

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

City of OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
107 COURHOUSE SQUARE
OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI 38655

October 7, 2004

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1998, the City of Oxford was at a crossroads. Looking back, we can see what has been gained and what has been lost in the changes that have come with growth. Looking ahead, we can imagine a future shaped by the choices made now.

A Collaborative Effort

A large body of work performed by citizens, City officials and staff produced the consensus reporting of the Vision 2020 project and the foundation of the Oxford Comprehensive Plan. This effort has been integrated into the analysis, discussion and debate undertaken in the preparation of the plan. City staff and the consultant worked closely with the City Planning Commission for eight months, reviewing material from every step of the plan's process with them, seeking input, insight and advice. In many cases, significant changes were made to improve the product.

This document is truly a multi-faceted synthesis of many points of view represented in the Oxford community. It is reflective and respectful of the very thoughtful efforts and recommendations of many people who have dedicated their time and efforts to Oxford's future.

A Logical Progression

The steps taken over the past five years have demonstrated the resolve and commitment to take on the Comprehensive Plan. As the adage states, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." While the task of mapping the City's future seemed overwhelming due to its sheer magnitude, it still followed logical steps, breaking the job into manageable pieces producing first Vision 2020 and the Town Guidebook. Each step was the building block for the next and the City has now reached another milestone --- not the end, but a place with a view to the future and a path to follow.

Guiding Principles

The Oxford Comprehensive Plan embraces and is driven by the community values as expressed in the Guiding Principles developed during the Vision 2020 project. It will be these ideas that the plan seeks to implement to create the City of preferred choice not mere chance.

These Guiding Principles are outlined below and will be used as the yardstick against which proposed ordinances, private development proposals and public programs and projects will be measured.

1. Recognize Oxford's historic ways of town building and use those traditions to provide a framework for future growth.

2. Understand the Mississippi hill country landscape and guide growth responsibly within it by encouraging compact development and using natural features to establish town boundaries.
3. Protect natural drainage areas to preserve water quality, provide open spaces, and reduce future storm water management costs.
4. Establish a densely connected network of streets and roads to guide future growth that equally serves automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles and future alternatives for transit.
5. Relate existing and future development to the network of streets and roads and natural drainage areas, emphasizing appropriate mixes of land uses instead of single use districts.
6. Recognize that design principles utilized for buildings, landscapes and streets form a central part of Oxford's plan for preservation, redevelopment and new growth.

A Useful Tool

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to manage growth and change in Oxford for the next 20 years. The plan is intended to be a practical guide for making decisions on specific land use and development issues in the City of Oxford and its growth areas. The plan is intended to articulate the vision for the City's future, identify tasks needing to be accomplished and provide tools to build toward that future vision. It will help place priorities for City actions in the face of limited resources. It will help communicate our vision and bring private and public sectors to work in concert to build Oxford with a better future for ourselves and the generations to follow.

2.0 COMMUNITY CHARACTER

2.1 PERSPECTIVE

Oxford is considered by most as a very special place, a unique blend of the old and the new. This character of community defining Oxford is a distinctive set of physical and cultural attributes that engenders a kinship between a people and a place and nurtures this pocket of civility. Among the prized attributes residents claim are:

- The Town Square and its historic focus of community activity
- The Town's history and traditions
- The University of Mississippi and the role it plays in the vitality of the community
- The Mississippi hill country and the beautiful, rolling forested areas of the region
- The charming residential areas surrounding the University Campus and the downtown
- The community's pride in its appearance

Growth of the community has accelerated the rate of change to the physical and social character of Oxford. Expansion of the University population, the designation of Oxford as a retirement community of choice, the small town charm and overall attractiveness of Oxford as a place to live and raise families are to list a few of the factors at work in changing the face of Oxford. Maintaining and enhancing the vibrant physical and social character of Oxford is the challenge at the core of this planning effort. The City's decisions and follow-through will have an enormous impact on the future character of Oxford and its ability to maintain its identity and continue to evoke a sense of place.

Fundamental to this future decision-making are what have become known as the **OXFORD GUIDING PRINCIPLES**.

"The Oxford Guiding Principles establish six fundamental urban design and planning principles for Oxford's future growth. Instead of long term goals to be accomplished at some future time, the Guiding Principles will guide day to day decisions of the Board of Aldermen, the Planning Commission, City Departments and other City boards and commissions."

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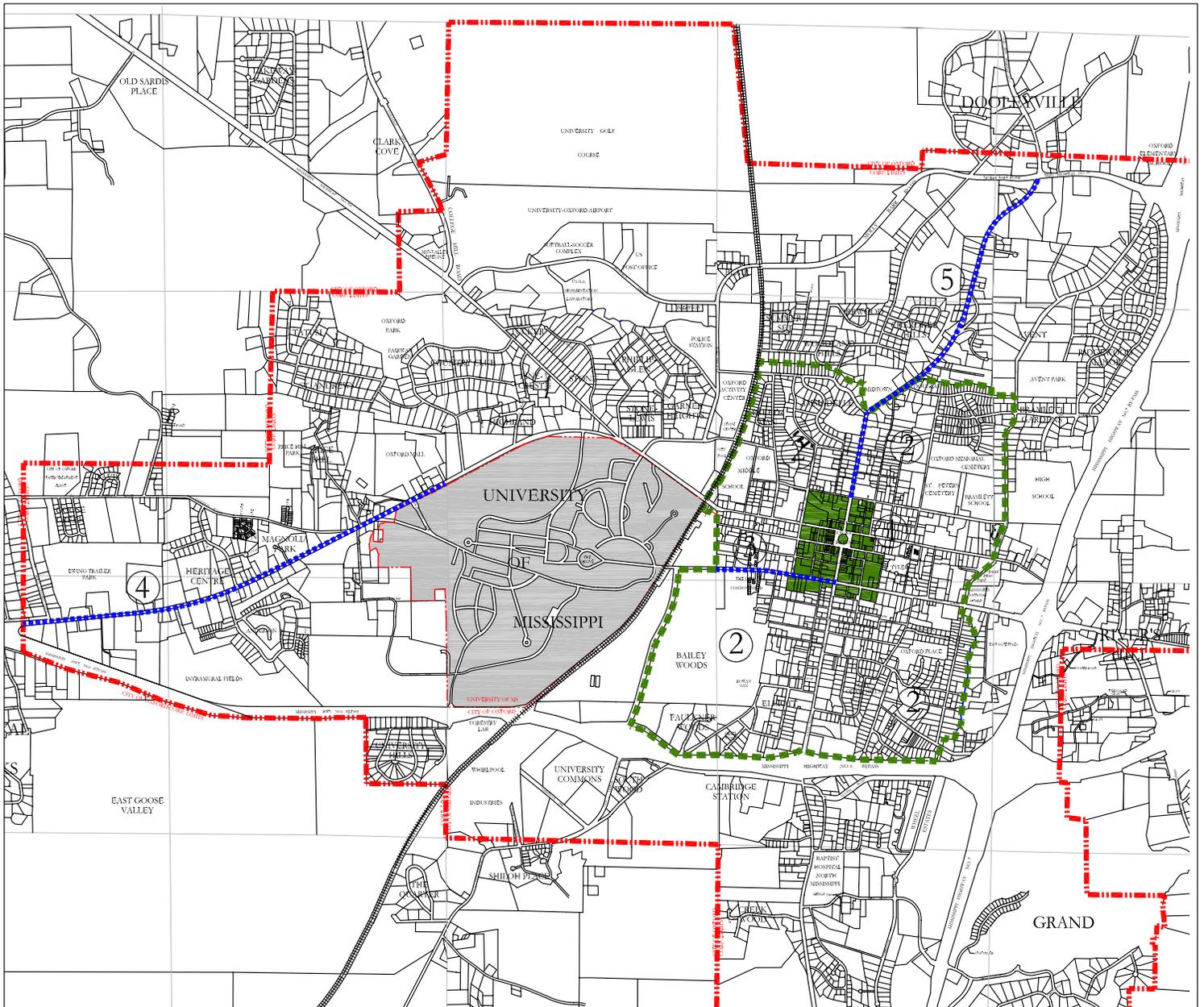
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The Oxford Vision 2020 report identified a number of these key areas of Oxford that are vulnerable or in transition to change. In a different light, these areas provide the opportunity to apply the Guiding Principles to renew or perpetuate those attributes that will sustain the character and quality that Oxford strives to maintain.

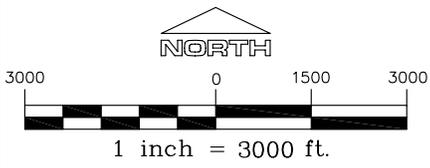
These areas are graphically depicted on Figure 1 and are further described below:

The Square and surrounding area. The courthouse square has traditionally functioned as the governmental and business hub for the community and the county. While governmental activities remain centered on and around the square the role of the square as the retail



- - - - - Corporate Limit
- - - - - Square and Environs Boundary
- - - - - Designated Study Area

- ① The Square
- ② Residential Areas Beyond Square
- ③ University Avenue from Square to Hwy. 7
- ④ Jackson Avenue Corridor
- ⑤ North Lamar Corridor



center of the area, has been fundamentally changed by the advent of increased suburban development, enhanced automobility and the evolution of retail merchandizing. Certainly the downtown is healthy by comparison to many downtown business districts across the country. Still it is imperative to continue to examine the economic and social impacts on the nature of the square and its surrounding area and determine the needs of this area to ensure its continued vitality. Redevelopment activity is especially important to monitor and even more importantly so at the fringes of the area. The health of both are dependent on each other.

Nearby residential area beyond the Square. The residential neighborhoods adjacent the Square, the Central Business District and the University are the oldest, most historically important residential areas of the community. They are a significant asset in defining the character of Oxford and yet they are the most vulnerable. Demand for off-campus housing and pressure for expansions at the edge of the business district threaten these neighborhoods with development conversions, increased traffic and other associated impacts.

University Avenue from Square to Highway 7. This area is the front door to Oxford and Ole Miss. The commercial corridor along University Avenue is in need of updating its appearance, rehabilitating and redeveloping a piecemeal, older, out-of-date pattern characterized by hodge-podge signage, no landscaping, random sidewalk installation and indiscriminate access. In addition to the Gateway appearance issues, this area will continue to be subject to increased traffic volumes.

The Jackson Avenue Corridor from the Oxford Mall to the Highway 6 Interchange. The roadway corridor contains the largest concentration of commercial development with a significant amount of “strip centers” in older buildings.

North Lamar from Jefferson Avenue to Molly Barr Road. This minor commercial corridor splits two large residential areas and contains some of the oldest commercial uses outside the Square. Increasing traffic and haphazard form of development has potential destabilizing effect on adjacent residential areas.

The purpose of the strategies and actions contained in the Comprehensive Plan is to manage growth and change so that Oxford will continue to have its special community character and quality of life. This will involve retaining the best of the past while developing new, innovative growth responses to challenges of the future. The strategies and actions set down in this Chapter concentrate on those areas identified earlier due in large part because the changes that occur in these areas are likely to have the greatest impact on those immediate areas and on the future character of Oxford.

Other areas of Oxford and surrounding growth areas are newer residential development and are not as vulnerable to the impact of change and transition.

These areas are, however, subject to the routine effects of new development and are included in Chapter 3.0 Land Use with respect to future Zoning and Land Use Controls that promote stability for existing neighborhoods.

2.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

Conserve and enhance those attributes that define Oxford's special community character and the cultural heritage of Oxford's historic neighborhoods.

Objectives

Neighborhoods: Protect the physical character and social fabric of Oxford's neighborhoods.

The Square: Implement and fund policies and programs to maintain and enhance the downtown's role as the center of Oxford's community life.

Historic Areas: Establish and maintain Historic District designations for these areas to preserve and promote this vital element of Oxford's character as a national cultural treasure.

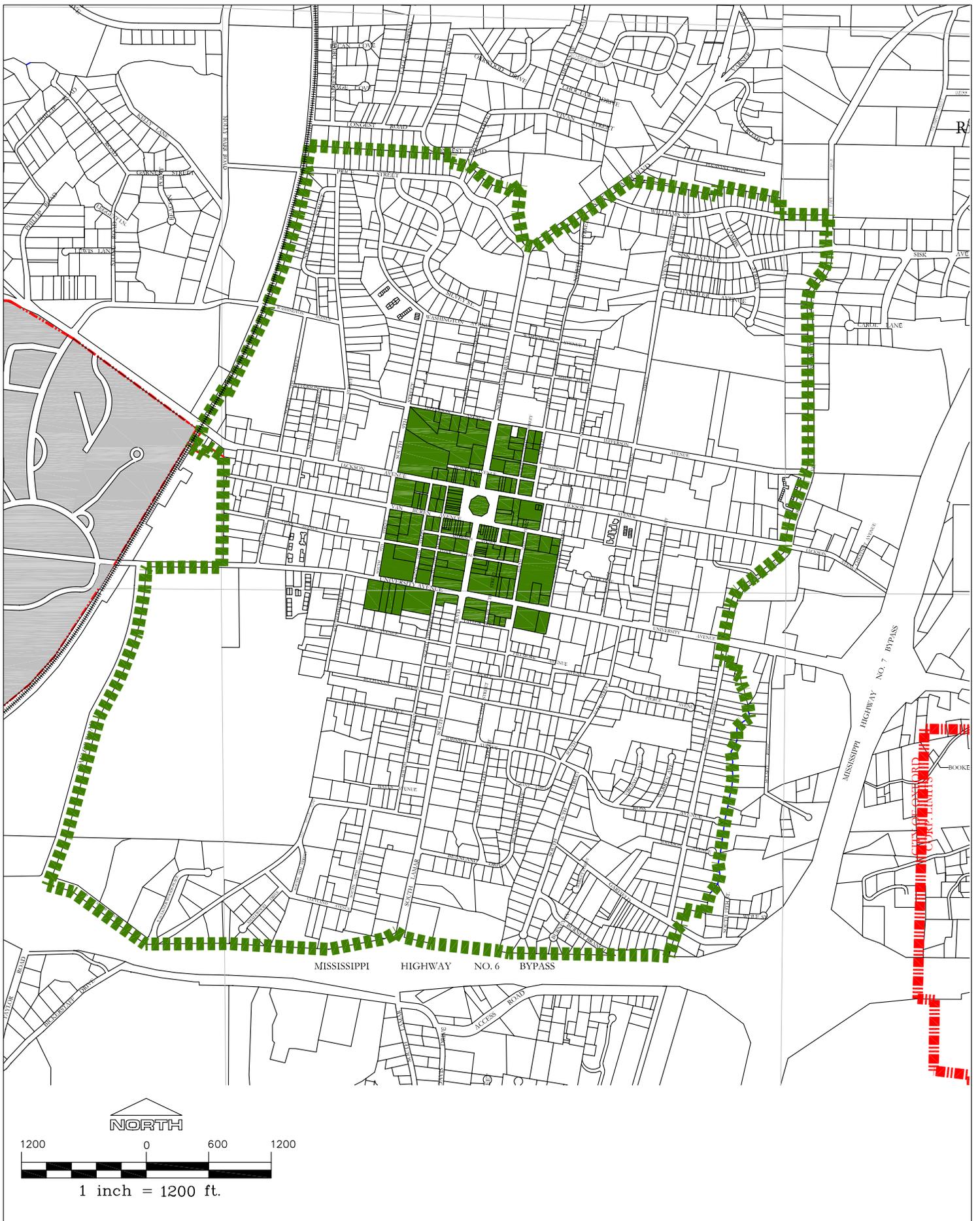
Gateways: Protect and improve the visual character and appearance of key entranceways to Oxford.

Physical Environment: Implement and fund policies and programs that protect and preserve Oxford's beautiful natural setting and distinctive historic buildings and embrace these unique assets in future development.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

2A. NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION

The overwhelming comment from the Oxford Vision 2020 project was the belief that protecting the physical character as well as the social fabric of neighborhoods is vital to maintaining Oxford's unique feel and special character. Of particular concern are the neighborhoods that surround the Square or touch the Ole Miss Campus. See Figure 2.



• Architects
 • Engineers
 • Environmental Consultants
 • Interior Designers
 • Landscape Architects
 • Planners
 • Surveyors



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Figure 2
Neighborhood Conservation Zone

2A1. Develop a Small Area planning process specifically for established residential areas.

Oxford has a very high percentage of the current incorporated area fully developed. As a result the pressure and demand for redevelopment or infill development is great. This condition is increased as a result of heightened demand for development in closer proximity to the Ole Miss campus. The importance of this is that the character of established parts of the city are being viewed as an integral, if not key, element in quality of life in Oxford and are coming more to the attention of residents and community leaders. A comparable example is the Downtown Small Area Plan recommended further in this section. Both areas, although confronting different issues, are vital and, given the importance established residential areas are in perpetuating the desired character of the community, they warrant comparable attention for small area planning studies.

Numerous factors need to be taken into consideration when proposing a planning process for established neighborhoods. Although there are examples for similar planning processes available across the country, it is imperative that any such process employed for Oxford be tailored to respond to the specific conditions of Oxford and more importantly each individual neighborhood. A brief outline of some of the key features of the process follows:

- Plans should be developed as a collaborative effort between the neighborhood residents and the City (Mayor, Board, Planning Commission, Staff). The City provides the technical expertise in preparing the plan, acts as the facilitator for neighborhood meetings, etc., and adopts the implementation measures. Heavy reliance should be made on the residents in gauging needs, identifying problems and producing clear statements of goals and objectives.
- Study areas should be determined based on the issues involved. Smaller areas may be suitable for well defined set of issues affecting a single neighborhood while wider ranging issues such as traffic or drainage may enlist several neighborhood areas.
- The process should be designed to gain the greatest participation possible. Creative means should be employed to engage the largest and most diverse audience. Do not rely on large scale meetings only, as they can intimidate otherwise valuable input.
- Plans should avoid singularizing or insulating neighborhoods apart from other neighborhoods. Extra attention should be placed on reinforcing physical interconnectivity as well as the social connections to share a greater sense of unity and purpose for the entire community.

<p>Actions: Neighborhood Small Area Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refine residential study area planning process. (City Staff)• Identify pilot study area(s). (City Staff, Mayor and Board of Aldermen)• Prepare and adopt Residential Small Area Plan and Design Guidelines. (City Staff, Neighborhood representatives, Planning Commission, Board of Mayor and Aldermen)

Ideally, neighborhood plans would extend the collaborative effort from the planning phase through the implementation of the plan. This might involve the neighborhood planning of special events, beautification awards, community gardens or home tours, while the City might adopt new parking rules, introduce a demonstration landscaping project or complete sections of missing sidewalks. It is important, if not essential, that resident involvement embraces ownership of the plan and the end products.

2A2. Reduce impact of vehicle use in residential neighborhoods.

