

It's just
NOT
the same...



City of Saraland
Master Plan

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following individuals for their input and efforts in the development of this Comprehensive Plan:

Mayor, Council Members & Staff	Planning Commission
Mayor Dr. Howard Rubenstein	Johnny Holley
Council President Joe McDonald	Mayor Dr. Howard Rubenstein
Council Member Newton Cromer	Council Member Wayne Biggs
Council Member Wayne Biggs	Lawrence Butts
Council Member Paul Stanley	Barry Andrews
Council Member Dr. Veronica Hudson	Stephen Smith
Matthew Lambert, Planner	Randolph Young
Mike Black, Chief Bldg. Official	Mandy Whigham
	Rev. Robert Lutz

Working Group	
Mayor Dr. Howard Rubenstein	Pat Castleberry
Mike Kinard	Cindy Chandler
Sharee Kinard	Linda Agee
Jeff Mauldin	David Brown
Phillip Woods	Janice Harvison
Benny Peoples	Denise Jernigan
Iris Kidd	J. C. West
Ronnie Outlaw	H. O'Neil Robinson
	Bill Silver

Planning Team



thompson
ENGINEERING

Christopher D. Baker, AICP, MBA
Jennifer G. Givens, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
Cindy T. Roton



watermark
DESIGN

Approved by the Planning Commission: (date)

Approved by the City Council: (date)



Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction 2

Chapter 2 - History & Demographics 3

Chapter 3 - Planning Process 9

Chapter 4 - Existing Conditions 12

Chapter 5 - Vision Statement..... 16

Chapter 6 - Goals and Objectives..... 18

Chapter 7 - Future Plan Alternatives..... 21

Chapter 8 - Implementation Plan..... 27

Funding for this project 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 # 11NOS4190104.



Chapter 1 - Introduction

The City of Saraland is located in the east central portion of Mobile County and is traversed by Interstate 65 and U.S. Highway 43. The city is part of the Mobile Metropolitan Statistical Area and has economic development ties and commuting patterns to the City of Mobile. The importance of master planning is emphasized because the City of Saraland is located in a major urban center.

The City of Saraland was awarded a grant from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division, Coastal Section to develop an updated Master Plan that reflects the new growth of population, a new school district, and the city's responsibility for smart growth. A Master Plan is an attempt to establish guidelines for the future growth of a community. It is an all-inclusive approach to addressing the issue of a community's future growth. The document is official in nature, meaning that it is designed to be adopted into law by some form of local government. The document should then serve as a policy guide for decisions about community development. The plan should fulfill five basic requirements:

1. Be comprehensive
2. Be long-range
3. Be general
4. Focus on physical development, and
5. Relate physical design to community goals and social and economic policies.

Growth expands the range of economic opportunities available in a community. However, if that growth is not properly planned for, the economic benefits will be overshadowed by the problems associated with land use conflicts and overburdened services and infrastructure. The success of master planning depends on communication and understanding among the public sector, private sector, and public agencies. The purpose of this Master Plan is to guide public policy development in terms of transportation, utilities, land use, recreation, and housing.



Chapter 2 - History & Demographics

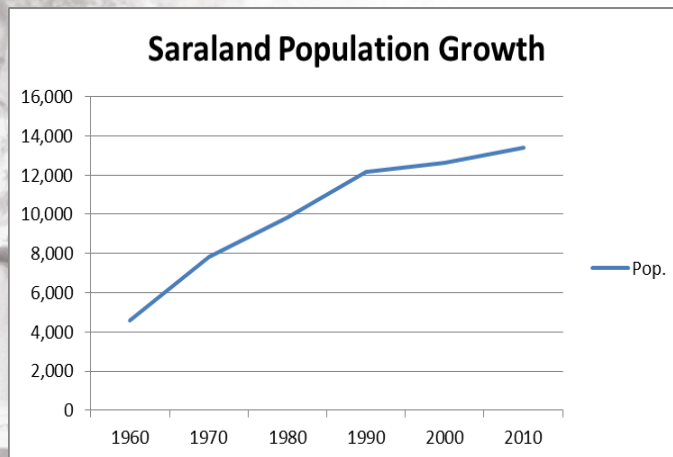
The land area that was to become the present-day Saraland was included in a Spanish land grant to Don Alvarez. Hence, descendants of Alvarez gave the community its first name: Alvarez Station. Later, land squatters moved into the area and were in 1800 legally able, to begin purchasing property. Some of the pioneer families who bought property were named Alvarez, Rice, Moore, Tool, Williams, and Cleveland. Ultimately, Alvarez Station was called Cleveland Station. The present name of the city is reported to have been given by C.J. DeWitt, a retired minister, who opened the first post office on the Southern Railroad in 1895. The community is purported to be the namesake of his beloved wife, Sara.

Saraland was sparsely populated during the early part of the 20th century, until an industrial and population boom occurred in Mobile. Northward expansion of Mobile in the 1940s and 1950s brought about the incorporation of Saraland in 1957. At that time, the city reported only 125 residents. By 1960, the U.S. Census reported a population of 4,595. In more recent years, the population has grown substantially.

The City of Saraland, which currently has a total land area of 22 square miles, is continually annexing property into the city limits. Saraland has its own award-winning school system, with elementary, middle, and high schools that are separate from the Mobile County Public School System. The new school system has attracted many people to the region who desire to locate within the city limits.

Royal Dutch Shell operates a Shell Refinery in the city limits. Saraland is continuing to grow with commercial developments and a regional hospital is in the development stage. All of these factors have contributed to the growth in population and housing in the city and nearby areas.

Since its incorporation, the population of Saraland has continued to grow steadily as depicted in the graph below.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census



The chart below shows the population of Mobile County and the cities within the County for comparison. Saraland had the third largest population of all municipalities in Mobile County.

Mobile County and Cities Population Comparison 2010			
Mobile County	412,992	Dauphin Island	1,238
Bay Minette	8,044	Mobile	195,111
Bayou La Batre	2,558	Mount Vernon	1,574
Chickasaw	6,106	Prichard	22,659
Citronelle	3,905	Saraland	13,405
Creola	1,926	Satsuma	6,168

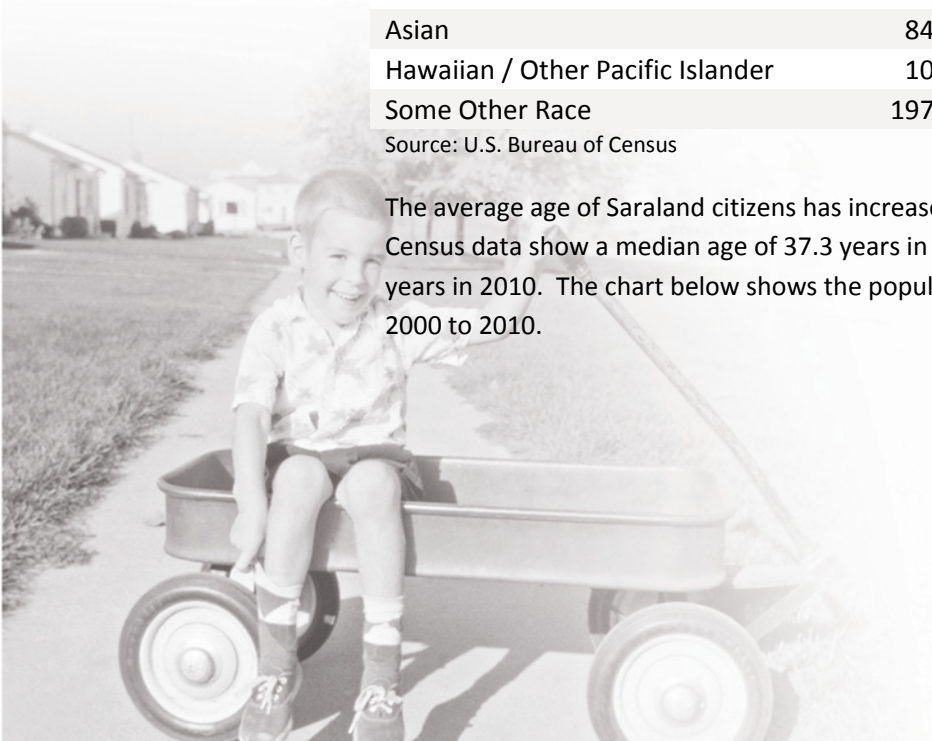
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

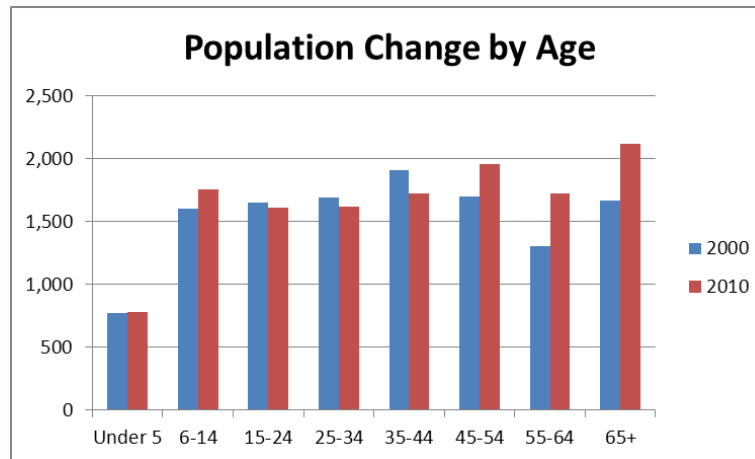
The City of Saraland is racially diverse and is continuing to change in population by race as the city grows. The city is primarily white, with 83% of the population. Other racial groups, which have grown faster than has the majority, are expected to continue to grow at a faster rate (see chart below for details).

