

How do we ***GROW*** from here?



City of Semmes
Comprehensive Plan

April 2014



Acknowledgements

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



Mayor and Council Members

*Mayor Judith Hale
Council Member David Baker
Council Member Howard Smith
Council Member Lawrence Webb
Council Member Renee Fransen
Council Member Jerry Shirey*

Planning Commission

*Hon. Tim Hale - Chairman
Mayor Judith Hale
Renee Fransen
Brandi Shewmake
Charles Lowery
Helen Joyce
Sondra Fincher
Debrah Ellis
Al Cheatam*

Working Group

*Brandi Shewmake
Betsy Dodd
Melinda Fairley
Linda Davis
Terri Nelson
Pat Hadder
David Miller
Sondra Fincher
Terry King
Brandon Van Hook*



Planning Team

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



Contents

Preface	2
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	3
Chapter 2: History of Semmes:	4
Chapter 3: Planning Process.....	6
Chapter 4: The Population of Semmes	8
Chapter 5: Existing Conditions:	9
Chapter 6: Vision Statement:	13
Chapter 7: Goals and Objectives:	15
Chapter 8: Alternative Plans	18
Chapter 9: Future Plan	21
Chapter 10: Implementation.....	26

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



Preface

The City of Semmes, Alabama incorporated in 2011 as a result of growth pressure in western Mobile County. Semmes had traditionally been a rural community that was born from the timber and nursery businesses. Conventional residential growth began to take place in Semmes and began to threaten the rural quality of life that the residents of Semmes chose to make their own. As a result, the historical community incorporated so that the residents of the city could have a voice in their future.

The City, which currently is approximately eight (8) square miles in area, has been aggressive in its accomplishments. It supports the Fire Department, has a contract with the Sherriff's Office for full-time police protection, has developed a Public Works Department, and has an active and forward thinking Planning Commission. The Commission has adopted subdivision regulations, construction standards, and commercial site plan requirements; and has cooperated with ALDOT on an access management plan for U.S. Highway 98 (aka Moffett Road). Significant steps have been taken.

One of the most significant steps taken is embarking on the development of a city-wide Comprehensive Plan. The Plan, which falls under the authority of the Planning Commission according to Alabama Law, sought to actively engage the citizens of the community so that the plan document itself would reflect the thoughts, desires, and opinions of the citizens. The plan is intended to be a decision-making guide for both the City Council and the Planning Commission. The plan is (and should be) a living document that is used frequently by staff, the Planning Commission, and the Council in making decisions and allocating resources. The plan sets the vision, and the implementation of the plan is accomplished through hard work.

The preferred plan that was developed during the planning process sets high standards for Semmes. The preferred plan works to address the issues raised by citizens, as well as those identified by appointed and elected officials. The preferred plan works to improve the image of Semmes and to allow it to grow in a diverse manner with both residential and commercial land uses. The preferred plan proposes new parks, a trail system, and new roads. The preferred plan is the result of countless hours of hard work by volunteers and it represents the vision for the future.



Chapter 1

Introduction

The City of Semmes secured a grant through the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to assist in funding the development of the plan. Once the process began, the consultant planning team asked the City to appoint a working group. The working group is an ad-hoc committee of citizen volunteers that represent various demographics, geographies, and professions within the City. The working group that was appointed consisted of 16 members.

The plan document is a multi-purpose work product that in its full state is intended to meet the requirements of Alabama Law 11-52-9 so that:

“The plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs which will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, including, among other things, adequate provision for traffic, the promotion of safety from fire and other dangers, adequate provision for light and air, the promotion

of the healthful and convenient distribution of population, the promotion of good civic design and arrangement, wise and efficient expenditure of public funds, and the adequate provision of public utilities and other public requirements.”

The plan document itself provides a brief historical account of Semmes, a description of the planning process utilized, a brief analysis of existing conditions, creation of goals and objectives, presentation of the draft plan alternatives, the preferred plan, and an implementation section.



Chapter 2

History of Semmes

Semmes is a community, and now a City, with a proud and rich history. Semmes was named for Admiral Raphael Semmes, who was a well-known Southern war hero during the War Between the States. The community was actually founded by the Semmes Land Company in November 1900 (Scrapbook of Memories, City of Semmes). A section of land was purchased by the Land Company, which then moved forward to lay the town out into lots and streets. The general area where the original town was laid out is today found south of Moffett Road on Wulff Rd. north and south of the railroad tracks. The post office was established prior to the town, in 1890. It is speculated that the activity generated by the post office was one of the reasons that the Semmes Land Company bought the property and went to the effort to lay out lots and streets (Scrapbook of Memories, City of Semmes).

In fact, the railroad tracks became the cornerstone of early Semmes. It is where the railroad station was built and served as the loading point for timber that was taken to Mobile for further shipment. In the early 1900's, Mobile was the nation's largest timber exporter (Scrapbook of Memories, City of Semmes). This boom in timber was the



Semmes Historic Church

main activity of the original town of Semmes. As the timber business grew, additional facilities were built in the town, such as the Funk Hotel and a store operated by Charles McCrary. The early success of Semmes was very much rooted in the success of the timber industry.

Education in Semmes was always important, just as it is today. The community started a formal school in 1894 and the Semmes School was built in 1902. The property was donated by Mr. Thomas Jefferson Howell and is the site of the existing old school. The school was



listed by the Alabama Historical Commission on the Alabama Register of Landmarks in August 1994.

Prior to 1920, the industrial settlers of Semmes began planting satsuma groves and constructing greenhouses to grow ornamentals. Dodd Nurseries started business during this time period and it is still active today. As timber began to wane, Semmes had a niche in the nursery business. As success grew in the early years, other nurseries were started, including the Blackwell Nursery. Today, as it was then, Semmes is well known for azaleas, camellias, and many varieties of plants shipped throughout the country and the world.

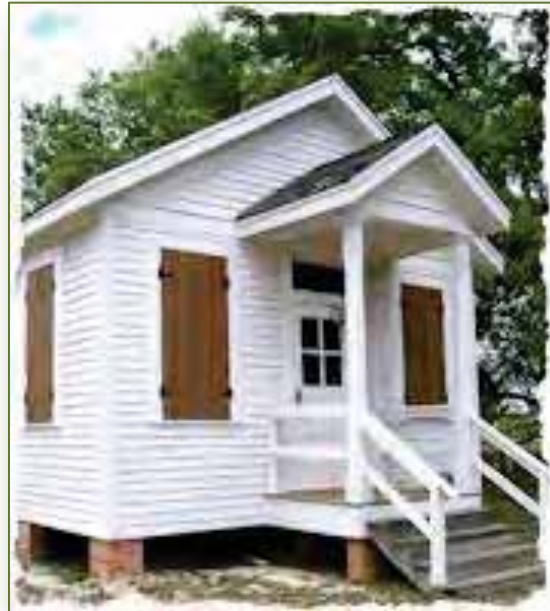
Moffett Road was paved in 1935. This, in conjunction with the growth of the nursery industry and several other local ventures (such as dairy, farming, and related agriculture activities) made the community quite vibrant. Semmes eventually grew into a hub for Western Mobile County, a hub of commerce, retail, and housing.

