fortunately, many state and federal programs have been established that offer assistance to municipalities that provide methods to build a more flood resilient community. Some of these programs include, but are not limited to: FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)'s Community Rating System (CRS), offered through



Alabama's Office of Water Resources; the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS)'s FORTIFIED HOME Program; and Smart Home America.

It is highly encouraged that city leaders work with these organizations to implement projects and develop new building code standards. These efforts will

not only achieve a safer, more flood-resilient community, but also qualify the city to receive discounted insurance rates that can be available to everyone. The establishment of these type of programs could make flood insurance more affordable for property owners, making home ownership more available, which will in turn protect housing values

and attract new homeowners and economic developers to the city.

SOILS

Information regarding the characteristics of soil is useful in planning the development of a community. Understanding the complexities and composition of the soil profile is a necessary tool used for a variety of planning purposes including land use and watershed management planning. Soil details can provide insight so that growth and development occurs in ways that are compatible with the environment, adjacent land uses and municipal development intentions. Multiple classified soils are distributed throughout Creola which are classified as either not highly erodible land or potentially highly erodible land. Approximately 500 acres of lands within Creola are classified as water or pits. The remaining lands are classified into the following soil associations:

- Dorovan-Levy
- Izagora-Annemaine
- Izagora-Bethera
- Alaga-Harleston
- Heidel sandy loam

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Most rainfall events that occur present a concern for flooding due

to the low lying topography that exists throughout the community, Stormwater management is an important issue that should be addressed in areas where poor drainage is present and any sites where land disturbing activities will occur. Stormwater runoff that does not result in widespread flooding can have a significant impact on nearby properties, public facilities, and natural systems. The first flush of stormwater can carry a large amount of pollutants picked up from the land and surfaces such as roof tops, streets, and parking lots. Stormwater from developed areas can also race towards streams, rivers, and lakes at speeds that cause erosion and channelization, and be so warm when it gets there that it changes the biology of the receiving waters. For these reasons, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has developed

stormwater guidelines that municipalities can apply when implementing local stormwater management controls. For years, construction practices treated stormwater as a menace to get off site as quickly as possible. This led to curb and guttering along streets, open ditches, and storm drainage systems that piped untreated stormwater directly to rivers and streams. Today there are better

options that treat stormwater as more of a useful resource and allow natural flow and infiltration to occur on site. These methods are referred to as Low Impact Stormwater Design (LID) and are being more widely used in construction projects today. These effective methods will reduce the number of municipal storm sewers, and improve the health of all waterways and wetlands.

NATIVE SPECIES

Native species include both plant and animal species that are native to the area. Native plant species are often more tolerant to the climate of the region than non-native species. These plants can help remediate contaminated soils and increase biodiversity. Some of the native vegetation found in and around Creola are found within the bottomland hardwood swamps. These habitats are usually associated with large river systems. They are forested wetlands that primarily contain bald cypress, tupelo gum, sweetbay, red maple, cottonwood, and other deciduous trees. These habitats are important because they help protect from downstream flooding by absorbing water. They also improve water quality by filtering nutrients, processing organic waste, and

reducing sediment before it travels to other water bodies.



Non-native plant species can be a nuisance in many habitats including water bodies, where fish populations may decrease and the overall health of the waterway may decrease, reducing water quality.

Native animal species include domestic and non-domestic and/or wild animal species. The Delta is home to hundreds of species of birds, such as wood ducks, osprey and swallow tailed kites.



There are a number of threatened and/or endangered plant and animal species in Mobile County, including habitats found in Creola in and around the Mobile Tensaw River Delta. Not only does the Delta ecosystem contain a

diversity of plant life, but also provides habitat for a variety of wildlife that include: black bear; bobcat; marsh rabbits; white-tailed deer. Careful planning practices should be implemented when considering new developments due to the fragile nature of some of the adjacent areas. A healthy community is reliant on a healthy environment.

WATERWAYS

Water resources include natural and man-made waterways. These are streams, creeks, bayous, bays, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, rivers, etc. These water bodies are part of a larger system of ground water and surface water. The health of this system directly affects the health of the community. Surface water can often be contaminated by storm water runoff from streets, sidewalks, rooftops, lawns, and agricultural fields. Contaminated surface water often has traces of pesticides, fertilizers, lead, bacteria, nitrates, and other heavy metals and chemicals. Ground water is often used for drinking water, and is becoming more polluted, a problem that will only potentially be made worse by growth and development. City leaders should also be concerned about the volume of water these local waterbodies can hold, along with

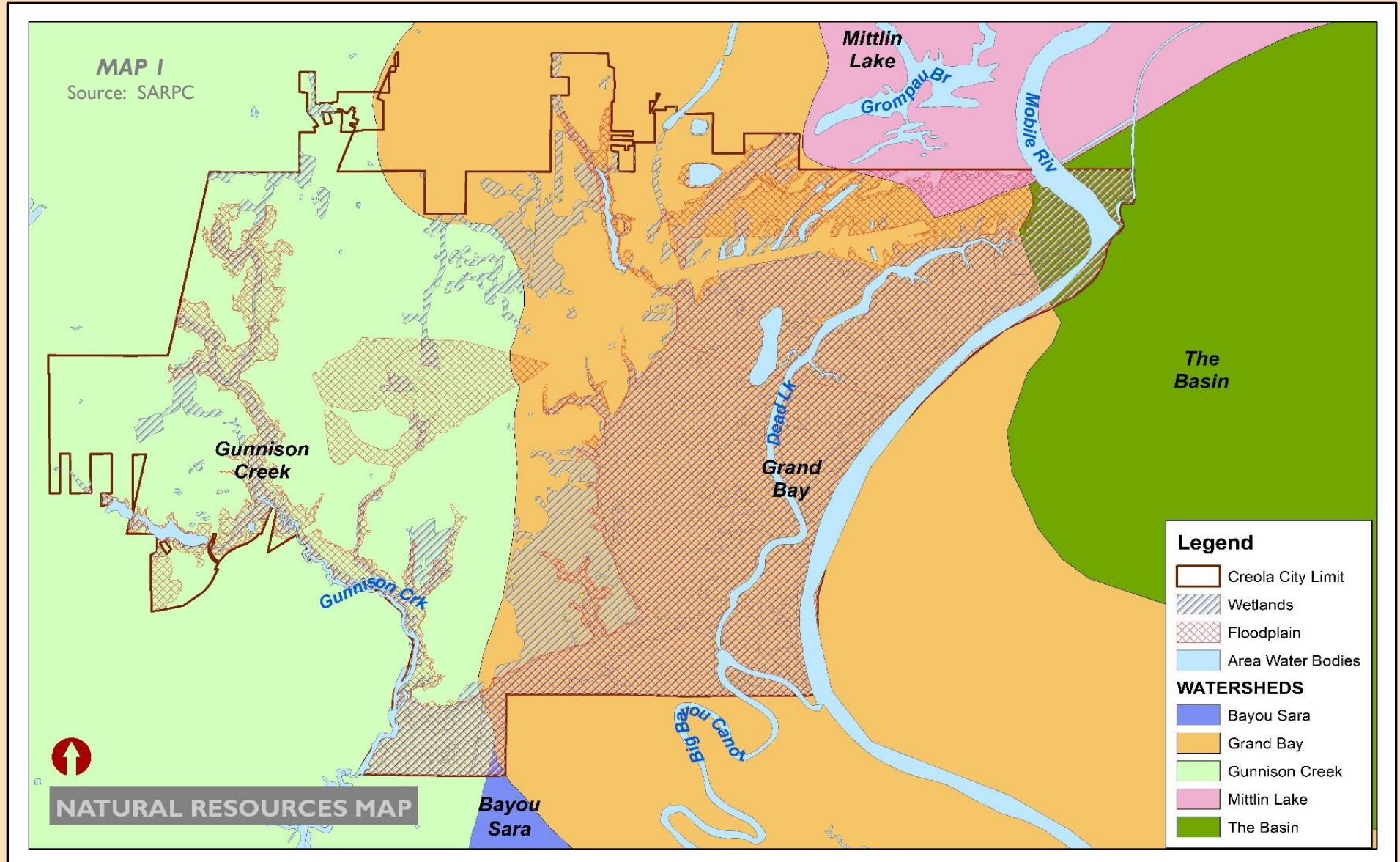
the quality of water within them. Soil is our most abundant pervious surface. When development occurs, more soils, or penetrating surfaces are replaced with impervious surfaces such as asphalt and concrete, causing the ground to lose its natural filtering ability, and in turn, reducing the area where water can run off to during a rainfall event. During times of heavy storms and down pours, these water bodies can overflow and flood, causing damage to individual properties and neighborhoods. This problem is compounded when drainage is not sufficient in a community.

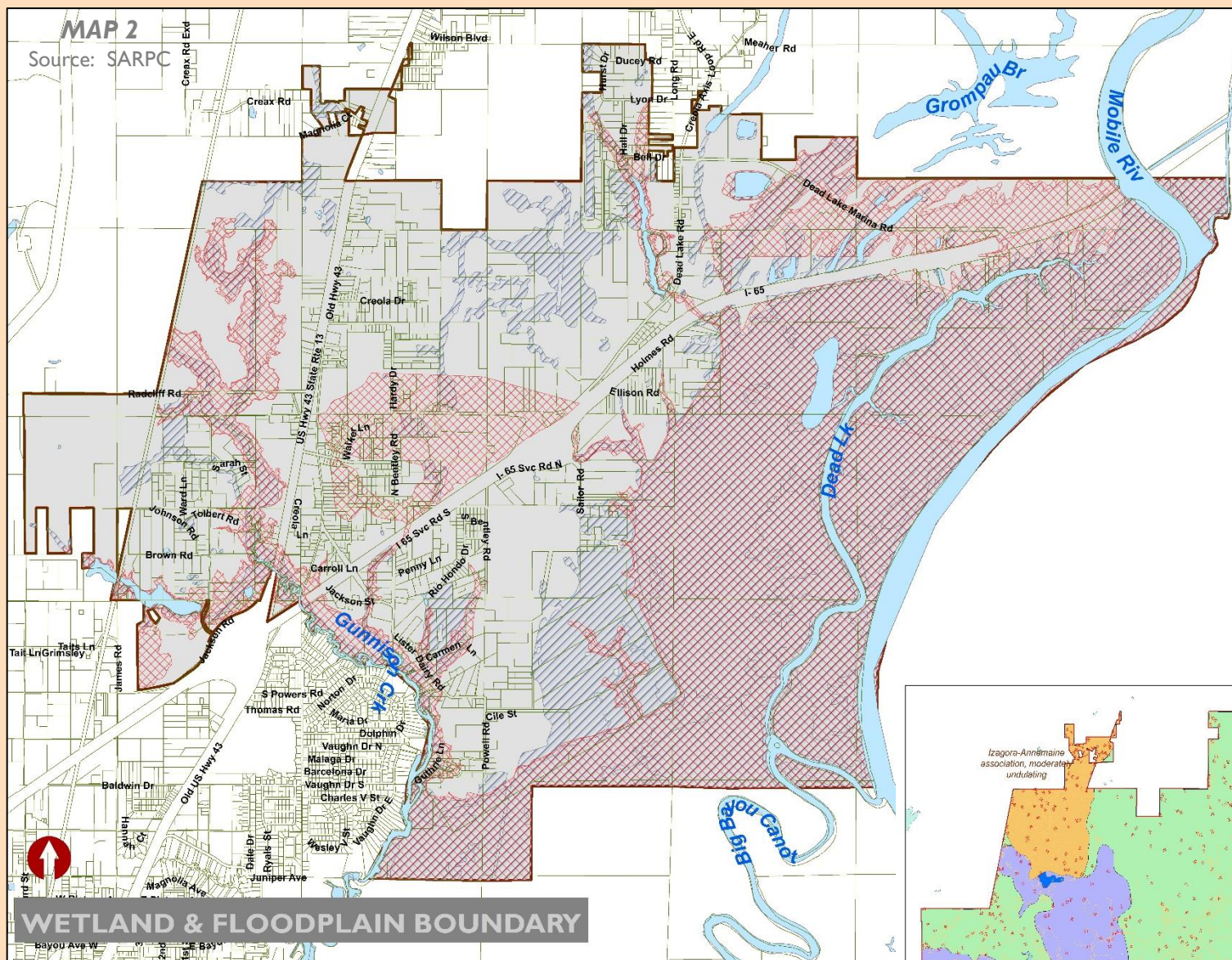


City leaders must consider all of these variables when planning for growth and take appropriate measures to ensure the integrity of the local waterways. They should make every attempt to reduce storm water runoff and pollution caused by impervious surfaces within the city limits and the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction.

It is highly recommended the city develop a stormwater management plan using the standards outlined by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management for Outstanding Alabama Water (OAW). The map to the right illustrates the city's current floodplain boundary, as determined by FEMA, along with the current wetland's boundary, as classified by US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

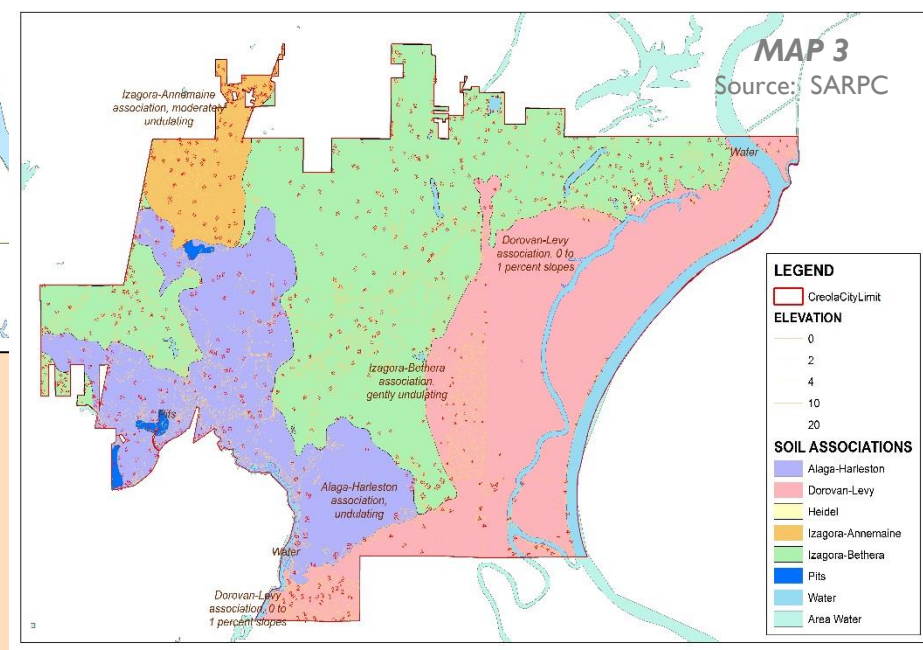
The map below (*Map 1*) illustrates the natural resources found throughout Creola and adjacent areas that includes local water bodies, the different watersheds, wetland boundaries, and floodplains. *Maps 2 and 3* on the following page identify the location of the wetlands and floodplains within the city limits, indicating which parcels of land and local roads are impacted, and the different soil associations found throughout Creola.





Map 2 to the left shows the floodplain boundary in red and the wetland boundary in blue. These land areas are considered environmentally sensitive and are vulnerable to flooding. Any new development will require additional permitting, elevation requirements, and building regulations prior to any construction activity. In efforts to reduce the threat of potential property damage and hazards to life, limited land uses should only be allowed in the impacted areas, and low-impact development practices are strongly encouraged to protect and sustain the wetlands, which serve as a natural buffer that provides protection from flooding to adjacent lands.

Map 3 to the right is an illustration of the different soil associations found throughout the city, as determined and categorized by the National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). The map shows the geographic areas where major soil groups occur. A soil association is a group of soils that are closely associated geographically and occur in a characteristic pattern. More detailed information about soils is available online through the U.S. Web Soil Survey at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/appl/>.



POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Trends & Growth Forecasts

A community is defined by the people and their actions. The make of people, with all of their individual qualities and personalities make up the city of Creola. They are the reason Creola is such a welcoming place with a high quality of life. The social growth of the community is fostered by education, organization, participation, and communication. These elements are important in shaping the individuals and the community.

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts an official, decennial census every ten (10) years. Additionally, the Census conducts an American Community Survey (ACS) on an annual basis which provides estimated data for the years between each decennial census. ACS estimates tend to have a high margin of error and the data is not reliable, therefore, for the purposes of this Plan, population forecast will mainly be calculated using decennial census data and ACS estimates will be used respectively. Data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau was used to analyze Creola’s population demographics, household characteristics, educational attainment, and economic and income statistics.

Overall, Census data indicates that Creola is considered a younger community due to the median age for residents being 40.7 years, with roughly 76% of residents being under the age of 60 and approximately 24% being over age 60. There is almost an equal proportion of males to females (51% to 49%), with young males, age 15-19 representing the largest portion of the population. The following figures illustrate how Creola and Mobile County’s historical growth trends compare decennially since 1970.

As Mobile County has seen a steady population growth over the last two decades, Creola has experienced a population decrease during the same time period. This is an indicator of people moving out of Creola to other areas of the county or elsewhere. Like the rest of the United States, the population of Creola will continue to change over the next 20 years.

Figure 1: Historic Population of Creola
1970-2015

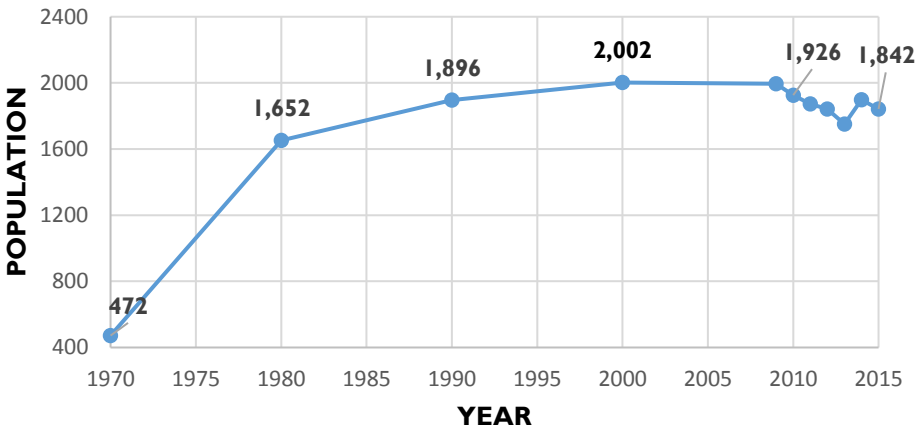


Figure 2: Historic Population of Mobile County
1970-2015

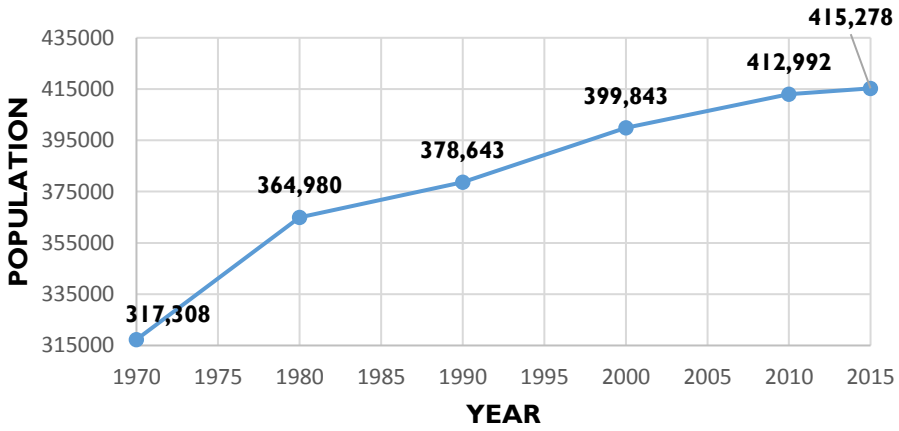


Table 1 compares population trends of Creola to other municipalities in Mobile County from 2000-2010. While other cities in the county have grown during this time period, the data reveals that others, including Creola have experienced a population decrease.

Table 2-1: Population Change of Mobile County Municipalities 2000 to 2010

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	Population Change	Percent Change
Creola	2,002	1,926	-258	-3.80%
Dauphin Island	1,371	1,238	-133	-9.70%
Chickasaw	6,364	6,106	-258	-4.40%
Bayou La Batre	2,313	2,558	245	10.60%
Mobile	198,915	195,111	-3804	-1.90%
Citronelle	3,659	3,905	246	6.70%
Satsuma	5,687	6,168	481	8.50%
Saraland	12,288	13,405	1,117	9.10%
Prichard	28,633	22,659	-5,947	-20.90%
Mount Vernon	844	1,574	730	86.50%
Mobile County	399,843	412,992	13,149	3.29%

Population projections are the numerical outcomes of a set of demographic assumptions. If the assumptions prove true, the projected numbers will be exactly on target. In practice however, assumptions are never one hundred percent accurate because of the inherent unpredictability of human behavior. Migration trends are particularly volatile, as workers respond quickly to job losses, on the one hand, and economic opportunities, on the other. Projections of population in the long range create more opportunity for variations in assumptions. Therefore, indicators of population change in a community, such as construction activity, economic growth and job creation, along with natural increase, must continually be monitored to verify the veracity and assumptions of projections. With this understanding and background, Creola and Mobile County's population has been forecast to the year 2035 for consideration in developing the recommendations of this plan in the following sections.

