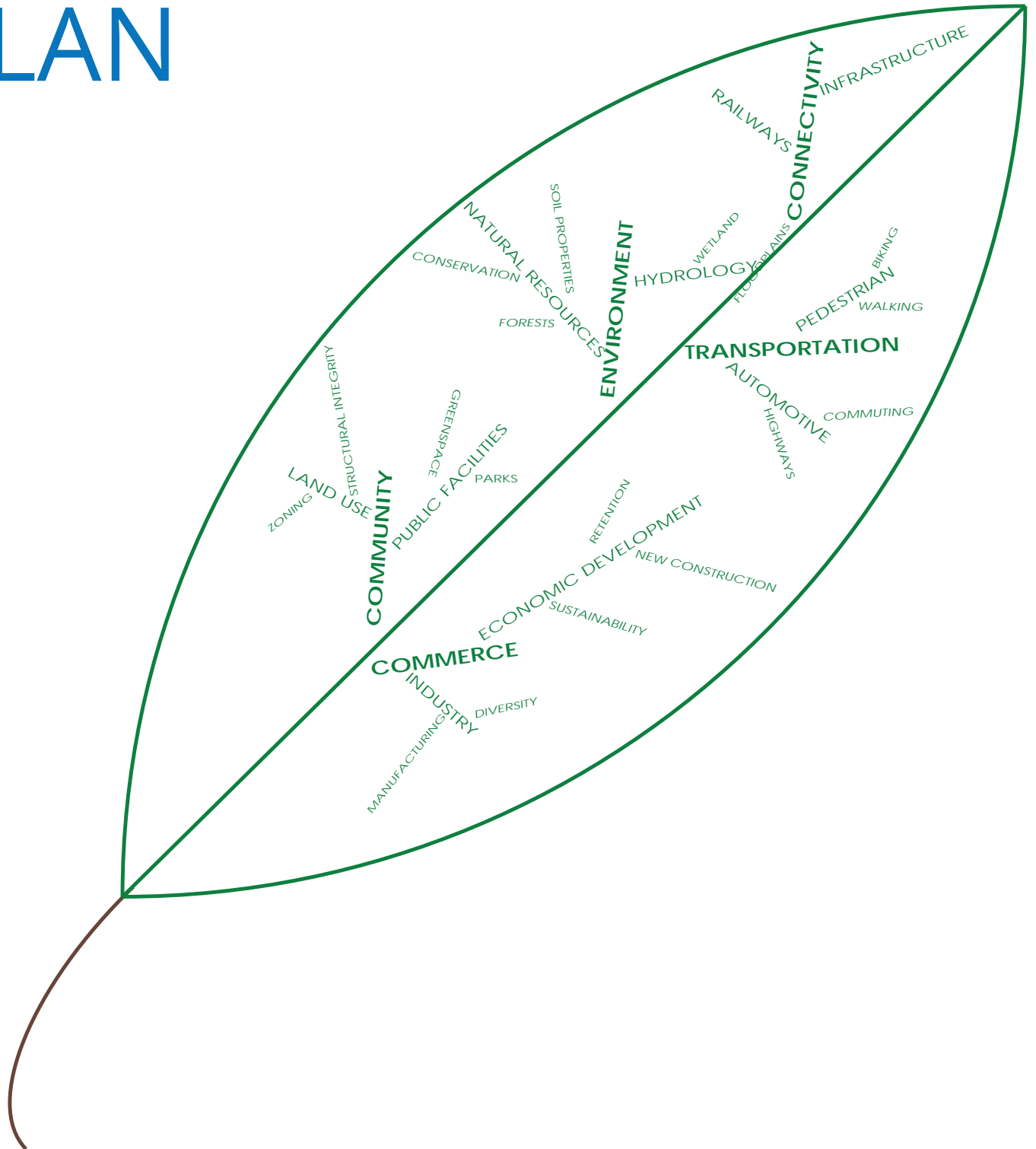


# BALDWIN GROWTH PLAN



AUGUST 5, 2014







*Simon Spigle*  
**AUDITORIUM**

*Claude Gentry*  
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**BALDWIN**  
  
**Home of the  
Bearcats**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Baldwin Comprehensive Growth Plan would not have been possible without the incredible support, participation, and vision of Baldwin's elected officials and residents.

We would also like to give a special thanks to the citizens who participated through questionnaires and other means which are not listed below.

## **CITY OFFICIALS**

Mayor, Michael James

Alderwoman Lynda Conlee

Alderman Tom Nelson

Alderman Richard Kohlheim

Alderman Ricky Massengill

Alderman Lee Bowdry

City Attorney, John D. Haynes

City Clerk, Nan Nanney

Chamber of Commerce, Lori Tucker

Building Inspector, James Harris

Street Department, Aston Alexander

Gas & Water Department, Carl Bryan

Fire Department, Jerry Ozbirn

## **PROJECT PARTNERS**

Community Development Foundation

Lee County Council of Governments

## **KEY MILESTONES**

- + Original Visioning Session: Tuesday, September 3, 2013
- + Private Sector Shareholder Tour: Friday, October 18, 2013
- + Second Visioning Session: Monday, October 28, 2013
- + Distribution of Public and Business Input Questionnaires: January, 2014
- + Questionnaires Gathered and Tallied: March 2014
- + MSU Stennis Institute First Impressions Visit: Wednesday, March 5, 2014
- + Draft Plan Presentation: Tuesday, April 1, 2014
- + Draft Plan Work Session: Tuesday, May 20, 2014
- + Public Hearing: Tuesday, July 8, 2014
- + Adoption by the Board of Aldermen: Tuesday, August 5, 2014

*Front cover design by Ryan Culp*

*Opposite Page: Restored Claude Gentry Theater in Downtown Baldwin*

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# INTRODUCTION



Baldwyn is a place where tradition touches tomorrow. As the City's motto implies, it is a place with deep roots and a strong sense of community. While still solidly grounded in tradition, the City is looking toward and preparing for tomorrow. As it embraces change and attempts to take forward steps, many challenges exist. This plan addresses both the opportunities and challenges present. It looks at where the City has been, where it is at, and where it is headed. This objective "look in the mirror" is the first step in finding strategies that will be beneficial for Baldwyn, while proactively addressing its current problems and challenges.

This Plan concentrates goals and objectives in a phased approach over the next two decades by targeting eight key areas of focus. The 'vision,' or the summary statement that encompasses the goals over the next twenty years, leads to goals that result in recommendations and form the structure of the Plan. The triple bottom line of economic, ecological, and social inputs are each addressed throughout the plan, helping to guide things in a sustainable direction. The hope is that this Plan, as applied and implemented correctly, will make Baldwyn one of the most desirable places to live and work in the surrounding region.

## BACKGROUND

In 1960 the Baldwyn Planning Commission, with the assistance of Urban Consultant Associates of Montgomery, Alabama prepared a land development plan which provided the basis for Baldwyn's first zoning ordinance. It was thirty five years before the next Comprehensive Plan was deemed necessary by the City, although a substantial amount of growth occurred during that period. In April of 1979, a professional Land Use Plan was conducted by Gregory-Grace and Associates for the Northeast Mississippi Planning and Development District in Booneville. Funded partially by HUD, the plan was not comprehensive in nature, but it provided a snapshot into the condition of the municipality at that time. By the 1990s, the land area of the city had reached its current extent of 11.6 square miles. In September of 1995 the Lee County Council of Governments produced the second comprehensive plan: *Baldwyn: Lee/Prentiss County Mississippi*.

In 2007 the Council of Governments released an update titled *Baldwyn, Mississippi: Comprehensive Growth Plan 2007-2027*. This Plan, like the 1995 document, did an excellent job of assessing the existing conditions of each respective period. However neither Plan established goals and objectives to guide future development in the City. In so doing, they left little guidance for policy and land use guidelines. As a result, the Council of Governments released a high quality set of Design Guidelines, adopted by the Board in January of 2008.

Now is the time for a plan with goals and objectives, and with possible ways to reach those setpoints, and

will better link the comprehensive planning of the City with the existing Design Guidelines. The City is at a critical point, and changes are currently taking place which will either adversely or positively affect the next two decades and beyond. With growing economic needs, energy concerns, and other issues, a major planning effort is needed to give direction to effectively guide public and private decisions for the next twenty years and beyond.

## PURPOSE AND ROLE

The purpose of this Plan is to create a framework for action and to articulate the vision of the public servants of Baldwyn, along with its residents, into a reality. The vision for the Plan embodies a unique character, a strong sense of place, environmental responsibility, and increasing economical viability.

True communities must be wrought from a distinct vision. They do not just happen accidentally. The Plan lays out steps to regain and rebuild the sense of community identity that has been slowly lost in the late-1970s until the present. This can only be achieved through deliberate action in the planning process.

Cooperation among citizens, the public sector, and the private sector must happen consistently. This Plan provides tools to guide the system of design guidelines, site plan review, subdivision, and zoning controls. These in themselves are tools to an end, and must be guided by the strong, consistent, overarching vision of the Plan. This has to occur in an incremental framework, over an extended period. Market fluctuations, political rivalries, and financial issues will all be distracting factors along the way. However, maintaining high standards will have great long-term rewards.

As the automobile transformed American society, the ability to travel quickly destabilized the historic growth and development patterns of urban areas. Baldwyn has been no exception. Much of the City's development since the 1950s has focused on rapid growth without a clear vision for the type of product it would produce. Developers have built low quality commercial districts to minimize risk and maximize profits, but have had no regard for where developments would be in 50 years. Baldwyn has been part of this negative trend and has suffered from this instability in some places.

However, in other places such as the downtown, there has been a pattern of 'benign neglect' of old commercial buildings, which has both preserved them and made authentic rehabilitation possible. The decline of commercial and residential areas as the city sprawled outward has had destabilizing impacts on older portions of town. At the same time a proliferation of public housing projects have increased rental rates and destabilized these neighborhoods.

Baldwyn has a history of searching for innovative



solutions, and this Plan will help take this search to the next level. For the future, the focus should be on making existing neighborhoods better places to live, efficiently and effectively accommodating new growth, and preserving and enhancing the existing commercial and residential assets.

## STRATEGY

**This is more than a plan. It is a growth and redevelopment strategy for action.** As a comprehensive growth and redevelopment strategy that will preserve valuable land reserves while helping to foster a climate of optimism, it will help ensure optimum economic vitality. **The Plan is strategically divided into eight major sections, which address existing conditions and make assessments.** The plan will then set long and short term goals for eight major categories and explore future challenges.

## LEGAL ASPECTS

The Comprehensive Plan, as adopted, serves as a statement of goals and policies to guide new development and redevelopment in the City. All development shall be in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Comprehensive Plan as adopted or amended by the Board of Aldermen. Amendments to the text may be necessary to ensure compliance with the plan (Section 17-1-11 of the Mississippi Code of 1972).

This Plan sets out to serve as a basis for public policy, land use development, economic development, and a capital improvements plan. In this way, this document is a guide for the future vibrancy of Baldwin.

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN

Comprehensive Planning is a continuous process. This Plan sets targets with clear and measurable results. The continuous use and application of the Plan is what is most important, the development plan is only as good as the measures and determination used to implement the Plan. Positive change usually does not happen without hard and concerted work. No single document can address and solve all of a community's needs. The Plan must be flexible, continuous, and changing. It should be periodically updated based on changing conditions, the shifting of resources, and the alteration of goals. One essential element is having a person or group of people to initiate and keep the Plan going over several decades.

The Plan is intended to be a useful tool of public policy to guide and inform city development over the next two decades. It is designed to be a practical guide for developing and implementing specific policies. Finance, land use, development, and economy are all related to issues and strategies of the Plan. It will help guide city decisions that will have to be made with limited resources.

It will help to translate the vision to both private and public sectors, and help facilitate collaboration among these parties.

## PLAN CREATION

The planning process takes projections, trends, public input, and current issues, together with the community vision, and it drafts a set of goals for action. These goals lead to recommendations, which will be discussed in detail.

Under the direction of the Lee County Council of Governments, the planning process began in August of 2013 and continued until April of 2014. The process involved detailed site visits, collaboration with stakeholders and public officials, and the collection of information and public input. Information was gathered through a variety of sources, including empirical analysis, geographic information systems, along with city, state, and federal references. References are cited throughout the Plan as citation is appropriate.

The process began with a look at existing plans and thorough look at all the data. City officials expressed their goals for the community. A charrette was conducted with public officials to garner feedback about design options for the community. All of these factors provided input for the final set of goals and resulting recommendations.

This planning effort was organized with the help of the City of Baldwin, the Board of Alderman, and Mayor Michael James. The Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Director Lori Tucker also played a major role in the Plan formation and gathering of public feedback and support.

In the Summer of 2013, the Council of Governments conducted a detailed inventory and analysis of existing conditions related to key development elements. A formal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis has been developed to assess major conditions and trends with the City. The results of this analysis were shared with the Board of Alderman and Mayor in September 2013 at a regular work session. These findings have also been incorporated into the body of the Plan.

After a major vision was developed and corresponding major goals were created to align and achieve that vision, objectives associated with each element were created to best reach those goals.

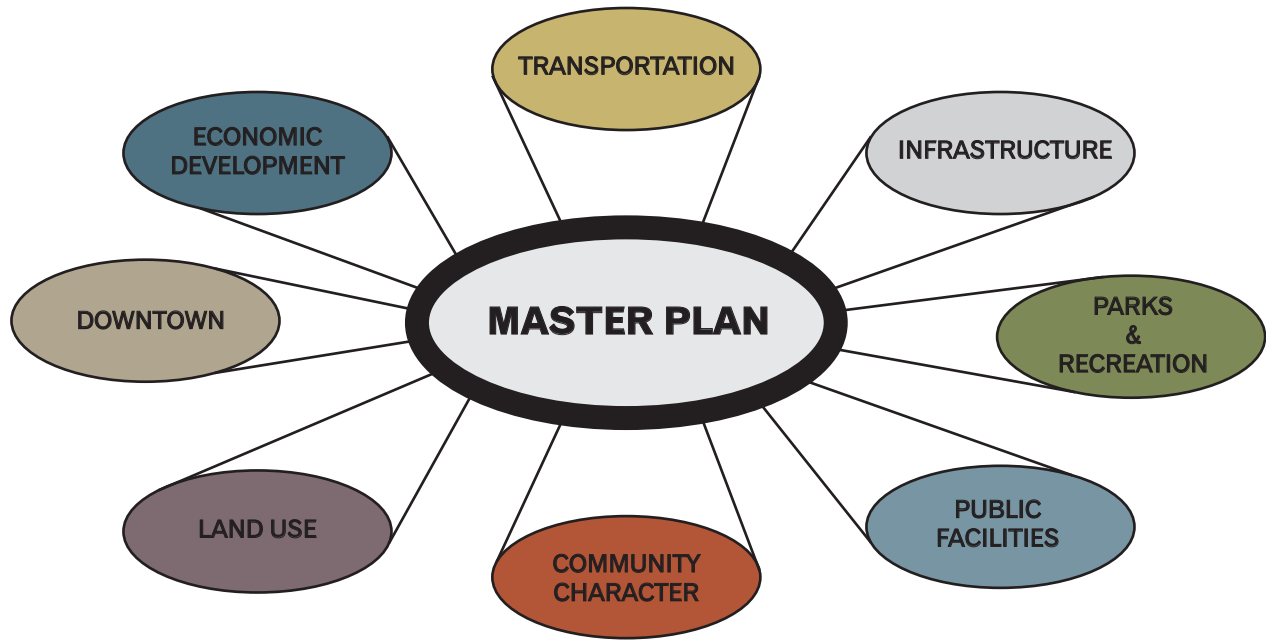


Figure I: The Master Plan is composed of the eight key components which form its structure.

## ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW

**The Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed every other year by the Mayor and Board of Alderman** to determine if issues have developed which merit amendment to the Plan. If necessary, the Board of Aldermen should initiate action as needed.

Because the future is always uncertain at best, the Plan provides a systematic platform for amendment to accommodate changing conditions in technology, the economy, as well as changes in planning strategy. **Needed plan revisions should be conducted every five years.** The Board of Aldermen, in conjunction with a committee, should perform an honest appraisal to determine what has and has not been accomplished at that time, and determine why. The extent of the review and revisions will be dictated by the appraisal. Related city ordinances should be amended correspondingly as the plan is amended.

The Mayor and the Board have the responsibility to oversee the fulfillment of the Plan and make such amendments as are deemed necessary to maintain the Plan's relevance.

In deciding whether to amend the Comprehensive Plan, the Board of Aldermen should ask if one or more of the following factors have occurred:

**(1.) There has been a change in projections or assumptions from those used in the original Plan.**

**(2.) Existing or new issues or needs have been identified which are not adequately addressed in the Plan.**

**(3.) The amendment will not hurt the character of the area in which the proposed development is to be located.**

## THE COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

Using the vision statement as a guide, the Plan focuses on eight key areas which form the core of the Master Plan. The eight categories include Economic Development, the Downtown, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Public Facilities, Land Use, and Community Character. No one area can be thought of without the others.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Good placemaking is vital to sustaining property values, community spirit, and natural resources. The vision for Baldwyn 2034 is to preserve small town character, promote economic growth, make the community more attractive, enhance the downtown, and promote a higher quality of life. Visioning is a constant process of improving and strengthening goals and recommendations, as changes occur and time passes.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It proposes ways to enhance value. Property value is tied to a complex set of interacting factors. Major players include community vitality, economic growth, real property, as well as Public Amenities and the School System.

The Plan will energize positive trends that are already occurring, while working to reverse negative trends. Growth, prosperity, family-friendly design, affordable options, and forward-looking policies are integral aspects of the Plan.

## SUSTAINABILITY

In looking to the future and anticipating changes, this Plan incorporates principles of sustainability. Environmental responsibility in patterns of development will enhance future opportunities and livability for generations to come.



# VISION AND CORE PRINCIPLES

*The Vision for 2034 is to make Baldwin into a thriving city encompassing the best quality of life possible. It will be well positioned as an emerging hub of growth, and retain its valuable character and historic assets as a destination in Northeast Mississippi for excellent housing, economic, and recreational opportunities.*

## COMMUNITY VISION

A vision is a useful guide for developing a great town and helping it reach goals. A community must have a vision to move forward. If a community's goal is to go nowhere, that is where it will end up. The vision of a community embodies the collective ideals, dreams, goals, and aspirations of its citizens. It is inclusive of all, but all too often only championed by a few. Often a community may thrive or perish due to the vision of the people, or lack thereof. A vision is of vital importance for this reason. The growth and sustainability of the City of Baldwin will be motivated by the driving vision of the people.

Many people work in and travel through Baldwin and are disconnected from the community. Industries are located nearby and people choose to commute from other places, instead of living in town. While any change is hard and painstaking, this plan will help guide the city through the "baby" steps necessary to induce change.

## CORE IDEALS

There are several core ideals upon which this plan and its vision are founded:

- (1.) Baldwin's best days can still be ahead.
- (2.) Economic Development and Community Development in Baldwin are inextricably linked.
- (3.) Hard work will be necessary to implement the improvements of this plan. There is no substitute, and nothing worth having will come without effort.
- (4.) Yesterday's decisions become today's problems. Today's decisions can become tomorrow's solutions. Baldwin is dealing with many of yesterday's poor decisions today.
- (5.) Baldwin's economic base must expand for the community to grow and prosper.
- (6.) This plan is a tool box for Baldwin's next twenty years, but does not pretend to account for the unknown future, and therefore revisions will invariably be necessary.
- (7.) Any positive change in Baldwin will require enormous levels of cooperation. Personal agendas must be left out.

(8.) Education will be critical. The future of the Baldwin Public Schools is a major factor, but is outside the scope of this plan.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Any plan must have a set of guiding principals to see an idea through to implementation. In this case, guiding principals have been developed by a combination of evaluation and public input. In this way, the Baldwin Growth Plan is guided by community responses and values. These have been translated into key guiding principles developed throughout the project. The principles help to guide the strategies of the Plan in a proactive and deliberate fashion.

These guiding principles have been further refined by a community questionnaire survey process. The Baldwin questionnaire was distributed in January 2014 to its citizens by the Chamber of Commerce, and an online survey was available for a set period of time. Over 200 citizens responded to the effort. The questionnaire included twenty-nine questions based on the previously defined major elements of the Plan. Each tallied response to the questionnaire provides a direct guiding principal or priority for the appropriate section of the Plan.

## SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

As a comprehensive strategy, the Plan covers the three legs of the sustainability stool: economy, environment, and society. These strategies have been developed much in the past two decades, and several prominent trends have emerged. Many of these strategies stand in contrast to the planning methodologies of the past decades, especially since the emergence of suburbia and rapid growth of the post-war era. These ideas are prescriptive and corrective in that they attempt to retrofit existing neighborhoods and commercial areas, while allowing for careful growth and expansion for the future. The following major ideas are outlined below:

## STRONG TOWNS

The economic development ideas of the non-profit organization Strong Towns are incorporated into this Plan. The mission of Strong Towns is "to support a model for growth that allows America's towns to become financially strong and resilient." The Strong Towns resources located at [www.strongtowns.org](http://www.strongtowns.org) will serve as a guide for recommendations.



## NEW URBANISM

In addition, the design and environmental conservation concepts of New Urbanism are utilized and referred to in this Plan. New Urbanism is a design movement which promotes walkable neighborhoods containing a range of housing and job types. It deals with many aspects of real estate development, urban planning, and municipal land-use strategies. Resources are available at: [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org).

## SMART GROWTH

Furthermore, the Plan also employs some of the principles of Smart Growth, especially in environmental and social recommendations. Smart Growth resources are available at [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org) and at [www.epa.gov/dced/about\\_sg.htm](http://www.epa.gov/dced/about_sg.htm). Smart Growth concentrates growth in compact walkable urban centers to avoid sprawl. It also advocates a pattern of compact, tight, and walkable land use. Aspects include neighborhood schools, complete streets, and mixed-use development with a range of housing choices. Smart Growth values long-range, regional considerations of conservation and sustainability over a short-term focus. Its goals are to achieve a unique sense of community and place; expand the range of transportation, employment, and housing choices; preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources; and promote public health.



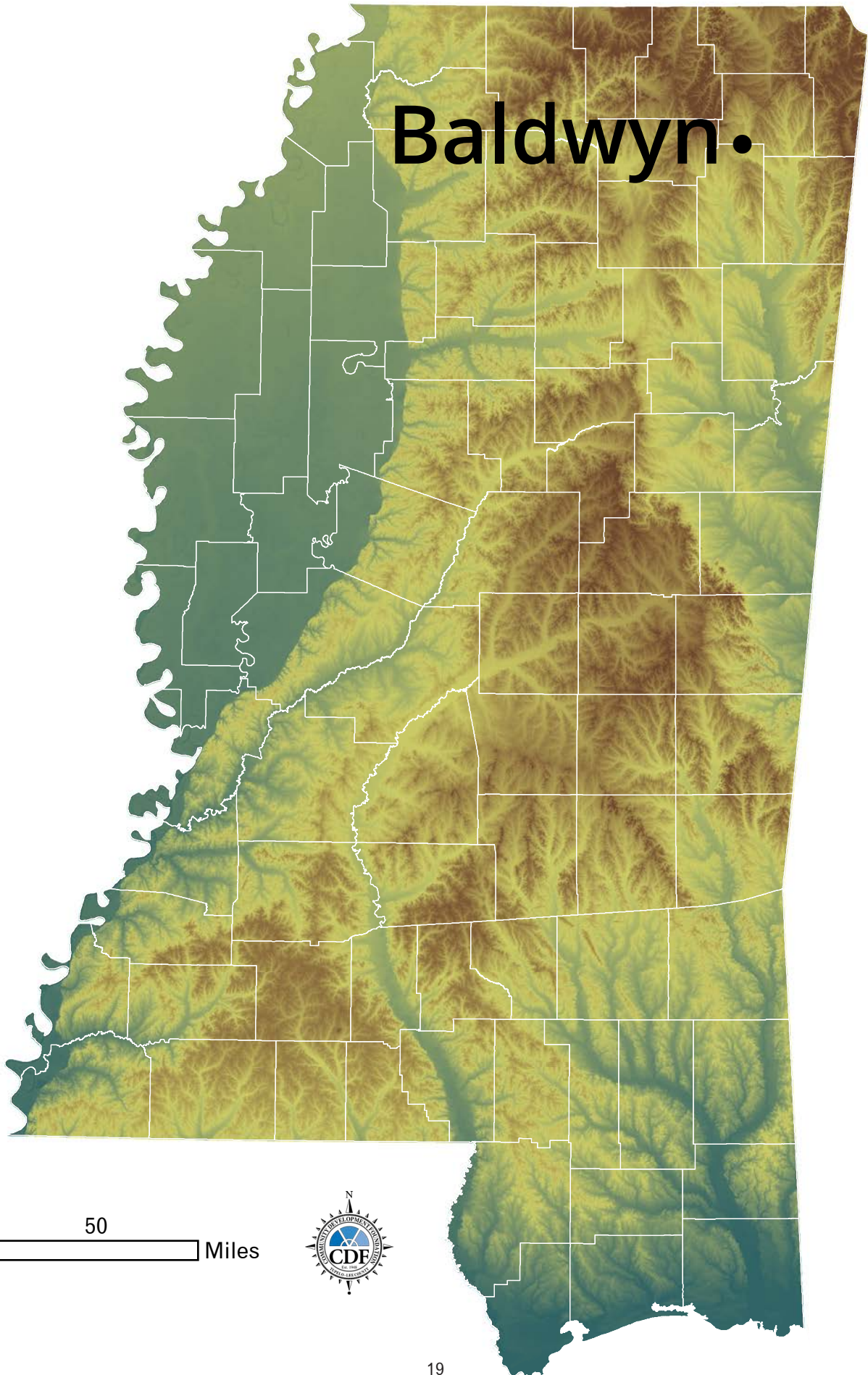
# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## SETTING

Baldwyn is located in northeast Mississippi, partially within both Lee and Prentiss Counties. The city is located along U.S. Highway 45, which provides a major 4-lane connection to the north and south. In addition, Mississippi Highway 370 and Mississippi Highway 145 run through the town. The Kansas City Southern Railroad runs generally north and south through the city. The city is located approximately 110 miles southeast of Memphis, Tennessee, 150 miles northwest of Birmingham, Alabama, 200 miles southwest of Nashville, Tennessee, and 220 miles northeast of Jackson, Mississippi.

In 2013 extent of the city limits cover an area of approximately 7,458 acres (11.7 square miles). The city is also partially located within the Tupelo Micropolitan area, which includes all of Lee, Pontotoc, and Itawamba Counties.