In the early and mid-2000's growth was exploding in Mobile County. New commercial businesses and residential subdivisions began to appear in Semmes. The City of Mobile was proposing to annex the community, and the plethora of new subdivisions were beginning

to alter the historical context of Semmes. The community of Semmes found itself at a cross-roads. The community could either be annexed into the City of Mobile, it could stay in the County yet still experience the kind of growth that was not harmonious with Semmes, or it could vote to incorporate into a City. In March 2010, the Friends of Semmes and the incorporation groups presented to the Mobile County Judge of Probate a request

for incorporation. The incorporation referendum took place on August 7, 2010, with nearly 74% of the voters approving incorporation. The City was declared incorporated according to Alabama Law on May 2, 2011.

Since May 2, 2011, a tremendous amount of work has been invested by the City Council, the Planning Commission and the citizens of Semmes. Today, the City has a fully functioning Public Works Department, Building Department, and Planning Department. The City is very supportive of public safety; it supports the Fire Department and also has a contract with the Mobile County Sherriff's Department so that the City is policed by dedicated deputies. The City has accomplished much in a short period of time. The accomplishments are a testimony to the spirit of Semmes, a spirit that dates back to the 1900s when timber was cut and loaded and when greenhouses were constructed. It is a spirit that seeks to preserve Semmes as a distinct community and a meaningful place.



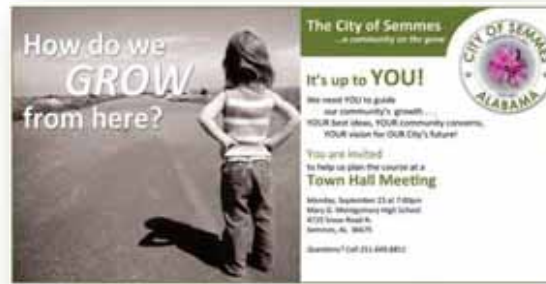
Semmes Historic Schoolhouse



Chapter 3

Planning Process

Planning for the future is as much an art as it is a science. For any planning project 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 Semmes Comprehensive Plan.



Mailier Announcing First Town Hall Meeting

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. This group would act 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 Semmes, how it got to where 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 Semmes.

The overall planning process with the working group was punctuated by strategically timed Town Hall meetings. There were two Town Hall meetings, one on September 23, 2013 at Mary G. Montgomery High School and the other on February 15, 2014 at the Semmes Community Center. More than 150 people participated in both of the Town Hall meetings.





Selected “Likes”

The planning process required the team to develop three future land use alternatives for consideration by the working group. The team identified them as easy, moderate, and hard. The three options were presented to the working group, 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 moderate and courageous alternatives, blends them together, and creates new opportunities for the future of Semmes.

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.

Selected “Dislikes”

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 the challenges and opportunities are adequately addressed as they evolve over time.



Chapter 4

Population of Semmes

As mentioned in the historical section, Semmes was founded by a group of industrious people who created a vibrant and sustained community in the woods. Today, the City is an active regional center for commerce and services. The City has grown quite substantially over time.

In 2000, the U.S. Census indicated that the total population in the Semmes Zip Code was 15,389. In 2010 the total population in the Semmes Zip Code was 18,345 (www.census.gov). The City was incorporated in 2011 with a population of 2,897. In 2012, the population inside the incorporated limits was 3,115 (City of Semmes statistics).

As can be determined from the above data, Semmes has grown and it is expected that Semmes will continue to grow. The greater Mobile region is continuing to see growth as a result of new industries. Recent trends indicate that the growing population is moving to the west. This will mean additional growth for Semmes. It is anticipated that a significant portion of the growth will take place outside of the City limits but within the City's planning and police jurisdictions.



2013 Semmes Azalea Festival



Chapter 5

Existing Conditions

As part of the due diligence needed to prepare the plan for the City of Semmes, it was necessary to come to an understanding of the existing conditions of the City. The understanding of the existing conditions incorporates not just the physical attributes or conditions of the City, but also infrastructure, public safety, drainage concerns, development patterns, and traffic. Each of these elements works together to form an impression of the City and to prepare the city for future demands.

The planning team evaluated existing land use and land cover data that was collected using GIS and a windshield survey. In order to communicate the planning teams' impressions and findings, the discussion below is divided into major land use categories. The color coding of the category descriptions below is keyed to the map on page 12 of this document.

Single Family Residential The patterns of development in Semmes have traditionally been low density single family with relatively large lots. The lots are typically large because of the desire of the people to be out in the country and the unavailability of water and sewer in many situations. If water and sewer are not present, then lots must be large



Working Group Identifying Issues

enough to incorporate septic systems, and development is much less dense.

Commercial Most of the commercial uses in Semmes can be found on Moffett Road and on Schillinger Road. Moffett is a major artery through Semmes, and Schillinger is an important regional roadway in Western Mobile County. Commercial is primarily retail oriented, which includes restaurants, gas stations, banks, and similar type of uses. Agriculture-based retail outlets (such as feed and tack stores) can also be found in Semmes. Additionally, there is a wide variety of automotive services including used car dealers, tire stores, and several body shops. There are professional offices in Semmes, as



well. Professional offices are generally limited to insurance, dental, and general practice doctors. There appeared to be a significant lack of professional office uses as compared to other communities. In general terms, the pattern of commercial development can be classified as strip-type, whereby the first several hundred feet of property adjacent to the roadway is developed, with each parcel or lot having independent access to the roadway. There are important shopping centers in Semmes that are found at the major intersections in the City.



Working Group Identifying Issues

Churches Semmes is fortunate to have a wide variety of active religious choices. Many of the churches that exist in Semmes have been in the community for decades. However, churches, new or otherwise, do reflect the national trend of providing a multitude of community services beyond traditional worship and children’s programs. Many churches in Semmes have a family life component to the facility, with a gymnasium and / or recreational center. As a result of the increased activity, the physical facilities of the churches have moved beyond the traditional church buildings.

Agriculture As has been noted previously, agricultural activity in Semmes is the foundation of the community. That trend continues today which the large and successful nursery businesses that operate in and around Semmes. The nursery industry is important to the City, since it provides a strong basis for economic activity and community pride. Physically, the nurseries make a strong statement in Semmes with large open spaces. This reinforces the perception of Semmes as a rural community. Of course, there are other agricultural activities in Semmes, but they are not as prominent or as dominant as is the nursery industry. The nurseries in Semmes typically operate on land that has been in the families

for many generations and can trace their origins back to the early 1900s.