The most recent ACS estimates available at time of publication are from 2015. According to the ACS, Creola's total population in 2015 was 1,842. The 2010 population, as determined by the U.S. Census, was 1,926, which was a decrease of 76 people from the year 2000. In order to plan for future growth and meet the needs of future residents, it is important to project future population. The following three methods were used to project future population in Creola through the year 2035.

Method 1 - Population Projection Based on Average Annual Building Permits

This method of population projection multiplies the average number of new residential unit building permits issued annually and multiplies it by the persons per household rate provided by the U.S. Census. Creola issued building permits for 16 new housing units between 2010 and 2015, at an average rate of 5.3 units per year. The 2010 U.S. Census persons per household rate of 2.88 applied to the 5.3 units annually results in a population increase of 15.3 people per year.

Method 2 – Population Projection by Average Growth Rate

This method of population projection calculates the average rate of change over a certain time period and then uses that average rate to project future populations. Aside from the dramatic growth increase from 1970 to 1980, Creola's population has not fluctuated much throughout the years. By removing the 1970-1980 growth rate we can better calculate a more accurate average. Using the U.S. Census populations provided each decade from 1980-2010, a 10-year average growth rate of 91.3 persons or five-year average growth rate of 45.6 persons or a one-year growth rate of 9.1 persons was calculated.

Method 3 – Population Projection as a Percentage of County

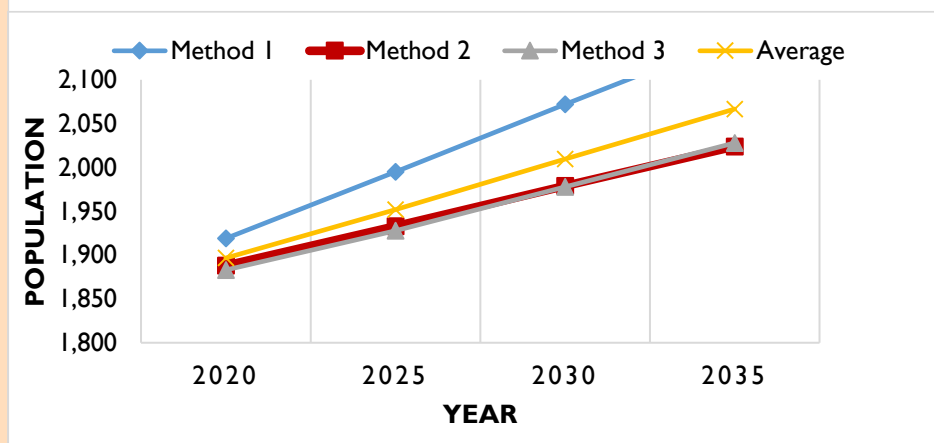
This method of population projection evaluates the population of Creola as a percentage of Mobile County's population. Between 1990 and 2010, the population of Creola, on average, was approximately 0.4% of the population of Mobile County. This rate is then applied to the University of Alabama's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) population projections for Mobile County for the years 2015-2035 to get population projections for Creola for the same years. These projections will be used in other parts of this plan, to determine impending needs as the city grows and changes over the next 20 years. *Table 2* and *Figure 3* show the population projections from 2015-2035 using these three methods. While none of these methods of projection is exact, most likely, future population will be somewhere in the middle, possible close to the average of the three methods.

Table 2: Creola Population Projections

	2020	2025	2030	2035
Method 1 – Building permits	1,919	1,995	2,072	2,148
Method 2 – Average growth rate	1,888	1,933	1,979	2,024
Method 3 – Percentage of Mobile Co.	1,883	1,928	1,978	2,028
Average of three methods	1,897	1,952	2,010	2,067

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, CBER, Calculations by SARPC

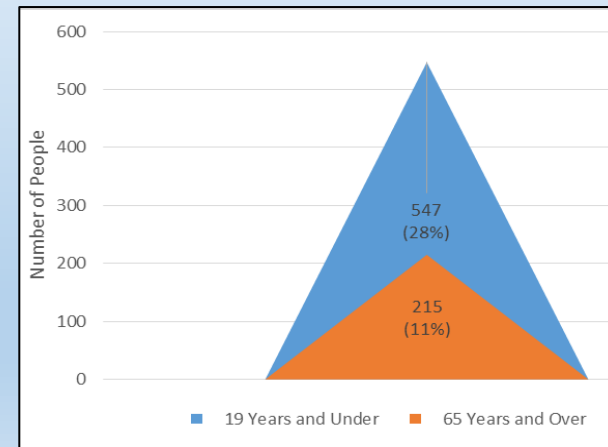
Figure 3: Population Projection Methods



The Dependency Population of Creola, meaning the youth and elderly people of the community, are comprised of citizens who require specific city services and programs in order to meet their needs and achieve a high quality of life. Presently, approximately 40% of Creola's population is classified as dependent. Data indicates that 28% of residents make up the youth dependency population, ages 0-19, and 11% of the population in Creola is made up of elderly persons ages 65 and older. City leaders must ensure that Creola is planning for the future by providing a sufficient amount of community services and programs to fulfill the needs of these younger and aging generations to ensure they are receiving the highest quality of life possible in Creola. The youth of our community will ensure and sustain the city's future success. Planning efforts should be centered around the wants and needs of these dependency age groups and the city should develop accordingly. Examples of such facilities and services needed by these demographic groups are; preschools, day cares, senior centers, parks, health care facilities, and public transportation services.

RECOMENDATION

The City of Creola should consider establishing a Junior City Council (JCC) for middle and high school-aged students in efforts to engage the youth population of the community in city government and community development decisions. The creation of a JCC would strengthen the youth of north Mobile County by giving them a voice and a chance to contribute to society. Their input is vital to the success and improvement of the community.



In addition to population, it is also important to know the make-up of that population. Other factors that may influence the future needs of a city or City can include age, gender, race, marital status, and persons per household. Figure 4 explains the city's racial profile, and Table 3 shows other important population demographics for the City of Creola.

Figure 4: Racial Profile of Creola ~ 2015

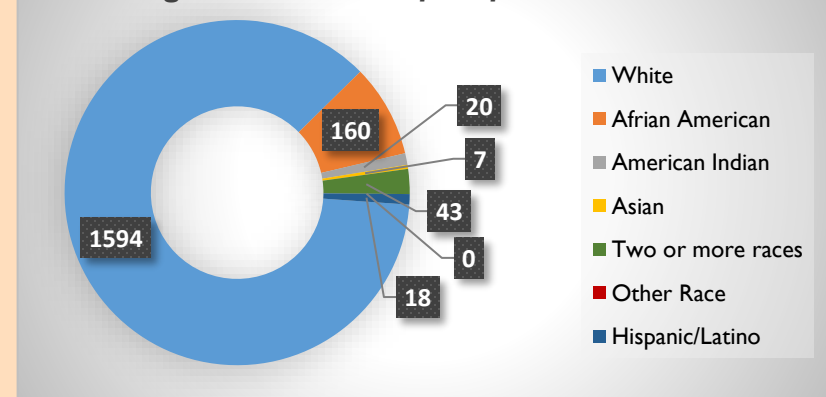
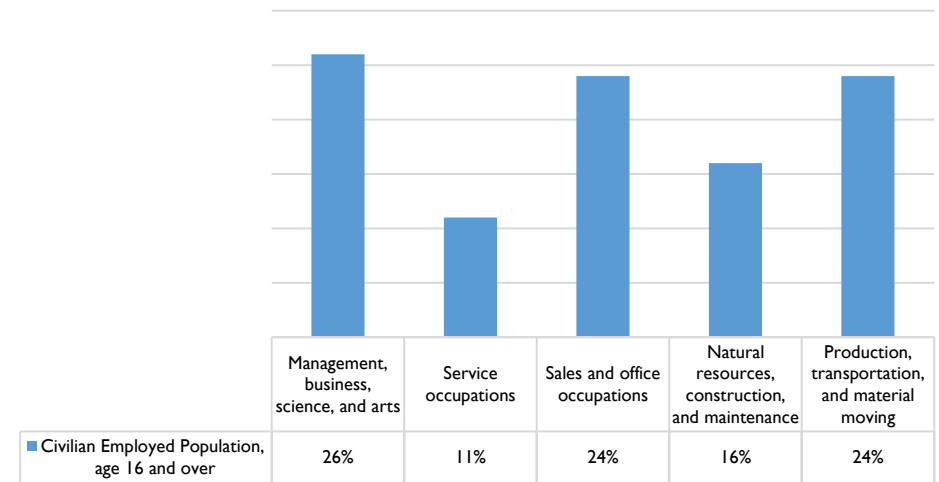


TABLE 3: Population Demographics in Creola, 2015

Total Population		1,842
Median age		41 years
Male/Female Ratio		51% / 49%
Dependency/Non-dependency ratio		40% / 60%
Percentage of total population aged:	0-19 years	28%
	20-44 years	29%
	45-64 years	28%
	65 + years	16%
Total households		698
Average persons per household		2.8 people
Percentage of total households with children under 18 years		41%
Percentage of total households with people over 60 years		40%
Median Household Income		\$50,395
Marital Status, Age 15 and Over:	Married	56%
	Never	26%
	Divorced	12%
	Widowed	3%
Educational Attainment, Age 25 & Over:		
High School Diploma or higher		84%
Bachelor's Degree or higher		18%
Percentage of population living at or below poverty line		16%

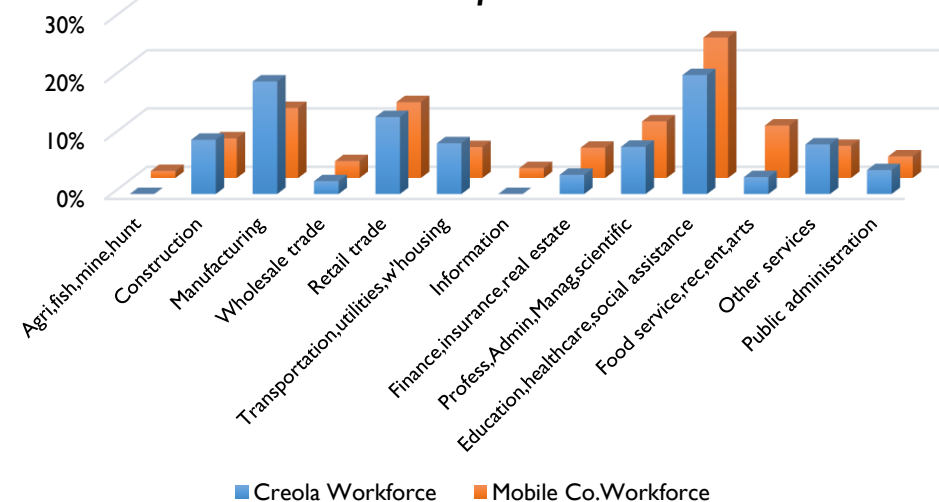
years and older that are considered to be in the civilian labor force. Creola's workforce population is currently 1,502 residents. Of that number, approximately 53 percent are presently employed in the labor force. The city has an unemployment rate of approximately 7%. See the data in *Figures 5 and 6* below, which show occupational and industrial data for Creola workers.

Figure 5: Occupations of Creola's Workforce ~ 2015

ECONOMICS & HOUSING

Economic characteristics are important tools when evaluating the economic health of a community and planning for the future. An educated workforce and a diverse job opportunities usually result in a larger tax base with higher incomes. In order to gain insight into Creola's present economic condition, it is essential to examine certain population characteristics such as educational attainment, labor force statistics, occupation, incomes and industry. Trends in the community's business environment, the wholesale, retail, service and manufacturing trades, and other indicators of economic activity are discussed and evaluated in this Plan. Current conditions are assessed on the basis of past economic trends of the City.

Employment typically generates population growth as well as provides a source of income for the purchase of homes, retail goods and local services. In addition, the businesses that provide employment generate revenues, which support governmental services. The Labor Force statistics from the Census are derived from the employment status of Creola residents, age 16

Figure 6: Creola & Mobile County Industry Workforce Comparison

Out of the 53 percent of residents who are in the workforce, less than 2 percent of them are employed and reside within Creola. *Figure 7* below shows job counts by work place. It reveals that Creola residents currently work in 827 occupations throughout the region, most of which are located in the city of Mobile (45.6%). Listed are the top 10 locations where Creolans work, however the list does not show “All Other Locations”, which make up 252 jobs and comprise over 30% of the workforce. Some of these jobs are located in nearby Axis, Alabama where many of the city’s residents are employed at the LeMoyne Industrial Park. Future job growth over the next ten years is predicted to be 31.72%.

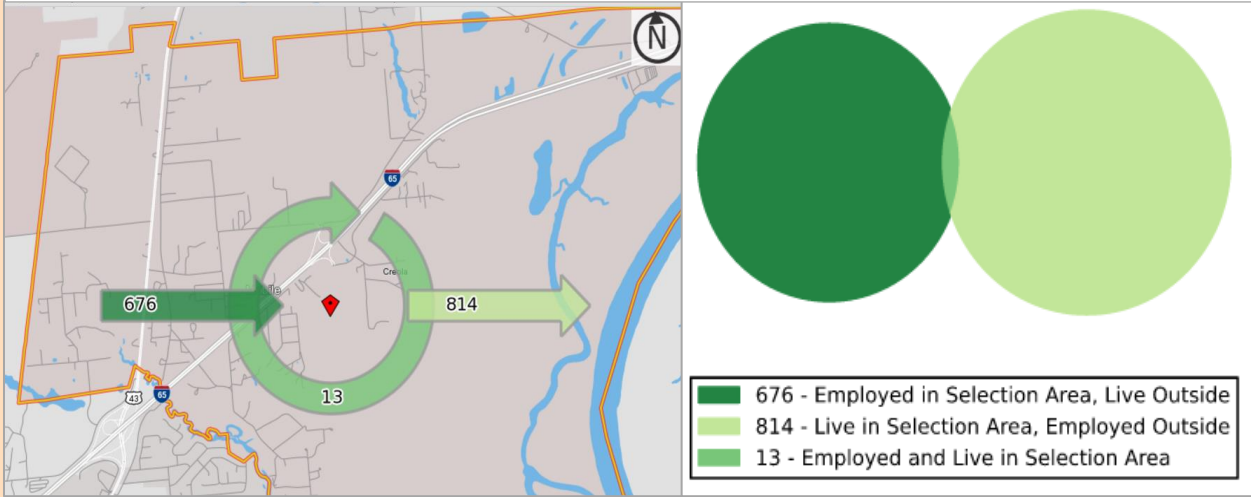
Figure 7: Cities Where Creola Residents are Employed

Jobs Counts by Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.) Where Workers are Employed - All Jobs		
	2014	
	Count	Share
All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)	827	100.0%
Mobile city, AL	377	45.6%
Saraland city, AL	67	8.1%
Mount Vernon town, AL	31	3.7%
Prichard city, AL	25	3.0%
Satsuma city, AL	19	2.3%
Daphne city, AL	16	1.9%
Creola city, AL	13	1.6%
Birmingham city, AL	10	1.2%
Bay Minette city, AL	9	1.1%
Chickasaw city, AL	8	1.0%
All Other Locations	252	30.5%

Source: US Census Bureau

Census data reports the average commute time for residents is approximately 24 minutes. *Figure 8* explains the number of workers who don’t live in Creola, but work in Creola (676 workers), compared to the number of workers who live and work in Creola (13 workers/residents), compared to Creola residents who travel outside of Creola to find work (814 workers).

Figure 8: Workforce Employment and Commute Patterns



Source: US Census Bureau

Economic Trends

One of the largest drivers of the region’s population growth has been the creation of new jobs. Creola is fortunate to be located within close proximity to the city of Mobile. Mobile is considered the region’s economic hub and contains Alabama’s most diverse economy. Many companies have expanded or invested in the area creating thousands of new jobs, primarily in manufacturing and production. The city offers the Port of Mobile, five Class I railroads, two major interstates and two major airports, all of which contribute to the region’s desirability as a location for manufacturing and industry. Major industrial manufactures are located in Mobile such as Airbus and Austal., Since 1990 the city has had its healthiest economy in decades, based on factors such as tax revenue, Port of Mobile tonnage, total employment, and residential sales. Medicine and research, aerospace, retail trade, services, construction, and manufacturing are among the region’s major businesses. From 1993 to 2003, 87 new companies were created and 399 existing companies were expanded, resulting in 13,983 new jobs. The city’s fastest-growing jobs are those in tourism and services.

LEMOYNE INDUSTRIAL PARK (LIP)

The LeMoyne Industrial Park (LIP) was formed in February 1983 by Courtaulds North America, Stauffer Chemical Co., Shell Chemical Co., Virginia Chemical, M&T Chemical, Alabama Power, and the Alabama Property Company. The purpose of the park is to allow the members to cooperate on projects of common interest and restrict the property within the park to uses limited to manufacturing, assembling of products, treatment and processing of raw materials, and support activities. The park also provides a forum in which the members can plan and provide mutual aid to each other during emergencies and cooperate on safety and emergency response training. Located just a few miles from Creola on US Highway 43, the LIP employees a total of about 1,400 people, many of which reside in the surrounding communities of Creola, Axis, and Bucks, Alabama. The industrial park provides a payroll of approximately \$70 million a year and pays approximately \$8 million a year in property taxes.

The LeMoyne Industrial Park consist of the following companies:

- DuPont
- Axis Industrial Landfill
- US Amines
- Arkema
- AMVAC
- Alabama Power
- AkzoNobel
- Lenzing Fibers, Inc.
- SSAB

The LIP has formed wonderful partnerships with its neighbors and provides many outreach services to the region, such as: provides support to local Volunteer Fire Departments; annual roadway Clean up events along Highway 43; Fund Raisers for community churches and citizens in need;

Supports local schools in the area; offers scholarship opportunities through local universities; sponsors a Community Day in the Park at Creola's Municipal Park. This event is an annual event hosted by the LIP member companies for the community of Creola and all the neighboring communities of north Mobile County. The fun-filled day sees an average of over 1,000 attendees, who enjoy food, fun, entertainment, and festivities.

Recently, one of the LIP partners, Austrian company Lenzing Fibers, Inc., announced plans to spend nearly \$300 million to build a new plant at the LeMoyne Industrial Park. The company plans to build "the largest TENCEL fiber plant in the world" at the LIP and is scheduled to begin operations in early 2019. Lenzing has owned the Axis site since 2004, when it bought the Tencel group of companies. It has a worldwide production capacity of 222,000 tons per year of Tencel fibers and aims to increase that by more than 50 percent in the next two years. The new plant at the LIP alone will produce 90,000 tons of Tencel fiber per year and is expected to create many new jobs to the region.



Housing Trends

In order to accommodate all socioeconomic groups in a community, a city needs to provide a variety of housing types and densities. To ensure the highest quality of life and the continued vitality of a community, the housing supply should support the existing housing needs, and adapt to meet future demands as the community grows and develops. This sustainability requires effective management of the housing supply which should include maintenance and rehabilitation, as well as new construction. The City of Creola prides itself on the rural, small town atmosphere which make it a wonderful place to live. However, with new growth and development comes the additional responsibility of protecting existing residential areas from encroachment of incompatible land uses, increased traffic congestion, and increased demand on utilities and infrastructure. Table 4 shows important housing characteristics in the City of Creola.

TABLE 4: Creola Housing Characteristics, 2015	
Total housing units	749
Number of occupied housing units	646
Number of vacant housing units	103
Number of owner-occupied housing units	485
Number of renter-occupied housing units	161
Average persons per household in owner-occupied home	2.88 people
Average persons per household in renter-occupied home	2.76 people
Median housing value	\$128,400
Number of Housing units with a mortgage	233
Number of Housing units without a mortgage	252
Median gross rent costs	\$849/month

Age, condition, and type of housing are also important characteristics to consider when planning for future growth. As the housing stock ages, more maintenance is typically required, thus increasing the cost of living expenses. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) conducted a land use survey in 2015, which included an evaluation of housing age and conditions. While there appear to be no clearly defined historic areas, sections of Creola’s housing stock are considered older, with 25 percent of those homes being built between 1970-1979. Twenty four percent of the housing stock was built between 1990-1999. Census data indicates that no new homes have been built in Creola since 2013.

The land use survey revealed there are very few houses that are in sub-standard or dilapidated condition. The survey also revealed there are only two types of housing styles that exist in the community, which are single family residential and mobile homes. Single family housing comprises most of the housing stock, with the majority of homes, 539 units, or 73%, being this type of housing. Mobile homes housing makes up the remaining housing stock, with 210 units or 30% of homes being mobile home style of housing. Lacking completely in the housing stock are duplex housing and multi-family housing styles.



