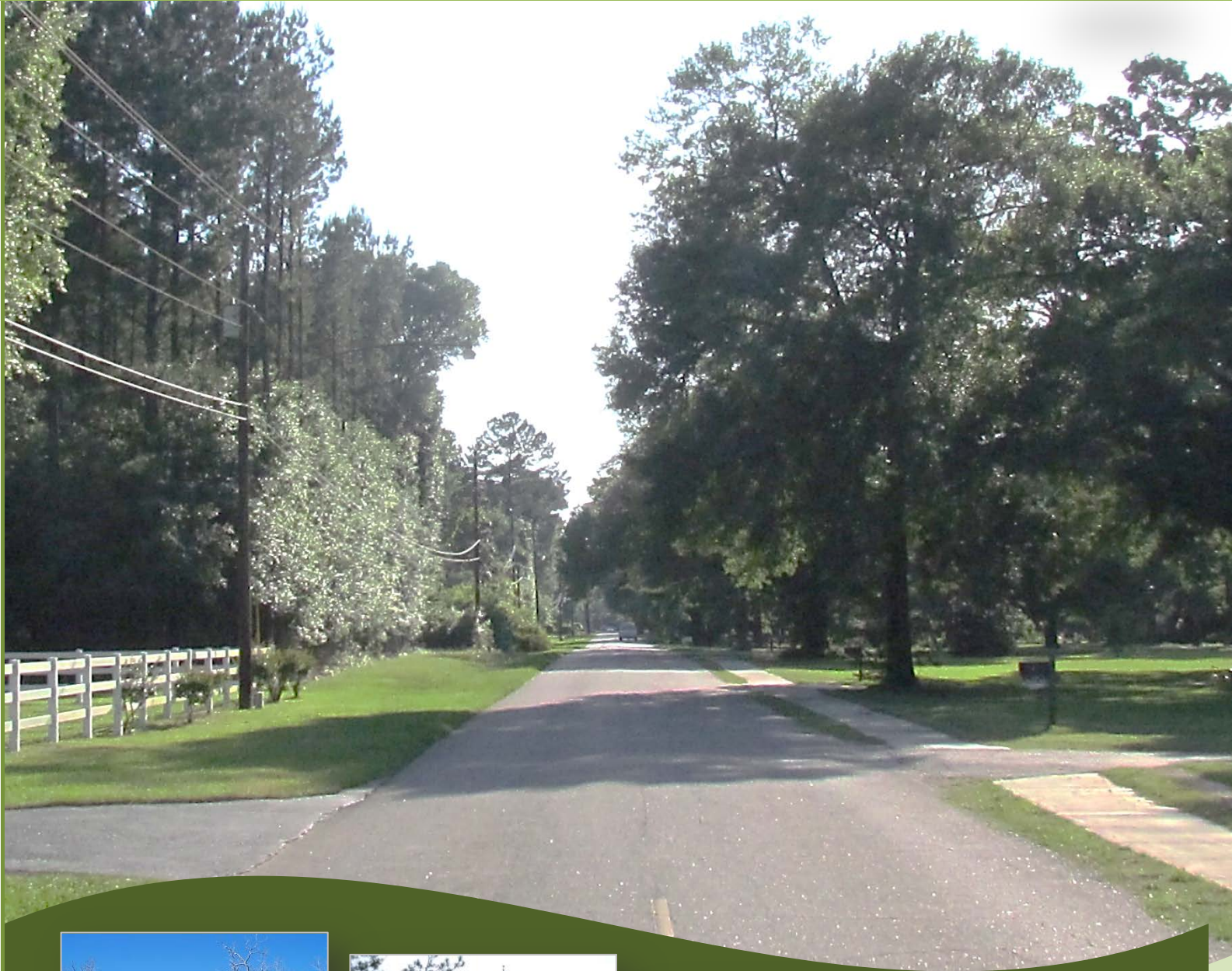


Town of Mount Vernon

Comprehensive Plan 2030

Adopted August 18th, 2014

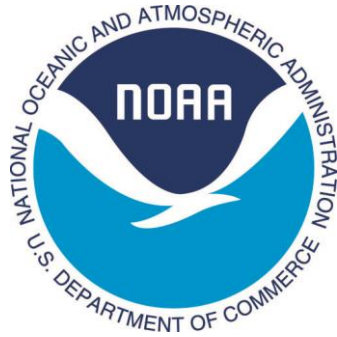




Town of Mount Vernon

Comprehensive Plan 2030

*“The future depends on what
we do in the present.”
-Mahatma Gandhi*



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This plan's progressive mission, vision, and goals were developed by the 2013-2014 Mount Vernon Planning Commission and the 2013-2014 Mount Vernon City Council members listed on the following page. Assistance was provided by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission.

Town of Mount Vernon

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Johnnie Robinson, District 1

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Special appreciation and thanks in the development of this Plan goes to: the Mount Vernon Planning Commission, current and past members; Honorable James Adams, Mount Vernon Police Department, Mount Vernon Public Library, Mobile County Public Library of Local History and Genealogy, Mount Vernon Post Office, Mr. Andre Reid, Mr. Kevin Boucher, Mr. Paul Taylor, Mrs. Bonnie Byrd and Mrs. Theresa Weaver.

I, Johney Weaver, _____, do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the Town of Mount Vernon's Comprehensive Plan, adopted August 18th, 2014.



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Mission Statement

Through this Comprehensive Plan, we the leaders of the Town of Mount Vernon, strive to provide our citizens with progressive opportunities to thrive and succeed in all aspects of their lives. We see as our duty to ensure that the highest quality of life for our citizens is addressed through implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. We also recognize as our duty to ensure that the health, safety and general welfare of our citizens is secure. Through this vision, we lay the foundation for the future progress of our town and understand that implementing responsible progressive actions is the key to our town's future success. We will ensure this, as our responsibility, while remembering the values that have established the Town of Mount Vernon throughout the years.



Introduction

“Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely day dreaming, but vision with action can change the world.”

- Nelson Mandela

What Is A Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a legal policy document developed with public participation to help guide public and private decision makers, specifically related to land use and public infrastructure. Comprehensive Planning is a process which provides, regardless of a town’s size or economic capabilities, an opportunity to develop goals and identify gaps based on a broad range of concerns and issues.

The Comprehensive Plan is a legal document which is approved and adopted by the Planning Commission as required by Alabama state law. It describes goals, objectives, and recommendations for various segments of town operations such as transportation, recreation, economic development, public facilities and land use. While it is considered by some as a blue print or road map to reach designated goals in the future, it is, by necessity, a document or plan which is under constant amending and revision as conditions change over time.

Why Should Mount Vernon Have A Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan provides not only a vision for the current leaders, but a plan for future leaders to build on as Mount Vernon grows and develops over the next 20+ years. It identifies the deficiencies at the present time and enables leaders to have a plan to address those areas of need while looking to future improvements. It also identifies specific opportunities for the town to take advantage of.

What Will A Comprehensive Plan Do For Mount Vernon?

Comprehensive Planning will provide Mount Vernon with the opportunity to focus on long-range concerns and issues. The Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan describes goals and recommendations under various elements such as:

- ✓ Regional, Historical and Environmental Setting
- ✓ Population and Economy
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Land Use
- ✓ Community Facilities and Services
- ✓ Community Design

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for decision making related to growth and development. The Comprehensive Plan will help the Town of Mount Vernon determine when and where new public facilities and improvements are needed.



The Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan is the main point of reference for evaluation of all town programs and projects affecting development and a major source of guidance for private investors.

The plan also provides guidance for areas outside of the town's current boundaries that will impact the town's future development on a broad range of matters.

Recommendations can be amended as new information is available, or to address a change in circumstances. The Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan should be updated periodically or at least once every five years, to reflect changing conditions.

The Town of Mount Vernon and its planning commission should:

1. Develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan. This Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan 2030 constitutes the town's current Comprehensive Plan.
2. Review and act on all subdivision plans within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction as they will be amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Review and make recommendations to the Town Council on all amendments to the zoning ordinance, including the drafting of revisions to the text and map.
4. Review all public improvements, proposals, and thoroughfares, which involve the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Undertake surveys and studies, and prepare reports as may be required to carry out this planning program.

Upon adoption, the Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan is to be used by the Planning Commission, Board of Adjustments and Town Council as they review all proposed development plans to determine conformance with the policies and recommendations included in the plan.

Comprehensive Plans Are Intended To Be Implemented

The adoption of a Comprehensive Plan is the beginning of the implementation process. The plan's success rests on how well ideas and visions are expressed in the plan for the future of Mount Vernon and how well the plan is monitored and implemented over time. Plans without implementation deem the plan irrelevant.

The plan provides guidance on strategies for successful implementation and identifies implementation priorities. It includes priority assignments for both physical improvements and policy and regulatory enhancements. These listings can be found in the full text of this plan.

Plan Implementation Strategies

To help ensure the plan is implemented and remains up-to-date, the following strategies are recommended:



- ✓ Maximize involvement and implementers. Work to maximize the number of different parties actively addressing at least one recommendation.
- ✓ Prepare an annual action agenda of recommendations to be implemented.
- ✓ Prepare an annual status report of the previous year's plan implementation activities.
- ✓ Update the plan at least every five years.
- ✓ Enhance the effectiveness of the town's planning and building department function.



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Regional, Historical and Environmental Setting

History

Mount Vernon has deep roots in Alabama’s rich soil of history. Before Alabama became a State in 1819, Mount Vernon was already a bustling little village. The town’s onset came from two famous military installations, Fort Stoddert and the Mount Vernon Arsenal and Barracks. *Figure 1* shows a Historical Marker at the former Mount Vernon Arsenal and Barracks site.

Fort Stoddert was built in 1799 on orders from President Thomas Jefferson and the U.S. Congress after the “Pinckney Treaty” was signed with Spain in 1795 over disputed land between the 31st and 32nd parallel. The treaty at the time established the southern boundary of the United States. This new one bastion fort was constructed under dense oaks and moss on Ward’s Bluff (now called David Lake) by the 2nd United States Infantry commanded by Lieutenant John McClary. The location was on the Mobile River (now old river bed) near the confluence of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers. The fort was named after former U.S. Secretary of War, Benjamin Stoddert. Upon completion of the fort, the command was under Capt. Bartholomew Shamburger.

From 1800 to 1811 Fort Stoddert was home to the U.S. Collector of Customs, and the first area newspaper, “The Mobile Centinel,” published by Samuel Miller and John Hood. Subscriptions for the newspaper were only \$4.00 a year. Aaron Burr, who is famous for shooting and killing Patriot Alexander Hamilton in their famous duel, was also held prisoner at Fort Stoddert upon his notorious capture. The Commander during most of these years was Lt. E.P. Gaines, who Fort Gaines located on Dauphin Island, AL is named in honor of.

In 1811, a proposed cantonment was laid out by Col. Thomas Cushing at what is now the former Searcy Mental Hospital site. This selected location was approximately 3 miles west of the Mobile River which was described as being a magnificent hill that also proved to be a strategic military position. The cantonment had an upwards of 700 men at times due to the conflict of the Creek War.

Figure 1
Mount Vernon Historical Marker



Source: Town of Mount Vernon



In 1814, Andrew Jackson, the 7th President of the United States, visited the Mount Vernon area and the troops stationed there. During this time, the cantonment was under the command of Major Uriah Blue. President Jackson was very interested in using the Mount Vernon Cantonment as an arsenal and on May 24, 1828, the Mount Vernon Arsenal was authorized at the former cantonment site by an Act of Congress and signed approval by President Jackson. Edward Harding was the first commander of Mount Vernon Arsenal. Construction on buildings and the wall around the arsenal began about 1830. This wall can still be seen today. The Arsenal also manufactured small weapons during this time.

From 1830 to 1866 a few famous men known in American History were stationed in Mount Vernon. One was Lt. Josiah Gorgas who served as President of the University of Alabama in his later years. The historic Gorgas House and Gorgas Library located on the campus of The University of Alabama are named in his family's honor. Capt. Jesse Reno, a decorated American soldier who surrendered the arsenal to Confederate loyal Alabama forces during the Civil War was also stationed in Mount Vernon.

In 1870, Mount Vernon Arsenal became a Federal Post. Later, Secretary of War, William Belknap, recommended the property be used by the Quartermaster's Department and in August 1873 it was renamed Mount Vernon Barracks. Dr. Walter Reed, who was a pivotal influence in discovering the then mysterious causes and cure for yellow fever, was the Post Surgeon of the Mt. Vernon Barracks. During this time he garrisoned 2 companies. These two companies consisted of the Infantry, Artillery, and Calvary.

In 1887, 450 Apache Indians were housed at the Mount Vernon Barracks. Among them were legendary Native American leaders (shown left to right respectively in *Figure 2*): Chief Chihuahua, Chief Natchez, Chief Loco, Chief Nana and most notably, Geronimo. It is said that Geronimo was the one who kept the peace among the incarcerated Apaches and Americans. The occupation of the Apaches ended in 1894 when the War Department transferred the incarcerated Indians to Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

In 1895, Mount Vernon Barracks were released by the Federal Government and given to the State of Alabama. In 1900, the Alabama State Legislature approved the site as a mental institution which

Figure 2
Notable Imprisoned Apache Leaders



Source: Town of Mount Vernon



was then known as Mount Vernon Insane Hospital. In 1919, the name changed to Searcy Mental Hospital in honor of the hospital's first superintendent, Dr. J.T. Searcy. The site served African-Americans exclusively until 1969, when it was desegregated following the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The hospital continued to be used as a mental institution by the State of Alabama until it was closed by state order in 2011. The property is currently vacant and rapidly deteriorating.

There still to this day remains a lively Native American cultural presence through the MOWA Indian Tribe that live throughout the region. The MOWA Indians are descendants of the Choctaw Band of Indians that have long inhabited the area of Mount Vernon and the surrounding region throughout Mobile County and Washington County. Cultural events are held throughout the year at the tribe's nearby reservation just northwest of Mount Vernon.

Mount Vernon remains a wonderful town, a gracious place to raise children without fear, and a place to proudly call home.

*Information in this section was provided by: Mount Vernon's Origin, By Thelma J. Hartman/
Mobile Public Library Local History and Genealogy/ Town of Mount Vernon*

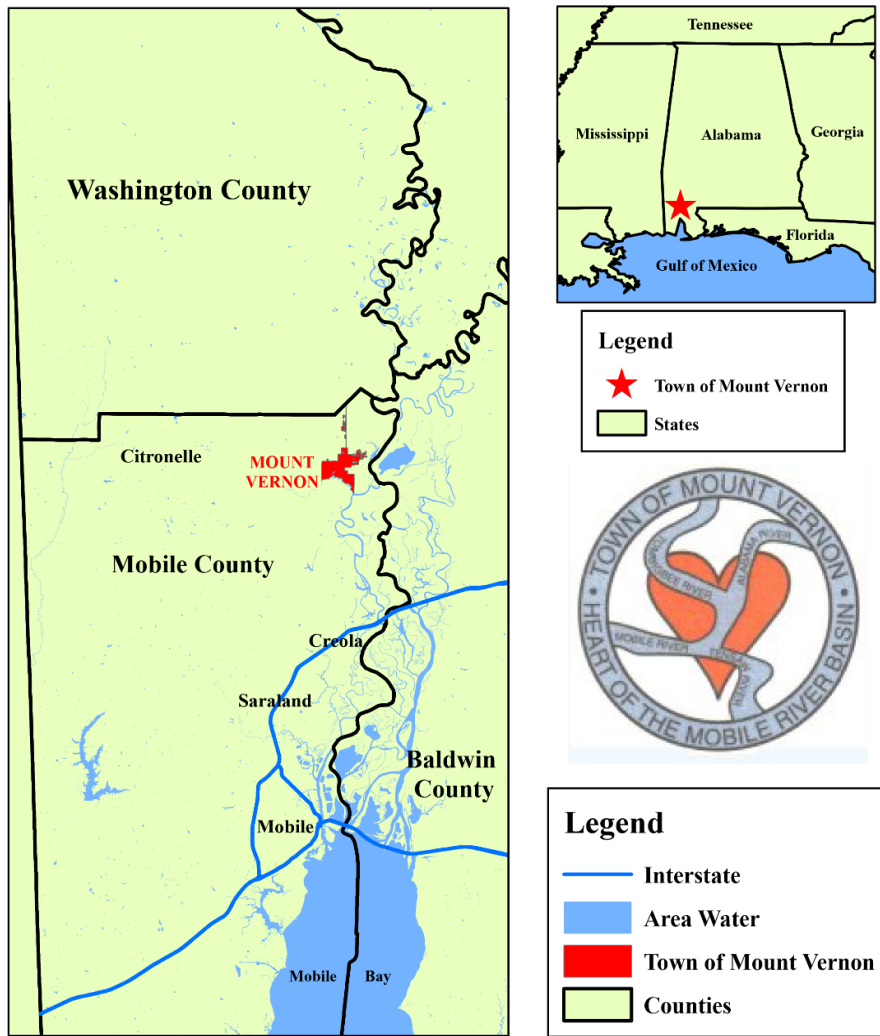
Location

Mount Vernon is located in the northwest corner of Mobile County, Alabama. Mobile County, along with Baldwin County, are the southernmost counties located in the state of Alabama and are the only counties in Alabama bordering the Gulf of Mexico. Mount Vernon is located just west of the point where the Mobile-Tensaw Delta begins. This location gives Mount Vernon's the title of being "The Heart of the Mobile River Basin". At this point, the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers combine to form the Mobile River which then splits into the Mobile-Tensaw Delta waterway system. This waterway system discharges an average of 62,000 cubic feet of water per second, south through the Mobile Bay, into the Gulf of Mexico. Mobile Bay is the fourth largest estuary in the United States. The Mobile-Tensaw delta is home to a wide range of unique vegetation and wildlife that is found nowhere else in the world. This location also provides a vast amount of recreational opportunities to the citizens of Mount Vernon. These opportunities include fishing, kayaking and hunting.

Mount Vernon is also a unique transportation corridor in that it provides a wide range of transportation opportunities which include the Highway 43 Corridor, Mobile Delta Shipping Corridor and a major railroad track that run directly through the town. Mount Vernon is also in close proximity to two large airfields located just south in the City of Mobile. An illustration of Mount Vernon's location can be seen in *Figure 3*.



Figure 3
Location of the Town of Mount Vernon



Source: SARPC

Natural Resources

Development of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Mount Vernon includes a respect and understanding of the area’s natural systems that provide the resources necessary for the Town to exist and grow. These include basic functions such as clean air, water and fertile soils. These resources and natural systems not only provide drinking water, breathable air, habitats, and agricultural opportunities but also enhances a competitive advantage for future growth and prosperity. The town’s goal is a long-term stewardship of clean water and air, and the ongoing creation of opportunities for residents and visitors to explore, learn about, and enjoy the natural beauty of the area and region.



The Town of Mount Vernon is unique in that there are a variety of natural resources available ranging from lowland wetlands to upland timber. Mount Vernon has and should continue to use these resources as both recreational and economic tools.

Wetlands

Wetlands are a vitally important natural feature. Wetlands provide a variety of functions such as: storm water storage, erosion control, water purification, sediment trapping, nutrient removal, groundwater discharge and recharge, animal and plant habitats, and economic and recreational opportunities for the community.

While the amount of wetlands are currently scarce within the current borders of the Town of Mount Vernon, plans for future development are subject to a vast amount of wetlands in the Mount Vernon area. Being located along the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, the Mount Vernon area contains a vast amount of freshwater wetlands which are primarily composed of forested/shrub wetlands. While federal and state laws restrict many types of development in these classified wetland areas, other opportunities such as recreational hunting, fishing and boating are possible uses. Special elevated construction such as boardwalks and elevated housing can be used to take advantage of the restricted wetland areas. *Figure 4* illustrates the wetlands by type in the Mount Vernon area.



Climate

Mobile County has a humid, nearly subtropical climate, with no dry seasons. The summers are long and fairly hot, but the heat is tempered by breezes from the Gulf of Mexico. The winters are short and mild, with occasional short periods of subfreezing temperatures that are accompanied by frost. The average annual temperature is approximately 67 degrees. The average temperature ranges from 50 degrees during the winter months to 80 degrees during the summer months. Annual precipitation averages 67 inches. Dry or wet periods can last long enough during the growing and harvesting seasons to injure the crops and cause losses. Snowfall is rare but hard freezes do occur occasionally during the winter months. Hurricanes late in summer and early in fall can damage crops and property. Mount Vernon should keep a constant review of flood plans and develop evacuation plans for severe tropical weather in order to secure the safety of their citizens during tropical storms.

Hydrology

Hydrology refers to the distribution of water on the surface of the land, in the soil, and underlying rocks. Creeks, streams and other bodies of water ultimately flow to drainage paths within a specific watershed.

The Mount Vernon area lies at the northern tip of the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta with nearly all area water eventually flowing toward the Tensaw River. The Mobile-Tensaw Delta is one of the largest in the United States and directs tens of thousands of cubic feet per minute southward into the Gulf of Mexico. This water is directed from all over the southeast, meaning that torrential rains in the region can cause flash flooding in the area. Mount Vernon should look at this potential risk when developing in low-land and wetland areas.

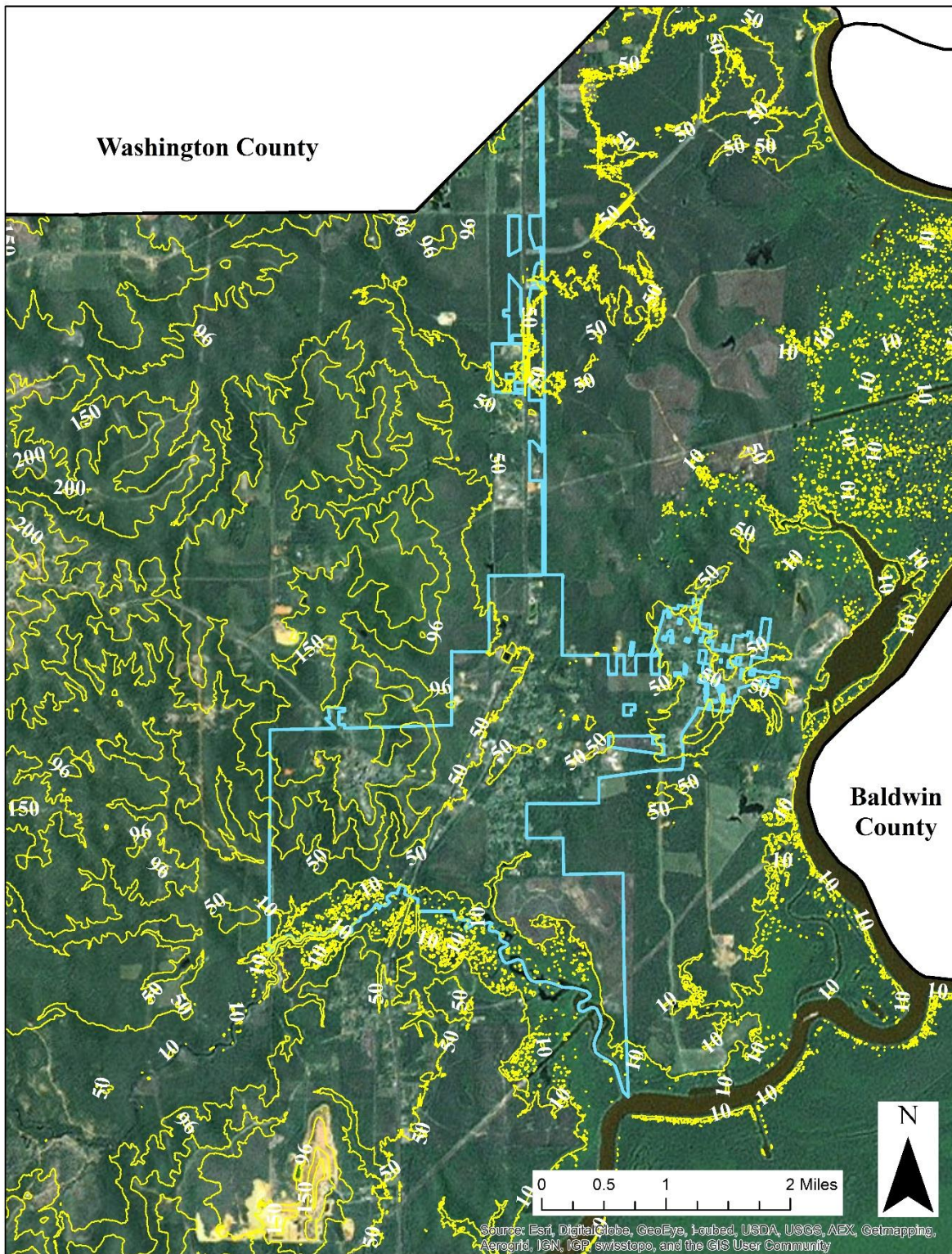
Topography

Topography is the precise detailed study of the surface features of a place or region. It is the configuration of a surface and the relations among its man-made and natural features. Mobile County has a varied topographic pattern ranging from broad flat expanses of agricultural land to steep incised stream valleys. The elevation ranges from sea level to over 400 feet above sea level.