Traffic impact on neighborhoods on the periphery of both the Ole Miss campus and the Square has continued to increase as a destabilizing factor. Higher volumes of traffic, higher vehicle speeds (including cut-through traffic) and the attendant high demand for on-street parking have encroached deeply into these neighborhoods effecting resident’s safety, enjoyment of their homes and the overall quality of life and character of these areas. Action needs to be taken to reduce the impact of traffic and parking within the affected areas. Measures which may be needed include installation of traffic calming devices, prohibition of large commercial vehicles, increased traffic enforcement and possibly the implementation of resident-only parking restrictions.

Actions: Traffic Impact

- Implement actions to address parking and traffic issues as part of Residential Small Area Plan. (City Staff, Mayor and Board of Aldermen)

2A3. Develop a strategy to counter the effects of conversion from owner-occupied residences to rental units.

Growth in the community and especially growth of the University population and an increased reliance on private rental housing has heightened resident concerns about the effects of conversion of traditionally owner-occupied single family residences to rental properties for students who live off-campus.

Actions: Rental conversions

- Engage a coordinated enforcement of occupancy parking and noise ordinances. (City Staff)
- Prepare and adopt ordinance changes to address issues such as front yard parking, etc. (City Staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board of Aldermen)

Typical concerns include housing affordability, crowding, noise, front-yard parking, lack of property up-keep and the change caused to the physical and social character of the neighborhood.

- Improve effectiveness of existing regulations by enhanced enforcement and appropriate ordinance revision. The City’s Development Code defines and restricts occupancy of single-family residential homes to no more than four (4) unrelated individuals. Other pertinent regulations such as noise, weed control, trash collection, animal control, parking and others should be reviewed with the objective of neighborhood improvement and effective enforcement.
- Introduce an information campaign for property owners and renters. Disseminating information and educating property owners about City ordinances (parking, noise, etc.) would help reduce the enforcement effort.

- Establish design guidelines for conversion of single family dwellings to rental properties. This element could readily be incorporated in neighborhood design guidelines developed in the course of neighborhood small area planning effort discussed earlier.

2B. REINFORCE THE SQUARE

Oxford can hardly be imagined without the Square. Historically the hub of commercial activity before suburban sprawl, the Square still functions as the center of City and County government and the cultural heart of the community.

Reinforcing the Square and its environs is an important objective of the Comprehensive Plan. Oxford is a special place to live and the Square is symbolic of that special community character (see Figure 2, Neighborhood Conservation Zone).

2B1. Prepare and implement a Downtown Small Area Plan

A detailed Small Area Plan for the Square and surrounding downtown area is needed to ensure the vitality of the existing downtown and maintain its role as the business, social and cultural heart of Oxford. The plan needs to develop strategies and action plans to conserve the special character embodied by the square. Special attention should be given to the following issues:

- Promote and support a diversity of business types to locate downtown.
- Aggressively pursue preservation as part of redevelopment.
- Promote pedestrian friendly design.
- Address parking as a major issue and explore location for and construction of a mixed use parking structure.
- Develop downtown design guidelines.
- Address relationships and compatibility with adjacent residential development.
- Promote mixed-use commercial/residential development.

Actions: Small Area Plan for the Square

- Formalize the planning process for study. (City Staff)
- Select and appoint an Advisory Board for study. (Mayor and Board of Aldermen)
- Identify Study Area boundaries (City Staff, Advisory Board, Mayor and Board of Aldermen)
- Prepare and adopt Small Area Study for Square including parking strategy, public improvements and design guidelines. (City Staff, Advisory Board, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board of Aldermen).

2C. HISTORIC CONSERVATION

Oxford's historic resources are a priceless asset and a foundation for the special character so valued by this community. The National Register of Historic Places includes eight entries from the community. Among them are included Rowan Oak, the William Faulkner home, the Oxford Courthouse Square Historic

District and Lafayette County Courthouse, College Church, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Isom Place, Ammadelle and the Lamar L.Q.C. House. Recently, the North Lamar Historic District was adopted and is in the process of developing design review guidelines for use by the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission.

Because of the importance of Oxford's cultural heritage to the essence of the community's character, it is essential that the strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan be devised consistent with the Oxford Guiding Principles and sensitive to the historic assets and the contributing neighborhood environment.

Examples of action strategies and the follow-on activity that may have unintended effects on the goal of historic conservation might include:

- Small Area Plan preparation for the Courthouse Square should not only look at the individual building assets but at the neighboring context of development and its contribution to the historic integrity of the place.
- The objective of encouraging mixed-use developments should be tempered with a critical assessment of the impact on neighboring historic assets to carefully gauge spillover effects such as parking, traffic, views, tree removal and other associated aspects of the proposed development.

2 C-1. Strengthen existing Historic District conservation.

The neighborhood protection strategies outlined earlier will help considerably in ensuring the stability and vitality of Oxford's older and historic neighborhoods. The Residential Conservation District designation, and follow-on small area plans (see Figure 2) offer a significant level of extra care and sensitivity in the context of redevelopment of property in these areas. To enhance the conservation of the City's historic assets, it is recommended that the City undertake additional efforts to shore up and strengthen its regulatory measures with respect to historic neighborhoods.

Extend regulatory protection to other potential historic districts. This recommendation fits nicely together with the strategy calling for the small area studies to be undertaken in the Neighborhood Conservation District. Residents within this area will have an active role in the deliberations and recommendation for this area and affords the opportunity to include historic district designations as part of the conservation toolkit.

Review procedures and requirements associated with building demolition.

<p>Actions: Historic Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore additional designation of historic districts as part of the Neighborhood Conservation small area studies. (City Staff)• Review procedures and requirements for building demolition. (City Staff)

2D. OXFORD'S GATEWAYS

Oxford's role as the region's economic center and the home of the University of Mississippi draws large volumes of traffic into the City via its major road corridors. The appearance of these visual corridors is an important first impression of the community's character. Five (5) main entrance corridors warrant consideration. These include MS Highway 7 entrances both north and south, MS Highway 6 Bypass at Highway 7 and extending west and MS Highway 314.

2D1. Oxford Master Gateway Corridor Plan

A master plan should be prepared that identifies scenic elements along the corridor and at the gateways. The plan should also identify problem areas where improvements in the way of landscape planting and/or screening or other measures are recommended. The intent of the plan is to maintain and preserve significant visual assets within the gateway corridors and to enhance the visual appearance at problem areas and key locations at the entrances to the community. The plan should make specific recommendations as to projects and establish priorities for accomplishing gateway enhancements. Elements of the Master Gateway Corridor Plan should be incorporated with the Oxford development design guidelines.

<p>Actions: Gateways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a Master Corridor Gateway Plan. (City Staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board of Aldermen).

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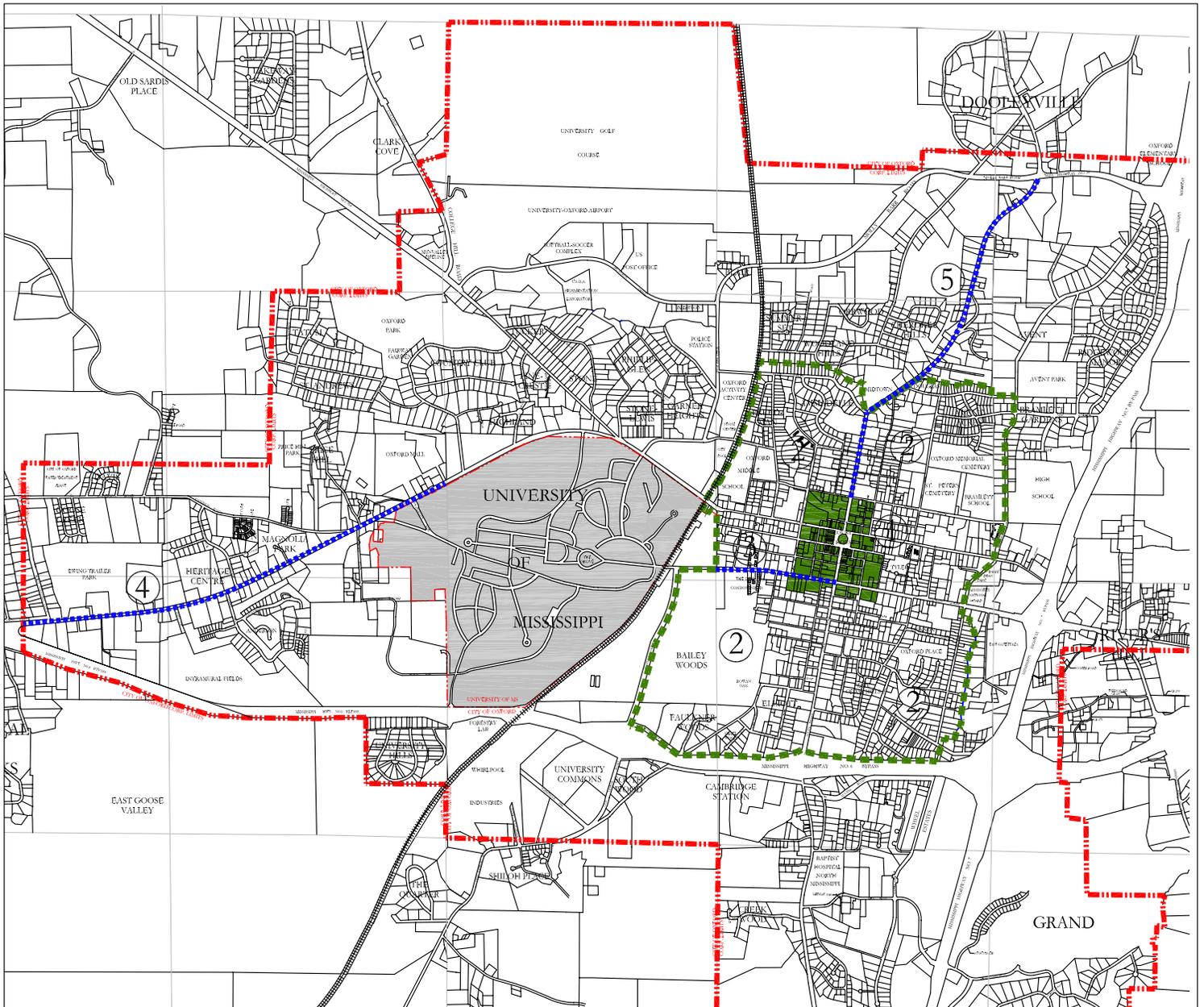
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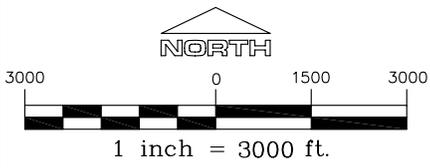
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These areas are, however, subject to the routine effects of new development and are included in Chapter 3.0 Land Use with respect to future Zoning and Land Use Controls that promote stability for existing neighborhoods.

2.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

Conserve and enhance those attributes that define Oxford's special community character and the cultural heritage of Oxford's historic neighborhoods.

Objectives

Neighborhoods: Protect the physical character and social fabric of Oxford's neighborhoods.

The Square: Implement and fund policies and programs to maintain and enhance the downtown's role as the center of Oxford's community life.

Historic Areas: Establish and maintain Historic District designations for these areas to preserve and promote this vital element of Oxford's character as a national cultural treasure.

Gateways: Protect and improve the visual character and appearance of key entranceways to Oxford.

Physical Environment: Implement and fund policies and programs that protect and preserve Oxford's beautiful natural setting and distinctive historic buildings and embrace these unique assets in future development.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

2A. NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION

The overwhelming comment from the Oxford Vision 2020 project was the belief that protecting the physical character as well as the social fabric of neighborhoods is vital to maintaining Oxford's unique feel and special character. Of particular concern are the neighborhoods that surround the Square or touch the Ole Miss Campus. See Figure 2.



• Architects
 • Engineers
 • Environmental Consultants
 • Interior Designers
 • Landscape Architects
 • Planners
 • Surveyors



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Figure 2
 Neighborhood Conservation Zone

2A1. Develop a Small Area planning process specifically for established residential areas.

Oxford has a very high percentage of the current incorporated area fully developed. As a result the pressure and demand for redevelopment or infill development is great. This condition is increased as a result of heightened demand for development in closer proximity to the Ole Miss campus. The importance of this is that the character of established parts of the city are being viewed as an integral, if not key, element in quality of life in Oxford and are coming more to the attention of residents and community leaders. A comparable example is the Downtown Small Area Plan recommended further in this section. Both areas, although confronting different issues, are vital and, given the importance established residential areas are in perpetuating the desired character of the community, they warrant comparable attention for small area planning studies.

Numerous factors need to be taken into consideration when proposing a planning process for established neighborhoods. Although there are examples for similar planning processes available across the country, it is imperative that any such process employed for Oxford be tailored to respond to the specific conditions of Oxford and more importantly each individual neighborhood. A brief outline of some of the key features of the process follows:

- Plans should be developed as a collaborative effort between the neighborhood residents and the City (Mayor, Board, Planning Commission, Staff). The City provides the technical expertise in preparing the plan, acts as the facilitator for neighborhood meetings, etc., and adopts the implementation measures. Heavy reliance should be made on the residents in gauging needs, identifying problems and producing clear statements of goals and objectives.
- Study areas should be determined based on the issues involved. Smaller areas may be suitable for well defined set of issues affecting a single neighborhood while wider ranging issues such as traffic or drainage may enlist several neighborhood areas.
- The process should be designed to gain the greatest participation possible. Creative means should be employed to engage the largest and most diverse audience. Do not rely on large scale meetings only, as they can intimidate otherwise valuable input.
- Plans should avoid singularizing or insulating neighborhoods apart from other neighborhoods. Extra attention should be placed on reinforcing physical interconnectivity as well as the social connections to share a greater sense of unity and purpose for the entire community.

<p>Actions: Neighborhood Small Area Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refine residential study area planning process. (City Staff)• Identify pilot study area(s). (City Staff, Mayor and Board of Aldermen)• Prepare and adopt Residential Small Area Plan and Design Guidelines. (City Staff, Neighborhood representatives, Planning Commission, Board of Mayor and Aldermen)

Ideally, neighborhood plans would extend the collaborative effort from the planning phase through the implementation of the plan. This might involve the neighborhood planning of special events, beautification awards, community gardens or home tours, while the City might adopt new parking rules, introduce a demonstration landscaping project or complete sections of missing sidewalks. It is important, if not essential, that resident involvement embraces ownership of the plan and the end products.

2A2. Reduce impact of vehicle use in residential neighborhoods.

Traffic impact on neighborhoods on the periphery of both the Ole Miss campus and the Square has continued to increase as a destabilizing factor. Higher volumes of traffic, higher vehicle speeds (including cut-through traffic) and the attendant high demand for on-street parking have encroached deeply into these neighborhoods effecting resident’s safety, enjoyment of their homes and the overall quality of life and character of these areas. Action needs to be taken to reduce the impact of traffic and parking within the affected areas. Measures which may be needed include installation of traffic calming devices, prohibition of large commercial vehicles, increased traffic enforcement and possibly the implementation of resident-only parking restrictions.

Actions: Traffic Impact

- Implement actions to address parking and traffic issues as part of Residential Small Area Plan. (City Staff, Mayor and Board of Aldermen)

2A3. Develop a strategy to counter the effects of conversion from owner-occupied residences to rental units.

Growth in the community and especially growth of the University population and an increased reliance on private rental housing has heightened resident concerns about the effects of conversion of traditionally owner-occupied single family residences to rental properties for students who live off-campus.

Actions: Rental conversions

- Engage a coordinated enforcement of occupancy parking and noise ordinances. (City Staff)
- Prepare and adopt ordinance changes to address issues such as front yard parking, etc. (City Staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board of Aldermen)

Typical concerns include housing affordability, crowding, noise, front-yard parking, lack of property up-keep and the change caused to the physical and social character of the neighborhood.

- Improve effectiveness of existing regulations by enhanced enforcement and appropriate ordinance revision. The City’s Development Code defines and restricts occupancy of single-family residential homes to no more than four (4) unrelated individuals. Other pertinent regulations such as noise, weed control, trash collection, animal control, parking and others should be reviewed with the objective of neighborhood improvement and effective enforcement.
- Introduce an information campaign for property owners and renters. Disseminating information and educating property owners about City ordinances (parking, noise, etc.) would help reduce the enforcement effort.

- Establish design guidelines for conversion of single family dwellings to rental properties. This element could readily be incorporated in neighborhood design guidelines developed in the course of neighborhood small area planning effort discussed earlier.

2B. REINFORCE THE SQUARE

Oxford can hardly be imagined without the Square. Historically the hub of commercial activity before suburban sprawl, the Square still functions as the center of City and County government and the cultural heart of the community.

Reinforcing the Square and its environs is an important objective of the Comprehensive Plan. Oxford is a special place to live and the Square is symbolic of that special community character (see Figure 2, Neighborhood Conservation Zone).

2B1. Prepare and implement a Downtown Small Area Plan

A detailed Small Area Plan for the Square and surrounding downtown area is needed to ensure the vitality of the existing downtown and maintain its role as the business, social and cultural heart of Oxford. The plan needs to develop strategies and action plans to conserve the special character embodied by the square. Special attention should be given to the following issues:

- Promote and support a diversity of business types to locate downtown.
- Aggressively pursue preservation as part of redevelopment.
- Promote pedestrian friendly design.
- Address parking as a major issue and explore location for and construction of a mixed use parking structure.
- Develop downtown design guidelines.
- Address relationships and compatibility with adjacent residential development.
- Promote mixed-use commercial/residential development.

Actions: Small Area Plan for the Square

- Formalize the planning process for study. (City Staff)
- Select and appoint an Advisory Board for study. (Mayor and Board of Aldermen)
- Identify Study Area boundaries (City Staff, Advisory Board, Mayor and Board of Aldermen)
- Prepare and adopt Small Area Study for Square including parking strategy, public improvements and design guidelines. (City Staff, Advisory Board, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board of Aldermen).

2C. HISTORIC CONSERVATION

Oxford's historic resources are a priceless asset and a foundation for the special character so valued by this community. The National Register of Historic Places includes eight entries from the community. Among them are included Rowan Oak, the William Faulkner home, the Oxford Courthouse Square Historic

District and Lafayette County Courthouse, College Church, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Isom Place, Ammadelle and the Lamar L.Q.C. House. Recently, the North Lamar Historic District was adopted and is in the process of developing design review guidelines for use by the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission.

Because of the importance of Oxford's cultural heritage to the essence of the community's character, it is essential that the strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan be devised consistent with the Oxford Guiding Principles and sensitive to the historic assets and the contributing neighborhood environment.