The availability of affordable housing is an issue that has received a considerable amount of attention over the past decade throughout the county. It can be very difficult for a community to balance the need to provide affordable housing options for residents of all income groups while simultaneously attempting to manage growth at an appropriate level. Creola prides itself on offering a quiet, country atmosphere that is conveniently located to all the amenities the booming metropolis of the city of Mobile has to offer. The Creola community provides a beautiful landscape for single family homes on large, sprawling lots, complete with huge yard space and plenty of privacy. Large plots of vacant, undeveloped land is available throughout the community for housing development and expansion. The

need for additional housing currently exists in Creola. Residents who participated in the community survey indicated not enough homes or housing options were available to fill the housing need in the community.



Housing markets are influenced by many factors including supply and demand, especially within a regional area. Due to mobility of the workforce, the convenient access to Interstate 65 and Highway 43, and the willingness of people to commute to their jobs, Creola has the potential to appeal to families and individuals as a desirable place to live. While presently the city provides sufficient affordable housing, newer and/or improved affordable housing must be considered in order to provide for future growth. Many alternative housing options are trending now, which offer

solutions on how to manage a communities housing needs. Such solutions and initiatives to consider are, using infill on vacant residential lots to develop duplexes, townhomes, and garden/patio types of housing. Infilling empty lots for the development of community gardens, mini parks or pocket parks, and open green spaces should be considered to enhance neighborhoods, promote social interaction, and create outdoor recreation opportunity, all of which will attract new homeowners to the community.

New housing developments should give consideration to the walking distances from housing developments to local businesses and other places such as parks and churches, in order to develop a more walkable community. Other housing initiative and development strategies are discussed throughout this Plan using methods such as Accessory Dwelling Units and Small House Developments to provide independent living options for retirees and the elderly.

Patio homes or cluster home developments offer individual living quarters, which are part of a unit of several houses attached to each other, typically with shared walls between units, and shared green space. Exterior maintenance and landscaping services are usually provided through an association fee. Targeted buyers are primarily those who do not want to be bothered by external maintenance typically associated with home ownership, but still want single family residential style of living. The following are examples of different styles of affordable residential housing. They include: Townhomes, Duplexes, Patio/Garden Homes, and Apartments.



Patio/Garden Style Housing



Apartment Style Housing (Multi-Family)



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CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

- Community Inventory
- Existing Conditions
- Parks & Public Spaces



EXISTING COMMUNITY INVENTORY

A community is made up of a wide variety of people and requires a wide variety of facilities and services to ensure the basic health and safety needs are met for all demographic groups. These services also create a high quality of life for citizens and help build a sustainable economy. The following chapter identifies and assesses the condition of the city's current inventory of community facilities and services. Additionally, it identifies the critical services and facilities needed to accommodate the Creola's future population and business activities.

Development requires the provision for municipal services such as police and fire protection, and recreational services. In addition, support services beyond Creola's municipal authority must also be provided. These services include electricity, water, natural gas, communication, and educational institutions.

Creola City Government

Creola's official incorporation occurred on February 14, 1978, creating the Town of Creola, Inc. Creola became a city in 1985 when the town's population exceeded 2,000 residents. City Hall and city offices were established at 190 Dead Lake Road, where they continue to be located today.>>The building was acquired from the Fire Department and was previously used as the fire bay and jail for the city until the new fire station building was constructed. The city operates 95% of its business from City Hall, including court, permitting, business license issuance, accounts payable/ receivable, and many other daily duties. City offices located at City Hall include the office of the Mayor, City Clerk, Assistant City Clerk, Building Official, and Court Magistrate. In 2015, the population of Creola was 1,842 citizens and counting. The city is currently involved in an annexation campaign to bring in new residents who wish to have their property included in Creola's corporate limits in order to take

advantage of all the services the city strives to provide to its citizens.

CITY COUNCIL

Creola's governmental structure consists of a mayor and five council members, elected at large. The nature, powers, and functions of this governing body are explicitly covered in the City's charter. The Creola City Council meets once a month at City Hall to conduct city business and discuss city matters and any issues that citizens may be encountering. Pictured and listed below is the 2016 Creola City Council, along with presiding Judge Jay Ross.

Mayor ~ William Criswell
Place 1 ~ Lee Anne Greene
Place 2 ~ Harold Martin
Place 3 ~ Ralph Avis Walker
Place 4 ~ Tonya Moss
Place 5 ~ Kendal Hadaway



PLANNING COMMISSION

The objectives of the Planning Commission are to assist the Mayor and City Council in the preparation, maintenance, and implementation of city development plans, regulations and ordinances for the orderly development of the City.

The Planning Commission meets each month to review and act on subdivision, zoning, annexation, and ordinance applications.

The Planning Commission consists of nine members, including the Mayor, one member of the City Council and an Administrative Official of the City. These three members serve four-year terms corresponding to the term of the Mayor. The other six volunteer positions are filled by citizens who are appointed by the Mayor. Their term of office is six years.



MUNICIPAL COURT

Municipal Court is held each month at Creola's Community SAIL Center located at 9716 Old Highway 43. The court employs one judge, one defense attorney and one prosecutor, along with two full-time magistrates and the city clerk is a certified officer of the court. Judge Jay Ross has been the presiding judge for over 20 years. The court services over 300 cases monthly which requires daily input and updating to maintain files in preparation for court. The municipal judge hears and rules on misdemeanor, criminal, domestic violence, and traffic cases within the 1.5 mile police jurisdiction of Creola. Current needs of the court are a larger and safer facility to accommodate the public, hold court proceedings, and provide suitable court chambers as well as ample office space for city and court personnel.

Public Safety

City leaders know that one of the most important factors in attracting new residents and businesses to Creola is the ability to provide quality public safety services. In order to grow and develop the community over the next twenty years, it is crucial that the public safety departments are prepared to respond and expand their services by equipping them with proper equipment and sufficient manpower in order to provide professional and reliable fire and police services to the community. They also recognize the public safety departments have always been forced to meet a high demand load on limited resources, and they are committed to solving the daily issues and challenges that both departments continually face.

Creola's Police and Fire Departments are lead by strong, experienced leaders that provide area residents with quality care and superior protection. Overall confidence in the public safety departments is high amongst residents, which was indicated through comments received from the Community Survey, that overwhelmingly indicated that 80-90 percent of the citizens feel both departments provide excellent services through quick response times and security measures.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Creola Police Department employs a Chief, 6 full-time officers, 6 part-time officers, four jailers/dispatchers, and two EMTs. Additionally, the Creola PD operates a K9 unit, conducts criminal investigations, crime scene analyses, narcotics control and daily police patrols. They oversee the daily operations of the municipal jail as well. Located at 190 Dead Lake Road in Creola, the PD contains a holding facility that can accommodate up to three inmates. The PD has a jurisdiction of the corporate limits of Creola, extending 1.5 miles beyond the corporate limits. The Department's mission is to efficiently provide quality police service to the community by promoting a safe environment by partnering with the community, emphasizing mutual trust, integrity, fairness and professionalism.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

Five years before the Town of Creola came into existence, the Creola Volunteer Fire Department was established on August 2, 1973. The Alabama Department of Forestry donated equipment to help get the volunteer fire department up and running. Since that time, Creola's Fire Department has grown to a group of volunteer firefighters devoted to helping and protecting the community. They maintain a total of 25 volunteer firefighters and a fleet of five trucks and one vessel for water rescue services. With an exceptional response time of 8 minutes, all Creola firefighters are trained through the Alabama State and Pro-Board Fire College as Firefighter I & II positions. The Creola FD membership includes firemen certified as Firefighter I, Volunteer Firefighter I, Fighter Firefighter II, HazMat Awareness and Operations, HazMat Technicians, Rope and Confined Space Technicians and more. Additionally, the Department provides certified divers, EMTs, wild fire certifications, instructors and Paramedics ready to respond.



"There's Nothing Stronger Than The Heart of a Volunteer"
Lt. Col. J. Doolittle

The Fire Department responds to emergencies through a dispatch system distributed by the Mobile County Central 911 Emergency System. Volunteers respond to structural fires, motor vehicle fires, wood fires, search and rescue and motor vehicle accidents. They also provide assistance with emergency ambulance service when needed and assist with CPR calls. The Department has a mutual aid agreement between itself and several local fire departments in the neighboring community of Axis, Alabama.



Creola Fire Department

Source: City of Creola

The Creola FD responds to all fire emergencies, EMS and technical rescues.

The FD fleet includes the following:

- Ladder truck
- (2) 1250 gpm Pumper trucks
- Water rescue vessel
- Brush truck
- (2) AEDs



The quality of fire services is directly proportional to the availability of water via fire hydrants and water lines. Residential and commercial customers depend on a consistent supply of municipal water for normal consumption as well as for fire protection. Homeowner's insurance rates are affected by the quality of fire services in a community as well. Insurance companies use a uniform system called an ISO, on which to base their insurance premiums. ISO stands for Insurance Service Organization, which is a group of trained, professional evaluators that assess almost every fire department in the U.S. ISO uses a consistent set of guidelines to evaluate a fire department

and base the fire department's rating on many factors including the number of personnel on duty, training level of personnel (paid or volunteer), the amount of water the fire department can get to a fire, and the amount and quality of equipment used (such as fire engines and hand tools). They use a ranking system of 1 thru 10, with a 1 being the best and 10 being the worst. The higher the quality control in a fire department will yield a lower ISO rating, creating lower rates for homeowner's insurance that can be passed on directly to every homeowner in the community. Presently, the ISO rating for Creola's FD within the city limits is a seven (7) and within the extra territorial jurisdiction is a nine (9). Current needs of the Department include an updated fleet and newer vehicles. It is highly encouraged that the FD work with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Surplus Property Division to acquire the needs of the fleet as well as office supplies and other needed equipment.



PUBLIC WORKS

Creola's Streets Department is responsible for repairing and maintaining the city's streets and sidewalks inside the city limits. The city employs one staff member to oversee

the department who supervises and manages operations. The department utilizes the help of the Police Department's inmates to assist with any labor the Streets Department is needing help with. The department is also responsible for the upkeep and maintenance on the city's parks and trails. The following is a list of duties and requirements the Streets Department is responsible for maintaining and repairing:

- **Street repairs (potholes)**
- **Grounds, landscaping, mowing**
- **Drainage ditch clean-out**
- **Sign installation**
- **Tree trimming**

The department works with Mobile County on larger projects such as routine drainage ditch and detention pond maintenance to help control flooding throughout the community. The city has a list of dirt roads they submit to the Pay-As-You-Go Program. The Program ultimately chooses which roads will be selected to be paved. After the County paves the roads, the city is responsible for maintaining them.

Public Utilities

WATER & SEWER

LeMoyne Water is a rural water system located in the unincorporated area of Mobile County. The utility provides water and sewer services to

numerous communities including the City of Creola. They have three wells and three tanks and service approximately 1,259 customers. However, as the city continues to grow, more water services and higher water pressure requirements will be needed to safely provide sufficient water supply to the community.

LeMoyne collaborates with the city in collecting donated fees that help fund the Creax Scholarship Foundation. These funds pay for tuition costs Creola residents incur for attending Satsuma City Schools. The scholarship program has been tremendously successful and the city is proud to offer this program to the citizens of Creola and grateful to LeMoyne and all the customers who donate.

ELECTRICITY

Electric service is provided in Creola by Alabama Power Company. The utility provides service to 1.4 million homes, businesses and industries in the southern two-thirds of Alabama. Alabama Power is one of 11 electric and natural gas U.S. utilities operated by Southern Company, one of the nation's largest producers of energy.

SOLID WASTE

The city hires outside contractors to provide solid waste services throughout Creola. Presently, two companies service the community and they are Advanced Disposal and S & S Sanitation. Both service providers collect solid waste and yard debris. It is highly recommended that city leaders coordinate with agencies such as Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) to establish an affordable recycling program, and contract with a recycling service to provide recycling services to the citizens of Creola.

NATURAL GAS

Natural gas utility is available in Creola and is provided by Mobile Gas. The company provides service to 89,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers in southwest Alabama, and operates over 2,250 miles of gas pipeline.

DRAINAGE

Creola borders the Mobile River and contains several other bodies of water. In addition to the surrounding hydrology, the topography of the area is characterized by low-lying, flat lands, which are at or just above sea level in much of the area incorporated within the city limits. These geographical circumstances cause the city to understandably be subject to storm surge and riverine flooding. A Watershed Management Plan is currently being developed to help identify sources of flooding and methods to maintain and manage flood waters. Drainage systems within the city consist of open drainage ditches with culverts that attempt to alleviate surface water run-off from heavy rainfall events. The city coordinates with Mobile County when needed to remove debris and sediment from area ditches and drainage ponds to help reduce and control flooding throughout the city. However, additional infrastructure and drainage methods are needed to control and manage surface waters. More coordination and assistance is needed with county representatives to install new drainage infrastructure and schedule routine repair and maintenance of existing drainage methods.

COMMUNICATION

Communication services such as telephone, Internet, and Cable services are available in Creola

and provided by two carriers, Mediacom and AT&T.

Public Education

NORTH MOBILE COUNTY K-8 SCHOOL

School aged children living in Creola attend several schools in the area. The Mobile County Board of Education provides the North Mobile K-8 School for elementary through middle school-aged children. The school is located at 1950 Salco Road West, approximately 12 miles from the City in the community of Axis.

The school has a current enrollment of 567 children. It offers education instruction from Kindergarten (K5) through 8th Grade. It employs a certified teaching staff of almost 40 Teachers, Instructional Paraprofessionals, and Resource Teachers in addition to an administrative and support staff of over ten employees.

With a high-tech learning program, the school has 200 student laptops; a 13-station computer lab for elementary students; a 30-station computer research lab in the library; a 32-station computer lab for middle schoolers; and a classroom set of computers for the two math classes in the middle school. In addition to the many academic programs, the school also offers many clubs, organizations, and programs to the students.



North Mobile Co. K-8 School

Source: mcspp.com

SATSUMA SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Satsuma City School System is an independent school system that offers educational instruction for grades K5-12. With a current enrollment of 1,417 students, the school offers a total of 44 certified teachers and 44 support staff. Although Creola is not zoned for Satsuma City Schools, Creola children are eligible to attend the school through a merit-based scholarship program. The City of Creola and the City of Satsuma have developed an educational partnership to offer this scholarship opportunity for the children of Creola who wish to attend school in the Satsuma City School System.

CreAx Scholarship Foundation

On February 10, 2014, the CreAx Scholarship Foundation was established to raise funds to pay for tuition costs for Creola and Axis citizens attending Satsuma Schools. The 501 (c)(3) Foundation collaborates with LeMoyne Water to help raise the funds needed for the tuition costs by making available a one dollar donation to the Foundation when paying for water service through LeMoyne Water Utility. The Foundation has the means to support any student in Creola who wishes to attend Satsuma's City Schools, providing they maintain academic compliance with the scholarship requirements and guidelines.

Students living in Creola also have the option of attending high school at Citronelle High School, which is approximately a 30 minute bus ride for the students. The school is one of twelve signature academies in the Mobile County School System that offers workforce training and job placement opportunities. Each of the 12 Mobile County high schools offer a different Signature Academy and

several smaller academies. Students can apply for admission and even transfer into the school with the academic program that best fits their interest.

Through the academies, students learn from professionals in the field, visit job sites, have opportunities for internships and learn skills essential to applying for and getting jobs that are available in Mobile County. When they graduate, they are prepared to enter the workforce or continue their studies in college.

Citronelle High School, also known as the Citronelle Academy, offers the Manufacturing, Industry, and Technology Academy with the following six training programs, or pathways, to help students achieve their career goals and dreams post high school graduation. Pathway training programs offered are:

- Manufacturing
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Agriculture
- Leadership
- Technology



Located at 19325 Rowe Street in Citronelle, Alabama, Citronelle High School has a current enrollment of 819 students in grades 8th through 12th and provides a full-time teaching staff of 55 certified teachers.

Post Office

The U.S. Postal Services provides a post office branch to the City of Creola. It is located at 9617 Old Highway 43 and is opened daily through the week.

Community Center

Creola's SAIL (SENIOR ACTIVITIES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING) Senior Center is located at 6918 Old Highway 43. The Center offers a wide variety of services to the community, many of which are available for the senior population. Approximately 30 senior citizens utilize the Center and take advantage of the services offered to them such as:

- Fieldtrips
- Hot Meals (daily)
- Bingo
- Meals-on-Wheels (deliver approx. 80 meals a day)
- Dance Lessons
- Activities & Games



The SAIL Center offers many amenities to the community, such as a kitchen, offices, board rooms, meeting rooms, all of which are available for rent to accommodate a group of almost any size. Municipal Court is presently being held at the Center, and occasionally, Town Hall meetings are conducted at the facility. Currently, the Center is not able to provide free senior and public transportation, however, the City is aggressively pursuing grant opportunities to acquire a senior bus for the City.

Healthcare Facilities

Currently, there are no healthcare facilities within the City of Creola. However, the city is within close proximity to Infirmary Health's new, state

of the art Emergency Center and Medical Complex Plaza located in Saraland. Infirmary Medical Plaza is scheduled to open in late 2017 and will be located on Shell Street on the northwest side of the intersection of I-65 and Hwy. 158. Creola can access this facility within minutes to receive any type of general or emergency medical treatment they are in need of. The new medical plaza is also provide space for additional physician offices and other healthcare services. In addition to this facility, the neighboring cities of Saraland and Satsuma offer multiple urgent care facilities, medical clinics, pharmacies, as well as other various healthcare facilities.

Creola Community Development Organization, Inc.

The Creola Development Group is a volunteer organization that sponsors many community wide events at the Center, such as the Annual Veterans/Seniors Appreciation Breakfast, as well as many other community events. The organization formed approximately four years ago as a group of concerned citizens who simply wanted to improve their community.

Religious Institutions

The City of Creola is home to 14 churches and religious institutions that offer places of worship to the citizens of Creola and neighboring communities. There are various religious denominations available to the community.

Creola-Axis Ministerial Association

The Creola-Axis Ministerial Association is a group that supports all of the churches in the Creola and Axis communities. They sponsor and host many community events throughout the year as well. The Association is made up of a representative from each of the fourteen churches in the Creola and Axis area. They offer many community services, such as the National Day of Prayer ceremony held each May in Creola's Municipal Park.

Cemetery

The city is home to two cemeteries for interment purposes.

Creola Cemetery

Creola Cemetery is located behind the Creola United Methodist Church west of Highway 43 and on James Burkett Lane. It has existed for more than one hundred years. The property was donated to the city by the Davis Family. Lister Cemetery on Lister Dairy Road dates back to the 1800s.

Baldwin Cemetery is located at 8755 James Road in Creola.

Andrew and Julia Jackson Memorial Cemetery

The Andrew and Julia Jackson Memorial Cemetery sets nestled among old oaks, pines and dogwood trees along Lister Dairy Road about 100 yards from Gunnison Creek on the Jackson Estate property. It sets on a well-manicured half acre of land. For years the cemetery sat behind the Starlight Missionary Baptist Church before the church relocated to Satsuma, Alabama. To walk among the tombstones is a history lesson itself on prominent family names of Creola's African American community. For years the Andrew and Julia Jackson Memorial Cemetery was the only burial place for African Americans in the Creola community. The Andrew and Julia Jackson Memorial Cemetery is a private cemetery now and is open to family members and close friends of the Jackson family. Mrs. Juanita Jackson Crenshaw, the great- granddaughter of Andrew and Julia Jackson and now the matriarch of the Jackson family, is proud of the contributions made by her family to the Creola community and its people.

There are numerous historic cemeteries located throughout the area around Creola that date back hundreds of years.

Library

Creola does not presently provide a public and/or community library for the citizens. It is strongly encouraged that city leaders work with Mobile County Library System to establish a public library branch in the city to service the citizens as well as residents of neighboring communities and all of north Mobile County. The Mobile Public Library System offers Bookmobile Services as well to communities that do not have a public library. The library operates the bookmobile three days a week at over 30 different stops across Mobile County. Each location is visited every three weeks. City leaders should coordinate with the library system to offer this service to the residents while funding is pursued to build a library.

PARKS & PUBLIC SPACES

Adequate parks, open space, and recreational opportunities are vital to the quality of life in communities by providing citizens of all ages with enjoyable activities and settings in which to spend leisure time outdoors. Parks are complex components of a city that contribute to the overall health and quality

of life in a community and should be accessible and equally distributed throughout a community. They define and characterize a community and the neighborhoods within. Studies prove that residents will utilize outdoor recreation facilities when they are present within their community. Traditional park area standards set by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggest 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. Presently, the city provides two city parks, a marina, and several walking trails that combined, equal approximately 71.2 acres of parkland, water access, and nature trail systems within the city limits. Additionally, there are numerous regional land and water trails that run throughout and border the community. The city borders 50,000 acres of wildlife management land that offers prime hunting and fishing opportunities. The following is a list of outdoor recreation venues in and around Creola.

- **Dead Lake Marina ~ Long's Marina**
- **Friedman's Park ~ Creola Municipal Park**
- **Crenshaw Park & Walking Trails**
- **Regional Trails ~ Bartram Canoe Trail, nature trails at Dead Lake Marina**



Boat Slips at Dead Lake Marina

Source: SARPC

DEAD LAKE MARINA

The twenty-five acre Mobile River Delta Marina & Campground provides access to the beautiful, pristine ecosystem of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta in Creola.



