

City of

Bay Minette

Progress

Through

Unity



Comprehensive Plan

2030

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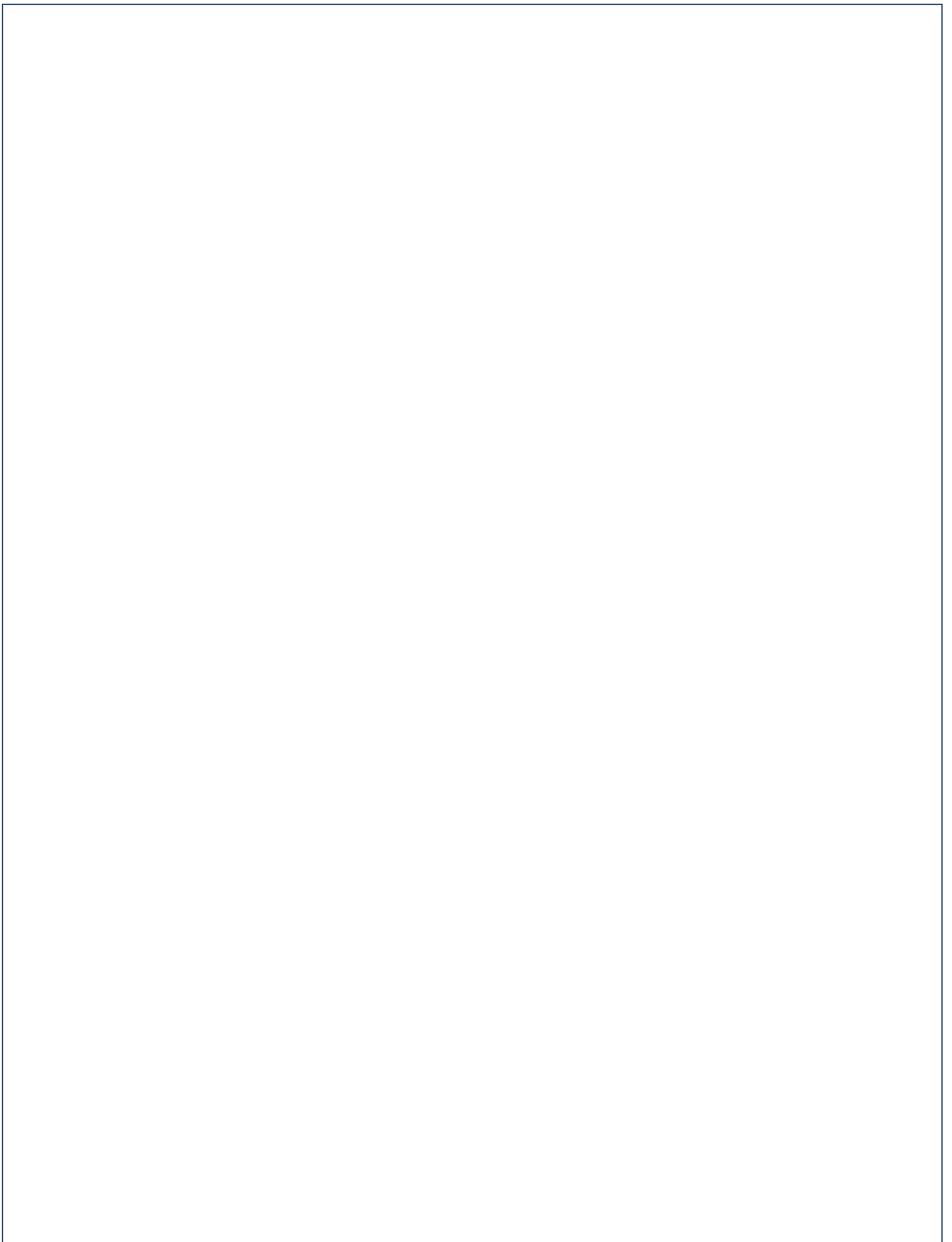
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Introduction

The City of Bay Minette, Alabama is a thriving community unique for its small town charm and southern hospitality. Situated in the north portion of coastal Baldwin County, Bay Minette is the gateway community to Alabama’s coastal beaches with an estimated 4.7 million tourists visiting Alabama’s beaches in 2007 and spending more than \$2.3 billion in travel related expenditures. Bay Minette is the county seat of Baldwin County and is the location of many county government buildings and operations. Bay Minette is rich in history and developed around its agricultural assets, timberland, and convenient location to the railroad and Gulf of Mexico for its transportation of goods.

It is estimated that the population of Bay Minette grew by 6.68% between 2000 and 2009 and its location in one of the top three growing counties in the state ensures this rapid growth trend will continue. Baldwin County is projected to experience a 62% population increase by the year 2030. Bay Minette can expect to be the center of a lot of this growth as it boasts a prime location between Interstate 65 and Interstate 10 and serves as the center of Baldwin County’s governmental operations.



Figure 1.1: Downtown Bay Minette

The City of Bay Minette is located 20 miles from Mobile Bay and 30 miles from Downtown Mobile. Mobile’s economy has continued to experience success even during these hard economic times and new industries and businesses continue to locate in the Mobile region. Bay Minette is only 51 miles from the City of Pensacola, Florida, which is also an economically successful metropolitan area due to the Naval Air Station and multiple air force bases. As many people move to this area to fill these employment opportunities, it is anticipated that Baldwin county, and communities like Bay Minette, will acquire some of this incoming population. This will impact transportation networks, school systems, public services, residential and commercial development in Baldwin County and the City of Bay Minette.



Figure 1.2: Downtown Bay Minette and the Baldwin County Courthouse

With all of these great community assets and development opportunities currently available to Bay Minette, the community can be confident that a prosperous future full of growth and development is on the horizon. With this anticipated growth, community leaders have identified the need to update the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Bay Minette and coordinated this effort with the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission and with funds

from the Coastal Zone Management Program through the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division. This Plan reflects the desired future growth and development of the City of Bay Minette as identified by the residents of the community through public workshops. It also identifies strategies and implementation schedules to achieve the desired goals of the community while supporting the projected future growth and development.



Figure 1.3: Downtown Bay Minette and the Bay Minette Public Library

Scope and Purpose

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that functions as the long-range plan for future growth and development. It identifies the goals, objectives, and strategies of the community, determined by its residents and property owners. The Plan serves to guide the City's growth and development over the next fifteen to twenty years, by addressing the multitude of issues facing the City, ranging from land use to economic development to housing and beyond. By setting goals and objectives, City officials can use the document to make policies that effectively provide a coordinated approach for future growth.

Though adopted by the City Planning Commission, the Plan is intended to provide guidance for future legal and policy decisions as determined by City Council and through analysis of existing and predicted conditions. The Plan also serves as the statutory basis for many of the City's land use and subdivision regulations as well as the application of zoning districts, as zoning and future land use must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan assesses Bay Minette's municipal limits and the surrounding planning area. The proposed planning period is approximately 20 years, or until 2030. The Plan contains ten chapters, each with two components: an inventory of the current conditions and a list of proposed recommendations and strategies to achieve desired community goals.



Figure 1.4: Downtown Bay Minette

The chapters of the Comprehensive Plan include Population & Economy, Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Community Facilities and Services, Parks and Recreation, Downtown and Historic Resources, Natural Resources, and Community Design. The Plan also forecasts growth trends within each of these elements and recommends strategies to accommodate the projected growth.

During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community

participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion

Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette’s future growth and development.

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community’s input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis from planners at the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, to achieve the identified goals of the community. The recommendations and strategies proposed in each chapter establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the proposed recommendations and strategies, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer to obtaining their vision for prosperous growth and development for the City of Bay Minette.



Figure 1.5: Highway 59, Bay Minette.

Challenges of Growth

Growth brings with it increasing demands for land, infrastructure, and services. More people means more houses, streets, utilities, schools, and social services such as police and fire protection. Growth’s demands for land are heightened by dispersed patterns of development in fringe areas, which offer larger lots but result in segregated neighborhoods that lack pedestrian connectivity to schools and commercial needs. Sprawled growth strains a City’s financial ability to provide services to these areas and often creates stressed transportation corridors.

An important challenge facing the City of Bay Minette is to determine how to effectively and equitably accommodate growth and development without adversely affecting the small town, rural character of the community. To aid in accomplishing this, development should be not only more compact and contiguous the closer to the center of the City, but it should also maximize the use of existing infrastructure and resources through redevelopment of the existing community whenever possible. This will help preserve the larger tracts of agricultural land that have been part of the City’s history and are associated with Bay Minette’s beauty.

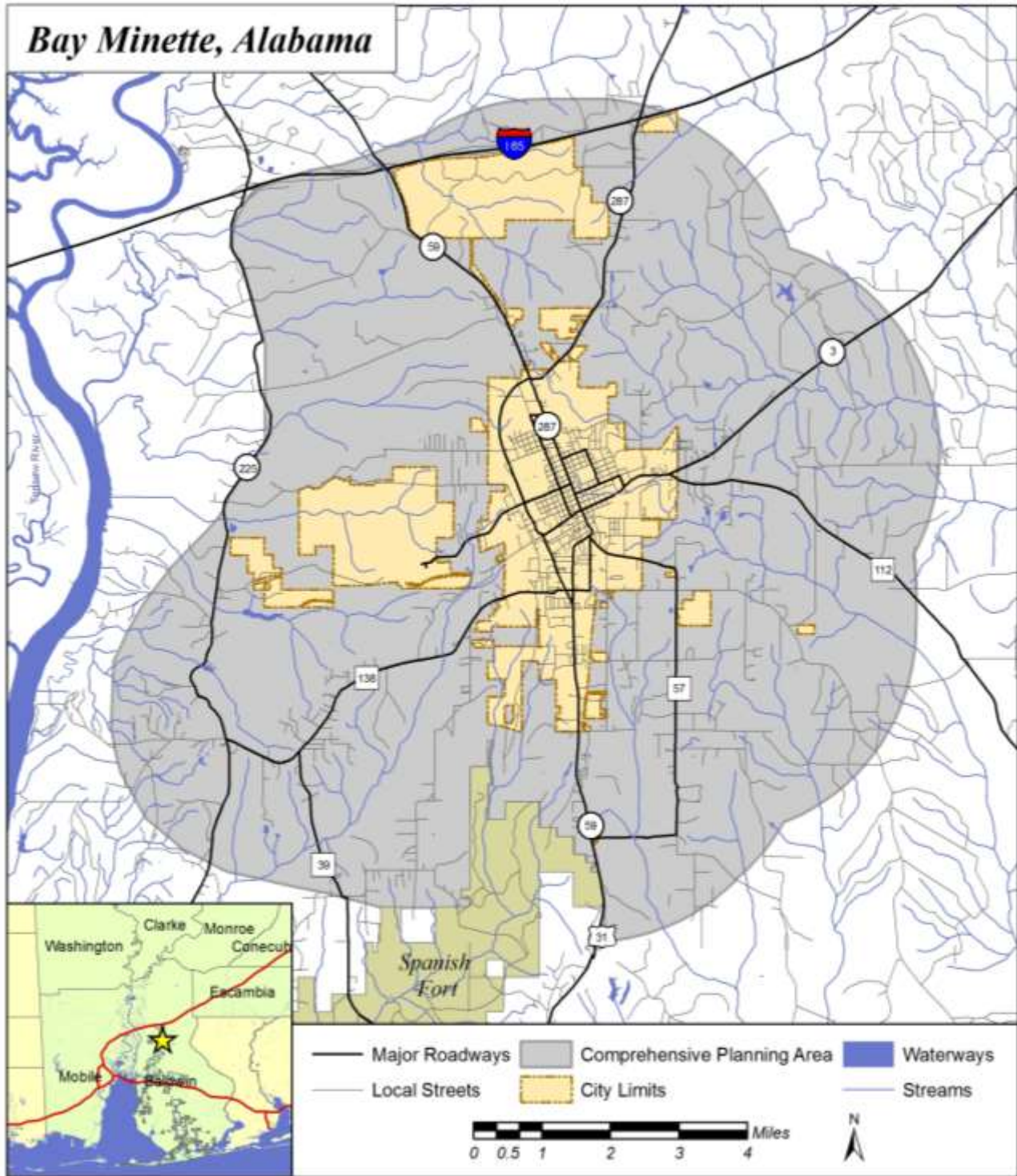


Figure 1.6: Residential street, Bay Minette

Regional Setting

The City of Bay Minette is located in the northern portion of coastal Baldwin County, in the southeastern most part of the State. *Map 1.1* illustrates Bay Minette’s location in the state and its location in reference to adjacent municipalities, counties, and the Gulf Coast. *Map 1.1* also shows the municipal limits of the City of Bay Minette and the planning area.

Map 1.1: The City of Bay Minette



Source: South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC)

The City has developed along the Alabama Highway 59 corridor, which runs through downtown Bay Minette and is a major north/south corridor through Baldwin County. Highway 59 also serves as the main transportation link between Interstate 65 and the City of Gulf Shores and the City of Orange Beach, which are popular tourist destinations.

Highway 31 intersects Highway 59 on the downtown square and connects Bay Minette with adjacent Escambia County, AL, Brewton, and Florida. *Table 1.1* illustrates Bay Minette’s convenient location to adjacent communities and other points of interest.

Bay Minette’s History

The original township of Bay Minette was located about 12 miles southwest of the present corporate limits, near an estuary on the Eastern Shore which was named in honor of the French surveyor, Henri Minet, who mapped Baldwin County in the 1700’s. It was then known as Minet Bay. With the construction of the railroad through north Baldwin County, the settlement shifted in population and name to its present location. This move was actually brought about by the postmaster who moved his office and the town name to the new site in north central Baldwin County. Settlements in the area continued during the pre-Civil War days and by 1881, the town was a thriving community.

Table 1.1: Distance to Regional Points of Interest	
City/Interest	Distance (Miles)
Interstate 65	0 (North Boundary)
Spanish Fort	17
Interstate 10	17
Loxley	17
Escambia County	18
Gulf Shores	47
Brewton	48
Florida State Line	32
Mobile	30
Pensacola	51
New Orleans	172
Birmingham	230
<i>Source: SARPC</i>	



Source: University of South Alabama

Figure 1.7: Baldwin County Courthouse in Bay Minette, circa 1920

In 1868, the Baldwin County Commission selected Daphne as the county seat since it was located in the center of the county’s populous Eastern Shore area. Bay Minette’s bid for the county seat had enough political backing to be approved by the State Legislature in 1896 and by ruling of the State Supreme Court in 1901. When Daphne still refused to give up the designation, a midnight raid was organized by J.D. Hand in which the townspeople invaded Daphne and took the county records and furniture to Bay Minette. Hand also raised the money necessary to build the first courthouse in Bay Minette. Bay Minette was incorporated in 1907, six years after it became the county seat. A newer courthouse was built in 1955, which is the present

day structure. The City continued to develop in all directions around the courthouse square as the center of community activity. Baldwin County and Bay Minette continued to grow and prosper over the next 50 years with increased business and industry locating in the region and increased tourism to the County's beaches, resort communities, and vacation destinations. Bay Minette's small town character, proximity to the coast, and designation as the county seat has made it attractive for residential growth. Bay Minette's 45 minute commute to the Mobile Metropolitan Area has also contributed to its residential growth.

By 2000, Bay Minette's population had reached 7,820 and it is estimated to have exceeded 8,342 in 2009. This steady 6.68% increase is mirrored throughout Baldwin County, which is currently the second fastest growing county in Alabama. In 2007, the City of Bay Minette celebrated its 100th anniversary and continues to experience an abundance of prosperity and success.

Population and Economy

Mobile and Baldwin Counties have been fortunate to see sustained population and economic growth for many decades, even when the rest of the nation has fallen on hard times. The region is still seeing new industries locate here as well as the expansion of existing industries. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes how Bay Minette’s population and economy has changed over the past several decades and forecasts population estimates and economic strategies for desired growth for the next 20 years. Proposed strategies and recommendations are outlined at the end of the Chapter that will guide future activities and aid in measuring progress over the life of this Comprehensive Plan.

Goal

Create an atmosphere that will foster educational attainment to attract new industries and encourage the retention and expansion of existing industries.

Objective

Preserve the quality of life established to ensure that Bay Minette remains an attractive residential community and promote sound commercial development.

Population Analysis

Growth Trends

The population of Bay Minette has continued to increase over the past 30 years with a total growth of 1,093 individuals from 1970 to 2000. This is a 16.25% increase. See Table 2.1. However, the population slightly decreased between 1980 and 1990 by 287 individuals. The City regained this population loss by 2000 in addition to 78 more people. The population of Baldwin County grew by 81,033 individuals between 1970 and 2000. This is a 136% increase. 43% of this growth occurred between 1990 and 2000.

Table 2.1: City of Bay Minette and Baldwin County Population Change 1970- 2000.	Decennial Census Total Population				Population Increase	Percent Change
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970-2000	1970-2000
City of Bay Minette	6,727	7,455	7,168	7,820	1,093	16.25%
Baldwin County	59,382	78,556	98,280	140,415	81,033	136%
Bay Minette As % of County	11.3	9.49	7.29	5.57	-	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to annual estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the City of Bay Minette and Baldwin County has continued to increase since the 2000 Census. *See Table 2.2.* Some of the annual population estimates over the past nine years were projected to decrease, however the overall estimated change in population was a 6.68% increase from 2000. The estimated 2000-2009 population change in Bay Minette ranged between -1.12 and 5.04 with the average (mean) annual population increase of 0.68%. The population estimates from the last two years, 2008 and 2009, exhibited higher annual increases and averaged a 3.98% increase between the two. Therefore, older population estimates project a more conservative annual growth while recent population projections anticipate a more moderate growth for Bay Minette. In Baldwin County, the annual population increase ranged between 2 and 4 percent, with the average (mean) percent increase in population being 2%.

	City of Bay Minette	Population Change	Percent Change	Baldwin County	Population Increase	Percent Change	City as % of Co.
Census 2000	7,820	-	-	140,415	-	-	5.7
July 2000	7,857	37	0.47	141,364	949	0.70	5.6
July 2001	7,816	-41	-0.52	144,960	3596	2.54	5.4
July 2002	7,820	5	0.05	148,071	3111	2.15	5.3
July 2003	7,854	34	0.43	151,574	3503	2.37	5.2
July 2004	7,823	-31	-0.35	156,368	4794	3.16	5.0
July 2005	7,810	-13	-0.17	162,261	5893	3.77	4.8
July 2006	7,721	-89	-1.14	168,233	5972	3.68	4.6
July 2007	7,717	-4	-0.05	171,769	3536	2.10	4.5
July 2008	8,106	389	5.04	176,212	4,443	2.59	4.6
July 2009	8,342	236	2.91	179,878	3,666	2.08	4.6
2000-2009 Increase	-	522	6.68%	-	31,354	22.33%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The Alabama Advantage, an information resource developed by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, is also a credible source for community demographic information. *Table 2.3* illustrates population estimates from the Alabama Advantage for Bay Minette and Baldwin County. The 2009 population estimates for Bay Minette and Baldwin County are less than that of the U.S. Census Bureau and predict a population decrease for Bay Minette between 2000 and 2009.

Year	Bay Minette	Baldwin County
1990	7,168	98,280
2000	7,820	140,415
2009	7,588	178,293

Source: Alabama Advantage

Gender and Age Distribution

According to the 2000 Census, there are 112 more females in Bay Minette than males. *Figure 2.1* illustrates the gender ratio for the City. Males represented 3,854 or 49.3% of Bay Minette’s total population and females represented 3,966 or 50.7% of the City’s population.

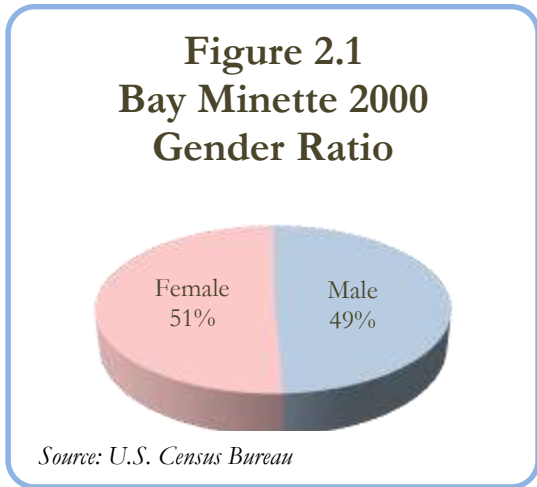
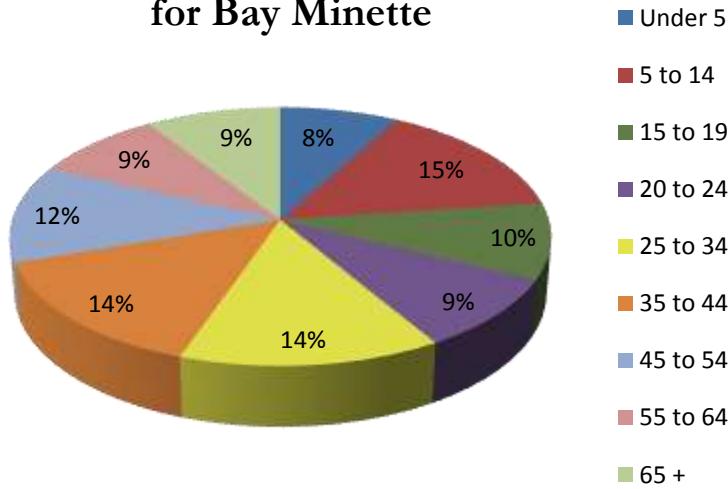


Table 2.4 and Figure 2.2 illustrate the 2000 age distribution characteristics of Bay Minette and Baldwin County. The median age of the residents is 33.4, compared to 39.0 for Baldwin County and 35.8 years for the State. 7.6% of the population is under the age of five. 22.9% of the population is school age, ranging between 5 and 19. Young adults within the age group 20-24 (typical college age) comprise 8.6% of the population. The work force population, ranging in age from 25 to 54, makes up 38.2% of the population. The group entering into retirement, ages 55-64, represents 8.4% of the population. The retired population, ages 65 and up, comprises 14.3% of the population.

Table 2.4 Age Distribution of Population Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Bay Minette		Baldwin County	Alabama
	2000 Census	2000 % of Total Population	2000 % of Total Population	2000 % of Total Population
Under 5	593	7.6	6.1	6.7
5 to 9	531	6.8	6.8	7.1
10 to 14	563	7.2	7.2	7.2
15 to 19	700	8.9	6.7	7.3
20 to 24	671	8.6	5.1	6.9
25 to 34	1022	13.1	12.1	13.6
35 to 44	1067	13.6	15.6	15.4
45 to 54	898	11.5	14.0	13.5
55 to 59	356	4.6	5.9	5.1
60 to 64	295	3.8	5.1	4.3
65 to 74	534	6.8	8.8	7.1
75 to 84	445	5.7	5.1	4.4
85 +	145	1.8	1.5	1.5
Median Age	33.4	-	39.0	35.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Figure 2.2
2000 Age Distribution
for Bay Minette**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Analysis of age distribution of populations is important to determine which community services will be needed in the future. The age profile for the City of Bay Minette indicates a younger population base in comparison to that of the County and State. When comparing Bay Minette's 2000 population composition to Baldwin County and Alabama, age groups under the age of 34 represent a greater portion of the population when compared to the County or State's percent of total population. Therefore, the City's need for adequate school systems and affordable

housing for first time home buyers to accommodate this population is evident. Approximately 55.5% of the population is between the ages of 20-64. This group is generally considered the most economically productive age group. Age groups 35 and older make up less of the total population for Bay Minette when compared to the County and State. The only exception to this is individuals 75 years and older, which comprise more of the total population in Bay Minette than they do in the County or State. This population trend indicates that future needs for social services and housing to accommodate a more mature population is more in comparison to the rest of the region. Bay Minette has a younger median age at 33 than Baldwin County at 39 and the State of Alabama at 35.8.

Table 2.5 shows 2000 youth population trends for Baldwin County and its twelve municipalities, including Bay Minette. Bay Minette has the third highest school age population, at 23.0%, only exceeded by Elberta at 23.3% and Robertsedale by 23.6%. Bay Minette's school age population also exceeds the State's at 21.6% and the County's at 20.7%. If you add the under 5 population of 7.6%, the total dependant population under 19 equals 30.6%. The percent of total households with individuals under the age of 18 in Bay Minette is 38.7%, which exceeds the State and County percentages and is the third highest in Baldwin County.

Table 2.5: 2000 Youth Population Trends for Baldwin County and Municipalities	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Ages 5-19</i>	<i>Percent of Ages 5-19</i>	<i>Total Household s</i>	<i>Average Size</i>	<i>Percent Household s with under 18</i>
State of Alabama	4,447,100	960,177	21.6	1,737,080	2.49	36.1
Baldwin County	140,415	29,093	20.7	55,336	2.43	34.5
Bay Minette	7,820	1,794	23.0	2,793	2.56	38.7
Daphne	16,581	3,535	21.3	6,563	2.5	36.8
Elberta	552	129	23.3	228	2.42	33.3
Fairhope	12,480	2,274	18.2	5,345	2.27	28.7
Foley	7,590	1,458	19.3	3,126	2.35	31.3
Gulf Shores	5,044	761	15.0	2,344	2.15	21.8
Loxley	1,348	293	21.7	562	2.35	34.3
Orange Beach	3,784	550	14.6	1,779	2.13	22.2
Robertsdale	3,782	891	23.6	1,444	2.60	39.1
Silverhill	616	132	21.4	241	2.54	35.3
Spanish Fort	5,423	1,219	22.5	2,035	2.61	37.2
Summerdale	655	151	23.0	255	2.57	39.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.6 depicts the 2000 elderly population trends for Baldwin County and its municipalities, including Bay Minette. Bay Minette’s elderly population (age 65+) is 14.4%, which is slightly larger than the State’s at 13.0% and less than that of Baldwin County’s at 15.5%. Only four other municipalities in Baldwin County have a smaller elderly population. Baldwin County has historically maintained an elevated elderly population due to its coastal location and higher property values. The percent of total households with individuals 65 and older in Bay Minette is 26.3%, which is larger than the State’s at 24.1%, but less than Baldwin County’s at 27.3%.

The total dependent population, which is those residents under the age of 19 and over the age of 65, makes up 45% of Bay Minette’s total population. Bay Minette’s dependent population exceeds Baldwin County’s at 42.2% and the State’s at 41.3%. The dependent population increases the need for community facilities and services such as daycare centers, recreational facilities, youth activities, nursing homes, senior citizen housing, public transit, senior services, and health care facilities.

Table 2.6: 2000 65+ Population Trends for Baldwin County and Municipalities	Total Population	Ages 65+	Percent of Ages 65+	Total Households	Households with Individuals Ages 65+	Percent Households with Age 65+
State of Alabama	4,447,100	579,798	13.0	1,737,080	418,608	24.1
Baldwin County	140,415	21,703	15.5	55,336	15,076	27.3
Bay Minette	7,820	1,124	14.4	2,793	719	26.3
Daphne	16,581	1,707	10.3	6,563	1,185	18.1
Elberta	552	105	19.0	228	81	35.5
Fairhope	12,480	2,954	23.7	5,345	1,933	36.2
Foley	7,590	1,650	21.7	3,126	1,084	34.7
Gulf Shores	5,044	1,164	23.1	2,344	793	33.8
Loxley	1,348	176	13.1	562	136	24.2
Orange Beach	3,784	688	18.2	1,779	510	28.7
Robertsdale	3,782	512	13.5	1,444	388	26.9
Silverhill	616	100	16.2	241	73	30.3
Spanish Fort	5,423	960	17.7	2,035	648	31.8
Summerdale	655	72	11.0	255	55	21.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Racial Composition

Over the course of the 1990s, Bay Minette’s racial population became slightly more diverse. *Table 2.7* and *Figure 2.3* illustrate the racial composition changes over the past decade. The white population in 1990 was 69.2% compared to 2000, where the white population decreased to 64.3%. The difference is primarily due to an increase in the black and Hispanic populations. The black population increased from 29.6% in 1990 to 33.5% in 2000. The Hispanic population increased from 0% in 1990 to 1% in 2000. In 2000, the white population in Baldwin County was 87.1% and in the Alabama it was 71.1%. These population percentages for the region are considerably higher than Bay Minette demonstrating the increased minority composition of the City in comparison to the region.

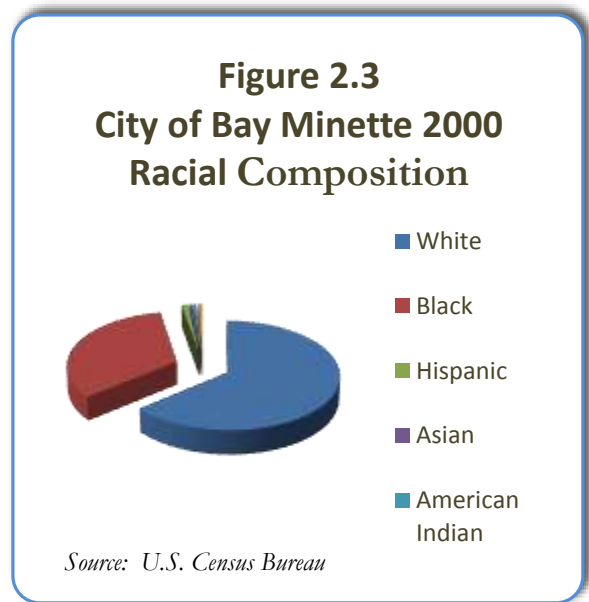


Table 2.7: General Population Characteristics By Race	City of Bay Minette				Baldwin County	State of Alabama
	1990 #	1990 %	2000 #	2000 %	2000 %	2000 %
White	4960	69.2	5030	64.3	87.1	71.1
Black	2122	29.6	2617	33.5	10.3	26.0
Hispanic	0	0	80	1.0	1.8	1.7
Two or More Races	*	*	58	0.7	1.0	1.0
American Indian	59	0.8	47	0.6	0.6	0.5
Asian	24	0.3	34	0.4	0.4	0.7
Other	3	0.04	*	*	*	*

*Not a category for the denoted census year.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Marital Status

Trends in marital status are important because they can influence the natural population increase of communities and impact such things as housing needs and the school-age population. *Figure 2.4* illustrates the 1990 and 2000 marital status of Bay Minette’s population that was 15 years and older. In 2000, the population 15 years and older was 6,121 compared to 1990 when it was 5,457. This is a 12.2% increase from 1990. In 2000, 1,661 individuals or 27.1% had never married compared to 1,552 individuals or 28.4% in 1990. Married individuals numbered 2,941 or 48% in 2000 compared to 2,746 individuals or 50.3% in 1990. The separated population percentage remained the same between 1990 and 2000. The divorced totaled 736 or 12% in 2000 compared to 526 or 9.6% in 1990. In 2000, 58.6% of the divorced were female. In 2000, 579 individuals or 9.5% were widowed compared to 1990 when 454 individuals or 8.3% were widowed. In 2000, 81.7% of the widowed were female.

According to *Figure 2.4*, the percent of married individuals has slightly declined as well as individuals whom have never married since 1990. The number of separated individuals stayed about the same however, the number of divorced individuals increased by 2.4%. This increase in divorced individuals illustrates the greatest change in the marital profile of Bay Minette between 1990 and 2000. The marital status trends over the past 10 years indicate that the single population of Bay Minette is increasing due to divorce and people choosing to not marry.

**Figure 2.4:
Marital Status of Bay Minette's 1990 & 2000 Population 15
Years and Older**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Household Characteristics

Household characteristics of a city determine the quantity and type of community facilities and services that are needed to support the population. They guide future land use and development, including transportation. The number and type of individuals in households influences a community's school systems, senior services, and economic development. The income of a household can also influence the commercial development of the community.

According to the 2000 Census, there are 2,739 households in Bay Minette and 1,912, or 69.8%, are family households with the majority of these being married – couple families. See *Tables 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10*. Non-family households constituted 30.2% of households which is considerably more than the County or State's percentage population. In Bay Minette, 34.4% of family households have children under the age of 18, as compared to 31.5% for Baldwin County and 32.3% for the State.

When comparing total households with children under the age of 18, Bay Minette exceeded the County and State percentages with 38.7%, compared to 34.5% and 36.1%. Bay Minette has a considerably higher amount of female householders with no husband present when compared to the State and the County. These female householders also demonstrate higher percentages of having children under the age of 18 within their household.

Table 2.8: 2000 Census Households By Type in Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Bay Minette		Baldwin County	Alabama
	Persons	Percent of Total Households		
Total Households	2,739	100	100	100
Family Households	1,912	69.8	72.8	70.0
With Own Children Under 18	941	34.4	31.5	32.3
Married Couple Family	1,297	47.4	59.3	52.2
With Own Children Under 18	569	20.8	24.0	22.5
Female Householder, No Husband	511	18.7	10.2	14.2
With Own Children Under 18	326	11.9	5.9	8.1
Nonfamily Households	827	30.2	27.2	30.0
Householder Living Alone	747	27.3	23.3	26.1
Householder 65 Years and Over	328	12.0	9.5	9.8
Households with Persons Under 18	1,059	38.7	34.5	36.1
Households with Persons 65+	719	26.3	27.3	24.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.9: Relationship of Population in Households for Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Bay Minette				Baldwin County	Alabama
	1990		2000		2000	2000
	Persons	% Total Pop.	Persons	% Total Pop.	% Total Pop.	% Total Pop.
Total Pop. In Households	6,931	96.7	7,000	89.5	98.4	97.4
Householder	2,555	35.6	2,739	35.0	39.4	39.1
Spouse	1,303	18.2	1,297	16.6	23.4	20.4
Child	2,446	34.1	2,299	29.4	28.2	29.3
Other Relatives	458	6.4	443	5.7	4.2	5.4
Non-Relative	169	2.4	222	2.8	3.2	3.3
Total Pop. In Group Quarters	321	4.5	820	10.5	1.6	2.6
Institutionalized	126	1.8	575	7.4	1.2	1.5
Non-Institutionalized	195	2.7	245	3.1	0.4	1.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.10: Household and Income Characteristics	City of Bay Minette			Baldwin County	State
	1990	2000	% Change	2000	2000
Population	7,168	7,820	9.1	140,415	4,447,100
Total Households	2,471	2,739	10.8	55,336	1,737,080
Family Households	1,767	1,912	8.2	40,260	1,215,968
Avg. Household Size	2.77	2.56	-7.6	2.50	2.49
Avg. Family Size	3.31	3.11	-6.0	2.94	3.01
Median Household Income	\$18,145	\$27,226	50.05	\$40,250	\$34,135
Median Family Income	\$23,388	\$34,605	47.96	\$47,028	\$41,657
Per Capita Income	\$8,901	\$16,093	80.8	\$20,826	\$18,189

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In 2000, total households with persons 65 and older comprised 26.3% of Bay Minette’s total population. This is higher than the State at 24.1% and lower than Baldwin County at 27.3% indicating an increased senior population. Baldwin County is one of the leading Counties in Alabama for retired individuals and seniors, most of which have located along the coast. The data reflects that Bay Minette supports both increased senior populations in addition to younger families with school age children. This indicates that the dependant population in Bay Minette is growing and will require more social services.

When assessing household composition, 89.5% of Bay Minette’s 2000 population was in a household, compared to 98.4% for the County and 97.4% for the State. Bay Minette had considerably more individuals in group quarters at 10.5% when compared to the County at 1.6% and the State at 2.6%. This was the most notable difference between Bay Minette and the region in regards to household relationships. The percent of individuals in group quarters as opposed to households also doubled in Bay Minette between 1990 and 2000. Another interesting characteristic of Bay Minette’s household composition was the decreased percentage of spouse composition of households when compared to that of the County and State. This indicates a higher amount of single parents in Bay Minette than what is averaged throughout the region.