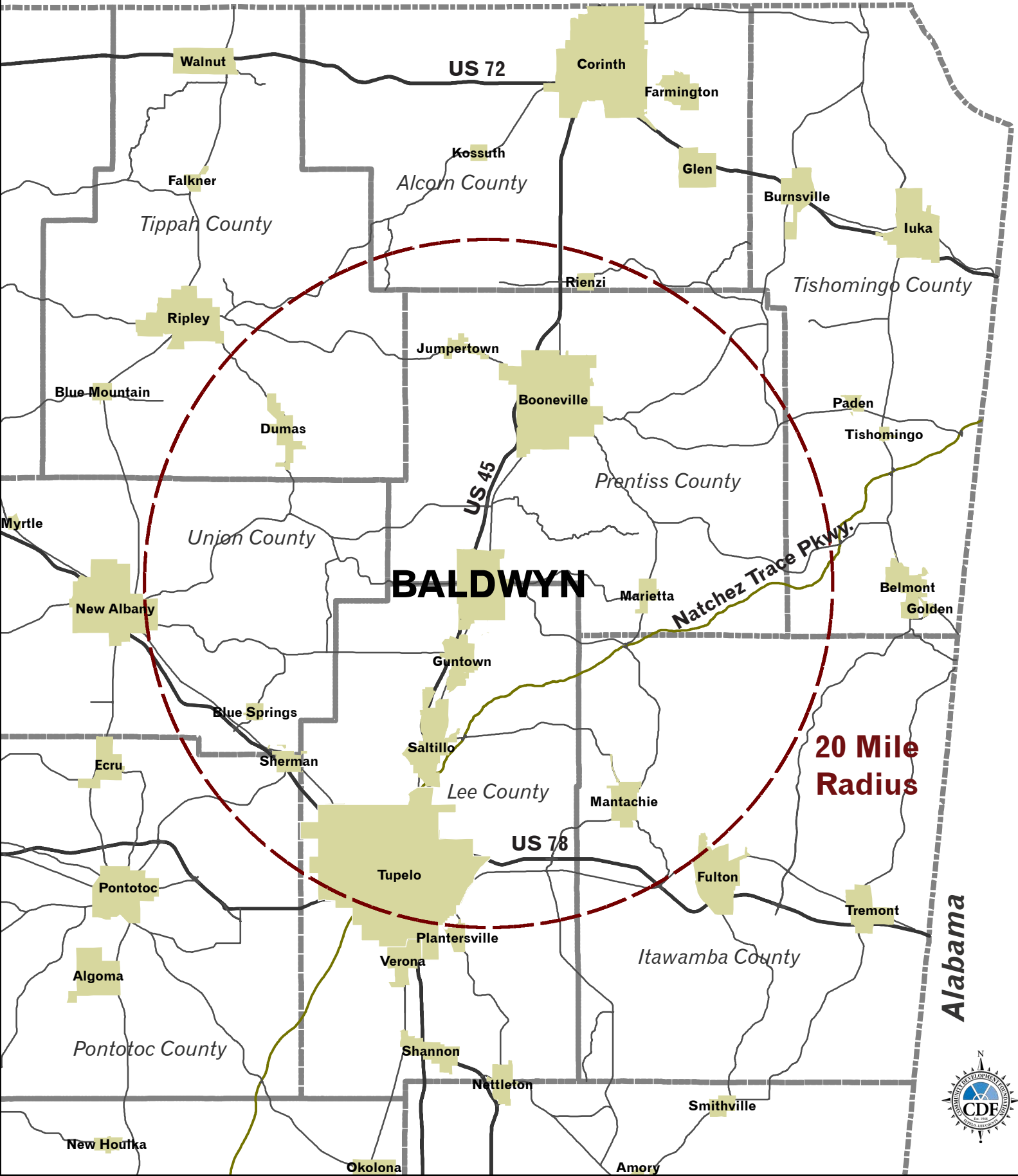
# Baldwyn •



50 Miles



# Tennessee



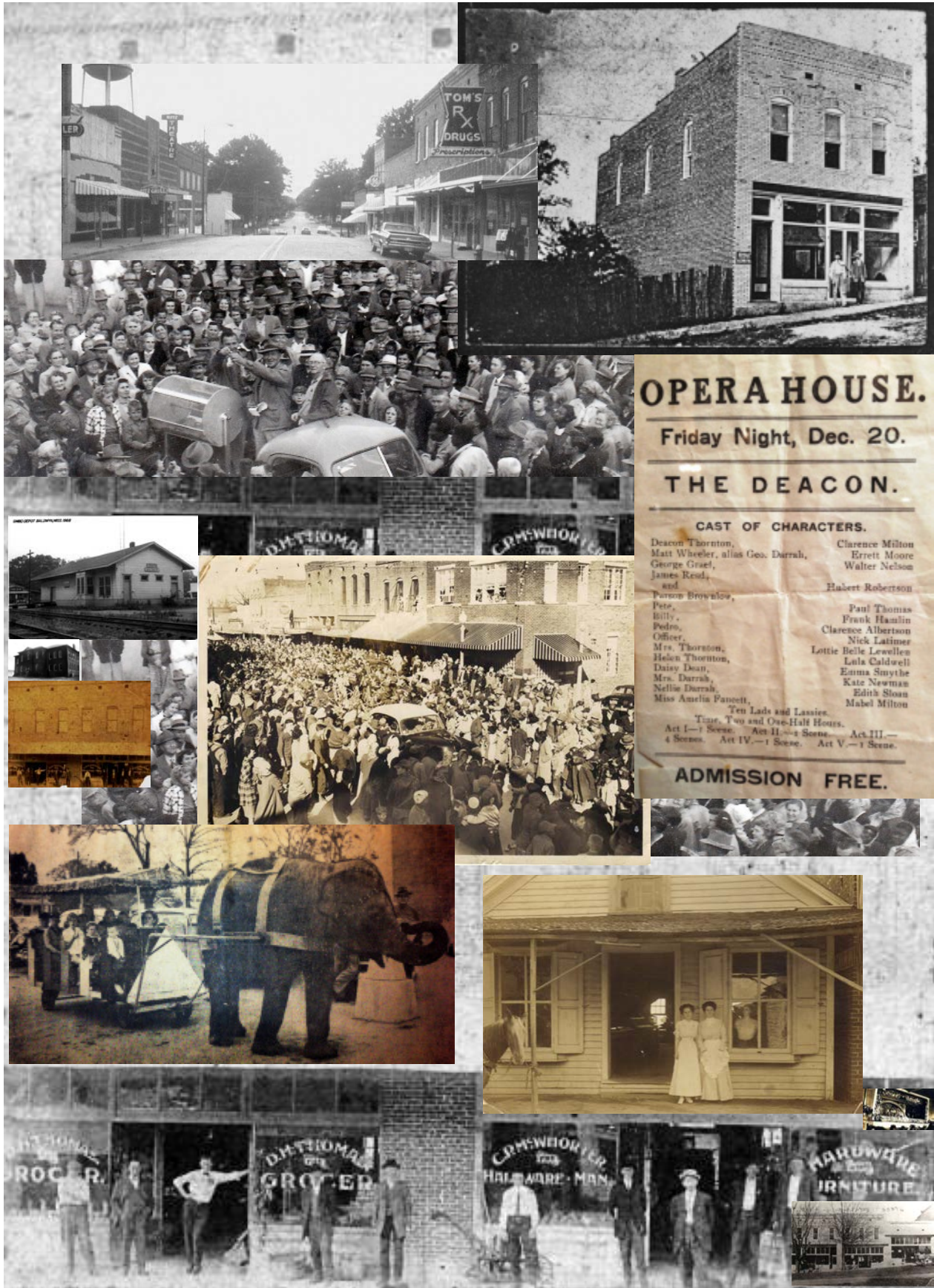
## BALDWIN

**20 Mile  
Radius**

**Alabama**







**OPERA HOUSE.**  
 Friday Night, Dec. 20.  
**THE DEACON.**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS.**

Deacon Thornton,	Clarence Milton
Matt Wheeler, alias Geo. Darrah,	Errett Moore
George Graef,	Walter Nelson
James Reed,	
and	Habet Robertson
Porter Brumlow,	
Pete,	Paul Thomas
Billy,	Frank Hamlin
Pedro,	Clarence Albertson
Officer,	Nick Latimer
Mrs. Thornton,	Lottie Belle Leavelle
Helen Thornton,	Lula Caldwell
Daisy Dean,	Emma Smythe
Mrs. Darrah,	Kate Newman
Nellie Darrah,	Edith Sloan
Miss Amelia Pancett,	Mabel Milton

Ten Lads and Lassies.  
 Time, Two and One-Half Hours.  
 Act I.—1 Scene. Act II.—2 Scenes. Act III.—  
 4 Scenes. Act IV.—1 Scene. Act V.—1 Scene.

**ADMISSION FREE.**

## COMMUNITY HISTORY

Baldwyn was established on April 1, 1861, along what was then the border of Tishomingo and Itawamba Counties. The town was the outgrowth of the earlier village of Carrollville, which existed over a mile northwest of the present downtown. The crossroad was a stop for people travelling from Pontotoc, Mississippi to Tusculumbia, Alabama and by the 1840s and 50s had become a small economic hub. The Mobile and Ohio Railroad was built 1848 to 1861 and as a result, it missed Carrollville and the citizens relocated to the new town of Baldwyn. Baldwyn was the mid-point between Mobile and the Ohio River, and therefore the center point of the new railroad. The new town was named for the civil engineer who surveyed the railroad through the town. It is said that Mr. Baldwyn also had a role in designing the original town layout.

Tishomingo, chief of the Chickasaw, lived at old Carrollville before being relocated west with his tribe in 1839. He died in route at Little Rock in 1839 of smallpox.

The famous Civil War Battle of Brice's Cross Roads was fought west of the town in June 1864. The battle was a strategic victory for the Confederate force led by General Forrest, but had no effect on the outcome of the war.

Following the Civil War, Prentiss and Lee Counties were formed, and Baldwyn continued as a border town, straddling the county line through its downtown.

The town continued to grow steadily through the early twentieth century, serving as a hub of economic activity supporting the surrounding agricultural region. As an agricultural town, it provided retail and trade services for the agricultural region of the nearby Black Prairie. This role shaped the development and character of Baldwyn, and while it was never a place of great wealth, a notable mercantile sector developed and influenced the cultural level of the town.

Along with the rest of the region, after the 1960s a shift toward industry became the dominating influence on the local economy which continues until today. By the late 1970s, the City had nine industries which employed around 930 persons.

Over its history, Baldwyn has developed a strong community identity and a unique sense of place. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the local commerce saw a steady decline. However, from the mid-1990s until today, significant downtown redevelopment and other notable commercial expansion has begun to occur.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

### POPULATION

Baldwyn's population grew by over 500% over the early and mid-twentieth century, reaching 3,427 in 1980. However, for the past three decades, Baldwin has shown a stabilized population which has seen very little change, although gradually decreasing. The census is predicting that this slow decline will continue, at a rate of approximately -0.64% per year to 2017, with a population of 3,107. The current population is divided between 1,528 males (46%), and 1,769 females (54%).

When Baldwin's population was growing, it was due to a variety of factors. Increased industrial and commercial development, the completion of the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway, the completion of the Natchez Trace Parkway nearby, along with other factors contributed to this growth. Corresponding to this are several relatively large annexation efforts over the past several decades. In 1960 the town was approximately 2,233 acres (3.48 square miles). By 1994 a series of annexations had brought the city up to its current size of approximately 11.6 square miles, nearly four times as large. However, since then population has not increased, and the density has stayed low. The current population density of Baldwin only is 283 persons per square mile, while Booneville is 336 per square mile, New Albany is 446 per square mile, Guntown is 460 per square mile, Ripley is 477 per square mile, Corinth is 483 per square mile, Saltillo is 550 per square mile, and Tupelo is 709 per square mile.

### AGE

While the total population is getting smaller, Baldwin's population has grown older as well since 1990, especially in people over age 45. The current median age is 38.8, which has increased from about 31 in the late 1970's.

Although this is older than the U.S. median age, it is still relatively a young population for a rural small town. The future of Baldwin's growth is largely dependent on decisions that need to be made. If changes and improvements are not undertaken, it is likely that the current trends of decline will continue. However, Baldwin is in a unique position to increase its population and make its location more viable for people of all ages to relocate to. To accomplish sustained growth, it will take an enhanced and combined effort from citizens and city officials. The City should focus on attracting people of all ages to the community. This will take effort and focus, along with important steps that will be covered in the following sections of this Plan.

### RACE

Baldwyn's minority ratio has been increasing in the last three decades. In 1990 the ratio of whites to blacks was 61% to 39%. By 2010 this ratio had changed to 53% white to 45% black. Other ethnic groups and multi-racial individuals currently make up the difference in numbers.

### MARITAL STATUS

Currently, the adult population (over 15) is 41% married, followed by 32% of the population who have never married. In addition, 14% of the population is divorced, and 13% is widowed.

### EDUCATION

The educational attainment figures for Baldwin have improved over the past thirty years. High school graduates with no higher education were about 26% of the population in 1990, the same as the estimate for 2012. However, Associates Degree holders have more than doubled from 3.6% in 1990, to 9.9% in 2012. Bachelor's Degree holders increased from 7.3% to 13.3% over the same period. At the same time, the Master's/Doctorate/

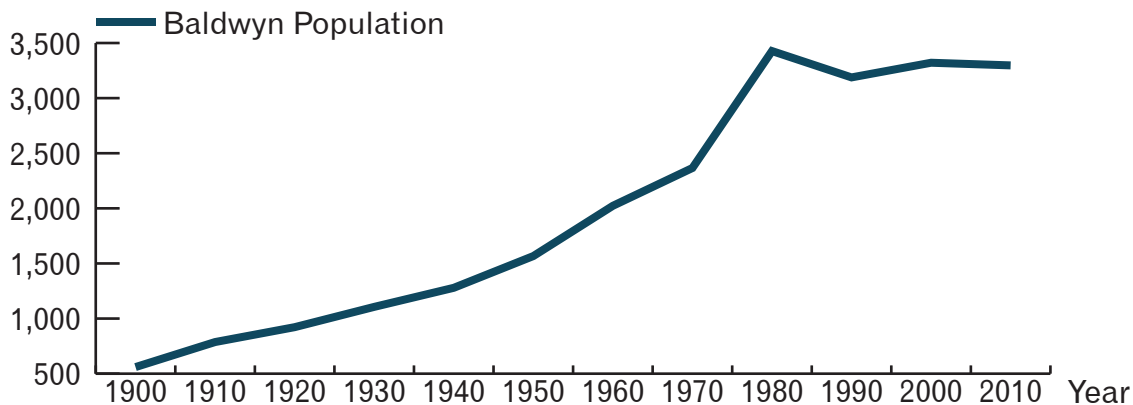


Figure II: After steady growth for 70 years, Baldwin's population has remained stable over the past three decades.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Historical Census Reports, ESRI Community Analyst.



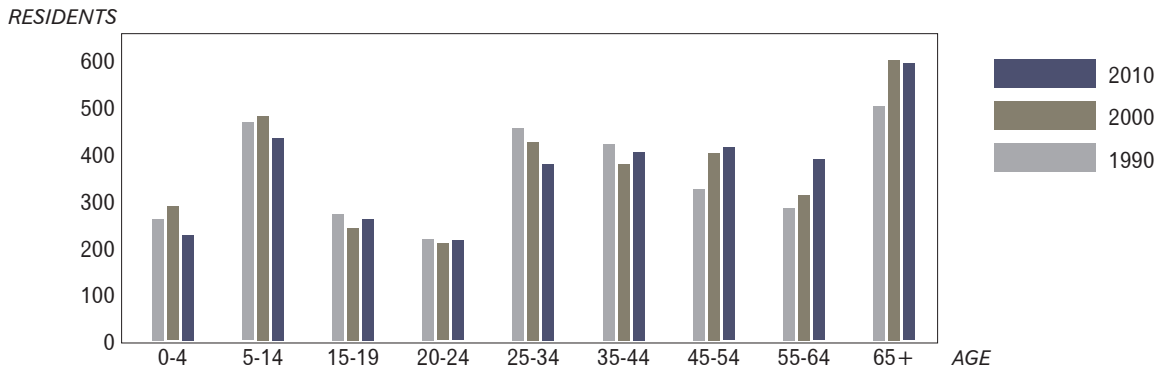


Figure III: For the past two decades, Baldwin the population of Baldwin has become older on average. Source: U.S. Census, ESRI Community Analyst

Professional category went up from 3.1% to 4.8% of the population.

The Baldwin School system has been known for its commitment to education and excellence. It has done much with limited resources.

Baldwyn is in an excellent location for continuing education and higher education opportunities. Located just 10 miles from Northeast Mississippi Community College, and 35 miles from the main campus of Itawamba Community college, the community is well situated for advanced education.

## HOUSING

Housing remains a critical issue. If current trends continue, the ratio of renter-occupied units, as well as vacant units, are both expected to increase slightly in comparison to the overall owner-occupied rate. In addition, the overall number of available housing units is expected continue to decrease at a small rate each year.

Home ownership rates have declined sharply since 1980, when the ownership rate was 80%. This rate had fallen to 66% by 2000, and in 2010, only 55.5% of housing units were owner-occupied. Of the remaining, 32.8% were renter-occupied, while 11.7% were vacant. Of occupied units, the percentage of renters has increased from 29.8% in 1990 up to 37.2% in 2010. This is higher than Lee County (32%), Prentiss County (26%), and Mississippi as a whole (30%).

A housing study conducted by the Lee County Council of Governments in 1978 observed that housing conditions in Baldwin are as follows: Of 970 total units surveyed at the time, 670 were considered 'sound,' 235 were classified as 'deteriorating', and 72 were classified as 'dilapidated' (Figure IV).

At that time, the study concluded that the need for new

and rehabilitated housing was critical in Baldwin and throughout Lee County. The most needed types are low cost housing for the elderly; low income minority residents; small, low-cost homes for young persons with small families; and homes to comfortably accommodate large families.

In the last three decades, as the number of total units have expanded, a large number of multi-family housing projects have appeared. The Census estimated that the total units in 2010 were 1,488. At that time, the Census estimated that 826 were owner occupied, 488 were renter occupied, and 174 were vacant.

In the summer of 2013, 34 years after the Gregory-Grace Survey, the Council of Governments conducted another housing study. The findings show that a negative trend is occurring. Out of a total of 1,255 total structures, it was found that a large majority were in deteriorating condition. Some of these structures contain multiple units, which is why the total number of structures is less than the unit total (Figure V).

