City of Dothan
Long Range Development Plan 2030

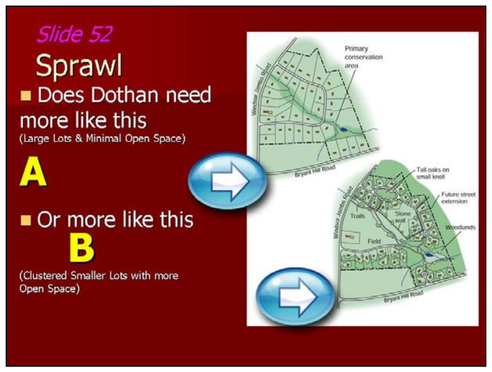
The Dothan City Commission and the Dothan Planning Commission, acknowledging the need for a Land Use Plan which took into account these, and other changes, authorized the City's Planning Staff to prepare a revised Land Use Plan to guide Dothan's physical growth and development for the coming 20 years. Although this Land Use Plan addresses a 20 year planning period, the City Commission, Planning Commission, and Planning Staff realize that unforeseen changes will occur during that time which will make it necessary to revise portions of the Plan. Therefore, in adopting this Land Use Plan, the City should commit itself to conduct a comprehensive review of the Plan at intervals of no more than five years. At that time, the trends and patterns on which this Plan is based, as well as the recommended policies, should be re-evaluated and revised as needed.

It has been over ten (10) years since the 1999 Plan was adopted and many of the assumptions made regarding growth and development remain valid today. This document then constitutes the comprehensive review alluded to earlier.

In late 2006, staff of the Department of Planning and Development began the task of planning an update of that earlier plan. We knew that a conventional "Comprehensive Plan" was more involved and would require more time and staff resources to accomplish the task. Therefore, we concluded that a modified land use plan, with emphasis on transportation would be the focus of this Plan, making it a Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). Additionally, pertinent goals and strategies outlined in this document will be refined and applied through a series of neighborhood plans to be developed subsequent to this Plan.

In January, 2007, staff prepared a detailed guide for the development of this Plan, a plan for planning, if you will and developed an Organizational Structure, began to gather information about the community (including public input), prepared an analysis of existing conditions, derived goals and objectives from the analysis and an implementation plan.

The center piece of Phase I – IV was the assembly of an advisory committee that reviewed the components of the Plan as produced by staff and provided feedback and guidance as appropriate.



One of the most important components of any long range plan is setting community goals. Community goals can be determined in a number of ways, the most accepted and popular of which is the public forum as well as surveys. It is important that the pulse and opinion of the citizens of the community is accounted for in the planning process because to be effective, the Plan must be embraced by the general population as "their plan". Therefore, a survey was created and mailed to all customers of Dothan Utilities and included in the March, 2007 Dothan Utilities bill. Besides being mailed, the survey was also posted on the City's website as a "downloadable" document. The Planning and Development Department received and catalogued 1,708 survey forms, which is a 5% survey return.

The following spring, Planning Department Staff conducted a series of forums to collect additional input from the public. The agenda for these meetings was simple, educate the audience, measure their preferences for a variety of development characteristics and collect their thoughts directly on their perceptions of what is a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat to the City of Dothan.

Together, the two "visioning" exercises pointed to obvious community-wide concerns that will become the basis for Plan goals, policies and objectives that can be used to implement them. Results for all three of the public participation elements are available as separate documents upon request.

Following the completion of the Existing Conditions Analysis in late 2007 and presented to the advisory committee. The committee received the report and no comments were recorded from the members.

This Long Range Development Plan contains a series of eight chapters organized in a manner that can be divided into four groupings – The Community; the Plan; The Big Picture; and Key Components to our community. Two principal chapters (Chapters 6 & 7) are topic-specific with goals and strategies. These elements are defined below as they apply to this Plan.

Chapter 1: Community Profile - The LRDP begins with our community profile establishing from where we came, who we are as a community, and who we expect to be in the future. It includes an overview of some demographics from the community, however, a more detailed presentation of those demographics are found within a precursor report to this one entitled "Dothan's Existing Conditions -2007 Report".

Chapter 2: Community Involvement - This document is a plan for our community and by our community. It was of the utmost importance to the City to assure that the community was not only allowed to participate, but strongly encouraged to participate. Chapter 2 provides a discussion about the public participation process that was undertaken for this LRDP.

