

# STARKVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



City of Starkville, Mississippi  
December, 2015



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **CITY OF STARKVILLE - to be provided by the client**

### **Mayor & Aldermen**

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### **Planning Commission**

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### **Project Advisory Panel**

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# INTRODUCTION





# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT INTENT

While perhaps overused, the adage “To fail to plan is to plan to fail” comes with a great deal of truth. For local governments to operate effectively and efficiently, they must periodically go through a planning phase. The resulting plan should be comprehensive in nature by addressing a broad range of issues, including land uses, development form and character, mobility, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resource preservation, infrastructure, parks and recreation, and similar important issues. Starkville’s last comprehensive plan was prepared in 2005. Considering that



*A key foundation for this plan is an extensive public input process that insures that the final plan document reflects the community’s vision for the future of Starkville.*

***“The intent of this project is to provide comprehensive research to form policy to increase the quality of life of the City of Starkville, its economic development prospects, balanced mobility, recreational opportunity, design quality, and environmental integrity.” - City’s Request for Proposals Document***

# INTRODUCTION

states that mandate comprehensive plans (Mississippi does not) typically require a new plan every five years, in addition to the considerable growth that has occurred in Starkville over the past decade, it is clearly time for a new plan. Any effective comprehensive plan will answer the following questions:

- What are the community's current conditions?
- In what direction is the community trending?
- What is the community's vision for the future?
- What is the blueprint for achieving the community's vision?

Once the comprehensive plan is completed and adopted by the City, it can be implemented through a number of different means. One tool for shaping future land uses, densities, development forms and character will be zoning and development standards. City, state, and federal investments in infrastructure will be another means. Economic-based strategies

might be implemented by the community's economic development entities, while much of the implementation will occur through the private sector, such as real estate development and business start-ups.

***"This new plan needs to have clarity, it needs a consistent vision and theme, and it needs to be inspiring."***

- Mayor Parker Wiseman



*The past few decades have brought a great deal of change to Starkville, such as the incremental development of the Cotton District located between Downtown and the MSU campus.*

# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT APPROACH

The following five-step approach was used by a consultant team overseen by a City-appointed Advisory Panel:

### Task 1.0: Project Kick-Off & Research

- Review of Background Information
- Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting & Study Area Tour
- Physical Analysis
- Utilities & Storm Water Infrastructure Analysis
- Economic & Market Assessment
- Public “Kick-Off” Meeting

### Task 2.0: Community Visioning

- Key Person Interviews
- Stakeholder Focus Group Meetings
- Build-Out Scenario
- Planning Principles

### Task 3.0: Charrette & Concept Plan

- Studio Set-Up & Follow-Up Field Work
- Public Workshop
- Concept Plan Development

- Concept Plan Presentation

### Task 4.0: Draft Plan Preparation

#### BACKGROUND SECTION

- Existing Conditions Analysis
- Public Input & Planning Principles
- Concept Plan

#### PLAN ELEMENTS SECTION

- Natural & Cultural Resources Conservation

- Land Uses, Densities/Intensities, Form and Character
- Transportation & Mobility
- Public Space & Recreation
- Housing
- Economics
- Plan Implementation
- Utilities & Storm Water Infrastructure

### Task 5.0: Plan Presentations & Revisions



*The first trip of the consultant team to Starkville included a “windshield survey” of the community led by key City officials. A bus was used to traverse all ends of the City and beyond to study a broad range of planning and development issues. See [pages 37-40](#) for information on the results of the public charrette workshop.*



# BACKGROUND





## BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

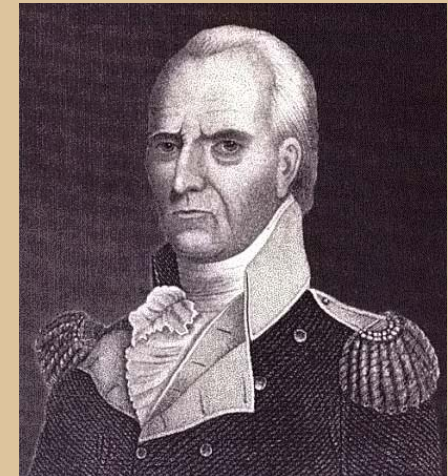
### BRIEF HISTORY OF STARKVILLE

The Starkville area has been inhabited for over 2100 years, as evidenced by clay pot fragments and artwork found east of Starkville at the Herman Mound and Village site, a National Historic Register site accessible from the Indian Mound Campground. By the time of early European settlement of what is now the United States, the area was inhabited by the Choccuma (or Chakchiuma) tribe. However, they were wiped out shortly before the Revolutionary War by a rare alliance between the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes.

Oktibbeha County was established in 1833 as one of the several counties created from the Choctaw Territory ceded by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit in 1830. The present site of Starkville was selected in 1834 for the county seat, in part because of the existence of two large springs. It was surveyed and planned the same year, and the sale of lots soon began to occur. The town was incorporated in 1837 by the Mississippi

#### Origins of Starkville's Name

When the town was established in 1834, it was named Boardtown because of a mill southwest of town that manufactured clapboards. However, when the town was incorporated in 1837, it received the name that it still has today in memory of General John Stark, the Revolutionary War "Hero of the Battle of Bennington." That battle, part of the Saratoga Campaign in 1777, actually occurred in New York, but was only ten miles from Bennington, Vermont. Stark's famous quote years later was "*Live free or die: Death is not the worst of evils.*" Those words were adapted as New Hampshire's motto in 1945.



General John Stark

Legislature and it was quickly settled. However, it remained a small village up until the Civil War, having a population of fewer than 200 in 1860. The community began to grow in the 1870s, and in 1874 Starkville acquired rail service with the completion of the Mobile and Ohio branch line connecting the town to the main line at

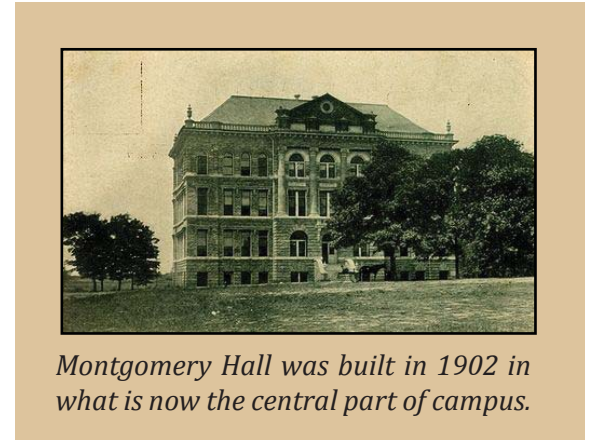
Artesia. Soon afterward, telegraph service was established. In April of 1875, a fire swept through Downtown Starkville, destroying numerous stores and offices. Because the street was so narrow at that time, the fire spread from one side of the street to the other. After that major crisis, it was decided to widen the street before rebuild-

## BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

ing began to avoid a similar fate in the future. The Canton, Aberdeen, and Nashville Railroad (later part of the Illinois Central system) reached Starkville in the 1880s.

The most important factor in shaping the future growth of Starkville was the establishment of the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Mississippi State University) in 1880. Between the

railroads and the college, Starkville began to emerge as a business and educational center. The presence of the university and a Borden condensary provided economic stability for the area through the 1930s. After World War II Starkville continued to grow as the enrollment increased at MSU and additional businesses and industries located in Starkville and Oktibbeha County.



*Montgomery Hall was built in 1902 in what is now the central part of campus.*



*Downtown Starkville, seen here in the late-1920s, has always been the community's cultural center. The Chester House Hotel, built in 1925, can be seen in the background.*

Even with the growth of new businesses along highways leading to Downtown Starkville, the historic commercial core of has remained relatively strong and vibrant. During the early-1990s, the area now known as the Cotton District, between Downtown and MSU, began to revitalize as a New Urbanist neighborhood with mixed uses along University. While this are is popular with college students, student driven growth occurs throughout the community, including the southern and westerly edges of town.

This history is based, in large part, upon the City's 2011 historic resources survey.

# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: NATURAL RESOURCES

### WATERSHEDS

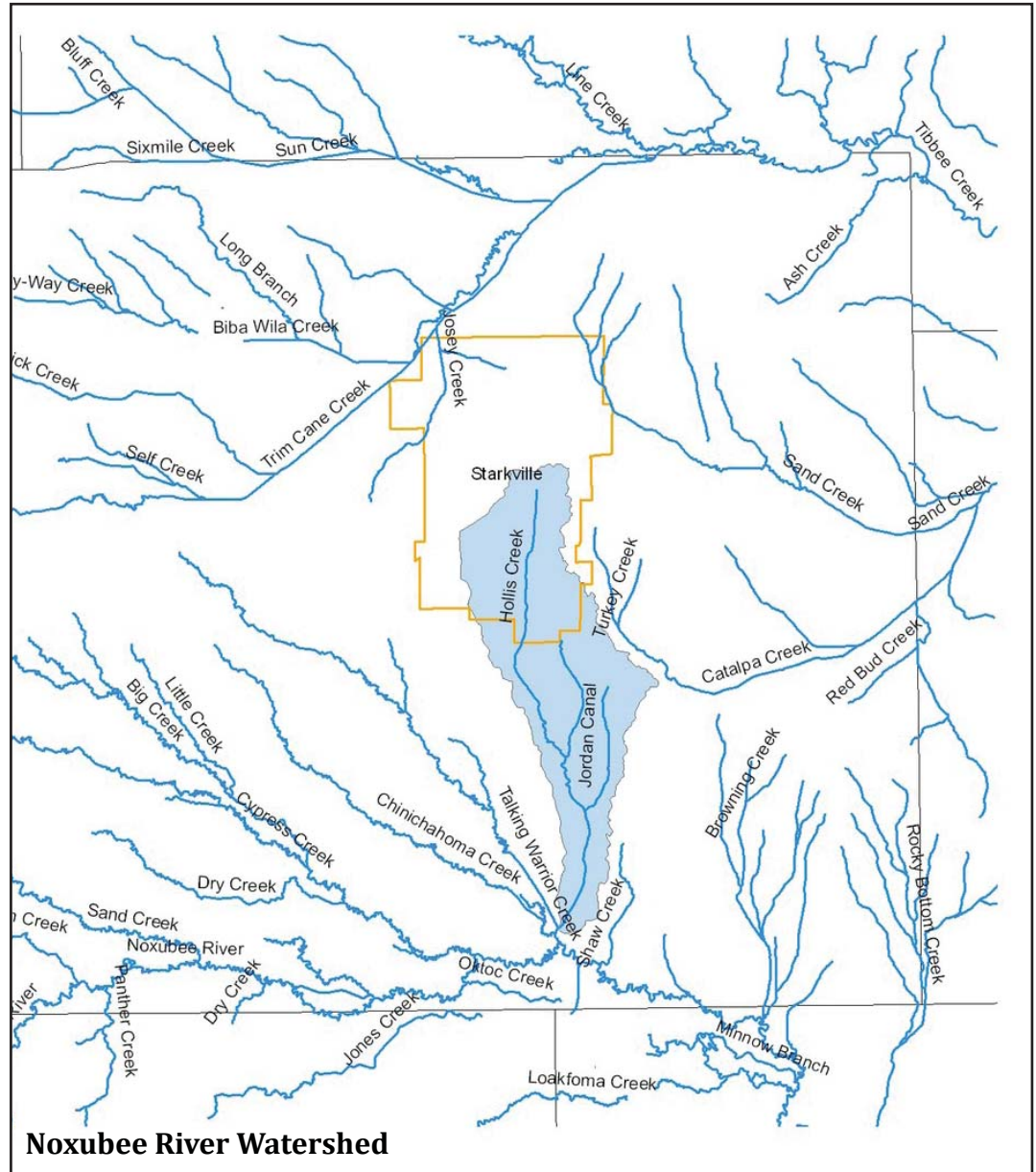
Watersheds are geographic areas in which the topography results in water flowing to particular streams. In the case of Starkville, there are multiple watersheds that comprise the natural environment, including the following:

#### Tibbee Creek Watershed

This watershed encompasses 714,195 acres of land, most of that lying beyond the City of Starkville. Located in the northern portion of Starkville, Tibbee Creek flows east to the Ten-Tom Waterway.

#### Noxubee River Watershed

This watershed encompasses 715,000 acres of land. Roughly two thirds of it is located beyond the City of Starkville. Located in the southern portion of Starkville (see map at right) this watershed's streams, including Hollis Creek, flow southeast to the Ten-Tom Waterway.





# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: NATURAL RESOURCES

### CREEKS

As the map at right reflects with blue lines, Starkville has an extensive system of creeks. The four key creeks are listed below:

#### Hollis

This creek is located in the southeast portion of Starkville and it has a generally north-south axis.

#### Josey

This creek extends from the very northwest corner of the community and has numerous branches that extend to the south and east.

#### Sand

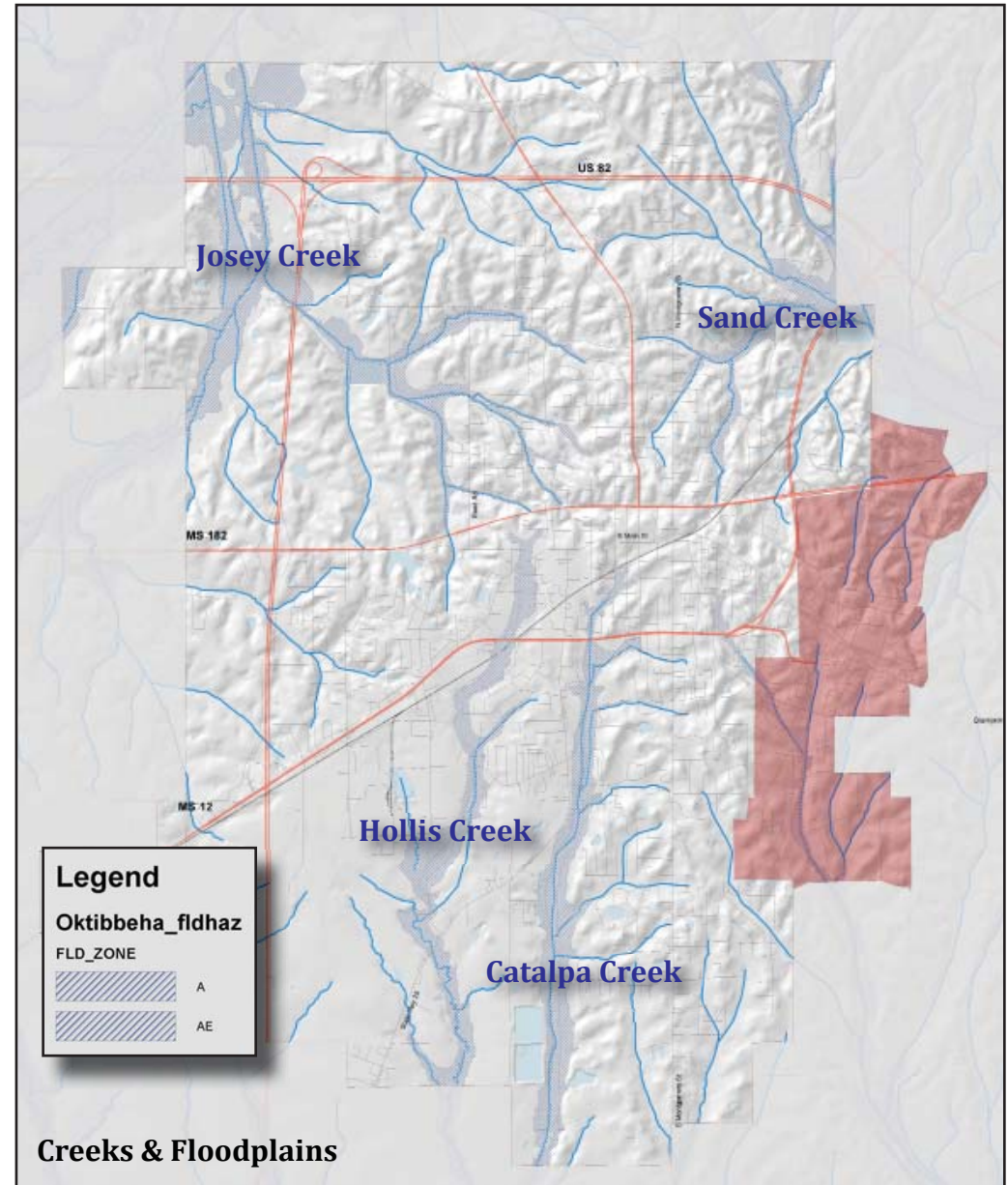
This creek is located in the northeast part of town and has branches extending north, west and south toward MSU's campus.

#### Catalpa

This creek is to the immediate east of Hollis and also has a north-south alignment.

### FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are associated with these creeks. They are depicted in cross hatching on the map at right.





# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: NATURAL RESOURCES

### FLOODPLAINS (continued)

Although it is physically possible to develop within floodplains by using fill material to elevate a site, as is frequently done, it is more environmentally sustainable to avoid development within floodplains.

### WETLANDS

A review of United States Geological Survey (USGS) maps for Starkville revealed that there are extremely limited wetlands existing in the community.

### SOILS

The map at right illustrates the three soil types that exist in Starkville, as summarized below per the 1973 USDA Soil Conservation Service survey:

#### Leeper-Catalpa-Marietta

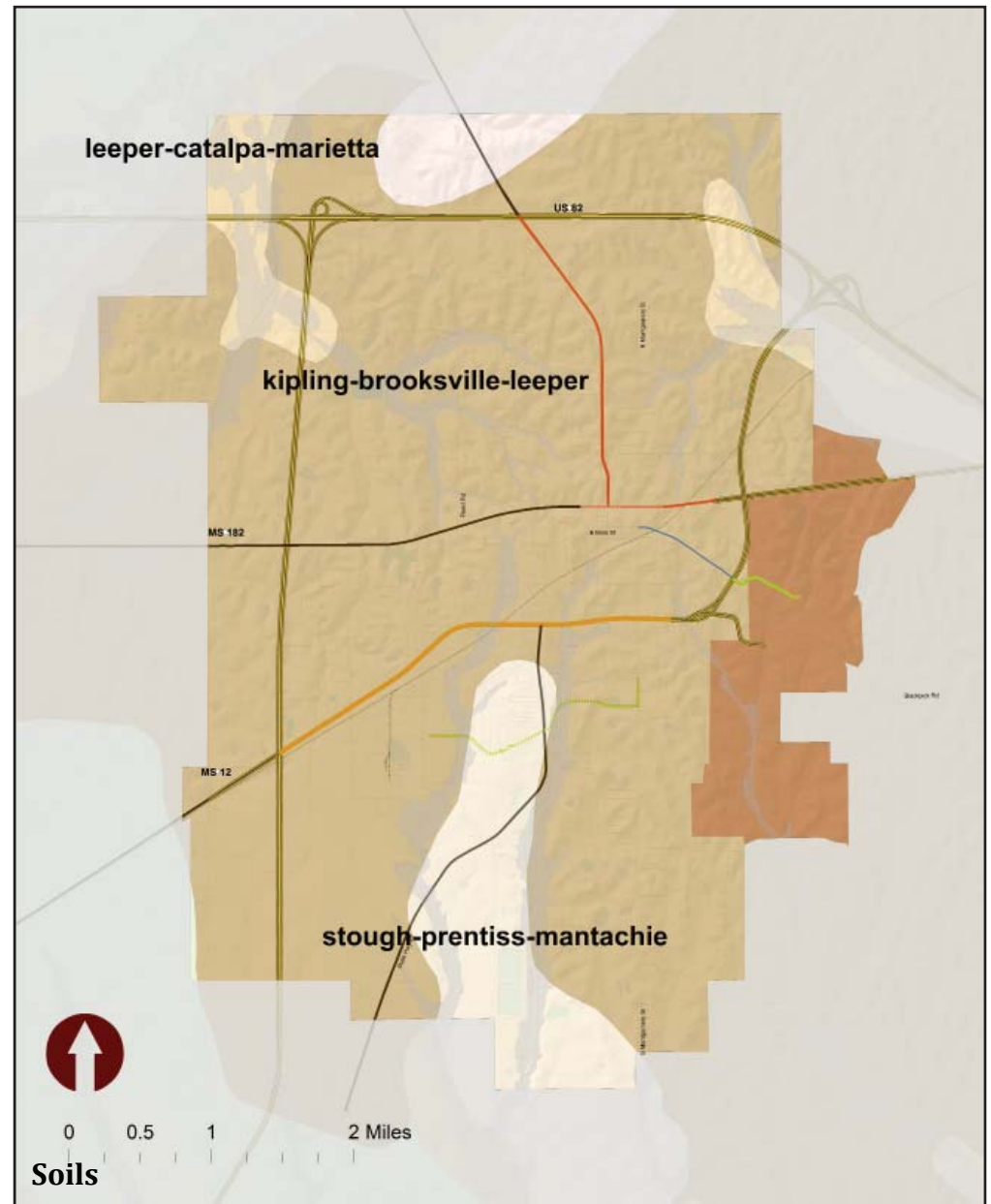
This soil drains poorly, it shrinks and cracks when dry, and it ponds in some areas.

#### Kipling-Brooksville-Leeper

Associated with 0-2% slopes, this soil has the same characteristics as the leeper-catalpa-marietta.

#### Stough-Prentiss-Mantachie

This soil drains slightly better than the two above.



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

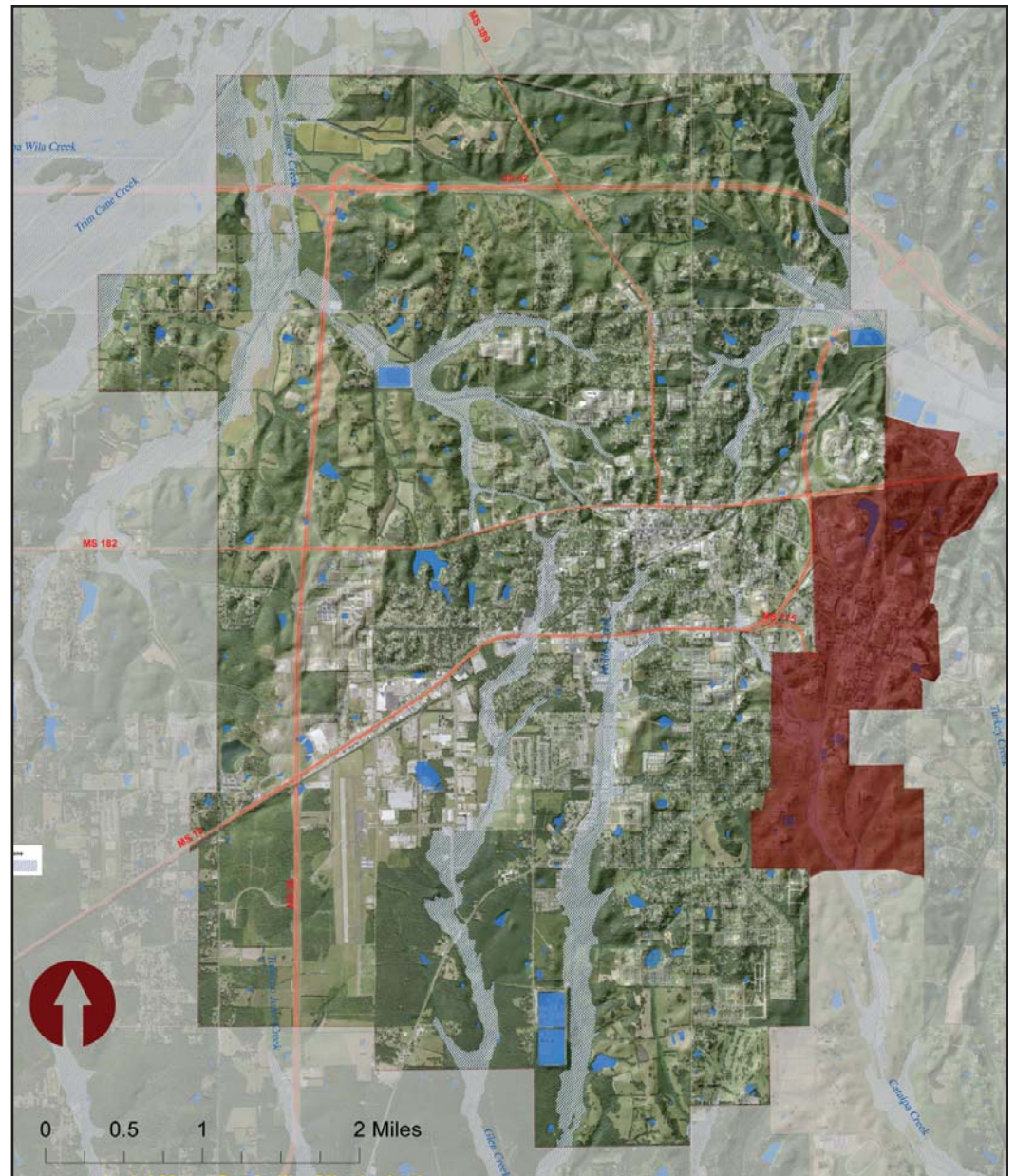
## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: NATURAL RESOURCES

### TOPOGRAPHY

Consistent with the USDA soil surveys data summarized on the previous page, Starkville's overall topography is relatively gentle. The map at right features "hill shade" to allow the topography to be understood. As the map illustrates, the northern portion of the community has the greatest extent of steep slopes. This is also an area that is least developed, particularly north of US Hwy. 82.



*Starkville's relatively flat terrain allows developers to avoid expensive site grading.*





# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

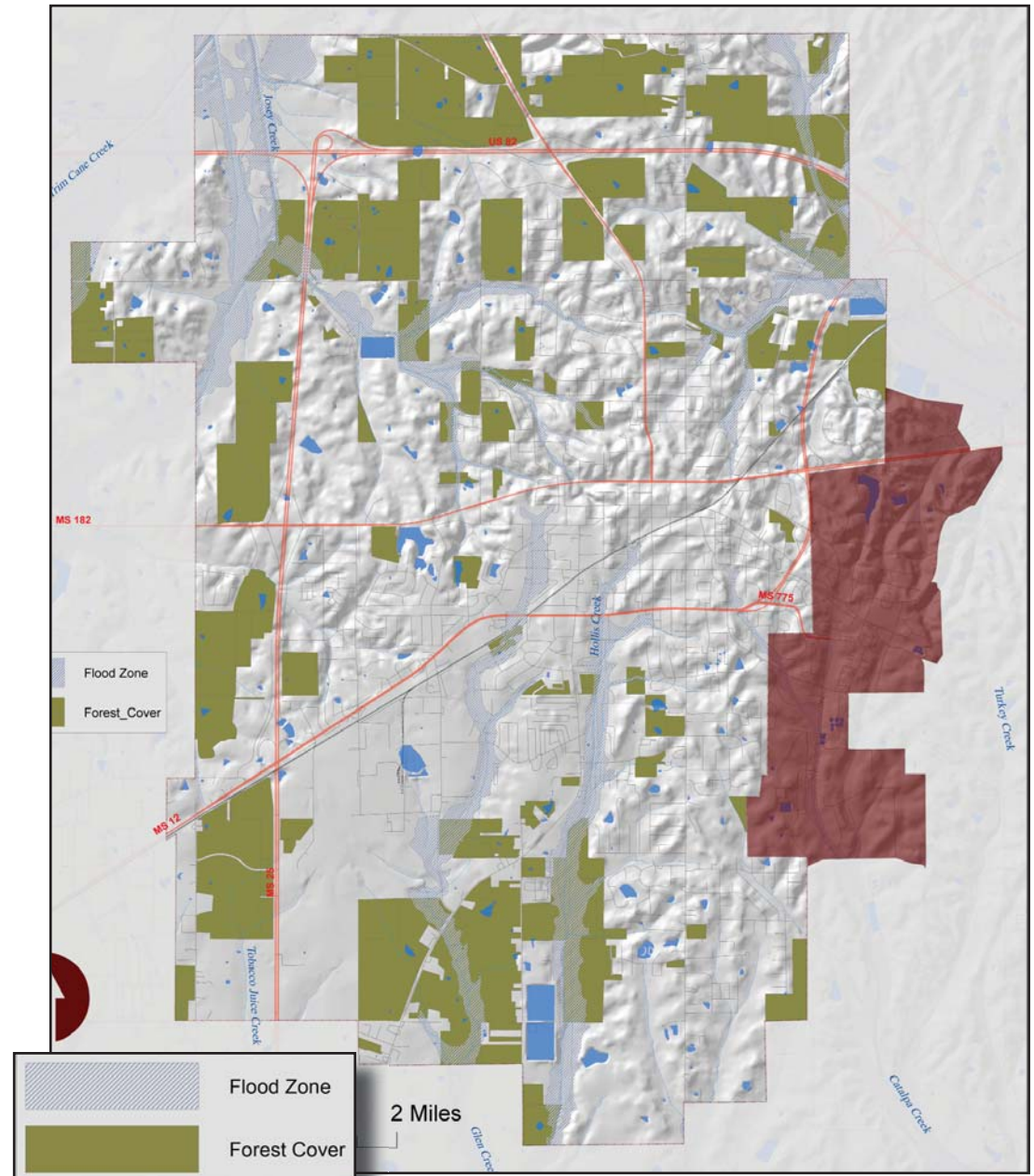
## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: NATURAL RESOURCES

### TREE COVER

Lands having a dense tree cover provide habitat to a rich variety of plants and animals. Within Starkville, much of the heavy tree cover is associated with streams, floodplains, and slopes - all lands less suited for development. As the map at right also reveals, much of it located on the community's periphery.



*This winter aerial photograph of the northeast corner of Starkville distinguishes between the leafless deciduous trees and the evergreen trees.*



## BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

### PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: HISTORIC RESOURCES

Although a community such as Starkville has numerous historic resources, including buildings, cemeteries, bridges, and other objects, only those areas having a high percentage of such resources are designated as historic districts. Historic districts have a cohesiveness giving them a strong sense of character. Two different types of historic districts exist in Starkville:

#### NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

National Register (NR) districts acknowledge an area's significance and can provide financial incentives, including federal and state tax credits for eligible rehabilitation projects. However, no protection is provided to such places unless federal funding or licensing might impact the district, and even those actions come with very limited protections.

#### LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Local historic districts do offer protections to historic resources via the design review controls of the City. Not only are existing historic buildings typically preserved and alterations are appropriate, but new infill development must be compatible.



*The majority of Starkville's historic resources are in the form of buildings, which range from residential, commercial, and institutional structures. Many of these, however, are threatened by demolition because they lack regulatory protections, including all of Downtown Starkville.*

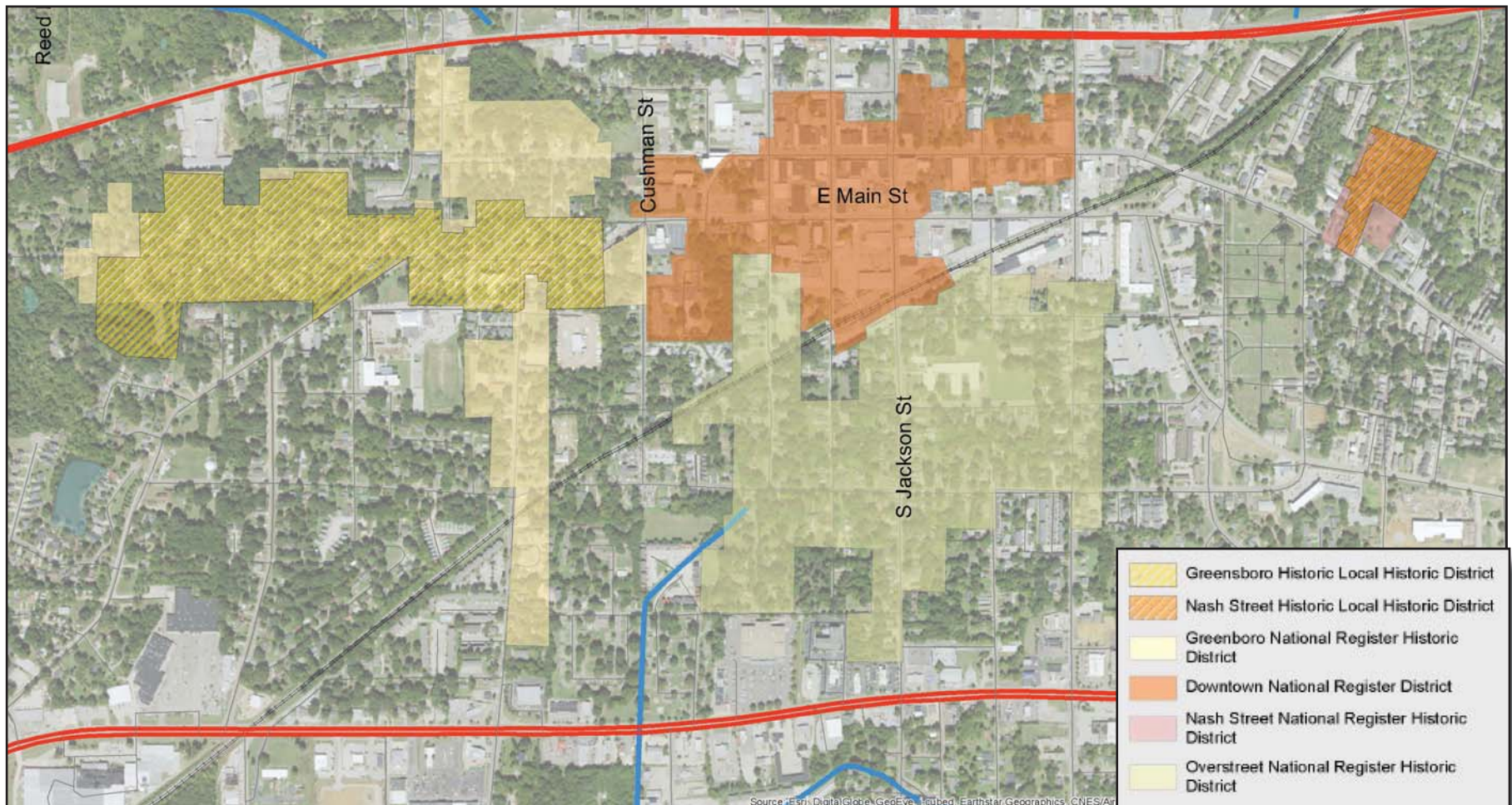




# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: HISTORIC RESOURCES (continued)

Starkville has four National Register (NR) districts, as illustrated on the map below. Of the four NR districts, there are currently only two that are also locally designated districts - the Greensboro Historic District and the Nash Street Historic District. For more detail on historic zoning, see [pages 31-32](#).

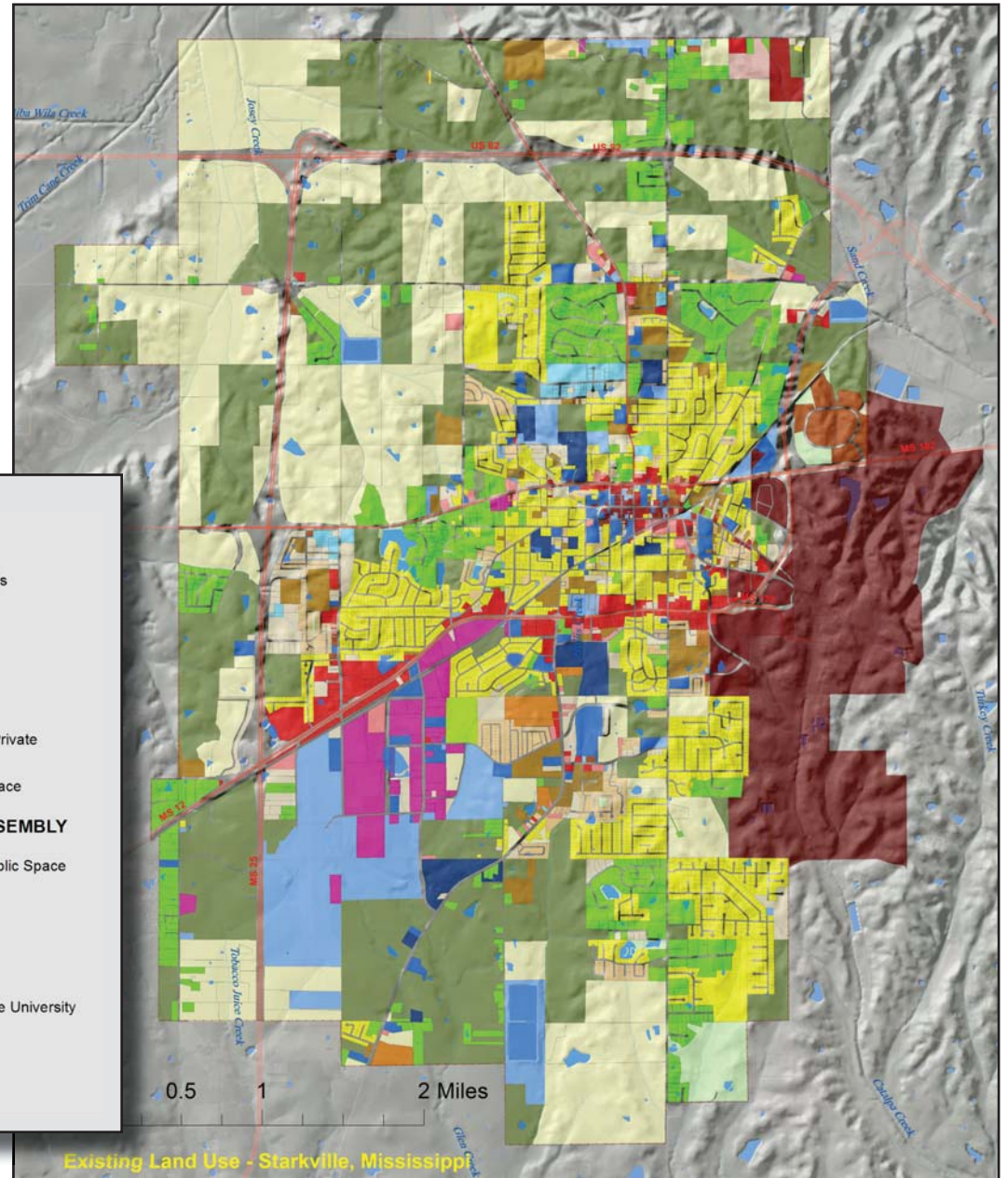
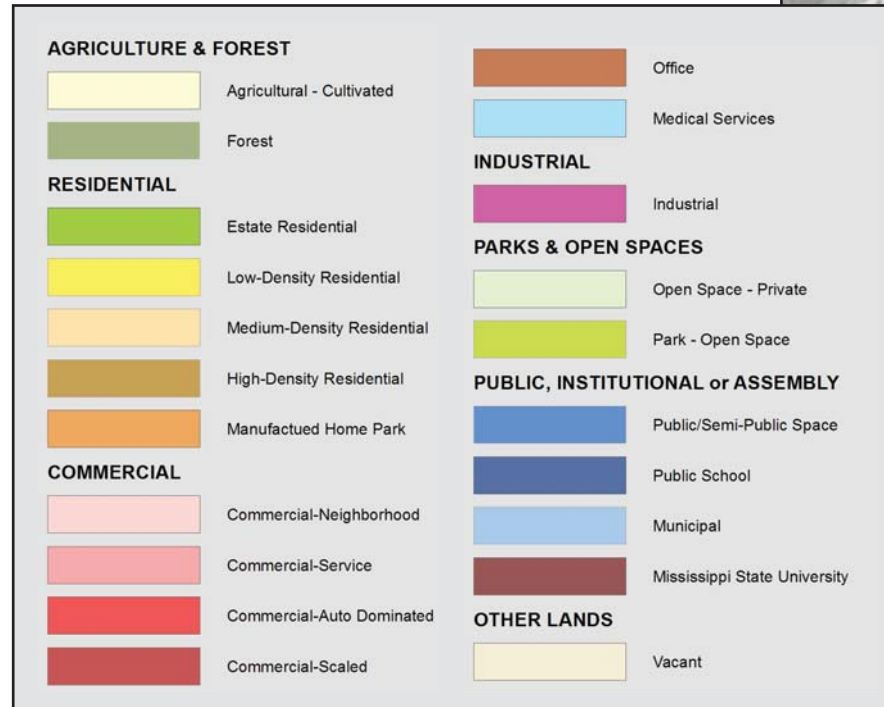




# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: EXISTING LAND USES

Starkville, like most communities, has a broad range of existing land uses. The map at right is color-coded by land use to correspond to the map legend below. Specific uses are grouped under the following broad categories: agriculture and forest; residential; commercial; industrial; parks and open spaces; public, institutional or assembly; and other.



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

As with the wide range of land uses, Starkville also has a diversity of development forms and characteristics. In fact, the forms and characters can be split into six general “place type” categories:

- **Natural** - Undeveloped land consisting of fields, forests, streams, and other natural conditions.
- **Rural** - While some areas may be natural, most include cultivated fields, grazing meadows, farmsteads, and sporadic housing and commercial development along key roads.
- **Suburban** - Expansive areas of single-family detached housing and segregated strip commercial corridors designed primarily for automobiles.
- **Urban** - Walkable neighborhoods with mixed housing types and centers/corridors with mixed use development.
- **Downtown** - Downtown Starkville.
- **Special Districts** - MSU, hospital, etc.

See the following page for a related chart used for this project’s Public Workshop during the charrette.



**Suburban**  
Large lot, single-family detached with front-loaded garage



**Urban**  
Small lots, mixed housing types, with rear alley-accessed parking

## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN STARKVILLE



**Suburban**  
Large parcel, large front parking lot, single use (commercial)









**Urban**  
Small parcels, on-street and rear parking, mixed uses

## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN STARKVILLE



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## STARKVILLE PLACE TYPES

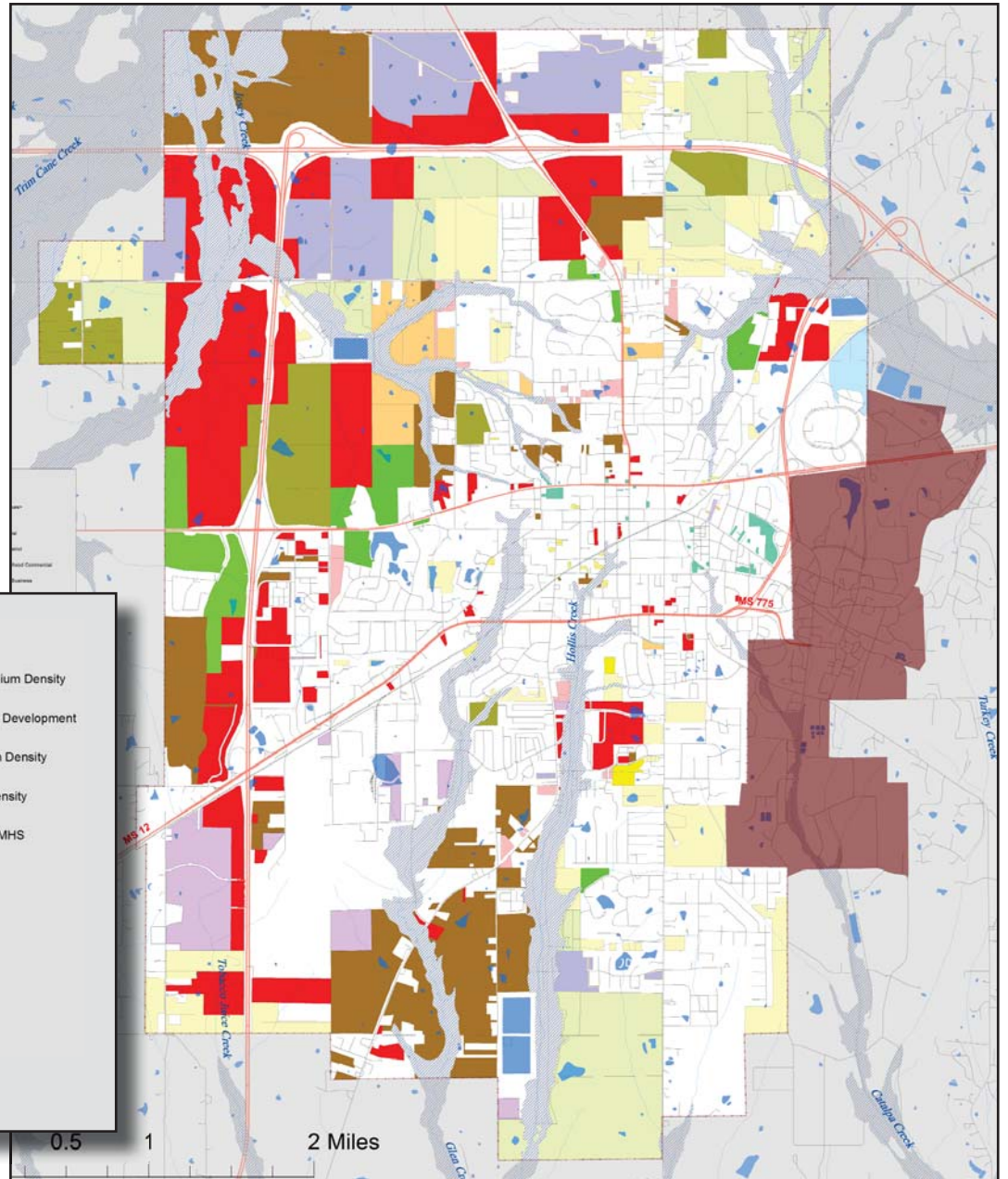
Natural	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Downtown	Special Districts
					
<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Plant and animal habitat, passive recreation	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Agriculture, unused open space	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Residential, commercial, institutional	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Residential, commercial, institutional	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Commercial, institutional, residential	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)
<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Not applicable	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Cultivated fields, forests, occasional houses and outbuildings	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Generally segregated land uses with commercial concentrated along key corridors	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Mixed use and commercial nodes near residential	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Mixed use – uses integrated both horizontally and vertically	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Often insular and campus-like
<b>Physical Character:</b> Natural landscapes – fields, forests, wetlands, streams	<b>Physical Character:</b> Fields (cultivated and uncultivated), grazing meadows, woods	<b>Physical Character:</b> Low to moderate densities, single-family houses, strip commercial corridors	<b>Physical Character:</b> Moderate to high density, walkable	<b>Physical Character:</b> High density, historic, walkable	<b>Physical Character:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)
<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Generally not applicable	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings typically set back far from roads, unpaved front parking	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings separated from their streets with front parking lots	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings front onto streets; parking to side, rear & on-street	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings front onto streets; parking to rear & on-street	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)
<b>Local Examples:</b> Hollis Creek and associated wetlands (southwest part of town)	<b>Local Examples:</b> Much of northwest part of town with fields and forests	<b>Local Examples:</b> Much of the southeast part of town accessed by South Montgomery	<b>Local Examples:</b> Cotton District, Nash Street District, Greensboro Street District	<b>Local Examples:</b> Downtown Starkville	<b>Local Examples:</b> Mississippi State University



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: VACANT LAND

The map at right illustrates vacant land in Starkville by its zoning classification. There is currently a total of more than 8,000 acres of vacant land, which is nearly one half of the city. If developed per the current zoning (assuming sufficient market demand existed), this vacant land would yield 18.5 million square feet of non-residential space and over 40,000 housing units. The following page features a chart with a breakout of existing vacant land by zoning.