In comparing the 2000 Census data with the 1990 data, the total households in Bay Minette increased by 652, or 9.1%. Over the past 10 years, family households also increased by 145, or 8.2%. This is considerable growth and impact to the housing stock and community facilities and services when you consider that over 600 new households needed a place to live and over 145 children entered into the school system within this time span. If this growth trend continues, larger schools will be needed to accommodate the influx of children and residential development will increase throughout the City and planning jurisdiction.

The average household size of Bay Minette decreased from 2.77 in 1990 to 2.56 in 2000. This is higher than the County at 2.50 and the State at 2.49. Therefore, household income is being distributed amongst more people reducing the per capita average.

Population Projections

Preparing population projections is essential in determining future needs of a community and developing accurate land use forecast for future growth and development. Understanding future population growth patterns for a City can assist public and private sector planners and developers in determining infrastructure needs and identifying community investment opportunities. There are a variety of projection methods available to planners. The four methods utilized in this plan include the Historic Population Trend Forecast, Exponential Growth Rate Forecast, and Historic and Recent Decennial Growth Rate Forecast.

It is extremely difficult to project future populations with a high degree of accuracy given that population data is only collected every ten years by the U.S. Census Bureau. Even utilizing the most widely accepted methodologies for population projections, the numbers are just estimates that can be effected by so many elements of change. Therefore, the following assumptions provide a basis for the development of the population projections. It is assumed that the City of Bay Minette will not suffer significant, large-scale economic decline as a result of the current economy. It is assumed that the City will have the necessary resources and infrastructure to accommodate the projected growth within the planning horizon of 20 years. However, current economic conditions and the potential of large industries locating in the Bay Minette area provide additional opportunity to speculate on future population projections.

Historic Population Trend Forecast Approach

This technique relies on historic population trends for the City of Bay Minette to project four types of growth trends (recent, short-term, moderate, and long-term). These growth patterns are obtained by analysis of population growth trends over multiple year increments. *Table 2.11* projects future population estimates for the City of Bay Minette utilizing this method.

The growth patterns are calculated from Bay Minette's population changes over the past 39 years. The recent growth pattern was determined by subtracting the 2000 Census from the 2009 population estimate to obtain the most recent growth pattern reflecting population change over the past nine years. During this growth pattern, the population increased by 522 individuals over nine years, or an estimated 58 people a year. The short-term growth pattern was determined by subtracting the 1990 Census from the 2000 Census and dividing by 10 years to reflect the decennial profile. During this growth pattern, the population increased by 652 individuals over ten years, or an estimated 65.2 people a year. The moderate growth pattern was determined by subtracting the 1980 Census from the 2000 Census and dividing by 20 years. During this growth pattern, the population increased by 365 individuals over 20 years, or an estimated 18.25 people a year. The long-term growth pattern was determined by subtracting the 1970

Census from the 2000 Census and dividing by 30 years. During this growth pattern, the population increased by 1,093 or an estimate of 36.43 people a year.

These growth patterns were utilized to project the future population ranges for the years 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025, and 2030 which are illustrated in the table above. According to historical population trends, Bay Minette’s population in 2030 could reach 9,711.

Table 2.11: Bay Minette Population Projections based on Historic Growth Trends	Growth Pattern	Population Projections
2010	Recent Growth	8,400
	Short Term Growth	8,407
	Moderate Growth	8,360
	Long Term Growth	8,378
2015	Recent Growth	8,690
	Short Term Growth	8,733
	Moderate Growth	8,451
	Long Term Growth	8,560
2020	Recent Growth	8,980
	Short Term Growth	9,059
	Moderate Growth	8,542
	Long Term Growth	8,742
2025	Recent Growth	9,270
	Short Term Growth	9,385
	Moderate Growth	8,633
	Long Term Growth	8,924
2030	Recent Growth	9,560
	Short Term Growth	9,711
	Moderate Growth	8,724
	Long Term Growth	9,106
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Calculations</i>		

Exponential Growth Rate Approach

This technique projects future populations utilizing the average growth rate of Bay Minette’s current and historic population trends. It assumes that future populations will increase at similar rates as the City has in the past. *Table 2.12* illustrates population projections for Bay Minette for years 2010 through 2030 using the average annual growth rate of 0.68%. The average annual growth rate was obtained by comparing the annual growth rates from the U.S. Census Estimates for 2000 to 2009 to calculate the average. *Table 2.2*, in the beginning of this section, illustrates the annual percentage growth rate for each year. According to *Table 2.12*, Bay Minette’s 2030 population will be 9,618.

Table 2.12: Bay Minette Population Projections Based on the Average Annual Growth Rate of 0.68%

Year	Population	Population
2010	57	8,399
2011	57	8,456
2012	57	8,513
2013	58	8,571
2014	58	8,629
2015	59	8,688
2016	59	8,747
2017	59	8,806
2018	60	8,866
2019	60	8,926
2020	61	8,987
2021	61	9,048
2022	62	9,110
2023	62	9,172
2024	62	9,234
2025	63	9,297
2026	63	9,360
2027	64	9,424
2028	64	9,488
2029	65	9,553
2030	65	9,618

Source: U.S. Census and SARPC Calculations

Historic Decennial Growth Rate Approach

The historic decennial population growth was analyzed by comparing 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census data. The decennial percent increase was calculated and the average decennial growth rate was determined. Population projections were calculated using the average decennial growth rate of 5.3% for Bay Minette. *Table 2.13* illustrates these associated population projections. This alternative resulted in similar projections to that of previous projection methods and calculated Bay Minette’s 2030 population at 9,129.

Table 2.13: Bay Minette Population Projections Based on Historic Decennial Growth Rates	Population Increase	Decennial Growth Rate
1970-1980	728	10.8%
1980-1990	-287	-3.9%
1990-2000	652	9.1%
Average Decennial Growth Rate	-	5.3%

Projections Based on 5.3% Average Decennial Growth Rate	Population Increase	Population Projections
Year 2010	415	8,234
Year 2020	436	8,670
Year 2030	459	9,129

Source: U.S. Census and SARPC Calculations

Recent Decennial Growth Rate Approach

The recent decennial growth rate method assumes the 1990 - 2000 decennial growth rate for future populations. Bay Minette’s 1990 – 2000 growth rate was 9.1%. *Table 2.14* illustrates the associated population projections. This alternative projected a high 2030 population projection for Bay Minette at 10,155.

Table 2.14: Bay Minette Population Projections Based on the 1990-2000 Growth Rate of 9.1%

Census 1990	7,168
Census 2000	7,820
Projection 2010	8,532
Projection 2020	9,308
Projection 2030	10,155

Source: U.S. Census and SARPC Calculations

Table 2.15 provides a summary of Bay Minette’s population projections from all methods utilized in this plan. A summary for each year was calculated to provide a likely population range and average for future populations. For the purpose of making further recommendations associated with this plan, the following population projection range for each year will be used to forecast Bay Minette’s future needs. In 2010, the projected range is 8,234-8,532. For 2015, the projected range is 8,451-8,733. In 2020, the range is projected to be 8,542-9,308. For 2025, the population projection range is 8,633-9,385. For 2030, the range is 8,724-10,155. An average (mean) population projection was also calculated from all the projection methods for each year.

Table 2.15: Summary of Bay Minette Population Projections	Population Projection Method	Bay Minette Population Projections	Summary of Population Projections
2010	Historic Population Growth	8,360-8,407	Range: 8,234-8,532
	Exponential Annual Growth Rate	8,399	
	Historic Decennial Census Growth Rate	8,234	Average: 8,387
	Recent Decennial Census Growth Rate	8,532	
2015	Historic Population Growth	8,451-8,733	Range: 8,451-8,733
	Exponential Annual Growth Rate	8,688	Average: 8,624
2020	Historic Population Growth	8,542-9,059	Range: 8,542-9,308
	Exponential Annual Growth Rate	8,987	
	Historic Decennial Census Growth Rate	8,670	Average: 8,898
	Recent Decennial Census Growth Rate	9,308	
2025	Historic Population Growth	8,633-9,385	Range: 8,633-9,385
	Exponential Annual Growth Rate	9,297	Average: 9,102
2030	Historic Population Growth	8,724-9,106	Range: 8,724-10,155
	Exponential Annual Growth Rate	9,618	
	Historic Decennial Census Growth Rate	9,129	Average: 9,429
	Recent Decennial Census Growth Rate	10,155	
<i>Source: U.S. Census and SARPC Calculations</i>			

Household Projections

Household projections are useful in forecasting future residential land use needs and predicting future population profiles associated with how people live together. This technique assumes that future household projections will follow the same growth trend observed between 1990 and 2000 and continue to increase at the same pace. *Table 2.16* illustrates the projected household increase over the next 20 years. The 2030 total population estimate from household trends is 9,070. This supports Bay Minette’s projected 2030 population range above of 8,724-10,155 with the average future population projected at 9,429.

Table 2.16: Bay Minette Household Projections	Census 1990	Census 2000	Estimated Annual Increase	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Households	2,471	2,739	26.8	3,007	3,141	3,275	3,409	3,543
Projected Total Population Based on Household Size of 2.56	-	-	-	7,698	8,041	8,384	8,727	9,070

Source: U.S. Census and SARPC Calculations

Economic Analysis

The City of Bay Minette has a strong and diversified economy. The City’s favorable economy derives largely from its strategic location and accessibility from the I-65 corridor and its geographical location along the State’s busiest tourist transportation corridor, Highway 59, the main route to the Gulf Coast beaches of Alabama. The City is the County Seat and this provides many employment opportunities through local government. The City is also host to numerous industrial and manufacturing employers, including Standard Furniture, Quincy Compressors, and Dental EZ, Inc. The following sections provide an overview of local economic indicators that guide future economic development.

Objective

Create an atmosphere in Bay Minette that fosters new industries and encourages the retention and expansion of existing industries

Educational Attainment and School Enrollment

The educational attainment of a city’s residents can influence the city’s economy and affect the income and type of employment opportunities within the community. According to the 2000 Census, 69.3% of Bay Minette residents have a high school education or higher compared to 82.0% for Baldwin County and 75.3% for the State. *Table 2.17* illustrates the type of educational attainment for persons 25 years and older. The 2000 Census reports 30.7% of the population, 25 years and older, in Bay Minette does not

have a high school diploma compared to 18.0% for Baldwin County and 24.7% for the State. Conversely, only 9.1% of Bay Minette’s 2000 population, 25 years and older, has attained a Bachelorette Degree compared to 14.8% for Baldwin County and 12.2% for the State.

	City of Bay Minette		Baldwin County		State of Alabama	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 25 Years and Older	4,810	-	96,010	-	2,887,400	-
Less Than 9 th Grade	395	8.2	4,197	4.4	240,333	8.3
9 th -12 th Grade, No Diploma	1,083	22.5	13,061	13.6	473,748	16.4
High School Graduate	1,369	28.5	28,428	29.6	877,216	30.4
Some College, No Degree	840	17.5	22,456	23.4	591,055	20.5
Associate Degree	380	7.9	5,722	6.0	155,440	5.4
Bachelor’s Degree	439	9.1	14,225	14.8	351,772	12.2
Graduate or Professional Degree	304	6.3	7,921	8.3	197,836	6.9
% High School Graduate or Higher	-	69.3	-	82.0	-	75.3
% Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	-	15.4	-	23.1	-	19.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Employment and Labor Force

The labor force of an area is, by definition, 16 years old and over, who are employed or actively seeking employment. Labor force and employment data provide evidence of the strength of the local economy. *Table 2.18* compares the 2000 Census employment status of Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama. Bay Minette’s labor force comprises a smaller percentage of the 16 years and older population than the County or the State. The number of employed individuals in the labor force is also smaller in Bay Minette than it is in the County or the State and the unemployed population considerably exceeds that of the County and State.

	City of Bay Minette		Baldwin County	Alabama
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Population 16 Years and Older	6,035	100	100	100
In Labor Force	3,117	51.6	59.8	59.7
Civilian Labor Force	3,110	51.5	59.6	59.3
Employed	2,857	47.3	57.1	55.6
Unemployed	253	4.2	2.6	3.7
% of Civilian Labor Force	-	8.1	4.3	6.2
Armed Forces	7	0.1	0.2	0.4
Not in Labor Force	2,918	48.4	40.2	40.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2.5 illustrates changes in Bay Minette’s labor force between 1990 and 2000. Bay Minette’s labor force has declined by 8.5% between 1990 and 2000 but the number of employed persons has increased by 5.6% and the number of unemployed persons has declined.

Occupation and Industry

Occupation profiles of a community identify the occupations of the population and can influence what type of commercial and industrial developments occur within a community. Table 2.19 illustrates the occupations of the residents of Bay Minette in 1990 and 2000 to demonstrate how the occupation profile has changed. It also compares Bay Minette’s 2000 profile with Baldwin County and Alabama for a regional analysis. Between 1990 and 2000, Bay Minette’s Management and Professional category increased 10%, while the Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance category decreased by 10.8%.

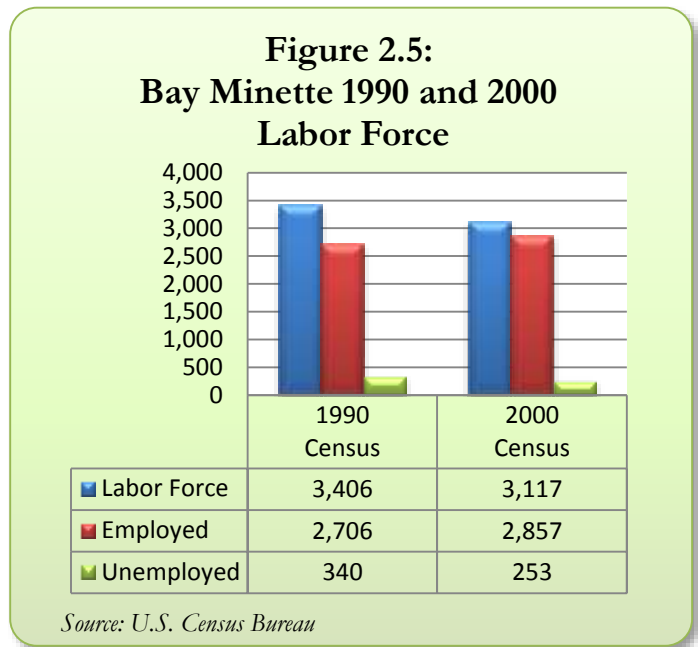


Table 2.19: Occupation of Employed Population of Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama.	1990 Bay Minette		2000 Bay Minette		2000 Baldwin County	2000 Alabama
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Management and Professional	527	19.5	779	27.3	29.5	29.5
Service	333	12.3	470	16.5	14.5	13.5
Sales and Office	727	26.8	662	23.2	27.5	29.9
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	35	1.0	33	1.2	1.0	0.8
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance	665	24.6	303	10.6	13.8	11.3
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	519	15.5	610	21.4	13.7	19.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Bay Minette’s Management and Professional category is lower in comparison to Baldwin County and Alabama. Bay Minette’s 2000 Production, Transportation, and Material Moving category is significantly higher than the County’s and slightly higher than the State’s. Bay Minette’s Service category is slightly higher than the County’s or the State’s however, the Sales and Office category is lower. The remaining categories are relatively similar in their percent population composition. In 2000, the category with the highest percent of total employed population in Bay Minette was the Management and Professional

category followed by the Sales and Office category. These two categories alone comprise 50.5% of the total population’s occupation. In Baldwin County and Alabama, the category with the highest percent of total population was the Management and Professional occupation.

The employment industry profile for Bay Minette is illustrated in *Table 2.20*. The Educational, Health, and Social Services category was the largest in Bay Minette in 2000 consisting of 24.6% of the employed population. The second largest category was Manufacturing at 19.7% and the third was Retail Trade at 9.8%. These three industry categories comprise 54.1% of the total population of Bay Minette.

When comparing Bay Minette’s employment industry profile to that of the region, the most obvious difference is the increased amount of individuals in Bay Minette employed in the Education, Health, and Social Services category when compared to the County or State. The Manufacturing category is also higher in Bay Minette when compared to the region. Bay Minette has a decreased percentage of population in the Retail Trade category and the Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate category when compared to the region.

In support of the Census data illustrated below, three major employers in Bay Minette are Baldwin County, the Baldwin County Board of Education, and the North Baldwin Infirmary. There are also several major manufacturing employers in Bay Minette, including Standard Furniture, Quincy Compressors and Dental EZ, Inc.

Table 2.20: 2000 Industry Population Profile for Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Bay Minette		Baldwin County	Alabama
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, & mining	79	2.8	1.9	1.9
Construction	178	6.2	10.7	7.6
Manufacturing	563	19.7	12.5	18.4
Wholesale Trade	64	2.2	3.8	3.6
Retail Trade	280	9.8	14.2	12.2
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	172	6.0	5.2	5.3
Information	18	0.6	2.3	2.2
Finance, insurance, real estate, & rental/leasing	71	2.5	6.1	5.8
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	192	6.7	7.4	7.1
Educational, health, & social services	704	24.6	17.2	19.3
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	238	8.3	9.1	6.4
Other services (except administrative)	141	4.9	5.4	5.1
Public administration	157	5.5	4.2	5.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Income and Poverty Characteristics

The buying power, or personal wealth, of a population influences the socio-economic characteristics of that community. The ability to purchase goods, including housing, is dependent on the income of a community's population. The average income of a community determines what type of housing stock, retail goods, and services can be afforded by the community. The population's income and buying capacity also influences the City's revenue, public facilities and services, and ability to grow.

Table 2.21 and Figure 2.6 illustrates household income trends by income category for Bay Minette from 1989 to 1999 and compares 1999 data to that of Baldwin County and Alabama.

Table 2.21: Household Income for Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Bay Minette				Baldwin County	Alabama
	1989		1999		1999	1999
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Less than \$10,000	621	25.3	576	21.1	8.8	14.4
\$10,000-\$14,999	339	13.8	272	10.0	6.9	8.1
\$15,000-\$24,999	564	23.0	413	15.2	13.2	14.8
\$25,000-\$34,999	347	14.2	375	13.8	13.7	13.6
\$35,000-\$49,999	279	11.4	347	12.7	18.7	16.5
\$50,000-\$74,999	222	9.1	444	16.3	19.7	17.2
\$75,000-\$99,999	21	0.9	187	6.9	9.4	7.7
\$100,000-\$149,999	49	1.9	60	2.2	5.8	4.9
\$150,000-\$199,999	10	0.4	9	0.3	1.9	1.3
\$200,000 or more	0	0	42	1.5	1.9	1.4
Median Household Income	\$18,145		\$27,226		\$40,250	\$34,135

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The most obvious household income change in Bay Minette between 1989 and 1999 is that the City's population became progressively wealthier. Income categories under \$35,000 decreased in population percentage, while income categories over \$35,000 increased. However, Bay Minette still demonstrated a higher percent of population with incomes less than \$10,000 in 1999 when compared to the County and the State. The percent of population making over \$50,000 a year is also considerably less in Bay Minette in comparison to the County and the State. In 1999, the largest income category in both the County and State was the \$50,000 - \$74,999. The median household income for Bay Minette doubled between 1989

and 1999 from \$18,145 to \$27,226. However, the median household income of Bay Minette is less than that of the County at \$40,250, and the State at \$34,135.

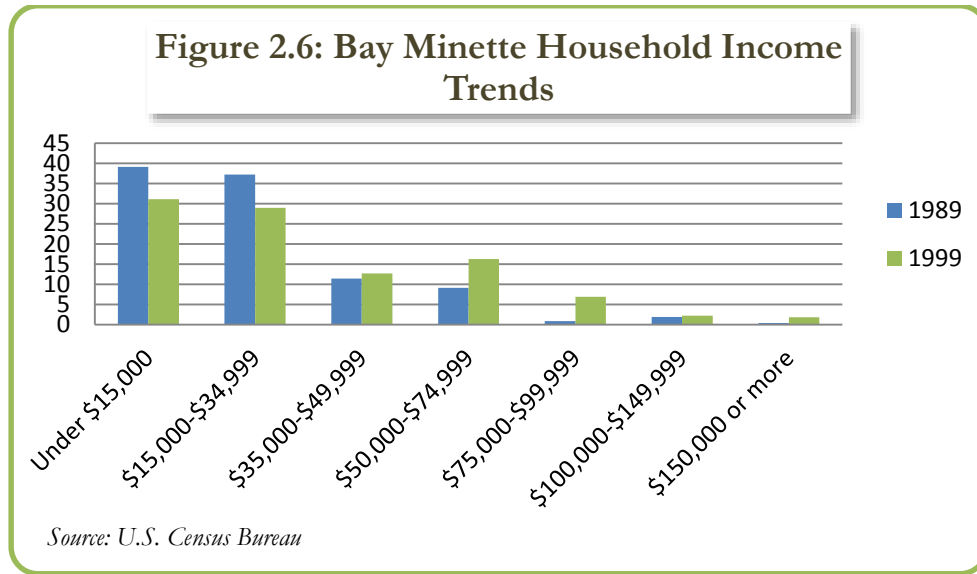
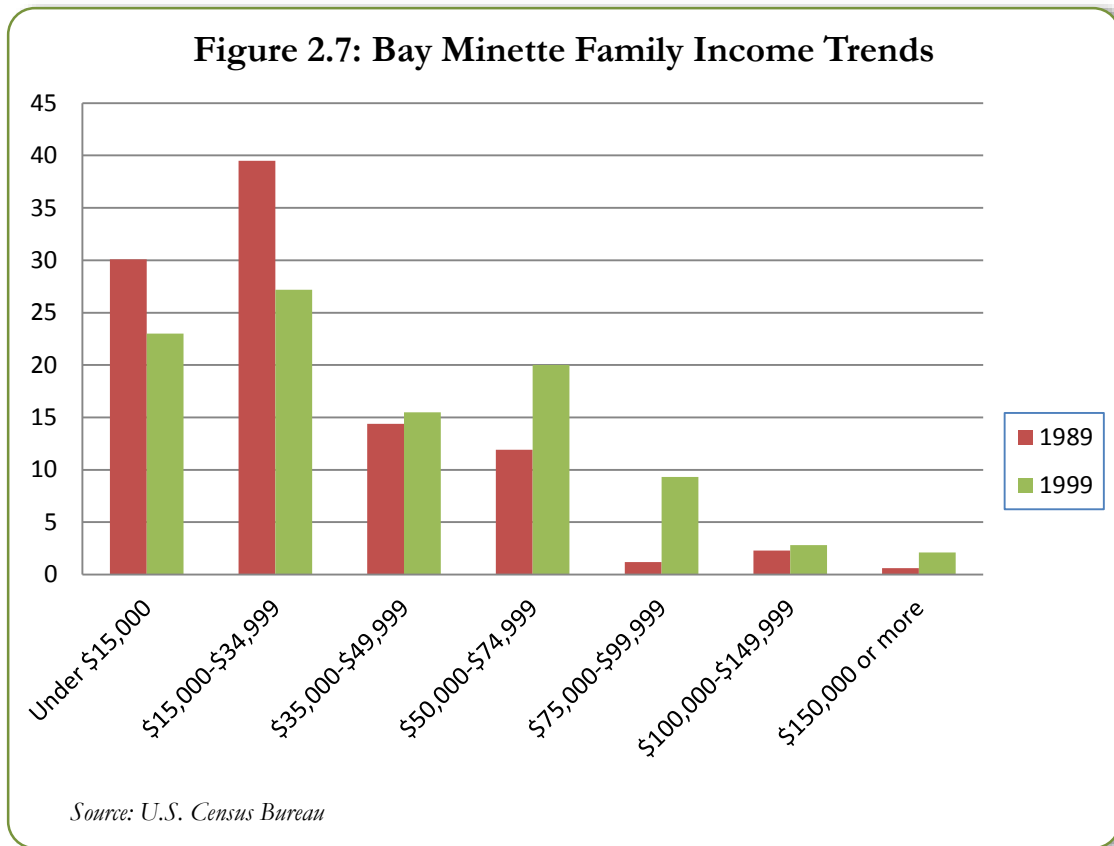


Table 2.22 illustrates family income trends by income category for Bay Minette from 1989 to 1999. It also compares Bay Minette’s 1999 data to Baldwin County’s and Alabama’s. Figure 2.7 illustrates the family income change between 1989 and 1999. Bay Minette’s family income trends follow the same pattern as its household income trends, including which family income categories demonstrated the highest percent of population per year. This reflects the consistent growth in income and wealth, whether by household or family, within the City. Bay Minette’s 1999 median family income was \$34,605 which is also less than

Table 2.22: Family Income for Bay Minette, Baldwin County and Alabama	City of Bay Minette				Baldwin County	Alabama
	1989		1999		1999	1999
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Less than \$10,000	270	15.0	270	14.4	4.8	8.4
\$10,000-\$14,999	274	15.1	162	8.6	4.4	5.9
\$15,000-\$24,999	405	22.3	256	13.6	10.5	13.2
\$25,000-\$34,999	311	17.2	256	13.6	13.5	13.6
\$35,000-\$49,999	261	14.4	290	15.5	20.2	18.2
\$50,000-\$74,999	215	11.9	375	20.0	23.2	21.0
\$75,000-\$99,999	21	1.2	175	9.3	11.5	9.9
\$100,000-\$149,999	42	2.3	53	2.8	7.2	6.4
\$150,000 or more	10	0.6	39	2.1	2.3	1.6
Median Family Income	\$23,388		\$34,605		\$47,028	\$41,657

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

that of the County at \$47,028 and that of the State at \$41,657. However, the median family income between 1989 and 1999 nearly doubled.



Per capita income is used as an economic indicator of a community’s standard of living and wealth. Communities with higher per capita income trends tend to have more educational, recreational, and entertainment opportunities as well as more buying capacity. *Table 2.23* illustrates per capita income for municipalities in Baldwin County in 1989 and 1999. Bay Minette’s per capita income almost double from \$8,910 in 1989 to 16,093 in 1999.

Bay Minette ranks number 11 of 13 municipalities in Baldwin County in 1999 for per capita income. Per capita income for Baldwin County in 1999 was \$20,826 and \$18,189 for the State.

Table 2.23: Per Capita Income for Baldwin County Municipalities

County Municipalities	1989	1999
Orange Beach	\$16,512	\$27,082
Spanish Fort	-	27,081
Daphne	17,471	25,597
Fairhope	14,987	25,237
Gulf Shores	17,414	24,356
Magnolia Springs	-	21,587
Silverhill	10,314	21,587
Foley	9,498	19,374
Loxley	9,741	18,099
Robertsdale	9,531	16,510
Bay Minette	8,901	16,093
Summerdale	9,470	13,775
Elberta	8,480	12,942

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.24 illustrates the number and percent of individuals below the poverty level in Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama in 1999. Poverty statistics in Bay Minette were higher than those of the State and Baldwin County in all categories. Based on this Census data, great efforts should be taken at the local, State, and Federal level to eliminate poverty conditions throughout Bay Minette and increase improved employment opportunities for the residents.

Table 2.24: Number and Percent of Individuals Below Poverty Level in Bay Minette, Baldwin County, and Alabama in 1999	City of Bay Minette		Baldwin County	Alabama
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total Families	375	20.0	7.6	12.5
With Children Under 18	306	29.7	11.5	18.2
With Children Under 5	125	30.9	14.4	21.9
Total Female Householder Family, No Husband	217	41.4	25.0	35.6
With Children Under 18	210	55.9	32.9	44.6
With Children Under 5	68	56.7	43.3	56.6
Total Individuals	1533	22.3	10.1	16.1
18 Years and Older	919	18.4	9.1	14.3
65 Years and Older	192	19.0	8.9	15.5
With Related Children Under 18	592	32.0	13.1	21.2
With Related Children 5 to 17 Years	436	34.2	12.0	20.3
Unrelated Individuals 15 Years and Older	387	35.9	22.1	30.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Recommendations and Strategies

To ensure that Bay Minette’s Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette’s future growth and development.

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community’s input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis of the current and projected population and economic statistics to achieve the identified goals of the community. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the

recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer to obtaining their vision for prosperous growth and development for the City of Bay Minette.

- Continue to actively seek a diversified local economy with an employment base that surpasses the needs of the local labor force in order to provide employment for the surrounding areas and stimulate local economic growth.
- City leaders and officials should partner and coordinate with other regional agencies and governments to foster an increase in commercial and industrial development in Bay Minette that will create a diversified local economy to bring more jobs to the community. City officials should work closely with the local Chamber of Commerce, the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance, and other state and local agencies to promote the benefits of new businesses and industries locating in Bay Minette.
- Support and encourage the Industrial Development Board for the City of Bay Minette. The purpose of the Board is to research and encourage new businesses and industries to locate within Bay Minette and to publicize and promote economic development of the City. The board should also create a “brand” for the City such as *Life Long Careers in Bay Minette*, for example, and aggressively advertise this new focus for future growth. The Board should also inventory industrial and commercial properties available for sale or lease within the City and aggressively promote their development and use.
- The City of Bay Minette should define and clarify desired areas of industrial development and establish an Industrial Park. This will attract and hold industrial development potential and associated future land use in the designated area. The Highway 59 corridor north of the City has access to I-65 and would be a desirable location for an industrial park. However, Highway 59 south of the City currently has industrial land uses. The City should establish areas to focus future industrial development to prevent this land use from being scattered throughout the community. The same should also be done for areas of the City with high concentrations of business and commercial land uses to implement appropriate future developments in type and scale. With commercial land uses, traditional clustered development with multiple types of land uses should be encouraged over more recent strip/sprawl patterns. As funds become available, efforts should also be taken by the City to ensure parcels zoned for business and industrial development possess all necessary infrastructure to attract potential developers.
- The City of Bay Minette should develop an economic development plan for the Highway 59 corridor, north and south of the downtown square. This will ensure that these areas grow in a manner that is mutually beneficial to the community and property owners and establish a future course of action for all types of development in these less dense, undeveloped portions of the community. The Plan can be used to promote future development of the area and attract investors to the region.

- Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce to establish a Downtown Alliance or Merchants Group for downtown businesses responsible for generating interest in the local historic district, encouraging the redevelopment and habitation of the downtown buildings, and maintaining the physical restoration of the downtown buildings and streetscapes through support from the City with state and federal grant opportunities. The City should encourage and support the Group's coordination of promotional and merchandising efforts of the downtown businesses through various means of advertisement. The City, with support from the Group, should develop and implement design guidelines that guide the physical development and appearance of the downtown streetscape and building facades to ensure a compatible and harmonious theme is created.
- The City, Chamber of Commerce, and the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance should work closely with the Industrial Development Board and the Downtown Merchants Group to establish more service/retail types of commercial development around the courthouse square to better serve the Baldwin County employees. Types of development that should be encouraged are restaurants, dry cleaning services, daycares, beauty salons and barber shops, coffee shops, retail shops and boutiques, etc.
- The City of Bay Minette should, in coordination with ALDOT, develop a Parking and Access Plan for the downtown area. The lack of parking is an increasing problem around the courthouse square for downtown guests. The City is in need of a resolution to this problem through a proposed plan that will recommend strategies to increase parking facilities downtown and identify appropriate sites for these facilities.
- The City of Bay Minette should aggressively seek to increase the educational attainment of the workforce of the City. By increasing the education and skill level of the population over 18, the City's capable workforce will increase which will expand the local economy. The City should work with the Baldwin County Board of Education to establish an aggressive local program that encourages high school graduation. The City should aggressively seek workforce development through assistance and cooperation from the Alabama Industrial Training Association (AIDT). AIDT is an institution established by the Board of Education to build healthy economies by recruiting and training local workforces with various industrial skills.
- Promote home occupations of appropriate types of businesses and services in neighborhoods, as established in the Zoning Ordinance, that adequately foster this type of use without adverse effect on adjacent property owners. This supports local entrepreneurship during the struggling economy and creates additional revenue for the City and its residents without the cost of building overhead.
- Update Bay Minette's regulatory documents to encourage commercial infill of existing commercial lots by offering incentives as opposed to continued new commercial development along the Highway 59 corridor creating urban sprawl. Also require that all new developments and substantial rehabilitations submit landscaping plans in compliance with the local regulatory documents.

- Seek grant funding opportunities through state and federal agencies for economic development, for improvements to infrastructure that would support economic development, and for community rehabilitations that improve the aesthetics and appearance of buildings, districts, and corridors and foster economic development. Agencies for assistance include the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the Economic Development Administration, and the Alabama Department of Transportation.
- Promote the development of tourist and recreational attractions based on the natural resources of the area.

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Housing

Goal

Provide a wide variety of safe and attractive living environments for all socioeconomic groups.

A City requires a diversity of housing types and densities to accommodate all socioeconomic groups of a community. The housing supply of a community must support existing and forecasted housing demands to ensure the resident's quality of life and the vitality and growth of the City. A community must foster continued maintenance, rehabilitation, and new construction of their housing stock to maintain the City's sustainability. The intent of this chapter is to provide an inventory of the housing stock in the City of Bay Minette and to assess the type, age, and value of the existing housing supply. This chapter also projects future residential development trends within the City and formulates future housing supply needs to accommodate the City's future population. Recommendations and strategies are proposed to accomplish these housing goals and objectives and respond to future housing growth.

The City of Bay Minette prides itself on being a wonderful place to live and the residents are passionate about enhancing the quality of life of the community through improving local schools, residential housing stock, and the local economy.

With new growth and development comes the additional responsibility of protecting existing residential areas from encroachment of incompatible land uses, increased traffic congestion, and increased stress and damage to utility and storm water drainage systems. This Chapter emphasizes the importance of planning for future growth and development without compromising the character that makes Bay Minette unique.

Housing Inventory and Analysis

The housing stock plays a critical role in a City's economy. Housing is typically the largest land use in a community and the community's largest capital asset. The housing stock also influences the people that live in a community. Housing costs are the single largest expenditure for most people and are typically

BAY MINETTE HOUSING FACTS

Total Number of Housing Units (2000): 2,941

72.7 percent are single-family homes

63.1 percent owner occupied homes

Age of Housing (2000 Census)

- 77.2 percent of residential buildings were built after 1960
- 24.1 percent of residential buildings were built between 1970 and 1979
- 27 percent of residential buildings were built after 1990

Housing Construction Trends

459 new housing units built between 2000 and 2009 according to building permit data. This is a 16 percent increase from 1999.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

the largest and most valuable asset they own. A community’s housing stock directs commercial and industrial development of a region and can be the main determining factor for developers when they are selecting locations for economic development.

Number and Type of Housing Units

Based on data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bay Minette’s housing supply has grown moderately since 1990. *Table 3.1* illustrates the number and type of residential dwelling units in Bay Minette in 1990 and 2000. The housing supply increased 259 units, from 2,682 in 1990 to 2,941 in 2000. This is a 10.0% increase. Single family units make up around 72% of the total dwelling unit for both years. In both 1990 and 2000, around 28% of Bay Minette’s population lived in duplex, multi-family, or manufactured/mobile homes. Between 1990 and 2000, the percent of duplex and multifamily dwellings decreased from 21.1% to 19.6%. Between 1990 and 2000, mobile/manufactured homes increased from 5.1% to 7.7%. In 1990, 1.4% of the dwellings were of another type such as boat, RV, or van. By 2000, these types of dwellings no longer existed within the City limits.