Chapter 3: Understanding the Context of Our Future Decisions - The purpose of this chapter is to set forth the boundaries of our decision making process.

Chapter 4: Purpose of the Long Range Development Plan - This chapter provides a roadmap for steering the City's policy and decision making over the next 20 years.

What it is	What it isn't
➢ A statement of City policy	➢ A Zoning Ordinance
➢ A guide to decision making	➢ A Land Development Code
➢ A framework for more specific planning	➢ A rigid or static document
➢ A tool for education and communication	➢ A Capital Improvements Plan
➢ A view in long range perspective	➢ A City Budget template
➢ A way to improve quality of life	➢ A specific project development plan

Chapter 5: LRDP Vision and Guiding Principles - Chapter 5 establishes the overall vision and guiding principles for this planning effort. The vision and guiding principles described herein were obtained through community input and planning policy that helped define our decision process and set the LRDP direction.

Chapter 6: Land Use and Community Appearance - This chapter presents a detailed view of how existing and future land uses might interact with one another. Community appearance and design were primary concerns expressed by a number of citizens providing feedback. The appearance of our downtown, neighborhoods, and residential structures within the neighborhoods was expressed.

Chapter 7: Transportation – Chapter 7 contains a discussion of what the existing issues are with the city transportation system and the issues that will likely impact the shape of the future transportation system in Dothan.

Chapter 8: Implementation Plan - A plan without implementation is useless. This vital part of the Plan determines how the issues conveyed to the City by its public are to be considered, studied and acted upon.

Implementation of the Plan

Throughout this plan, we have set the stage for planning in Dothan. The preferences on issues raised by the public and those of concern to City leadership are discussed in detail in the plan document available on-line at http://www3.dothan.org/planning.html. On this pager, the key recommendations are presented intended to implement this Plan. They are organized according to the feedback we received through a citizen survey, several public forums, Planning Commission meetings, City Commission meetings, as well as through letters, and telephone calls to the City. In addition to the concerns expressed during the planning process, several other items important to staff that are included in the recommendations outlined below.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE CITY

- Continue to monitor active transportation improvements projects and steward the development of the I-10 Connector.
- Create and adopt the MACPlan by ordinance. Maintain, update and re-adopt the MACPlan as appropriate.
- Promote street connectivity to adjacent undeveloped property.
- Develop land use patterns compatible with and supports a variety of transportation opportunities.
- Encourage neighborhood street design that facilitates safety, ensures connectivity, deters through traffic and supports viable and sustainable communities.
- Implement access management standards in the Subdivision Regulations and development plan review.
- Develop and adopt a complete streets policy.

SIDEWALKS, PEDESTRIAN WAYS AND BIKE TRAILS

- Enforce sidewalks requirements established in the subdivision regulations. Revise as appropriate.
- Participate fully in the development of the Bike/Ped Plan for the City and implement as funding becomes available.
- Encourage pedestrian and bicycle links between shopping and entertainment destinations in the development plan approval process.
- Use incentives such as reduced street width or development density to encourage sidewalk design and construction in excess of minimums required.
- Promote design and construction of streets and walkways to be safe and pedestrian friendly and incorporate in-line public spaces throughout the network.
- Develop streetscape plans and overlay districts for highly visible major roadways in the City that address issues such as safety, trees and landscaping, lighting, pedestrian amenities, sidewalks, crosswalks and medians to enhance the walkability of our City.

COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE PUBLIC

- Continue with the Dothan 101 program and have the presentations broadcast on the public access channel as a tape-delayed program.
- Investigate opportunities to broadcast the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning and Adjustment, and the Historic Preservation Board meetings as tape delayed programming on the public access cable channel.
- In addition to the tape delayed programming, investigate the practicality to broadcast each meeting "live" on the official City website.
- When entering into the "neighborhood planning" phase of individual neighborhoods within Dothan, it is recommended that a steering committee of citizens who live within the neighborhood being studied be formed to aid in the analysis and development of the plan for their neighborhood. In doing this, the citizens will achieve a sense of community and camaraderie as the process unfolds and culminates.
- Investigate implementing an annual citizen survey.