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: VACANT LAND (continued)

At right is a chart that quantifies the map illustrated on the previous page. The left column indicates the zoning classification, the middle column indicates the number of acres, and the right column is the percentage of the total vacant land. Below is a summary of the available vacant land for development (over 8,000 acres) by current zoning classification per the percentage of total vacant land:

- Agricultural & Residential Estate – 17%
- Single Family – 20%
- Multi Family – 17%
- Manuf. Home / Mobile Home - 6%
- Commercial – 20%
- Form Based - < 1%
- Manufacturing - 3%
- Flood Zone – 13%
- Other - 3%



Vacant Land As Zoned - Starkville - Preliminary		
A-1 Agricultural	1206.37	14.9%
RE Residential Estate	147.6	1.8%
R-1 Single Family	902.9	11.1%
R-2 Single Family Duplex	9.4	0.1%
R-3A Multiple Family	17.0	0.2%
R-3 Multiple Family	172.7	2.1%
R-4 Zero Lot Line Cluster	704.6	8.7%
R-4A Single Family, High Density	0.0	0.0%
R-5 Multiple Family	1219.5	15.0%
R-6 Manufactured Home	115.8	1.4%
R-M Mobile Home	354.0	4.4%
C-1 Neighborhood Commercial	70.0	0.9%
C-2 General Business	1604.9	19.8%
C-3 General Business	0.0	0.0%
CD Form Based Code	1.9	0.0%
T-4 Form Based Code	14.1	0.2%
T-5 Form Based Code	10.6	0.1%
T-6 Form Based Code	2.5	0.0%
Buffer	174.7	2.2%
M-1 Manufacturing	273.4	3.4%
P-O Planned Office	48.0	0.6%
Planned Unit Development	2.5	0.0%
SU Special Use District	0.0	0.0%
Floodplain	1053.7	13.0%
	8106.0	100.0%



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: PUBLIC LANDS

The map at right highlights land in Starkville owned by public entities. Below is a summary of lands deemed public, institutional and for assembly, as well as parks and open space:

### Public, Institutional or Assembly

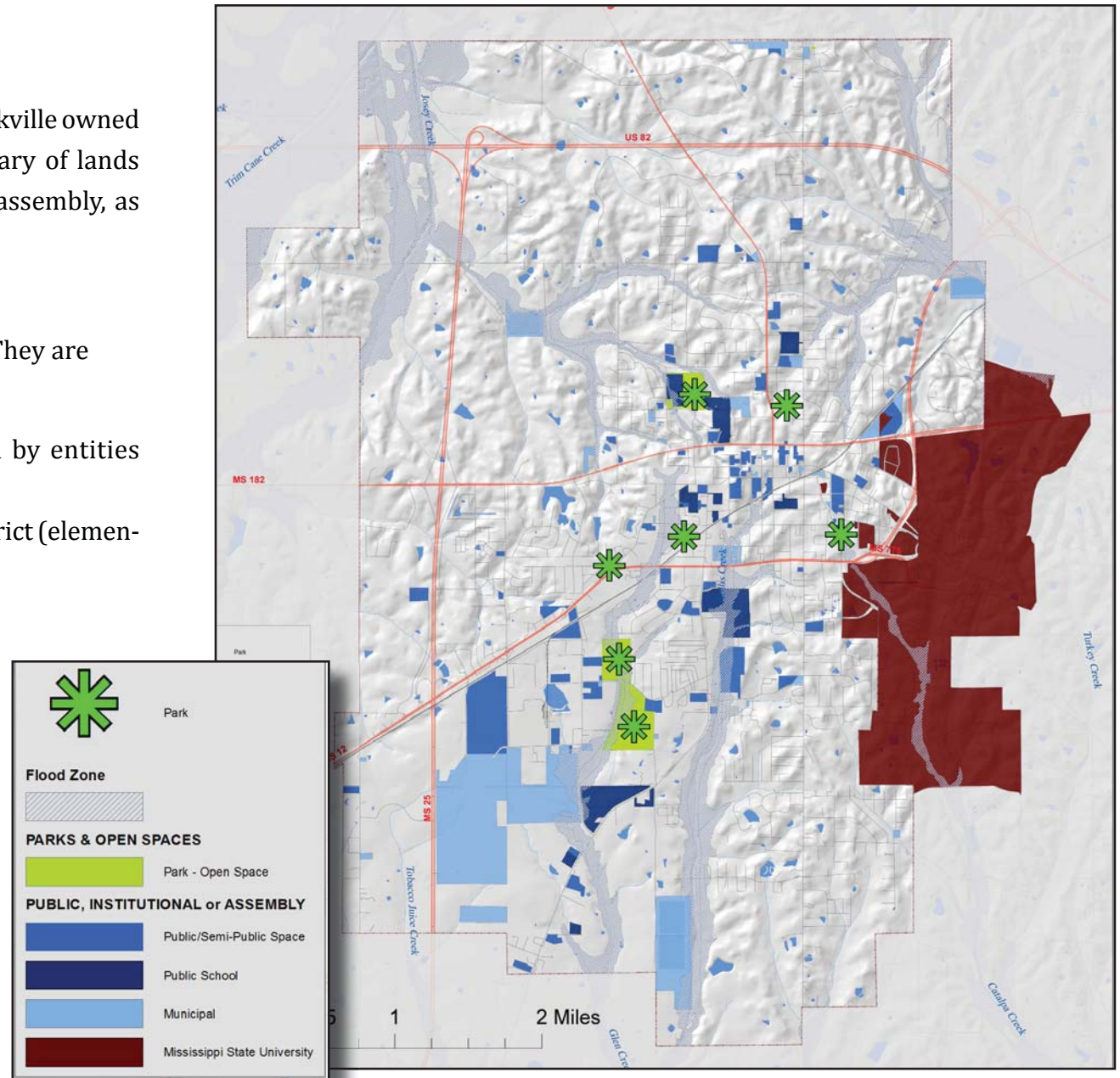
Below is a brief description of each. They are all various shades of blue except MSU.

- *Public/Semi-Public Space* - owned by entities other than below
- *Public School* - Starkville School District (elementary, middle and high schools)
- *Municipal* - City and County
- *Mississippi State University* - west part of campus in the City.

### Parks & Open Space

These areas are highlighted in green and a symbol denotes parks (see [page 91](#) for park information).

Because the City is currently preparing a separate parks and recreation plan, this topic is being covered in much greater detail there.





# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: MOBILITY

### STREET NETWORK BY LANES & ADTs

Starkville's five street types are listed below and average daily trips (ADTs) are mapped at right.

#### 5-Lane Undivided MDOT

This street type is limited to the segment of MS Hwy. 12 from MS Hwy. 25 to Blackjack Road.

#### 4-Lane Divided MDOT

This type applies to the balance of MS Hwy. 12, all of MS Hwy. 25, most of US Hwy. 82, and MS Hwy. 182/MLK from just west of Hwy. 12 to the east.

#### 3-Lane MDOT

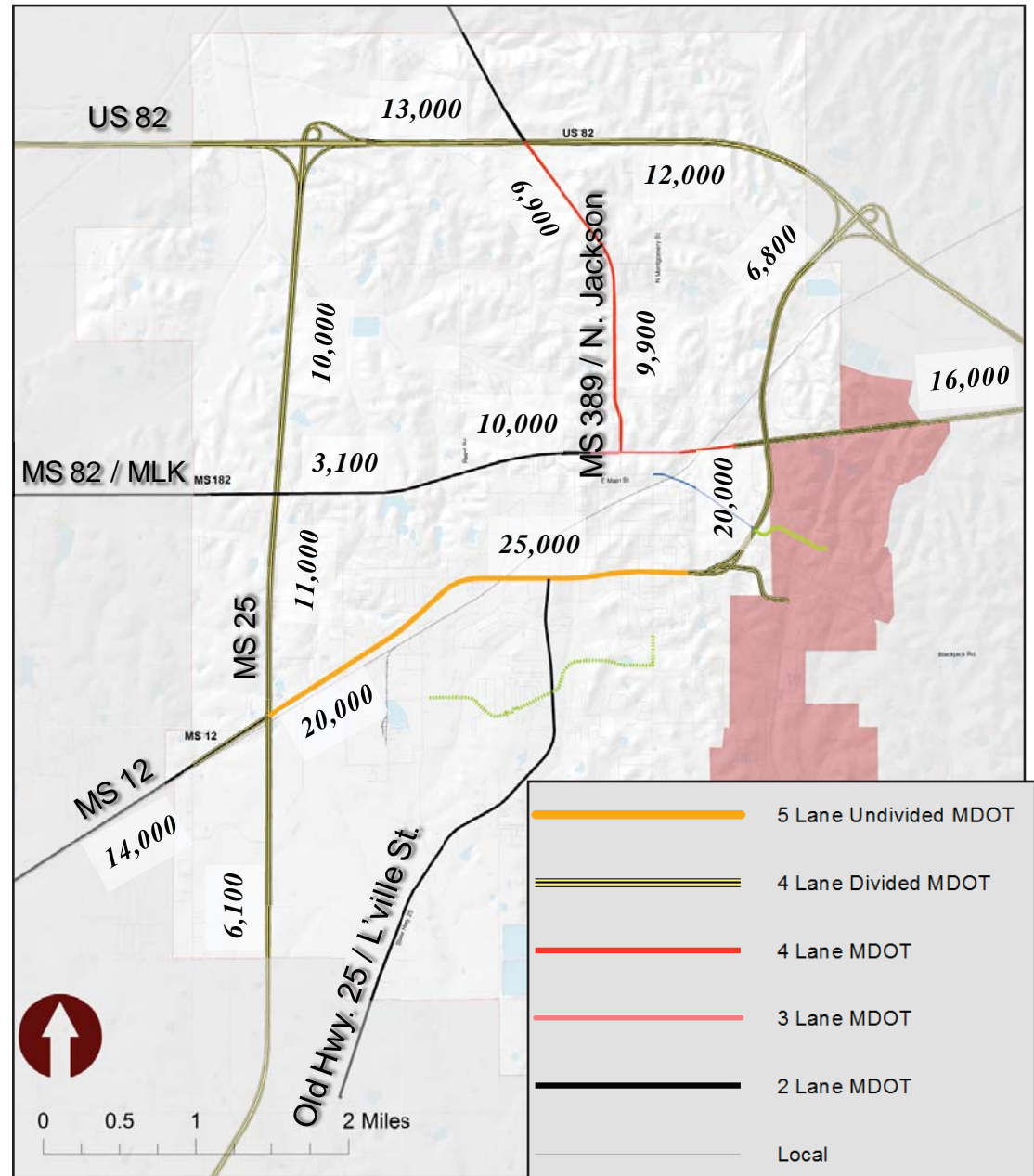
This street type is limited to a segment of MS. Hwy. 182/MLK from Conner Dr. to Old West Point Rd.

#### 2-Lane MDOT

This street type is applied to MS Hwy. 182/MLK from Connere Dr. to the west, the segment of MS Hwy. 389/N. Jackson north of US Hwy. 82, and all of Old Hwy. 25/Louisville St.

#### Local

This street type applies to all other 2-lane streets lacking State designation (most of city's streets).



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: MOBILITY

### MULTI-USE PATHS & BIKE LANES

At present, Starkville has a very limited system of paths and bike lanes. Illustrated on the map at right, both are described below:

#### Multi-Use Paths

##### Existing Paths

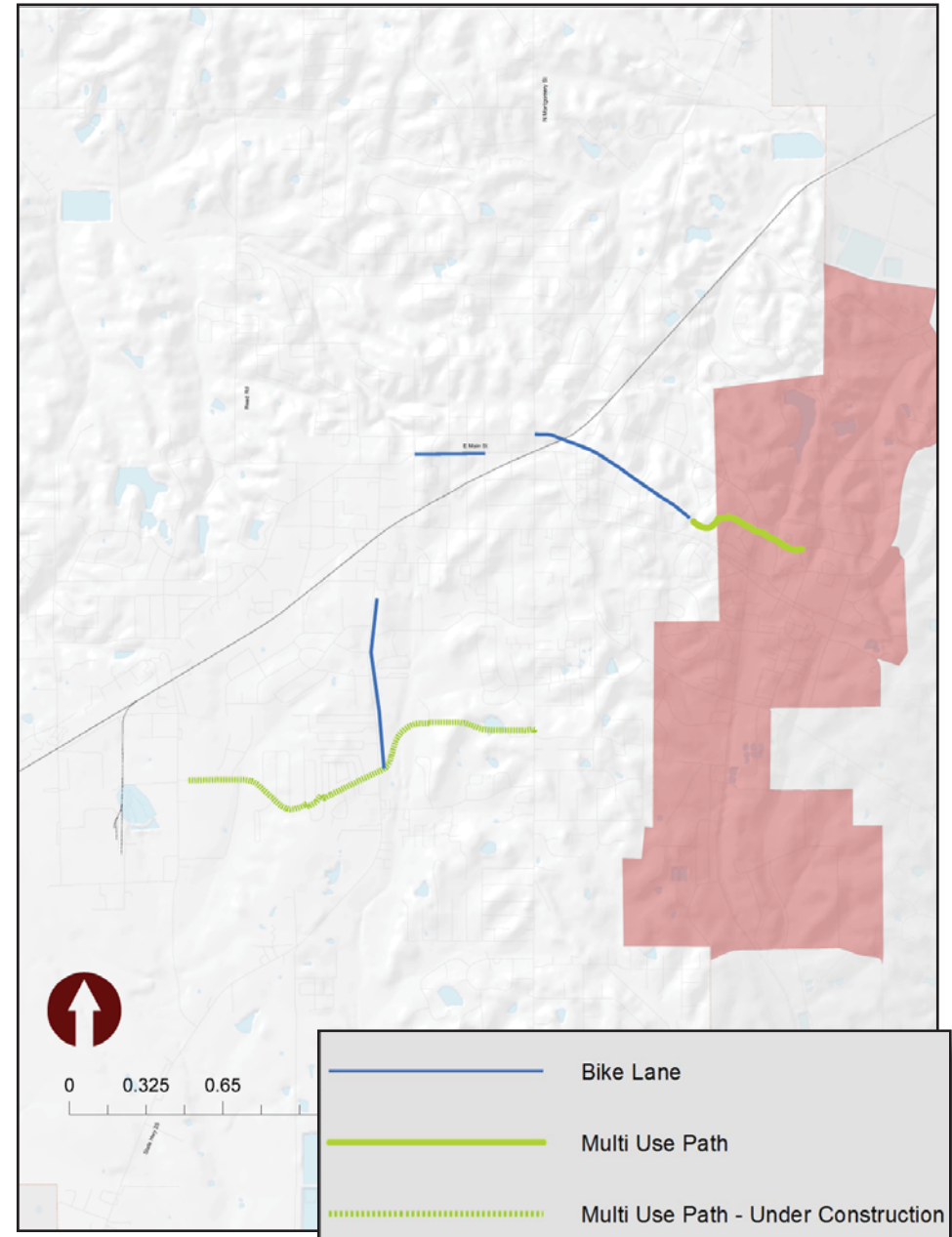
The community's only existing multi-use path is located primarily on the MSU campus. It extends from just east of the football stadium along Barr Avenue and ends on University Drive just east of where it begins on the west side of Hwy. 12.

##### New Path

Since the initiation of this planning process, the City recently completed a new path on Lynn Lane extending both east and west of Old Hwy. 25/Louisville Street (see green dashed line).

#### Bike Lanes

The only identified existing bike lanes are along University Drive from Hwy. 12 (connecting to the multi-use path on Barr Ave.) extending west to S. Montgomery, and the recently-constructed bike lanes on Louisville St. (south of Hwy. 12) and on Lampkin St. Downtown. The City has committed to additional bike facilities, both on-road and off-road systems, as opportunities allow.



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: MOBILITY

### SIDEWALKS & CROSSWALKS

As the map at right suggests, the majority of sidewalks and crosswalks in Starkville are located within the downtown and surrounding urban neighborhoods. Below is a description of each:

#### Sidewalks

##### Existing Complete Sidewalks

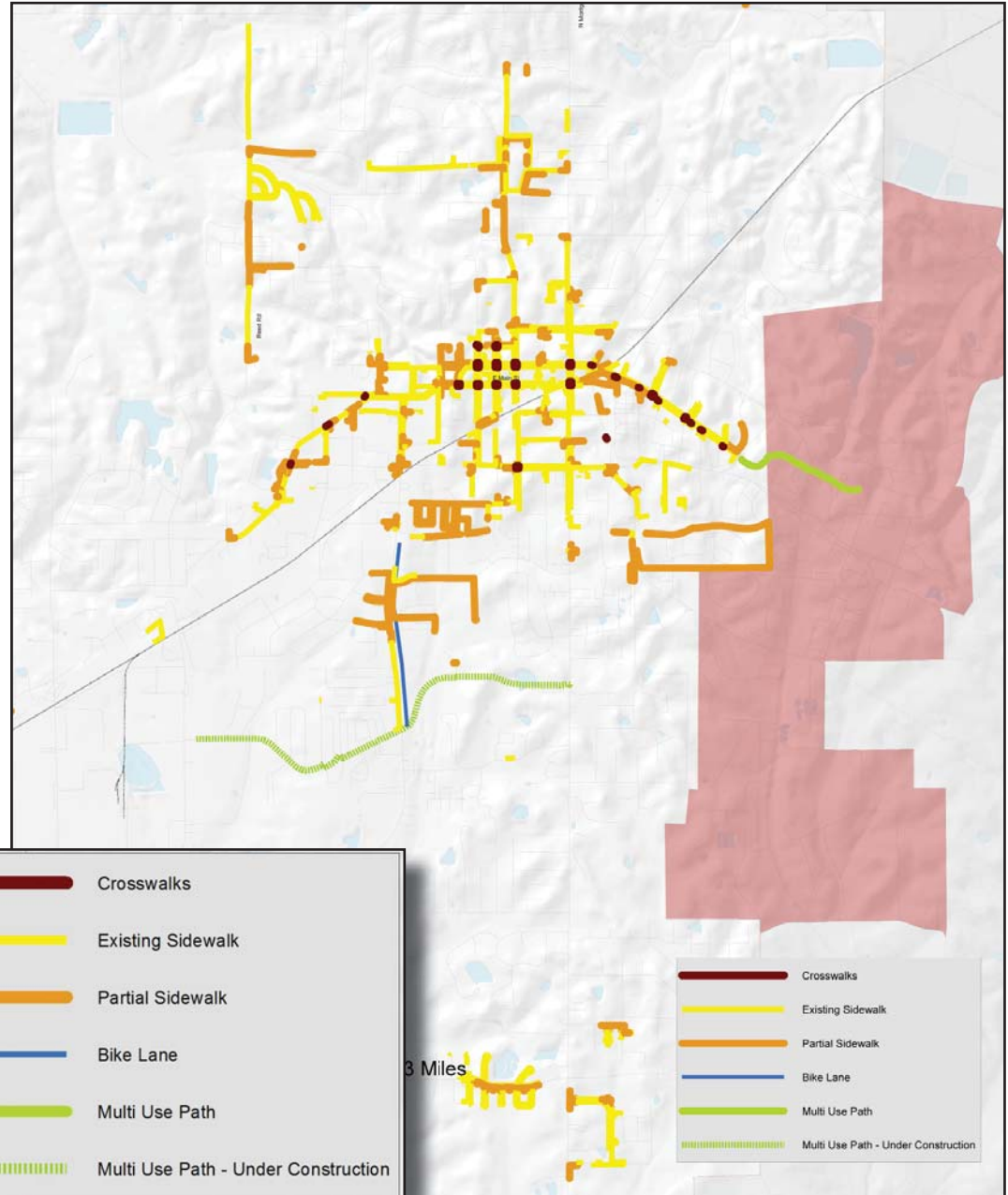
This category of sidewalk consists of those that are provided on both sides of the street. They are concentrated in the Downtown, along University Drive toward MSU, and in the neighborhoods south of Downtown.

##### Partial Sidewalks

This category of sidewalk is primarily located on the periphery of the more intact “complete” sidewalk networks.

#### Crosswalks

Intersection crosswalks, shown on the map as maroon squares, are limited primarily to the Downtown.



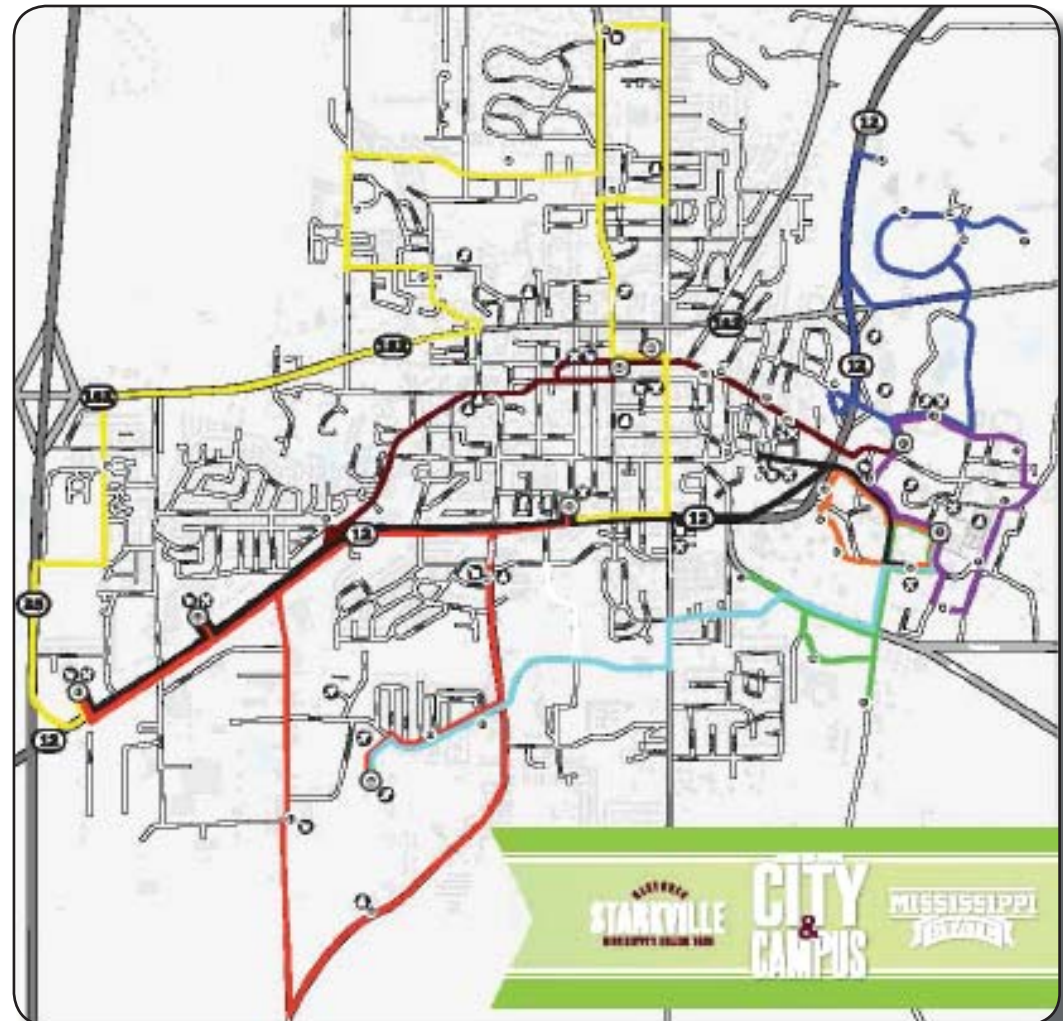


# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: MOBILITY

### TRANSIT NETWORK

Starkville benefits tremendously from a transit system run by MSU. Known as SMART (Starkville - MSU Area Rapid Transit), it features nine different routes, which traverse both the MSU campus and the broader community. The system is available to both students and general citizens, and there is no cost to riders. The “headways” (amount of waiting time for riders) range between ten and thirty minutes. Below is a list of the routes, which are color-coded to the map at right.



### SMART ROUTES

- Central Loops
- South Loops
- Greek Loops
- Research Loops
- Old Main Express
- Sportsplex
- Boardtown North
- Boardtown South
- Hwy. 12

# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: UTILITIES

Starkville Utilities is a public utility incorporated in 1939 and it operates as a self-sustaining arm of the city government. All assets and operations are paid through its utility rates. The utilities department provides water, sewer, and electric utilities.

### WATER

Public water in Starkville is provided by the Starkville Water / Sewer Department. The map at right illustrates water lines in blue. As can be seen, water lines currently extend throughout the city boundaries and even beyond into the county.

### SEWER

The map at right illustrates sewer lines in yellow. As with the water lines, they also extend beyond the city.

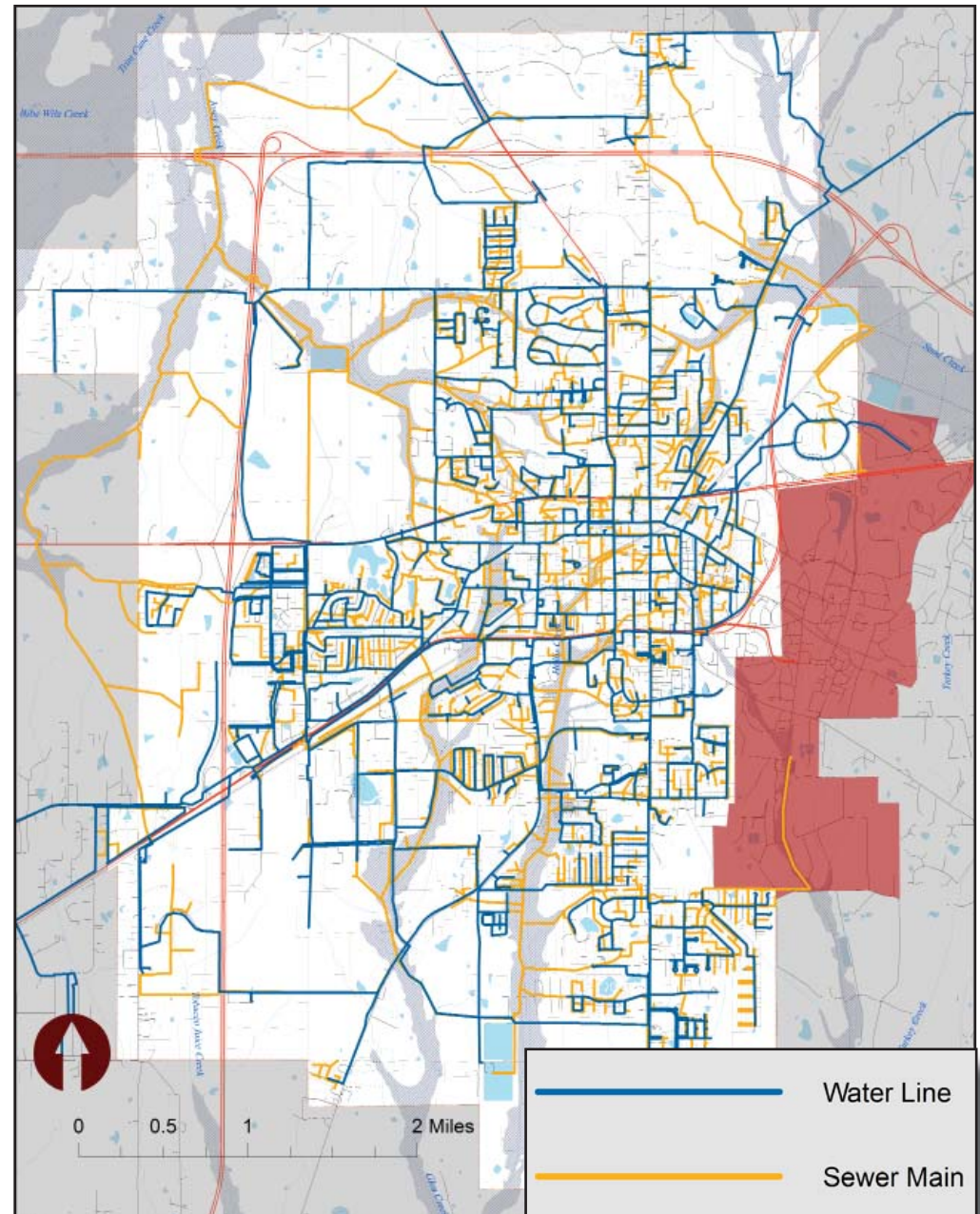
### ELECTRICITY

Electricity is provided by the Starkville Electric Department. There are no significant geographic limitations.

### OTHER UTILITIES

Gas is provided by Atmos Energy, and telecommunications are provided by MaxxSouth, AT&T and Cspire/Telepak.

See *Appendix A: Utilities Existing Conditions* for details.





# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### STARKVILLE'S ECONOMIC CONTEXT

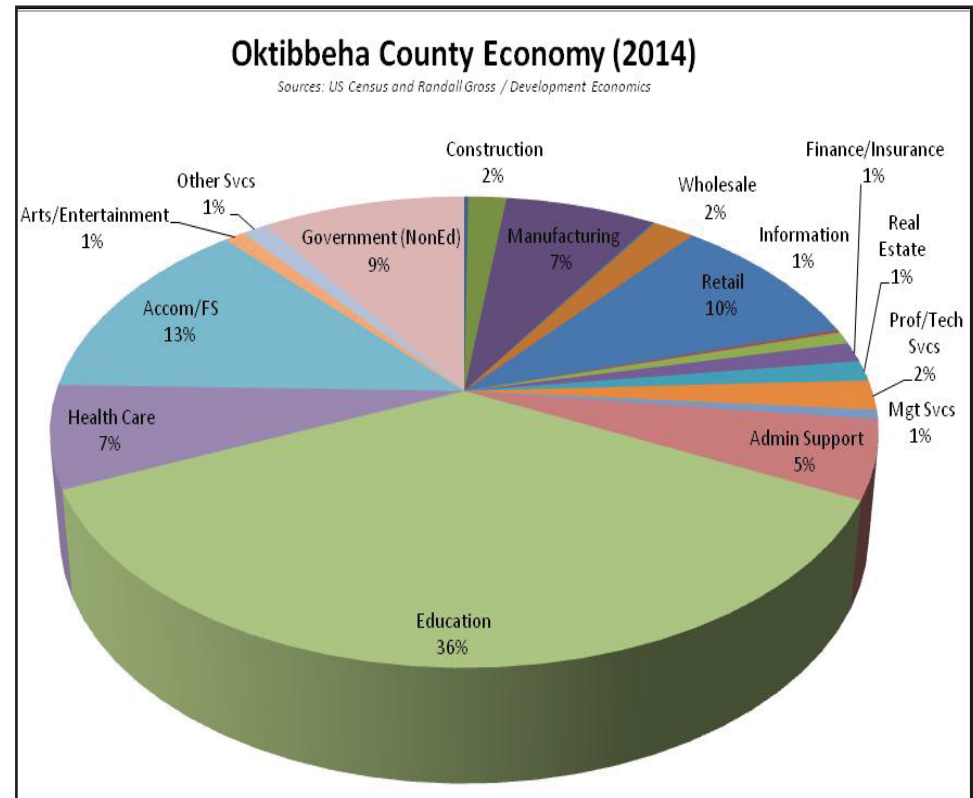
Mississippi State University (MSU) is the largest state-wide university system in Mississippi and it is the largest single employer in Starkville. Starkville is also part of the Golden Triangle, an organized economic development region comprised of Starkville, Columbus and West Point. Of the three, Columbus has the strongest city-level economy and West Point has enjoyed recent success in securing major industries with strong employment growth.

### RECENT ECONOMIC GROWTH

Between 2004 and 2014, Starkville has experienced economic growth at a rate of approximately 1% annually. Below is a summary of key job sectors that are at the high and low ends of the spectrum. The chart at right provides greater detail.

**High Growth Sectors:** real estate, health, accommodation / food service, arts, wholesale trade (640 jobs have been added in accommodation / food service).

**Low Growth Sectors:** manufacturing, construction, transportation, management, education (340 less jobs in education).



### COMMERCIAL MARKET

Most of Starkville's commercial development is concentrated along the Hwy. 12 corridor. Starkville has experienced recent challenges in recruiting desired retail because the community's demographics are not strong enough, especially compared with Columbus. The downtown commercial market has been strong in recent years and has nearly 100% occupancy of building space, which limits future retail growth there. The Cotton District includes a relatively small amount of student-oriented commercial uses, but it experiences high demand.

# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### RETAIL SECTOR

Retail is often attracted to Columbus over Starkville and Oktibbeha County because Lowndes County has 35% more total personal income (TPI) and perhaps 40% more retail sales capacity. While Starkville has a large number of MSU students, the community has more limited incomes. There is a need for higher-quality retail space than exists in the Hwy. 12 corridor, and space is very limited in the Downtown. Below is a comparison of these two retail areas:

#### Downtown

Older buildings

\$8-13/SFG (sq. ft. gross)

Parking challenges

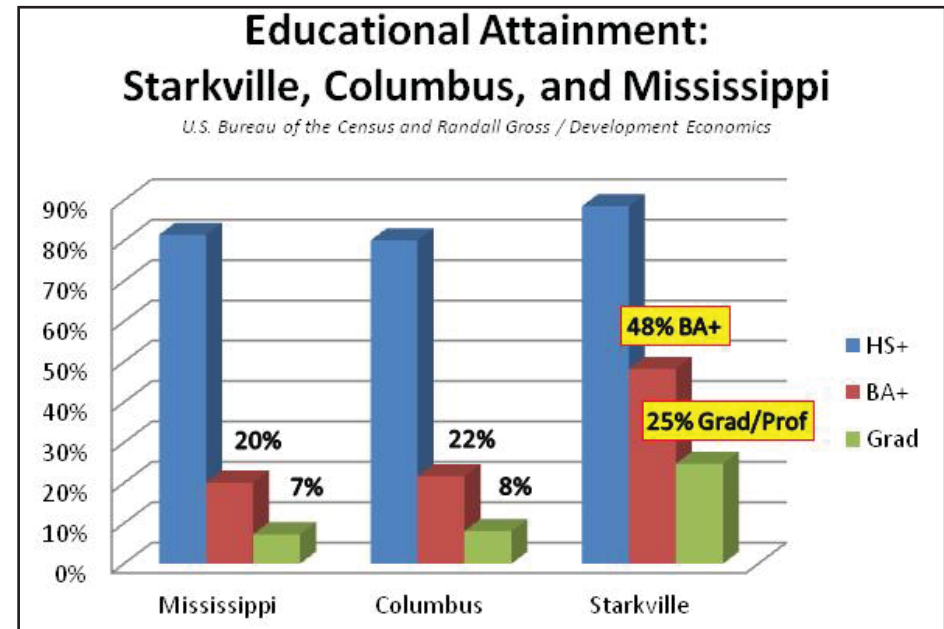
#### Hwy. 12 Corridor

High visibility (Hwy. 12/Hwy. 82)

\$19-23/SFN (sq. ft. net)

Plenty of parking

Starkville has a smaller household income base than Columbus, but it has faster demographic growth. As the graph at right demonstrates, Starkville also has higher education levels. As a result, there is demand for niche retail, including organic foods, coffee, restaurants, and premium products. Such businesses less likely to locate in “big boxes” or strip centers, providing Downtown with growth and expansion opportunities. Downtown has a strong identity (brand), but much of it is only a single story and there are very few vacancies. Regardless, there are niche retail and mixed-use



on downtown’s north side along Hwy. 182/MLK. The potential is strong for local entrepreneurs with a unique brand, as well as meeting and conference space.

***There is a need for higher-quality retail space than exists in the Hwy. 12 corridor, and space is very limited in the Downtown.***



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### HOUSING SECTOR

Starkville's rental housing market is driven by off-campus student housing. Student housing is particularly heavy in the multi-family segment, but it impacts single-family housing as well. The for-sale housing market currently has a limited inventory of mid-range housing costs between \$100,000 and \$300,000. Home sales figures have been stable, with an average of 300-400 annual sales from 2010 to 2014. Sales prices have been up 28.5% since 2010.

### Housing Development Trends: 1996-2014

Between 1996 and 2004, an average of 286 housing units were constructed annually. Between 2005 and 2014, an average of only 206 units were built annually. Below is a summary by housing type:

#### Single-Family

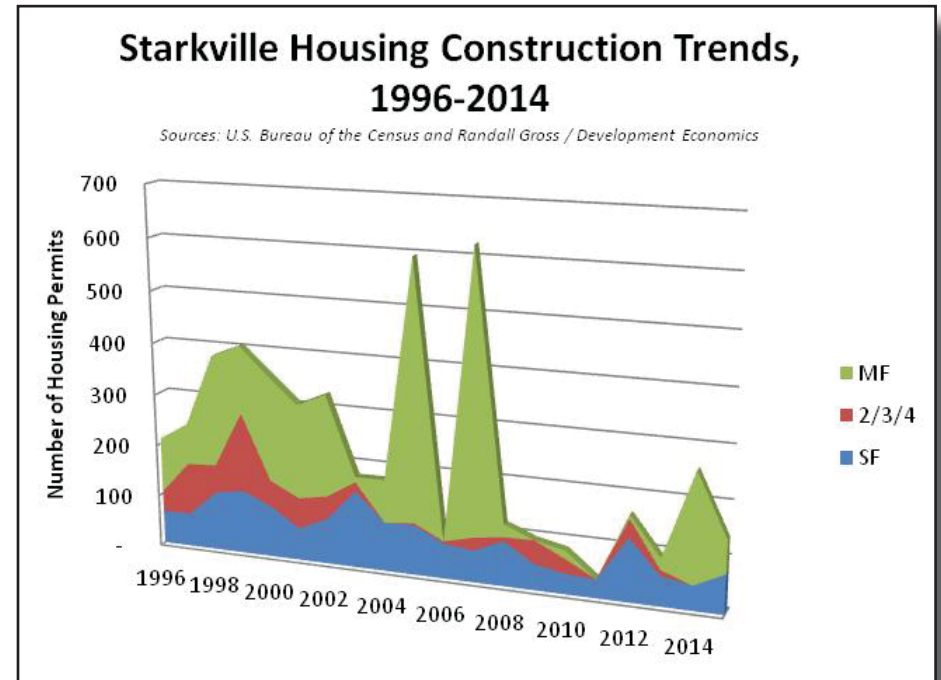
- 1996-2004: 95 average units per year
- 2005-2014: 67 average units per year

#### Duplex / Triplex

- 1996-2004: 58 average units per year
- 2005-2014: 15 average units per year

#### Multi-Family

Multi-family development has been erratic: 10-15% vacancy



### DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IMPACTING HOUSING

Oktibbeha County is adding over 320 people and 220 households per year. The number of young adults is decreasing, while “millennial” and “empty nester” growth will drive housing demand through 2020:

- Age 35-44: +56% (80-130 families per year)
- Age 65-74: +28%

These age groups prefer walkable neighborhoods. Affordable high-density single-family cottages in developments such as Park Town and Garden Lane are popular. See the next page for related data.

# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IMPACTING HOUSING (continued)

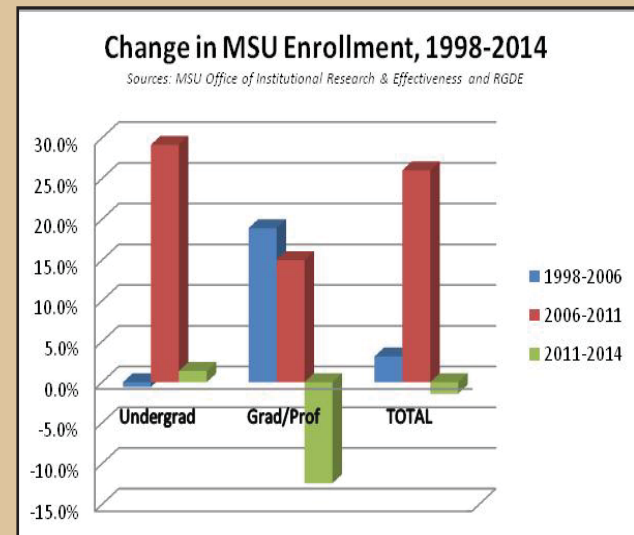
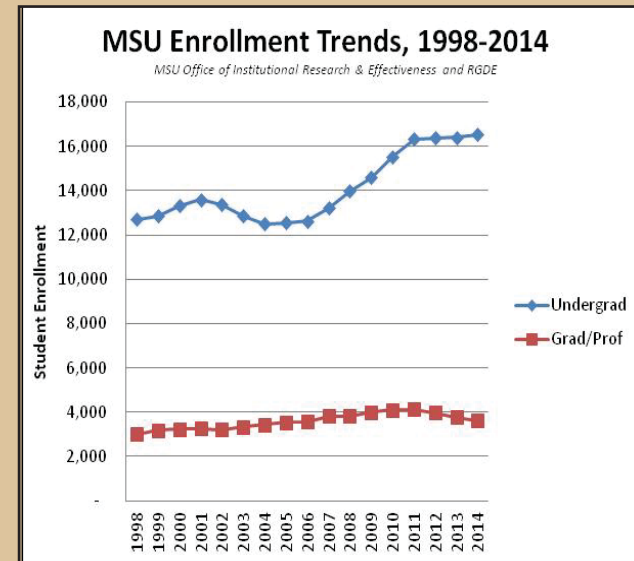
The graph below supplements the overview of demographic changes addressed on the previous page.

#### Impacts of MSU Enrollment on Housing

Following a period of rapid enrollment growth at MSU, a plateau indicates slowing demand for student housing in Starkville (see top graph at right). An estimated 70% of rental tenants in Starkville are students and many prefer new housing product, such as Haven12 and Aspen Heights.

Table. AGE DEMOGRAPHICS, STARKVILLE AREA, 2015-2020				
Age Cohort	2015	2020	2015-2020 Change	
			Number	Percent
15-24	2,758	1,913	(845)	-30.6%
25-34	2,307	2,659	352	15.3%
<b>35-44</b>	<b>1,282</b>	<b>1,997</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>55.8%</b>
45-54	1,231	1,374	143	11.6%
55-64	1,243	1,275	32	2.6%
65-74	788	1,006	218	27.7%
75-84	562	590	28	5.0%
85+	225	238	13	5.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,396</b>	<b>11,052</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>6.3%</b>
Sources:	Nielsen and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

*An estimated 70% of rental tenants in Starkville are students and many prefer new housing product.*





# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### OFFICE & INDUSTRIAL MARKETS

While the retail and housing markets are substantially impacted by MSU, the university's influence on the office and industrial sectors is more subtle. Below is an overview of each.

#### Office Sector

Employment growth is occurring in Starkville's professional and technical services, finance, and administrative services. Such uses are most likely to locate in the downtown, the Mill District and other mixed-use locations. For such areas to succeed in attracting this employment growth, perceptions related to parking issues must be addressed and new building space will be required, particularly Class A space. The Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park is currently dominated by uses tied directly to MSU, but it needs to attract more commercialization.



#### Industrial Sector

Past regional industrial marketing for the Golden Triangle has focused on Lowndes County and manufacturing, including the aerospace and automotive industries. Oktibbeha County's only existing industrial park is the Cornerstone Industrial Park, but it lacks the electrical capacity to support heavy manufacturing. The Innovation District was LINK's recent effort to create a new advanced industrial park in Starkville, but the targeted site had environmental issues and archeological resources that derailed the project. The research park at MSU should seek opportunities to leverage commercialization into manufacturing, but land availability might be a challenge for that effort.

For much more detailed information on Starkville's economic and market conditions, please see this plan's *Appendix B: Economic & Market Assessment*.

# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PUBLIC POLICIES

### DECISION MAKING BODIES & PLANS

Two key components for future growth in Starkville are the various decision making bodies of the City and the plans that guide them. Both are described below:

#### Decision Making Bodies

The City's key decision making bodies relevant to this comprehensive plan include:

- Mayor and Board of Aldermen
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Board of Adjustment and Appeals
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Tree Advisory Board



### Plans

Various plans have been prepared in recent years for specific areas and issues, but the most relevant to this plan is the City's 2005 Comprehensive Plan. That plan ended a relatively dormant period for planning in Starkville and introduced the following important concepts:

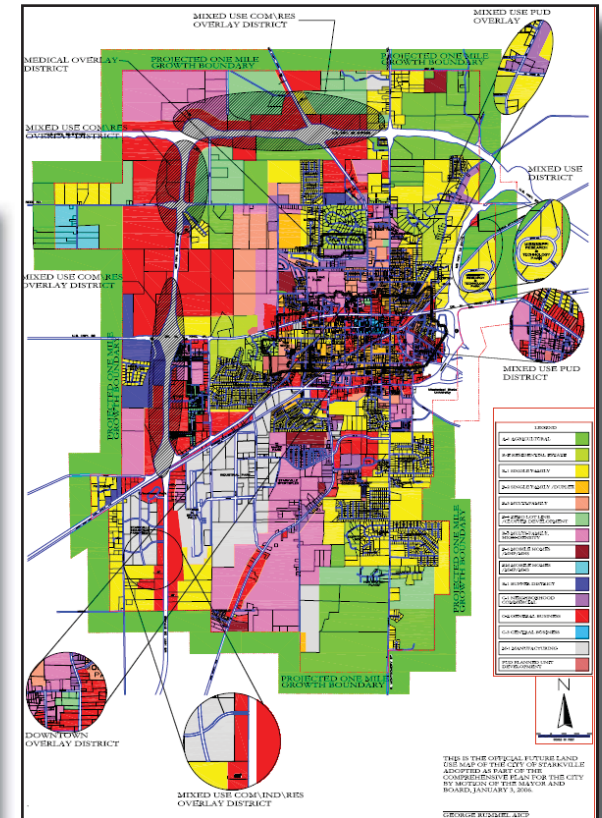
- Historic Preservation
- Downtown Revitalization
- Transect Planning
- Form-Based Coding

*The 2005 comprehensive plan ended a relatively dormant period for planning in Starkville.*



*The Greensboro Historic District is just one outcome of the 2005 comprehensive plan.*

LEGEND	
A-1 AGRICULTURAL	[Green Box]
R-E RESIDENTIAL ESTATE	[Light Green Box]
R-1 SINGLE FAMILY	[Yellow Box]
R-2 SINGLE FAMILY / DUPLEX	[Orange Box]
R-3 MULTI-FAMILY	[Light Orange Box]
R-4 ZERO LOT LINE / CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT	[Light Green Box]
R-5 MULTI-FAMILY, HIGH-DENSITY	[Pink Box]
R-6 MOBILE HOMES /MHP/MHS	[Red Box]
RM MOBILE HOMES /MHP/MHS	[Light Blue Box]
B-1 BUFFER DISTRICT	[Dark Blue Box]
C-1 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL	[Purple Box]
C-2 GENERAL BUSINESS	[Red Box]
C-3 CENTRAL BUSINESS	[Light Blue Box]
M-1 MANUFACTURING	[Grey Box]
PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT	[Red Box]







## BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

### PUBLIC POLICIES

#### HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Starkville has a variety of historic resources, as described previously on [pages 11-12](#). As with most communities, the majority of those are in the form of historic buildings. Considering that federal historic preservation standards consider any building over fifty years old and still retaining its architectural integrity to be “historic,” there are multiple areas of town that have the potential to be historic districts. Historic districts exist at two distinct levels: National Register Historic Districts and local districts. Each category is described below with respect to how they relate to Starkville’s existing conditions.

#### National Register Historic Districts

National Register (NR) designation offers very little protections for historic resources, as they are limited to resources potentially negatively impacted by federally funded or licensed actions. However, there are potential financial benefits, including federal and state investment tax

credits for qualified building rehabilitation projects. In addition to various individually designated properties, there are currently four NR districts in Starkville. They were illustrated previously in the map on [page 12](#) and described below:

#### Nash Street NR Historic District

The Nash Street Historic District is the earliest and most intact of Starkville’s twentieth-century subdivisions. It is the first of 61 subdivisions registered at the Courthouse from 1934 to 1974, representing the transformation of Starkville from a small agricultural center to a college town. The district is also significant as one of the most intact concentrations of 1930s residential architecture in the county. Its period of significance extends from 1932 (the year the first new house was built) until 1940 (the year the last pre-war house was erected). Architectural styles include Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. In addition to being an NR district, it is also a locally-designated historic district.

#### Overstreet School NR Historic District

The Overstreet School Historic District is significant to Starkville because it is an important physical expression of the growth and development of the community from 1870 to 1940. Additionally, the district is locally significant for its architecture, which represents the business and professional class that created the modern town following the Civil War. It has the largest concentration of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century residential architecture in the county and includes examples of Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, Victorian Vernacular, and Craftsman styles.



*This district is named after the school built in 1897 and adapted and expanded in 1949.*



# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PUBLIC POLICIES

### HISTORIC DISTRICTS (continued)

#### Greensboro Street NR Historic District

This district derives its name from the road leading west from the town of Greensboro, which was the county seat of Choctaw County until 1871. Even after the demise of Greensboro, the road continued to be known by that name until most of it was incorporated into U.S. Highway 82. The Greensboro Street Historic District is a highly cohesive and architecturally/historically significant collection of primarily residential structures. The district is important as containing perhaps the highest concentration of residences of the economic and civic leaders of Starkville from the mid-nineteenth through the early-twentieth centuries. The district included 55 contributing buildings with a period of significance from 1860 to 1920. Because of the broad timeframe that the district represents, architectural styles include Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Four Square, Colonial Revival and Bungalows.

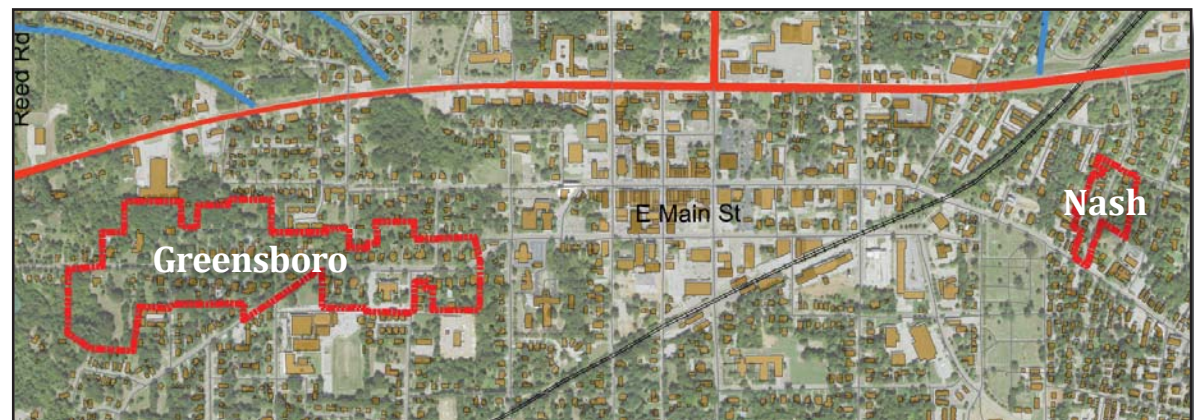
#### Downtown Starkville NR Historic District

This district was designated only a few years ago and it comprises the historic downtown core of Starkville. Most of the buildings are commercial and include 101 contributing buildings and 35 non-contributing buildings. Most of the buildings are one to two stories in height, clad with brick, and date from the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries. Only a few surviving buildings date from before 1885 based upon Sanborn insurance map information. As with most downtowns, there are several institutional buildings in the district.



### Local Historic Districts

Of the four NR districts, only two are also locally designated - the Greensboro Street and Nash Street districts (see map below). Local designation brings some level of protection via design review through the City's Historic Preservation Commission.