Population by Race 2000 - 2010 and Percent Change			
	2010	2000	% Change
Total Population	13,405	12,630	6.1%
One Race	13,224	12,490	6.0%
Two or More Races	181	140	29.3%
White	11,225	11,205	0.2%
Black or African American	1,604	1,110	44.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	104	72	44.4%
Asian	84	56	50.0%
Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	10	1	900.0%
Some Other Race	197	46	328.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

The average age of Saraland citizens has increased over the last decade. The U.S. Census data show a median age of 37.3 years in 2000 and a median age of 40.8 years in 2010. The chart below shows the population change by age group from 2000 to 2010.





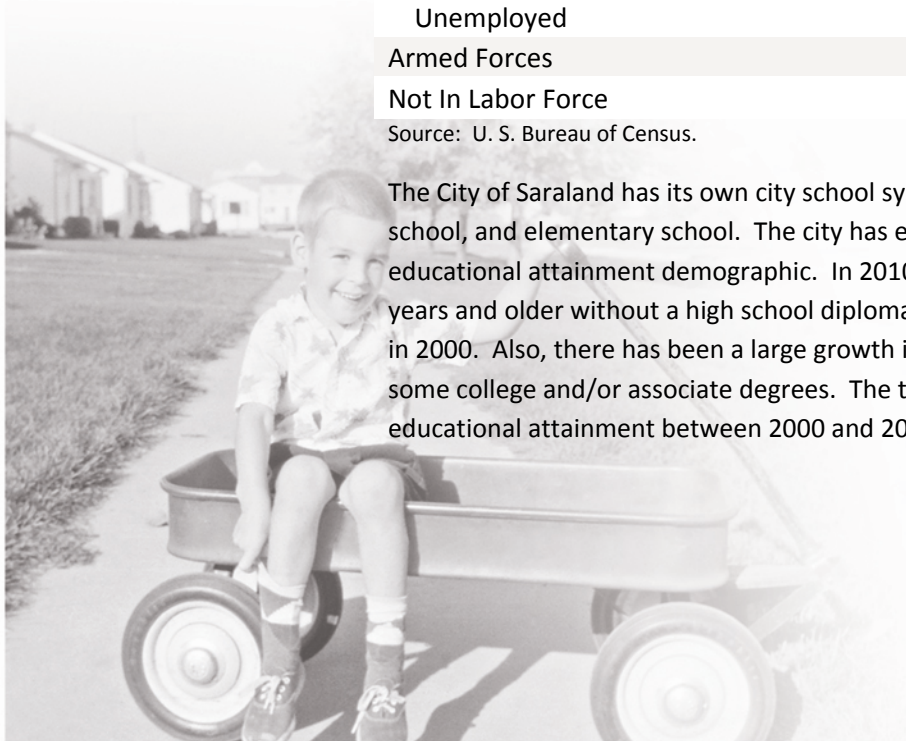
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

With the growth in population, a change in the workforce has also occurred within the city. As of 2010, the city had a working-age population of 10,582 (age 16 years and older), a 10.1 % increase from the previous decade. In 2010, there were 6,382 individuals in the labor force with 5,799 employed and 573 unemployed. The change in employment status is a direct response to the population growth. The percentage increase in citizens who were unemployed or not in the labor force grew faster than those who were employed. The table shows the employment status as of 2010 and the percent change from the last 10 years.

Employment Status			
	2010	2000	% Change
Population 16 Years and Over	10,582	9,609	10.1%
In Labor Force	6,382	6,023	6.0%
Employed	5,799	5,578	4.0%
Unemployed	573	445	28.8%
Armed Forces	10	0	N/A
Not In Labor Force	4,200	3,586	17.1%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census.

The City of Saraland has its own city school system with a high school, middle school, and elementary school. The city has experienced a growth in the educational attainment demographic. In 2010, there were fewer people age 25 years and older without a high school diploma residing in the City of Saraland than in 2000. Also, there has been a large growth in those in this age group who have some college and/or associate degrees. The table below shows the change in the educational attainment between 2000 and 2010.



Educational Attainment 25 Years & Over			
	2010	2000	% Change
Less Than 9th Grade	311	462	-32.7%
9th - 12th, No Diploma	1,277	1,520	-16.0%
High School Graduate	3,706	3,223	15.0%
Some College, No Degree	1,753	1,613	8.7%
Associate Degree	728	397	83.4%
Bachelors Degree	703	638	10.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	324	310	4.5%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census.

The City of Saraland has experienced major population growth in the last 10 years. New residential construction has been required to accommodate this influx of people. Saraland had 5,828 housing units as of 2010. Of these, 5,208 were occupied with the remaining 620 vacant. The table below shows the housing units and occupancy for the county and the cities for comparison.

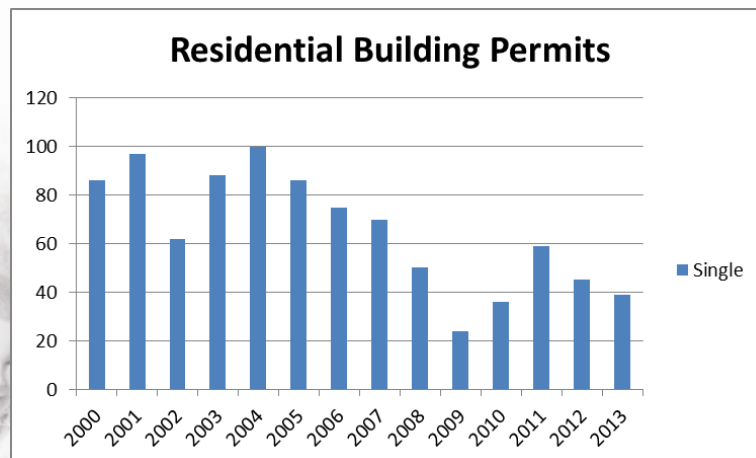
Housing Occupancy			
	2010	2000	% Change
Total Housing Units	5,828	5,138	13.4%
Occupied Housing Units	5,208	4,810	8.3%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	3,905	3,621	7.8%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	1,303	1,189	9.6%
Vacant Housing Units	620	328	89.0%
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.0	1.8	11.1%
Rental Vacancy Rate	10.0	11.2	-10.7%

The city has experienced a steady growth in new residential building permits. The table on the following page shows the trend of the building permits for the last 13 years. Building permit activity peaked in the 2004-2008 time period.



Year	Building Permits		Units
	Single	5 +	
2000	86		86
2001	97	1	105
2002	62	4	98
2003	88	1	93
2004	100		100
2005	86	4	126
2006	75	8	115
2007	70	4	110
2008	50	3	65
2009	24	1	29
2010	36		36
2011	59		59
2012	45		45
2013	39		39

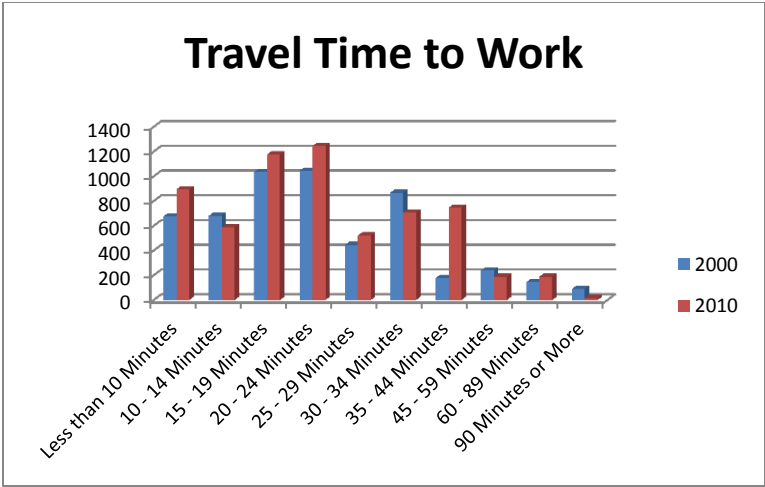
The chart below shows the trend in single building permits over the 13-year period. The chart depicts a dip in new building construction in 2009, which corresponds to the drop in the housing market nationwide.



