



Design
Alabama

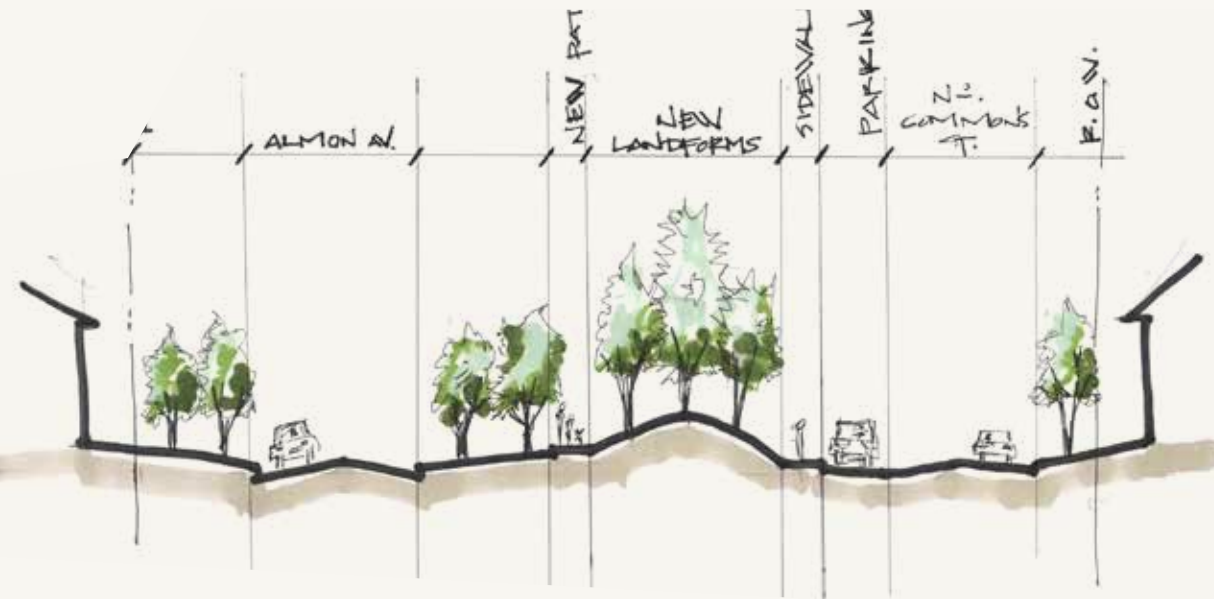
DESIGNPLACE

MUSCLE SHOALS



JUST A WORD

The ideas represented in the following report are those of a design team brought together to work for three days in a charrette process for the City of Muscle Shoals. The ideas found in this report are based on observations of the community, significant public participation and insights the community shared with the team about Muscle Shoals. The process has informed our thoughts about Muscle Shoals, and this report represents our best professional recommendations in how to create and enhance spaces throughout the community. We look forward to seeing all the exciting things that come from our time in Muscle Shoals.



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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2016 DesignAlabama decided to create a program that would allow communities represented at the DesignAlabama Mayors Design Summit with a “next step.” The idea was that mayors who had gained so much knowledge about planning and design during their time at the Summit needed a chance to share that knowledge with their community. The idea of the program is not to create a new place, but to enhance a community based on the assets of their community. Community assets include the built environment, the natural environment and most importantly, a community's people.

Through a three-day charrette process, DesignAlabama brings in a team of design experts with experience in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, graphic design, interior design and planning.

Perhaps the greatest benefit is the stimulation and mobilization of the public. Citizen participation is absolutely critical to the success of DesignPlace or any local design and planning initiative. A DesignPlace visit is not an end; rather, a new beginning. A second and equally important benefit is the objectivity which a team of “outsiders”



brings to a community. Professional consultants are free to carefully examine strengths and weaknesses with “fresh eyes” untainted by political ambition or economic self-interest. Further, for both design and non-design professionals on the team, professional skills are sharpened. And for all participants, appreciation is deepened through citizen participation in the design and planning process. Finally, DesignPlace is invaluable for illustrating the value of community design and planning in Alabama. It stimulates awareness of design issues and dramatizes the impact design can have upon a community’s vitality and the quality of life within its boundaries.



II. WHO IS MUSCLE SHOALS?

Located in the eastern portion of Colbert County, Muscle Shoals is part of the region known as “The Shoals,” along with the cities of Sheffield, Tuscumbia, and Florence. The city of Muscle Shoals is approximately 30 miles south of Tennessee and approximately 20 miles east of Mississippi. Muscle Shoals also touches the banks of the Tennessee River, which is the source for much of the rich history of Muscle Shoals.

Indians first inhabited the lands bordered by the Tennessee River that we call the Shoals area today. No one knows when the name Muscle Shoals was first used for this area, however, there are many theories of where the name originated.

In 1918, a year after the United States entered World War I, the building of Wilson Dam began. The United States needed nitrates for ammunition and explosives, prompting President Woodrow Wilson to approve the building of 2 nitrate plants and a dam to supply needed electricity for the



plants. At its peak, the building of Wilson Dam employed more than 18,000 workers, including some from what is now Muscle Shoals. The actual construction for nitrates began in the Muscle Shoals plant in February of 1918, and the first nitrates were produced in November of 1918. Since the war ended two weeks earlier on November 11, 1918, there was controversy over what to do with the uncompleted Wilson Dam which was named after President Woodrow Wilson.

In 1921, automotive tycoon Henry Ford, accompanied by Thomas Edison, came to Muscle Shoals with a vision of transforming this area into a metropolis. "I will employ one million workers at Muscle Shoals, and I will build a city 75 miles long at Muscle Shoals," stated Mr. Ford.

Mr. Ford offered to buy Wilson Dam for \$5 million but was turned down by Congress. Instead, Congress, under the influence of Senator George Norris of Nebraska, later formed the Tennessee Valley Authority to develop the dam as well as the entire river valley. Although Ford's plans did not turn Muscle Shoals into a huge city, it did lay the foundation for the city of Muscle Shoals.

On March 7th, 1923, a petition was presented to the Probate Judge of Colbert County to incorporate the town of Muscle Shoals. The incorporation of the "Town of Muscle Shoals" was made official on April 24, 1923. After the incorporation of Muscle Shoals, the town began to grow.

In the 1960's, Rick Hall, a legend in the music industry, risked locating a major industry of another kind in the city of Muscle Shoals. This industry, Fame Recording Studio, made Muscle Shoals known as "The Hit Recording Capital of the World." Famous bands and singers, including Aretha Franklin, the Osmond's, Mac Davis, and Duane Allman, came to Muscle Shoals to record hit songs at Fame.

Muscle Shoals is a city of southern hospitality that not only has an exciting history, but a promising future.



III. HOW DID WE GET HERE?

In 2022, Mayor Mike Lockhart attended the Philip A. Morris Mayors Design Summit. Mayor Lockhart attended the summit looking for design ideas that would help Muscle Shoals create a clear, overarching identity and design for their community that would help them their small-town character, while embracing the rapid growth coming to their community. Suggestions offered to Mayor Lockhart at the Mayors Summit are included in the box to the right, which are also some of the items examined and discussed later in this report. The consistency of these issues demonstrates a commitment by this community in creating goals and continuing to work towards them, no matter the long-term time commitment.