The topography of the Mount Vernon area is similar to the rest of northern Mobile County, with hills that range from sea level to 250 feet above sea level, with the highest elevation in the area being approximately 252 feet above sea level. Very little of the land is limited in development due to slope. *Figure 5* illustrates the topography of the Mount Vernon area.



Figure 5
Mount Vernon Area Topography



Source: SARPC



The information regarding the characteristics of soil is useful in planning the development of a community. Soil management can help in avoiding soil-related failures in uses of the land. Soil information can aid in the planning, use and management of soils for building sites, highways or other transportation systems. Slope and drainage factors are also influenced dramatically by soil types. Soil information is also useful for the management of soils for agriculture use, crops, pasture, and woodlands. According to the Mobile County Soil Survey, there are thirteen soil associations present in the Mount Vernon planning area, which were broken down into 7 sub-groups. They are:

Alaga-Harleston

These soils have fair potential for most urban uses. Alaga soils have slight limitations for most building site developments and septic tank absorption fields. Some areas of Harleston soils are subject to very brief flooding during periods of unusually high rainfall. This soil is found in the southern part of the planning area around U.S. Highway 43 and Cedar Creek Landing Road.

Dorovan-Bibb and Dorovan-Levy

These soils have poor potential for cultivated crops, pasture, and urban developments. The soils are frequently flooded and have a water table above or near the surface much of the year. These limitations are difficult to overcome. These soils are located at nearly sea level wetlands along the Mobile River and Cedar Creek.

Izagora-Annemaine and Izagora-Bethera

These soils have poor potential for most urban uses. Wetness, low strength, and the hazard of flooding are the major limitations. Drainage and proper engineering design of structures will help overcome the limitations. Flooding is rare, typically very shallow, and usually of brief duration. The use of septic tank absorption fields is severely restricted because of wetness and slow permeability of soils. These soils are the most prominent in the planning area making up most of the central and eastern portions.

Palmico-Bibb

These soils have poor potential for cultivated crops, pasture, and urban uses because of wetness and frequency of flooding. These limitations are difficult to overcome. Subsidence is a problem in drained areas of the Palmico soil. This soil is found near the western corporate limits and makes up only a small percentage of the soil in the planning area.



Troup-Benndale and Troup-Heidel

These soils have fair potential for most building site developments and for septic tank absorption fields. Slope is the main limitation. Seepage is a severe limitation for sewage lagoons and sanitary landfills. These soils make up most of the western portion of the planning area.

Alaga-Harleston, Troup-Heidel, and Troup-Benndale associations are the only three associations that provide fair potential for urban development. These three associations make up a small part of the planning area.

Izagora-Annemaine and Izagora-Bethera associations offer the potential for urban development provided there is an investment in proper drainage and engineering design of structures located on these soil associations. These two associations make up a large portion of the corporate limits of Mount Vernon and its planning jurisdiction. See *Figure 6* for all soil associations in the Mount Vernon Planning area and *Figure 7* to see the potential of development based on soil type within the current Mount Vernon Planning Jurisdiction. *Table 1* shows soil associations by acreage.



Figure 6
Mount Vernon Area Soils

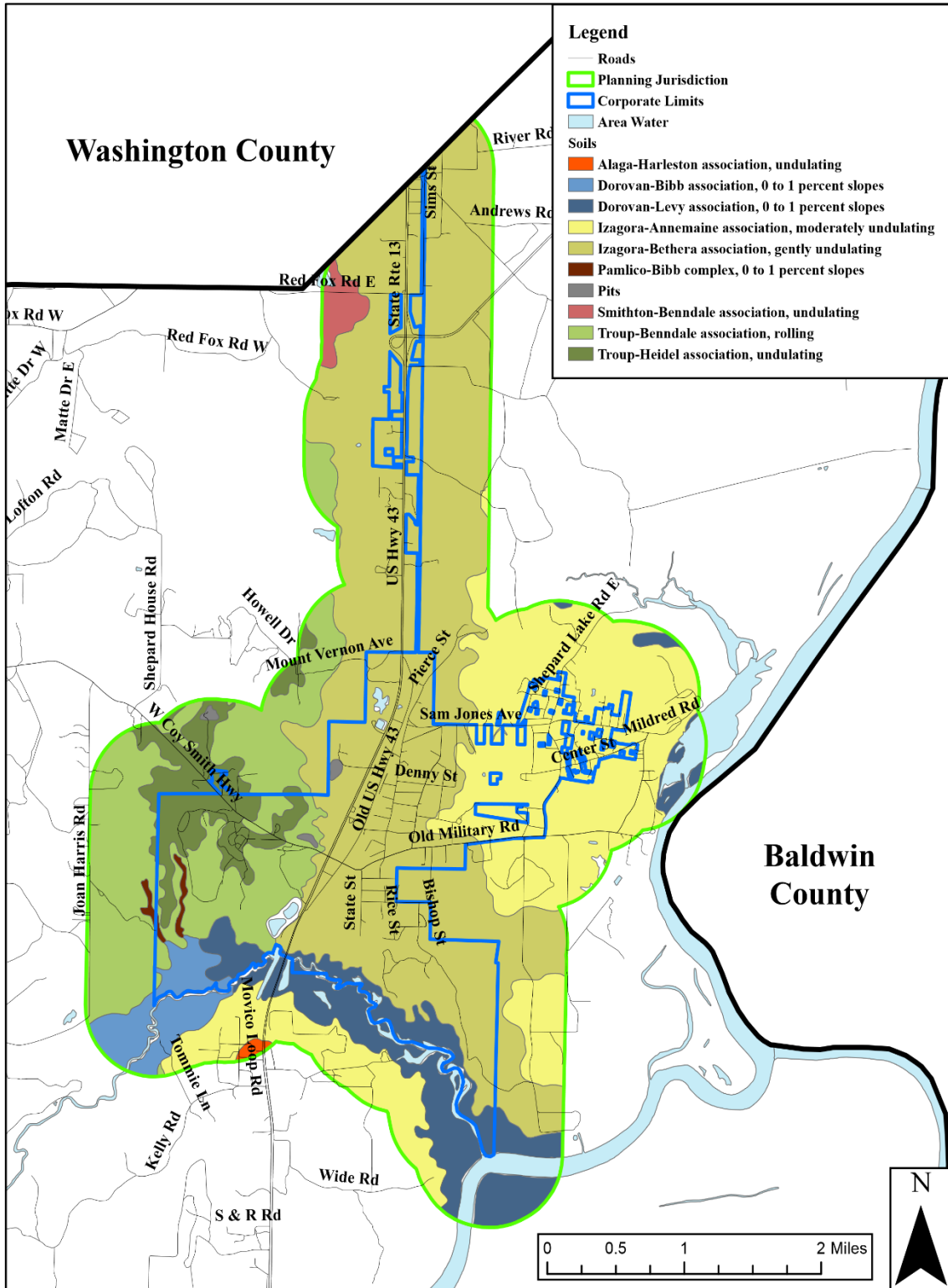
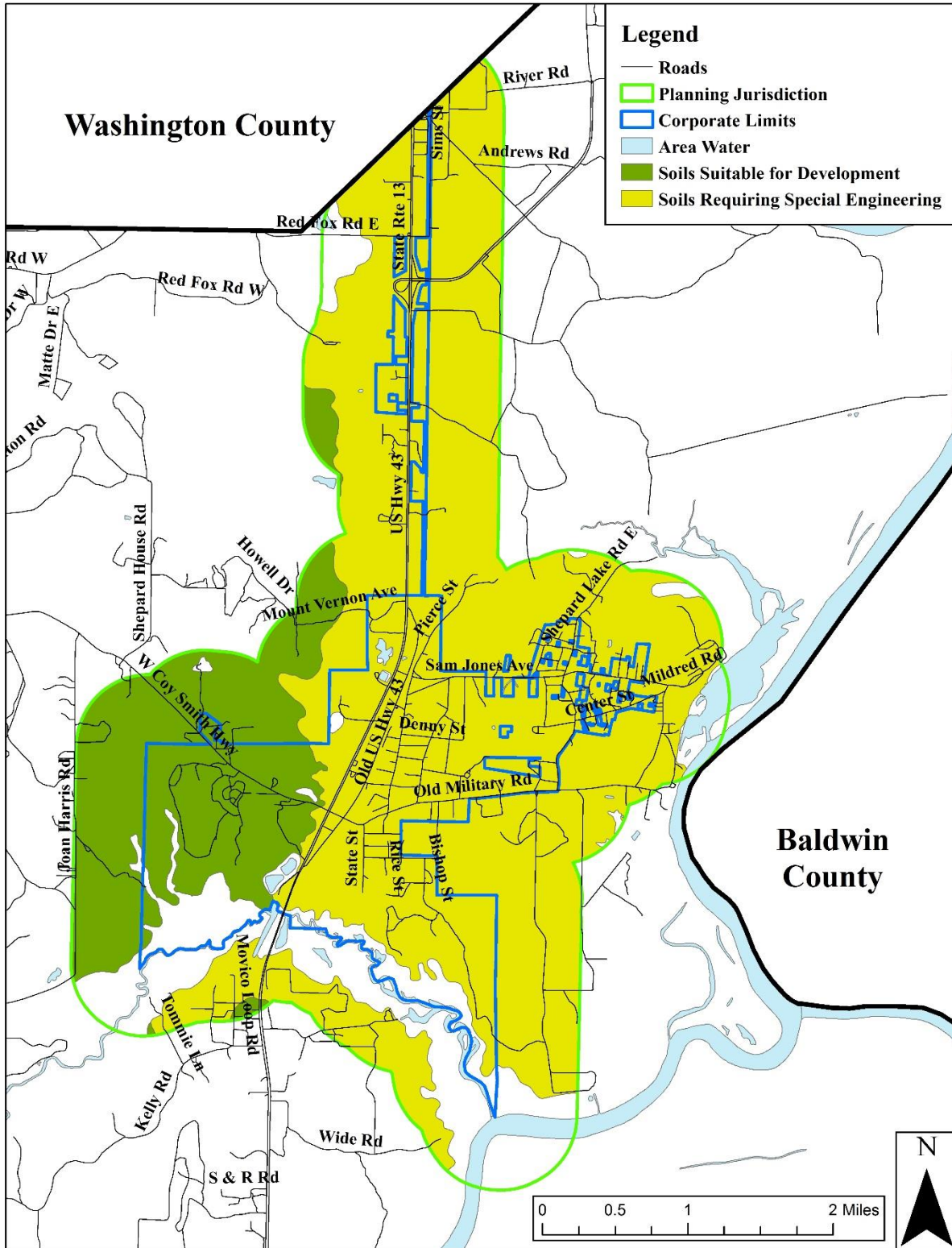




Figure 7
Potential for Development in the Mount Vernon Area Based on Soils



Source: SARPC



TABLE 1 TOWN OF MOUNT VERNON SOIL ASSOCIATION BY ACREAGE	
Soil Association	Acreage
Alaga-Harleston	186
Dorovan-Bibb & Dorovan-Levy	1,788
Izagara-Annaine & Izagara-Bether	6,531
Palmico-Bibb	27
Pit	17
Troup-Bennedale & Troup-Heidel	2,785
Total Acreage	11,331

Source: SARPC

Recommendations

- Promote historical landmarks and sites throughout Mount Vernon, especially the federally historically recognized Searcy Property.
- Develop an evacuation plan.
- Promote recreational opportunities as an economic tool for the vast abundance of wetlands in the Mount Vernon Area.
- Conserve wetlands and other natural resources in the Mount Vernon Area.
- Promote the Town of Mount Vernon as an ideal location for commercial and industrial businesses due to the diverse amount of transportation corridors through the town and region.
- Continue to maintain and evaluate a flood and evacuation plan in order to be prepared for severe tropical weather.
- Refer to this Comprehensive Plan during future developments to determine soil suitability of development.

“In this bright future, you can't forget your past.”

-Bob Marley



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Population & Economy

The Population and Economy section of this Comprehensive Plan provides a broad range of demographic and economic information for the Town of Mount Vernon. This information, both historical and current, is used to create future demographic projections and economic strategies for the town.

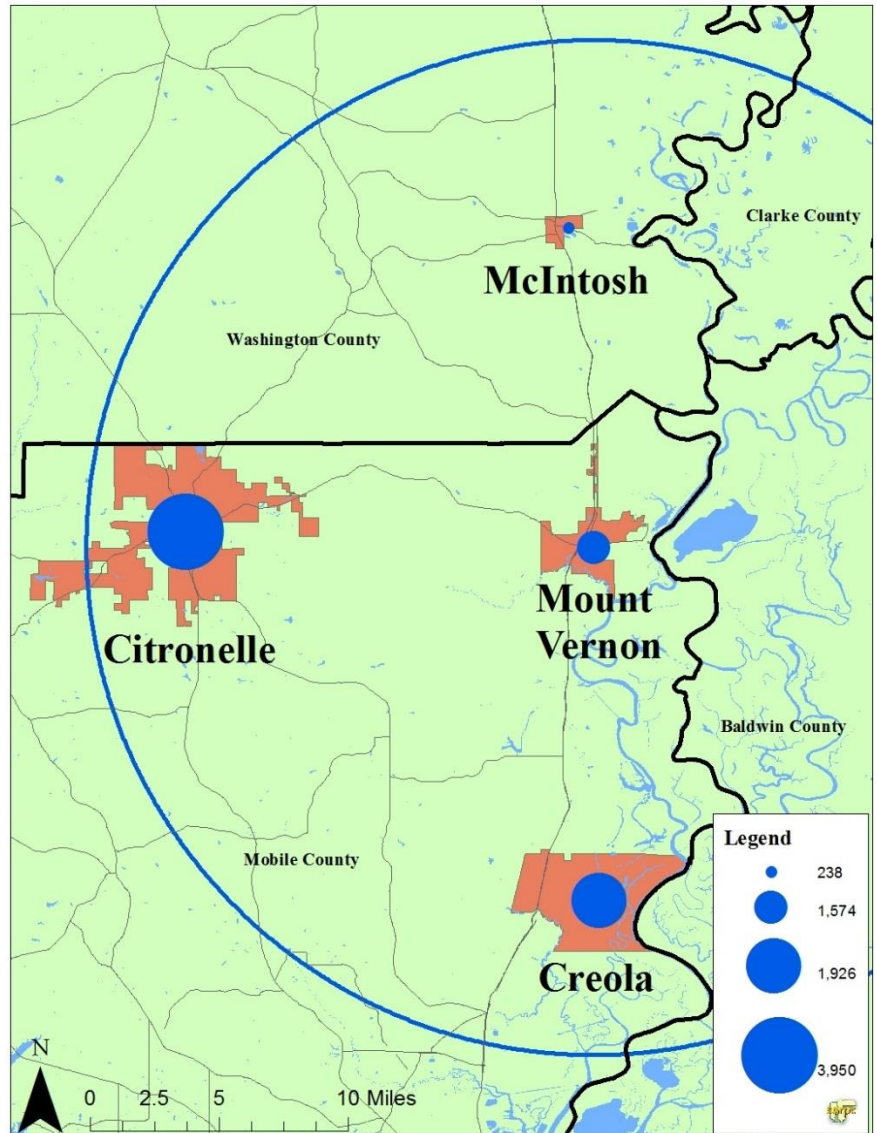
Figure 8
Regional Graduated Population Comparison

Population

Growth Trends

The Town of Mount Vernon has seen both positive and negative population changes in the past 20 years. From 1990 to 2000, the Town of Mount Vernon saw a slight 6% decrease in population. However, from 2000-2010, the town saw a substantial 86% increase in population. This major increase could be a result of new incoming industry in the area such as the ThyssenKrupp Steel Facility. However, it is likely due to many annexations that occurred during this period of time.

Figure 8 illustrates similar municipalities within a 15-mile radius of Mount Vernon as well as their graduated population comparisons. Table 2 shows this 20-year growth trend for the Town of Mount Vernon's population as well as for the other similar municipalities in the region as well as Mobile County.



Source: SARPC



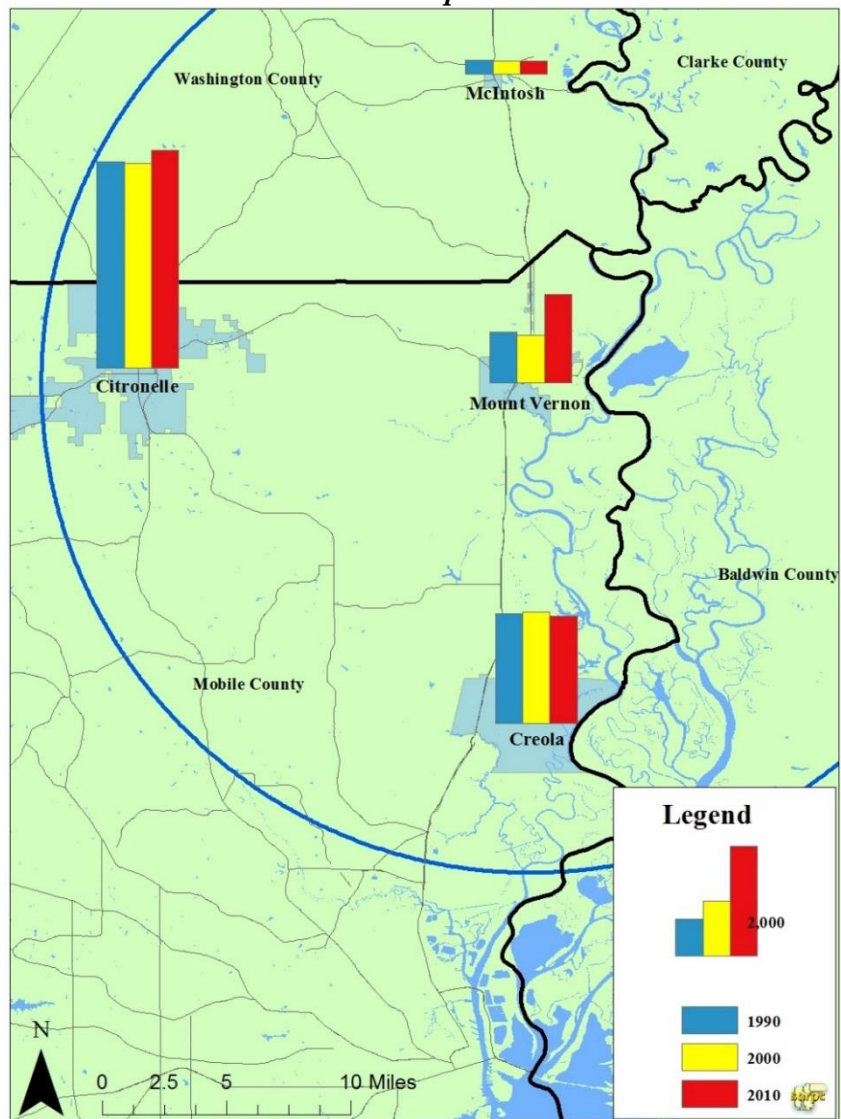
Table 2 <i>Decennial Population Change of Mount Vernon and Mobile County</i>				
	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change
Town of Mount Vernon	902	844	1,574	+75%
Town of McIntosh	250	244	238	-5%
City of Creola	1,961	2,002	1,926	-2
City of Citronelle	3,695	3,659	3,905	+2%
Mobile County	378,643	399,843	412,922	+9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 9
1990-2010 Decennial Population Growth Trends

Figure 9 illustrates this trend in population growth for Mount Vernon and other similar municipalities in the region within a 15-mile radius of Mount Vernon. As shown, the Town of Mount Vernon has established itself as one of the fastest growing municipalities in not only this 15-mile region, but also in Southwest Alabama. As stated earlier, this is most likely attributed to the high volume of new citizens being annexed into the corporate limits of Mount Vernon over the last decade as well as a result from newly developed industries locating near Mount Vernon.

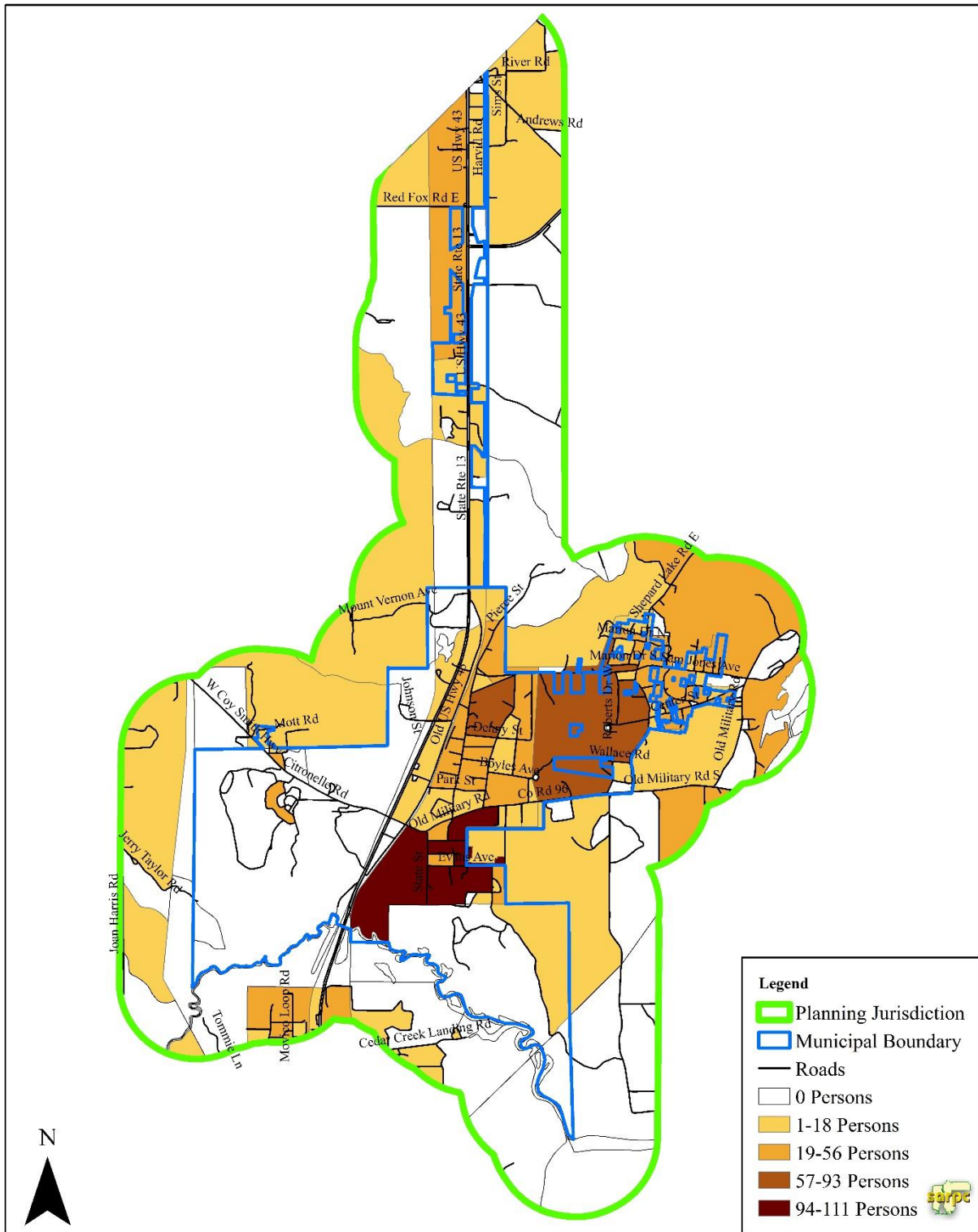
Figure 10 displays an illustration of the 2010 Census Block population distribution within Mount Vernon.