### Local Historic Districts

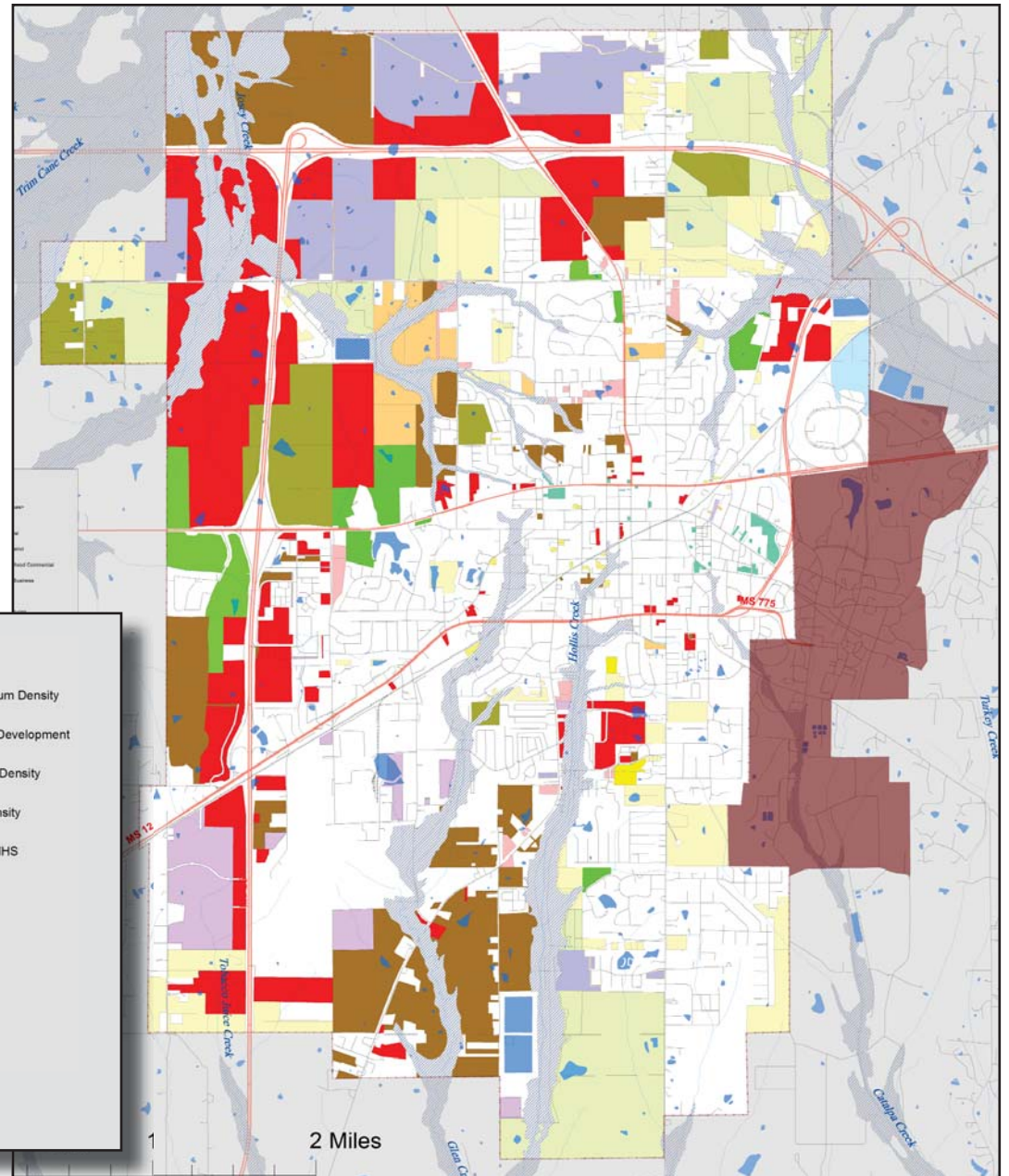
# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PUBLIC POLICIES

### BUILD-OUT PER CURRENT POLICIES

The map at right highlights Starkville's undeveloped land with color-coding tied to the existing zoning. Assuming that sufficient market demand existed (and it does not), a complete build-out of the 8,000+ vacant acres would yield the following:

- 18.5 million sq. ft. of non-residential space
- 40,000+ housing units





# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PUBLIC POLICIES

### BUILD-OUT PER CURRENT POLICIES

The chart at right provides a detailed breakout of the statistics used to calculate the future build out potential for Starkville per the current zoning.

Zoning District	Lot Size (sf) by Unit Type				Calculated or Estimated Maximum Density	Vacant and Developable Acres	Buildout Capacity
	SFD	2 FD	3 FD	4 FD			
A-1 Agricultural District	43,560	-	-	-	1.0	1206.4	1206.4
R-E Residential Estate District	17,500	-	-	-	2.5	147.6	367.4
R-1 Residential District	10,000	-	-	-	4.4	902.9	3933.0
R-2 Residential District	7,500	-	-	-	5.8	9.4	54.5
R-3 Residential District	5,000	7,000	9,000	11,000	8.7	17.0	148.1
R-3A Single-family, medium density	5,000	-	-	-	8.7	172.7	1504.6
R-4 Residential District	3,200	-	-	-	13.6	704.6	9591.5
R-4A Single-family, High density	3,200	-	-	-	13.6	0.0	0.0
R-5 Residential District	-	-	-	1,800	24.2	1219.5	29510.7
R-6 Residential District (mobile homes)	5,000	-	-	-	-	115.8	0.0
R-M Residential District	10,000	-	-	-	-	354.0	0.0
B-1 Buffer District	?	-	-	-	-	174.7	0.0
C-1 Business District (local shopping)*	-	n/a	-	-	0.25	70.0	762,300
C-2 Business District (general)*	-	n/a	-	-	0.25	1604.9	17,477,361
C-3 Central Business District*	-	n/a	-	-	1.00	0.0	-
M-1 Industrial District (light)	-	n/a	-	-	n/a	273.4	-
PO Planned Office	-	n/a	-	-	0.25	48.0	522,720
PUD Planned Use District	-	Varies	-	-	6	2.5	-
SU Special Use District	-	n/a	-	-	n/a	0	-
CD CD Form Based	-	-	-	-	2	1.9	3.6
T-4 Transect 4	-	n/a	-	-	8	14.1	112.8
T-5 Transect 5	-	n/a	-	-	20	10.6	212.0
T-6 Transect 6	-	n/a	-	-	25	2.5	62.5

\* Expressed as Floor Area Ratio  
 Source: Interpretation of City of Starkville Zoning Ordinance

# BACKGROUND: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PUBLIC POLICIES

### BUILD-OUT POTENTIAL VERSUS FUTURE DEMAND

The previous two pages indicate that a complete build-out of Starkville’s 8,000+ vacant acres per the current zoning would yield 18.5 million square feet of non-residential building space and over 40,000 housing units. *So how does that extent of development compare to projected future population growth and the corresponding potential demand for new development?*

### Housing Demand

Based upon data reflected in the chart at right, Starkville will experience a population growth over the next five years averaging 177 new residents annually. Combined with the anticipated growth of MSU, that trend will translate into an annual demand for approximately 200 housing units per year. Thus, the existing zoned potential for 40,000 units would result in enough residential land to supply housing for the next 200 years.

### Retail Demand

Similarly, the 18.5 million square feet of non-residential space that could result from the current zoning, based on future population growth projections, would provide enough retail space to supply Starkville for the next 375 years.

**Table 1. DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS, STARKVILLE AREA, 2015-2020**

Factor/Area	2015	2020	2015-2020 Change		
			Number	Percent	Per Year
<b>Population</b>					
Starkville	24,323	25,207	884	3.6%	177
Other County	25,241	25,957	716	2.8%	143
<b>Households</b>					
Starkville	10,619	11,052	433	4.1%	87
Other County	19,765	20,439	674	3.4%	135
Sources:	Nielsen and Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

### FUTURE GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS

Per data from Nielsen, Starkville has a population of 24,300, accounting for roughly half of Oktibbeha County’s population. Starkville is expected to grow by about 890 people (180 per year) or 0.7% per year, slightly faster than the county as a whole. Starkville’s household base is expected to increase by 0.8% or about 90 households per year.

### Age Cohorts

During the next five years, there may be rapid growth in the number of households headed by millennial generation adults, as well as empty nesters. The number of householders aged 35 to 44 will increase by 56%, and those aged 65 to 74 will increase by 28%.

### Caveats

These growth projections were generated by Nielsen based on Census estimates, recent trends, and regional secondary source models. As such, they were not produced specifically for this plan using detailed market-based or actual development inputs. A more thorough, detailed and localized analysis using market-based inputs specific to this planning effort could produce different results.



# BACKGROUND: PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

## PUBLIC INPUT

One of the most critical aspects of any public planning process is transparency. Not only is it important that the public know that the process is done under the watch of all stakeholders - including average citizens, but it is also vital that the public's perspective, values, preferences and ideas be integrated into the plan.

### PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The most effective way to obtain meaningful public input is to provide a variety of means for gathering that input. Consequently, the following opportunities have been provided for public participation:

Task 1.5: Public Kick-Off Meeting (July 21, 2015)

Task 2.1: Key Person Interviews (Aug. 11-12, 2015)

Task 2.2: Stakeholder Focus Group Mtgs. (Aug. 11-12, 2015)

- Residents
- Property owners, developers, and real estate professionals
- Business owners/operators and economic development reps
- MSU representatives - students, faculty, administration
- Public officials – elected/appointed, City staff, etc.

Task 2.3: Build-Out Scenario (Sept., 2015)

Task 2.4: Planning Principles (Oct., 2015)

Task 3.0: Charrette & Concept Plan (Oct. 19-22, 2015)

See more regarding the Planning Principles and the Charrette and Concept Plan on the following pages. Not only was the public able to provide input on the Concept Plan when it was presented on October 22nd, but another round of input will occur with the Draft Comprehensive Plan presentation.

See *Appendix C. Stakeholder Meeting Questions & Answers* for more detail on the results of these meetings.



# BACKGROUND: PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

## PUBLIC INPUT







### PUBLIC CHARRETTE

A charrette is, in short, an intensive multi-day brainstorming session to generate key ideas for a plan in a manner that engages stakeholders in a hands-on manner. The charrette used to create the Concept Plan for this comprehensive plan occurred between October 19-22, 2015. A key event was the October 19th Public Workshop.

### Public Workshop

Following a presentation on the key findings of this project's background research, as well as an orientation for workshop instructions, the following steps occurred:

- 1) Participants were split up into multiple teams of 8-10 people (9 teams/ tables)
- 2) Each team had a base map of the city, supporting info. and colored markers
- 3) Each team developed a plan reflecting their vision for Starkville
- 4) Participants reconvened as one group and each team presented their plan

STARKVILLE PLACE TYPES					
Natural	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Downtown	Special Districts
					
<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Plant and animal habitat, passive recreation	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Agriculture, unused open space	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Residential, commercial, institutional	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Residential, commercial, institutional	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Commercial, institutional, residential	<b>Dominant Land Uses:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)
<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Not applicable	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Cultivated fields, forests, occasional houses and outbuildings	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Generally segregated land uses with commercial concentrated along key corridors	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Mixed use and commercial nodes near residential	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Mixed use – uses integrated both horizontally and vertically	<b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Often insular and campus-like
<b>Physical Character:</b> Natural landscapes – fields, forests, wetlands, streams	<b>Physical Character:</b> Fields (cultivated and uncultivated), grazing meadows, woods	<b>Physical Character:</b> Low to moderate densities, single-family houses, strip commercial corridors	<b>Physical Character:</b> Moderate to high density, walkable	<b>Physical Character:</b> High density, historic, walkable	<b>Physical Character:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)
<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Generally not applicable	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings typically set back far from roads, unpaved front parking	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings separated from their streets with front parking lots	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings front onto streets; parking to side, rear & on-street	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings front onto streets; parking to rear & on-street	<b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)
<b>Local Examples:</b> Hollis Creek and associated wetlands (southwest part of town)	<b>Local Examples:</b> Much of northwest part of town with fields and forests	<b>Local Examples:</b> Much of the southeast part of town accessed by South Montgomery	<b>Local Examples:</b> Cotton District, Nash Street District, Greensboro Street District	<b>Local Examples:</b> Downtown Starkville	<b>Local Examples:</b> Mississippi State University

*This chart was provided to workshop participants to coordinate with their colored markers.*





# BACKGROUND: PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

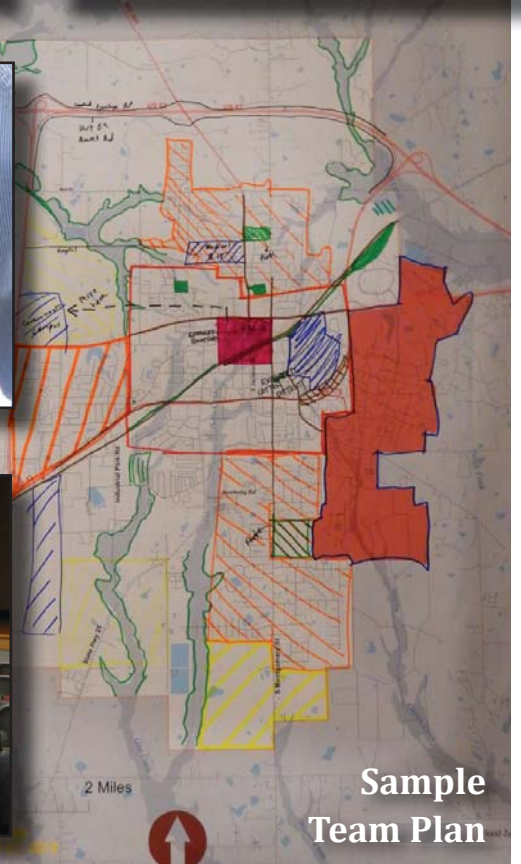
## PUBLIC INPUT

### PUBLIC CHARRETTE (continued)

#### Public Workshop Results

Because so many different ideas were generated by the diverse citizen participants, it would be impossible to list them all. However, some of the key ideas that were repeated and/or particularly viable are as follows:

- *Downtown* - needs to grow geographically for more commercial space and businesses.
- *182/MLK Corridor* - needs to redevelop in a more urban form with mixed use development.
- *East Side of Campus* - the town needs to grow in this direction, especially with housing convenient to MSU.
- *Greenways & Trails* - more connectivity is needed between key parts of town (especially MSU), including a trail along the railroad line.
- *Preservation of Natural Features* - including protecting flood plains for open space and trails.
- *High-Tech & "Creative Culture" Jobs* - need more of these jobs by leveraging the MSU "brain trust."



# BACKGROUND: PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

To conduct a valid and logical planning process, it is important to bridge the research and public input phase with the plan development phase through the creation of a set of planning principles. The principles should be broad objectives that a strong

consensus can be generated behind to help guide the planning process. When complex issues need to be resolved, it is helpful to step back and revisit the planning principles. Below are the principles for this plan. They were created prior to the charrette and used by the workshop participants in crafting their team plans addressed on the previous page.

### **1. Preserve Open Space and Environmentally Sensitive Areas.**

Discourage development within environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and important plant and animal habitats. Preserve tree cover where possible, as well as open space connected to a broader open space network.

### **2. Take Advantage of Existing Community Assets.**

Examples of assets to leverage include the historic downtown, older buildings citywide, open spaces, streams and other natural resources. Steer future development toward existing developed areas with existing infrastructure. Another key asset for Starkville to leverage is Mississippi State University and the MSU community.

### **3. Foster Walkable Neighborhoods Offering a High Quality of Life.**

Neighborhoods should feature a variety of housing types where appropriate, parks and recreation, strong pedestrian and biking accessibility, and small commercial nodes where appropriate. The character of existing historic neighborhoods should be protected through the preservation of buildings and compatible infill development, and automobiles should not dominate neighborhood design.

### **4. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Affordable Choices.**

While single-family detached houses will continue to dominate the community, a variety of housing types and sizes should be available, including accessory units, attached housing, and multi-family housing. Higher density housing should be located where infrastructure can support it and where other land uses can provide needed amenities, including shopping, dining and recreation.

### **5. Mix Land Uses for Pedestrian-Friendly Places.**

Provide specific locations where a mixture of land uses, including commercial, office, housing and civic uses, can be physically integrated. Such integration should be both horizontal and vertical (mixed use bldgs.) and result in pedestrian-friendly places.



### PLANNING PRINCIPLES (continued)

#### **6. Promote Attractive Development with a Strong Sense of Place.**

Attractive development includes high-quality architecture and building materials, generous landscaping, and minimal visual impact of vehicle circulation and parking areas. Buildings should also have a strong physical relationship with their associated street, and development should reflect Starkville's historic development patterns and character.

#### **7. Provide Recreational and Cultural Amenities.**

With strong recreational and cultural facilities, including museums, performing arts, and visual arts, and plenty of active and passive recreational opportunities, Starkville can offer a high quality of life. Such amenities will not only benefit citizens directly, but also help with attracting new job-creating businesses.

#### **8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices and High-Quality Transportation Corridors.**

Starkville should be easy and convenient to navigate. Traffic congestion should be minimized, and motorized traffic should be "calmed" to avoid negative impacts. "Complete streets" should be context sensitive and accommodate a range of transportation modes, including motorized vehicles, bikes and pedestrians. An extensive greenway system should be provided. Strip commercial corridors should be avoided and instead feature highly-functional and attractive corridors in which commercial development is concentrated into mixed use centers at key street intersections.

#### **9. Expand Economic Development Opportunities.**

Starkville should offer a business-friendly climate that welcomes new businesses that provide jobs and add to the tax base of the city. A variety of business types should be pursued for a diversified economy, including those featuring high technology and manufacturing jobs. MSU's research and development park should continue to be leveraged.

#### **10. Insure Policies and Processes that are Equitable to both Citizens and Developers.**

Encourage meaningful citizen participation in Starkville's growth and development decisions, while making development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective within a framework of policies that reflect the City's adopted citywide comprehensive plan.

# THE PLAN





# THE PLAN

## CONCEPT PLAN

The Concept Plan was created during the four-day charrette described previously and it consists of the key ideas to serve as the basis of the Comprehensive Plan. However, before the Concept Plan can be described, a clear understanding of “place types” must first be established.

### PLACE TYPES

In previous decades, the primary component of a comprehensive plan was the land use plan. However, such an approach failed to consider important issues that go beyond the two-dimensional topic of land use. Consequently, current planning practice takes a more holistic approach and considers the following issues:

- Land use
- Spatical patterns
- Intensity/density
- Scale
- Form
- Character

The combination of these factors adds up to “places.” This approach differs dramatically from conventional land use planning and zoning as practiced by earlier generations, but it results in a much higher quality of life.

### SUBURBAN FORM

#### Segregated Single Uses

Retail, office, and/or residential are in separate buildings and developments.

#### Automobile Oriented

- Buildings set back away from street
- Parking in front of buildings
- Windows and doors oriented to parking lots

#### Disconnected

- Private driveways
- Disconnected parking lots
- Limited or no sidewalks

### URBAN FORM

#### Mixture of Uses

Retail, office, and/or residential are in the same buildings and developments.

#### Pedestrian Oriented

- Buildings close to the street
- Parking behind (or beside) buildings
- Windows and doors on the street

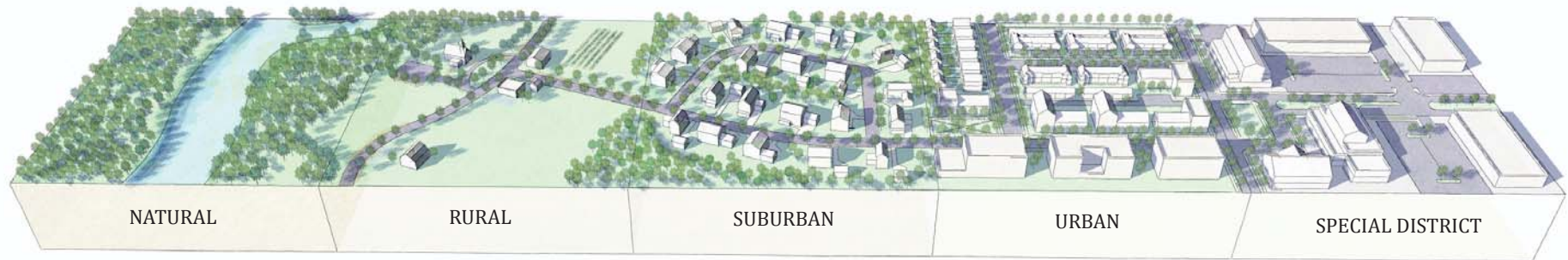
#### Connected Network

- Multi-modal
- Streets, blocks, and service lanes
- Sidewalks

*Current planning practice takes a holistic approach and considers a variety of issues, including spatial patterns, scale, form and character. The combination of these factors adds up to “places.”*

# THE PLAN

## S T A R K V I L L E P L A C E T Y P E S



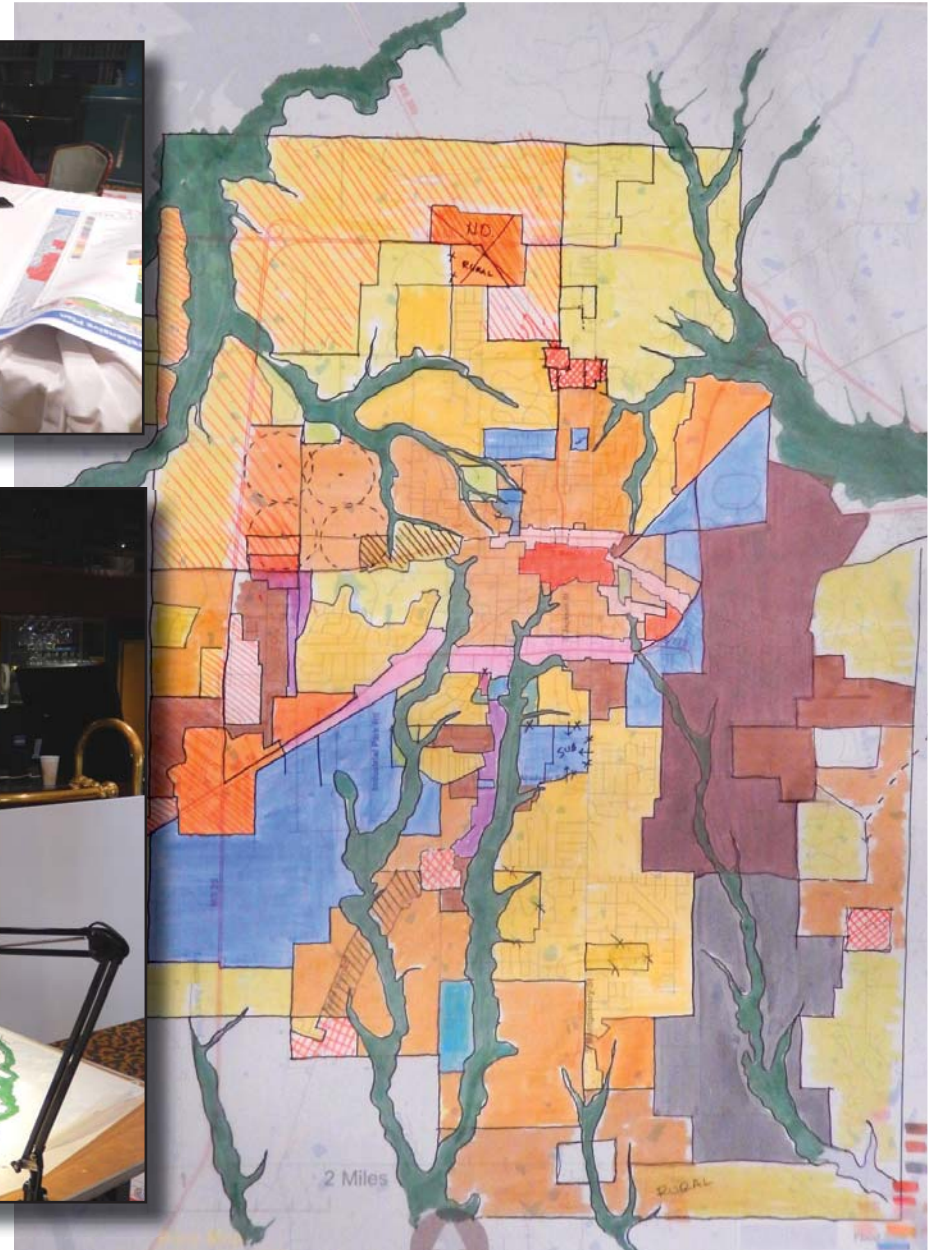
NATURAL	RURAL	SUBURBAN	URBAN	SPECIAL DISTRICT	OPTIONAL DISTRICT
<p><b>Land Uses:</b> Plant and animal habitat, passive recreation</p> <p><b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Not applicable</p> <p><b>Physical Character:</b> Natural landscapes – fields, forests, wetlands, streams</p> <p><b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Generally not applicable</p> <p><b>Local Examples:</b> Hollis Creek and associated wetlands (southwest part of town)</p>	<p><b>Land Uses:</b> Agriculture, unused open space</p> <p><b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Cultivated fields, forests, occasional houses and outbuildings</p> <p><b>Physical Character:</b> Fields (cultivated and uncultivated), grazing meadows, woods</p> <p><b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings typically set back far from roads, unpaved front parking</p> <p><b>Local Examples:</b> Northwest part of town with fields and forests</p>	<p><b>Land Uses:</b> Residential, commercial, institutional</p> <p><b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Generally segregated land uses with commercial concentrated along key corridors</p> <p><b>Physical Character:</b> Low to mod. densities, single-family houses, strip com. corridors</p> <p><b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings separated from their streets with front parking lots</p> <p><b>Local Examples:</b> Southeast part of town</p>	<p><b>Land Uses:</b> Residential, commercial, institutional</p> <p><b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Mixed use and commercial nodes near residential</p> <p><b>Physical Character:</b> Moderate to high density, walkable</p> <p><b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Buildings front onto streets; parking to side, rear and on-street</p> <p><b>Local Examples:</b> Cotton District, Greensboro Street District, Downtown Starkville</p>	<p><b>Land Uses:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)</p> <p><b>Land Use Patterns:</b> Often insular and campus-like</p> <p><b>Physical Character:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)</p> <p><b>Building, Street &amp; Parking Relationship:</b> Based on nature of the district (institutional, industrial, etc.)</p> <p><b>Local Examples:</b> Mississippi State University</p>	<p>This district is different from the other categories, as it consists of three distinct options for land owners:</p> <p><b>Commercial Option:</b> This option is a Suburban Center, preferably as a lifestyle center.</p> <p><b>TND Option:</b> Traditional Neighborhood Developments allow a mix of uses in an urban form.</p> <p><b>CSD Option:</b> The Conservation Subdivision Development entails clustered housing and open space.</p>

# THE PLAN

## CONCEPT PLAN

The Concept Plan represents the culmination of a great deal of research, public input, and analysis. Although months of work served as the foundation for the Concept Plan, it was created during the four-day charrette conducted in October of 2015 and described on the previous pages. In particular, the public workshop conducted on the first evening of the charrette generated numerous ideas, many of which made their way into the Concept Plan. The Concept Plan was then presented to the public on the final evening of the charrette to solicit public input.

*These photos illustrate the consultant team creating the Concept Plan in their studio space. At far right is the rough "place types" map serving as a composite of the plans created by the workshop participants.*





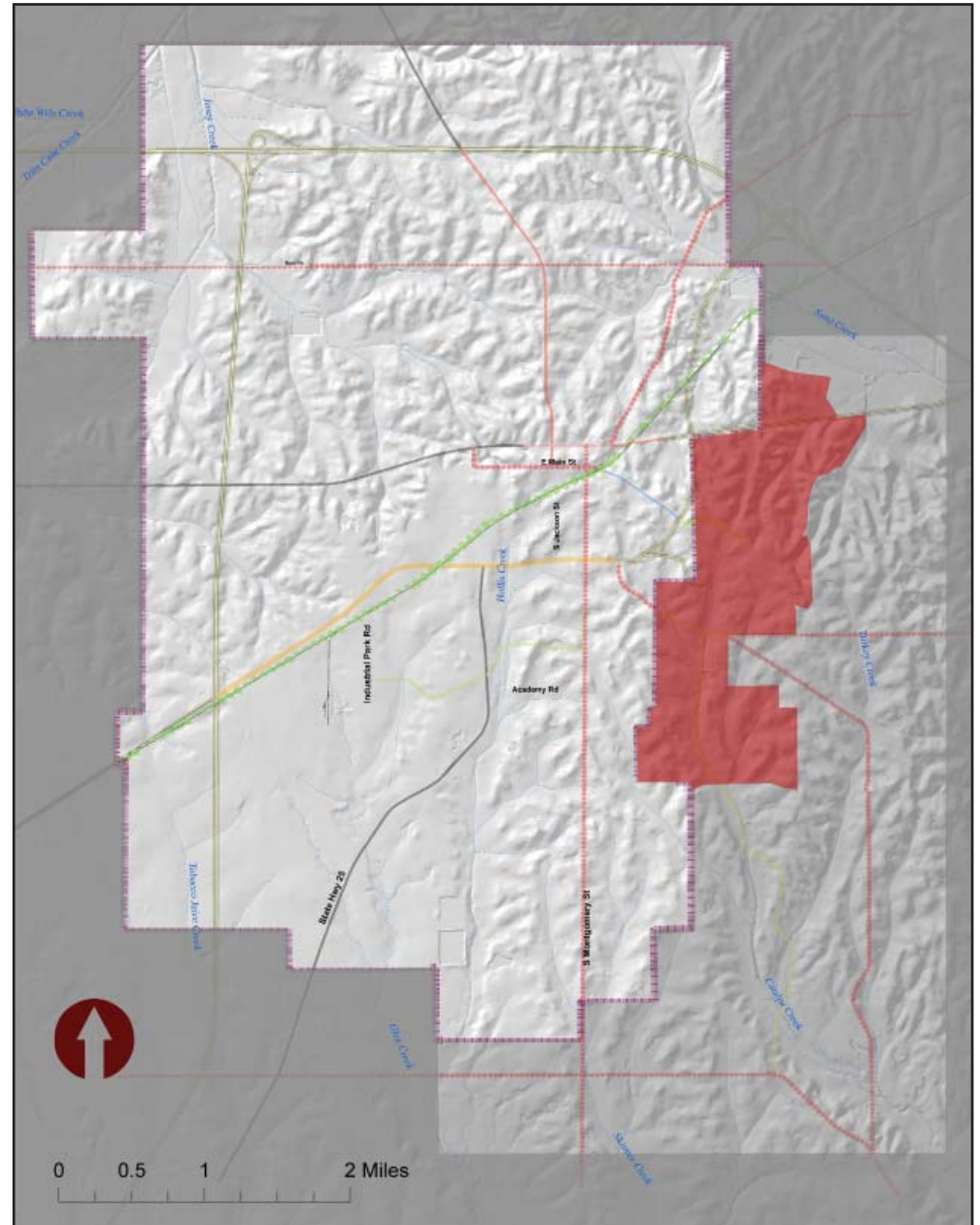
# THE PLAN

## CONCEPT PLAN

### GROWTH TO THE EAST

This planning process has revealed the need for the City of Starkville to geographically expand to the east. Other directions for future expansion were considered, but were ultimately determined as not being viable. For example, substantial roadway infrastructure has been developed on the west side of town in recent years (Hwy. 25 and associated interchanges), but continued growth toward this end of town should not be an objective for the City. In particular, the presence of MSU on the east side of the community makes future growth east of MSU much more viable than continued growth in the opposite direction. Further growth to the west will only encourage more driving trips and an overall spatial imbalance of Starkville's places to live, work and play.

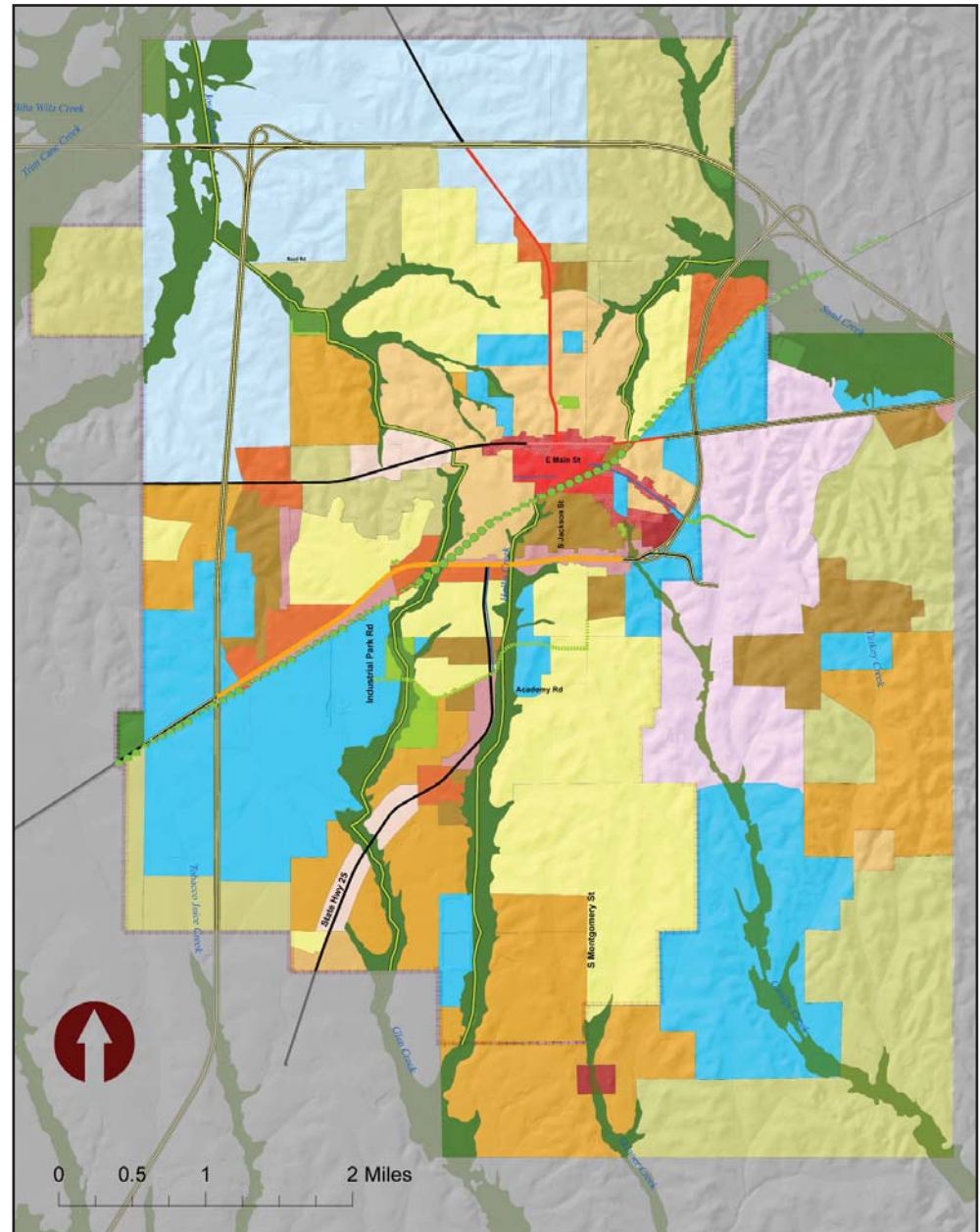
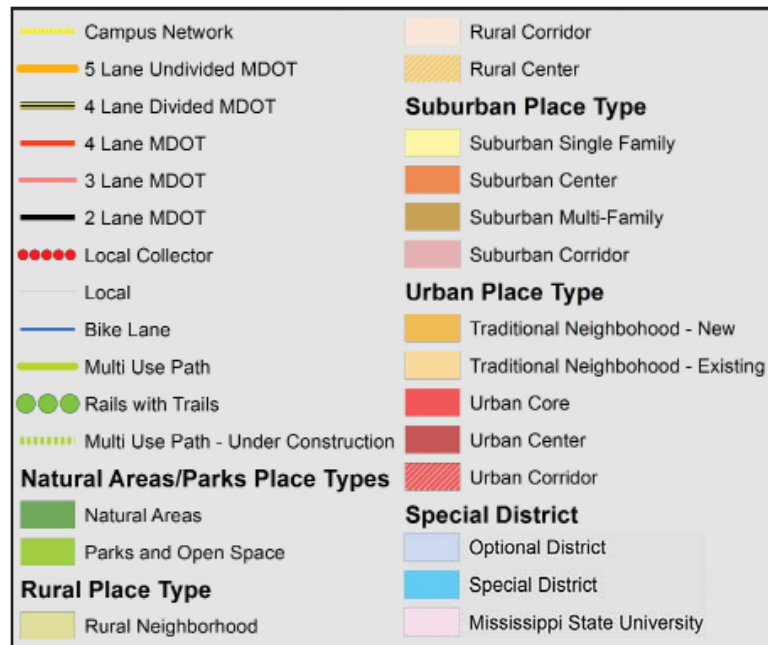
Consequently, the following pages that describe the defined "place types" for Starkville will illustrate a planning area that includes lands to the east of the current city boundaries (see gray area). Whether such lands are planned for via extraterritorial jurisdictional planning or through land annexations, the following maps will reflect the potential expanded city to the east.



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: MAP

At right is a map illustrating the proposed “place types” for Starkville. It is similar to a land use plan, as typically created in years past, but it also factors in the density/intensity, form and character of development. The legend below explains the map. The five broad place type categories include Natural Areas/Parks, Rural, Suburban, Urban and Special District. Within each of those categories are sub-classifications, each of which is described on the following pages. The map at right also reflects transportation issues addressed later in this plan.





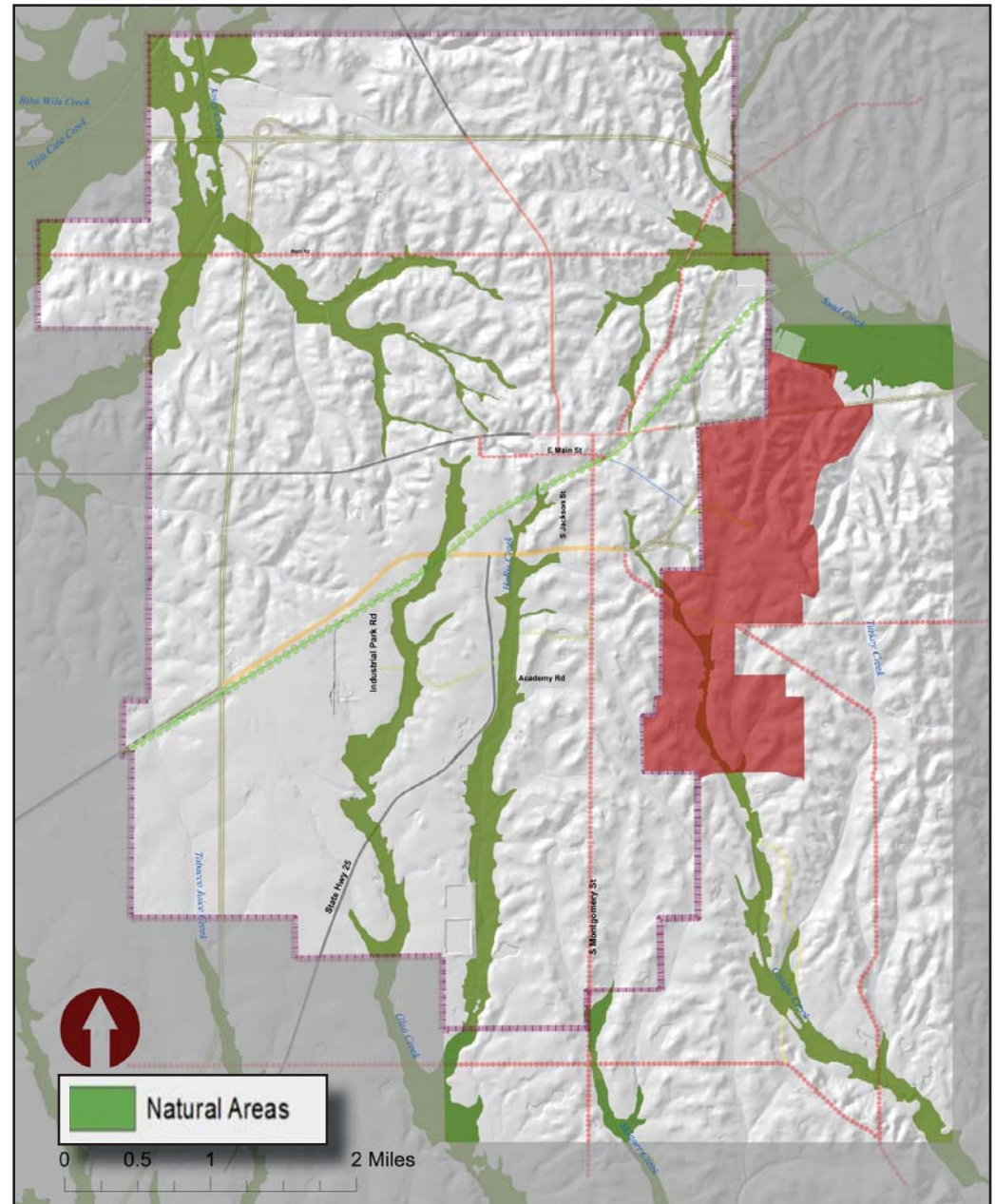
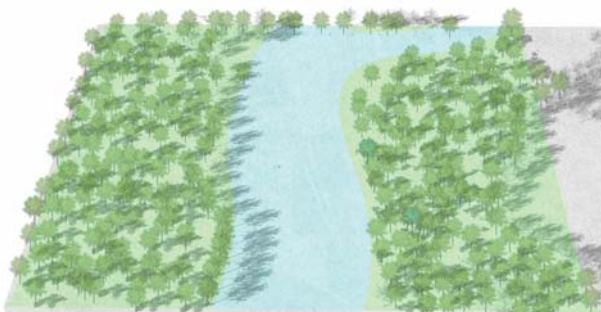
# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: NATURAL AREAS

Natural areas are generally unsuitable for development due to steep topography, hydrology, or other environmental conditions. Floodplains and other areas associated with streams are among this category of landscape. Consequently such areas should have few if any buildings. Instead, natural areas are best suited for open space, passive parks and trails.

The map at right illustrates in green natural areas. Most are associated with the following four stream systems (see [page 7](#) for detailed information on the creeks):

- Hollis Creek
- Sand Creek
- Josey Creek
- Catalpa Creek





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: NATURAL AREAS (continued)

### MAKING NATURAL AREAS BETTER

The following recommendations are provided:

#### Provide Regulatory Protections

Prohibit development of wetlands, discourage development in floodplains, closely regulate grading, and adopt tree protection/replanting provisions. Steep slopes are essentially a non-issue in Starkville.

#### Provide Incentives for Natural Resource Protection

Offer incentives such as permitting higher density development in some areas of a site to offset negotiated preservation of environmentally valuable areas.

#### Acquire and Protect the Most Important Lands

The City should acquire from willing owners key properties offering a high level of environmental and outdoor recreational value, as well as connectivity to other resources and greenway networks.

#### Work with Land Trusts to Conserve Lands

The City should form a strong partnership with organizations such as the Mississippi Land Trust to encourage owners of important natural resource lands to enter conservation easement agreements. Such tools can provide tax incentives to land owners.



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: RURAL AREAS

### RURAL AREA PLACE SUB-TYPES

Three categories of rural area sub-types exist in Starkville as follows:

#### Rural Neighborhoods

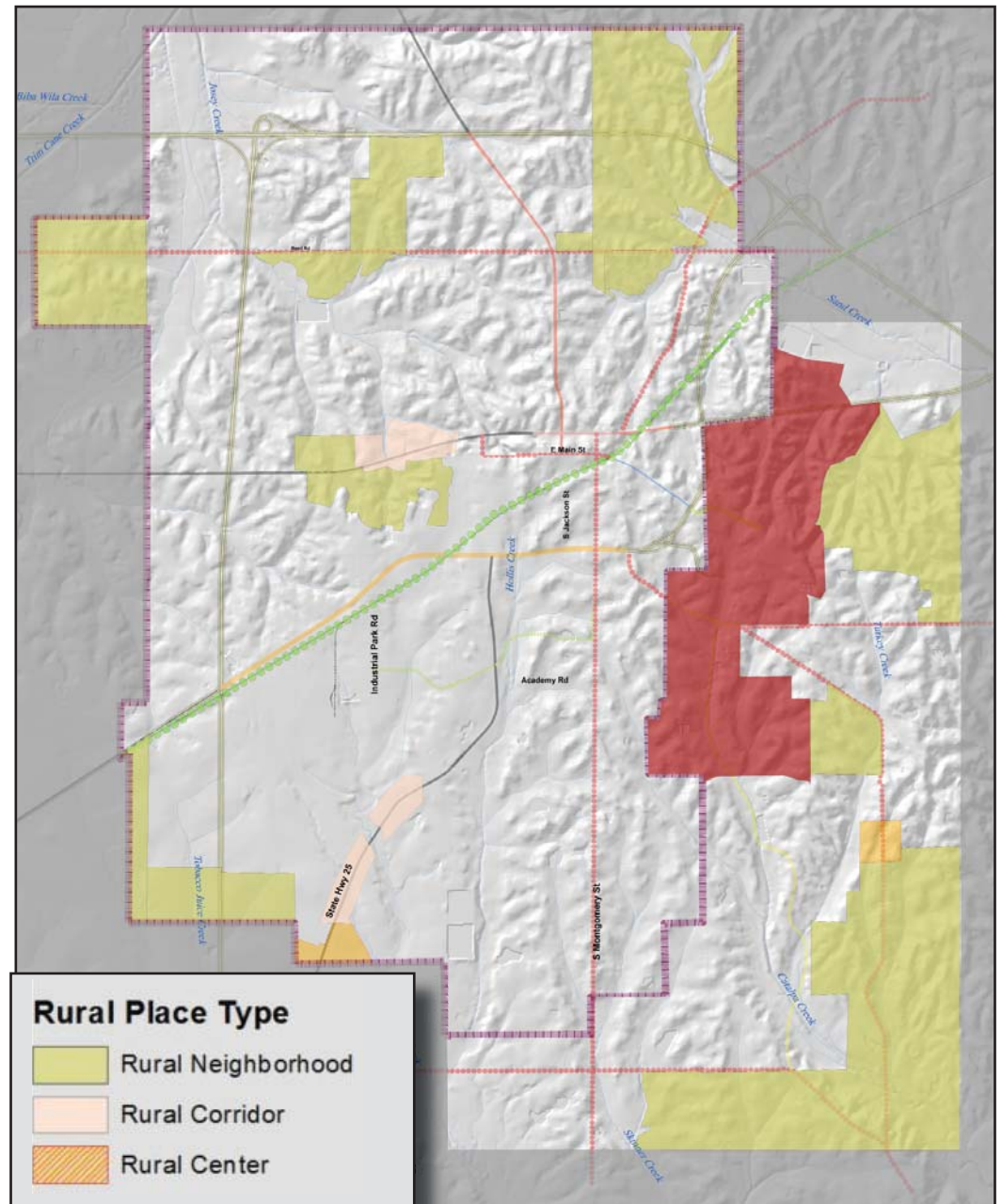
These areas could also be considered as “general rural,” as it applies to all rural areas that are not rural corridors or centers.

#### Rural Corridors

Corridors include key rural roads and their adjacent lands. They can be flanked by housing and other uses.

#### Rural Centers

Centers are typically in the form of “country cross-roads” and feature small scale mixed uses.





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: RURAL AREAS

### RURAL NEIGHBORHOODS

#### Rural Neighborhoods

##### Locations

Primarily peripheral, as well as west of Downtown

##### Spatial Form

Expansive random forms

##### Land Uses

Agricultural, very low density residential, very limited commercial and light industrial, unused fields and forests

##### Density / Intensity

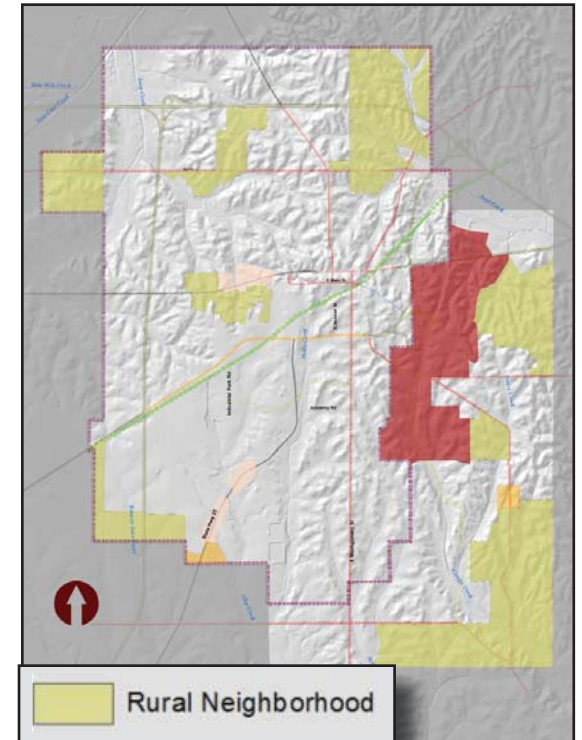
Very low density / intensity

##### Development Form

Homes, outbuildings, commercial (very limited) and agricultural structures in informal patterns

##### Street Types

Parkways, Avenues and Local



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: RURAL AREAS

### RURAL CORRIDORS

#### Rural Corridors

##### Locations

South segment of Louisville St., and  
Hwy. 182 east of Hwy. 25.

##### Spatial Form

Generally linear along the axis of  
associated road

##### Land Uses

Agricultural, residential,  
commercial, small-scale light  
industrial

##### Density / Intensity

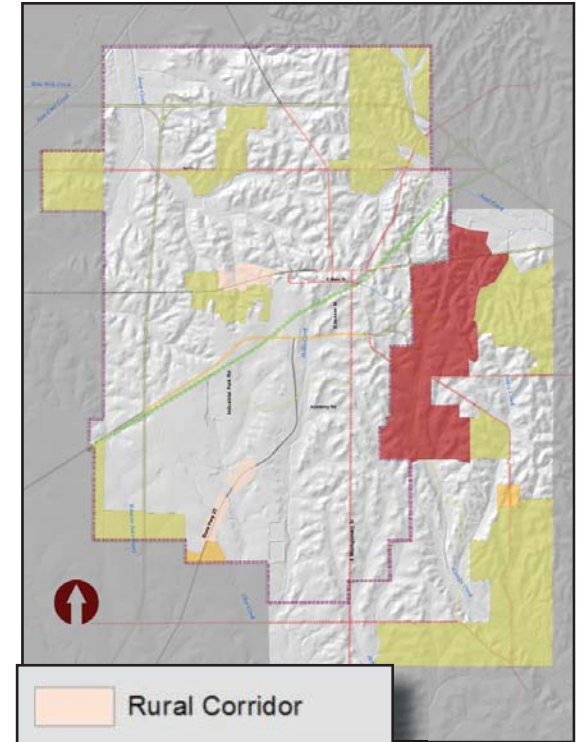
Low density / intensity

##### Development Form

Irregular lot sizes and front set-  
backs, low-rise buildings

##### Street Types

Parkways, Avenues and Local





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: RURAL AREAS

### RURAL CENTERS

#### Rural Centers

##### Locations

South end of Louisville St. at city boundary, and intersection of Oktoc Rd. and Artesia Rd.