Picnic Pavilion at Dead Lake Marina

Source: SARPC

Located at 2350 Dead Lake Road in Creola, the parkland was purchased by the Mobile County Commission for \$1 million in Coastal Impact grant funds. The facility was extensively upgraded in early 2012. It is a wonderful park to explore wildlife and enjoy the great outdoors. It offers many services and amenities to guest including an RV and tent campground, nature trails, and a swimming pool. Other facility amenities and services include:

- **RV & Tent Camping**
- **Camp Store**
- **Wildlife Viewing & Educational Kiosks**
- **Elevated Nature Boardwalk**
- **Meeting & Banquet Room**
- **Cabin Rentals**
- **Fishing Pier**
- **Covered Picnic Pavilion**
- **Picnic Tables**
- **Playground**
- **Bath House**
- **Laundry Facility**
- **Lake & River Fishing**

- **Cleaning Stations**
- **Covered Boat Slip Rentals**
- **Boat Rental**
- **Houseboat Dockage**
- **Bait & Tackle**
- **Limited Groceries**
- **Boat Launch Ramp**
- **In-ground Swimming Pool (Campers only)**

Fishing & Hunting

Most of the activities at the marina center around the excellent fishing available in Dead Lake and the adjacent Mobile Tensaw River Delta. Bass, bluegill, crappie, catfish, and striped bass are the most sought after species in the upper delta, while saltwater fish such as flounder, speckled trout, white trout, redfish, drum, and sheepshead can be caught in the lower delta and Mobile Bay.

The marina property borders the 50,000+ acres of the Mobile Tensaw wildlife management area recently acquired by the state. Excellent hunting exists here for such game animals as deer, ducks, turkey, rabbit, raccoon, and squirrel. Wild hogs are abundant in the area and many people hunt them with dogs or by stalking. A game area permit, available from the courthouse or the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as well as the River Delta Ranger Stations, is required in addition to a regular hunting license.

Boating

The Marina is located on Dead Lake, which flows into the Mobile River. The Mobile River is part of an elaborate matrix of the Mobile Tensaw River Delta, which contains hundreds of miles of rivers,

streams, bayous, bays, all of which ultimately lead to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Marina provides an excellent and affordable launch that is easily accessible and can accommodate a vessel of most any size. This launch is one of only a few in Mobile County that can access the Delta and have you fishing and boating in some of the most ecologically diverse and pristine waters in the state. Teeming with a variety of fresh and saltwater species, the Delta is a great place to fish and boat and spend the day on the water. The facility also offers live bait, a good supply of tackle and other supplies, and boat rentals. Hundreds of miles of historic rivers, creeks and bayous await your exploration, with ancient Indian mounds looming out of the dense forest in places.



Boat Launch at Dead Lake Marina Source: SARPC

The rivers also have sand bars that are a good place to stretch your legs or have a picnic with family or friends. Nature lovers can launch their own personal canoes to sneak up on wary animals and view rare and beautiful birds such as osprey, pileated woodpeckers, wood ducks, and even an occasional majestic bald eagle. Alligators are a common sight in remote areas and are fascinating

to watch as they glide silently along, submerging and surfacing like living submarines.

A large meeting/banquet room overlooking Dead Lake is available for rent to the public. The building can accommodate a large crowd and can be used for a variety of purposes. It provides a wrap around deck and is connected to the nature boardwalk trails.



Meeting Facility at Dead Lake Marina Source: SARPC

The picnic pavilion area at the Marina is available to the public as well. The facility can accommodate large numbers of people and can be rented out for special occasions and events.



Picnic Pavilion at Dead Lake Marina Source: SARPC

Dockage

Boat slips for small boats are available for rent at the lowest prices you will find anywhere, \$20 in most cases, while accommodations for any size

houseboat or cruiser may be arranged to dock overnight or stay on a monthly basis. Security guards are on duty from 4 p.m. to 6 a.m. a day to watch over the boat docks and the campground area.

Camping services available at the Marina include a KOA Campground that offers RV and tent camping, cabin rentals, playground, bath house, laundry, lake fishing, river fishing, launch ramp, covered boat slip rentals, houseboat dockage, bait and tackle, limited groceries, and nature trails. It also provides an in-ground swimming pool for campers. The campground contains 42 full hook-up RV sites, tent sites, and cabins. A swimming pool, playground, and a lake stocked with bluegill and bass is available for campers only use. There is also a laundry and bathhouse centrally located within the campground.



Rental Cabins at Dead Lake Marina Source: SARPC

Security guards are on duty throughout the night and free use of the boat launch is included for registered campers.

The Future

The Marina has recently become a stop on the statewide Bartram Canoe Trail which will soon have floating camping platforms along its path so that canoeists and kayakers can travel the entire

NATURE BOARDWALK AT DEAD LAKE



Boardwalk Trails at Dead Lake

Source: SARPC

BARTRAM CANOE TRAIL

In January 2003 Alabama State Lands implemented the Bartram Canoe Trail system which provides opportunities for recreational boaters, specifically canoeist and kayakers, to enjoy the rivers, streams, lakes, sloughs and bayous of the Delta. Currently the State Lands Division maintains six day-use trails and six overnight trails. There are two land-based campsites and four floating platform campsites available for the overnight routes. The land based camping areas are open to anyone on a first-come first-served basis. The floating platform campsites are limited to groups no larger than eight and are available by reservation only.



RIVER DELTA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT LAND

The Mobile-Tensaw River Delta is Alabama's largest wetland ecosystem and the nation's second largest river delta. The Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources continues development, maintenance, and management of over 721,574 acres of land for the Alabama hunter. These areas are financed with funds derived from hunting licenses and federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition. 50,000+ acres of the Mobile/Tensaw wildlife management area recently acquired by the state. Excellent hunting exists here

for such game animals as deer, ducks, turkey, rabbit, raccoon, and squirrel. Wild hogs are abundant in the area and many people hunt them with dogs or by stalking. A game area permit, available from the courthouse or the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as well as the River Delta Ranger Stations, is required in addition to a regular hunting license. Additionally, the Mobile-Tensaw Delta Wildlife Management Area has a variety of habitats for the birder to explore as well. Located along the east bank of the Tensaw River is an 850- acre parcel comprised of flooded hardwood bottoms along the river to upland hardwoods and pines. Additionally, there is a lake and peripheral freshwater marsh. During the breeding season, common species include Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-eyed Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler and Northern Parula. In the summer months, Swallow-tailed Kites may be spotted flying along the river banks just above tree line. Purchased by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway mitigation, this area is managed by the ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division.

JUANITA HALL CRENSHAW PARK

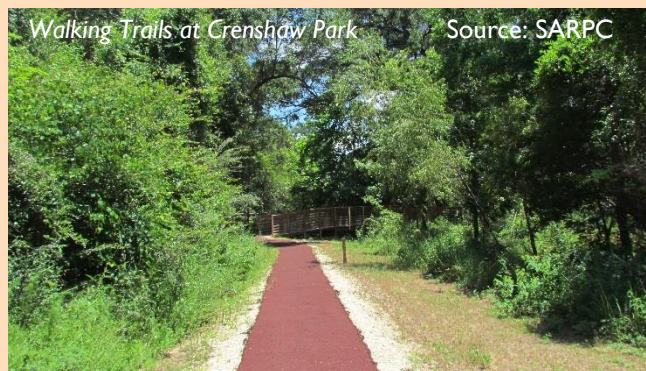
Sitting on beautiful Gunnison Creek in Creola is Crenshaw Park. It is located at the south end of



Picnic Area at Crenshaw Park

Source: SARPC

Old Highway 43. The 7- acre park features a nature walking trail, picnic tables, barbeque grills, picnic pavilion, canoe/kayak launch, and a swimming area.



Walking Trails at Crenshaw Park

Source: SARPC

Back in the 1940s, much of the community would gather at this park to swim and enjoy the outdoors. Since that time, many improvements have been made to the park and it was dedicated to the city in September of 2016. The park remains a favorite gathering place for the community. It's a great spot to have a picnic and go swimming, and many area churches use the space for baptism ceremonies.



Swimming Area at Crenshaw Park

Source: SARPC

FRIEDMAN'S PARK ~ CREOLA MUNICIPAL PARK

Located at 9610 Old Highway 43 is the Creola Municipal Park. This 20 acre parcel of land was leased to the city by the Friedman family back in the early 1980s. By 1997, park construction was underway to provide outdoor recreation

opportunity for the youth of Creola and north Mobile County. Creola's Municipal Park is a complex containing:

- 4 ball fields
- picnic area with a pavilion
- walking trails with exercise stations
- tennis courts
- basketball court
- restroom and concession facilities
- 18-hole disc golf course

The park has been a tremendous success for the city and draws people to Creola each weekend from all over the area. The park is open to everyone for sporting events, community events, and private gatherings.



Friedman's Park (Creola Municipal Park)

Source: SARPC

The city rents the park facilities out for special occasions and community events are held occasionally at the site since it has the capacity to handle large crowds.

The Creola Axis Ministerial Association hosts several community events throughout the year including the annual Sunrise Service, National Day of Prayer, community revivals, Veterans & Seniors Appreciation Breakfast, and community yard sales. The LeMoyne Industrial Park (LIP) sponsors a Community Day each year in November at the

park, which draws over 1,000 people to Creola each year. Other community events held at the park include BARK For Life, which is in conjunction with Relay For Life, and many other events sponsored by the Creola Community Development Group, such as Movie in the Park.

The park is a vital resource for the community and serves as an important venue in bringing the community together. Recent additions to the park include a new restroom facility that was funded by a grant through the Mobile County Commission.



Current needs of the park include more lighting, additional playground equipment, and an expanded parking area. The City hopes to continue enhancing the park and expanding the youth programs. Many development ideas are currently in the planning process as the City continues to seek grant funding as well as other community fundraising opportunities.

North Mobile County Soccer Club

The North Mobile County Soccer Club is a non-profit organization designed to give the youth of North Mobile County a place to learn and play the game of soccer. The Club has numerous youth soccer leagues that play at Creola's Municipal Park year round.

Almost every Saturday the community of Creola is filled with over 200 kids and families who gather for youth soccer games and tournaments at the park.



SKI CHASTE LAKE & WATER SKI CLUB

Ski Chaste Lake is a traditional 3 Event Tournament Water Ski site located in Creola. Ski Chaste neighborhood is a uniquely designed and planned subdivision, made up of twelve homes that back up to a man-made lake specifically designed and made for water skiing purposes. It is essentially a recreational and tournament water ski community.



Ski Chaste Lake is a man-made lake started over 25 years ago as the dream of J.R. Henley, a lifelong South Alabama skier who had a vision of a tournament ski site in the river delta area. Over the years, the lake has matured, with the help of nature and the dedication of the residents, into a shining star of the Alabama Water Ski Federation. Its beauty and consistent and no-compromise "skiability", along with traditional southern hospitality has made it a favorite tournament stop for southeast skiers and a frequent host of the Alabama State Water Ski Championships. The community hosts many water ski events throughout the year that draw huge crowds to Creola, including the 2017 U.S. Junior Open Championships.



In summary, Creola offers an ample amount of park space. However, more parks and recreational events such as adult league softball, youth and adult flag football and fishing tournaments should be considered. The city should establish a recreation board and supporting committees to oversee these programs in order to provide adequate recreation to the community. Recruiting volunteers will be essential to the success of these recreational programs. Flood plains and wetlands should have only limited development so that they can retain their natural function of filtering runoff

From stormwater and containing flood waters during heavy rains. These areas could be utilized, however, for outdoor recreation purposes, such as parks and greenways, that could foster quality-of-life amenities and further tourism efforts. Typical land uses include recreation, entertainment, institutional, and light industrial.

Recreational facilities should include small and large-scale parks, sports facilities, programmatic facilities, hunting and fishing clubs, and trails. Some of these land uses are large areas, such as parks. Others are linear, in the form of trails or greenways. Recreational lands can often serve as buffers between incompatible land uses and increase accessibility in doing so.

Additionally, Creola has a wonderful opportunity to seize the vast quantity of water access points in the area as recreational assets. These water access points provide opportunities for a multitude of types of recreation ranging from kayaking to fishing. As discussed in the Transportation section of this Plan, Creola should look into developing more water access points, primarily along the Mobile River and Gunnison Creek in order to recruit more out of town visitors to the area and promote tourism.



Gunnison Creek Waterfront in Creola Source: SARPC

The city should also develop more recreational trails. Many acres of land are currently underutilized due to their geographic location and being at risk of flooding. These environmentally challenged lands can provide an optimal location for elevated walking and birding trails, as well as other eco-friendly activities. Eco-friendly development opens up a great opportunity to take advantage of the areas of vast amounts of undeveloped lands and provide recreation that will in turn ensure conservation. These type of developments should be considered assets to the community as well as an economic development resource that has the opportunity to bring in visitors from all over the region.

Pedestrian Network

A future pedestrian network should be considered and developed for the community. It will be created through a local pathway network. Pathways in Creola include off-street trails, on-street trails, and pedestrian shoulders. Trails and shoulders are relatively inexpensive to create and maintain, therefore, they are the best solution for a new trail system that will create a pedestrian friendly environment. The Pedestrian Network should utilize existing rights-of-ways on existing roads, connect to regional pedestrian and bicycle opportunities, and should use semi-pervious materials when possible.

OFF-STREET TRAILS

In Creola, several rights-of-way segments exist but are not currently used for vehicle traffic. These locations should be used for Off-Street Trails for cycling and mountain biking opportunities. These trails also act as pedestrian connections that allow

residents to have more direct walking paths within some portions of the community.

ON-STREET TRAILS

On-Street Trails often share road rights-of-way with vehicles. These trails are often separated from motorists by using a landscaped buffer such as shrubs, bushes, trees, or a raised median. On-Street Trails should be encouraged along local roads and adjacent to the railroad and Old US Highway 43.



Walking Trail Kiosk at Greshaw Park Source: SARPC

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CHAPTER 4

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

- Existing Land Use
- Development Concept & Strategies
- Commercial Development
- Industrial Expansion
- Transportation Network
- Neighborhood Design
- Future Development Concept
- Eco-Tourism Opportunities



EXISTING LAND USE

The incorporated area of the City of Creola encompasses approximately 19.5 square miles, most of which are terrestrial lands. The remaining 1-2 square miles of lands are made up of surface waters of the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta. Creola's waterfront is one of the few areas in Mobile County that provides direct water access to the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, Mobile Bay, and other adjacent waterways that all flow into the Gulf of Mexico.

Development Patterns

In early spring 2016, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) conducted a visual windshield survey to determine the arrangement of all land parcels within the corporate limits of Creola and how these lands were currently being used. At the time of the survey, there were a total of 1,404 land parcels that equaled 10,633.62 acres. Existing land uses were inventoried, mapped, and analyzed by using survey results and aerial photography of the selected area in order to determine community development patterns and trends for the city. Creola is currently made up of the following land use classifications:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Undeveloped
- Utility

Of the roughly 10,000 acres in Creola, the greatest majority of land is classified as Undeveloped, which make up almost 7,000 acres, or 65.5% of the total land mass. Residential uses are comprised of almost 3,000 acres or 28 percent of the land mass. The remaining six percent of land area is classified as commercial, industrial, public/semi-public, and utility. The following table defines the different land use classifications

currently in place along with the total number of acres each use encompasses.

Table 5: EXISTING LAND USES IN CREOLA ~ 2016

Land Use Classification	Acres	%
Residential Lands used for Single Family, Duplex, Multi-Family, mobile and manufactured dwelling units	2,976.6	28.04%
Commercial Lands with or without buildings, where goods and services are distributed and/or personal services are provided for retail sales	47.7	.45%
Industrial Lands with or without buildings, where semi-finished or rough material is further processed, fabricated or manufactured, including warehousing and wholesaling establishments engaged in storage and non-retail sales	445.9	4.2%
Undeveloped Vacant lands that do not have structures and are not used for agriculture	6,968.1	65.5%
Public/Semi-Public Lands used for outdoor recreation such as parks, open space, and trails; educational/governmental facilities or land that is owned by federal, state, or local units of government; land occupied by privately-owned facilities that are generally open to the public, such as lodges, churches and cemeteries	194.1	1.8%
Utility Lands used to provide the public with electricity, gas, water, communication, sewage collection or other similar service	1.19	0.01
TOTAL	10,633.62	100%

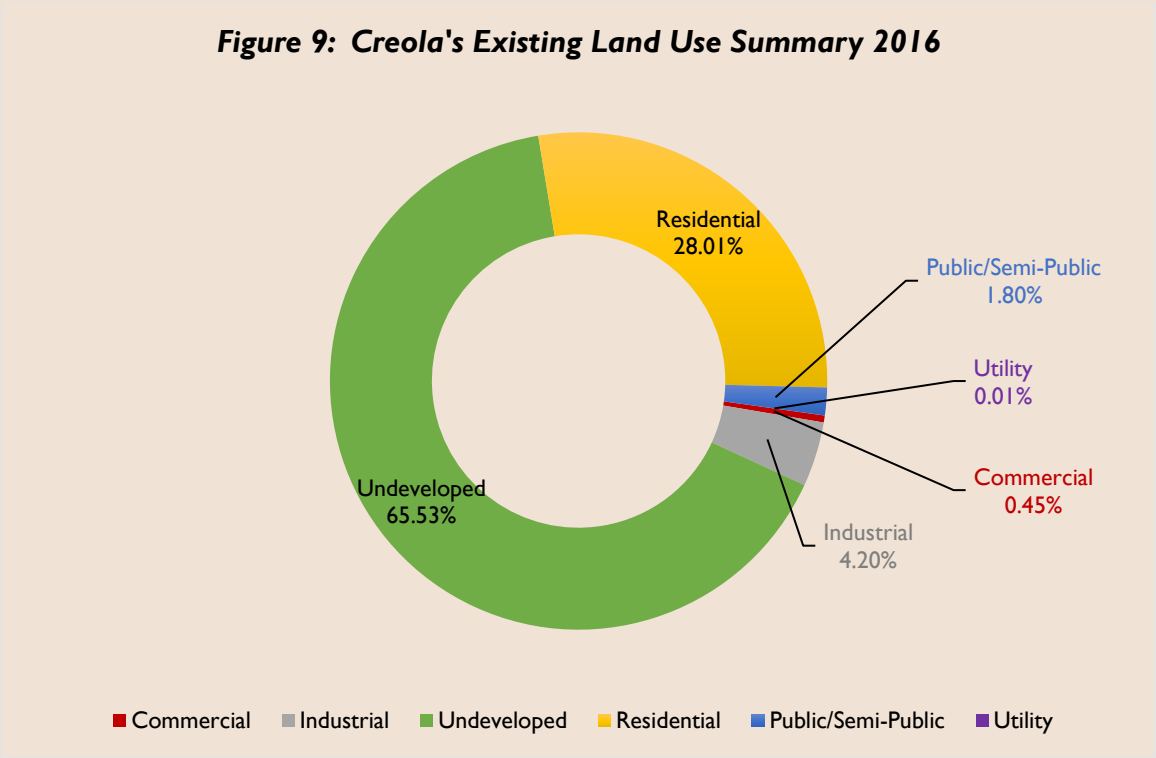
The results of this classification and analysis are illustrated in the following figures. Noteworthy findings in this analysis include:

- Less than half of one percent of Creola’s land is used for Commercial purposes. This is a stark indication that there are not enough commercial properties and retail establishments to properly serve and maintain the Creola population. More commercial land uses are needed along Highway 43 and the two Interstate interchanges to recruit retail establishments and business development to the city.
- The majority of land in Creola (65.5%) is Undeveloped, which represents the potential reserve supply of land for future development. A large portion of these lands may be impacted by development constraints due to naturally occurring conditions, such as wetlands and flood plains. The feasibility for future development and appropriate land use activities are further analyzed and discussed in the following sections of this chapter.
- Residential uses make up a considerable amount of land in Creola (28%), indicating sufficient space is available for an expanding housing market.
- Only 4.2% of land is currently designated for Industrial uses and activities. With the amount of undeveloped land available, Creola has a great advantage and the ability to recruit more industry to the area by offering the needed space that future industrial development will demand and require.
- More lands are needed to supply the community with Public and Semi-Public uses and opportunities, such as parks, open space, and outdoor recreation areas. Presently, less than 2%

of land in the city limits is reserved for this type of land use.