About 66% of units in Baldwin are single family, detached homes. Another 11% of housing units are mobile homes. The remaining 23% of housing units are some type of multi-family. Of these, 385 units of housing in the City are multi-family, ranging from two units up to twenty or more units. Corresponding with this is the age of housing in Baldwin. Over the past decade, relatively little housing has been constructed. Since 2000, only 33 new homes have been constructed in Baldwin, less than 3% of the total existing housing stock.

Although there have been some new developments in Baldwin, much of the housing stock has continued to decline in the past three decades. The persistence of manufactured homes and the increase in multi-family apartments are both issues of concern as well. While new developments have occurred in the past few decades, most of these have not impacted the older, declining parts of town, especially those areas that are

in close proximity to the downtown.

Owner-occupied homes constitute the majority of home value and stability in Baldwin. Current estimates show that the value of over 50% of the homes in Baldwin are worth less than \$100,000. According to estimates, only one percent of homes in the city were valued at over \$400,000. The rest fell in between these two categories. The average home value for 2012 was estimated by ESRI to be \$105,740. ESRI predicts that this average will increase over the next five years to \$112,190.

Median home values for Baldwin are estimated at \$88,544 by ESRI for 2012. A decade ago Baldwin's median home value (\$67,287) was much higher than that of Prentiss County (\$56,422), however the value for Prentiss is now higher at \$88,924. The median home values for Lee County have remained higher than Baldwin, being \$85,517 in 2000 and \$118,284 in 2012.

## ECONOMY

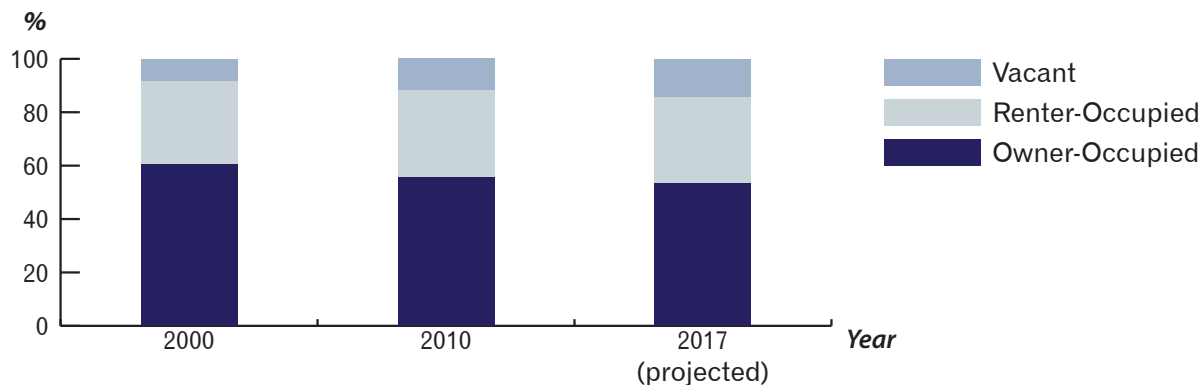
### INCOME

In 2010, the Census reported that the median household income in Baldwin was \$26,774, and the median income for a family was \$37,600. ESRI estimates the median household income in 2012 was \$29,062, which was an improvement, but was less than the average for both Prentiss (\$33,960) and Lee (\$38,762) Counties as a whole.

Males had a median income of \$27,160 versus \$21,170 for females. The per capita income for the City was \$15,430. About 20% of families and 24% of the population were below the poverty line, including 33% of those under age 18 and 23% of those age 65 or over.

Households below poverty are estimated at 453 or 31.2%

Figure IV: If current trends continue, the amount of rentals and vacant properties will increase.



Source: ESRI Community Profile

in 2012. This is up from the 2000 level of 353 households (26%), but the same as the 1990 percentage of 31%, which was 381 households at that time.

Median household income has continued to increase in Baldwin, roughly proportional with the County and State levels, although always remaining less. The current estimate for 2012 is \$29,062, less than Prentiss (\$33,960) and Lee (\$38,762).

## TRANSPORTATION

Baldwyn has excellent transportation connectivity. U.S. Highway 45 was originally constructed through Baldwin in 1936-37. The road became Highway 145 when the new four-lane Highway 45 was completed around Baldwin in the 1990s.

## TAX BASE

It is estimated by ESRI that there are currently 256 businesses operating in Baldwin, with a total employment of 1,272. The highest percentage of businesses are in the services category.

Baldwyn currently has a millage rate of 33.0 according to the Mississippi Department of Revenue. In 2007, Baldwin adopted a city tourism tax that would be levied at a rate of 2.0% against the gross proceeds derived from room rentals of hotels and motels, and the gross proceeds of sales from restaurants and convenience stores derived from the sale of prepared food and beverages. This tax was in addition to existing taxes, and was begun in April of that year.

With this tool in place, Baldwin should take steps to recruit more of these types of industries, and take advantage of its tourism possibilities.

Baldwyn has an available labor force, which is underemployed within the city. Much of the population continues to commute outside the City to work. The mean travel time to work in 2010 was 19.3 minutes, and most of these (1,497 of 1,686) who drove commuted alone.

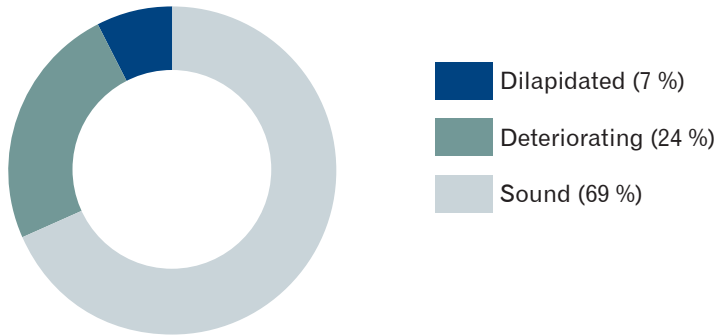


Figure V: Housing Conditions in 1979

Source: 1979 Land Use Plan, Gregory-Grace and Associates

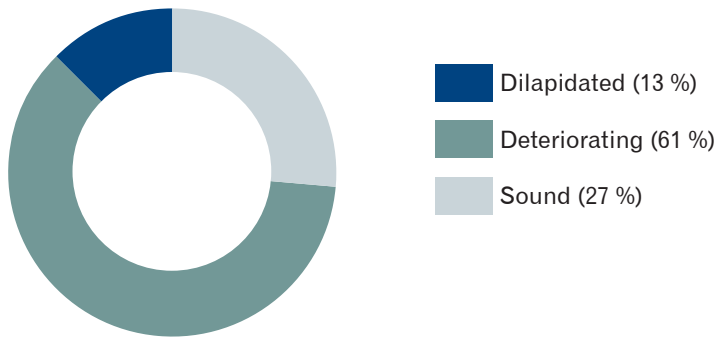


Figure VI: Housing Conditions in 2013

Source: Council of Governments Survey, 2013

## CULTURE AND TOURISM

Early in its history, Baldwyn was affected by the Civil War. The Battle of Brice's Cross Roads was fought nearby. An interpretive and visitor center is located in the city on U.S. Highway 45. Today, many opportunities exist to promote new forms of tourism, as well as ways to enhance the existing.

ation opportunities should be advertised as part of the City's overall marketing strategy. Culture and tourism opportunities exist in abundance, and will be an important part of Baldwyn's future.

Baldwyn's downtown is a valuable asset for cultural attractions, and enhances the other tourism resources.

In addition to Brice's Cross Roads, other nearby recre-



Mallard Lake (above) is an example of newer housing in Baldwyn. The subdivision remains unfinished but offers supply for a housing sector which needs growth.

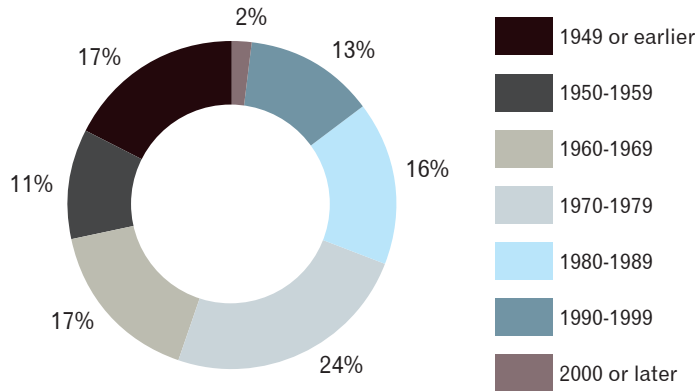


Figure VII: Year Built

Source: ESRI Community Profile

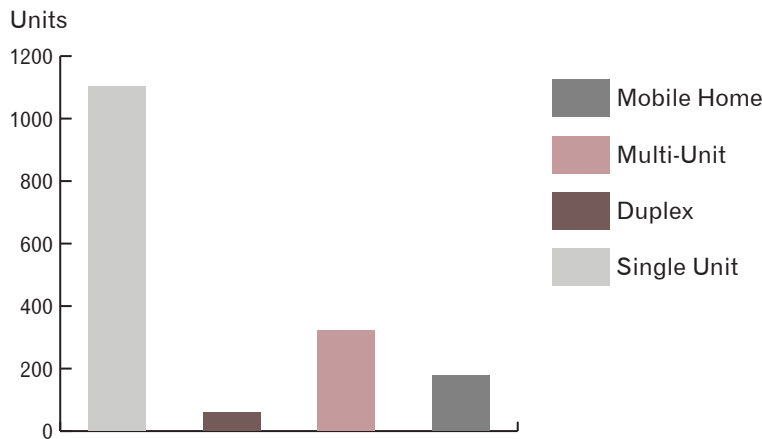


Figure VIII: Type of Housing

Source: ESRI Community Profile

## NATURAL CONDITIONS

Located at 34.6° N, 88.5° W, the average elevation of the city ranges from only 360 to 400 feet above sea level. The city is located in the fertile area popularly known as the the Black (or Tombigbee) Prairie Region, with the relatively high Pontotoc Ridge a few miles to the west, and the Tombigbee Hills region a few miles to the east. The city lies within the Gulf States physiographic region and is situated between the Ripley and Eutaw formations on a low soil formation composed of loess, clay, and chalk. Soils are primarily of Ora fine sandy loam type which is characterized by a semi-permeable layer near the soil surface.

Baldwyn has a humid subtropical climate characterized by cool winters and warm humid summers. Annual precipitation is about 55 inches per year, with March usually having the most precipitation, and August having the least.

The Twentymile Creek and its tributary ditches are the surface water features that carry Baldwin's drainage and runoff out of town. Potable water for the City is provided by three deep wells that tap the Eutaw Sands aquifer.

Much of the land has been cleared and is used for agriculture. Existing natural vegetation consists of regrowth

mixed southern forest, primarily short-leaf and loblolly pine, with some oak and hickory.

## SUMMARY

Baldwyn has witnessed significant shifts in the size and composition of its population since the turn of the century. Much of the population growth took place up to the 1980s, at which time the population plateaued and has slightly began to decline. For the past three decades the city has had a stabilized population which has seen very little change, although it continues to slightly decrease. This took place with the expansion of the city limits, which reached their current extent of 11.7 square miles by the late 1970s. There have been significant shifts in the age distribution of population as well. The median age has grown about a decade older during the past three decades. Current projections show that this trend of decline will continue unless change occurs. It is imperative that the City develop long term strategies to revitalize growth in a way that preserves community character and prospers the citizens.

Economic Development, housing availability, housing conditions, the rental rate, and construction activity are all major issues in Baldwin, and this plan will deal with each of them in greater detail.

PART I  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The goals of this section are to assess the current conditions, while providing tools and policy recommendations to strengthen and promote the growth of Baldwin's local economy. Major points include:

- (1.) Maintaining Financial Stability**
- (2.) Growing the Tax Base**
- (3.) Creating Business**
- (4.) Expansion of Existing Business**
- (5.) Creating future value through Baldwin's physical layout and design**
- (6.) Encouraging development that enhances value and improves appearance**
- (7.) Reducing the poverty rate**

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

***Would you like to see Baldwin grow in population?***

***Yes - 184 (92%) No - 17 (8%)***

***Would you support the city annexing undeveloped land to prepare for future development?***

***Yes - 167 (83%) No - 35 (17%)***

***Do you support the city taking action to assist in recruiting new industry and other development?***

***Yes - 182 (98%) No - 4 (2%)***

## THE ECONOMIC BASE\*

The progress of the local economy will be evaluated by three primary factors:

- 1. The Economic Base**
- 2. The Service Sector**
- 3. The Net Worth of Resident Households, Businesses, and Institutions**

The economic base of a city must be growing faster than its population for growth to happen. Economic base jobs are those where products and services produced by local residents are sold outside the community, generating a net gain of income back in. Economic base sectors include tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, government, and self-employed workers.

## THE SERVICE SECTOR

The service sector in turn, is mainly stimulated by the growth of the economic base, as well as to a lesser degree by regional draws to the area such as retail and tourism.

The service sector indicators show how much money is spent locally. The secondary jobs generated by this sector show the goods and services sold to fellow residents and companies in the community. These are important because they produce taxable transactions, which support city government and its initiatives. Communities which lack a complete spectrum of retail and commercial services send residents out of town to spend the community's economic base profits.

Service sector jobs include retail related jobs, along with other secondary services.

## NET WORTH OF HOUSEHOLDS

The biggest component of net worth is the value of people's homes. If the home values are appreciating at a faster rate than inflation, a city's residents are building net worth faster on top of any savings they have.

The ratio of home ownership to renters, stick built homes to mobile homes, the age and condition of the local housing stock are important indicators of a community. They show the net worth and the direction in which it is headed.

Positive net worth gives people more money to spend as their home appreciates in value, it improves the revenue per square foot in local retail and commercial businesses, and it raises property values (tax revenues) and sales tax revenues. Finally, it helps create the net worth needed for retirement and long term stability in the community.

## EXISTING ECONOMY

Baldwin is situated well regionally. Mississippi, along with the Southeast as a whole, is growing and is in a positive position for additional growth.

However, Baldwin suffers from depressed socioeconomic conditions. The Census reports that 29.1% of individuals are below poverty. There are a relatively high and increasing number of rentals as well. Many neighborhoods and commercial properties show signs of neglect and decline.

There are positive economic trends. The town's greatest strengths are its Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Professional Services, Administrative Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance sectors, which are all relatively strong. In addition, the Accommodation and Food Services sectors are also growing in importance.

\*Analysis adapted from process developed from Mark Lautman "When the Boomers Bail", 2011.

INDICATOR #1:

BALDWIN’S BASE ECONOMY

Lee County has served as a regional commerce hub for Northeast Mississippi for many years. The regional trade has been generated around services such as the North Mississippi Medical Center, the Mall at Barnes Crossing, multiple manufacturing operations, and more. In recent years Baldwin has seen part of this growth in its two industrial parks. As the location of an affordable social environment, Baldwin has also served as a bedroom community for workers who commute to the Tupelo, Corinth, and Booneville regions.

Baldwyn is largely a bedroom community. The mean travel time to work is currently estimated at a little over nineteen minutes. Approximately 20% of Baldwin residents commute locally (less than a ten minute commute), and another 28% commuted between ten and fifteen minutes to work. However, another 28% have more than a thirty minute commute to work each day.