Examples of action strategies and the follow-on activity that may have unintended effects on the goal of historic conservation might include:

- Small Area Plan preparation for the Courthouse Square should not only look at the individual building assets but at the neighboring context of development and its contribution to the historic integrity of the place.
- The objective of encouraging mixed-use developments should be tempered with a critical assessment of the impact on neighboring historic assets to carefully gauge spillover effects such as parking, traffic, views, tree removal and other associated aspects of the proposed development.

2 C-1. Strengthen existing Historic District conservation.

The neighborhood protection strategies outlined earlier will help considerably in ensuring the stability and vitality of Oxford's older and historic neighborhoods. The Residential Conservation District designation, and follow-on small area plans (see Figure 2) offer a significant level of extra care and sensitivity in the context of redevelopment of property in these areas. To enhance the conservation of the City's historic assets, it is recommended that the City undertake additional efforts to shore up and strengthen its regulatory measures with respect to historic neighborhoods.

Extend regulatory protection to other potential historic districts. This recommendation fits nicely together with the strategy calling for the small area studies to be undertaken in the Neighborhood Conservation District. Residents within this area will have an active role in the deliberations and recommendation for this area and affords the opportunity to include historic district designations as part of the conservation toolkit.

Review procedures and requirements associated with building demolition.

<p>Actions: Historic Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore additional designation of historic districts as part of the Neighborhood Conservation small area studies. (City Staff)• Review procedures and requirements for building demolition. (City Staff)

2D. OXFORD'S GATEWAYS

Oxford's role as the region's economic center and the home of the University of Mississippi draws large volumes of traffic into the City via its major road corridors. The appearance of these visual corridors is an important first impression of the community's character. Five (5) main entrance corridors warrant consideration. These include MS Highway 7 entrances both north and south, MS Highway 6 Bypass at Highway 7 and extending west and MS Highway 314.

2D1. Oxford Master Gateway Corridor Plan

A master plan should be prepared that identifies scenic elements along the corridor and at the gateways. The plan should also identify problem areas where improvements in the way of landscape planting and/or screening or other measures are recommended. The intent of the plan is to maintain and preserve significant visual assets within the gateway corridors and to enhance the visual appearance at problem areas and key locations at the entrances to the community. The plan should make specific recommendations as to projects and establish priorities for accomplishing gateway enhancements. Elements of the Master Gateway Corridor Plan should be incorporated with the Oxford development design guidelines.

<p>Actions: Gateways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a Master Corridor Gateway Plan. (City Staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board of Aldermen).

3.0 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

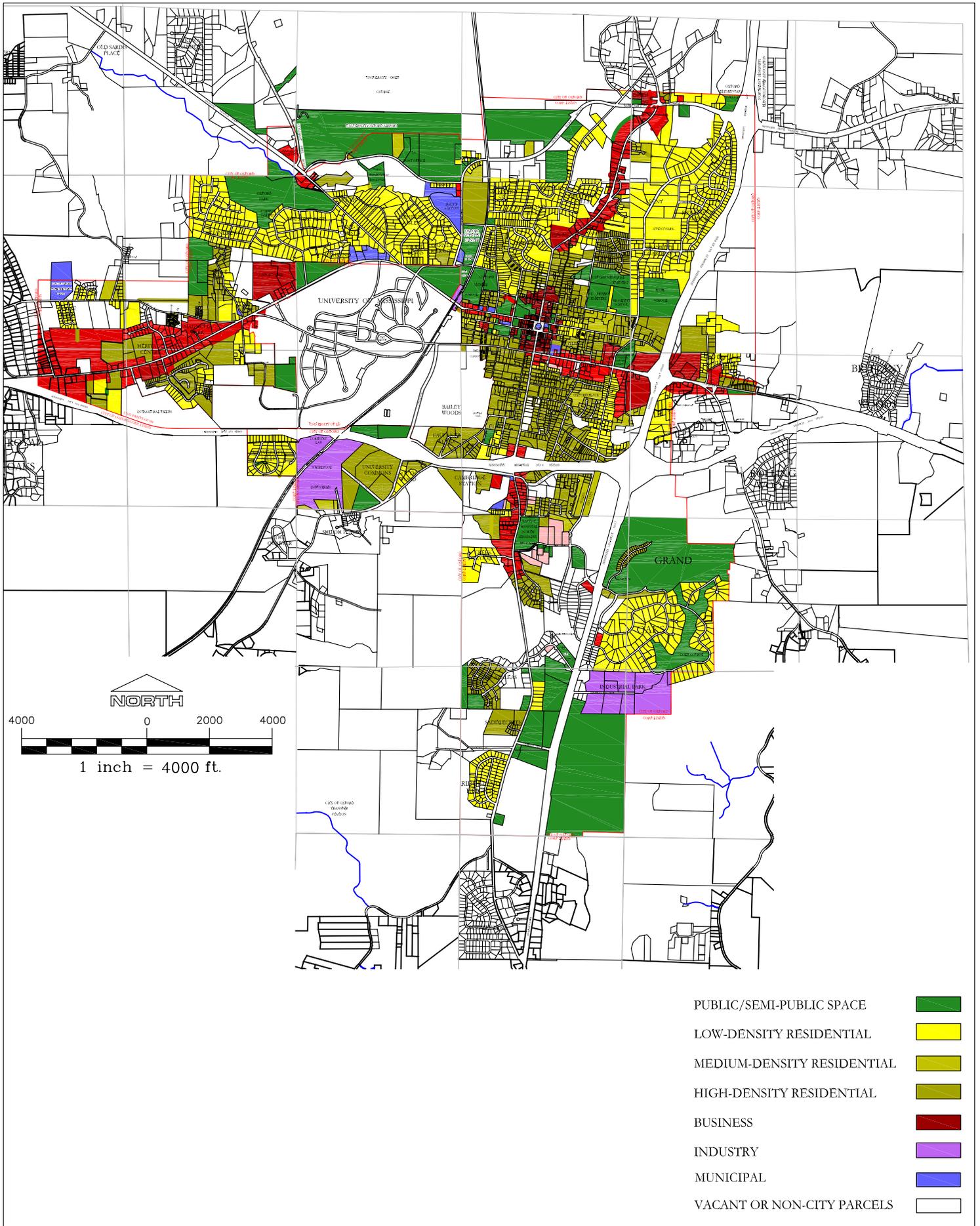
3.1 PERSPECTIVE

Existing land use in Oxford is shown on Figure 3. The current land use pattern is characterized by an identifiable "center" consisting of the downtown, adjacent traditional neighborhoods, and the University of Mississippi (U of M) campus; predominantly lower density residential areas to the north, east, and south; and commercial uses located along major roadway corridors, primarily Jackson Avenue, University Avenue, and North Lamar. Residential development is the primary land use, comprising approximately 38 percent of the land within the corporate limits of Oxford. Residential land use is unevenly split between single family and multi-family 40/60 owing to the comparable population division of students and non-student residents. The next largest use is public or quasi-public (mostly land owned by the University of Mississippi) at 20 percent of the corporate area. Privately-owned commercial and office areas combined total less than 10 percent of the city land area.

With the recent development of Grand Oaks and planned development of mixed-use communities, Oxford is a maturing community that is approaching build-out. Approximately 33 percent (1,490 acres) of the city land area (excluding committed developments and land owned by U of M) is either undeveloped or developed at very low density (one unit per three more acres).

Regardless of the scarcity of undeveloped land, development pressures in Oxford will likely continue due to strong population growth in the region, the city's attractiveness as a place to live, and the continued expansion of the Old Miss enrollment. As a result, land use planning will continue to focus on new development and managing infill and redevelopment of underutilized or previously developed properties. Areas in transition, such as older commercial corridors and neighborhoods experiencing change, will be especially susceptible (see Chapter 2.0, Community Character).

Population projections have been developed for the City based upon an assessment of existing land use, existing zoning, and housing growth trends within Oxford. These projections assume that, by the year 2020, all of the undeveloped land within the corporate limits of Oxford will be developed, and that some of the land that is currently developed at very low intensity will be redeveloped. Assumptions regarding infill and redevelopment of currently developed areas, as well as growth in the University of Mississippi student population, are also built into the assumptions. The projections indicate that the city's population is likely to grow from approximately 21,173 (Census 2000) to approximately 44,012 persons in 2020, a 50+ percent increase. During the same period, the number of dwelling units is projected to grow from approximately 6,976 (Census 2000) to 18,158 in 2020. This represents an increase of approximately 11,182 or about 560 units per year.



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Figure 3
 Existing Land Use Plan

A major controlling factor in these projections is the continuing upward trend in enrollment at the University. Due to the uncertainty that may exist with growth due to increased enrollments, it is imperative that this factor be monitored annually with adjustments accordingly.

3.2 FUTURE LAND USE

The desired future pattern of land use in Oxford is shown on Figure 4. This pattern is largely an extension of existing land use, reflecting the importance of maintaining Oxford's established community character. At the same time, the Land Use Plan and supporting strategies outlined in this chapter are designed to accommodate projected growth in ways that complement the existing built and natural environment. Key features of the plan include the following:

A. Residential Uses

- Low (1-4 units / acre) and medium (4-8 units / acre) residential development will remain predominant in terms of land area utilization. Existing high-density residential development (8-15 units / acre) is also designated on the plan. The City's policies should strive to maintain and enhance the character of these established residential areas, encourage a diverse low-to-medium range of new development and redevelopment, and regain a more suitable balance between single family and multi-family residential land use. Specifically new residential districts should be added to the Development Code to provide exclusively for single family residential development on smaller tracts. Areas surrounding the downtown and University of Mississippi campus have been designated as "residential conservation areas" because they are considered to be particularly susceptible to change and hence should be a focus of neighborhood protection policies (see Chapter 2.0).

B. Commercial / Mixed Uses

- Existing commercial and office areas are designated to remain in their current uses. However, neighborhood-serving commercial centers will be encouraged to develop in the future with a greater mix of uses (see Strategy 3 A-2). In addition, a new designation of Neighborhood Commercial is recommended to allow for appropriate limited commercial use as a compatible support for and transition into adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Undeveloped or partially developed sites that are suitable for nonresidential development are designated mixed-use, with the objective of integrating office, commercial, and residential development to the greatest extent possible. This is consistent with the designation of special opportunity areas as locations for mixed-use development (see Strategies 3 A-1 and 3 A-2).

- The downtown is designated to remain as the center of the community ("Town Center"), using a Downtown Small Area Plan as a guide for future development (see Strategy 3B-1). The emphasis will be on attracting a diverse business mix in addition to preserving the scale and character of the existing buildings and streetscape. Appropriate infill and redevelopment opportunities will be encouraged elsewhere in the downtown as is expected to be recommended in the Small Area Plan.
- The recent Wal-Mart and Home Depot developments, along with the Oxford Mall, and East Gate Plaza and Convention Center are shown as "Village Centers" with a mix of uses.

C. Institutional / University Uses

- Existing and planned community-serving facilities are shown as institutional land. In addition to lands designated for institutional use, the plan shows potential school sites identified by the City for possible use by the Oxford School Board. This designation will allow the School Board to reserve a school site when a subdivision application is submitted for approval, if the subdivision application includes part or all of a school site designated on the Land Use Plan. If the School Board decides to reserve a site, it should have 18 months from the date of final subdivision approval in which to acquire the property.

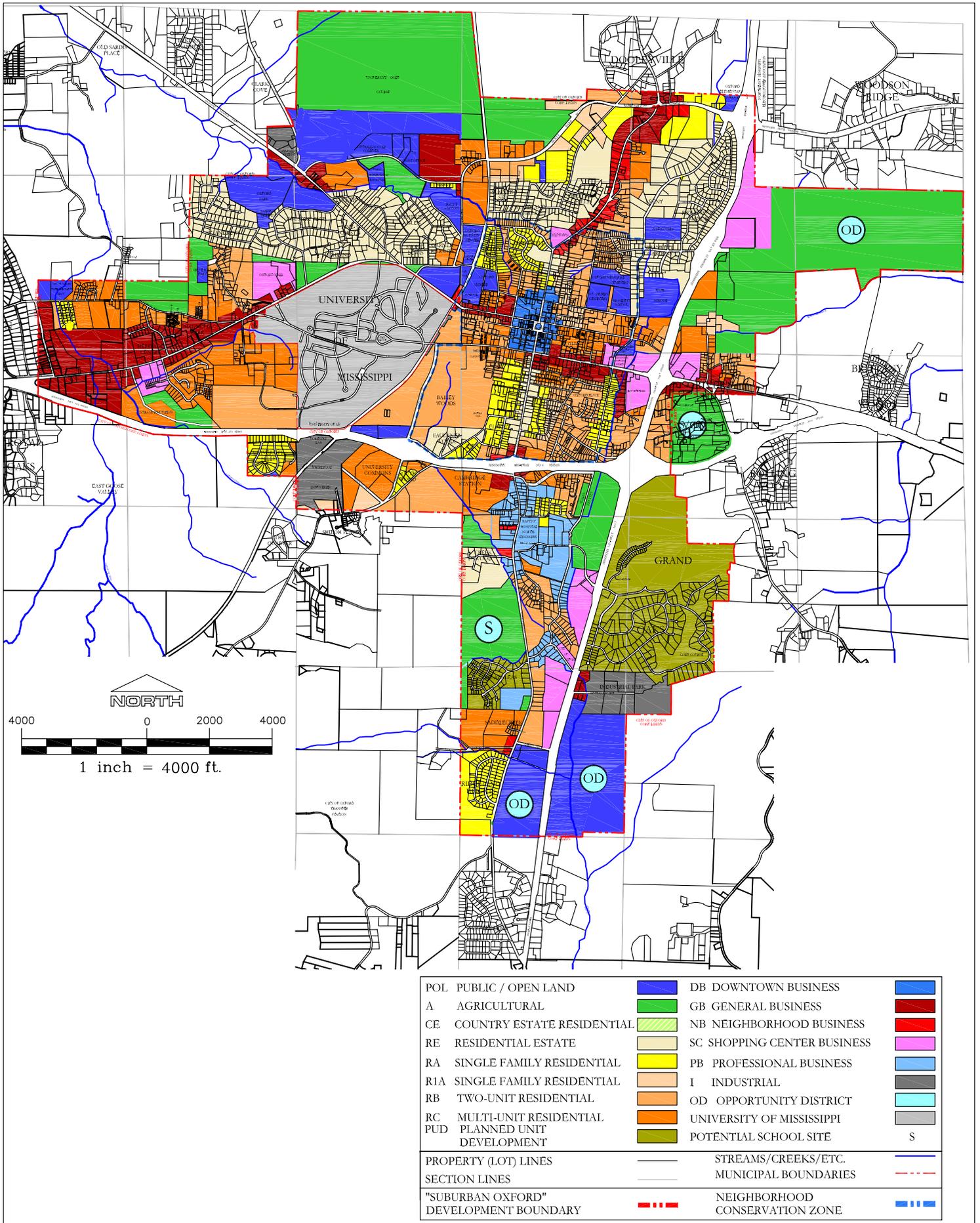
D. Parks, Open Space, and Conservation Areas

- Existing parks and open spaces are indicated, along with selected locations for possible dedication as open space or parkland in the future. It is expected that preparation of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan will result in the designation of additional open space areas.

E. Special Designation Areas

- Key development opportunity areas are designated as "D" on the Future Land Use Plan (see Figure 4). These areas are appropriate for creative development or redevelopment to achieve Comprehensive Plan objectives (see Strategy 3A-1). Use of the Planned Unit Development process is recommended for these special designation areas as a means of measuring development in keeping with the Guiding Principles.
- Potential school sites have been selected and are shown on the Land Use Plan as "S".

The Land Use Plan is intended as a guide for future land use decision-making, including changes to zoning. As a priority implementation action, the City should adopt a comprehensive rezoning of areas of Oxford whose present zoning is not in conformance with the Land Use Plan.



F. Annexation Areas

- Areas currently in unincorporated Lafayette County but identified as high priority for annexation (see Strategies 6B-1 and 6B-2) should be individually studied to determine future land use and zoning along with the Plan of Service needed to support the area.
- New zoning district classifications to provide for single-family residential development on smaller lots is recommended as a transition to the larger lots developed in the County.

3.3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Goal

Promote orderly development and redevelopment to achieve appropriate and compatible use of land.

II. Objectives

Form of Development: Establish a plan for future land use (including a revised Land Development Code) and incentives for Oxford that provide for land use patterns, types, and densities that contribute to achieving the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Timing of Development: Implement coordinated land use policies, recommendations, and capital improvements that provide for development to occur concurrently with the provision of adequate public services and facilities.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

3A. Development Form

The Land Use Plan is designed to conserve and protect existing residential areas and places of special character, while providing for growth and redevelopment in areas most suitable to accommodate them. Neighborhoods susceptible to change will be protected by the strategies described in Chapter 2.0 (Community Character). New development forms will be encouraged in selected locations through a variety of mechanisms as described below.

3A-1 Encourage development of selected "opportunity areas" to achieve Comprehensive Plan objectives.

The Land Use Plan and supporting strategies identify areas of Oxford that are appropriate for development or redevelopment to achieve one or more Comprehensive Plan objectives, such as supporting alternative transportation

Actions: Future Land Use

- Modify zoning to be consistent with the Land Use Plan. (Mayor and Board, Planning Commission).

Measure of Progress: Future Land Use

- Adopt comprehensive zoning consistent with Land Use Plan.

(transit, walking, and biking), providing housing choice, and preserving open space. These areas vary in character but have two common attributes. First, their current use is subject to change in the future. Second, their physical character and location in relationship to established land uses and public facilities are suitable to support development. Development opportunity areas include the following:

- *Areas appropriate for mixed-use development.* These include mixed-use development areas designated on the Land Use Plan and existing and potential mixed-use centers (see Strategy 3A-2).
- *Specific sites appropriate for higher density residential development* (up to 15 units per acre) to expand housing choice, including potential locations in the downtown and in the northwest area. (Residential development in the northwest area should be combined with provision of open space and recreational facilities using principles of conservation development.)
- *Specific sites appropriate for low to medium density residential development* (from 4 to 8 units per acre) also to expand housing choice.
- *Selected sites that are either undeveloped or developed below their zoning capacity.*

In these areas, the City should promote creative development that achieves Comprehensive Plan objectives through regulatory policies, incentives, and public/private partnerships. Effects on community character and established land uses will need to be taken into consideration. For example:

Transportation impacts (traffic and support of other transportation modes).

Visual character, in particular, views from public roadways

Interface with adjacent residential neighborhoods. (This issue encompasses both the need for appropriate buffers where residential neighborhoods abut higher intensity uses and the desirability of pedestrian and other physical connections between residential areas and centers of community activity, such as mixed-use shopping areas.)

3A-2 Encourage mixed-use development form.

In the conventional suburban development pattern land uses such as residential subdivisions, employment areas, and retail centers are isolated from one another. This pattern both contributes to a lack of community identity (in contrast to the "synergy" created by mixed uses in a traditional, functioning downtown) and creates total dependence upon the automobile to perform basic daily activities such as working and shopping.