- Quality of life -people coming to and from your community just for that
- Greenspaces needed
- Seaside Village-low density development example
- What does mixed use really look like for your community?
- How can 133 become more pedestrian despite the vehicular traffic, curb and cutter, complete streets-travel lane width, driving development, can an 80-year-old and an 8-year-old both use it?
- Effect the drivers by what they see visually
- Street design will say a lot about your values
- Traffic calming- the people who would be most affected should be part of the discussion
- Psychology to pedestrian and driver
- Crepe Myrtles vs. large canopy trees important to know what goes where
- “money does grow on trees”
- Greenville, SC
- Tree ordinance-rely on your peers
- Developers want to know your rules, make them clear and concise
- Mount Laurel in Shelby county -overlay to the vehicular pattern
- Combining heavy flood into public space-if you are building a retention pond, don't just work with an engineer, also hire a landscape architect
- Land trust
- Conservation Neighborhood
- Many of these ideas are not new
- Retention Pond- make it not be in an eye sore – how do we make it look better? Raise the water level, move the banks out and landscape, aerator (that looks like the fountain), say you will take on the maintenance
- Huntsville example with ALDOT-Michelle Jordan
- Am I ok with my population's commute taking just a little longer, if it's safer/nicer congestion isn't always a bad thing
- Greenspace -parking- where do guests park- Hampstead in Montgomery
- Diversity of housing
- Walkability
- Housing typology
- For Woodward-lighting, curb similar tactics we discussed for 78 in Irondale, code
- If you design for cars, you get more cars, but if you design for people, you get more people
- Inside right of way management-start with ALDOT
- Zoning overlay

A. REDEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD SOUTHGATE MALL

Muscle Shoals is a community that needs a town center. A frequent community comment was a desire for a stronger identity and place to gather. In addition, the community and local leadership identified varied retail opportunities and a hotel as important components of their economic development strategy.

Southgate Mall is currently an underutilized building that anchors one corner of a major intersection that includes the nationally recognized FAME studios. The main building is largely vacant except for a major retailer and few smaller retailers. Several adjacent parcels are occupied by fast-food and fast-casual restaurants as well as a gas station, drug store, and gym. A major retailer sits immediately adjacent to the building. Three of the city's largest revenue contributors are part of this site.

The Southgate Mall site is an opportunity for a large parcel redevelopment project that could become that desired town center that

allows city residents to celebrate and enjoy their hometown. Improved urban design will also provide different building footprints that diversify business opportunities and increase city revenue. This conceptual design includes several components that support community gathering and economic development opportunities for Muscle Shoals.



Current Conditions

Central Green Space - This area provides a space for large gatherings, events, and passive recreation. It acts as an informal town center that softens the hard surfaces found throughout Muscle Shoals. The design also invites visitors to linger and be in a place where they have no other agenda than spending time with other community members. It includes an open-air pavilion and connection to a row of small-scale retailers anchored by an entertainment use such as a brewery.

Open Space - Sidewalks and smaller green spaces have been included to encourage walking and create a unique identity for this development. Walkability is encouraged by connections to neighboring home districts and providing natural shade for increased outdoor comfort.

Singing River Trail - This design incorporates the regional Singing River Trail into the street design to create a direct connection to the users of that network. It provides additional pedestrian connectivity to more of Muscle Shoals and increases the foot traffic that appeals to retailers and restaurants. In addition, long distance trails such as this one has been proven to attract new tourists and create opportunities for new businesses such as running, biking, and other outdoor recreation tenants.



Proposed Updates

Retail - All three major retailers are retained on site in either their current locations or in improved buildings. Additional retail space is provided in a variety of formats to provide opportunities for local entrepreneurs or mid-scale retailers that align with a pedestrian scaled environment.

FAME Studios - The connectivity to FAME Studios is improved with a green space that includes a walking and biking connection at the intersection. This connection allows FAME to be a destination for

visitors to the proposed hotel and takes advantage of the proposed FAME Studio Corner and music history museum.

Hotel - Hotel developers prefer locations that provide them with an attractive tourism destination, adjacent eating establishments, and entertainment activities. This design includes a hotel positioned in the middle of all the activity.

B. STEENSON HOLLOW

SteenSON Hollow is an unique residential neighborhood located next to the Tennessee River in the northern area of Muscle Shoals. The neighborhood contains an existing city park and a privately held marina, providing access to the river along River Road. Steenson Hollow is an existing neighborhood with multiple infill and development opportunities. The future Singing River Trail is planned along River Road, providing additional connection for the Steenson Hollow neighborhood to the region and downtown Muscle Shoals. The development diagram and the conceptual development plan, provide a vision of the assets and the potential pattern of trails, homes and new commercial activities that could be developed in the neighborhood. The goal of any new development is to fit into the natural and existing development pattern of Steenson Hollow.