Source: SARPC



Figure 10
2010 Mount Vernon Population Distribution by Census Blocks



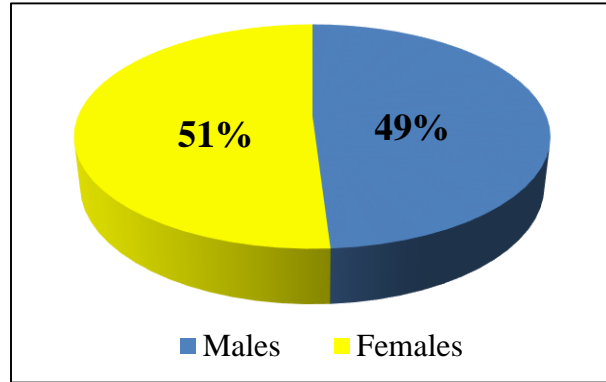
Source: SARPC



Gender

The 2010 U.S. Census estimated a nearly 1:1 male to female ratio for the Town of Mount Vernon with a 51% male population and 49% female population. *Figure 11* illustrates this gender ratio.

Figure 11
Mount Vernon Gender Ratio

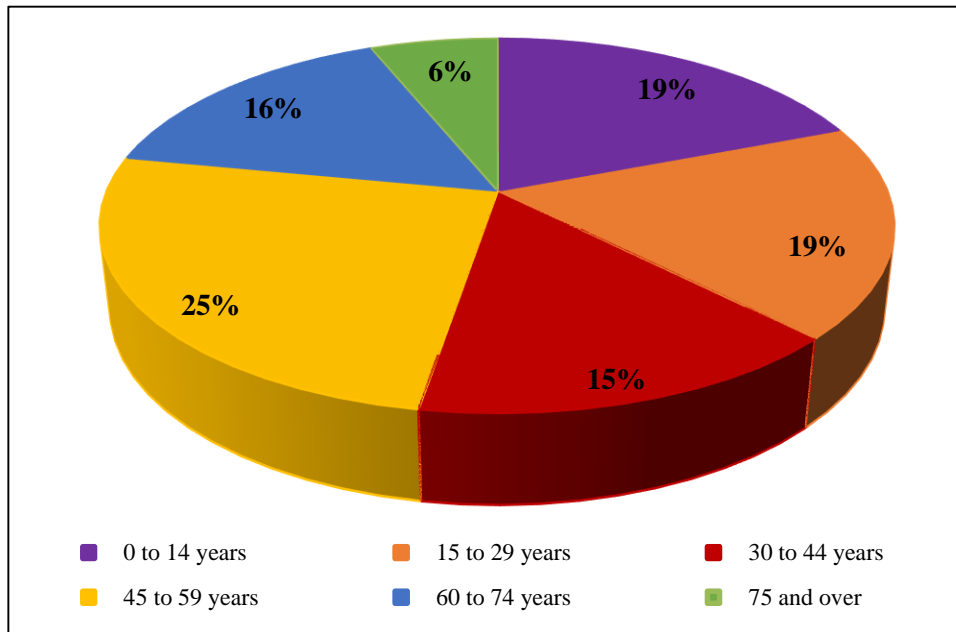


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Age

Figure 12 illustrates the age distribution for the Town of Mount Vernon according to the 2010 U.S. Census. This illustration shows that Mount Vernon has a large older population, with nearly half of its residents consisting of 45 years or older.

Figure 12
Mount Vernon Age Distribution

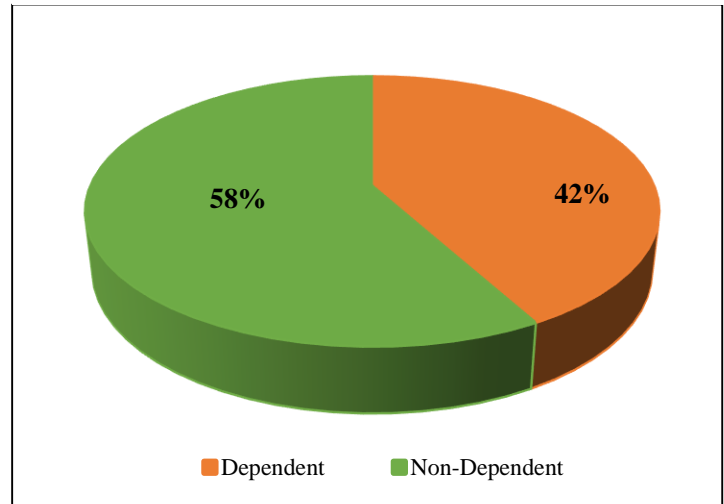


Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Another key age demographic is a community's dependency ratio. A dependency ratio shows the proportion between the dependent age groups, ages 1-19 and 64+, and non-dependent age groups, ages 20-63. This ratio is important in identifying if communities are and/or will be in need of dependent services and facilities such as playgrounds, schools, senior centers and meals on wheels programs, just to name a few. *Figure 13* illustrates the Town of Mount Vernon's dependency ratio from the 2010 U.S. Census. Mobile County and the State of Alabama have 42% and 40% dependent populations respectively, putting Mount Vernon at an average equal percentage of the County and State's dependency ratio. While this number is average, it still should be noted that Mount Vernon displays a large population of dependent citizens all of whom should be adequately supported.

Figure 13
Mount Vernon Dependency Ratio

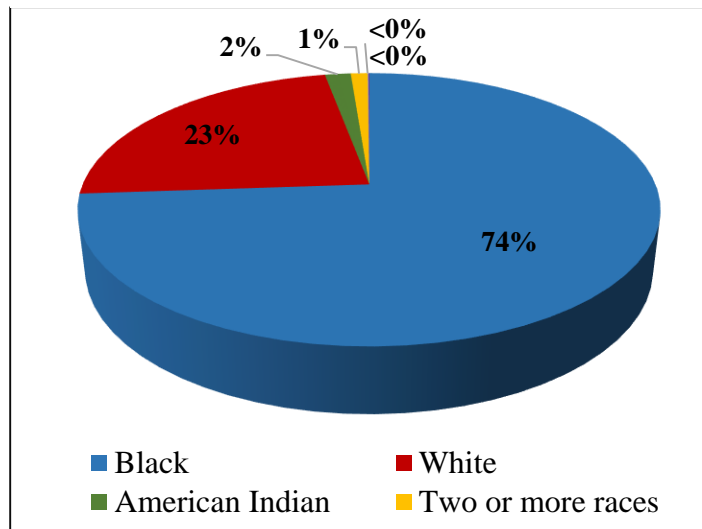


Source: U.S. Census Bureau/SARPC

Race

Figure 14 illustrates the Town of Mount Vernon's racial composition according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The Town of Mount Vernon was predominantly occupied by African American citizens at nearly 75% of the total population. Nearly a quarter of the population consisted of Caucasian population at 23%. The 2010 U.S. Census also stated that there were 27 American Indians living within the Town of Mount Vernon which accounted for 2% of the total population.

Figure 14
Town of Mount Vernon Racial Composition



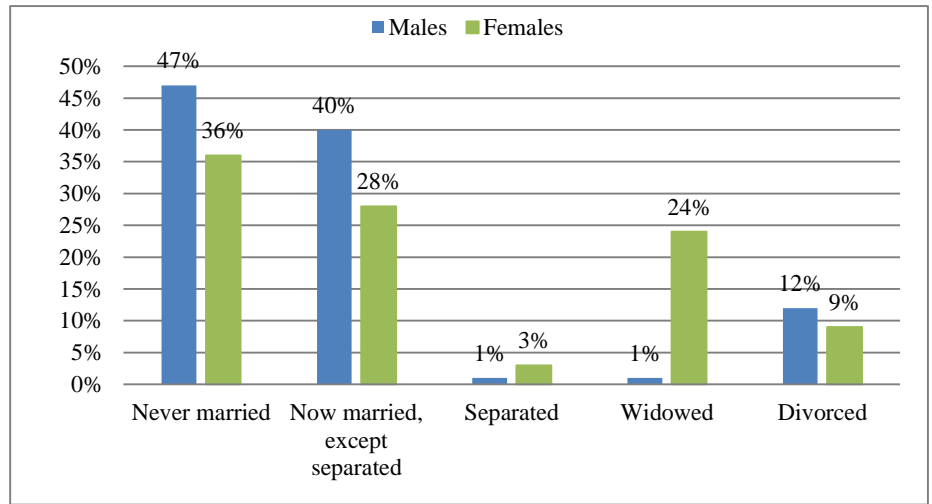
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Marital Status

Figure 15 illustrates the marital status of the citizens 15 years of age and older in the Town of Mount Vernon according to the 2011 American Community Survey. One category that stands out is that nearly a quarter of all the women in the Mount Vernon are widowed (24%). This could be a reflection of the higher age population in the Mount Vernon.

Figure 15
Town of Mount Vernon Marital Status Age 15 years and Older



Source: American Community Survey

Households

Type and size of households are crucial in determining a numerous range of community services and facilities that are needed to support a given population. Schools, senior services and commercial services are factors that play into a given population’s household type and size. The Town of Mount Vernon nearly mirrors the household demographics of Mobile County, which are also illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3
2010 Households by Type in the
Town of Mount Vernon and Mobile County

	Town of Mount Vernon		Mobile County
	Number of Households	Percent of Households	
Total households	556	100	100
Family households	399	71	68
With own children under 18 years	147	26	30
Husband-Wife family	253	45	45
With own children under 18 years	94	17	17
Male householder, no wife present	25	4	5
With own children under 18 years	9	2	2
Female householder, no husband	121	22	19
With own children under 18 years	44	8	10
Nonfamily households	157	28	32
Householder living alone	141	25	27
Male	70	13	12
65 years and over	18	3	3
Female	71	13	15
65 years and over	39	7	7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Table 4 illustrates the Town of Mount Vernon’s relationship of population in households in comparison to Mobile County according to the 2010 U.S. Census.

Table 4			
2010 Relationship of Population in Households for the Town of Mount Vernon and Mobile County			
	Town of Mount Vernon		Mobile County
	2010		2010
Relationship	Persons	Percent	Percent
Total population	1,574	100	100
In households	1,514	97	98
Householder	556	35	38
Spouse	253	16	17
Child	467	30	30
Own child under 18 years	266	17	20
Other relatives	202	13	8
Under 18 years	106	7	4
65 years and over	13	1	1
Nonrelatives	36	2	5
Under 18 years	3	>1	>1
65 years and over	2	>1	>1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population Projections

Population projections are vital to illustrate to community leaders what services and facilities are necessary for the future population. These include schools, transportation systems and recreation, just to name a few. While Mount Vernon continues to add citizens to their town, they should be prepared to provide and serve those citizens comprehensively and efficiently. Table 5 illustrates population projections for the Town of Mount Vernon using information from the Center for Economic Business and Research (CEBR) and Mount Vernon as a percentage of Mobile County’s growth trends. Mount Vernon’s historical percentage projections were calculations based on building permits issued in Mount Vernon over the 2000-2010 decennial period. These numbers were calculated with the average household size of Mount Vernon in 2010 to form a growth percentage based on construction of housing and average household size, which resulted in a .045% decennial increase. The second percentage is a growth rate projection using the growth rate of Mobile County from 2000-2010, which was a .038% increase.

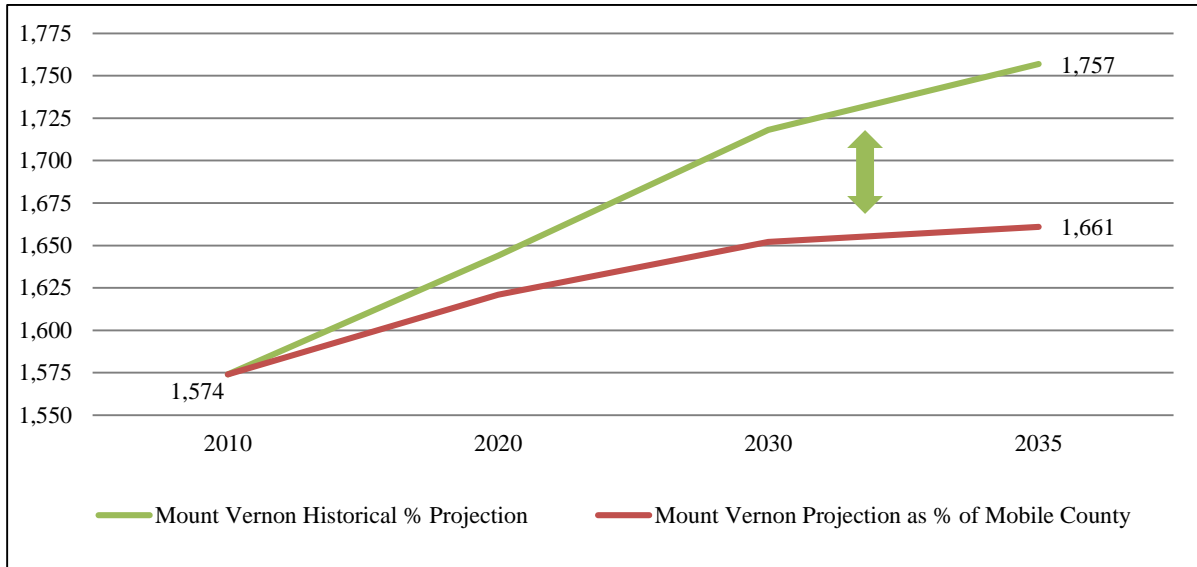
Table 5					
Town of Mount Vernon Population Projections					
	2010	2020	2030	2035	Growth Rate
Mount Vernon Historical Percent Projection	1,574	1,644	1,718	1,757	.045% Decennial Growth Rate
Mount Vernon Projection as % of County	1,574	1,621	1,652	1,661	.038% Decennial Growth Rate

Source: CEBR, City-Data.com, U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Calculation



Figure 16 illustrates a graphical representation of the population projections in Table 5 as well as a cone of probability projection.

Figure 16
Mount Vernon Population Projections



Source: CEBR, City-Data.com, U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC

Economy

Mount Vernon revolved economically around the Mount Vernon Arsenal in the early years of the town and the Searcy Hospital in more recent years. In 2012, a state order closed Searcy Hospital’s doors for good. This order released institutionalized patients or relocated mental health patients treated at Searcy and other facilities throughout the state to more localized facilities. This resulted in a loss of nearly 400 employees at Searcy and approximately 200 patients.

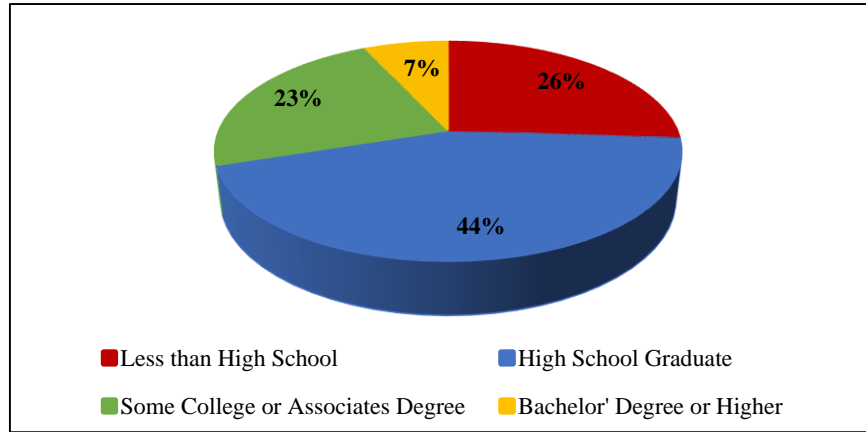
However, in the past few years Mount Vernon has seen a drastic change of its economic image as ThyssenKrupp Steel Co. constructed a multi-billion dollar state of the art steel facility just north of Mount Vernon on the Tombigbee River. This shift to heavy industry has made a drastic impact on the region. More than 2,500 people are employed at this steel facility. In 2013, ThyssenKrupp sold the facility to ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel for \$1.55 billion.

Educational Attainment

The educational attainment of a town’s residence can influence the town’s economy and affect the overall income and type of employment opportunities within the community. According to the 2011 American Community Survey, approximately 74% of the citizens age 25 and older in the Town of Mount Vernon had obtained a high school diploma or some form of higher education. Figure 17 illustrates these statistics.



Figure 17
Mount Vernon's 2011 Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Older



Source: American Community Survey

Labor Force

A town's labor force is defined as the population ages 16 years and older, who are employed or seeking to obtain employment. Evidence of strength in a town's labor forces provides evidence of a strong economy. *Table 6* displays Mount Vernon's employment status in relation to Mobile County and the State of Alabama, according to the 2011 American Community Survey. As shown, Mount Vernon falls behind in all categories when compared to Mobile County and the State of Alabama.

Table 6 Employment Status for Mount Vernon, Mobile County and Alabama				
	Town of Mount Vernon		Mobile County	Alabama
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Population 16 Years and Older	1,221	100	100	100
In Labor Force	459	38	61	60
Civilian Labor Force	459	38	61	60
Employment	423	35	54	54
Unemployment	36	3	6	6
% of Civilian Labor force	-	8	10	10
Armed Forces	0	0	<1	<1
Not in Labor Force	762	63	39	38

Source: American Community Survey



Occupation and Industry

Table 7 displays the type of employment by industry for the Town of Mount Vernon according to the 2011 American Community Survey.

<i>Table 7 Employment By Type of Industry</i>		
	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	423	100
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0	0
Construction	44	10
Manufacturing	36	9
Wholesale trade	16	4
Retail trade	73	17
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	24	6
Information	0	0
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	13	3
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	21	5
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	148	35
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	16	4
Other services, except public administration	10	2
Public administration	22	5

Source: American Community Survey

The highest percentage of citizens in Mount Vernon are classified as working in education, health or social services. This could be as a result of the former Searcy Mental Hospital located within Mount Vernon. Due to the closing of Searcy in 2012, these number could fluctuate in the coming years. Mount Vernon should make sure to keep citizens working within or nearby the town in order to keep a strong domestic labor force.

The average commute time to work according to the 2009 American Community Survey showed that the average commute time to work for Mount Vernon citizens was 27 minutes. This shows that Mount Vernon citizens are working outside of town and traveling long distances for work.

Income

Income is a major socio-economic contributor to how a community functions. The ability to purchase goods, especially housing, is dependent on a communities income levels. The average income of a community determines what type of housing stock, retail goods and services will be afforded to the community. Also influenced is the population’s contribution to town revenue, public facilities and services and the town’s ability to grow.



Household incomes can greatly influence the economic development of a community. *Table 8* illustrates the Town of Mount Vernon’s 2011 median household income, median family income and per capita income in comparison to the similar regional municipalities, Mobile County and the State of Alabama.

<i>Table 8 2011 Median Income Values for the Town of Mount Vernon, Mobile County and the State of Alabama</i>			
	Median Family Income	Median Household Income	Median Per Capita Income
Mount Vernon	\$48,167	\$34,063	\$13,923
Citronelle	\$53,864	\$41,042	\$20,192
Creola	\$53,170	\$46,192	\$21,387
McIntosh	\$40,000	\$36,856	\$16,251
Mobile County	\$51,682	\$42,187	\$22,306
Alabama	\$54,001	\$42,938	\$23,483

Source: American Community Survey

Individual poverty levels in the Town of Mount Vernon remain at nearly 30% when compared to the State and Mobile County. However, family poverty statistics remain below both the state and county in that respective demographic at 11%. This data is illustrated *Table 9*.

<i>Table 9 2011 Poverty Statistics For Town of Mount Vernon and Alabama</i>			
	Alabama	Mobile County	Mount Vernon
All Persons	18%	21%	29%
Families	13%	18%	11%

Source: American Community Survey

Table 10 illustrates more specifically the age and household relationship percentages of families and individuals whose income fell below the poverty level in 2011 according to the American Community Survey.



Table 10
Percentage of Families and Individuals Below Poverty Level in
Mount Vernon, Mobile County and Alabama in 2011

	Mount Vernon	Mobile County	Alabama
All families	11%	16%	13%
With related children under 18 years	20%	24%	21%
With related children under 5 years only	0%	30%	24%
Married couple families	0%	6%	6%
With related children under 18 years	0%	8%	9%
With related children under 5 years only	0%	6%	9%
Families with female householder, no husband present	29%	38%	37%
With related children under 18 years	41%	48%	47%
With related children under 5 years only	0%	63%	54%
All people	29%	19%	18%
Under 18 years	27%	28%	25%
18 years and over	30%	16%	15%
18 to 64 years	32%	17%	16%
65 years and over	17%	12%	11%
People in families	18%	17%	15%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and over	68%	29%	30%

Source: American Community Survey

Recommendations

- Collaborate and work with The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development and Economic Development Association of Alabama to implement progressive future economic plans for the Town of Mount Vernon.
- Redevelop the former Searcy property into a productive asset.
- Lobby to federal, state, county and local politicians to push for redevelopment and productive service at former Searcy Hospital site.
- Appeal to steel plant employees as a great community to live and raise a family.
- Recruit businesses such as restaurants, retail and hotels that appeal to large industry employees.
- Work with citizens of the community to help in providing opportunities to access employment.
- Institute progressive ordinances to ensure future economic growth.

“The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith.”

- Franklin D. Roosevelt



Housing

Residential housing is typically a community’s largest land use as well as its largest capital asset. A community’s housing stock directs commercial and industrial development of a region and can be the foremost determining factor for developers when choosing areas in which to reside. The Housing section of this Comprehensive Plan provides an inventory of housing and population projections based on a wide range of demographics such as type, age and value. Using this information, we can plan for future housing and supply needs to serve the Town of Mount Vernon citizens efficiently over the next 20 years.