Actions: Development Opportunity Areas

- Promote creative development of designated development opportunity areas through regulatory policies, incentives, and public/private partnerships (City staff, Mayor and Board).

Actions: Mixed-Use Development

- Evaluate and amend the mixed-use provisions of the Development Ordinance to promote mixed-use development (City staff, Mayor and Board).

Measures of Progress: Mixed-Use Development

- Address mixed-use development in the comprehensive development ordinance revision.
- Develop a strategy to promote mixed-use development.

By definition, a mixed-use development consists of several types of activity, each of which could function independently, but that would benefit from proximity to each other. For example, residential units could be located on upper stories above ground level stores or in residential development within easy walking distance of a neighborhood retail center, thus affording ready access to businesses that provide groceries and other goods and services needed on a daily basis. Adding office space would create the opportunity to live, work, and shop in the same vicinity, while a public facility or facilities such as a park, community center or school would increase the range of activities and provide a community focus.

The City has identified mixed-use zoning as a desirable development pattern and has encouraged mixed uses in specific developments. Promoting additional mixed uses – both within individual developments and in land use relationships between proximate properties – is a key Comprehensive Plan strategy. Three primary contexts are proposed for application of the mixed-use concept.

- Areas where office or a combination of office and commercial (retail and service establishments) area the primary uses. Those areas designated on the Land Use Plan or office mixed-use should include smaller scale retail / service and possibly residential development as supporting uses, while areas designated for office and commercial mixed-use could potentially include residential.
- Existing commercial centers that serve surrounding neighborhoods. Oxford's existing land use pattern includes a number of small (neighborhood-scale) and medium (community-scale) commercial centers that serve surrounding neighborhoods. Midtown on North Lamar Avenue is a good example of a neighborhood-scale commercial center, while community-scale centers include the downtown and the Jackson Avenue shopping centers. Opportunities to introduce or reinforce mixed-use characteristics in these centers and adjacent areas should be explored. For example, residential and / or office uses could be added when larger shopping centers are infilled or redeveloped. The Oxford Mall area has several different uses (commercial, residential, University, and park) located in close proximity to each other, but would benefit from sidewalk connections between the uses. These existing neighborhood and community-scale commercial areas are encouraged to become enhanced mixed-use centers.
- Areas suitable for development as new neighborhood-serving, mixed-use centers. In addition to existing commercial areas, two undeveloped sites are recommended as potential mixed-use development and designated as Special Opportunity Areas (Figure 4).

The city should undertake several initiatives to encourage mixed-use development and to make such development a more attractive option. A new mixed-use zoning district should be considered to allow for infill or redevelopment of existing neighborhood or community-scale shopping centers with a wider range of uses. This could be in the form of an overlay district that sets criteria for the design of mixed-use centers and is tied to the locations shown on Figure 4.

Finally, the City should take a proactive approach to encouraging desirable mixed-use development through appropriate incentives, partnerships with the private sector or Ole Miss (with respect to the Oxford Mall tract), and consideration of developer competitions for publicly owned property.

3A-3. Preserve open space in residential developments through the application of conservation development principles.

The unique hill country terrain indigenous to Oxford and Lafayette County is an important feature in the esthetics and character of the community and warrants extra care in the design of new development.

Conservation development (also referred to as conservation subdivision design) is an innovative form of residential development that reduces lot sizes so as to set aside a substantial amount of the property as permanently protected open space, while maintaining the overall permitted density. It differs from "cluster development" in three important ways. First, it sets much higher standards for the quantity, quality, and configuration of the resulting open space. Where cluster ordinances typically require only 25 to 30 percent open space to be set aside, conservation subdivision designates at least 50 percent of the unconstrained land as permanent, undivided open space. Unlike most cluster provisions, this figure is based on "density zoning" that counts only the acreage that is high, dry, flood-free and not steeply sloped. In this way, important natural resources (e.g., stream corridors and woodlands) and historic or cultural features can usually be included within the minimum required open space.

Second, rather than leaving the outcome purely to chance, this flexible design approach can be strongly encouraged or even required in areas with noteworthy resources or to achieve water quality objectives in sensitive watersheds. The encouragement could take the form of strong density disincentives to discourage land-consuming layouts of large lots, combined with density bonuses for land-conserving design exceeding a minimum open space requirement (e.g., 50 percent). In certain districts where the resources are critically important or particularly sensitive, the Development Ordinance could simply require all plans to follow the principles of conservation subdivision design.

Third, the protected land can be configured so that it will, wherever practicable, contribute to creating an interconnected network of open space throughout the community, linking resource areas in adjoining subdivisions and / or providing

Actions: Preserve Open Space

- Review Development Code to address conservation subdivision opportunities and revise Code accordingly. (City staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board).

Measure of Progress: Preserve Open Space

- Address conservation issue in comprehensive revision of Oxford Development Code.

buffers between new development and pre-existing parks or other dedicated open space areas. From this standpoint, conservation development could become a tool to help implement a community-wide greenway network.

For conservation subdivisions to become a preferred development practice, certain revisions will need to be incorporated into the Development Ordinance. These revisions include conservation zoning provisions and additions to the Subdivision Regulations to achieve conservation subdivision design. The revisions would replace the existing Planned Unit Development and provisions in the Subdivision Regulations. Potential changes that should be evaluated by the City include the following:

- Provisions for a "menu" of options regarding density and the amount of the property required to be preserved as open space, including incentives for higher open space percentages.
- Adjustment of mandatory open space requirements.
- Enhanced standards for the design, use, ownership, and maintenance of dedicated open space areas.
- "Density zoning" provisions that tie the permitted density of both conservation and conventional developments directly to the ability of the site to support it. In other words, tracts with high development suitability (flat, open, dry, etc.) would be eligible for full density, while other parcels of the same overall size but with less buildable land would qualify for proportionally fewer dwellings.

Refinements to the Subdivision Regulations to define a process for designing conservation subdivisions that organizes development around open space resources rather than vice versa.

3B. SMALL AREA PLANNING

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to set an overall vision and policy framework for the long-range development of Oxford, together with short- and mid-term actions designed to set the community on the path of achieving the future desired by residents. An important part of the action program will be to prepare and implement plans that address issues in specific sub-areas of the City in more detail than is appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan. The scale addressed by these "small area plans" could range from a single neighborhood or group of neighborhoods to a roadway corridor or larger geographic sector of Oxford.

3B-1 Prepare and adopt small area plans to implement Comprehensive Plan concepts.

As part of preparing the Comprehensive Plan, three "focus areas" were identified that are in needs of special attention due to a combination of their unique characteristics, susceptibility to change, and importance to the future of the City. These focus areas are:

- Downtown Square
- North Lamar Historic Area
- University Avenue Corridor

These focus areas are priority candidates for the completion and adoption of small area plans. Additional candidates for future small area plans include the following:

- Jackson Avenue Corridor
- Burney Branch Neighborhood
- Midtown / Lamar Avenue North

3C. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

In addition to the implementing regulations themselves, the development review and approval process can be a critical tool to encourage or discourage development, and, where encouraged, to guide it in desired directions. No set of regulations is perfect. Like the plans they are intended to implement, regulations require periodic revision to keep pace with policy changes and to reflect the cultural, economic, and technological characteristics of the community. The City is committed to improving its development regulations and the process by which they are implemented to better serve the needs of citizens, businesses, developers, and staff. Examples of measures that can be taken include more user-friendly regulations, use of new technologies to enhance dissemination of information about development applications, and expedited development review processes in targeted locations (e.g., the downtown) to facilitate desired types of development.

3C-1 Improve the development review process.

Providing opportunities through the Development Review Process for informal, early communication on development proposals between applicants and the public is an effective way to promote positive dialogue among the parties, ideally contributing to faster and better development outcomes.

The City already has early notification requirements in place. Informal public information meetings are scheduled after receipt of a development application to present the proposal to neighbors and the public in general. This early participation process could be further enhanced by using contemporary technologies such as public access / cable TV and the Internet. Not only do

Actions: Small Area Planning

- Develop and adopt small area plans. (City staff, residents, City Council, Advisory Boards)

Measures of Progress: Small Area Planning

- Complete at least one small area plan every two years.

these technologies improve the timing of notification over traditional mailings and newspaper notices, but they can provide expanded opportunity for feedback and the flexibility to continuously update information on development applications and their status.

An additional result of such increased interaction will be to help reduce the uncertainty of the review process for both sides, by making mutual expectations known at an early stage. In addition, the City should evaluate its development regulations and review processes to identify areas where clarification and / or standardization of the requirements and limitations can help to increase, to the maximum extent possible, predictability for developers as well as for neighbors of the proposed development. This process may be further strengthened by tying it to the residential area planning and design guideline strategies described in Chapter 2.0 (Community Character). Because these plans and guidelines are intended to be tailored to the specific characteristics of residential developers as to what is expected and result in projects that are, from the outset, more suited to the neighborhood's unique character and development pattern.

Provided that they are clear and definite, development review requirements can also be used to achieve area-specific goals and objectives. For example, in residential conservation areas where the primary emphasis is on protection of existing character, the notification process can be increased and the overall review process be made more elaborate. On the other hand, in areas where certain types of development are desired, the review process can be simplified and expedited in order to attract such development. In the downtown area, for example, requirements should be customized to encourage the development and redevelopment of property consistent with the Downtown Small Area Plan.

Another possibility for improving the development review process is to expedite the processing of projects of limited scope and impact. This mechanism could be used as a tool to support small businesses. Administrative or staff review is a mechanism commonly used to expedite processing of limited scope projects. The meaning of "limited scope" would need to be clearly defined by setting thresholds that would trigger specific review process requirements.

Actions: Development Review Process

- Review and improve the current development review process. (City staff, Planning Commission, City Council)

Measures of Progress: Development Review Process

- Address the development review process in the comprehensive development ordinance revision.

4.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

4.1 PERSPECTIVE

Community facilities include services and infrastructure provided by the City of Oxford for the benefit of City residents. They include the following:

- Water and sewer facilities
- Solid waste facilities
- Fire stations and services
- Police
- Libraries
- Parks and recreational facilities

In order to meet the needs of a growing community, the City of Oxford must be proactive in planning public facilities. A Community Facilities Plan is essential if a proactive approach to providing public facilities and services is to be implemented. The plan will establish realistic requirements to meet the current and future demands on the various types of community facilities. It should also address issues for development timing and be consistent with the Land Use Plan (Chapter 3.0), and address the relationship between the demand for community facilities, and the City's ability to provide these facilities. It should be noted here that the Comprehensive Plan does not include schools or healthcare facilities. While these are important assets to the community, they lie outside of the City's scope of authority to plan for or provide.

4.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Goals

Provide community facilities and services that meet the physical, social, and cultural needs of Oxford's population.

II. Objectives

A. City-wide Criteria: Locate, design, and operate community facilities and services to promote public health, safety, and well-being within Oxford's Urban Services Area.

B. Facility Types and Standards: Establish standards or performance criteria for the following types of facilities and services, to ensure that they adequately meet community needs:

- Water and sewer
- Solid waste management
- Police protection
- Library services

- Fire protection
- Parks and recreation

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

4A. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Results of the Vision 2020 planning process reveal that the City of Oxford has generally done well in providing basic public facilities and services to serve the growing population. Provision of water and sewer service, public safety, and municipal facilities has generally kept pace with or, based on planned capital improvements, is expected to maintain adequate levels of system capacity. Nevertheless, growth-related problems are being experienced in some areas, notably parks and recreation, and in the long term, water and sewer systems.

The prospect of a continued high growth rate underscores the need to be proactive in planning for and meeting the community's needs for public facilities and services.

An example of such a proactive approach is development and use of a "growth management standard" for the provision of community facilities and services (see Chapter 3.0, Land Use and Development). One of the recommended components of this standard is the adoption of level of service standards, or similar performance criteria, to measure the capacity of each type of public facility or service. The level of service standards may be derived from government requirements, professional or industry standards, or even from measuring citizen expectations through surveys or other means.

Examples of such standards were incorporated in the Vision 2020 Guidebook, a sample of which is included on the following page.

A Community Facilities Plan is essential if a proactive approach to providing public facilities and services is to be implemented. This plan will set realistic requirements to meet the needs of the current and future population for the various types of public facilities provided by the City. Based upon a comparison of the current and programmed provision of public facilities to the levels of service or other performance standards identified in the plan, planning can be provided for needed capital improvements or other means of meeting future needs.

The Community Facilities Plan should also address issues of development timing and support of and consistency with the Future Land Use Plan. The suggested growth management standards may be the basis for dealing with these issues by adopting a staged plan for the expansion of facility capacity. For example, different levels of service may be associated with different land use intensities within the established Urban Growth Boundary.

Figure 5

Recreation Facility Inventory and Estimation of Future Needs								
Facility Or Measure	Exist. Acres 2000	Existing Acres/ 1000 Daytime FP	Recom. Standards (acres/ 1000 pop.)	Acres Needed or Planned 2020	New Acres Needed or Planned (based on current LOS)	Acres Needed or Planned 2020	Acres Recom. LOS	New Acres Needed or Planned based on avg. of recom. LOS)
Daytime Functional Population	28,660			57,074				
Parks								
• Mini-Park	1.4	0.05	.25 to .50	2.8	1.4	21.4	0.375	20.0
• N ^o rborhood park or Playground	17.7	0.62	1.0 to 2.0	35.2	17.5	85.6	1.5	67.9
• Community Park	110.6	3.86	5.0 to 8.0	220.3	109.7	371.0	6.5	260.4
Totals	129.7	4.53	6.25 to 10.5	258.3	128.6	478.0	8.375	348.3

Finally, the Community Facilities Plan should address the relationship between the demand for public facilities and the City’s fiscal ability to provide those facilities at the level of service standards set forth in the Plan. The growth management standards established by Strategy 6.A.2 should include provisions for mitigation actions or payments by applicants to offset the demands of new development on public facilities and services. While the public agencies are still responsible for implementing capital improvements, this would provide a valuable source of funding that directly relates service demands to service costs.

The parameters of the Community Facilities Plan are described below in the context of the six types of public facilities and services.

4 A-1 Water and Wastewater Systems

Objective: Provide safe, adequate water supplies and wastewater treatment capacity for the community.

Water and sewer service is provided by the City of Oxford to serve Oxford as well as other nearby areas in Lafayette County.

Potable water is delivered to Oxford’s residents, businesses, industry and other facilities located within the Urban Growth Boundary using a system of trunk lines and mains, water storage facilities, and booster pumps. The raw water is treated at the City of Oxford Water Treatment Plant. Present capacity of the plant is 7.5 millions of gallons per day (MGD). Unlike water supply reservoirs, which are sized to meet average daily demand calculated over a year, treatment facilities must be able to meet the maximum or peak demand of any given day. Current peak daily demand in the service area is approximately 3 MGD.

Additionally, treated water storage capacity, needed to maintain adequate water flow and pressure throughout the system, is 2.5 million gallons.

Sanitary sewer treatment facilities are located at the City of Oxford Wastewater Treatment Plant off Highway 7 South and treated wastewater is discharged into the Yocana River. The plant has a current capacity of 3 MGD, with about 1.5 MGD of unused, uncommitted capacity available to serve new development. However, anticipated growth is expected to exhaust current excess capacity within the period of this planning forecast. Further, expansion of or improvement to the existing facilities at the current location are not likely to be attainable.

Development in the adjacent areas of the county provides sewer service, either by on-site septic systems or by small-scale treatment plants operated by private utility districts.

Strategies / Actions:

The City should develop a Water and Sewer Strategic Plan, and provide follow-through with the following actions:

- Adopt appropriate performance standards.
- Monitor the City's total capacity needs in order to ensure a sufficient water and sewer service supply to meet projected demands.
- Monitor service contracts for development outside the City and re-examine payment and rate policies currently in practice
- Support water reuse and conservation efforts.
- Work with Lafayette County and private utility providers to minimize development impacts and provide for construction of utilities consistent with Oxford's design requirements..

The City will also continue to encourage private sector financing of capital costs associated with future expansion of water and sewer facilities necessary to serve new development.

4 A-2 Solid Waste Management

Objective: Develop and implement a solid waste management plan that incorporates waste reduction goals.

Currently, the City of Oxford Landfill on Pea Ridge Road serves the solid waste disposal needs of Oxford and Lafayette County by acting as a transfer station. All garbage is transported by truck to the Three Rivers landfill in Pontotoc County, a distance of 30 miles. Brush and yard waste is disposed of in the Oxford Landfill and only white goods and tires are recycled.

The greatest challenge in the area of solid waste management is the reduction in the amount of waste discarded. If this cannot be accomplished, the costs will

Actions: Water and Sewer

- Coordinate with Lafayette County in developing and implementing the Water and Sewer Strategic Plan. (City of Oxford, Lafayette County).

Measure of Progress: Water and Sewer

- Adopt and implement a Strategic Water and Sewer Plan.

continue to rise and the life span of the landfill will more rapidly decline. The City of Oxford has initiated a broad based effort to attack the solid waste disposal problem. A major aspect of this initiative should be the development of a Countywide Solid Waste Management Plan. Specific waste reduction measures contained in the plan should include:

Construction of a Materials Recovery Facility for processing recyclables.

- Adoption of volume-based solid waste fees.
- Adoption of bans on landfilling recyclables.
- Establishment of alternative methods for managing yard waste debris
- Increasing recycling and general waste prevention education. This should include programs that encourage the following: reuse, repair, and composting; recycling-based manufacturing and the use of other waste prevention technologies such as reducing the use of packaging; and reductions in the use of toxic, long-lived, and non-recyclable materials.

4 A-3 Police Protection

Objective: Expand facilities and staff as needed to meet future community needs for police protection.

The City of Oxford Police Department is composed of seven divisions, including the patrol, detective, housing, traffic, dispatch, records and administration divisions. The existing Police Headquarters Building is located on Molly Barr Road at Price Street. A new training facility has recently been completed, adding approximately 9,000 square feet to the existing headquarters. Police services are supplemented through programs such as ongoing neighborhood watch / policing programs.

In 2002, the Police Department had a total staff of 54 persons and 30 vehicles. Based upon the projected population increase, the volume of service calls is expected to increase proportionally by the year 2020. Total projected staff for 2020 is 131 persons and a total of 48 vehicles. These numbers are derived from population projections and a performance standard based on a desired maximum utilization or workload capacity rate.

The above and other factors are considered in calculating additional facility demands and will continue to be used to calculate additional police staffing and facility demand. However, the continued adequacy of these standards should be evaluated periodically and action taken as needed to respond to changing conditions. Population projections to the year 2020 suggest that additional space will be needed to accommodate expanded staffing and equipment needs. Further evaluation of public safety requirements will be necessary in conjunction with any contemplated annexation.