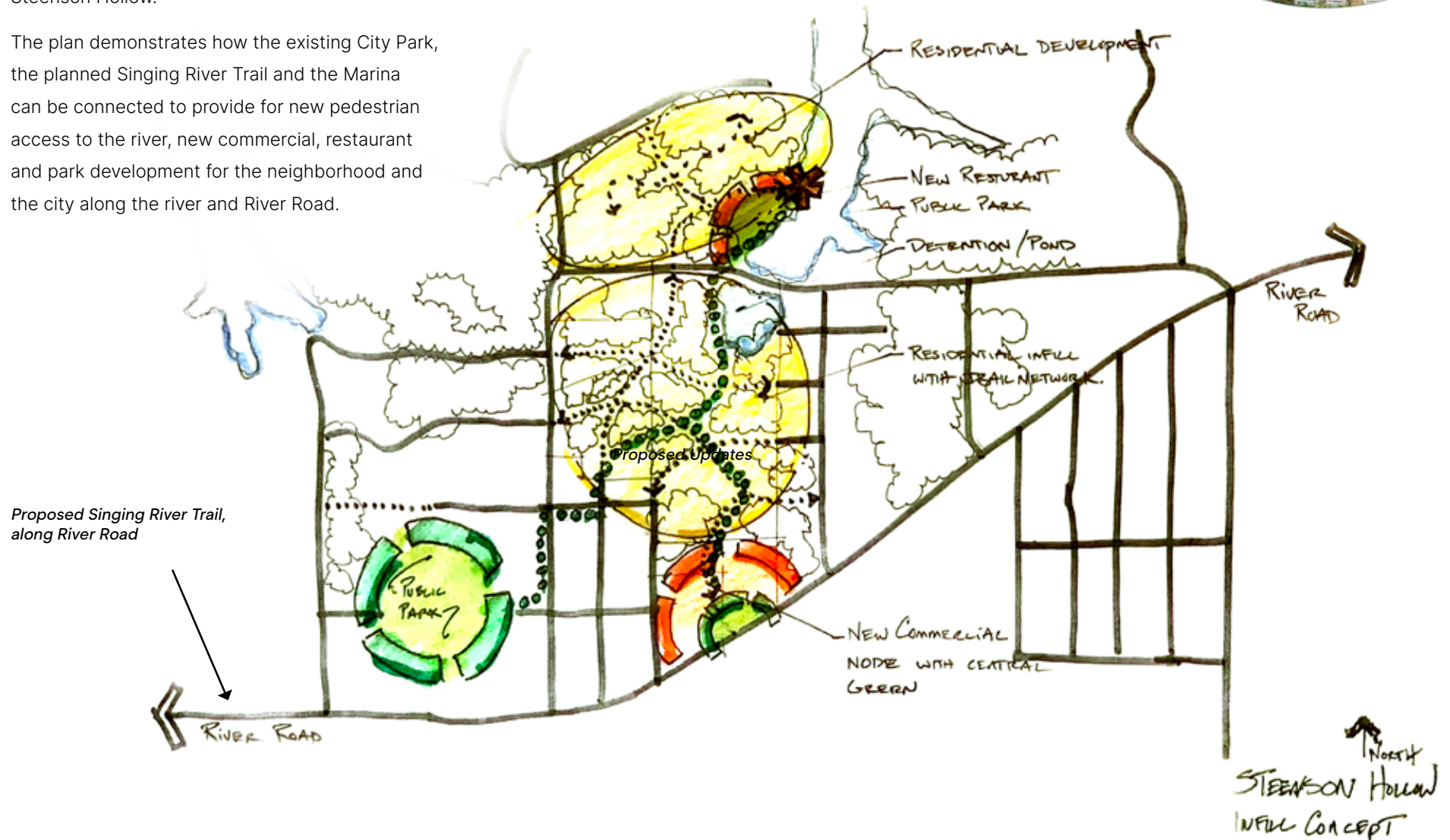


Current Conditions



The concept plan demonstrates how new commercial and new residential development can provide different housing typologies from cottages, townhomes and traditional single-family developments to fit into the context of Steenson Hollow.

The plan demonstrates how the existing City Park, the planned Singing River Trail and the Marina can be connected to provide for new pedestrian access to the river, new commercial, restaurant and park development for the neighborhood and the city along the river and River Road.



Proposed Mixed Use Infill Housing



C. CREATION OF WORKFORCE HOUSING AROUND INDUSTRIAL PARK

The design team conceptualized a potential development pattern that created a new pond and storm water facility, public park and a potential new housing development. The concept plan provided a visual for how the land uses can be positioned with one another. The two key land uses, the residential housing development and the pond feature should be designed with both their needs and design requirements in mind. In addition, continued work with the potential housing developer to determine the overall site boundary, product type and how the units may sit on the land adjacent to the pond design. The park space can be a designed feature that connects the residential uses and the storm water facility, and a public private partnership can be developed to take advantage of the cities expertise and needs along with the development opportunities.



RESIDENTIAL INFILL IDEAS

- Residential infill projects should offer a choice of different housing types and sizes (e.g., single-family detached, duplexes, townhouses, cottages, etc.) Subdivisions may be designed for fee-simple sale of individual homes or townhouses, or for rental.
- In higher-density developments, consider using alleys to serve garages, trash pickup, and even mail delivery to keep the street frontages clean and inviting. Provide shared street parking for guests and deliveries.
- Continue street networks and connectivity with existing surrounding development.
- Provide connections to parks, open space, and trail systems where possible.



Stormwater basin ideas

- Detention ponds are designed to be dry, except for about 2 or 3 days following a storm event. Retention ponds are designed to hold some water all the time. Both allow water to percolate into the ground.
- Riprap/stone forebays will allow sediment and waterborne solids to settle out of flows before entering the main pond.
- Aerator jets will help clarify the water and control algae blooms. These can be a simple, subtle bubbler that just moves the surface. Generally, these are sized for the surface area of the pond.
- Discourage (better still, ban) the use of fertilizers and other chemicals for maintenance of home lawns and gardens, especially within close proximity to a pond. Keeping nutrients out of the stormwater system will reduce algae blooms.
- Check inlet and outlet structures regularly, especially after a major storm. Remove overgrowth, leaves, sticks, trash, etc. Look for signs of erosion. Remove sediment accumulations.
- Use native shrubs, trees, and wildflowers that tolerate extreme wet and dry conditions to landscape around ponds. A variety of plantings will contribute to year-round interest as the seasons change. Native plantings will provide food and habitat for local wildlife.





Trees:

- Winterberry – *Ilex verticillata*
- Overcup oak – *Quercus lyrata*
- Bald cypress – *Taxodium distichum*
- American plum – *Prunus americana*

Shrubs:

- Dwarf wax myrtle – *Morella cerifera* ‘Tom’s Dwarf’
- Virginia sweetspire – *Itea virginica* ‘Henry’s Garnet’ or ‘Little Henry’
- Inkberry – *Ilex glabra*
- American beautyberry – *Callicarpa americana*
- Bushy St. John’s-wort – *Hypericum densiflorum* ‘Creel’s Gold’

Perennials:

- Orange coneflower – *Rudbeckia fulgida* ‘Goldsturm’
- Stokes’ aster – *Stokesia laevis*
- Swamp sunflower – *Helianthus angustifolius*
- Blazing star – *Liatris spicata*
- Butterfly weed – *Asclepias tuberosa*

Grasses:

- Pink muhly grass – *Muhlenbergia capillaris*
- Little bluestem – *Schizachyrium scoparium*
- Purple love grass – *Eragrostis spectabilis*

This is not an exhaustive list – there are many more options.

Wildflower mixes will provide cover quickly. Species that thrive in the various microclimates of each pond area will find their ecological niche and establish themselves into plant communities. Wildflowers are self-seeding and will replace themselves with the change of seasons.

Create and maintain walking paths around ponds, connected to neighborhoods.

Providing native plant cover will create habitat for a variety of wildlife, including rodents and snakes. This provides a proper home for these animals and allows them to occupy their place in the ecosystem.

Mow/maintain a border between paths and wildflower areas to create a sense that the area is cared for and to promote a sense of safety for users. Avoid mowing wildflowers areas more than once a year, preferably in late fall after the first frost.



D. CITY HALL ACTIVATION

Avalon Avenue is home to Muscle Shoals' main civic core, which includes the schools, several churches, the public library, City Hall, and the post office. Residents expressed a need to create a gathering space. The large open expanse behind the existing amphitheater stage lends itself to several uses – not just gathering to listen to music, but for other events like art shows or farmers' markets.

The plan we developed includes new office buildings that could be occupied during the week, and in a convenient location to other civic uses. Eventually, should city services expand, some of these new buildings could serve as annexes to City Hall. The additional parking provided could support event visitors. One or two sections of the parking could be closed off to accommodate food trucks.