Inventory

Housing age

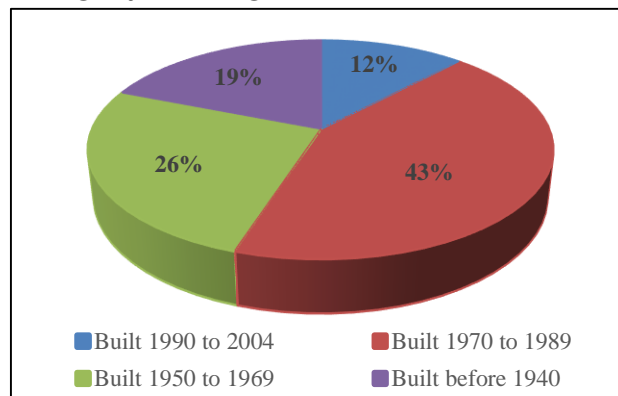
The age of housing stock can provide information on potential deficiencies in the quality and safety of dwelling units and identify areas in need of rehabilitation. Older houses are more prone to these deficiencies and in cases where rehabilitation is needed, assistance can be provided through numerous sources such as the Mobile County Consortium’s Community Development Block Grant Program. *Table 9* and *Figure 10* illustrate the housing age of Mount Vernon according to the 2011 American Community Survey.

Table 9
Age of Housing Units in Mount Vernon

Year Built	Number	Percent
Total housing units	611	100%
Built 2005 or later	25	0.0%
Built 2000 to 2004	22	3.8%
Built 1990 to 1999	48	8.2%
Built 1980 to 1989	129	22.0%
Built 1970 to 1979	124	21.2%
Built 1960 to 1969	75	12.8%
Built 1950 to 1959	75	12.8%
Built 1940 to 1949	47	8.0%
Built 1939 or earlier	66	11.3%

Source: American Community Survey and City-Data

Figure 10
Age of Housing Units in Mount Vernon



Source: American Community Survey



Type of Dwellings

Table 10 displays the number and type of dwelling units for the Town of Mount Vernon according to the 2011 American Community Survey. The majority of Mount Vernon consists of single family units. Mobile homes, make up approximately 20% of the housing stock.

UNITS IN STRUCTURE	Number	Percent
Total housing units	611	100 %
1-unit, detached	484	78%
1-unit, attached	0	0.0%
2 units	0	0.0%
3 or 4 units	9	2%
Mobile home	118	20%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0%

Source: American Community Survey and City-Data.com

Table 11 displays building permits issued from 2003-2012 within the Town of Mount Vernon. This data shows relatively 28 homes were built during this time in Mount Vernon.

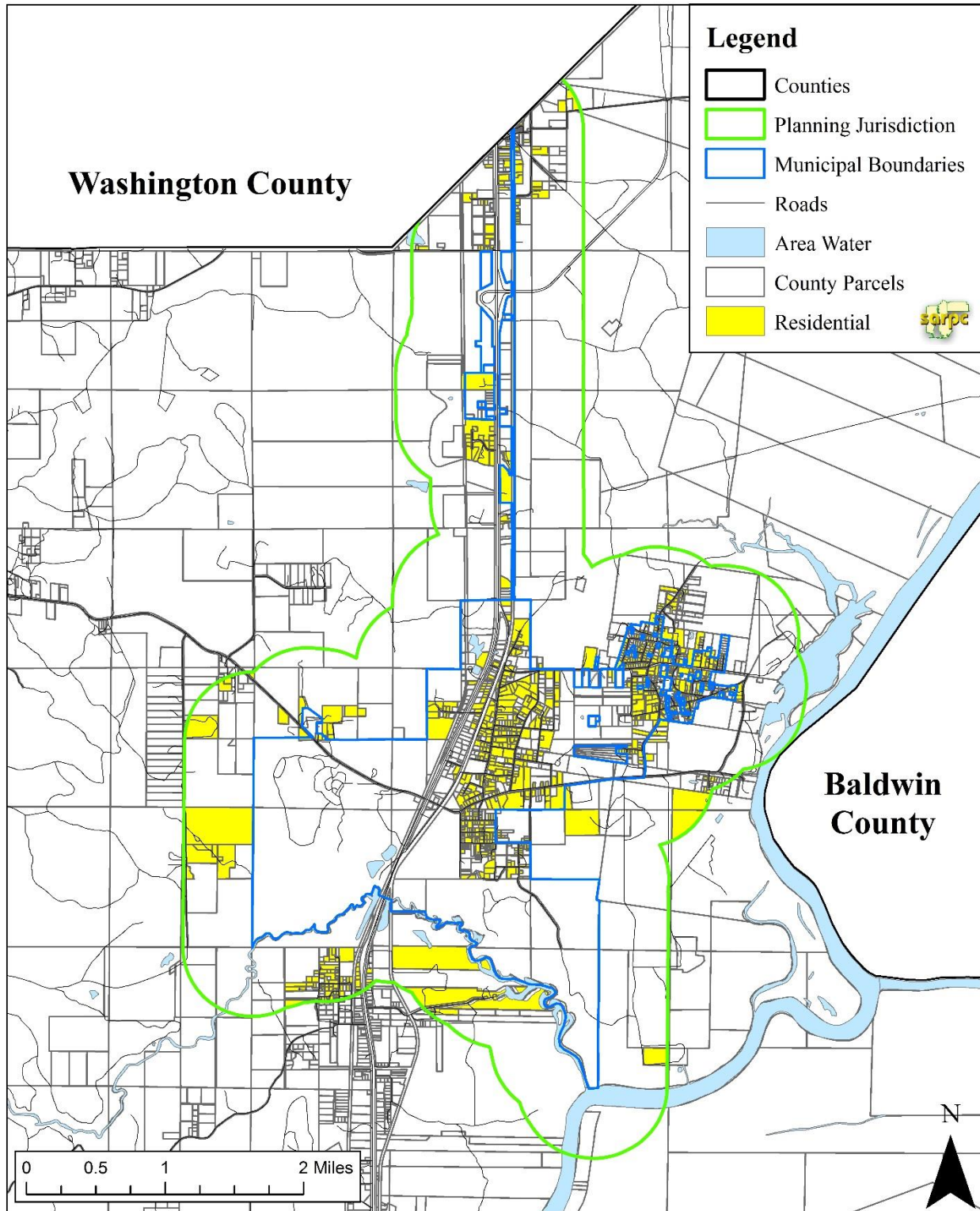
Year	Buildings
2003	1
2004	2
2005	4
2006	5
2007	4
2008	2
2009	0
2010	4
2011	4
2012	2

Source: City-Data.com

Figure 11 displays the residential areas in Mount Vernon. Figure 12 illustrates a U.S. Census Block Map showing the spatial density of housing units in the Town of Mount Vernon.



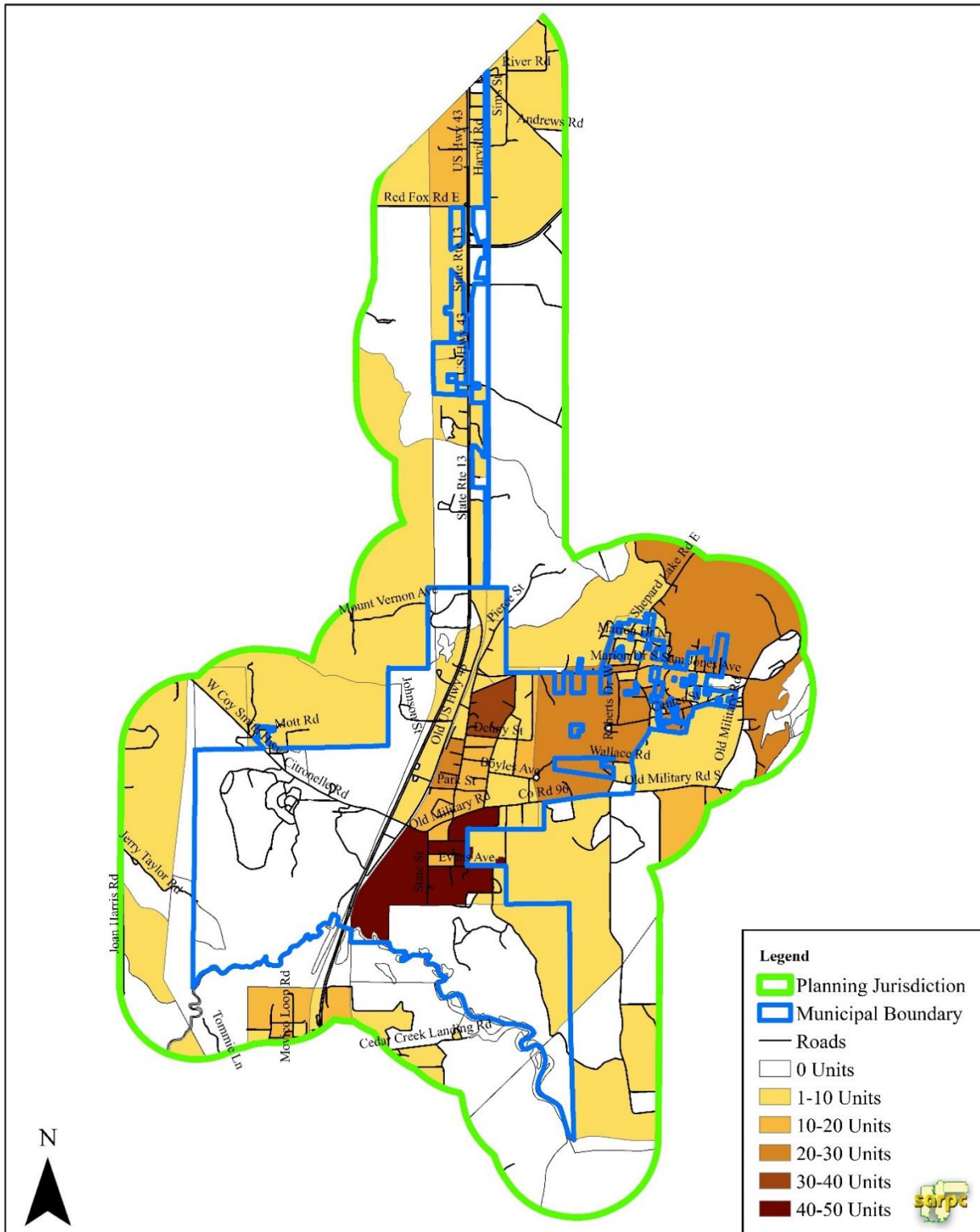
Figure 11
Mount Vernon's Residential Distribution



Source: SARPC



Figure 12
2010 Mount Vernon Housing Unit Distribution by Census Blocks



Source: U.S. Census and SARPC



Occupancy/Vacancy Status

Occupancy and vacancy rates can indicate numerous areas of concern such as areas in need of rehabilitation or areas in economic decline that are in need of resurgence or stabilization. Increased vacancy rates can indicate a decline in population within the town and an increase in occupancy can indicate an increase in population. *Table 13* illustrates the occupancy status for the Town of Mount Vernon in 2000 and 2010. The substantial increase in total housing units is a result of recent annexations.

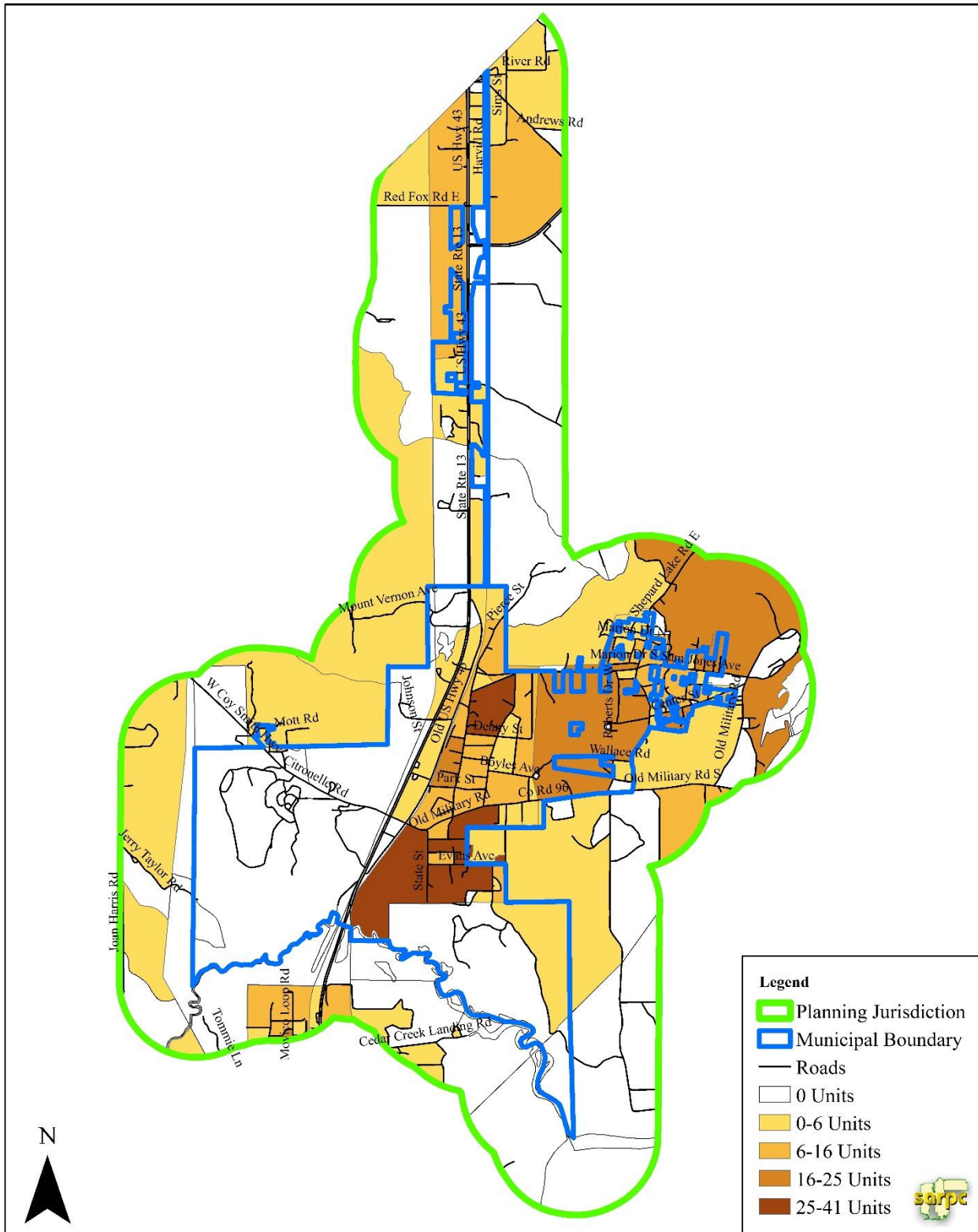
<i>Table 13</i> <i>Mount Vernon's Occupancy Status for 2000 and 2010</i>			
	Total Housing Units	Vacancy Percentage	Occupied Percentage
2000	395	16%	84%
2010	667	17%	83%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and City-data.com

Figure 13 illustrates the areas of occupied housing in Mount Vernon while *Figure 14* illustrates the areas of vacant housing in Mount Vernon.



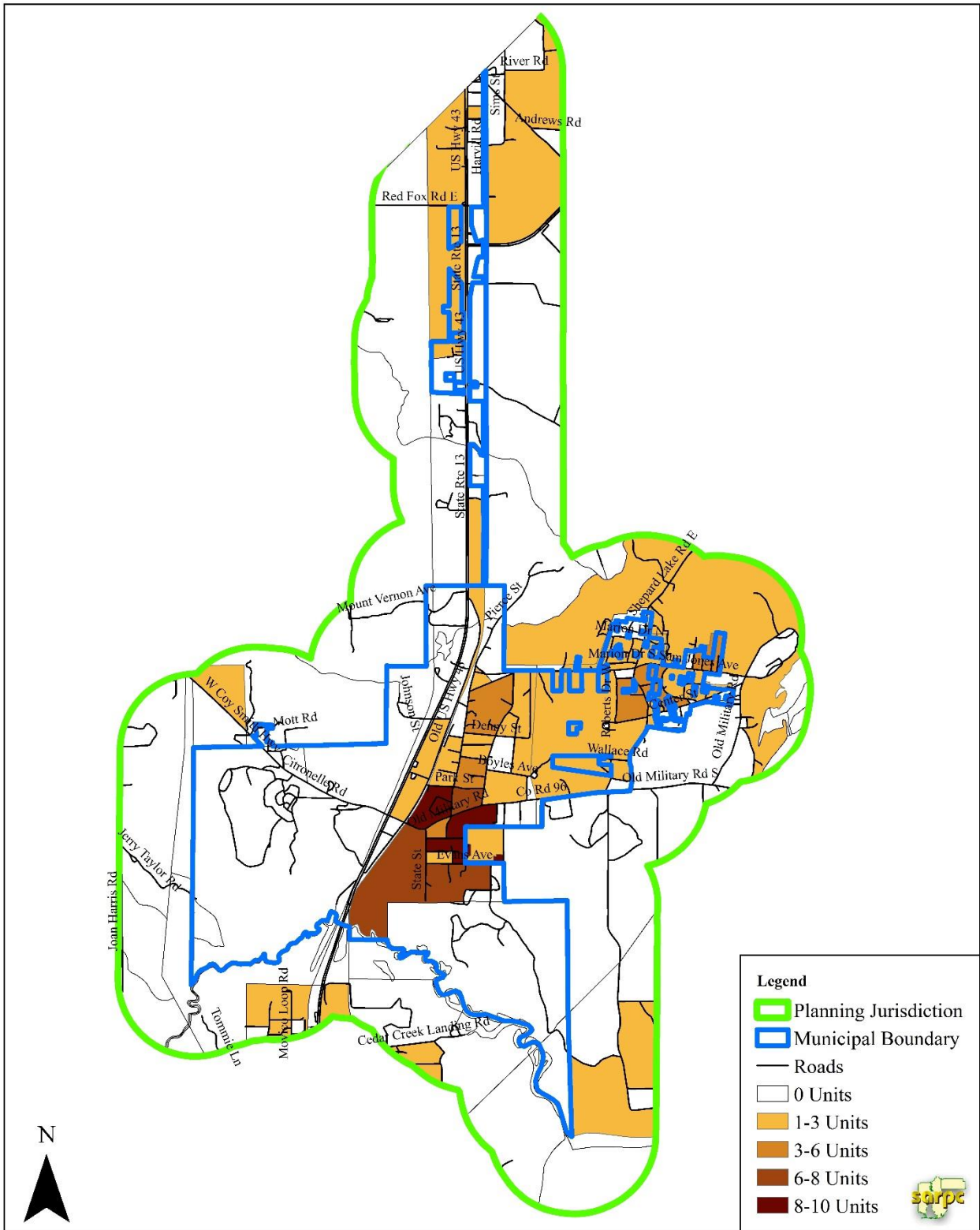
Figure 13
2010 Mount Vernon Occupied Housing Unit Distribution by Census Blocks



Source: U.S. Census and SARPC



Figure 14
2010 Mount Vernon Vacant Housing Unit Distribution by Census Blocks



Source: U.S. Census and SARPC



Housing Tenure

Housing tenure is the difference between housing ownership and housing rentals in a community. This can show important socioeconomic characteristics of a community as well as indicate the type of population within an area. High ownership typically means more mature families while more rentals indicate a younger population or lower income families. *Table 12* illustrates the comparison of housing tenure for 2000 and 2010 in Mount Vernon.

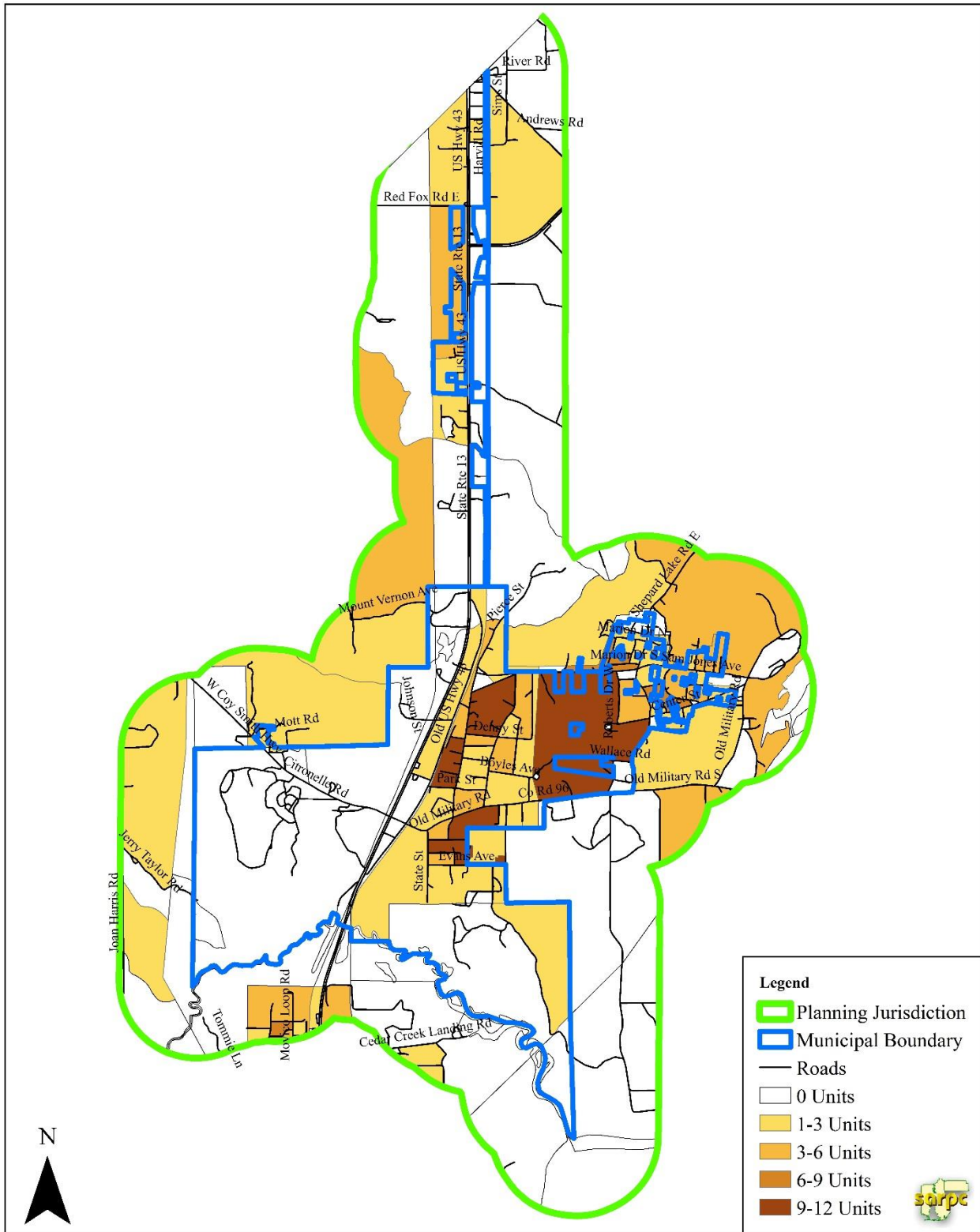
<i>Table 12</i>						
<i>Mount Vernon's</i>						
<i>Housing Unit Tenure for 2000 and 2010</i>						
	2000			2010		
	Total No. of Occupied Housing	No.	%	Total No. of Occupied Units	No.	%
Owner Occupied	333	276	83	556	445	80
Renter Occupied		57	17		111	20

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figures 15-17 display the Town of Mount Vernon's spatial distribution of housing with mortgages, with rentals and with no mortgages, respectively.