Over 21% of Baldwin’s workforce commutes to a manufacturing job each day. This is the largest sector of employment for Baldwin’s workforce, with the exception of retail trade, which is just larger at 22% of the total. The Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance category is another significant class that makes up about 12% of the local workforce. Finally, the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services category makes up about 12% of the workforce as well, which is the final category above 10%.

MARKET EVALUATION

According to TIP Strategies’ *CDF 5.0, 2010-2020 Economic Development Strategic Plan for Lee County*, there has been a decline in manufacturing in the Northeast Mississippi Region as a whole, and from 2001-2008. Lee County lost a net of almost 43% of its manufacturing

jobs. In 2010, despite heavy job losses in manufacturing county-wide, 1 out of 6 jobs remained in manufacturing. In late 2013, approximately 10,310 jobs in Lee County were still in manufacturing, according to BLS. In addition, more than one third of the total employment base in the ten counties of northeastern Mississippi was in Lee County. While this decline happened, the economy has been in transition to more of a knowledge-based economy, which includes Advanced Manufacturing and Business and Professional Services.

Baldwyn is doing well despite this downturn, as new industries have located in the City, and just outside in the Harry A. Martin North Lee Industrial Complex (HAMLIC). The 281 acre complex was established in 1991. Several types of manufacturing are located in the park including H.M. Richards (furniture), Advanced Innovations (foam products), Auto Parts Manufacturing Mississippi (automotive components), and Hancock Fabrics among others. The Baldwin Industrial Park, located in Prentiss County in the northeast part of the City, is also home to several industries.

As Community Development Foundation (CDF) continues to recruit top companies to expand and enhance the employment base, Baldwin should use this job creation resource along with the utilization of other positive trends as recruitment tools to enhance investment.

STRENGTHS VS. WEAKNESSES

Baldwyn’s competitive strengths make it a local employment cluster and retail destination. Both of these aspects have good potential for enhancement.

There are many opportunities that could be better utilized. Strong regional competitors continue to draw away employees and retail revenue from the local economy. This competition should be addressed by enhancing the secondary economy so that the base economy

Figure 1.1: Current Baldwin Businesses by Sector

Quantity	NAICS Business Sector
11	Manufacturing
9	Wholesale Trade
50	Retail Trade
6	Real Estate, Rental, Leasing
14	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
62	Administrative, Support, and Waste Management Services
7	Education Services
13	Health Care and Social Assistance
2	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
10	Accommodation and Food Service
39	Other Services (except Public Administration)

Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue

Figure 1.2: Current Employees by Industry

Industry Sector	#	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Mining	7	0.4%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, & Food Services	196	11.6%
Construction	84	5.0%
Educational Services, Health Care, & Social Assistance	196	11.6%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, & Leasing	25	1.5%
Manufacturing	361	21.4%
Other Service, Except Public Administration	154	9.1%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, & Waste Management	160	9.5%
Public Administration	50	3.0%
Retail Trade	373	22.1%
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	16	0.9%
Wholesale Trade	64	3.8%
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>1,686</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: ESRI Community Analyst

Figure 1.3: Retail Business Inventory

Note: Includes retail and wholesale trade.

	#	%
Apparel and Accessory Stores	2	3%
Auto Dealers, Gas Stations, Auto Aftermarket	15	25%
Eating and Drinking Places	8	14%
Food Stores	6	10%
Furniture and Home Furnishings	2	3%
General Merchandise Stores	3	5%
Home Improvement	4	7%
Miscellaneous Retail	19	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ESRI Community Analyst.

resources will not be lost to other municipalities. Disposable income is captured in the secondary segment of the economy. Currently for Baldwin's disposable income, ESRI estimates that the median household is at \$25,670 and that the average household is at \$33,063. The highest sectors are the households with members earning income in the 35 to 54 age range, which comprises about 447 (34%) or the entire membership of the local working economy.

### INDICATOR #2:

#### SECONDARY ECONOMY

The retail marketplace also shows opportunities in certain retail sectors (Figure 1.3: Retail Business Inventory). While this data is appropriate for examining current trends and opportunities, it should not replace an in-depth market study for specific sectors to examine what is happening in more detail.

### INDICATOR # 3

#### REAL AND PERSONAL INCOME

Figures 1.4 and 1.5 detail the significant increase in value over the past five years, both within the City and within the Baldwin School District.

Within the City of Baldwin from 2009 to 2013, real property assessed values (buildings and land) increased by over 17% in total value, while personal property assessed values (machinery, equipment, etc.) went up by 24%. Within the Lee County portion of the Baldwin School District from 2009 to 2013, real property assessed values (buildings and land) increased by over 105% in total value, while personal property assessed values (machinery, equipment, etc.) increased by 282%. Much of this increase can be attributed to new industry in the Harry Martin North Lee Industrial Park.



<b>Baldwyn Total</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Real Property</b>	<b>Personal Property</b>
2009	\$11,349,837	\$7,082,567
2010	\$13,029,440	\$6,577,664
2011	\$12,809,784	\$5,249,537
2012	\$12,409,604	\$6,681,405
2013	\$13,319,802	\$8,771,000
<b>Five Year Increase in Value</b>		
\$	\$1,969,965	\$1,688,433
%	17%	24%

Sources: City of Baldwyn and Lee County Tax Assessor.

Figure 1.4: Real and Personal Property Values within Baldwyn City Limits.

Note: These figures are gross values and do not show homestead or other exemptions.

<b>Baldwyn School District: Lee County Portion</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Real Property</b>	<b>Personal Property</b>
2009	\$15,374,564	\$6,929,907
2010	\$15,543,740	\$4,286,917
2011	\$14,955,884	\$4,225,508
2012	\$30,683,847	\$26,527,803
2013	\$31,531,571	\$26,467,773
<b>Five Year Increase in Value</b>		
\$	\$16,157,007	\$19,537,866
%	105%	282%

Source: Lee County Tax Assessor.

Figure 1.5: Real and Personal Property Values within Lee County Portion of the Baldwyn School District.

Note: These figures are gross values and do not show homestead or other exemptions.

## WAGES

The Workforce investment area (WIA) of Three Rivers Planning and Development District covers 27 counties in northern Mississippi (including Lee and Prentiss Counties). The average manufacturing wage for late 2013 was \$14.19 per hour for this area. In August 2013, according to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Mississippi had a non-adjusted employment rate of 8.4%, and the U.S. had a non-adjusted rate of 7.3%. In comparison, Lee County had a rate of 7.8%, while Prentiss County had a non-adjusted rate of 8.8%. This means that in Lee County, around 3,070 are unemployed of 39,530 total, and in Prentiss County, about 940 are unemployed of 10,650 total.

## TAXES

Overall tax revenue has increased steadily over the past decade. The current millage rate is 33.00 for City taxation. In comparison, the other Lee County municipalities currently have the following millage rates, according to the Mississippi Department of Revenue:

Tupelo - 32.47

Guntown - 26.50

Satillo - 27.00

Sherman - 35.23

Plantersville - 26.40

Nettleton - 34.00

Verona - 37.44

Shannon - 21.61

## UTILITY RATES

Compared with the nation, utility rates are relatively low. Prentiss County Electric advertises that it is still one of the lowest providers in the State and the entire seven state Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) region.

Currently, an industry can currently expect to pay in the range of 6 to 8 cents per kilowatt hour. For information see [www.pcepa.com](http://www.pcepa.com).

## TRANSPORTATION

The existing transportation infrastructure is conducive to commercial growth. It could be improved with minimal funding and the participation of private property owners. Baldwyn has key highway corridors which effectively link it to the broader region. U.S. 45, in particular, offers a great deal future development potential.



	2003	2012	% change
Total Commercial Taxpayers	155	151	-2.6%
Gross Sales Tax	\$2,725,849	\$2,921,427	7.2%
<b>By Industry Sector:</b>			
Automotive Businesses	50	50	0.0%
Gross Sales Tax	\$825,902	\$463,208	-43.9%
Food and Beverage Businesses	36	40	11.1%
Gross Sales Tax	\$954,711	\$1,229,121	28.7%
Furniture and Fixture Businesses	4	0	-----
Gross Sales Tax	\$49,087	\$0	-----
General Merchandise Businesses	10	8	-20.0%
Gross Sales Tax	\$192,711	\$356,741	85.1%
Miscellaneous Retail Businesses	32	35	9.4%
Gross Sales Tax	\$150,629	\$290,344	92.8%
Miscellaneous Services	0	4	-----
Gross Sales Tax	\$0	\$125,752	-----
Contracting Services	11	6	-45.5%
Gross Sales Tax	\$60,390	\$18,863	-68.8%

Figure 1.6: Ten Year Sales Tax Trends

Note: Figures include audits and adjustments from prior years.

Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue

Year	2003	2012	% change
<b>Total City Sales Taxes Returned</b>			
Total Commercial Taxpayers	\$499,702	\$551,501	10.3%
<b>By Industry Sector:</b>			
Automotive Businesses	\$154,857	\$86,852	-43.9%
Food and Beverage Businesses	\$179,008	\$230,460	28.7%
Furniture and Fixture Businesses	\$9,204	\$0	-----
General Merchandise Businesses	\$36,133	\$66,889	85.1%
Miscellaneous Retail Businesses	\$28,243	\$54,440	92.8%
Miscellaneous Services	\$0	\$23,579	-----
Contracting Services	\$11,323	\$3,537	-68.8%

Figure 1.7: Baldwin Portion of Ten Year Sales Tax Returns

Note: Figures include audits and adjustments from prior years.

Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue

Year	Diversion to City	Gross Sales Tax
2003	\$499,702	\$2,725,849
2004	\$544,328	\$3,024,954
2005	\$540,621	\$2,968,676
2006	\$563,844	\$2,963,696
2007	\$602,041	\$3,149,620
2008	\$618,153	\$3,314,601
2009	\$556,931	\$2,926,685
2010	\$515,672	\$2,701,459
2011	\$516,961	\$2,748,212
2012	\$552,601	\$2,921,427
2013	\$551,501	\$2,931,994

Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue

Figure 1.8: Ten Year Sales Tax Collections for City.

Baldwyn Building Permits		
Year	Number	%
2009	9	9%
2010	27	26%
2011	25	25%
2012	18	18%
2013	23	23%
5 Year Total	102	

Source: City of Baldwin

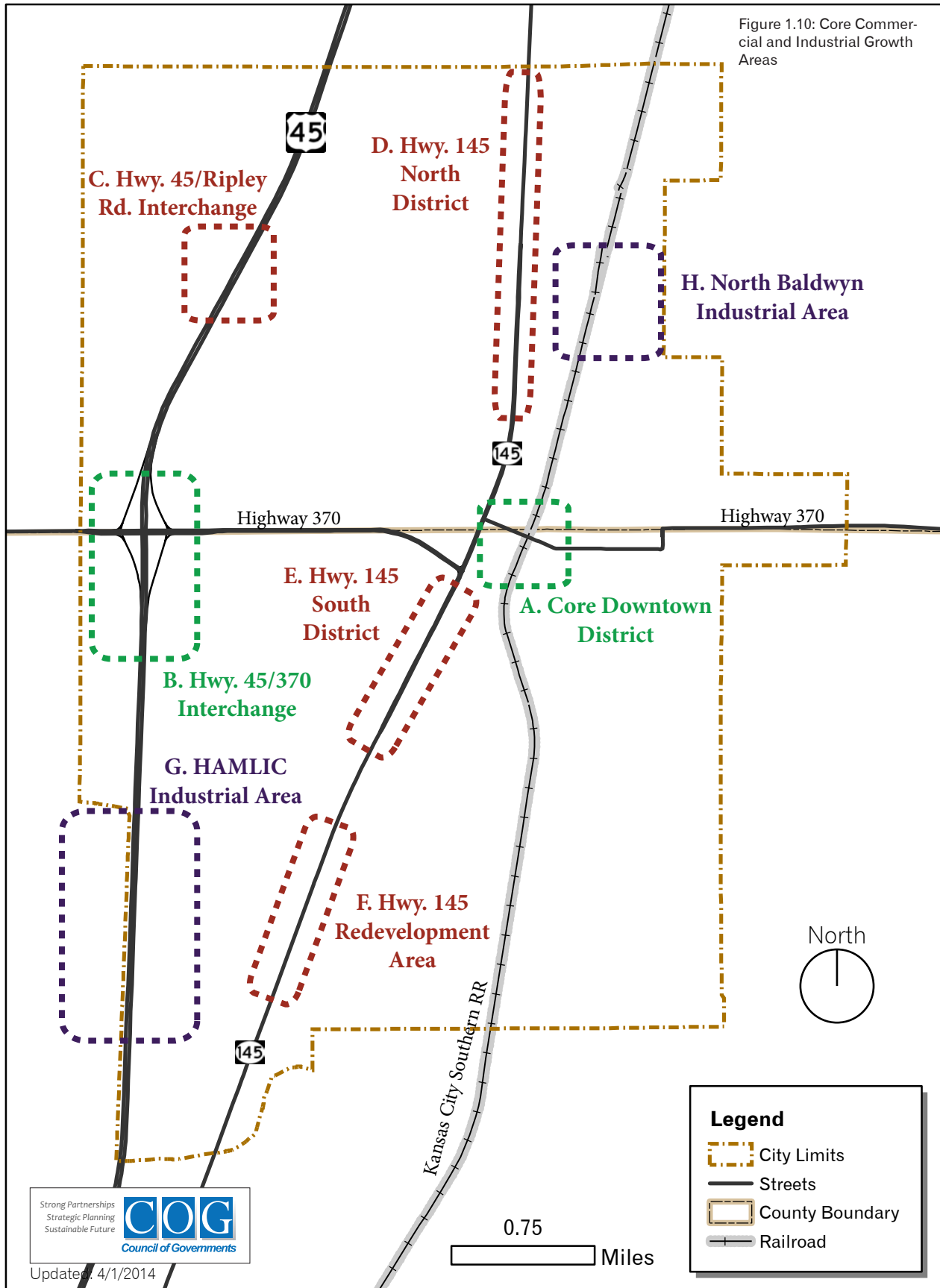
Figure 1.9: Five Year Building Permit Trends

Note: Figures include sign and accessory projects.



Hancock Fabrics (above) located in the Harry A. Martin North Lee Industrial Park, is one of Baldwin's Economic Base Industries and an important employer for the city.

Figure 1.10: Core Commercial and Industrial Growth Areas



Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

The transportation section of this plan will discuss this important aspect of economic development in greater depth.

Also, Baldwin has excellent rail opportunities with the Kansas City Southern (KCS) line which runs north and south through town, passing just east of Downtown. Sites near the railroad are currently available for industrial development.

## WORKFORCE

Education and workforce opportunities are excellent, especially for the Core Sectors of Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, and Administrative/Support. The key will remain in creating more jobs in these sectors to leverage education opportunities, as well as to retain and attract graduates of nearby programs offered by Northeast Mississippi Community College, Itawamba Community College, Blue Mountain College, the University of Mississippi, and Mississippi State University.