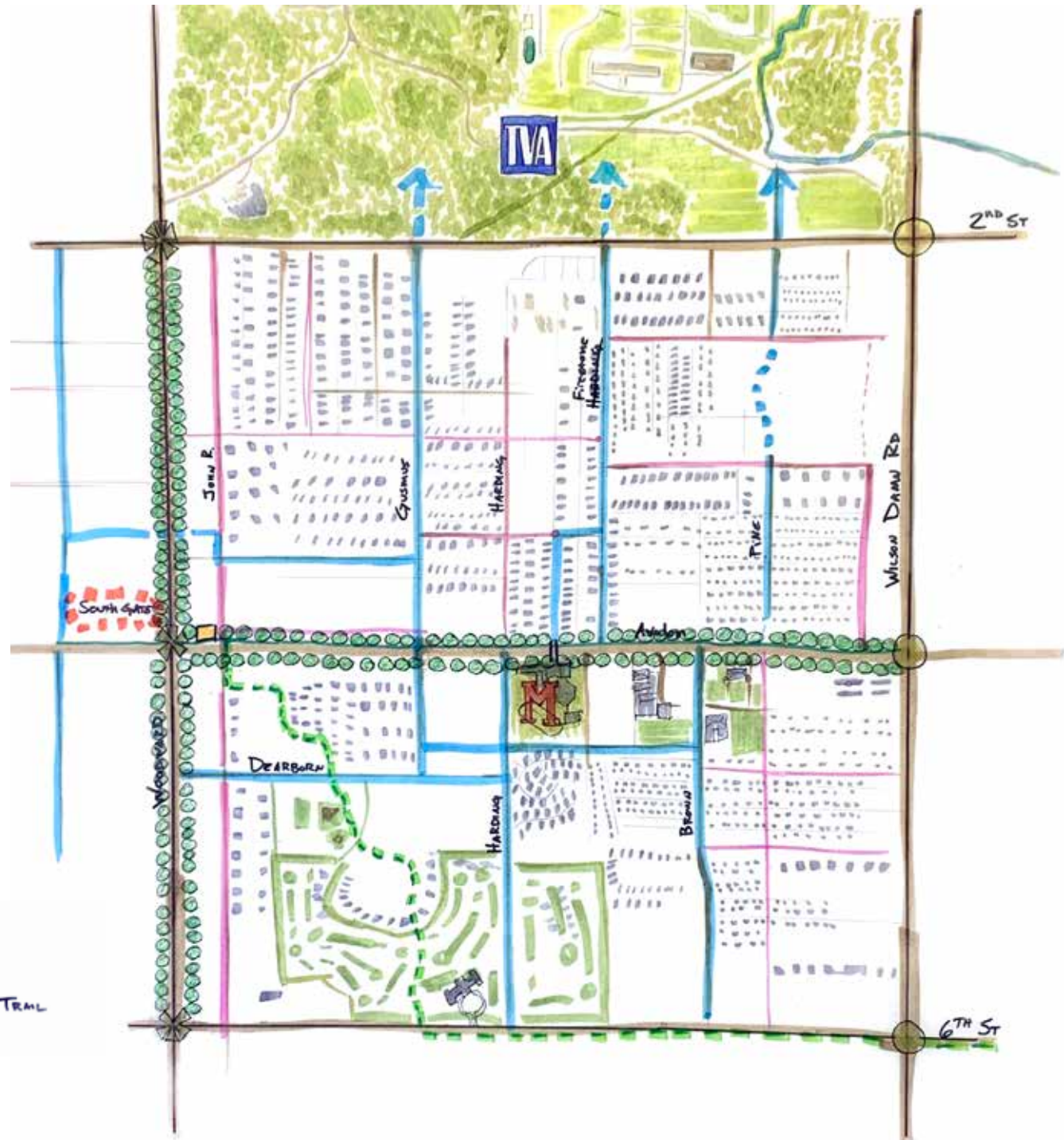
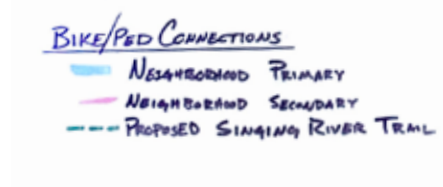
Proposed Updates



Current Conditions

E. CONNECTIVITY AND WALKABILITY

“The Cube”; known as the area bound by Woodward, 2nd Street, Wilson Dam, and 6th Street creates a major opportunity in the City. At the center lies the schools, City Hall and other institutional land uses surrounding this area is almost completely residential. The City should set a goal that every student inside “The Cube” have a safe path to walk or bike to school. This goal will help guide design decisions on sidewalks and paths in the neighborhoods. Improving the ability to walk and bike to school can have many positive impacts including improving the pickup/drop off traffic. Additionally, by improving walkability in the neighborhoods it will encourage more people to be outside which can improve a sense of community for residents, make the neighborhood safer, and increase home values.





Neighborhood Shared



Neighborhood Primary



Neighborhood Secondary

Walking and Biking should be prioritized along neighborhood streets.

Priority Streets have been identified to designate routes for walking and biking that is accommodated by a high level of “comfort” facility. This is represented by a 10-12 separated multiuse path. Existing ROW allows for the room to install without creating a need for property acquisitions.

Secondary streets allow for additional priorities to implement sidewalks and traffic calming to accommodate bike/ped activity safely within the existing street envelope.

The North Side of **The Cube** borders the TVA property. The City should make efforts to make bike/ped connections to the existing and future trail networks.

The proposed Singing River Trail is programmed to route through the southern side of The Cube.

Connections and accommodations to the implement the Singing River Trail should be prioritized to create broader connectivity to N. Alabama trails and outside destinations.

- **John R Street** should serve as a transition line to step down from the commercial land uses along Woodward to the residential neighborhoods to the east. Land use along this street could include small scale multi-family residential uses such as small apartment buildings, townhomes and duplexes to support the transition.



Avalon Avenue Existing

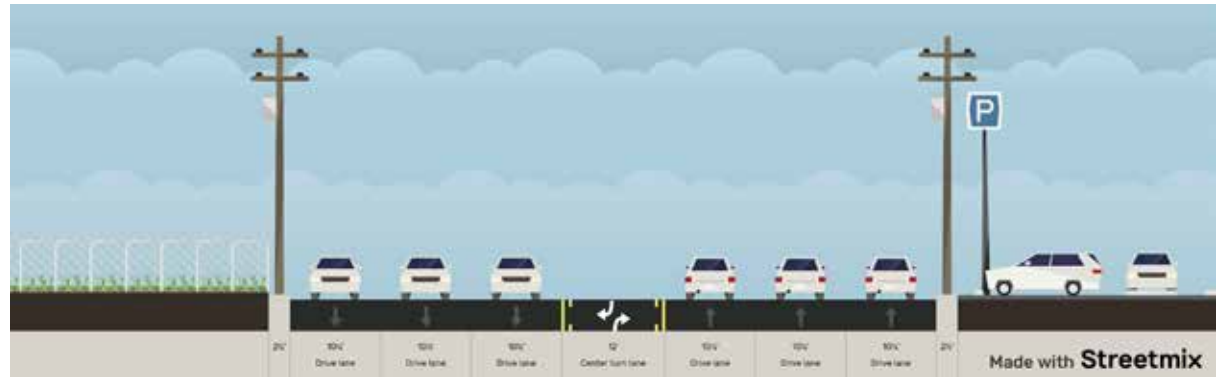
- **Avalon Avenue** serves as the core street within Muscle Shoals. There are future opportunities for it to serve as Muscle Shoals version of a Main St. While it will never be a historic downtown like the neighboring communities, it has the potential to connect the community in a more complete method offering opportunities for connection and placemaking. It will join City Hall and the Schools on the eastern end with a future redevelopment at the current South Gate Mall site. In order to provide these opportunities it is recommended



Avalon Avenue Proposed

that Avalon Avenue be transformed by reducing the cross-section from the existing 5-lane roadway to a 3-lane roadway with a separated multi-use path along one side. Narrowing the travel lane will allow for safer pedestrian crossings connecting the neighborhoods on the north and south sides.