Source: Saraland Building Department

The City of Saraland is expanding in area and annexing property farther away from the city center; this is where much of the new development is occurring. This type of development has increased the travel/commuting time to work for the average citizen. The graph on the following page shows this change.





Source: U. S. Bureau of Census.



Chapter 3 - Planning Process

Planning for the future is a complicated endeavor. While none of the participants possesses the proverbial crystal ball, the process does work diligently to anticipate and prepare for future needs. The process does not assign probability to certain events taking place, but attempts to lay an appropriate foundation for growth as it takes place. Planning for the future is as much of an art as it is a science.

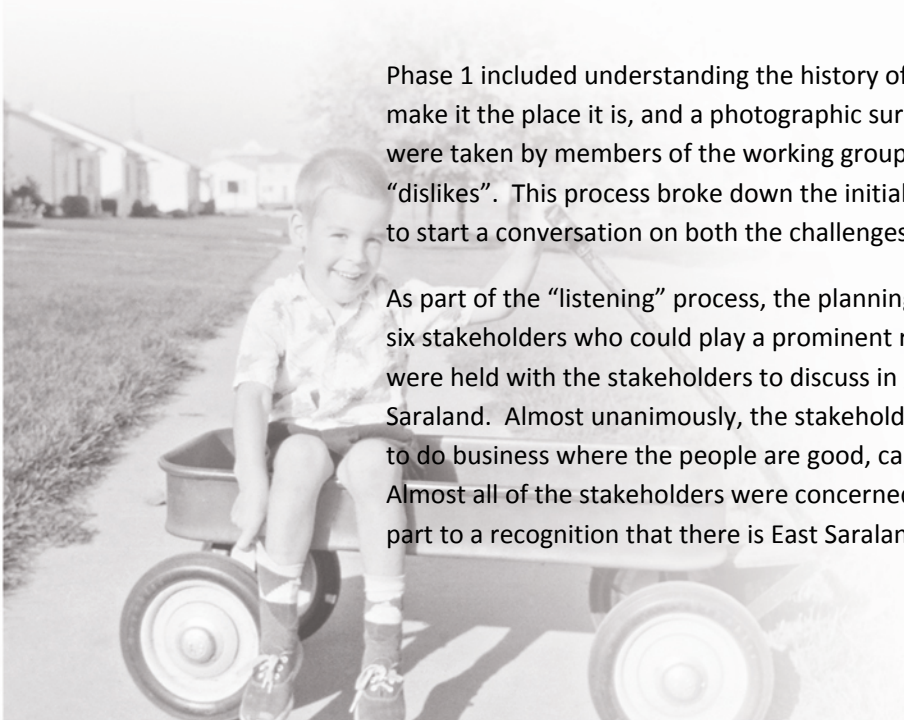
While the technical part of planning for the future can be accomplished with data and computers, the fact is that people inhabit Saraland. The plan will impact the current and future residents of Saraland for many years. In order for the plan to be embraced, adopted and implemented, it must be born from the residents and appropriately address their concerns and desires. The process must be public, it must be transparent, and it must be participatory. This approach was applied to the development of the Saraland Master Plan.

The process began with a grant award from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Shortly after the award, a working group committee consisting of 16 volunteers was appointed by the City of Saraland. This group served as a community resource to identify issues, solidify goals and objectives, provide input on draft plans, and ultimately vote to endorse the preferred plan. Over the course of the project, the working group met a total of seven times. Based on a macro-perspective, the planning process is divided into three phases:

- Phase 1 is Listening,
- Phase 2 is Plan Alternative Development, and
- Phase 3 is Adoption and Implementation.

Phase 1 included understanding the history of Saraland, the characteristics that make it the place it is, and a photographic survey of the city. The pictures, which were taken by members of the working group, were divided into “likes” and “dislikes”. This process broke down the initial communication barriers and served to start a conversation on both the challenges and assets of Saraland.

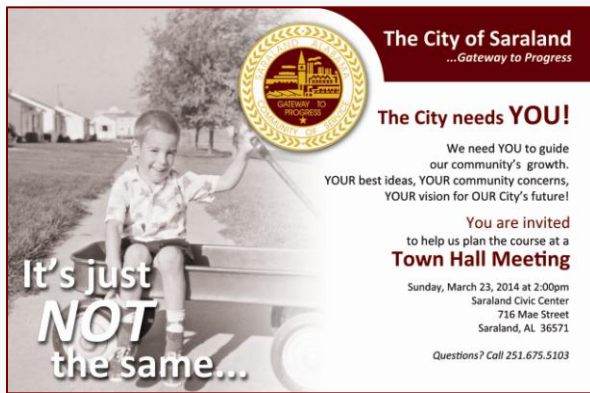
As part of the “listening” process, the planning team asked city officials to identify six stakeholders who could play a prominent role in Saraland. Individual meetings were held with the stakeholders to discuss in general terms their perceptions of Saraland. Almost unanimously, the stakeholders identified Saraland as a good place to do business where the people are good, caring folks that make the city what it is. Almost all of the stakeholders were concerned about the future of Saraland, due in part to a recognition that there is East Saraland (original) and West Saraland (new).



There seemed to be an understanding that original Saraland was not as prosperous or vibrant as it once was and that a significant amount of activity, focus, and investment has moved west over time. The stakeholders focused in on taxes and expressed significant optimism resulting from the creation of the city school system. The perception was that the continued success of the city school system will be an economic engine for the City of Saraland by making it a desirable place for people with children to locate. Overall, the perception of the stakeholders could be characterized as cautiously optimistic that the best days of Saraland lie ahead.

Selected "Likes"	Selected "Dislikes"
	
	
	
	





Email Flyer Announcing Town Hall Meeting

identified them as common, bold, and aspiring. The three options were presented to the working group members, who provided feedback, input, and suggestions that guided the development of the preferred plan. The preferred plan (presented later in this document) takes the best aspects of the bold and aspiring alternatives, blends them together, and creates new opportunities for the future of Saraland.



Participants at Town Hall Meeting

The overall planning process with the working group was punctuated by strategically timed Town Hall meetings. There were three Town Hall meetings: January 30, 2014 at Saraland High School; February 16, 2014 at the Saraland Civic Center; and March 23, 2014 at the Saraland Civic Center. More than 300 people participated in the Town Hall meetings.

The planning process required the team to develop three future land use alternatives for consideration by the working group. The team

Ultimately, the planning process with the working group concluded with the presentation and discussion of the implementation section of the plan. The implementation section of the plan seeks to highlight and strategically prioritize efforts that must be done to make the plan a reality. The planning process for the documents concluded with the formal adoption of the plan by the Planning Commission and the City Council. Too often, well devised plans simply sit on the shelf after adoption. The plan must be used as a living document to benchmark decisions. It is not intended to be static or written in stone. It can (and must be) revisited to ensure that challenges and opportunities are adequately addressed as they evolve over time.



Chapter 4 - Existing Conditions

The foundation for the future rests within the context of today. Thus, it is important to arrive at an understanding of the current conditions of the City of Saraland. The planning team devoted a significant amount of time to understanding the current conditions in the city. The team observed the status and patterns of land uses in and around Saraland. Traffic patterns were evaluated, along with other infrastructure, parks, drainage, and community facilities.

In general, the planning team came to a quick realization that there are significant differences in the land use status and patterns in Saraland, based on geography. These differences can be easily segregated by east and west of I-65. East of I-65 is the area that came to be known as original Saraland. This area was developed years ago along U.S. Highway 43. The business environment along Highway 43 appears to be somewhat challenging in some areas and quite prosperous in other areas. However, the overall character of development along Highway 43 appears to be from the 1960s and 1970s. In terms of residential development, original Saraland can be characterized by single-story, ranch style homes that were popular and common in the 1960s and 1970s. Excluding Industrial Parkway, the infrastructure in original Saraland is characterized by open ditch roadway sections.

West of I-65 is characterized by a development type that transitions from the 1980s through the current time. The Celeste Road and Kali Oka Road corridors have been quite popular areas for development. These neighborhoods reflect the character of new development with curb and gutter, sidewalks, detention ponds and a variety of housing choices ranging from smaller lot single family to lower density single family. Because the northern and western parts of Saraland have continued to develop at a rapid pace, this area is also known for its traffic issues. Except for the commercial development along Highway 158 at the interstate, commercial development west of I-65 has been somewhat limited. This area features the typical interstate oriented commercial businesses and a variety of light industrial activities.