## CORE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The existing commercial and industrial areas are identified as target areas to concentrate efforts for growth and redevelopment. Refer to the map for the approximate location of these areas (Figure 1.10).

**A. Core Downtown District:** This area is comprised of the core downtown district and the historic business district of the city. It has some of the greatest opportunity for ongoing redevelopment, and will be addressed in much greater detail in the next section. Sectors should include retail, housing, and hospitality.

**B. Highway 45/370 District:** Due to its high visibility, connectivity, and available sites, this area also has high development potential for new commercial retail and hospitality sector development. The character of this area still needs greater definition. The character and identity of this area need to be guided by the design process to ensure quality in the future. Sectors should include hotel, office, retail, and institutional.

**C. Highway 45/Ripley Road District:** This area enjoys high visibility and has some available land. However it has already been built out to some degree, and has a commercial strip development style character.

**D. Highway 145 North Commercial District:** This area also enjoys high visibility and has some available land. It has been largely built out, and is in need of redevelopment and improvements to the facades and streetscape. Auto scrap yards and other unsightly businesses in this area should be cleaned up, and the city should consider relocating future such uses to less visible areas. Sectors should include larger retail, office, and related services.

**E. Highway 145 South Commercial District:** This area has been mostly developed and is currently in need of some redevelopment and improvements to the facades and streetscape.

**F. Highway 145 Redevelopment District:** This area is in need of serious attention. Long-range plans should be made to improve the appearance of auto salvage yards and used auto dealerships in these areas. The city should consider phasing out future such uses unless they can demonstrate ways to improve their curb appeal.

**G. HAMLIC Industrial Area:** This area continues to be developed with the assistance of Community Development Foundation. It contains an electric substation and other necessary industrial infrastructure. The city may consider allowing light industrial uses to expand near the edge of existing uses outside the industrial park boundary.

**H. North Baldwin Industrial Area:** This area has been a long-time industrial section of the city. It contains an electric substation and other necessary industrial infrastructure. The city should continue to develop remaining lots for future industrial uses in this district. Due to its location on the edge of town, it is suited for such intensive uses in the future.

## PLAN PHASES, CORE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The phases outlined below are very general. There are many factors which can change the timeline and alter the business/development climate. However, a general plan is necessary for guiding projects and developing more specific goals.

### 1. Phase 1: 2014-2020

Focus on Area A. Downtown Core and Area B. Hwy. 45/370 Interchange. The Downtown action plan will be discussed in the next section. For Area B, develop a master plan of available lots at the interchange, and create a desired program. Develop a retail recruitment guide to develop the area. Incorporate sidewalks and bike paths into the area, and functionally integrate with the downtown. Strictly regulate future development in all the other districts, and work with the CDF for continued industrial and retail business recruitment.

### 2. Phase 2: 2020-2025

Continue to implement Phase 1 in Areas A and B. Work to redevelop Areas C, D, E, and F. Focus on cluster development in key areas of new and redeveloped properties.

### 3. Phase 3: 2025-2030

Continue to implement Phases 1 and 2. Place specific



emphasis on redevelopment of the 145 corridor. Target property which needs specific attention and take appropriate action.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Goal #1 : Economic Environment.

Provide a growth environment that will help diversify and enhance the local economy. Reduce costs associated with development. Allow business owners to reinvest savings to strengthen the economic condition of the city, and its position in the local and regional economy.

#### Economic Environment Objectives.

1. Work with Community Development Foundation, Lee County, and Prentiss County to implement property tax incentives for new residential and commercial development.
2. Issue tax credit options and tax increment financing for new commercial anchor buildings and equipment.
3. Update the zoning map to ensure ample property is available and appropriately zoned for desired growth.
4. The city should develop incentives for cost sharing between the municipality and the developer for the extension of public utilities and other infrastructure to proposed development sites.

### Goal #2: Strengthen Existing Assets.

Strengthen the existing commercial downtown district, promote infill development and redevelopment of the Highway 45 and 145 corridors, and induce outward expansion of the downtown commercial zone into surrounding blocks.

#### Existing Asset Objectives.

1. Utilize public and private resources to improve streetscapes and curb appeal. These include subsidies, tax abatements, low interest loans, guarantees of public absorption of some of the costs of site acquisition and development, and revolving loans.
2. Improve public/private collaboration to enhance redevelopment of vacant commercial and industrial areas.
3. Continue and increase marketing efforts and tourism attraction.
4. Prioritize physical improvements to entry points to the town, particularly those leading to the downtown historic district.
5. Develop a comprehensive parking strategy. Conduct

a parking inventory study and utilize to add new spaces when necessary.

6. Develop a twenty year program of capital investment for water, sewer, road, and other facilities necessary to support industrial and commercial development.

### Goal #3: Create a Healthcare Anchor.

Plan for new commercial development along Highway 370/45 interchange, formulate a master plan, and phase infrastructure and site development. This development should be higher density and multi-use, incorporating medical, commercial, office, and other compatible uses.

#### Healthcare Objectives.

1. Cluster medical and related services, and continue to foster and develop these assets. Promote sites applicable to each.
2. Adjust land use controls to incentivize medical clustering. Use a PUD overlay or an incentive zone.
3. Continue to promote strategies to enhance the availability of the workforce housing, and promote affordable and high quality new housing developments that could locate near medical uses.

**Note:** This idea has for this has been informed by recent national trends, especially occurring across the Sunbelt Region of the United States. Although a larger scale that what Baldwin can accommodate, Tradition in Gulfport, is the largest master-planned community in the State of Mississippi. It captures the new emphasis on health care as an anchor: [www.traditionms.com](http://www.traditionms.com).

### Goal #4: Promote Innovation.

Diversify and enhance the innovative capacity of the local economy by promoting entrepreneurship and innovation. Foster economic gardening practices of the existing economy.

#### Innovation Objectives.

1. Start program to recruit new companies while promoting new ideas. Engage local business and education leaders to recruit one new economic base company per year and facilitate transition.
2. Improve collaboration among regional educational institutions with businesses in town, and start an internship program to retain local talent.
3. Promote continuing education programs through local employers. Educate employers on the value of

sending employees for training, and develop ways to retain that talent.

4. Create a professional recruitment pamphlet with CDF/Baldwyn Chamber that recognizes accomplishments and sells what is happening.

5. Explore possibility of a business incubator in downtown Baldwyn.

#### **Goal #5: Redevelopment Agency.**

Create a local redevelopment agency using municipal legal powers to catalyze development and redevelopment of the economy

##### **Redevelopment Agency Objectives.**

1. Establish a city land bank as a mechanism to acquire and redevelop vacant properties and key development parcels and to remove blighted structures.

2. Establish Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, which allow money that would typically to taxing entities to be directed instead to the development/redevelopment of underdeveloped or blighted areas.

3. Identify key parcels/areas where these strategies should be employed.

#### **Goal #6: Support Local Businesses.**

Establish a loyalty program to buy local and sell local to close broken links in the economic cycle.

##### **Local Business Support Objectives.**

1. Create a local farmers market in the Downtown.

2. Create a loyalty card composed of a cooperative of local Baldwyn-based businesses.

3. Market the local economy through the Baldwyn Chamber to recognize local business and the products/services that they offer.

4. Have periodic meetings of local businesses to educate and learn ways to work together.







# PART II

## DOWNTOWN

## VISION

The Downtown and its surrounding historic district are key part of the broader economy. For the central business district a separate section is necessary due to its unique characteristics. The Downtown is already a regional destination for its shopping opportunities, and this plan will help to promote and link it to the outside area.

The vision for the Downtown is to continue to promote a district of complementary assets including dining, shopping, and entertainment. The assets should complement one another instead of serving as competitors. It should contain a mix of economic base and secondary economic activities. Retail stores and other businesses draw in funds from outside the city. The goal is to enhance this attraction of businesses, and keep the funds in Baldwin once they arrive.

The goals of this section are to enhance the physical design and appearance. At the same time, taking steps to enhance the business climate. Efforts should be made to continue advancing the positive trends occurring in Baldwin's Downtown, to help and alleviate the parking problems, to create anchors to spur and stabilize additional redevelopment, to improve the entrances to downtown, and to expand the downtown blocks out, helping to link the core business district with the fabric of the surrounding residential areas.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

***Would you support the City adding additional parking spaces in the downtown?***

**Yes - 173 (93%) No - 13 (7%)**

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Downtown's historic look, its human scale, and its inherent walkability are all strengths that should be cultivated and expanded outward. The historic built environment and the public realm of the Downtown adds value to the property that fronts it.

This section builds on the previous economic development portion of the plan, focusing on the core downtown district for retail and local business development and startup. Of all Baldwin, this area has the highest net density of jobs and businesses per acre.

A major challenge of the Downtown is its location and relative isolation. It is an island of economic activity and historic businesses that are cut off from the broader public exposure of Highway 45. There is no signage or advertising to link the outside world with the Downtown. As a first step, these entrances should be enhanced for greater curb appeal and serve to draw people into the city from the outside. Other challenges include a growing demand for parking spaces, for

which there is no easy solution. In addition, overhead utility lines create significant visual obstructions and airspace issues in the downtown.

## ROLE IN LOCAL ECONOMY

The Downtown business district is very important to the local economy, particularly in retail, entertainment, and office uses. Some residential has been added above businesses and has high potential to develop here, as well as on vacant tracts as infill. The Downtown also houses local government, including the Baldwin City Hall and the Baldwin Separate School District Office. The City Library is also located in this area.

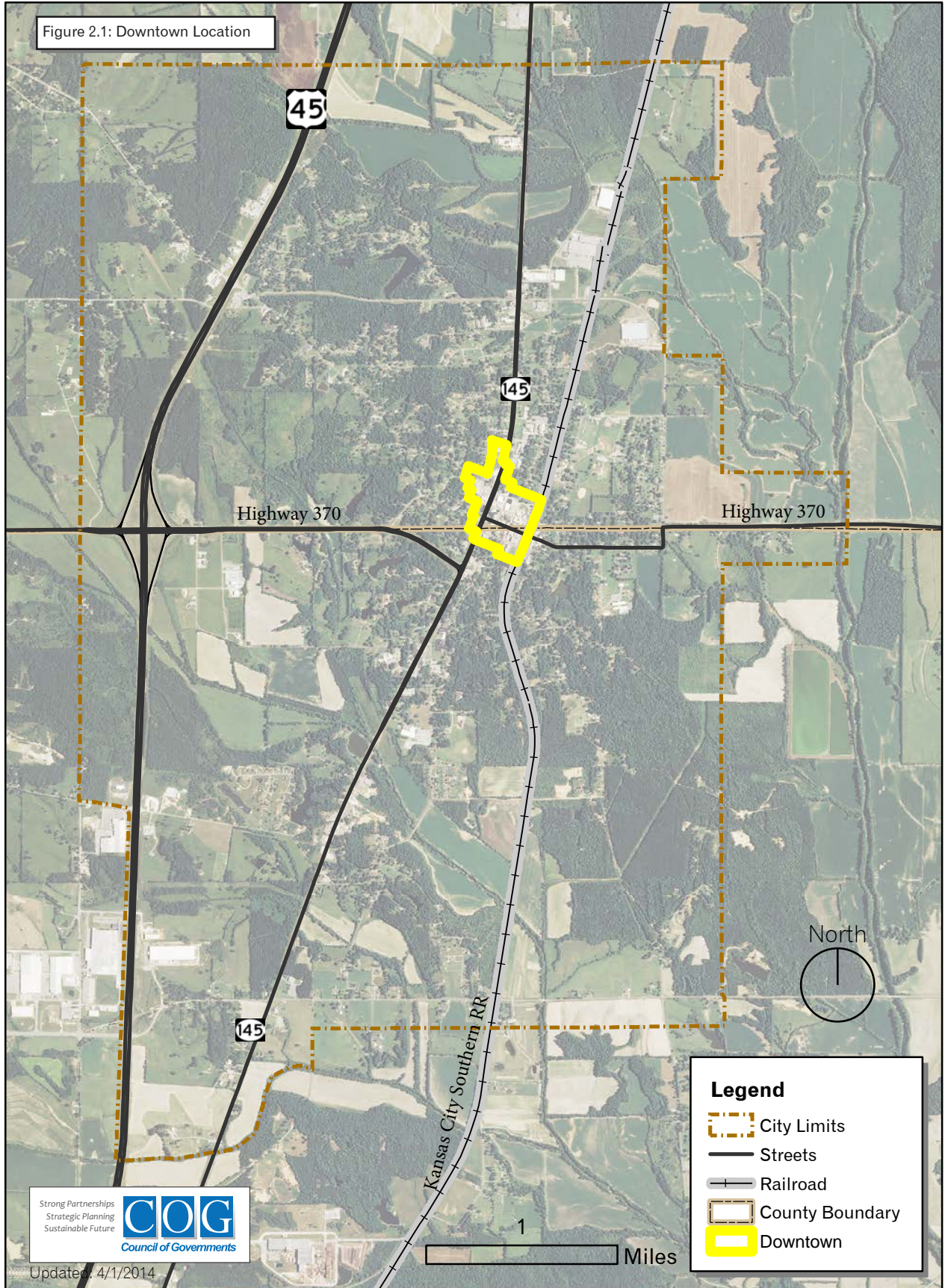
## SOLUTIONS: REINFORCEMENT OF DOWNTOWN

Since the downtown is a key part of economic development and a core part of the city tax base, it will be very important to drive long-term growth and development. The Downtown defines the character and spirit of Baldwin and should be preserved, protected, and promoted. The city should continue to plan for and to foster downtown growth, and to continue to make it as desirable as possible.

The Downtown should be protected and expanded through a zoning overlay or a mixed-use zoning district. This will serve to buffer the area and promote its expansion of influence.

The existing *Design Guidelines of Baldwin* developed by the Council of Governments, discuss overall massing, setbacks, streetscape, and character, as well as other design issues, and serve to promote walking through good design and land use patterns, if they are correctly applied.

With more flexible zoning in place, the focus should be less about use and more about form. The future expansion of the Downtown should emulate the pattern of the design transect, beginning at the city core with maximum density and growing lesser outward. Future land use and street design should promote pedestrian connections to and from the Downtown area. The Safe Routes to School Sidewalk programs are an excellent example of the types of development which need to continue to occur. Parking issues continue to be a major concern in the six-block core of Downtown. The City should look at acquiring a number of nearby parcels to alleviate this problem. Also, a new configuration should be explored along downtown streets. Assigned parking spaces should be located in the rear of buildings for regular employees, to make room for adequate parking on the street. Whenever possible, street parking is desirable over large lots of surface, off-street parking.



Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

Figure 2.2: Commercial Zone



Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.



## PHASING

Development of the Downtown core will be a continuous process. While private sector investment, business expansion, and business development will depend on market trends, the city government can develop a phasing plan for infrastructure upgrades and expansion, along with planning for public amenities to anchor development, streetscape, and parking.

Figure 2.4 shows the Downtown area in comparison to the historic district. Since the historic district is larger than the six block core downtown, the City should create a design overlay for the entire area outlined in red, which will create guidelines for development that focus on form and promote creative mixed use development and redevelopment. In addition Figure 2.4 also shows parcels near the Downtown which should be redeveloped and incorporated into the Downtown area. These areas should be used for new businesses, infill housing, or open space. More detail will be given to infill housing and proposed patterns of use in the Community Character portion of this plan.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **Goal #1: Downtown Appearance.**

Continue to promote and enhance historic character of Baldwin's Downtown and expand its influence, through land use designs and facilitation of development.