Figure 15
2010 Mount Vernon Distribution of Housing Units with Mortgage by Census Blocks



Source: U.S. Census and SARPC



Figure 16
2010 Mount Vernon Distribution of Rental Housing Units by Census Blocks

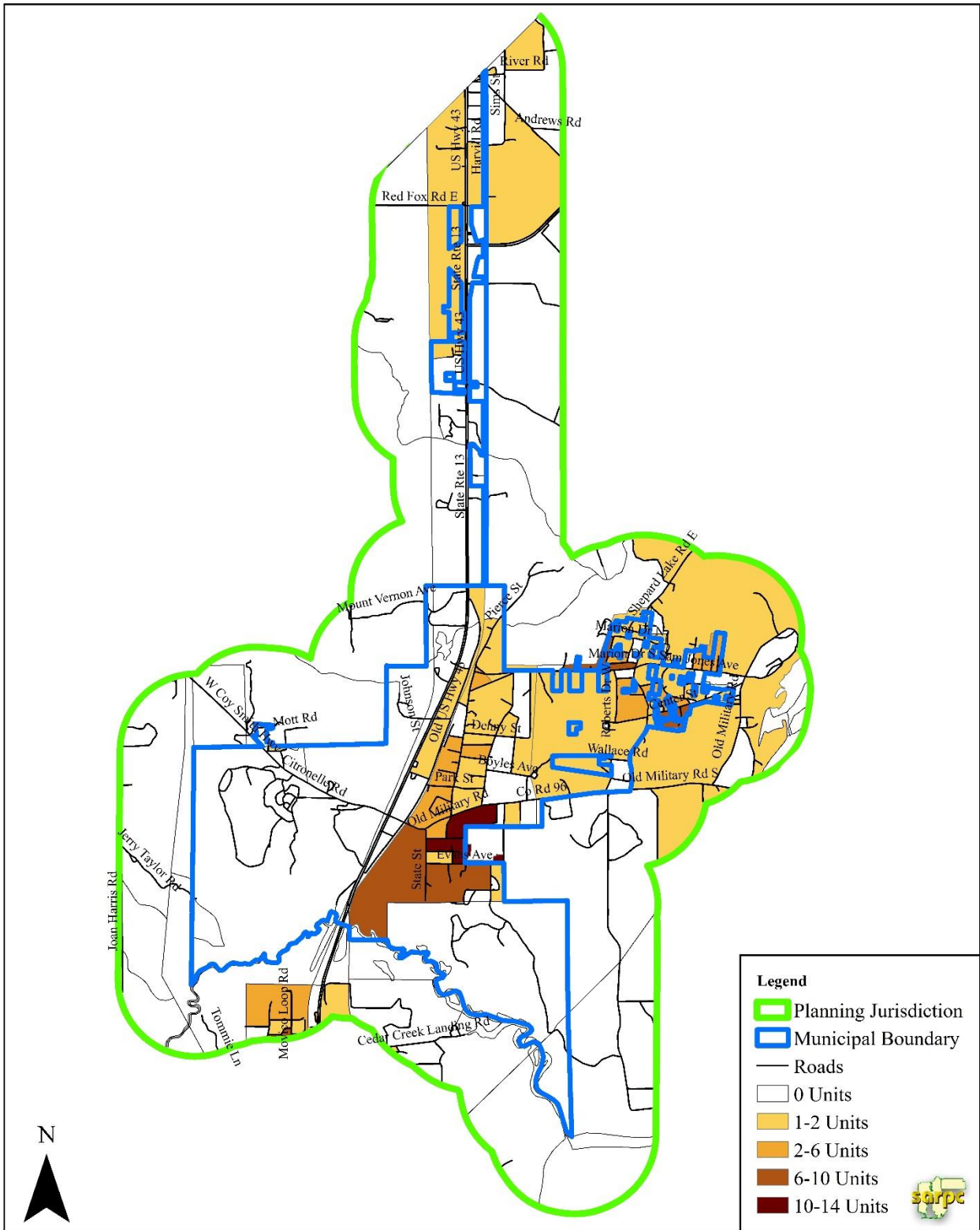
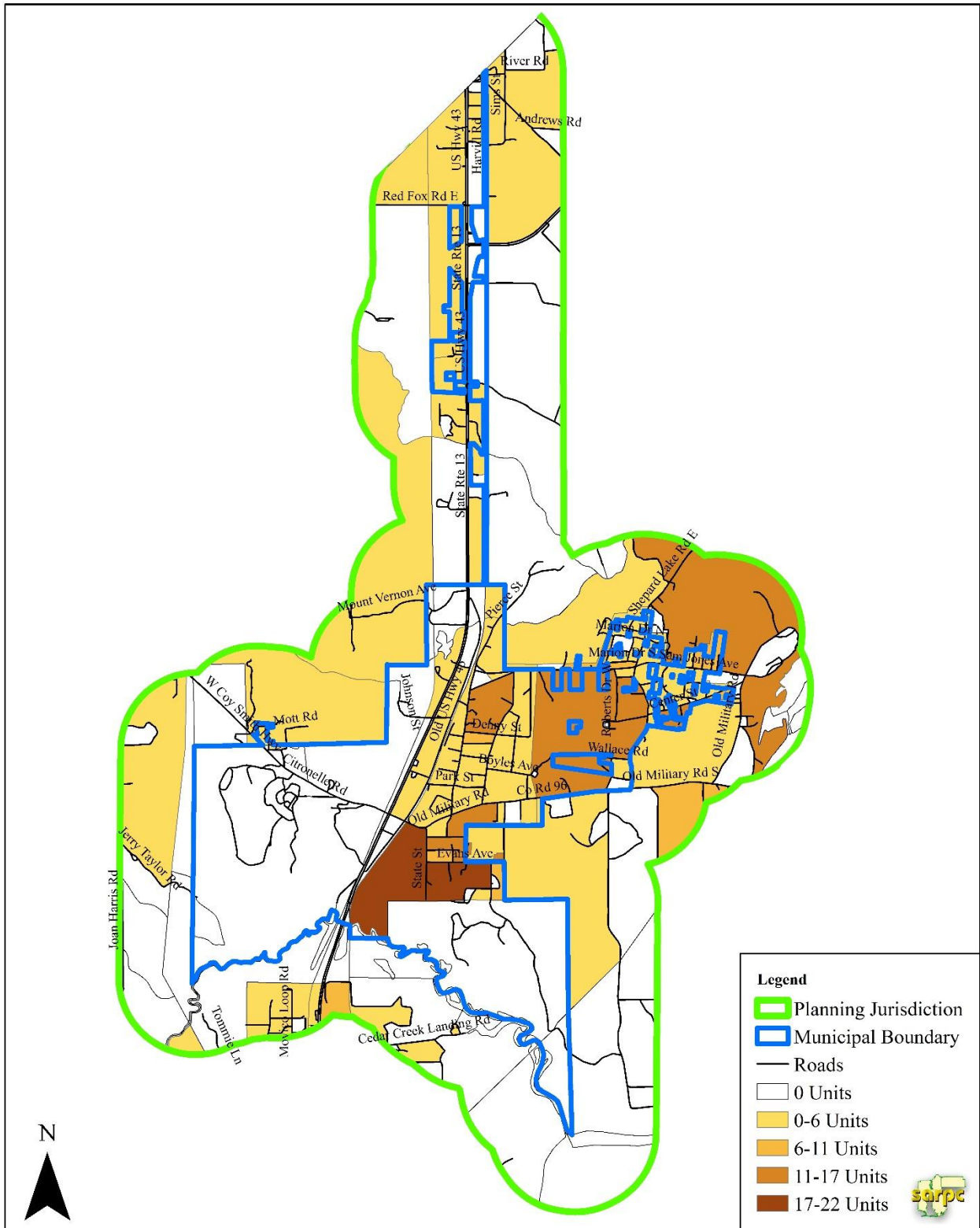




Figure 17
2010 Mount Vernon Distribution of Housing Units without Mortgage by Census Blocks





Housing Values

The cost of housing in a community is influenced by many factors including the community's employment opportunities, recreation and transportation. Housing values are a key socioeconomic demographic that directly reflects numerous demographics within the population of a community such as income levels. *Table 13* illustrates the housing values for the Town of Mount Vernon.

Table 13
Housing Value Statistics for Mount Vernon, Mobile County and Alabama

Municipalities	Median Owner-Occupied Housing Values (\$)	Median Owner-Occupied Housing Monthly Mortgage (\$)	Median Renter-Occupied Monthly Rent (\$)
Mount Vernon	71,400	980	677
Mobile County	124,100	1,185	723
Alabama	120,800	1,150	674

Source: American Community Survey

Table 14 and *Table 15* illustrate more specifically the housing stock income levels for monthly mortgage and monthly rental costs in the Town of Mount Vernon according to the 2011 American Community Survey.

Table 14
Monthly Mortgage Costs for Specified owner Occupied Housing Units

	Total	Percentage
Housing Units with a Mortgage	137	100%
Less than \$300	0	0%
\$300 to \$499	0	0%
\$500 to \$699	11	8%
\$700 to \$999	64	47%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	41	30%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	16	12%
\$2,000 or more	5	4%
Median (dollars)	980	(X)

Source: American Community Survey

Table 15
Monthly Rent for Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units

	Total	Percentage
Occupied Units Paying Rent	71	100%
\$200 to \$299	0	0%
\$300 to \$499	13	18%
\$500 to \$749	35	49%
\$750 to \$999	9	13%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	14	20%
\$1,500 or more	0	0%
Median (dollars)	677	(X)

Source: American Community Survey

Housing Projections

Housing projections are a crucial part of the planning process in that they prepare communities for the long term future population growth by supplying a sufficient housing inventory. As explained

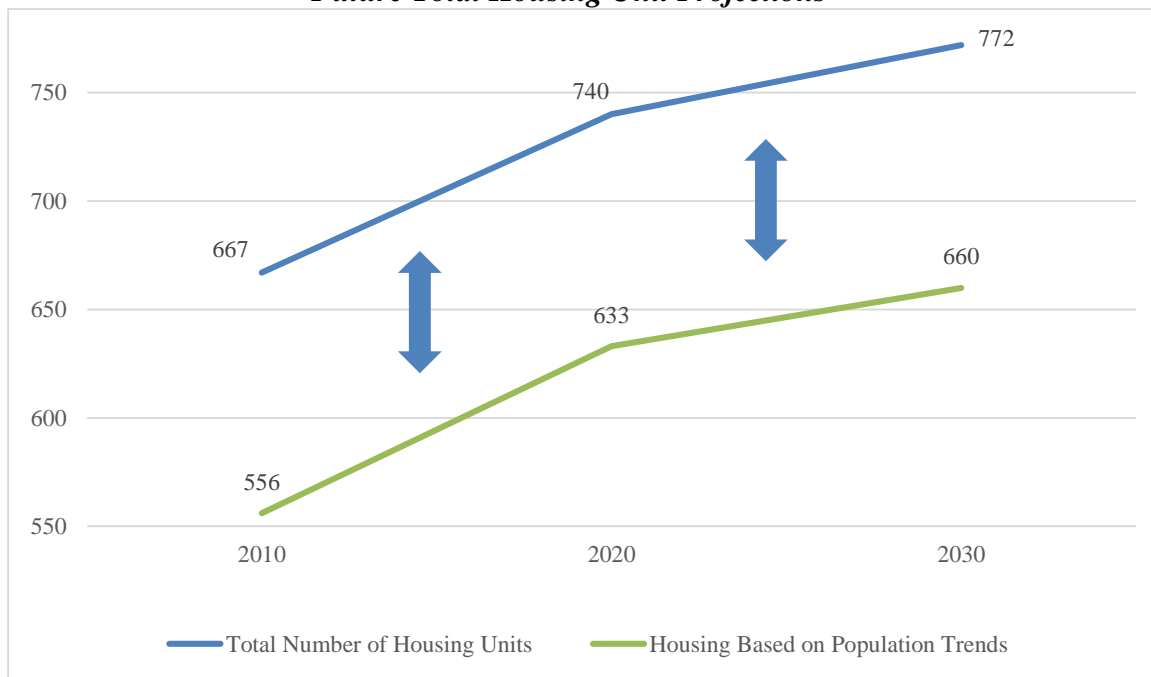


in the Population and Economy section of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Mount Vernon is expected to see a slight population increase in the next 20 years. Although this is a slight increase in population, additional housing units are needed to maintain the current vacancy rate of 17% in the future. See *Table 16* and *Figure 18* for future housing unit needs.

Table 16 Future Total Housing Unit Projections		
Year Projected	Total Number of Housing Units	Occupied Housing Projections based on Historical Mount Vernon Population Trends
2010 (Past)	667	556
2020	740	633
2030	772	660

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Estimations

**Figure 18
Future Total Housing Unit Projections**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Estimations

Based on this data it appears Mount Vernon will need additional housing units to efficiently support the future housing populations projected in this plan. According to the windshield survey conducted by SARPC, Mount Vernon has numerous homes that are classified as dilapidated or deteriorated and are in need of repair or demolition. These areas are located in the southern and northeastern areas of town (see Future Land Use Map for illustration) that are densely populated and are primarily older homes. Mount Vernon should work with the Mobile County Consortium



along with other funding sources to attempt to revive and redevelop the areas of town with these needs.

Medium to High-Density Housing

Another issue addressed by citizens of the Town of Mount Vernon is the need to recruit newer tax paying citizens into Mount Vernon, primarily workers at the nearby steel mill and other industrial locations in the region. Mount Vernon should look into newer, more adequate housing such as apartments, condos and high scale neighborhoods in order to supply these needs to the more than 1,000 employed industrial workers in the region. The town should look into amending zoning regulations to allow for these developments. Setbacks from roads and train tracks due to noise, open space, pedestrian accessibility and other quality of life factors should be closely considered when allowing these developments. Proposed areas of consideration for high-density housing can be seen in the Future Land Use Map in the Land Use section of this Comprehensive Plan.

Dilapidated Structures

During the windshield survey conducted in November, 2013 by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission for this Comprehensive Plan, it was recognized that the Town of Mount Vernon had approximately 934 parcels with residential housing as a primary land use. Of these 934 parcels, 95 were classified as deteriorating structures, or 10% of the total housing. 22 homes were considered dilapidated, or 2.4% of the total housing stock. Also during the survey, it was discovered that on the southeast corner of the Searcy Property, just north of Cedar Creek, there are several severely dilapidated structures. Upon inspection it appears these structures have been the site of consistent crime and trespassing. The town's police as well as fire department should look into options to patrol or demolish these structures.

Mount Vernon officials should look into housing rehabilitation programs such as the Mobile County Consortium's Community Block Program to address these issues of housing conditions.

Recommendations

- Work with Mobile County Consortium Community Development Block Grant Program to demolish, repair or restore deteriorating and dilapidated homes in Mount Vernon.
- Work with Code Enforcement to increase property values through the demolition or redevelopment of older vacant properties and neighborhoods.
- Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow for new high density apartments, condos and/or neighborhoods which would appeal to nearby industrial workers.
- Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow for a variety of housing options with a wide range of sizes and prices, particularly close to schools, churches and recreation to create a more walkable community.



- Adopt a housing policy initiative offered through HUD's (Housing and Urban Development) S.M.A.R.T. (Safe, Mixed-income, Accessible, Reasonably-priced, Transit-oriented) program to encourage smart growth and affordable housing throughout the Town of Mount Vernon.
- Remove dilapidated housing units throughout town, particularly on the current Searcy property.

“Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”

- Warren Buffett



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Transportation

All residents and businesses in a community depend on transportation to connect them to their community and region. The type, quality, and location of these transportation networks are key components that influence the quality of life and a sustainable local economy. An adequate transportation network provides safe and expeditious travel movement of persons and goods that are vital to community growth. Transportation should always be a major consideration when developing new residential areas, commercial properties and industrial sites.

Transportation Network

Road Classification and Volumes

The Town of Mount Vernon has a transportation inventory that consist of highways, local streets, signage, lighting, parking, traffic signals, sidewalks and river accessibility. U.S. Highway 43 is the principle arterial road that connects Mount Vernon to other major areas in the region such as the City of Mobile. Coy Smith Highway and Old Military Road are classified as minor arterials while Margaret Street is classified as the only urban collector in Mount Vernon. The following are descriptions of these respective roadways:

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials serve the major centers of activity, have the highest local traffic volumes and carry the major portion of trips entering and leaving our area. Most principal arterials are fully or partially controlled access facilities. When improvements are necessary, substantial federal funding is available. U.S. Highway 43 is classified as this type of roadway.

Minor Arterials

Minor arterials interconnect with the urban principal arterial system and provides for trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel than principal arterials. This roadway distributes travel to geographic areas smaller than those identified with the higher roadway system. Coy Smith Highway and Old Military Road are classified as minor arterials.

Urban Collectors

Urban collectors provide land access service and traffic circulation for residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas. They differ from the arterial system in that collectors may penetrate residential neighborhoods, distributing trips from the arterials through neighborhoods to the ultimate destination. Collector streets also collect traffic from our local streets, channeling



traffic to the arterial system. Margaret Street is the only classified Urban Collector in Mount Vernon.

Local Roads

Local roads are all roads that are not in the higher roadway system. They generally carry low volumes of traffic and serve primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and to higher order systems. These roadways offer the lowest level of mobility and through traffic movement is usually discouraged. The majority of streets in Mount Vernon are classified as local roads. Most of the local roads are in good to fair condition with some in need of minimal repairs. Most repairs include street paving, improved shoulders and drainage improvements.

Average daily traffic counts were obtained from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). *Table 17* displays two ALDOT traffic count locations from 2005– 2011. These counts represent average daily traffic volumes at particular locations within the town’s corporate limits.

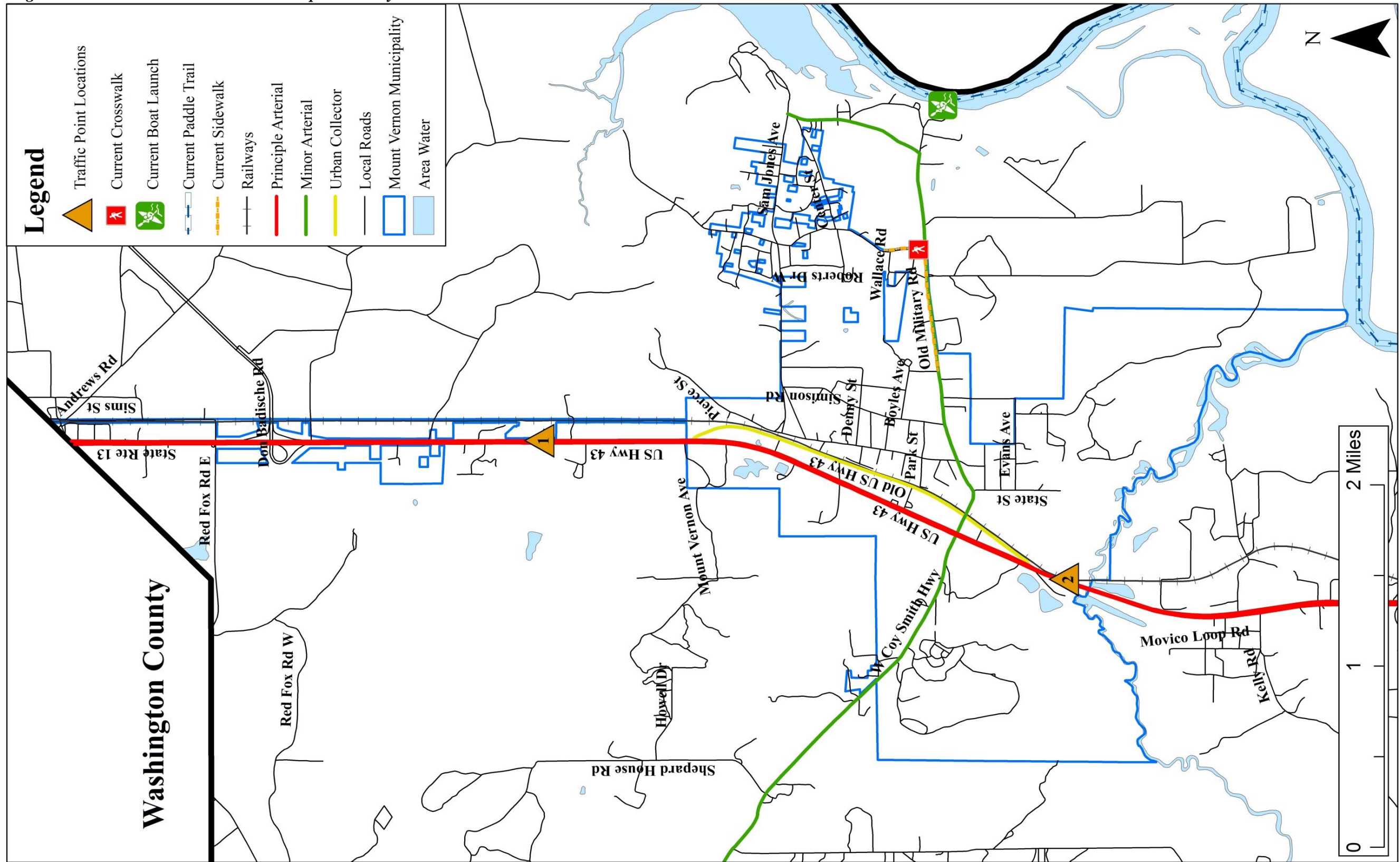
Table 17 also identifies the roadway’s Level of Service (LOS) rating. ALDOT assigns volume capacities to roadways in order to determine the performance of a transportation facility within a network. Daily traffic volumes are assessed to determine the road’s LOS rating. There are six LOS categories, A through F, with A being the least congested and most desirable, and F being the most congested and least desirable. A review of this model determined that the Town of Mount Vernon’s transportation corridors are currently operating at a LOS of B. As can be seen, Mount Vernon has seen an increase of 4,510 daily vehicular traffic from 2005 to 2011 at counter location 1 (see *Figure 19: Mount Vernon’s Current Transportation System* and *Figure 20: Mount Vernon’s Future Transportation System*). This could be an issue the town could address by installing traffic signals, turn lanes and improved signage along U.S. Highway 43.