The City of Saraland has very limited multi-family apartment options. All but one of the multi-family housing choices were built many years ago. With the exception of one newer apartment complex, the existing multi-family stock can be characterized as outdated, not maintained, and not desirable. Therefore, there is a negative perception of multi-family housing in the City of Saraland, and the desire to avoid creating any new multi-family housing options in Saraland is real.

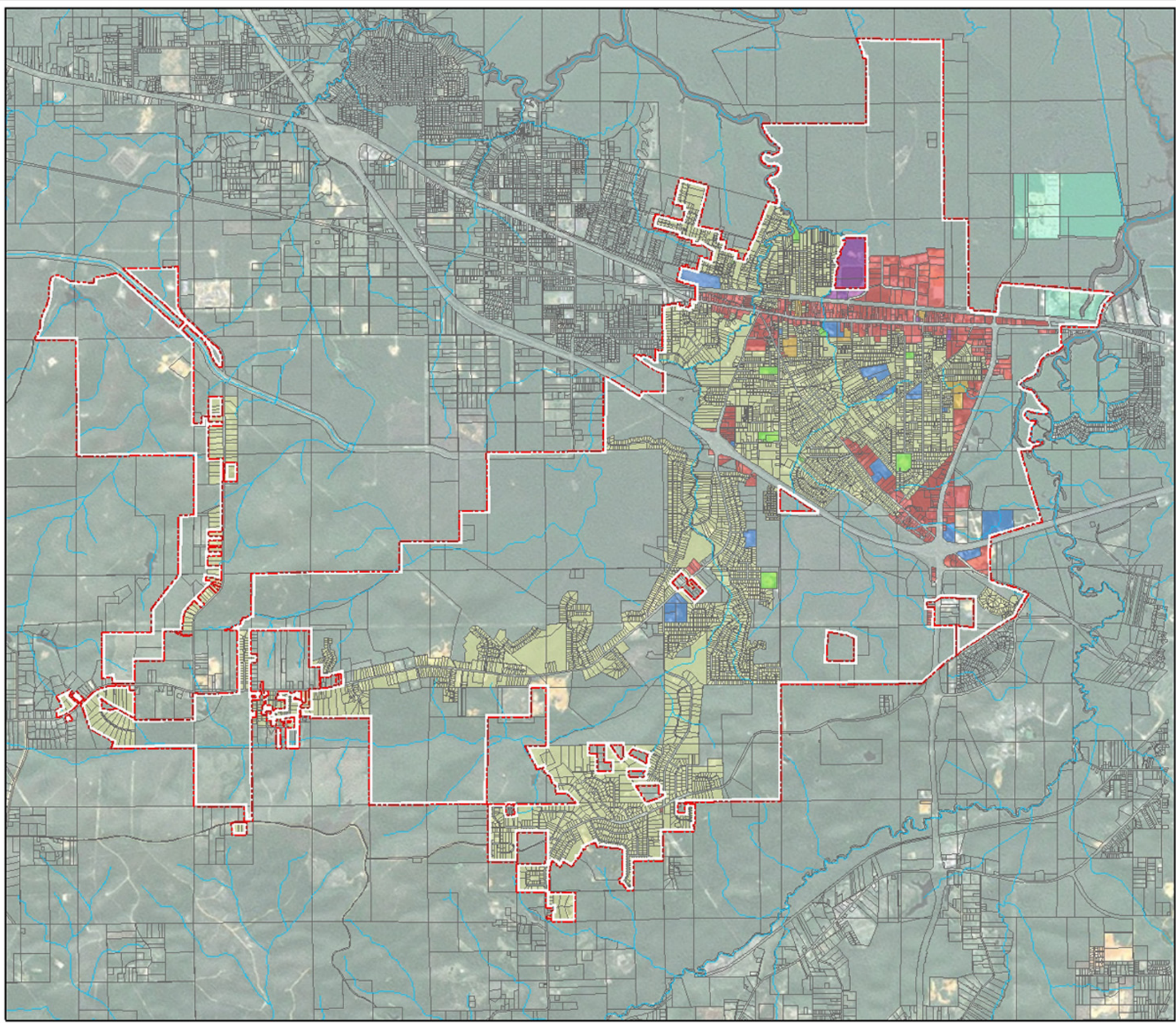
There is very little agricultural activity located in Saraland, because of the topography and flood-prone areas in the northwest portion of the city and the essentially built out condition of original Saraland. Although there are some agriculturally related businesses in Saraland, these businesses do not rely on agricultural activity that takes place in the city.



Industrial activity has long been an important part of the image of Saraland. The current City Seal includes a depiction of a manufacturing facility. The perception of an industrial focus is further supported by the fact that one of the main east-west corridors in the city is named Industrial Parkway. However, Industrial Parkway near I-65 can be characterized as typically auto-oriented strip commercial with an interstate focus. This area is dominated by larger restaurants and hotels. The Wal-Mart shopping center and a variety of other retail outlets are located nearby. Generally, true industrial activity takes place east of Highway 43 near the waterfront and on Highway 158 west of I-65.

The Highway 43 corridor hosts a wide variety of businesses, including banks, fast food restaurants, public facilities, regional employment centers, auto-oriented businesses, and light industrial businesses. Although there are quite a few prominent businesses on Highway 43, there are also quite a few closed business properties. At one time, Highway 43 was a very viable commercial center; however, it appears that much of this commercial activity migrated to be located in close proximity to the interstate. This migration has negatively affected the vitality of Highway 43.





Land Use Classification

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks
- Public
- R-Multi Family
- R-Single Family
- School/Church
- City Limits

- Ownership Parcels
- NHD Flowline

DATASOURCES:
City of Saraland City Limits, Parcels
Source: Esri, Imagery, USDA, USGS, AEX, GeoEye,
GeoMapping, AerialGrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User
Community



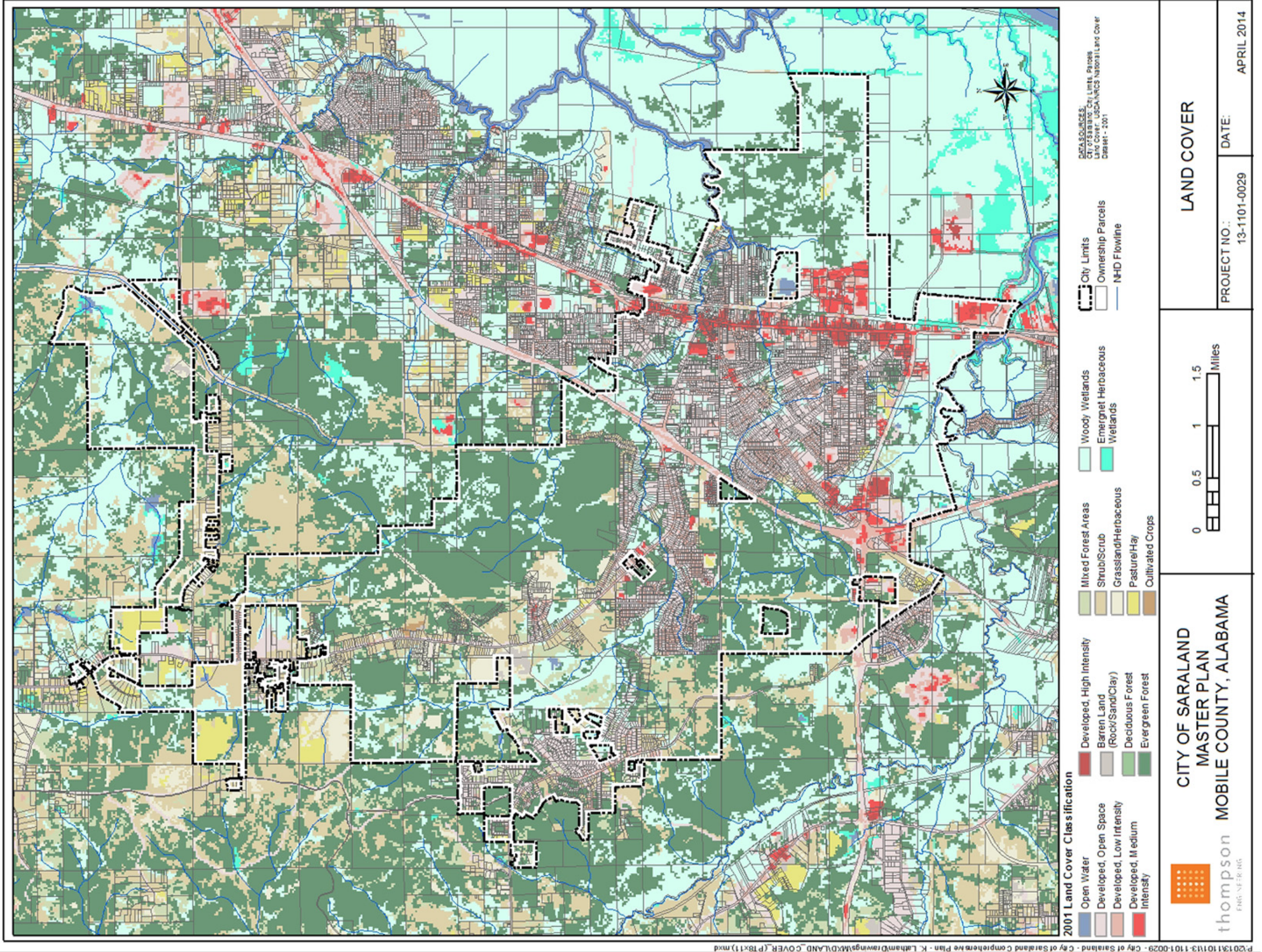
**CITY OF SARALAND
MASTER PLAN
MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA**