- **Woodward Avenue**, also known as US Highway 72, is major arterial roadway with extensive commercial frontages. The current cross-section consists of 7 lanes made up of 3 - 10: travel lanes in each direction with a center turn-lane. Combined with the unmitigated number of access driveways and even 90-degree parking directly from the travel lane, the roadway does not comply with current design guidelines for a safe and efficient US Highway.



Woodward Avenue Existing

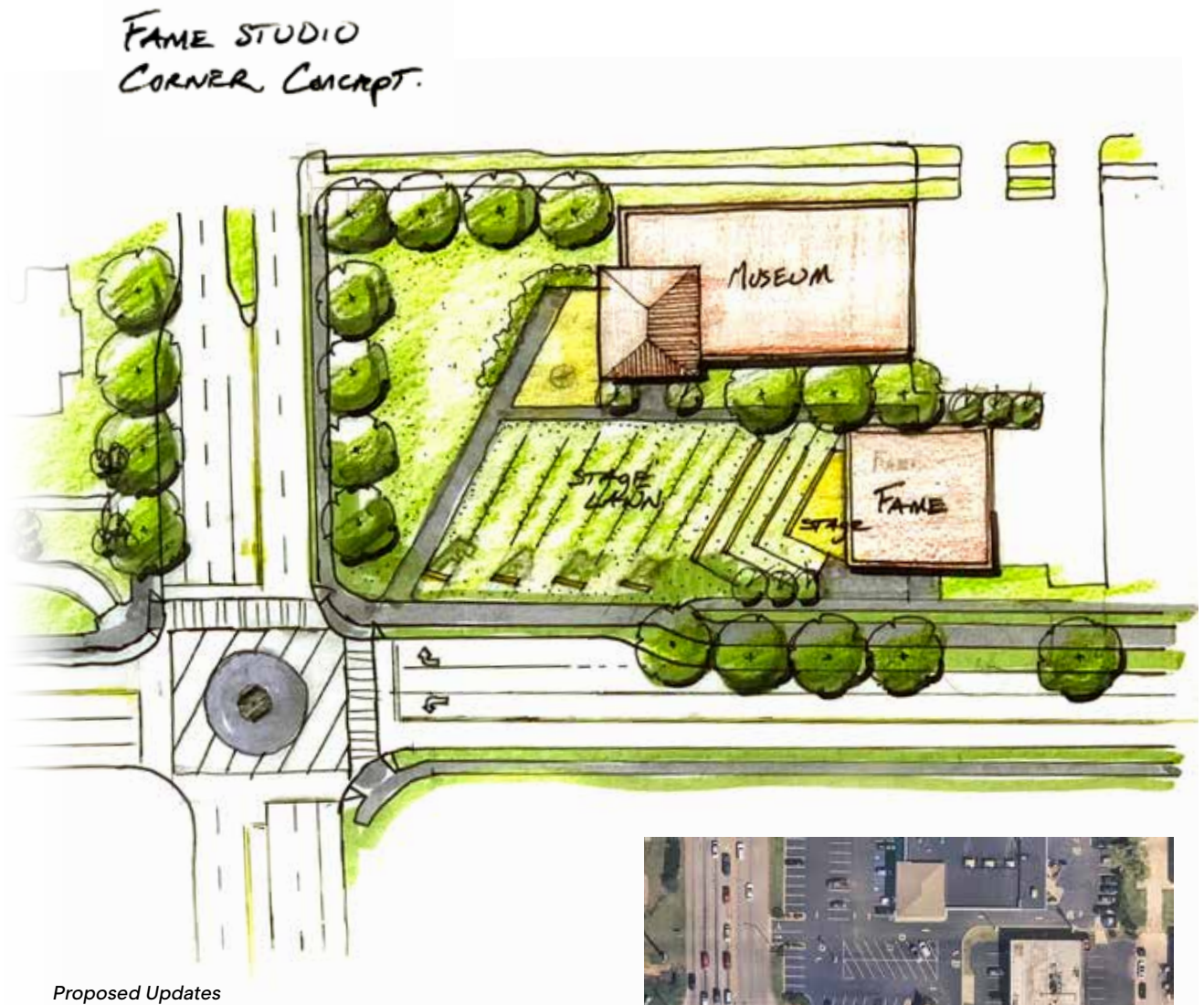


Woodward Avenue Proposed

It is strongly recommended that a partnership be formed with the North Region of ALDOT to study the roadway to develop a safer configuration. One potential is to reduce the laneage to 2 travel lanes in each direction with a median that includes proper left turn lanes. With the reduction of the outside lanes, driveways can be reduced and combined, sidewalks added, and right turn lanes installed at intersections. ALDOT traffic count data shows a fairly flat traffic growth with an approximate AADT below 25,000 vehicles per day. These volumes can be accommodated by at 4-lane median divided roadway without a major impact to existing flow.

F. FAME STUDIO VISIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

Fame Studios is one of the premier businesses, cultural institutions, and landmarks in the City of Muscle Shoals. The design team explored options to celebrate and provide residents, Fame Studios and tourists new ways to interact with the studio and meet the City's goals for beautification and pedestrian connections along Avalon Avenue. Connecting Fame Studio to the proposed Singing River Trail along Avalon and across the street to a proposed new design of Southgate Mall, creates opportunities to reclaim existing parking and commercial uses. It also provides a new people-oriented space to Fame Studios and a proposed new music history museum. The concept demonstrates how new spaces for lawns, crosswalk and trail connections, pedestrian plazas, signage and branding opportunities and a small amphitheater can provide new spaces for a variety of activities to support, encourage and celebrate Fame Studios.



V. BRANDING

Brand Narrative

WHERE RHYTHM LIVES

A City of Harmony

The City of Muscle Shoals has long welcomed and engaged newcomers, emerging as a cultural and economic hub in northwest Alabama. We are a community that celebrates family and faith and reaches outward in service to others. In many ways, our legacy centers on harmony. People here recognize the unifying power of potential, and work hard to develop it.

Connections for Living

It's easy to find your way in Muscle Shoals. The layout of the city keeps most everything central, with a quick commute—enhancing our already-strong sense of connectedness. It's surrounded by beauty and abundant in natural resources. The future of our human resources is in good hands, with schools among the best in the area.

Locals and visitors alike appreciate the safety and relaxed atmosphere the city actively promotes. And here, a higher quality of life is made possible in part by a lower cost of living.

Working Together

Just as it's a rewarding place to live, it's also a great place to work. Municipal leadership is supportive and responsive to the needs of business owners. Support is likewise shown by a loyal customer base with plenty of disposable income.