IMPROVEMENTS TO DOWNTOWN

- Continue working to implement the Downtown Plan.
- Continue funding the DDRA.
- Actively seek out private land development companies who specialize in downtown redevelopment projects on a large scale for private ventures or public/private partnerships.
- Improve the infrastructure system within the downtown to include upgrading the water transmission system to a size that could handle increased development density and intensity in the downtown area.
- Develop a streetscape plans at a pedestrian scale for other areas of downtown to emphasize a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Encourage use of unique design guidelines for UTND's to promote residential mixed-use developments downtown.

DOWNTOWN ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

- Continue City-sponsored events in the downtown and establish new ones such as Mardis Gras parades, balls, etc.
- Relocate activities to downtown venues such as the "Smokin' in the Wiregrass" bar-b-que cook off held in the spring.
- Investigate opportunities to develop an "attraction" downtown such as an aquarium, a movie theater, or other such activities that would attract visitors to spend time in the downtown.

PREVENT COMMERCIAL ENCROACHMENT

- Avoid rezoning approvals where there is no clear understanding of what will be developed on that tract.
- Revise the landscape buffer criteria with regard to landscaping requirements that recognizes the varying intensities of use.
- Refine landscape requirements so large parking areas include buffering and planting that soften or mitigate intrusive views.
- Review height restrictions for non-residential uses that reflect the distance from adjacent residential uses.
- Ensure adequate opportunities for new commercial development in appropriate locations in the City.
- Develop a variety of regulatory techniques to promote effective compatibility between adjacent land uses.
- Encourage large commerical uses to locate at major nodes in the transport system.

MORE OPEN SPACE AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- Acquire land appropriate for neighborhood park opportunities including in the downtown area.
- Consider an amendment to the subdivision regulations which would require land to be set aside for the use of the future residents of the new community.
- Increase the amount of open space with an emphasis on creating a greenway network and hike/bike trails.
- Encourage land uses that promote an environment where residents can work, live, and play within their neighborhoods.

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

- Map the location of elements of green infrastructure, protected and endangered species and known cultural resources.
- Identify, preserve and protect green infrastructure and habitat in the development review process.
- Add conservation development standards to the subdivision regulations to minimize disruption of green infrastructure.
- Integrate the constructed environment and the natural environment to protect the native landscape and topographical features inherent in our community.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN SUPPORT OF URBAN GROWTH AREA, BOUNDARY AND ANNEXATION GOALS

- Dothan will give primary consideration for annexing land which has a fiscally positive impact.
- Property lying outside the Urban Growth Boundary as designated in this Plan should not be annexed.
- The capacity of existing infrastructure and redevelopment of older areas should be promoted to maximize existing taxpayer investments.
- Consider initiating a flood hazard ordinance and building inspections program in the three-mile police jurisdiction area to establish a level of protection for its current and future residents.
- Ensure that growth occurs in a manner that balances the pace of development with the City's ability to provide critical services such as police and fire protection, utilities, and trash removal as well as capital improvements such as parks, transportation and open space.
- Recognize that all land uses are necessary to provide for the balanced and orderly growth and development of the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY APPEARANCE GOALS AND STRATEGIES

- Housing of all types and form must be constructed of the highest quality materials and designed to create safe and attractive neighborhoods. Attention must be paid to building massing and form with emphasis on variation to prevent repetition of similar homes or building complexes.
- Improve design standards for multi-family housing that will address issues such as architectural design and integrity, building design and massing, spatial relationships, and safety, while creating sustainability and durability.
- Improve design standards for various levels of single-family structures that address the specific issues elaborated above.
- Develop standards for development quality in the built environment to prevent premature obsolescence.
- Enhance and accentuate primary gateways to the City by constructing landscaped medians or points of arrival.
- Non-residential uses along image corridors should be clearly recognizable and relate directly to the corridor it fronts.
- Use street trees, landscaping and lighting to enhance the appearance of the use or building from the image corridor.
- Where possible, adjacent buildings should relate in size, height and appearance to each other.
- Developments should integrate pedestrian and bicycle paths and lanes in image corridors.
- Frontage or backage roads should be incorporated into development design in image corridors.
- Maintain transitions to residential areas in image corridors; strive to define edges in development patterns.
- Sign types and sizes should be appropriate to their context, i.e. height and size should be a function of intensity of use and traffic speed to avoid visual clutter in image corridors.
- Land uses along image corridors should be coordinated against a set of design standards.
- Strip or leapfrog development along image corridors should be minimized to create a recognizable transition between the "city" and the "country