CURRENT LAND USE

PROJECT NO.:
13-1101-0029

DATE:
APRIL 2014



P:\2013\101013-1101-0029 - City of Saraland Comprehensive Plan - K. Latham\Drawings\LAND_COVER_F18x11.mxd

Chapter 5 - Vision Statement

The working group created the following vision statement for the City of Saraland, the rationale of which is further discussed below:

Saraland is the Gateway to Progress. We are continuing to build a safe, connected community with outstanding infrastructure that promotes neighborhood pride and provides social interaction, economic growth, environmental stewardship, and a world-class education for all generations. Saraland is a regional destination offering everything needed to live, work, play, and thrive.

Gateway to Progress.... This has been Saraland's motto for a number of years. The working group and the participants in the planning process believed that this concept was still very relevant to the activities in today's Saraland. Saraland has a history of being a progressive community and still is, as evidenced by the effort taken to establish its own city school system.

Continuing to build a safe connected community.... Working group members and the participants in the planning process identified the excellent service the police and fire departments provide. Excellent public safety should continue as the city grows. Building a connected community embodies improving physical connections throughout the city, be they roads or sidewalks or trails.

Outstanding infrastructure.... The city takes pride in its infrastructure and has continued to work diligently to address any infrastructure-related issues. The current improvements and realignment of Shell Road and the pending improvements to the Celeste Road interstate exit are examples of the city's proactive approach. There is a strong commitment from city leaders to continue infrastructure investment.

Neighborhood pride and social interaction.... The small-town atmosphere of Saraland is an important component of the city. The working group and planning participants indicated that this element should be promoted, supported and continued in the future. This involves helping to create opportunities for neighbors to meet neighbors, such as at a community festival, through activities sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department, or at the Senior Center. These opportunities are an important part of the fabric of Saraland.

Economic growth.... Saraland desires to grow in meaningful ways that diversify housing, redevelop existing properties, and welcome new businesses.

Environmental stewardship.... The city desires to manage, maintain, and improve its environmental assets. The topography, wetlands, and floodplains throughout the northwestern part of the city offer an opportunity to create a system of trails to preserve and promote the local environmental assets.



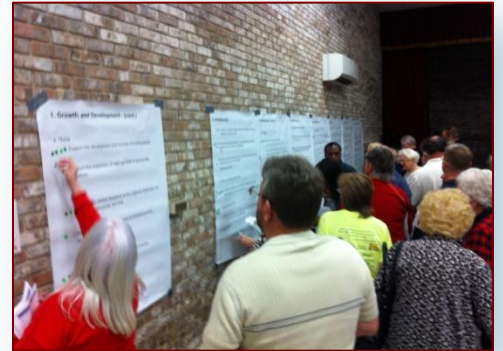
World-class education.... The city is understandably proud of the school district and the educational accomplishments and improvements that have been made to date. The working group and planning participants understand that the opportunity to create a world-class education is not only a benefit for the students, but also serves as an economic development and re-development engine for Saraland. The education system in Saraland is an important building block for the future of the city.

Regional destination..... Fundamentally, the City of Saraland desires to evolve into a regional center that attracts people from northern Mobile County. Utilizing the regional population base will expand and diversify the local economy in terms of professional and retail opportunities. Saraland is poised to make this happen by virtue of infrastructure alignments.



Chapter 6 - Goals and Objectives

The plan for the future of Saraland must be based on a common understanding of what is important to the citizens and what their hopes and dreams are for the future. Goals and objectives provide that platform. They categorize the different elemental building blocks of the city and then help create a path forward toward realization.



Prioritizing Goals and Objectives

1. Growth and Development

Goal: Evolve into a regional destination that provides a variety of high quality choices.

- Live
 - Direct higher density residential immediately adjacent to more intense commercial areas and with appropriate vehicular access.
 - Evaluate density gradients so development is balanced with the infrastructure that serves it.
 - Encourage the development of commercial activity that provides local services and supports the perception of Saraland as a regional destination.
- Work
 - Balance the need for signage and community appearance desires.
 - Review land-development standards to implement the plan.
 - Promote successful small businesses.
- Play
 - Develop Saraland into a regional destination for recreational activities.
 - Enhance and support the park and recreation system.
 - Provide opportunities for social interaction through proper planning.
 - Balance street design so that it does not favor motorized traffic; promote multi-modal use.
 - Provide a park and open space system that provides a rich variety of recreational options for all residents in the community.
 - Design land uses, parks, opens spaces and trails to facilitate active and passive outdoor recreation.
- Thrive
 - Support the development and success of small business.
 - Support the expansion of regional retail at appropriate locations.
 - Aggressively market Saraland as the regional destination for retail and professional services.
 - Partner with professional services to enhance growth opportunities.
 - Continue to support the Chamber of Commerce.



2. Infrastructure

Goal: Continue to provide excellent infrastructure that successfully balances competing needs.

- Provide a balanced street network for efficient access and safe circulation for cars, bikes and pedestrians.
- Develop a capital improvements and maintenance plan in order to methodically enhance and maintain Infrastructure yearly.
- Develop a roadway master plan
 - Continue to cooperate with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to implement improved traffic safety on Highway 158 and Highway 43.
- Sidewalks/Bicycle Paths
 - Develop sidewalks in a network that is cohesive, continuous, convenient and context appropriate.
- Sanitary Sewer
 - Expand northward up Celeste Road and Kali Oka Road.
- Drainage
 - Proactively manage stormwater runoff.
 - Locate open spaces along existing drainage ways and integrate new stormwater management systems within the open space system.
 - Map new and existing drainage systems in the city's geographical information system (GIS).
- Overhead Utilities
 - Relocate utilities on major roadways from overhead to underground where feasible.
 - Provide street lighting in appropriate locations, to enhance safety.

3. Built Environment

Goal: Improve the visual identity of Saraland.

- Implement new gateways into the community as growth occurs.
- Improve the identity of Saraland through signage and branding; shed the image of an industrially based community.
- Redevelop and support the original Saraland.
- Further enhance the long term viability of the regional center (Walmart).
- Locate civic development near the original Saraland.
- Place priority on rehabilitating dilapidated structures and filling in "gaps."
- Develop a landscaping ordinance for existing and new development.
- Enhance and beautify the streetscape and pedestrian environment by bringing landscaping closer to the street.
- Continue to find public landscaping opportunities as the city grows.



4. Natural Environment

Goal: Protect and enhance natural environment for the benefit of the city.

- Continue to enhance Walter Cofield Park
- Acquire additional parkland in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Utilize environmentally sensitive areas as an amenity and opportunity.

5. Education

Goal: Continue to provide a world-class education system.

- Coordinate future development in order to plan school locations, bus routes, projected student volumes, etc.
- Provide a variety of activities, topics of studies, vocational studies, and advanced studies.
- Continue to hire quality educators in the classrooms.
- Emphasize teacher/parent communication and continue electronic communication.
- Provide the most up-to-date technology for our students and teachers.
- Maintain safety on all school campuses.

6. Government Services

Goal: Continue to deliver exceptional services to citizens in a financially responsible manner.