Actions: Solid Waste Management

- Work with Lafayette County to formulate a Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. (City of Oxford, Lafayette County, Three Rivers Authority, University of Mississippi)

Measure of Progress: Solid Waste Management

- Adopt and implement a Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan.

Actions: Police Protection

- Expand the Police facilities and take other action as necessary to meet community police protection needs. (Police Department, Mayor and Board)

Measure of Progress: Police Protection

- Monitor crime rates with the objective of achieving a decline in the overall crime rate and the different categories of crime over time.

4 A-4 Fire Protection

Objective: Provide for facility development and equipment acquisition needed to meet future community needs for fire protection.

The City of Oxford Fire Department facilities include a headquarters building located at North Lamar and Price, and two additional substations. A fourth substation is intended to be built at a location on Highway 6 to serve the City's western areas.

Currently, fire services are provided on the basis on a one-mile response radius from each station, to ensure an emergency response of less than three minutes. This standard is based upon recognized and accepted professional practice and also reflects resident demand for fire protection service. It is used to determine the need for additional fire equipment and facilities. The City's service provision has generally met the five-minute response time standard except for the area of Oxford located at the western edge of MS Highway 6.

The provision of these kinds of facilities depends greatly on local preferences. These preferences can often be measured by the state Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating. A fire insurance rating of 1 is considered best and carries with it the lowest possible fire insurance premiums while a rating of 10 indicates there is no fire protection and thus insurance premiums would be highest.

The Oxford Fire Department currently has attained an ISO rating of 5. This is considered slightly better than average for a rural community. The service area for the fire department extends outside of the city boundary into Lafayette County. If requested, the fire department will serve a distance of five miles outside its boundaries. The city is currently equipped with three pumpers, one ladder truck, and one crash rescue foam truck. The level of service for fire facilities can be measured in several ways, including number of equipment bays, space in square feet, or personnel.

The City of Oxford currently has approximately 12,091 square feet of facility space for fire protection services, but is projected to need an additional 14,152 square feet of facility space by the year 2020. The analysis also shows a need to add 9 additional equipment bays and 56 additional personnel, given current level of service, by the year 2020.

4 A-5 Library System

Objective: Develop and implement a plan to meet future community needs for library services.

The Oxford Public Library provides free library services to all residents of Lafayette County. The current library building, completed in the early 1990s, is located in a wooded property that is planned for park development within the next two years. The library contains 26,300 square feet of floor area and

Actions: Fire Protection

- Construct the Highway 6 West substation and respond with additional actions as needed. (Fire Department, Mayor and Board)

Measure of Progress: Fire Protection

- Maintain a maximum response radius of one mile from each station and an emergency response time of less than three minutes.

accommodates approximately 90,000 volumes.

These numbers, coupled with space demand projections of approximately 5,000 square feet by the year 2020 (which were contained in the Vision 2020 City Plan Guidebook), indicate that demand for library services are now well taken care of by the current capacity and that only a modest facility expansion may be necessary to accommodate the needed 90,000 new volumes to be placed in circulation.

Actions / Strategies:

The task force’s work should be developed into a more detailed plan and implementation program to address the community’s future needs for library services. This plan should determine the need to expand the existing library or to develop new facilities.

Actions: Library Services

- Develop and implement a Library Master Plan. (Oxford Public Library, City Council)

Measure of Progress: Library Services

- Complete Library Master Plan.
- Establish performance standards to be used in assessing the need for future library services in the Master Plan.

4 A-6 Parks and Recreational Facilities

Objective: Provide facilities to meet future community needs for park and recreational opportunities.

A significant component in the perception of a community’s quality of life is the availability of well-maintained parks and varied recreational opportunities. These facilities provide an exceptional benefit to individual physical well-being and to the esthetic attributes of the city. It should be noted that because Oxford is largely built out, the City faces constraints in attempting to provide additional park and recreational facilities to serve its residents within the current corporate limits.

Actions: Parks and Recreational Facilities

- Develop and implement a Parks and Open Space Master Plan. (City staff, Parks and Recreation Commission, coordinating with Lafayette County Parks and Recreation Department)

Currently, Oxford owns six parks with a cumulative total of 130 acres. A new 150-acre park site is located west on Highway 314 is presently in the early stages of planning and design. A possible loss of park facilities is likely to be the 15-acre softball and soccer complex adjacent to the airport. When the new park is completed, these properties will bring the total parkland to 265 acres. The following list shows the current inventory for parks in Oxford:

Measures of Progress: Parks and Recreational Facilities

- Complete Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
- Establish performance standards to be used in assessing the need for park and recreational facilities in the Master Plan.

Park Name	Acres	Facility Type
Avent Park	19	Neighborhood Park
Airport Ball Complex	15	Community Park
Hank Aaron Park	12	Community Park
Stone Park	14	Community Park
Dizzy Dean Park	1.4	Mini Park
Oxford Public Garden	72	Community Park
Highway 314 Park	150	Community Park

Assessment of the land and facility needs undertaken in the Vision 2020 Plan indicates Oxford’s current level of service to be significantly lower than the recommendation for types of parks set forth by the National Recreation and Park Association. Even when factoring in the contribution of the new Highway 314 park, there remains an imbalance in the provision of the smaller

neighborhood and mini-park facilities. Part of this may be offset by the easy accessibility of two major outdoor recreation venues of Sardis Lake and Holly Springs National Forest. Regardless, the plan recommends the City active pursue opportunities to increase both the scale and diversity of park space.

Actions / Strategies:

Given the difficulties associated with acquiring additional land, a variety of strategies to increase public recreational opportunities should be pursued. Potential strategies that should be considered in development this plan include:

- Evaluate the suitability of property already owned by the City for park development, particularly to identify opportunities to establish neighborhood parks in areas of need.
- Evaluate redevelopment sites for potential acquisition and park development.
- Enhance existing parks and recreation facilities to improve and increase utilization. These enhancements may include adding lights to existing sports fields to expand hours of use; improving bicycle and pedestrian links to all parks; and redesigning facilities to better meet the specific needs of the community.
- Ensure that new development provides for the park and recreational facility needs of future users of the development.
- Continue to pursue facility cost-sharing and joint use / joint planning agreements with other agencies such as the University of Mississippi, Oxford City Schools, and Lafayette County.

5.0 TRANSPORTATION

5.1 PERSPECTIVE

Over the past 50 years, America has experienced both the benefits and impacts of the automobile. The City of Oxford is no exception. Dependence on automobiles is affecting development patterns and lifestyles. Residents live further from destinations and make more daily trips, resulting in increased congestion. Increased congestion impacts all modes of transportation, including transit, walking and bicycling. Safety has become a significant problem.

As Oxford continues to grow, decisions must be made about the street system. Do you continue to cater to the automobile, and engineer for increased capacity and wider intersections, or develop streets and highways that are more in harmony with the community?

In order to accomplish this, there must be a coordinated transportation planning effort by the City, County and University. The piecemeal transportation planning that has defined City, County and University policies and projects is a road map to inefficiency, duplication and ultimately, community discord and disruption. There need to be new, creative responses to today's growing transportation problems. Some of the priorities are:

1. Bike and pedestrian ways (essential to community life).
2. A community-wide Transportation Council (urgently needed to coordinate planning).
3. Public Works Design Standards (needed to define the aesthetic and functional qualities of streets and roads).
4. Public transportation (urgently needed in the City and University).
5. A Tri-County Airport Authority (needed to develop a regional airport).

An integrated approach to transportation and land use planning will be key to successfully implementing these concepts. Land use will have an effect on transportation. For example, narrower streets with pedestrians / bikeways will increase non-automobile forms of transportation, but will also increase traffic congestion. However, it is reasonable to accept higher levels of automobile traffic congestion in exchange for narrower, more pedestrian-friendly streets, and for higher levels of public transit, bicycle and sidewalk usage.

The citizens of the community place a high value on nurturing the small town atmosphere, as well as preserving the rural and agricultural setting and context. The basic question is: how can the expansion of the transportation system meet the needs of twice as many people without destroying the very characteristics of

the community that are most important? This chapter will attempt to answer that question. The Major Thoroughfares Plan appears in Figure 6, with the proposed bikeway system shown in the Proposed Pathways Network, Figure 7.

5.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Goal: to develop a balanced, multi-model transportation system that will meet the needs of the citizens, without destroying the small town character.

II. Objectives

A. Long Range Transportation Plan: Develop and maintain a comprehensive network of streets and highways that support safe automobile, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian mobility within City.

B. Pedestrians: Develop and maintain a pedestrian circulation system, including sidewalks and greenway trails, that provides direct, continuous, and safe movement within and between districts of City. Link neighborhoods to activity centers, transit stops, schools, parks, and other neighborhoods.

C. Bikeways: Develop and maintain a system of safe and efficient bikeways (on-street bike lanes and off-street bike paths within greenways, railroad beds and public land) designed to contribute to City-wide mobility, connecting neighborhoods with activity centers, schools, parks and other neighborhoods.

D. Parking: Develop a parking system within downtown that recognizes the need for adequate short-term parking while encouraging policies and practices that minimize the long-term parking supply.

E. Public Transportation: Develop a public transportation system that enhances the mobility and safety of City residents, employees, and students.

F. Regional Travel: Develop a regional airport and improved access to interstate bus and airport service.

Actions: Transportation Planning / Coordinating Council

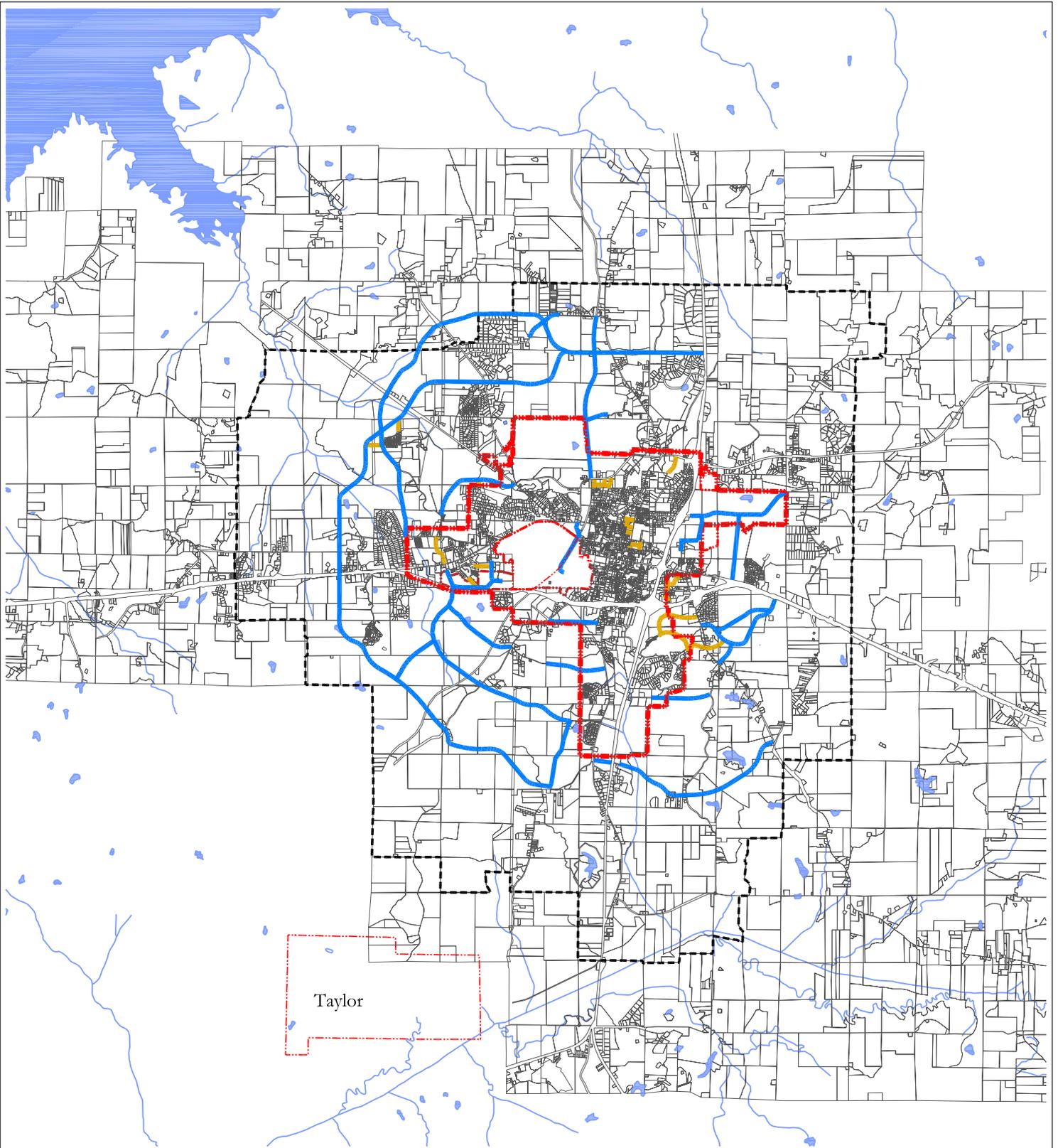
- Identify and prioritize projects for street improvements, pedestrian ways and bike facilities.
- Develop a "review and comment" process that includes outreach to neighborhoods, businesses, and other community groups.
- Secure legislative changes and funding to allow the use of radar to detect and cite speeders.
- Work with MDOT to enforce implementation of local design standards.
- Identify and secure funding for projects.

Measure of Progress: Transportation Planning / Coordinating Council

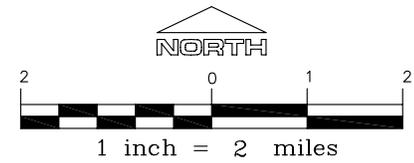
- Address the recommended revisions as part of the comprehensive development ordinance revision.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

5A-1 Objective: Develop a comprehensive, long-range transportation program for the City of Oxford, Lafayette County, and the University of Mississippi in order to improve City/County/University coordination. Coordinated transportation planning and implementation among these entities will better serve the public's need to understand and endorse the allocation of public resources, while assuring that common needs and concerns are addressed.



-  Existing Corporate Boundary
-  Proposed Corporate Boundary
-  Proposed Major Road
-  Proposed Minor Road

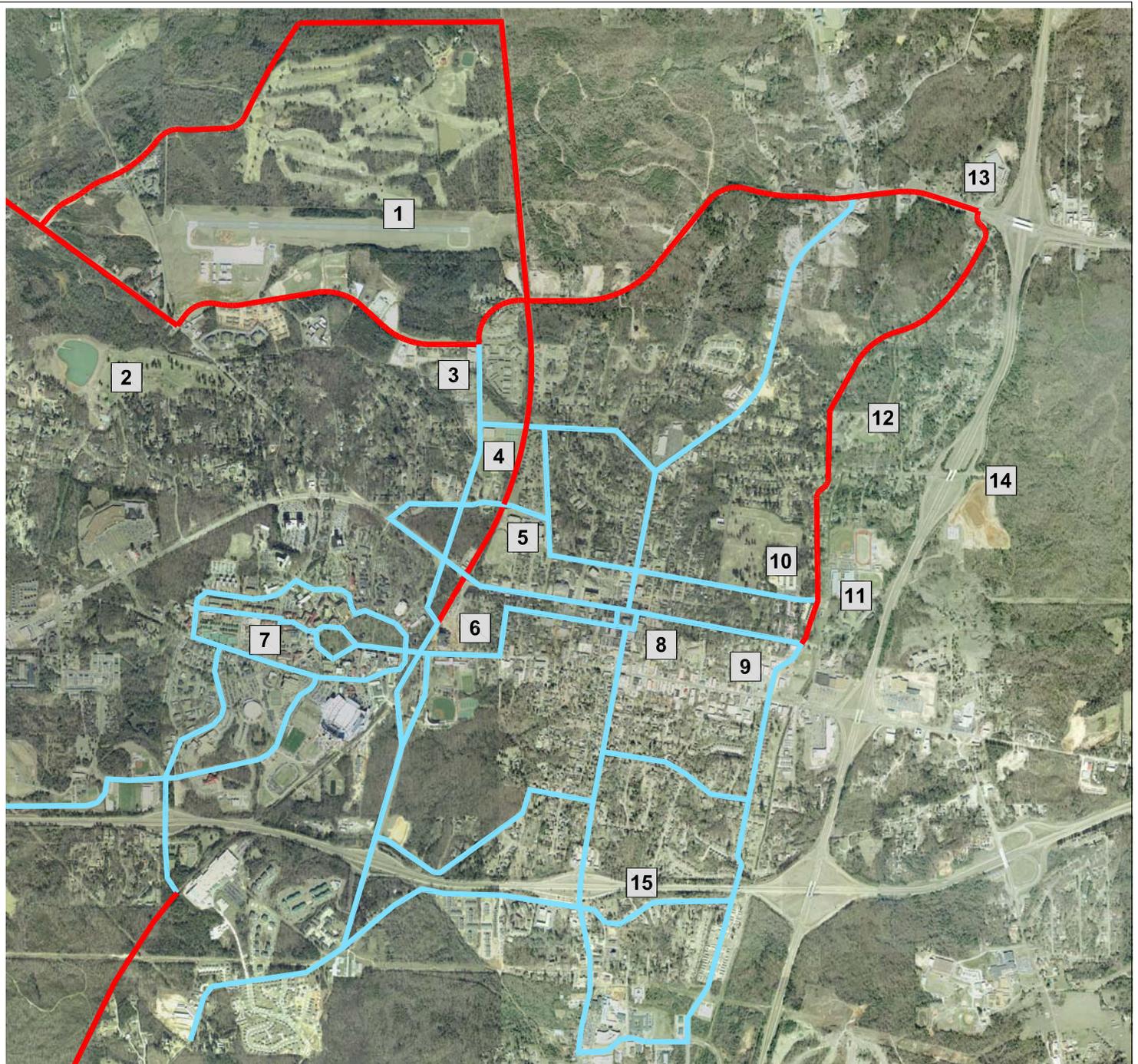


Architects
 Engineers
 Environmental Consultants
 Interior Designers
 Landscape Architects
 Planners
 Surveyors



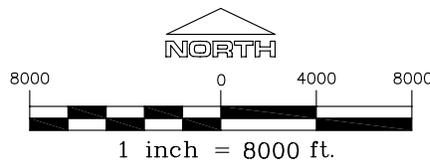
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Figure 6
 Major Thoroughfare Plan



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- 1) University Golf Course & Airport
- 2) Pat Lamar Park
- 3) Oxford Housing Authority
- 4) Oxford Park Commission Activity Center
- 5) Oxford Elementary and Oxford Middle Schools
- 6) Old Oxford Depot
- 7) University of Mississippi
- 8) The Square
- 9) Lafayette County Library
- 10) Bramlett Elementary School
- 11) Oxford High School
- 12) Avent Park
- 13) Oxford Elementary School
- 14) MS Hwy 7
- 15) MS Hwy 6



Bike Trails

-  Network Index
-  Primary pathway routes
-  Secondary pathway routes

Architects
Engineers
Environmental Consultants
Interior Designers
Landscape Architects
Planners
Surveyors



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Figure 7
Proposed Pathways Network

- Strategies: Establish a comprehensive, long-range Transportation Planning / Coordinating Council. The Council will assure that transportation issues and discussions are coordinated, publicized, and open to community input. The Council will strive to secure the adoption of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan, which will be reviewed semi-annually, and revised every five (5) years.
- Actions: Identify and prioritize projects for street improvements, pedestrian ways, and bike facilities. Develop a “review and comment” process that includes outreach to neighborhoods, businesses, and other community groups. Involve MDOT and Three Rivers in transportation priority setting. Secure legislative changes to allow Lafayette County law enforcement officers to use radar to detect and cite speeders. Work with State and other officials to secure funding. Work with MDOT to encourage state acknowledgement of, and compliance with, local design standards. Identify and secure funding for project.