Industrial There is a lack of heavy, smokestack type industry in Semmes. However, there is a wide variety of light industrial uses that range from support of the agricultural industry to light manufacturing. A significant number of the industrial land uses can be found on Schillinger Road south of Moffett Road.

Roadway Infrastructure Semmes is fortunate to have a network of roadways in the City and its jurisdiction that are in very good physical condition. Mobile County repaired a significant number of roads in Semmes just prior to the City’s incorporation. The roadways in Semmes, while in good shape, are built for the automobile and very few (except for interior neighborhood roads), make any accommodation for other users, such as pedestrians and bicycle riders.



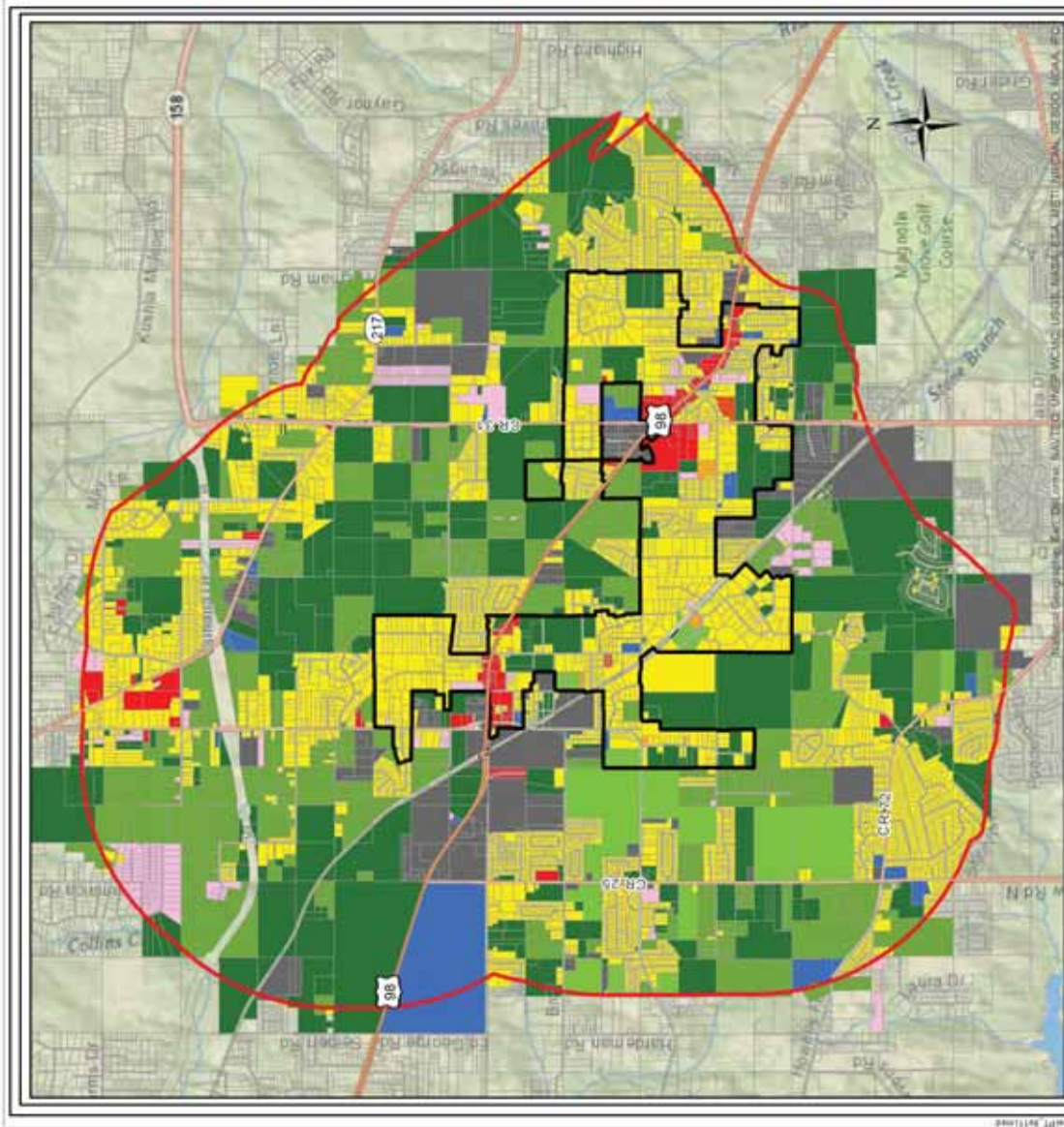
Park and Recreation

The City has two primary parks, the walking track park located adjacent to Mary G. Montgomery High School. This park provides for both active and passive recreation. The City is currently constructing the Honor Park. The Honor Park is located south of Moffett Road on Wulff Road. The park is intended to honor all veterans and provide a gathering place for community events. Additionally, the Semmes Community Center facility is located at the property. The City is currently nearing the completion on construction of the Heritage Park on Wulff Road. In general terms, park and recreational opportunities in Semmes are currently limited and are accessible by vehicle only. The City is also fortunate to have a new Senior Center that was recently completed. The senior center, located on Moffett Road was made possible through collaboration with Mobile County. As might be expected, the center is a hub of activity for the senior population of Semmes and other seniors who live in the area.



Example Focus Area Issue Maps

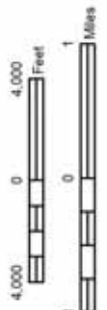




This Comprehensive Plan Map does not constitute zoning nor establish zoning regulations.

- LEGEND**
- City Limits
 - 1.5 Mile Planning Jurisdiction
 - Parcel Boundary
 - Planning Jurisdiction Land Use**
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Institutional
 - Mobile Home
 - Residential Single Family
 - Residential Agricultural
 - Agricultural
 - Undeveloped: Woods, Fields, etc.

- City of Semmes Land Use**
- Commercial: Retail, Consumer-Oriented Business
 - Industrial: Manufacturing, Distribution Business
 - Institutional: Church, School
 - Mobile Homes
 - Residential Agricultural: Single Residence with large tract of undeveloped land
 - Residential Single Family: Residential Single Family Enhanced; Sidewalks
 - Residential Business: Primary Residence with Family Business on property
 - Multifamily: Duplex, Two-Family Residence, Multifamily Apartments
 - Rights of Way: Transportation, Utility
 - Agricultural: Nursery/Farm
 - Undeveloped: Woods, Fields



City of Semmes
Comprehensive Plan
Mobile County, AL



Existing Land Use/Land Cover Map

PROJECT NO: 13-1101-0029
DATE: APRIL 2014

Chapter 6

Vision Statement

The working group dedicated a significant amount of meeting time to crafting and creating the vision statement shown to the left. The vision statement is very important because it encapsulates what the future of Semmes is as it changes over time. The vision statement is the foundation for the goals and objectives of the plan and is a primary driver in land use plan alternatives.

