

CITY-WIDE PLANS

Book Two: Comprehensive Plan



Introduction

The City of Prattville has over 30,000 residents and is predicted to grow substantially in the coming decades. It has recently added hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial property. It has brand new stores at I-65 and a historic downtown just a short drive down the same street. It has housing stock from almost every decade since the turn of the last century. A city as diverse and complex as Prattville requires a plan that addresses these variations on more than one scale.

As such, the Comprehensive Plan document will operate at two levels: City-Wide and District. In the following sections, the plan will illustrate first the concepts that affect Prattville as a whole. These include “high-level” considerations like Future Land Use (for both the City and a three-mile radius into the County), Transportation Improvements, Parks and Trails Network, and Economic Development, among others. Subsequently, the plan will “zoom in” and examine several defined districts in greater detail. These districts have been identified based on several factors including likelihood of change, availability of development opportunities, and community vision. By focusing on these target areas, the plan intends to more closely shape their future development and ensure their compatibility with the Community Objectives (See Part 1.0 of this Section).



Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty... Daniel Burnham

Future Land Use Plan

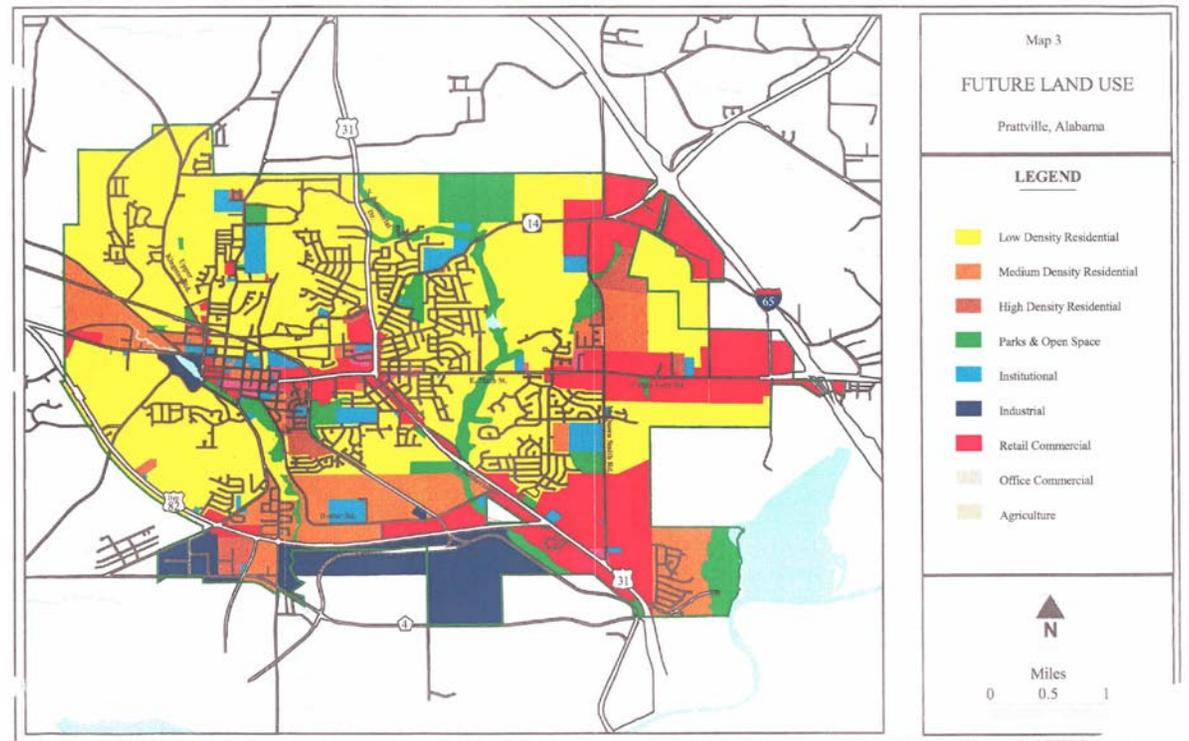
A Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is an important tool in guiding growth policy. While it does not carry the same implications as zoning, it can be used to guide planning and re-zoning decisions on an area-wide or parcel-by-parcel basis. For proactive municipalities, it is an often-consulted and, for all practical purposes, binding document.