5A-2 Objective: Evaluate and plan for new roads to provide needed access: North-south links to Highway 6 east of Coliseum Drive and a north-south loop around the City, particularly between West Jackson Avenue and Highway 6.

- Strategies: Integrate construction priorities in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Communicate plans and priorities with MDOT and Transportation Commission.
- Actions: Examine and prioritize route alternatives, including the rail bed, a link with Heritage Drive, and an extension of McElroy Drive. Identify construction priorities and review every five (5) years. Work with County and University to achieve goals for transportation project design. Conduct an assessment of possible new roads and north-south connections. Have Lafayette County adopt Major Thoroughfare Plan and implement in City / County review of rural subdivisions. Review land use proposals to consider implications for traffic flow and required roadway improvements.

5A-3 Objective: Serve as a model in implementing innovative transportation technologies and alternatives that preserve and sustain a rural, small-town quality of life. Be willing to consider new, fresh ways of addressing traffic problems.

- Strategies: Integrate transportation calming features into land use and zoning considerations for traffic management such as roundabouts, 4-way stops, multiple connections between streets, and shorter blocks with alleys, all help to disperse traffic and provide drivers with choices. Carefully evaluate other alternative measures before

Actions: New Roads and Needed Access

- Examine and prioritize route alternatives.
- Identify construction priorities, review every 5 years.
- Work with County and University.
- Conduct an assessment of potential new roads, north-south connections.
- Review land use planning strategies.

Measure of Progress: New Roads and Needed Access

- Establish methodology for identifying and prioritizing needed projects and evaluating land use planning strategies.
- Lafayette County Supervisors adopt Major Thoroughfare Plan.

Actions: Innovative Transportation Leadership

- Evaluate projects from a traditional streetscape perspective.
- Encourage alternative street designs and conduct public education programs.
- Document accident rates and problem areas.

Measure of Progress: Innovative Transportation Leadership

- Incorporate adjusted approach and initiate public education program.
- Provide documentation of effectiveness.

embarking on major street widening/paving projects. Safety must remain a primary concern.

- Actions: Review all new construction projects with a traditional streetscape in mind. Encourage use of alternative street patterns, traffic calming features, and innovative landscaping. Conduct public education programs regarding the benefits of traditional development and transportation forms. Document accident rates and problem areas to measure the effectiveness of alternative designs.

Actions: Intersection Safety Improvements

- Identify priorities and implement projects.
- Address pedestrian and bicycle requirements and include new design standards.

5A-4 Objective: Redesign and improve the safety of dangerous intersections. Intersection signals, signs and alignments need to be evaluated and corrected to safely accommodate motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians

- Strategies: Major new road crossings will have safety features, including pedestrian signals, crosswalks and appropriate design. Existing facilities will be upgraded.
- Actions: Identify priorities for retrofitting existing lights and intersections. Include pedestrian and bike use in developing lists. Incorporate design standards into projects.

Measure of Progress: Intersection Safety Improvements

- Establish prioritized list of projects.

5A-5 Objective: Develop Public Works Design Standards and a review process to ensure that the appearance and functionality of road improvements are clear to residents before plans are finalized

- Strategies: Establish a City/County/University Public Works Planning Committee to develop public works standards and recommendations. Develop a City/County/University Public Works Plan establishing guidelines and design options for streets that will retain or re-establish rural, small-town characteristics. Develop street and subdivision design standards, including landscaping, parking and lighting, for all public construction projects. Secure the adoption of the Public Works Design Standards as part of the Comprehensive Transportation plan for the community.
- Actions: Develop a Community Public Works Working Committee to work with MDOT and other agencies to implement the standards. Develop a community education, outreach and information process to help promote the benefits of traffic calming strategies and design standards. Establish a Public Works Design Standards Review Board to review and approve public projects design. Establish a public review process for public works.

Actions: Inter-Agency Public Works Planning Committee

- Establish the Committee.
- Develop educational program for the public.
- Develop new street and subdivision design standards.

Measure of Progress: Inter-Agency Public Works Planning Committee

- Establish the Committee and Board, and develop the educational program, and adopt new street and subdivision design standards.

5A-6 Objective: Improve enforcement of speed and other safety regulations, and improve community education about these. Lack of

enforcement has contributed to a climate of disregard and carelessness among many drivers. The inability of the County Sheriff's Department to successfully cite speeders is unacceptable and, through the cooperative efforts of local jurisdictions and the State Legislature, must be changed.

- Strategies: Establish a City/County/University Traffic Safety Committee. Include citizens and law enforcement officers from each entity. Develop a Comprehensive Long-range Transportation Safety and Education Plan. Establish a Public Safety Review Committee to assist with public education and monitoring process. Secure the adoption of this plan as part of the Comprehensive Transportation plan.
- Actions: Identify alliances with other counties that may enhance the chances of legislative changes to permit County control of speeds. Develop and implement a speed control information campaign. Develop a “review and comment” process including safety information, for public input. Conduct information meetings with the Mississippi Highway Commission, MDOT, and legislative leaders.

5B-1 Objective: Develop and maintain a pedestrian circulation system, including sidewalks and footpaths, that provide direct, continuous and safe movement within and between districts of the City. Link neighborhoods to activity centers, transit stops, schools, parks, and other neighborhoods.

- Strategies: Establish a City/County/University Pedestrian and Bicycling Planning Committee. Develop and adopt a Comprehensive Long-range Pedestrian Facility Plan. Develop a “review and comment” process for the community. Develop a Rails to Trails corridor or Green Space Linear Park Plan for abandoned railroad rights-of-way. Develop policies that require new road construction to include pedestrian provisions, and new development to provide pedestrian access. Avoid approving subdivisions that are isolated from employment centers, thereby denying safe access by walkers.
- Actions: Embark on a county wide education program to inform motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians about safety. Begin a sidewalk completion program. Evaluate costs and prioritize construction. Work with State and Federal land managers to include pedestrian trails on public lands. Install footpaths along pedestrian ways in the county and other areas where sidewalks may not be appropriate, which will quickly develop an integrated system of pedestrian ways. Install pedestrian crossing signals at all collector and arterial intersections.

Actions: Safety Regulations

- Establish Inter-Agency Committees for Traffic and Public Safety.
- Develop Comprehensive Long-range Transportation Safety and Education Plan
- Develop a “review and comment” procedure and conduct meetings.

Measure of Progress: Safety Regulations

- Establish Inter-Agency Traffic Safety Committee and Public Safety Review Committee.
- Adopt Comprehensive Long-range Transportation Safety and Education Plan.

Actions: Pedestrian Circulation Planning

- Establish Inter-Agency Pedestrian and Bicycling Planning Committee to develop and adopt a Comprehensive Long-range Pedestrian Facility Plan.
- Initiate construction of pedestrian system and safety improvements.
- Conduct public awareness campaign.

Measure of Progress: Pedestrian Circulation Planning

- Establish Inter-Agency Pedestrian and Bicycling Planning Committee.
- Initiate public awareness campaign.
- Adopt a Comprehensive Long-range Pedestrian Facility Plan.
- Adopt policies and implement projects for improved pedestrian circulation systems.

5C-1 Objective: Develop and maintain a system of safe and efficient bikeways (on-street bike lanes and off-street paths within greenways, railroad beds, and public lands), designed to contribute to County wide mobility, connecting neighborhoods with activity centers, schools, parks and other neighborhoods.

- Strategies: Establish a City/County/University Pedestrian and Bicycling Planning Committee. Develop and adopt a Comprehensive Long-range Bike Facility Plan using the Pathways. Bike Facility Plan (see Figure 7) as a guide. Develop a “review and comment” process for the community. Develop a Rails to Trails Corridor or Green Space Linear Park Plan for abandoned railroad rights-of-way. Develop policies that require new road construction to include bicycle provisions, and new development to provide bicycle access.
- Actions: Develop a County wide education program to inform motorists and bicyclists about safety. Establish a consistent University-City enforcement scheme to address safe bicycling on and off campus. Provide safe access to areas where off-road trails are available. Pave road shoulders, or incorporate outside lanes into road improvement planning. Negotiate funds through MDOT allocation process. Publish maps of the bike route system with safety tips. Develop a core system of bike paths and connecting routes for children and inexperienced bicyclist. Pursue a League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Community designation.

5D-1 Objective: Provide attractive, adequate, functional parking. With proper planning, parking availability will improve in a way that is consistent with and will preserve the small southern community character.

- Strategies: Require parking lot design to be consistent with the streetscape. Landscape and screening should be mandatory.

Actions: Develop and adopt design standards for parking areas. Publish the design standards. Conduct design forums for interested parties.

5E-1 Objective: Provide public transportation. The lack of public transportation is placing an unacceptable burden on citizens who need access to it for health, employment and other purposes. These needs will grow as the number of local retirees increases.

- Strategies: Establish a City/County/University Planning Committee to formalize long-term planning for public transportation. Develop a Comprehensive Long-range Public Transportation Plan. Explore funding. Develop a “review and comment” process for all interested citizens and community groups. Adopt the plan.

Actions: Bicycle Circulation Planning

- Conduct public awareness campaign.
- Incorporate bikeway system improvements into road improvement planning.
- Investigate funding for improvements through MDOT.
- Develop core system of bike routes.
- Pursue designation as League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Community.

Measure of Progress: Bicycle Circulation Planning

- Initiate public awareness campaign.
- Adopt a Comprehensive Long-range Pedestrian Facility Plan.
- Secure funding for improvements through MDOT.
- Obtain designation as League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Community.

Actions: Parking System Planning

- Develop new design standards for parking lots.

Measure of Progress: Parking System Planning

- Adopt and enforce new design standards for parking lots.

Actions: Transit System Planning

- Encourage private sector and corporate participation in identifying routes and services and in sponsoring shuttle service.
- Review adequacy of system every 2 years.
- Apply for grant funding.
- Develop a Comprehensive Long-range Public Transportation Plan

Measure of Progress: Transit System Planning

- Establish an Inter-Agency Committee.
- Adopt the Comprehensive Long-range Public Transportation Plan.

- Actions: Encourage private sector cooperation in identifying routes and services. Evaluate needs / effectiveness every two years. Enlist Oxford merchants and the University to sponsor a shuttle. Encourage corporate participation. Establish routes. Prepare grants for funding.

5F-1 Objective: Develop a regional airport and improved access to interstate bus service.

Strategies: Establish a Regional Airport Authority to develop plans for a regional airport in a new location, or expand Clegg Field. Considerations are a 6,000-ft. runway, an additional crosswind runway, and an Instrument Landing System.

- Actions: Identify locations for a modern regional airport. Examine all issues regarding relocation. Establish a process for developing a regional facility. Evaluate improvements to existing facilities and alternative uses if a regional facility is constructed. Develop an implementation plan. Seek all available opportunities to serve the community with improved ground transportation.

Actions: Air, Rail and Ground Transportation Systems Planning

- Investigate viability of improved regional airport.
- Develop Regional Airport Implementation Plan.
- Identify methodologies for improved ground transportation.

Measure of Progress: Air, Rail and Ground Transportation Systems Planning

- Adopt Regional Airport Implementation Plan.

6.0 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

6.1 PERSPECTIVE

The City of Oxford will relatively soon reach a condition of being fully developed within the existing corporate boundaries. An area of only approximately 1,500 acres remains undeveloped and some of this area is likely to remain so due to physical characteristics of the land. Consequently, the management efforts will increasingly need to address the form and timing of development in outlying rural areas in addition to providing guidance to re-development activity within the confines of the older areas of Oxford.

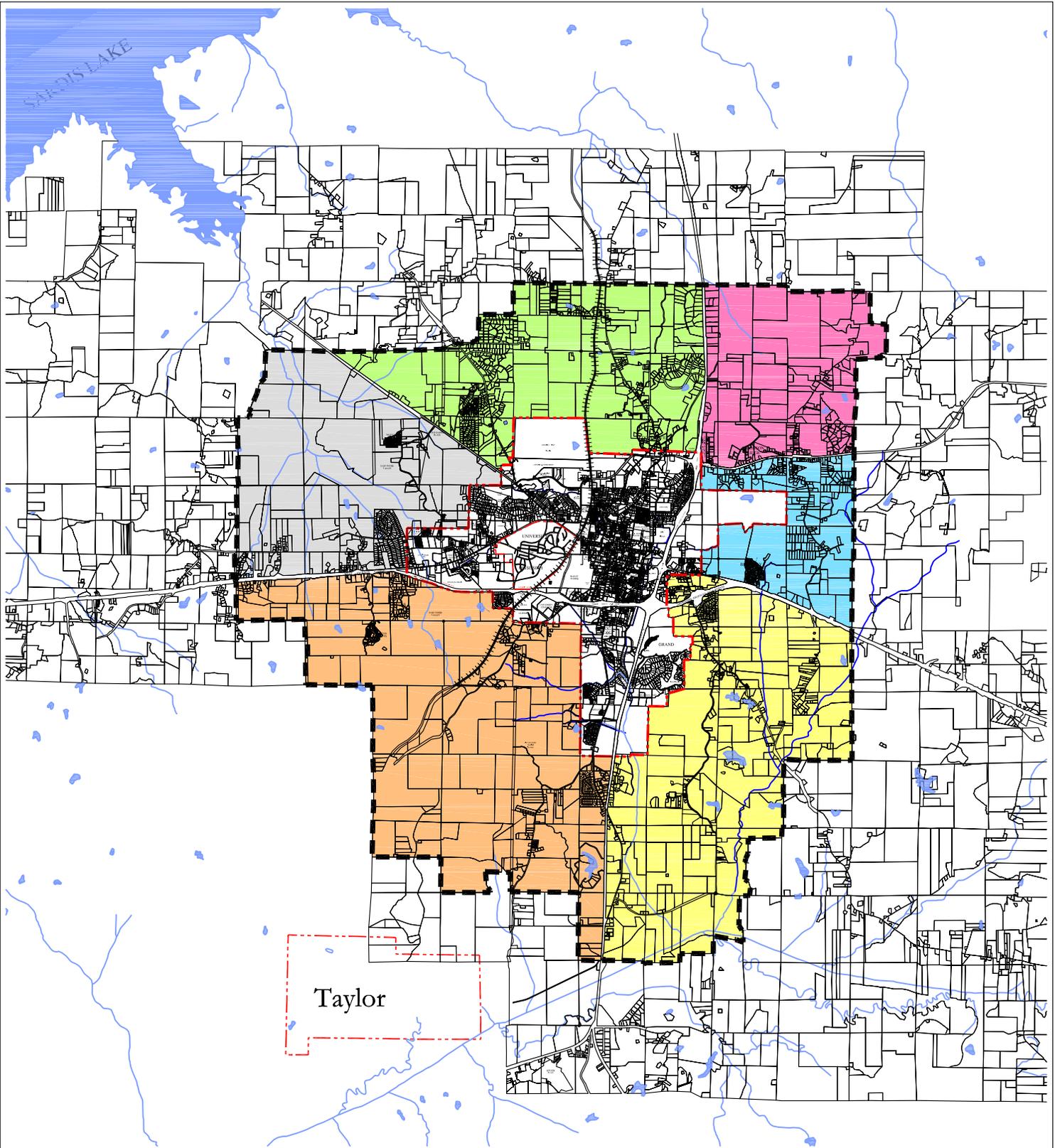
A very significant challenge faces the community as it responds to the growth pressures affecting the area. Several factors over which the City has little or no control compound this effort. Chief among these factors is the ability for rural development to occur at urban densities by utilizing private utility districts to provide sanitary sewer and domestic water supply systems. Sewer collection and treatment and water treatment and supply are typically constructed at standards that are far less stringent than would be required by a municipality. By example, none of the private utility districts provide adequate pressure or line capacity to support fire fighting requirements. This form of development makes logical expansion of the City extremely difficult due to the high cost to upgrade these utilities in the course of any annexation.

Lack of any zoning or land use controls exercised by county government creates an additional element to frustrate orderly development in the extended urban growth area. Such lack of guidance allows for a haphazard pattern of land use and creates uncertainty for land owners, prospective developers and long-term residents so as to leave areas unstable and eventually diminished in desirability and value.

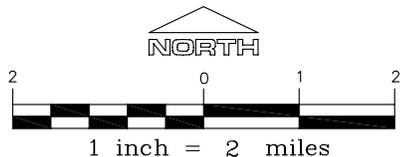
A further factor which has a significant impact on the ability of the City to logically grow is the strict standard of judicial review placed on annexation as it affects minority population representation within the proposed annexation areas.

Growth management is typically undertaken through a coordinated process of timely capital improvements, judicious annexation of growth areas and the appropriate exercise of development standards in areas identified to be within the City's urban growth areas.

The Urban Growth Area is comprised of six geographic areas which extend up to two miles beyond the current corporate limits. Each area is contained within easily defined physical boundaries and consists of lands with reasonably similar development conditions. These areas are described below and are shown in Figure 8. It should be noted that not all lands within these areas may be



- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Woodson Ridge Study Area |  | Thacker Hills Study Area |
|  | Campground Study Area |  | Goose Valley Study Area |
|  | Yellow Leaf Study Area |  | North Oxford Study Area |



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Figure 8
 Comprehensive Plan Study Areas

logical areas for annexation. They are included, however, to create sufficient study areas to evaluate urban service needs and potential annexation benefits.

A. Woodson Ridge

Woodson Ridge is located in the northeast quadrant of the Urban Growth Area and is comprised of approximately 3,850 acres of lightly forested rolling hills and pasture land. Highway 7 forms the western limit and Sisk Avenue creates the southern boundary. Development activity consists of scattered home sites and one subdivision of lots, Calico Point, located at the east end of the study area.