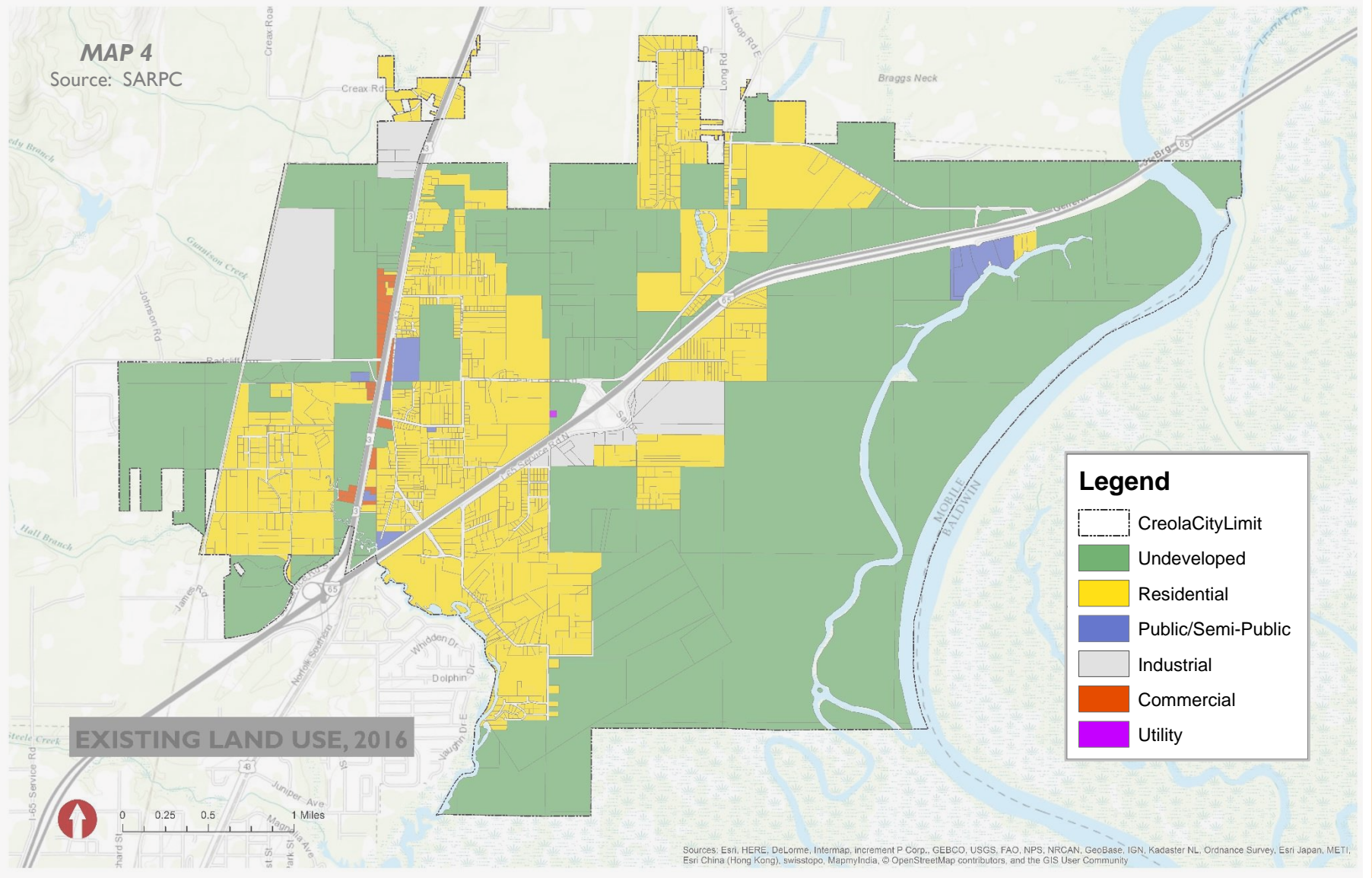
The land use patterns and their character provide the basis for engaging the community on both the quality and quality of future development in the City of Creola and are further discussed in the sections that follow.

Figure 9: Creola's Existing Land Use Summary 2016



See the Existing Land Use Map on the following page for a detailed layout of where the city ‘s current land uses are located.

MAP 4
Source: SARPC



DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT & STRATEGIES

Development Concept

The Creola Development Concept is a bird's eye view of the City's plan for its physical growth and development over the next 20 years. The Development Concept was created in response to the need to guide public and private investment and construction in a way that meets and resolves challenges, as well as maximizing existing and future opportunities. Essentially, it is a vision of how Creola will look in twenty years. Public discussions and technical studies during the planning process led to the identification of long-term challenges and opportunities that must be addressed as the City of Creola moves forward to accomplish the long-range goals set forth in this Comprehensive Master Plan. As a result, the following development strategies were created that relate to all facets of life in Creola, now and in the future. They are as follows:

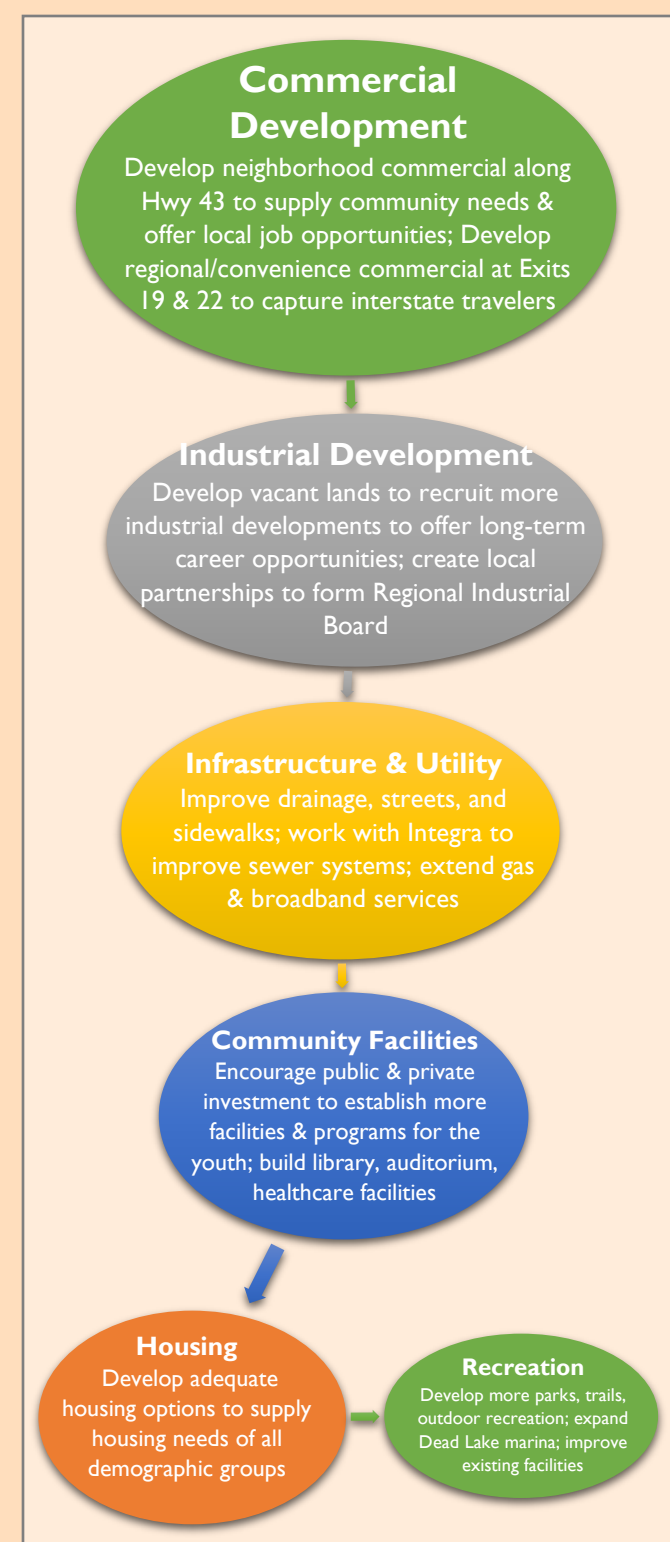
1. Capitalize upon Creola's convenient location on Interstate 65 and U.S. Highway 43 to recruit economic development.
2. Collaborate with neighboring municipalities to form a Cooperative Industrial Development Board to recruit more industry to the area. Utilize vacant lands to provide an Industrial Park.
3. Provide appropriate housing options to retain existing population and capture new residents.
4. Identify and create a centralized "downtown" area for Creola.

5. Define and advertise a civic identity for Creola through welcoming gateways and POI markers
6. Provide more options in all realms of education.
7. Identify and utilize environmentally sensitive lands to create eco-tourism developments.
8. Provide additional community facilities, resources, and services necessary to supply the needs of the existing and future populations.

Rather than classify every individual land parcel into a future land use category, the development concept and accompanying strategies provide a conceptual growth outline for future development in general areas. While each of the development strategies are unique opportunities, they all work together for the comprehensive development of the community by promoting harmonious land use patterns and proper placement of new developments that will enhance the overall character and charm of Creola.

Guiding Principles

The development concept and strategies were identified and created through a culmination of public suggestions and input, along with extensive research and data collection. This information along with additional data taken from the city's Five Year Strategic Plan, was used to create the guiding principles that serve as the foundation for this planning document. They represent the complete vision of the community; the mission the city hopes to achieve through future growth; and the goals and recommendations identified through public meetings and surveys. They are listed on the following chart in order of importance and most pressing need.



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A variety of commercial development is desperately needed for different locations throughout Creola to supply the needs of the residents and sustain the community for future generations. Commercial developments can be separated into different types of districts which are intended to cater to different markets of the Creola population and visitors who shop in the community. Planned new commercial development districts include: Highway 43/Local-Neighborhood Commercial, Interstate/Gateway Commercial, and “Downtown” Commercial. Combined, these districts can meet the retail shopping, personal service, office space, and entertainment needs of the residents of Creola, as well as the neighboring communities. Typical land uses in commercial areas include downtown offices and civic buildings, interstate lodging, dining, and convenience businesses, small business and other neighborhood commercial, and larger, regional “big box” businesses on US Highway locations.

Highway 43 Commercial

Highway 43 is a commercial corridor running directly through the city of Creola. Commercial developments along this route generally serve the local residents, general public, and the occasional tourist. The most critical commercial need for the city is to establish more commercial uses along this economically important corridor in order to create sales tax generated revenue for the city. Almost 80 cents of every dollar spent within the city limits of a town, stays in that town by funding the town’s general budget. Sales tax revenues are what municipalities rely on for general funding and proper operation of the town. The more shopping consumers do within the city, the more sales tax revenue is generated, resulting in more money for the city to use to grow with. Local commercial development includes establishments that cater to adjacent neighborhoods, providing an opportunity for residents to shop at home. Local commercial uses would include grocery stores, pharmacies, healthcare services, eateries, banks, and specialty stores. These areas should be developed in a way that does not cause undue traffic congestion and will not disrupt the atmosphere of the adjacent residential areas. Emphasis should be placed on infill development of existing vacant lots and reuse of vacant buildings prior to the construction of new local commercial developments. Infill development should be encouraged due to the existing infrastructure and public

improvements that are already installed on the property. Additionally, infill prevents blight by utilizing poorly maintained and underutilized properties. Highway 43 is a commercial



corridor and should be developed in a manner to reflect this plan. Residential and non-profit uses are not recommended for this area simply because these types of land uses do not provide any revenue to the city.

Interstate 65 Corridor Development

Interstate commercial developments should be thought of as gateway businesses that attract visitors and enable residents to shop at home with large retail shopping resources. Typical land uses found in this commercial district include regional businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, auto dealerships, and large box-retail stores. Given the large size of this type of business, these areas should still remain proportionately small and concentrated. Interstate business development should be restricted to the gateway areas with defined growth, or development, boundaries to prevent encroachment into non-commercial areas. Design guidelines and aesthetic amenities, such as landscaping, lighting, and signage, should enhance the area and compliment the city’s civic identity. These variables are important in these districts and should be considered and enforced when new development occurs due to their location at the entrances to Creola and the image and impression this will make on the traveler.



Welcoming Gateways

Gateway development is a means of welcoming residents and visitors to Creola by establishing a sense of “place” or arrival to a destination. Gateway areas should create a visual appeal that is reflective of Creola's civic identity and hospitality. This character can be established with highway and interstate vegetation and landscaping, welcoming and directional signage, screening, and lighting, building facades and other aesthetic improvements. Typical land uses that may be found in a gateway area include highway business or convenience stores, tourism and entertainment, lodging and dining opportunities. Gateway design should complement the surrounding existing and planned development to entice visitors and new residents to Creola.

Motorists enter the community on large, fast moving roadways. Welcoming gateways will visually notify travelers that they are no longer in that high speed environment, and that they have arrived in the community of Creola. Their driving behavior should respond to the context change. Recommended areas for welcoming gateways are for the following locations:

- Exit 22- Intersection of Interstate 65 and Sailor Road
- Exit 19- Intersection of Interstate 65 and Highway 43
- Along Highway 43, north and southbound lanes near the corporate limits of the city

Downtown Commercial

It is difficult to geographically define a centralized “downtown” area for the community of Creola. In the past, like many of the small towns in Mobile County, Creola was established along a major north/south railroad line, and the town developed adjacent to it. Although the railroad line is no longer there today, there are many opportunities to take advantage of in this original town center. Regulations pertaining to development near railroad crossings presents a challenge, especially for Creola. This twenty year comprehensive plan suggest that the city develop a centralized area that can be defined as the heart of Creola. Located on Old Highway 43, the district's boundary would be from Dead Lake Road, extending north to include Friedman's Park. This commercial district would not only provide business opportunity, but offer many civic elements a city must acquire and maintain in order to create a sense of community. This district would be anchored with uses such as professional service establishments, professional office space, civic offices and buildings, community centers, small-scale retail, recreational areas, and open space. A successful future for the downtown commercial area will be dependent on private investments, public assistance and incentives, local support and partnerships, and implementation of community building programs, such as Alabama's Main Street Program, Certified Local Government Program through the Alabama Historic Commission, and the Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) Program. The downtown uses should be accessible by vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians, but mainly be

developed with walkability in mind, serving as a community gathering place. Future plans for the district include the relocation of city hall and other city services, expansion of Friedman's Park, and the establishment of professional offices to serve the community. Strict design and landscaping requirements will be enforced through the Zoning Ordinance in efforts to create a true civic identity for the city of Creola.

INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

It is proposed that industrial expansion occur in the vicinity of where existing industrial activity is presently occurring. Vacant, undeveloped properties, located near Radcliff Road in the city of Creola provide the most feasible location for industrial development. This area of the city provides the mobility necessary to support industry with trucking and other delivery requirements. Additionally, industrial growth at two different locations helps minimize work traffic congestion. In addition to the existing industrial parks, it is recommended that the City of Creola coordinate with the communities of Satsuma and Axis to form and establish a Cooperate Regional Industrial Development Board. Coordination is needed with the Mobile County Commission to investigate ways to diversify the existing industrial base with the attraction of commercial warehousing and distribution facilities, including the development of industrial parks, resulting in higher paying jobs and long-term career opportunities. Typical land use activities in these types of developments include heavy to light industrial, heavy to light manufacturing, warehousing, storage, and transportation.

Industrial Parks

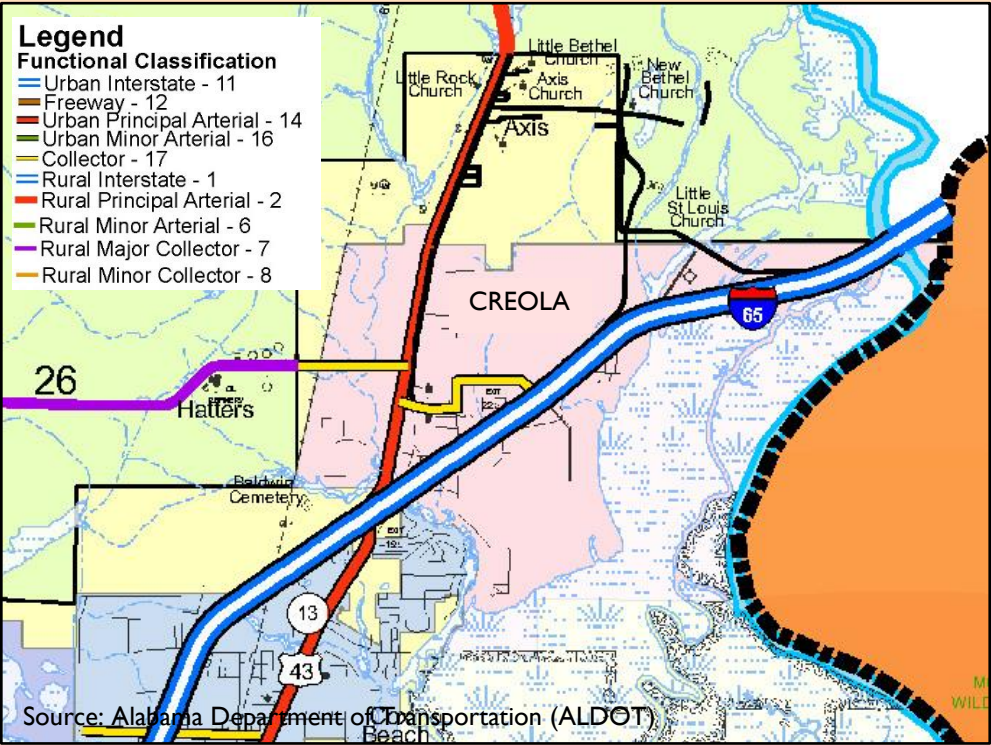
The establishment of industrial parks helps to concentrate major utilities and services to designated areas and enables the city to better serve the industries because of the concentration. Key considerations in industrial expansion include maintaining transportation accessibility through on-going road and circulation improvements and maintaining

Superior utility services. Although the land uses within industrial areas are often utilitarian in nature does not mean the park itself cannot be attractive. It is proposed that the existing industrial parks and any expansions be improved through landscaping, signage, and lighting. These improvements encourage a mix of industrial uses and will help in the attraction of higher-end industries.

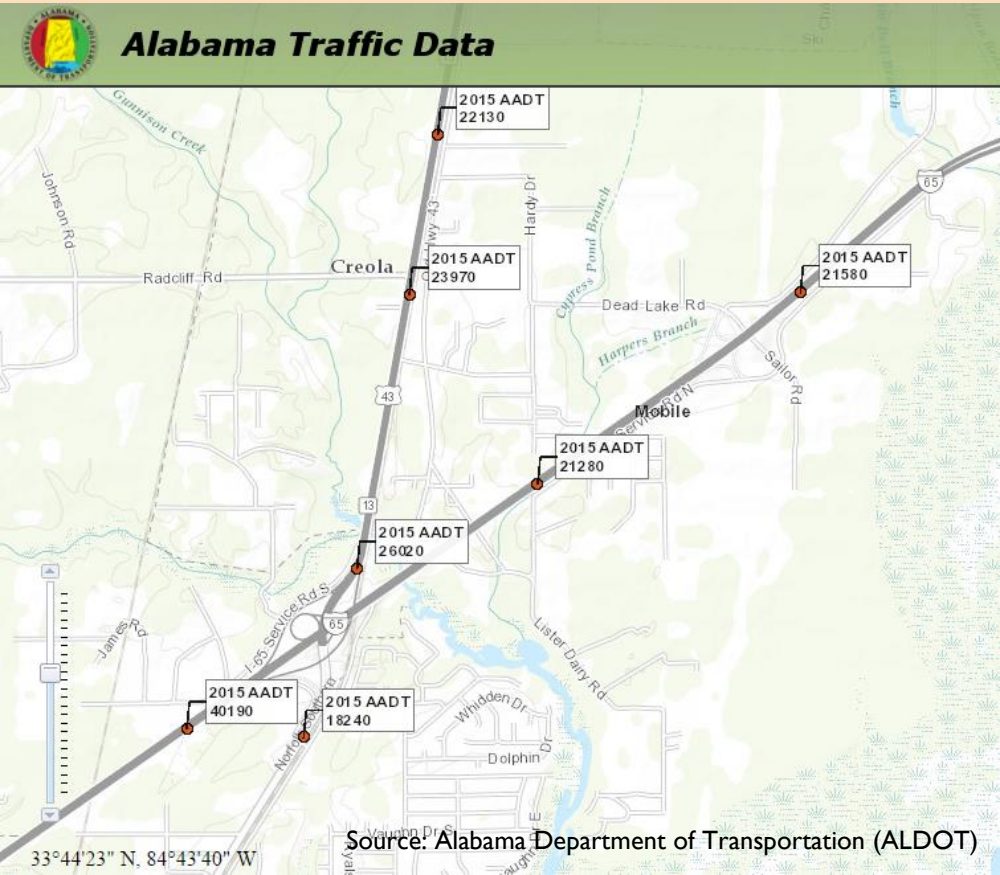
TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Road Classifications & Usage

Creola’s existing transportation network provides convenient access to and around the community. It contains a variety of transportation modes that support local and regional travel. The network is primarily made up of local streets and collector roads, with the most heavily used roadways being the U.S. Interstate and Highway that run throughout the entire city limits. Interstate 65 is classified as an Urban Interstate, Highway 43 is classified as an Urban Principal Arterial, Dead Lake Road and Radcliff Road are classified as Major Collectors, and all other roads inside the city limits are classified as Local Roads.



Creola’s accessibility to major vehicular transportation networks and rail lines provides the potential for limited multi-modal services. Further, Creola’s location makes an ideal spot for travelers to congregate.