##### Spatial Form

Relatively small and nodal

##### Land Uses

Mixed use, but primarily commercial; can include agricultural and institutional uses (churches, etc.)

##### Density / Intensity

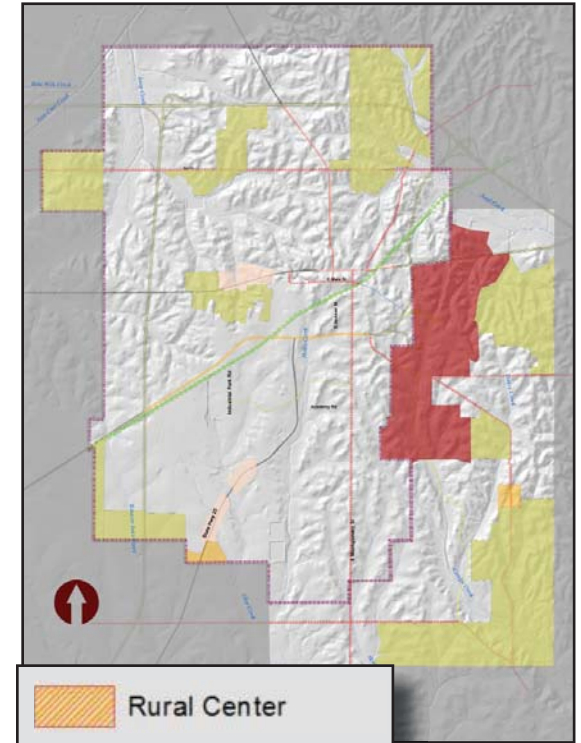
Moderate to high density / intensity just within the center area

##### Development Form

Irregular lot sizes and front setbacks, low-rise buildings

##### Street Types

Parkways, Avenues and Local



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: RURAL AREAS

### MAKING RURAL AREAS BETTER

The following recommendations are provided for Starkville's rural areas:

#### Keep Rural Areas Rural

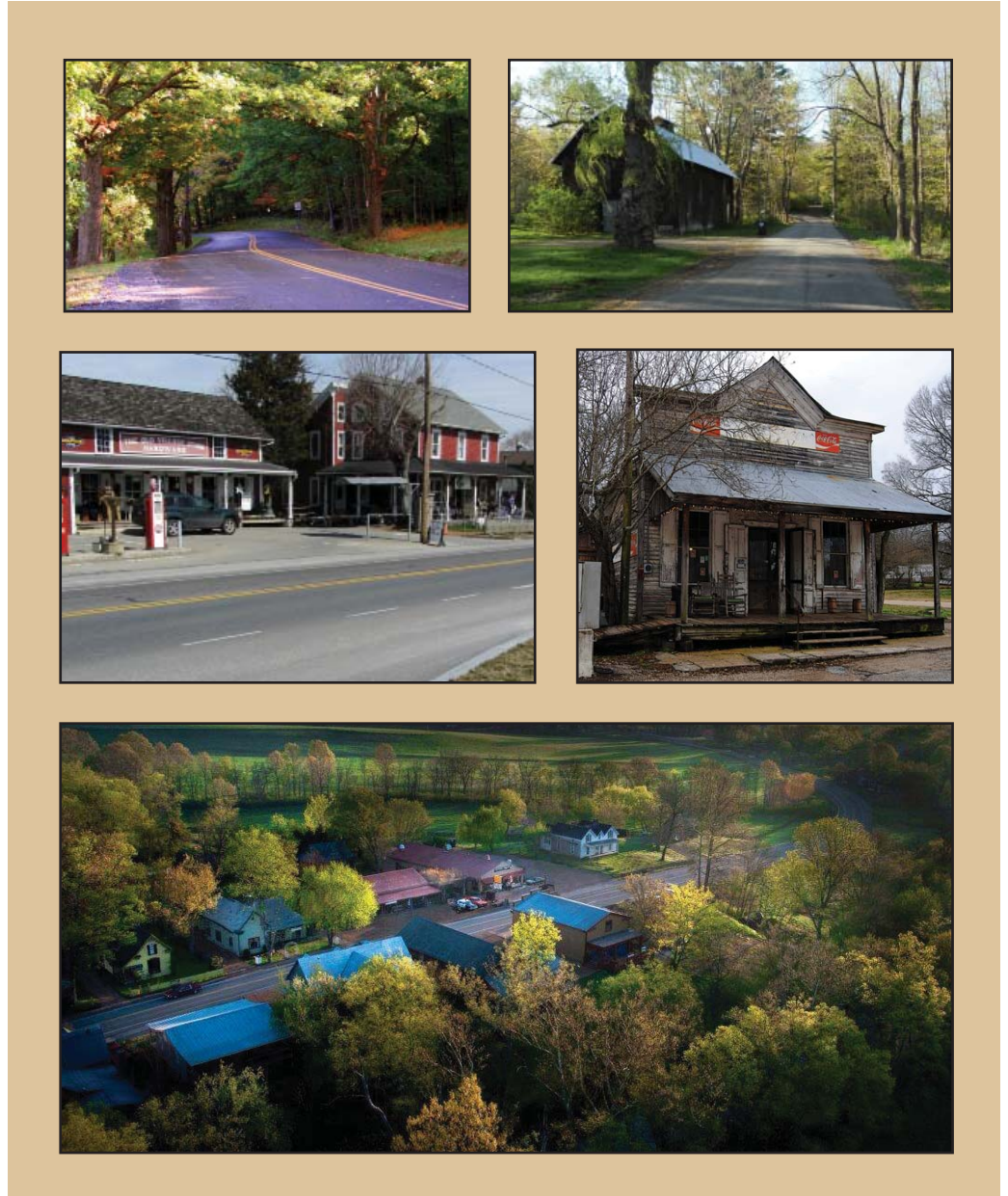
Until this comprehensive plan and resulting zoning is amended at some point in the future, areas designated in the place types map as being rural should maintain rural uses and a rural character. The subsequent recommendations echo this principle.

#### Avoid "Strip Commercial" on Rural Corridors

While it is natural for some rural roads to attract development, it should remain relatively random and incohesive. It should also avoid taking on the character of suburban corridors with generic franchise architecture fronting large parking lots.

#### Rural Centers Should be "County Crossroads"

As with rural corridors, rural centers should not become suburban in character, as described above. Instead, buildings should be small-scaled and traditional, and parking should not be in the form of large parking lots in front of buildings. Front parking should not exceed a single parking bay, with the balance (if needed) occurring to the side or rear.





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SUBURBAN AREAS

### SUBURBAN AREA PLACE SUB-TYPES

Four categories of suburban area sub-types exist:

#### Single-Family Areas

Such areas are the most expansive category of developed lands and feature post-1950 neighborhoods.

#### Multi-Family Areas

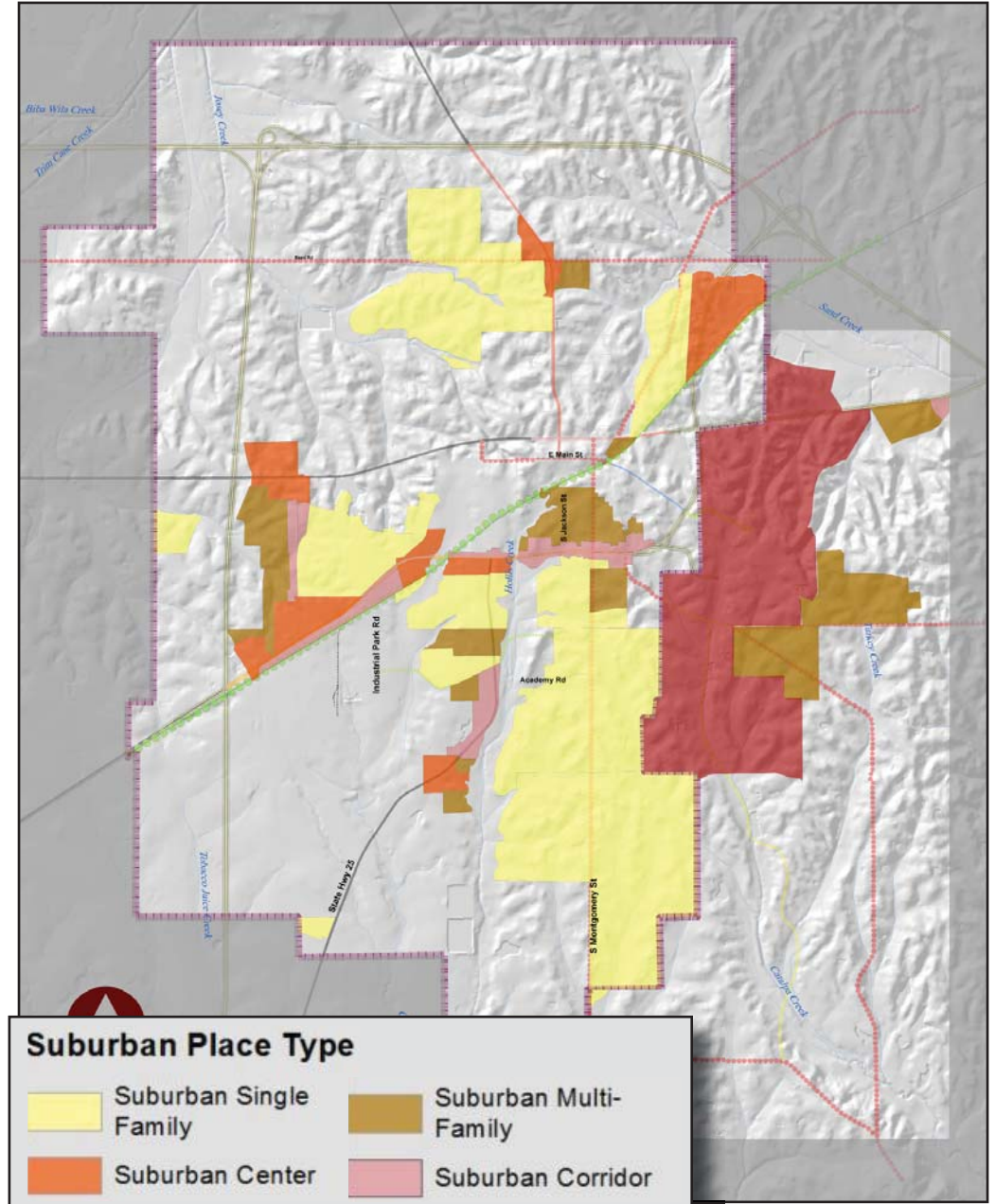
Located throughout town, this category is larger than in many cities because of MSU and student demand.

#### Corridors

These key roads are often a “strip commercial” form.

#### Centers

These areas are on key roads, but not a linear form.



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SUBURBAN AREAS

### SINGLE-FAMILY AREAS

#### Suburban Single-Family Areas

##### Locations

Throughout the community, particularly along S. Montgomery

##### Spatial Form

Primarily expansive random forms

##### Land Uses

Single-family residential and supporting amenities (parks, etc.)

##### Density / Intensity

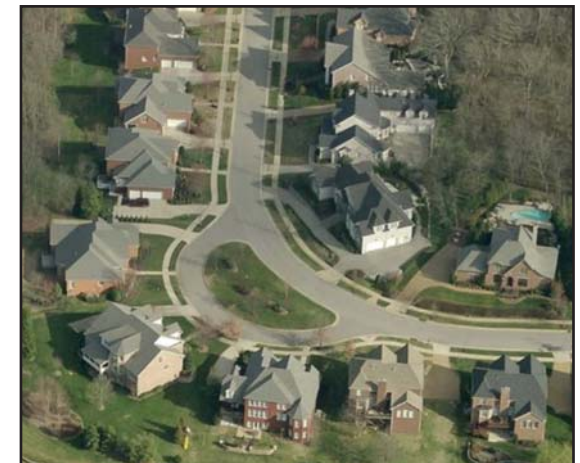
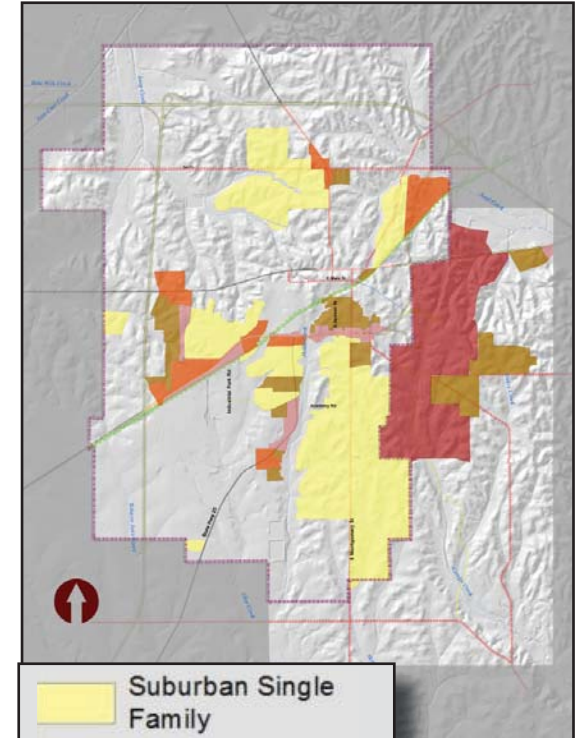
Low to moderate density

##### Development Form

Single-family detached homes with driveways and front-loaded garages, auto-oriented overall development patterns, including some cul de sacs

##### Street Types

Boulevards, Avenues and Local





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SUBURBAN AREAS

### MULTI-FAMILY AREAS

#### Suburban Multi-Family Areas

##### Locations

Throughout the community

##### Spatial Form

Small to moderate random forms

##### Land Uses

Multi-family residential and supporting amenities (club houses, pools, etc.)

##### Density / Intensity

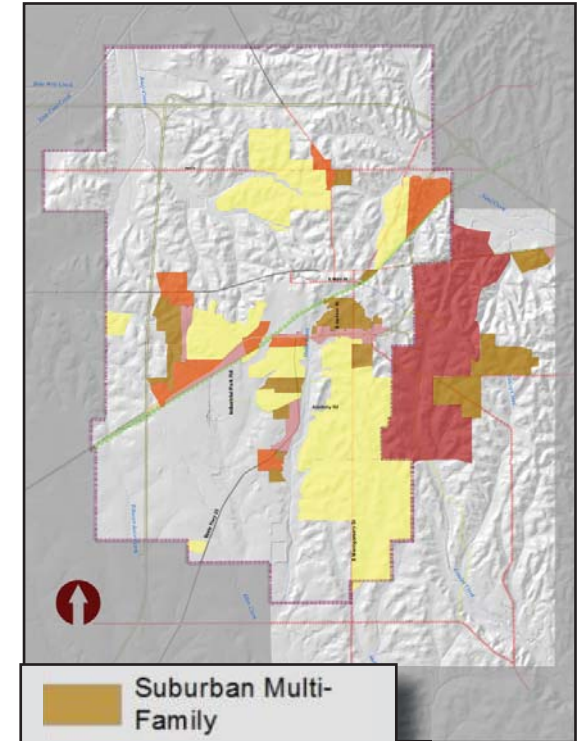
Moderate to high density

##### Development Form

Primarily two or three-story buildings fronting parking lots, typically repetitive building designs, often generous landscaping

##### Street Types

Boulevards, Avenues and Local



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SUBURBAN AREAS

### CORRIDORS

#### Suburban Corridors

##### Locations

Segments of Hwy. 12, Old Hwy. 25, Hwy. 182, and Stark Rd.

##### Spatial Form

Linear along primary roads

##### Land Uses

Primarily commercial, particularly retail and dining with drive-thru windows, as well as office and multi-family housing

##### Density / Intensity

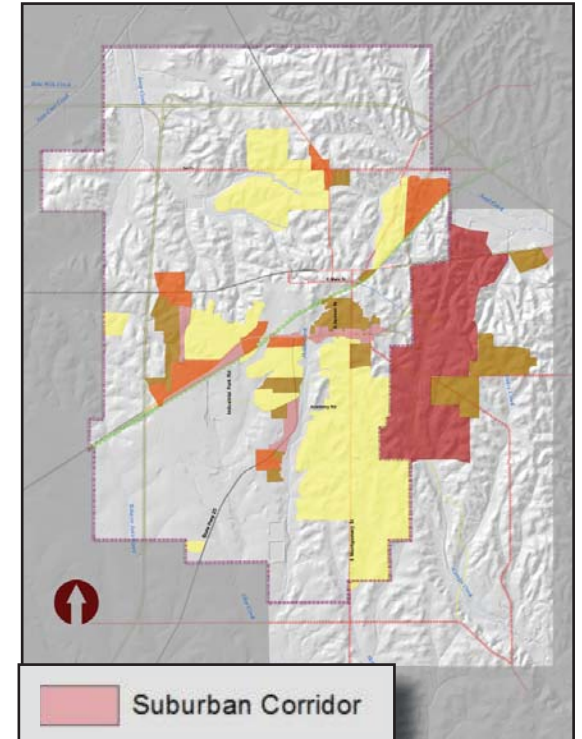
Moderate density / intensity

##### Development Form

Auto-oriented form with low-rise buildings fronting parking lots, but softened with generous landscaping

##### Street Types

Boulevards and Avenues





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SUBURBAN AREAS

### CENTERS

#### Suburban Centers

##### Locations

Key points along suburban corridors, as well as on Hwy. 12 in the NE corner of town and at the intersection of N. Jackson and Garrard

##### Spatial Form

Various scales and somewhat nodal

##### Land Uses

Primarily commercial, but also ofices and multi-family residential

##### Density / Intensity

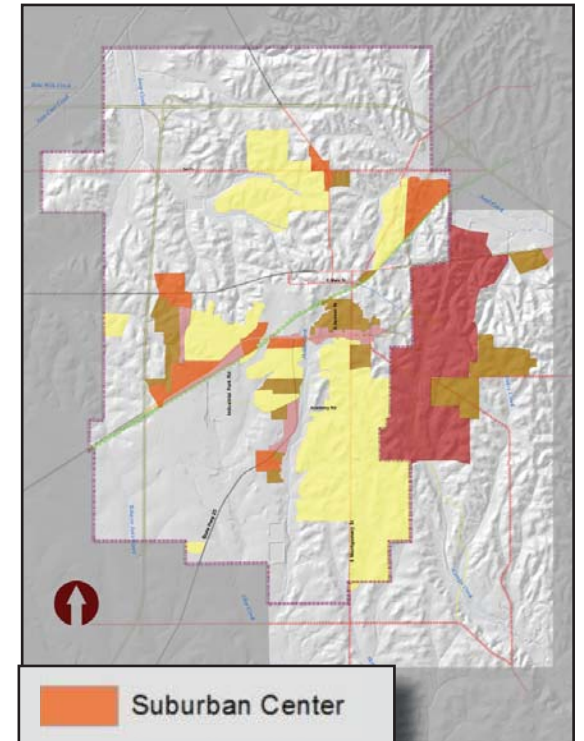
Moderate to high density

##### Development Form

Range from “big box” retail to smaller buildings, auto and pedestrian friendly, generous landscaping

##### Street Types

Boulevards, Avenues and Local



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SUBURBAN AREAS

### MAKING SUBURBAN AREAS BETTER

Because of their dependence on automobiles and inefficient use of land and infrastructure, many aspects of suburban development are counter to sustainable planning. However, because of market demand for such areas, this plan's objective is to make existing and future suburban places better, as follows:

#### Provide a Variety of Housing Types

While the majority of housing in suburban areas will be single-family detached, a range of housing types and affordability should be provided.

#### Increase Connectivity and Varied Modes of Travel

Street systems should be interconnected and avoid cul de sacs, and designed to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. Streets should not be too wide to discourage speeding, minimize runoff and save costs.

#### Make the Suburbs Greener

Preserve mature vegetation, liberally provide street trees, and heavily landscape parking lots.

#### Make Corridors Walkable and Attractive

Design sites to be pedestrian-friendly, provide extensive landscaping, and minimize driveways and signs.





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: URBAN AREAS

### URBAN AREA PLACE SUB-TYPES

Four categories of urban area sub-types exist:

#### Traditional Neighborhoods

These areas include both existing neighborhoods, such as those surrounding the Downtown, and newly proposed Traditional Neighborhoods.

#### Corridors

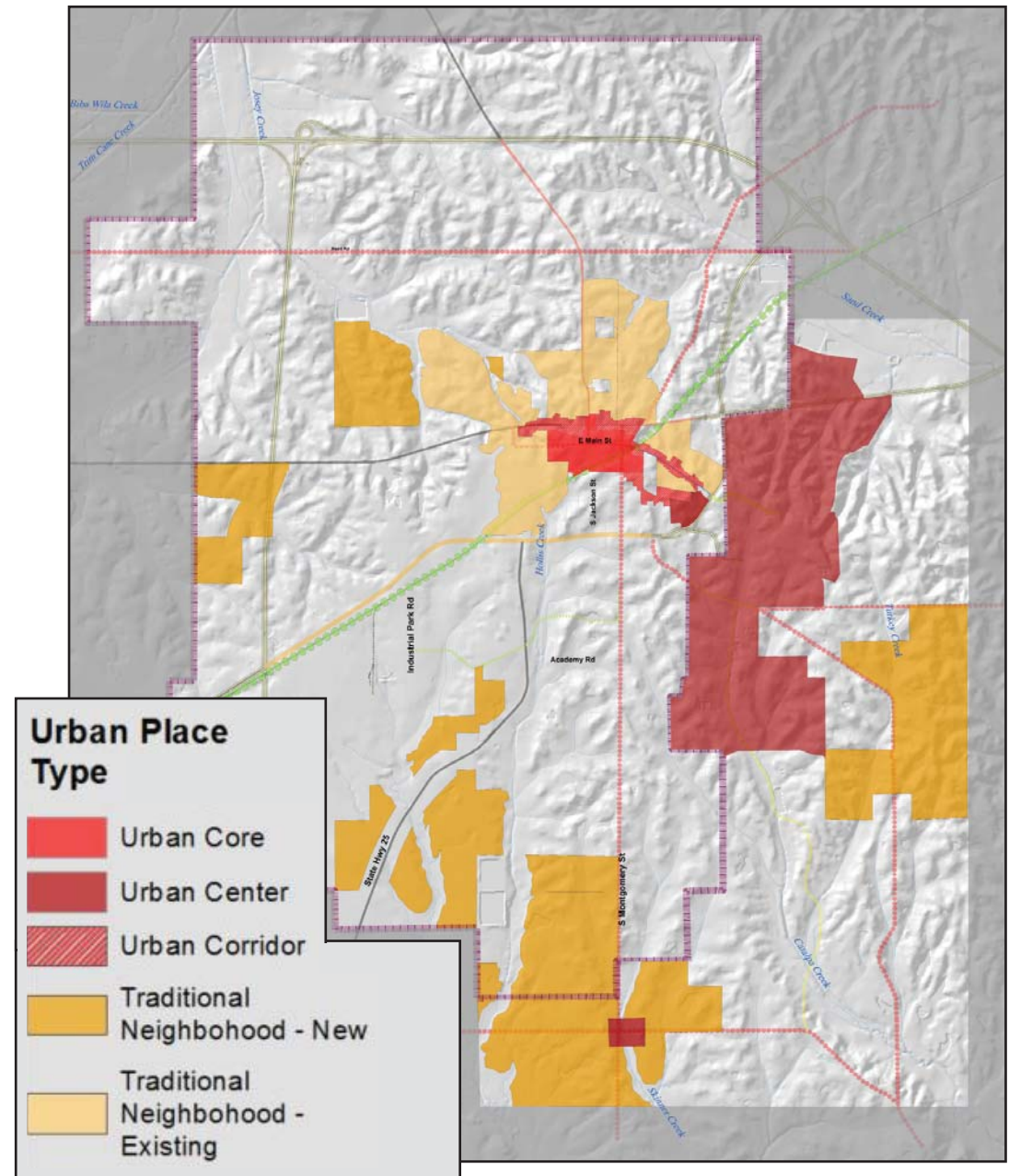
The few Corridors extend from Downtown.

#### Centers

The proposed Urban Centers are at the Mill and the intersection of S. Montgomery and Poor House Roads.

#### Core

The sole Urban Core is Downtown Starkville.



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: URBAN AREAS

### TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS: EXISTING

#### Traditional Neighborhoods: Existing

##### Locations

Surrounding the Downtown

##### Spatial Form

Relatively expansive random forms

##### Land Uses

Primarily single-family detached houses, but also attached houses, multi-family and small-scale commercial

##### Density / Intensity

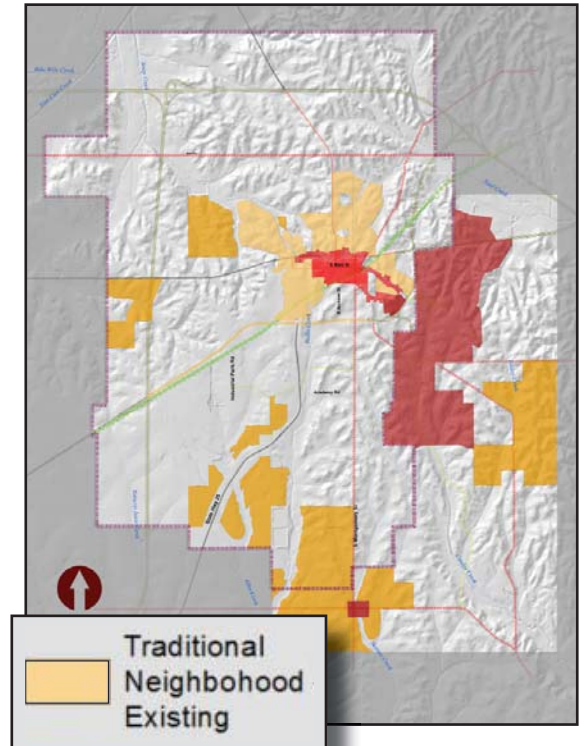
Moderate to high density, but with some larger lots

##### Development Form

Buildings close to the street, parking to the side or rear, and a connected street network with on-street parking and well-designed streetscapes

##### Street Types

Avenues and Local





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: URBAN AREAS

### TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS: NEW

#### Traditional Neighborhoods: New

##### Locations

Peripheral locations

##### Spatial Form

Large, medium and relatively small random forms

##### Land Uses

A wide range of housing types and small-scale commercial uses

##### Density / Intensity

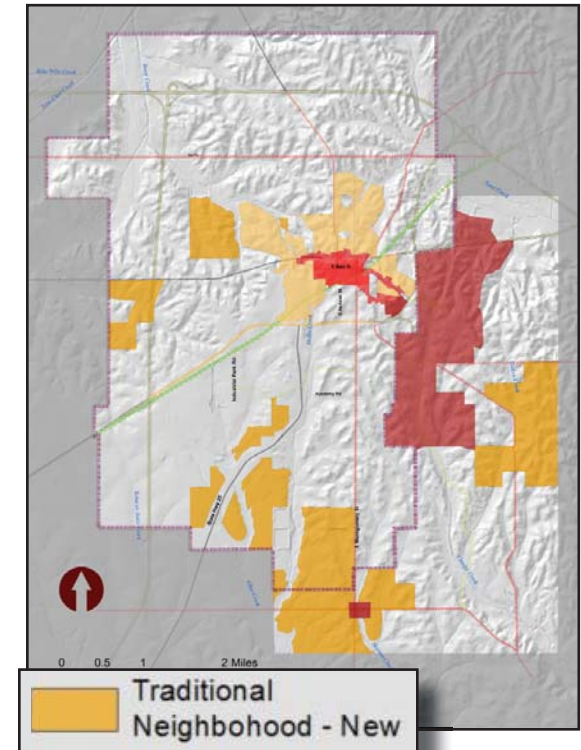
Moderate to high density, but with some larger lots

##### Development Form

Buildings close to the street, parking to the side or rear, a connected street network with on-street parking and well-designed streetscapes

##### Street Types

Avenues and Local



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: URBAN AREAS

### URBAN CORRIDORS

#### Urban Corridors

##### Locations

Hwy. 182 adjacent to Downtown, University Dr., and Russell St.

##### Spatial Form

Linear following their associated streets

##### Land Uses

Mixed use, including high-density residential

##### Density / Intensity

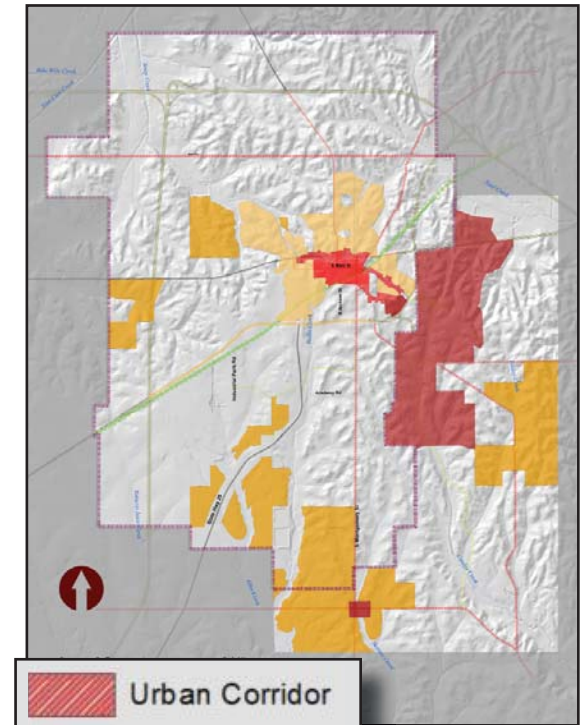
High density / intensity

##### Development Form

Buildings fronting streets, parking behind or below buildings, a connected street network with on-street parking, public spaces of various types

##### Street Types

Avenues





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: URBAN AREAS

### URBAN CENTERS

#### Urban Centers

##### Locations

At the restored Mill and at the intersection of South Montgomery and Poor House Roads

##### Spatial Form

Small and nodal

##### Land Uses

Mixed use

##### Density / Intensity

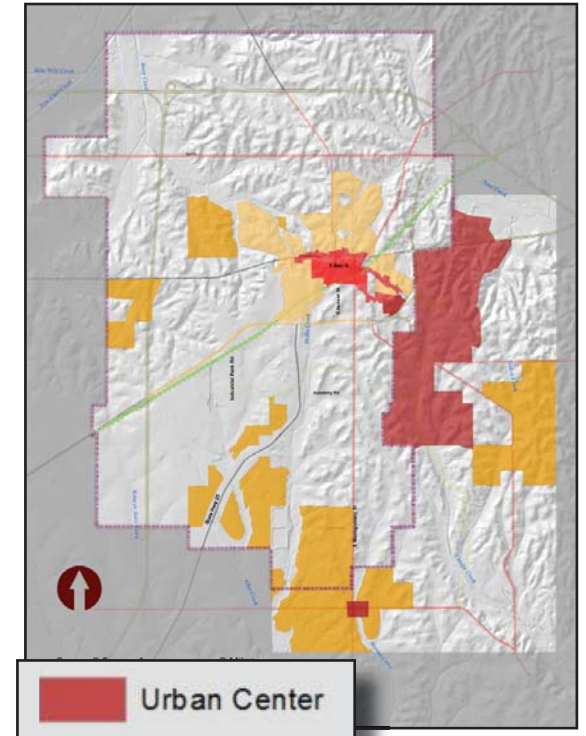
High density / intensity

##### Development Form

Buildings fronting streets, parking behind or below buildings, a connected street network with on-street parking, well-designed streetscapes, and public spaces of various types

##### Street Types

Avenues



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: URBAN AREAS

### URBAN CORE

#### Urban Core

##### Locations

Downtown Starkville

##### Spatial Form

Nodal with an east-west axis oriented to Main St.

##### Land Uses

Mixed use - commercial, residential, institutional

##### Density / Intensity

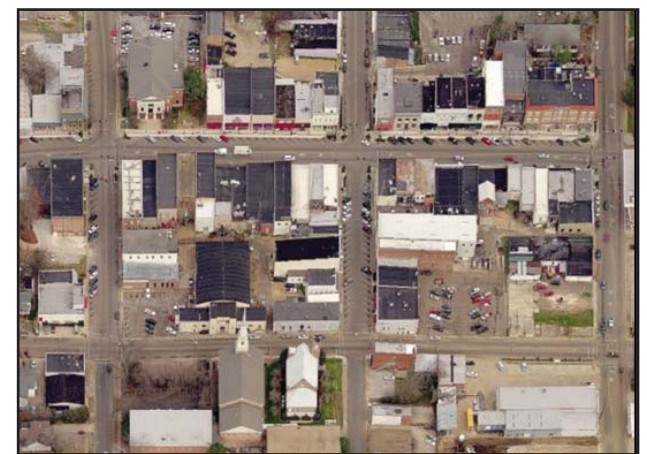
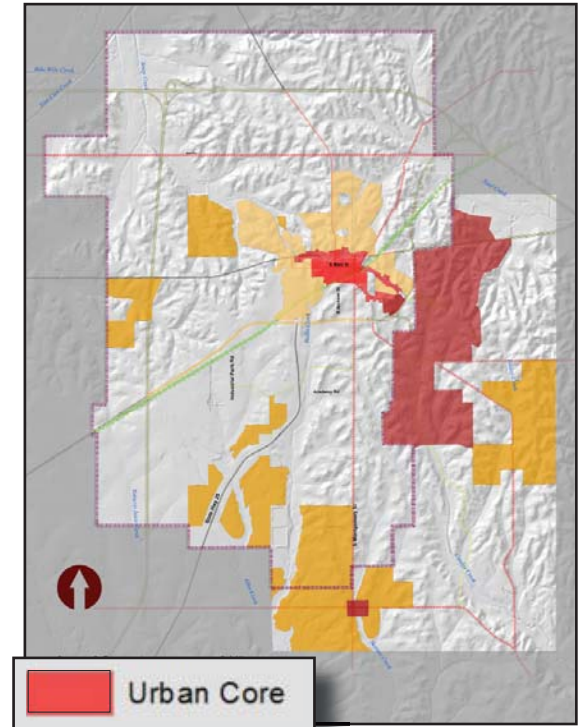
Highest density / intensity in Starkville

##### Development Form

Buildings fronting streets, parking behind or below buildings, a connected street network with on-street parking, well-designed streetscapes, and public spaces of various types

##### Street Types

Main Street





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: URBAN AREAS

### MAKING URBAN AREAS BETTER

Unlike Suburban areas that bring many inherent challenges to sustainable growth, Urban areas are intrinsically sustainable, so much of “getting it right” is focused more on the details and aesthetics. This plan’s objective is to make existing and future urban places better, as follows:

#### Mix Uses Horizontally and Vertically

Not only should there be a rich mixture of uses within a given area, but some buildings should have different uses on different floors.

#### Achieve Compatibility with Design and Scale

Differing adjacent uses are incompatible if not compatible in scale and well designed. Good design and appropriate scaling makes mixed uses work.

#### Design Streets and Streetscape for Diverse Users

“Complete streets” accommodate drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and other modes of mobility.

#### Save and Utilize Older Buildings Where Viable

Existing older buildings that can be saved and used should be, as they are economically valuable assets and reinforce the special character of urban areas.



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SPECIAL DISTRICTS

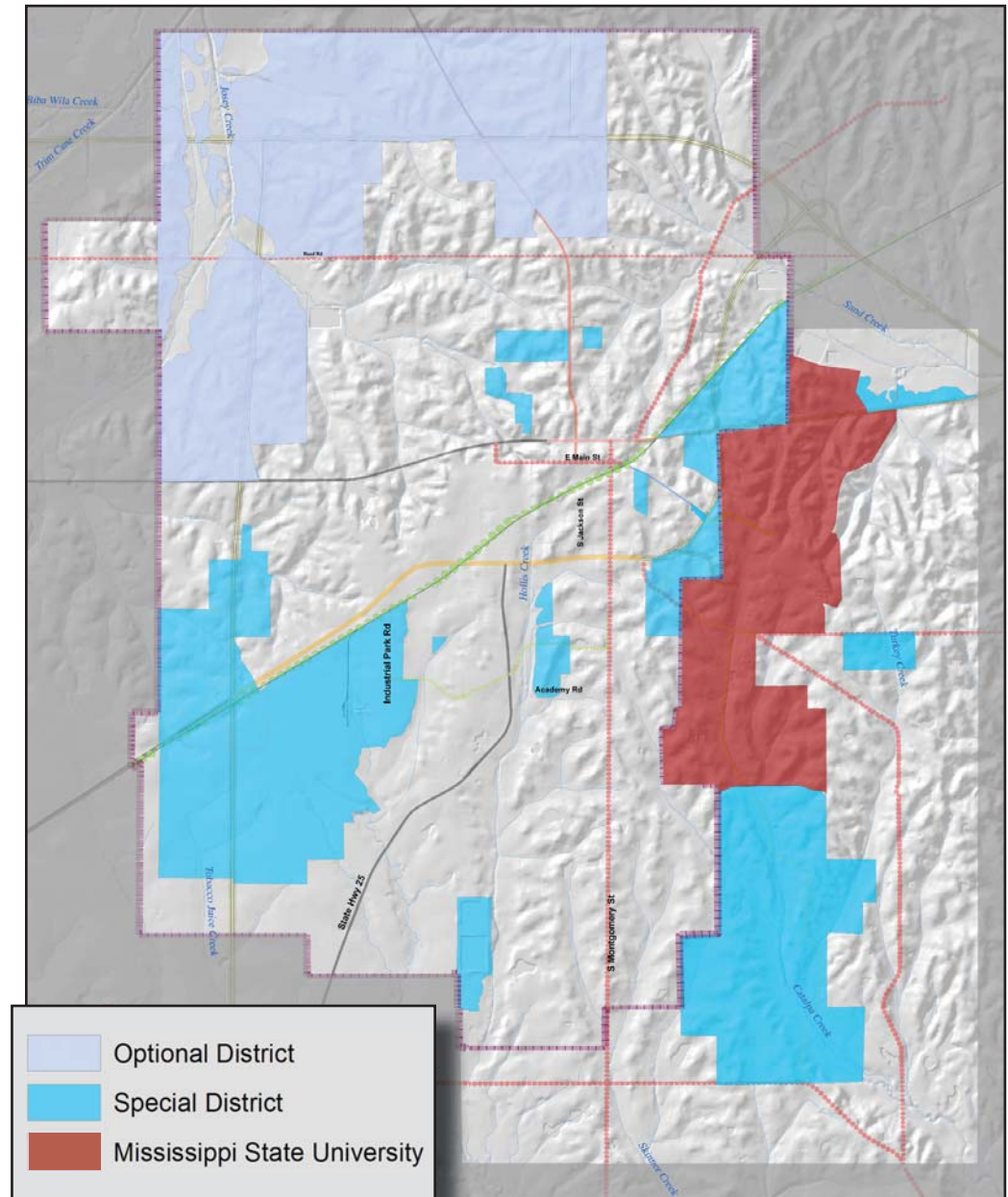
### SPECIAL DISTRICT EXAMPLES

Special Districts are indeed “special” and do not fit into the more basic categories of residential, commercial and similar uses. They are the type of uses that are often geographically isolated from other uses and sometimes feature an insular “campus” form. Below are examples of such districts:

- Airport
- Industrial & research areas/parks
- Schools
- Hospital

### Optional & MSU

Four options are explained on [pages 69-73](#). Mississippi State University could be categorized under “schools,” but because of its scale and magnitude, it is singled out here as a distinct place type.





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SPECIAL DISTRICTS

### SPECIAL DISTRICTS

#### Special Districts

##### Locations

Throughout the community

##### Spatial Form

Range between small and large

##### Land Uses

Institutional, utilitarian, industrial

##### Density / Intensity

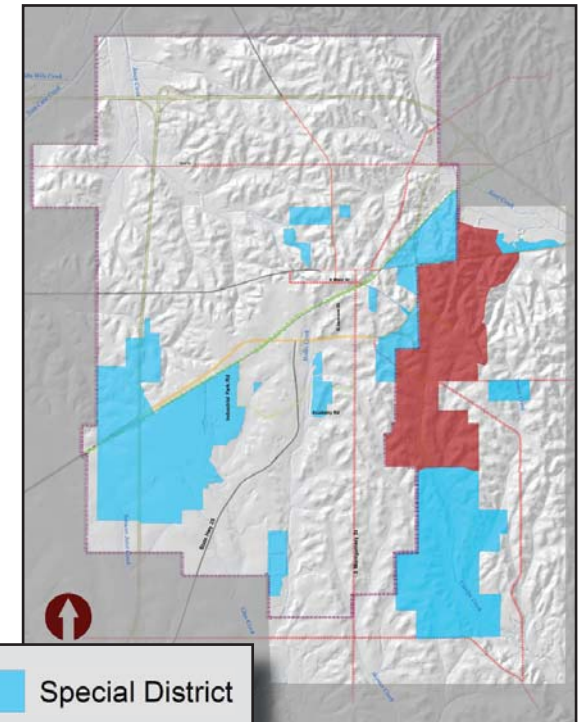
Dependent upon the use/purpose

##### Development Form

Dependent upon the use/purpose, but often internally-focused and campus-like; buildings are often clustered and repetitive in use and/or design; considerable buffering (space and/or landscaping) is often needed at the perimeter

##### Street Types

Parkways, Avenues, Local



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: SPECIAL DISTRICTS

### MAKING SPECIAL DISTRICTS BETTER

Despite the broad diversity of potential uses and development types, the following are suggestions that apply to many uses within this place type category:

#### Provide Good Access

Most uses for this place type require excellent access, including for truck traffic. That means roads with ample widths and durability, as well as avoiding traffic through residential and pedestrian-oriented areas. Some industrial uses also require rail access.

#### Buffer Sites from Adjacent Areas

Many uses within this category need buffering from nearby areas, although it is less critical for some smaller scale uses, such as schools. The best forms of buffering include space (generous building setbacks) and dense landscaping with plant species that will provide a year-round buffer.

#### Provide Generous Landscaping

In addition to peripheral landscaping for buffering, internal landscaping can greatly enhance properties.

#### Strategically Locate High-Quality Architecture

Locate well-designed buildings at high-visibility places to help screen lower-quality buildings.





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: OPTIONAL DISTRICTS

### OPTIONAL DISTRICT CHOICES

There are four optional uses for this place type:

#### Commercial Option

This option allows a range of commercial uses, including retail, dining, personal and professional services, offices and other related uses. It can be either a conventional suburban development or a more urban “lifestyle center.”

#### Industrial Option

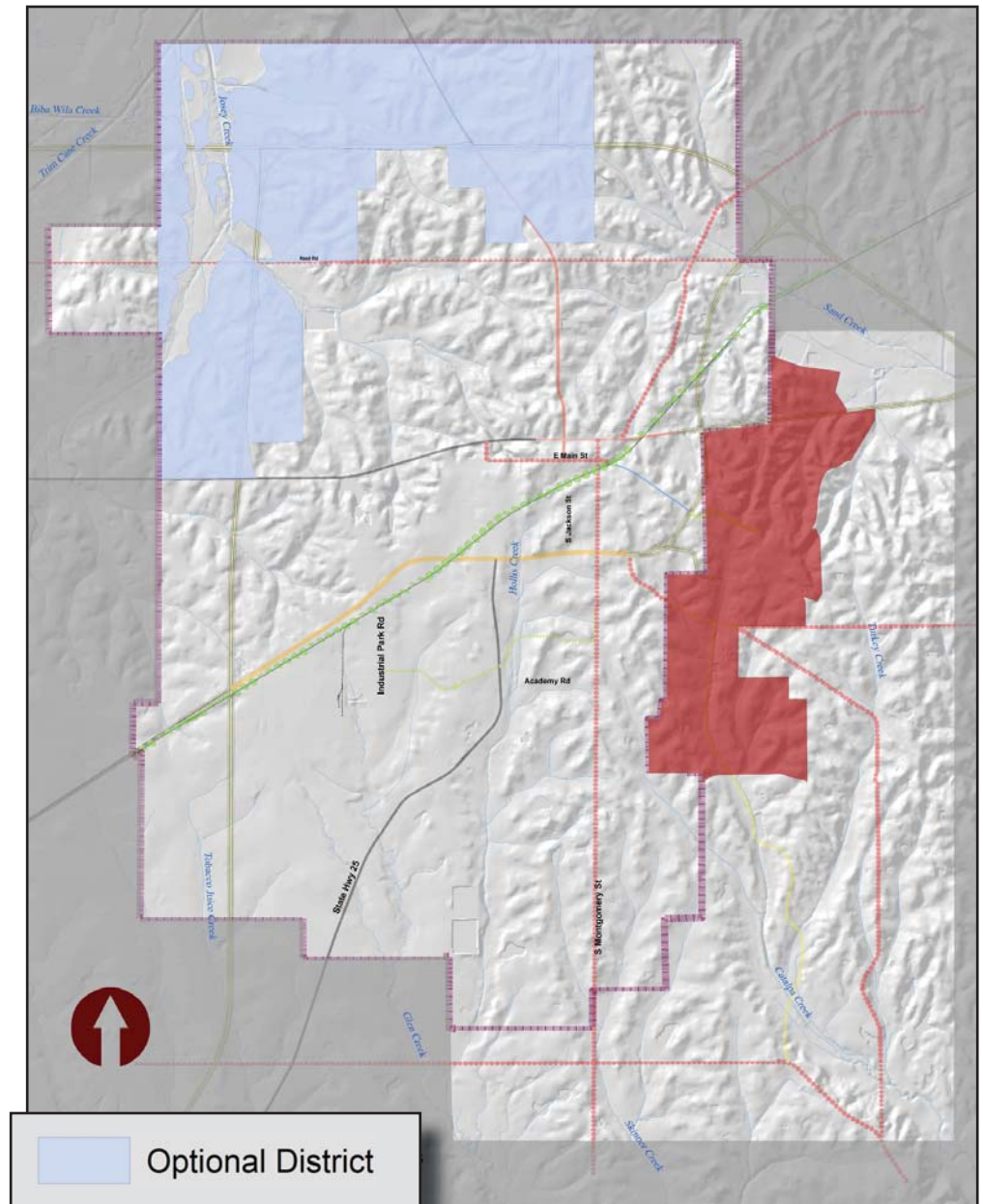
This option allows manufacturing, warehousing and similar industrial uses. It offers the ability to design sites in a campus style and to utilize generous landscaping.

#### TND Option

Traditional Neighborhood Development features a mixture of uses in an urban form. Housing can occur in a variety of types and densities, and the overall design should result in a pedestrian-friendly place.

#### CSD Option

Conservation Subdivision Development allows clustered housing to result in preserved open space.



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: OPTIONAL DISTRICTS

### COMMERCIAL OPTION

#### Commercial Option

##### Locations

Northwest part of Starkville

##### Spatial Form

Large expansive areas

##### Land Uses

Retail, dining, service, office, etc.