TABLE 3.1:				
<i>Number and Type of Dwelling Units in Bay Minette in 1990 and 2000.</i>				
	1990		2000	
Type of Dwelling Units	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Single Family Units	1,944	72.5%	2,138	72.7%
Duplex & Multi Family	565	21.1%	576	19.6%
Mobile Homes	136	5.1%	227	7.7%
Other	37	1.4%	0	0%
Total	2,682	100%	2,941	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Sample Data

Table 3.2 illustrates the residential building permits for single family and multifamily dwellings in Bay Minette from 2000 to 2009. There were 459 new housing units built in Bay Minette during the past decade. The only two years that experienced considerable multifamily development were 2007 and 2008 with a total of 155 new multifamily units being constructed in those years. 300 single family residential units were constructed from 2000 to 2009. Adding the newly constructed units to the existing housing units from the 2000 Census data gives Bay Minette a total of 3,400 residential dwellings units by the end of 2009. However, this does not include new manufactured housing placements within the City since 2000. Therefore, it can be anticipated that the total number of residential dwellings is slightly more than 3,400. Bay Minette’s housing units increased by 259 units between 1990 and 2000 according to *Table 3.1*, and by 459 units between 2000 and 2009, according to *Table 3.2*. At a minimum, this is a total increase of 718 units, or 26.8 % in the past 19 years.

TABLE 3.2:
*Annual Residential Unit Building Permits for
 Single and Multi-Family Dwellings in Bay
 Minette.*

YEAR	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI- FAMILY	TOTAL
2000	12	2	14
2001	12	2	14
2002	10	0	10
2003	10	0	10
2004	11	0	11
2005	12	0	12
2006	70	0	70
2007	88	90	178
2008	58	65	123
2009	17	0	17
TOTAL	300	159	459

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permit Data

Occupancy Status

Occupancy and vacancy status of a community’s housing stock can be influenced by many factors including the housing market, the economic climate of the region, and housing trends such as insurance and property taxes.

Vacancy rates in a community can indicate areas for housing rehabilitation or neighborhoods in economic decline that are in need of stabilization. Increased vacancy rates over a period of time can indicate regional shifts in population and economic trends. A high housing vacancy rate is also associated with increased health and safety issues of neighborhoods including increased crime rates.

Table 3.3 illustrates occupancy and vacancy statistics for municipalities in central Baldwin County to demonstrate the housing trends from a regional standpoint. Bay Minette has a fairly low to moderate vacancy rate and percentage compared to other communities in the region at 7.2% for all dwelling types. The vacancy rate among homeowners in Bay Minette was lower than that experienced in other communities at 2.1%. This lower vacancy rate among homeowners indicates that the majority of the newly constructed single-family homes in Bay Minette between 2000 and 2009 are likely occupied with little to no over saturation of the housing market.

Many communities in Baldwin County over built residential dwellings prior to the economic recession that began in 2008 and are now struggling to occupy these homes. This causes stress to the local housing market and property values. Although Bay Minette’s housing market has struggled too during these hard economic times, it has not experienced the type of loss neighboring communities have in regards to their housing market.

TABLE 3.3: 2000 Regional Housing Statistics for Bay Minette Area

Municipality	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units	Vacant Housing Unit %	Vacancy Rate-Home Owner	Vacancy Rate-Renter
Daphne	7,222	6,563	659	9.1	3.7	12.8
Fairhope	6,000	5,345	655	10.9	3.8	13.0
Foley	3,468	3,126	342	9.9	4.1	8.4
Bay Minette	2,950	2,739	211	7.2	2.1	7.6
Spanish Fort	2,164	2,035	129	6.0	2.0	5.6
Robertsdale	1,523	1,382	141	9.2	4.2	8.0
Loxley	609	562	4	0.6	0	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3.4 illustrates the occupancy status for Bay Minette’s housing units in 1990 and 2000 according to data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. In 1990, 92.1% of the housing units were occupied compared to 92.5% in 2000. This decrease in vacant housing units between 1990 and 2000 coupled with the addition of 259 new housing units indicates a healthy housing stock demonstrating steady growth. In addition, the habitation of previously vacant housing also indicates upgrade and rehabilitation of older housing units within the community. If you assume vacancy rates follow historical trends, then Bay Minette’s number of vacant housing units was estimated to continue to decrease and represent around 238 units in 2009.

TABLE 3.4: Bay Minette’s Occupancy Status for 1990 and 2000

	1990			2000			2009 Estimate*	
	Total No. of Units	No.	%	Total No. of Units	No.	%	Total No. of Units	No.
Occupied	2,682	2,471	92.1	2,941	2,720	92.5	3,400	3,162
Vacant		211	7.9		221	7.5		238

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Sample Data *Estimate based on historic trends.*

Housing Tenure

Housing tenure data for a community can provide insight into the socioeconomic status of an area as well as indicate what types of population live in that community. For example, a high concentration of renters can indicate an increased population of young singles and couples, where as a high concentration of homeowners indicates a more settled and mature population with families and children. Tenure data can also reflect the built housing stock as well. A high concentration of renters is usually associated with more multifamily dwellings and increased densities, while having more homeowners indicates less dense single family dwellings.

Table 3.5 illustrates tenure for Bay Minette’s housing units in 1990 and 2000. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of occupied housing units increased 249 units between 1990 and 2000. This is a 10.1% increase in ten years. The percent of rental property increased from 34.6% in 1990 to 36.9% in 2000.

TABLE 3.5: Bay Minette’s Housing Unit Tenure for 1990 and 2000						
	1990			2000		
	Total No. of Occupied Units	No.	%	Total No. of Occupied Units	No.	%
Owner Occupied	2,471	1,617	65.4	2,720	1,715	63.1
Renter Occupied		854	34.6		1,005	36.9
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau</i>						

According to building permit data illustrated in Table 3.2, 459 new housing units were constructed in Bay Minette between 2000 and 2009. Three hundred of those units were single family and 159 were multifamily. Typically, single family units are owner occupied while multifamily units are renter occupied. Therefore, we can assume, at a minimum, the addition of 159 new rental units to the housing stock in Bay Minette by the end of 2009.

Housing Age

The age of the housing stock can provide an indication of potential deficiencies in the quality and safety of dwelling units and identify areas in need of rehabilitation. Older residential units may be constructed to lesser building standards than are currently required and be eligible for public funding assistance for modernization activities. The age of a City’s housing stock also identifies the community’s historic

neighborhoods and homes that are potentially eligible for historic preservation through federal, state, or local agencies.

The age of Bay Minette’s housing stock is illustrated in *Table 3.6*. Approximately 27 percent of Bay Minette’s housing stock has been constructed within the last 19 years. Around 50 percent of Bay Minette’s housing stock was constructed between 1960 and 1989 (20 to 49 years old). Typically, this group of housing begins to show signs of deterioration and needs rehabilitation. These neighborhoods may also qualify for public funding for rehabilitation assistance through grants obtained by the City. Community Development Block Grant and HOME Grant Programs provided by the state offer such assistance.

Year Built	Number	Percent
April 2000 to 2009*	459	13.5%
1999 to March 2000	58	1.7%
1995 to 1998	272	8.0%
1990 to 1994	130	3.8%
1980 to 1989	418	12.3%
1970 to 1979	818	24.1%
1960 to 1969	469	13.8%
1940 to 1959	573	16.9%
1939 or earlier	203	6.0%
TOTAL	3,400	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
 *Building Permit Data, U.S. Census Bureau

Twenty three percent of Bay Minette’s housing stock is 50 years old or more. Typically, for residential property to qualify for historic significance with federal or state historical agencies, a property must be at least 50 years old or more and have maintained a lot of its historical structural integrity. Therefore, less than 23% of Bay Minette’s housing stock would potentially qualify for historical preservation at this time. Most of these historic structures are located in residential neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the downtown area. A historical structure survey should be conducted by the Alabama Historical Commission to identify properties potentially eligible for historic preservation if desired by the community.

Housing Values

The cost of housing in a community is influenced by many factors including the community’s location to employment opportunities, recreational opportunities, and transportation. The cost of housing within a community also influences the type of population that lives there. *Table 3.7* illustrates regional housing value trends of municipalities centrally located in Baldwin County adjacent to Bay Minette’s planning area.

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bay Minette’s median housing value in 2000 is \$69,800 and the median monthly mortgage is \$706. The median monthly rent for non-owner occupied housing is \$409. In comparison to other municipalities in central Baldwin County, Bay Minette’s housing stock is priced considerably lower than others in the region. In Bay Minette, the median value for an owner occupied housing unit is the lowest in central Baldwin County. However, when compared to other

counties within the State, Bay Minette’s housing stock values are considered average. The difference within the local region is due to the increased property values associated with coastal and beach front properties. Residential property values increase the closer you travel to the coast. In addition, Baldwin County is the second fastest growing County in Alabama and has experienced significant increases in the number of residential properties and their associated values over the past ten years. Bay Minette’s location in the northern portion of the County results in its lower property values in comparison with more southern communities. However, when compared to the rest of the State, Bay Minette’s property values exceed that of most communities.

TABLE 3.7: 2000 Regional Housing Value Statistics for Bay Minette Area

Municipality	Median Owner-Occupied Housing Values (\$)	Median Owner-Occupied Housing Monthly Mortgage (\$)	Median Renter-Occupied Monthly Rent (\$)
Spanish Fort	157,700	1,153	739
Fairhope	149,900	1,073	710
Daphne	125,300	1,067	666
Foley	97,900	797	465
Robertsdale	84,800	696	390
Loxley	78,300	685	331
Bay Minette	69,800	706	409

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3.8 illustrates the change in housing values within the City of Bay Minette between 1990 and 2000. Bay Minette’s housing market experienced a great deal of success during this time as most of the housing values significantly increased, some even doubled. In 1990, over 64% of the housing stock’s value was below \$50,000. However, by 2000, 76.7% of the housing stock’s value exceeded \$50,000. In 2000, the majority of Bay Minette’s housing stock was valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999.

Table 3.9 illustrates the change in monthly mortgage costs for owner-occupied housing units between 1990 and 2000. Monthly mortgage costs increased significantly during this time. In 1990,

TABLE 3.8: 1990 and 2000 Housing Values for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units in Bay Minette

Value (\$)	1990	2000
Less than 50,000	64.2%	23.3%
50,000-99,999	32.0%	53.7%
100,000-149,999	3.4%	14.6%
150,000-199,999	0%	5.5%
200,000-299,999	0.4%	2.0%
300,000-499,999	0	0.9%
500,000-999,999	0	0
1,000,000+	0	0
Median (\$)	39,500	68,900

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Sample Data

over 18% of the housing units had a monthly payment less than \$300. In 2000, only 3.3% of the housing units had a monthly payment less than \$300. In 1990, the majority of housing units had monthly payments within the \$300-\$499 range. In 2000, the majority of the housing units had monthly payments within the \$500-\$999 ranges. In 1990, 6.5% of monthly mortgage payments were in excess of \$999. In 2000, 12.0% of the monthly mortgage payments were over \$1,000. The increase in monthly mortgage payments reflects the success of the housing market in Baldwin County and in Bay Minette during this time coupled with the new construction of larger, more expensive, single family homes within the City.

Table 3.10 illustrates the change in monthly rent for specified non-owner occupied housing units in Bay Minette between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, 40% of all monthly rental payments were within the \$300-\$499 range. In 2000, 40.4% of the monthly rental payments are within the \$300-\$499 range as well. In 2000, 24.7% are within the \$500-\$749 range. In 1990, there were no rental payments in excess of \$749. However, in 2000 there were 3.3% of monthly rental payments in excess of \$749. Monthly rental payments below \$200 between decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000. The median rent increased \$127 a month from 282 in 1990 to 409 in 2000.

Trends in Residential Development

Expansion of the housing stock in response to population growth often occurs in cyclical fashion. These cycles are reflections of various factors both within the community and in the region. Residential construction in a community is influenced by many elements including economic growth levels, real estate prices, interest rates, insurance rates, and a community's zoning and subdivision regulations. However,

historic population and household trends coupled with analysis of building permit data can be used to project future housing needs and estimated growth of the housing stock.

TABLE 3.9: 1990 and 2000 Monthly Mortgage Costs for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units in Bay Minette

Monthly Mortgage (\$)	1990	2000
Less than 300	18.4%	3.3%
300-499	43.6%	9.8%
500-699	21.4%	17.9%
700-999	10.1%	17.2%
1,000-1,499	5.9%	12.0%
1,500-1,999	0.6%	2.4%
2,000+	0	0.4%
Median (\$)	441	706

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Sample Data

TABLE 3.10: 1990 and 2000 Monthly Rent for Specified Non-Owner Occupied Housing Units in Bay Minette

Monthly Rent (\$)	1990	2000
Less than 200	25.8%	10.9%
200-299	31.2%	10.6%
300-499	40.0%	40.4%
500-749	3.0%	24.7%
750-999	0	0.5%
1,000-1,499	0	2.8%
1,500+	0	0
Median Rent (\$)	282	409

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Projected Population and Household Growth

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this document, the estimated population range for Bay Minette in 2010 is 8,234-8,532 with an average projection of 8,387. In 2020, the population is projected to be within 8,542-9,308 with an average a projected average of 8,898. For 2030, the population projection is between 8,724-10,155 with a projected average of 9,429.

The 2000 U.S. Census reported 2,739 households in Bay Minette. Chapter 2 of this document discusses household projections in more depth, but assumes that future household projections will follow the same growth trend observed between 1990 and 2000 and continue to increase at the same pace. For 2010, the projected number is 3,007. For 2020, the projected number of households is 3,275. For 2030, the projected number of households is 3,543. If you assume the City will maintain a household size of 2.56 persons per household, then total populations projections based on household data can also be projected. The household projections listed in Table 2.16 use this method and project a 2030 population of 9,070. This falls within the range of the 2030 population projections obtained through other methods, thus supporting Bay Minette’s projected 2030 range of 8,724-10,155 with a projected average of 9,429.

Projected Housing Needs

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 2,941 housing units in Bay Minette. Since then and through the end of 2009, building permits were issued for a total of 459 units thus giving a housing unit estimate of 3,400. This number does not include new manufactured home placements which would increase this total even more. However, if you just assume the 3,400 total housing units, this constitutes an average of 46 new housing units per year. If you assume future housing starts demonstrate historic growth trends and increase by an average of 46 housing units per year, it is possible to project the number of future housing units Bay Minette can anticipate by 2030, with the exception of new manufactured home placements. *Table 3.11* illustrates the future housing unit projections based on an annual increase of 46 units.

Type of Housing Unit

According to the 2000 Census, of the 2,941 housing units, 2,138 were single family, 576 were duplex and

TABLE 3.11: Future Housing Unit Projections for Bay Minette	
Housing Unit Projections	Number of Housing Units
2009 Total	3,400
2010 Total (add 46)	3,446
Projected new units from 2010-2015 (46 per year)	230
2015 Total	3,676
Projected new units from 2015-2020 (46 per year)	230
2020 Total	3,906
Projected new units from 2020-2025 (46 per year)	230
2025 Total	4,136
Projected new units from 2025-2030 (46 per year)	230
2030 Total	4,366
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau , Building Permit Data Calculations: SARPC</i>	

multi-family and 227 were mobile homes. Between the years of 2000 and 2009, building permits were issued for 300 new single family homes and 159 new multi-family units. The units can then be added to the 2000 Census information giving an estimate of 2,438 single family units and 735 multi-family units for 2009. Of the 3,400 total dwellings in 2009, 71.7% of housing units were single family, 21.6 % were duplex and multi-family, and 6.7 % were mobile homes. *Table 3.12* illustrates the percent of housing unit types for Bay Minette in 2009.

TABLE 3.12: Percent of Housing Unit Type in Bay Minette

Type of Housing Units	2000 Census	Percent of Total Units (2000)	Building Permits 2000-09	2009 Housing Units	Percent of Total Units (2009)
Total Housing Units	2,941	-	459	3,400	-
Single Family	2,138	72.7%	300	2,438	71.7%
Duplex and Multi-Family	576	19.6%	159	735	21.6%
Mobile Homes	227	7.7%	0	227	6.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau , Building Permit Data

Housing Unit Projections by Type

Assuming that the types of housing units needed in the future will be the same as they are now, the 2009 percentage of total units for each housing type can be used to project the number and type of units needed to support future growth. The total number of housing units needed in each year is multiplied by the percentage rate for the type of dwelling, thus determining the number of single-family, duplex and multi-family, and mobile homes needed in 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025, and 2030. *Table 3.13* illustrates Bay Minette’s projections for future housing needs based on the housing type.

TABLE 3.13: Projected Future Housing Type Needs for Bay Minette

Future Housing Unit Needs	2009		Total Units Needed	Total Units Needed	Total Units Needed	Total Units Needed	Total Units Needed
	Total Units	%	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Housing Units	3,400		3,446	3,676	3,906	4,136	4,366
Single Family	2,438	71.7	2,471	2,636	2,801	2,966	3,130
Duplex and Multi-Family	735	21.6	744	794	844	893	943
Mobile Homes	227	6.7	231	246	262	277	293
Total Increase in # of Units	-	-	230	230	230	230	230

Source: U.S. Census Bureau , Building Permit Data
Calculations: SARPC

Housing Density

According to a windshield survey conducted by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission and the Current Land Use Map located in Chapter 5 of this document created using that information, total acreage per housing type for the planning area was calculated. Based on this method, it was estimated that in Bay Minette, single family units occupy approximately 9,120 acres of land, duplex and multifamily units occupy approximately 298 acres of land, and manufactured or mobile home units occupy 1,689 acres of land within the planning area.

According to requirements for residential development land density defined in Bay Minette's Land Use and Development Ordinance, 7,500, 9,000, or 15,000 square feet is required for single family lot development depending on which residential zone the dwelling is located in. All duplex and multifamily developments require at least 7,500 square feet for one unit plus 2,500 square feet for each additional unit. Manufactured homes require at least 7,500 square feet for lot placement. All future residential development will be required to meet these land densities and minimum future land requirements can be estimated from the regulations.

Projected Land Requirements

Bay Minette has shown significant population growth over the past two decades and if that trend continues, it is important to plan for the future residents, specifically with regard to housing. According to the population projections discussed earlier in this section, by 2030, Bay Minette is expected to have a population range between 8,724- 10,155 with an average projected population of 9,429. By using the housing type percentages shown in *Table 3.13* and the residential densities requirements outlined in the City's Land Use and Development Ordinance, it is possible to determine the amount of land that will be required to house future populations. These projections assume that future land densities per housing type will reflect the same density percentages that were exhibited in Bay Minette in 2009.

Table 3.14 illustrates projected future land requirements per housing type for Bay Minette through 2030. According to the projected future land requirement data shown in *Table 3.14*, Bay Minette will grow by 46 residential dwellings by 2010 and an additional 230 units with each five year increment between 2010 and 2030. This is a total of 966 new residential units in Bay Minette by 2030. Bay Minette's residential acreage will increase between 7 and 13 acres between 2009 and 2010. Between 2010 and 2015, an additional 34 to 67 acres will be needed to accommodate Bay Minette projected residential growth. In each five-year increment between 2010 and 2030, Bay Minette's residential land growth will require an additional 34 to 67 acres. Therefore, Bay Minette will need an additional 143 to 281 acres for residential land development by 2030.

According to the windshield survey conducted by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission and the Land Use Map created using that information, Bay Minette currently has approximately 9,009 acres of undeveloped land within its planning area. Some of this land can be used to accommodate the future projected land use needs for residential development.

TABLE 3.14: Bay Minette's Projected Future Land Requirements per Housing Type

Housing Type	2010			2015			2020		
	Units Needed	Unit Increase From 2009	Acres Needed for 2010 New Units	Units Needed	Unit Increase From 2010	Acres Needed for 2015 New Units	Units Needed	Unit Increase From 2015	Acres Needed for 2020 New Units
Single Family	2,471	33	5.61-11.22	2,636	165	28.05-56.1	2,801	165	28.05-56.1
Duplex and Multi-Family	744	9	0.71-1.53	794	50	3.17-8.5	844	50	3.17-8.5
Mobile Homes	231	4	0.68	246	15	2.55	262	16	2.72
Total	3,446	46	7.0-13.43	3,676	230	33.77-67.15	3,906	230	33.94-67.32
	2025			2030					
Single Family	2,966	165	28.05-56.1	3,130	164	27.88-55.76			
Duplex and Multi-Family	893	49	3.05-8.33	943	50	3.17-8.5			
Mobile Homes	277	15	2.55	293	16	2.72			
Total	4,136	230	33.65-66.98	4,366	230	33.77-66.98			
<i>Calculations: SARPC</i>									

Future residential growth should utilize infill development techniques where possible to prevent residential sprawl away from the community's core of commercial areas, schools, and pedestrian/public transit access. Creating isolated residential neighborhoods only adds stress to the public infrastructure including roads, water and sewer, and City services. However, meeting the housing demand is typically left up to the private sector, though the City should have an active role in determining the type of housing, the density, and where the housing will be located. It is important to consider the overall goal of the community when planning for future housing needs. In order to maintain the rural, small-town character, new housing should be directed toward the center, more dense part of the City. The City should also try to avoid further subdivision of large agricultural/forested parcels on the outskirts and fringe area. These parcels should be reserved for very low density agricultural and timber uses.

Affordable Housing

The availability of affordable housing is an issue that has received a considerable amount of attention over the past decade in Baldwin County. It can be very difficult for a community to balance the need of providing affordable housing options for residents of all income groups while simultaneously attempting to manage growth at an appropriate level. This is made increasingly difficult with the rise in property values associated with tourism and access to natural resources, such as Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. However, housing markets are influenced by many factors including supply and demand, especially within a regional area. Baldwin County continues to demonstrate the second highest growth rate in the State. Due to the mobility of the workforce, the access to Interstate 10, and the willingness of people to commute considerable distances to their jobs, Bay Minette will continue to appeal to families in Baldwin and Mobile Counties from all income levels as desirable place to live. Bay Minette's moderate to low property values coupled with the economic growth of Mobile's metropolitan area and Baldwin County will continue to attract new residential developers.

The affordability of a community's housing stock is based on a comparison of the household income to the median household income within the community. Households with the greatest potential need of requiring financial support for housing are those that are below 80% of the community's median family income and paying more than 30% of gross income towards housing costs.

According to 2000 U.S. Census data, over 28.9% of Bay Minette's population earned below the median household income of \$27,226 and over 20% of Bay Minette's families are below the poverty level. 23% of Bay Minette's single family property owners pay more than 30% of their gross income to housing costs. Therefore, Bay Minette's population demonstrates need for affordable housing options. However, Bay Minette's current property values are the lowest in Baldwin county and there are currently many affordable housing properties, both single family and multifamily units, available to serve this population. Although new construction of affordable housing units within Bay Minette is not needed at this time, future residential development should include housing opportunities to serve this low to moderate income population within the community.

Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes are considered a housing option for some low to moderate income households. Within Bay Minette's municipal limits, manufactured homes are allowed in Residential Districts R-3 and R-4 by Special Exception and R-5 by Right according to the City of Bay Minette's Zoning Ordinance. The City should continue to allocate sites for manufactured homes, as they are one type of affordable home for low to moderate income residents. The City should also consider design standards associated with the installation of manufactured homes to encourage their compatibility with stick-built homes in the area.

Multifamily Housing

It is estimated that there are currently 735 duplex and multifamily dwellings in the City of Bay Minette. This constitutes over 21.6 percent of the total housing stock of the city. The City allows duplex construction in Limited Density Multi-Family Residential District (R-2) zoning district and multifamily development in High Density Multi-Family Residential District (R-3) zoning district. Duplex and Multifamily dwellings provide housing options for low to moderate income households in addition to young singles and couples. They also provide housing for temporary populations associated with temporary employment, such as construction or tourism industries.

Substandard Housing

The structural integrity of Bay Minette's housing stock was assessed during a windshield survey conducted by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. Housing units were marked as either standard, deteriorating, or dilapidated. Standard housing units are those in need of no major repairs and are well maintained. Deteriorated units are those showing signs of needed repair and rehabilitation such as poor roofs, flaking paint, or cracking foundations. Dilapidated units are those considered not economically feasible for repair and present a health and safety issue to the community. Data from the field survey indicated that 1.5% of Bay Minette's housing stock was considered dilapidated, 8.5% was considered deteriorated, and the remaining 90% of the housing stock was considered standard. Therefore, Bay Minette's housing stock is in good structural integrity with less than 10% needing rehabilitation or demolition. The City of Bay Minette should identify target areas to focus rehabilitation activities of substandard houses and demolish those that are a danger to the community. Rehabilitation and demolition of substandard housing units can be accomplished through a combination of private investments and government funds. The City should actively seek assistance through the CDBG, HOME, and Federal Rehabilitation Loan Program to aid in this effort.

Public Housing

The Bay Minette Housing Authority is located at 400 South Street and offers Section 8 vouchers, low income housing, and senior housing for eligible populations within the Bay Minette area. Currently, the Housing Authority operates and maintains 108 duplex and multi-family public housing units throughout the City. The vacancy rate is less than 1%. There are 24 Section 8 housing units which use 24 certificates. There are also three HUD subsidized apartments within Bay Minette: Bay Minette Rotary Village; Bay Minette VOA Housing; and Village Oaks. These facilities provide housing to low income populations that are elderly. The Housing Authority's future needs include additional units for occupancy and rehabilitation of existing units.

Recommendations and Strategies

To ensure that Bay Minette's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette's future growth and development.

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis of the current and projected housing statistics to achieve the identified goals of the community. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer to obtaining their vision for prosperous growth and development for the City of Bay Minette.

- Promote a choice of rural, suburban, and urban living environments and housing types to accommodate all household incomes. This includes anticipating and planning for future land requirements associated with future population projections and projected housing types.
- Preserve and maintain the rural, small town character of Bay Minette by implementing subdivision regulations that will not: result in environmental degradation; adversely affect rural/semi-rural areas; impair working agricultural and timberland operations.
- Protect the quality of life in existing and new neighborhoods by implementing subdivision regulations that will: ensure the separation of incompatible land uses; preserve and/or create open spaces and landscaped areas; promote the connectivity of roads, schools, parks, and open spaces; require, where feasible, the installation of sidewalks throughout the development; and prevent stress on the existing public infrastructure and public services.
- Update the City's building code to be consistent with the current International Building Code.
- Require, through the adopted current building codes and inspection, a high quality of construction for residential structures that meets all flood and hurricane specifications. This includes issuing code violations for existing properties that are not in compliance. Encourage developers to locate new utilities underground to prevent damage during tropical storms and hurricanes.
- The Beautification and Historic Committees shall coordinate with the Baldwin County Historic Commission and the Alabama Historic Commission.

- Ensure, through site plan review and/or subdivision plat review, that high-density developments have a design and scale compatible to adjoining residential developments and are buffered from different residential densities.
- Rehabilitate existing substandard housing areas by encouraging rehabilitation of deteriorated properties and demolition of dilapidated structures. Seek assistance for this effort from state and federal housing grant programs including the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)-CDBG and HOME Programs. Seek assistance from other applicable organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity.
- Prevent, through subdivision regulation enforcement, the development of land that is topographically not suitable for residential development such as floodplains and wetlands.
- Maintain the public infrastructure at a level needed to continue adequate service to existing and new residential dwellings. This includes correcting existing deficiencies in infrastructure and upgrading or constructing new infrastructure to accommodate new developments. Deny new development if the infrastructure is not in place to support it without compromising the service to existing housing. Require that all new development be connected to the City's existing public water and sewer lines at the developer's expense.
- Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to provide the required improvements and extensions to support future residential development projected in this Chapter with public infrastructure.
- Identify undeveloped lots within existing residential neighborhoods that would be suitable for residential infill of single family and multifamily developments. Encourage developers to consider these target areas for future residential development.

Transportation

Goal

Provide a transportation network capable of moving people and goods efficiently and safely.

All residents and businesses of a community depend on its transportation network to connect them to their region. The type, quality, and location of these transportation networks are key components that



Figure 4.1: Downtown Bay Minette and the Baldwin County Courthouse

influence quality of life and sustainable local economy. An adequate transportation system that provides for safe and expeditious movement of persons and goods is vital to the growth of a community.

There is a significant relationship between transportation and land use. New development or changes in existing land uses, whether incremental or sudden, directly affect the safety and functionality of roadways and the demand for additional transportation facilities. On the other hand, creating new or improving existing transportation corridors can have a significant distribution effect on the type and

timing of development within a community and/or region. Therefore, it is essential that communities exercise sound and innovative transportation planning solutions to accommodate growth and development.

The transportation network of Bay Minette includes streets and highways, sidewalks, bicycle paths, signage, lighting, parking, and traffic signalization. This chapter identifies and evaluates the current elements of Bay Minette's transportation system as they relate to traffic flow and connectivity of land uses. It also identifies and evaluates alternative modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit. Lastly, recommendations and strategies are proposed to accomplish community identified transportation goals and to address identified problems or deficiencies in the current transportation network.

Current Transportation Network

The City of Bay Minette has developed along a generally north-south axis in the north-central section of Baldwin County. A large percentage of the City's planning area consists of rural residential property, including large tracts of agricultural and timberland. The City's central downtown square serves as the Baldwin County Seat and the focal point for the City's business and commercial development. Bay Minette's streets were originally laid out in a grid pattern and some have evolved into important local collector streets. Highway 59 and Highway 31 serve as the City's principal arterials. Highway 59 is the

major north-south traffic corridor for the City and is also the main tourist transportation corridor to and from Alabama's beaches along the Gulf Coast. Highway 59 extends through downtown Bay Minette and around the City square. East-west access to and through the City is provided by County Road 138, State Highway 31, Old Pensacola Road, and D'Olive Street Extension.

The transportation network of Bay Minette is illustrated in *Map 4.1* and *Map 4.2*. The existing transportation network for the City of Bay Minette currently provides adequate means of transportation and linkage throughout the City and to adjacent municipalities for its residents with only minimal traffic congestion, delays, and safety concerns. However, the current network will not accommodate the pressures of the ongoing growth and development of Bay Minette and Baldwin County for much longer, without significant traffic and safety problems.



Figure 4.2: The Square in Downtown Bay Minette facing north

Bay Minette serves as a crossroads community within Baldwin County and connects the County and southern municipalities to Interstate 65. Interstate 65 access, less than six miles to the north from downtown, and Interstate 10 access, approximately seventeen miles to the southeast, has made it possible for residents of Bay Minette to pursue employment in the Mobile Metropolitan Area and adjacent municipalities. The U.S. Census Bureau projects a population increase for Baldwin County of 62.0% by the year 2020 to a population of 227,727. The population projections formulated in this Plan for Bay

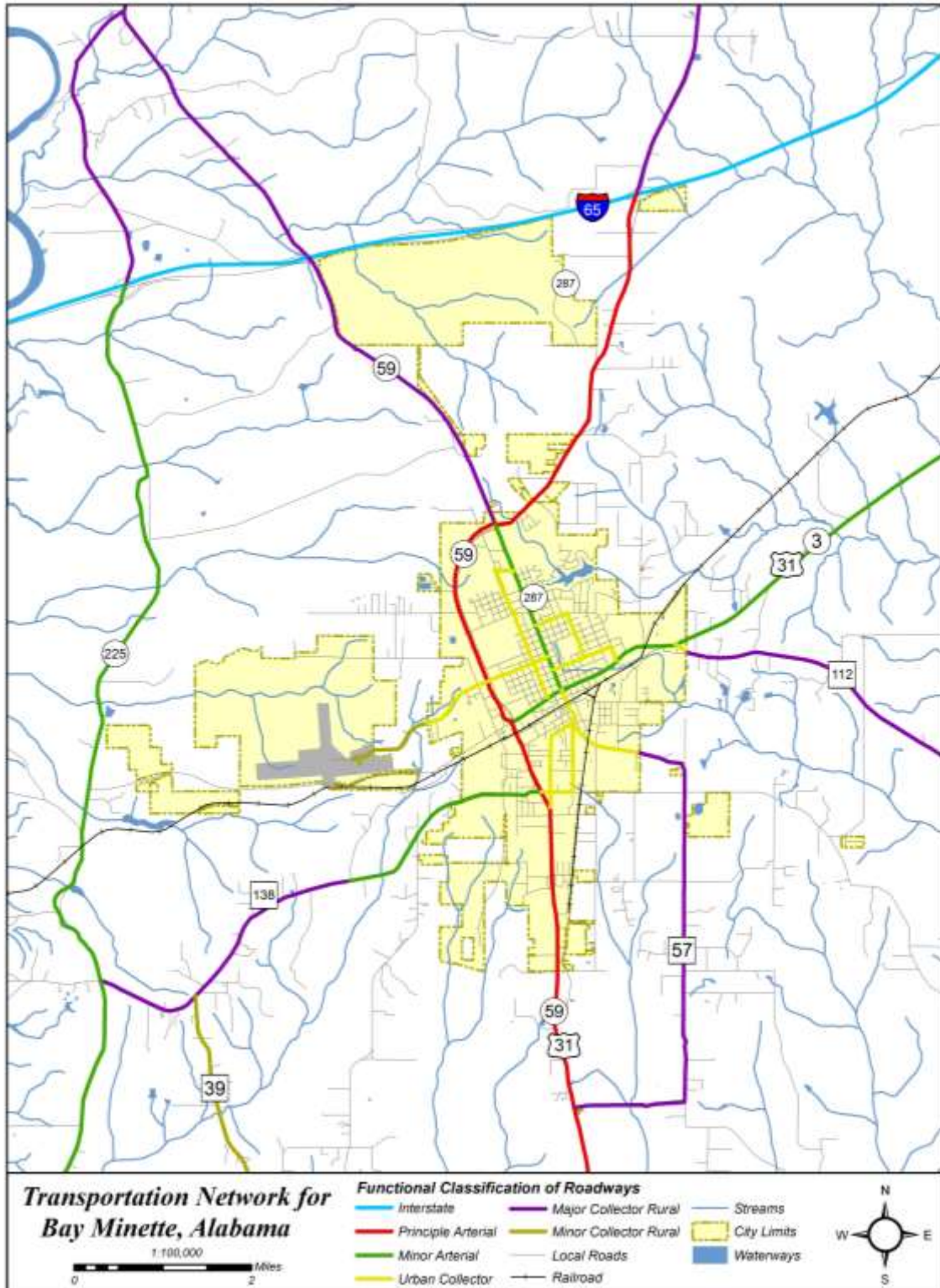
Minette propose a 20.6% increase between 2000 and 2030 to an average population of 9,429. With the County and City experiencing such growth, it can be expected that traffic along many of the State, County and local roads will exceed the roadway capacities unless improvements to the transportation network are made. Bay Minette is already experiencing traffic congestion during peak traffic volume times along Highway 59 and around the downtown square.

Road Classifications & Volumes

The functional classification system separates streets by a hierarchical system based on street function. The classification system is used to balance traffic movement and accessibility on different roadways. The classes of roadways in Bay Minette range from principal arterial, emphasizing the movement of large volumes of traffic movement, to local streets, emphasizing access to adjacent properties. Bay Minette's traffic circulation network is comprised of a fairly well-linked system of arterial, collectors, and local streets that provides reasonably efficient access. Below is a description of each road classification. *Table 4.1, Map 4.1, and Map 4.2* illustrate the functional classification of the current transportation network in Bay Minette.