Roadways

Part of Creola’s future growth is dependent on the accessibility to the City of Mobile and the northern portion of Mobile County for employment. Road improvements are needed along Highway 43 to manage traffic flow and high speed motorist during peak rush hours of the neighboring industrial plants. According to the 2015 Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) traffic counter stations, approximately 26,000 motorist travel along Highway 43 near exit 19, daily. As traffic flows north on Highway 43, traffic counts decrease to approximately 15,000 motorist. This is indicative of industrial plant employees traveling to and from the various plants located along

Highway 43 between Creola and the community of Axis. In addition to that, Interstate 65 south of Highway 43 (exit 19) saw approximately 40,000 drivers a day, and north of Highway 43 way about half of that number. Suffice it to say that a vast number of motorists are traveling in and around the community daily. Many citizen comments were received through the Community Survey regarding the condition of the city's existing roads, roads to be paved or repaved, and areas where new roads and street improvements are needed. It is proposed that Creola develop commuting facilities to increase that accessibility, and to participate in the development of a regional public transportation system. Other transportation problems noted from the community survey were as follows:

- Many roads are in need of paving
- Many roads are in poor condition and in need of resurfacing
- New roads are needed to provide better accessibility and connectivity throughout the city
- Too much heavy, high-speed traffic on US Highway 43. Speed reducing & traffic calming measures are needed
- There is no public transportation service available for senior citizens
- A service road is needed on the west side of US Highway 43 to access this area and provide more accessibility to neighborhoods on the west side of US Highway 43
- Limited pedestrian services and facilities are in place. Citizens would walk more if more pedestrian infrastructure was

in place to accommodate walkers

- Way finding signage is needed to direct travelers and visitors to points of interest throughout the city
- Additional parking is needed at Friedman's Park
- A traffic signal is needed south at Jackson Road and Highway 43 for safety

Water Access

Long's Marina at Dead Lake Marina offers two boat launches for any sized vessel. The Marina is located at 2350 Dead Lake Marina Road in Creola.

Railroads

The following Class I and Class III railroads transport freight into Mobile, Alabama, through Creola:

- TASD Terminal Railway
- CSX Transportation
- CG Railway
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
- Norfolk Southern
- Canadian National
- Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway

These interline connections allow customers several options that provide fast, efficient transit.

Airport

The Mark Reynolds Airport, also known as the North Mobile County Airport is located inside the Creola city limits on Dead Lake Road. Located



Source: SARPC

near Dead Lake Marina, the airport offers services for smaller aircraft.

Pedestrian Accessibility

Some of the neighborhoods throughout the community offer pedestrian sidewalks. However, there is no city-wide sidewalk system in place to provide connectivity and promote walkability. Survey respondents indicated this was a service greatly needed in the community. City leaders should investigate funding opportunities through ALDOT programs such as ATRIP and TAP funds in order to provide more sidewalks in the community.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Creola's existing land use survey that approximately 28 percent of lands are dedicated to residential land uses, making residential the single largest use of developed land. In fact, the percentage of residential land use is higher than all other developed land uses combined. The survey also showed that just under 66 percent of the total land area within the Creola corporate boundary is currently undeveloped. This undeveloped land provides plentiful opportunities for additional residential development to meet future population growth without expansion of the corporate limits. Not all of the undeveloped land will be physically suitable to structural development. With consideration to alternative types of development, however, the amount of land suitable for residential purposes can be increased.

Housing opportunity and housing design are key to a viable residential market. Since residential development is largely driven by the private sector,

it is often difficult for a city to ensure that adequate housing is available to meet citizen needs. Affordable housing does not mean subsidized housing. Affordable housing means the availability of housing at a variety of income levels, which most often leads to housing choice. Housing choice can be fostered in high density communities, traditional subdivisions, as well as rural areas. It is proposed that Creola take a four-pronged approach to housing development: (1) *Traditional Neighborhood* (2) *Open Space/Cluster* (3) *Rural Residential* and creation of a (4) *Specialty Housing Market*. All residential areas, existing and future, should focus on both the actual and perceived safety of residents through construction of safe streets, lighting, and individual property maintenance.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Low to medium density residential development is the predominant layout design for most of Creola's existing neighborhoods. The city offers many acres of large sprawling plats of land that are suitable for this type of development. This type of neighborhood development is appropriate for the community, however, it will not attract the homeowner who does not desire the routine maintenance that a large lot requires. These neighborhoods are desirable to the homeowner who needs additional space and wants to achieve quiet, country living. They require estate lots where residential density should be low to very low.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Traditional neighborhoods primarily serve the residential needs of urban areas. The primary use is generally single family residential housing, and

they are considered pedestrian friendly and accessible by all modes of transportation. Ideally, they feature parks, schools, and other public businesses and uses. This neighborhood design is prevalent in many areas of Creola. This older style of traditional housing usually blankets an entire development site, consuming all the land for individual lots, and not conserving any space for distinctive, natural features that make the site a special place. These neighborhoods, while functional, lack in design and attractiveness. It is proposed that the City of Creola encourage the development of alternative types of subdivisions that allow higher density of housing units in exchange for open space and community amenities. These types of developments are sometimes called open space or cluster subdivisions. Clustering of a neighborhood could be utilized to fill out the residential fabric of the city, as well as maintain rural character in the outlying areas.

OPEN SPACE/CLUSTER NEIGHBORHOODS

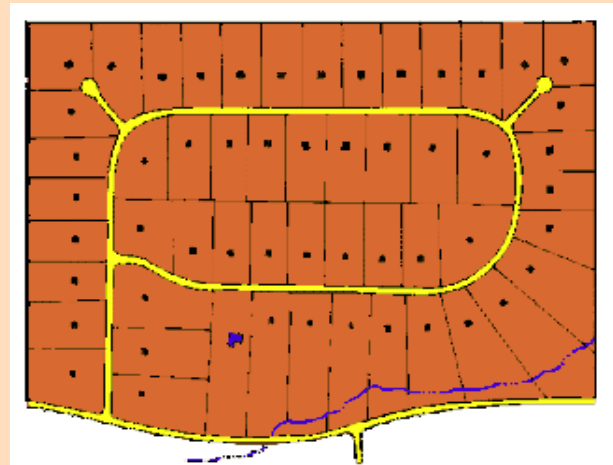
"Clustering," also called "Open Space Development", should be considered as an alternative to large lot "rural sprawl". Rural sprawl consumes open space, privatizes all land, and creates lots that are too small for farming or meaningful habitat protection.

This approach also places development in less sensitive areas while preserving forested land, wetlands, and other ecologically or visually valuable landscape features. It can also be used to preserve resources such as buildings or historical sites. Typically 50 to 90 percent of a site area is preserved in its existing natural or farmed state, with individual house lots occupying the remaining acreage. Clustering can also save on infrastructure

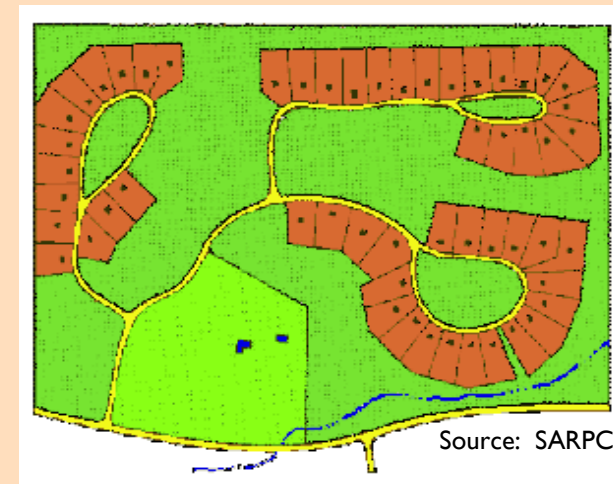
costs by reducing the length of roads and utility lines in new developments.

The following illustration shows the differences between a traditional development pattern and a cluster development. The traditional neighborhood is designed with uniform-sized large lots (typically 2.5 acres or greater) that blanket an entire development site, consuming all the land and destroying the distinctive, natural features that make the site a special place.

Traditional Neighborhood Design



Cluster Neighborhood Design



Source: SARPC

In contrast, a cluster development plan uses a greater variety of lot sizes (generally 1/4 to 1 acre in size) to accommodate the same number of units, while preserving substantial areas as open space. The retaining pond is preserved as an accessible amenity, linked with roadways to a trail. With more connections and linkages between streets, travel distances are shorter throughout the development. The sparse arrangement of homes along the main roads on the perimeter also provide an attractive, unobstructed view of the development's rural surroundings. Cluster development is achieved when residential units cluster on a portion of the land and leave the remaining land undeveloped, which helps protect the natural and rural character of the community.

SPECIALTY HOUSING MARKET

Creola's regional location lends itself to the development of a specialty housing market to attract retirees and/or young professionals with new families. Population studies predict that by the year 2030, one in five Americans will be over 65 years of age and will comprise 20% of the population. The aging of the Baby Boomer generation is a national trend that has many implications. To ensure that older Americans don't just add years to their lives, but also increase their quality of life, it will require individuals, families, and communities to plan for successful aging. As these generations continue to age, city leaders must find ways to make Creola a lifelong, intergenerational community, making the city a more desirable place to live. Further details and strategies for lifelong communities can be found at the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging at www.n4a.org and the Alabama Department of Senior Services at: www.adss.state.al.us

Patio & Garden Homes

There are several housing options for this portion of the population such as Garden Homes, Patio Homes, apartments, and condominiums. The concept for these housing styles is the same; a maintenance-free home that offers plenty of amenities, but does not require a lot of maintenance. While the product name may vary among builders, the idea is the same: a single-family detached or duplex home on a small lot with amenities similar to a townhome or condominium, such as yard maintenance provided by the homeowner's association or a community pool. Some include tennis courts, fitness/workout areas and walking trails. These types of housing developments should be considered when planning for housing in Creola.

Tiny Houses

Another housing type that is currently trending are Tiny House Developments. Communities of small homes or tiny houses are popping up as new developments in progressive neighborhoods. The basic concept for the Tiny House Movement, also called the Small House Movement is to provide affordable housing so homeowners can live simpler and within their means. Smaller homes are less expensive than larger ones in terms of utility costs, taxes and building, heating, maintenance, and repair costs.

Tiny Houses are a self-contained, mobile living space that provides the homeowner with freedom and flexibility. These transient dwellings offer independence, affordability, and sustainability. Typically allowed in RV and/or Mobile Home Parks in zoning codes, Tiny House Developments can also be built within a Planned Unit Development

(PUD) community that is exclusive to Tiny Houses, complete with amenities such as walking trails, community gardens, amphitheater, and farmers markets. They are essentially the new mobile home in the housing market that provide permanent housing solutions to demographic groups such as retirees, veterans, students, and transients. The lower cost of living may be advantageous and more suitable for those 55 and older with fixed incomes and little savings. The typical size of a small home seldom exceeds 500 square feet and the home is usually assembled on wheels. In the United States, the average size of new single family homes grew from 1,780 square feet in 1978 to 2,662 square feet in 2013, despite a decrease in the size of the average family. With the stagnant economy most Americans have experienced for the last several years, traditional housing options aren't always feasible for people who desire home ownership. Tiny House developments provide an option for affordable home ownership.



Tiny House Community in Orlando
Source: theplaidzebra.com

Accessory Dwelling Units

Other initiatives to attract home buyers to communities is the option of using accessory dwelling units for housing. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and Accessory Living Quarters (ALQ) are intended to increase the supply of affordable and independent housing for a variety of households, increase home and personal security, provide supplemental earnings, and increase urban residential densities. ADUs and ALQs are located in residential zoning districts. An Accessory Dwelling Unit is a home that is located on the same lot, and under the same ownership as, and is detached from, an owner-occupied single family dwelling. It is intended for use as a complete, independent living facility. It does not substantially alter the single-family character, harmony, and appearance of the lot or its conformity with the character of the neighborhood, meeting all setback and lot coverage requirements. An ADU is defined as separate living quarters detached from the primary residence. Mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and guest houses are not considered ADUs and should not be allowed as a dwelling unit use in the zoning codes. Offering this type of housing enables the homeowner to provide separate, independent living quarters for a family member who wishes to maintain their independent lifestyle, but can not continue living completely on their own.

Multi-Family Housing

High density residential development should be carefully incorporated into the community with special consideration given to traffic volume and accessibility. The moderate density levels, along with limited high density development, is necessary to foster community atmosphere, support local businesses, and facilitate delivery of services. This type of housing should be considered to attract individuals and small families who are not in need of home ownership. Interconnections between neighborhoods should be maintained with sidewalks and other pedestrian friendly accessibility



Townhome Community
Source: Zillow.com

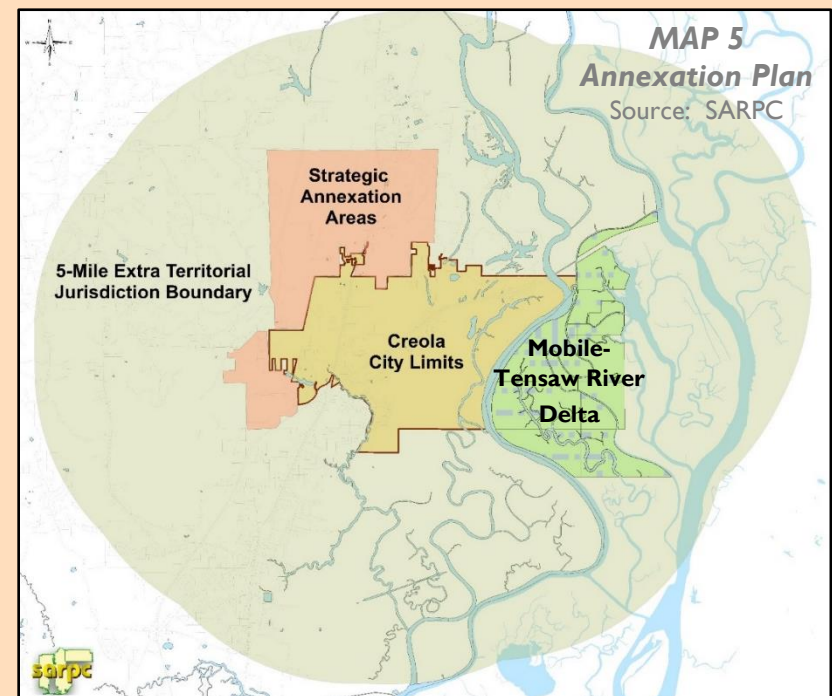
options. It is recommended that a residential market study be conducted to determine what type of specialty housing market would be feasible in Creola.

Strategic Annexation

Communities typically annex property in several different ways: proactively, opportunistically, or strategically. It is suggested that Creola approach future annexations in a strategic manner that accomplishes the vision and key goals of the community. The city should consider annexation for land adjacent to Radcliff Road in efforts to expand industry in the area. The city should also consider annexing lands to the north and west of the current corporate limits in efforts to protect the watershed of Gunnison Creek, Dead Lake, and Big Bayou Canot. Development within this northwest area would likely occur as residential. Low impact development strategies are needed to reduce problems caused by stormwater runoff into the waterways south of these areas.

Extra Territorial Jurisdiction

The Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) is an area that extends beyond the City Limits for a distance of 5 miles in all directions with the exception of where neighboring municipalities ETJ boundary intersect.



When development occurs outside the city limits, that development is not subject to zoning regulations of Creola, meaning, the city can not enforce any zoning regulations for development on that site. Additionally, the city can not collect the needed sales and property tax revenue on these properties. The city is allowed to enforce the subdivision regulations in the ETJ and can collect impact fees when development does not meet the subdivision regulations.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The future land use plan was created based on Creola's vision statement, which focuses on expanding upon existing industry, recruiting more commercial to the city, utilizing the existing natural resources, providing quality, affordable housing, and ultimately preserving Creola's family-oriented, relaxing atmosphere. To accomplish this vision, the Creola Planning Commission evaluated studies and reports from city leaders and professionals, along with citizen comments, to formulate a future land use map that illustrates how the city plans to look in twenty years. Identification of floodplains, wetlands and uplands were considered and evaluated in the creation of the growth concept map. The Future Land Use Plan is essentially a road map the city can use to guide development by identifying the proper placement of land use activities that are appropriate to the area. It correlates with the zoning map in efforts to implement the strategies listed throughout the Plan. New zoning districts will be established to allow for new land use activities and development that will in turn create a functional and sustainable community. Implementation of these resources will protect property owners, housing values, and natural resources over time.

The vision of Creola emphasizes the importance of protecting the natural resources while carefully utilizing them to their fullest to create new economic opportunities through eco-tourism development. The corporate limits of Creola are rather large, as compared to the existing population, which has resulted in a somewhat low density overall. This is due to the existence of large tracts of land that are either used for conservation purposes or undeveloped. The existing land use map shows that a majority of these large land parcels are located in areas of the city that are not easily accessible and lie within floodplain zones and wetland areas. However, these environmentally sensitive lands can carefully be developed for eco-tourism purposes such as birding trails and fishing piers, etc. These types of

developments require additional permitting, inspections from regulatory agencies, and restrictions, but can be developed into an economically viable business for the city. In contrast, the majority commercial development has occurred along Highway 43 in a linear fashion, which has created a rather dense area with smaller parcels of land. Much of this concentrated area of the city is not properly be utilized with retail development to provide tax-based revenues for the city. Instead, many land parcels adjacent to Highway 43 are used for residential purposes. In order for the city to grow economically, prime commercial real estate must be identified and fully utilized to develop revenue for the city. Regional and convenience commercial should be developed adjacent to exits 19 and 22 along Interstate 65. It is essential that these particular land parcels are used in the future to develop businesses that capture Interstate travelers and visitors.

Parts of the city sit at a very low elevations and are highly susceptible to riverine flooding associated with storm surge and heavy rains. Because of these circumstances, Creola faces the challenge of providing areas for housing and commercial development that are protected from the flood zone.

Due to the development of this Comprehensive Master Plan, the residents have the unique opportunity to define how and if the city will grow and develop in the future. While the population in Creola has remained relatively constant, continued increases in population and development in Mobile County places pressure on smaller communities like Creola to grow and accommodate the housing need. Therefore, new developments should be required to provide the necessary road and infrastructure improvements needed to accommodate the development. These improvements should not be subsidized by the city. Furthermore, it is the vision of many residents of Creola to remain a small community and maintain the community's small town atmosphere. However, the city should responsibly prepare for development and growth to occur by implementing and enforcing proper planning and design guidelines.

Future Land Use Plan

The future land use plan is conceptual in nature, rather than exact, and it is meant to serve as a general guide rather than a precise formula. It will always be changing and adapting as the city grows and changes in the coming years. Amendments to this plan and map may be necessary to reflect new and changing conditions as the city develops.

Good land use planning includes emphasis on economic and social issues in a community, so it important that the future land use plan supports the goals and recommendations outlined in this document. To effectively implement the Master Plan, the City Council, Planning Commission, and Administrative Departments should all consult this document prior to making any planning, development, or budgetary decisions, approvals or actions.

LAND USE...

A description of how land is occupied or used

LAND USE PLAN...

A basic element of the Master plan containing proposals for the physical, economic, and social development of the community

The future land use plan was created based on Creola’s vision statement which values the rural, small town, family friendly atmosphere. To accomplish this vision, the future land use plan calls for the city to be divided into seven land use development districts, each with their own unique purpose. They are as follows and Table 6 to the right and on the following page lists the allowable uses for each district.

- Residential
- Old Town
- Industrial & Special Use
- Recreational Conservation
- Interstate Commercial Overlay
- Highway 43 Commercial Corridor
- Floodplain Overlay

TABLE 6: FUTURE LAND USE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS
<p>RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS</p> <p><i>Future lands used for the Residential needs of the city will include Suburban Neighborhood developments and other residential housing options that supply the specialty housing market. The purpose of this district is to provide a variety of housing options in appropriate areas that are protected from the floodplain. It will encourage the future development of safe neighborhoods that incorporate characteristics such as sidewalks, proper setbacks to allow for ample yard sizes, lot dimensions to determine density and other design details. Suburban Neighborhoods include rural and traditional style housing developments with larger lot sizes and low to medium density. Specialty housing developments include Patio & Garden style housing that provide individual dwelling units with shared outdoor space. Other housing options include duplexes, townhomes, tiny houses, apartments, and condominiums, all of which allow for higher density and multi-family dwelling units. Specialty housing developments are generally within close proximity to commercial services and provide more options for pedestrians in efforts to promote walkability. Other allowable land uses include parks and schools.</i></p>
<p>OLD TOWN DISTRICT</p> <p><i>The purpose of the Old Town district is to create a vibrant and walkable municipal center. It will contain a variety of land uses, including parks, neighborhood commercial, professional services and offices, residential housing, personal services establishments, and civic uses. Commercial should be smaller-scaled, that provide goods and services to the adjacent neighborhoods. Civic uses should include city hall, library, post office, police/fire complex, etc. Design elements and civic enhancements will be encouraged, such as fountains, park benches, playgrounds, walking paths, street furniture, all of which will serve as a municipal complex that provides a community gathering place and opportunity for walking.</i></p>
<p>INDUSTRIAL & SPECIAL USE DISTRICT</p> <p><i>These districts should be planned as major single purpose land uses, major industrial sites, and large industrial parks that offer a mix of industrial uses. The purpose of this district is to allow for activities that may involve the processing, handling, and creating of products as well as research and technological processes. Heavier industries may include manufacturing, assembling, fabrication, processing, bulk handling of products, storage, warehousing and heavy trucking. Consideration should be given to the potential hazardous threat the facility has on surrounding properties, adjacent roadways, and nearby water bodies. Appropriate engineering and drainage plans should be required that give special consideration for sufficient utility and transportation supply needs.</i></p>
<p>RECREATIONAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT</p> <p><i>The purpose of the Conservation District is to allow for recreational development in environmentally sensitive areas and to utilize lands that are currently undeveloped or under-developed. This district also creates eco-tourism opportunities that will utilize existing natural resources, while ensuring their protection and sustainability. Land uses will be limited to those that encourage outdoor recreation and eco-tourism activities, such as kayaking, canoeing, boating, fishing, birding, bicycling, walking, hiking, swimming, farming, etc. Elevated boardwalks and other protective construction standards that include pervious surfacing and the like will be required, in efforts to protect underlying wetlands. Conservation practices will be used for the purpose of providing green/open space for drainage, filtration, and protection to other neighboring developed lands. Land uses and activities will be limited due to the fragile nature of the landscape.</i></p>

INTERSTATE 65 COMMERCIAL OVERLAY

The purpose of the I-65 Commercial Overlay is to manage specific development along this major route and create a welcoming gateway into Creola. It should provide convenient access to interstate travelers and offer opportunity for interstate-oriented business. Commercial development should be specific in this district to include larger, regional businesses such as “big box” retailers, grocery stores, banks, restaurants, service stations, and hotels. Industrial land uses, storage facilities, and warehouse uses should not be allowed in this district. Special attention should be given to appropriate architectural and community design guidelines to capture motorist, including but not limited to: building facades; roof pitches; landscaping; signage; lighting, etc. These civic enhancements should be required to ensure that each development complements the city, while creating a civic identity for Creola.