The vision statement contains and embodies important ideals that are worthy of a brief discussion:

Semmes will grow.... The fact is that the City will change over time and it will continue to grow as Mobile County grows. There will be additional residential and commercial activity in Semmes. The question is not if Semmes will grow, but how it will grow.

Family-Friendly.... The working group and the Town Hall meetings all underscored the importance of retaining the family friendly focus of Semmes. Semmes has always been a good and safe place to raise a family and it is desired that this continue.

Physically connected... Much of the conversation regarding the challenges facing Semmes now and in the future relates to traffic and mobility. Moffett Road is an important corridor and the extension of Highway 158 will take place in the future. These corridors carry a large amount of through traffic and are also a primary route for local traffic. It was identified early and often that additional routes in and around the City are necessary so that Moffett Road and the future State Highway 158 can be a route choice, not a route necessity.

Safe Safe embodies fire and police protection.

Economically-diverse ... The City desires to diversify the local economy. Currently, much of the business base is retail or nursery-related. While there are some professional jobs and some industrial activity, there could be more. The City would like to have jobs within its jurisdiction so that residents do not have to leave to find suitable employment. Attracting and diversifying the job base will take place as more people move into Semmes. It will require focused support to create this job growth and diversification.

Vision Statement

Semmes will grow as a family-friendly, physically connected, safe and economically-diverse community, while protecting its unique and tranquil quality of life and preserving its traditional rural character.



*Unique and tranquil quality of life ...*The citizens of Semmes routinely identified the tranquil quality of life as important to them and as an important asset of the City. Pictures that were taken routinely showed the “wide-open spaces” of Semmes as a “like” and as something worth preserving.

Traditional rural character The Semmes community was founded by hard working industrious folks who created a community out of the woods in the early 1900s. This work ethic and the rural setting of the community continues today as demonstrated by the success of the nurseries and the typically low density housing that is and has been prevalent in the community for more than 100 years.

All of the above elements were important to the working group and Town Hall participants. The City desires to encourage growth. Growth is fundamentally a progression of Semmes. Semmes desires to have growth--growth that reflects the past and what drew people to Semmes in the first place and growth that diversifies the City in the future.



Chapter 7

Goals and Objectives

Goals are general statements that describe how City residents want Semmes to evolve in the future. Objectives are the particular steps that must be achieved to reach the goals. The goals and objectives below were born from the listening phase of the project, during which challenges and aspirations were identified by the working group and then ratified at the Town Hall meeting in September 2013.

1. **Growth and Development: To grow Semmes into a diversified community that reflects its traditional rural character.**

- Protect the rural heritage of Semmes while fostering its small-town feel.
- Promote agriculture-related business and industry.
- Define and redevelop “Historic Semmes” and strengthen its connection to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Locate commercial development in identified target growth areas.
- Encourage the development of commercial activity that provides local services and supports the perception of Semmes as a small town.

- Direct higher density residential development to areas that are close to commercial areas.
- Limit non-agricultural industrial use to those areas directly adjoining the railway.
- Strategically evaluate and annex properties into the City.

2. **Infrastructure: To improve infrastructure and options so that mobility, transportation, and public safety continue to improve.**

- Implement new roads to enhance vehicular circulation and improve travel times.
- Provide a balanced street network for cars, bikes and pedestrians in the community, as appropriate.
- Develop a long-term maintenance plan for the City streets and drainage so as not to create a financial burden on the City.
- Continue to cooperate with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) in implementing improved traffic safety on Moffett Road (U.S. Highway 98).
- Ensure that low-speed streets are designed appropriately.



- Develop sidewalks in a network that is cohesive, continuous, convenient and context-appropriate.
- Provide street lighting in appropriate locations to enhance safety.

- Partner with ALDOT to support the State Highway 158 extension.
- Ensure that adequate public facilities are available to serve new development.

- Support economic diversity, so that all types of goods and services are offered in Semmes and good job opportunities are created locally.

2. Infrastructure

- Implement new roads to enhance vehicular circulation and improve travel times.
- Provide a balanced street network for cars, bikes, and pedestrians in the community, as appropriate.
- Develop a long-term maintenance plan for the City streets and drainage so as not to create a financial burden on the City.
- Continue to cooperate with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) in implementing improved traffic safety on Moffett Road (Highway U.S. 98).
- Ensure that streets that are intended for lower speeds employ the appropriate traffic-calming features as part of the design.
- Develop sidewalks in a network that is cohesive, continuous, convenient and context-appropriate.
- Provide street lighting in appropriate locations to enhance safety.
- Partner with ALDOT to support the State Highway 158 extension.
- Ensure that adequate public facilities are available to serve new development.

3. Built Environment: Grow Semmes in the future and work to ensure that viability of existing businesses and development continues, while improving the physical image of the City on main corridors.

- Support the long-term viability of the regional shopping center (Walmart retail complex and adjacent shopping centers).
- Develop and support the “historic” town center.
- Locate civic development near the “historic” town center.
- Identify and develop small-scale neighborhood shopping centers that provide localized goods and services.
- Support high quality development in appropriate locations, along with traditional rural low density (single detached home) residential development.
- Improve the physical identity of Semmes by implementing gateway improvements and street beautification.

4. Natural Environment: Enhance the natural environment and opportunities that are presented.

- Develop appropriate Semmes-specific landscape ordinance requirements for new commercial development and streetscapes.
- Preserve and protect natural and open spaces as community amenities.
- Develop a regional stormwater management system.
- Incorporate stormwater management features (such as retention ponds) along roadways and within development parcels to preserve and protect the natural environment.
- Encourage low-impact development (LID) as a strategy for promoting on-site infiltration of rainfall, controlling runoff volume and protecting receiving waters from polluted stormwater.

Goals and Objectives Sheet from Town Hall Meeting



5. Outdoor Parks and Recreation: Build a system of parks that affords opportunities to all use groups and demographics, with particular attention to multimodal trails.

- Create a system of parks and open spaces that provides a variety of passive and active recreational options for all residents in the community.
- Support the development of a strategic pedestrian/bike (multimodal) trail network with linkages to and between residential, commercial, and institutional areas.
- Support the existing local sporting organizations.

6. Quality of Life: Support the social fabric of the community through events and partnerships with local institutions to support the small town feel of Semmes.

- Celebrate rural history.
- Celebrate the historic and future successes of the nursery industry.
- Design streets so that they are not barriers to personal interaction and do not unduly favor motorized traffic.
- Partner with the Senior Center to create and implement community wellness programs.

- Support the local public schools in Semmes.
- Partner with the school system to create a traffic safety program that offers basic pedestrian safety instruction to students.
- Develop partnerships with local organizations to link residents with social opportunities.

7. Government Services: Provide and deliver essential local government services in an efficient, cost effective, and collaborative manner to improve the City's future and provide public safety protection.