In this emerging market, industrious businesspeople continually look for ways to invest in, and collaborate with, their eager business neighbors. Opportunity is always welcome in Muscle Shoals.

A Vision for Growth

The future of the area is purposeful, planned, and bright. Our community is positioned for intentional growth. To make it happen, the City's active, focused, and forward-thinking leadership keeps internal communication open.

Our burgeoning population will have diverse housing choices, yet will stay connected to their neighbors thanks to walkable, connected communities. People will thrive in an environment where living, learning, working, and playing all have their proper place, in the beautiful City of Muscle Shoals.









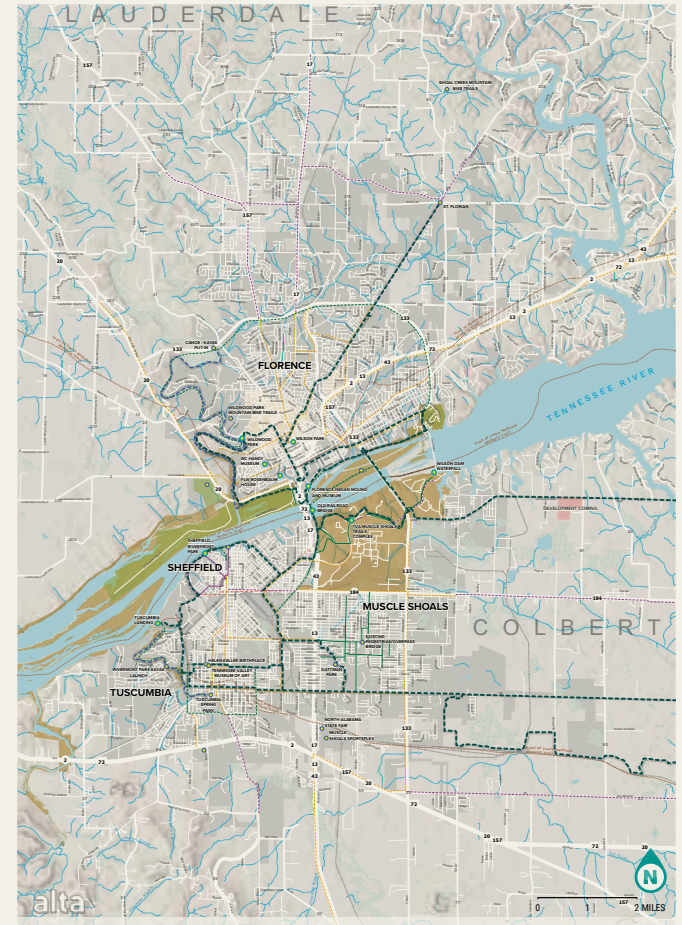
VI. NEXT STEPS

The City of Muscle Shoals is currently experiencing strong forward momentum with leadership, community involvement and development. The city is experiencing a surge of opportunities that are directly related to the level of activity, participation, and excitement from the community. As the city continues to plan and hold community events, city leadership should take advantage of these opportunities to continue to engage, refine ideas and begin to implement desired projects.

The design team experienced this level of community involvement and identified potential projects throughout the city for Muscle Shoals to continue to explore and refine. The first task is to continue to engage the community with the city's Comprehensive Plan process. This overall city-wide planning document can help the city to prioritize values, assets and needs. This work can help the city to explore the design opportunities that Design Alabama discovered.

Connectivity to the Singing River Trail

The design team discovered multiple ways to interact and invest in the city's development opportunities through alignment with the Singing River Trail. Currently the Singing River Trail moves through and interconnects the city of Muscle Shoals and the region. Identifying key nodes of activities and points of access can help leverage trail funding and activities to support local real estate developments for the community. Along the projected trail route, the design team found multiple places for new potential development opportunities including a new park and detention site along 6th Street, a river and marina connection along River Road, Creating a dedicated trail alignment through Muscle Shoals' main street, and new commercial redevelopment opportunities at the existing Southgate Mall.



The design team identified potential goals and outcomes for the district. The city should use their current comprehensive plan and process to document these desired goals and strategies. New specific codes and policies can be developed for identifying and adopting goals to help the city and future developments meet the community's vision. The city should share these ideas and build relationships with key owners, stakeholders and partners such as ALDOT and the Singing River Trail organization. Partnerships with institutions such as ALDOT can help the city ensure new projects and capital improvements are in line with the community's vision.

As seen in the graphic, the design team provides a conceptual vision that connects the existing Marina, River Road and an existing city park, with new infill development opportunities and new commercial development/ restaurant and parking area at the marina. As the City continues with its comprehensive plan and the development of the Singing River Trail, immediate next steps are to engage the Marina property owners and surrounding stakeholders to identify potential public/private partnerships and development opportunities.

Southgate Mall

For Southgate Mall, the city should continue to document its engagement with the ownership team and the property management team, and to ensure any code issues are being shared with everyone. As the mall becomes more and more vacant ownership may look for City leadership on a new potential vision. The city should share the conceptual vision with the ownership group to engage their interest in the potential project. The city can begin to develop potential partnership tools such as gathering support from local businesses and future potential tenants who wish to locate in the new development, along with creating specific overlay standards to ensure all design and programed spaces meet the community's vision.