- Fire
 - Maintain premier emergency response.
 - Maintain the high fire rating for insurance.
 - Provide appropriate funding for equipment and training improvements.
- Police
 - Maintain high ratio of police to population.
 - Provide appropriate funding for equipment and training improvements.
 - Provide crime prevention, public involvement and public education programs.
 - Continue proactive community policing.
- Municipal
 - Maintain high quality of service with a customer friendly focus to residents and customers.
 - Continue to improve the communication between the city and its residents.
 - Maintain existing facilities to a high standard.
- City Leaders
 - Maintain a balanced budget while meeting residents' needs.
 - Undertake a municipal facility needs study (Capital Planning Committee) for public buildings, as needed.
 - Address community nuisances (e.g. abandoned houses, litter).



Chapter 7 - Future Plan Alternatives

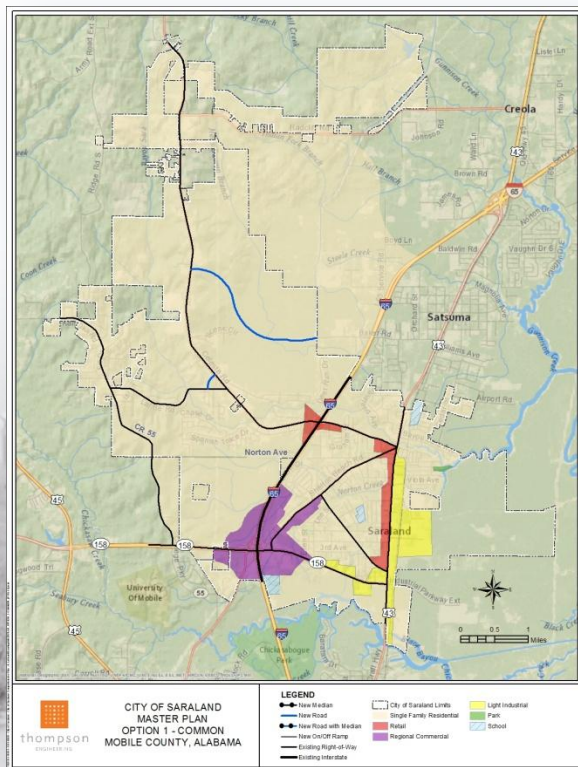
Based on the prioritization of the goals and objectives that took place in the Town Hall meetings and input from the working group, the planning team created three future plan alternatives for Saraland. The three plan alternatives were intended to be distinct from each other and chart different courses for the future. Each alternative placed a different emphasis for the future, had different consequences, and involved different opportunity costs. Planning for the future is about anticipating, creating positive change, and making the best decisions possible to arrive at a suitable solution.

Common Plan Alternative:

This alternative was named “common” because it did little to change the future of Saraland. The focus of this plan alternative was to create a large area of regional commercial at the Highway 158 and I-65 axis, to create new retail opportunities at Celeste Road and I-65, and to provide some limited transportation improvements in the northwest part of the City by connecting Celeste Road to Baker Road. This plan alternative envisioned industrial or light industrial development taking place on Highway 158, east of Highway 43, and retail

development taking place on the west side of Highway 43. Finally, this plan option proposed single family residential in all remaining portions of the city.

This plan alternative would be the easiest to implement. It would take little effort by the city or the citizens to make this plan a reality. The working group dismissed this option because it did not represent enough positive change for the future of the city – simply put, it did not make enough of a difference and fell short in addressing the concerns expressed by the citizens and the working group.



Common Plan Alternative

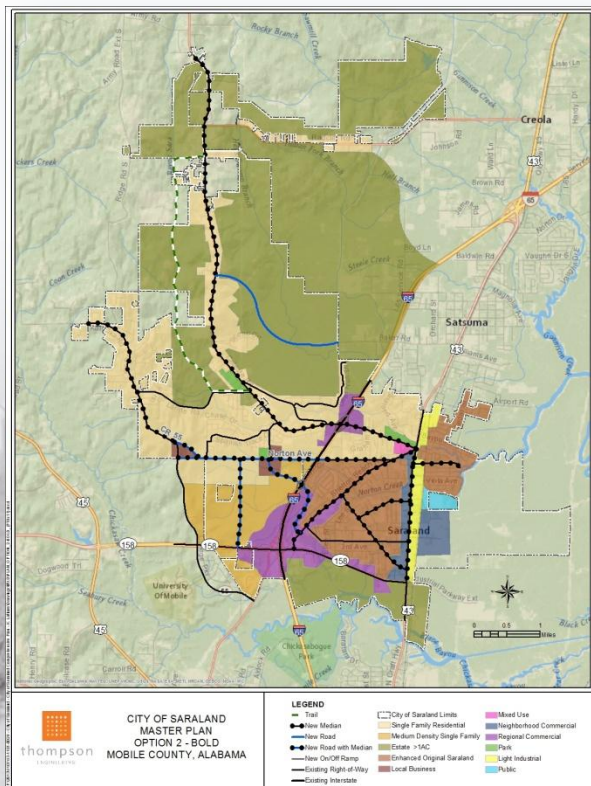


Bold Plan Alternative:

This plan alternative was named “bold” because it quite dramatically represented a bold new future for the City of Saraland. The focus of this plan alternative was dramatic and varying.

First and foremost, the bold plan alternative addressed east or original Saraland. As discussed in Chapter 4, the original Saraland is characterized by an older housing stock dominated by the ranch style. The key here is to make original Saraland as desirable a place to live as is west Saraland, despite the fact that housing choices and consumer preferences have changed over time and will continue to do so.

Generally, original Saraland is populated by older residents who have long been part of the fabric of the Saraland community. As this population ages and moves on, what will happen with the housing stock? Will it continue to be owner-occupied or will it transition into rentals? While there is no way of knowing the likelihood of either outcome, this plan alternative seeks to keep original Saraland as owner-occupied. Because original Saraland must compete for sales with west Saraland and the housing stock in original Saraland does not represent many of current consumer preferences, the manner in which to drive owner-occupied investment is to compete not on housing stock but on quality of life. Thus, this plan calls for an enhanced original Saraland.



Bold Plan Alternative

Enhanced original Saraland contemplates building on its very desirable location, the fact that all of the daily needs are in very close proximity to homes, and that the ease of access to major roads and community facilities is an important asset. Enhanced original Saraland seeks to create an integrated lifestyle choice by providing new community amenities, such as sidewalks and complete streets. It seeks to build a new identity as the “place to be in Saraland” and to turn the equation on its head and say, “Why would you NOT want to live in enhanced original Saraland?”

The bold plan alternative builds on the concept of regional commercial at Highway 158 and I-65. It also encourages redevelopment of the west side of Highway 43 adjacent to enhanced original Saraland by providing commercial opportunities.

Higher density single family housing would be located on Highway 158, with much lower density housing proposed in areas further north in the city. In this plan alternative, a significant part of the Celeste Road and Kali-Oka Road corridor is anticipated to be low density single family with



large lots. This is in response to the traffic issues associated with the north and west portions of the city. The strategy in this plan was two-fold: (1) reduce the number of rooftops; and (2) provide alternative routes to disperse traffic. Thus, this plan alternative also proposes a connector between Celeste Road and Baker Road.

From an infrastructure perspective, this plan alternative proposes significant improvements in the future. It proposes a significant complete street system throughout the City of Saraland. While most of the direct impacts are intended to be in original Saraland, the bold plan alternative also seeks to implement complete streets on major roadways outside of original Saraland in order to improve community connectivity and recreational opportunities. This plan alternative also calls for trails to be located west of Celeste Road. This backcountry trail system would provide a new recreational choice and quality of life enhancement. This plan alternative also includes the construction of two new roadway overpasses to improve community connectivity, increase transportation options, and provide general dispersal of traffic. One new roadway with an overpass is proposed to cross I-65 south of Norton Avenue to create new retail opportunities north and west of where it connects to Shelton Beach Road. The other roadway with an overpass is proposed to connect Norton Avenue to the west over the interstate, including completion of the construction of CC Road west to Kali-Oka Road. This road extension would become an important east-west corridor for the community and help to alleviate traffic congestion at Celeste Road and I-65.

Many of the components of the bold plan alternative were embraced by the working group. The working group members thought that the strategy proposed for original Saraland was positive and they also liked the complete street proposal. There was significant discussion regarding the future of Highway 43 and how it would change over time in this plan alternative. In general, the working group members believed that this plan alternative did not provide enough of a positive direction for Highway 43. Although there was agreement that reducing housing density in the northwest part of Saraland would reduce future traffic generation, the working group recognized that such a significant step would also have the undesirable outcome of limiting the growth of Saraland.

Aspiring Plan Alternative:

The “aspiring” plan alternative is a step beyond the “bold” alternative. It is predicated on the “bold” plan, but takes the redevelopment of Highway 43 further. The “aspiring” plan concept is based on the success of enhanced original Saraland being further enhanced by mixed use development on Highway 43. This plan alternative seeks to connect the water and enhancements of Bayou Sara with the residents and proposes a park at “Five Points.”