- Create a Capital Planning Committee to conduct a municipal facility needs study for city buildings and equipment.
- Link capital improvements and the planning process to ensure implementation is based on community desires.
- Develop a sign ordinance that is specific for Semmes.
- Develop a zoning ordinance that is specific for Semmes.
- Ensure that adequate public facilities and government services (including transportation, roads, water, fire

- protection, emergency services, schools and medical facilities) are balanced with the population.
- Develop incentives for developers that promote good development practices.
- Address community nuisances (such as abandoned houses, litter).
- Support the Fire Department.
- Support the Sheriff's Department.



Chapter 8

Alternative Plans

Based on the input provided by the working group and the general public (at the September 2013 Town Hall meeting and on comment forms), the planning team created three distinct future land use options for consideration by the working group. The vision statement and the goals and objectives provided the fundamental basis for the development of the plan alternatives. The purpose of the plan alternatives is to provide options for the future of the City that are rooted in what the citizens desire to see achieved. The plan options were distinct from each other, as there is always more than one correct answer in the future of a growing City.

Alternative 1 – Easy

This option was created to reflect the traditional rural nature of Semmes and is easy to implement. Commercial development would locate primarily in a strip fashion along the arterials. Residential neighborhoods would simply fill in the gaps, and community facilities, such as churches, would locate where it is most economical. In general



Map Depicting Alternative 1



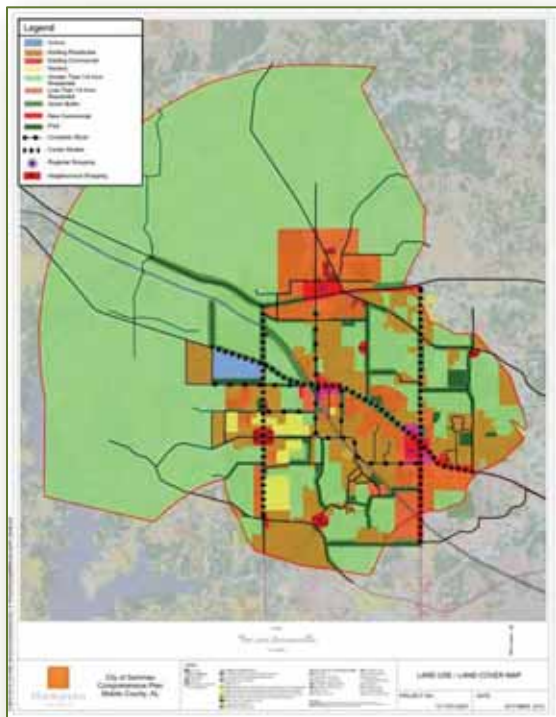
terms, a City that would represent mainstream American development practices. Significant alterations to the City, transportation, quality of life, and the physical image of the City are not contemplated to take place.

Alternative 2 – Medium

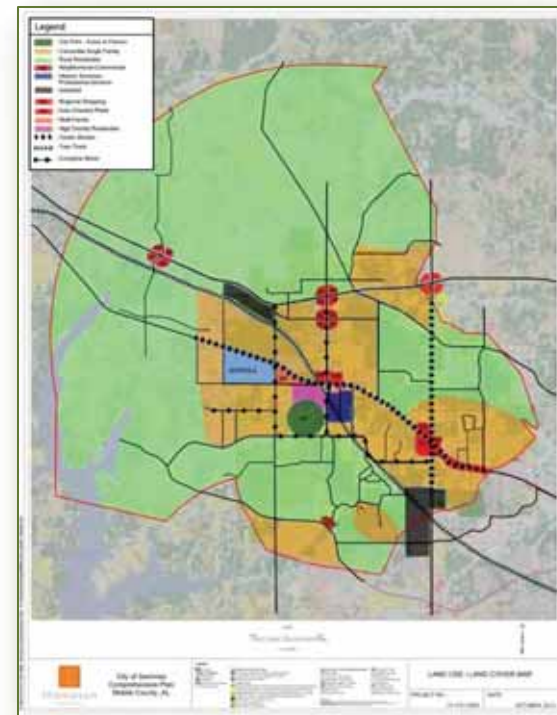
This option was created to incorporate elements that the participants in the planning process indicated were important: low density, improving the physical image of the City, creating some main corridors for complete streets that accommodate all users of the roadway, and medians on major arteries through the City. The medians are intended to change the physical image of the City and improve public safety by creating a discontinuous center turn lane. This plan option includes the provision for green belts along new roadways. The green belt concept essentially enhances the right-of-way (ROW) of the road and creates a larger green area between the roadway and the property lines. This could also be achieved by using an easement which would have the same impact. The green belt area would then have a uniform treatment that reinforces the image of the City. Finally, this option proposes neighborhood shopping in certain locations that would have a critical mass of rooftops to support commercial development. The neighborhood shopping is intended to service the immediate population with small-scale convenience needs, such as a dry cleaner, convenience store, or other similar small commercial uses.

Alternative 3 – Hard

This plan option is visionary, dramatically alters the physical image of the City, creates new transportation options, more aggressively seeks to manage residential density, contemplates a large park, and seeks to redevelop the “historic” center of Semmes. This plan option is the most challenging to



Map Depicting Alternative 2



Map Depicting Alternative 3



implement of the three options. This plan option makes a distinction between neighborhood commercial, which is contemplated to be small-scale, neighborhood-oriented uses and auto-oriented retail. Auto-oriented retail is contemplated to be uses that rely on higher traffic volumes to sustain business. Typically, auto-oriented commercial includes national chain commercial establishments. Neighborhood commercial is frequently locally owned. Examples of auto-oriented commercial could include a typical fast-food restaurant, a cell-phone retailer, and farm and tack supply.

This plan seeks to re-develop “historic” Semmes into a heartbeat of the City. The “historic” core would include civic buildings and also seek to locate professional services within this area. Additionally, the core would be adjacent to the large city park and is contemplated to include sidewalks and other physical improvements. The result is that the “historic” area, because of its already platted lots, would redevelop in a more dense manner with everything (all of the daily needs) -- professional services, post office, city hall, library, churches, grocery store, pharmacy, recreation, and schools—within a short distance of each other.



Chapter 9

Future Plan

The preferred future plan approved by the working group was the direct result of extensive collaboration and discussion. It was also the result of input received from a Town Hall meeting held at the Semmes Community Center in February 2014. In general terms, the preferred future plan is a blend of the hard and medium plan alternatives previously discussed.



Green Buffer Concept Image

The preferred future plan makes a dramatic statement that the City and the surrounding area desire to remain a rural community. This is proposed to be accomplished by addressing density and directing the more dense projects to areas that have the infrastructure to



Green Buffer Concept Image

support them. The plan also places a high value on public safety through the siting of fire stations and the proposed medians and complete streets. Several new roads are contemplated to be built with the new plan; these are based on real-world topography, lowlands, and potential connections. The desire is to create a circulation pattern in Semmes that allows people to move about without being forced onto Moffett Road, Schillinger Road, or Snow Road.