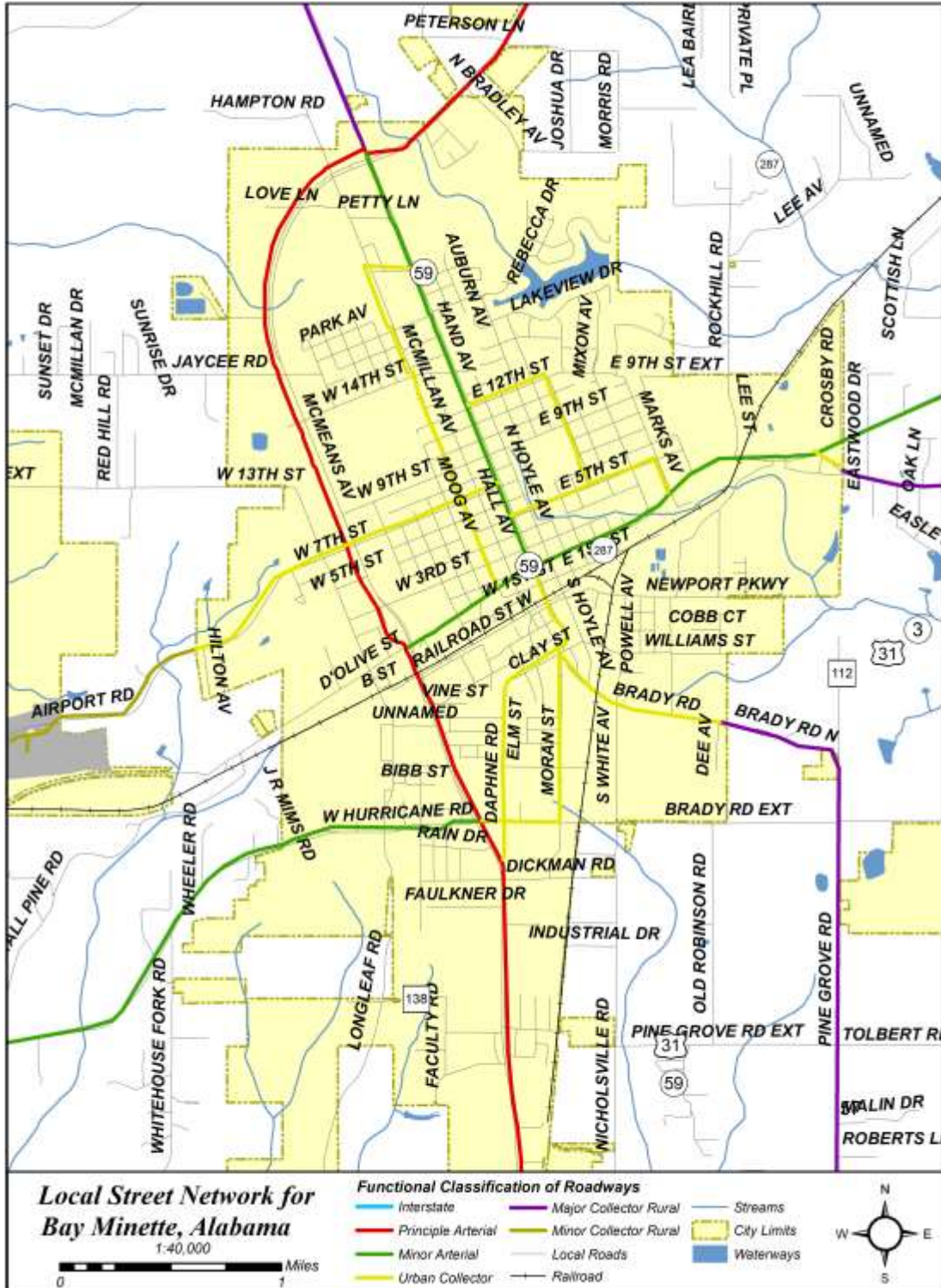
- Arterial Highways – Alabama Department of Transportation defines these roads as the most important in the state. They are designed to carry significant high-speed long-distance traffic. When improvements are necessary substantial federal funding is usually available.

Map 4.1: Bay Minette Functionally Classified Road



Source: SARPC

Map 4.2: Bay Minette Current Transportation Network



Source: SARPC

- Collector Highways – These are defined by ALDOT as roadways that collect and distribute traffic to the arterial roads. Generally, they serve places of lower population density. Baldwin County provides routine maintenance to these roadways and the City has the responsibility of plowing and sanding.
- Local Roads – These are defined by ALDOT as all roads not in the first two categories. They generally carry low volumes of traffic and serve local transit needs.

Table 4.1: Functional Classification of Roads in Bay Minette	
Highway or Roadway	Functional Classification
Alabama Highway 59	Principal Arterial
Alabama Highway 287	Principal Arterial/Minor Arterial
U.S. Highway 31	Minor Arterial
Old Pensacola Road	Major Rural Collector
County Road 138	Minor Arterial
County Road 57	Major Rural Collector
<i>Source: Alabama Department of Transportation</i>	

Average Daily Traffic Volumes

In order to determine the performance of a transportation facility within a network, daily traffic volumes are assessed to determine a Level of Service, LOS. Levels of Service categorize roads based on traffic, congestion, and delays. Using traffic counts, a LOS is assigned to roadways based on their current ability to serve or exceed their capacity. *Table 4.2* illustrates the different LOS categories assigned to roadways.

Average daily traffic counts were obtained from the Alabama Department of Transportation. *Table 4.3* illustrates the average daily traffic counts of 30 traffic stations in the Bay Minette planning area from 2001 to 2009 and *Map 4.3* depicts their locations. These volumes represent average daily traffic volume at particular locations within the transportation network of Bay Minette’s planning jurisdiction. Comparing maximum roadway capacities with actual volumes identifies current problems. The maximum roadway capacities were determined using the Mobile Area Transportation Study’s model of roadway capacities by functional classification. It was determined that all of the City of Bay Minette’s transportation corridors are currently operating between an LOS of A and an LOS of B.

Bay Minette has two I-65 access ramps in the north portion of the planning jurisdiction where ALDOT has located traffic counters. According to Table 4.3, the traffic at both of these I-65 counters has increased around 10% since 2001. The north corridor HWY 59 and the south corridor HWY 59/31 leading into and out of the City have both experienced a significant increase in traffic volumes of around 10% since 2001. A portion of this 10% increase in traffic volume associated with I-65 access and HWY 59/31 usage can be attributed to the increase in tourism to Alabama’s Gulf Coast beaches since 2001.

The eastern corridor into and out of the City, HWY 31, illustrates moderate traffic volume increase within the City limits of around 6%. However, HWY 31 east of the City within the planning jurisdiction has experienced an 18% increase in traffic volume since 2001. This corridor is the main route to Escambia County and communities such as Atmore and Brewton.

TABLE 4.2: Level of Service (LOS) for the City of Bay Minette	
A	Highest LOS which describes primarily free-flow traffic operations at average travel speeds. Vehicles are completely unimpeded in their ability to maneuver within the traffic stream. Stopped delay at intersections is minimal.
B	Represents reasonable unimpeded traffic flow operations at average travel speeds. The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is only slightly restricted and stopped delays are not bothersome. Drivers are not generally subjected to appreciable tension.
C	Represents stable traffic flow operations. However, ability to maneuver and change lanes may be more restricted than LOS B and long queues and/or adverse signal coordination may contribute to lower average travel speeds. Motorists will experience noticeable tension while driving.
D	Borders on a range in which small increases in traffic flow may cause substantial increase in approach delay and, hence, decreases speed. This may be due to adverse signal progression, high signal density, extensive queuing at critical intersections, and inappropriate signal timing.
E	This is the beginning of an inadequate network, with long queues causing excessive delays.
F	This represents traffic flow characterized at extremely low speeds. Intersection congestion is likely at critical signalized locations, with high approach delays resulting in more traffic demands than signal capacity.
<i>Source: Alabama Department of Transportation</i>	

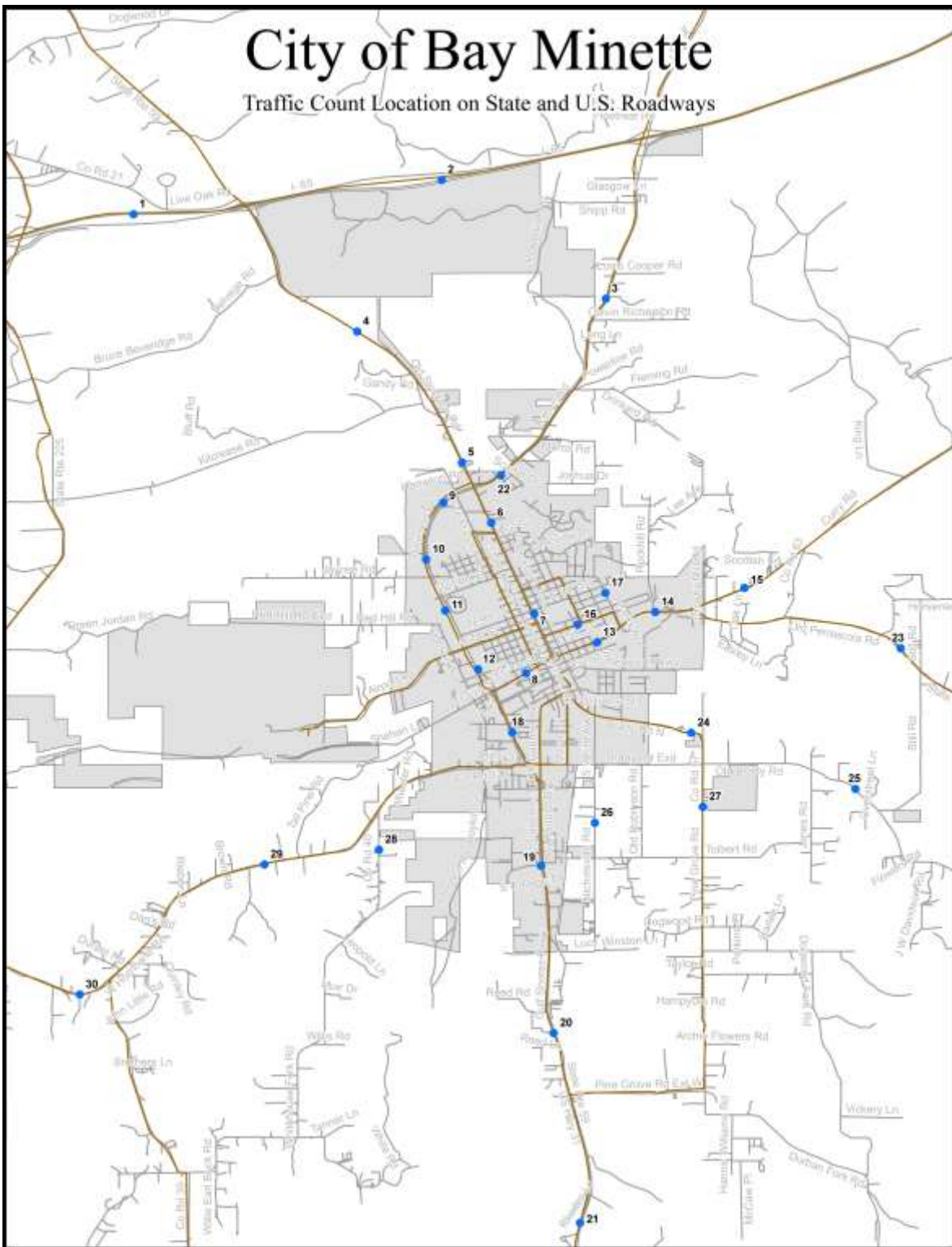
Table 4.3: Historical Average Daily Traffic Counts on State and U.S. Roadways in the City

LOCATION	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2001- 2009 % Change
1- I-65 west of HWY59	17,580	17,960	17,820	18,610	19,040	18,810	19,130	18,900	19,240	9.4
2- I-65 east of HWY59, west of 287	15,330	15,820	15,970	16,340	16,560	16,630	16,910	16,710	17,010	11.0
3- HWY 287 north of City	6,660	6,970	7,470	7,470	7,670	7,980	7,820	6,690	6,950	4.4
4- HWY 59 north of City	5,740	5,980	6,030	6,250	6,340	6,590	6,460	6,090	6,340	10.5
5- HWY 59 north, south of Kilcrease Rd.	6,690	6,970	7,030	7,280	7,460	7,760	7,640	7,200	7,270	8.8
6- Hwy 287, south of Hwy 59 intersection	5,160	5,320	5,570	4,900	5,100	5,300	5,190	4,440	4,480	-13.2
7- HWY 287/Hand Ave., north of downtown square	6,160	5,990	6,250	6,190	6,390	6,650	6,520	5,570	5,630	-8.6
8- Hwy 287/HWY 31, west of downtown square	13,680	14,860	14,820	15,040	15,090	15,690	15,380	14,090	14,230	4.0
9- HWY 59, west of 287 intersection	10,670	11,030	11,640	12,020	12,240	12,730	12,480	11,760	11,960	12.0
10- HWY59 ,north of Jaycee Rd.	10,670	11,030	11,640	12,020	12,240	12,730	12,480	11,760	11,960	12.0
11- HWY59 south of Jaycee Rd., north of 8 th St.	14,090	14,910	15,600	16,040	16,360	17,010	16,790	16,010	16,280	15.5
12- HWY59 north of HWY 287/31 intersection	18,050	19,550	20,290	20,770	21,080	21,920	21,480	20,730	21,080	16.8
13- HWY 31 east of square	8,170	8,870	8,840	8,970	9,010	9,370	9,180	8,410	8,490	3.9
14- HWY 31 east of downtown	6,890	7,730	7,700	7,810	7,850	8,160	8,000	7,330	7,400	7.4
15- HWY31 east of City	3,730	4,400	4,370	4,430	4,630	4,760	4,670	4,280	4,420	18.5
16- 5 th St. downtown, east of HWY 59	NA	NA	NA	370	400	420	420	410	410	10.8*
17- Marks Ave. downtown, east of Hwy 59	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	540	-
18- HWY59/31 south of 287 intersection	24,260	24,810	25,940	25,980	26,370	27,470	26,870	25,310	25,740	6.1
19- HWY59/31 south of City	17,580	18,420	19,290	19,460	19,800	20,590	20,180	19,010	19,330	10.0
20- HWY59/31 south of City	13,130	13,710	14,350	14,400	14,790	15,380	15,070	14,200	14,750	12.3
21- HWY59/31 south of City	13,720	14,470	15,490	15,510	15,680	15,930	15,800	14,880	15,460	12.7
22- HWY 287 east of HWY 59 intersection	8,120	8,440	8,990	8,400	8,570	8,900	8,780	7,510	7,640	-5.9
23- Old Pensacola Rd., southeast of City	1,140	1,200	1,270	1,600	1,700	1,740	1,710	1,600	1,670	46.5
24- Brady Rd. N	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,770	-
25- Brady Rd. S.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,190	1,090	-8.4*
26- White Ave., east of HWY 59 south	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,930	1,860	1,880	-2.6*
27- Pine Grove Rd.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,500	1,450	1,510	0.7*
28- White House Fork Rd., west of HWY 59 south	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,910	1,870	1,890	-1.0*
29- County Rd. 138, west of City	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,550	2,430	2,530	-0.8*
30- County Rd. 138, west of City, west of Co. Rd. 39, east of State Rt. 225	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,670	2,590	2,700	1.1*

Source: Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)
from first recorded year.

*Indicates % change calculated

Map 4.3: Bay Minette Traffic Count Locations Map



Source: Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)

Considerable residential and commercial development has occurred to the southwest of Bay Minette towards the City of Spanish Fort. ALDOT has recently placed traffic counters on some of these State and County routes and changes in their traffic volume are illustrated in Table 4.3. The western corridor into and out of Bay Minette, HWY 138, has not experienced traffic volume increases according to ALDOT's data even though this area of the County has seen substantial residential growth. This would suggest that the majority of new residences within the southwest portion of the planning jurisdiction are occupied by individuals who do not work in Bay Minette.

Overall, most of the traffic corridors where ALDOT is measuring traffic volume within Bay Minette's planning jurisdiction have demonstrated an increase in usage. However, changes in the traffic flow can be observed along the HWY 287 and HWY 59 interchange. Historically, HWY 287 south of the HWY 59 intersection (Hand Avenue) experienced higher traffic volumes. However, traffic has now shifted northwest of downtown and utilizes the HWY 59 bypass corridor as opposed to traveling downtown through the square. This is due to the substantial increase in commercial development along this HWY 59 bypass corridor, including the new Super Wal-mart.

Traffic counters 17 and 18 are measuring traffic volume around the elementary school and indicate an increase in traffic volume of around 10%. Several counters are measuring traffic volumes to the southeast of downtown where industrial development is a dominant land use. These counters indicate a slight decrease in overall traffic volume since 2001. Below is a brief description of each ALDOT functionally classified road within the planning jurisdiction of Bay Minette and their changes in traffic patterns based on the ALDOT traffic count data since 2001.

Major Arterials

Alabama Highway 59

Alabama Highway 59 is the major north/south transportation corridor in Bay Minette and in Baldwin County. HWY 59 and HWY 59/31 are divided four lanes throughout Bay Minette's municipal limits and planning area with the exception of the northern corridor between I-65 and HWY 287. Both the north and south HWY 59 corridors have experienced increased traffic volume since 2001 of around 10%. HWY 59 forms the Bay Minette bypass and routes traffic to the west of central Bay Minette. The increase in traffic volume along Highway 59 has led to the movement of commercial business away from the central business district and to the bypass corridor. The four traffic counters located



Figure 4.3: HWY 59 north of Bay Minette, southward bound

along the HWY 59 bypass indicate significant traffic volume increases ranging from 12 to 16 percent. Highway 59 is also the major hurricane evacuation route for Alabama's Gulf Coast, therefore adequate emergency planning for county-wide evacuation is necessary.



Figure 4.4: HWY 59 and HWY 287 intersection, southward bound



Figure 4.5: HWY 59 bypass, southward bound



Figure 4.6: HWY 59 and HWY 31/287 intersection, southward bound



Figure 4.7: HWY 59/31 south, northward bound towards the HWY 59 bypass and HWY 31/287 intersection



Figure 4.8: HWY 59/31 south, northward bound approaching Bay Minette City limits



Figure 4.9: HWY 59/31 south, northward bound, within the Bay Minette planning jurisdiction

Alabama Highway 287

Alabama Highway 287 serves as a secondary connector to Interstate 65 to the northeast of Bay Minette. The roadway is an important corridor through central and downtown Bay Minette, where it is called Hand Avenue. Hand Avenue provides linkage from the Central Downtown Business Square to Highway 59. HWY 287 shares the south corridor of the square with HWY 31, which extends east to Escambia County. The traffic counters located on this route indicate a slight increase in all areas with the exception of the Hand Avenue portion of the corridor south of the HWY 59 bypass intersection. This indicates a shift in traffic flow from the downtown to the new commercially developed HWY 59 bypass.



Figure 4.10: HWY 287, northward bound



Figure 4.11: HWY 287 and HWY 59 intersection, northward bound on HWY 287



Figure 4.12: HWY 287 (Hand Avenue), southward bound



Figure 4.13: HWY 287/31, eastward bound towards downtown square



Figure 4.14: HWY 287/31, west side of the downtown square.



Figure 4.15: HWY 287/31, westward bound to the HWY 59 bypass intersection.

Minor Arterials

U.S. Highway 31

Highway 31 connects Bay Minette with communities in southern Escambia County, Alabama as well as communities along the Eastern Shore of Baldwin County. It is the main transportation corridor to Atmore and Brewton from Baldwin County. Highway 31 is mostly a two-lane highway for this eastern portion of the corridor into Escambia County. Highway 31 merges with Highway 287 in downtown Bay Minette on the square and they share the route to the Highway 59 bypass intersection. At this point, Highway 31 turns south to merge with Highway 59 and share this route to just north of Stapleton where Highway 31 splits and turns southwest. Highway 59/31 is a divided four-lane through this portion of the County. Highway 31 continues southwest into the City of Spanish Fort and then to Mobile. Highway 31 serves as one of the main corridors that link Bay Minette to Mobile.



Figure 4.16: HWY 31, eastward bound to Escambia County



Figure 4.17: HWY 31, eastward bound out of the City

ALDOT traffic counters located along HWY 31 measured moderate growth of between 4-7% east of the City since 2001. Traffic counters along HWY 59/31 south measured significant growth of over 10% since 2001.



Figure 4.18: HWY 31, westward bound towards the downtown square



Figure 4.19: HWY 31, eastward bound out of downtown



Figure 4.20: HWY 31/D'Olive St., eastward bound towards the downtown square

County Road 138

Baldwin County Road 138 runs east to west and connects Bay Minette to State Route 225 to the west of Bay Minette. This corridor serves as an important route for commuters who work in Mobile County but live in Bay Minette. This area of the planning jurisdiction has seen considerable residential growth over the past few years as the City of Spanish Fort has grown into this area. However, ALDOT traffic counters along this corridor indicate that traffic volumes have remained the same since 2001 with little to no increase.

Collector Streets

Old Pensacola Road

Old Pensacola Road serves as a secondary route between Bay Minette and Pensacola, Florida. It also serves to connect Bay Minette, the County seat, with smaller rural communities on the western portion of northern Baldwin County. ALDOT traffic counters along this route measured tremendous growth of over 46% since 2001. This represents the highest increase in traffic volume along any corridor in the Bay Minette planning area since 2001. Clearly, with this type of traffic volume increase, the level of

service for this particular roadway is likely to decrease and indicate the need for future road improvements such as additional lanes to accommodate this doubled volume.

Local Streets

All other roadways in Bay Minette are local streets. Bay Minette's local streets serve residential areas and connect neighborhoods to commercial areas. Most of the local streets are in good to fair condition with some in need of minimal repairs. Very few unpaved roads were identified during the land use survey of the community. Most repairs include typical patching and drainage improvements. Some problems exist due to flood prone areas which create safety and access concerns. Most of the City's streets were originally established in a grid pattern and some extend for several miles. 7th Street has evolved into a collector street between Hand Avenue and State Highway 59. The local streets exhibit fairly good connectivity, however several dead-end roads and cul-de-sacs were identified. Congestion and delays were not observed during any portion of the land use survey on any local streets. However, many of these local streets, closer into the downtown area, have an excess of stop signs. These stop signs have been placed at every block intersection of the traditional City grid. They are intended to slow traffic along residential streets however, their numbers result in impeding adequate traffic flow. These stop signs have been the source of many complaints to the City. The City has indicated the need for an alternative solution to this problem. The City should consider utilizing residential round-a-bouts similar to ones used along residential streets in neighboring Mobile. This would serve to slow the traffic flow without completely impeding traffic movement and creating congestion during peak hours.

Parking

The parking facilities in Bay Minette are predominantly associated with the on-site land use they serve. Bay Minette's commercial development is generally located within the central business district of downtown Bay Minette and along Highway 59. The downtown is the only area that supports pedestrian access to commercial uses and also possesses on-street parking for the local businesses. The Baldwin County Courthouse is situated in the middle of the downtown square. The employees and county residents that access the courthouse daily require a great deal of parking spaces around the square. This necessity for government parking associated with the courthouse competes and conflicts with the parking necessary for the commercial business and retail stores around the square. The City gets many complaints from courthouse employees, business owners, and residents of the County concerning the lack of adequate parking in downtown Bay Minette around the square. The City agrees that there is a problem with downtown parking facilities and is committed to finding a resolution. The City is researching parking alternatives such as a municipal owned parking lot. However, the limited transit services available in Bay Minette would require this type of parking facility to be located close to the courthouse. Currently, large vacant lots appropriate for this type of development are not available around the square. However, the City is committed to developing a solution to the parking problem downtown.

Pedestrian/Bicyclist Access

The Land Use Regulations of the City of Bay Minette currently address the construction standards and conditions for sidewalks. However, the City does not require the installation of sidewalks with all land use development. The City should take an aggressive effort to install new sidewalks to improve pedestrian access along many of the City's major transportation corridors. The City should also update the Land Use regulations to support this initiative. With support from Baldwin County grants, downtown Bay Minette has an improved sidewalk network that adequately accommodates pedestrians throughout the downtown business district. The downtown sidewalk network is well landscaped and has attractive street furniture and lamp post lighting that creates an attractive atmosphere for commerce. Efforts should be made by the City of Bay Minette to continue these types of improvements throughout the City, especially along Hand Avenue, Highway 287/31, and Highway 59 bypass.

The Alabama Department of Transportation has designated one National Bicycle Route and proposed two State Bicycle Routes through the Bay Minette planning area. The National Route extends from Meaher State Park in Spanish Fort, up the west side of the Bay Minette planning jurisdiction, into the western portion of the State, then just west of Tuscaloosa, enters into Mississippi to extend north to the Natchez Trace Parkway and into Tennessee. The National Route follows many state highways including HWY 31, 225, 43, 69, and 120. The proposed State East/West Route 5 follows the Highway 31 corridor and extends east from the City of Bay Minette to Brewton, Andalusia, Dothan, then into Florida. The proposed State North/South Bicycle Route follows the existing National Route until just southwest of Carrolton, then follows the Highway 17 corridor north to the northwest corner of the State and ends in the City of Tuscumbia. A map of these three routes can be obtained by contacting the Alabama Department of Transportation.

The Baldwin County Trailblazers, a local non-profit organization, is working with many municipalities in Baldwin County and state and federal entities to increase the number of bicycle routes through Baldwin County. Through multiple partnerships and public funding from grants and donations, several bicycle trails have been established. However, there are efforts from municipalities and other applicable entities within the County to create a County Wide Bicycle Route that would link all the communities to the existing routes. Most of the proposed routes follow abandoned railroad corridors and are eligible for funding through ALDOT's Rails-To-Trails Program. *Map 4.4* illustrates the existing bicycle routes and the proposed bicycle routes in Baldwin County.



Map 4.4: Map of existing and proposed bicycle routes in Baldwin County

Public Transit

According to the US Census, in 2003, 41.7% of Baldwin County's labor force worked outside Baldwin County with 24.8% (10,193) commuting to Mobile County. In addition, there is a tremendous need for public transit within Baldwin County to transport north and central populations to southern portions of the County where they are employed in the retail/service industries associated with the tourist economy along the beaches. To accommodate these needs, Baldwin County has partnered with several entities to establish multiple forms of public transit throughout the County and into the City of Mobile.

Bay Minette is served by the Baldwin Rural Area Transportation Service (BRATS), which provides multiple transit programs to connect people throughout Baldwin County and to Mobile County. BRATS' mission is to provide transit services to protect the environment, conserve energy, and promote a strong economy. They provide multiple routes including Dial-A-Ride, Work Routes, Historic Routes, and Health/Medical Routes. The Bayline Route connects Baldwin County communities to downtown Mobile. A list of all routes and schedules can be found on the Baldwin County Commission website.

The BRATS Ride-to-Work, NorthLinc Routes allow individuals to travel from the Eastern Shore and South Baldwin County to Bay Minette for Work. These routes were designed for county employees as well as the general public to travel to work 5 days a week using public transportation. The Faulkner Schedule Route was created to accommodate the travel to Faulkner State Community College in Bay Minette. Pick-up points for these public transit opportunities are located at the Bay Minette Courthouse Square, the Baldwin County Board of Education, EMC of Bay Minette, Standard Furniture, and Faulkner Community College.

Another transportation program is available to Baldwin County residents through the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. The commuter service is called the Ride-Share Program and it functions to link individuals throughout Baldwin, Mobile, and Escambia Counties that share similar commuter routes throughout the region. The program identifies commuter groups for carpool and provides individuals with a ride home in the event of an emergency. Information about this program can be found at the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission's website.

Streetscaping

Streetscaping includes street furniture, lamp post, trees and vegetation, signage, curbing, paving materials, awnings and canopies, and other aesthetically pleasing corridor improvements. A successful streetscape provides visual interest, draws people in, and creates social meeting places for community interaction. Fortunately, Bay Minette and Baldwin County have made great efforts over the years to incorporate some streetscaping into the downtown area, specifically the first block around the square. This has created a beautiful downtown area that has pedestrian access, is well landscaped, and full of aesthetically pleasing street furniture and light fixtures. Therefore, the majority of streetscaping improvements should be focused on areas outside of the immediate downtown inner blocks. Sidewalk

installation and improvements with associated lamp post should be placed along Hand Avenue, Highway 31, and Highway 287/31 to extend the downtown theme into the residential and commercial corridors leading into the downtown square. In addition, streetscaping should be installed along Highway 59 bypass where all the new commercial strip development is occurring to connect this portion of the City to the downtown theme and create pedestrian access and linkage to this area from adjacent residential neighborhoods. Portions of Highway 59/31 south should also have streetscaping installations such as lamp post lighting, as opposed to highway lighting, to create a sense of character unique to Bay Minette as opposed to generalized urban sprawl. Additional types of streetscaping should be utilized along Highway 59/31 south closer into the City such as sidewalks, street furniture, and covered transit stops.

Gateways

The north and south gateways into the City are lined primarily with large agricultural land uses and timberland. As you get closer into the City, the residential lots become denser and commercial land uses become more prominent. The I-65 and Highway 59 north gateway into the City is predominantly lined with timberland until the Highway 59 bypass and Highway 287 intersection. There is a monument style welcome sign into Bay Minette located at this intersection. Future improvements should include the introduction of a landscaped sidewalk network along Hand Avenue from this intersection southward to downtown. Lamp post lighting, landscaping, and street furniture should also be utilized along Hand Avenue. This intersection is also the gateway into the City from I-65 and Highway 287. This corridor is also lined with mostly timberland until the Highway 59 intersection. Highway 59 bypass, southwest of the Highway 287 intersection, should be improved with the installation of lamp post lighting as opposed to highway lighting. Additional landscaping is needed as well. Photographs of these gateway corridors are located on previous pages of this chapter.



Figure 4.21: City welcome sign located at the HWY 59/287 intersection, facing south

The Highway 59/31 south gateway into the City is lined with mostly rural residential and agricultural land uses throughout the planning jurisdiction. Commercial land uses become more prominent as you become closer into the City. This corridor is lined with many billboard signs, some advertising tourist attractions throughout the region that appeal to the Gulf Coast vacationers. There is a monument welcome sign into the City as well. There is also moderate landscaping. However, future improvements for this corridor should be the same as what is proposed for the Highway 59 bypass corridor. In addition, sidewalks should be installed closer into the City near the Highway 59 and Highway 287/31 intersection to connect pedestrian access from this commercial portion of Bay Minette to the downtown area and adjacent residential neighborhoods. The front building facades of commercial business that line all gateway corridors within the City should be held to an increased standard of appearance

guidelines to prevent the construction of bare metal building fronts and other types of unattractive development and land uses from existing along the City's gateways. Gateway corridors are the first and last impression a community has on their visitors and residents and directly effects future economic development.

The Bay Minette Municipal Airport

The Bay Minette Municipal Airport is located at 11981 Airport Road just southwest of the downtown area, off the Highway 59 bypass. The airport is publically owned by the City of Bay Minette and managed and operated by the Bay Minette Airport Authority. It has one runway strip with two approaches (Runway 8/26), tie-down parking facilities, and on-site fueling. Operational statistics include an average of 30 planes onsite a day with 28 of those being single engine aircraft. Currently, there are identified plans for an airport expansion, as seen on *Map 4.5*.

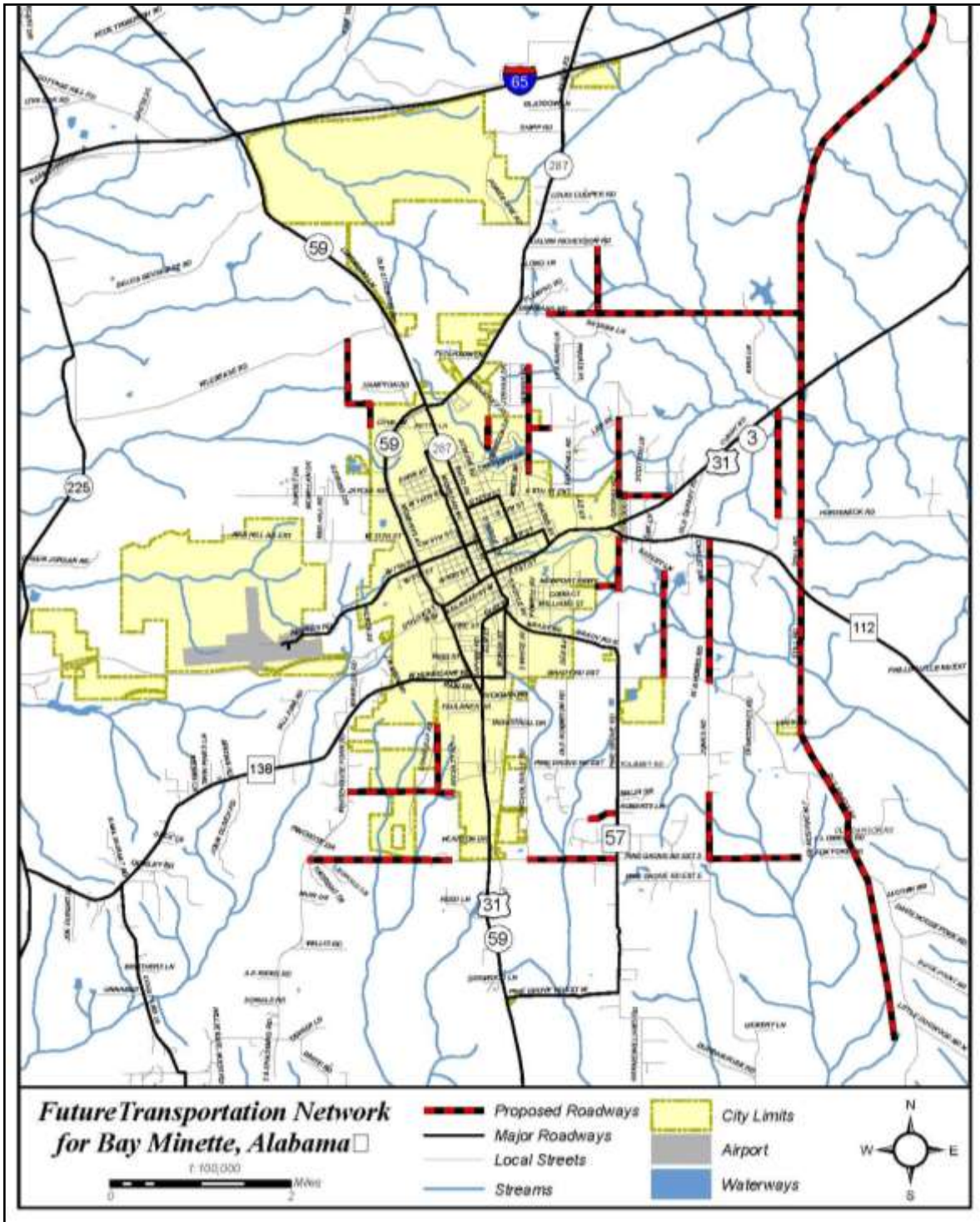
Future Transportation Network

The future transportation network proposed for Bay Minette is illustrated on *Map 4.5*. There are 25 proposed road extensions to local streets. The proposed local street extensions will increase connectivity throughout the City. There is also one proposed State extension through ALDOT called the Baldwin County Extension. This proposed corridor will extend north/south through east side of the planning area of the City. It is an extension of the current Foley Beach Extension from the Gulf Coast to Interstate 10. The Baldwin County Extension will provide connectivity of this corridor all the way to Interstate 65 north of Bay Minette.

Recommendations and Strategies

To ensure that Bay Minette's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette's future growth and development. In addition, the future transportation network map, *Map 4.4*, was developed for Bay Minette. It is based on the current transportation network but proposes future roadway projects needed to accommodate future growth and more efficiently move people throughout the community. *Map 4.5* proposes future road expansions and new constructions throughout the municipal limits that will improve the transportation network. It is the goal of the City, with assistance from the State and County, to complete these expansions and new constructions by 2030.

Map 4.5: Bay Minette Future Transportation Network



Source: SARPC

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis of the current and projected transportation network to achieve the identified goals of the community. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer to obtaining their vision for prosperous growth and development for the City of Bay Minette.