In comparing past City maps with recent patterns of development, it is clear that Prattville utilizes its Future Land Use Map to great effect. As mentioned in the Inventory and Assessment section, there are very few deviations from the maps and reality. With that knowledge, it is recognized that this update of the FLUM is extremely important, and must be carefully considered.

In this iteration of the FLUM (Figure 2.1, following page), like those in the past, there is little to no incursion in the established residential neighborhoods beyond the provision of greenspace or institutional amenities. Commercial, office and industrial uses are designated towards the corridors that can support their transportation needs and which provide the central locations necessary for sustainable business.

The most noticeable differences between past FLUMs and the included iteration have to do with the expansion of the City limits, the pruning of the commercial designations and the re-working of the land use categories themselves.

Since the 1996 plan, the City has added a great deal of acreage, primarily to the north and west, but also filling into Elmore County along the I-65 corridor. This expansion has presented opportunities for the City to better control its surrounding context, but it has also increased and varied the pressures.



Future Land Use Map - 1996 Prattville Comprehensive Plan

LEGEND:

- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Mixed-Use - Transitional
- Mixed-Use - Commercial
- Mixed-Use - Residential
- Conservation & Greenspace

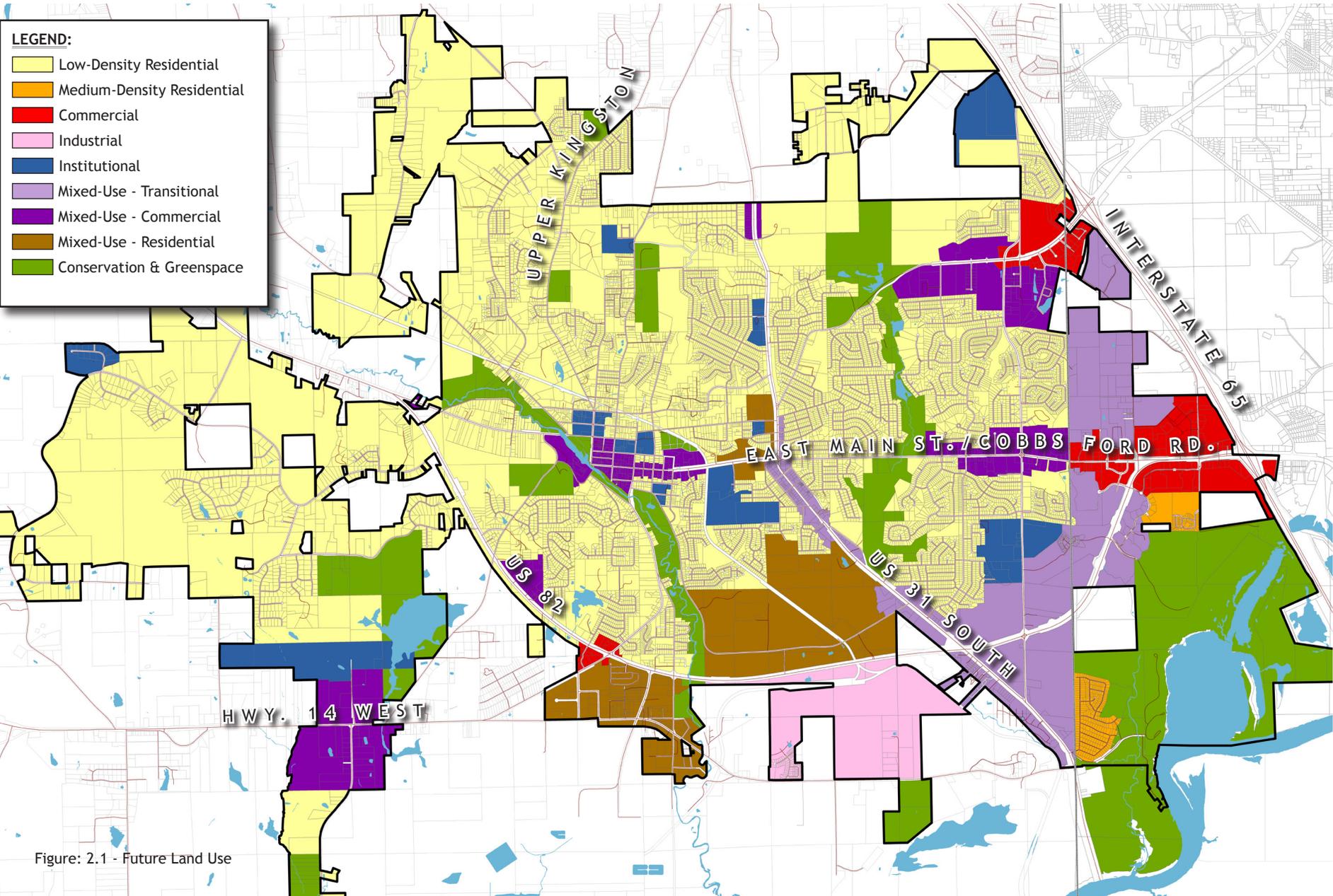


Figure: 2.1 - Future Land Use

To the north, all indications point to residential growth. The challenges for the City include the timing (and funding) of supporting infrastructure; the location of potential neighborhood-oriented commercial nodes; and, the process and practicalities of annexation. To the west, the infrastructure is already planned, but there are annexation ‘holes’ to deal with as well as questions of density and future development typology. Along the I-65 corridor, Prattville now extends into Elmore County, presenting a need for close planning and development coordination with two counties. Though almost exclusively contained within Autauga, the Elmore portion is of particular import due to its concentration of retail and commercial uses. Fostering and supporting these uses in the future will be important to all municipalities concerned.

Another refinement is the reduction, and to some extent the change in designation, of purely commercial land. Over the past decade, Prattville has worked very hard to expand and solidify its retail base and it has by all accounts been very successful. However, this has produced a situation in which future retail growth may be more limited. As such, *Project Prattville* has reduced the amount of land designated as “Commercial” (see figure 2.11 - *Land Use Comparison*, following page). The idea is to concentrate retail growth in certain targeted areas, and to make sure that existing retail is not diluted. However, in many cases this does not mean that the property trimmed out of the commercial designation is no longer developable as such. Rather, much of this land has been changed to a mixed-use designation, the details of which are discussed in the following section. Depending on the specific type of mixed-use district, commercial development can still be pursued, but under conditions that make it more consistent with the stated growth and market goals of the City.