The plan incorporates the concept of the green buffers, as contemplated in the hard plan option. It also retains the concept of “historic” Semmes, again as discussed in the hard plan option.





Complete Streets Concept Image

One of the most significant aspects of the preferred plan is the creation of a wide variety of park and recreation areas. While the plan contemplates active recreation taking place on a large athletic complex adjacent to “historic” Semmes, the uses of other parks are not defined by this plan. The plan stops short of defining the types of activities associated with the proposed parks, other than attempting to locate park opportunities throughout the City.

The participating public and the working group identified Big Creek Lake as an underutilized recreational resource. A trail is proposed on the western edge of the plan adjacent to the Lake, the intent of which is to create a loop from the Blackwell Nursery

Road west and then North to US Highway 98. Of course, this project would have to include cooperation from Mobile County and the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System (MAWSS).

Commercial development in the preferred plan is divided into four primary categories:

- Historic Core/ Local Business
- Auto-Oriented Retail
- Regional Shopping and
- Neighborhood Commercial.

Historic Core / Local Business: While not a historic district in regulatory terms, it is the general location where Semmes was founded and where many of the community’s original buildings and residences were located. This area is encouraged to redevelop over time into a local business district where professionals and locally owned businesses would locate. It is also where future civic buildings such as a City Hall, Fire Department, and Police Station, would locate. This portion of the City would allow for mixed use in both commercial and residential terms. The infrastructure is existing and is generally connected. Given its proximity to existing retail, existing business, schools, and future parks and retail, it is envisioned to be more dense than other parts of Semmes. In part, this is because the property is already

subdivided into small lots that can be capitalized on.

Auto-Oriented Retail: This district is contemplated to host businesses that require a significant amount of traffic. Examples would be a typical fast-food restaurant, large pharmacies, and similar larger-scale, high-use commercial businesses. These areas would provide the goods and services that are frequently found on high-volume roadways. Site design could be considered “strip” with parking typically in front of the building(s). Neighborhood commercial and locally owned businesses can locate in these areas, also. Typically, commercial property along major roadways (with higher volumes or traffic) have a premium on the price; this market reality drives the development of the property.

Regional Shopping: These areas provide for holistic shopping center environments that serve a broad-based regional market. Typically, regional shopping includes an anchor store and has a variety of other retail opportunities that may develop adjacent or in close proximity. The other retail opportunities may be locally owned, but are typically part of the entire shopping center development. These developments serve a population base that is several miles in



diameter. Regional shopping is important to Semmes because of the sales tax revenue generated. Generally, a regional shopping center is quite large and offers several hundred thousand square feet of retail space.

Neighborhood Commercial: These areas are intended to provide for neighborhood based and neighborhood-scale businesses. These are frequently locally owned and operated, although that is not always the case. These areas offer convenience goods and services to nearby residents and typically do not draw from a large regional area. Uses could include dry cleaning, gift shops, restaurants, and similar smaller-scale commercial ventures. Neighborhood commercial could also be home to professional office space. Most frequently, neighborhood commercial develops in a small shopping center format that shares parking and other facilities. Neighborhood commercial often locates at the intersections of streets and is usually surrounded by or in close proximity to residential development.

Residential: Residential growth is contemplated and encouraged in Semmes. The challenge here is to manage the new residential growth so that it contributes to Semmes in the way the residents who participated in the planning process desire Semmes to grow. Residential growth in

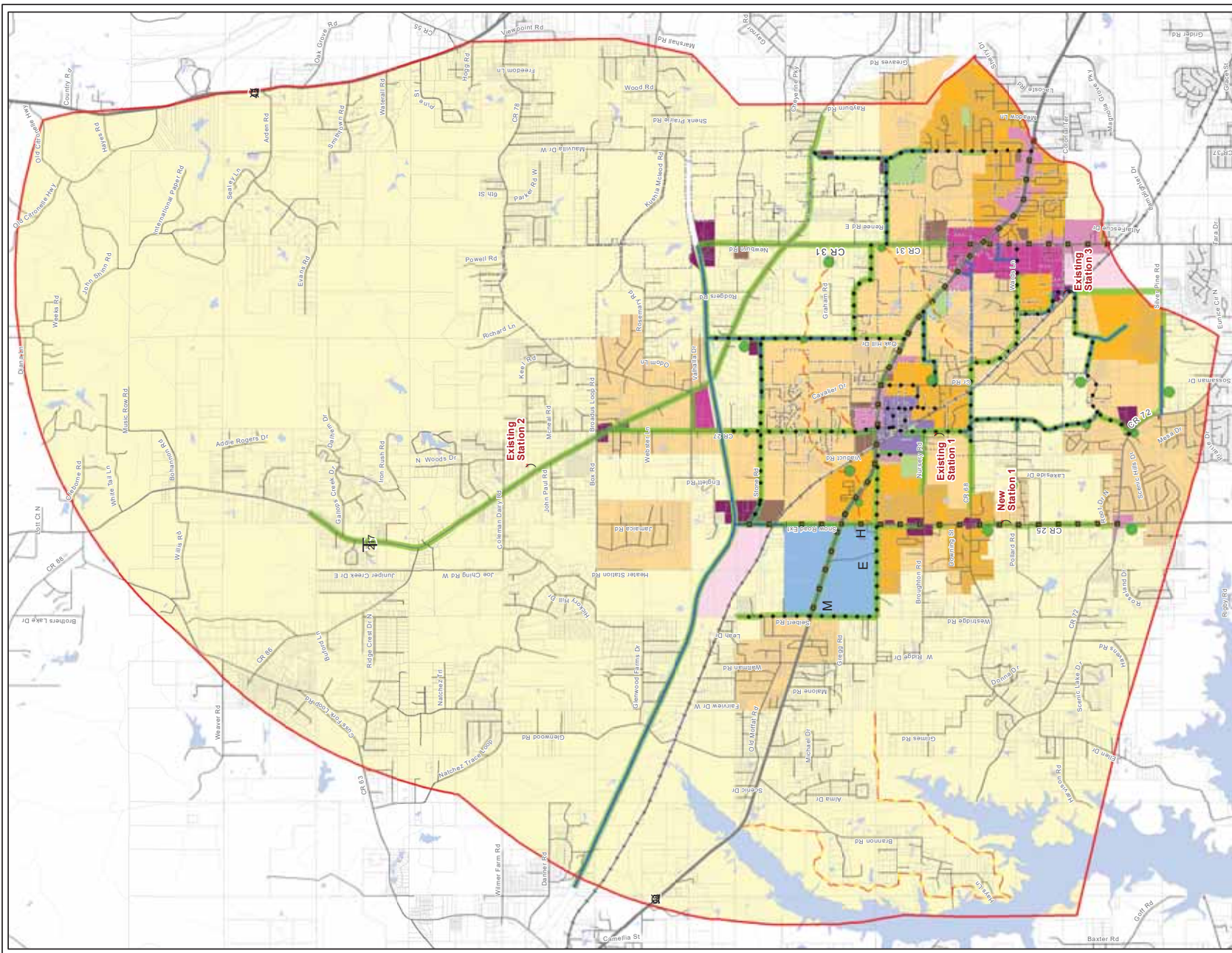
Semmes is contemplated to take place with low density, medium density, and higher density development. The suggests general locations related to multi-family housing. However, Semmes desires to be a predominately single family community, although the planning participants realized that a limited amount of multi-family provides additional housing choices currently not available.