##### Density / Intensity

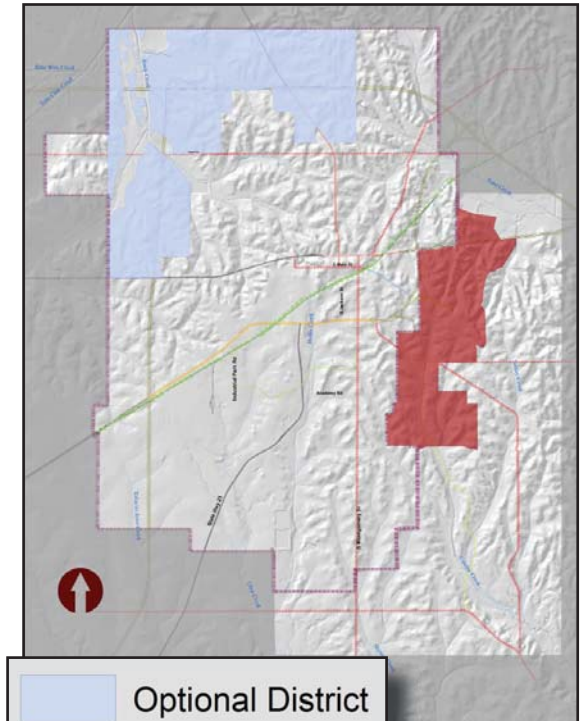
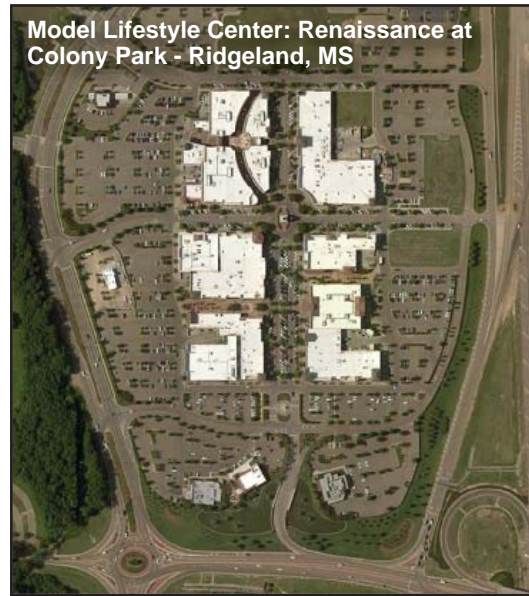
Low to moderate overall “gross” site density/ intensity, but can be high where buildings are located

##### Development Form

Can range from conventional suburban forms with an auto orientation to more urban “lifestyle” centers with mixed uses and a walkable environment and peripheral parking lots

##### Street Types

Parkways, Avenues, Main Street, Local





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: OPTIONAL DISTRICTS

### INDUSTRIAL OPTION

#### Industrial Option

##### Locations

Northwest part of Starkville

##### Spatial Form

Large expansive areas

##### Land Uses

Manufacturing, assemblage, processing, warehousing, and other industrial uses

##### Density / Intensity

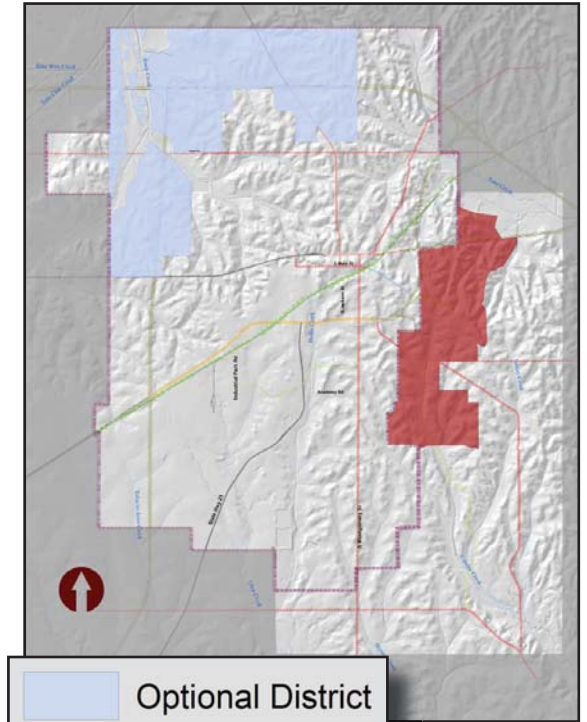
Low to moderate

##### Development Form

This option should be designed as “campuses” with unifying elements for streets, landscaping, signage, and architecture; and buildings are often large, utilitarian and clustered

##### Street Types

Parkways, Avenues, Local



# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: OPTIONAL DISTRICTS

### TND OPTION

#### TND Option

##### Locations

Northwest parts of Starkville; potentially a conditional use elsewhere

##### Spatial Form

Relatively large areas

##### Land Uses

Primarily residential with varied housing types, as well as small-scale commercial and institutional uses

##### Density / Intensity

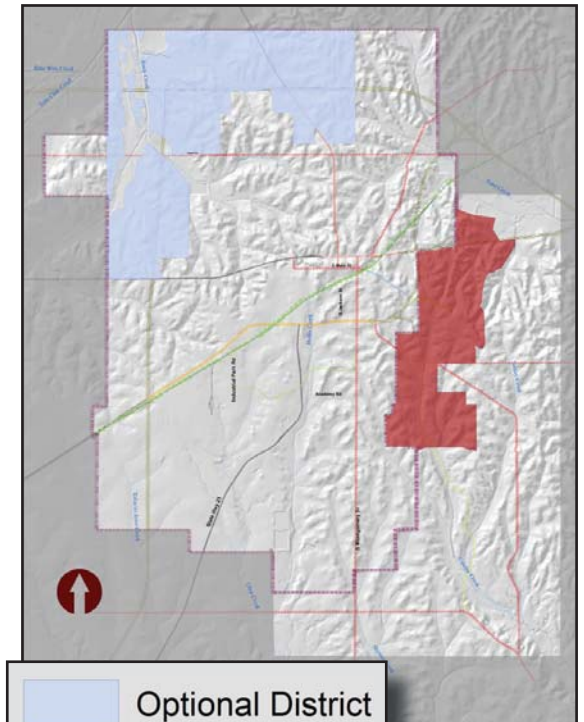
Moderate to high density/intensity

##### Development Form

Urban and compact form with emphasis on public and pedestrian realms; buildings close to streets, with parking on-street and behind/below buildings

##### Street Types

Parkways, Avenues, Main Street, Local





# THE PLAN

## PLACE TYPES: OPTIONAL DISTRICTS

### CSD OPTION

#### CSD Option

##### Locations

Northwest part of Starkville; potentially a conditional use elsewhere

##### Spatial Form

Relatively large areas

##### Land Uses

Residential and open space

##### Density / Intensity

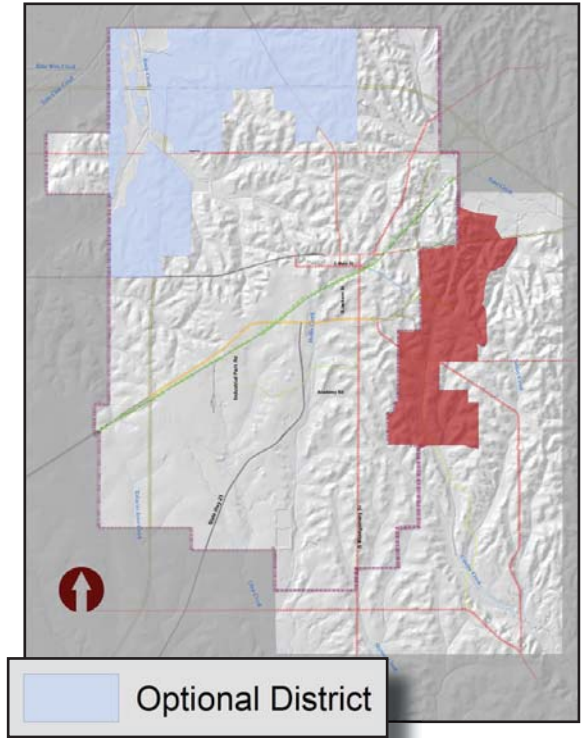
Low gross density for the site, but high density in developed portions with clustered housing

##### Development Form

Primarily single-family detached houses on clustered small to medium sized lots with 50-75% preserved open space; rural character

##### Street Types

Parkways, Local



## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Starkville's street network is comprised of larger, higher-speed facilities under the jurisdiction of MDOT supplemented by local streets and University streets. The MDOT facilities range from limited access freeways such as US 82 Bypass, MS 25, and MS 12 (from US 82 to MLK), and also multi-lane surface arterials such as MS 12 and MS 82/MLK. Local streets form the majority of the lane miles, and most local streets are two lanes, with regular intersections and driveways, as well as some special-purpose streets such as Main Street in Downtown (wide sidewalks, on-street parking, and a higher level of streetscape).

Many streets in Starkville serve car movement extremely well, but are seen as barriers to pedestrian and bicycle movement. In most instances in Starkville, streets are geared almost entirely toward moving personal motor vehicles and trucks, resulting in facilities that move traffic well, but at the expense of other modes of

travel. In addition, these streets by their very nature have created a pattern of development as the City grew that is auto-oriented, where people lack viable choices for movement other than motor vehicles. The very fact that the roadway bordering the Mississippi State campus is known as "Highway 12" emphasizes this auto-dominated pattern.

As part of this comprehensive planning effort, the community made it known that they want streets that offer choices about how residents and visitors can move around the community. There is an opportunity to rebalance the streets to move people better, and not just cars. By adhering to the principles of complete streets, in which streets are designed to afford people choices in how they move about, many Starkville streets can be rebalanced, and new streets can be constructed with other modes of travel in mind. During and after the charrette, a palette of street types and cross sections was developed to allow Starkville to realize the desired vision for their transportation system. Guiding

principles used to develop the street types included in this Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

### Principles for Street Types

- Streets will respect the built and natural contexts through which they pass;
- Streets will support all modes of travel, where contextually appropriate, to foster the ability for people to choose how they move about Starkville;
- Streets will strike a balance between appropriate vehicular operational efficiency and safety for all users, regardless of their choice of travel mode;
- The City will work with MDOT on facilities under MDOT jurisdiction to achieve streets as complete as they can be within the state system; and
- Street design will support the types of development and redevelopment appropriate for the character area in which they occur.



# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

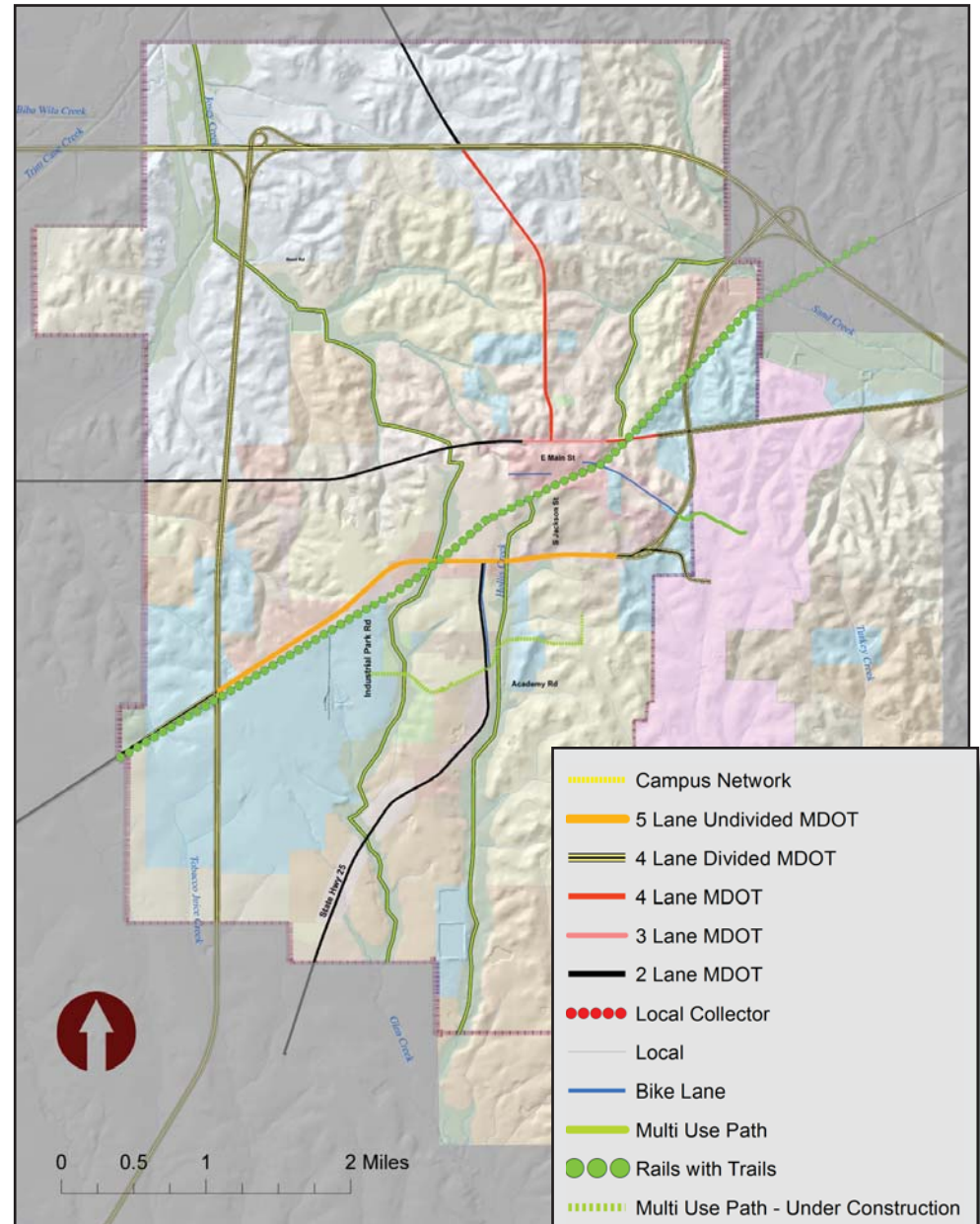
### RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS

The map at right shows the mobility enhancements recommended as part of this plan from a project level. The enhancements shown on the map are actual new roadway and greenway connections as depicted. Recommendations for mobility enhancements fall into two categories: projects and policies. The recommendations are described in the following sections by category: streets, active transportation and transit.

### Streets

Street projects consist mostly of applying complete streets design elements to the existing street network when projects such as resurfacing or a development results in the construction of new streets. The exceptions are as shown on the map, such as the planned Southern Entrance road into the University. In addition, Starkville is already retrofitting streets to incorporate complete streets elements. The construction of the shared use path along Lynn Lane and the retrofit of Nash Street are good recent examples.

From a policy standpoint, the first recommendation is that Starkville integrate complete streets into the planning and development process surrounding new streets and retrofits of existing streets. To do that will require the following:



# THE PLAN

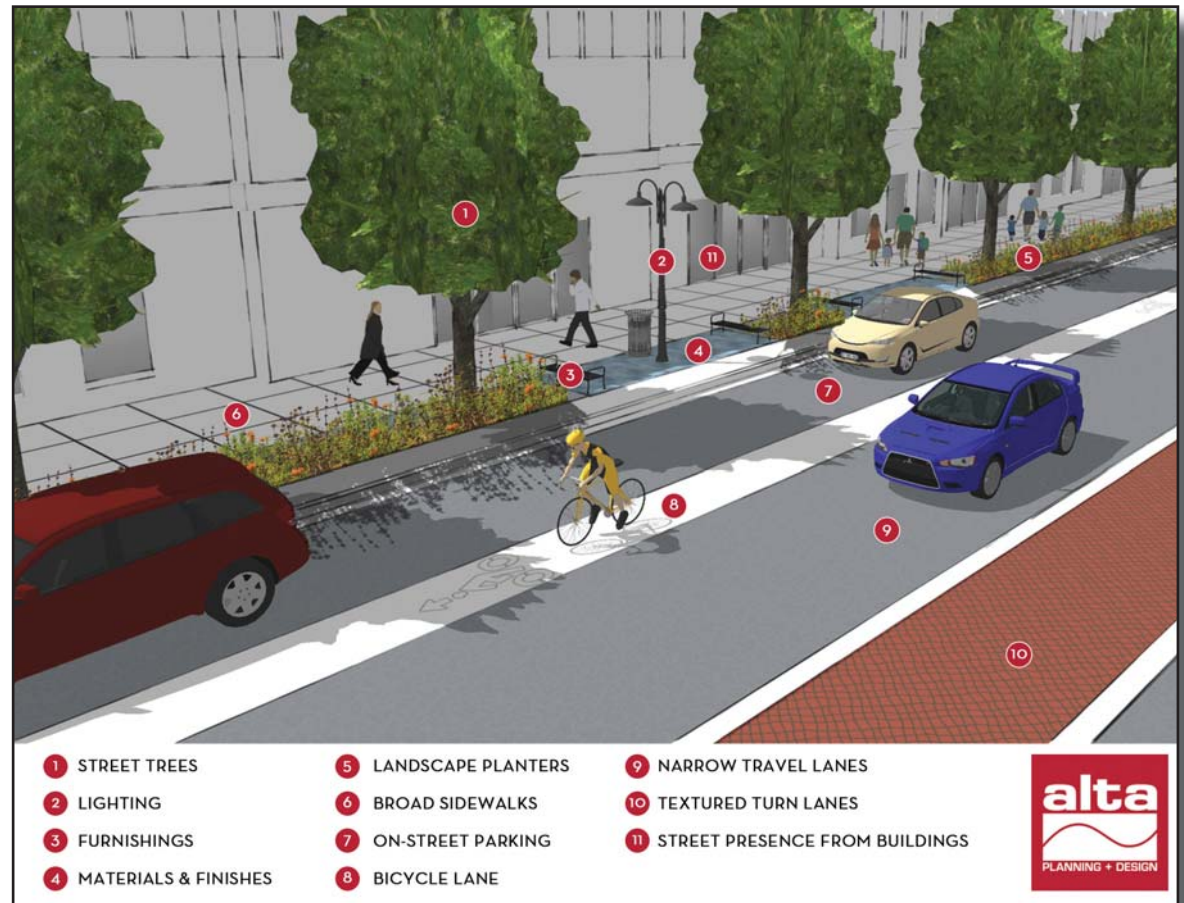
## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS (continued)

- Develop and adopt a Complete Streets Policy
- Recognize new street typologies as part of this Plan
- Develop street design guidelines that reflect the new street typologies
- Work with MDOT to make their enhancements and roads “as complete as they can be”

Many examples exist of Complete Streets policies that Starkville could use as a template for development and adoption. However, without developing a new set of street designs that include complete streets elements, the policy is nothing more than a good intention. For that reason, a set of proposed street sections were developed and included as part of this Comprehensive Plan.

By adhering to Complete Streets principles, a palette of recommended street types for each context area was developed. Sufficient



design flexibility is built into the design elements and dimensional specifications for each street type to respond to contextual variations and to be able to create a street that is holistically consistent with each of the “place types” envisioned for Starkville.

These street types adhere to best practices for Complete Streets that afford safe and efficient movement for people, and not just cars. *See pages 114-116 for recommendations to transform the Hwy. 182/MLK and Hwy. 12 corridors.*



# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS (continued)

#### Applicability Matrix

At top right is a copy of the “place types” spectrum introduced earlier in this plan, and it relates to the matrix located below it and addressed on the following pages. The matrix indicates the proposed street types relative to the place types where they should occur. In addition, the table at bottom right relates the new street types to the conventional functional classification system used by MDOT. The street types, as proposed, are described in detail in the following pages.

This place type graphic will be replaced by one I'm having designed now.



#### STREET APPLICABILITY MATRIX

Place Type	Parkway	Boulevard	Avenue	Main Street	Local	Sensitive
Natural						●
Rural	●		●		●	●
Suburban	●	●	●		●	
Urban		●	●	●	●	
Downtown			●	●	●	
Special Districts	●	●	●	●	●	●



*Complete streets accommodate a range of users - drivers, parkers, cyclists, and pedestrians. They feature designated lanes/paths for each user type.*

		TYPOLOGY RELATED TO FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION					
		Parkway	Boulevard	Avenue	Main Street	Local	Sensitive
ARTERIAL		●	●	●	●		
COLLECTOR				●	●	●	●
LOCAL						●	●

# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### STREET TYPES

#### Sensitive (Natural Environments)

In rural and transitional areas of Starkville where stormwater and wastewater do not feed into sewers, other forms of drainage must be provided. Along encompassed streets, open channel drainage ditches are typical and must be accommodated within special cross-sections. These sections could accommodate rain gardens or biofiltration as well. In many areas where environmental concerns such as floodplains occur, sensitive streets can offer the lightest imprint on the natural landscape, while providing the much-needed connectivity for all modes of travel.



#### STREET DESIGN PARAMETERS

Sensitive	
Design Elements	Description
Number of Lanes	2 (max.)
Parking	No
Sidewalks	No - shared use path
Bicycle Facilities	Shared use path
Drainage	Open swale; rain gardens; bioswales
Median	No
Streetscape	Natural; informal
Shoulders	Reinforced turf
Lighting	Optional



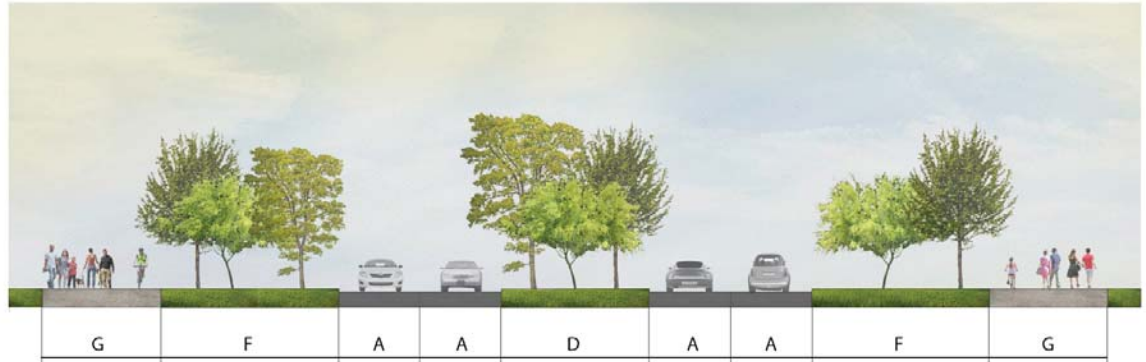
# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### STREET TYPES

#### Parkway

Parkways apply to thoroughfare and arterial streets that require two or four lanes to accommodate traffic demand. Parkways with four lanes always feature medians; the medians can be broken to provide a left turn bay. Signalized intersections are spaced further apart on parkways to better facilitate vehicular mobility. Mid-block pedestrian crossings can be installed on long (>600') blocks to maintain walkability in areas where pedestrian usage could be heavy. Major transit routes are often found on these corridors. Streetscape elements such as street trees and lighting, as well as furnishings, are consistent with the place type in which the parkway occurs. Active transportation modes on parkways are supported by shared-use paths or dedicated on-street bike corridors, such as bike lanes integrated into the street or separated cycle tracks.



#### STREET DESIGN PARAMETERS

Parkway	
Design Elements	Description
Number of Lanes	2-4
Parking	Off-Street
Sidewalks	No
Bicycle Facilities	Shared Use Path (preferred) one or both sides
Drainage	Open (swale) or closed (curb + gutter); context dependent
Median	Yes, with left turn bays
Streetscape	Appropriate street trees in median and tree lawn / verge
Furnishings	Yes, benches and shelters related to transit service
Lighting	Yes in urban contexts; optional in rural

Parkway Design Specifications		
Component	Description	Dimensions
A	Travel lane	11'-12'
D	Median	12'-16'
F	Verge	10'-30'
G	Shared Use Path	10' min. - 12' preferred
	Target speed	45 MPH (rural); 35 MPH (urban)

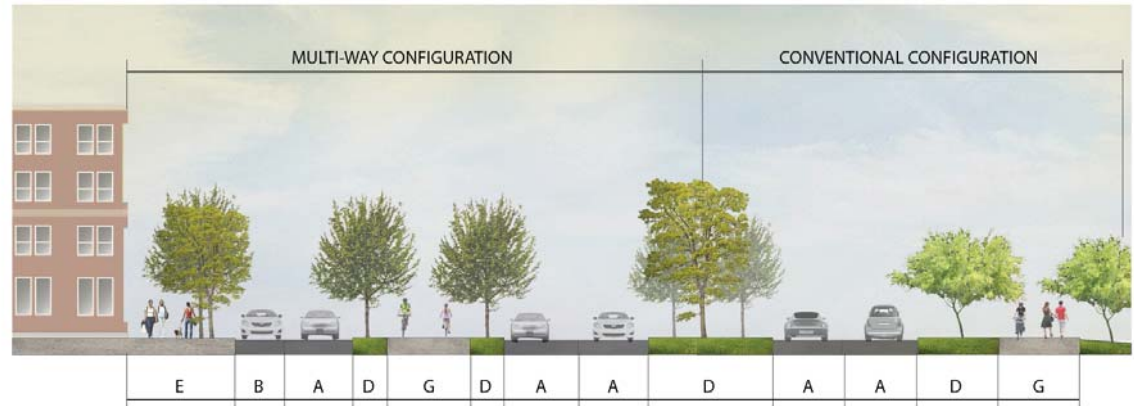
# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### STREET TYPES

#### Boulevard

Boulevards are designed to support multiple travel modes, including automobiles, freight movers, transit vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. Boulevards balance high vehicular capacity with high pedestrian and vehicular accessibility to adjoining urban land uses. Boulevards include a center median or left turn lane, 4 through travel lanes, sidewalks and/or a shared use path on one or both sides. In an urban multi-way configuration, landscaped medians separate and buffer through traffic from a local access lane that accommodates parking, low-speed vehicular traffic, bicyclists, and pedestrians in a street frontage condition. In this configuration, the access lanes are low-speed and are designated as shared use. Streetscapes for boulevards are typically formal in nature, with regularly spaced tree plantings, spot or full medians, lighting, and benches and shelters for transit users.



#### STREET DESIGN PARAMETERS

Boulevard	
Design Elements	Description
Number of Lanes	4 Through; +2 on access lanes
Parking	Only on access lanes in multi-way configuration
Sidewalks	Yes
Bicycle Facilities	Shared Use Path; sharrows in access lane/ multi-way configuration
Drainage	Closed (curb + gutter)
Median	Yes, with left turn bays
Streetscape	Formal; street trees in median and tree lawn / verge; Tree wells in walkway in multi-way configuration
Furnishings	Benches, trash receptacles, bike racks on access lanes in multi-way configuration
Lighting	Yes; vehicle scale on main lane; pedestrian scale on access lanes

Boulevard Design Specifications		
Component	Description	Dimensions
A	Travel lane	11'-12' (main lane); 10'-11' access lane
B	Parking (access lane)	8'
D	Median /Verge	16'-22' (center); 18'-22' (side, in multi-way)
E	Sidewalk	6'-10' (main lane); 16'-20' with tree wells (with building, frontage, multi-way)
G	Shared used path	10' (min.) - 12' (preferred)
	Target speed	35 MPH (main lane); 15 MPH (access lane)



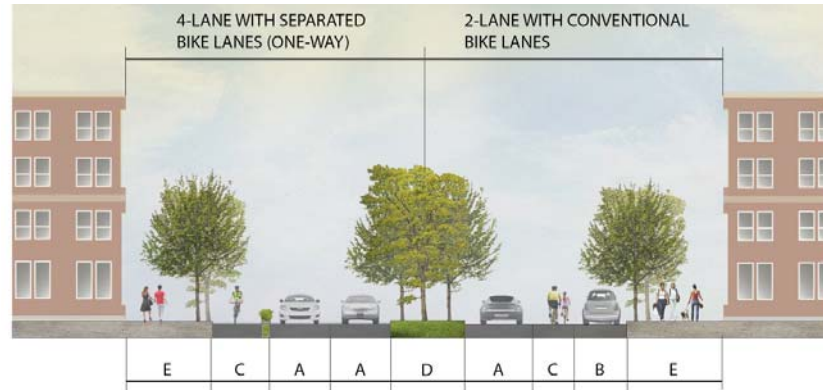
# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### STREET TYPES

#### Avenue

Avenues are walkable, lower speed streets that are generally shorter in length than boulevards. They provide access to abutting commercial and mixed-use land uses, as well as multi-family development. Avenues are predominately only two lanes, but can be four lane if traffic volumes warrant. Depending on the context, avenues can accommodate on-street parking. They serve as primary bicycle and pedestrian routes, and may accommodate local transit vehicles. Avenues may feature a median and on-street parking in urban contexts, or can feature swale drainage in more rural or transitioning contexts. Depending on the context, avenues can have sidewalks on one or both sides, and will accommodate bicycle traffic through shared lanes, bike lanes, or protected bike lanes.



#### STREET DESIGN PARAMETERS

Avenue	
Design Elements	Description
Number of Lanes	2-4
Parking	Optional: parallel
Sidewalks	Yes
Bicycle Facilities	Bike lane or Separated lane
Drainage	Closed (curb + gutter)
Median	Optional in 2 lane; required in 4 lane; accommodate left turn bays or flush median for left turns
Streetscape	Formal; street trees in median and tree lawn / verge; Tree wells in hardscape walkway
Furnishings	Bike racks / street furniture; public art
Lighting	Yes; vehicle scale on 4 lane; pedestrian scale on 2 lane

Avenue Design Specifications		
Component	Description	Dimensions
A	Travel lane	10'-11'
B	Parking (access lane)	8'
D	Median / flush median	10'-11' (spot and flush)
E	Sidewalk	6' (min.) 8' (preferred); 16'-20' with tree wells (neighborhood commercial)
C	Bike lane	6' (min.)
C	Protected bike lane	One-way: 7' + 3' separator (preferred) 6'+2' separator (constrained segment); Two-way: 12' + 4' separator (preferred) 10'+2' separator (constrained segment)
	Target speed	35 MPH (4 lane); 25 MPH (2 lane)

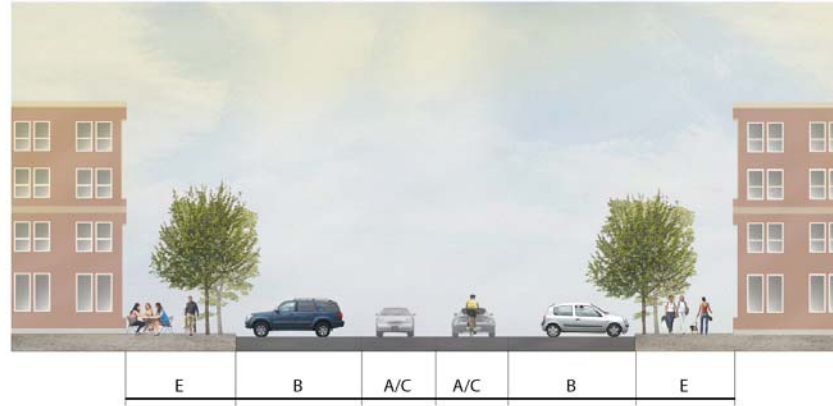
# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### STREET TYPES

#### Main Street

Main Streets are designed to provide connections between neighborhoods and districts, as well as providing access to avenues and boulevards from local streets. Main Streets are highly walkable and may serve as the primary street for commercial or mixed-use centers. On-street parking is typically provided in either a parallel or angled configuration (including back-in angled parking). Pedestrians are accommodated with wide sidewalks and bicycles are accommodated in a shared lane due to the low speed nature of the street type. Main Streets feature closed drainage systems and a high degree of streetscape, with formal pedestrian-scale lighting, trees in tree wells with grates to create an expanded walking promenade, and furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks. Sidewalks are wide enough to allow for outdoor cafes, including the tree well width.



#### STREET DESIGN PARAMETERS

Main Street	
Design Elements	Description
Number of Lanes	2
Parking	Yes; Parallel or angled (back-in angled preferred)
Sidewalks	Yes,
Bicycle Facilities	Sharrows; Shared Lane
Drainage	Closed (curb + gutter); Permeable parking (optional)
Median	No
Streetscape	Formal; Tree wells in hardscape walkway
Furnishings	Bike racks / street furniture; public art
Lighting	Pedestrian scale

Main Street Design Specifications		
Component	Description	Dimensions
A	Travel lane	10' (parallel parking); 13' (angled parking)
B	Parking	8' (parallel); 20' (angled)
E	Sidewalk	16' (min.); 20' (preferred); 4' tree wells
C	Bicycle facilities	Sharrows in travel lane
	Target speed	20 MPH



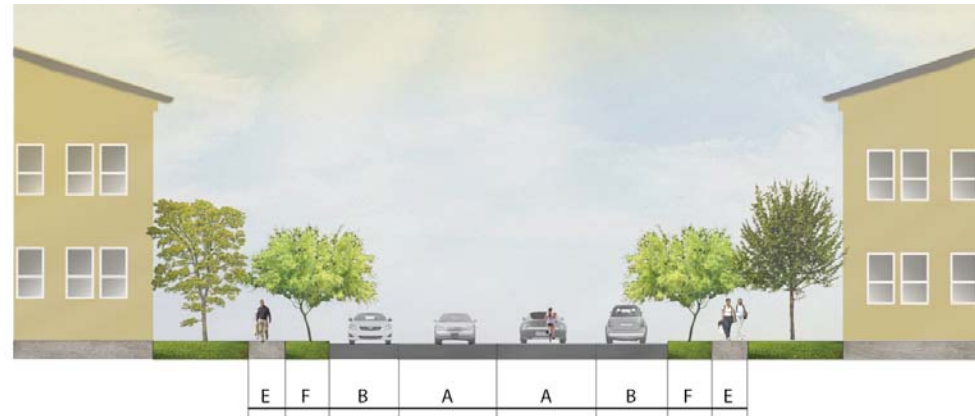
# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### STREET TYPES

#### Local

Local Streets provide access to individual lots, accommodate pedestrians and serve as low-speed bicycle and vehicle routes. Local streets should be relatively short in total distance, but interconnected to form a street grid and multiple routing and access points for the neighborhoods they serve. The low-speed nature and low anticipated traffic volumes of local streets allow for bicycles to share the street with motor vehicles. As a result, local streets can form some of the best bicycle routes to offer alternatives to less experienced or confident cyclists when well-connected. Local streets can feature open or closed drainage, depending on the context, and should have sidewalks when serving residential uses. Parking on-street is accommodated either in parallel parking bays in a multi-family frontage condition, or informally accommodated in a “yield” street condition for single-family frontages.



#### STREET DESIGN PARAMETERS

Local Street	
Design Elements	Description
Number of Lanes	2 (max.)
Parking	Yes; Parallel or yield (informal)
Sidewalks	Yes
Bicycle Facilities	Routes / shared
Drainage	Closed (curb + gutter); rain gardens / bioswales (optional)
Median	No
Streetscape	Configuration dependent on context
Lighting	Pedestrian scale

Local Street Design Specifications		
Component	Description	Dimensions
A	Travel lane	10' dedicated lanes (max.); 24'-27' two-way yield
B	Parking	7' parallel in bays; informal curbside in yield condition (24'-27' street width)
E	Sidewalk	5' (min.) both sides
F	Verge	5' (min.)
	Target speed	20 MPH (max.)

# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

#### Bike Lanes

Starkville has already begun incorporating bicycle and walking facilities into new streets and adapting existing streets. Through these recommendations, and simply by implementing the street typologies contained in this plan, Starkville can greatly increase its network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. As routine maintenance such as resurfacing is accomplished, streets should be evaluated to determine the ability to incorporate elements such as bike lanes or even protected bike lanes. Similarly, new or reconstructed streets will facilitate the incorporation of elements such as bicycle facilities (on and off-road), as well as sidewalks.



**Shared Lanes:** Most appropriate for streets  $\leq 25$  mph. Typically installed in the middle of the street.



**Bike Lanes:** 5-6' wide. Located between driving and parking lanes. Best for streets 25-35 mph.



**Cycle Track:** Buffered, 6-11' wide.



# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION (continued)

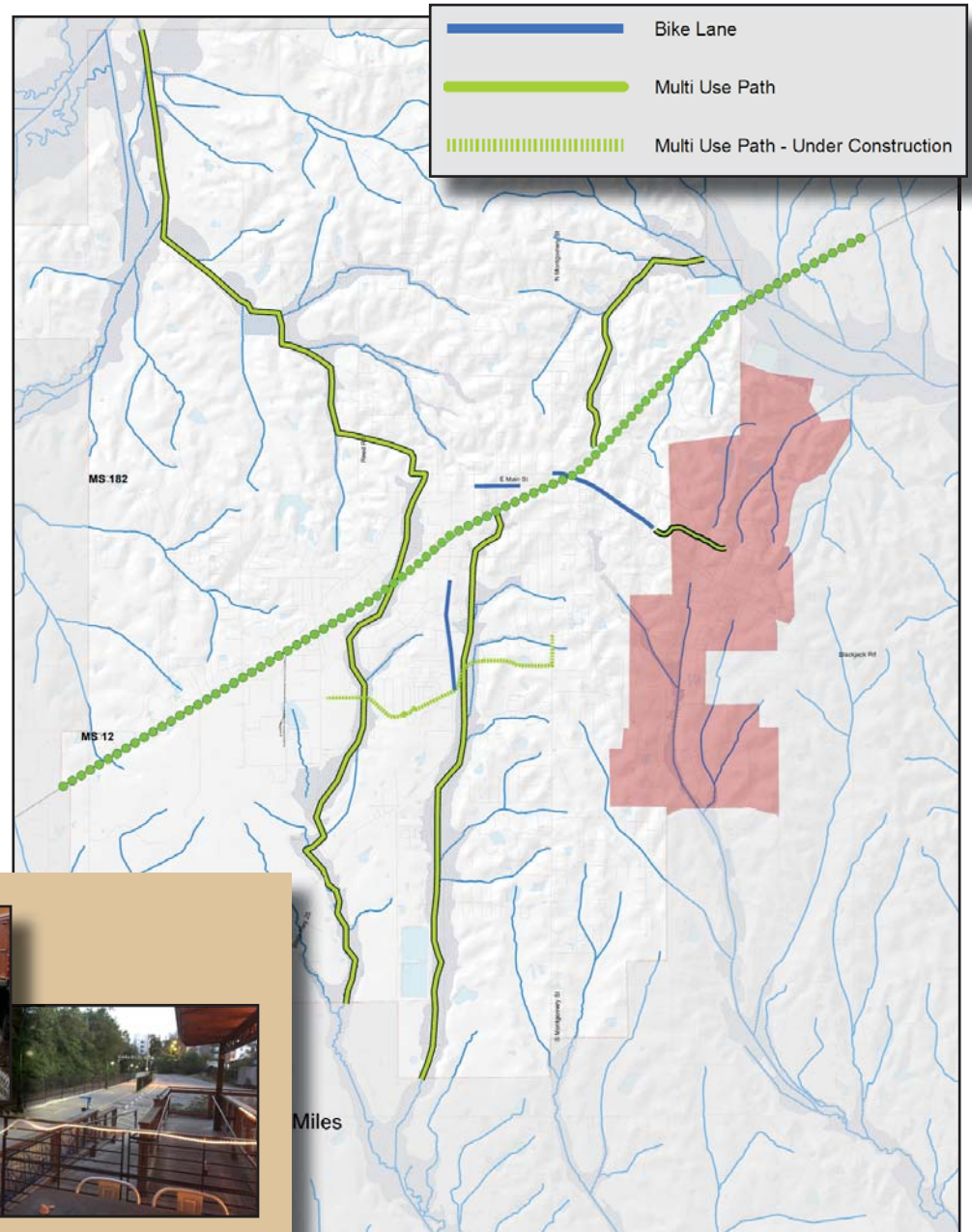
#### Greenways

##### Stream Corridors

One of Starkville's greatest opportunities to expand its existing greenway system is to utilize stream corridors. Not only are they linear and oriented to connect peripheral parts of town with the core, but the associated floodplains are relatively inexpensive for ROW acquisition given their general lack of development value.

##### Rail with Trail

One major opportunity to create a new connected active transportation facility lies within the current Kansas City Southern rail right-of-way that bisects the City. Challenges with railroad coordination are certainly difficult to overcome, but the City should make it a priority to acquire use of (or actual ownership of) the corridor ROW to create a "rail with trail." Peer communities that have implemented rails with trails that Starkville could look to include Fayetteville (AR), Peoria (IL) and Portland (OR).



*Fayetteville's rails with trails facility.*

# THE PLAN

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION (continued)

#### Sidewalks

Page 21 of the Background section already provides an overview of existing sidewalks, including the map at right. Below are recommendations for expanding the system:

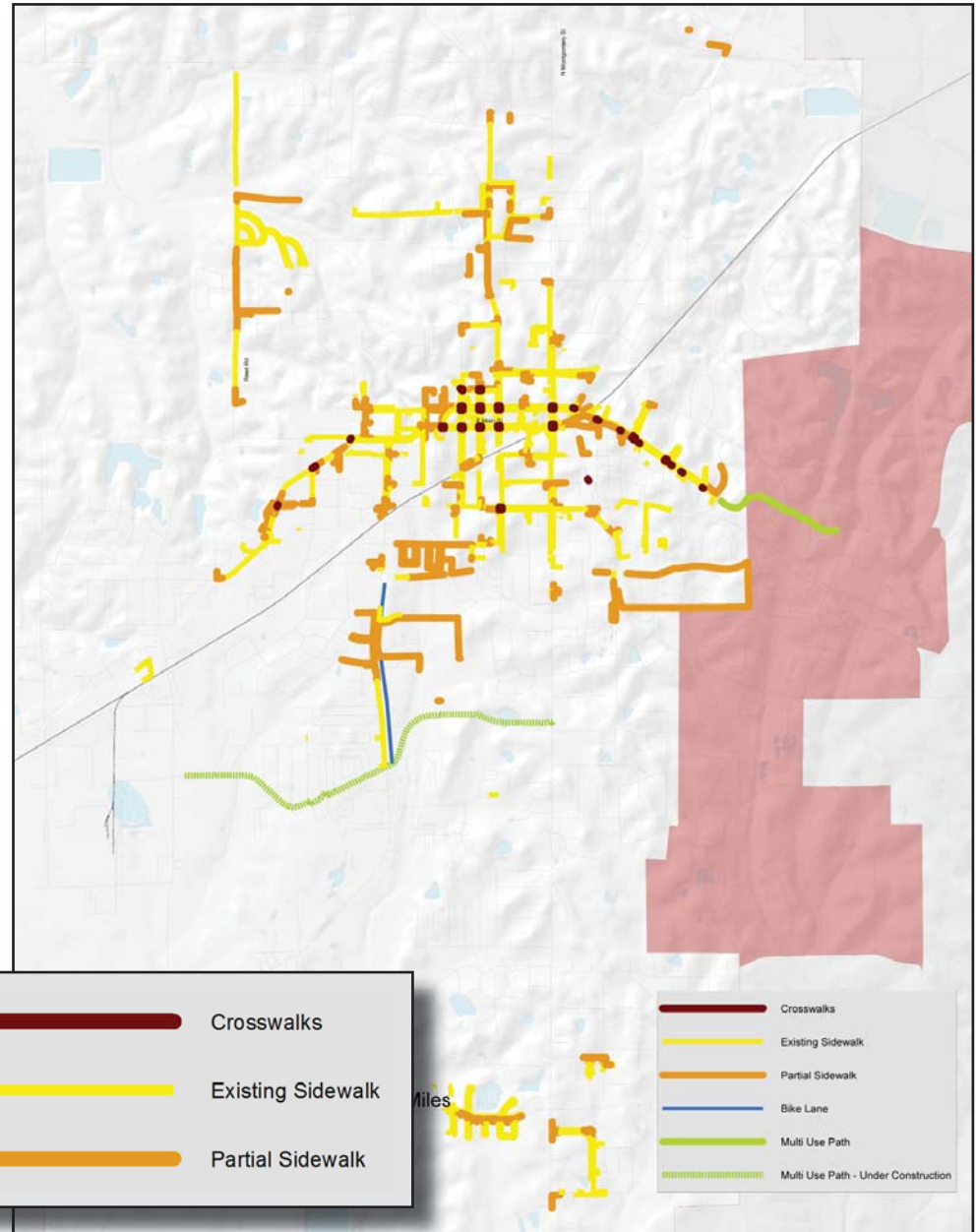
#### Code Requirements

The City already requires sidewalks for new development with only two exceptions: 1) the property is outside of the “sidewalk district,” and 2) the costs of the sidewalk would exceed 10% of the total project construction cost. One option for the City to consider is to eliminate the sidewalk district and require sidewalks everywhere except for the lowest density development (ave. of .5 units/acre or less).

#### City Initiatives

While mandating sidewalks is a solution for new development, it does not help existing developed areas. It is recommended that the City construct sidewalks based on the following priorities:

- Filling gaps in existing systems
- Linking schools, parks and other community facilities with one another
- Providing on the other side of high-traffic streets where they are only on one side.





# THE PLAN

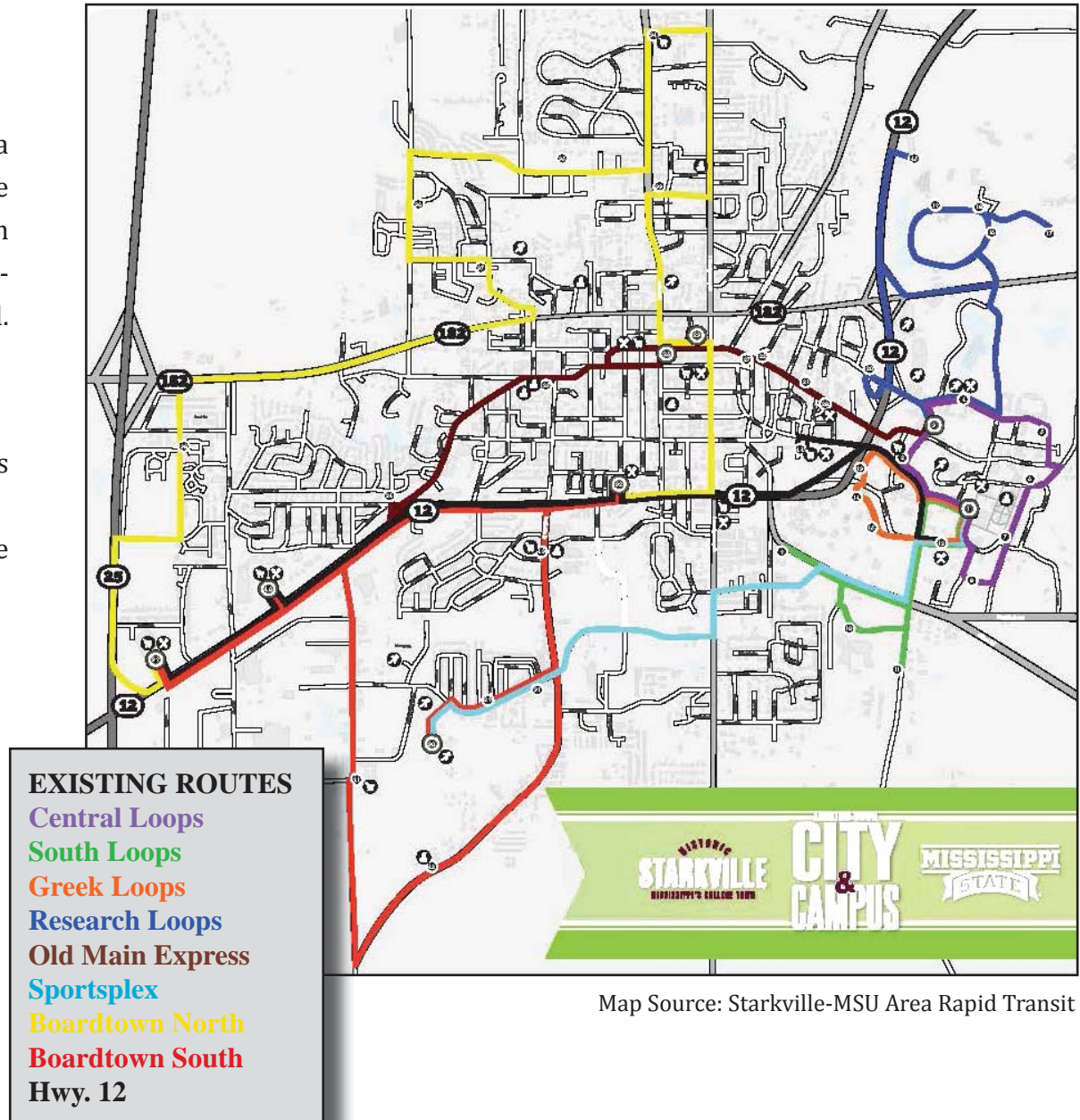
## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

### TRANSIT

Since Starkville already has implemented a first rate transit system in conjunction with the University, the City does not need to start from ground zero on the transit system. Rather, simple tweaks to the system are recommended. Specific recommendations are as follows:

- Explore additional funding opportunities
- Increase/modify routes and service as needed
- Target flexible headways with 10-15 minute intervals in peak use times

Initiatives such as establishing “nested” routes in the highest demand locations can reduce headways in peak times by overlapping service on existing routes. One such instance would be the route that connects Downtown with the MSU campus, especially during peak class times. In this manner, Starkville can “grow” into more frequent service without major capital investments in equipment until they are needed.



Map Source: Starkville-MSU Area Rapid Transit

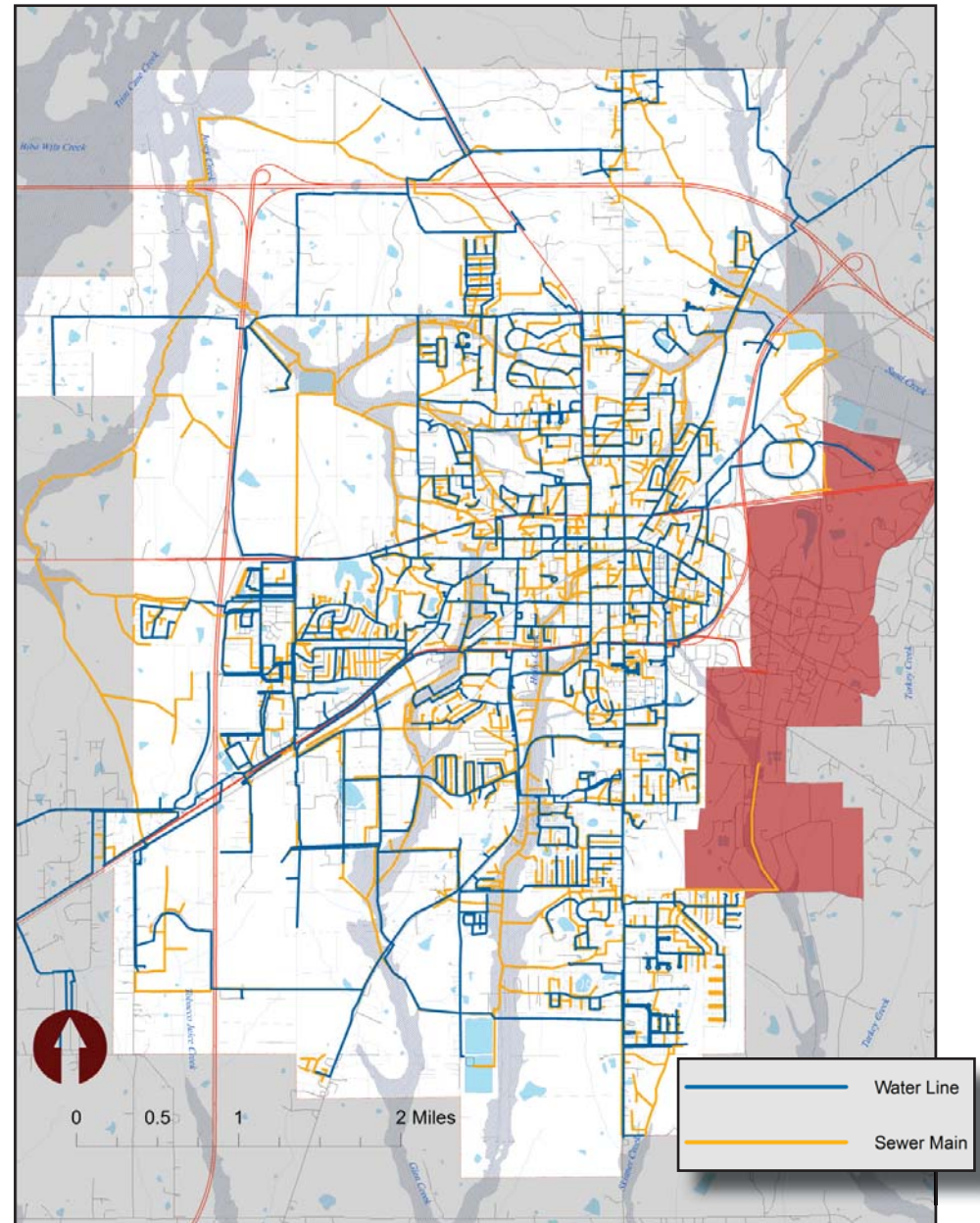
# THE PLAN

## UTILITIES & STORM WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

As stated in the existing conditions utility report, the average age of the City's water distribution system and sewage collection system are 50 years and 40 years, respectively. In addition to the aging water and sewer infrastructure, many of the existing drainage facilities within Starkville were either poorly designed or improperly constructed, resulting in deficient drainage throughout many areas. As such, the most pressing and critical need the City currently faces is the repair and rehabilitation of these existing utility systems, not only to properly support current usage, but also to handle future demand from increased development.