B. Campground Road

The Campground Road study area encompasses about 2,500 acres east of Highway 7 extending south of Highway 30 to Highway 6. The Yellow Leaf Creek and Four-Mile Branch drainage basins create some limited flood plain and steep slopes in this area. Sisk Avenue is intended to be extended eastward as part of the Major Road Plan. Both the location of the new National Guard Armory at the Sisk Avenue extension and the development of a shopping center at the Highway 6 interchange are attractive features to draw development to this area.

C. Yellow Leaf

Yellow Leaf comprises one the two largest study areas consisting of approximately 10,000 acres located south and east of Highway 6 and the intersection with Highway 7. Development within the area is relatively sparse except for that portion located within the City limits at Grand Oaks. Minor Subdivisions have been developed, including Rolling Woods at Highway No 334 south of the Highway 6 Bypass.

Lafayette County High School is located north of Grand Oaks west of Highway 334 and provides a center for neighborhood development. Additional development of both commercial and residential uses extends south along Highway 7. This development tends to strip out the frontage and has no distinct identity as might be obtained by development of a unified "business park". Large vacant agricultural areas extend east and south of the Grand Oaks PUD along Bell River Road. This area appears will suited to new residential development.

D. Thacker Foothills

The southwest quadrant of the "greater" Oxford study area consists of the area known as the Thacker Foothills. The study area contains approximately 10,400 acres bordered by Highway 6 on the north and Highway 7 on the east. Several smaller subdivisions and other miscellaneous development comprise the limited development in this largely agricultural area. Development of any significant residential activity is not anticipated due to the large land holdings just to the south of Highway 6. Old Taylor Road bisects this area diagonally to the southwest parallel to the Old Mississippi railroad.

E. Goose Valley

The Goose Creek study area is located between Highway 6 and Highway 314 in the wedge of land extending roughly 2 miles west of Oxford. Approximately 5,600 acres of land are located in this area. Highway 314 provides direct access to Sardis Reservoir and serves as the principle transportation artery for several subdivisions including Woodlawn, Wells Gate, Price Hall and Western Hills.

F. North Oxford

North Oxford consists of the approximately 6,000 acres north of the corporate limits of Oxford between Highway 7 on the east and State Highway 314 diagonally to the northwest. The Oxford municipal airport and the University of Mississippi golf course at the northern edge of the Oxford corporate limits and the Lafayette County Industrial Park in the north-central part of the study area form the dominant land uses influencing development of this area. Additional development of several residential subdivisions creates the largest concentration of rural residential development within the Oxford growth area. These include: Twelve Oaks, Quail Creek, Tara Estates, Lake Way Gardens, College Hill Heights, Long Meadow, and Woodland Hills. All of these subdivisions are provided water and sewer service by private utility districts.

Recent acquisition of a 150-acre park site has also brought the City of Oxford sanitary sewer and municipal water service along Highway 314 to Berry Branch on Davidson Creek, a distance of approximately two miles northeast of the present City limits.

6.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Goal:

To create a city that is livable and sustainable. To derive the greatest value possible for the City's investment in infrastructure. To grow in a manner providing urban services to a growing urban community.

II. Objectives

A. Develop and implement measures and procedures to monitor City service capacities and program for future capital expenditures.

B. Proceed with selective annexations that are responsive to growth needs and responsible to financial considerations.

C. Establish a cooperative relationship with Lafayette County to administer some measure of land use controls within the oxford Urban Growth Boundary.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

6A. DEVELOPMENT TIMING

"Development timing" refers to the provision of public facilities to support growth as it comes on line and places demands on roads, sewers, parks, fire prevention, and other infrastructure and services. Throughout the country, communities are playing "catch-up" as they struggle to build capital improvements for developments that have outstripped the capacity of existing facilities and services. By comparison, Oxford is in the fortunate position of being a mature community with a well-developed infrastructure and a defined City land area. Nevertheless, some public facilities such as roads and parks, and to some extent sewers, have capacity issues (see Chapters 5.0, Transportation, and 2.0, Community Facilities), suggesting the need to manage growth so as to keep pace with the ability of public infrastructure and services to support it.

6A-1. Develop a growth management index to address the provision of public facilities and services to support development.

In order to manage growth in a manner that is consistent, transparent, and legally defensible, a clear framework or index is needed. The underlying premise is that the City needs to "stay ahead of the curve" by monitoring the capacity of public facilities and services so that capital improvements or other measures can be implemented before projected shortfalls reach serious levels. This is particularly important as Oxford employs its ability to serve outlying development with municipal sewer and water as a means to guide the location and quality of such development. A growth management index suitable for Oxford may be comprised of five elements:

- Level of service standards or other means to measure the capacity of each type of public facility or service.
- Estimates of "reserve capacity" for each of the critical constraint factors.
- A growth monitoring system to keep track of changing levels of reserve capacity, potentially coupled with an impact analysis requirement for each development application where certain key services or facilities are approaching capacity.
- A staged plan for expanding facility capacity to accommodate the projected growth in population.
- Provisions for applicants to "mitigate" the impacts of their developments, such as building infrastructure components, donating land, and / or paying for necessary capacity enhancements (e.g., roadway or intersection improvements).

Actions: Infrastructure

- Develop Growth Management Index (City Staff, Mayor and Board)
- Prepare Five-year Capital Improvement Program. (City Staff, Mayor and Board)

Measures of Progress: Infrastructure

- Implement Index in review of development proposals.

The purpose of this mechanism is to allow the City Council to annually check the capacities of key components of community infrastructure, and to be able to use this information in reviewing and acting on development proposals. The growth management index will also allow the community to identify needs for capital improvements to key components of community infrastructure and to increase capacity as needed. Initially, the items subject to the protocol will be schools, raw water supply, water treatment capacity, sewage treatment capacity, and levels of service of key arterial roads. Projects for which approval has already been given will be counted as debits against existing capacity. A finding that infrastructure capacity is inadequate to serve a proposed development may, in some regulatory contexts, be cited as a reason for denial of an application.

6 A-2. Develop and prepare an annual Growth Management Report to monitor the actual experience of development and form the basis for City Capital Improvement Budgeting.

By necessity, the growth management index will be closely lined to the Community Facilities Plan and associated measures of capacity developed per Strategy 4.A. (Chapter 4.0, Community Facilities). Depending upon the selected types of public facilities and services, it will need to be coordinated with other providers such as the Mississippi Department of Transportation. The proposed growth monitoring system will provide a mechanism – in the form of an annual Growth Management Report – to coordinate and share information on development activities and trends in Oxford and existing and projected public facility capacities. Because of the regional context in which growth and corresponding demand on public facilities and services occur, the system will need to take into account regional issues. The annual Growth Management Report, for example, should also address the status of the Major Thoroughfares Plan and ongoing regional transportation planning efforts.

The Growth management Report is also intended to form the foundation of interaction needed to prepare the City's Capital Improvement Program and associated annual Capital Improvement Budget. In line with this process, the City needs to ensure that development will pay its fair share of the cost of providing the needed public facilities and services.

Fiscal management is critical as the community grows and is especially important in approaching decisions to incorporate outlying development by annexation. The City has maintained a relatively low tax rate by comparison with other municipalities and has managed growth within the limits of the existing city boundaries with expectations based on these historic budgets. Consideration of annexations should also be accompanied by consideration of necessary funding or new sources of funding to meet the obligations of expanded services and infrastructure improvement. As part of this consideration the City should examine the fee structure associated with development, i.e., processing fees, contractual fees for water and sewer service, etc. as well as more innovative approaches which might consider tax increment financing, special district assessment or other mechanisms as may be appropriate.

6B. ANNEXATION

Closely aligned with the issue of timing in the management of growth is the question of annexation or incorporation of areas currently outside of the Oxford city limits. There are numerous reasons for Oxford to consider and expect to annex additional territory. First is the inherent responsibility of municipalities to provide urban services to development that reaches urban densities and produces higher levels of demand. Oxford must also consider annexation in light of the need to provide infrastructure for the location and development of necessary commercial centers to serve a growing population. Annexation is also appropriately considered as a means to guide the form of development, the interconnection of roads, the appearance of gateways, and the relationships and long term compatibility between types of development within the City's adjacent territory.

Annexation should however be very carefully considered, especially as it relates to the financial implications and obligations such annexations may place on the City. It should be noted that residential neighborhoods by and large generate a greater share of the demands for municipal service by comparison with other forms of development. Demand for police and fire protection, parks and recreation, solid waste, libraries (not to mention schools) all are disproportionately higher for a residential population. Typically, the revenues generated from these same residential properties do not cover the cost to provide these services and it is necessary to aggregate the tax base of a larger mix of uses including commercial and industrial properties to provide adequate funding.

6B-1. Annex contiguous vacant land with access to facilities.

The key to annexation is to find the best match between facilities already in place with adequate or excess capacity and areas of contiguous land that are under-developed or undeveloped.

Several areas in the immediate environs of Oxford appear to satisfy this criterion. It is important, however, that some restraint is observed in selecting these areas or the size of these areas. The maps at Figures 10, 11, and 13 identify the recommended annexation areas.

6B-2. Annex key areas to provide needed services and promote appropriate growth.

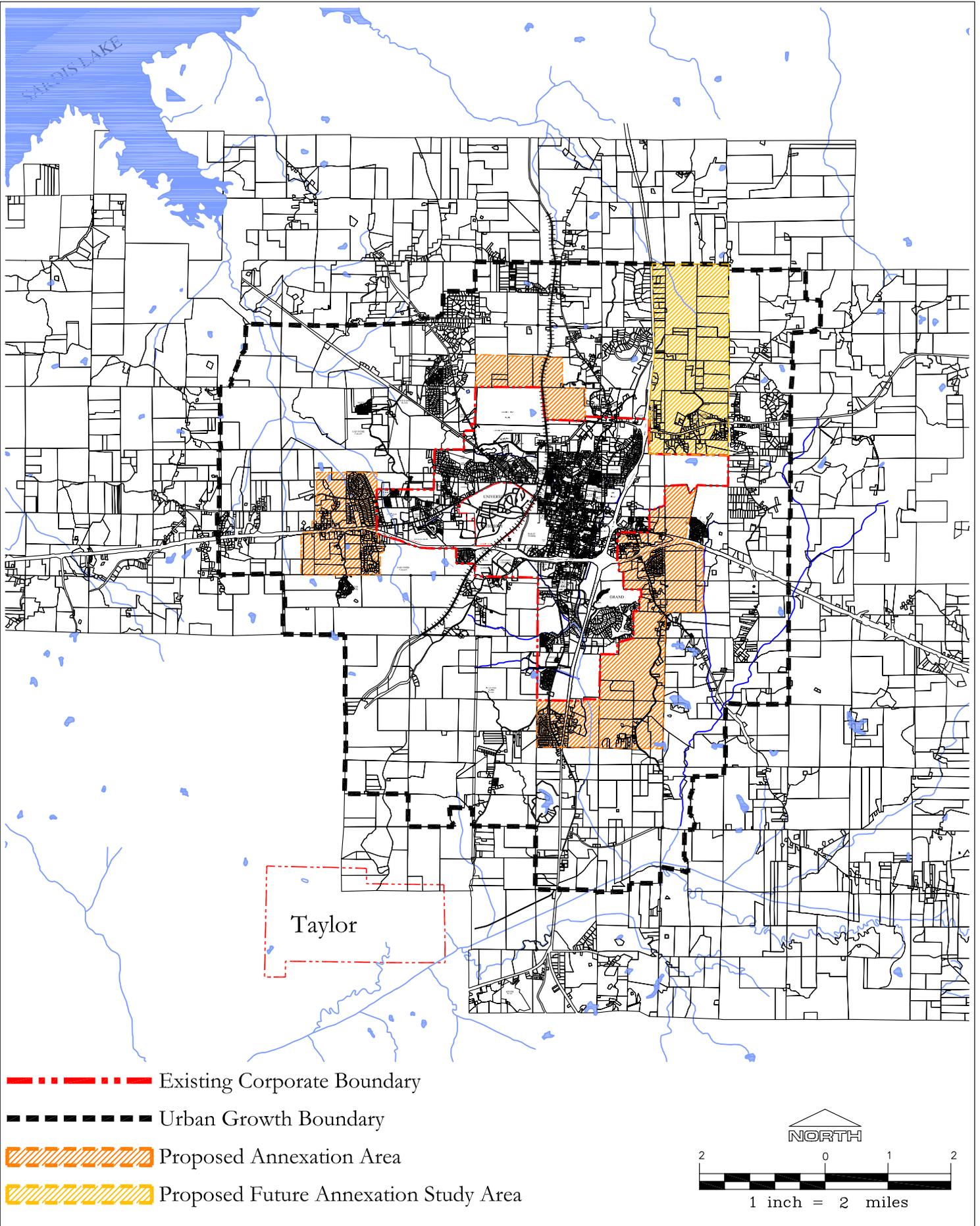
Annexation should in all cases attempt to derive the greatest value possible from the City's investment in infrastructure. In conjunction with any annexation, public infrastructure investment in existing or future capital facilities should be geared to be a catalyst for increased economic development.

Actions: Annexation

- Prepare and adopt provisions for mandatory annexation petitions. (City Hall, Legal Counsel, Mayor and Board).
- Proceed with detailed examination to present and approve annexation. (City Staff, Mayor and Board).
- Prepare detailed land-use analysis and service study. (City Staff, Mayor and Board).

Measures of Progress: Annexation

- Annex key areas.
- Annex contiguous areas.
- Evaluate timing of annexation.



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Figure 9
 Annexation Areas

As neighborhoods develop and population growth occurs, additional area will be needed to provide local and community scale retail shopping and business centers. These centers will require the full range of public facilities including transportation and utilities. To the extent that such designated centers can coincide with existing or planned facilities, annexation to promote such development is recommended. Two areas are proposed for annexation in locations that meet these criteria, one extending south along Highway 7 and another extending west on Highway 6. Figures 10 and 12 identify these areas.

6B-3. Study potential annexation areas that represent near-term opportunities for voluntary annexation or expanded rural development.

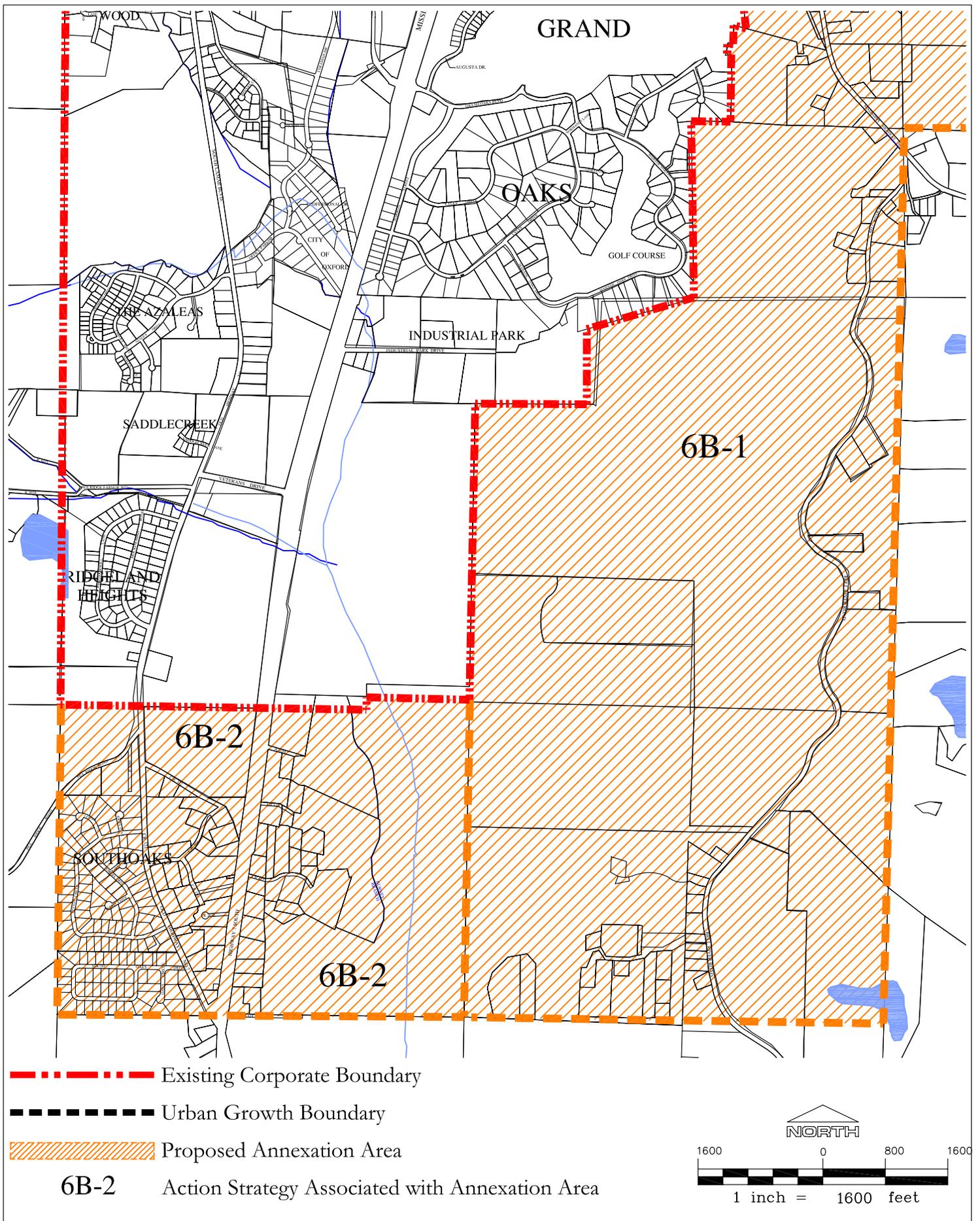
Given that the direction and timing of development is somewhat difficult to predict, it is important to assess the possible impact of alternative growth areas. In line with strategy 6 B-1, the introduction of infrastructure and other key facilities may propel development in certain areas.