This plan goes beyond merely affirming or recoding areas
2.12

of land use; it is also compelled, by changes in local and national development paradigms, to reexamine the land use types themselves. The previous land use legend included the following categories:

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Parks & Open Space
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Retail Commercial
- Office Commercial
- Agriculture

The new land use legend eliminates some of these. In some cases they were deemed to be inconsistent with future growth plans; in other cases, the categories were judged to be unwieldy in providing for the specifics of desired uses. The new FLUM legend uses the following designations:

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Mixed-Use - Commercial
- Mixed-Use - Residential
- Mixed-Use - Transitional
- Conservation & Greenspace

The mixed-use category is one that is increasing in popularity and implementation throughout the Southeast and the nation. The particular needs of Prattville, however, suggested that more than one type of mixed-use designation would be required. What follows is a review of each of the new categories, as well as an explanation for those that were replaced, removed or edited.

This matrix illustrates the current land use by existing categories, as well as the proposed Future and Extended Land Uses by the proposed new categories. The totals for the Extended Land Use Plan are not inclusive; that is, they do not include the area within the City limits.

Future Land Use Plan			Extended Land Use Plan (not inclusive)
Land Use Category	Current Acreage	Proposed Future Land Use	Proposed Future Land Use
Low-Density Residential	7,676*	11,550	44,545
Medium-Density Residential	6.7	171	0
High-Density Residential	238	[Removed]	[Removed]
Commercial - Retail	739**	[Combined below]	[Combined below]
Commercial - Office	109	[Combined below]	[Combined below]
Commercial	[Combined Category]	590	107
Industrial	209	591	3,709
Institutional	1,040	765	135
Mixed-Use - Commercial	[New Category]	1,021	1,354
Mixed-Use - Residential	[New Category]	1,104	538
Mixed-Use - Transitional	[New Category]	1,446	757
Conservation & Greenspace	2,519***	2756	12,089
Agricultural	2,731	[Removed]	[Removed]
* Includes mobile home parks			
** Includes lodging			
*** Includes programmed and unprogrammed space			

Figure: 2.11 - Land Use Comparison

Low Density Residential. This use is carried forward intact from previous plans, and will continue to make up the bulk of the City's land use. Low Density Residential refers to single family homes on single lots, usually at least one-sixth of an acre or larger. These lots have front, side and rear setbacks, and will only in very rare cases abut a land use other than single-family or greenspace. Target densities would not exceed eight units per acre.