### SANITARY SEWER

The City has already identified the most critical areas within the existing sewage collection system and is currently in the process of repairing/replacing these sections of pipe. These improvements will greatly decrease the amount of storm water infiltration into the sewage collection system, resulting in decreased demand on existing treatment facilities. In addition, these improvements will address the most problematic pipe blockages resulting in fewer sewer backups and manhole overruns. They will also provide much needed relief to the existing sewage collection and treatment system. However, the City will need to implement a comprehensive rehabilitation program to address addi-





## UTILITIES & STORM WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

### **SANITARY SEWER** (continued)

tional deficiencies that exist throughout the system. Where pipe size and capacity allows, much of this work could reasonably be accomplished through the use of non-invasive pipe-lining and pipe-bursting technologies. Where these techniques are not feasible, replacement and upgrades to existing collection mains should be considered.

The current sewage collection network is reasonably comprehensive throughout the existing city limits, becoming less dense north, northwest, and southwest of town. Increased development in these areas will require construction of additional collection mains and the installation of additional sewage pump stations to convey the increased flow to the City's treatment facility. Additional improvements might include construction of a new trunk line or interceptor along the west and south sides of town to convey flow the treatment facility. Based on predicted population growth and EPA water

usage estimates, it is anticipated that the City will experience a 0.5 MGD increase in demand for sewer treatment over the next five years. This increase in demand should not require any capacity upgrades to the City's sewage treatment facility.

### **WATER DISTRIBUTION**

While repairs to existing water mains remain a priority for the City, the City should develop a comprehensive rehabilitation program to address additional deficiencies and problem-areas that exist throughout the system. While non-invasive and trenchless technologies can be employed to repair/rehabilitate portions of the water distribution network, other sections will need be evaluated for removal and replacement as funding allows. Repairs and upgrades of this nature will not only decrease demand on the City's water treatment facilities, but will also greatly decrease demand on City work forces by decreasing the total number of water main repairs. Improvements to the existing water distribution network

will also save the City money in terms of roadway maintenance and repair, by reducing roadway excavations and patching associated with these repairs.

Similar to the sewage collection system, the water distribution network within the exiting city limits of Starkville is reasonably comprehensive, again, becoming less dense north, northwest, and southwest of town. While the internal distribution network does not currently exist within these areas, there are distribution mains in these areas that should be able to provide the needed flow. As development increases east of town and the university, new water distribution infrastructure will need to be installed to provide the needed service. Based on predicted population growth and EPA water usage estimates, it is anticipated that the City will experience a 0.5 MGD increase in demand for potable water over the next five years. This increase in demand should not require any capacity upgrades to the City's water treatment facilities.

## UTILITIES & STORM WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

### POWER

Based on predicted population growth, it is anticipated that the City will experience an increase in power demand of approximately 15,000 kW during peak hours. While additional distribution lines will need to be installed to accommodate future growth, there are no issues regarding additional capacity to service new residents and developments.

### DRAINAGE

The City is currently in the process of addressing localized flooding and erosion issues. Projects have already been prioritized by the City and are implemented incrementally on an annual basis. In addition, review of drainage facility design and construction are now a priority for the City, resulting in a significant increase in the overall quality of storm water drainage systems. The City should continue with their current program of drainage rehabilitation and closely monitor storm water detention requirements

to prevent increased demand on existing drainage facilities due to future development. In addition, the City should look holistically at drainage in proposed development areas to formulate a comprehensive drainage improvement plan that will serve both residents and the City long term.

### ADDITIONAL UTILITIES

Additional utilities (cable television, internet, phone, gas, etc.) required by new residents and development to be provided by their respective provider as growth occurs. Installation of these utilities along City rights-of-way should be closely monitored to ensure proper placement

### Summary of Utilities & Storm Water Infrastructure Recommendations

- Based on growth projections, increased capacity will not be required for either the existing sanitary sewer or water systems.
- The City should continue targeted sanitary sewer line repairs and replacement, but will also need to implement a comprehensive rehabilitation program for additional deficiencies.
- The City should continue with repairs to existing water mains and should develop a comprehensive rehabilitation program for additional deficiencies.
- While power lines will need to expand with new growth, there are no capacity issues.
- The City should continue the drainage rehabilitation program, monitor storm water detention, and formulate a comprehensive drainage improvement plan.



# THE PLAN

## PUBLIC SPACE & RECREATION

At the time of this plan's preparation, the City was in the early stages of preparing a detailed parks and recreation master plan separate from this citywide comprehensive planning project. Because that plan will go into much greater detail than this plan can provide, this section of the comprehensive plan is intentionally general. It is consistent with the City's separate plan on this topic, but readers interested in this topic should review that plan, which can be obtained from the City of Starkville.

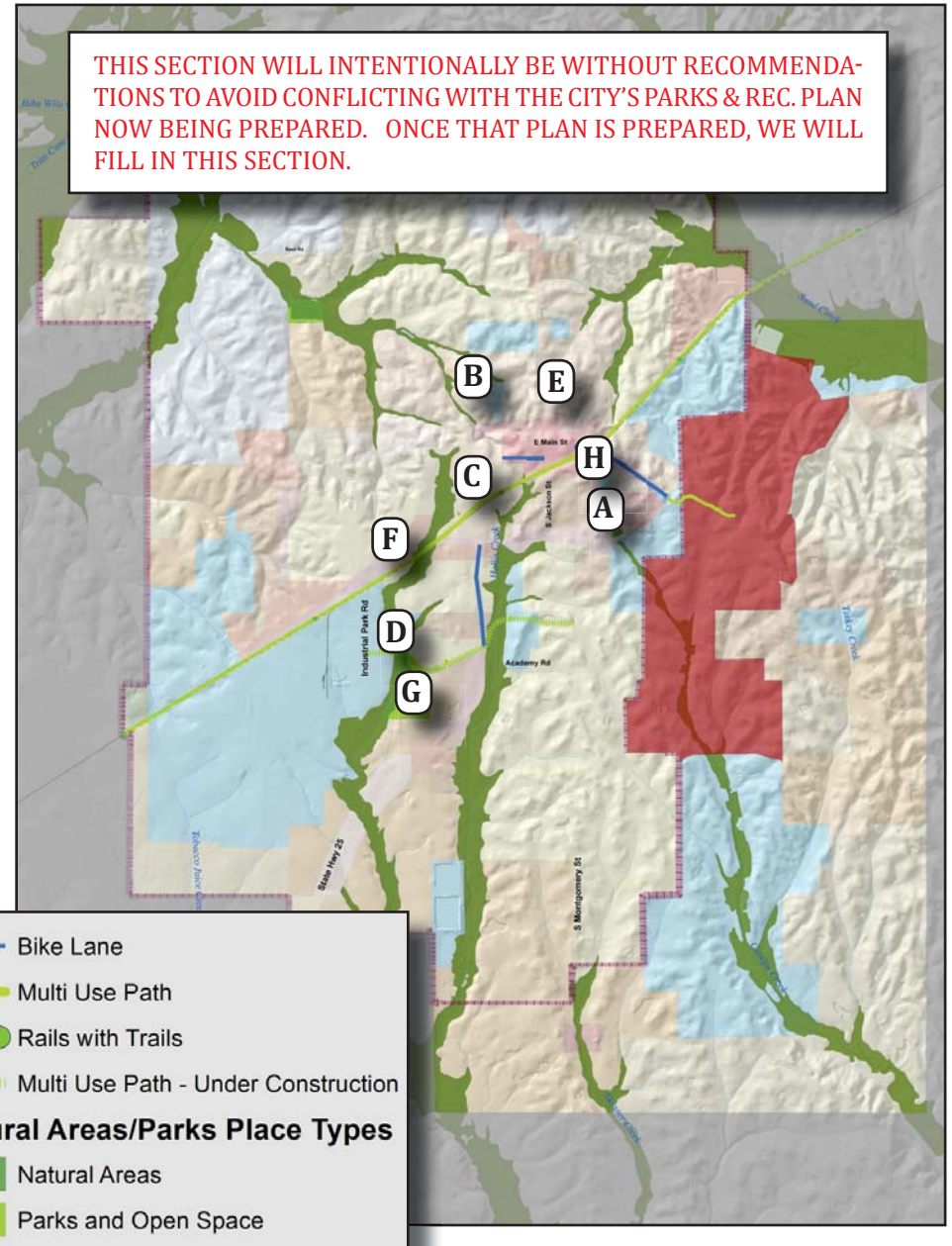
### EXISTING FACILITIES

Below is a summary of the City's existing key facilities:

**A) George Evans Park** is located at 610 East Gillespie Street. It includes basketball courts and playground equipment, and is home to the Gillespie Street Center.

**B) J.L. King Senior Memorial Park** is located at 400 North Long Street. It includes two large multi-purpose fields, two basketball courts, two tennis courts, and a public splash-pad. The J. L. King Center, pavilion, and playground are also located here.

**C) Josey Park** is located on Josey Avenue. This small park includes playground equipment and a concrete court, as well as Starkville's Community Garden.



# THE PLAN

## PUBLIC SPACE & RECREATION

### EXISTING FACILITIES (continued)

**D) McKee Park** is located on Lynn Lane. This park houses 6 youth baseball fields, 4 tennis courts, a playground, a musical trail, and 1 basketball court. Its buildings include a centralized concession stand, 2 pavilions, and a restroom facility.

**E) Moncrief Park** is located at 310 North Jackson Street. It includes playground equipment, an inline hockey court, a pavilion, a public swimming pool, and Starkville's only Dog Park.

**F) Patriots Park** is located at the corner of Whitfield Street and Avenue of Patriots. This community park has a pavilion and playground equipment.

**G) Starkville Sportsplex** is located at 405 Lynn Lane. It is a multi-purpose facility that includes 4 lighted youth softball fields, 4 lighted adult softball fields, 7 lighted soccer fields, and 3 concessions. It also houses two indoor basketball courts, two racquetball courts, a three-lane walking track, two meeting rooms, an aerobics room, a conference room, an activities room, and a banquet room.

**H) Fire Station Park** is located at the end of Russell Street between Lampkin and the unused Kansas City Southern Railway tracks. It is the location of the community market.



*Starkville's Sportsplex is a state-of-the-art facility with a wide range of recreational opportunities and programs.*











# THE PLAN

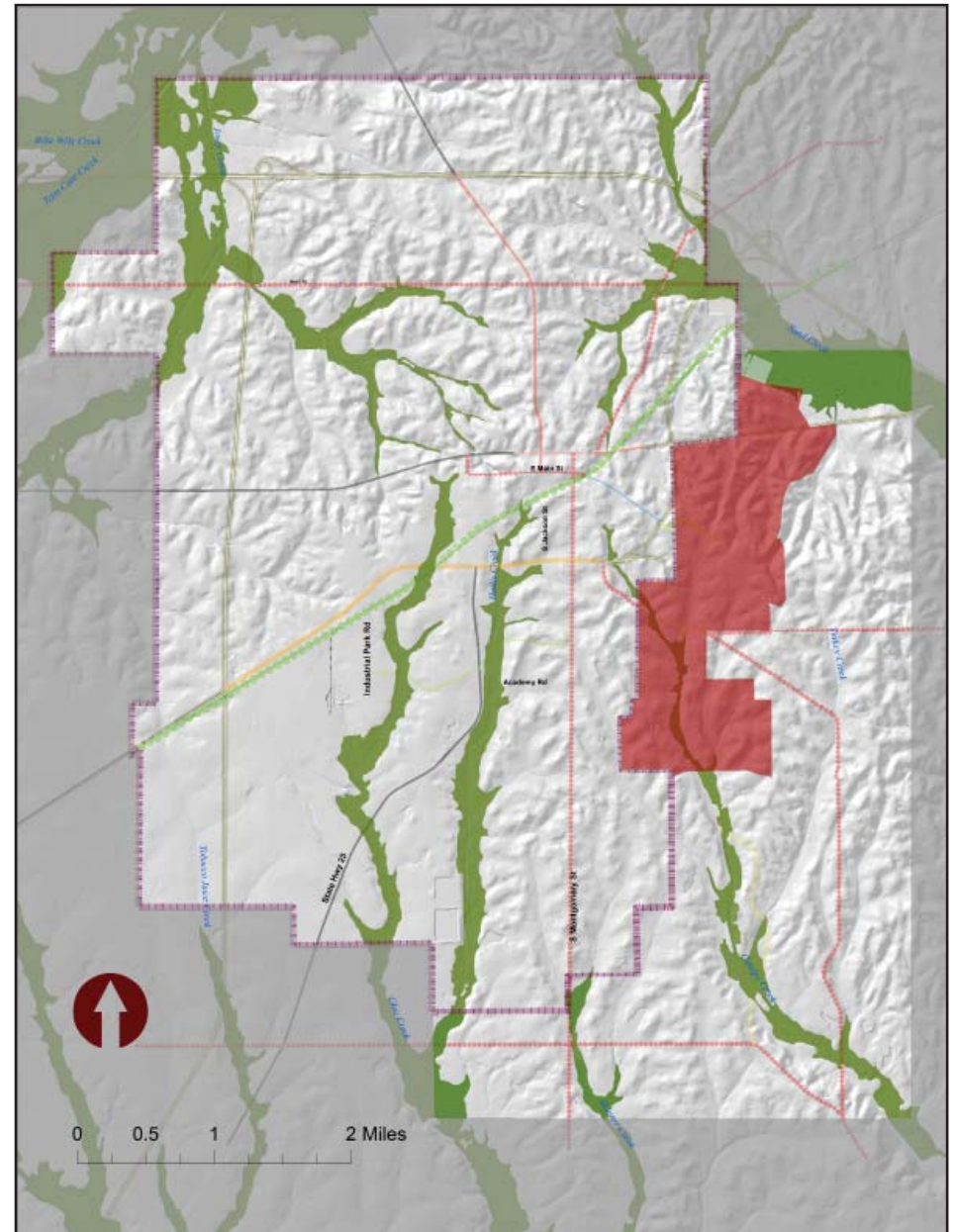
## NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

### NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

The “Existing Conditions” section of this plan’s *Background* portion addresses the following topics on [pages 6-10](#): watersheds, creeks, floodplains, wetlands, soils, topography, and tree cover. Furthermore, the “Place Types” section of this plan provides specific recommendation for natural resources on [pages 46-47](#). Rather than repeating those recommendations here in detail, below is a summary of those recommendations:

- Provide Regulatory Protections
- Provide Incentives for Natural Resource Protection
- Acquire and Protect the Most Important Lands
- Work with Land Trusts to Conserve Lands

The map at right illustrates in green the most significant environmentally-valuable natural areas, most of which follow the community’s key streams. Consequently, they are generally linear in form and include each stream’s associated floodplains. These areas serve as habitat for many important plant and animal species. A greenways master plan could be a vehicle for regulatory protections, incentives, land acquisitions, and conservation easements.



# THE PLAN

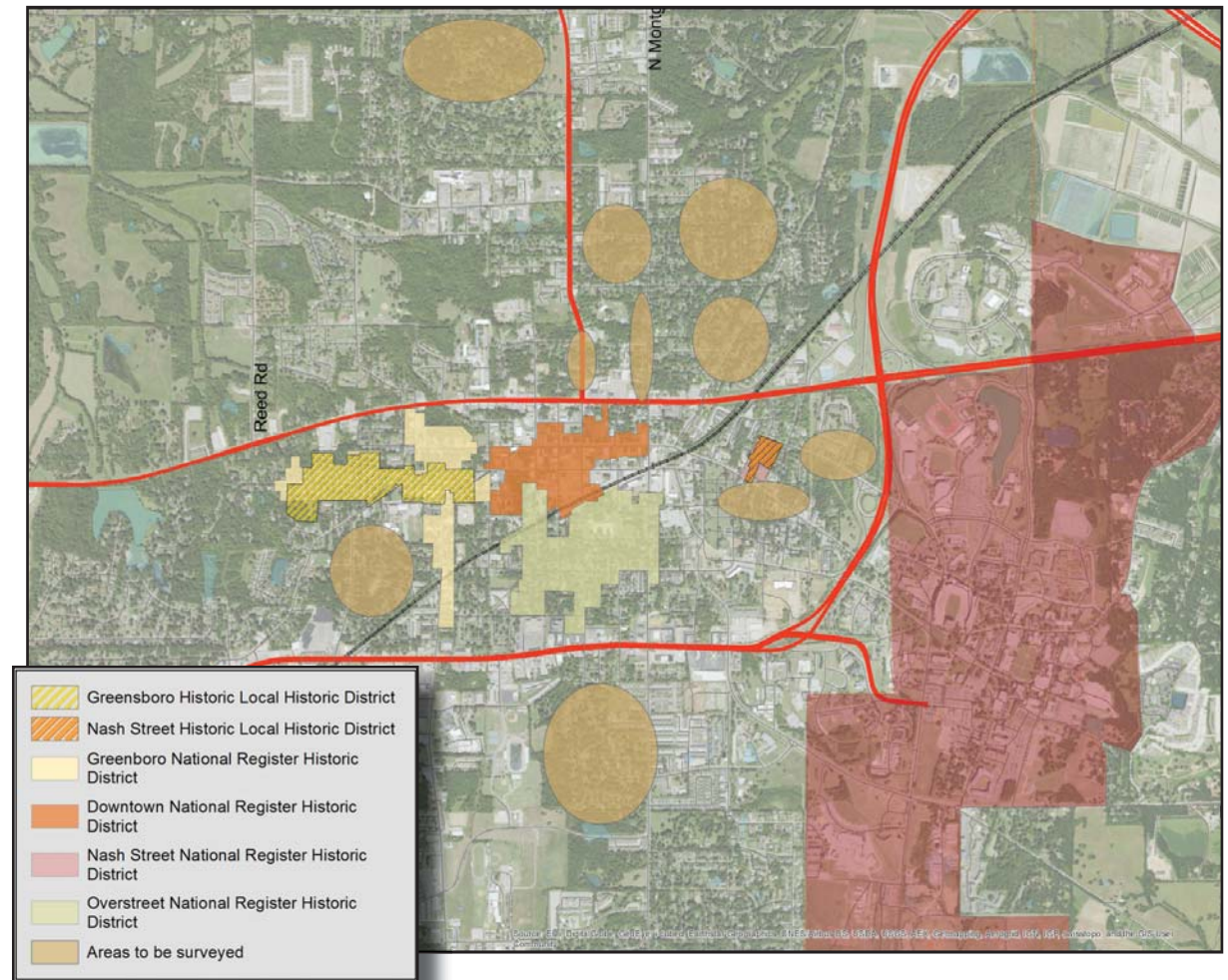
## NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

### CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

The “Existing Conditions” section of this plan’s *Background* portion addresses Starkville’s history on [pages 4-5](#), with an emphasis on the community’s physical development over time. That plan section also addresses existing historic resources on [pages 11-12](#), and it describes the city’s existing designated historic districts (both local and National Register) on [pages 31-32](#). One particularly valuable resource regarding Starkville’s historic properties is the *Historic Resource Survey Report* prepared specifically for Downtown Starkville by the Mississippi Heritage Trust in 2011. In addition to inventorying historic structures within the downtown, it provides a variety of recommendations for future preservation efforts in the community, many of which are still valid and incorporated here. Recommendations for future preservation initiatives in Starkville include the following:

**Continue with further historic resources surveys.** The 2011 historic resources inventory for downtown identified ten areas that have not yet

been surveyed, but that are worthy of consideration for future surveys. Those areas are illustrated on the map below.





# THE PLAN

## NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

### CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION (continued)

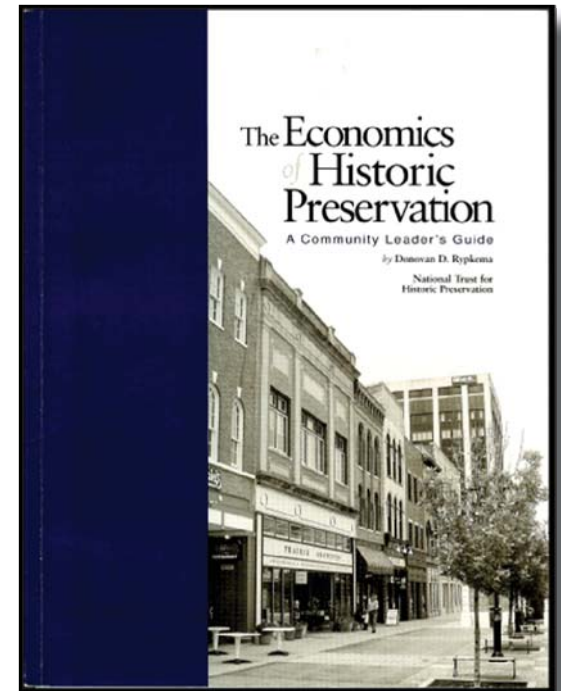
#### **Maintain and support the City's CLG status and the Main Street program.**

The State's Certified Local Governments (CLG) program is part of a national program designed to recognize and support communities with formal preservation programs, including a historic resources survey, a preservation ordinance, local historic districts, a preservation commission, and design guidelines used as part of a historic district design review process. It is critical that the City maintain that status for many reasons, including the fact that it makes the City eligible for State preservation grants. Similarly, the City's Main Street program for downtown revitalization is operated by the Greater Starkville Development Partnership. This organization has been successful in completely transforming the historic downtown

into a vibrant mixed-use district that currently has nearly 100% occupancy of all building space. As with the CLG program, the Main Street program - which has historic preservation as its primary foundation - deserves continued financial support from the City.

**Educate the community on the benefits of preservation.** There are countless merits to historic preservation, including many financial and economic benefits. Examples include the federal 20% investment tax credit for the qualified rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings. Also beneficial is the state's 25% investment tax credit for the qualified rehabilitation of both commercial and residential historic buildings. These and many more benefits of preservation warrant strong publicity.

**Pursue local designation for existing National Register districts not already locally designated.** As explained in great detail earlier in this plan, there are currently four National



*There are countless excellent resources available through groups such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation to help educate people on the value of preservation. One such resource is "The Economics of Historic Preservation."*

Register historic districts in Starkville, yet only portions of two are locally designated. National Register designation brings very little protections to such districts, while locally-designated

# THE PLAN

## NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

### CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION (continued)

districts bring substantial protections. Thus, it is recommended that the City pursue local designation for the Downtown National Register District and the Overstreet National Register District, as well as expanding local designation for the portions of the Greensboro and Nash Street National Register districts not currently part of their local districts. However, *a critical caveat to pursuing local district designation is that a significant majority of property owners within any proposed district be supportive of designation.* As just one example, past efforts to adopt local designation of the Overstreet district met sufficient resistance to preclude designation.

**Expand the City's existing design guidelines if any non-residential areas are designated in the future.**

The City's existing design standards were prepared in 2012 by the Mississippi Heritage Trust and work very well for residential districts. However, they do not address commercial buildings sufficiently, particularly the appropriate design of storefronts. If the historic downtown or some other older commercial areas are to be locally designated, a new section on commercial architecture should be added to the existing standards.

**Adopt local incentives for preservation in the form of property tax abatements.** Section 27-31-31 of the State Code allows Mississippi communities to adopt tax abatement programs for their central business districts. This option allows assessed property values to be frozen for up to seven years following the rehabilitation of a historic structure. This incentive avoids penalizing a property owner for enhancing their property. If adopted, a requirement for property owners to benefit

from the incentive should be compliance with the City's preservation design standards. This incentive would also be a good "carrot" to counter-balance the "stick" of local historic designation if applied to Downtown.



*The City's existing historic district guidelines are excellent for addressing residential buildings, but would need to be expanded to sufficiently address commercial buildings if commercial areas were designated as local districts.*



## HOUSING & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

This section provides recommendations for housing and commercial development based on the findings of the market conditions assessment summarized earlier in this plan. Input from stakeholder focus groups was also considered. Current housing needs are identified, along with existing retail opportunities, and recommendations are provided for housing and commercial development.

### HOUSING

#### Current Housing Needs

An assessment of existing housing market conditions was completed as an input to this plan. Key findings from that assessment are provided in this section on housing and are used as the basis for strategic recommendations relating to housing.

#### MSU Student Housing

MSU enrollment increased dramatically (26%) between 2006 and 2011, but

then stabilized until 2015, when the university experienced another large increase in enrollment with the addition of more than 700 freshmen. Private developers of purpose-built student housing complexes have stepped in to provide housing to the growing number of MSU students. Some of this housing is being built east of campus, outside of the City limits. For now, it appears that the student housing need is being met. However, since the State does not cap enrollment at its universities, it is difficult to predict future enrollment patterns and student housing needs at MSU. The number of multi-family permits issued by the City has slowed an average of less than 200 per year since 2008, suggesting that an increasing share of rental housing supply is being provided outside of the City limits.

*It is recommended that the City maintain a close relationship with the university's institutional research and housing departments to ensure that the City is informed of any dramatic shifts in university*

growth and enrollment patterns. Starkville can also work with the County to avoid issues seen in other communities where massive student housing projects are built in areas where they conflict with residential neighborhood qualities and add to traffic volumes.

#### Housing Affordability

As noted in this plan's housing assessment, there is a relative balance in supply and demand for housing in Starkville in terms of the overall numbers of units. However, new for-sale housing construction is skewed towards a higher-end, more expensive product. There is housing inventory available in the \$250,000+ range, but little in the \$100,000 to \$250,000 range. With a preponderance of working households having incomes of less than \$30,000 per year, the "median" household can only afford housing in the \$100,000 to \$120,000 range, translating into payments of less than \$830 per month. Thus, households in the middle of the market in Starkville will have challenges finding housing that they can

# THE PLAN

## HOUSING & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### HOUSING (continued)

afford to purchase. More of those households will, by necessity, form part of the rental market.

There is an opportunity for building housing targeted to the middle market, but such opportunities will be forced to areas with more affordable land and construction costs in the absence of public interventions. The north and west sides of Starkville, and areas east of the university, may be more appropriate for workforce housing.

### Housing Development Strategies

*There are opportunities for more mixed-use and infill residential projects near downtown that appeal to the growing numbers of empty nesters, retirees, young professionals and Millennials. Encouraging infill and densification between downtown and the Cotton District can only help to build the market for both*

places and establish a walkable corridor between the two. Smaller houses (zero lot line), patio homes, townhouses and condominium flats in mixed-use buildings could help bring somewhat more affordable for-sale housing on the market to appeal to households seeking housing for less than \$250,000. The difficulty would be in identifying and assembling parcels where affordable housing can be developed.

### Direct City Initiatives

Direct housing strategies that the City can pursue include the following:

- The City should work closely with local developers and property owners to help facilitate the assembly and write-down of land costs.
- The City should construct public parking facilities and other public amenities needed to market affordable housing developments.
- Overlay districts and other regulatory approaches defined elsewhere in this plan can help reduce regulatory burdens for projects that meet certain

standards of affordability or that meet other community objectives.

### South Montgomery Street

There are other housing-related issues that need to be addressed. One issue relates to the continued residential development sprawl along South Montgomery Street. Developing low-density residential uses along this corridor will only add to traffic congestion over time. The planned east-west connector will help, but there is still a need to establish nodes and grids with more parallel routes to distribute traffic and to congregate housing and mixed-uses at those nodes. Some of the issues with sprawl on South Montgomery Street relate to the perceived quality of former County versus City elementary schools. Regardless of consolidation, zoning is still in place for elementary schools, which results in pressures for family housing development within the former City school boundary, extending primarily south from downtown. Working out these school issues will be helpful.



# THE PLAN

## HOUSING & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### HOUSING (continued)

#### Summary of Housing Development Strategies

For more housing to occur Downtown and in other mixed-use urban areas, the City should:

- Help assemble and write-down land costs for developers.
- Provide parking and other amenities supporting housing.
- Adopt overlay districts and other regulatory tools to reduce the cost of housing.

City-wide strategies include:

- Create more mixed-use and higher density nodes at locations such as South Montgomery and Poor House Road.
- Require applications for owners renting properties to reduce impacts of students via regulations.

#### College Student Impacts

Issues such as over-parking and noise associated with college students occupying single-family homes can be addressed by requiring homeowners to file renter applications. Code inspections

and enforcement could be triggered by an application or the renewal of a license. Payments made as part of the application process could be used to fund the inspections.



*Starkville has some excellent residential neighborhoods, but the City will need to utilize regulatory tools in some locations to avoid the negative impacts of overcrowding by college students.*

# THE PLAN

## HOUSING & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Existing Retail Opportunities

This plan's market assessment notes that what Starkville lacks in household numbers, it more than compensates in education levels. Starkville's residents have very high levels of educational achievement. As a result, the city's residents generate demand for specialty goods and services that appeal to more sophisticated tastes. Specifically, better-educated residents tend to shop for healthy food, specialty goods, and higher-value products. Such buyers may also look to purchase goods from locally-based retailers over chain stores. They tend to comparison shop in more stores rather than relying on one-stop "big box" shopping. On the other hand, they are more likely to purchase goods over the Internet rather than visiting a brick-and-mortar shop for certain essential items.

#### Local & Specialty Retail

Starkville is more likely to attract specialty niche retail uses than would Columbus or other neighboring communities. Uses such as locally-owned and branded coffee shops, bakeries, full-service restaurants, fashion boutiques, sporting goods stores, bicycle shops, antique and home furnishings stores, and other specialty stores are most likely to locate Downtown, in the Cotton District and similar walkable neighborhoods than along highway strip corridors such as Hwy. 12.

There is also the opportunity to attract more tourism to Downtown Starkville if there were additional anchor attractions and lodging choices. Given that Downtown retail occupancy is close to 100%, there is a need for the development of more high-quality Downtown commercial space, particularly within the several blocks surrounding Main Street. Mixed-use development that includes both commercial and residential uses should also be encouraged, because

there are currently few opportunities for traditional "upper floor" residential living in Downtown Starkville.

#### Big Box Stores

Throughout the planning process, there has been some preference expressed by the community for selected big box stores (e.g., Target) to locate in Starkville. Some basic research has identified both opportunities for, and constraints to, such development. In general, Target tends to locate in metro areas with at least a 100,000 population or with intervening factors that increase spending patterns for a smaller population, such as resort communities that attract affluent seasonal customers.

While it is part of the Golden Triangle region with 130,000 people, the Census Bureau considers Starkville part of a "micropolitan" area (Oktibbeha County) with a population of about 50,000. The Census definition takes into consideration commuting patterns and other factors that are important to retailers. Of



# THE PLAN

## HOUSING & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

course, this population does not account for all MSU students. But even if Starkville’s entire MSU enrollment is included in its population, the micropolitan area still falls 30% short of the 100,000 benchmark for Target. But Target does not consider population alone in its site location decisions. Other factors include the Target customer profile. Below is a chart comparing the Starkville Micropolitan Area to Target Store’s customer profile requirements on several key factors:

Based on several factors, it becomes clear that Starkville does not meet some of the basic market characteristics sought by Target Stores in their location profile. Starkville has a much younger population base and median income, and far fewer households with children than the average Target serves. Most surprising is that, *even with Starkville’s relatively high education levels, it still falls short of Target’s market threshold.* If some of the MSU students are excluded from these numbers, then Starkville may come closer to meeting Target’s customer profile, but it still falls far short on population base. Ultimately, Starkville will remain at a compet-

itive disadvantage for some of these larger national chains until the Golden Triangle is considered a metropolitan area and Starkville offers good sites accessible to commuters from throughout the region.

### Commercial Development Strategies

#### Mixed-Use Nodal Development

As noted previously, walkable mixed-use projects that integrate housing and commercial uses in key nodes can help mitigate some long-term traffic issues and create much-needed urban commercial space. Ultimately, Downtown is a very successful node that would benefit from physical expansion to include more commercial space and mixed-use buildings.

New commercial space in the Downtown area should be intended to attract destination anchors, as well as specialty stores, restaurants and services. Main Street and the Greater Starkville Development Partnership should target appropriate sites for redevelopment, recruiting developers, and working with the City on parking

### Starkville’s Relation to Target Store Profiles

Market Factor	Target	Starkville
Median Age	40	25.4
Median Household Income	\$64,000	\$31,000
Households with Children	43%	23.5%
Completed College	57%	43%



# THE PLAN

## HOUSING & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

management. There is also an opportunity for the identification and recruitment of entrepreneurs to open local businesses catering to Downtown's mix of tourists, students, and destination shoppers. Commercial and mixed-use projects located between Downtown and the Cotton District could help link the two areas and establish a more walkable environment for students, residents and visitors.

There are also opportunities for development of more "local-serving" commercial and mixed-use nodes to serve surrounding neighborhoods, such as at South Montgomery and Poor House Road. However, it must also be recognized that retail development on major suburban thoroughfares will generate significantly more traffic, which is already an issue for residents.

#### Big Box Commercial

"Big Box" development will be attracted

to locations that maximize highway exposure and land area, such as at Hwy. 12 and the Hwy. 82. As the east side of Starkville (currently in the county) develops further, there is likely to be more interest in big box development near the Hwy. 82 and Hwy. 182/MLK. As noted earlier, some national chains have population and customer profile thresholds that Starkville does not yet meet. However, as population, incomes, and education levels continue to rise, Starkville will become more attractive for all types of retailers.



*As the east side of Starkville continues to grow, areas such as Hwy. 82 and Hwy. 12, as well as Hwy. 82 and Hwy. 182/MLK, may attract "big box" commercial development.*

*As population, incomes, and education levels continue to rise, Starkville will become more attractive for all types of retailers.*

#### Summary of Commercial Development Strategies

- Efforts should continue to attract anchor uses, specialty retail, restaurants and services to the Downtown.
- Recruit entrepreneurs to open local businesses.
- Target the area between Downtown and the Cotton District for infill commercial development.
- Pursue commercial development nodes on S. Montgomery.
- Big box retail opportunities exist along Hwy. 82.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

This plan section provides a summary of recommendations for Starkville's economic development and diversification based on input generated through the planning process. Some of these recommendations impact on the physical development of the city, regulatory approaches, key infrastructure investments, and other aspects of planning. Other recommendations relate more to economic development structures and marketing. Much of the input provided here was generated through a series of economic development focus groups and a visioning session held as part of the overall planning charrette process. The focus groups and visioning session were attended by nearly 30 representatives from various institutions and economic sectors, including MSU, real estate, finance, insurance, professional services, non-profits, restaurants, retail, tourism, health care, information technology and others. Individual interviews were also

### Key Objectives

Objectives generated by focus groups, interviews and a visioning session include:

- 1) *Focus on quality of life.* It was recommended that there be a focus on QoL elements as a critical objective for Starkville and any future economic development strategic planning. It was determined that a high quality of life is one of Starkville's competitive advantages for economic development. Consequently, the community should consider ways to add amenity value and improve the overall quality of life for residents.
- 2) *Energize residents, business people, faculty and other stakeholders.* To progress with the Starkville's economic development, it is imperative that the City gain buy-in and community-wide support for this comprehensive plan and associated economic development strategies. Engaging with the university and its students is an important element of any effort to "energize" the community, along with building leadership for the future.
- 3) *Use targeted incentives to leverage Starkville's strengths.* Private businesses and institutions support the use of incentives to leverage the city's competitive strengths, such as its quality of life.
- 4) *Pursue "implementable" and targeted strategies for economic development.* Specific strategies for implementation are preferred by stakeholders over broad-brush approaches. Such an objective requires a more detailed and structured economic development strategy than what can be provided within the context of this comprehensive plan.
- 5) *Address policies that hinder economic development.* Such policies are discussed elsewhere in this plan section.
- 6) *Address issues with poverty and under-development.* The scope and scale of what can be accomplished as part of this comprehensive planning process is limited, but ultimately, economic development strategic planning must address these issues.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

conducted with economic development agencies and representatives of business and industry, education and real estate.

### Economic Development Vision

An economic development vision statement was generated from these same sources using an amalgam of the key concepts, as follows:

*Having an economic development structure and policies that are focused on small business, entrepreneurship, and technology development; and on enhancing our local strengths, culture and quality of life.*

The direction that is established by this mission statement is that the structure and policies that exist for economic development need to be refined to market the city's competitive strengths and its viable opportunities. The strengths of local culture and quality of life are themes that emerged consistently throughout

this planning process. Meeting participants shared their view that the city's key opportunities lie in small business and entrepreneurial development, and in strengthening the city's MSU-driven technology sector. Ultimately, stakeholders desire local policies, incentives, structures and approaches to support these elements of the city's competitive strengths and economic development opportunities.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Several opportunities for economic development have been identified to help guide future business recruitment efforts, marketing, and infrastructure investment. Since these concepts were not generated from a full-scale target industry assessment, it is only a "snapshot" or conceptual perspective on the city's economic development opportunities based upon input from economic leaders. Much more detailed analysis would be required to recommend specific industries and opportunities for business development.

### Strengths and Challenges

Strengths and challenges were recognized as a precursor to the identification of opportunities for economic development in Starkville. Understanding the city's apparent competitive advantages, as well as its disadvantages, is helpful to identifying prospective opportunities in lieu of a full-scale target industry assessment that is beyond the scope of this plan.

### Competitive Strengths

Starkville is a college town with a highly-educated demographic. Many see this characteristic as being of paramount importance to marketing Starkville. College towns have relatively stable economies and attract growing numbers of retirees and entrepreneurs who want to return to a small town way of life. Colleges create amenity value that is critical in supporting the community's long-term sustainability. Furthermore, the City and MSU are collaborating on an increasing array of projects (events, Mill conference center, Russell Street, etc.), helping to break down barriers between the university



# THE PLAN

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

and the broader community.

Starkville has a strong sense of place. There are local businesses and entrepreneurs who operate popular establishments (City Bagel, Sherman, Little Dooley, etc.) that help to make Starkville unique and a “place to be.” Downtown is highly successful attracting various events and offering a family-friendly atmosphere while also catering to college students and football weekend crowds.

The city offers a nice country club and historic neighborhoods that are appealing to various demographics. There are also “emerging” historic neighborhoods offering houses that were rented for many years, but are now being returned to homeownership. Attractive housing and neighborhoods help Starkville sell itself to prospective entrepreneurs or businesses relocating here. While a small

### Role of Starkville in the Regional Economy

A major thrust of the focus group discussions was on defining the role of Starkville in the regional “Golden Triangle” economy. Differentiating Starkville and its economic development objectives is important because of the way that economic development marketing is currently structured. Regional efforts are currently focused primarily on the development of large-scale manufacturing and other industrial uses for which Starkville is less competitive. While Starkville residents still benefit from these regional efforts in terms of job and income base, the community needs to find its own niches and define strategies that are more attuned to Starkville’s unique competitive advantages, as follows:

1) High quality of life. Starkville has a higher quality of life than surrounding communities, and this factor should be considered one of its competitive advantages for attracting and growing certain types of businesses. Starkville should be considered the “Pace Car” for the region, taking the lead on strengthening and enhancing all aspects of quality of life: culture, restaurants, recreation, and education. Starkville should aim to be recognized for being the best at all of these factors. As a critical component of recruitment efforts, the City and County should invest more in its amenities, educational resources, and other quality of life drivers.

2) High-quality technology and infrastructure. There is a desire to see economic development for Starkville focused on setting high standards for design (architecture / form-based codes), and on integrating the most advanced technologies into the city’s infrastructure systems (e.g., Internet speed). There is a consensus that the city’s leadership should “accept who we are” with a focus on strengths in research and academics, engineering, technology, and design, rather than the bulk-scale industry that drives development for Lowndes and Clay counties.

3) Retirement and alumni. Attracting alumni back to live in Starkville should be an important aspect of Starkville’s economic development strategy since these people bring experience, resources and entrepreneurship that is otherwise lost after graduation. Quality of life is again paramount in attracting retirees who are looking for walkability and a strong sense of community.

# THE PLAN

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

city, Starkville and MSU offer a great public transportation system in SMART. The city is comparatively progressive having passed a smoking ban, bringing fiber to the home, having a tolerance for diversity and an international presence, and supporting new technologies. Those traits appeal to Millennials and entrepreneurs looking at small cities to relocate.

Compared to places in the north and west, Starkville offers relatively low wages and cost of living. There is also opportunity for expansion of the city's medical/office node and other sites for development. Overall, residents and business people agree that Starkville offers a relatively high quality of life, but enhancing this characteristic is key to its future economic development.

#### Challenges to Economic Development

While all agreed that the city has many

strengths, there was also an understanding that the city needs to overcome key challenges to pursue its economic development.

#### *Infrastructure Deficiencies*

Among the most important challenges are the city's deficiencies in the provision of certain infrastructure, such as power capacity, bandwidth, and water/sewer coverage, to meet the needs of future growth and economic development.

#### *Lack of Direction*

Another deficiency has been the lack of direction or a definition of the role and identify of Starkville in the regional economy. Regional economic development efforts have subsumed some of Starkville's unique characteristics in favor of a more broad-brush approach to attracting large-scale industrial development. Much of this development has been driven to Lowndes County, which offers the sites and infrastructure to support it. Part of the issue relates back to the funding structure for economic development,

with a question of "who is really focused on economic development specifically for Starkville?" Within the state's economic development community and among funding sources, Starkville lacks visibility. According to some stakeholders, the city has a reputation with the State government for having a lack of direction, when it comes to economic development.

#### *Low Household Incomes*

Despite the presence of a major university, there are still high poverty levels in Starkville and an income "barbell" (as described by the Mayor) with relatively few middle-income family households.



*The Cotton District is indicative of what a unique place Starkville is and why it has economic opportunities that are equally unique.*



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

#### *Public Schools*

There continues to be a perceived or real discrepancy in the local education system, despite the consolidation of City and County systems.

#### *Deficient Community Amenities*

A challenge to executive and faculty recruitment remains the lack of “things to do” - parks, recreation facilities, and other amenities that could enhance the city’s quality of life and make Starkville a highly attractive place for business.

#### *Lack of Community Engagement*

There is also a perceived lack of community engagement, whether due to apathy or because people are too busy, although substantial crowds did participate in this comprehensive planning process.

#### *Perceived Lack of “Business Friendliness”*

Perhaps most important to business

people as a challenge has been the lack of assistance for businesses as they try to navigate through the City’s development approval process or gain support for business development. Business people identified general “inconsistencies” in the development approvals process based on their own individual experiences. While they appreciate that the City needs to set higher standards if it is to maintain a higher quality of development, they believe that there is a need for better communication and shepherding through the process. In fact, some indicate that there are sporadic approval decisions left to individuals without providing written direction or advance specifications for plans or procedures, although that perspective would appear to be generally inconsistent with the realities given that the City has a formal review and approval process. With respect to business assistance, technology companies in particular could benefit from more sources of venture capital and other financing, recruitment of employees, and other business assistance.

## Opportunities for Diversification and Balance

Stakeholders, along with nominal economic assessment, helped identify several areas where the city has competitive advantages and opportunities to attract business and investment. While many of these opportunities build on MSU and the university’s research base as an asset, there is also an attempt to diversify the local economy and create more balance. Several opportunities for economic development and diversification are identified below:

### Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)

Starkville has some of the key qualities that are attractive to BPO companies, including a large college student population, a focus on technology (especially on high-speed computing), a high quality of life, university amenities, and relatively affordable housing. Part of what Starkville lacks at present is space to accommodate such companies, which need large blocks of open plan space, whether in new or historic buildings, preferably Downtown

# THE PLAN

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSIFICATION AND BALANCE (continued)

or near the university. Creating a mini-tech campus between Downtown and the Cotton District, or nearby, would provide an ideal location for this type of company. Having very high-speed internet access would also help attract such businesses.

#### Information Technology

MSU has spun off several successful IT firms and there are opportunities for more of these companies to locate in Starkville, especially among alumni. However, the city's shortcomings include the lack of entertainment and recreation amenities to help these businesses recruit young employees who would otherwise prefer to locate in a larger city. The city would also benefit from having very high-speed internet access in support of such business operations.

#### Professional Engineering Services

MSU is a hub for engineering research and computing activity that could gener-

ate more opportunities for federal contractors and others working on projects throughout the region.

#### Agro-Sciences

Starkville has strong prospects for product development and testing related to Agro-Sciences. MSU generates the fifth largest expenditures in the nation on agricultural sciences research. The university is no doubt working with large agriculture and chemical companies, as well as entrepreneurs and MSU spin-off companies, to commercialize some of this research. The City should be working with MSU on opportunities to establish a supportive environment for recruiting and retaining the offices of some of these companies in Starkville.

#### Specialty Retail, Restaurants &

Entertainment Not only is there a need for more amenities in Starkville to help attract business, but there may also be a prospective market to support certain retail and entertainment uses. The current constraint is in the amount of available space in Downtown or the Cotton District

to house such uses.

#### Retirement & Medical Services

Starkville has many of the qualities necessary for attracting retirees, especially MSU alumni. There may be a need for real estate, professional services, medical, education, cultural, and entertainment services geared to this growing niche market. There is likely to be growing demand for medical services in Starkville, especially as the population ages and more retirement-age people relocate to the area.

#### Light "Clean" Industry

Starkville has the opportunity to attract some light industrial uses, such as product assembly (i.e., supplying the automotive, aerospace, or other regional industries), testing and engineering services, agro/environmental services, and similar industries. The economic potential for these and other industries to locate in Starkville has not been tested, but the city offers certain characteristics that support the future development of these industries.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSIFICATION AND BALANCE (continued)

#### Key Strategies

As noted earlier, this comprehensive plan provides guidance and input on the city's economic development, but further analysis would be required to identify the city's best targets and how to achieve them. Overall, however, several key recommendations are made for enhancing and strengthening Starkville's economic and business development based, in part, on the input from stakeholders and basic economic research described previously.

#### **1. Strengthen the Local Economic Development Marketing Structure.**

Most business and institutional stakeholders agree that the regional economic development marketing entity (Golden Triangle Development LINK) does a fine job of marketing the three-county region for large-scale industrial development projects and is successful in attracting large employers to the region. However, there is also agreement that the LINK cannot focus on the opportunities specific to Starkville, which are somewhat unique in this region. Rather than create yet another development entity, it is recommended that consideration be given to funding at least one dedicated staff person at the Greater Starkville Development Partnership (GSDP) to focus solely on the city's economic development marketing and business recruitment. Among the tasks they would undertake would be assisting and representing businesses as a liaison to local government for development approvals, permitting, and other areas where businesses need assistance.

#### **2. Create an Economic Development Strategic Plan.**

While there are regional target industry strategies and local efforts aimed at Main Street and tourism, there is a need to assess the city's opportunities for business development, identify key targets, and develop an implementation plan for local economic development.

#### **3. Package Programs and Incentives to Promote and Recruit Tech Business.**

Technology businesses are likely to be a prime target for Starkville's economic development, but the city has several deficiencies to overcome. High-speed internet service is a priority for attracting such businesses. Assistance in employee recruitment and retention is also important, with a particular focus on strengthening the city's amenity value. Where the City could play a substantive role is in developing stronger recreational and cultural amenities, and working with developers to create space for more Downtown entertainment, retail and restaurant activity. The City and GSDP could work closely with the university to develop joint programming that assists in moving tech companies into Downtown space as they grow or expand, and in recruiting alumni-run and other tech businesses to the city.

# THE PLAN

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSIFICATION AND BALANCE (continued)

#### Key Strategies (continued)



*Although Downtown Starkville is very successful and lacks any significant vacant space, it needs to physically expand for the community to realize its full economic potential.*

#### **4. Facilitate Downtown Development & Business Recruitment.**

As an outgrowth of (or in conjunction with) a Downtown Master Planning process, the City should work with Downtown area property owners and developers to assemble property and leverage development of commercial and mixed-use space for additional retail, office, restaurant, housing, cultural, entertainment and tourism uses. Just because Downtown space is fully occupied does not mean that the market is satisfied. Starkville's potential lies, in part, on building on its competitive strengths relating to its sense of place and amenity value. Growing Downtown is necessary to help increase the amenity mix, partly as a device for recruiting businesses, but also for enhancing residents' quality of life.

#### **5. Create an Entrepreneurial Development & Small Business Support Program.**

GSDP should work on packaging assistance, services, and incentives to assist local entrepreneurs and small businesses. It has become clear from discussions with stakeholders that one of Starkville's competitive strengths is its unique local businesses and opportunities to grow its entrepreneurial culture. The small businesses are ones that create a sense of place and serve as an amenity for helping to attract larger employers. LINK does not focus on small business development and the university is focused on its own spin-off businesses, so there is a need to leverage growth and support for the other entrepreneurs and small businesses.