This plan alternative locates high density single family on Highway 158 near shopping, schools, and existing infrastructure. The high density single family in this area is intended to be similar in character to 6,000 or 7,000 sq. ft. lots. A park that serves as an extension of Chickasobogue Park is proposed on the south side of the high density single family on Highway 158.



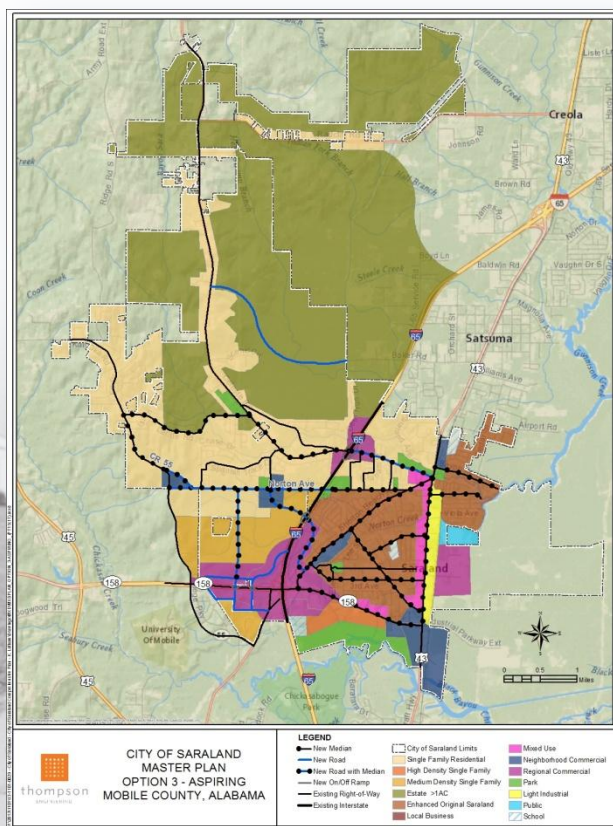
The intersection of Highway 43 and Highway 158 is intended to redevelop as neighborhood oriented commercial. This means smaller scale retail and service businesses that may or may not be locally owned. Typically, the footprint of these businesses is smaller and traffic is not as intense as in the area of a regional commercial entity.

This plan alternative builds on the enhanced original Saraland concept. It also proposes to keep housing density lower in the north and west portions of the city. Additionally, neighborhood commercial is proposed to be located at strategic intersections of Norton Avenue. It is anticipated that significant residential growth will take place at these general locations and that neighborhood commercial would provide the locally needed goods and services to the rooftops in those areas.

Infrastructure in this plan alternative is very similar to that proposed in the “bold” plan alternative; however, additional roads are proposed in the region of Highway 158 to create “rear-loaded” commercial opportunities so that the functional integrity of Highway 158 is maintained while suitable access is provided to new regional commercial ventures. A new route also is proposed from Celeste Road to Baker Road. Among the working group members, there was considerable debate regarding the alignment of this proposed roadway and the fact that traffic was

being funneled outside of the city into a neighboring community before re-entering Saraland further south on Highway 43.

This plan alternative was generally well received and seemed to address the needs and desires of the community. There was significant discussion about the two new overpasses and the ability of the city to afford those projects.



Aspiring Plan Alternative



Preferred Plan:

The preferred plan is the result of the direction, comments, and input provided by the working group and the comments and input provided by the public at the Town Hall meeting on March 23, 2014. The preferred plan combines the community building elements of the “bold” and “aspiring” plan alternatives that were supported by the citizens of Saraland. The preferred plan will be challenging to implement and focuses on many physical improvements to the city. The preferred plan will cost money to implement; however, it embraces the evolution of Saraland into a regional destination without representing a philosophical change in how the city deals with growth. Fundamentally, Saraland desires to grow and the proposed plan encourages and facilitates that growth.

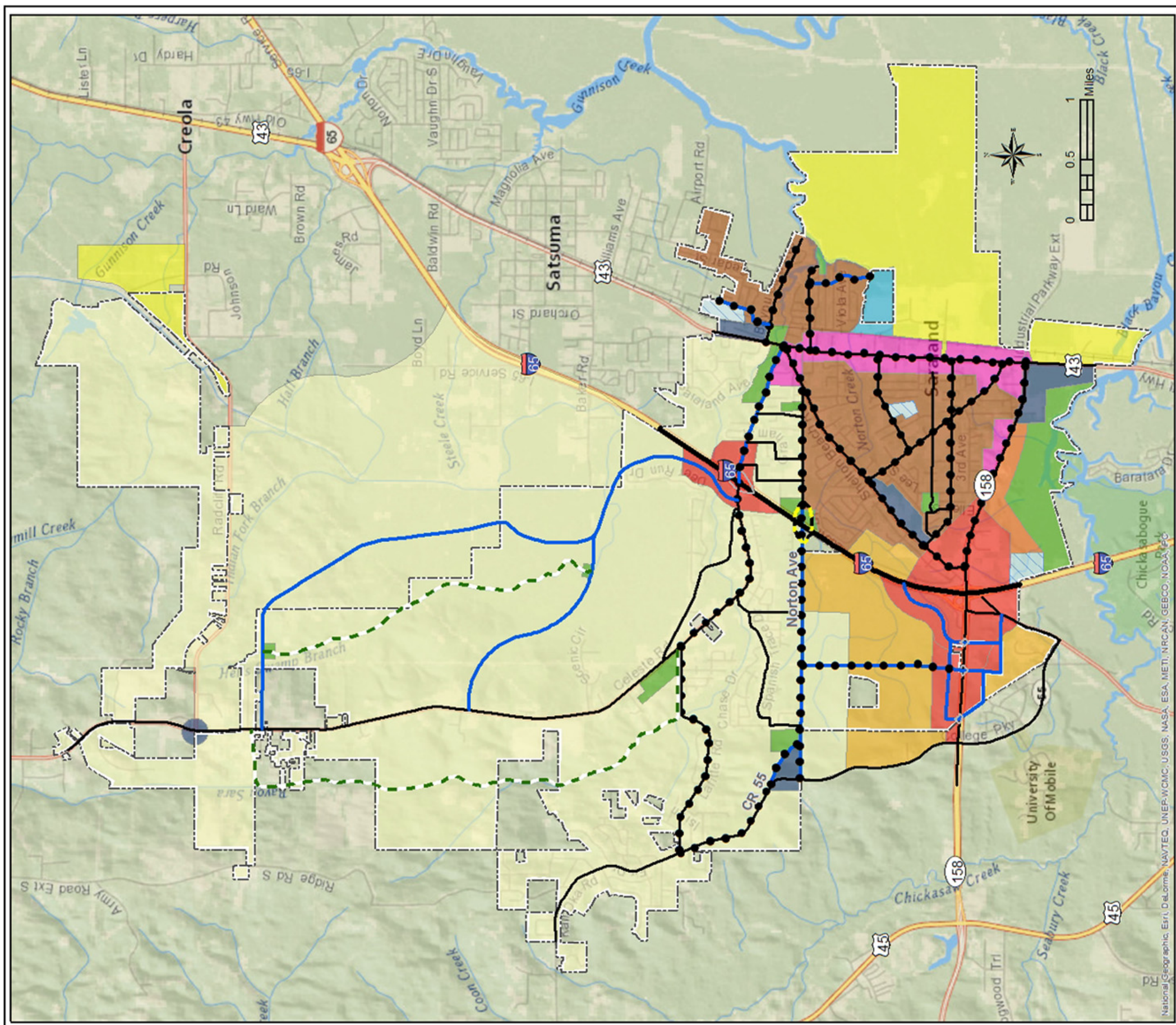
The preferred plan has three significant modifications to the “bold” and “aspiring” options: 1) the north and west portion of the city in the Celeste Road corridor is intended to be low density single family, in keeping with the city’s current development entitlements in the area; 2) mixed use is proposed along both sides of Highway 43, to make Bayou Sara more accessible and convenient to the homes and complete streets in original Saraland and to enhance the desirability of the area; and; 3) industrial land use is proposed to be located to the east of the mixed use on Highway 43.

The preferred plan incorporates the concept of enhancing original Saraland as discussed previously. This is a keystone of the preferred plan and is also the basis for future vitality on Highway 43. Original Saraland must be able to compete with new Saraland for new investment and new owners; otherwise the older parts of Saraland will deteriorate. Original Saraland is the most important element of the preferred plan.