Table 17 Historic Average Daily Traffic Counts on Roadways in the Town of Mount Vernon from 2005-2011									
Counter Location	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2005-2011 Fluctuation	Level of Service
1. U.S. Highway 43 @ Mile point 23.8	12,820	12,470	12,820	13,370	13,890	17,930	17,330	+ 4,510	B
2. U.S. Highway 43 @ Mile Point 25.42	12,330	12,220	12,410	11,980	12,450	12,150	11,967	-363	B

Source: Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)



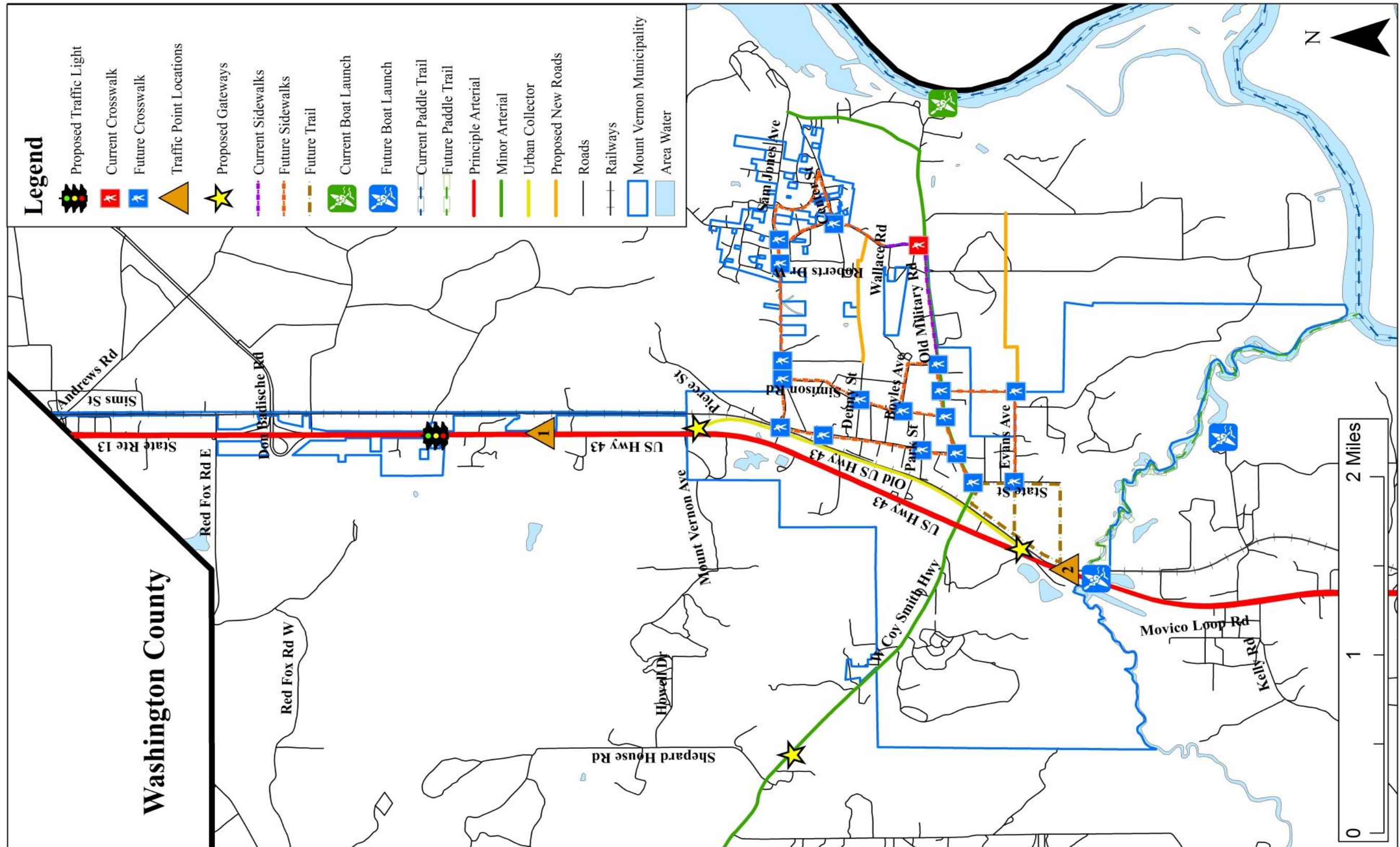
Figure 19: Mount Vernon's Current Transportation System



Source: SARPC/Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)



Figure 20: Mount Vernon's Future Transportation System



Source: SARPC/Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)



Railroads

Another benefit to the Town of Mount Vernon is their access to two major railways that run directly through the center of town. These railways pass north to south and navigate freight from all over the nation south into areas such as Mobile and north to industrial sites such as the steel facility in north Mobile County. This railway is crucial to the success of various industries in the region and provides adequate rail freight access to large ports in Mobile from all over the nation. These railways are illustrated in both *Figure 19* and *Figure 20*.

Water Access

Mount Vernon is known as the “Heart of the Mobile River Basin”. The town gets this name due to its location directly on the Mobile River, just a few miles from where the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers combine to form the Mobile River and eventually the Tensaw River. This provides a rare and wonderful opportunity for the town to capitalize on the numerous water resources available. Resources and activities such as fishing, hunting, kayaking, waterskiing and community events can all be available to the region through this water access point. Water access is crucial in recruiting visitors around the region as well as giving local citizens access to water based recreational opportunities. There is currently one water access point in Mount Vernon located at Waterfront Park on the Mobile River. This location is illustrated on *Figure 19*. While this provides a great transportation resource for the town, Mount Vernon should also look into more water access points as they continue to expand through future incorporation. One such proposed site is illustrated in *Figure 20* along Cedar Creek at U.S. Highway 43.

The Alabama Scenic River Trail and the Bartram Canoe Trail are recreational canoe and kayaking trails that are utilized greatly by visitors from all over the world. These trails connect throughout the State of Alabama to the Mobile River Delta, therefore giving the Town of Mount Vernon direct access to these trails. Canoeing and Kayaking is multi-million dollar annual recreational asset that Mount Vernon should benefit from by publicizing and advertising the town’s access to these trails. These paddle trails are illustrated as current paddle trails in *Figure 19* and as current and future in *Figure 20*.

Sidewalks and Trails

Mount Vernon has established in recent years a series of sidewalks to help pedestrians navigate safely and efficiently throughout the community. One such sidewalk that has recently been added is along Old Military Road connecting the eastern and western portions of the Town. This can be illustrated as current sidewalk system in *Figure 19*. While this system was crucial for connectivity and unity of the community, Mount Vernon should consider a more broad system of sidewalks to serve a safe and efficient connecting route of pedestrian traffic to areas of the community such as parks and churches in order to create a more walkable town. A proposed sidewalk route that encompasses these connective goals can be seen in *Figure 20*.



Discussion of a park being developed in the southern portion of town at Old Military Road and State Street can also provide an opportunity to extend the community's pedestrian routes. As displayed in *Figure 20*, trails for running and other forms of recreation could eventually be located at this site to serve the citizens of Mount Vernon. This system could be connected to the future sidewalk system in order to completely connect the current northern and southern areas of Mount Vernon.

Cycling Paths

There also are no current bike routes in the Town of Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon may want to consider and shared road program which would allow cyclists a safe and efficient means of travel via cycling. An example of a rural shared roadway is shown in *Figure 21*. As illustrated, the bike paths are located between vehicular lanes and the roads shoulder with pedestrian sidewalks also parallel in the right-of-way.

Figure 21
Example of a Rural Shared Road System



Source: Ontario Ministry of Transportation

Due to the age of local residents in town, Mount Vernon should consider allowing golf carts and other smaller forms of navigable transportation. This would require reducing speed limits on the local roads and ensuring that all businesses on U.S. Highway 43, eastside, have rear access.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) are grant financial funding resources the Town of Mount Vernon should pursue throughout the span of this plan in order to develop a safe and accessible walkable



community throughout Mount Vernon. Assistance can be provided through the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC).

Recommendations

- Erect traffic signals, especially along U.S. Highway 43, to address the issue of increased vehicular traffic.
- Replace and improve traffic signage throughout Mount Vernon.
- Establish more water access points in order to promote and take advantage of Mount Vernon's access to the Mobile River Delta.
- Promote small watercraft such as kayak and canoe transportation as a fun and useful means of recreation throughout Mount Vernon.
- Promote Mount Vernon as a walkable town where pedestrians can travel safely without vehicles to areas of town such as homes, parks, stores and churches.
- Continue to improve roads throughout town and expand the system of paved roads throughout Mount Vernon.
- Ensure roads are kept to high quality with lines, reflectors, signage, ect.
- Maintain a transportation system that is adequate to the population growth project for the town of Mount Vernon in the adopted years of this plan.
- Establish a Shared/Complete Road Program.
- Encourage the use of golf carts and other small motorized vehicles throughout town.
- Lower speed limits throughout town.
- Require rear access driveways for businesses on the east side of Highway 43.
- Apply for grants, such as the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), to gain funds to construct newer sidewalks and trails throughout Mount Vernon.
- Establish a committee to focus on grant and funding opportunities for sidewalks and other infrastructure needs.

“You can't understand a city without using its public transportation system.”

- Erol Ozan



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Land Use

The land use plans presented in this section, represents the Town of Mount Vernon's official position on all matters related to the physical use and development of public and private lands within the town's planning area. Land use planning is the orderly arrangement of land, resources, facilities, and services that ensures the proper growth and development of a community through the wise allocation of land to various uses based on the anticipated needs of future populations. Specifically, land use criteria protects the quality of life and safety of citizens, conserves natural resources, promotes compatible land uses and transportation accessibility, and provides availability of utilities and public facilities.

Figure 22
Saint Cecilia Catholic Church



Source: SARPC

The Land Use section of this plan provides an inventory and analysis of the existing and future land use patterns within the planning jurisdiction of this Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon's land uses are divided into land use categories consisting of: agriculture, commercial, industrial, institutional, public, recreational, residential and undeveloped. Every parcel within the planning jurisdiction of Mount Vernon is assigned an existing and future land use category and the corresponding land use map accompanies each category to identify the location of these parcels. Additionally, this section sets forth the physical plan for future development in Mount Vernon and designates appropriate locations for future uses which will guide the town in establishing criteria for future land use management, standards and regulations. This section will also identify future recommendations that will guide Mount Vernon in achieving the desired future land use goals over the next 20 years and beyond.

Existing Land Use

Inventory

In November 2013, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission conducted a field windshield survey for all property parcels within the planning jurisdiction for the Town of Mount Vernon. This survey was then mapped and land use category percentages were determined using a geographical information system. The findings are disclosed in the following paragraphs.



The Town of Mount Vernon has approximately 9,789 acres of land area within the town's planning jurisdiction. Of that 9,789 acres, 6,540 acres are undeveloped. The current corporate limits consist of 3,305 acres of land area.

The existing land use categories and brief descriptions are as followed:

Agriculture

This land use category includes land primarily for agricultural purposes. Agricultural uses comprise approximately 16 acres or <1% of the developed land within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction for the Town of Mount Vernon.

Cemetery

Cemeteries, while not normally classified as a specific land use, do provide unique characteristics to a community. Redevelopment of these areas are extremely rare due to current laws and regulations restricting development. There are currently 10 acres or <1% of land area that consist of cemeteries within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction for the Town of Mount Vernon.

Church

Churches are not a land use that is normally classified specifically. However, the Town of Mount Vernon consists of a high number of churches throughout the community. There are approximately 31 acres or <1% of the total land area within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction for the Town of Mount Vernon.

Commercial

This land use category includes land areas with or without structures, including off-street parking lots, where goods are distributed and/or personal services are provided. Commercial land accounts for 235 acres or 2.4 % of the total land uses within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon.

Industrial

This land use category includes land areas with or without buildings, where semi-finished or rough material is further processed, fabricated, or manufactured. It includes warehousing and wholesaling establishments engaged in either indoor or outdoor storage or non-retail sales. Industrial sites consist of approximately 709 acres or 7.2% of the total land uses within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon.



Institutional

This land use category consists of parcels of land that include educational institutions and health facilities. The Town of Mount Vernon has a large institutional land use coverage consisting of 1,045 acres or 10.6% of the total land uses within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon. Of this 1,045 acres, the property that was formally used as the Searcy Mental Health Facility consist of approximately 999 acres, or 10.2% of the total land uses within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon.

Parks & Recreation

This land use category consists of land used for recreational purposes, such as: local parks, ball fields, marinas, etc. Recreational uses comprise 37 acres or <1% of the total land uses within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon.

Public

Public land uses consist of governmental entities, public utilities and facilities, just to name a few. The public land uses for the Town of Mount Vernon consists of 36 acres or <1% of the total land uses within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon.

Residential

This land use consist of residential dwellings. Houses, trailers and manufactured homes are the types of housing that make up the residential housing stock for the Town of Mount Vernon. Residential uses consists of 1,130 acres or 11.5% of the total land uses within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon.

Undeveloped

This land use category is devoid of urban developments, which includes vacant plots, gullies and subdivided land, with no structures. Forestry/Timber uses are also included in this category. Undeveloped lands comprise approximately 6,540 acres or 66.8% of the total land uses within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon.

Table 18 shows the existing land use by acreage and percentage within the corporate limits planning jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Vernon.



Table 18
Existing Land Use by Acreage for the
Town of Mount Vernon’s Planning Area

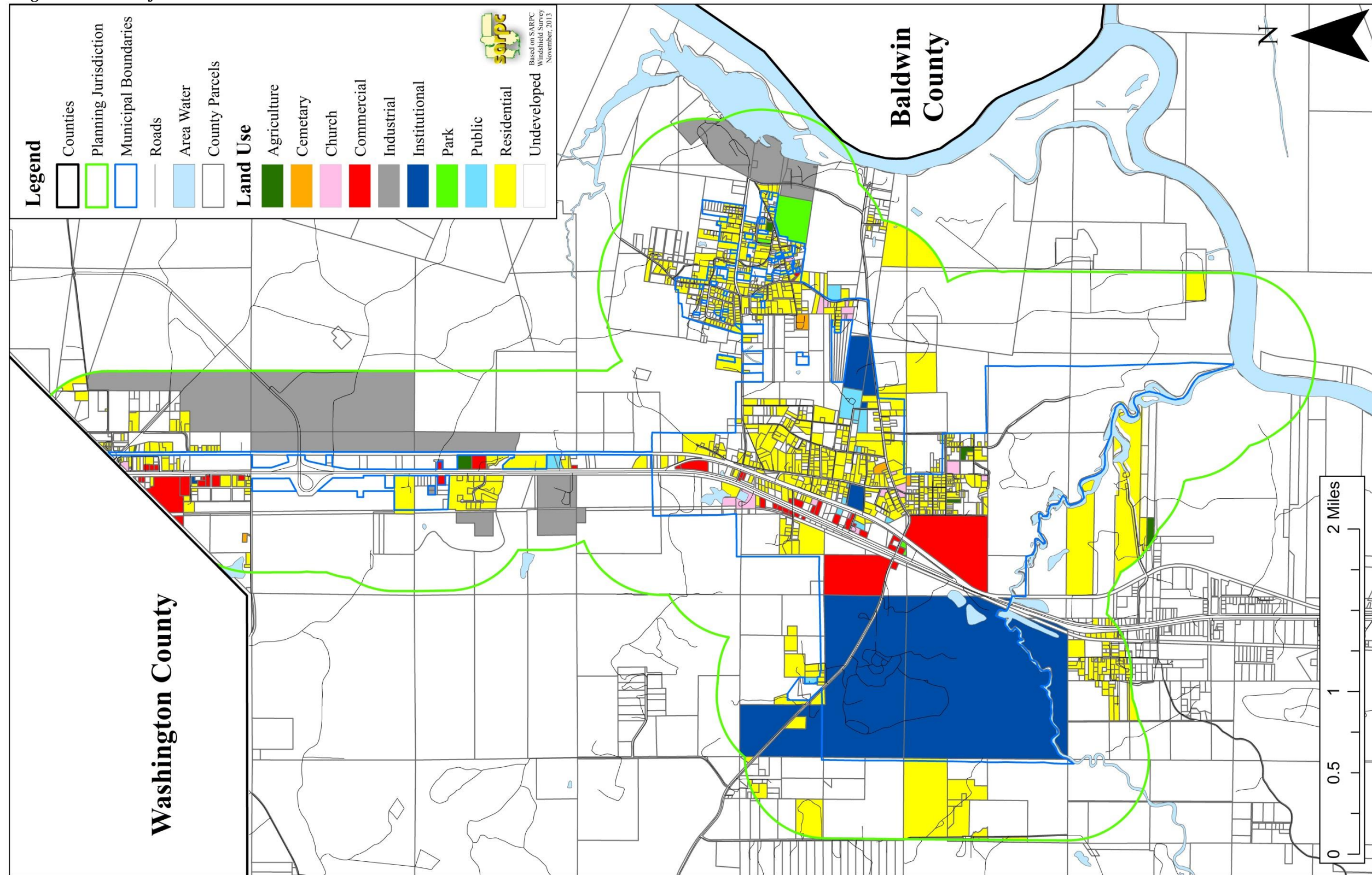
Land Use Categories	Total Acreage	Total Percentage
Agricultural	16	<1.0
Cemetery	10	<1.0
Church	31	<1.0
Commercial	235	2.4
Industrial	709	7.2
Institutional	1,045	10.6
Parks & Recreation	37	<1.0
Public	36	<1.0
Residential	1,130	11.5
Undeveloped	6,540	66.8
Total	9,789	100

Source: SARPC Windshield Survey, 2013

Figure 22 illustrates the Current Land Use Map. Figure 23 illustrates the Comprehensive Future Land Use Map for the Town of Mount Vernon.



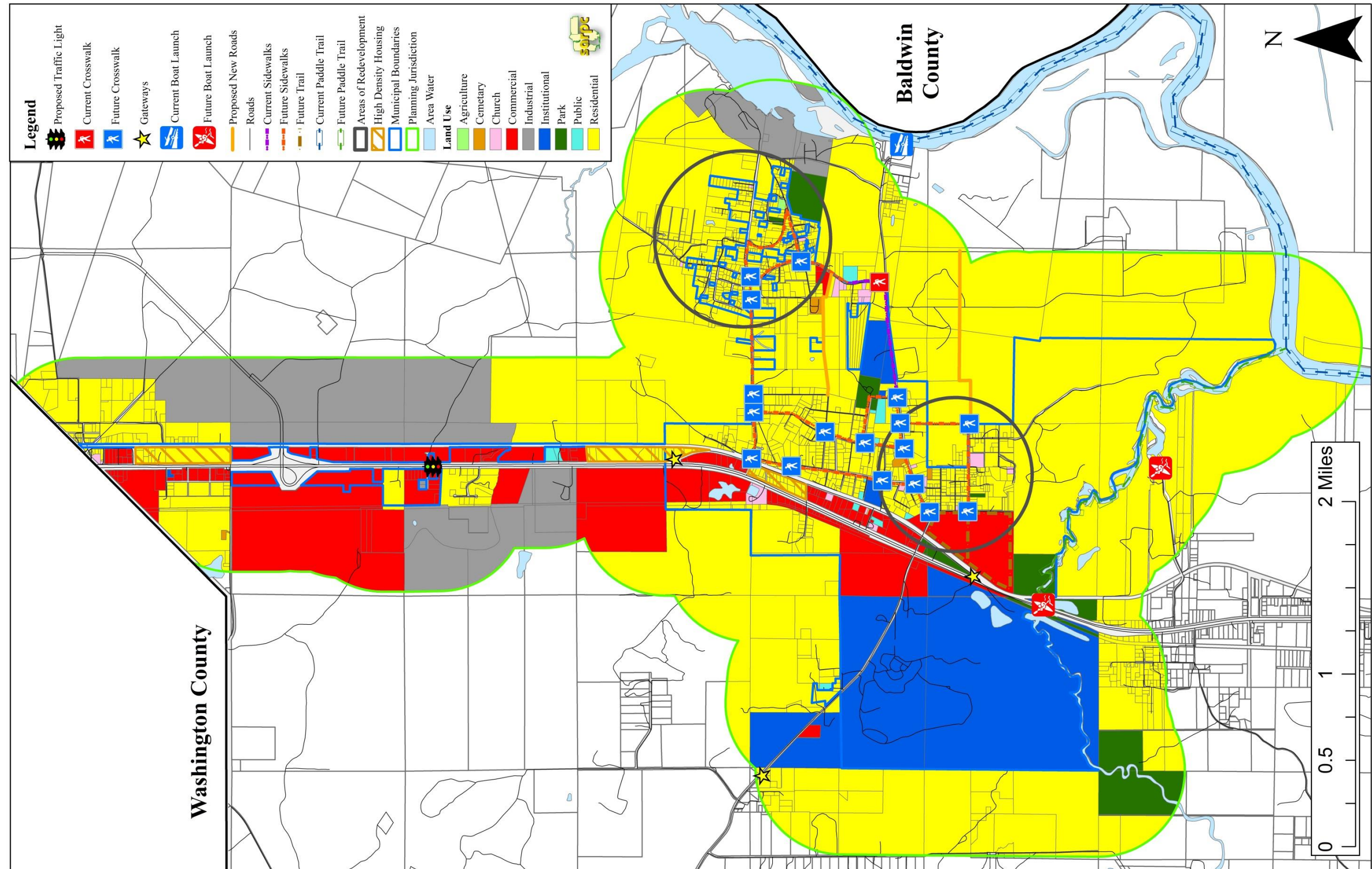
Figure 22: Town of Mount Vernon Current Land Use



Source: SARPC Windshield Survey, 2013



Figure 23: Town of Mount Vernon Future Land Use



Source: SARPC



Future Land Use Plans

The Future Land Use Plan presented in the following pages, represents the Town of Mount Vernon's official position on all matters related to future physical development of both public and private lands within the corporate limits and planning jurisdiction of Town of Mount Vernon. The purpose of this plan is to provide for adequate amounts of land based on accepted planning standards for each land use and to assure that these arrangements are harmonious and confirmative to future needs.

To determine future land use projections for the Town of Mount Vernon, data from other chapters in this plan was evaluated. The Future Land Use Plan was formulated using the existing land use inventory, current and historical growth trends, Mount Vernon's Zoning Map and future land use requirements according to population and housing projections.

The following are descriptions of the future land uses illustrated in this Comprehensive Plan:

Undeveloped

Undeveloped parcels are not identified in future land use. However, this does not mean that all parcels within Mount Vernon are projected to be undeveloped. This only illustrates opportunities for every parcel to become developed in the future. Parcels lying within wetlands and flood plains should be noted as unsuitable for most development and must comply with the Town of Mount Vernon's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations as well as state and federal regulations.

Agriculture

A slight reduction in agricultural land uses consist of 14 acres. Most of this reduction is due to an expansion of parks and recreation in agricultural areas throughout Mount Vernon.

Cemetery

Due to developmental restrictions on cemeteries, cemetery land uses remains constant with no projected expansion.

Church

Church land uses remain relatively constant. However, with the future increase of population, Mount Vernon should look into establishing more churches throughout the town. Residential areas with walkable accessibility to churches should be considered for these locations.



Commercial

Commercial land uses see a dramatic increase in the future land use plan, primarily along the U.S. Highway 43 corridor. The U.S. Highway 43 corridor provides a great opportunity for economic development that should be pursued. It is also noted that the Shepard Lake community in northeast Mount Vernon should be considered for commercial development such as a neighborhood drug store for daily essentials. This would prevent citizens from traveling across town for needed daily essentials such as food and toiletries.

Industrial

Industrial land uses also have a dramatic increase in acreage. This increase is based on estimations of expansion for area industries such as ArcelorMittal Steel, formerly known as ThyssenKrupp Steel. No new locations are proposed for industrial development in the Future Land Use Plan.

Institutional

Institutional remains relatively constant with only a slight increase of 25 acres. This increase consist of the parcels containing the currently non-subdivided proposed sewage treatment lagoon on the former Searcy property.

Public

Public land uses see only a slight reduction of 14 acres. This is primarily due to a reduction or elimination of old deteriorating public facilities. The Town of Mount Vernon should prepare to redevelop the new locations of these facilities in strategic positions through the town.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation see a dramatic increase of just over 200 acres. This primarily consist of proposed development of recreation along Cedar Creek. Kayaking and canoeing opportunities should be considered and pursued in this area. See the Transportation section of this Comprehensive Plan for more information on proposed Cedar Creek paddle trails.

Another factor for an increase in recreational acreage is the proposed redevelopment of deteriorating parks, some of which were classified undeveloped in the current land use inventory.

Residential

Residential land uses has the highest increase in future land use acreage, resulting in 64% of the total future land usage. Most undeveloped land in the current land use inventory is classified as residential in the Future Land Use Plan. This allows for flexibility in development and allows



residential expansion with options for establishing churches, schools, public facilities and parks, just to name a few.

Table 2 illustrates the acreage inventory for the Future Land Use Plan of the Town of Mount Vernon.