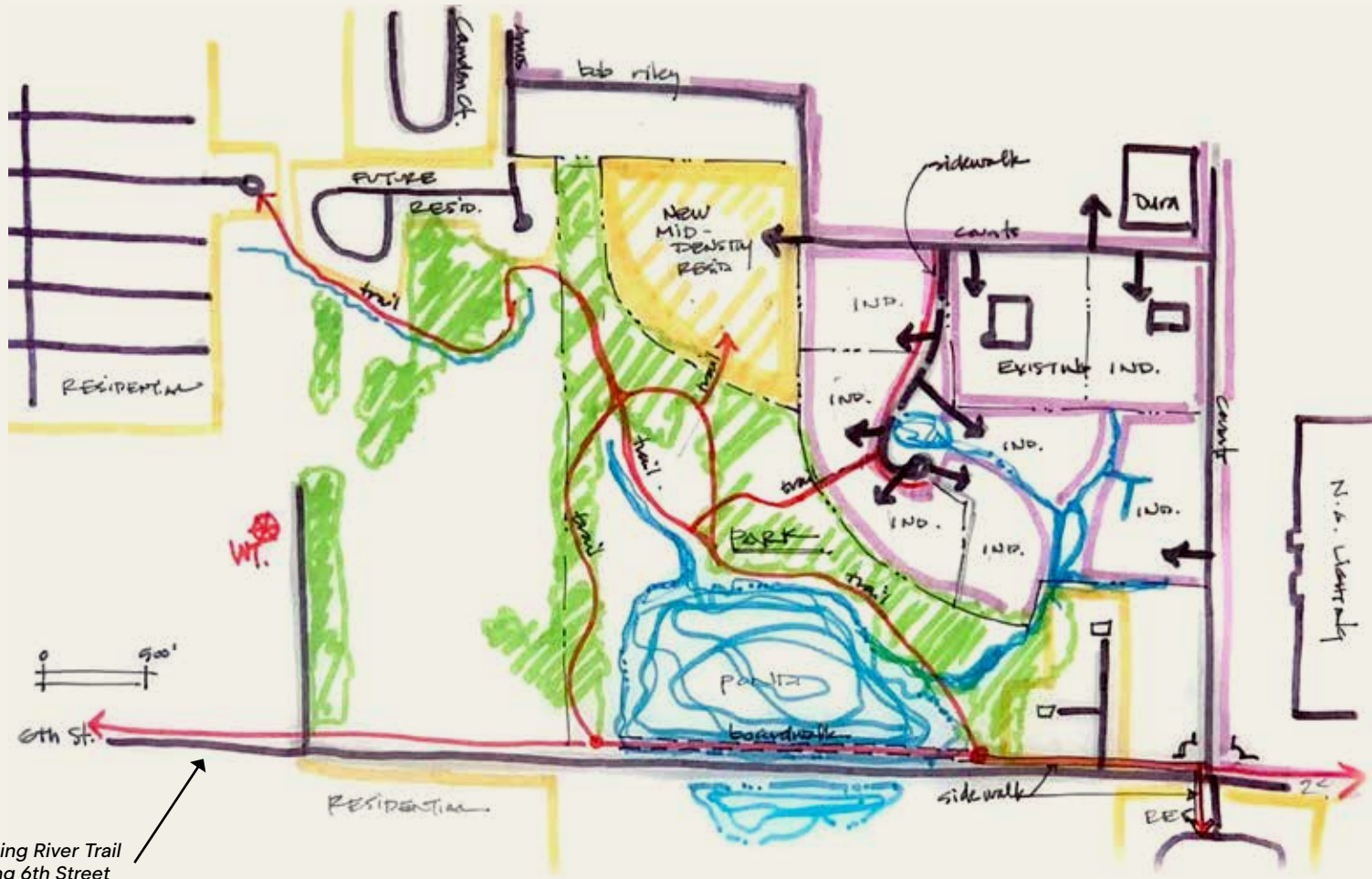


6th Street Park, Pond and Housing

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housing development and the pond feature should be designed with both their needs and design requirements in mind. In addition, continued work with the potential housing developer to determine the overall site boundary, product type and how the units may sit on the land adjacent to the

pond design. The park space can be a designed feature that connects the residential uses and the storm water facility, and a public private partnership can be developed to take advantage of the cities expertise and needs along with the development opportunities.



Proposed Singing River Trail
Alignment along 6th Street

VII. RESOURCES

The city has strong partnerships throughout the region and should continue to leverage these relationships as they identify potential projects to explore funding tools and grant needs. These tools can be used to create catalytic development projects, assist development opportunities, and create public/private partnerships to help projects succeed.

1. Relationships: One of the most important tools that Muscle Shoals has are its existing relationships with partners and programs. The city can help developers identify project needs and their gaps and can connect them to resources that may identify potential business operators and entrepreneurs who are seeking physical locations. The city can introduce development partners to legal and financial service providers who are familiar with local market needs and help define legal and financial terms for projects.

2. Regulatory tools: The next set of tools that are available to the city are its ability to set visions, identify needs and enact standards for the performance and design of projects. The city can create forums for public engagement that allow the community to set visions, plans and priorities for their needs. The city can then develop performance and design standards for projects to ensure they meet the community's and market's

needs. The city can use comprehensive plans, master plans, neighborhood plans, downtown plans, overlay districts, design standards and zoning and land use ordinances to set minimum standards and aspirational goals.

3. Corporations – The State of Alabama Charter provides an additional set of tools that cities may use. The different tools listed below can provide a city with a comprehensive set of economic development options for the acquisition, assemblage, disposition, redevelopment, loans and grants to spur public and private developments. The tools listed below will each require specific findings, a plan and an entity or group responsible. The plans created may be used by multiple groups to help guide decisions.

- a. Urban Renewal District
- b. Downtown Redevelopment Authority
- c. Commercial Development Authority
- d. Tax Increment Financing District
- e. Amendment 772



4. Sponsor activities – There are multiple organizations that can help communities, non-profits and developers to accomplish their defined goals and needs for the city. These projects can range from community gardens and workshops to capital projects and new construction activities. Below is a list of several statewide organizations that have grant and funding opportunities that may meet different project goals.

- a. Alabama Department of Transportation – State and Federal grants to help infrastructure and capital projects.
- b. Alabama League of Municipalities – Grants and workshops for City projects and leadership.
- c. Alabama State Council of the Arts- Series of planning, design and construction grants for organizations and projects.
- d. Alabama Association of Regional Councils – Regional planning, transportation and economic expertise to help cities. Each council has a variety of tools and grants that may be engaged.
- e. University of Alabama Center for Economic Development and Auburn University Government and Economic Development Institute – Specific development programs, grants and expertise to help cities and projects navigate their development needs.

f. Your Town Alabama – Organization for leadership and community planning workshop for city's leadership and community members to participate in.

g. Design Alabama – Series of programs and workshops for cities including the Mayors Summit, Design Vision and Design Place, which allow cities additional education and design opportunities for their communities.

h. Main Street Alabama – A downtown engagement organization to help promote preserve, program and incentivize downtown economic development activities.

i. Alabama Association of Resource Conservation and Development Council -RC&D is a unique process that helps people protect and develop their economic, natural, and social resources in ways that improve their area's economy, environment, and quality of life, providing grants and funding to specific projects and organizations.

5. Federal Grants and Tools – Municipal tools to utilize federal funding sources to help projects and organizations. The city has a role to play in Home Funds and Housing Authorities to help partner and empower their work. These partnerships are critical as organizations and developers seek out Choice Neighborhood Grants, Low Income Housing Tax Credits and Alabama Housing Finance Authority Grants. In

addition, cities can access ADECA and their programs and tools including federal Community Development Block Grants. Additionally, the State of Alabama allows for cities to apply to be Certified Local Governments with the State Historic Agency to help offset costs for the establishment of Historic Districts and properties.

a. ADECA – Statewide organizations that access state and federal funding along with national organizations such as the Appalachian Regional Commission to provide project funding and grants for specific needs.

b. Home Funds – Federal Housing Requirements, Alabama Housing Finance Authority & Local Housing Authorities

c. Community Development Block Grants – Variety of loan and grant opportunities from redevelopment costs on blighted structures, equipment loans to entrepreneurial business and façade rebate programs for building owners.



VIII. TEAM



BEN WIESEMAN

(Facilitator)

Ben Wiese is the founder of Place Associates, a multi-disciplinary firm with expertise in Planning, Landscape Architecture and Real Estate Development. Ben has a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture from the University of Kentucky, and a master's degree in Real Estate Development from Auburn University and is a graduate of the Leadership Birmingham program. Ben Currently holds licenses and professional credentials as a Registered Landscape Architect in the State of Alabama, and as an American Institute of Certified Planners, with the American Planning Association. Ben has assembled, designed, managed, leased and envisioned buildings, projects and development deals; providing economic and real estate development services to municipalities, organizations and developers around the southeast.