- Conduct an Access Management Plan of HWY 59 through Bay Minette. This plan will identify the areas with the highest accidents and congestion and propose solutions such as additional traffic signals. If current growth trends continue, additional traffic signals will be needed along HWY 59 and possibly HWY 31 by 2020.
- The City should apply for state and federal funds for improvements to Bay Minette's transportation system. ALDOT, ADECA, and other agencies have programs for street enhancements, gateway improvements, tree/ landscaping installation, sidewalk and trail improvements, street furniture, etc.
- Establish a Gateway Subcommittee/ Roadway Beautification Committee made of volunteers from the community responsible for identifying areas in need of improvements. The Committee should work with City Council and City Staff to provide suggestions for improvements and aid in project support such as in-kind contributions for grants.
- Install streetscaping improvements along Hand Avenue, Highway 59/31 south, and Highway 59 bypass. These improvements should include lamp post lighting as opposed to highway lighting, street furniture, landscaping, and, where appropriate, sidewalk construction, repair, and extension. This will improve the appearance of the gateway corridors into the City and increase pedestrian access in these commercial areas in addition to linking them to the downtown square.
- Accomplish a connected street network by amending subdivision regulations to require that all new streets connect with existing streets instead of the installation of cul-de-sacs and dead-end roads. The connectivity of the existing network can be achieved through the extensions proposed in the future land use map.
- Provide local traffic with alternatives to HWY 59. This can be achieved by improving local streets that serve schools and residential traffic and alleviate access management problems along the congested portion of HWY 59.
- Amend subdivision regulations to require that all new developments, especially residential, install sidewalks that connect the new development with the City's sidewalk network to ensure linkage to parks, schools, and commercial uses.

- Replace several of the residential stop signs along Hall Avenue, McMillian Avenue, and Hoyle Avenue with residential round-a-bouts. Round-a-bouts are traffic calming and slowing installations that do not stop traffic flow and create areas of congestion because they allow traffic to continue moving. Examples of these types of round-a-bouts can be seen in residential neighborhoods in downtown Mobile.
- Work with adjacent municipalities and environmental and recreational funding agencies to create a Greenbelt Bikeway/Pedestrian Network that connects Bay Minette to other municipalities throughout the County. This includes the creation of a Citywide Bike/Pedestrian Plan that connects major transportation corridors throughout the County with local municipal sidewalks, parks and bike paths.
- Develop a Downtown Parking Assessment and Plan to resolve the inadequate parking facilities in downtown Bay Minette. This can be accomplished with support from grants through ALDOT.
- Establish Rural/Scenic Route corridors for preservation and enhancement that have significance to the character of the community. Standards for protection could include preservation of old trees and their canopy, increased setbacks for development surrounded by natural vegetation, and limiting overall development to prevent the need for future road widening.

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Land Use

Goal

To ensure the orderly growth and development of the City of Bay Minette through the wise allocation of land to various uses based on the anticipated needs of future populations, with attention in planning and implementation to protect the quality of life and safety of the residents, conserve natural resources, promote compatible land uses and transportation accessibility, and provide availability of utilities and public facilities.

Land use planning is the orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities, and services with an intent to securing the physical, economical, and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban communities. The Land Use Chapter establishes the physical plan for future development of the City of Bay Minette. This Chapter also designates the appropriate locations for future land uses and guides future growth and development of Bay Minette for the next twenty years.

The Land Use Chapter will identify and assess the current types and densities of land uses within the City of Bay Minette such as residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, government, and recreational. This chapter will also project future land use densities based on current and historic development trends and propose a future land use configuration of the City that will guide future land use management and regulations. This chapter will also identify recommendations and strategies that will guide the City in achieving their desired future land use goals.

Existing Land Use Inventory

Bay Minette's current land use development patterns are illustrated on *Map 5.1*. A land use

LAND USE FACTS

The City of Bay Minette planning area assessed in this Chapter consists of 71,828 acres.

Agricultural land use is currently the largest land use category in Bay Minette with over 45,403 acres, or 63%, of the total planning area being farmed, forested, or used for livestock.

Single-family residential development is the second largest land use category in Bay Minette. It constitutes 14% of the planning area at 10,291 acres.

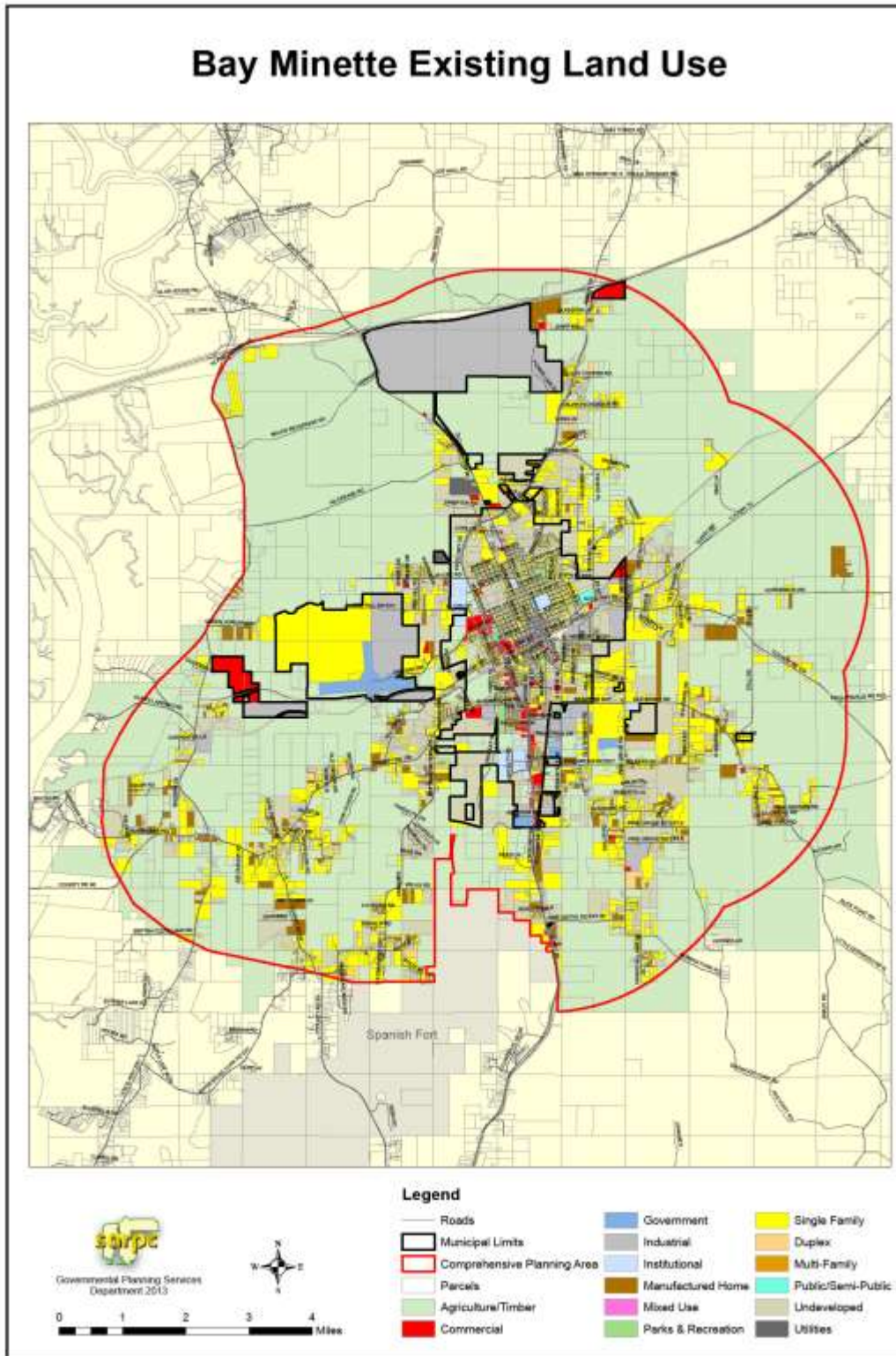
Over 12% of the City's planning area, approximately 9,000 acres, is categorized as undeveloped and currently available for future growth.

The residential build out analysis discussed in Chapter 4 estimated that an additional 966 housing units could be constructed on undeveloped or agricultural land zoned for residential use by 2030. This will require an additional 143 to 281 acres of land.

The City currently has close to 78 acres of parks, trails, and recreational property for public use.

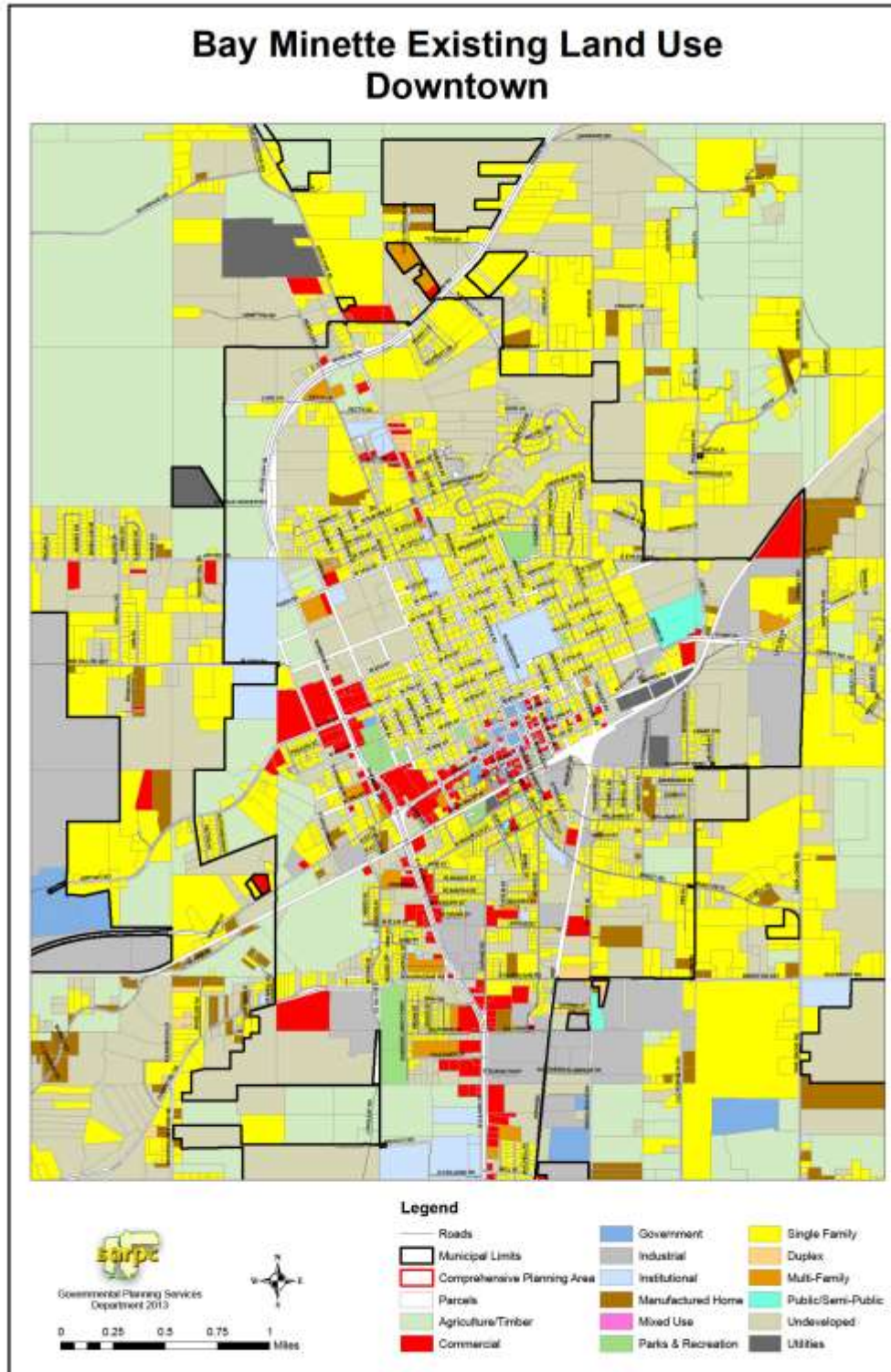
Source: SARPC

Map 5.1: Existing Land Use for the City of Bay Minette



Source: SARPC

Map 5.2: Existing Land Use for the City of Bay Minette, Downtown



Source: SARPC

Category has been assigned to all parcels within the City of Bay Minette’s planning area and municipal limits. The primary source of this information is a field survey conducted by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. This field data was then converted to a GIS database and used to create the current and future land use maps in this chapter. The data was then cross-referenced with the Baldwin County Revenue Commission 2010 parcel data for accuracy. The maps divide land use activities into several categories which include the following:

Agriculture/Forestry – All parcels that are farmed or forested. This includes croplands, timberlands, and livestock.

Undeveloped – All parcels that do not have structures on them and are not used for agriculture.

Single-Family Residential – All parcels that have single-family structures.

Duplex Residential – All parcels that have two to four dwelling units per lot.

Multi-Family Residential – All parcels that have five or more structures per lot.

Manufactured Home – All parcels that have mobile or manufactured homes on individual lots or in parks.

Institutional – All parcels that have a school, hospital, nursing home, or church.

Parks and Recreation – All parcels that have parks, open space, trails, recreational space and facilities.

Government – All parcels with City, County, or Federal structures. This includes police and fire facilities, post offices, libraries, court houses, and City and County buildings.

Mixed Use – All parcels where more than one type of compatible land use is present such as an apartment over an office or retail business.

Commercial – All parcels within the planning jurisdiction that have commercial structures and/or uses. This includes banks, offices, gas stations, restaurants, and retail stores.

Industrial – All parcels with light or heavy industrial structures and uses including industrial parks, warehouse and manufacturing operations.

Table 5.1 presents a summary of the approximate acreage contained in each of the land use categories listed above within the planning area and municipal limits of the City of Bay Minette. Bay Minette’s planning area is currently 71,828 acres. As illustrated in the table, the largest land use category in Bay Minette is currently agriculture/forestry, with a total of 45,403 acres. This is of the total municipal limits and planning area. Bay Minette has historically been a timber community and clearly continues to support this type of use within its planning area.

The single-family residential land use category is the second largest category totaling 10,291 acres, or 14.33% of the total developed area. Bay Minette’s small town character, designation as the county seat, and convenient location to great public schools and areas of employment has stimulated single-family residential growth within the City and planning area. Duplex residential and multi-family residential land uses constitute less than 1% combined of the total developed planning area. The manufactured home category totals 1,696 acres, or 2.36% of the planning area.

Institutional land uses comprise over 0.5% of Bay Minette’s developed planning area, or 425 acres. The community’s dedication to improved educational and healthcare facilities and has led to an increase in the amount of land devoted to support these facilities. Bay Minette also has many churches throughout their planning area and municipal limits.

Bay Minette currently has 78 acres of parks and recreational property which accounts for 0.11% of their total developed land. Currently, the City needs additional acreage of regional park space, community park space, trails, and mini park space as determined in the Parks, Recreation, and Events Chapter. However, the City has an adequate amount of neighborhood parks within the planning area to serve the current and future population needs of the City.

**TABLE 5.1:
Current Total Acreage of Land Use Categories
Illustrated on Map 5.1 and Map 5.2 in the City and
Planning Area of Bay Minette**

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Agriculture/Forestry	45,403	63.21
Undeveloped	8,989	12.51
Single-Family Residential	10,291	14.33
Duplex Residential	181	0.25
Multi-Family Residential	130	0.18
Manufactured Home	1,697	2.36
Institutional	425	0.59
Parks and Recreation	78	0.11
Government	259	0.36
Mixed Use	0.45	0.00
Commercial	729	1.01
Industrial	3,485	4.85
Total	71,828	100

Source: SARPC

The government land use category represents 0.36% of the total developed area, or 259 acres. The City has an abundance of this type of land use category due to their designation as the county seat. In addition, the City has improved their public facilities with the construction of a new fire department. Government land uses have been historically located downtown around the square. A lot of the downtown square buildings contain Baldwin County Offices including the Baldwin County Annex. However, there has been a recent development trend to locate government land uses along the Highway 59 Bypass, including a newer post office and the Baldwin County High School.

Commercial land use constitutes 1.01% of the total developed land area, or 729 acres. This land use has continued to grow and expand along the Highway 59 Bypass corridor and the Highway 59/31 corridor. Mixed use development constitutes less than 1% of the total developed land area, or 0.45 acres. This land use category has only been utilized downtown. Industrial land use represents 4.85% of the total developed area, or 3,485 acres. The City has demonstrated commitment to expanding industrial land use within the City and is currently seeking industrial development opportunities for future growth. Existing industrial development land uses are located predominantly along Highway 59/31.

Undeveloped land comprises over 12.51% of the total developed area. This totals 8,989 acres currently available for land development and new construction. Some of these lots are located within residential neighborhoods while others are located in commercial areas. These vacant lots should be developed with uses that are the same or compatible with adjacent uses.

Historical Land Use Patterns

The previous City of Bay Minette Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1999 and identifies the land use pattern of the City at that time. The land use categories identified in the previous Plan are slightly different from the ones used today; however, comparisons can be made between the two land use inventories. Analysis of the historical inventory in comparison to the current inventory allows identification of land use categories that have shown an increase over the past 11 years and ones that have decreased. It also establishes historical growth trends and patterns that can be projected forward to guide development plans and future land use projections.

According to Bay Minette’s previous comprehensive plan, the total planning area in Bay Minette in 1999 was 27,345.8 acres. Therefore, the City’s planning area has increased by 44,482.2 acres in the past 11 years. The City of Bay Minette has annexed land into their municipal limits over the past 11 years, particularly acres to the southwest and north. The resulting planning area is extremely large and has resulted in an adverse financial burden on the City. The City is currently taking actions to decrease their planning area to a more manageable size in the near future.

The following land use categories were used in the 1999 land use inventory: residential (included all types); commercial; industrial (light and heavy); public/semi-public (this included institutional, park/recreational, medical and government land uses); agricultural/forestry, and undeveloped. *Table 5.2* presents a summary of the 1999 land use inventory categories and their associated acreage.

The largest land use category in Bay Minette in 1999 was the undeveloped land use category which constituted over 48% of the total planning area. The second largest category was agricultural/forestry land uses comprising over 27% of the total planning area. Residential land use was the third largest category comprising over 14% of the total planning area.

TABLE 5.2:
City of Bay Minette 1999 Historical Land Use Inventory and Total Acreage of Land Use Categories

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Residential	3,957.9	14.47
Commercial	267.6	0.98
Industrial	489.6	1.79
Public/Semi-Public	2,020.7	7.39
Agricultural/Forestry	7,473.9	27.33
Undeveloped	13,137.1	48.04
Total	27,346.8	100

Source: SARPC

Table 5.3 illustrates a land use inventory comparison between the historical land use inventory of 1999 and the current land use inventory of today and identifies changes within similar types of land uses.

TABLE 5.3: Comparison and Analysis of Bay Minette’s Historical 1999 Land Use Inventory to Bay Minette’s 2010 Current Land Use Inventory

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>1999 Land Use Inventory Acreage of Total Planning area</i>	<i>2010 Current Land Use Inventory Acreage of Total Planning Area</i>	<i>Difference in Planning Area Composition</i>
Agricultural/Forestry	7,473.9	45,403	37,929.1
Residential (Includes all 2010 residential categories)	3,957.9	12,298	8,340.1
Public/Semi-Public (Includes the three 2010 categories: Government, Parks/Recreation, and Institutional)	2,020.7	762	-1,258.7
Commercial	267.6	729	461.4
Industrial	489.6	3,485	2,995.4
Undeveloped	13,137.1	8,989	-4,148.1

Source: SARPC

According to *Table 5.3*, all of Bay Minette’s 2010 land use categories have increased except the public/semi-public land use category and the undeveloped land use category. The agricultural/forestry category increased by 37,929.1 acres over the past 11 years. This is due to the significant increase in the planning area which consists mostly of these types of land uses. The residential land use category increased by 8,340.1 acres and is the result of increased residential development and the increased planning area.

Commercial property has increased since 1999 by 461.4 acres. Most of this new development has occurred along Highway 59 Bypass and along Highway 59/31 south. Industrial development increased by 2,995.4 acres and is predominantly located along Highway 59/31 south. The undeveloped land use category decreased by 4,148.1 acres since 1999. Some of this decrease is due to the new commercial, industrial, and residential development that has occurred within the planning area over the past 11 years.

Future Build Out Analysis and Projections

The physical characteristics of the land help mold the location, density, and types of development that occur. Soil characteristics, drainage patterns, and topography influence if land is acceptable for development. Bay Minette’s topography is generally flat and doesn’t present substantial development restrictions associated with slope. There are six main drainage areas identified by FEMA as 100-year floodplains within the Bay Minette planning area. Most are located in the southern portion of the City. However, the City is classified as an area of minimal flooding. Most flooding issues can be resolved through storm water management best practices and engineering at the site plan review level. The soil surveys indicate soils with few to moderate limitations and soils that are suitable for agricultural land uses.

Map 5.3 and Map 5.4 illustrate the 2030 future land use development pattern projected for the City of Bay Minette. This proposed development pattern was based on a build out analysis for the City of Bay Minette and its planning area. The build out analysis was formulated using the existing land use inventory, historical land use growth patterns, and future population projections for the City of Bay Minette. The build out analysis and projected future land use development pattern did not include future annexations or expansions of municipal or planning jurisdiction limits. Although this action is anticipated in the future, many of these expansions are initiated by property owners and private developers and it is difficult to predict these actions 20 years in advance. Therefore, this build out analysis only assess the current land inventory.

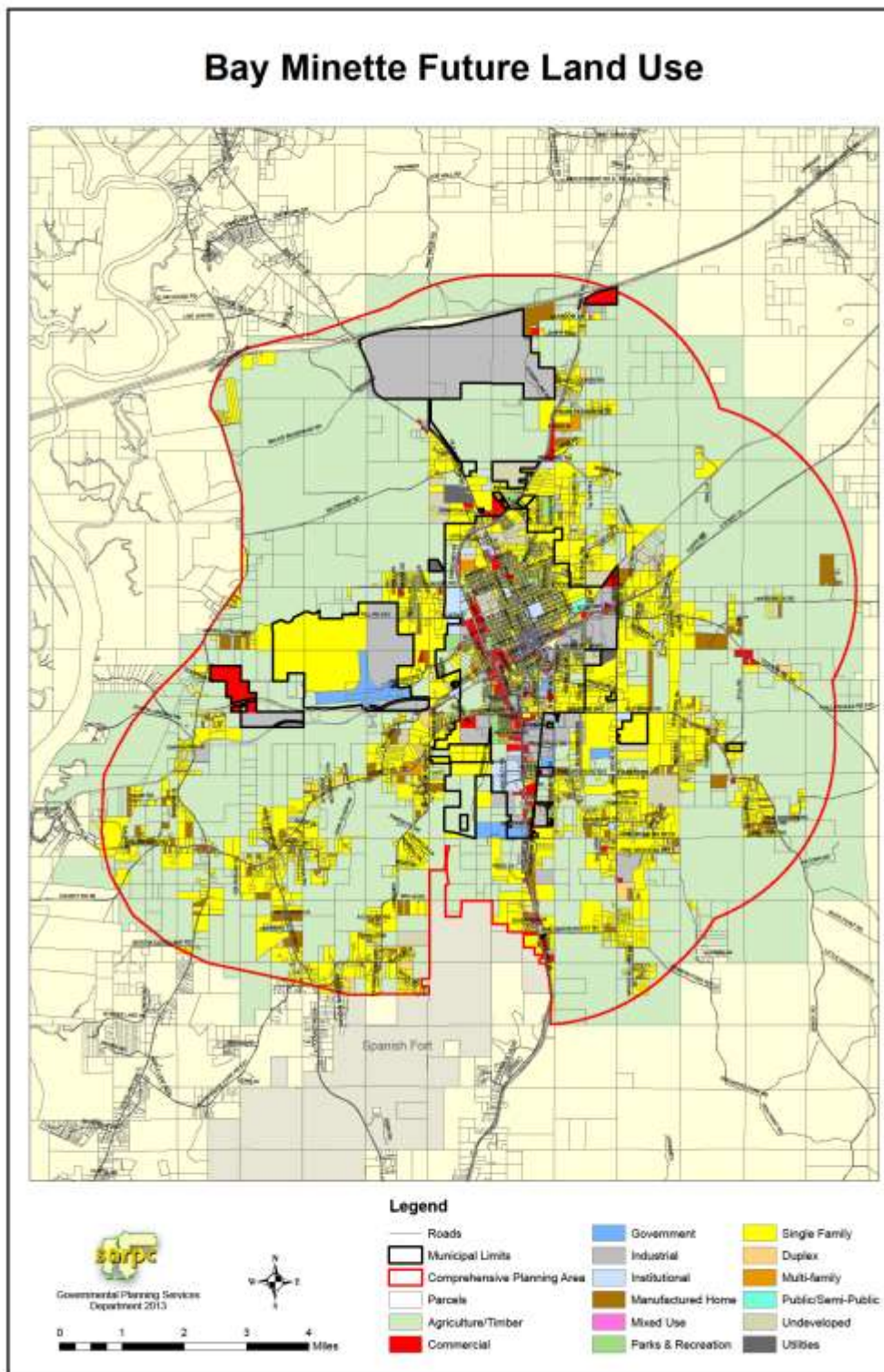
TABLE 5.4:
Future Projected Acreage of Land Use Categories
Illustrated on Map 5.3 and Map 5.4 in the City and
Planning Area of Bay Minette

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Agriculture/Forestry	45,505	63.35
Undeveloped	1,115	1.55
Single-Family Residential	16,872	23.49
Duplex Residential	243	0.34
Multi-Family Residential	225	0.31
Manufactured Home	1,560	2.17
Institutional	524	0.73
Parks and Recreation	181	0.25
Government	370	0.52
Mixed Use	35	0.05
Commercial	1,025	1.43
Industrial	3,978	5.54
Total	71,282	100

Source: SARPC

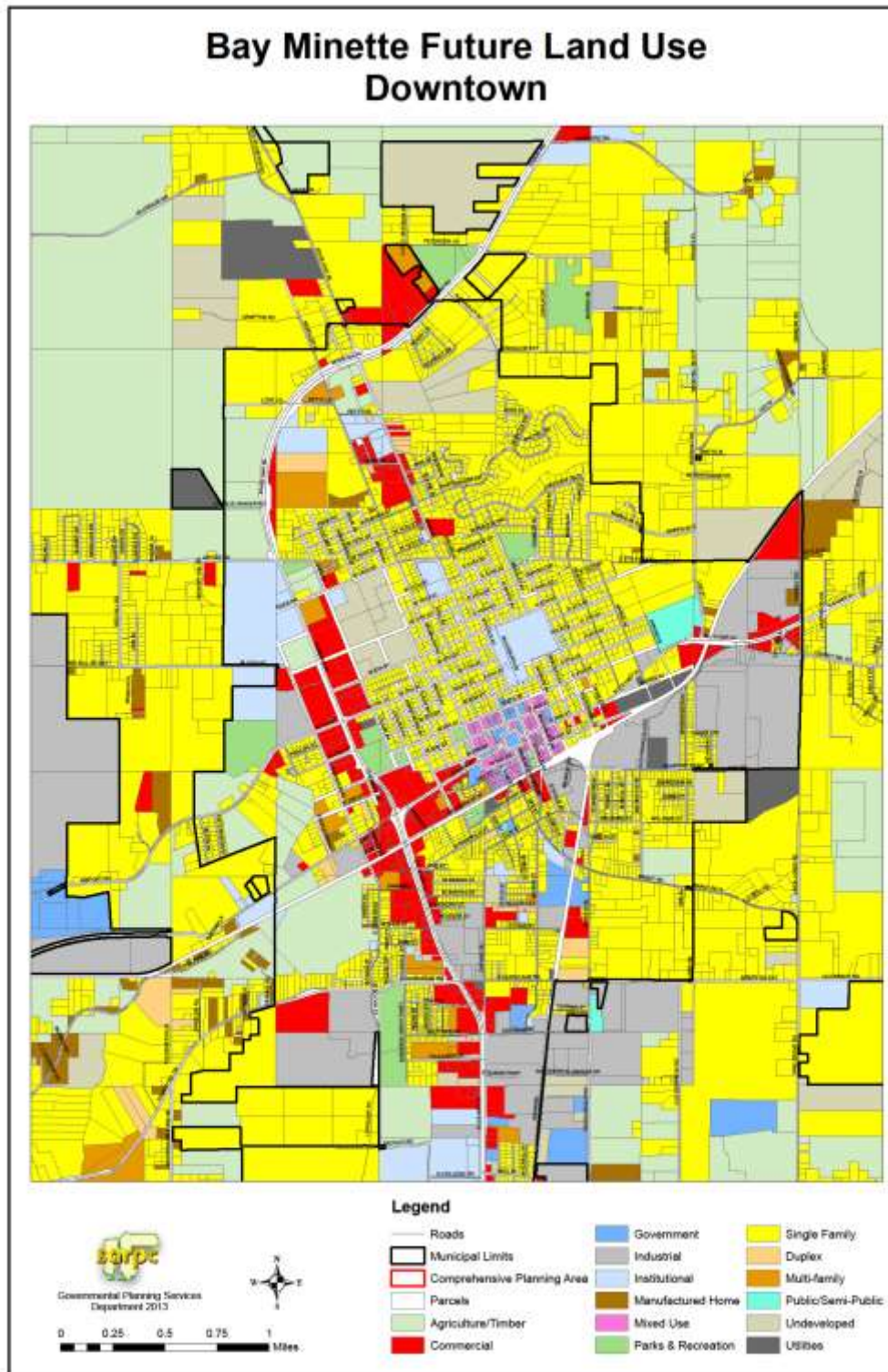
Table 5.4 presents a summary of the approximate acreage contained in each of the land use categories projected on the future land use map. The future land use acreage was projected based on current and historic growth trends and future land use requirements estimated according to future population and housing projections.

Map 5.3: Future Land Use for the City of Bay Minette



Source: SARPC

Map 5.4: Future Land Use for the City of Bay Minette, Downtown



Source: SARPC

Future 2030 population projections, discussed in Chapter 2, for the City of Bay Minette range between 8,724 -10,155 with an average estimate of 9,429. This is an additional 1,087 new residents in the City of Bay Minette by 2030. According to the 2000 Census, the average household size is 2.56 individuals. If the City continues to demonstrate this household average into future population projections, then over 425 new housing units will be needed in Bay Minette to accommodate the influx of new residents.

According to future housing projections discussed in Chapter 3, there will be an additional 966 housing units in Bay Minette in 2030. This projection is based only on historical building permit data and projecting past and current development trends into the future. This projection does not consider future population projections for the City. When conducting a future build out analysis for future development, population projections and housing projections must be assessed to ensure enough land is allocated to accommodate the range of projected growth. It was estimated that an additional 143 to 281 acres will be needed to accommodate this potential residential growth pattern.

Current land requirements, defined in the Zoning Ordinance for residential development within the City of Bay Minette range from 7,500 to 15,000 square feet per lot for Single-family depending on which zoning classification the development is occurring in. Multi-family development requires 7,500 square feet per lot and an additional 2,500 square feet for each additional unit. If you compare historical land use patterns with the current land use pattern, residential development land uses in Bay Minette are typically single-family developments with less than 1% of housing being duplex or multi-family units. If the City continues this same trend, twice as much acreage will be required to accommodate future residential population projections. Care will have to be taken to preserve the agricultural and timberland land uses that define Bay Minette's small town rural character that so many residents value as an asset to their community.

As illustrated on *Map 5.3*, *Map 5.4*, and in *Table 5.4*, the future land use inventory for residential categories projected 16,872 acres for single-family; 243 acres for duplex residential; 225 acres for multi-family residential; and 1,560 for manufactured homes. This is a total of 18,900 projected acres for future residential land use in Bay Minette by 2030. Residential land use categories were increased from 14% of the total planning area in 2010 to 23% of the total planning area by 2030. Single-family acreage was increased by 6,581 acres which allows for more than enough land for future single-family developments while preserving the large, open rural character of the community. This allocation of land does not include any expansion of the current municipal or planning jurisdiction boundaries and attempts to preserve, where possible, as much of the agricultural and forestry land uses of Bay Minette. To accommodate future population and housing projections, duplex and multi-family development acreage went from 0.43% of the total planning area in 2010 to 0.65% by 2030. The mixed use category was increased from nearly 0% of the total planning area in 2010 to 0.05% in 2030. This will also increase the future residential land use availability of the City.

The 2010 agricultural land use category increased by 102 acres in the 2030 future land use inventory. The undeveloped land use category was decreased from 12.51% in 2010 to 1.55% of the total planning area by 2030. This is a significant decrease in acreage from 8,989 in 2010 to 1,115 by 2030. Future land use

projections utilized 7,874 acres of undeveloped, vacant land to accommodate most all of the future growth of the City. Care should be taken to encourage development of the vacant lots within the municipal limits as opposed to the planning area to prevent financial increases in public services to new development located miles from the City's center.

The commercial land use category was increased by over 290 acres to almost 1.5% of the total planning area by 2030. Most of this future development stayed consistent with current commercial development trends and is located along the Highway 59 corridor. However, some new commercial development was allocated along the Highway 31 corridor and Highway 287. New commercial development was also allocated to land east of the City where the Baldwin County Extension corridor is proposed. Residential development was allocated additional acreage along this corridor as well.

The industrial land use category was slightly increased from 4.85% of the total planning area to 5.54% to a total of 3,978 acres. This will accommodate the desired future industrial growth the community is actively working towards. The City should also designate an area of development for a Bay Minette Industrial Park. The City's location between I-65, I-10, and the railroad corridor creates a desirable geographic location for industry and the transportation of goods. Designating an industrial park within the City will attract industrial developers and allocate land for this use separate from non-compatible land uses.

The parks and recreational land use category was increased by 103 acres to 0.25% of the total planning area. The future land allocations for parks and recreation will fulfill the current and future acreage needs identified in Chapter 7 in accordance with the standards developed by the National Park and Recreation Association.

The institutional land use category was increased by almost 100 acres to allocate future land use for school expansions, healthcare facilities, and new church facilities. The government land use category increased by over 100 acres to allocate future lands for expansions of city facilities and services in addition to any future development needs by County or Federal entities.

Based on the projected future land use inventory of Bay Minette illustrated on *Map 5.3* and *Map 5.4*, the City of Bay Minette can accomplish all desired future growth and development needs within their current municipal and planning area boundaries. This includes expanding residential land uses to accommodate future population needs, increasing commercial and industrial development, and preserving the rural character of the community all without increasing the cost of public services provided by the City that are typically associated with annexations of properties into municipal limits.

Recommendations and Strategies

To ensure that Bay Minette’s Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette’s future growth and development.

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community’s input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis of the current land use trends and projected future trends to achieve the identified goals of the community. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will be closer to achieving their goals for downtown revitalization through preservation and revitalization of their natural resources.

- Promote a choice of rural, suburban, and urban living environments through density regulations associated with residential land uses. Encourage conservation of large tracts of land through subdivision regulations. This includes anticipating and planning for future land requirements associated with future population projections, projected housing types, and the need for additional commercial land uses.
- Preserve and maintain the rural, small town character of Bay Minette by implementing subdivision regulations that will not: result in environmental degradation; adversely affect rural/semi-rural areas; or impair working agricultural or forestry operations. Provide tax incentives to local farmers, foresters, and land owners that lease to farmers or timber growers to keep the agricultural/forestry industry in Bay Minette strong. Encourage local farmers to be active with local agri-tourism initiatives to increase support to this industry.
- Protect the quality of life of existing and new developments by implementing land use regulations that will: ensure the separation of incompatible land uses; preserve and/or create open spaces and landscaped areas with each new development; promote the connectivity of roads, schools, parks, and open spaces; require, where feasible, the installation of sidewalks throughout the development; and prevent stress on the existing public infrastructure and public services.
- Encourage through land use regulations infill development of undeveloped lots as opposed to urban sprawl to support the conservation of rural lands within Bay Minette’s planning area.