Medium Density Residential. Also a holdover from previous plans, this use represents a slightly more intensive residential model. Typical building types would include townhomes, garden home and duplexes, and they would be sited for the most part closer to activity centers and districts. They would be of 'zero lot line' design, with one or more units sharing party walls or being contained within a single envelope. Within this use would also be included the 'senior housing/active living' designation. Target densities would range between eight and 20 units per acre.

High Density Residential (Removed). A land use designation that would typically cover condominium and apartment developments, very little of this has been built out in Prattville. In addition, it was not viewed as compatible with the bulk of Prattville uses, and this particular designation did not have a lot of support among the general population. There was one moderating circumstance, however. As part of a mixed-use development, most citizens felt that multi-family housing would be acceptable and even appropriate. Ergo, this category was removed, with its use rolled in to select Mixed-Use categories (defined below).

Commercial. Previously two distinct categories - Retail and Office - those distinctions have been made in new Mixed-Use categories, and this use has been left to encompass any and all types of commercial uses. As such, it is limited in its application, applied only to

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Sample images, from the top: Low-density residential; medium-density residential

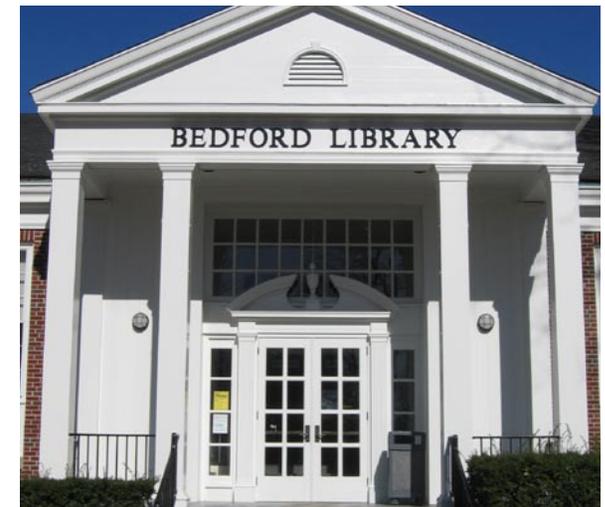
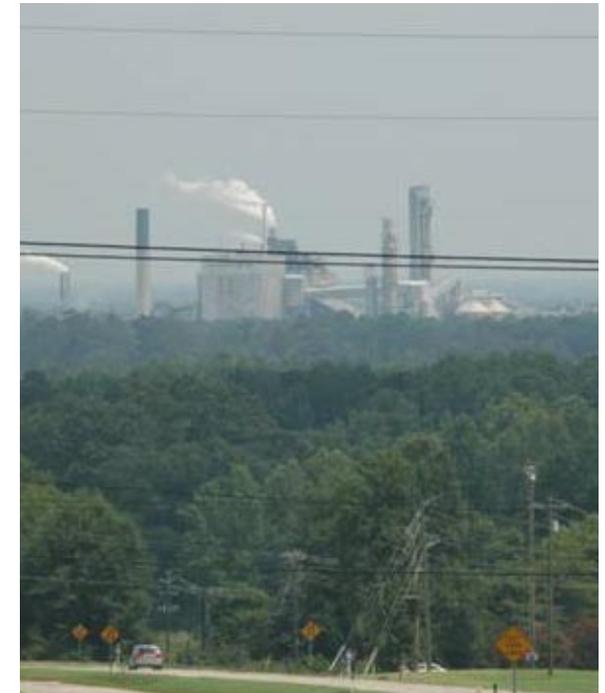
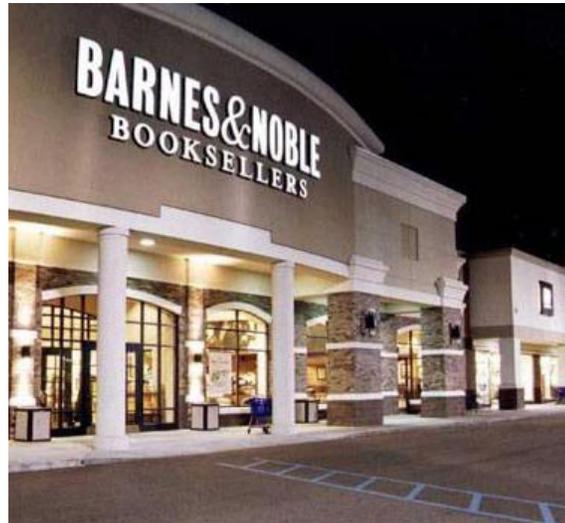
high-traffic intersections and corridors, and rarely to more than a parcel in depth. It allows maximum flexibility, especially in areas that might have more difficulty in attracting redevelopment.