Norton Avenue will be extended over I-65 and connect to Kali-Oka Road. Although the overpass will be an expensive item, it was recognized as important to the long-term mobility and economic development of the city. Because of its high cost, the overpass is low on the priority list for implementation. However, the city should work to make it happen in the future. The other overpass road south of Norton Road and connecting to Shelton Beach Road is not included in the preferred plan.

The preferred plan also calls for the construction of new roads that connect to Celeste Road. The conceptual alignments do not reflect the connection to Baker Road that is included in the “bold” plan alternative. However, the connection of Celeste Road to Baker Road should be further studied and considered. The new Celeste Road corridors seek to provide new routes and traffic dispersion. These conceptual alignments are based on a desktop analysis of topography, wetlands, floodplain and floodways. Because of environmental constraints, these roads could be expensive to construct, yet they are desperately needed to improve community mobility.





LEGEND

- Trail
- Complete Street Existing Road
- New Road
- Complete Street New Road
- New On/Off Ramp
- Future Overpass
- Existing Right-of-Way
- Existing Interstate

- City of Saraland Limits
- Low Density Single Family Residential and Estates Encouraged
- Medium Density Single Family
- High Density Single Family
- Enhanced Original Saraland

- Mixed Use
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Park
- Public
- School

CITY OF SARALAND MASTER PLAN MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA



Chapter 8 - Implementation Plan

A future plan for any city takes work, hard work to make reality. It takes dedication to make a vision tangible. It can be a daunting challenge due to limited resources, pressures, and shifting priorities. In order to create an organized and systemic methodology to the process of plan implementation the following Implementation Matrix has been created. The Matrix is intended to create some order and priorities for the City and its staff. Not only will this make it easier to implement, but also bring structure to the process. It should help decision makers while they are making decisions regarding resources, policies, and new initiatives. The Matrix is a guide designed to facilitate making the plan a reality in an incremental manner. It creates short term (0-2years), medium term(2-4 years), and long term (more than 4 years) priorities.

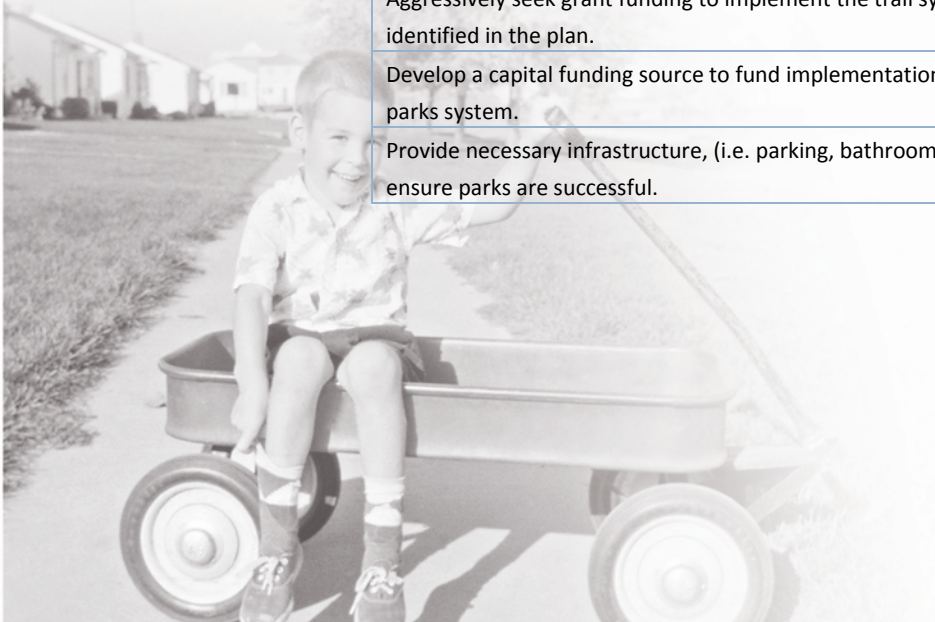
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Continue to support local sporting organizations .	X	X	X
Assist sporting organizations with advertising, maintenance on public property, and other in-kind contributions.		X	
Create a stable funding program to maintain parks to a high standard.	X		
Develop a proactive program to abate nuisances (e.g., litter, abandoned properties, dilapidated structures).	X	X	
Strategically annex property into the City.	X	X	X
Promote, sell, and brand identify original Saraland.	X		
Aggressively recruit regional commercial entities as partners and encourage them to locate in Saraland.	X	X	X
Develop potential incentive programs for regional professional and commercial businesses.	X		
Balance public facilities (roads and schools) to keep pace with residential and commercial growth.	X		
Utilize school system and accomplishments as a way to generate growth and investment.	X	X	X
Create a special zoning designation for original Saraland.	X		
Create a special zoning designation for all mixed use areas on Highway 43.	X		
Promote the development and retention of local businesses in original Saraland.	X		
Improve the visibility and effectiveness of the Chamber of Commerce.	X		
Actively recruit new professional services.		X	



INFRASTRUCTURE	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Coordinate with existing water and sewer systems as the city grows.	X	X	X
Budget for the implementation of proposed roads in the plan.		X	
Collaborate and push for the Celeste Road / I 65 improvements.	X		
Embark on studies needed for new roads proposed in the plan.	X		
Focus effort and funding on new roads to improve access in Celeste Road area.		X	
Extend CC Road to Kali Oka Road with overpass.			X
Develop a capital funding source to fund implementation.	X	X	
Enhance the roads as proposed in original Saraland.	X		
Support growth of Public Works Department to maintain infrastructure.	X		
Continue the improvement of Industrial Parkway/Highway 158 to Highway 43.		X	
Rename Industrial Parkway.	X		
Improve Kali Oka Road while preserving the character of the roadway and neighborhood.		X	
Adopt a complete street policy so it can be applied in concert with the plan.	X		
Redevelop original Saraland into a pedestrian-friendly and attractive environment.		X	
Pursue grants to allow people to safely cross Highway 43.	X		
Aggressively pursue Safe Routes to School and similar funding to connect schools to neighborhoods, especially in original Saraland.	X		
Implement complete streets on identified routes as per this plan.		X	
Continue to require sidewalks in new development.	X		
Integrate new stormwater management systems within new neighborhoods, new commercial development, new parks and existing open spaces.	X		
Map new and existing drainage systems in the City's GIS.		X	X
Relocate utilities on major roadways from overhead to underground where feasible.	X	X	
Promote underground utilities in all new developments.	X		
Maintain and extend utility services as the city grows.	X	X	X



BUILT ENVIRONMENT	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Locate and design active parks and recreation facilities so that public safety is easily achieved.	X		
Improve the physical identity of Saraland through improved maintenance, enhancements, and landscaping.	X		
Optimize the City's landscape requirements.	X		
Redevelop and improve the Gateways into Saraland at Industrial Parkway and Highway 43.		X	
Keep public facilities in original Saraland and connect them to neighborhoods with sidewalks.			X
Strategically locate regional shopping centers in accordance with this plan so long-term viability is supported.			X
Evaluate development standards to ensure that results are consistent with vision and details of this plan.	X		
Continue the development of low density and rural single family development in the Northwest part of Saraland.	X		
Encourage higher density development to locate where infrastructure can support its demands.	X		
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Create a system of parks that provide for both active and passive options for all residents.		X	X
Develop a horticulture program for the City right of way areas.		X	
Use the flood plain and flood ways in northwest part of the City as trail corridors.			X
Aggressively seek grant funding to implement the trail system identified in the plan.	X	X	
Develop a capital funding source to fund implementation of the parks system.	X		
Provide necessary infrastructure, (i.e. parking, bathrooms) to ensure parks are successful.		X	



EDUCATION	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Use school system as way to promote community-wide events and build city identity.	X		
Continue to support the local schools in Saraland.	X		
Use Senior Center as a communication tool to older residents about public safety.	X	X	
Leverage the Senior Center to create opportunities for more varied senior programs and events.		X	
Partner with churches in Saraland on community clean-up events and similar types of outreach.	X		
Promote neighbor-helping-neighbor attitude in Saraland through events and media.	X		
GOVERNMENT SERVICES	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Collaborate with Fire Department to budget for future capital expenses.	X		
Develop an outreach program on safety and protection for seniors.	X		
Provide all necessary protection to keep schools safe.		X	
Continue to ensure that training and equipment for first responders meets standards.	X		
Study and anticipate future needs for Police Department.	X		
Maintain high professionalism of Police Department.	X		
Publicly celebrate public safety personnel and volunteers.	X		
Develop a pre-position disaster contract for disaster response.	X		
Develop a debris management plan in accordance with FEMA standards.	X		
Develop a reserve force account to fund disaster cleanup.	X		
Continue to improve city-wide communication (e.g. develop an e-newsletter).	X		