- Increase the diversity of residential land uses by encouraging multi-family residential land uses to locate in the more densely populated center of the City. Discourage multi-family development in the more rural, less dense planning area where agricultural land uses and rural character can be encroached upon. This also decreases the strain of public infrastructure and public service cost.
- Ensure, through site plan review and/or subdivision plat review, that all types of land use developments have a design and scale compatible to adjoining properties and are buffered from different incompatible land uses and adverse impact due to encroachment.
- Prevent, through land use regulation enforcement, the development of land that is topographically not suitable for development such as floodplains and wetlands.
- Maintain the public infrastructure at a level needed to continue adequate service to existing and new developments. This includes correcting existing deficiencies in infrastructure and upgrading or constructing new infrastructure to accommodate new developments. Deny new development if the infrastructure is not in place to support it without compromising the service to existing housing. Require that all new development be connected to the existing water and sewer lines at the developer's expense.
- Rezone portions of land along Highway 59 north and Highway 59/31 south to industrial land use to encourage more industrial development within the City, in appropriate areas. The City should also designate land for the development of a Bay Minette Industrial Park.
- Encourage downtown mixed use development opportunities through tax incentives and state and federal grant opportunities.

Natural Resources

Goal

Maintain a balanced relationship between development and the environment and protect and enhance the quality of air, water, native vegetation, and local ecosystems unique to Bay Minette. Identify natural resources that must be protected from development and encourage the maintenance and preservation of these areas for future generations.

The City of Bay Minette has an abundance of significant natural resources within its planning area. The Natural Resources chapter provides an inventory and assessment of these community assets and proposes recommendations and strategies to preserve and enhance their existence. Natural resources include the City's topography, hydrology, soils, forests, wetlands and natural habitats and wildlife. The purpose of identifying these resources is to help the community recognize areas that need to be protected from development or physical characteristics that would limit future development. By incorporating this information into land use decisions, the City can better guide future land use development.

Bay Minette is fortunate to be located less than seven miles from the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta and 47 miles from the Gulf Coast beaches. Bay Minette's has a humid, nearly subtropical climate. Summers are long and hot, with a temperature average of 80.2°. Winters are short and moderate with an average temperature of 53.9°. The average annual rainfall is 64.4 inches.

Natural Resources

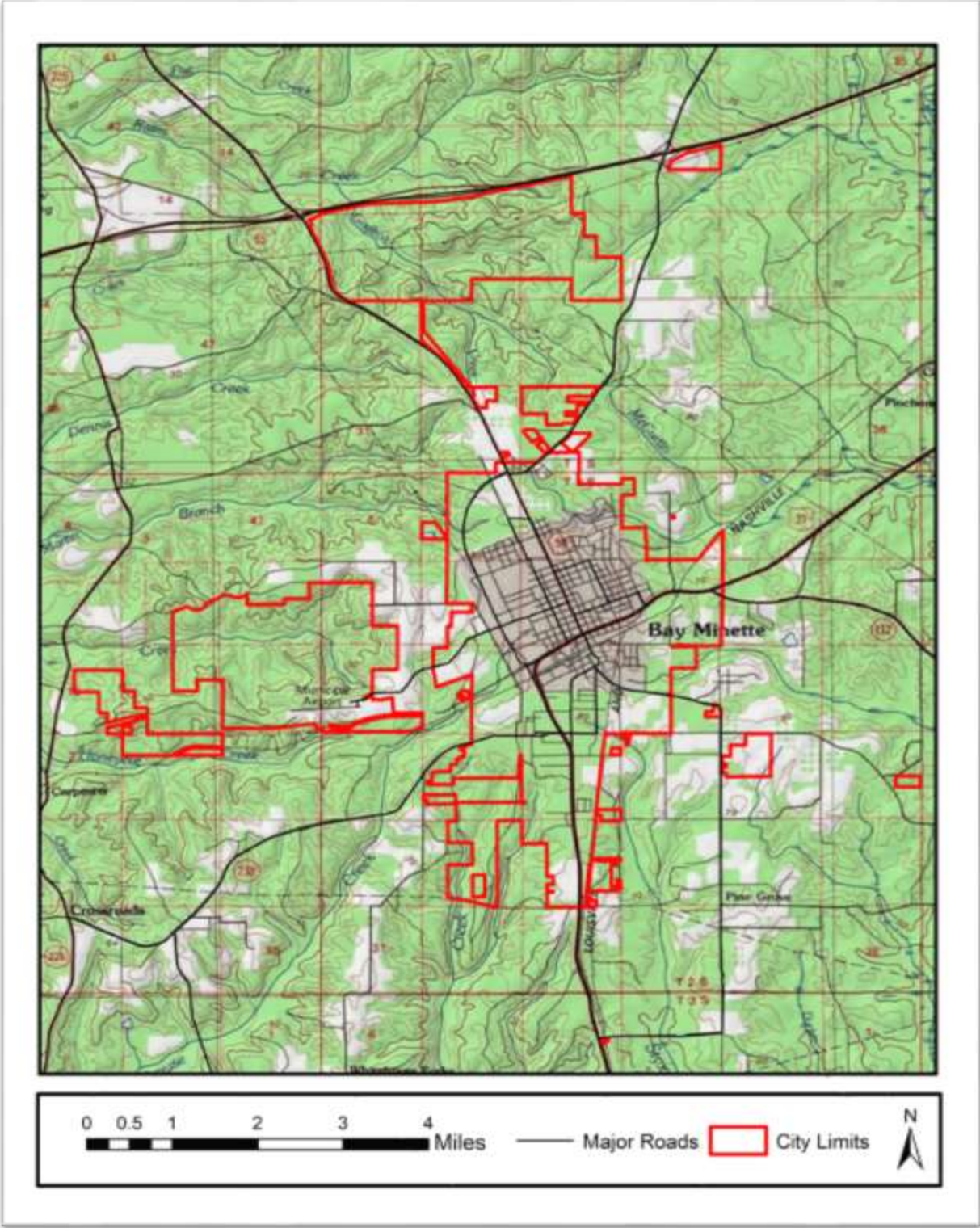
Topography

The topography of Bay Minette refers to the surface features of the land which are reflected in the hills and valleys of the region. It is defined as the change in elevation above sea level. Slope is an indication of the steepness of the land's surface and can influence suitability for development. Slopes in excess of 15% can place limitations on septic tank installation and operation, increase the cost of construction of roads and buildings, and increase surface runoff and erosion. The topography of Bay Minette, like most of Baldwin County, is characterized by low rounded hills and large expanses of nearly level terrain. The slope is subtle in most places and very little of the land is limited in development potential due to topography. Elevations vary from 150 to 300 feet above sea level. *Map 6.1* illustrates the topography of Bay Minette.



Figure 6.1: Mobile Tensaw Delta

Map 6.1: Topography Map of the City of Bay Minette



Source: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

Hydrology

Hydrology refers to the distribution of water on the surface of the land, in the soil, and underlying rocks. Creeks, streams, and other water bodies ultimately flow to drainage paths within a specific watershed. A watershed is defined as the land area that drains into a specific low point. Baldwin County is completely surrounded by water with the exception of an area in the northeast bordering Escambia County. Baldwin County is bounded by the Alabama and Little River to the north, the Middle, Alabama, Spanish, and Tensaw Rivers and Mobile Bay to the west, the Perdido River and Perdido Bay on the east, and the Gulf of Mexico to the south. The interior of the County is drained by the Styx and Blackwater Rivers.

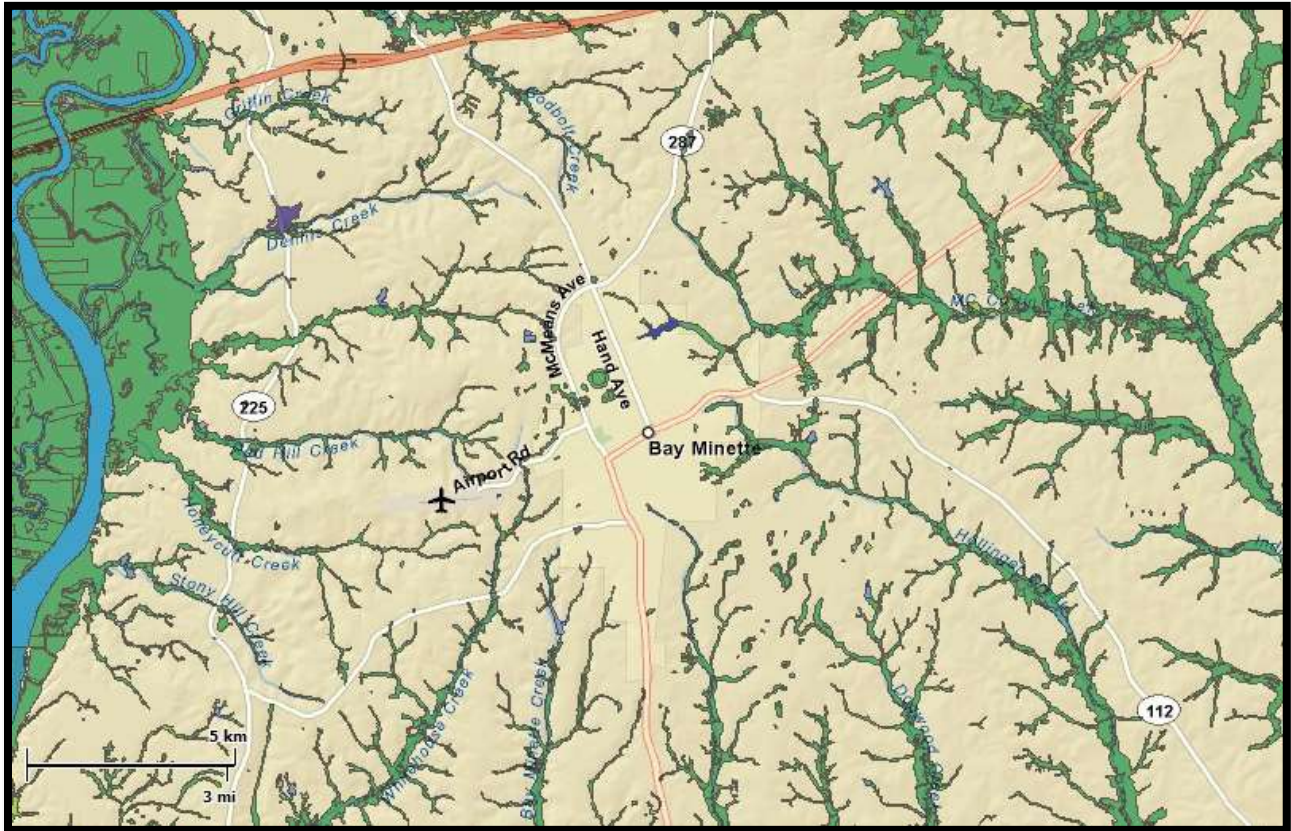
Bay Minette is located within the Perdido and Mobile Tensaw Watersheds. The Mobile Tensaw watershed is the second largest river delta in the U.S and is over 45,000 acres of bottomland hardwoods, cypress-tupelo swamps, bogs, marshes and waterways. The Delta is 30 miles long and 12 miles wide just north of Mobile Bay. Congress named it a National Natural Landmark in 1974. The Delta drains 70 percent of the state's water, resulting in a 200,000-acre wetland – Alabama's largest. Tributaries of the Mobile Tensaw watershed include Bay Minette Creek, Bayou Sara, Chickasaw Creek, Cold Creek, Eightmile Creek, Gum Tree Branch, Industrial Canal, Middle River, Mobile Bay, Mobile River, Tensaw River, Threemile Creek, Toulmins Spring Branch, and an Unnamed Tributary to Threemile Creek. The Perdido watershed encompasses an area of 1,250 square miles and is located on the Alabama and Florida state line. Tributaries of the Perdido watershed include Big Lagoon, Tarkiln Bayou, Bridge Creek, Marcus Creek, Bullshead Branch, Turner Creek, Hurst Branch, Eightmile Creek, Tenmile Creek, Elevenmile Creek, McDavid Creek, Coffee Branch, Hollinger Creek, Brushy Creek, Rock Creek, Wolf Creek, Negro Creek, Styx River, and Blackwater River.

Within Baldwin County and Bay Minette, all types of land developments occur within the watersheds from single-family development to heavy industrial. Therefore, it is important to consider watershed conservation when determining planning issues as it is difficult to separate downstream effects from upstream causes. Population growth and land use modification threaten the quantity and quality of drinking water, alter natural wetlands, and increase human exposure to geologic hazards. The watershed approach to planning calls for the understanding and appreciation of the impacts certain activities will have on other resources in and connected to the watershed.

Map 6.2 illustrates the surface water in the Bay Minette region of north Baldwin County. The rivers and streams located within the Bay Minette planning area that serve as the natural drainage system are: the Styx River, Dubin Branch, Dogwood Creek, Bay Minette Creek, White House Creek, Red Hill Creek, Martin Branch, MC Curtin Creek, Hollinger Creek, Godbolt Creek, Dennis Creek, Horseneck Creek, and Indian Creek.

Over the years, the natural drainage of the planning area has been affected by road construction and land development. To compensate for the interruption of flow, man-made drainage ditches and culverts have been installed, however problems still exist with certain areas. These areas tend to be where wetlands occur.

Map 6.2: Bay Minette Surface Water and Wetland Inventory



Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Wetland Inventory/2001

Wetlands

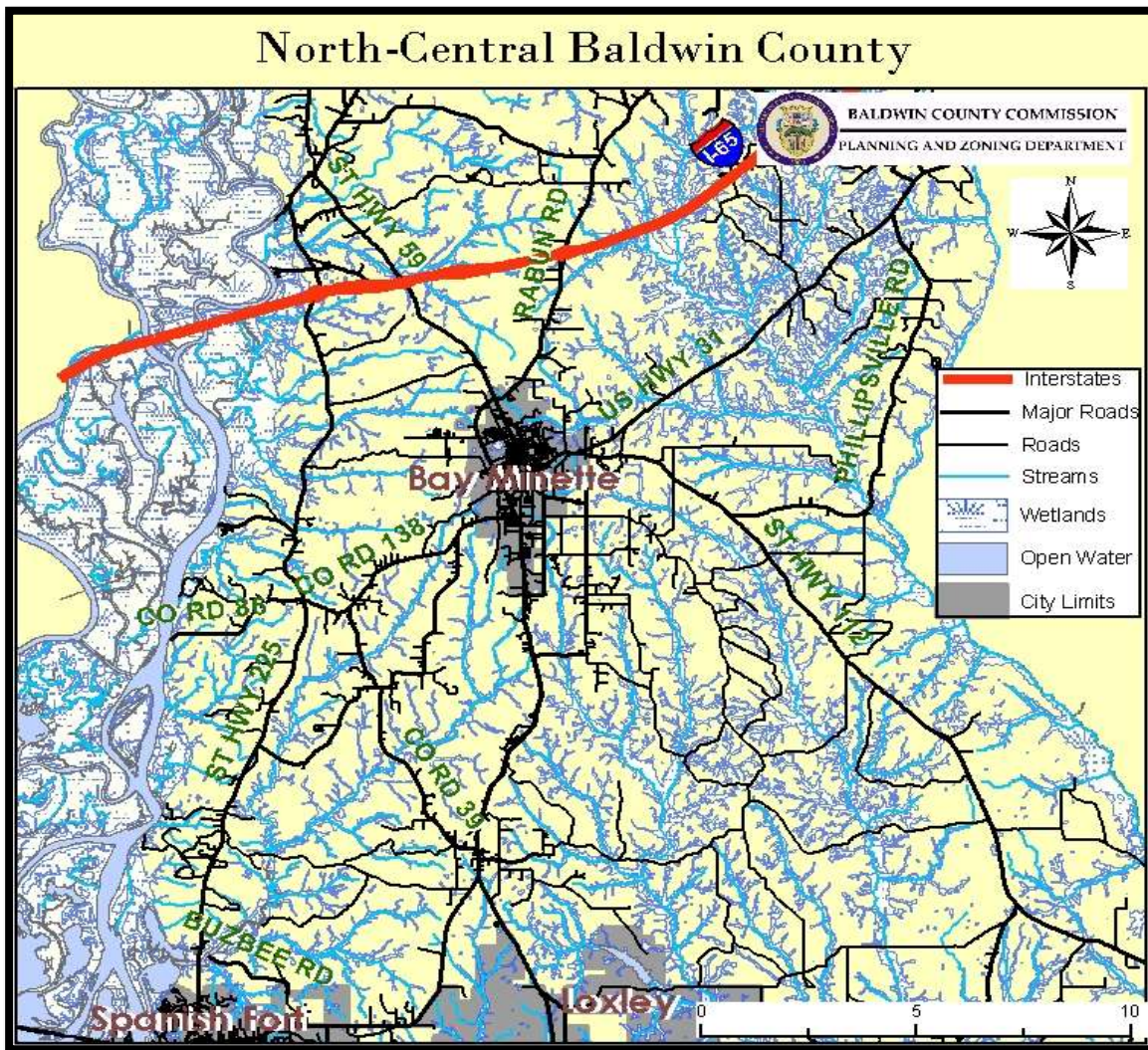
Wetlands represent the interface between aquatic and terrestrial environments. Wetlands provide a variety of functions which include: filter excess nutrients and contaminants from runoff before they enter surface waters; provide temporary storage for flood waters; provide erosion control through river bank stabilization and shoreline protection; provide habitat for water-dependant and upland plants and animals, some endangered. Wetlands are defined based on the presence of a combination of three indicators: plant species, soil types, and hydrological surface patterns.

It is estimated that there are approximately 470 square miles (380,000 acres) of wetlands in Baldwin County. Three types of wetlands are found in Bay Minette: Riverine, Depressional, and Flat. Riverine wetland areas are characterized by relatively high productivity and support a wide variety of wildlife. Dominant water sources are overbank flow from the channel or subsurface hydrologic connections between the stream channel and adjacent wetlands. These areas are important for water storage and flood control. Depressional wetlands occur in topographic depressions and are often termed “Grady ponds”. Isolated wetlands, such as Grady ponds, are critical natural resources because of their contribution to habitat and ground water recharge. The dominant water sources include rainfall, groundwater discharge, and overland flow from adjacent uplands. Elevation contours are closed thus allowing surface water

accumulation. Flat wetlands are located in areas where the main source of water is precipitation. They occur on areas with little or no topographic gradient and depend partly on groundwater discharge.

Many wetland systems in Baldwin County have been adversely affected or lost due to infill for construction, runoff from construction activities and poor land use development, and insufficient sewer systems. Communities in Baldwin County are realizing more and more the recreational and economic benefits wetlands provide their communities. Due to the increased development throughout Baldwin County in the last 20 years, many Cities and County officials are working closer with environmental agencies to preserve this natural asset. Baldwin County has developed a Countywide Generalized Wetland Map and Wetland Conservation Plan. The Map identifies prospective wetlands within the City of Bay Minette and the north central region of Baldwin County. Map 6.3 illustrates Baldwin County's Wetland Map for the north-central region of the County.

Map 6.3: Wetland Map of Bay Minette and North Baldwin County

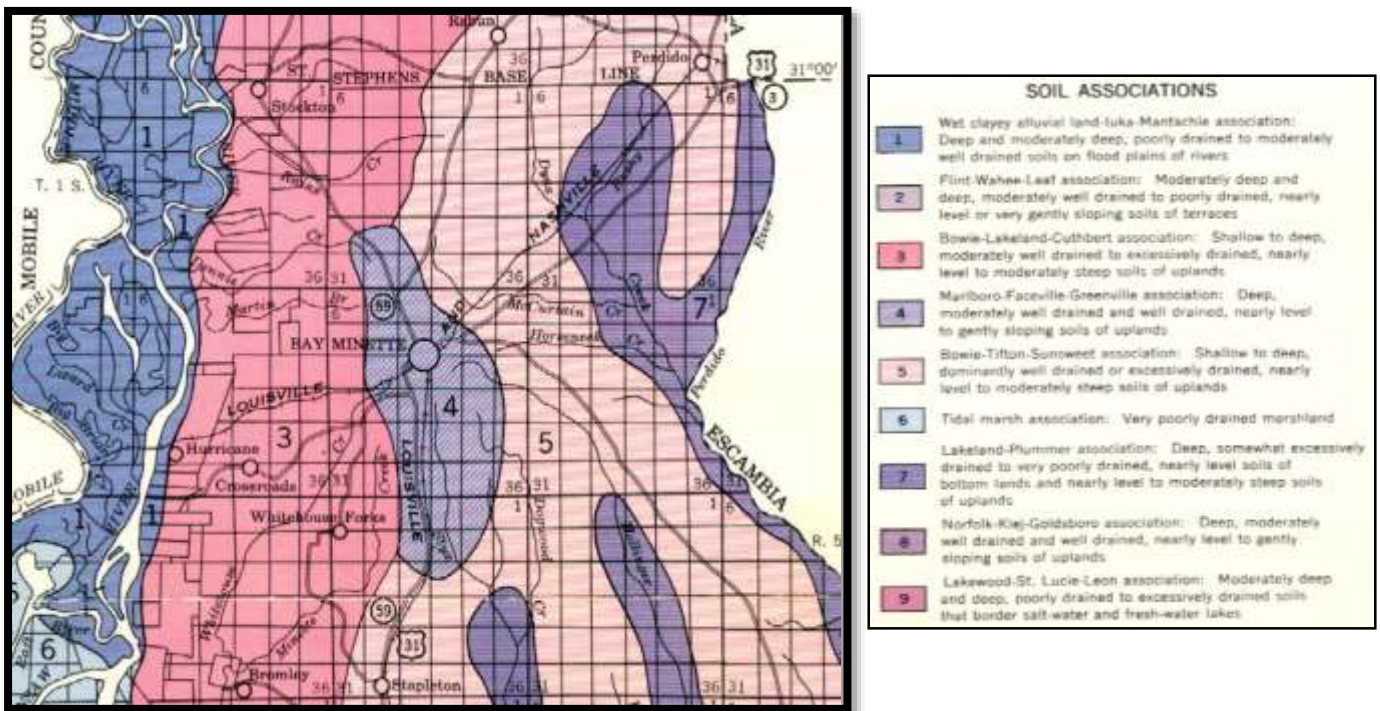


Source: Baldwin County Planning and Zoning Department

Soils

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining agricultural productivity and the best and most cost efficient locations for new development. Factors such as drainage, erosion, land use, and watershed management are affected by soil types. There are 17 varieties of soils found in the Bay Minette planning area. However, soils are grouped according to common characteristics such as formation, parent material, slope, and degree of erosion. These soil groups are called associations. There are five soil associations in Bay Minette’s planning area with Marlboro-Faceville, Bowie-Lakeland, and Bowie-Tifton being the most predominant. The Iuka-Mantachia association represents wet soils to the west that abut the Delta. The Lakeland-Plummer association represents portions of the planning area to the east adjacent to Escambia County. *Map 6.4* illustrates the soil associations of the Bay Minette planning area.

Map 6.4: Soil Map of Bay Minette



Source: U.S. Geological Survey

Wildlife Habitat Preservation Areas

There are currently many natural wildlife habitat preserves, trails, and management areas in Baldwin County on the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta within a short drive from Bay Minette. Below is a brief inventory of these resources:

- Upper Delta Wildlife Management Area
- Gulf State Park
- Meaher State Park
- Weeks Bay Nature Preserve and Trail
- Blakely State Park and Trail
- Perdido River Wildlife Management Area

- Mobile-Tensaw Delta WL Holland Wildlife Management Area
- Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge and Trail

Within these preserves, many of the following plant and animal species can be observed, all of which are listed on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s Threatened or Endangered Species list:

- Alabama Beach Mouse
- West Indian Manatee
- Bald Eagle
- Gulf Sturgeon
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle
- American Burrying Beetle
- Gopher Tortoise
- Eastern Indigo Snake
- Red-Cockaded Woodpecker
- Piping Plover
- Alabama Red-Bellied Sea Turtle
- Peregrine Falcon
- Wood Stork
- Least Tern
- Perdido Key Beach Mouse
- Alabama Sturgeon
- Heavy Pigtoe Mussel
- Flatwoods Salamander

Forestry Resources

Forestry and agriculture within Bay Minette and Baldwin County is a dominant feature of the landscape and an important economic resource. According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Baldwin County has over 900 farms with a total area of 165,565 acres. While much of the agricultural industry is related to the production of cotton and food items, the major products are sod and plants. Alabama ranks third in the nation in turf grass and sod production and 16th in greenhouse and nursery production. Currently, Baldwin County is the number one sod producer in Alabama.

Bay Minette’s early growth and development was primarily due to the region’s abundance of timber. The economy of Bay Minette is centered on a thriving timber industry. Bay Minette had the only wood processing plant that produced turpentine, resin, and pine oil, which was one of Alabama’s largest industries in the early twentieth century. The L&N railroad corridor also played a significant role in establishing Bay Minette as a regional leader in the timber and logging industry. Today, Bay Minette’s timber industry is still flourishing and it is estimated that over 76% of lands in Baldwin County are forested.

Agricultural and forestry land use is not just important to Bay Minette’s economy but, they are also important to the rural character and image of the community. Residents are passionate about the abundance of farm land, timberland, and open space in Bay Minette and want to ensure that future development does not sacrifice the rural, small town feel unique to their community. Despite the local support for agriculture, farming, and the timber industry, the number and acreage of these land uses has been decreasing over the past few decades.

Factors such as high operating costs, low product prices, globalization, and encroaching development are major threats to local farms, agricultural and forestry land uses. In order to fight decreasing profits, farmers, not only in Alabama, but nationwide, are recognizing the need to diversify their farm products and supplement their income. Many are exploring the idea of agri-tourism. Agri-tourism is defined as a commercial enterprise at any agricultural location, including horticultural and agri-business operations, conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental tourism income for the owner. In Alabama, the Alabama Agri-Tourism Partnership was formed to develop and market a state-wide agri-tourism database and directory. Some examples of agri-tourism include:

- Farmers' Markets
- U-pick Operations
- Tours
- Petting Zoos
- Corn Mazes
- Camping
- Trail Rides
- Nature Walks
- Special Events
- Barn Dances
- Conference Facilities
- Christmas Tree Farms
- Winery/Nursery Tours
- Farm Vacations / Farm Bed & Breakfast

Some forms of agri-tourism are already well established in Alabama, including fairs and festivals, but there are many more opportunities available. Bay Minette's location on Highway 59, with the large number of tourists passing through on a daily basis, is an ideal location for agri-tourism ventures. Agri-tourism in this area would not only provide excellent economic advantages, but would also help prevent the loss of precious agricultural and forested lands. There are currently five Agri-tourism establishments in Baldwin County belonging to the Alabama Agri-Tourism Partnership and on the Alabama Agri-Tourism Trail:

- W&E Kichler & Sons – Elberta
- Fairhope Alpacas – Fairhope
- Oak Hollow Farms – Fairhope
- WAB Farm – Fairhope
- Perdido Vineyards - Perdido

Recommendations and Strategies

To ensure that Bay Minette's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette's future growth and development.

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis of the natural resources to achieve the identified goals of the community. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will be closer to achieving their goals for downtown revitalization through preservation and revitalization of their natural resources.

- Consider water quality management when making City decisions. Utilize natural drainage patterns and take preventative measures to minimize surface and groundwater pollution.
- Coordinate with North Baldwin Utilities to consider an aquifer study to determine current and future service capabilities, especially with projected population growth. Densities, land uses, and future development should be regulated to permit maximum recharge and protect the water quality.
- Cooperate with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the Army Corps of Engineers to protect the quality of surface water and groundwater.
- Preserve the ecological and hydrological functions of wetlands by protecting them from development. Explore the adoption of a local wetland ordinance to accomplish this.
- Encourage local land owners to keep natural areas and open spaces from being developed by using conservation easements. State and federal agencies offer grant opportunities for these activities.

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Parks, Recreation, and Events

Goal

Provide a variety of parks, recreational opportunities, events, and programs for all age groups in a safe and attractive environment.

Adequate parks, open space, and recreational opportunities are vital to the quality of life in communities by providing citizens of all ages with enjoyable activities and settings in which to spend leisure time. The City of Bay Minette has taken an active role in improving their parks and recreational facilities over the past couple of years. In 2000, 22.9% of Bay Minette’s population was of school age and 14.4% was over the age of 65. These age groups depend on the parks and recreational services the City provides for quality of life. The median age in Bay Minette in 2000 was 33. Younger populations are also more active in outdoor activities such as sports, walking, and bicycling. The City’s residents are fortunate to have new facilities and equipment for all types of outdoor activities and age groups.

Current Inventory

The first part of this chapter inventories all parks, recreational facilities, events, and programs in the Bay Minette planning area. An analysis was also done on the condition of park facilities with regard to improvements that may be required in order to meet the future growth needs of the community. The second part of this chapter identifies future recommendations and strategies for Bay Minette to achieve based on current need and proposed growth trends to improve the City’s parks, recreational opportunities, events and programs to accommodate future populations.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

The City of Bay Minette Recreation Department operates and maintains the recreational facilities and programs. Some of the recreational opportunities within Bay Minette’s planning area are provided through other state and federal entities. The annual events and festivals are presented by various nonprofit community organizations. Below is an inventory and description of all the parks, recreational facilities, events and programs the City has to offer.

- ***Bay Minette Pool Complex***

The Bay Minette Pool Complex is located on Bradley Avenue and is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. Park amenities include a clubhouse; one Olympic-size pool with a diving area and slide; and one kid’s pool with a splash fountain, a handicap-accessible park, six tennis courts and one basketball court. Day passes can be purchased



Figure 7.1: Kid’s pool at the Bay Minette Pool Complex

for a nominal fee or annual memberships can be purchased as well. The park is open Monday through Sunday from 10:00 to 6:00.

- ***Kid’s Park “Imagination Station”***

The Kid’s Park is located on McMillian Avenue, three blocks northwest from the courthouse square and is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. Park amenities include a wooden castle playground, tennis courts, splash pad, puppet theatre, pavilion, gazebo, and picnic tables. The park can be rented for birthday parties or other social events through City Hall.



Figure 7.3: Splash pad at the Bay Minette Kid’s Park



Figure 7.4: Entrance to Kid’s Park



Figure 7.2: Wooden castle playground at the

- ***Ulmer Park***

Ulmer Park is located at 1400 Shedrick Hardy Parkway in the southwest portion of the City. The park is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. Park amenities include two softball fields, two basketball courts, two tennis courts, a pavilion and a playground.

- ***Brownwood Park***

Brownwood Park is located at 1001 Newport Parkway in the east portion of the City. The park is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. Park amenities include a playground and a softball field.

- ***White Park***

White Park is located on South Day Street in the east portion of the City. The park is owned and maintained by the City. Park amenities include a basketball court, softball field and playground equipment.

- ***George B. Halliday Park***

George B. Halliday Park is located off Highway 59 bypass on West 3rd Street and McMeans Avenue, west of downtown. The park is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. Park amenities include five baseball fields, batting cages, two tennis courts, playground, pavilions, park benches, picnic tables, and a skate park.

- ***Skate Park***

The Skate Park is located Highway 59 Bypass near the George B. Halliday Park. The Skate Park is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. Park amenities include two ramps and six stunt fixtures including rails and steps. Park users are required to wear protective gear when using the facility.



Figure 7.5: Skate Park

- ***Sye Davis Park***

Sye Davis Park is located on Powell Avenue in the east portion of the City. The park is owned and maintained by the City. Park amenities include a basketball court.

- ***Rex Courtyard (Hoyle Avenue Park)***

Rex Courtyard is located on Hoyle Avenue South in downtown Bay Minette between two historic buildings in the east side of the Avenue. The park resulted from the conversion of a vacant, empty lot into a pocket park for downtown use. The park is owned and maintained by the City. Park amenities include shaded park benches and a fountain.



Figure 7.7: Entrance into Rex Courtyard



Figure 7.6: Rex Courtyard



Figure 7.8: East entrance into Rex Courtyard

- ***John F. Rhodes Civic Center***

The John F. Rhodes Civic Center is located at 301 D'Olive Street and is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. The 6000 square foot facility is equipped with a full kitchen, bathrooms, large stage, and a dance floor. The occupancy rate is 300 with tables and 500 without tables. The facility is available for rent for social events through the Building Department.

- ***Douglasville Community Center***

The Douglasville Community Center is located at 812 West Hurricane Road and is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. The occupancy rate is 75 people with tables and 125 people without tables. The facility is available for rent for social events through the Building Department.

- ***Bay Minette Area Senior Center***

The Bay Minette Area Senior Center is located at 300 North Hoyle Street and is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. The facility offers various social services for the elderly including oil painting classes, bridge lessons, bingo/game night, movie night, exercise hour, health screenings and annual dances. The Meals on Wheels Program also arranges for services to needy seniors through this facility.

- ***Blackburn Park***

Blackburn Park is located on East 1st Street and North Hoyle Avenue downtown, one block southeast from the Courthouse Square. The park abuts the east/west railroad corridor that extends through the downtown. The park is owned and maintained by the City. Park amenities include a fountain, gazebo, park benches and picnic tables.



Figure 7.9: Fountain at Blackburn Park with downtown in background



Figure 7.10: Gazebo at Blackburn Park



Figure 7.11: Fountain and community building at Blackburn Park

- **State and National Bicycle Routes**

The Alabama Department of Transportation has designated one National Bicycle Route and proposed two State Bicycle Routes through the Bay Minette planning jurisdiction. *Map 7.1* illustrates the existing bicycle routes and the proposed bicycle routes in Baldwin County. The National Route extends from Meaher State Park in Spanish Fort, up the west side of the Bay Minette planning jurisdiction, into the western portion of the State, then just west of Tuscaloosa, enters into Mississippi to extend north to the Natchez Trace Parkway and into Tennessee. The National Route follows many state highways including HWY 31, 225, 43, 69, and 120. The proposed State East/West Route 5 follows the Highway 31 corridor and extends east from the City of Bay Minette to Brewton, Andalusia, Dothan, then into Florida. The proposed State North/South Bicycle Route follows the existing National Route until just southwest of Carrolton, then follows the Highway 17 corridor north to the northwest corner of the State and ends in the City of Tusculumbia. A map of these three routes can be obtained by contacting the Alabama Department of Transportation.



Map 7.1: Map of existing and proposed bicycle routes in Baldwin County

The Baldwin County Trailblazers, a local non-profit organization, is working with many municipalities in Baldwin County and state and federal entities to increase the number of bicycle routes through Baldwin County. Through multiple partnerships and public funding from grants and donations, several bicycle trails have been established. However, there are efforts from municipalities and other applicable entities within the County to create a County Wide Bicycle Route that would link all the communities to the existing routes. Most of the proposed routes follow abandoned railroad corridors and are eligible for funding through the State’s Rails-To-Trails Program.

- **Bartram Canoe Trail**

The Bartram Canoe Trail is a system of canoe and kayak trails in the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta. The 200-mile-long trail system is one of the longest in the United States and explores the Nation’s second largest Delta. It includes bottomland hardwood swamp, creeks, side channel sloughs, lakes and backwaters. The trail system also includes Bottle Creek which is in close proximity to the Bottle Creek Indian Mounds. Day trips and overnight trips are available. There are floating platforms at various stopping points along the trail for camping.