HIGHWAY 43 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

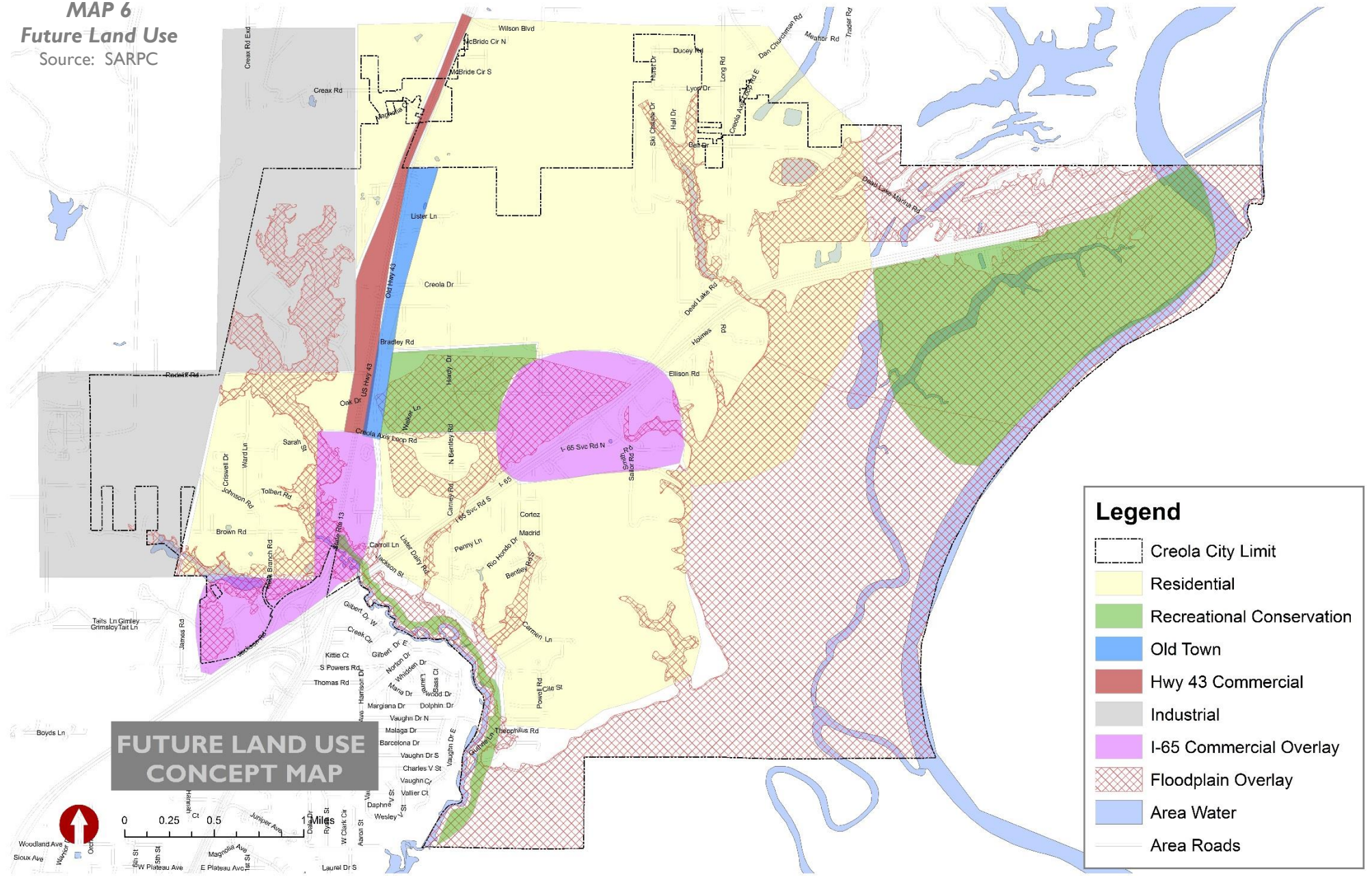
Similar to the Interstate 65 Commercial Overlay, the purpose of the Highway 43 Commercial Corridor is to manage development along this major north/south route and create a gateway into Creola. This roadway should have limited access that is controlled and safe for other motorists and pedestrians. Commercial development should be local and small-scale in nature to accommodate the needs of local residents. Sidewalks, crosswalks and other pedestrian-friendly features should be encouraged to allow for more foot and bicycle traffic. Medians and other traffic calming measures should be added as well to ensure pedestrian safety. Special attention should be given to creating “entrances” to the city and creating a “sense of place” by adding cohesive streetscape features such as welcome and directional signage, lighting, flags, and street furniture.

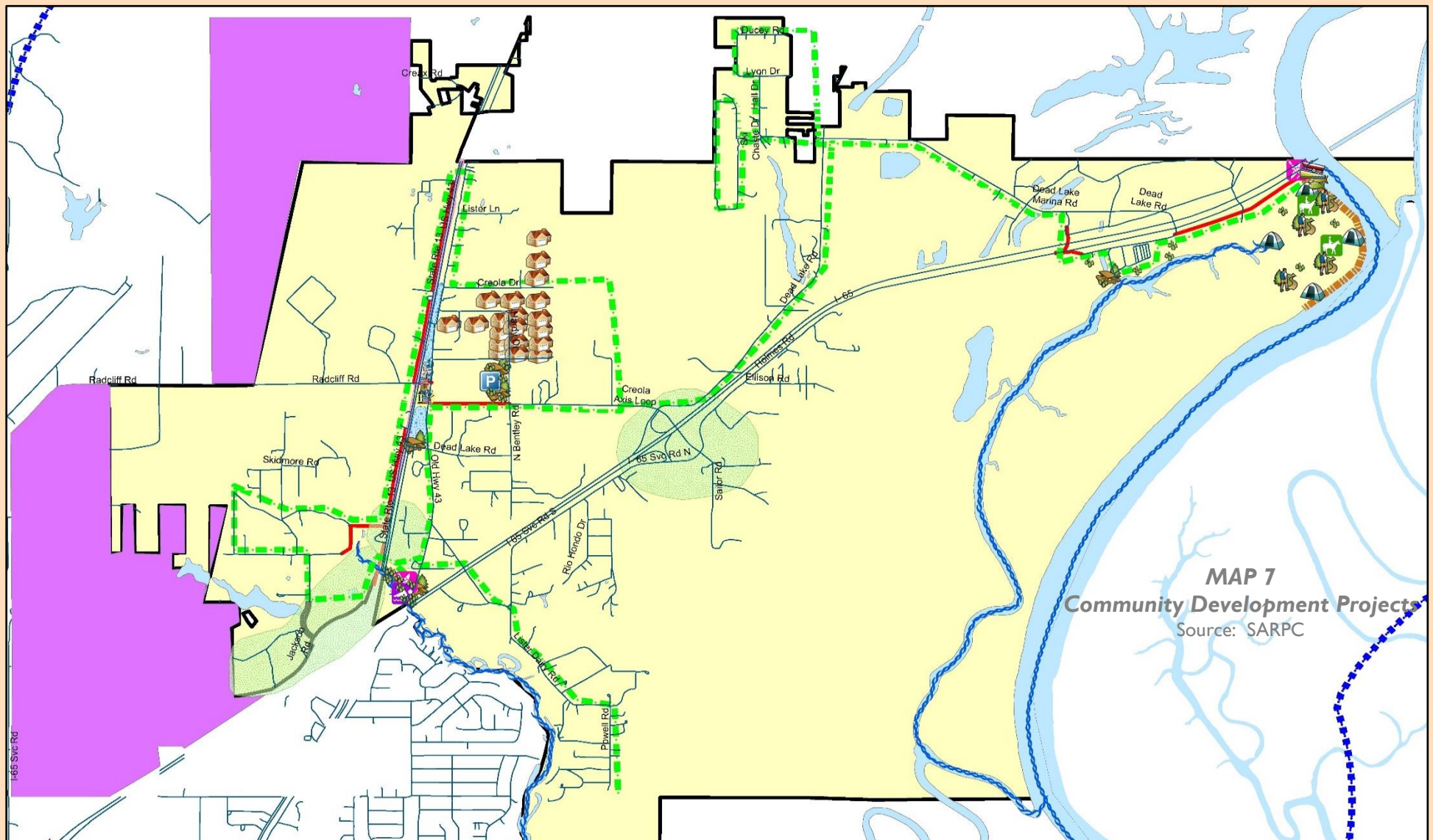
FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY

Lands that are located within the floodplain overlay boundary are considered environmentally sensitive and vulnerable to flooding during storm events. In efforts to reduce the potential threat of property damage and hazards to life, new construction in this area will require additional permitting from regulatory agencies as well as elevation requirements and regulations implemented by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Provisions for open space and low impact development will be encouraged. All land uses allowed in the underlying zoning districts will be permitted.

The following maps illustrate the Future Land Use Plan for Creola for the next twenty years. *Map 6* identifies the general location of the suggested land use development districts, while *Map 7* indicates the location of suggested future land uses and community projects. The future land use map suggests how the city could develop over the next two decades. Identification of floodplains, wetlands, and uplands were considered and evaluated in the creation of the new development districts. The future land use map is essentially a road map the city can use to guide development by identifying the proper placement of land use activities that are appropriate to the area. It correlates with the zoning map in efforts to implement the strategies listed throughout the Plan. New zoning districts will be established to allow for new land use activities and development that will in turn, create a functional and sustainable community. Implementation of these resources will protect property owners, increase housing values, and preserve natural resources over time.

MAP 6
Future Land Use
 Source: SARPC





MAP 7
Community Development Projects
 Source: SARPC

CREOLA CITY LIMITS

1.5 Mile Planning Area

Highway 33 Commercial Corridor

I-65 Commercial Corridors

Old Town Commercial Corridor

Industrial Expansion

New Roads

New Housing Developments

Parking

Parks

Boat Launch

Swimming Area

Hiking Trail

Equestrian Trail

Fishing Pier

Camping Area

Kayak Launch

Biking Trails

Paddle Trails

Boardwalk Trails

Chamber of Commerce

Municipal Complex

City Hall

Fire Station

Library

OUTDOOR RECREATION & ECO-TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Parkland Development

In addition to offering an attractive setting to spend leisure time, promoting social interaction and providing a healthy lifestyle, parks create and promote the following benefits that create a thriving and sustainable community:

- **SAFER NEIGHBORHOODS**- residential areas adjacent to parks and green spaces have lower crime rates
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**- enhance property values, increase municipal revenues and attract homebuyers and sports enthusiasts
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**- provides a social gathering place for neighbors and city leaders to interact and communicate
- **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**- ecologically conserves natural resources and ensures ecosystem function and health, sustains clear air and water
- **TOURISM**- promote offerings and attractions to target groups seeking out eco-tourism activities and events
- **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**- outdoor classrooms and learning centers provide hands-on, interactive education opportunity
- **SENITIVE LANDS**- utilize environmentally sensitive lands that can't support all types of development and work as natural buffers and filters for habitats and storm protection
- **SMART GROWTH**- define the layout, real estate value, traffic flow, public events, and the civic culture of a community, and reveal the natural beauty of a place

Future Economic Development

Economically sustainable communities share several core elements that create long-term socially and economically healthy communities. In order for a city to prosper economically and generate revenue, there must be a strong economic base contributing to the city's general fund. When shoppers buy from local commercial businesses, they contribute tax-based revenues to the city. If the city doesn't have enough businesses, or if the citizens aren't buying local, the city will not have enough revenue to pay for operating costs properly, much less grow the community.

City leaders must not only find ways to recruit commercial retail businesses to the city, they must also diversify the economy by tapping into new commercial endeavors, such as eco-tourism or nature based economic developments.

Eco-Tourism

Economic research has proven that people will seek out and pay dearly to experience nature based activities. Throughout the planning process, many ideas were shared at public meetings as to how to market the city and spur economic development. Eco-tourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that involves the exploitation and utilization of natural areas in order to carry out environmentally friendly activities. It provides an educational opportunity by focusing primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, its landscape, flora, fauna and the habitats within. Tourism and eco-tourism development diversifies the local economy of a community by providing the alternate source of industry and livelihood. A symbiotic and complex relationship between the environment and human activities is possible when careful planning and regulatory polies are established and followed. Nature based tourism developments provide direct benefits that offset pressure from other less sustainable activities that make use of natural and cultural resources. If developed correctly, the nature-based tourism industry can conserve resources, protect biological diversity, and maintain the sustainable use of resources, while gaining economic benefit.

The following is a suggested list of eco-tourism development strategies that could potentially grow and expand the Creola's economy. It was derived from a combination

of citizen comments from the community survey, input gathered at town hall meetings and planning discussions. It is highly encouraged that the city coordinate with different organizations such as the Mobile County Commission, Mobile Chamber of Commerce, and other community development organizations to attract and promote eco-tourism to the Creola.

Examples of Eco-Tourism Development

- Birding trails & observation towers
- U-PICK Farms
- Kayak/canoe/paddle board outfitters & launching sites
- Environmental education center
- Primitive campgrounds
- Archery/Shooting ranges
- Hunting areas & guided tours
- Biking, hiking & nature trails
- Scenic overlooks
- Fishing piers
- Zip-line parks
- Community parks & playground
- Community gardens
- Equestrian trails & services
- Linear Parks



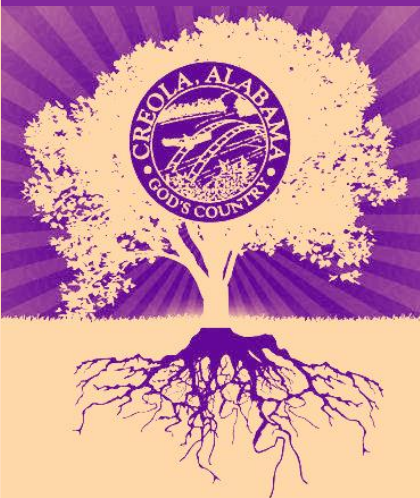


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CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

- Community Development
- Community Design
- Community Organizations
- Community Events Calendar
- Project Priority List



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community design is defined as the discipline concerned with functional and visual relationships between people and their physical environment. It examines ways in which the physical environment can be desirably formed, using design techniques and planning methods specific to the city that will create an overall civic identity for the community. Communities are defined by their people and the actions of the people. The character of a community is established by the design and aesthetics of its features, giving an overall impression of the community and creating a unique “sense of place”. Community design elements include:

- welcoming gateways
- street and sidewalk design
- lighting design and intensity
- way-finding and directional signage
- landscaping and beautification
- pedestrian accessibility features
- utility placement
- historic preservation

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Streetscaping

An important concept and element of community design is streetscaping. Streetscaping includes street furniture, lighting, landscaping, signage, curbing, paving materials, sidewalks, gateways, and other aesthetically pleasing corridor elements. A successful streetscape provides visual interest, and creates social meeting places for community interaction. A positive, harmonious streetscape can create a positive overall impression of the community.

GATEWAYS & SIGNAGE

Gateways provide an opportunity to make a positive first impression to welcome people entering the city by establishing an arrival point or destination. A “sense of place” can be experienced even before entering the geographic boundaries of a city. A city’s entrance gateway should be a reflection of the city’s people, character and define the community’s identity. New and updated welcoming gateways are needed at entry points along the main roadways throughout Creola. They should include improvements such as decorative lighting and landscaping elements. Way-finding and Points of Interest signage is needed for the community as well. Creola has many notable features and interesting places of interests that should be identified and advertised to travelers and visitors.



Transportation studies have proven that motorists will exit the interstate if a business or point of interest is properly advertised.

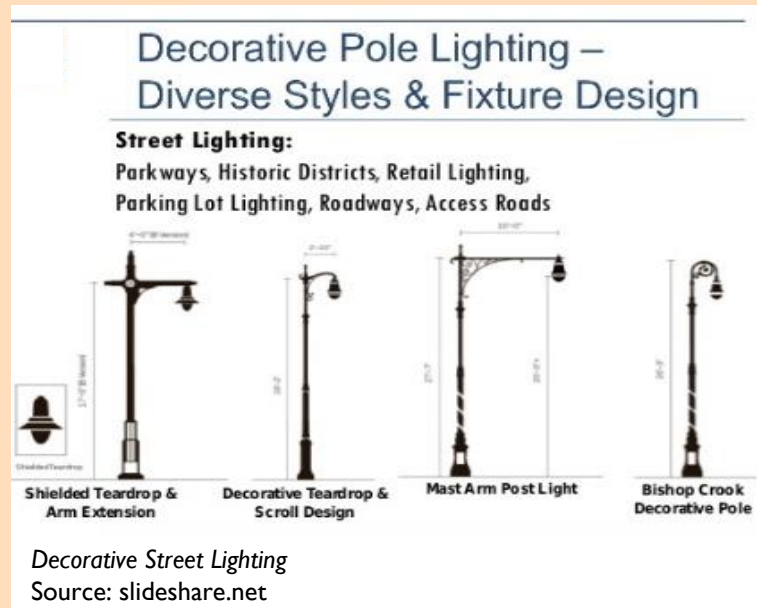
SIDEWALKS & TRAILS

Sidewalks are an important community design element because they provide many benefits including safety, mobility, and healthier communities. They promote walkability and provide the basis for and support of the use of street furniture. Sidewalks and trails should be plentiful throughout a community and provide for various modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, hiking, paddling, and equestrian. Additionally, they should be installed with a protective median or barrier that effectively separates the pedestrian from motorists. The lack of sidewalks and other pedestrian accommodations is a major concern amongst citizens who participated in the community survey, along with a need for crosswalks and other measures that provide pedestrian safety and accessibility.

It is strongly encouraged that the city coordinate with organizations such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), to conduct a walkability assessment of the community to determine and identify areas in need of sidewalk additions and rehabilitation.

LIGHTING

Lighting is an important element of community design and a key component to a successful streetscape. City lighting should offer high illumination, security, and safety, but also be environmentally friendly by consuming little energy. Night lighting can dominate the mood and focus of a streetscape. Supporting structures for light fixtures (e.g. light poles) are part of the overall “street furniture” associated with



public and private streets. As such, these structures define the streetscape and establish a civic identity. Low-level street lighting offers the most pleasing community design, along with proper safety function.



STREET FURNITURE

Streetscapes are, in large measure, defined and enhanced by the orderly and disciplined installation of street furniture. Street furniture elements include items such as park benches, community clocks, community fountains, trash receptacles, and other enhancements that catch the eye and serve a function. Street furniture gives character and quality to a streetscape, while making the area more attractive to the pedestrian. It acts to convert a harsh street scene to a more sensitive human scale that is inviting and promotes community. It is recommended that the city identify areas throughout the



LANDSCAPING & BEAUTIFICATION

Landscaping provides a welcoming and attractive appearance to a community. Requiring landscaping standards for commercial developments and parking lots can enhance a community, making it a desirable place to shop and do business. Even minimal landscaping improvements, such as yard plantings and hanging baskets can greatly improve the overall appearance of a community, as well as promote civic pride amongst the residents. An overwhelming number of survey respondents stated the city is in need of additional landscaping and beautification improvements and would support efforts that would provide for a cleaner and more inviting city.

community that are in need of street furniture and work with local businesses to sponsor city beautification programs that would provide these enhancements for the community.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS & DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

Community organizations are what bring the people of Creola together. These volunteer groups often have planned, coordinated, and proposed actions and events that help achieve a common goal and greater community. Members of these groups often identify what they view as issues or assets of their community and develop projects and events around them. In communities like Creola, city budgets are limited to operations only, and funds for any ancillary projects are all but impossible to come by. These organizations play a critical role in raising the needed funds to afford these vital community projects and events in order to help the city grow and evolve. It is essential that these organizations remain and new groups form in order to sustain the community for future generations. The existing community development groups and organizations in Creola currently include:

- Creola Community Development Organization, Inc.
- Creola-Axis Ministerial Association

Creola Community Development Organization, Inc.