#### **6. Diversify the Mix of Business Environments.**

While Starkville is not likely to compete for the large "drop-in" mega projects, there are opportunities to create mixed-use and business park locations that are appealing to a broadening mix of light industry, technology, service, and research companies more prone to locate in the city. Ensuring that Starkville has a business park or mixed-use environment that provides differentiated services and appeal from the large industrial parks in the region will be important. Such business park or mixed-use environments would not be meant to compete with the MSU research park, but rather, support and collaborate with it in terms of the mix of businesses that could be attracted.

# THE PLAN

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSIFICATION AND BALANCE (continued)

#### Key Strategies (continued)



*East Mississippi Community College plays an important role in workforce training, but a broader collaboration with other entities, such as MSU and the local school system, could leverage even greater benefits.*

#### **7. Increase the Focus on Technology Workforce Development.**

While East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) provides a much-needed service for the region in terms of workforce development, there is a need to strengthen collaborations that focus on programs to assist Starkville's business needs while engaging more Starkville residents in the workforce. Providing collaborations that bring more Starkville residents into the technology workforce could help reduce the city's poverty levels. Programs that focus on computer programming and related skills for young students in local schools, for example, could engage EMCC, MSU and the City/County schools in an effective collaboration that might also enhance school performance.



# THE PLAN

## KEY REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This plan has identified multiple areas in Starkville that should be targeted for redevelopment, such as the Hwy. 12 corridor and the periphery of Downtown. Another key opportunity is the Hwy. 182 / MLK corridor. Not only is it an important gateway for the east side of town, but its redevelopment could function as an extension of the north side of Downtown. The graphic at right illustrates the area's potential redevelopment within its broader context, while the graphic below shows more detail.



### Hwy. 182 / MLK REDESIGN

Building footprints in gray represent existing buildings, while brown buildings represent new infill. This scheme does not attempt to create an entirely urban place, as shallow front parking areas fronting portions of 182/MLK are an attempt to work with the existing development pattern.





# THE PLAN

## KEY REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### HWY. 182 / MLK REDESIGN (continued)

The “Existing” and “Proposed” graphics at right illustrate the potential transformation that could occur at 182/MLK immediately north of Downtown. Some of the key changes include the following:

- Convert it from an entirely paved street to one driving lane in each direction and a landscaped median with breaks at intersections.
- Create wider and higher quality sidewalks.
- Redevelop existing suburban-type development into more urban development in which the buildings are closer to the street.

It is noteworthy that burying overhead utilities was considered for these graphics, but the cost may ultimately be prohibitive. See below for a sample cross-section similar to that proposed for this important gateway corridor.



# THE PLAN

## KEY REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### HWY. 12 REDESIGN

The Greater Starkville Development Partnership (GSDP) has established a Highway 12 Task Force seeking to create a Business Improvement District (BID) to transform this strip commercial corridor into a more functional and attractive place. A BID is a special taxing district in which property owners in the jurisdiction tax themselves and manage the funds for improvements to that area. Funds are managed by a district management group within a non-profit corporation, which could potentially be the GSDP. State statutes allow for such BIDs, but only one other city in the state (Jackson) has taken advantage of this tool. Downtown Starkville has a special taxing district, though not formally a BID, that generates money for landscaping maintenance, Christmas decorations, and similar activities.

A recent meeting of property owners and other stakeholders on this project resulted in what appeared to be a lack of sufficient support by those in attendance, but it is recommended that the GSDP continue to work with land owners to build sufficient support for this project.

### GSDP Visual Simulations for Hwy. 12 Redevelopment



*These simulations created for the GSDP by the Mississippi Main Street Association illustrate potential improvements that could be funded by a BID, including landscaping, sidewalks, lighting, maintenance, public art, and road improvements.*



### Mississippi Code Title 21 – Chapter 43 – Business Improvement Districts

Key provisions of this code, adopted by the State in 2012, include:

- A petition must be signed by 20% of area property owners to start the process.
- A district plan must be prepared for the upcoming 10 year period.
- The district plan must be agreed upon by the majority of the property owners.
- Public hearings and a referendum of affected property owners is required.
- At least 60% of voting property owners must approve the BID's creation.
- The City must approve an ordinance following the affirmative vote of owners.



## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### OVERVIEW

A good plan implementation strategy helps the community move from vision to reality. The intent of this plan section is to be implemented through the actions of the City, including elected and appointed bodies (boards and commissions) and staff. These actions may include ordinance amendments, budget approvals, capital improvements programs, and similar activities and products. Capital projects should be included in the City’s capital improvements program and budgeted accordingly. As the chart at right illustrates, the three key categories of implementation actions include policies, projects and administration. Examples of each category are also included. Regardless of the specific responsibilities of the City government, it will take the entire Starkville community - public sector, private sector and non-profits - working together to achieve the full vision expressed in this plan.

### Implementation

#### Matrix

The Implementation Matrix on the following pages lists specific actions, strategies and concepts expressed throughout the plan. It provides a summary of the concepts, indicates who will be responsible, and when they should be completed.

Policies	Projects	Administration
<b>Development Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning</li> <li>• Preservation</li> <li>• Environmental</li> <li>• Work Force Housing</li> <li>• Design Character</li> </ul> <b>Annexation Policy (East)</b>	<b>Mobility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern Connector</li> <li>• Greenways</li> <li>• Bike/Ped Expansion</li> </ul> <b>Capital Projects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park acquisition/expansion</li> <li>• Public Safety Facilities</li> <li>• Maintenance of existing infrastructure</li> </ul>	<b>Collaboration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University Collaboration</li> <li>• County Collaboration</li> </ul> <b>Other</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Implementation Monitoring</li> <li>• Predictable development process</li> </ul>

#### Time-Frames

When considering the time-frame, it is important to understand that some actions build on others and cannot occur simultaneously if they are to be effective. Therefore, actions listed as “mid-term” are not necessarily less important, but they often just require other actions to occur first to be effective.

#### Responsible Party

The “responsible party” column in the matrix identifies individuals, groups, or organizations that should implement the

subject action. It should not be viewed as exclusive or comprehensive in that others who have not been listed may have an interest, skill, or responsibility for assisting with the action. It should also not be interpreted to be mandatory. This part of the plan must remain very fluid to be as responsive and nimble as needed to take advantage of opportunities and partnerships as they present themselves over the coming years.

# THE PLAN

## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The matrix below, and continued on the following two pages, summarizes this comprehensive plan's key recommendations. It also provides a page reference for more detail on each listed recommendation, responsible parties, and a suggested time frame.

No.	Recommendation	Pg. #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
<b>A General Growth &amp; Development Policies</b>				
A-1	Expand the city boundaries east of MSU's campus without annexing MSU.	44	City	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
A-2	Adopt a new land policy based upon "place types" that will be translated into the City's Codes.	45-73	City	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
<b>B Natural &amp; Cultural Resources</b>				
B-1	Provide regulatory protections to preserve wetlands, floodplains, trees and other resources.	46-47, 95	City	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
B-2	Provide incentives for natural resource protection, such as shifting densities away from resources.	46-47, 95	City	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
B-3	Acquire and protect the most important lands from willing sellers.	46-47, 95	City and willing sellers	Mid Term (Yrs. 4-6)
B-4	Work with land trusts to preserve land, such as the Mississippi Land Trust.	46-47, 95	City, land trusts, willing owners	On-Going
B-5	Continue with further historic resources surveys so additional historic districts might be considered.	11-12, 96	City, MS Dept. of Archives & History	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
B-6	Maintain and support the City's Certified Local Government (CLG) status and Main Street program.	97	City, GSDP, MS Dept. of Ach. & Hist.	On-Going
B-7	Educate the public on the many benefits of historic preservation, including economic merits.	97	City, GSDP, MS Herit. Trust, MDAH	On-Going
B-8	Pursue local designation of existing National Register Historic Districts where sufficient support exists.	97-98	City, MS Dept. of Arch. & Hist.	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
B-9	Expand the City's existing design guidelines if any non-residential areas are designated as local districts.	98	City	As Needed
B-10	Adopt local incentives for preservation in the form of property tax abatements.	98	City, GSDP	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
<b>C Transportation &amp; Mobility</b>				
C-1	Adopt this plan's street typologies so that existing and future streets are context sensitive.	76-83	City	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
C-2	Adopt a "complete streets" policy and design standards to transform streets being repaved, built, etc.	75-76	City & MDOT	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
C-3	As part of the complete streets policy, look for opportunities to integrate bike lanes to expand the system.	84	City & MDOT	On-Going
C-4	Expand Starkville's greenway system via stream corridors and a "rails with trails" project.	85	City & Kansas City Southern RR	Mid Term (Yrs. 4-6)

# THE PLAN

## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (continued)

No.	Recommendation	Pg. #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
<b>C Transportation &amp; Mobility (continued)</b>				
C-5	Expand Starkville's sidewalk system as part of street improvements and targeted projects to fill gaps.	86	City	On-Going
C-6	Seek additional funding and adjust current routes to maximize the effectiveness of SMART (transit)	87	Starkville-MSU Area Rapid Transit	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
C-7	Follow through with the planned South Connector Road to provide better E-W connectivity in the south.	75	City	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
<b>D Utilities &amp; Storm Water Infrastructure</b>				
D-1	Continue improvements to the sanitary sewer system and adopt a comprehensive rehabilitation program.	88-89	City	On-Going
D-2	Continue improvements to the public water system and adopt a comprehensive rehabilitation program.	89	City	On-Going
D-3	Continue drainage system improvements and prepare a comprehensive drainage improvement plan.	90	City	On-Going
<b>E Public Space &amp; Recreation - to be completed based on the City's current Parks &amp; Recreation Plan</b>				
E-1		91-94		
E-2		91-94		
E-3		91-94		
<b>F Housing &amp; Commercial Development</b>				
F-1	Develop new housing Downtown and in other urban areas via incentives (land assembly, parking, etc.).	99-100	City, GSDP and developers	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
F-2	Create mixed-use nodes along S. Montgomery St. for higher density and affordable housing.	100	City and developers	Mid Term (Yrs. 4-6)
F-3	Establish a regulatory system for rental housing to minimize impacts of off-campus student housing.	101	City	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
F-4	Continue efforts to attract anchor uses, specialty retail, restaurants and services to the Downtown.	102	GSDP / Main Street program	On-Going
F-5	Physically expand the Downtown for more uses and target the University Dr. corridor for infill buildings.	102-104	City & GSDP / Main Street program	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
F-6	Target lands near the intersection of Hwy. 182/MLK-Hwy. 82 and Hwy. 12 - Hwy. 82 for big box retail.	102-104	City & GSDP	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)



# THE PLAN

## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (continued)

No.	Recommendation	Pg. #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
<b>G Economic Development &amp; Diversification</b>				
G-1	Pursue an economic development strategy distinct from the region to leverage the city's unique assets.	105-110	City, GSDP, MSU & LINK	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
G-2	Strengthen the local economic development marketing structure via the GSDP (to address G-1 above). □	111	GSDP	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
G-3	Create an economic development strategic plan to identify business development opportunities.	111	City & GSDP	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
G-4	Package programs and incentives to promote and recruit technological businesses.	111	City, GSDP & MSU	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
G-5	Facilitate Downtown development and business recruitment to help grow the Downtown as an amenity.	112	City & GSDP/Main Street program	On-Going
G-6	Create an entrepreneurial development and small business support program.	112	GSDP	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
G-7	Diversify the mix of business environments to include business parks and mixed use areas.	112	GSDP & City	Mid Term (Yrs. 4-6)
G-8	Increase the focus on technology workforce development to expand the efforts East Miss. Com. College	113	EMCC, MSU & local school district	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
<b>H Key Redevelopment Opportunities</b>				
H-1	Redevelop the Hwy. 182/MLK corridor both as a complete street and for adjacent private development	114-115	City & property owners	Near Term (Yrs. 1-3)
H-2	Redevelop the Hwy. 12 corridor both as a complete street and for adjacent private development	116	City & property owners	Mid Term (Yrs. 4-6)

# APPENDICES



# **APPENDICES SECTIONS**

- A. Utilities Existing Conditions**
- B. Economic & Market Assessment**
- C. Stakeholder Meeting Questions & Answers**



## APPENDIX A: UTILITIES EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of Starkville, covering an area of approximately 26 square miles, is located in Oktibbeha County, MS, and is home to around 24,500 residents. City residents are supplied water, sanitary sewer, and power by Starkville Utilities Department. Additional utilities, such as cable, internet, and natural gas are supplied by such companies as MaxxSouth (cable, internet), Cspire (cable, telephone & internet), AT&T (telephone & internet), and Atmos Energy (natural gas).

### **Water**

The City's primary water treatment facility is located at 402 D.L. Conner Drive, Starkville, MS. The City also operates two additional treatment facilities; one located at the intersection of Montgomery Street and Academy Road, and the other located on Bluefield Road. This combined system, which is currently operating at approximately 65% capacity, is capable of producing 7,600 GPM (2.736 MGD) of potable water which is distributed to City residents through a network of subsurface distribution mains and services. The City currently maintains approximately 240 miles of water distribution mains which are comprised of roughly 60% ductile iron pipe and 40% PVC Pipe. The City also operates seven (7) wells and two (2) booster stations. The average age of the existing system is around 50 years. In addition, the City recently purchased Bluefield Water Association and is now operating and maintaining their distribution network. The most prevalent issue with the existing water distribution system, according to the City, is the excessive number of water main leaks and associated repairs.

### **Sewer**

The City's sewage treatment facility is located at 306 Sand Road, Starkville, MS. This system, which is currently operating at approximately 60% capacity, is capable of treating 10 MGD of raw sewage. Sanitary sewer from local residences and businesses is collected via gravity collection mains and transmitted to the City's sewage treatment facility. The City currently maintains approximately 175 miles of collection mains which are comprised of roughly 40% Reinforced Concrete Cylinder Pipe (RCCP), 40% PVC Pipe, and 20% Vitrified Clay (VC) Pipe. The City also operates eighteen (18) sewage pump stations. The average age of the collection system is around 40 years. The most prevalent issue with the existing sewage collection system, according to the City, are numerous pipe segments with one or more PACP Grade 5 defects; meaning the pipe segment has failed or will likely fail within the next five (5) years. The City is currently in the process of correcting these deficiencies.

### **Electricity**

Electricity distributed by Starkville Utility Department is provided by the Tennessee Valley Authority Bulk Power Supply. Peak demand for the City is approximately 100 MW of power. TVA's transmission lines, which supply power to the City, run in a NE/SW line just west of the City Limits. Starkville Utility Department currently maintains approximately 132 miles of 13 kV overhead distribution lines, 46 miles of underground 13 kV distribution lines, and 10 miles of 69 kV overhead transmission lines. The average age of the distribution system is around 20 years. There are no issues regarding additional power capacity from TVA.

**Drainage**

Regarding drainage, the City can be divided into eight (8) separate drainage basins. These basins are as follows: Josey Creek Drainage Basin, Tobacco Creek Drainage Basin, Glen Creek Drainage Basin, Hollis Creek Drainage Basin, Skinner Creek Drainage Basin, Catalpa Creek Drainage Basin, Sand Creek Drainage Basin, and Town Creek Drainage Basin. Runoff within these basin is collected via surface and subsurface drainage facilities and is transmitted to its respective discharge stream.

The City is plagued by inadequate or poorly designed stormwater collection and conveyance systems in residential neighborhoods that were built in the past. These stormwater issues existed when the City accepted/annexed the neighborhoods or resulted from poor or very little oversight by the City during design and construction processes to ensure the facilities could properly convey design flows. Additionally, storm water collection systems in older parts of town, particularly downtown, are deteriorating and need to be addressed with rehabilitation projects. In response, the City has had to utilize Capital Improvement funds to improve, replace, or repair substandard/deteriorated facilities in many of these areas, some of which are less than 20 years old.

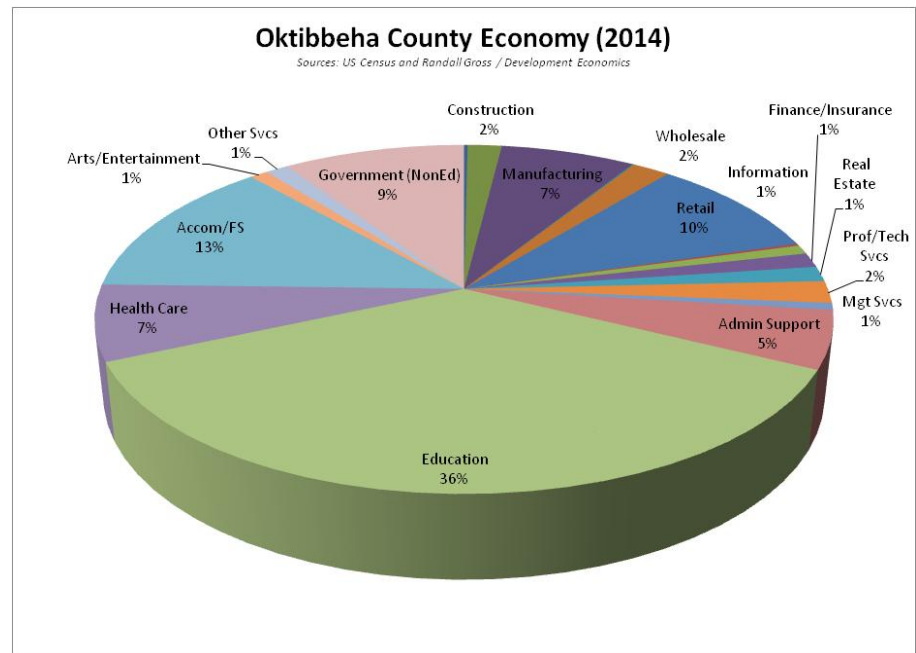
Another common drainage-related issue is erosion of drainage conveyance channels in and around the City of Starkville. This is due primarily to the erosive nature of native soils in the area. The City annually implements one or two erosion control/stabilization projects along existing drainage conveyance channels to repair damage caused by erosion and to mitigate future erosive effects.

## APPENDIX B: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND MARKET CONDITIONS

This section describes the general socio-economic and real estate market conditions in Starkville. Economic trends impacting on the community are summarized and existing conditions in the housing, retail/commercial, office and industrial markets are described. Input is also provided on key opportunities for development within the existing market context. Finally, several assumptions relating to the future growth of Starkville are provided as context for planning purposes.

### Economic Overview

Starkville, the County Seat of Oktibbeha County, is a vibrant college town situated within the region's "Golden Triangle," comprised of Starkville, Columbus, and West Point. The city is home to Mississippi State University (MSU), which is the largest university in the state and Starkville's largest employer. With over one-third of Oktibbeha County's 21,500 jobs concentrated in the education sector, MSU and its 2,100 employees play an undeniably important role in driving the local economy. Many other sectors, such as accommodation and foodservice, benefit from university spin-off. At the same time, it could be said that Starkville and Oktibbeha County are somewhat dependent on MSU and there is a need for diversification to help shelter the community from dramatic shifts in university employment.





Aside from education, Starkville and Oktibbeha County's economic base includes employment mainly in accommodation and foodservice (13%), retail (10%), government (9%), manufacturing (7%), health care (7%), and administrative services (5%). The remaining 12 major economic sectors combined only account for about 13% of Oktibbeha County's employment base.

**Employment Trends**

As detailed below, Oktibbeha County has seen generally moderate economic growth, as measured by employment trends over a ten-year period. The county gained about 1,200 jobs between 2004 and 2014, yielding an annual growth rate of slightly less than 1.0%.

The fastest growth has been in real estate (43%), health care (39%), wholesale trade (36%), accommodation & foodservice (30%), and arts & entertainment (which experienced a 100% increase but started from a very small base). The largest number of jobs was added in accommodation and foodservice (640), followed by health care (420) and retail trade (250).

<b>Table 1. AT-PLACE EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, OKTIBBEHA COUNTY, 2004-2014</b>					
<b>Industry</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>2004-2014 Change</b>	
				<b>Percent</b>	<b>Per Year</b>
Agriculture	50	40	(10)	-20.0%	-2.9%
Mining	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	420	380	(40)	-9.5%	-1.4%
Manufacturing	1,600	1,500	(100)	-6.3%	-0.9%
Utilities 1/	20	20	-	0.0%	0.0%
Wholesale	310	420	110	35.5%	5.1%
Retail	1,800	2,050	250	13.9%	2.0%
Transport/Whse	70	40	(30)	-42.9%	-6.1%
Information	160	180	20	12.5%	1.8%
Finance/Insurance	230	290	60	26.1%	3.7%
Real Estate	210	300	90	42.9%	6.1%
Prof/Tech Services	370	440	70	18.9%	2.7%
Mgt Services	190	140	(50)	-26.3%	-3.8%
Admin Support	1,100	1,150	50	4.5%	0.6%
Education	8,060	7,770	(290)	-3.6%	-0.5%
Health Care	1,090	1,510	420	38.5%	5.5%
Accommodation/FS	2,170	2,810	640	29.5%	4.2%
Arts/Entertainment	100	200	100	100.0%	14.3%
Other Services	270	250	(20)	-7.4%	-1.1%
Government (NonEd)	2,080	2,030	(50)	-2.4%	-0.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,300</b>	<b>21,520</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Sources	Mississippi Department of Employment Security and Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

Manufacturing, construction, transportation, management, and education experienced slower growth and even some decrease in employment. The education sector had 340 less positions in 2014 than it did in 2004, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Some of those losses may have resulted from cutbacks at local school systems.

**City of Starkville.**

Available employment data for the city of Starkville reflect a similarly moderate growth rate of 0.8% per year.

Census data does not exist for all industries consistently across the five-year intervals of the U.S. Economic Census (conducted in 2002, 2007 and 2012 most recently) for municipalities. Still, a clear picture emerges of growth in certain sectors,

<b>Table 2. AT-PLACE EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, STARKVILLE, 2002-2012</b>					
<b>Industry</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2002-2012 Change</b>		
			<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Per Year</b>
Utilities	N/A	60	N/A	N/A	N/A
Manufacturing	1,742	1,200	(542)	-31.1%	-3.1%
<b>Wholesale</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>246.2%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>
Retail	1,846	1,711	(135)	-7.3%	-0.7%
Transport	N/A	60	N/A	N/A	N/A
Information	125	181	57	45.4%	4.5%
Finance	N/A	363	N/A	N/A	N/A
Real Estate	138	156	18	13.0%	1.3%
Prof/Technical	358	381	23	6.4%	0.6%
Management	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Administration	846	819	(27)	-3.2%	-0.3%
Education (in city)	60	25	(35)	-58.0%	-5.8%
<b>Health</b>	<b>1,293</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>28.1%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
Arts/Entertainment	175	60	(115)	-65.9%	-6.6%
<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>1,753</b>	<b>2,283</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>30.2%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
Other Services	375	125	(250)	-66.8%	-6.7%
<b>TOTAL (Selected)</b>	<b>8,834</b>	<b>9,509</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Notes:	Employment for several industries estimated based on Census ranges. (Italicized) N/A means Not Applicable or Available. Total only includes industries for which there is data. Education is private education services within the city.				
Souces:	U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

including accommodation & foodservice, health care, and wholesale trade. The city has seen declining employment in manufacturing, retail trade, arts/entertainment/recreation, and selected other services. Aside from arts & recreation employment, these trends fairly mirror those in the county as a whole.

The number of businesses in Starkville continues to expand, with an increase of about 55 (11%) since 2002 (based on information from those businesses that completed surveys conducted by the Census Bureau). Overall, growth in the number of businesses has exceeded the growth in employees, suggesting a trend towards smaller, more entrepreneurial businesses. The financial crisis of 2008 and recession of 2009-10 may have contributed to this trend.

**Economic Development Marketing & Workforce Development**

The Greater Starkville Development Partnership (GSDP) provides marketing services in support of the three organizations that comprise the partnership: Starkville Convention and Visitors Bureau & Main Street Association (focused on Downtown and tourism), Starkville Area Chamber of Commerce (focused on local business networking and promotion), and the Oktibbeha county Economic Development Authority (providing funding for infrastructure to leverage economic development in the county). MSU also conducts its own economic development efforts, focused primarily on generating commercialization from research and business spin-off to its Thad Cochran research park.

<b>Table 3. BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT TRENDS, STARKVILLE, 2002-2012</b>					
<b>Industry</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2002-2012 Change</b>		
			<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Per Year</b>
Manufacturing	22	19	(3)	-13.6%	-1.4%
Wholesale	11	12	1	9.1%	0.9%
Retail	142	138	(4)	-2.8%	-0.3%
Information	14	17	3	21.4%	2.1%
Real Estate	43	51	8	18.6%	1.9%
Prof/Tech	54	62	8	14.8%	1.5%
Admin	21	26	5	23.8%	2.4%
Education	5	4	(1)	-20.0%	-2.0%
Health	55	81	26	47.3%	4.7%
Arts/Recreation	5	7	2	40.0%	4.0%
Accommodation	73	90	17	23.3%	2.3%
Other Services	56	49	(7)	-12.5%	-1.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
Notes:	Establishments shown only for those industries with Consistent data. Education only includes private schools in Starkville.				
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.				



However, Starkville and Oktibbeha County also form part of a broader region nicknamed the Golden Triangle for the purposes of economic development. That region also includes Lowndes County (Columbus) and Clay County (West Point). The task of marketing the area and recruiting business is largely the responsibility of the Golden Triangle Development LINK.

The LINK and its sister agencies have been successful in bringing large-scale manufacturing, including job-rich automotive and aerospace industries to the region. Among the top employers are Airbus Helicopters, Yokohama, Weyerhaeuser, Beyer Electric, and others. The LINK represents the region to State agencies for funding and to identify sites. Much of the large-scale industry has concentrated in Lowndes County, where infrastructure supports development. Even so, many of the workers originate in Starkville and Oktibbeha County. One aerospace company identifies about 25% of its workforce as originating in Oktibbeha County, with 28-30% from Lowndes, 17-18% from Clay, and the rest from surrounding counties in the region.

Attempts have been made to increase the supply of industrial sites in Oktibbeha County (see Industrial section), but to date these efforts have run up against various site development and infrastructure capacity constraints. Regardless, none of these agencies is tasked specifically with representing Starkville's assets for targeted businesses or small business development.

The East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) has also proven to be very successful in training a workforce to meet the needs of industry. In particular, the college has focused on retraining workers for new technologies to fill a skills gap in the region. Much of this "upgrading" of workforce skills has been pro-active, to anticipate the requirements of industry using new technologies. About 30 to 40% of EMCC funding is generated by private industry, indicative of the role of industry in defining the training program. The college's focus is on manufacturing skills but also health care, which is seen as a "high-value" target.

### **Demographics: Future Growth Assumptions**

Oktibbeha County has a population of nearly 50,000. Based on data supplied by Nielsen, the county is expected to add about 1,600 (320 per year) to its resident population by 2020, yielding a growth rate of 0.6% per year. Meanwhile, the city of Starkville has a population of 24,300 and accounts for about one-half of the population of the county as a whole. Starkville is expected to grow by about 890 people

(180 per year), for a rate of 0.7% per year, slightly faster than the county as a whole.

The household base is also expected to increase over the next five years. The county, with a household base of about 30,300, is forecasted to add 1,100 households (220 households or 0.7% per year) by 2020. Starkville will add about 430 households or less than 100 households (0.8%) per year.

**Age Cohorts.** While there will be modest growth in population and households over the next five years, there will be a relatively dramatic shift in the age demographics of the community. There will be a decrease in the number of young adult householders (age 15 to 24). But during the same period, there will be rapid growth in the number of households headed by millennial generation adults as well as empty-nesters. The number of householders aged 35 to 44 will increase by 56% (up to 130 more households per year) and those aged 65 to 74 will increase by 28%. These two groups will drive demand for housing in Starkville in the next five to ten years.

Within both of these groups, there is a general preference for more “walk-able” neighborhoods. Millennial family households and empty nesters will share a preference for affordable, high-density single-family housing. Cottages like Park Town or Garden Lane have proven popular with these age cohorts.

This information suggests that the Millennial generation and Empty Nesters will drive much of the demand for housing over the next five or more years. These cohorts demonstrate a marked preference for more walk-able, single-family neighborhoods.

Table 4. DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS, STARKVILLE AREA, 2015-2020					
Factor/Area	2015	2020	2015-2020 Change		
			Number	Percent	Per Year
<u>Population</u>					
Starkville	24,323	25,207	884	3.6%	177
Other County	25,241	25,957	716	2.8%	143
<u>Households</u>					
Starkville	10,619	11,052	433	4.1%	87
Other County	19,765	20,439	674	3.4%	135
Sources:	Nielsen and Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

**Income and Poverty.** The median household income in Oktibbeha County is about \$31,000, according to 2009-13 data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Starkville’s median household income is even lower, at \$29,100, but this may have included students. Nevertheless, this number compares with a statewide median income closer to \$40,000. More than one-third (33.7%) of Oktibbeha County residents live in poverty, based on statistics from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. As a result, the county has the 12<sup>th</sup> highest poverty rate in Mississippi, the state with the highest poverty rate in America. Starkville’s poverty rate is only slightly lower, at 32.6%. The local poverty rate exceeds the state’s average of 22.7% and the nation’s poverty level of 15.4%.

**Caveats.** Demographic forecasts were generated by Nielsen based on U.S. Census estimates, regional models and trends. However, they were not produced to account for local Starkville market conditions and other inputs that would otherwise be considered in producing detailed demographic forecasts as input to development planning.

**MSU Enrollment Trends**

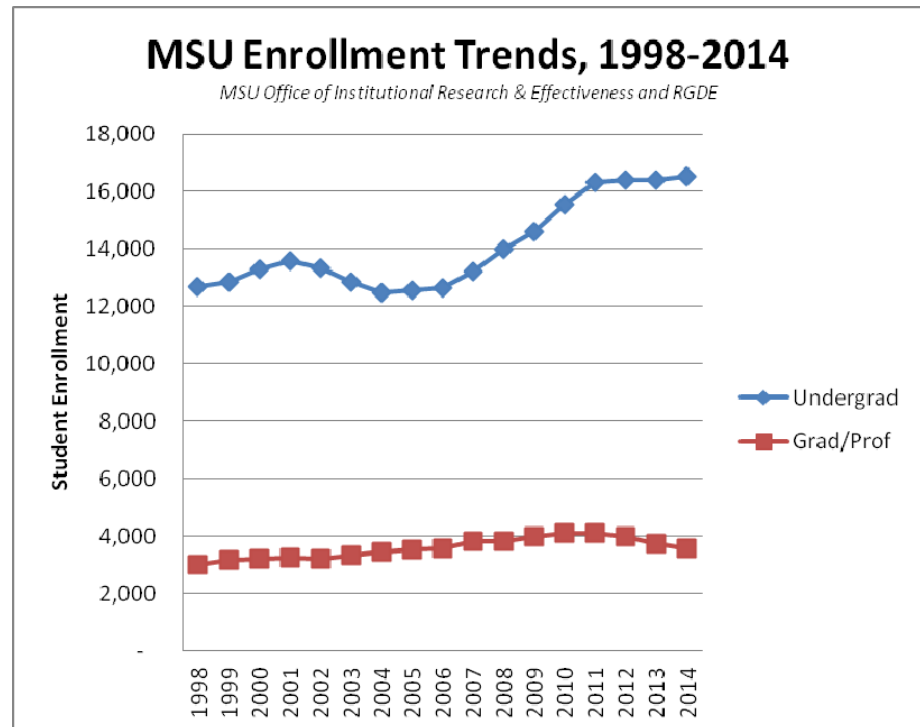
Mississippi State University (MSU) is a major economic driver for the city of Starkville and Oktibbeha County. MSU enrollment increased from about 15,700 in 1998 to over 20,100 by 2014, an increase of about 28% over the 16-year period. Undergraduate enrollment increased by over 30% while graduate and professional school enrollment increased by less than 20%. Mississippi State, like other universities in the state, does not place a cap on enrollment. Thus, enrollment is a reflection of demographics and demand for education at the school. The following chart illustrates the long-term enrollment trend at the university for undergraduate as well as graduate students.

<b>Table 5. AGE DEMOGRAPHICS, STARKVILLE AREA, 2015-2020</b>				
<b>Age Cohort</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2015-2020 Change</b>	
			<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
15-24	2,758	1,913	(845)	-30.6%
25-34	2,307	2,659	352	15.3%
<b>35-44</b>	<b>1,282</b>	<b>1,997</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>55.8%</b>
45-54	1,231	1,374	143	11.6%
55-64	1,243	1,275	32	2.6%
65-74	788	1,006	218	27.7%
75-84	562	590	28	5.0%
85+	225	238	13	5.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,396</b>	<b>11,052</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>6.3%</b>
Sources:	Nielsen and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

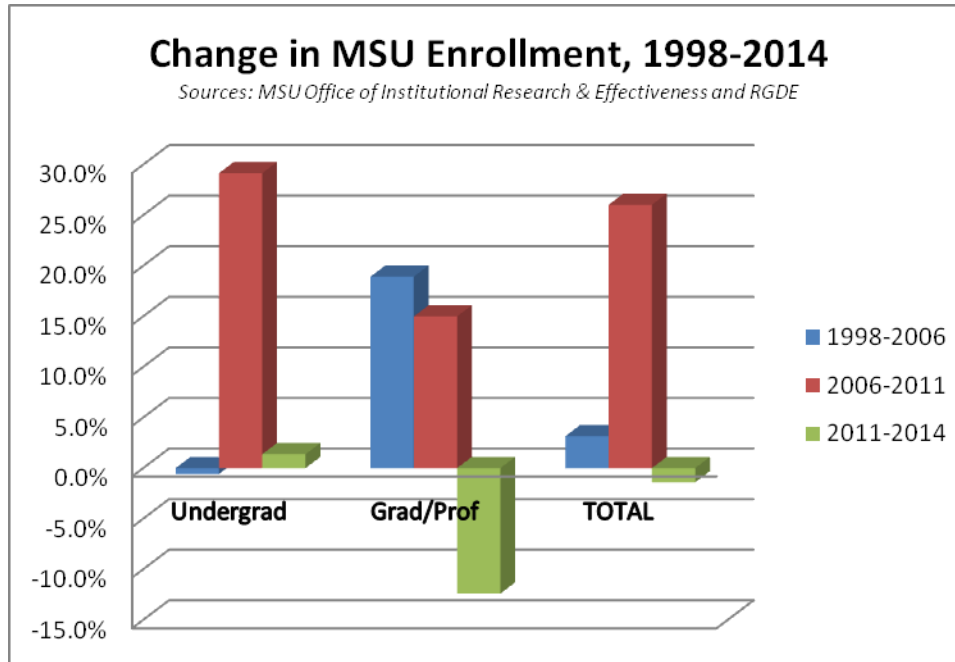


Enrollment increased modestly by 3.2% between 1998 and 2006, but increased dramatically (26.0%) between 2006 and 2011. Enrollment actually fell by 1.4% overall between 2011 and 2014, the decrease was in graduate enrollment with a continued (but much slower) increase in undergraduate enrollment. The change in MSU enrollment from 1998 through 2014 is summarized in the following table.

<b>Table 6. CHANGE IN MSU ENROLLMENT 1998-2014</b>			
<b>Factor/Yr</b>	<b>Undergrad</b>	<b>Grad/Prof</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Number	3,832	595	4,427
Percent	30.2%	19.8%	28.2%
1998-2006	-0.6%	18.9%	3.2%
<b>2006-2011</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>
2011-2014	1.4%	-12.4%	-1.4%
Sources:	MSU Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, and RGDE		



The 2015 school year saw another dramatic increase, with the addition of about 740 students or 3.6%, for a record total enrollment of 20,873. The 2015 school year also saw a record 17% increase in the number of incoming first-time freshmen.



### Real Estate Market Conditions Assessment

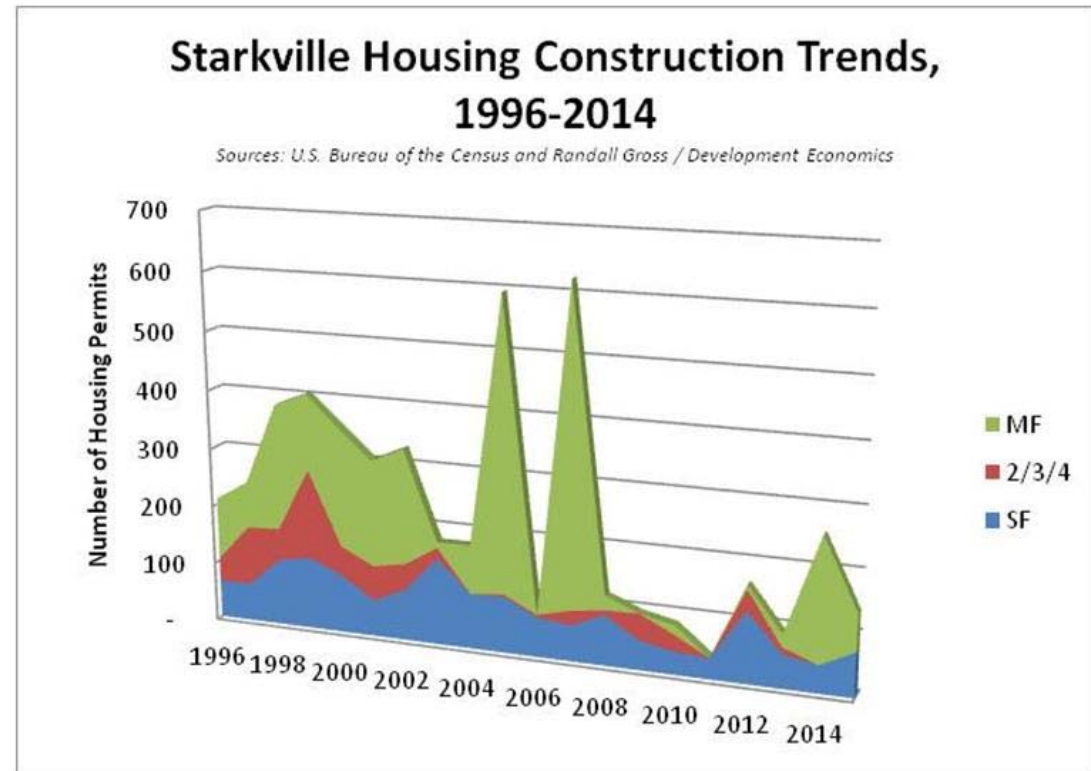
An assessment of existing real estate market conditions was completed based on field reconnaissance, input from area real estate professionals, and available market data. While this “assessment” did not entail forecasting the potential demand for real estate, it does provide context and input on existing market parameters. The assessment focused on market conditions for housing, retail/commercial, office and industrial land uses, as described below.

### HOUSING

There have been about 4,800 housing units permitted for construction in Starkville since 1996, for an average of about 240 units per year. Of those, 130 per year were in multi-family, 80 per year in single-family homes, and 30 per year in

duplex/triplex/quads. Construction has peaked several times in the last 20 years (1998, 2004, 2006, and 2014), mainly due to permits for large student or other multi-family developments in those years. Appendix Table 1 provides a summary of housing permit trends since 1996.

Development trends have slowed somewhat in recent years as compared with previous periods. Between 1996 and 2004, Starkville permitted 286 housing units per year. But between 2005 and 2014, the City only permitted an average of 206 units per year. This decrease has been consistent across all types of housing. Single-family construction fell from 95 to 67 units per year, duplex/triplex construction fell from 58 to only 15 units per year, and multi-family permitting has been erratic but has also fallen over time. Certainly the financial crisis of 2008-9 and recession in 2010 may have resulted in slower growth. But even since 2012, the city has only averaged 162 housing permits per year. So, there development has not yet returned to the heady growth of the early 2000s.



**Residential Neighborhoods and Development Trends.** Starkville has a wide variety of old and new neighborhoods, including communities that are setting national standards for excellence.



Downtown / Cotton District. Starkville has several attractive older neighborhoods on the southern and northern fringes of downtown and in several other locations scattered around the city. One of the older neighborhoods, Oktibbeha Gardens (“OG”), has seen a resurgence of people moving in and restoring homes. According to brokers, young professionals, relocations, and move-ups are attracted to the “vintage” feel of the neighborhood’s houses.

Perhaps the neighborhood that has received the most attention in recent years has been the Cotton District, a successful example of the entrepreneurship (and architectural craftsmanship) of investors who have helped to transform this eastside community into a laboratory for new urbanism and mixed-use development. The neighborhood has attracted students and others to live, eat and shop. According to brokers, the Gin on Russell condominium project attracted at least 8 to 10 pre-sales out of the 60 entering the market. In some ways, the Cotton District may be a victim of its own success, with escalating values, high occupancy, and rising expectations attracting larger-scale out-of-town investment that threatens to overwhelm the intentions of the original Camp family investors to create a walk-able community characterized by a mix of smaller-scale uses.

Several small projects just east and south of downtown, such as on Garden Lane or at Park Towne Village offer a high-density, single-family detached cottages and other urban products that have become very popular among young professionals, move-downs, and 2<sup>nd</sup>-home buyers. Proximity to campus has certainly been a major draw for these walk-able city neighborhoods.

MSU / East. The MSU campus extends along the eastern edge of Starkville’s City Limit, preventing further development within the city to the east. However, student housing and high-end single-family development has taken place east of the university. Stable, university worker-related single-family neighborhoods have evolved in University Hills. Highland Plantation offers a high-amenity golf course. Ultimately, proximity to campus has driven housing development surrounding the university on all sides.

Northside. The city school district did not extend very far north, so only a handful of subdivisions were developed over time north of downtown, such as Rolling Hills, Woodland Heights, Presley Place (custom-built homes on 3-acre lots around lake), and Redbud Springs, a neighborhood of craftsman-style plantation homes surrounding Oktibbeha County Hospital. Redbud Springs’ homes, priced in the \$200,000 range, have sold well to young professionals, retirees and university workers. There are other housing developments in the area that offer subsidized housing. Haven 12 student housing has been developed north-east of town on Route 12, near the university’s research park and a LaQuinta Inn.

Condo units are also being developed near the university's research park. The 16 852 square-foot units are priced at \$169,900, while another 24 units will be priced at \$179,900.

West Starkville. There is a mix of relatively affordable neighborhoods west of downtown, such as Upper Crossing, Green Oaks, and others that are conveniently located between the Bypass and downtown. Some of these single-family houses are used as rentals. Longmeadow appeals to younger couples who want convenience and don't mind upgrading an older home. Southwest of downtown are Oakwood, Densbrook, Cross Creek, Crossgate, Heritage Colony and others, offering some available housing in the \$175,000 to \$250,000 range on larger lots. Browning Creek offers 0-lot line homes, appealing to empty nesters. There is a large concentration of rental apartments on the west side as well, located along Lynn Lane, with access to McKee Park and other amenities.

South / Montgomery Street Corridor. Much of the newer, mid- and upper-range single-family housing in Starkville is being built south of downtown in the Montgomery Street corridor. Much of this housing is priced from \$250,000 or \$300,000 and higher. This corridor is home to private schools and the Starkville Country Club, and is easily accessible to the MSU campus. Affiliation with the country club can be extremely important in a town of Starkville's size, where many social and networks and professional connections are formed and cemented at the club. Timber Cove, Pleasant Acres, Sherwood Forest, Greenbrier, and Huntington Park have been joined by Country Club Estates, Sunnyland Estates, and newer subdivisions.

According to brokers, Country Club Estates is a top-tier estate home development that has attracted professionals such as doctors who are willing to pay a premium for access to the club. The popular Greenbrier neighborhood has attracted university professors and young families with children who may not be in the market for housing at Country Club Estates. Academy Village offers condominiums and the planned Sundance development will offer 15 townhouse units. Several 0-lot line home projects have proven to be popular, including Delphine, Annabella, River Road and Belle Oaks. Pleasant Acres is very popular for "Bull Dog" homes selling to game-day visitors. Huntington Park offers estate homes and patio homes in the \$250,000 price range. This mix appeals to retirees and empty nesters or younger people who do not want the upkeep of a yard. Sherwood Commons has garden homes priced in the \$200,000 range, oriented to retirees.

More retirement and assisted living communities are also planned or under development in this area. The Adelaide, for example, serves the aging community. Ultimately, the continued extension of low-density development further south along

this corridor could increase north-south traffic congestion, resulting in reduced marketability for housing in this area over time.

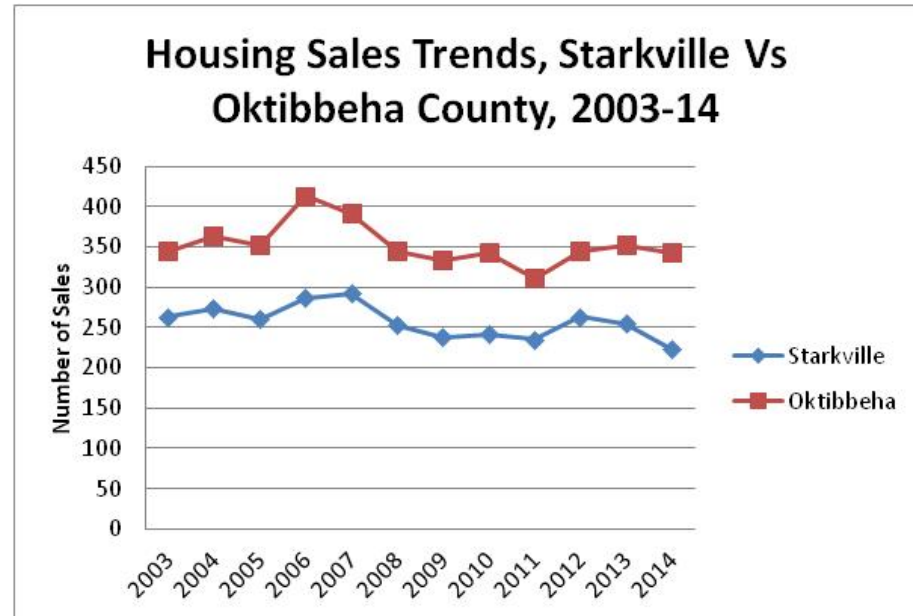
**Market Indicators.** Housing market indicators were analyzed to provide context for housing development in Starkville and as input to the planning effort. Key indicators for the for-sale and rental housing markets are provided below.

For-Sale Market. Housing sales trends in Starkville generally mirror those in the county as a whole. The number of sales has remained relatively stable over time, at 300 to 400 per year between 2010 and 2014.

While the number of sales has remained relatively stable (aside from peaks in the early 2000s and valleys during the 2008-2010 economic downturn), prices have generally continued to rise. In fact, median for-sale housing prices are up by 28.5% since 2010. There is limited mid-range inventory, with most available housing listing for over \$300,000. Demand for housing has increased, while supply has not. As a result, the number of days that homes stay for sale on the market (DOM) has fallen dramatically since a peak in 2012.

Average housing sale prices within Starkville and Oktibbeha County have increased over time, as illustrated here. The average price in Starkville was \$124,700 in 2003, but increased by 50% to \$189,000 by 2015. A recognized SEC college football program has also helped to attract game-

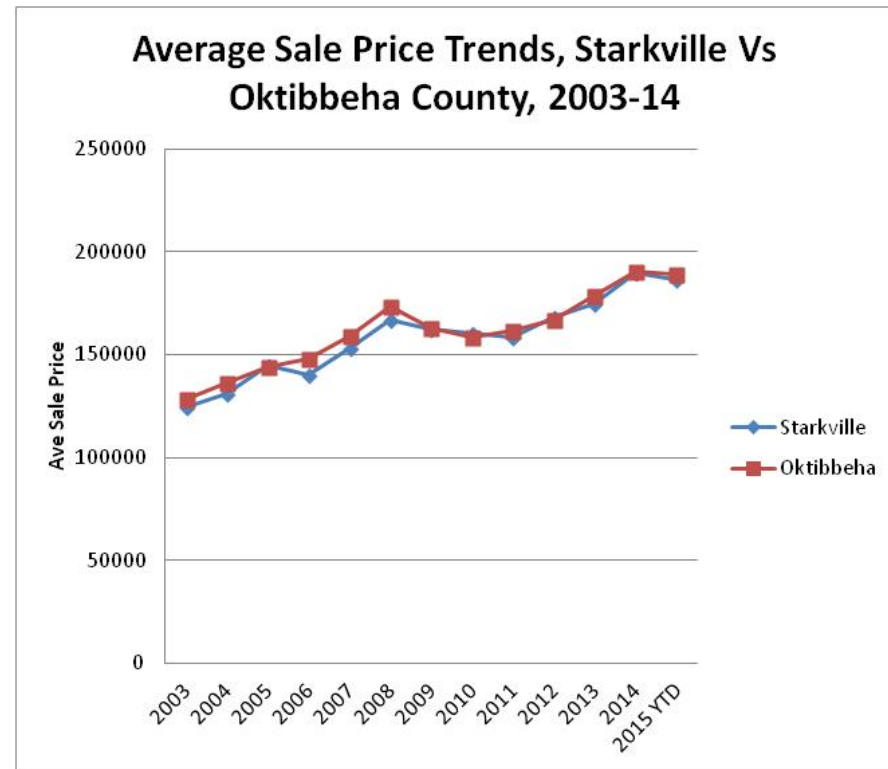
day home purchases (houses purchased by out-of-towners for use during football game weekends), augmenting local demand. The 50% increase in prices has occurred at the same time that inflation increased by only 29%. Thus, the escalation in housing prices outstripped inflation by 20%.





Most of the for-sale housing in this market is in single family detached units. However, there are several existing and new condominium developments such as The Gin, located in the historic Cotton District. Two-bedroom units in this complex listed from \$274,500 to \$284,500, and three-bedroom units from \$365,000 to \$380,000. Thus, newer multi-family product in desirable locations is being marketed, like most available detached housing, to households with incomes exceeding the median.