Figure 7.12: Backwater way of the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta

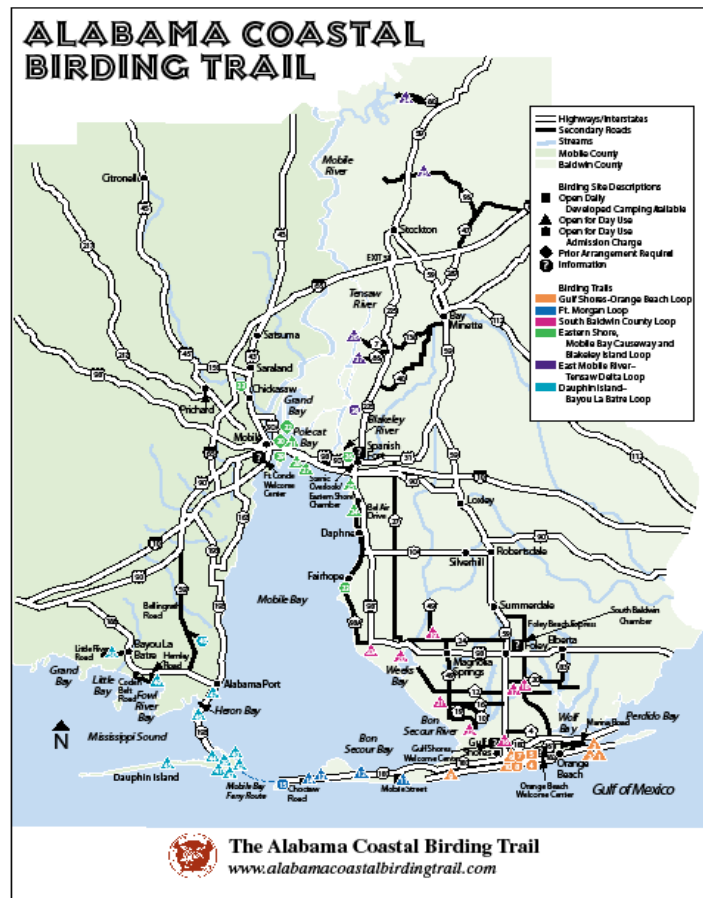
The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Coastal Lands Division maintains the trails and provides navigational maps of the canoe/kayak trails through the Delta and accepts reservations for the camping platforms. The Hurricane Creek/Mound Island Canoe Trail is part of the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta and 9.2 mile trail that abuts the Bay Minette planning jurisdiction just west of HWY 225 off Hurricane Road. Due to the close proximity of these trail systems to Bay Minette, many tourists who visit the Mobile Tensaw River Delta utilize lodging and restaurant establishments in Bay Minette.

- **Bay Minette Walking Path**

The Bay Minette Walking Path is a 1.7 mile concrete walking path from Halliday Park through adjacent residential neighborhoods and ending across from Baldwin County High School. The walking path is owned and maintained by the City.

- **The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail**

The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail is considered one of the nation’s top birder’s paradise with trails that span two counties, offering birding enthusiast with endless opportunities for avian appreciation. The trails are located in Baldwin and Mobile counties and divided into six regions of interest with over 50 identified loop trails. *Map 7.2* illustrates the trails located in Baldwin and Mobile Counties. Located within the Bay Minette municipal and planning jurisdiction is the East Mobile River-Tensaw Delta Loop of the trail. This loop begins at the intersection of I-65 and AL 225 just north of Stockton and extends north into Bay Minette. Route 36 is located at Cliff’s landing and Route 37 is located off County Road 86 at a Wildlife Management Area. The Mobile-Tensaw River Delta has been designated a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy and identified as one of the best locations in the country to observe neo-tropical migrant birds and butterflies. Wild Bird Magazine recently rated the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail as one of the top four locations in North America for viewing migratory birds in the spring. There are over 348 reported bird species on the trail during the migrations.



Map 7.2: Map of the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail

- ***Cliff's Landing***

Cliff's Landing is the closest public water access to the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta from Bay Minette. It is located to the west of Bay Minette off Highway 225. The facility is operated and maintained by Baldwin County and the State Fisheries Department. The facility contains a 4-lane boat launch, two stationary docks, boat trailer parking, restrooms, pavilion, picnic tables, and lighting for night access.



Figure 7.13: Cliff's Landing boat slip, pavilion and stationary dock

Annual Events

- ***Fourth of July Celebration***

The Fourth of July Festival is presented by the City of Bay Minette and the Rotary Club. The annual celebration is held at Simmons Field and features fireworks.

- ***Bay Minette Family Festival and Kids Day***

The Bay Minette Family Festival and Kids Day is held every year in October the weekend before Halloween and presented by the Bay Minette Kiwanis Club. The festival is held at the Kid's Park and features live music, children's games and activities, a cake walk, craft vendors, and a BBQ cook-off.

- ***North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce Annual Christmas Festival***

The North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce Annual Christmas Festival is held every year in December on the streets of Downtown Bay Minette. The festival is presented by the North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and features arts and crafts vendors, food vendors, kid's activities, live entertainment, and the annual Christmas parade. The Christmas Festival is a Bay Minette tradition that dates back to 1982.

Recreational Programs

The City of Bay Minette offers many recreational and social programs and services to the residents of the community at various locations throughout the City. These locations include the Recreation Department and parks associated with recreational facilities identified above. These programs and services include but are not limited to:

- Basketball
- Youth and Adult Softball
- Dodgeball
- Skating
- Soccer
- Quilting Club
- Circuit Training
- Youth tackle football
- Cheerleading
- Competitive Dance Classes
- Tennis
- Kelly's Kids (summer half-day camp)
- Gymnastics
- Ballet
- Tap
- Jazz
- Baton
- Acting/drama
- Educational, health and art classes; i.e. guitar, painting, aerobics, yoga, etc.

Classifications and Level of Service

Park Classification and the Level of Service Standards provide communities with a method of assessing their current park and recreational inventory and projecting improvements based on future growth. This method is based on the National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) guidelines which consider the type, use, size, and service area of parks and recreational facilities. Future demand for parks and recreation facilities is based on comparing projected populations with recognized level of service standards and responding to changing trends. Future needs are also directly influenced by population characteristics of the community. For example, communities with more children require more outdoor recreational opportunities close to home within a comfortable walking distance. Communities with more seniors can benefit from having more passive parks near residential areas, senior centers, and transit to accommodate their activities.

Park Classifications and Types

The following park classifications were based on the NPRA standards and modified to accommodate Bay Minette's current park and recreational inventory as well as future goals for improvements.

- Mini-Parks – Mini parks, or “pocket parks,” serve a limited or concentrated population, usually a neighborhood, residential district, or commercial area and provide an urban green space within a densely developed area. Amenities might include a walking path, landscaping, park benches, and picnic tables. The service area is usually less than ¼ mile radius. The desirable size of the park is 2 acres or less. The NPRA suggest 0.25-0.50 acres per every 1,000 in population.
- Neighborhood Parks – Neighborhood parks serve residential neighborhoods in developed areas and are intended to receive a high level of use. They typically have a landscaped walking path that can withstand the impacts of heavy foot traffic and should be connected to the community's sidewalk network. Citizens should be able to walk to this park without crossing a major arterial street. They are places where neighbors can gather, children can play, and people can engage in recreational activities. Amenities might include an open grass lawn, playgrounds, basketball courts, pool, tennis court, pavilions, etc. The service area is usually less than ½ miles radius. The desirable size of the park is between 5 and 20 acres. The NPRA suggests 1.0-2.0 acres per every 1,000 in population.
- Community Parks – Community parks are large parks intended to serve the entire community and meet the recreational needs of multiple neighborhoods. They provide more specialized and community organized recreational services and opportunities. They should be located adjacent to major arterials or other collector streets to provide easy vehicular and pedestrian access. They should be connected to linear trails and greenways throughout the region and developed around the natural resources of the community. Amenities include sports complex, ball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, playgrounds, splash pads, pavilions, disc-golf course, etc. The service area is usually a one to two mile radius. The desirable size of the park is 25 to 100 acres. The NPRA suggests 5.0-8.0 acres per every 1,000 in population.

- Regional Parks – Regional parks are large recreational areas usually developed around an area’s natural resources and they serve entire regions, including several municipalities. They may be county, state, or federally operated, but should connect to smaller community parks via greenways or trails to create regional linkage. Amenities include sports complex, ball fields, tennis courts, pool, playground, hiking trails, mountain biking trails, ATV trails, camping facilities, disc-golf course, etc. The service area is usually at least a five mile radius or more. The desirable size is 50 acres or larger. NPRA suggest 20.0 acres per every 1,000 in population.
- Linear Parks, Greenways and Trails – provide linkages between other parks and/or points of interest. The service area and size varies from neighborhood greenways to regional pedestrian, bicyclist, and equestrian trails.

Levels of Service

Parks and recreational facilities within a community affect the character of the community and the quality of life of the residents. Therefore, having adequate types of facilities to serve the growing population is necessary for successful community growth and development. The National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) recommends Level of Service Standards associated with park and recreational facilities for communities in order to achieve an adequate number and type of facilities per population. *Table 7.1* illustrates these recommendations.

Table 7.1: National Park and Recreation Association’s Suggested Level of Service Standards for Communities

Park Type	Suggested Service Area	Suggested Size	Suggested Community Needs
Mini / Pocket Park	Less than ¼ mile radius	2 acres or less	0.25-0.50 acres per 1,000 population
Neighborhood Park	Less than ½ mile radius	5 to 20 acres	1.0-2.0 acres per 1,000 population
Community Park	1-2 mile radius	25 to 100 acres	5.0-8.0 acres per 1,000 population
Regional Park	5+ mile radius or more	50+ acres	20.0 acres per 1,000 population
Linear Park, Greenways, and Trails	Varies	Varies	1 mile per 1,000 population

Source: National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA)

Bay Minette currently has two mini or pocket parks: Rex Courtyard and Blackburn Park. Rex Courtyard is one downtown 50’ X 144’ lot between two historic buildings and is approximately 7,200 square feet or 0.17 acres. Blackburn Park is also downtown and consists of one acre. Therefore, the City currently has an inventory of 1.17 acres of mini parks. Both parks serve the downtown business area, especially on the south side of the courthouse. The NPRA’s Level of Service Standard for mini parks is 0.25 – 0.50 acres

per 1,000 residents. To accommodate the 2010 population estimate, Bay Minette should currently have 2-4 acres of mini parks. To accommodate the projected population average for 2030, Bay Minette should contain 2.25 - 4.5 acres of pocket or mini parks. Therefore, the City currently lacks the recommended acreage for mini parks for a community its size and should seek out future locations to purchase land to develop an additional 1.08 - 3.33 acres of these types of park facilities by the end of 2030.

Bay Minette currently has three neighborhood parks: White park, Brownwood Park, and Sye Davis Park. White Park is approximately 6.3 acres and serves the residential neighborhoods along the east portion of the City. Brownwood Park is approximately 5.4 acres and serves residential neighborhoods in the east portion of the City. Sye Davis Park is approximately 0.5 acres and serves neighborhoods on the east portion of the City. There are no neighborhood parks located in neighborhoods located in the north, south, or west portions of the City. The City currently has an inventory of 12.5 acres of neighborhood parks. The NPRA's Level of Service Standard for neighborhood parks is 1.0 – 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents. To accommodate the 2010 population estimate, Bay Minette should currently have 8-16 acres of neighborhood parks. To accommodate the projected population average for 2030, Bay Minette should contain 9-18 acres of neighborhood parks. Therefore, the City currently falls within the recommended acreage for neighborhood parks for a community its size for the 2010 and 2030 projected need. However, the City should consider expanding these types of recreational spaces into residential neighborhoods that currently do not have them by the year 2030.

Bay Minette currently has one community park: Ulmer Park. Ulmer Park is approximately 14 acres and is located on the west portion of the City and contains tennis courts, ball fields, basketball courts, pavilion, and playground equipment. The City currently has an inventory of 14 acres of community parks. The NPRA's Level of Service Standard for community parks is 5.0 - 8.0 acres per 1,000 residents. To accommodate the 2010 population estimate, Bay Minette should currently have 40-64 acres of community parks. To accommodate the projected population average for 2030, Bay Minette should contain 45-72 acres of community parks. Therefore, the City currently lacks the recommended acreage for community parks for a community its size and for the 2010 and 2030 projected need. The City should seek out future locations to purchase land to develop an additional 31 acres of this type of park facilities by the end of 2030.

Bay Minette currently has four regional parks: George B. Halliday Park, the Bay Minette Pool Complex, Kid's Park "Imagination Station", and the Skate Park. All of the regional parks attract City and county residents. George B. Halliday Park is approximately 17.2 acres and is located on the west portion of the City off Highway 59 Bypass. The Bay Minette Pool Complex is located in the northeast portion of the City and is located on approximately 12 acres of land, most of which is open space. The Kid's Park is approximately 2 acres and is located 3 blocks northwest of the downtown square. The Skate Park is located on approximately 1 acre and is adjacent to Halliday Park. The City currently has an inventory of 32.2 acres of regional parks. The NPRA's Level of Service Standard for regional parks is 20.0 acres to a 1,000 residents. To accommodate the 2010 population estimate, Bay Minette should currently have 160 acres of regional parks. To accommodate the projected population average for 2030, Bay Minette should contain 180 acres of regional parks. Therefore, the City currently lacks the recommended acreage for

regional parks for a community its size and for 2030 future populations. The City should seek out future locations to purchase land to develop an additional 148 acres of these types of park facilities by the end of 2030. A possible location for a future regional park could be lands to the west of Highway 225 off Kilcrease Road. These lands are currently not within the City limits but within the planning jurisdiction. However, the City could annex these lands into the City without significant financial impact if purchased for development. The Mobile-Tensaw River Delta is only five miles from the intersection of Highway 59 and Kilcrease Road. A regional park with emphasis on water access and natural resource conservation could be developed there. This would provide the community with a wonderful recreational facility to enjoy the natural resources of the Delta while also creating a tourist attraction that would increase local revenue. The facility could feature boat slips and launches, floating docks, marsh boardwalks, wildlife observation decks, pavilions, picnic tables and an assembly hall. The assembly hall could be designed similar to buildings located at the 5 River's Delta Center in Spanish Fort and be rented out by the City as a source of revenue. Funding assistance for the development of the park could be available through state and federal entities including the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, ADECA Recreational Trails Program, and the Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant Consortium.

Bay Minette currently has one trail for pedestrians: Bay Minette Walking Path. The Walking Path is approximately 1.7 miles long and is begins at Halliday Park and extends to Baldwin County High School. The NPRA's Level of Service Standard for trails is 1 mile for every 1,000 residents.

To accommodate the 2010 population estimate, Bay Minette should currently have 8 miles of trails within their planning jurisdiction. To accommodate the projected population average for 2030, Bay Minette should contain 9 miles of trails. Therefore, the City currently lacks the recommended acreage for pedestrian/bicyclist trails for a community its size and for 2030 future populations. The City should seek out future locations to purchase land to develop an additional 7.3 miles of these types of recreational facilities by the end of 2030. Possible locations for future trails could be extending the existing trail into more residential neighborhoods. Another solution would be to convert abandoned railroad corridors into walking/bicycle trails through the State's Rails-To-Trails Program. This solution is a shared goal of the Baldwin County Trailblazers who are working with Baldwin county municipalities to create county wide linkage between all communities with these programs. Another solution would be to develop a pedestrian/bicyclist trail network through the proposed Delta waterfront regional park described in the previous paragraph.

Recommendations and Strategies

To ensure that Bay Minette's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette's future growth and development.

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis of the current park, recreation, and events inventory to achieve the identified goals of the community. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will be closer to achieving their goals for downtown revitalization through preservation and revitalization of their natural resources.

- Acquire through donation to the City or purchase 1.08 - 3.33 acres of land for mini/pocket park development by 2030. Possible future locations could be in newer commercial areas that are denser in development, i.e. around hospitals or office complexes. This provides outdoor space for employees and patrons.
- Acquire through donation to the City or purchase 148 acres of land for regional park development by 2030. A possible future location could be west of the City out Kilcrease Road on the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta.
- Acquire through donation to the City or purchase 31 acres of land for community park development by 2030.
- Extend the City Walking Path into adjacent neighborhoods and explore the development of a Rail-To-Trails Program in Bay Minette that would convert abandoned railroad corridors into pedestrian/bicyclist trails for county linkage. The City should acquire and develop an additional 7.3 miles of pedestrian/bicyclist trails within the planning jurisdiction by 2030.
- Upgrade the existing parks and recreational facilities through continued maintenance and installation of new equipment, services, and amenities to accommodate the City's resident and visitor populations. This should include new and approved play ground equipment, additional park benches and lightening at many facilities, and increased landscaping with native vegetation.
- Research and pursue potential funding sources for park and recreational acquisitions, developments, and improvements such as ADECA Recreational Trails Program and ALDOT Transportation Enhancement Program, ALDOT Scenic Byways and Corridors Program, Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and EDA Economic Development Programs.
- Conduct a feasibility study on the development of a new recreational facility for water access in the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta region to the west of the City out Kilcrease Road or Shehan Lane. The facility would support recreational boating, kayak/canoe trailing, recreational and commercial fishing, and include boat slips, boat launches, marsh boardwalks, wildlife observation decks, fishing pier, pedestrian/bicyclist trails, pavilions, picnic tables, and an assembly hall available for rent for social gathering and meetings. The facility should also provide adequate parking for cars, boats, and

trailers. Possible funding assistance could be obtained through entities described in the previous recommendation.

- Develop additional annual events and festivals for resident and visitor populations. These could include an arts and crafts festival, musicals/concerts on the lawn at Blackburn Park, a Hurricane Creek Canoe Run, and a Delta Bayou Bass Tournament. Bay Minette could also host a Downtown Bay Minette First Fridays on the Courthouse Square and allow craft vendors to set up booths along the sidewalks and sell goods for a nominal fee. In addition, downtown merchants stay open until 8:00 to enjoy additional business and revenues. Many communities have had a lot of success with this type of event.
- Encourage greater utilization of existing recreational facilities and parks by providing more diverse services and social events. Examples include: youth and adult arts and crafts classes; educational and hobby classes; exercise classes; card and bingo games; luncheons and dinners; and sports and game activities for disabled youth.
- Explore the development of All-Terrain-Vehicle (ATV) Trails for recreational development. ATV Trails are a growing recreational trend nationwide and are gaining support by state and federal agencies for funding for construction, maintenance, and operation. These trails have proven to be successful recreational opportunities for communities with large tracts of land. These trails and parks increase local tourism year round and many communities hold annual sporting events associated with the trails. Potential funding sources could be the ADECA Recreational Trails Program and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Currently, there are only eight ATV Trails in the State of Alabama with most occurring in the middle and north portions of the State. There are no listed ATV Trails in southern Alabama.
- Explore the development of a new sports complex (i.e. 4 regulation softball fields, t-ball field, 6 soccer/football fields)

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Downtown and Historic Resources

Goal

Preserve, protect, and rehabilitate the historical integrity of Bay Minette’s historic building, sites, and landmarks that help define the identity and character of Bay Minette.



Figure 8.1: Hand St. south of square facing the Baldwin County Courthouse

Bay Minette is rich in historical assets, which have influenced the cultural heritage of the community. Heritage establishes a City’s unique sense of place, fosters civic pride, and gives communities their own identity. Safeguarding a city’s heritage encourages knowledge of and respect for the community’s character, history, and culture while guiding future development.

The architecture past residents have left behind reflects the physical and social development of a City and encompasses its founding in the eighteenth century, its development in the nineteenth century, and its maturation in the twentieth

century. Bay Minette’s historic buildings, structures, and sites are physical representations of generations past. The distinctive design of historic buildings makes them important symbols of the community, gives an area a unique image, and avoids the anonymity and uniformity that often comes with typical new construction.

For all of these reasons, preservation of Bay Minette’s historic assets must be a priority for residents and City officials. Studies have shown that preservation of historic and cultural buildings and sites enhances a resident’s quality of life while making the community a more attractive and desirable place to live. Historic preservation not only increases resident’s pride in their community, but it also encourages economic growth by increasing property values and stimulating new business.



Figure 8.2: Downtown shops along Hoyle Ave. South



Figure 8.3: Hand Ave. south of square facing north

Rehabilitation of an existing building typically costs less than new construction, stimulates rehabilitation of surrounding structures, and inspires improved and compatible design quality for new infill buildings.

Downtowns and historic neighborhoods also provide for a healthy mix of residents, allowing low-income, moderate-income, and higher-income families to live in close proximity. Older neighborhoods have a social structure in place

including churches, playgrounds, social agencies, and neighborhood groups. These downtown neighborhoods keep people in proximity to the things they need such as work, shopping, and schools.

Benefits of Historic Preservation and Revitalization

Preservation and revitalization of a community's historic resources, particularly downtown areas, has proven economic and social benefits within the community. Some of the benefits are listed below.

- ***Creates Jobs While Protecting the Environment – Revitalization*** activities create jobs for construction workers, architects, skilled craftsmen, engineers, and designers. Dollars earned by the local labor force are spent within the community and cycle through the local economy. Revitalization of existing buildings results in a recycling of a community's infrastructure and conservation of natural resources. Through rehabilitation, instead of new construction, existing infrastructure can be utilized instead of installing new facilities. This saves time and money for the developer and prevents new growth strains on city resources without losing the economic benefits of growth. It also prevents community sprawl into undeveloped lands.

- ***Increases Property Values*** – Conservation and revitalization of historic resources fosters community pride and appreciation of local heritage. This effort increases and stabilizes local property values thus increasing the resale and market values. The Alabama Historic Commission has determined that restored historic properties are worth more, appreciate faster, and retain more of their value than most new construction.

- ***Vehicle for Heritage Tourism*** - Tourist are drawn to the historic resources of a community for their unique architecture, individual character, and personal history. In



Figure 8.6: Streetscaping in southeast corner of the square



Figure 8.4: Shops along southeast corner of the square



Figure 8.5: Downtown storefront and streetscaping

In downtown areas, building facades cultivate the merchants' distinctive identity, goods, and services. This creates visual interest and diversity that attracts tourist to the area which is unique and specific to the community. Restored historic properties and downtown areas that are well promoted become a fixture of local heritage generating a local tourist economy that multiplies the city's revenue.

- **Spawns Historic Revitalization of Area** - Most historic properties, including downtown buildings, are owner occupied. When revitalization efforts begin, adjacent property owners become motivated and inspired to invest in their own properties. Property owners will begin to take pride in their individual building facades and actively promote an aesthetically attractive streetscape to draw in customers and/or increase their property values. Investors are also attracted to this revitalization movement and will begin to purchase vacant lots for infill development.



Figure 8.7: Streetscaping and landscaping along square

- **Builds the Local Economy**- Preservation and revitalization of historic resources can enhance the business recruitment potential of a community. Companies continually re-locate to communities that offer workers a higher quality of life, which is typically associated with communities that value and restore their historic resources and downtown areas. Revitalization of historic areas attracts new businesses to those areas and encourages entrepreneurship. The new businesses generate increased sales tax and create local investment opportunities.



Figure 8.8: Northwest corner of the square

- **Creates New Housing Opportunities**- Revitalization of historic areas, especially downtowns, encourages mixed use development where apartments, condominiums, and lofts are in close proximity to retail shops, restaurants, banks, and office buildings. Mixing these types of uses allows these areas to remain active with people and street life to service the merchants for the day and early evening. The activity encourages future development and attracts more vendors. The diverse housing opportunities that are created appeal to moderate income populations and supply the downtown labor force with pedestrian friendly housing opportunities.



Figure 8.9: Streetscaping in northwest corner of the square

Inventory of Bay Minette's Historic Resources

A historic resource can take one of many forms including architecturally and historically significant buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. Bay Minette's historic resources serve as visual reminders to the community's past and offer clues to the people and events which have shaped the patterns of development. These resources are irreplaceable and therefore it is vital to protect them from

demolition, deterioration, and the intrusion of incompatible structures and land uses. Below is a list of Bay Minette’s historic sites with the exception of single family homes and neighborhoods.

- Downtown Hand Avenue, circa 1937 (formerly U.S. Post Office)
- Residential houses around downtown square
- Baldwin County Courthouse
- Bay Minette Public Library, 205 West Second Street (formerly First Baptist Church)
- North Baldwin Utilities, 25
- Rhodes Store, Pine Street, circa 1890
- Board of Registrars downtown, north side of D’Olive Street
- L &N RR Depot, HWY 59 (formerly located at 200 East Railroad Street, circa 1911)
- Concrete Water Tower, intersection of Hand Avenue and West Third Street, circa 1915

Many of these buildings and sites may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or on the Alabama Historical Commission’s Registry. These listings provide official recognition of historic resources that are worthy of preservation and may provide eligibility for tax incentives. However, the listings do not directly prohibit alteration or destruction of the resource. The most effective method of preservation occurs at the local level. Local governments can adopt historic preservation ordinances to prevent demolition as well as establish architectural and/or historic review boards to oversee proposed changes.



Figure 8.10: Shops along Hoyle Ave. South

Bay Minette’s downtown area is situated in the center of the City’s municipal limits along Highway 59, north and south bound, and Highway 31, east and west bound. The downtown square was constructed at the intersection of these two transportation routes. The location of the downtown in reference to Highway 59 allows for continuous exposure and interaction of downtown business with through traffic from this major transportation corridor through Baldwin County.



Figure 8.11: Eastside of the Courthouse

The railroad corridor was also constructed along these routes and three rails converge at an interchange along the south portion of the downtown area, a block from the square. The historic L&N Railroad

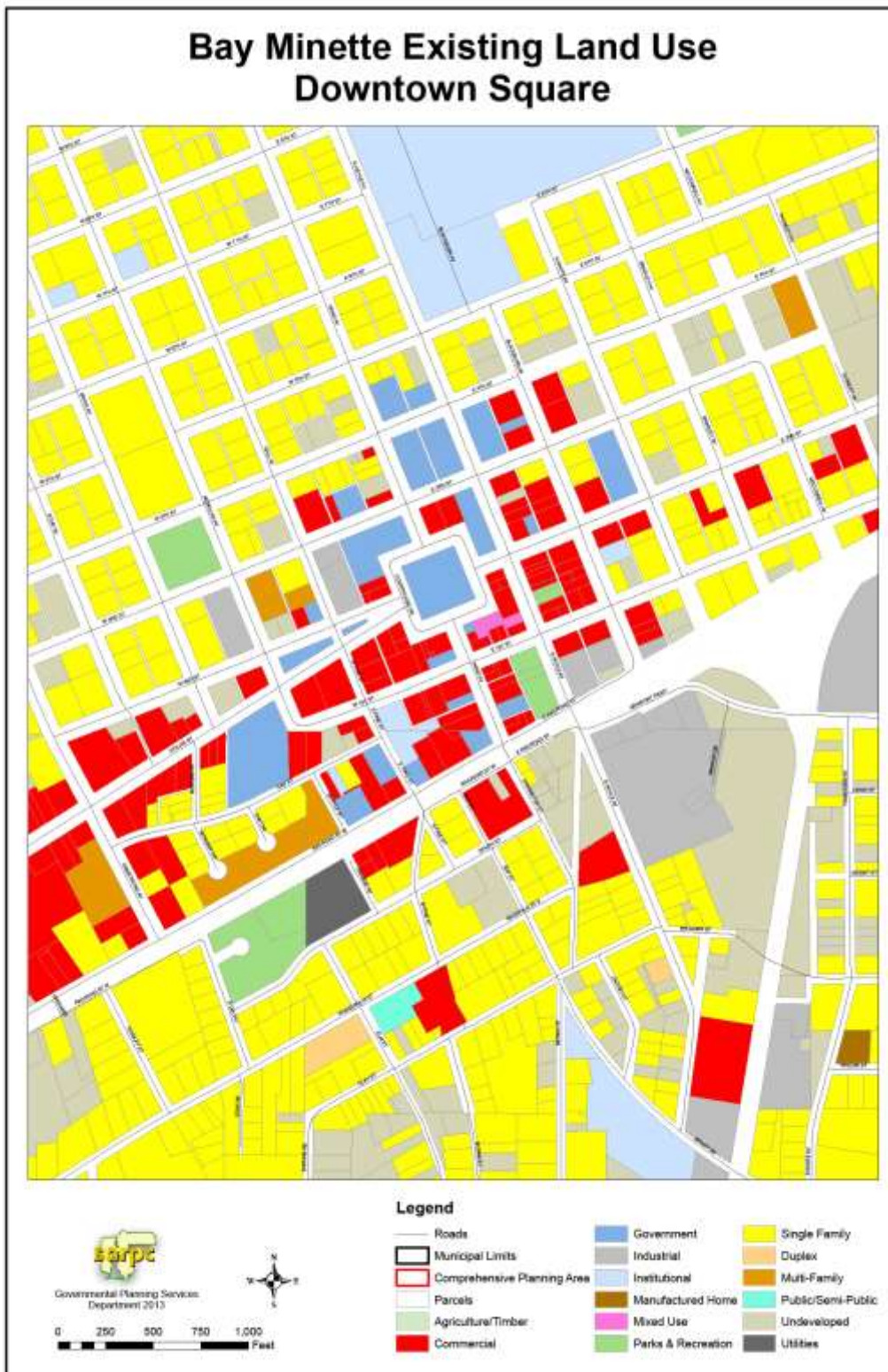


Figure 8.12: Baldwin County Courthouse

Depot has been restored and is located on 200 East Railroad Street. See *Map 8.1*.

Downtown Bay Minette is positioned on a traditional grid layout which forms the heart of the City. Most of the downtown buildings are still intact and possess many of their original architectural features of interest. Most of the exterior facades of the buildings have been restored with very few building in the downtown area in need of major

Map 8.1: Downtown Bay Minette



Source: SARPC

rehabilitation. The Baldwin County Courthouse is situated in the middle of the square and is surrounded by historic buildings. Construction of the downtown area began after 1861 when the Louisville & Nashville Railroad constructed a railroad junction just south of downtown. Many of the buildings



Figure 8.13: Downtown streetscaping.

down town pre-date 1900. Efforts have been made by the County, City, and local business owners to restore and preserve these historic landmarks. Every effort should be made by the City to enhance the appearance of this historic district and guide future growth and development to be complimentary to the historical integrity of the downtown area. This can be accomplished through local historic guidelines adopted as a part of the City’s zoning ordinance. Although great efforts have been taken to restore and revitalize Bay Minette’s downtown area, there are some needed improvements. The restoration efforts need to be extended beyond the downtown square into adjacent blocks and along transportation corridors leading into and out of the City. Extending the established streetscaping theme from the downtown area into newer portions of the community creates a harmonious design character specific to Bay Minette. It also eliminates the redundancy



Figure 8.14: Downtown streetscaping



Figure 8.15: Downtown park, Hoyle Ave.

and visual appearance of “big box sprawl” development that is common in many communities. The City should obtain state and federal funding opportunities to accomplish these improvements. The installation of intersection improvements with fixtures of visual interest would improve the aesthetics and walkability of the newer commercial areas. Encouraging individual property owners to invest in building façade



Figure 8.16: Downtown streetscaping

improvements through local tax incentives is another option the City has for local improvement solutions.

The greatest problem the downtown area currently has is the lack of adequate parking facilities to accommodate the current parking need. The Baldwin County Courthouse and Baldwin County Commission employ a great deal of individuals who must park in the downtown area. County employees compete with local merchants and their patrons for parking. County residents needing to conduct business as the courthouse also complain that parking is not available within the first block around the square or in any other additional parking facility within a reasonable walking distance.

Therefore, the City should develop a Downtown Parking Assessment and Plan to determine a solution to the current parking problem and develop a plan of action to correct the situation through the installation of additional parking facilities. The type and location of these additional parking facilities must not compromise the historic integrity or visual character of the downtown area and should be planned and designed to complement Bay Minette’s downtown district.

Recommendations and Strategies

To ensure that Bay Minette’s Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette’s future growth and development.

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community’s input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis of the downtown and historic resources to achieve the identified goals of the community. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will be closer to achieving their goals for downtown revitalization through preservation and revitalization of their natural resources.

- Develop an inventory of properties within the City of Bay Minette having historic or architectural significance, eligible for designation on the State and/or National Registers. Explore funding opportunities for the preservation and restoration of these properties. Encourage property owners of these historic resources, including residential structures, to support and engage in preserving Bay Minette’s historic integrity and unique heritage through participation with state and federal agencies.
- Establish a Main Street, or Downtown Committee for the purpose of preserving and revitalizing the downtown area. This Committee is charged with the tasks of identifying future goals, recommending strategies, and implementing plans and programs for the historic preservation and economic redevelopment of the downtown district. Responsibilities



Figure 8.17: Downtown office



Figure 8.18: Downtown business

would include: working with the Chamber of Commerce to promote the downtown revitalization efforts and recruiting new merchants; assisting the city with exploring and obtaining grant opportunities to fund revitalization efforts, including the Downtown Revitalization Plan; working with the city to establish downtown historic preservation through state or local ordinance; and working with downtown merchants to establish design guidelines to guide future development and revitalization efforts.



Figure 8.19: Downtown lamppost

- Develop a Downtown Parking Assessment and Plan. This Plan should identify the amount of future parking spaces needed to adequately accommodate the current need and future growth and development of the downtown area. It should propose different types of parking facilities, both small and large, and describe the benefits and obstacles of both. It should also propose locations for these future parking facilities. The proposed type and location of future parking facilities should not compromise the historical integrity of the downtown area and result in complimentary development that is compatible with the current downtown character.

- Develop a Downtown Strategic Plan.
- Explore the establishment of guidelines for the Downtown Historic District.
- Improve City’s image and attractiveness through expansion of the downtown design theme and streetscaping to newer commercial areas along gateway corridors. This includes installing trees and landscaping, street furniture, signage, and widening sidewalks to include a green



Figure 8.20: Blackburn Park



Figure 8.21: Downtown building mural

downtown architecture. These improvements would create a harmonious design theme throughout the City and increase linkage between downtown, newer commercial areas, and adjacent neighborhoods. The City should pursue funding for these improvements from State and/or Federal agencies such as ADECA, EDA, and ALDOT.

- Increase the downtown housing stock and its diversity to include multi-housing and mixed use development. Additional residential opportunities that should be encouraged include townhomes, condominiums, studios and flats, and apartments over retail and service uses. Encourage infill residential development to follow historical design guidelines of existing historic homes within the City where appropriate. Newer residential architecture should be utilized in newer residential areas and neighborhoods, not in downtown residential blocks near the square.
- Improve streetscape maintenance along major corridors.
- Encourage annual downtown events such as art walks and festivals, music in the park, folk and music festivals, spring plant sales, sidewalk sales, and history and food fairs. This would increase local revenue for the City and merchants, promote and advertise downtown businesses, and foster future economic development. Downtown merchants could extend their hours of operation into the evening for these events.

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Community Facilities and Services

A community requires a wide variety of facilities and services to ensure basic health and safety needs are met, to maintain a high quality of life, and to promote a sustainable economy. The intent of this chapter is to provide an inventory of community facilities and services currently offered in the City of Bay Minette and to identify services and facilities needed to accommodate the City's future population and business activities. The current condition, use, and capacity of existing facilities and services were assessed. Based on community feedback through the public workshops, community goals and objectives were identified related to community services and facility needs. Any services or facilities that are in need of expansion or rehabilitation to meet community needs or projected growth are also identified. Recommendations and strategies are proposed to accomplish community goals, service and facility deficiencies, and future growth.

Current Inventory

Below are community facilities and services located within the City of Bay Minette and its associated planning jurisdiction. Some facilities and services are owned and operated by the City of Bay Minette and some by Baldwin County. Others are owned and maintained by private entities or quasi-governmental entities. It is important to note that all entities, regardless of their type (public/private, profit/nonprofit), must comply with the provisions of this Comprehensive Plan and submit, for approval by the Planning Commission, all plans of construction and development, per regulations outlined in 11-52-11 of the Code of Alabama.

Community Buildings and Spaces

Bay Minette City Hall

The Bay Minette City Hall is a two story brick structure located at 301 D'Olive Street. The building houses the Council Chambers, the Mayor office, the City Clerk's office, the Finance Director's office, accounting personnel offices, and administrative offices. The Building Inspector/Code Enforcer and maintenance are located at 300 N. Hoyle Avenue adjacent to the Police Department. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 p.m. The structure was built in 1998 and adequately accommodates City staff.