Ben serves on multiple boards and agencies throughout the state. He is a member of the City of Hoover's Planning Commission, a member of Design Review Board for the City of Birmingham, the Vice President of Your Town Alabama, and

is a board member and facilitator for Design Alabama. In addition, Ben has been an adjunct faculty member for Auburn University over the past 15 years teaching both undergraduate design classes and graduate classes for the Master of Real Estate Development program and he continues to facilitate planning and designs sessions for a variety of clients and stakeholders such as Your Town Alabama, YLF of Birmingham and other non-profits and municipalities.

Ben's Economic Development, Planning, Landscape and Facilitation work has years of projects and clients focused on: Comprehensive Planning, Downtown Master Planning, Downtown Economic Development Strategies, Neighborhood Land Planning, Land Use and Redevelopment Plans, Campus planning, Parks and Trails, Playgrounds, Streetscapes, Urban Plazas, Project landscaping, Wayfinding and branding, Organizational Facilitation, Small Town Charrettes, Design Place and Mayor's Summit events, Your Town Alabama Workshop, Youth Leadership Forum, Development Project analysis, assemblage, proforma, and scheduling, Development Project Management, recruitment, leasing and sales.



CLARK BAILEY

Clark has 15 years of professional experience leading teams to solve complex transportation problems to improve communities, connect people, and communicate new ideas. He has worked throughout the state of Alabama and across the southeast on projects developing transportation plans, traffic studies, complete streets designs, traffic signals, parking studies and transit projects. Clark graduated with a bachelor's and master's from Auburn University and helps lead the Birmingham office of Kimley-Horn and Associates. He serves on the board of the Alabama Chapter of ITE and chairs the transportation committee for the Alabama chapter of ULI. Clark lives in Homewood, AL with his wife Katherine and four boys.





MATT LEAVELL

Matt Leavell is a project developer with experience in economic development, real estate, architecture, urban design, planning, sustainable tourism, and facilitation. He's

applied design thinking strategies across a wide variety of projects throughout Alabama including the Regional Ecotourism Plan for Coastal Alabama and the Gulf State Park Enhancement Project, a \$143

million effort to redevelop Gulf State Park into an international benchmark for economic and environmental sustainability that demonstrates best practices for outdoor recreation, education, and hospitality. This six-year multi-stakeholder project included a 350-room hotel, an Interpretive Center seeking Living Building certification, a Learning Campus, dune restoration, and a 28-mile trail network. He is one of the primary authors for the 2022 Alabama State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, a founding member of

the Cahaba Blueway, and the board chair for Your Town Alabama, a leadership workshop dedicated to inspiring and educating leaders about the ability of design and planning to assist them in improving their communities.



JANE REED ROSS

Jane Reed Ross has been practicing Landscape Architecture for over 35 years, with experience throughout the southeast

as well as in the Washington D.C. metro and Queensland, Australia. Jane has led projects in the direction of sustainable design in award winning civic spaces like Homewood Central Park, Homewood Shades Creek Greenway and Birmingham Children's Zoo. Combining quality design with environmentally holistic solutions,

she has worked on projects that have a sense of place and presence based on an ethic of function, art and the client's needs and budget. Jane has worked with GMC for over 10 years as lead landscape designer on placemaking projects such as Red Rock Trail Master Plan, Jefferson County; Rotary Trail, Birmingham; Lane Parke Mixed Use Development in Mountain Brook, Pepper Place 2nd Avenue Streetscape in Birmingham, Birmingham Zoo Entrance Plaza and Event Lawn and numerous trail projects and campus work including projects at Auburn University, UAB and UNA. nonsumus, fatus, opublic menatri ocapere





ANGELA STIFF

Angela Stiff is the Managing Partner and Creative Director of Copperwing Design, located in Montgomery, Alabama. Angela succeeded

in growing Copperwing into one of Alabama's leading communications firms during the first decade of the company's existence. She founded the firm with brand management as its cornerstone, recognizing its critical role in creating breakthrough communications with long-term relevance. She continues to lead with the same out-front thinking as she sets the vision for the firm. She has successfully led branding initiatives

for clients with regional and national reach. Her creative work has been recognized with numerous industry awards. Angela is a proud graduate of Auburn University, where she earned a BFA in visual communications.

Angela is a member of the Auburn University College of Architecture, Design and Construction Executive Board. She serves as member and Communications Co-chair to the DesignAlabama Board of Directors. She has served as past member of the Summerdale University College of Communication and Fine Arts Advisory Council. She has also served as past board member to AGAPE for Children, for whom she still advocates.



STEPHEN SCHRADER

Stephen W. Schrader, Jr., PLA, ASLA, began his career with a summer internship in the office of New Orleans landscape architect René J.

L. Fransen. A year later, Schrader returned to New Orleans and spent the next five years creating high-end outdoor living spaces in New Orleans and across the Gulf Coast.

After Hurricane Katrina, Schrader settled in Birmingham, where at Holcombe Norton Partners

he completed a variety of projects, including more than 12 LEED-certified institutional projects. In early 2019, he joined Renta Urban Land Design (RULD) with offices in Birmingham, Huntsville and Cullman. Schrader holds a bachelor of architecture from Auburn University and is a CLARB Certified landscape architect with active registrations in Louisiana and Alabama.

He is the ASLA Alabama chapter trustee and has served in several roles on the chapter executive committee, including president. In 2019, the Alabama Chapter of ASLA presented Schrader with its Chapter Service Award.

Alabama Clean Water Partnership

Allison Jenkins // 205-266-6285
cleanwaterpartnership.org

Alabama Communities of Excellence

Mary Jackson // mjackson@almonline.org
alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org

ADECA

Kenneth Boswell, Director // 334-242-5370
adeca.alabama.gov

**Alabama Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources**

334-242-3486

Alabama Forestry Commission

Dale Dickens // 334-240-9300
forestry.alabama.gov

Alabama Historical Commission

334-242-3184 // preserveala.org

Alabama League of Municipalities

almonline.com

Alabama State Council on the Arts

Jacqueline Viskup // 334-242-4076
arts.state.al.us

Alabama Travel Council

334-271-0050

Alabama Tourism Department

334-242-4169 // tourism.alabama.gov

Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

205-943-4700 // edpa.org

**University of Alabama Center for Economic
Development, The University of Alabama**

Nisa Miranda // 205-348-7058
uaced.ua.edu

MainStreet Alabama

Mary Helmer Wirth // 205-910-8819
mainstreetalabama.org

National Endowment for the Arts

arts.gov

Opportunity Alabama

opportunityalabama.com

USDA Rural Development

334-279-3400 // rurdev.usda.gov/al

Housing and Urban Development

Denise Cleveland-Leggett, Regional Administrator
205-731-2617
www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/
communitydevelopment/programs/stateadmin

Your Town Alabama

www.yourtownalabama.org

Additional Federal Resources:

www.reconnectingamerica.org
Downtown Revitalization - www.nal.usda.gov
www.nal.usda.gov/ric/guide-to-funding-resources
Rural Development Grants – www.rd.usda.gov
EPA Smart Growth Grants – www.epa.gov
(Smart Growth in Small Towns and
Rural Communities)
https://projectrowhouses.org/
https://monstrum.dk/en



Design
Alabama

Our mission is to
advocate for the
collaboration of the
design arts and their
importance in creating
and enhancing place
in Alabama.