#### **Downtown Appearance Objectives.**

1. Create new entrance route to Downtown from the west and provide landscaping on the streetscape of this area appropriately.
2. Promote the consistent use of Design Guidelines in Downtown development and redevelopment
3. Continue to make the Downtown more pedestrian friendly and create reasons to walk Downtown. These strategies should include parks, outdoor areas, and recreational facilities.
4. City officials and key stakeholders should engage in a case study visit to a small city that has redeveloped downtown, preferably in a town similar in size and demographics to Baldwin.

### **Goal #2: Increase Downtown Investment.**

Continue to promote public investment and leverage private sector investment in the Downtown, to improve the physical condition and continue business development there.

### **Downtown Investment Objectives.**

1. Utilize Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and facilitate redevelopment opportunities by seeking funding partners and developers for the Downtown's enhancements.
2. Develop an inventory of potential projects and prioritize investment activity in Downtown.
3. Begin an Enterprise Zone on the peripheral areas of Downtown. (An Enterprise Zone is a tax incentive program for the re-development of properties.)
4. Look at other grant opportunities, i.e. CDBG Economic Opportunity Initiative Fund, State, Federal, and other opportunities such as New Markets and Historic Preservation Tax Credits that would continue to leverage investment in the Downtown.

### **Goal #3: Attract People Downtown.**

Continue to bring high quality jobs, businesses, and residents to the Downtown and to adjacent areas.

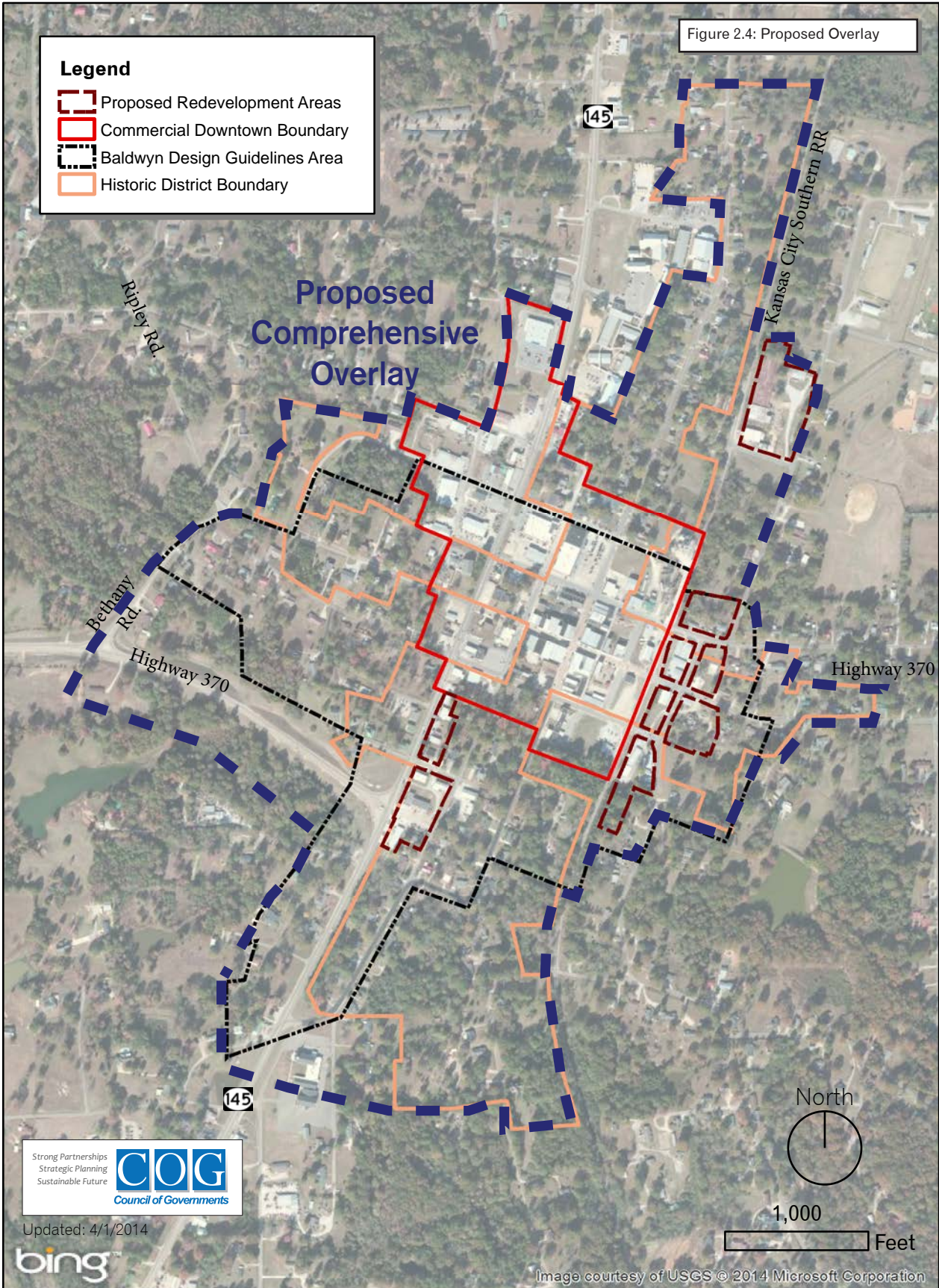
#### **Downtown Attraction Objectives.**

1. Promote a range of business types to help keep the Downtown's streetscape activated from early morning until evening.
2. Develop high quality marketing campaign to be run by Baldwin Chamber. Include a Downtown website as part of this campaign.
3. Actively develop and allocate commercial lots at the edge of the Downtown for key development and redevelopment.

Figure 2.4: Proposed Overlay

**Legend**

- Proposed Redevelopment Areas
- Commercial Downtown Boundary
- Baldwyn Design Guidelines Area
- Historic District Boundary



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PART III  
TRANSPORTATION



## VISION

Transportation should be viewed as a major part of Baldwin's plan and of its future, affecting the land use, energy use, economic development, and virtually all other aspects of the City's future. Transportation systems are not independent from development, but at the same time, they should not be the sole guiding force behind development decisions. The layout of streets, sidewalks, and bike trails should add as much value as possible to the neighborhood and the properties that they serve and travel through. Development should essentially guide transportation, and not vice-versa.

Recently, a greater emphasis has been placed on alternative transportation such as biking and walking in the North Mississippi region. Baldwin is located near the Tishomingo Trail/Brices Crossroads, as well as the Natchez Trace Parkway, which both offer opportunities for walking, running, and biking. This Plan continues that trend of development.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

***Would you support the City making long-term improvements to streets to improve access and prepare for future growth?***

**Yes - 174 (93%) No - 13 (7%)**

***Which of the following improvements do you think is the greatest priority for the long-term benefits of Baldwin's streets and thoroughfares?***

***Paving/Drainage - 103 (60%)***

***Beautification - 35 (20%)***

***Improved Accessibility - 27 (16%)***

***Street Signage - 7 (4%)***

***Do you consider it important to make Baldwin friendlier to bicycling and walking?***

**Yes - 164 (89%) No - 20 (11%)**

## TRANSPORTATION CATEGORIES

Baldwin has four central ways in which residents can travel commonly in the region:

**Automotive:** This form of transportation is the most common in use today. Most people are dependent upon the automobile for access to employment, commerce, or other destination points.

**Cycling:** This form is growing in popularity. At this

point it is largely recreational and serves little functional purpose for residents as a whole. However, the opportunity exists to develop this mode at little comparative expense.

**Public Transit:** No true form of public transit exists for Baldwin residents, although there are great opportunities for future alternatives such as bus or rail, even on a regional scale network. School busses are the only large scale form of public transit at this time.

**Pedestrian:** Some Baldwin residents take advantage of the opportunity to walk to work, school, or shopping.

## PURPOSE

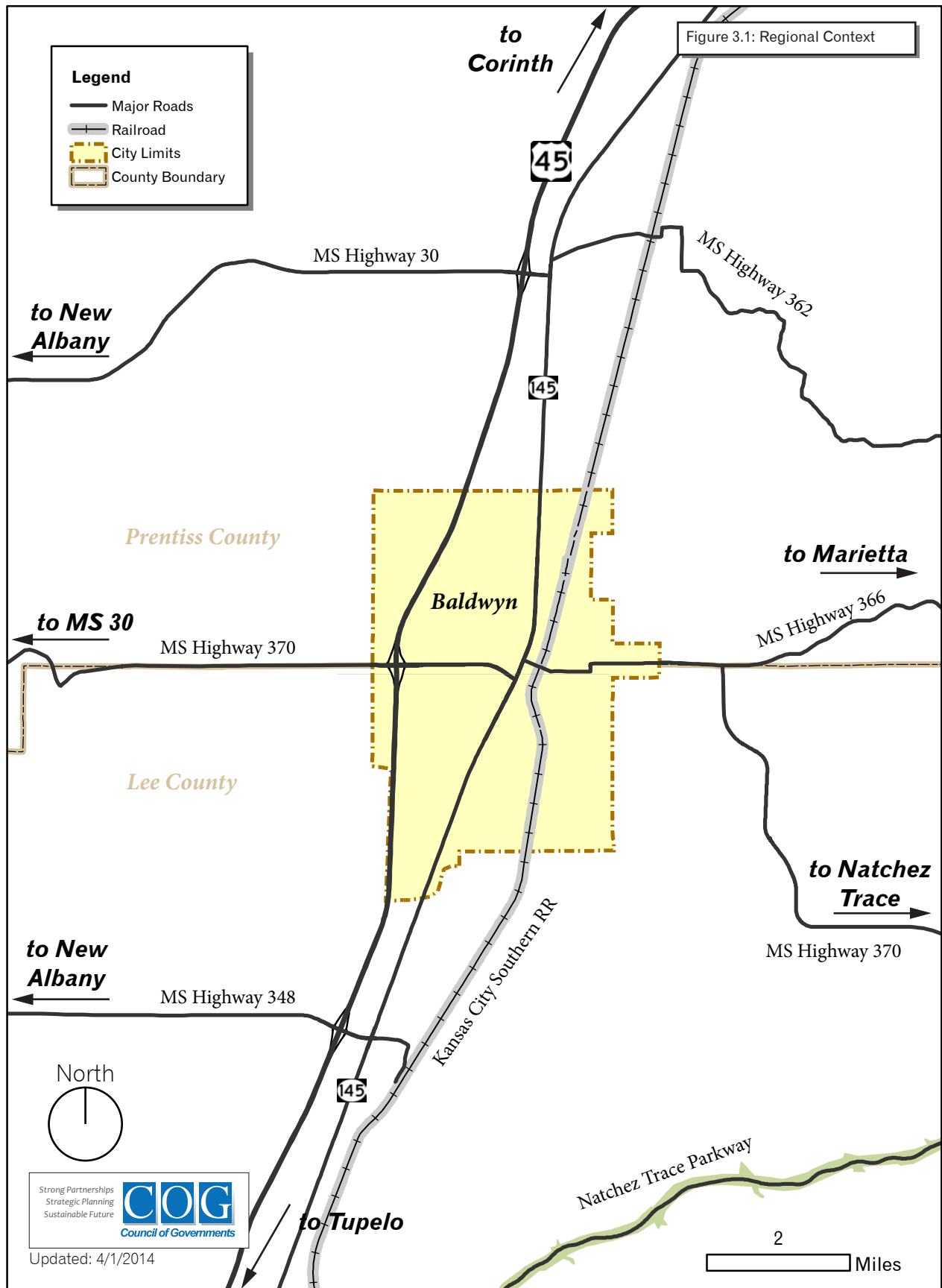
Baldwin has over 122 miles of public street and highway centerline. Of this total, there are approximately 9.8 miles of Federal highway centerline in the city. Also of the total, there are approximately 12.3 miles of state highway centerline in the city. In addition, the Kansas City Southern Railroad currently travels over 4.2 miles north to south through town.

Baldwin's roads should serve their purpose of moving traffic at high speeds outside of neighborhoods and urban areas. Within neighborhoods and urban areas, a complex network of streets should equally help to make a full range of transportation options available for residents. Capital improvements should budget for existing maintenance and for upgrades.

To foster community along residential streets, automobiles should not be given priority over other modes of travel. Street design elements such as boulevard, avenue, street, alley, lanes, and paths are all part of an integrated policy that creates hierarchy. Traffic should be dispersed as evenly as possible, optimizing opportunities for all citizens to choose the healthiest, most appropriate, and cost effective form of travel.

There should be a mix of transportation options (which allow biking and walking) in neighborhoods, especially within commercial districts and in the Downtown.





Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

## REGIONAL DISTANCES

Baldwyn is well located regionally and fits into the southeastern highway network (Figure 3.1). The Distances from Baldwyn to the following cities/destinations:

Tupelo: 20 miles

Corinth: 33 miles

Jackson: 192 miles

Columbus: 84 miles

Memphis, Tennessee: 107 miles

Jackson, Tennessee: 86 miles

Nashville, Tennessee: 201 miles

Birmingham, Alabama: 150 miles

Huntsville, Alabama: 140 miles

Natchez Trace Parkway: 11 miles

Tishomingo State Park: 37 miles

Tombigbee State Park: 28 miles

J.P. Coleman State Park: 51 miles

## STREET CLASSIFICATIONS

There are four standard types of streets classified that make up the roadway network of Baldwyn:

**1. Highway:** major regional transportation routes such as Highway 45 and 145.

**2. Arterial Street:** major thoroughfares of the City on a more local level

**3. Collector Street:** secondary thoroughfares that connect to local streets and funnel traffic to major transportation routes.

**4. Local Street:** streets that make up neighborhood networks, cul-de-sacs, and drives.

Traffic count data is available for higher classes of streets (Figure 3.2). After consultation with the Mayor, Street Department, and a separate visual assessment, the following conditions are evident:

The focus for planning should be on allowing city streets to provide a better range of options. This will involve retrofitting and redesigning the streets to be more walkable and connected in the future. Some of the main corridors should be developed into complete boulevards to assist in better linking the patchwork of city neighborhoods together. The design of each street

should be flexible and determined by its location and surroundings, as well as what it connects.

U.S. Highway 45 is part of the Federal Highway system and was constructed around Baldwyn in the 1990s. Its completion marked a change of exposure for Baldwyn, with traffic being drawn away from downtown to the west. The highway runs approximately 1,300 miles from the Gulf of Mexico at Mobile, Alabama, to Lake Superior at Ontonagon, Michigan. In its maiden alignment, a 49-mile segment in Lee County has notoriety as being the first paved road in the South. The concrete stretch was finished in November of 1915. Today it forms the most important commercial connection with the region.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For Highway 45, an easy solution for visual appearance would be to landscape and plant trees in the median through the section in Baldwyn. Highway 145 also has great potential for major improvements and incorporation of boulevard design. Rezoning and streetscape improvements of this important corridor should be employed. For future construction, building fronts should be brought up to the street right-of-way in the central business district. Highway 370 should be enhanced as well. Screening and landscaping should be installed in the 'gateway' sections of the road leading into the Downtown. A generous sidewalk and amenity zone would help to improve the curb appeal of the road as vehicles enter the Downtown district. In addition, Ripley Road, which serves as a secondary entrance corridor to Downtown, should be improved in a similar way, through better landscaping.