Figure 9.1: Bay Minette City Hall

The City of Bay Minette incorporated on April 8, 1907. The City of Bay Minette functions under a Mayor and five council members elected at large. The City Council meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each

month at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall Council Chambers. The City of Bay Minette also has an appointed nine member Planning Commission and a five member Board of Adjustments, with two supernumerary members. The Planning Commission meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5:30p.m. at City Hall Council Chambers. The Board of Adjustments meets on an as needed basis. The Mayor, City Clerk, and the various department heads administer day-to-day operations of the municipality.

City of Bay Minette Department of Public Works Building

The Department of Public Works building is a single story facility located at 801 East First Street. The Public Works Department maintains responsibility for City sanitation, street maintenance, city garage, and city landscaping. The Public Works Department currently employs 27 people. The facility also houses various types of heavy equipment used for street repair, landscaping, and general construction activities including track hoes, back hoes, bull dozers, dump trucks, garbage trucks, limb trucks, and light duty vehicles. The facility adequately accommodates all the above referenced City responsibilities; however, the City may need to evaluate future facility needs.

Bay Minette Public Library

The City of Bay Minette has one public library, located at 205 West Second Street in the former First Baptist Church building built in 1915. The Bay Minette Library was founded in 1922 by the Women’s Civic Improvement Association. The library moved into the First Baptist Church building in 1997 and renovated the structure to its current state. The library building is listed on the Alabama and National Register of Historic Places and is a two-story building with over 12,200 square feet. The library houses a collection of resources worth over \$1,400,000. Library membership is currently over 15,000 patrons and the facility serves not only Bay Minette, but all the communities of north Baldwin County. The library is currently staffed by two full-time employees, two part-time employees, and one regular volunteer.



Figure 9.2: Bay Minette Library

The hours of operation vary by day, but the library is open 52 hours per week and is closed on Sunday. Other programs/services offered by the Bay Minette Public Library include the following.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Vast Collection of Books | Computer Lab with Free Public Internet Access |
| Audio Books | Reference Services |
| eBooks | Computerized Card Catalog |
| DVD’s and Videotapes | Alabama Virtual Library |
| 61Magazines and Newspapers Subscriptions | Community Announcements Board |
| Large Print Books | Preschool Story Hour |
| Music CD’s | Summer Reading Program |
| Public Access Catalog | Free 24/7 WiFi |

The main goal of the library is to provide quality services to the community and maintain and steadily improve the library collection and programming. A secondary goal is to do more outreach into the community and garner more community involvement via various partnerships including the North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, the Bay Minette Beautification Board, and Old Town Bay Minette Arts Council.

The Bay Minette Public Library has identified the following needs:

- Future improvements or replacement of the heating and cooling system
- Exterior building maintenance
- Interior building maintenance to address past water damage
- Interior and exterior security cameras
- Summer programs for children (i.e. mentoring program, community garden, etc...)
- Increased staffing and public computer access (to better serve current and future population)
- Dedicated Wi-Fi line to accommodate increased internet usage

John F. Rhodes Civic Center

The John F. Rhodes Civic Center is located at 301 D'Olive Street and is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. It is also the location of City Hall. The 600 square foot facility is equipped with a full kitchen, bathrooms, large stage, and a dance floor. The occupancy rate is 300 with tables and 500 without tables. The facility is available for rent for social events through the Building Department.

Douglasville Community Center

The Douglasville Community Center is located at 812 West Hurricane Road and is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. The occupancy rate is 75 people with tables and 125 people without tables. The facility is available for rent for social events through the Building Department.

Bay Minette Post Office

The United States Post Office in Bay Minette is located at 601 McMeans Avenue. It is a new structure and currently meets the demands of the community with no immediate plans of expansion or renovation. The facility offers post office boxes and is open six days a week. There is also another post office in Bay Minette located at 25 Hand Street downtown.



Figure 9.3: Bay Minette Post Office

Bay Minette Area Senior Center

The Bay Minette Area Senior Center is located at 300 North Hoyle Street and is owned and maintained by the City of Bay Minette. The facility offers various social services for the elderly including oil painting classes, computer classes, bridge lessons, bingo/game night, movie night, exercise hour, health screenings and annual dances. The Meals on Wheels Program also arranges for services to needy seniors through this facility.

Baldwin County Buildings

As the County seat, Bay Minette is the location for many Baldwin County buildings and many county residents commute into Bay Minette daily for employment or county business at one of these facilities. The most notable of these buildings is the Baldwin County Courthouse located in the center of the downtown square. Other buildings include: the Baldwin County Board of Education located at 2600 Hand Avenue; the Baldwin County EMC located at 47511 HWY 59; the Baldwin County Sherriff's Office located at 312 Courthouse square; the Baldwin County Corrections located at 310 Hand Avenue; the Baldwin County Archives located at 305 East Second Street; and the Baldwin County Annex located at 312 Courthouse Square #11.



Figure 9.4: Bay Minette Courthouse



Figure 9.4: Baldwin County EMC



Figure 9.5: Baldwin County Archives

North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

The North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce is located at 301 McMeans Avenue in the historic train depot building. The Chamber serves the City of Bay Minette and 24 other unincorporated communities in north Baldwin County.



Figure 9.6: North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

Public Safety

City of Bay Minette Police Department

The City of Bay Minette Police Department is located at 300 North Hoyle Avenue. The Bay Minette Police Department has nineteen full-time sworn officers and one part-time sworn officer. Three of those officers are administrative and fourteen officers are in the patrol division. The Police Department currently has two police detectives and one Animal Patrol Officer. Several of the sworn officers have received specialized training in tasers, firearms, and accident reconstruction. There are two shift changes in a twenty-four hour period with three to four officers per shift. There are eight non-sworn personnel employed for the positions of communications officers, records clerk, and secretary that perform administrative duties. The Bay Minette Police Department follows the State Personnel Policy regarding the hiring and training of sworn officers and personnel.

The current City of Bay Minette police vehicle fleet consists of twenty-nine vehicles. These include police cars and sport utility vehicles. Twenty-five of the units are marked and seven are un-marked. Vehicles are equipped with radar, video cameras, emergency lights, sirens, and other basic equipment.

The City of Bay Minette utilizes the Baldwin County Corrections facility for its municipal jail. The Police Department of Bay Minette has its own municipal court that handles misdemeanors and traffic violations that occur within the city limits and police jurisdiction of Bay Minette. Court is held at the Municipal Court located at the Police Department every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. The Bay Minette Police Department relies on surrounding cities and agencies for back up assistance. The Police Department has computerized records and uses the CAD system to communicate with State and County departments. The Bay Minette Police Department receives most of its funding through the General Fund as well as State and Federal Law Enforcement grants to assist with equipment purchases and specialized training.

Table 9-1 illustrates the Uniform Crime Report Data for Bay Minette from 2000 to 2008. This data is what federal and state funding entities evaluate when determining a community's eligibility for law enforcement and community safety funding. This data can also be used to identify growing crime rates in police jurisdictions and the overall safety of communities.

According to *Table 9-1*, the number of reported crimes in Bay Minette has increased significantly since 2000. The years with the next highest reported crimes are the last two years reported, 2007 and 2008. In 2000, there were only 64 reported total crimes in Bay Minette. The data for years 2001 and 2002 is

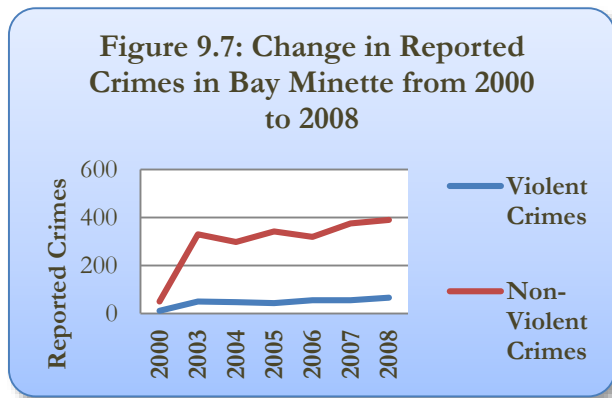
not available. In 2003, there were 381 reported crimes. This is a 495% increase from 2000. The total crimes reported increased 616% between 2000 and 2008.

TABLE 9-1: Bay Minette Uniform Crime Report Data 2000- 2008

Crime Type	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Murder	0	NA	NA	1	1	0	0	1	0
Rape	1	NA	NA	2	2	1	1	3	7
Robbery	3	NA	NA	9	9	11	14	9	15
Assault	8	NA	NA	39	36	32	41	41	45
Burglary	9	NA	NA	45	49	59	68	73	56
Theft	33	NA	NA	277	241	270	229	281	318
Vehicle Theft	9	NA	NA	8	9	14	23	22	17
TOTAL	64	NA	NA	381	347	387	376	430	458

Source: Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety Department

Figure 9.7 illustrates the change in reported crimes by type in Bay Minette from 2000 to 2008. Crimes are classified as either violent or non-violent crimes. Violent crimes include murder, rape, robbery, and assault. Non-violent crimes include burglary, theft, and vehicular theft. The increase in number of assault, burglary, and theft crimes is over the past years has contributed the most to Bay Minette’s increased crime rate. The number of reported theft crimes alone has increased 864% since 2000. In 2000, violent crimes only made up 19% of the total crimes reported. However, in 2008, violent crimes made up 12 % of the total crimes reported.



Source: Baldwin County Sheriff’s Department

Due to the increased amount of reported crimes between 2000 and 2008, the current service capacity of the Bay Minette Police Department should be assessed to determine if the current staff can adequately service the resident population or if new officers, patrol units, or other equipment is needed. Future population projections for the City illustrated in Chapter 2 of this Plan project a future 2030 population of 9,429. This is an increase of 1,087 residents from 2009 to 2030. The Police Department will need to expand over time to accommodate the projected future growth.

City of Bay Minette Fire Department

The Bay Minette Fire Department is located at 603 Highway 31 (D'Olive Street) South, just west of City Hall. The Bay Minette Fire Department was founded in 1908 as a volunteer department and officially chartered in 1960. The Fire Station is a new 14,700 square foot facility that houses four engine trucks, one 85' ladder truck, one rescue truck, two service/support vehicles, one fire prevention vehicle, and two specialized command vehicles. The fire station is also equipped with a 4-story training tower. The Bay Minette Fire Department currently has a 10-20-30 year plan outlining their fire truck needs.



Figure 9.8: Bay Minette Fire Department

The Fire Department personnel includes 15 career firefighters, 19 volunteer firefighters, and 5 part-time firefighters. All personnel are trained EMTs. The Department has a class 4 ISO rating and has specialized emergency training through courses offered by the Alabama Fire College, the National Fire College, in-house training drills, and other educational institutions. The Department provides 24 hour coverage, seven days a week for fire protection and emergency medical services in the City. The Bay Minette Fire Department responds to an average 1,700 calls a year or 4.65 calls a day. The firefighters not only serve the residents of Bay Minette, but also aid adjacent communities when needed. The Bay Minette Fire Department also provides back-up services and support to nine volunteer fire department located in north Baldwin County.

Public Works

The City of Bay Minette maintains many of the community's services through the Department of Public Works which includes the following: the Sanitation Office, the Street Maintenance Office and the City Garage. Some of these services are funded from general tax revenues and others are funded from user fees. Below is an inventory and description of all community services and utilities, some of which are owned and operated by the City.

Roads and Sidewalks

The Street Maintenance Office is responsible for all streets, sidewalks, signage, drainage and right-of-way maintenance. The State Highway Department and Baldwin County maintain Highway 59, Highway 31, Highway 225, Highway 281, and Hand Avenue. The Transportation Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan identifies the current transportation network.

Bay Minette currently accepts new streets constructed as part of a subdivision under its Land Use and Development Ordinance. Approval must be obtained from the Planning Commission and City Council. All new streets constructed to required standards and approved for acceptance into the City by the City Council are maintained and improved by the City. The City funds maintenance and improvements with general tax revenues in addition to support from Baldwin County and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

Water

The availability and quality of drinking water influences a community's future growth and development. North Baldwin Utilities is an individual entity that operates as a water, sewer, and natural gas provider in north Baldwin County and Bay Minette. North Baldwin Utilities is located at 25 Hand Avenue and was organized by the City of Bay Minette in 1945 under the name of The Water Works Board of the Town of Bay Minette. The name was changed several times over the years before adopting the current name which occurred in 2005.

The North Baldwin Utilities water system is supplied by eight water wells, all having a combined capacity of 4,680,000 gallons per day. The distribution system consists of pipes ranging from 3/4 inches to 12 inches. The water system consists of eight water storage tanks that range from 250,000 to 1,500,000 gallons storage capacity. The newest tank has a storage capacity of 250,000 gallons.

The water supply for Bay Minette is provided by five deep wells, having a pumping capacity of 4,032,000 gallons per day (GPD). Well No.1 is located in the north-central (downtown) portion of the City and has a pumping capacity of 432,000 GPD. Well No.2 is located southwest of No.1 at Orange Street across from White Park and pumps at a rate of 720,000 GPD. Well No.3 is in the south part of the City on Dickman Road at the railroad tracks and has a capacity of 720,000 GPD. Well No. 4 is located about 1,500 feet north of No. 3 at Hurricane Road and the railroad track and has a pumping capacity of 720,000 GPD. Well No. 5 is located in the northwest portion of the City and has a pumping capacity of 1,440,000 GPD. On-site treatment of all five wells includes aeration and the addition of lime, chlorine, fluoride, and phosphoric acid to the water. Perimeter loops in the distribution main tie all wells into the existing storage tanks.

Bay Minette has three water storage tanks. An elevated storage tank is located at Well No.2, No.3, and No.5. The No.2 Well Tank has a storage capacity of 250,000 gallons. The No.3 Well Tank has a storage capacity of 1,000,000 gallons. The No.5 Well Tank has a storage capacity of 1,500,000 gallons. The current water system adequately serves the population of Bay Minette and the surrounding region with no immediate plans for major rehabilitation or upgrade.

Sewer

The availability of a public sewer system also influences future growth and development of a community. Developers often seek to annex into municipalities because of the lack of infrastructure in unincorporated areas of the County. Therefore, having adequate public sewer infrastructure in place to accommodate future growth will encourage development.



Figure 9.9: North Baldwin Utilities

Sewer services are provided to the City of Bay Minette by North Baldwin Utilities. North Baldwin Utilities sewer system consists of over 260,000 feet of sewer lines ranging in size from 8 to 27 inches in diameter. The system also contains over 800 manholes and 25 lift stations. North Baldwin Utilities maintains two wastewater treatment facilities: the Harry B. Still Plant and the Westside Treatment Plant. The Harry Still Plant was built in 1983 and is located at 1000 1st Street in Bay Minette. It has the capacity to handle 2 million gallons a day of wastewater. The average daily load is 1 million gallons a day. The Westside Plant was built in 2003 and is located at 107 Charlie Kraker Drive in Bay Minette. It has the capacity to handle 0.499 million gallons per day with an average daily load of 130,000 gallons a day. Both treatment facilities operate using the Schreiber Activated Sludge Process. The current sewer system adequately serves the population of Bay Minette and the surrounding region with no immediate plans for major rehabilitation or upgrade.

Electricity

The Alabama Power Company provides electrical service to the residents the City of Bay Minette. Much like the water and sewer systems, the electrical system and service area will expand to accommodate future residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. The installation of underground electrical wires would lessen the occurrences of power outages during hurricanes and tropical storms, which frequently impact the City.

Natural Gas

Natural gas service is provided to the City of Bay Minette by North Baldwin Utilities. North Baldwin Utilities purchases natural gas from BP Energy, Inc. The natural gas is transported to Bay Minette on the Gulf South pipeline. The system serves 1,800 residential customers, 24 industrial customers, and 335 commercial/other customers.

Solid Waste Management

The City of Bay Minette’s Sanitation Department is responsible for garbage, limbs, and trash pick-up within the City limits for a nominal monthly fee. Domestic waste is collected twice a week from residences within the police jurisdiction. There is an additional garbage pick-up on Saturdays for the businesses located downtown. Equipment used for garbage pick-up includes: rearload, sideload, and knuckle boom trucks. The Sanitation Department maintains a 10-15-20 year plan of equipment needs.

The City of Bay Minette transfers the solid waste to the Baldwin County Transfer Station, located in the City on Nicholville Road. It is owned and operated by Baldwin County’s Solid Waste Department. The Baldwin County Transfer Station meets all required state and federal requirements and can currently accommodate the garbage collected from the City of Bay Minette.

Recycling services are currently available through the Baldwin County Solid Waste Department. Neither the City of Bay Minette, nor Baldwin County, has curbside pickup for recyclable items at this time. However, the County provides several convenient locations throughout Bay Minette’s planning jurisdiction for drop-off. The locations for recycling drop off are the Baldwin County Commission Administration building, Baldwin County Transfer Station, and the Delta Elementary School. Items currently accepted include: cardboard, newspaper, magazines, phone books, plastic bottles, milk jugs, detergent containers, soda bottles, aluminum cans, and scrap aluminum. The Department currently does not recycle glass.

Health Care Facilities

The North Baldwin Infirmary Hospital provides medical service to all north Baldwin County and is located at 1815 Hand Avenue in Bay Minette. The facility was established in 1970 to meet the health care needs of the region and opened a 55-bed facility in its current location. In 2001, over \$20 million was spent on an addition and renovation of the facility. The additional 63,800 square feet include space for a new hospital entrance and main waiting room; diagnostics with full service MRI, X-Ray, CT scan, a digital mammography suite and nuclear medicine; surgical suite with three surgical rooms and space for a fourth room; post acute care unit; ambulatory care unit; obstetrics with five full-service LDRP rooms and Caesarean Section suite; five-bed intensive care unit; 25 medical/surgical beds with space for an additional 20 beds that will be transferred from the original building as space is needed.



Figure 9.10: North Baldwin Infirmary

The North Baldwin Infirmary also has a Wellness Center providing exercise opportunities for all ages, including seniors and children. The facility provides certified staff to assist individuals with their personal needs. The facility also provides many exercise classes such as aerobics, step, and yoga. Other amenities include:

Two Racquetball Courts	Indoor Track
Whirlpool	Indoor Heated Pool
Weight Machines	Bikes and Treadmills
Group Exercise Room	Elliptical Trainers
Locker Rooms w/ Showers	Kid's Zone
Free Weights	

In addition to the hospital and wellness center, there are also doctor's offices, dentists, eye doctors, chiropractors, assisted living complexes, a veteran's home, and a mental health center on site. There are currently 33 physicians, 52 nurses, and a total of 138 people employed by North Baldwin Infirmary.

Educational Facilities

The City of Bay Minette has a total of six public elementary, middle, and high schools. These schools have a current enrollment of approximately 3,507 students and employ over 235 teachers. Public educational facilities are administered and maintained by the Baldwin County Public School System. The Baldwin County School System includes 47 schools, approximately 26,900 students, 4,000 employees, and boasts the highest per pupil expenditure of all county school systems in Alabama. *Table 9.2* provides a listing of all the educational facilities within the City of Bay Minette along with their most recent enrollment levels and design capacity. Currently, all public school facilities located within Bay Minette's planning area exceed minimum standards for quality education. All facilities are currently below the maximum teacher-to-student ratio and are not at full capacity. Therefore, there are no current needs for expansion. All public school facilities are fairly new constructions and are in good repair. There are no current needs for major rehabilitation or new construction of facilities.

Colleges

There is currently one college located within Bay Minette's City limits, the James H. Faulkner State Community College. Faulkner Community College is located at 1900 Highway 31 South and has a current enrollment of 2,050. In addition, there are five other colleges located within a reasonable driving distance to Bay Minette. These include: the University of South Alabama-Baldwin County is located 23 miles south in Fairhope with an enrollment of 5,582; Bishop State Community College located in 23 miles southwest in Mobile with an enrollment of 2,758; the University of South Alabama located 28 miles southwest in Mobile with an enrollment of 9,082; the University of West Florida is located 42 miles southeast in Pensacola with an enrollment of 6,282; and Pensacola Junior College located 45 miles southeast with an enrollment of 6,036.

Table 9.2: 2009 K-12 Educational Facilities in the City of Bay Minette	<i>FACILITY</i>	<i>ADDRESS</i>	<i>GRADE</i>	<i>ENROLLMENT</i>	<i>TEACHERS</i>
<i>ELEMENTARY</i>	Bay Minette Elementary School	800 Blackburn Avenue	K-6	516	43
	Pine Grove Elementary School	43980 Pine Grove Road	K-6	567	34
	Delta Elementary School	10251 White House Fork Road	K-6	286	22
	Bay Minette Intermediate School	600 Blackburn Avenue	4-6	328	25
<i>MIDDLE</i>	Bay Minette Middle School	1311 West 13 th Street	7-8	609	38
<i>HIGH</i>	Baldwin County High School	One Tiger Drive off of HWY 59 Bypass	9-12	1,201	73
<i>Source: SARPC</i>					



Figure 9.11: Baldwin County High School



Figure 9.12: Bay Minette Elementary School

Recommendations and Strategies

To ensure that Bay Minette's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Bay Minette were asked to participate in one of four separate community workshops. Four community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey; the S.W.O.T. Analysis; the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resource Public Opinion Survey; and the General Public Opinion Survey. The collected data was used to establish community goals for Bay Minette's future growth and development.

Recommendations and strategies were formulated in combination with the community's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple workshops, and with analysis of the current community facilities and services to achieve the identified goals of the community. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will be closer to achieving their goals for downtown revitalization through preservation and revitalization of their natural resources.

- In partnership with North Baldwin Utilities, conduct a Current Inventory and Needs Assessment of the City's Water and Sewer Infrastructure to determine deficiencies with either system and what upgrades are necessary to foster and stimulate growth.
- Conduct Current Inventory and Needs Assessment of the Public Works Department to identify current and future needs associated with supplies, equipment, trucks/vehicles, and specialized training. Develop long-term budget goals to purchase any needed inventory.
- When economically feasible, install underground electrical utilities during new installation projects and substantial rehabilitation projects and repairs to lessen the occurrences of power outages and adverse effects associated with tropical storms and hurricanes.
- Seek assistance from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)-Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety (LETS) Program and any other potential grant funding sources for support to the City's Police Department. Potential grant funding could include new equipment, patrol cars, and specialized training.
- Seek funding from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program as well as any and all other programs available for any needed new equipment, fire trucks, or training for the City's Fire Department.

- Improve the visual appearance of City property with landscaping, infrastructure improvements, signage, lighting and street furniture. This can be accomplished, in part, with grant funds from agencies such as the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) Corridor Enhancement Programs, ADECA, or any other applicable grant opportunities.
- Work closely with the Baldwin County Board of Education to monitor the effects that the City's growth is having on the local schools' capacity to ensure an adequate teacher-to-student ratio. Maintain exceptional quality of education through continued monitoring and support.
- Periodically update the City of Bay Minette's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.
- Explore the feasibility of a community recycling program.
- Consider appointing a director of the Bay Minette Area Senior Center.

Community Design

Goal

Provide an aesthetically pleasing and prosperous community by examining the relationship between people and their physical environment.

Introduction

Community design can be defined as a discipline concerned with functional and visual relationships between people and their physical environment. It also examines the ways in which these relationships can be enhanced. Community design is therefore directly involved with several significant areas of community planning. These areas include housing, transportation, utilities, open space, and commerce. The underlying assumption in the practice of community design is that the physical environment can be desirably formed, using certain design techniques and methods.

Largely, the character of a community is established by the design of its elements. Such elements include public and private buildings, streets, parking areas, parks, open space, and neighborhoods. The design of individual elements provides an impression of a community, and together gives a sense of community image.

Small cities, such as Bay Minette, often lack the expertise and time to establish good community design. When development occurs rapidly, there is no time for an area to acquire a particular character or sense of place. Each new building, street, park, or neighborhood is designed autonomously. This often results in areas that, although not ugly, are not attractive. Even though each individual element may be attractive, the whole is not.

There are many factors, which play a role in a community's design. Factors include entrances, public streets, landscaping of public and private spaces, signage, utility placement, and historic preservation.

Entrances into the City of Bay Minette

Bay Minette's gateways and entrances are the first impression perceived by the travelers entering the City's limits. These gateways can be local streets or 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 travelers' anticipation or arrival.

There are several main traffic entrances to the City of Bay Minette, from the north and south on State Highway 59, from the west on County Highway 138 and east on U.S. Highway 31.

Street Design

One goal of street design is to keep traffic flowing smoothly: approaching, within, and exiting the corporate limits of the community. It minimizes the residents and travelers delay and other adverse impacts of stop-and-go driving. Another goal is for traffic to be slow and steady within the community. Fast, high-speed traffic detracts from the community's sense of place.



Figure 10.1: Entrance sign located east on County Highway 138

There are two street design networks that have multiple connections and relatively direct routes, traditional community grid and contemporary subcommunity 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 discourages crime rate because it is less accessible. Cul-de-sacs are popular in the contemporary sub-community networks. It is quieter and safer for children, and it encourages 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 types of networks have advantages and disadvantages within their designs. Traditional grids have more mobility, however contemporary grids are safer, more secure, and sensitive to the areas topography. An illustration of both network designs is shown in *Figure 10.2*.

Streetscape

An important concept 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, and lighting.

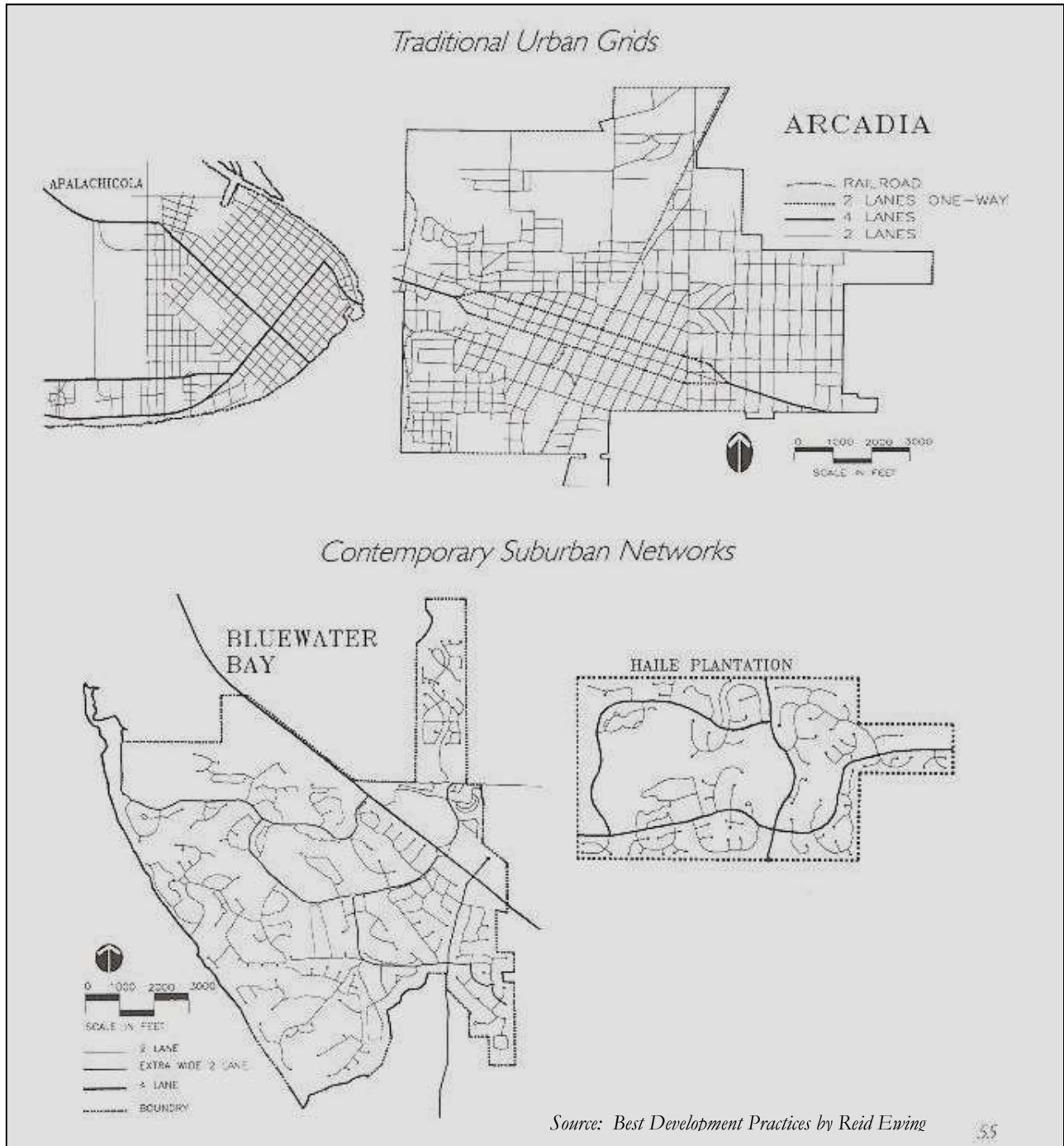


Figure 10.2: Traditional and Contemporary Street Designs

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” spaces. Thus, landscaping is particularly beneficial to residential and commercial/business developments. It softens the harshness of the Cityscape. Landscaping can actually promote patronage by providing an attractive environment and ambience suitable for shopping. The City should consider developing parking lots that are bermed and treated with shrubbery and trees, which are much more attractive to the user and passerby than lots lacking 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 a stark wall or fence façade. Landscape plans are required as part of a site plan or subdivision plan for any multi-family, commercial, or industrial development in Bay Minette.

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 a disagreeable one. 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.

Neighborhood Design

The beauty and appeal of Bay Minette is its small town and rural landscape. This landscape draws development, which in turn often destroys the natural features that attract people in the first place. "Clustering," also called Open Space Development, should be considered as an alternative to large lot

"rural sprawl," which 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 historic sites. When utilizing this method, typically 50 to 90 percent of the site area can be preserved in its existing natural or farmed state, with individual house lots occupying little 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 10.3 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 made 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 provides an attractive, unobstructed view of the development's rural surroundings.

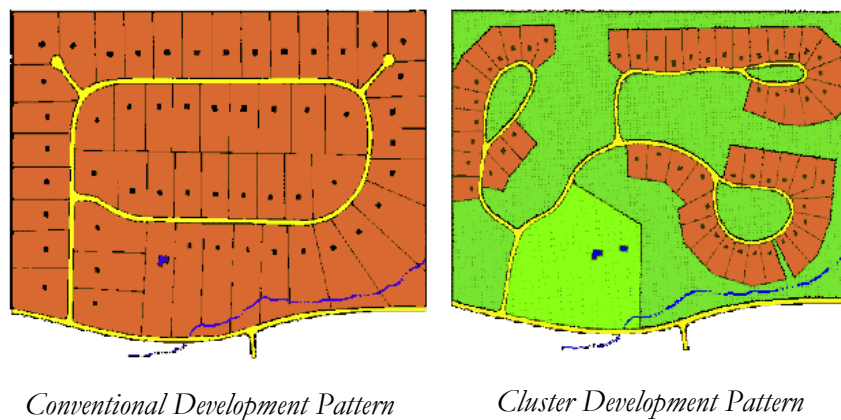


Figure 10.3: Conventional and Clustered Development Patterns

Also, in a recent study, "[An Examination of Market Appreciation for Clustered Housing with Permanent Open Space](#)," by Jeff Lacy at the Center for Rural Massachusetts comparing conventional and open space developments in two Massachusetts Cities over long periods of time, found that the value of homes in open space developments appreciated at a greater rate. See Figure 10.4.

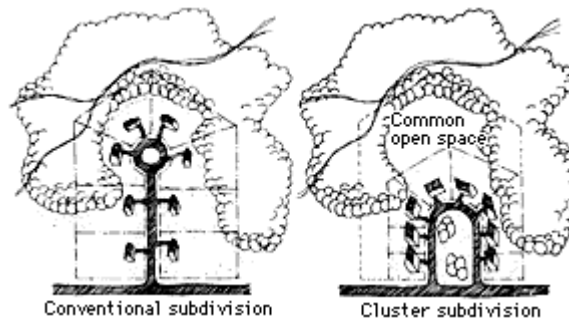


Figure 10.4: Conventional and Clustered Development Patterns

Form-based Code

Form-based code is another alternative to conventional development. Form based code is a method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. They create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form, with a lesser focus on land use. Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. This is in contrast to conventional zoning's focus on the segregation of land uses and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, traffic levels of service) that neglects an integrated built form. Form-based Code should not be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy. Form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory.

Visual Clutter

Visual clutter is the unplanned, disorganized arrangements of signs, utility poles and equipment and street furniture. Visual clutter makes a streetscape unattractive and often unsafe. State Highway 59, has many areas of visual clutter.

Excessive aerial lines striping a residential sky are visual clutter. 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. Litter and inappropriate refuse dumping or storage is obviously visual clutter.

Street Furniture

Street elements such as streetlights, traffic signals, directional signs, bus shelters, transit rider seating, tree grates, telephone booths, fire hydrants, information kiosks, drinking or decorative fountains, litter

baskets, 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 City influences the design of traffic signals, 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 encourage pedestrian use and provide the basis for and support of the use of street furniture. The use of a mailbox, a telephone booth, low-level street lighting, a drinking or decorative fountain, information kiosk, or bus shelter is linked to a defined pedestrian transportation network. The City should consider providing routine maintenance and replacement of the sidewalks that are currently in place to address safety issues.

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 consumes little energy. Collector and arterial streets, because of their greater traffic volumes, must be adequately lit. Moreover, measures should be taken to assure that right-of-way lighting best serves open space and subdivision entrances. In areas that are not in the public domain, the private developer should provide a lighting plan that considers lighting location, style, and type.

Night lighting can dominate the mood and focus of a streetscape. Supporting structures for light fixtures (e.g., 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. As what is found in the Courthouse Square, low-level street lighting offers the most pleasing community design.



Figure 10.5: Baldwin County Courthouse

The picture shown below is the same view of the courthouse as the one above, one block south. You can see the street lighting and landscaping has been extended beyond the courthouse square. The same thought and care should be given to the types of traffic signaling devices.



Figure 10.6: View of the Baldwin County Courthouse one block south

Recommendations and Strategies

- When economically feasible, coordinate with Auburn Design Studio, or similar entity, to create “Place” criteria and standards. Explore any and all grant opportunities that may be applicable for this purpose.
- Create, identify, improve, and maintain gateways and entrances on U.S. Highway 31, State Highway 59, and County Highway 138. Seek Highway Enchantment Grant funds, ADECA, ALDOT, and other grant opportunities to provide funding.
- Implement routine maintenance schedule on existing sidewalks to address safety issues.
- Investigate options for drainage improvements.
- Seek funds to replace above ground power lines with underground power lines along Highway 59.
- Seek funds to replace ‘string type’ with “pole type” traffic signals.
- Create focal points for new and existing neighborhoods by providing appropriately located parks, schools, parkways, street trees, and other amenities.
- Coordinate with the Bay Minette Beautification Committee to:
 - Identify unattractive streetscapes;
 - Create streetscapes with significant community designs;

- Eliminate visual clutter;
 - Create a common signage theme;
 - Create a street lighting theme;
 - Select material for sidewalks;
 - Create a street sign design;
 - Create a landscaping plan for Highway 59, Highway 31, and commercial developments;
 - Select and purchase street furniture.
- Amend Zoning Ordinance to:
 - Create and include aesthetic criteria and architectural designs and standards for the downtown area.
 - Identify State Highway 59/U.S. 31 and State Highway 59/Hand Ave as corridors of importance. Create an overlay district that would include aesthetic criteria and architectural designs and standards.
 - Relocate South gateway.
 - Determine if a form-base code alternative is appropriate.
- Consider Amending Subdivision Regulations to:
 - Require a heritage tree on every new residential lot (identify species and design);
 - Include a preferred street pattern and cluster development criteria.

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