**Rental Market.** Based on information collected through interviews, it is estimated that about 70% of the rental market is driven by MSU students, with the remainder being young professionals, families, retirees, or those just starting out. However, that mix varies by location and apartment complex. In the Cotton District, students may comprise as much as 85% of the occupancy, while in Lynn Lane, undergraduates only account for perhaps 40%. Overall, the rental housing occupancy is estimated at around 85%, although properties in certain parts of the city such as Lynn Lane or the Cotton District have close to 100% occupancy



A sample survey finds that rents are ranging from \$0.30 per square foot for a four-bedroom up to \$1.37 per foot for a studio or efficiency. Two bedrooms are averaging \$614 per month or about \$0.94 per square foot. This sample excludes purpose-built student apartments. There has been significant new construction of purpose-built housing for students, both in Starkville and east of the university. Some students prefer this newer product, in developments such as Haven 12 or

Aspen Heights. Another 800-bed student housing complex is currently under development on the east side. Overall, the city’s rental vacancy rate is estimated at 10 to 15%. However, multi-family rental product has proven to be more competitive, with occupancies as high as 100% in areas like the Cotton District. These areas also yield a premium on rents. Occupancies appear to be declining in single-family and other older private housing as new purpose-built student housing is constructed in the city.

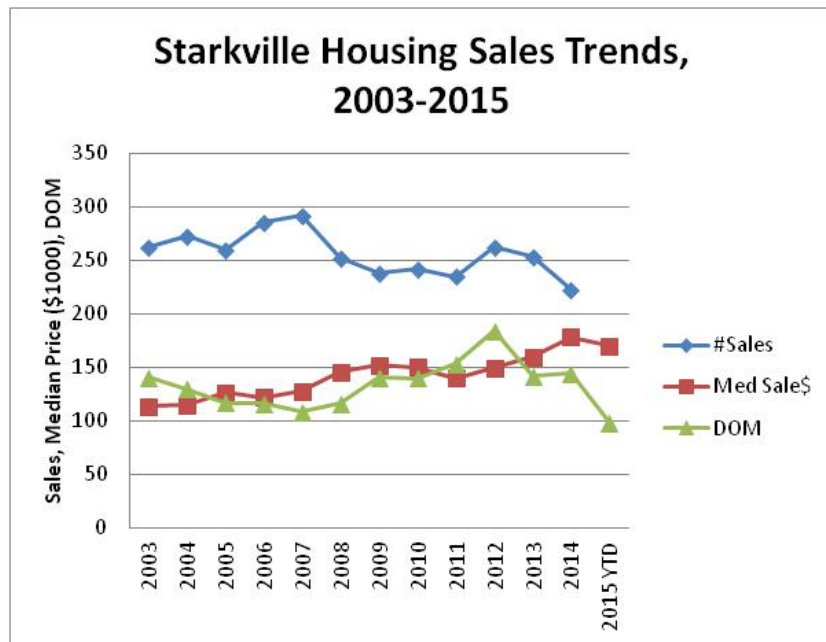


Table 7. SAMPLE RENTAL APARTMENT MARKET CONDITIONS, STARKVILLE, 2015					
Factor	Studio/Eff	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
Ave Rent	\$ 560	\$ 569	\$ 615	\$ 669	\$ 405
Ave Sq. Feet	500	624	958	1,191	1,348
<b>Ave Rent/SF</b>	<b>\$ 1.12</b>	<b>\$ 0.91</b>	<b>\$ 0.64</b>	<b>\$ 0.56</b>	<b>\$ 0.30</b>
Note:	4-bedroom units are typically priced for four sharing.				
Sources:	Various Apartment Managers and Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

**Overall Housing Market Outlook.** The Starkville housing market is relatively stable, although volatility can be caused by a sudden increase in MSU enrollment or national exposure gained through a winning football team (which yields interest in game-day housing). The market has seen an average of about 200 to 250 units permitted per year for the last 20+

years. Projected household growth, coupled with MSU enrollment patterns, suggests typical annual demand for about 200-250 housing units. So, there is a relative balance in supply and demand.

That being said, new construction in the for-sale market is tilting towards a higher-end, more expensive product. There is housing inventory available in the \$250,000 and up range, but little in the \$100,000 to \$250,000 range. With a preponderance of working households having incomes of less than \$30,000 per year, the “median” household can only afford housing in the \$100,000 to \$120,000 range or payments of about \$830 per month. Thus, households in the middle of the market in Starkville will have challenges finding housing that they can afford to purchase. More of those households will form part of the rental market.

**Key Opportunities.** There is an opportunity for building housing targeted to the middle market, but such opportunities will be forced to areas with more affordable land and construction costs in the absence of public interventions. The north and west sides of Starkville, and areas east of the university, may be more appropriate for workforce housing.

### **RETAIL/COMMERCIAL**

Much of Starkville’s highway-oriented retail use is concentrated in the Route 12 Corridor. Large retail “boxes” like Wal-Mart and Lowe’s are located at Route 12 and the Bypass, where regional traffic exposure is maximized. Downtown has more specialized retailers and restaurant uses, with an estimated 76,700 gross square feet of retail space on Main Street (based on an analysis of Assessment records). This is a relatively small base of commercial space for a university town of Starkville’s size. Not surprisingly, downtown occupancy is very high, with limited commercial space available in the downtown area.

Downtown rents range from \$8 to \$13 per square foot gross, but most of this space is in older commercial buildings. Based on the analysis of assessment records, the average downtown retail space is 95 years old. Interestingly for an historic downtown, many of the commercial buildings offer only one story of space. The downtown rents compare with \$19 to \$23 per foot net for new space (or \$15 and higher for older space) located along the Highway 12 Corridor. Highway 12 space also benefits from visibility and exposure to the highway and the Bypass.

Just outside of downtown to the north is the Route 182 (MLK Drive) Corridor. This commercial area once flourished with tourism uses such as motels and filling stations. Today, the area north of downtown has a mix of commercial uses, but the



primary commercial activity remains gas stations (there are at least seven current and former gas stations within a few blocks) and other auto-oriented uses. Land has been cleared for development that did not take place, providing an opportunity site within a few blocks of downtown. Further east, Route 182 has larger-scale commercial use including the local Ford dealership.

Also not far from Downtown, the Cotton District offers some additional specialty retail and restaurant space, with several venues generating high demand from college students. The lack of available, high-grade commercial space in central Starkville is indicative of successful marketing and high demand within those well-contained nodes.

**Competition.** Despite Starkville's success, residents have identified a need for more competitive retail uses including national chains. City leaders are concerned about competition from Columbus for retail recruitment. There is the perception that retail is more attracted to Columbus over Starkville and Oktibbeha County. Columbus has Target, Best Buy, Petsmart, and a shopping mall anchored by Belk Department Store. In reality, Lowndes County and Columbus have 35% more total personal income (TPI) and 40% more retail sales capacity than Oktibbeha County, due to the larger household base. While it is true that Starkville has a large number of Mississippi State University students, many students are on meal plans for their first years and then have limited disposable incomes as upper classmen. Affluent parents do supply some students with access to credit, but the majority of students do not require expenditures beyond those for basic necessities.

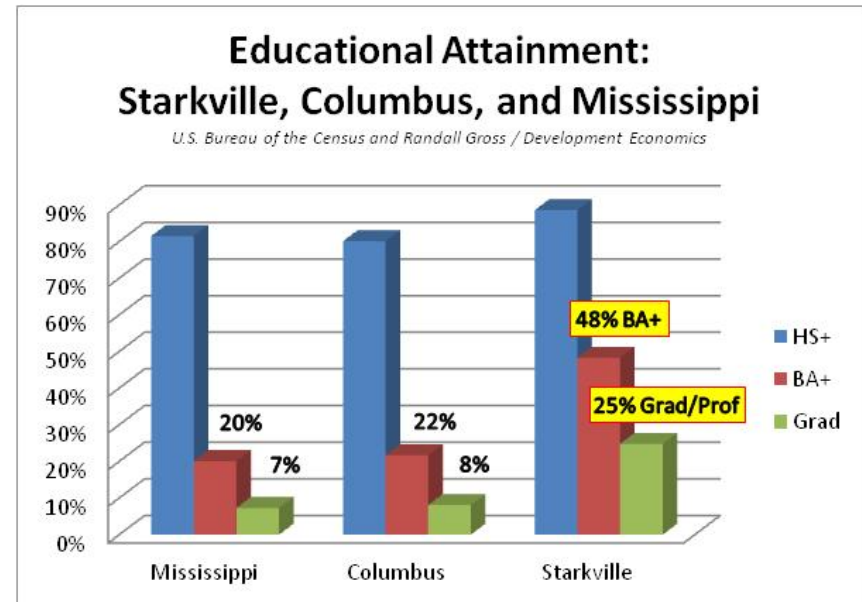
**Specialty & Local Niche Market Base.** What Starkville lacks in household numbers, it more than compensates in education levels. Compared with Columbus and with other parts of Mississippi, Starkville's residents have very high levels of educational achievement. Almost 50% of Starkville's residents have at least a BA degree or higher, as compared with only 22% of Columbus residents and 20% statewide. Furthermore, 25% of Starkville residents have earned a masters or professional degree, versus only 8% of Columbus residents and 7% of residents statewide.

As a result, the city's residents generate demand for specialty goods and services that appeal to more sophisticated tastes. Specifically, better-educated residents tend to purchase healthy food, specialty goods, and higher-value products. Such buyers may also look to purchase goods from locally-based retailers over chain stores. They tend to comparison shop in more stores rather than relying on one-stop "big box" shopping. On the other hand, they are more likely to purchase goods over the Internet rather than visiting a brick-and-mortar shop for certain essential items (e.g., toilet paper,

diapers, etc). The following chart illustrates the vast difference in educational achievement between residents of Starkville, Columbus, and the state of Mississippi as a whole.

**Key Opportunities.** Starkville is more likely to attract specialty niche retail uses than would Columbus or other neighboring communities. Such uses as locally-owned and branded coffee shops, bakeries, full-service restaurants, fashion boutiques, sporting goods stores, bicycle shops, antique and home furnishings stores, and other specialty stores are most likely to locate downtown or in the Cotton District and similar walk-able neighborhoods than along highway strip corridors.

There is also the opportunity to attract more tourism to downtown Starkville if there were additional anchor attractions and lodging choices. Given that downtown occupancy is close to 100%, there may be a need for development more high-quality downtown commercial space, particularly within the several blocks surrounding Main Street. Mixed-use development that includes both commercial and residential uses would also be encouraged, because there are few opportunities for traditional “upper floor” residential living in downtown Starkville.



## OFFICE

Starkville has a relatively small office base, with few large office employers downtown or in office and business parks. Based on an analysis of Oktibbeha County’s employment base, it is estimated that the Starkville area should have a total inventory of 200,000 to 270,000 square feet of office space to house existing, private sector uses. Based on an analysis of assessment records, it is estimated that Starkville’s downtown area has a total of about 98,000 square feet of private

office space, including two bank buildings totaling 64,400 square feet. Like retail space, much of downtown's office is in older buildings or in those that are becoming functionally obsolete. The average age of downtown office buildings is approximately 90 years. Office rents are generally consistent with those for retail in the downtown area. There is a large office/lab node at Thad Cochran Research, Technology, and Economic Development Park (see below), much of which is occupied by university-related and government uses. The historic 93,000 square-foot Cooley Building (originally built as the John M. Stone Cotton Mill) has been successfully rehabilitated as The Mill, with a conference center and office space, associated restaurants and retail space. MSU has leased about 30,000 square feet or one-third of the space, partly to house its nSPARC research company. The presence of garage parking has helped increase the competitiveness of the project in a market where there are few large blocks of office space having sufficient on-site parking. Otherwise, much of the area's office space is scattered in small buildings along commercial corridors or in small nodes such as Hospital Commercial Park, near OCH Regional Medical Center.

Mississippi State University operates Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park. The park's 272 acres house ten buildings with a total of 1,500 employees, adjacent to the MSU campus. A 45-acre expansion is underway. Demand at the park is driven in part by the university's High-Performance Computing Collaboratory, promoting collaborative research. Infrastructure has been developed at the park to support high speed computing. Among the park's non-Government tenants are Babel Street, Camgian Microsystems, Sitel (call center) and Profound Logic. While Camgian Microsystems is working on a federal defense project, there is a need to attract more commercialization of MSU basic research, which the University hopes to accomplish as part of the park's expansion.



**Opportunities.** The Starkville area has seen growth in office employment-generating uses, including professional and technical services, finance, and administrative services. These uses are among the most likely to locate in a downtown area, or in areas like the Mill District and other mixed-use locations. There is a need to address perceptions of parking issues downtown and in other areas, by examining parking demand and addressing management. There is also a need for new office/commercial space, given the dearth of new Class A office space for rent in Starkville. Certainly mixed-use development that addresses the need for new office and retail space in a mixed-use setting, is among the best opportunities.

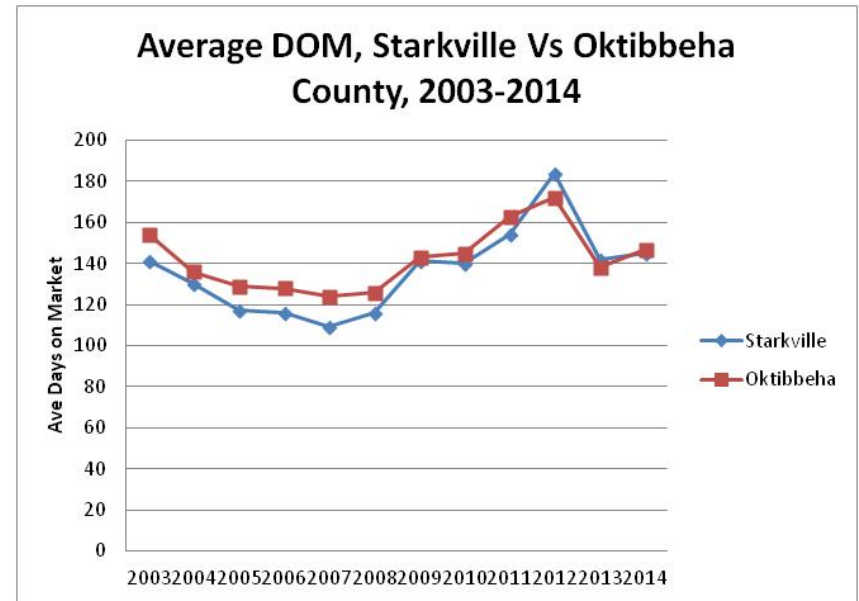
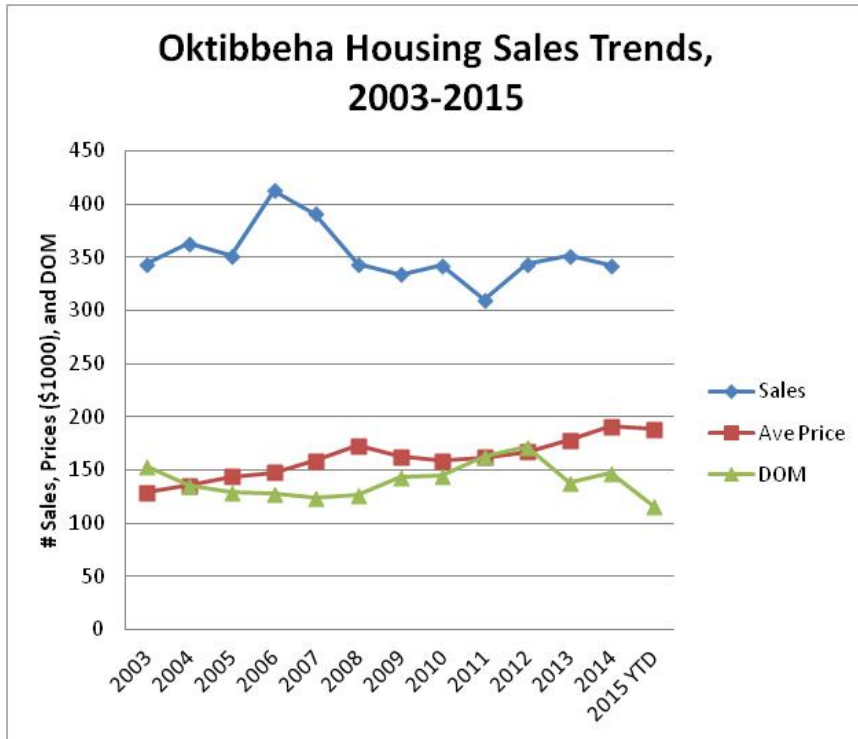


**INDUSTRIAL**

There is a regional industrial marketing effort through the LINK that focuses on attracting manufacturing uses to the three-county area, but focusing mainly on Lowndes County. The focus of target industrial marketing efforts is on aerospace and automotive industries. Development of Cornerstone Park was seen as an opportunity to attract industrial uses specifically to Oktibbeha County, but issues with lack of power capacity, highway frontage and land availability are preventing large-scale industrial development.

Another attempt at advanced manufacturing and industrial development focused on the proposed Innovation District. However, issues with environmental and archeological constraints prevent cost-sensitive development of a substantial portion of the site. Ultimately, the Thad Cochran Research, Technology, and Economic Development Park should spin-off commercialization of new products into light manufacturing processes, but there remains an issue with land availability in Oktibbeha County for this purpose. More detailed information and input on Starkville’s industrial conditions and opportunities are provided in the Economic Development Section of this plan.

<b>Table A-1. RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION TRENDS, STARKVILLE AREA, 2000-2015</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>2/3/4</b>	<b>MF</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1996	64	40	106	210
1997	65	100	79	244
1998	114	54	214	382
1999	123	152	130	405
2000	99	51	203	353
2001	62	60	181	303
2002	88	44	196	328
2003	148	18	10	176
2004	94	-	83	177
2005	96	4	495	595
2006	68	4	-	72
2007	61	25	537	623
2008	86	8	24	118
2009	50	45	-	95
2010	39	28	16	83
2011	36	-	-	36
2012	121	35	8	164
2013	57	11	22	90
2014	47	-	210	257
2015 (annual)	75	-	63	138
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,593</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>2,577</b>	<b>4,849</b>
<i>Per Year</i>	<b>80</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>242</b>
1996-2004	857	519	1,202	2,578
Per Year	95	58	134	286
Percent	33%	20%	47%	100%
2005-2015	736	160	1,375	2,271
Per Year	67	15	125	206
Percent	32%	7%	61%	100%
Sources:	U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross / Development Economics.			



*Summary of Findings:*

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUPS & VISIONING SESSION**

27 attendees from MSU and real estate, finance, insurance, professional services, non-profit, retail, restaurants, tourism, health care, information technology sectors.

- **Starkville's Competitive Advantages**

- College Town / MSU
- Highly-educated demographic
- City & MSU working together (Events, conf center, Russell)
- Sense of Place (Local businesses (City Bagel, Sherman, etc)
- Downtown (Events, family atmosphere)
- Country club
- Competitive ("low") wages
- Historic "emerging" neighborhoods
  - *"Non-rentable" properties back to homeownership*
- "Slightly (comparatively) progressive"
  - *Smoking ban, fiber-to-home, high-tech, tolerance of diversity/intl*
- SMART bus transportation (great and could be expanded)
  - *Hospital & medical land for expansion (Medical office/hub)*

- **Challenges to Economic Development**

- Infrastructure (e.g., power capacity, water/sewer, etc)
- Lack of direction / role / identity for Starkville in regional economy
- High poverty levels & income "Barbell"
- Perceived discrepancy in local education system
- Recruitment (lack of things to do, parks/rec, amenities)
- ED funding structure (who is really doing ED for Starkville?)



- S'ville's reputation in ED community/Jackson (lack of direction)
- Development approval process-Inconsistency and lack of direction
- Lack of community involvement (apathy/busy)
- Technology: lack sources of capital/VC, employees, assistance
  
- **Defining Starkville's Role in Region**
  - High Quality of Life that other communities do not have:
    - *Starkville should be the "Pace Car," take the lead for quality of life: culture, restaurants, recreation, education.*
    - *Contribute / invest in QOL as critical part of recruitment*
  - High Quality / Smart / Technology and Infrastructure
    - *Design – Architecture, form-based codes*
    - *Broadband/gig*
    - *Research/academics ("accept who we are")*
    - *Engineering*
  - Retirement & Alumni (Quality of Life)
    - *Walkability, small-town feel*

### **Economic Development Objectives**

- Focus on quality-of-life elements as critical component of Comp Plan
- Energize electorate, faculty
  - *Gain buy-in and community-wide support*
  - *Engage the students/university*
  - *Build leadership*
- Use targeted incentives to leverage our strengths
- Create "implementable" and targeted strategies
- Address policies that hinder economic development
- Address issues with poverty and under-development

## **Economic Development Vision (wordsmithed)**

...Having an economic development structure and policies that are focused on small business, entrepreneurship, and technology development; and on enhancing our local strengths, culture and quality of life.

## **EMERGING CONCEPTS FOR STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- ED Structure and Marketing:
  - LINK remains key agent for regional marketing
  - GSDP remains umbrella for Main Street, Chamber, OCEDA, CVB:
    - Initiate fund (Foundation and Municipal support) for Small Business Support and Development
    - Work with banks and Foundations on low-interest revolving loan funds for Small Business and Technology Financing
    - Work with City of Starkville and State of Mississippi on capital improvement loan and grant programs
    - Refine QoL Marketing Initiative focused on Starkville and Oktibbeha County
    - Initiate
- Conceptual Economic Development Targets
  - Information technology
  - Engineering services
  - Construction & skilled trades: plumbing, electrical, craftsmen, etc.
  - Business process outsourcing (BPO) and information services
  - Customer and technical support centers
  - Entrepreneurial niche retail and locally-sourced product
  - Administrative services
  - Analytical and environmental testing services
- Focus on quality of life initiatives that increase competitiveness for target industries and employee recruitment
  - Enhancing parks, trails and recreation amenities

- Recruitment of niche retailers, restaurants and small entrepreneurs
- Focus on elementary schools and local education initiatives
- Integrating internet accessibility, increasing band width
- Increasing access to cultural amenities
- Conference center development
- Labor Force Skills Development Initiatives
  - Work with East Mississippi Community College on “matchmaking”
  - Develop local business-entrepreneurial partnerships
  - Leverage university as asset for human capital development
- Real Estate Initiatives
  - Advanced manufacturing location (site TBD) to capture spin-off
  - Office/mixed use opportunities for tech, small business, entrepreneurial space
  - Affordable housing program: incentives based on City-owned land, higher-density, small lots at lower-cost land sites.



## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

### **Retail**

Perception that Starkville/Oktibbeha loses out to Columbus

What type of retail are we missing here?

--Boxes? --Niches?

Where should retail be developed?

In what ways should the plan address this topic?

What are the key issues facing retail businesses here?

Have sales been increasing?

What share of retail business is sourced from MSU/other students?

What share of retail business is sourced from outside of Starkville?

--Oktibbeha

--Columbus/Lowndes

--Clay

--Tourism

Is game day that important to retail sales?

## **Real Estate**

I've heard: people want to be close to the university, more affluent going south, growing demand for higher-density single-family (and condos do fine). Comment

Rental market (outside of a few managers) probably at 85% occupancy. Volatile? Stabilizing/dropping with enrollment?

What role does game day play?

Affordable – what is the issue? How would you define affordable?

Market break – housing below \$100k and above \$300k, is there a gap? Why?

Out of town developers?

Where should zoning push housing? Market open to diverse types?  
In what ways should the plan address this topic?

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## **Innovation / Technology / Manufacturing**

How has MSU and research park spurred economic development, innovation?

Is there a need for an incubator?

Where should commercialization occur? And manufacturing spin-off?

Broadband- status?

What is Starkville's role in region, in terms of manufacturing? What role SHOULD it play, if any?

Is manufacturing required for diversification?

In what ways should the plan address this topic?

### **Economic Development**

What are other issues or opportunities for economic development that need to be considered? And accommodated in the plan?



*Starkville Comprehensive Plan*

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
VISION SESSION**

1. Introductions
2. Observations
  - a. Economic Development marketing is oriented to region
  - b. Manufacturing concentrated in Columbus/Lowndes County
  - c. Lack of specific direction/role for Starkville in regional economy
  - d. Understanding of that role can help steer planning/development
3. Key Questions
  - a. What are Starkville's competitive advantages?
  - b. What are the city's key challenges for economic development?
  - c. In what ways can Starkville diversify its economic base?
  - d. What should be the city's role in the Golden Triangle?
4. ED Objectives for the Comprehensive Plan
5. Vision Statement: How should Starkville grow in the next 10 years?

# APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER MEETING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## Task 2.0: Starkville Comprehensive Plan

Draft – 8.27.15

The following questions were asked of a variety of stakeholders in Starkville on August 11-12, as well as through several phone interviews after those dates. Below is a composite of the answers. While we have attempted to confirm the accuracy of many of the statements below, *it is likely that there are some inaccuracies* given that the interviews are a reflection of perceptions and opinions.

### 1. What are Starkville's greatest strengths and opportunities?

#### MSU

Every group or individual asked this question quickly stated that *MSU is the community's greatest strength* and something that can be leveraged more. Not only does the university contribute tremendously to the local economy, but also to the quality of life. There are many amenities, such as good restaurants, because of MSU. The university also “brings the vitality of young people.” It provides “intellectual capital.” It also attracts retirees who are alumni and have little impact upon City services.

One example of MSU's benefit is the new school for grades 6-8 being built on the MSU campus as a partnership between MSU and the local school district. Several pointed out the added economic benefits to the community when MSU has a winning football season. The university's R&D park was also often cited. One person asked – “What would Starkville be without the university? Just another small Mississippi community.” Another person said that, without MSU, “we'd just be another Maben or Sturgis.”

#### Other Strengths & Opportunities

Other key strengths included Downtown, the Cotton District, and the local school district. With regard to the latter, the school district has a rating of only “C”, but it was noted that it is a major employer. One person noted that the emphasis on economic development within the Golden Triangle is a great strength. Although some cited access limitations in getting to and from Starkville, others saw the existence of four-lane roads as positive. One interviewee stated that “Starkville is not your typical Old South community.” They said it represents the “New South” and is relatively diverse and open to outsiders moving in.

### 2. What are Starkville's greatest challenges to overcome?

### Housing Affordability

Housing affordability was cited by many as the key challenge, particularly with regard to middle income housing. See more on this issue under question #12.

### Poverty & Schools

Poverty was cited as a challenge, as “you’ve got a lot of ‘have nots’ in Starkville.” It was stated that approximately 30% of the community lives in poverty, although most of those households are “peripheral to town.” Poverty was cited as a challenge, as “you’ve got a lot of ‘have nots’ in Starkville.” It was stated that approximately 30% of the community lives in poverty, although most of those households are “peripheral to town.” Poverty impacts the schools, although the schools do have advanced placement (AP) programs. “The top 10-20% of kids are academically as good as anywhere. The bottom 10-20% are as bad as anywhere.” It was stated that roughly 65% of school kids in Starkville’s public schools get free or reduced lunches.

### City Government

One interviewee stated that “Planning is a fairly new idea for Starkville. It used to be a Wild West town and everything was rubber stamped.” Another person said it seems like the City “just kind of muddles along” and doesn’t have a plan. Another person said the City “lacks a planning culture” and seems to be satisfied with maintaining the status quo. One interviewee stated that the City has a history of taking measures that weakens its various bodies. For example, the Beautification Committee received push-back from the Partnership and was eliminated. Then the Board of Adjustments & Appeals was changed to only an advisory capacity. Also, the Parks & Recreation Department was once independent, but it reportedly could not stay afloat financially so the Board of Aldermen had to take it over. “Bickering among City leaders” was also cited as a problem. One person said that the City’s existing ordinances need to be adhered to more and too many variances are granted. Another interviewee stated that better coordination is needed between City departments and that the development approval process needs clarification. “The problem isn’t the rules, it’s the process.” He also said that more technical expertise is needed on the Planning Commission and related bodies. He thinks criteria for such expertise should be added to the City’s requirements for serving. He said that the current focus on appointing people to serve is more ward-based (political).

### Other Challenges

It was pointed out that Starkville is two hours from any major shopping. Traffic congestion was also noted as a problem. Some saw insufficient infrastructure as a challenge. One person noted a lack of interstate access. Another stated that “Starkville is not up to par with other SEC towns.” He believed much of that situation was due to a relatively large poor population. That said, it was also indicated that Starkville has more wealth than in the balance of the county.

- 3. Are there any particular natural or historic resources that you feel might be threatened and in need of preservation? Should a local historic district be pursued for parts of the Central Neighborhood (similar to the existing Nash Street and Greensboro Districts)?**

### Natural Resources

A few people seemed interested in the concept of prohibiting any development in existing floodplains (precluding cut and fill that would raise a structure above the floodplain). However, it was also noted that development already occurs within such areas and the County does not



regulate floodplain development. Many people have been complaining about the extensive grading that recently occurred at the corner of Jackson and 182 for the new Family Dollar store. A draft tree ordinance was prepared some time ago, but it was never adopted.

#### Historic Resources

In addition to the federal 20% investment tax credit for historic rehabilitation that is available for income producing qualified projects for properties on or eligible for the National Register, Mississippi has a 25% credit for both income-producing buildings and those that do not produce an income (owner-occupied homes, etc.). Most people interviewed incorrectly believed that National Register designation offers protections to historic resources. They were also surprised to learn that areas such as the historic Downtown, which is a National Register district but not a local historic district, is completely vulnerable. However, some indicated that there is not much support for local historic districts. Regardless, many felt it was very important to achieve local historic designation for Downtown.

There is a small organization called the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation (no website) that is reportedly preservation-minded. One interviewee pointed out that a challenge with designating the historic residential areas immediately south of Downtown is the numerous incompatible infill developments that have occurred over the years (especially student apartments). One person stated that they thought an attempt was made previously to provide historic designation to the Pleasant Acres neighborhood, but the effort failed (he said he was not positive about this). He said that South Jackson dead ends at Pleasant Acres.

#### **4. What is your opinion of the quality of recent development in Starkville (commercial, residential, etc.)?**

There was very little discussion of this topic. People seemed to not have strong opinions. A few people referenced some new commercial developments on Hwy. 12 as being good models because the architecture was not bad and there was some landscaping. One interviewee cited the Starbucks and Panda as examples of high quality development on Hwy. 12 that could serve as positive models. One interviewee complained that the City's development ordinances change too much and make it confusing. He also said that the landscaping ordinance makes it very difficult to create parking, and that the City needs to be more business-friendly and help walk developers through the approval process. He did acknowledge that the City now has a new building inspection team that is easier to work with than in the past. One person said that the City's existing ordinances need to be adhered to more and too many variances are granted.

#### **5. Are there any particular areas of town or developments that would serve as a good model for future development? What do you think about the Cotton District?**

##### Cotton District

Despite the national reputation of the Cotton District as an example of incremental New Urbanism, few people cited the Cotton District. In fact, when brought up, many people cited what they considered problems with the area, such as density, too many vehicles, and maintenance issues stemming from the student population. It was also noted that the cemetery provides the only green space in the area and residents walk their dogs there, causing a problem with dogs relieving themselves there. A few people interviewed appreciated the area's density,

which one person reported at roughly 20 units per acre. A few people believe that a development similar to the Cotton District, but higher-income (non-student) and slightly lower density could be successful. One of those people mentioned a 10-acre property south of downtown (between the Greensboro District and a grocery store) as being a potential location.

#### Other Local Models

One interviewee cited the Starbucks and Panda as examples of high quality development on Hwy. 12 that could serve as positive models. One person cited the Mill project as a good model, although it is such a unique situation that only certain aspects of the project are replicable (historic rehab, mixed use). Another model is the Claiborne at Adelaide retirement community on South Montgomery near the Starkville County Club (<http://theclaiborne.com/communities/starkville>). It was described as a higher-end and lower-density version of the Cotton District for a senior market.

### **6. What is your opinion of the existing transportation network for all modes of travel (streets, roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways, etc.)?**

#### Russell Street & Hwy. 12

An MDOT intersection improvement is planned for Russell and Hwy. 12 to enhance safety for all modes of travel, as this location borders MSU. It was also indicated that an MDOT grant will result in sidewalks for Russell Street. One person stated that the new sidewalks on Russell should connect to the existing pedestrian bridge over Hwy. 12 along University. At least one person suggested that a roundabout should be considered for this intersection. Also, the topography there might lend itself to the creation of a pedestrian underpass.

#### South Montgomery & Connector Road

Much of the higher end housing is being developed on South Montgomery, which has caused significant peak time traffic congestion. Much of that traffic is also related to schools along this corridor. It is a two-lane road with few turn lanes. There is a turn lane at Academy, but it is reportedly too short. One person recommended that South Montgomery be transformed into a “complete street.” Reportedly, the intersection of S. Montgomery and Poorhouse Road has the only traffic light in the County. Many believe that once the connector road on the south end of school accessing the new entry to MSU via Poor House Road is built, some traffic will be alleviated on South Montgomery. The connector road will reportedly include bike lanes. One person stated that the key to the connector road working well will be coordination between the City, County and MSU. The construction will begin in October and is estimated to take 18 months.

#### Other Areas & Issues

The Carl Small Town Center at MSU worked on a bicycle plan for Starkville some time ago. Several noted the need for more bike lanes and greenways. One person suggested that transit (buses) is needed, although others cited the great shuttle bus system operated by MSU (SMART Bus). That service reportedly allows pets and is about to include service to the Golden Triangle Area Airport. One reported challenge to creating bus stops is that the ROWs on many key streets is fairly narrow and stops have to be achieved on private property. Several people thought that Hwy. 12 should transform into a “complete street,” which is consistent with the Partnership’s current pursuit of a BID and physical enhancements for this corridor. The County recently received a \$3 million grant from MDOT to improve Blackjack Road. One interviewee said that the town’s traffic signals need to be synchronized.

**7. Do you find the key gateway corridors into town (182, 25, 12, etc.) to be functional and inviting? If not, how might they be improved?**

Hwy. 12

Hwy. 12 was cited as a disaster both aesthetically and functionally. Problems noted include too much signage, too many driveways (many are too wide), a lack of sidewalks, overhead power lines and utility poles, and insufficient landscaping. As growth continues on the west side of town, traffic congestion will only worsen. The only positive aspect of 12 mentioned was the tax revenue that the corridor generates. The Partnership is working on a project to establish a business improvement district (BID) for 12 to enhance it. It would entail the vast majority of the road (from the Cotton Mill Market Place to Walmart). The State Main Street program, working with the Partnership, created some visual simulations illustrating how it could be improved (including the intersection of 12 and Montgomery). The Partnership created a report on this project. There is an ordinance passed some years ago that will result in the amortization of pole signs on 12 (and town-wide?) that will come into effect in about six years. One person stated that “12 needs curb appeal.”

Hwy. 182 / MLK

This corridor was noted by some as an important gateway into town. Many people cited 182 (MLK) as an area needing redevelopment and having strong potential. This road was considered “the strip” prior to the build-out of Hwy. 12. Some thought that the jail (built in the 1980s and County-owned) should be relocated to give the corridor greater potential. Research may be needed on State criteria for locating jails. Another option may be some design remedy to soften the facility’s appearance as seen from 182. The poor design quality of the developing new Family Dollar store is also viewed as a negative there. One interviewee believes that incentives from the City will be necessary to spark housing development in this corridor. Although this corridor features form-based code zoning, it was indicated that the excessive ROW widths in some segments of this road make it difficult to apply the form-based code.

The portion of MLK just north of Downtown has been an important business area for Starkville’s African American community over the past couple of decades (but not historically). However, one person stated that for the corridor to attract future investment and development, the name “MLK” would need to change for at least the segment being focused on for improvement. That rationale was based on his belief that roads named “MLK” in so many communities are in low-income areas that name hurts the marketability of the corridor. He recommended renaming it for a locally-significant African American.

Hwy. 25

While Hwy. 25 may someday develop out more, its time has not yet come. It was noted that a car dealership relocated there and could not succeed, so their building is now a church (Pine Lake Church). However, another interviewee worries about the negative impact that the corridor’s eventual development could have on the community.

**8. What is your opinion of Starkville’s existing open space, parks, and recreational facilities?**



### Needed Parks

Most people felt that more recreational opportunities are needed. Many of the small parks are heavily used. They are most heavily used in the south, according to one person. There is reportedly a need for more small neighborhood parks. It was stated by one interviewee that more parks are needed in the northeast, northwest and south. Where demographics dictate, playground equipment should be provided. One person indicated that more ball parks are needed, especially in the north. One interviewee stated that Starkville has only one public pool. It is located at Moncrief Park between North Jackson and North Montgomery. There is also a dog park there. A need for better maintenance of existing parks was also noted. It was recommended that greenways (and “complete streets”) should be used to connect parks, schools and other key locations. As noted before, the Cotton District was cited as an area lacking open space. It was indicated that there is a great deal of publicly-owned land that could be used for open space and passive recreation.

### City Parks Operations

One interviewee noted that the City’s Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee needs to do more park programming and needs to plan for new parks. The City is about to issue an RFP for a parks and recreation master plan. One person indicated that the City-owned/operated Sportsplex is roughly five to six years behind on maintenance needs and it should be leveraged more for various uses, such as for various youth sporting competitions. One person stated that the Sportsplex’s air conditioning system is inadequate. Reportedly, a 2% food and beverage tax funds the Sportsplex, but that tax has to be renewed by the State legislature every three years.

### Other Parks & Facilities

Although both are located south of town, two key natural areas for outdoor recreation are the Tombigbee National Forest and the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. One person recommended the City seeking public use of MSU recreational facilities in the summer when there are few students. MSU could also be used for sports events and cheerleading camps. The Mississippi Horse Park is operated by MSU and generates activities (barrel racing, horse shows, dog shows, etc.) that bring economic benefits to the area.

## **9. What kind of future economic development would you like to see with respect to industries and businesses occurring in Starkville? What kinds of jobs do you think are needed (by sector)?**

### Industrial Sector

Some people believe that more manufacturing jobs are needed. It was stated that no existing industrial business in Starkville has over 300 employees. An important regional industrial park exists near the airport in Lowndes County. The airport (GTR) was also cited as being critical, along with other regional employers such as Yokohama Tire Corporation in West Point. The City is reportedly planning to develop its own industrial park without “the bureaucracy of MSU.” Industrial recruiting efforts have reportedly yielded little success to date with large employers. One person stated that the Yokohama jobs average about \$30,000 a year, while the Packard jobs will average about \$50,000 a year. The Golden Triangle LINK program is an industrial recruitment program for the region ([www.cldlink.org](http://www.cldlink.org)).

### MSU Research Park

The MSU research park was developed in 1980 and it was a partnership of MSU, the City and the County. Phase 1 is built out and includes multi-tenant buildings and business incubator space. MSU just added 45 acres to the site as part of Phase 2. Yokohama Tire started in

Phase 2 for two years while the plant was being built in West Point. Unfortunately, most of the executives moved to Columbus for better schools. Phase 3 of the park is in the County and is a brownfield (former town dump). It is in the final phase and includes 10 acres of brownfield and 30 acres that are not.

#### Other Sectors

It was pointed out that “if the school [MSU] bubble busts, it could hurt the local economy.” (Note: this statement is likely unfounded since I have never heard of such a bust, and graduate school enrollment typically increases during poor economies). As with most college towns, there is a large service sector, but wages are low. One person in the financial industry indicated that the City does not seem to have a business-friendly attitude and developers have difficulties getting approvals. One person indicated that a craft store like Hobby Lobby or Michaels is needed. Another said the better clothing stores are needed (both men’s and women’s). Another desired a Target, Olive Garden and Cracker Barrel. One person having insights into retail indicated that Target will not come to Starkville until they first locate in Tupelo (stronger market), which has not happened yet. Many travel to Columbus for shopping. Even though Starkville has had a larger population than Columbus since 2009 and will continue to outgrow it, Columbus gets more retail because they have higher average incomes than in Starkville. Lowndes County has experienced significant industrial growth in recent years. One interviewee also noted the lack of available land for a “big box” store and thought Starkville is underserved for retail. A few people indicate that they thought the town was underdeveloped for retail.

#### **10. How vibrant do you find Downtown Starkville to be? What enhancements would you like to see there (physical, businesses, etc.)?**

Most people are pleased with the progress that Downtown has made in the past decade or so. A few people noted that years ago they never went Downtown, but now it is reportedly completely leased up (0% vacancies). However, one person claimed that “Downtown has never been too far down – it never hit rock bottom.” One person credited a charrette about five or six years ago with providing the Downtown with a singular vision for the future. The Main Street program is also credited with much of the recent success. That program was established in 2010, and they only had a merchants association before that. The Main Street district encompasses a very large area, including Russell Street, parts of Hwy. 182, and Cotton District. The existing farmers market was cited as being important for Downtown. One reported issue for locating restaurants and bars is the City’s required distance from schools and churches, which is double the minimum of the State. We were told that we should consider pursuit of Entertainment District designation per State laws that could avoid those regulations.

One person stated that an enhanced Downtown has helped with the “town and gown” issues because the MSU community and locals interact Downtown. Many people believe that the Downtown could benefit from some higher density housing on the edges, such as north near 182 and south in the Lampkin Street area. An interviewee said “What’s happened Downtown in the last ten years is amazing, but we need more people living downtown.” One person indicated that residential is not a permitted use on any ground floor in the Downtown, which would be a problem if someone wants to develop a building solely for housing (need to research this). Most people were surprised to learn that Downtown is completely unprotected through local historic zoning (it has only a National Register designation), but they also believe that support would be insufficient among land owners for local district designation.

**11. Are there particular areas of town that need revitalization and/or redevelopment?**

Downtown

While Downtown is doing fairly well, some stated that it could benefit from some higher density housing on the edges, such as north near 182 and south in the Lampkin Street area. One person thought the area immediately west of the new City Hall was ripe for redevelopment.

Corridors

The Hwy. 182 (MLK) corridor was cited by many as an area ripe for redevelopment, as was Hwy. 12. See question #7 above for more on those corridors. Russell Street is becoming more important, as it provides access to MSU and several key developments are occurring along it, including the recently rehabilitated cotton mill. Russell Street turns into Greek Row once it traverses MSU. An MDOT intersection improvement is planned for Russell and Hwy. 12 to enhance safety for all modes of travel.

Other Areas

Some think there is strong potential for new development and redevelopment on the north side of town between 182/MLK and 82. Examples of lower income neighborhoods needing help include Cooter's Bottom, Needmore and Yellow Jacket. Harlem Street was also noted as having "run down housing." While it is not a distressed area, a few people feel that the area around the newly rehabilitated Mill has strong potential for development.

**12. Do you believe that the existing housing stock is adequate and affordable? How might student housing fit into the equation?**

Housing Affordability & Availability

Relative to most Mississippi communities, there is a significant housing affordability challenge in Starkville, especially for houses in the \$125,000 to \$250,000 range. Another source indicated that, during the past 12 months, there have been 72 sales of homes within the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range. Sales prices typically range between \$160 and \$180 per square foot. It was indicated that houses in the \$250,000 to \$325,000 range move well, but there is a very limited inventory. An example of such a neighborhood is Sherwood Forest. Most believe that any sort of zoning requiring a "set aside" for affordable housing would not be politically viable. There is currently not much spec. housing going on right now. Almost all of it is custom. It has been stated that the high land costs in Starkville require builders to build large (expensive) houses. One person said there needs to be more variety of housing types that offer better intermediate transitions between the dominant types (single family detached and apartments)

The local school systems have impacted housing in the past. Because Starkville schools have historically been better than in the county, housing in Starkville has been a bit more expensive. However, the City and County school systems recently merged, so that dynamic may fade away with time. Many MSU alumni have second homes in Starkville, and some of that is driven by MSU sports (especially football and baseball). There is some concern regarding the potential proliferation of "game day condos" impacting the housing market.



Much of the higher end housing is being developed on South Montgomery, which has caused significant peak time traffic congestion. One person stated that “South Montgomery is where people are buying homes because they will sell when people decide to move.” That trend is particularly common for MSU faculty who plan on a relatively short stay in Starkville. It was also noted that South Montgomery is the only place where people can generally avoid students. Much of the new housing, including student housing, is occurring along Blackjack Road. The County is reportedly using \$2.5 million in TIF funding for infrastructure improvements on Blackjack Road for apartments.

#### Student Housing

MSU’s total enrollment is now 22,000. While freshman are required to live on campus, most other students live off campus. The university cannot keep pace with the demand for new dorms. Although freshmen are required to live on campus, MSU recently had to inform roughly 500 students that they could not live on campus because of a lack of rooms. They are now building two new residence halls, which will add 700 “beds” to the existing inventory of roughly 5,000 “beds.”

One cause of high housing costs cited is that investors frequently purchase housing that go on the market and convert them to rental units for students. Although many recognize the traffic problems and inconvenience created by student-oriented housing developed on the western side of town, some believe that very little additional such housing will occur there in the future. They see more future student housing being built in the Poor House Road area because of the new entrance to MSU being created on the south end of campus. MSU administrators expressed concern for the safety of students living in the County in housing that is not regulated by building codes (fires, balcony collapses, etc.). In addition to MSU students, many students at East Mississippi Community College’s Golden Triangle Campus (Mayhew - Lowndes County) and the Mississippi University for Women – “The W” (Columbus) reportedly live in Starkville.

### **13. Do you believe that the community and the university have a mutually beneficial relationship? What “town and gown” improvements do you think are needed?**

A few people stated that quality of life improvements in Starkville are needed for MSU to be able to attract and keep high-caliber faculty. It was indicated that many young professors move on to other universities after starting here. The MSU administration indicated that they plan to continually grow their enrollment at approximately 5% annually. Although freshmen are required to live on campus, MSU recently had to inform roughly 500 students that they could not live on campus because of a lack of rooms. It was reported by several people that having a winning season for the football team translates into a great economic boost. Game days can reportedly add 70,000 to 90,000 people to the existing populations of Starkville and MSU.

While there has been a lengthy history of “town and gown” friction, most believe that it is now getting better. That view is shared by the MSU administration. “There’s a spirit of cooperation now.” The City leaders and MSU administrators appear to be reaching out to each other more frequently on various issues and they have regularly-scheduled meetings. One example is the new school for grades 6-8 being built on the MSU campus as a partnership between MSU and the local school district. One person recommended the City seeking public use of MSU recreational facilities in the summer when there are few students. MSU could also be used for sports events and cheerleading camps. MSU administrators indicated that one reason they located a Barnes & Nobel bookstore on campus was to attract more local residents, but that objective has not been significantly achieved. The Mills rehabilitation and adaptive reuse is a partnership between MSU, the State, County,

City and various other entities. It will provide a much needed conference center and other resources. One person stated that an enhanced Downtown has helped with the “town and gown” issues because the MSU community and locals interact Downtown.

MSU provides its own water and electricity, while the City provides their sewage treatment. MSU representatives indicated that they would not want the campus to be further annexed into the City because they would lose the tax revenue that they currently earn, but they are fine with annexation to their east and south. In fact, they are concerned for the safety of students living in the County in housing that is not regulated by building codes. The MSU research park has strong potential for the local economy, including the aerospace industry. See question #9 for more on the park. One issue is that many of the MSU faculty spouses are underemployed (many are highly-educated).

**14. How would you describe the relationship between the City and County governments? Are there areas for improvement?**

There was not much discussion regarding this topic and few people seemed to have strong opinions. Thus, the notes below are more general about the County.

Issues Related to the County

As noted previously, the City and County school systems recently merged. It was stated that for every \$100 a Starkville property owners pays in City taxes, they are paying an additional \$249 in County taxes because there is very little tax base outside of the City. Another person indicated that the City rarely increases its tax rates, while the County and school district do. The County regularly raises its rates in small increments and the school board can raise taxes on their own without approvals from other bodies. The County owns the hospital, which is located on Hospital Road off of North Jackson (north of 182/MLK). They have considered selling it to a private operator in the past, but there is a fear that many employees might lose their jobs. If it were to go private the City and County would get tax revenue benefits. There are concerns that the County has no zoning or building codes (they recently adopted a subdivision ordinance). MSU administrators are concerned for the safety of students living in the County in housing that is not regulated by building codes. One interviewee indicated that they feared “the Highlands subdivision might become a slum.”

**15. Given that the university is located at the very eastern side of the City limits, yet much of the growth is occurring to the south and east of campus, do you think the City should expand to the east? Likewise, there is a great deal of growth occurring on the west side of town. Should the City’s boundaries expand further into such areas?**

As noted previously, MSU representatives indicated that they would not want the campus to be further annexed into the City because they would lose the tax revenue that they currently earn, but they are fine with annexation to their east and south. One person stated that future development should be to the north and west because “you can’t jump MSU.” It was noted that annexation would increase Starkville’s population, which would increase federal funding.

Many believe that development should occur in parts of town other than the west because of traffic congestion caused by students and because of the demand on infrastructure expansions. It was also indicated that much of the land northwest of town is floodplain. One person stated that the city should increase its overall density before it expands any more. It was also pointed out that the County has no zoning or building codes, but they are about to adopt subdivision regulations. This situation would obviously impact Starkville if such areas are eventually annexed. Although the City and County school systems recently merged, wealthier families in the County have been sending their children to private schools since the County schools are not very strong. One person believes that most future growth will occur to the east and north of town because, in part, of better access to Columbus and jobs. Another person believes that there may be enough growth to support a grocery store on the east side of town.

**16. Are there any communities that you have lived in or visited for which you believe there is some aspect that might be “borrowed” and adapted to Starkville?**

Several people noted that Oxford may be a good model, especially with respect to their downtown and some of their more recent development. Another person likes aspects of Fairhope, Alabama on the Gulf Coast. One person thought the Fairpark District in Tupelo would be a good model. When the issue of the jail on 182 was discussed with regard to its negative visual impact on that corridor, it was noted that Oxford has a more attractive jail. When existing retail was discussed, one person noted that a shopping center in Tuscaloosa across 82 would do well in Starkville. It has an Anthropology, Chipotle Mexican Grill, etc.).