Overall, the outer reaches of Semmes are contemplated to remain lower density. This is because there is limited infrastructure to support high density development in these locations. Lower density residential also reinforces the perception of Semmes as a traditionally rural community with open spaces. This topic was brought to the planning team's attention time and time again.

Higher density single family is contemplated in close proximity to the infrastructure to support it. Thus, higher or conventional type residential growth, as already exists along the Moffett Road corridor, is encouraged in these locations. It is here where roads, water, and sewer utilities can support increased demand. Additionally, since this corridor is already populated with neighborhoods of various sizes, the plan calls for continuing this trend.

Managing residential growth in Semmes will continue to be the largest challenge to the City, especially given the preferred plan choice that has been made. The City will face some difficult pressures in the future in terms of residential growth and how it shapes the future of Semmes.





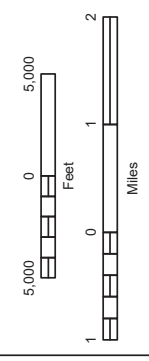
LEGEND

- City of Semmes Planning Jurisdiction
- New Road
- City of Semmes Corporate Limit
- Major Highways
- Highways
- Major Roads
- Streets
- Railroad
- Center Median
- Complete Street
- Trail System
- Green Buffer
- Emergency Services
- City Parks
- Parcel Boundary
- Historic Core/Local Business
- Active Parks
- Elementary, Middle, High School
- Industrial Commercial
- Auto-Oriented Retail Commercial
- Regional Shopping Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Residential Large Lot
- Residential Medium Lot
- Residential Small Lot
- Residential Multi-Family

This Comprehensive Plan Map does not constitute zoning nor establish zoning regulations.
 Data Sources: City of Semmes; City Limits, Planning Jurisdiction, Parcels, Thompson Engineering; Comprehensive Plan Data (Zoning/Land Use, proposed transportation improvements, recreation improvements).

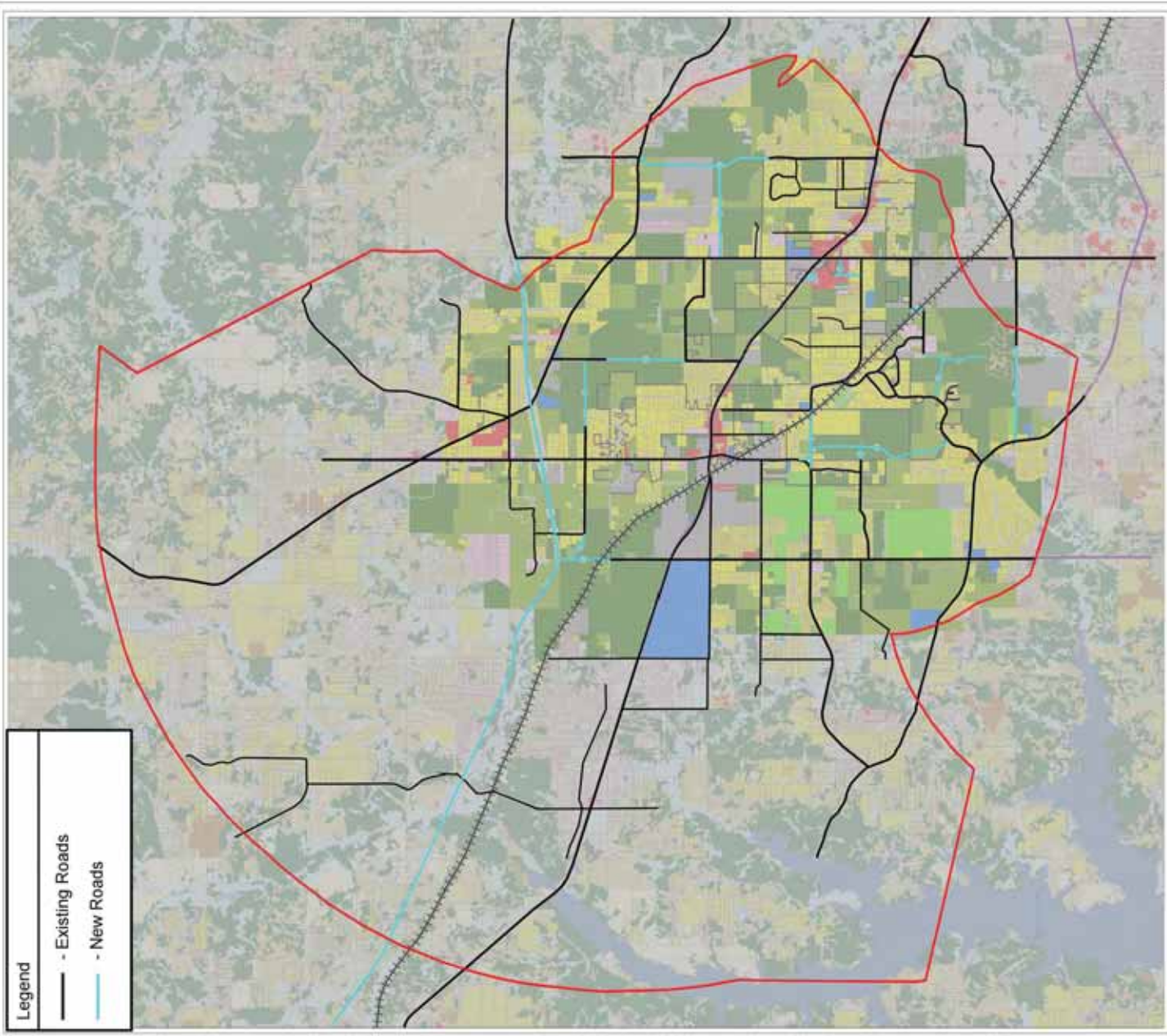


**City of Semmes
 Comprehensive Plan
 Mobile County, AL**



**Preferred Comprehensive Plan
 Final Draft**

PROJECT NO.: 13-1101-0029
 DATE: JULY 2014



Legend

- Existing Roads
- New Roads



City of Semmes
Comprehensive Plan
Mobile County, AL

LAND USE / LAND COVER MAP
ROADS

PROJECT NO.: 13-1101-0029 DATE: OCTOBER, 2013

Legend

- Existing Roads
- New Roads
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Water
- Forest
- Agriculture
- Wetlands
- Open Space
- Parkland
- Pasture
- Bare Soil
- Snow/Ice
- Water

Chapter 10

Implementation

The City of Semmes sits at an important milestone. It has been through the planning process and the future plan generated is the result of the vision, goals and objectives, and input of participants. It reflects the hope of the future and creates the path forward. Implementation in Semmes will require a constant and dedicated effort, if the plan is to be implemented as is intended. New policies, new partnerships, new efforts, new priorities, and new opportunities will be created.