Industrial. In this instance, the designation refers specifically to heavy industrial. These are resource-intensive uses that by and large need to be appreciably separated from most other land uses, especially residential. The plan specifically removes the sub-category often known as “light industrial”, and addresses it within some of the new Mixed-Use categories. It is anticipated that there will be minimal industrial areas identified, likely along the 82 Corridor to the south, where the existing International Paper facility has established some level of precedent.

Institutional. Very similar to the standing designation, this is reserved for government facilities, schools, churches, etc. In most cases, this has been applied to large, existing institutional locations, with the idea that future institutional development may occur under another use on a site-by-site basis .

Mixed-Use - Commercial. As its name suggests, this is a mixed-use category with a focus on commercial. It implies a rezoning, within the framework of which would be outlined allowances - most likely by percentage of square footage - for commercial and accessory uses. It is geared towards the redevelopment of existing commercial areas, so that there would not be a large net gain in retail, while additional complementary uses would be added.

Mixed-Use - Residential. With the High Density Residential category removed from the legend in this version of the plan, this new category provides for that level of development, but in a mandated mixed-use format. As a rule, mixed-use projects are more sustainable, in terms of performance and utility, than



Sample images, clockwise from top left: Commercial; Heavy industrial; Institutional; Mixed-use commercial

single-use counterparts. They also provide for more extended levels of activity, creating an atmosphere that is more conducive to public safety and security. The addition of this land use category can help the city satisfy an as-yet unmet demand for a variety of housing types, and do so in a format that is consistent with the popular vision.

Mixed-Use - Transitional. This is a very targeted land use category, designed specifically to support a broad range of redevelopment types while limiting additional retail that might soften the existing market. The two primary applications would be the Old Farm Lane corridor, and Home Place. The designation is geared towards creating a model of development and redevelopment that augments and supports the existing retail corridor on Cobbs Ford Road. Acceptable uses would include office, housing (of a variety of densities), hospitality, institutional, light industrial, flex office and greenspace, among others. Retail might be accommodated, but at a very limited scale, and of a purely local-serving variety.

Conservation & Greenspace. Only slightly different from the nomenclature of the existing Parks & Open Space designation, this category seeks to include any

and all riparian and undisturbed areas in addition to passive and active parks. This plan identifies, for the most part, existing parks within the existing city limits, with the understanding that specific sites need to be actively sought out and that all other land use categories include allowances for the inclusion of greenspace. More specificity - with regard to identifying potential sites - can be found in the subsequent section, Parks and Trails Network.

Agricultural (Removed). Currently, approximately 14% of the acreage within the city limits is being used for agriculture. It is anticipated that over the coming decades, this number will only shrink, and very likely disappear entirely, based on current growth projects. As such, this category was eliminated from the legend, though this by no means mandates the active removal of agricultural uses from within the city boundary.



Sample images, left to right: Mixed-use residential; Mixed-use transitional; Conservation & Greenspace

Extended Future Land Use Plan

In addition to the Future Land Use for the city itself, the plan is required to make land use designations within a three-mile radius of the city. This Extended Future Land Use Map (EFLUM) not only provides a level of contextual analysis, but also proactively addresses potential for growth and annexation of the city beyond its current boundaries.

This map (Figure 2.2, following page) illustrates future land use for the unincorporated county properties outside of the City limits and within their “Subdivision and Building Code Jurisdiction” boundary. While the three-mile radii are represented by arcs drawn from points within the City, for designation purposes any parcel that is overlapped by the boundary is also considered to be within the jurisdiction.

The outlying areas are dominated by low-density residential, with a few small exceptions. Neighborhood-based nodes of mixed-use commercial are located at some key intersections to the west, along 82. These are of a scale that they would not compete with the Cobbs Ford or Downtown commercial districts, but would be large enough to provide some locally-serving options to the immediate neighbors. A larger node is located at the Pine Level interchange, and it can provide both neighborhood-serving and interstate-oriented commercial uses. It would also provide an opportunity for medium- or high-density residential in a mixed-use format, as would be appropriate for this proximity to a major transportation corridor.