Formed approximately four years ago, this group of dedicated volunteers united because they wanted to do something good for the community and help bring people together. The group works very hard to organize events and programs to keep the community engaged and interested. They make every effort to ensure residents are aware of all the community events. Ms. Venus Davis currently presides as President of the group. She and other of the group participate in many community events throughout the year and volunteers whenever needed. They would like to expand their efforts by offering grant writing and services to the city. Some of the annual events the group sponsors and oversees are the Children's Halloween Costume Contest and the Creola Christmas parade. Other events the group has organized:

1. Monthly Yard of the Month recognition
2. Easter Pancake Breakfast (partnered with Creola Assembly of God)
3. Appreciation/Recognition Breakfast for Seniors and Veterans – Annually
4. Community Clean Up Day (1-2) per year (volunteers include local churches, and Boys Scouts and Girls Scout troops)
5. Movie Night in Friedman's Park (Usually under the pavilion during summer or early fall)

6. Honors Citizen of the Year and Business of the Year (Citizen Of the Year gets to be Grand Marshal at the Christmas parade)
7. Participants in the annual Christmas Toy Drive at the Gulf Coast Opry
8. Routine canned food drives



Creola-Axis Ministerial Association

The Creola Axis Ministerial Association was organized in 2007 with a goal to bring unity to the community through area churches. There are fourteen churches in the Creola/Axis area and they are all partners in the association.

Vision Statement

Bringing unity among the Churches of North Mobile County, specifically in the Creola/Axis area. "Finally, all of you, be like minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." (1 Peter 3:8)

Mission Statement

We are a community of Senior Pastors, Pastors, and Ministers in Northern Mobile County (Creola/Axis) who are committed to glorifying God by:

- *Developing healthy relationships with each other;*
- *Participating together in ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice for our community;*
- *Facilitating expressions of unity, outreach, service, worship, fellowship, and discipleship;*
- *Promoting Biblical perspectives on issues that affect our community in a humble Christ honoring way;*
- *Being open to new and future ways God may lead us to share our lives and ministry together.*

Statement of Faith

As partners in ministry we share a common faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We also recognize there is diversity within our association. We want to affirm the essentials of the Christian faith while leaving room for different views on the non-essentials. As we share our lives and ministry together we want to live in such a humble way that the Holy Spirit is continually producing in us the fruit of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

Our Common Commitment

We are committed to sharing our lives together with love and respect. We want our lives to be an answer to Jesus’ prayer that his followers, “may be brought to complete unity.” (John 17: 23)

LeMoyne Industrial Park Community Day in the Park

The LeMoyne Industrial Park (LIP) was formed in 1983 and is located in the nearby community of Axis. The purpose of the park is to allow members to cooperate on projects of common interests and restrict the property within the park to uses that include manufacturing, assembly, and

processing. The Industrial Park is made up of the following companies: DuPont, US Amines, AMVAC, Akzo Nobel, SSAB, Lenzing Fibers, Inc., Axis Industrial Landfill, Arkema, and Alabama Power.

Each year on the first Saturday in November, the LIP hosts a Community Day in the Park at Friedman’s Park, and the public is invited to attend. The purpose of the event is to educate the public about the LIP and to promote other local organizations. The LIP is committed to giving back to the community and helping communities grow. They have contributed many valuable assets to the area such as establishing scholarship funds and programs, maintenance of Highway 43 (trash pick-up, mowing, and plantings of crepe myrtles), developed emergency plans for neighboring communities, and provide medical services support to local fire departments. The Community Day in the Park attracts a huge crowd each year and provides a great opportunity for neighbors in north Mobile County to learn more about each other. The event not only provides information booths about each company in the LIP, but it also showcases other organizations in the area, provides live music, lunch, public safety information and demonstrations, offers door prizes, contests, and other prize give-aways. Additionally, the LIP donates \$5,000 to the City of Creola for the Council to use toward park upgrades and repairs. In the past, these funds have been used to pay for playground equipment, walking trails, and improvements to the pavilion and restroom facilities.



COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

The following is a list of annual community events which are currently held throughout the year. The City Council works with the Planning Commission and other community groups to schedule and host these events and continually adds events to the list. If you have an idea for a new event or would like to add to the current schedule, please contact the City of Creola with any suggestions.

January ~

February ~

March ~

April ~ *Easter Sunrise Service, Easter Pancake Breakfast*

May ~ *National Day of Prayer, Arkema Senior Fish Fry*

June ~ *Veteran's Appreciation Breakfast, Senior Pancake Breakfast*

July ~ *Fourth of July Community Picnic*

August ~

September ~ *BARK for Life, Relay for Life*

October ~ *Children's Halloween Costume Contest*

November ~ *LIP Community Day in the Park, Creola-Axis Ministerial Day*

December ~ *Community Christmas Parade, Toys 4 Tots Toy Drive*



Annual Christmas Parade

Source: City of Creola



Christmas Celebration at Friedman's Park

Source: City of Creola



Annual Christmas Parade

Source: City of Creola

Needs & Opportunities

Creola's Planning Commission conducted many work sessions, city hall meetings, and community surveys throughout the planning process in hopes of determining the wants and needs of the residents. Public comments revealed that the creation of additional parks, trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, and water access areas are some of the most important things to the citizens of Creola. The following is a list of outdoor recreation ideas and suggestions, along with other community development needs collected from residents throughout the planning process, and they are as follows:

- Install Welcoming Gateways at prominent entry points to the city along Highway 43 and Interstate-65 exits
- Provide more parking at Crenshaw Park
- Create more parks and picnic facilities
- Build more playgrounds with quality playground equipment
- Install way-finding and directional signage to city parks and other points of interest
- Build more walking and bike trails
- Install lighting at city parks
- Larger pavilion is needed at Friedman's Park
- Improve and expand parking at Friedman's Park (Creola Municipal Park)
- Provide better access to Dead Lake Marina from I-65
- Develop more paddle trails and establish a kayak rental facility
- Install signage on I-65 to advertise and direct traffic to Dead Lake Marina
- Create a Welcome Center along I-65 to capture Interstate motorist to welcome visitors to Creola and Mobile County
- Create a Railroad Depot History museum
- Establish a public library branch to service Creola and north Mobile County
- Create a Chamber of Commerce
- Establish a Farmer's Market/Community Garden
- Create a Community Development Corporation to raise funds for community development projects
- Construct elevated boardwalks in and around wetlands/marshlands to create birding and walking trails
- Establish a branch of the YMCA to service Creola and north Mobile County
- Develop equestrian trails
- Develop new boat launch, kayak launch, trails, fishing pier, and camping under Gen. WK Wilson Jr. Bridge along Mobile River
- Build a bicycle trail throughout the community

PROJECT PRIORITY LIST

The following list indicates the top community development priority projects for Creola. City leaders should strive to complete this projects within the first three to five years following adoption of this Comprehensive Master Plan.

1. Amend Creola's Subdivision Regulations & Zoning Ordinance to correlate with the Comprehensive Master Plan
2. Engage ALDOT to develop a Highway 43 development plan
3. Develop an Old Town Municipal Complex
4. Recruit new businesses to Highway 43
5. Recruit new businesses to I-65 interchanges
6. Develop a capital improvements program and budget
7. Form volunteer committees to implement community projects and seek funding opportunities
8. Address drainage issues throughout the community
9. Establish a local restaurant
10. Seek funding to develop a sidewalk system
11. Provide more employment opportunity for the youth
12. Develop more community programs for the youth
13. Develop a website for the city
14. Form a Chamber of Commerce
15. Partner with the Poarch Creek Indians on Community Development projects
16. Coordinate with Mobile County Library System to establish a public library branch in the city
17. Advertise and install directional signage throughout community
18. Install welcoming gateways along Highway 43 & I-65
19. Build more recreational trails and playgrounds
20. Provide a health care facility
21. Build a municipal auditorium
22. Coordinate with the state tourism board to create a welcome center on I-65
23. Establish a history museum
24. Expand Dead Lake Marina
25. Establish partnerships with neighboring communities to attract more ASA Youth Softball and other sports tournaments to Creola Municipal Park
26. Coordinate with YMCA to establish a branch in Creola to service north Mobile County residents
27. Develop retail
28. Create more family entertainment type facilities such as a community swimming pool, movie theater, bowling alley, and skating rink
29. Improve park facilities such as tennis and basketball courts, and little league fields
30. Approach neighboring communities to form industrial partnerships and boards
31. Establish partnerships with LeMoyne Industrial Board to recruit more industry

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CHAPTER 6

GOALS, STRATEGIES & PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

➤ Goals, Strategies & Recommendations

➤ Implementation Schedule



GOALS, STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of community goals and recommendations were formulated from input by the Creola Planning Commission, city employees and officials, and the citizens of Creola. The purpose of these goals and recommendations to to create a framework for future change that is easy to follow and feasible to implement over the next 20 years.

PEOPLE & ECONOMY

Goal: Promote and enhance opportunities for businesses that are complementary to Creola

- Support existing businesses
- Work with the Mobile County Chamber of Commerce and the Mobile County Commission to recruit new business opportunities to the area
- Support the LeMoyne Industrial Park and coordinate with these partners to expand upon more industrial opportunity
- Partner with the surrounding communities of Satsuma and Axis to form a regional Industrial Board to recruit new industrial opportunity
- Amend zoning ordinance to limit uses along US Highway 43 to commercial

HOUSING

Goal: Provide quality housing in a variety of types and densities

- Update the zoning ordinance to allow for the types of housing and densities outlined in this Plan.
- Identify areas in need of development/redevelopment
- Build more housing for retirees and young families
- Update the subdivision regulations to allow for open space subdivisions
- Continue and expand upon a strategic annexation campaign to bring more residents into the corporate limits

TRANSPORTATION

Goal: Improve appearance and functionality of US Highway 43

- Develop an access management plan
- Explore funding options for service road
- Update zoning ordinance to create an overlay district to enhance Highway 43 appearance and provide design guidelines
- Install traffic signal at Jackson Road and Highway 43
- Install traffic calming measures along Highway 43 to reduce high-speed motorist along roadway

Goal: Improve local road conditions & expand road network

- Resurface deteriorating streets and pave dirt roads
- Add new roads to improve connections and accessibility between existing roads

Goal: Improve Creola's accessibility on Interstate 65

- Coordinate with ALDOT to install new interstate exit at northern portion of city to provide direct access to Dead Lake Marina
- Install new signage on I-65 to advertise and promote POI in Creola
- Coordinate with Alabama Tourism Department to create new Welcome Center near Gen. WK Wilson Jr. Bridge

Goal: Improve pedestrian access throughout the city and introduce alternative modes of transportation

- Expand sidewalk system to residential areas throughout community
- Amend subdivision regulations to require sidewalks for new development
- Utilize existing wetlands and railroad right-of-way for a recreational trail/sidewalk system
- Create bike/pedestrian connections between residential neighborhoods and other locations in the community
- Provide transportation options for senior citizens and persons with disabilities

Goal: Improve gateway and way-finding throughout the city

- Install gateway signage at major entrances into Creola
- Install attractive directional signage to important destinations within the community

LAND USE

Goal: Develop sound land use policies that preserve the small city atmosphere and rural lifestyle to ensure that Creola remains an attractive rural residential community.

- Amend zoning & subdivision regulations to allow for new land uses introduced in this Plan

Goal: Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive lands

- Limit allowable land uses and provide proper design guidelines in environmentally sensitive areas
- Develop a stormwater management plan
- Create a wetlands ordinance

RECREATION

Goal: Provide a variety of recreational opportunities for residents of Creola

- Seek funding for construction of equestrian/recreational trails and trailheads

- Establish a recreation board
- Introduce and market new events that will attract locals and visitors
- Utilize existing ball fields and facilities for additional recreational opportunities
- Install new lighting & parking where needed at existing parks
- Advertise park amenities
- Provide direct access to Dead Lake Marina from I-65
- Create new boardwalk trails at Crenshaw Park
- Create new park facility at foot of Gen. WK Wilson Jr. Bridge

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Goal: Provide appropriate community facilities and services that enhance the quality of life for all residents of Creola.

- Coordinate with the Mobile County Library System to establish a Public Library branch in Creola
- Hire additional police & fire personnel as needed
- Establish a street resurfacing and paving plan
- Coordinate with the Mobile County YMCA to establish a YMCA branch in Creola to service north Mobile County residents
- Create a community garden & farmers market
- Work with the Alabama Tourism Authority to establish a history museum for the city
- Establish a recycling program for the city

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Goal: Improve the city's image while preserving the small city atmosphere and rural lifestyle.

- Incorporate traditional neighborhood design standards into the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations
- Incorporate conservation neighborhoods into the subdivision regulations

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Goal: Improve the city's image while preserving the small city atmosphere and rural lifestyle.

- Improve the cleanliness & appearance of the community
- Add/update landscaping requirements in the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations
- Install new streetscaping elements throughout the community
- Create a new municipal complex center area around Friedman's Park and along Old Highway 43

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The following schedule outlines the objectives listed in the previous chapter and assigns each objective a suggested time frame for implementation. Many of the goals are also on-going, meaning there is no specific time frame and should be implemented throughout the life of this plan. In order to utilize this plan and achieve the goals and objectives found within, it is also important to remember the following.

- Use the plan by referring to it often, especially when making zoning and subdivision decisions, and when budgeting for capital improvement projects
- When applying for grants, refer to the plan for project ideas
- Conduct a yearly review to evaluate progress and document accomplishments
- Make the plan available to all city departments, city council, and the public
- Amend the plan, as necessary, to ensure the plan stays relevant
- Conduct review of the plan when new Census information is available

<i>CREOLA MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE TABLE</i>				
	0-5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	On-Going
<i>HOUSING</i>				
Update the zoning ordinance to allow for the types of housing and densities outlined in the plan	X			
Identify areas in need of new development/redevelopment				X
Encourage infill development in the existing neighborhoods				X
Provide housing to accommodate retirees & younger families	X			
Update the subdivision regulations to allow for open space subdivisions	X			
Conduct market study to determine which type of specialty housing market would be feasible in Creola	X			
Consider annexing land around Radcliff Road to expand upon Industrial and Manufacuturing Zone				X
Form a committee to investigate potential areas for annexation				X
Work with the National Flood Insurance Program to increase resiliency to flooding events and offer affordable flood insurance to residents				X
Create a Floodplain Overlay in the zoning ordinance to identify land areas that are included in the FEMA floodplain boundary	X			

TRANSPORTATION	0-5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	On-Going
Explore funding options for service road on US Highway 43	X			
Develop an access management plan for US Highway 43	X			
Develop a zoning overlay for US Highway 43	X			
Resurface deteriorating streets and pave dirt roads				X
Update zoning ordinance to prohibit off-premise signs	X			
Add new roads to improve connections and accessibility between existing roads		X	X	
Coordinate with ALDOT to create landscaped median on Highway 43 to calm and slow traffic through city limits				X
Participate in the Pay As You Go program to pave dirt roads throughout community	X			
Expand current sidewalk system to residential areas throughout community		X		
Amend subdivision regulations to require sidewalks for new development	X			
Coordinate with National Modal Railroad Association to install new railroad to connect Dead Lake Road with Hwy 43		X	X	
Utilize existing wetlands and railroad right-of-way for a recreational trail/sidewalk system		X		
Create bike/pedestrian connections between residential neighborhoods and other locations in the community		X		
Install attractive directional signage to important destinations within the city	X			
Provide transportation options for senior citizens and persons with disabilities		X		
Install gateway signage at major entrances to Creola on Hwy 43 and Interstate 65	X			
Install traffic signal at Jackson Road and Highway 43	X			
Install traffic calming measures on Highway 43 to slow motorists	X			
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES				
Create a welcome center		X		

Establish a transportation program for the elderly		X		
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES (CONT'D)	0-5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	On-Going
Establish a public library branch		X		
Establish a YMCA branch			X	X
Establish a farmers market & community garden	X			
Coordinate with Mobile County Library System to provide Bookmobile services to community	X			
Establish a history museum			X	
Hire additional police & fire personnel as needed	X			
Establish a street resurfacing and paving plan	X			
Provide more alternatives for public and private education	X			
COMMUNITY DESIGN				
Incorporate traditional neighborhood design standards into the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations	X			
Incorporate conservation neighborhoods into the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations	X			
Improve the appearance & cleanliness of the community				X
Create and adopt a wetlands protection ordinance	X			
Add/update landscaping & tree protection requirements in the zoning ordinance	X			
Create a stormwater management plan	X			
Install street furniture throughout community to promote sense of community	X			
Install welcoming gateways into community	X			
Work with Tree City USA to become a member				
Install way finding signage throughout community to identify points of interests throughout community	X			
Coordinate with LIP Industrial Park to sponsor community improvement projects	X			
Coordinate with local community development groups to host more community wide programs and events				X

LAND USE	0-5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	On-Going
Amend the zoning ordinance to implement the districts included in this plan	X			
Create an “OLD TOWN” land use district along Old Hwy 43 to develop a centralized community hub				X
Amend the subdivision regulations to support the districts included in this plan	X			
Amend zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to include conservation neighborhoods	X			
Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive lands		X		
Create a Floodplain Overlay zone for land areas that are included in the FEMA floodplain boundary	X			
RECREATION				
Create a unified streetscape plan for community	X			
Seek funding for construction/recreational trails and trailheads		X		
Install parking lot at Crenshaw Park	X			
Establish a recreation board		X		
Introduce and market new events that will attract locals and visitors				X
Utilize existing ball fields and facilities for additional recreational opportunities				X
Install more parking at Friedman’s Park	X			
Utilize environmentally sensitive lands with eco-tourism development opportunities				X
PEOPLE & ECONOMY				
Support existing businesses				X
Work with the Mobile County Chamber of Commerce & Mobile County Commission to recruit new business opportunities				X
Partner with Satsuma, Axis and other neighboring communities to create a Regional Industrial Board to recruit new industry to the area				X
Coordinate with the LeMoyne Industrial Park to recruit additional industry to the area				X
Install an Industrial Park to recruit more industrial manufacturing opportunity to the area		X	X	

Develop new eco-tourism opportunities to recruit day visitors to the area and promote tourism	X	X		
Create an Interstate Commercial overlay for the zoning ordinance to ensure proper commercial development adjacent to Interstate 65	X			
INFRASTRUCTURE	0-5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	On-Going
Coordinate with Mobile County to schedule routine maintenance and repair on existing drainage ditches and infrastructure.	X			
Install new drainage infrastructure throughout corporate limits to control stormwater runoff	X			X
Increase water supply availability throughout community	X			
Increase overall water pressure throughout community to ensure safety needs are met for all residents and to prepare for future growth				X
Repair and replace outdated and inadequate existing infrastructure	X			
Apply with Mobile County Commission annually to secure CDBG funding for community projects				X

APPENDIX A

FUNDING RESOURCES

The following is a list of funding resources and organizations, both public and private, who offer grants and loan programs that support many of the projects suggested throughout the Comprehensive Master Plan. There are many other resources outside of this list that may also provide beneficial services and grant funding as well. The City of Creola should use this appendix along with the Implementation Schedule of this Comprehensive Master Plan for strategic planned implementation. It is also advised that city leaders establish multiple committees to oversee and pursue these opportunities available to the community. For more information of services provided by these resources, please contact the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) or each respective resource provider.

Transportation & Infrastructure

- US Department of Transportation
- Alabama Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Transportation Enhancement Grants (TE)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Safe Routes to School Program
- TIGER Grants
- Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (ATRIP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program
- Mobile County Consortium
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)

Economic & Community Development

- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)
- ADECA Law Enforcement and Safety Service (LETS) Program
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Economic Development Partnerships of Alabama (EDPA)
- The University of Alabama's Center for Economic Development (UACED)
- Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA)

Housing

- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Alabama Historical Commission
- SMART Home America
- HOME Grant Programs provided by the Mobile County Consortium
- Single-Family Mortgage Asset Recovery Technology (SMART) Program

Environmental & Recreation Development

- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association (NOAA)
- Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)
- Brownfields Program
- Alabama Forestry Commission

- Alabama Scenic Blue Way Trail
- Gulf Coast Resource, Conservation and Development Council (Gulf Coast RC & D)
- Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- RESTORE Act
- Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (NEP)
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
- Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP)

Support Services

- Main Street Alabama
- Mobile County Commission
- Mobile County Public Library
- Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE)
- Arbor Day Foundation
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Alabama Historical Commission Grants Program
- Alabama State Council on the Arts
- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)
- Adventure Cycling Association
- Bedsole Foundation
- Walkable & Livable Communities Institute
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- American Community Gardening Association (ACGA)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Alabama Power

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