Table 19 Future Land Use by Acreage for the Town of Mount Vernon's Planning Area		
Land Use Categories	Total Acreage	Total Percentage
Agricultural	2	<1
Cemetery	10	<1
Church	28	<1
Commercial	1069	11
Industrial	1045	11
Institutional	1070	11
Parks & Recreation	241	2
Public	22	<1
Residential	6302	64
Total	9,789	100

Source: SARPC

Recommendations

- Ensure that adequate housing, schools, public utilities and facilities, parks, and commercial businesses are provided to the future citizens of the Town of Mount Vernon.
- Continue to recruit commercial and industrial businesses to the areas vast amount of undeveloped land, primarily along the U.S. Highway 43 corridor.
- Designate and develop areas for new residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure that future developments adhere to the spirit of the Future Land Use Plan.
- Amend the Town of Mount Vernon Zoning Ordinance to ensure zoning is compliant with the Future Land Use Plan.

“For time and the world do not stand still. Change is the law of life.”

- John F. Kennedy



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Community Facilities and Services

A community requires a wide variety of facilities and services to ensure that basic health and safety needs are met. These services also insure a high quality of life and a sustainable economy. This chapter provides an inventory of community facilities and services currently offered to the residents and local businesses in Mount Vernon and identifies the services and facilities needed to accommodate their best interests moving forward. Recommendations are proposed to accomplish community goals and plan for future growth needs.

Utilities

Water

The general service area of the Mount Vernon Water System is within the current corporate limits of Mount Vernon. There are two elevated storage tanks, one that holds 125,000 gallons, and one that holds 250,000 gallons of water. One of these can be seen in *Figure 24*. There are two wells that provide water to both tanks. The wells operate at a pumping capacity of 350 gallons per minute (GPM). The present average daily consumption is 120,000 gallons with a peak daily consumption of 150,000 gallons. Mount Vernon must ensure that supply and storage facilities meet growth and fire protection requirements. Mount Vernon should also look into expanding their water system during future growth to acquire additional revenue. Damage has been reported to the ceilings of one of the water towers and should be addressed. Repairs to facilities should be pursued through grants such as Community Development Block Grants awarded by the Mobile County Consortium.

Figure 24
Mount Vernon Water Tower



Source: SARPC

Sewer

At this current time, the primary method of sewage waste disposal in the Town of Mount Vernon is septic tanks. However, in recent years Mount Vernon has received Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) Grants to begin development on a community wide sewage system program. The current proposed system could possibly be located at the previously existing water treatment



facility located on the former Searcy Property along U.S. Highway 43, seen in *Figure 25*. The facility was once used as the sewage treatment facility for the now closed Searcy Mental Hospital. This facility extracts purified water directly from the facility into Cedar Creek. The facility currently holds one 20,000 gallon tank at full capacity and can serve up to 80,000 residents. The system of purification is aeration and ultraviolet water cleansing. No chemicals are used in the water purification process. The current system will be available to residential uses only while commercial customers are obligated to pay an impact fee upon connection to sewage system.

***Figure 25
Proposed Sewage Treatment Pond***



Source: SARPC

Mount Vernon should continue to develop their sewage system in order to provide the residents and businesses of the town with adequate sewage utilities. The town should work to ensure that commercial developments can be waived from impact fee in order to ensure more adequate recruiting for economic development.

Gas System

Mobile Gas services the Town of Mount Vernon along with most of Mobile County with natural gas. Mobile Gas obtains natural gas through the Gulf South Pipeline.

Drainage

The drainage system serving the Town of Mount Vernon is quite basic and consists of mostly open ditches with culverts serving streets and roads. As is the case with most of the region, Mount Vernon is subject to heavy seasonal downpours. Storm water builds rapidly and the open ditches that exist are the preferred method to handle this amount of water. Although, localized street flooding does occur, many years of fine-tuning Mount Vernon's open ditch and drainage system have resulted in the elimination of most yard flooding during periods of heavy rain. It is evident that sustained development over time will require a more structured drainage system due to the loss of open ground used for saturation. The need exists for the town to undertake a long-range master drainage plan to identify future needs that future development will generate.

Solid Waste Management/ Recycling

The Town of Mount Vernon does not currently have a public sanitation department or recycling program. Residential solid waste disposal is contracted through the town with Advanced Disposal, a private company. Most trash is disposed in a nearby landfill along Coy Smith Highway west of the corporate limits of Mount Vernon.



During the Land Use survey conducted by SARPC, it was observed that in many areas of Mount Vernon residents have resorted to dumping trash at specified locations throughout town, especially in the Shepard Lake community. Due to the safety, health and environmental concerns this could bring, the Town of Mount Vernon should look into a more safe and adequate solid waste and recycling program to combat the dumping and littering issue throughout town.

Hazardous Waste

Hazardous waste is monitored by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). All households are exempt from ADEM regulation. Businesses are responsible for their own waste and should contact ADEM if there is any question as to whether or not the business may be generating hazardous waste. ADEM will then make a determination if hazardous waste is being generated.

Municipal Facilities

Mount Vernon Town Hall

The current Mount Vernon Town Hall is located at 1565 Boyles Avenue and was built in 1963. The building houses the administrative office, court chambers, utilities office, and the police department. The Town Hall can be seen in *Figure 26*. Mount Vernon should consider alternative locations such as the former Searcy complex or old Mount Vernon School as possible future locations for the Town Hall and Municipal Complex.

***Figure 26
Mount Vernon Town Hall***



Source: SARPC

Post Office

The town's U.S. Post Office is located at 19175 Old Highway 43. The current building was built during the 1980's and continues to serve the Town of Mount Vernon efficiently in regards to postal service. The post office on average sees around 500 articles of mail daily. Higher numbers are seen during holidays and at the beginning of each month. There is currently one delivery truck which operates on one full route and one auxiliary route.

While the post office currently serves Mount Vernon residents efficiently, Mount Vernon should prepare for more mail service in the future if annexation plans are carried out resulting in an increase of area postal customers. Also, with the projected increase in commercial development, the post office should be prepared for an increase in service to local businesses.



Library

Mount Vernon has a newly constructed library which was completed in 2011. This library can be seen in *Figure 27* during its grand opening. The Mount Vernon Public Library is located at 19180 Shepard Lake Road. Hours are Monday-Thursday from 10:00 am-5:00 pm, Saturday from 10:00 am-6:00 pm, and closed on Sunday.

The library boasts sixteen computers in the technology lab. There are currently nine PC computers and 7 Mac computers which are available to all Mount Vernon citizens. Internet access and printing capabilities are also available to patrons.

The library is in the process of improving their book collection availability. There are currently 3,500 books in the library's catalog. The new equipment, software, furniture and shelving was obtained through grants, appropriations and donations.

Currently the library has only one full-time librarian, which limits the hours the library is available. Funding is needed for technical support, new employees, community programs, etc. The town should also consider a volunteer program to help assist in working at the town library. The Alabama Public Library Service is a source the Town of Mount Vernon could use to gain such funding in the future. Mount Vernon should continue to support their library financially through tax dollars and by applying for grants in order to continue to provide the library as a valuable asset to the community.

Figure 27
Town of Mount Vernon Library



Source: SARPC

Community Center

The Mount Vernon Community Center is located at 19180 Shepard Lake Road East and is available for rental for most any occasion. The center is ideal for small meetings, parties and weddings with available seating for 75. It has a small kitchen to accommodate catering and food preparation.



Senior Center

The Town of Mount Vernon is currently in the process of establishing their own Senior Center. The town also currently has a town bus that is used for transportation services for senior citizens.

Public Safety

Police Protection

The police chief, whom is responsible to the mayor, administers the police department. Funds for the department are budgeted annually by the Town Council based on estimates prepared by the police chief and staff.

The police department currently has 3 full-time and 3 part-time employees including the Police Chief. The department can be contacted through the dispatcher for non-emergencies. All emergency calls are forwarded from the dispatch post located in Mobile, Alabama.

The police department has a fleet of 10 cars. However, only 3 are currently in good condition. Most exceed 200,000 miles and have numerous issues affecting service. Mount Vernon should pursue new vehicles and equipment through programs such as the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Surplus Property Division Program. This program offers a wide variety of equipment, ranging from patrol cars to furniture. This equipment can be bought at a reasonable price, donated, or bought at auction. Police vehicles also should be evaluated each year to determine if replacements are necessary. Additional vehicles, computers, bullet proof vests and other equipment should be provided to officers as the department and jurisdiction continues to grow. Surveys conducted by citizens of Mount Vernon identified a need for an increase in public safety. These surveys indicated an increase in police patrols and enforcement are needed due to an increase in crime, littering and a lack of local event security. *Table 20* shows the Mount Vernon Police Department’s annual crime activity reports for the years 2005-2012.

Table 20
Mount Vernon Police Department Uniform Crime Report Data

Year	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Theft	Total
2005	0	0	0	13	3	10	0	26
2006	0	0	0	4	0	5	0	9
2007	0	0	0	6	5	8	2	21
2008	0	1	2	19	5	24	1	52
2009	0	0	0	15	24	25	5	69
2010	0	0	0	10	31	43	5	89
2011	1	1	3	23	29	72	13	142
2012	0	1	1	23	14	54	6	99

Source: Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center



Fire Protection

The Mount Vernon Volunteer Fire Department currently has 9 part-time firefighters, 1 station, and 5 apparatus. However, volunteer numbers vary. The Fire Station is located at 19100 Ducloux Street. The Mount Vernon Volunteer Fire Department supplies fire protection and emergency medical services to an estimated 1,500+ citizens within its fire jurisdiction. Response time to the scene of a fire using the volunteer personnel is estimated to be 11 minutes. However, this average time may increase with future expansion of the corporate limits of the town. Based on requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), personnel are not allowed to enter a house fire with less than four fire fighters. Additional manpower has improved the fire departments response time. *Table 21* shows an inventory of the Mount Vernon Fire Department.

<i>Table 21 Fire Department Inventory Town of Mount Vernon</i>		
QUANTITY	EQUIPMENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION
2	Pump Trucks	1977 Jaco Fire Pumper 500 gal; 1982 Emergency Pumper 1000 gal
1	Ward Truck	
1	1992 Chevrolet Caprice	Chief's Vehicle
1	1997 Ford Explorer	

Source: Mount Vernon Volunteer Fire Department

Emergency Services

Emergency calls are serviced by the Mobile Central 911 service. When an emergency call is received, the Mobile Central 911 service forwards the call to the appropriate department. The town's police and fire departments are connected to the 911 service.

Schools

The Town of Mount Vernon is currently served by one public school, Belsaw/Mount Vernon School which is operated by the Mobile County Board of Education. Belsaw/Mount Vernon, which can be seen in *Figure 28*, provides education for children attending Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Belsaw/Mount Vernon is committed to educating children through a collaborative process of their faculty, staff, and community. The school's aim is to provide a challenging

Figure 28
Belsaw/Mount Vernon School



Source: SARPC



and flexible curriculum to address the learning styles of all students. The school's mission is to ensure the growth and development of the mind, body, and spirit of every child.

While Mount Vernon has a Kindergarten-8th grade school functioning within the corporate limits, the town should work with the Mobile County School System on developing a new high school. The nearest high schools are McIntosh High School to the north, Citronelle High School to the west and Satsuma High School to the south. These high schools are all between 12 and 16 miles from the Town of Mount Vernon. Due to the projected rise in population for the Town of Mount Vernon, teenagers in the high school grades will need an adequate high school to attend within the Mount Vernon area.

Hospital and Health Services

There is not a hospital in the Town of Mount Vernon. The closest hospital facilities are located in Mobile, Alabama. However, the North Mobile County Health Facility is located within the Town of Mount Vernon at 950 Coy Smith Hwy, Mt Vernon, AL 36560.

Park and Recreation

Recreation facilities should be equally distributed throughout the town with easy and adequate access. However, not all recreation is active. Mount Vernon should also be interested in providing larger parcels for the passive enjoyment of nature by its citizens.

The Town of Mount Vernon Municipal Park is located on Boyles Avenue opposite the Town Hall. The park has athletic fields which are available for the children of Mount Vernon through youth sporting events such as little league baseball and youth football.

The J.E. Turner Boat Park and Landing located on the Mobile River provides the citizens of Mount Vernon with water access, picnic areas and areas to fish. This park can be seen in *Figure 29*.

The town's lone public school, Belsaw/Mount Vernon, also offers recreational facilities in the form of playgrounds, which are available to the children and residents of Mount Vernon.

Figure 29
J.E. Turner Boat Landing



Source: SARPC



The Town of Mount Vernon currently has 46 acres with recreational uses inside the corporate limits and 8 acres at J.E. Taylor Park just outside the corporate limits. This is consistent with most National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) recommended standards. However, most of this acreage consist of a varying degree of neglect, undeveloped forested area and open space. These primarily undeveloped parks are located at Ballpark Road and another along Military Road.

More parks and recreational events such as adult league softball, youth and adult flag football and fishing tournaments should be considered. The Town of Mount Vernon should establish committees to oversee these programs in order to provided adequate recreation to the community. Recruiting volunteers will be essential to the success of these recreational programs.

The Town of Mount Vernon also has a wonderful opportunity to seize the vast quantity of water access points in the area as recreational assets. These water access points provide opportunities for a multitude of types of recreation ranging from kayaking to fishing. As discussed in the Transportation section of this Plan, Mount Vernon should look into developing more water access points, primarily along Cedar Creek, in order to recruit more out of town visitors to the area.

The town should also develop a regional park and recreational trails. This opens up a great opportunity to take advantage of the areas vast amount of undeveloped land to provide recreation and ensure conservation. A regional park should be considered as an asset to the community as well as an economic asset that has the opportunity to bring in visitors from all over the region.

Table 22 displays the NPRA recommended Levels of Service Standards associated with park and recreational facilities for communities in order to achieve an adequate number and type of facilities per population. These numbers are then compared to Mount Vernon’s developed recreational acreage. *Table 23* displays facility standards for parks from Moskowitz and Lindbloom.



Table 22 National Park and Recreation Association's Suggested Level of Service Standards for Communities				
Park Type	Suggested Area of Service	Suggested Size	Suggested Community Needs	Mount Vernon Park Acreage
Mini/ Pocket Park	<0.25 mile radius	2 acres or less	0.25-0.5 acres per 1,000 population	1 acre at Military Road and U.S. Highway 43 in good condition. Stage area and open space on site. There is room for additional facilities and expansion.
Neighborhood Park	<.5 mile radius	5 to 20 acres	1-2 acres per 1,000 population	2 acres at Ballpark Road that have been neglected. Overgrown fields and deteriorating structures on site.
Community Park	1-2 mile radius	25-100 acres	5-8 acres per 1,000 population	34 acres at Sawmill Road. Good condition. Mostly undeveloped forest. 12 acres at Mount Vernon Municipal Park in good condition. (46 Total acres)
Regional Park	>5 mile radius	50+ acres	20 acres per 1,000 population	0 acres
Linear Parks, Greenways and Trails	varies	varies	1 mile per 1,000 population	0 acres

Source: National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA)

Table 23 Outdoor Recreation Facilities Standards Town of Mount Vernon	
Type of Facility	Outdoor Recreation Facility Standards
Baseball fields	1/5,000 population
Basketball courts	1/2,000 population
Community centers	1/20,000 population
Football fields	1/10,000 population
Little League fields	1/3,000 population
Playgrounds/tots lots	1/1,000 population
Running track(1/4 mile)	1/20,000 population
Soccer fields	1/4,000 population
Softball fields	1/1,500 population
Swimming pools	1/20,000 population
Tennis courts	1/1,500 population
Trails	1 mile/3,000 population
Volleyball courts	1/3,000 population

Source: Moskowitz & Lindbloom



Searcy

One of the most historical and well know landmarks in not only Mount Vernon, but the region, is the property formerly known as Searcy Mental Hospital. This site has had numerous uses for over 200 years. Beginning with the Mount Vernon Arsenal in the early 1800's and recently as Searcy Mental Hospital, this site has served the region and nation as a valuable asset, resulting in its recognition as a Federal Historical Landmark.

However, since Searcy Mental Hospital closed its doors for good in 2011, the site has experienced severe deterioration. On site facilities and buildings range from deteriorating to dilapidated. *Figures 30 & 31* illustrate some of the deteriorating and dilapidated structures. The Mount Vernon Police Department has reported this as a routine location for crime such as vandalism and copper theft. The site is currently vacant with no current plans for future development.

With the site being owned by the State of Alabama, the Town of Mount Vernon, along with county, state, and federal representatives, should collaborate and work to revive this site. The town should ensure this historical landmark is redeveloped into a productive asset again that serves the citizens of Mount Vernon and the surrounding region productively and efficiently

Figure 30
Searcy Deterioration 1



Source: SARPC

Figure 31
Searcy Deterioration 2



Source: SARPC



Recommendations

- Provide adequate water facilities and water supply for both existing and future populations.
- Repair damages to current water storage facilities.
- Continue to expand sewage system to both residential and commercial customers.
- Work with grant administrators to waive impact fee for commercial sewage customers.
- Establish a committee to identify future needs for drainage and create a long-range master drainage plan.
- Improve solid waste program to help address littering and dumping issue throughout town.
- Establish a committee to oversee the establishment of a town recycling program.
- Provide adequate police and fire protection throughout the life of this comprehensive plan.
- Ensure growth of public safety personnel and equipment in order to serve future spatial growth of the Town of Mount Vernon.
- Establish a local high school.
- Designate, obtain and develop land for future park sites.
- Redevelop former park sites into productive assets the community can use.
- Establish community league softball, basketball, baseball, flag football, soccer, ect.
- Recruit volunteers for the town's future recreational activities and events.
- Designate and develop a regional park and recreational trails.
- Maintain and improve the town library through tax dollar support and grants.
- Establish a volunteer program to assist in working at the town library.
- Establish community involvement programs through the town library such as summer reading programs.
- Continue to advertise the Town of Mount Vernon Community Center as a productive asset.
- Ensure quality and adequate services to the senior citizens of Mount Vernon.
- Collaborate with town, county, state and federal representatives to revive and redevelop the site formerly known as Searcy Mental Hospital.
- Set up a local committee to oversee the handling of the former Searcy Mental Hospital site.

“Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great. We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools. We don't have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life.”

- Jim Collins, “Good To Great”



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Community Design

Community Design can be defined as a discipline concerned with functional and visual relationships between people and their physical environment. A positive aesthetic appeal can provide a positive image of a town to both visitors and residents alike. It also examines the ways in which functional and visual relationships can be enhanced. There are many benefits to an aesthetic presence in towns that range from general appeal to increased property value. Gateways, streets, landscaping, signage, utility placement and historic preservation are just a few examples of areas where community design can be implemented.

Gateways

Gateways and entrances are the first impression perceived by travelers entering the town. These gateways can be along anywhere from local streets to large freeways. They are approaches to the community and as such, give the traveler a first and often lasting impression. These gateways can visually establish a “sense of place” and heighten the traveler’s anticipation or arrival.

The Town of Mount Vernon has three major gateway points. Two are located along U.S. Highway 43 at the northern and southern borders of town. The other is located along Coy Smith Highway on the western border of town. While the only current gateway signs are located along U.S. Highway 43, Mount Vernon should look into development of newer gateways along these points. One current gateway can be seen in *Figure 32* and an example of a popular modern day designed gateway can be seen in *Figure 33*.

At this location illustrated in *Figure 32*, the Town of Mount Vernon has made plans to construct an elaborate veteran’s memorial site. This development will serve as a wonderful gateway into the town and will provide an aesthetic welcoming to all travelers entering the area from the south.

Figure 32
Current Mount Vernon Gateway



Source: SARPC

Figure 33
Proposed Modern Design Gateway



Source: Athensmidday.com



Streetscape

An important element of community design is streetscaping. A positive, harmonious streetscape can foster a positive overall impression of the community. If the opposite exists, then a less than favorable impression is made. Examples of positive streetscaping include landscaping, signage, utilities, street furniture, crosswalks and lighting.

Signage

The Town of Mount Vernon currently has a Sign Ordinance. However, this Ordinance is limited to only general placement and size restrictions of signs. Many towns in recent years have begun to develop more strict sign ordinances that require specific architectural and functional guidelines for signs. For example, portable signs, banners, illuminated signs, and other unaesthetic signs may be deemed unfitting for a community and restricted through ordinances. It is recommended that the Town of Mount Vernon amend the Town’s Zoning Ordinance to restrict unaesthetic signs, especially along U.S. Highway 43, to give the community a more defined sense of place for residents and a better welcoming for visitors. The town should also consider establishing nontraditional signage that is unique for the town such as themed street signs. Themes could be applied from historical places and events in the town’s history.

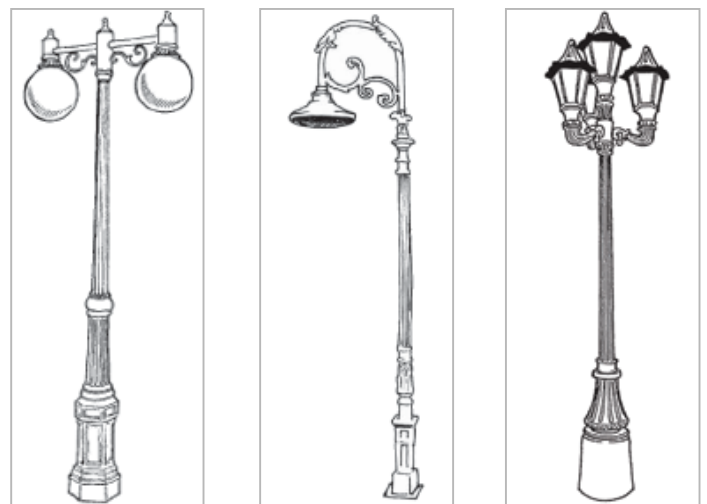
Lighting

Lighting is an important element of community design and a key streetscape item. Lighting should be sought that offers higher illumination, security, and safety, but also consumes little energy. Collector and arterial streets, because of their greater traffic volumes, should be adequately lit. Moreover, measures should be taken to assure that right-of-way lighting best serves open space and neighborhood entrances.

In areas that are not in public domain, the private developer should be required to provide a lighting plan that considers location, style, and type of lighting.

Night lighting can dominate the mood and focus of a streetscape. Supporting structures for light fixtures (ex. light poles) are part of the overall “street furniture” associated with public and private streets. As such, these structures can set the tone for streetscape. Low-level street lighting offers the most pleasing community design. There are many types of attractive, low level streetlights available for Mount Vernon to consider. Several examples are shown in *Figure 34*.

Figure 34
Proposed Lighting Structures



Source: SARPC



Landscaping

Landscaping is important to community design since it enhances both street and building design. People are attracted to a natural environment and usually respond positively to “green” places. Thus, landscaping is particularly beneficial to residential and commercial developments as it softens the harshness of the townscape.

Landscaping can actually promote patronage by providing an attractive environments and ambience suitable for shopping. Parking lots that are bermed and treated with shrubbery and trees are much more attractive to the user and passerby than parking lots that lack such treatment.

Landscaping a neighborhood, particularly tree planting, can provide visual beauty, relief from the climate and maintenance benefits. Shaded grass requires less watering and shaded homes require less use of interior air conditioning. Trees can actually reduce the ambient air temperature by several degrees. Landscaped cul-de-sacs and traffic circles provide park-like environment for those homes clustered around these streets. Landscaping residential areas abutting arterials and collectors provides a softer, more attractive image than that provided by fencing or stonewalls. Landscaping can require less maintenance than walls or fences if designed properly. If the latter are used as buffers, climbing or clinging vegetation can soften the stark wall or fence façade.

The Town of Mount Vernon should develop an official Landscape Ordinance soon after the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan. A local committee should be established to oversee the development of this proposed Landscape Ordinance and ensure modern and progressive content is implemented. The town should also implement into this proposed Landscape Ordinance a heritage tree be required for every lot throughout town, such as a Mimosa or Live Oak tree. As time passes, town administration should add and amend this proposed Landscape Ordinance if necessary to bring out the fullest aesthetic potential for the Town of Mount Vernon.