Closer into the core, the EFLUM fills in the unincorporated “islands” - The Home Place and South Memorial areas are consistent with the adjacent City land use designations, as are the Elmore County parcels along the Old Farm Lane corridor. Other than an expansion of the industrial and greenspace designations between 82 and the river, the rest is envisioned as low-density residential. This is consistent with current use, future vision, and market expectations.

The charming landscape which I saw this morning is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title... Ralph Waldo Emerson

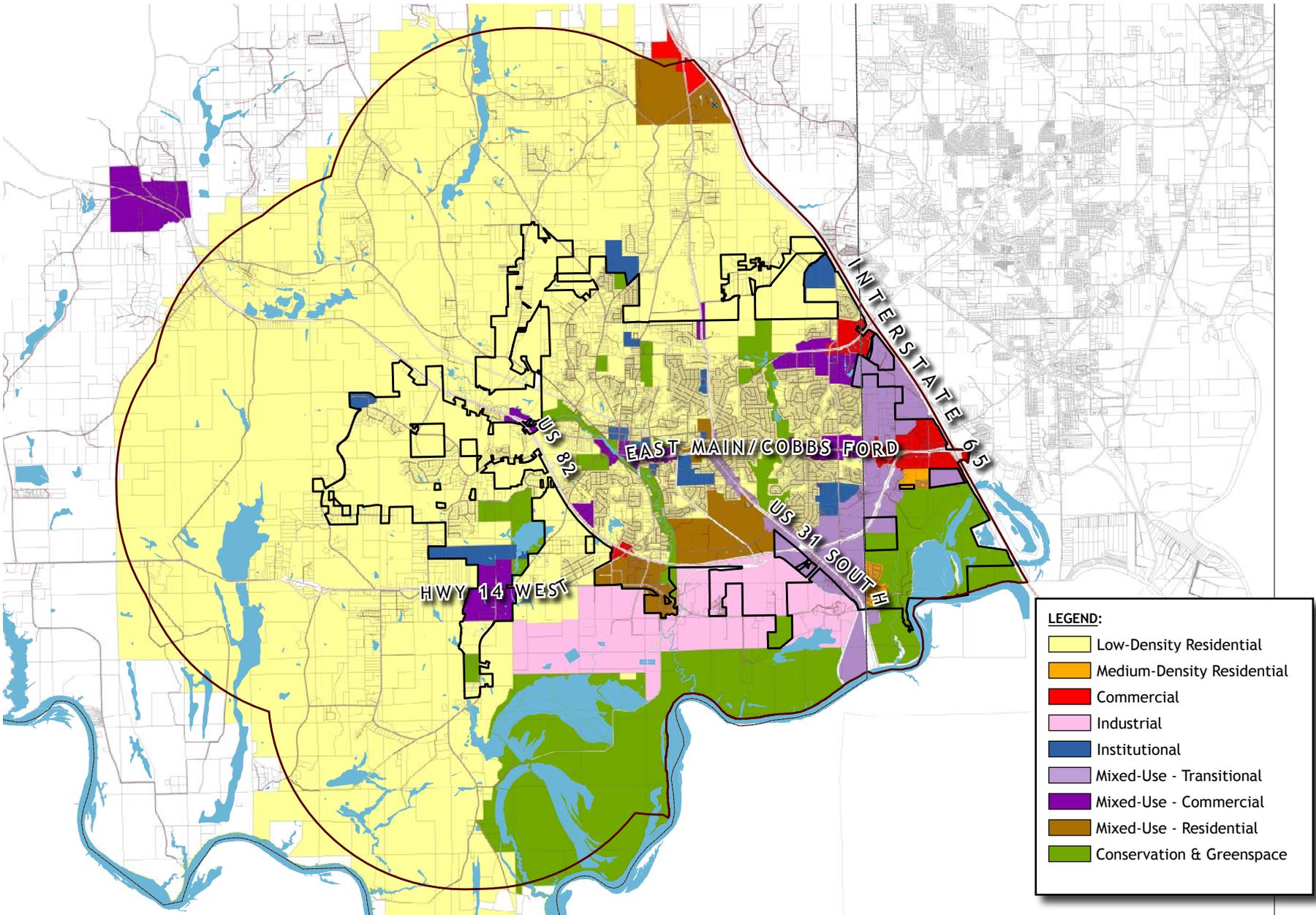


Figure: 2.2 - Extended Future Land Use