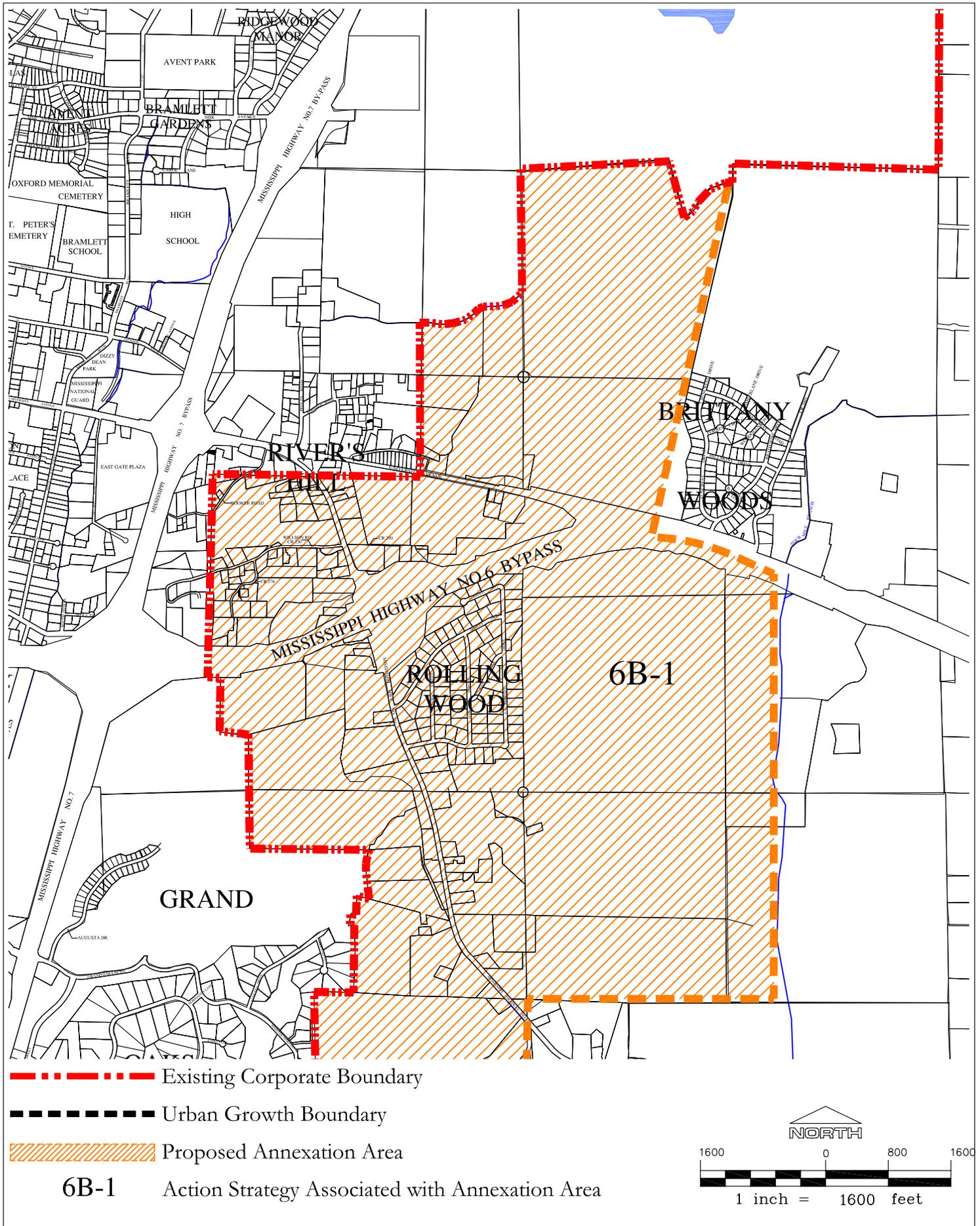
The area extending north of the convention center north of Sisk Road and north along MS Highway 7 appears to support such potential growth. The map at Figure 14 identifies this future study area.

6B-4. Require mandatory petition to annex property as part of any agreement to provide municipal service to unincorporated property.

6C. Land Use Controls need to be implemented in some form within the Oxford Urban Growth Boundary.

The City's development review process and land use regulations will be a primary mechanism for implementing the goals and policies of this plan for areas contained within the City limits. Only to a small extent can they be effective in the outlying areas, in instances where development seeks municipal water and sewer services. In the same manner as it is necessary to engage in the process of cooperation and integration of area-wide transportation planning and utility planning, it is important to develop an integration of effort between the City and County to administer a basic level of land use controls in the Oxford Urban Growth Boundary.



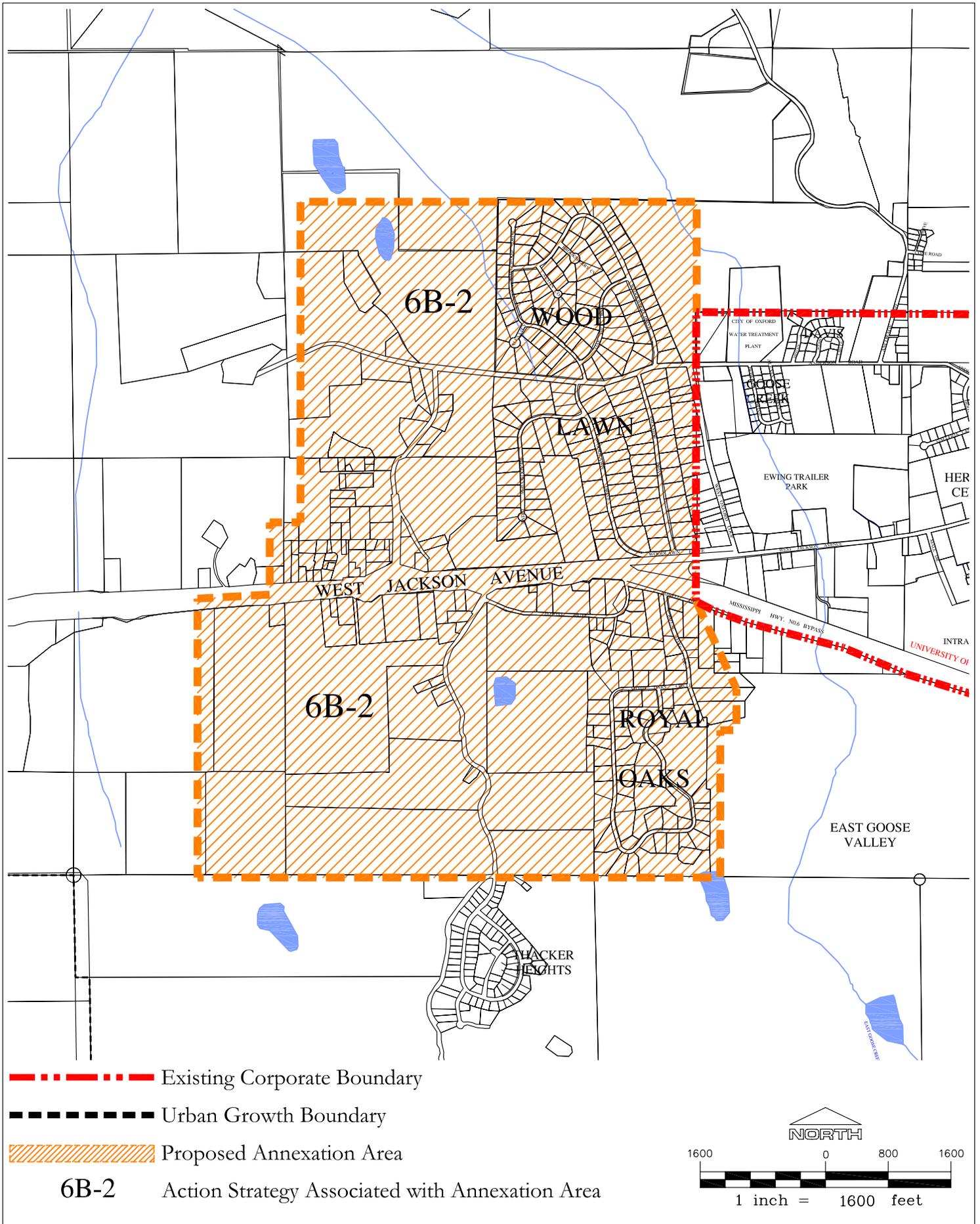


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Figure 11
 Annexation Area Detail East

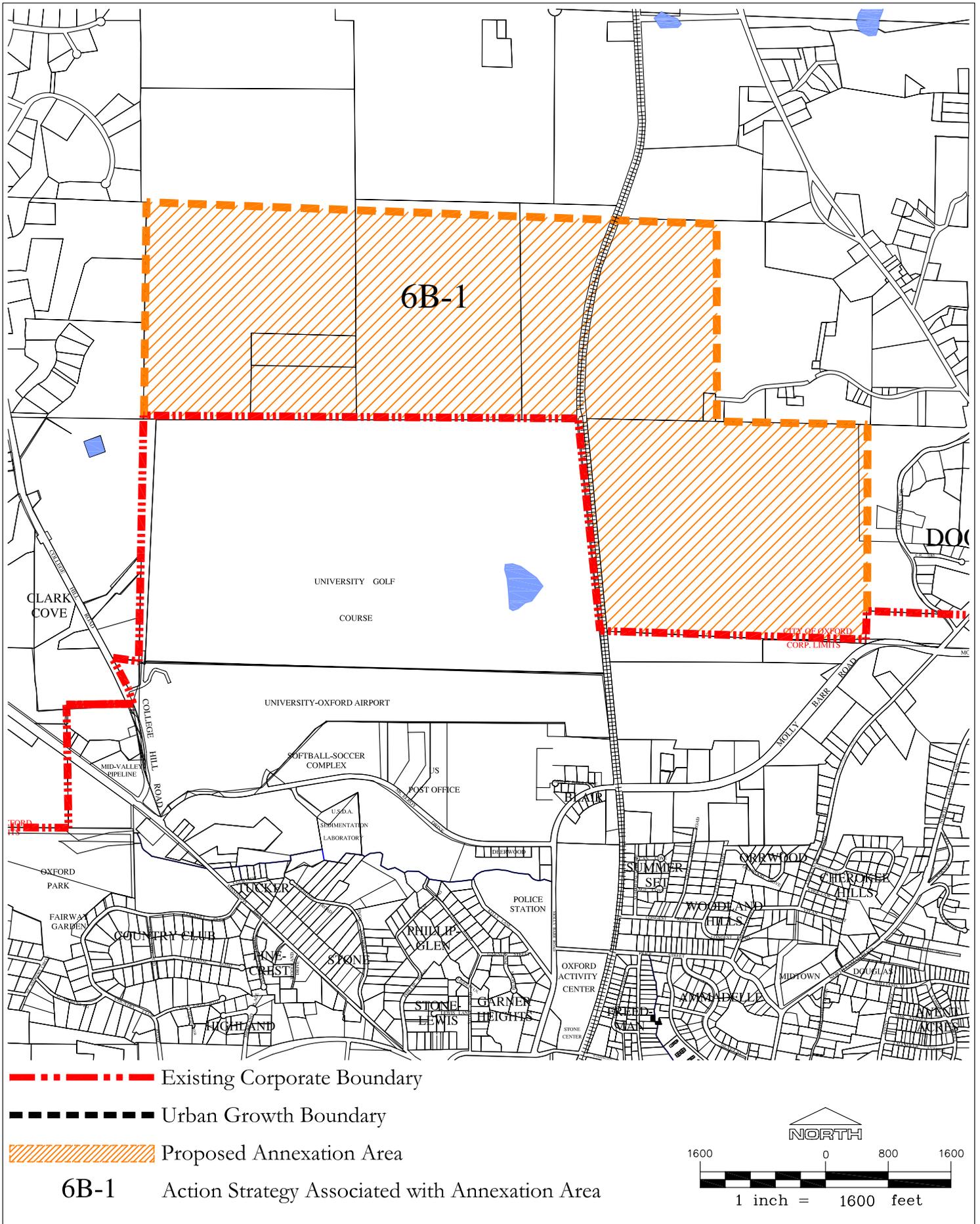


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Figure 12
Annexation Area Detail West

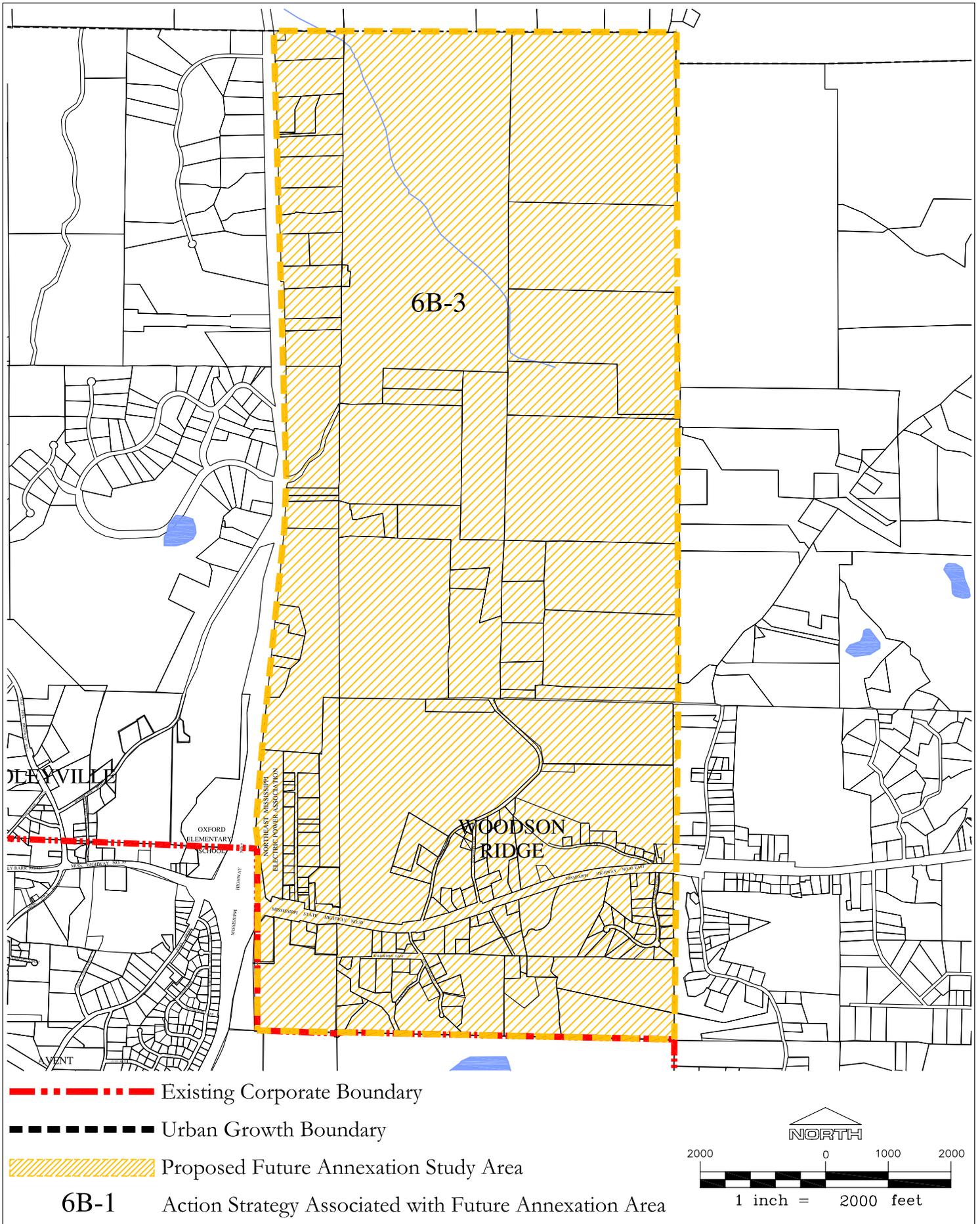


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Figure 13
 Annexation Area Detail North



7.0 HOUSING

7.1 PERSPECTIVE

Housing within the City of Oxford and the outlying areas of Lafayette County is a critical issue both from the standpoint of affordability as well as its impact on neighborhood stability and character. The housing stock of Oxford and its environs continues to grow thereby adding to the increased opportunity for choice in a larger housing market. The majority of this increased housing availability is the construction of multi-family dwellings and other rental units. The present housing inventory consists of sixty (60) percent multi-family units and in 2003, 150 dwelling units out of 367 were multi-family or rental. The cost of housing continues to rise in all types, new construction as well, in existing single-family owner-occupied as well as rental. There is an ongoing concern and a consensus among Oxford residents that the need to provide quality, affordable housing to a greater number of people is a major priority for the community. It is becoming increasingly alarming to be faced with a future where a greater number of citizens who work in and for Oxford cannot afford to live here.

7.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Goal

Increase the availability of quality, affordable, safe and sanitary housing.

II. Objectives

Housing Choice: Establish policies, new regulations and incentives to encourage increased availability of a full range of housing types with varying densities and costs located in new development and existing housing stock.

Housing Quality: Ensure that all housing development conforms to applicable local, state, and federal standards with respect to safety, health, energy efficiency, and design quality.

Housing Affordability: Increase the availability of affordable, quality housing to all citizens who work and live in Oxford.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

7A. Affordable Housing

The cost of land and the high demand for rental housing and condominium development have placed increased upward pressures on housing prices in

Oxford. The differential in standards between Oxford and outlying county land where no development regulations, utility standards or building codes apply further aggravates housing price pressures in Oxford. The provision of housing at affordable prices is a major priority for the City.

7-A1. Work with housing industry to advance community efforts to develop affordable housing in Oxford.

To create increased housing opportunities for all income levels a broad-based effort will be needed involving many elements of the community including the City and other public agencies, non-profit organizations and the private sector, especially the development and construction industry. The City should seek to increase the supply of housing for middle income residents who currently cannot afford to live in Oxford.

7-A2. Offer incentives to develop affordable housing.

The development and construction of any type of housing is dependent largely on the investment based expectations of private developers and contractors. Additional means are needed to encourage this area of the private sector to willingly choose to provide a greater range of choice and price in the products that are to be built. Although incentives are a voluntary approach to encourage the development of more affordable housing, here are a variety of options that may yield results in this direction.

- Density bonuses: Increasing the number of dwelling units per acre in any given zoning district as a consideration for development of a certain number of affordable dwellings could stimulate additional housing production and price diversity.
- Infrastructure support: Financial support from the City for construction of sewer and water systems could help reduce overall development costs and induce construction of affordable housing.
- Expedite development review: Measures to fast-track residential projects that area pledged to providing affordable housing helps reduce overall cost in the development process. Reducing the time of review helps address the “time is money” issue and can contribute as part of a package of incentives.
- Waiver or reduction of development fees: Development fees typically are just another cost of development passed on to the consumer. Reductions, rebates, credits, or waivers may be appropriate to add to the mix of incentives.
-

Actions: Affordable Housing

- Encourage increased development industry involvement and the creation of public / private alliances to develop affordable low and middle income housing. (City staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board).

Actions: Incentive Program

- Identify measures within local development codes that can be adjusted to reduce the cost of housing production. (City staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board).
- Develop an affordable housing program that ensures long-term participation of affordability units and protects against short-term sales at higher market values. (City staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Board).

Building setback and area requirements: Additional density provided by reducing lot sizes and the cost reduction for driveways resulting from reduced setbacks help combine to lower overall cost.

In entering into any incentive program the City must be very careful to develop a system that ensures the desired outcome of producing affordable housing and keeping such affordability for an extended period of time. Equally important is the necessity of ensuring that the quality of neighborhoods is not compromised by inappropriate relaxation of standards or that other objectives of the Comprehensive Plan are overlooked.