In order to equip the City of Semmes with a more detailed course of implementation, the Implementation Matrix shown on the following pages was created. The matrix corresponds to the goals and objectives of the future plan map and prioritizes them in short-term, medium-term, and long-term. It is hoped that this prioritization will assist the City in focusing efforts in a sequential and methodical manner.



City of Semmes – Implementation Matrix

INFRASTRUCTURE -- Roadway	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Budget for the implementation of proposed roads in the plan	X	X	X
Continue to work with ALDOT on Moffett Rd. access issues	X	X	X
Develop a detailed plan for medians on Moffett Rd	X		
Aggressively apply for grants to implement medians on Moffett Road	X	X	
Develop a detailed plan for medians on Schillinger Road	X		
Aggressively apply for grants to implement medians on Schillinger	X	X	
Install streetlights at all intersections	X	X	X
Support growth of Public Works Department to maintain infrastructure	X		
Work with and support ALDOT on Highway 158 extension	X	X	X
Aggressively pursue spot safety grants with ALDOT	X	X	
Explore improving the alignment of Firetower Road curves		X	
Adopt a complete street policy so it is applied in concert with the plan	X		
Improve safety and efficiency of Moffett and McCrary intersection	X		
Develop a maintenance operation plan on roadways for Public Works Department		X	
Develop a ROW permitting process/ program	X		
INFRASTRUCTURE -- People	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Redevelop Historic Core of Semmes into a pedestrian friendly environment	X	X	
Pursue grants to allow people to safely cross Moffett Road	X	X	
Aggressively pursue safe routes to school and similar funding to connect schools to neighborhoods	X	X	X
Implement complete streets on identified routes as per this plan	X	X	
Continue to require sidewalks in new development when density and location warrant in order to implement the plan	X	X	X



City of Semmes Implementation Matrix

PUBLIC SAFETY	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Collaborate with Fire Department to budget for future capital expenses	X		
Continue to reach out to community for support of Volunteer Fire Department	X	X	X
Develop an outreach program for seniors on safety and protection	X	X	
Continue to work with schools to educate students on safety topics	X	X	X
Budget for future public safety buildings as proposed in the plan	X	X	
Continue to ensure that training and equipment for first responders meets standards	X	X	X
Study and anticipate needs for future Police Department		X	X
Continue police protection through Sheriff's Office and increase visibility	X	X	
Explore part-time community policing options	X		
Evaluate and revise as needed fire standards as a function of density of proposed development	X		
Publicly celebrate public safety personnel and volunteers	X	X	X
Publicize call out records for public safety	X	X	X
Explore safe room and emergency evacuation programs and policies		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		



City of Semmes Implementation Matrix

RECREATION	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Create a system of parks that provides for both active and passive options for all residents		X	X
Develop a capital funding source to fund implementation of the parks system	X	X	
Continue to support local sporting organizations	X	X	X
Support the Semmes Community Center and Senior Center through in-kind contributions	X	X	X
Utilize the existing recreational assets to promote the small-town character of Semmes	X	X	X
Aggressively seek grant funding to implement the trails system proposed in the plan	X	X	
Provide necessary infrastructure (i.e. parking, bathrooms) to ensure parks are successful		X	X
Implement neighborhood parks in concert with the plan and citizen input	X	X	
Assist sporting organizations with advertising and maintenance on public property and other in-kind contributions	X	X	X
Utilize the proposed trail system as an economic development tool (i.e. mountain bike race, cross country tournaments)	X	X	
Create a stable funding program to maintain parks to a high standard		X	X
Creatively work with groups to implement trails proposed in the plan (i.e. Eagle Scout Project, Church Youth Groups)		X	X
Locate and design active recreation facilities so public safety is easily achieved		X	X
Collaborate with MAWSS to increase recreation opportunities at Big Creek Lake		X	X
COMMUNITY	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Celebrate rural history and nursery industry through events and marketing	X	X	X
Continue to support the local schools in Semmes through funding and in-kind services	X	X	X
Partner with Senior Center to provide support as needed for senior population with programs, activities and transportation		X	
Leverage the Senior Center to create opportunities for more varied senior programs and events		X	
Partner with churches in Semmes on community clean up events and similar types of outreach	X	X	
Develop new reoccurring community events	X	X	
Develop and maintain database of financial supporters and volunteers	X		



City of Semmes Implementation Matrix

CIVIC DESIGN and GROWTH	TIME FRAME		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Create jobs by recruiting new business and industry by participating in regional economic development efforts	X		
Improve the physical identity of Semmes through improved maintenance, enhancements, and better control of ROWs	X	X	X
Create an Industrial Development Authority	X		
Develop and enforce programs to address community nuisances (i.e. re-occurring yard sales, abandoned buildings, litter, dumping)	X	X	X
Strategically annex property into the City			X
Develop Low Impact Design standards and apply as appropriate	X		
Continue proactive erosion and sedimentation program	X	X	X
Partner with Mobile County and MAWSS on Big Creek Lake protection and enhancements		X	X
Evaluate feasibility of regional stormwater management systems to reduce or eliminate individual stormwater ponds		X	X
Develop a Semmes-specific zoning ordinance based on this plan	X		
Develop a Semmes-specific sign ordinance based on this plan	X		
Develop a Semmes-specific landscape ordinance to protect significant hardwood trees and reinforce rural character of Semmes	X		
Create special districts (i.e. Moffett Road. and Historic Core) and ensure that standards implement the vision based on this plan	X		
Develop program for green buffer implementation as proposed in this plan	X		
Promote the development of local businesses in historic core	X	X	X
Locate new public buildings, (i.e. City Hall) in historic core		X	X
Limit regional shopping centers in accordance with this plan so long term viability is supported	X	X	X
Create, facilitate, and support a Semmes Chamber of Commerce	X		
Evaluate development standards to ensure that results are consistent with vision and details of this plan	X	X	X
Encourage the development of low density and rural single family development	X	X	X
Encourage higher density development to locate where infrastructure can support its demands in accordance with this plan	X	X	X
Actively recruit new professional services	X	X	X
Facilitate and support as needed the nursery industry	X	X	X
Support, encourage, and facilitate the growth of small business in Semmes through campaigns and partnerships	X	X	X