Street Furniture

Street elements such as streetlights, traffic signals, directional signs, bus shelters, transit rider seating, tree grates, fire hydrants, information kiosks, drinking or decorative fountains, trash cans, step railings, and decorative doorknockers can all be termed street furniture. Streetscapes are, in large measure, defined and enhanced by the orderly, disciplined installation of street furniture. Street furniture gives character and quality to a streetscape, while making the area more attractive to the pedestrian. It acts to convert a harsh street scene to a more sensitive human/pedestrian scale.

The town influences the design of traffic signals, benches, bus stops, directional signs, fire hydrants, and litter containers. Design and installation standards for other furniture elements are derived from the private sector. The private sector occasionally responds in a well-planned and designed fashion. More often though, such design considerations are ignored or are not well planned.



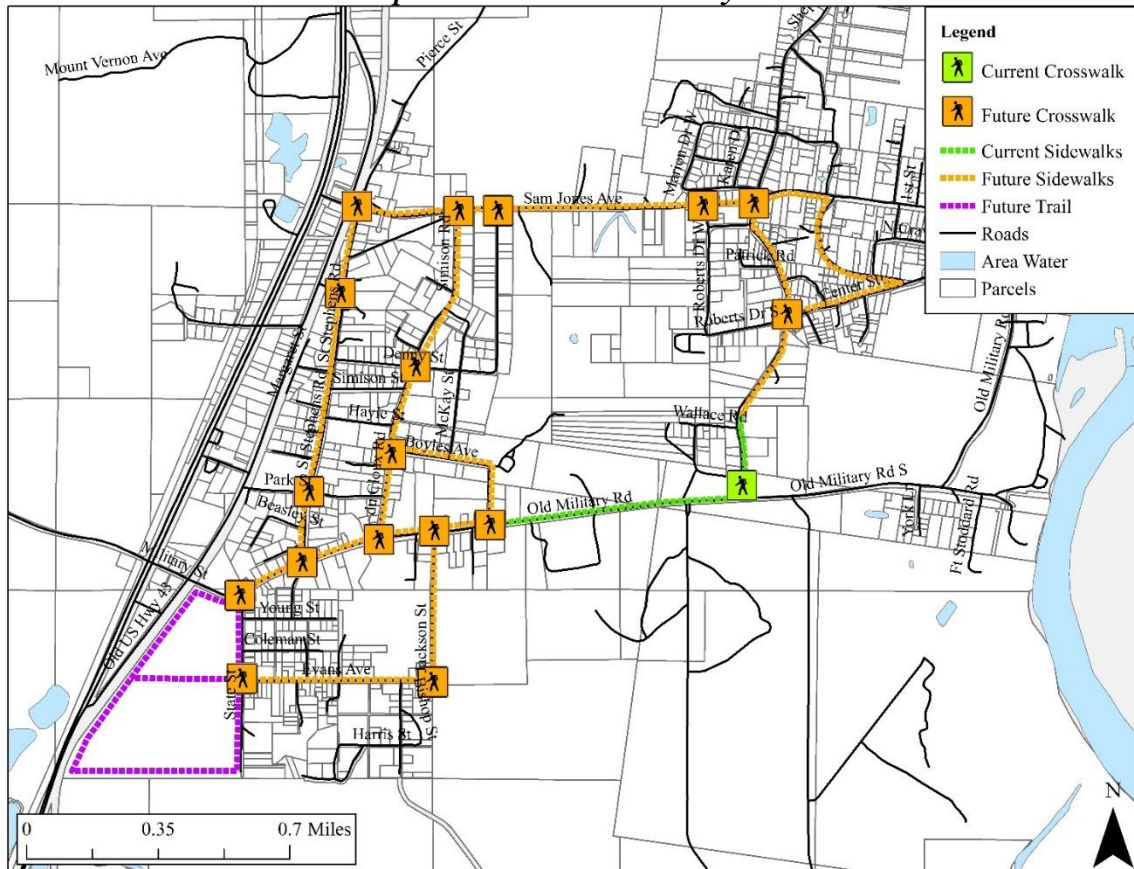
Sidewalks

Sidewalks are an important community design element. They provide the basis for and support of the use of street furniture. The uses of mailboxes, low-level street lighting, drinking or decorative fountains, information kiosk, or bus shelters are all linked to a defined pedestrian transportation network. Walkable communities have been shown to improve the quality of life in comprehensive aspects, such as improving overall health, safety, and moral of communities.

Mount Vernon in recent years has begun developing a system of sidewalks within town. Mount Vernon should continue efforts to expand the current sidewalk system to give residents a safe and efficient way of pedestrian navigation throughout town to destinations such as homes, schools, parks and churches. An illustration of a proposed sidewalk system can be seen in *Figure 35*.

Due to the large spatial area of these proposed sidewalk systems, it will most likely be required at some point for the town to provide crosswalks. This will give the town an opportunity to provide safe as well as aesthetically appealing opportunities of walkability for pedestrians. Benches and aesthetic landscaping are also something Mount Vernon should consider providing at these locations. Potential crosswalk locations can also be seen illustrated in *Figure 35*.

Figure 35
Proposed Future Sidewalk System



Source: SARPC (Also in shown in Future Transportation Map and Future Land Use Map)



Street Design

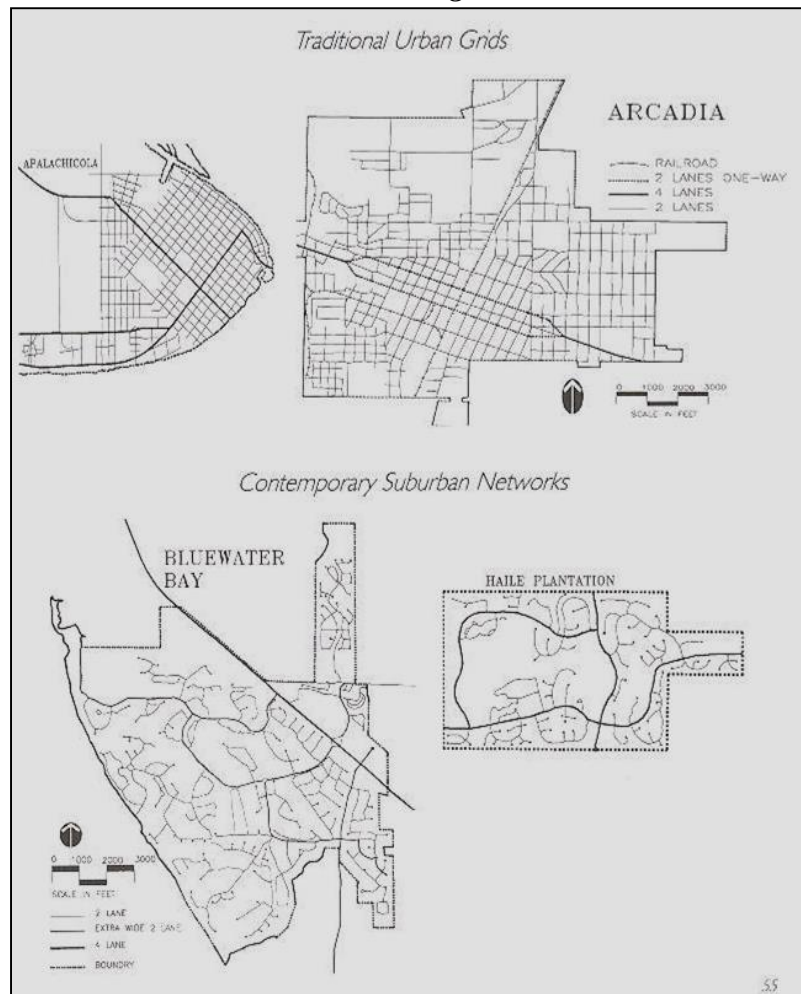
One goal of street design is to keep traffic flowing smoothly. It minimizes the pedestrian’s and traveler’s delay and other adverse impacts of stop-and-go driving. Another goal is for traffic to be slow and steady within the community. Fast, hi-speed traffic detracts from the community’s sense of place.

There are two street design networks that have multiple connections and relatively direct routes: traditional community grid and contemporary sub-community networks. The traditional community grid has short blocks, straight streets, and a crosshatched pattern. Traditional grids disperse traffic rather than focusing it at several intersections within the community. It offers direct routes, which generates fewer vehicle miles of travel (VMT). Traditional grids encourage walking and biking within the community and are more transit-friendly.

Contemporary sub-community networks keep through traffic out of neighborhoods, which keep accident rates down and property values higher. It also discourages crime because it is less accessible. Cul-de-sacs are popular in the contemporary sub-community networks because they are quieter and safer for children, and they encourage interaction between neighbors. Cul-de-sacs are also in premium demand in the real estate market. In addition, curving streets and dead-ends are able to go around or stop short of valuable natural areas within the community, thereby reducing cut-and-fill of the area.

Both network designs have advantages and disadvantages within their designs. Traditional grids have the mobility, but contemporary is safer, more secure and sensitive to the area’s topography. An illustration of both network designs is shown in *Figure 36*.

Figure 36
Street Designs



Source: SARPC



Neighborhood Design

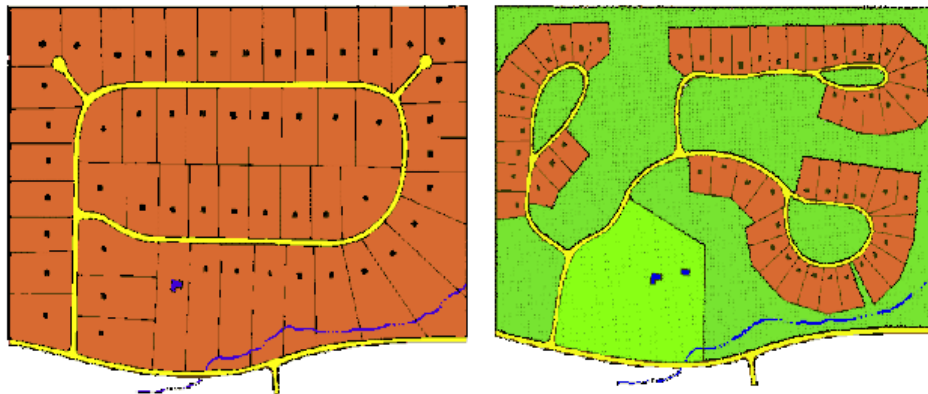
"Clustering," also called "Open Space Development", should be considered as an alternative to large lot "rural sprawl". Rural sprawl consumes open space, privatizes all land, and creates lots that are too small for farming or meaningful habitat protection.

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

Clustering can also save on infrastructure costs by reducing the length of roads and utility lines in new developments. Homes can be placed on variable lot sizes on soils most appropriate for septic tanks and drainage fields. Alternately, water wells and sewage drain fields can be shared, allowing them to be sited in appropriate soils and placed at maximum distances from one another.

Figure 37 illustrates a conventional development pattern, in which uniform-sized large lots (typically 2.5 acres or greater) blanket an entire development site, consuming all the land and destroying the distinctive, natural features that make the site a special place. The small pond at the center is hidden behind private lots, off-limits to most residents. In contrast, a cluster development plan uses a greater variety of lot sizes (generally 1/4 to 1 acre in size) to accommodate the same number of units, while preserving substantial areas as open space. The pond is preserved as an accessible amenity, linked with roadways to a trail. With more connections and linkages between streets, travel distances are shorter throughout the development. The sparse arrangement of homes along the main roads on the perimeter also provide an attractive, unobstructed view of the development's rural surroundings.

Figure 37
Conventional and Cluster Development Patterns



Source: SARPC

A study titled, "An Examination of Market Appreciation for Clustered Housing with Permanent Open Space," by Jeff Lacy, from the Center for Rural Massachusetts, compares conventional and



open space developments in two Massachusetts towns over long periods of time. The study found that the value of homes in open space developments increased at a greater rate over this time than did conventional development.

Utilities

Improved protective coatings for underground wiring, trenching and conduit technologies, combined with lower tree and drainage costs, have made underground utilities a more prevalent practice. Innovative, cost-cutting equipment is currently available to rapidly locate underground interruptions. This lowers maintenance costs. In addition, electric, telephone, and cable television companies can economize an operation by using common trenching. However, the short-term costs of providing aboveground utilities are lower when such facilities are already present.

Aesthetically, underground utilities are superior. The sight of poles along rear lot easements or within street right-of-ways is overall negative. However, it has been argued that pad-mounted equipment for underground utilities is just as unattractive as aerial equipment. In these cases, the design solution is to landscape areas immediately surrounding this equipment to provide screening. Underground utilities, switches and transformers can be cost-effective by reducing vandalism, maintenance costs, and traffic hazards.

Mount Vernon currently recommends that utilities be stored underground through the town's ordinance. The town should also look into more strict policies of requiring these utility cables be stored underground if conditions are adequate.

Visual Clutter

Visual clutter is the unplanned, disorganized arrangements of signs, billboards, utility poles and equipment and street furniture. Visual clutter makes a streetscape unattractive and often unsafe. Unscreened utility pads contribute to visual clutter. Abandoned cars or excessive off street parking can be termed visual clutter as well as community blight. Street elements, which produce visual disharmony or distraction, constitute a form of visual clutter. Billboards can degrade or destroy a community's image. Littering and inappropriate dumping is also obvious visual clutter.

A concentration of visual clutter can be found throughout Mount Vernon, especially along US Highway 43. The town should establish regulations that restrict development of clutter such as billboard restrictions, underground utilities, and establishment of more community litter baskets, just to name a few.



Recommendations

- Establish a gateway committee to research gateway alternatives and designs.
- Develop a new Town Sign Ordinance.
- Develop and implement nontraditional signage that is unique for the town such as themed street signs. Themes could be taken from historical places and events in the town's history.
- Require adequate and aesthetic lighting, especially along busy roads and at neighborhood entrances.
- Develop a Town Landscape Ordinance.
- Amend Subdivision Regulations to require a heritage tree on every lot.
- Establish Arbor Day activities.
- Provide an aesthetically pleasing and walkable sidewalk system to citizens.
- Amend Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to allow for cluster developments.
- Require underground utilities when possible.
- Eliminate visual clutter throughout the community.

“For you to sleep well at night, the aesthetic, the quality, has to be carried all the way through.”

- Steve Jobs



Implementation Schedule

The following is a chronological schedule for the strategic implementation of the recommendations listed throughout the text of this Comprehensive Plan. As recommended in the Introduction of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Mount Vernon Planning Commission, as well as the Town of Mount Vernon City Council, should meet at least once a year to review this schedule and ensure necessary plans are being implemented. Some of these recommendations should be fulfilled throughout the life of this comprehensive plan and are categorized as “ongoing”. This schedule should be used along with the related text as well as with the Funding and Assistance Resource Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan in order to ensure these planning decisions are being executed properly.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>0-3 years</i>	<i>3-6 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>10-20 years</i>
Appeal to steel plant employees as a great community to live and raise a family.	X				
Apply for grants, such as the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), to gain funds to construct newer sidewalks and trails throughout Mount Vernon.	X				
Conserve wetlands and other natural resources in the Mount Vernon Area.	X				
Continue to advertise the Town of Mount Vernon Community Center as a productive asset.	X				
Continue to expand sewage system to both residential and commercial customers.	X				
Continue to improve roads throughout town and expand the system of paved roads throughout Mount Vernon.	X				
Continue to maintain and evaluate a flood and evacuation plan in order to be prepared for severe tropical weather.	X				



<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>0-3 years</i>	<i>3-6 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>10-20 years</i>
Continue to recruit commercial and industrial businesses to the areas vast amount of undeveloped land, primarily along the U.S. Highway 43 corridor.	X				
Eliminate visual clutter throughout the community.	X				
Encourage the use of golf carts and other small motorized vehicles throughout town.	X				
Ensure growth of public safety personnel and equipment in order to serve future spatial growth of the Town of Mount Vernon.	X				
Ensure quality and adequate services to the senior citizens of Mount Vernon	X				
Ensure roads are kept to high quality with lines, reflectors, signage, ect.	X				
Ensure that adequate housing, schools, public utilities and facilities, parks, and commercial businesses are provided to the future citizens of the Town of Mount Vernon.	X				
Ensure that future developments adhere to the spirit of the Future Land Use Plan.	X				
Lobby to federal, state, county and local politicians to push for redevelopment and productive service at former Searcy Hospital site.	X				
Maintain a transportation system that is adequate to the population growth project for the town of Mount Vernon in the adopted years of this plan.	X				
Maintain and improve the town library through tax dollar support and grants.	X				
Promote historical landmarks and sites throughout Mount Vernon, especially the federally historically recognized Searcy Property.	X				
Promote Mount Vernon as a walkable town where pedestrians can travel safely without vehicles to areas of town such as homes, parks, stores and churches.	X				



<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>0-3 years</i>	<i>3-6 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>10-20 years</i>
Promote recreational opportunities as an economic tool for the vast abundance of wetlands in the Mount Vernon Area.	X				
Promote small watercraft such as kayak and canoe transportation as a fun and useful means of recreation throughout Mount Vernon.	X				
Promote the Town of Mount Vernon as an ideal location for commercial and industrial businesses due to the diverse amount of transportation corridors through the town and region.	X				
Provide adequate police and fire protection throughout the life of this comprehensive plan.	X				
Provide adequate water facilities and water supply for both existing and future populations.	X				
Provide an aesthetically pleasing and walkable sidewalk system to citizens.	X				
Recruit businesses such as restaurants, retail and hotels that appeal to large industry employees.	X				
Recruit volunteers for the town's future recreational activities and events.	X				
Refer to this Comprehensive Plan during future developments to determine soil suitability of development.	X				
Replace and improve traffic signage throughout Mount Vernon.	X				
Work with citizens of the community to help in providing opportunities to access employment.	X				
Work with Code Enforcement to increase property values through the demolition or redevelopment of older vacant properties and neighborhoods.	X				
Work with grant administrators to waive impact fee for commercial sewage customers.	X				
Amend Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to allow for cluster developments		X			



<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>0-3 years</i>	<i>3-6 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>10-20 years</i>
Amend Subdivision Regulations to require a heritage tree on every lot.		X			
Amend the Town of Mount Vernon Zoning Ordinance to ensure zoning is compliant with the Future Land Use Plan.		X			
Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow for new high density apartments, condos and/or neighborhoods which would appeal to nearby industrial workers.		X			
Collaborate and work with The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development and Economic Development Association of Alabama to implement progressive future economic plans for the Town of Mount Vernon.		X			
Collaborate with town, county, state and federal representatives to revive and redevelop the site formerly known as Searcy Mental Hospital.		X			
Designate and develop areas for new residential neighborhoods.		X			
Develop a Town Landscape Ordinance.		X			
Develop an evacuation plan.		X			
Establish a committee to focus on grant and funding opportunities for sidewalks and other infrastructure needs.		X			
Establish a committee to oversee the establishment of a town recycling program.		X			
Establish a gateway committee to research gateway alternatives and designs.		X			
Establish Arbor Day activities.		X			
Establish community involvement programs through the town library such as summer reading programs.		X			
Establish community league softball, basketball, baseball, flag football, soccer, ect.		X			
Improve solid waste program to help address littering and dumping issue throughout town.		X			



<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>0-3 years</i>	<i>3-6 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>10-20 years</i>
Institute progressive ordinances to ensure future economic growth.		X			
Redevelop former park sites into productive assets the community can use.		X			
Redevelop the former Searcy property into a productive asset.		X			
Require adequate and aesthetic lighting, especially along busy roads and at neighborhood entrances.		X			
Require rear access driveways for businesses on the east side of Highway 43.		X			
Require underground utilities when possible.		X			
Repair damages to current water storage facilities.			X		
Adopt a housing policy initiative offered through HUD's (Housing and Urban Development) S.M.A.R.T. (Safe, Mixed-income, Accessible, Reasonably-priced, Transit-oriented) program to encourage smart growth and affordable housing throughout the Town of Mount Vernon.			X		
Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow for a variety of housing options with a wide range of sizes and prices, particularly close to schools, churches and recreation to create a more walkable community.			X		
Develop a new Town Sign Ordinance.			X		
Develop and implement nontraditional signage that is unique for the town such as themed street signs. Themes could be taken from historical places and events in the town's history.			X		
Erect traffic signals, especially along U.S. Highway 43, to address the issue of increased vehicular traffic.			X		
Establish a committee to identify future needs for drainage and create a long-range master drainage plan.			X		
Lower speed limits throughout town.			X		



<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>0-3 years</i>	<i>3-6 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>10-20 years</i>
Remove dilapidated housing units throughout town, particularly on the current Searcy property.			X		
Work with Mobile County Consortium Community Development Block Grant Program to demolish, repair or restore deteriorating and dilapidated homes in Mount Vernon.			X		
Designate, obtain and develop land for future park sites.				X	
Develop a regional park and recreational trails.				X	
Establish a Shared/Complete Road Program.				X	
Establish more water access points in order to promote and take advantage of Mount Vernon's access to the Mobile River Delta.				X	
Establish a local high school.					X



Funding and Assistance Resources

The following is a list of resources, both public and private, that are available for assistance, funding and education to the Town of Mount Vernon. However, other resources outside of this list may also provide beneficial services as well. Some of the following resources can be found throughout the text of this Comprehensive Plan. While each of the following resources are addressed to specific areas of the plan, many can be used comprehensively. The Town of Mount Vernon should also establish multiple committees to oversee and pursue these opportunities available to the Town of Mount Vernon. The Town of Mount Vernon should use this appendix along with the Implementation Schedule of this Comprehensive plan for strategic planned implementation. For more information of services provided by these resources please contact the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) or each respective resource provider.

I. Regional, Historical and Environmental Setting

- Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)
- Alabama Forestry Commission
- Alabama Scenic Blue Way Trail
- Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- National Park Service
- National Registry of Historic Places
- State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) / Alabama Historical Commission
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Tree City USA
- U.S. Forest Service

II. Population and Economy

- The University of Alabama's Center for Economic Development (UACED)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)
- Economic Development Partnerships of Alabama (EDPA)



- Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA)

III. Housing

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)
- HOME Grant Programs provided by the Mobile County Consortium
- National Historic Registry of Historic Places
- Single-Family Mortgage Asset Recovery Technology (SMART) Program
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)/ Alabama Historical Commission

IV. Transportation

- Adventure Cycling Association
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
- Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)
- Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (ATRIP)
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Bedsole Foundation
- Federal Highway Department
- Mobile County Consortium
- Mobile MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization)
- TIGER Grants
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

V. Land Use

- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
- Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA)
- Bedsole Foundation
- Main Street Alabama
- Mobile County Commission
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Single-Family Mortgage Asset Recovery Technology (SMART) Program
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- The Arbor Day Foundation



- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

VI. Community Facilities and Services

- ADECA Law Enforcement and Safety Service (LETS) Program
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)
- Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)
- Alabama Forestry Commission
- Alabama Scenic Blue Way Trail
- Alabama State Arts Council
- American Veteran and Vietnam Veteran organizations
- Bedsole Foundation
- Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) offered through ADCNR
- Gulf Coast Resource, Conservation and Development Council (Gulf Coast RC & D)
- Military Surplus Equipment 1033 Program
- Mobile County Commission
- Mobile County Public Library
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- The Daniel Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Tree City USA
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- U.S. Forest Service

VII. Community Design

- Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)
- Alabama Power
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Arbor Day Foundation
- Community Transformation Grant (CTG)
- Gulf Coast Resource, Conservation and Development Council (Gulf Coast RC & D)
- Main Street Alabama
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)



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