A focus should be given to drawing tourists and other motorists from U.S. 45 into the town. This can be accomplished through the means of key signage for historical attractions and business destinations in the Downtown, and enhanced landscaping to make the City more appealing.

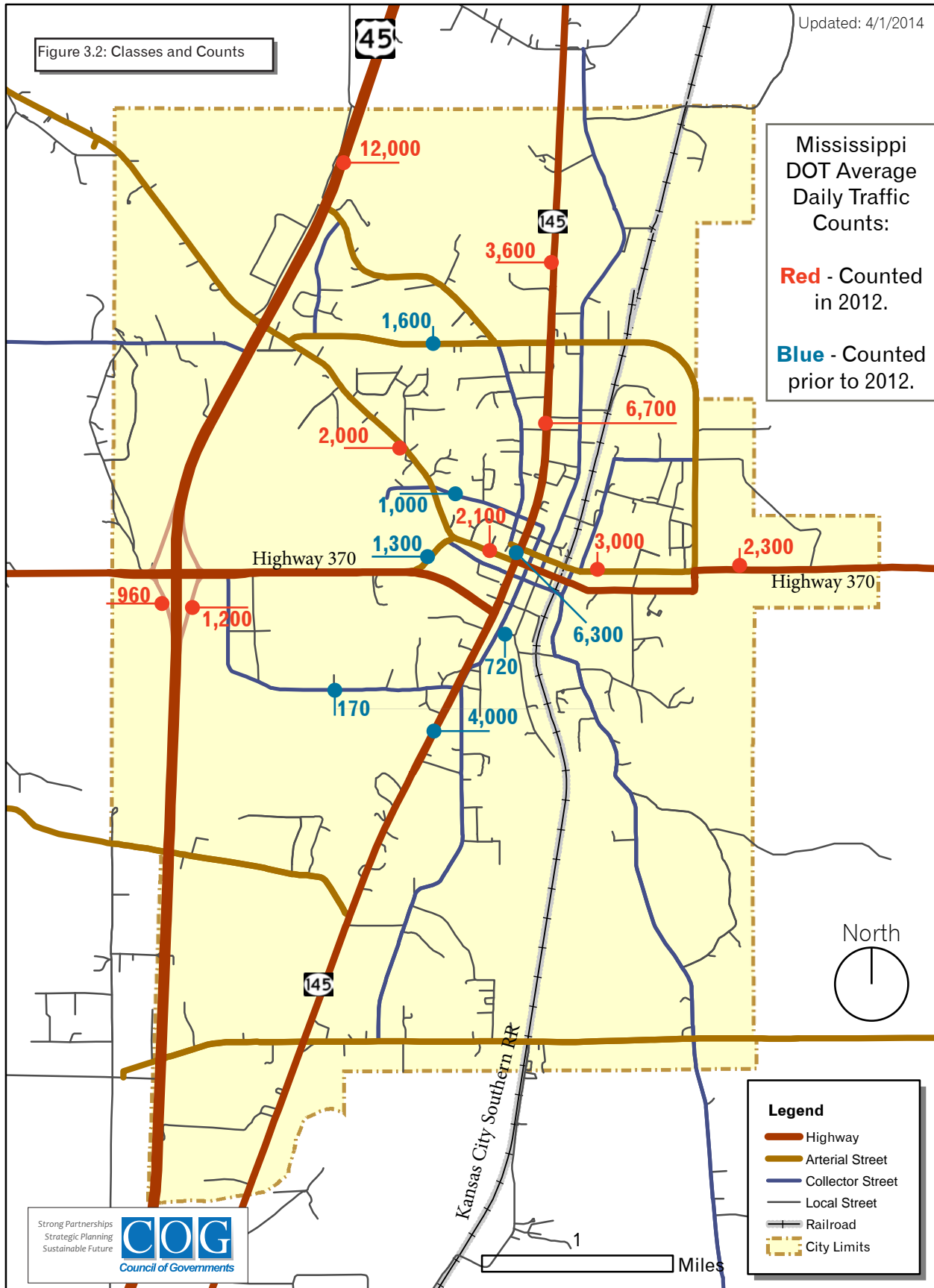
As part of a Complete Streets Policy, traffic calming measures should also be implemented in areas where pedestrian activity is going to increase. These design features should include raised crosswalks, neckdowns, planters, bulb-outs, narrower lane widths, traffic circles, and many other techniques to slow traffic. The combination of these features will help enhance pedestrian safety as well as commercial activity.

Using narrower streets in the future, designed for lower speeds, will save significant infrastructure funds and will be more fitting to the type of development that is desired.



Figure 3.2: Classes and Counts

Updated: 4/1/2014



**Legend**

- Highway
- Arterial Street
- Collector Street
- Local Street
- Railroad
- City Limits

Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **Goal #1: Reduce Costs and Improve Efficiency.**

Reduce costs associated with transportation, for both construction and maintenance, as well as through personal vehicle usage. This includes fossil fuel dependence for the future (Note: This can be accomplished partly through land use patterns and smart development as well).

#### **Transportation Cost Reduction Objectives.**

1. Ensure that functional uses are strictly abided by. Restrict heavy traffic to commercial grade roads.
2. Enhance and add on-street parking (instead of surface lots) to encourage walking. Start a plan to help people walk more and drive less.
3. Utilize volunteer and prison work for preventative maintenance of streets, bridges, and parking areas.
4. Do not take in new roads that are sub-par. Set goals to take in or build very few roads in comparison to the number of streets which need rehabilitation.

### **Goal #2: Increase Options and Decrease Trips.**

Use transportation planning and its layout to create a tight-knit community that is walkable with most necessities within short distances. Minimize travel distances for goods and services.

#### **Transportation Demand Objectives.**

1. Identify streets that will be phased first for enhancements based on key neighborhood connections.
2. Establish connections in the street grid, as well as alleys, to enhance connectivity and minimize the need for turning around. This will also allow greater pedestrian access.

### **Goal #3: Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.**

Use a complete streets policy to incorporate a network of sidewalks and trails to promote exercise, increase health, and reduce demand on vehicles. This policy will reinforce the greater density desired in residential and commercial infill districts.

#### **Complete Streets Objectives.**

1. Identify corridors for a comprehensive streets network, linking key areas of parks, schools, and the downtown. Build on what has already been started with safe routes to school projects, as well as with the downtown enhancements.

2. Educate the public on the benefits of non-vehicular travel. Create incentives to encourage walking and biking. Show correlations to disease, immunity, and a sedentary lifestyle.

3. As part of this, incorporate an onstreet bike path/network to connect Latimer Park to Brice's Cross Roads (Figure 3.3).

### **Goal #4: Use Transportation as Economic Catalyst.**

Use transportation to add value and improve the public realm. Leverage transportation investment dollars to produce income and additional tax revenue.

#### **Transportation Value Objectives.**

1. Create Downtown gateways along East Main Street and the Baldwin-Ripley road as mentioned in the previous sections (Figure 3.3).
2. Use a selected network as a tool to incentivize the redevelopment/improvement of adjacent areas
3. Create a trail system linking downtown Baldwin with Tishomingo Trail/Brice's Cross Roads to the west, and the Natchez Trace to the east. Utilize existing utility easements and the rail corridor for applicable portions (Figure 3.3).

### **Goal #5: Expansion of Network.**

Plan for long term expansion of the transportation network.

#### **Network Expansion Objectives.**

1. Conduct a long range transportation study, or partner with Lee County to participate in a county-wide transportation study.
2. Adopt city subdivision regulations to strengthen standards for street layout and design that will discourage sprawl and inefficient, disconnected streets.



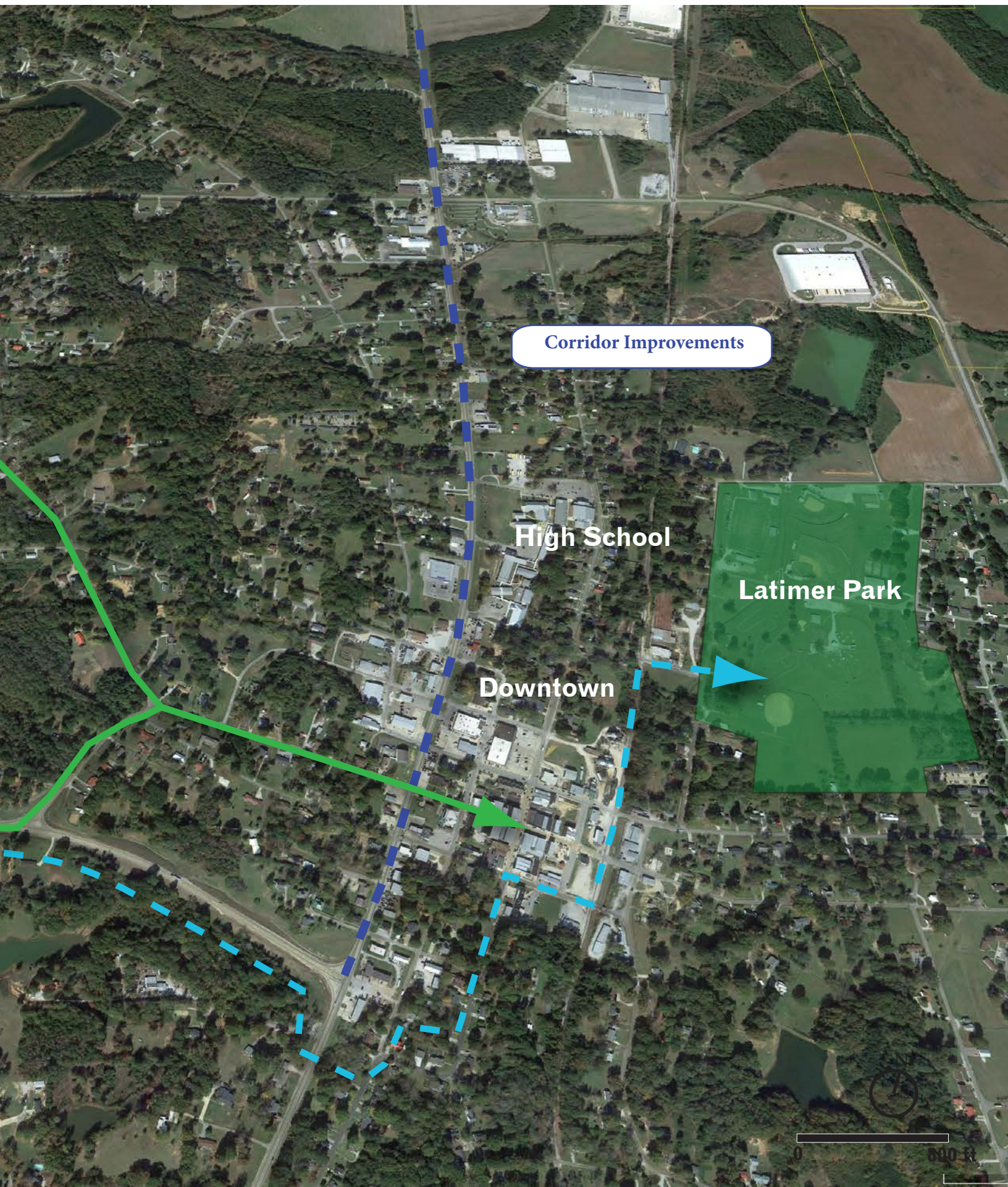
Figure 3.3: Transportation Vision



Enhanced Downtown Gateways

New Bike/Walking Route connecting Latimer Park to Brice's Cross Roads

Visitor's Center



Corridor Improvements

High School

Latimer Park

Downtown



PART IV  
INFRASTRUCTURE



## VISION

To enhance and further develop a viable long-term infrastructure system that is economical and environmentally safe. In connection with the previous section, to maintain streets at a level superior than the existing conditions through preventative maintenance. To establish a capital improvements plan for future construction and maintenance that supports future growth.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

***Would you support the use of the City funds to expand water and sewer lines to encourage future growth and development?***

**Yes - 90 (93%)    No - 10 (7%)**

## STORMWATER

Stormwater is a major issue in Baldwyn. The average annual rainfall in Baldwyn is typically between 55-60 inches per year. The City is situated in the northwestern part of the Upper Tombigbee Watershed. Locally, the town is situated on the western side of the Twentymile Creek Bottom, which is part of the Watershed. Stormwater entering the town comes from precipitation that falls on the ground and from stormwater that flows in at several creeks to the west and north of town. Water that is not absorbed often ponds before travelling into lakes or ephemeral streams/ditches (see Figure 4.1).

There are currently some chronic problem areas which experience overflow and flooding during major rainfall events. These areas need attention and should be priorities for the capital improvements plan. There locations are listed at the end of this section in Figure 4.6.

During flood events there is a potential for pollution as overflow from the Baldwyn lagoon. The overflow is released during rainfall events into the Twentymile Creek. The runoff generated from nearby agricultural and industrial areas, as well as runoff from streets, contain harmful contaminants such as nitrates, phosphates, metals, petroleum distillates, hydrocarbons, and total suspended solids from vehicle contaminants should be better mitigated to improve overall water quality. Serious erosion (and cost to taxpayers) is occurring downstream. This can be partially remedied by changing the process in Baldwyn to an integrated system. Conventional or hard engineering solutions involve capturing rainwater and removing it as quickly as possible. While these techniques do a good job of alleviating individual sites and properties, they create larger problems to the watershed and in areas downstream, having severe ecological impacts. This increases erosion, rapidly erodes soil and stream banks, and leads to greater flooding potential. In addition, the natural recharge process of the aquifer is impeded.

An integrated stormwater system will allow cost sav-

ings over the next several years, when resources will likely be tight. The process is highly efficient, but will be a long process to implement and to develop. The integration of streetscapes, parks, vacant tracts, and restoration zones will be discussed further in the parks section.

When resources allow, a stormwater management master plan is highly recommended. A stormwater management master plan will help guide this transition, with some room for flexibility. It will help with flood prevention and protection. It will also create and enhance a natural feel and character of the city.

## FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

Flood prone areas are defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These zones are ideal locations for innovative stormwater management solutions and other innovative flood control. Development within this area should be avoided or be at as low a level as possible. No mapped floodway exists in Baldwyn currently. For a map of the FEMA flood hazard areas refer to Figure 4.2.

## ELECTRIC UTILITY

All of Baldwyn is within the service area of Prentiss County Electric. The corporate headquarters of the utility are located in Booneville, and the cooperative has a branch office in Baldwyn at 106 E. Clayton Street.

Prentiss County Electric Power Association has a proven record of working with Baldwyn to help improve the quality of life for our members. One way they accomplish this is by working with the wholesale power supplier: Tennessee Valley Authority, as well as the North Mississippi Industrial Development Association, and the Community Development Foundation to encourage new industrial growth and further development of existing business and industries.

## WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM

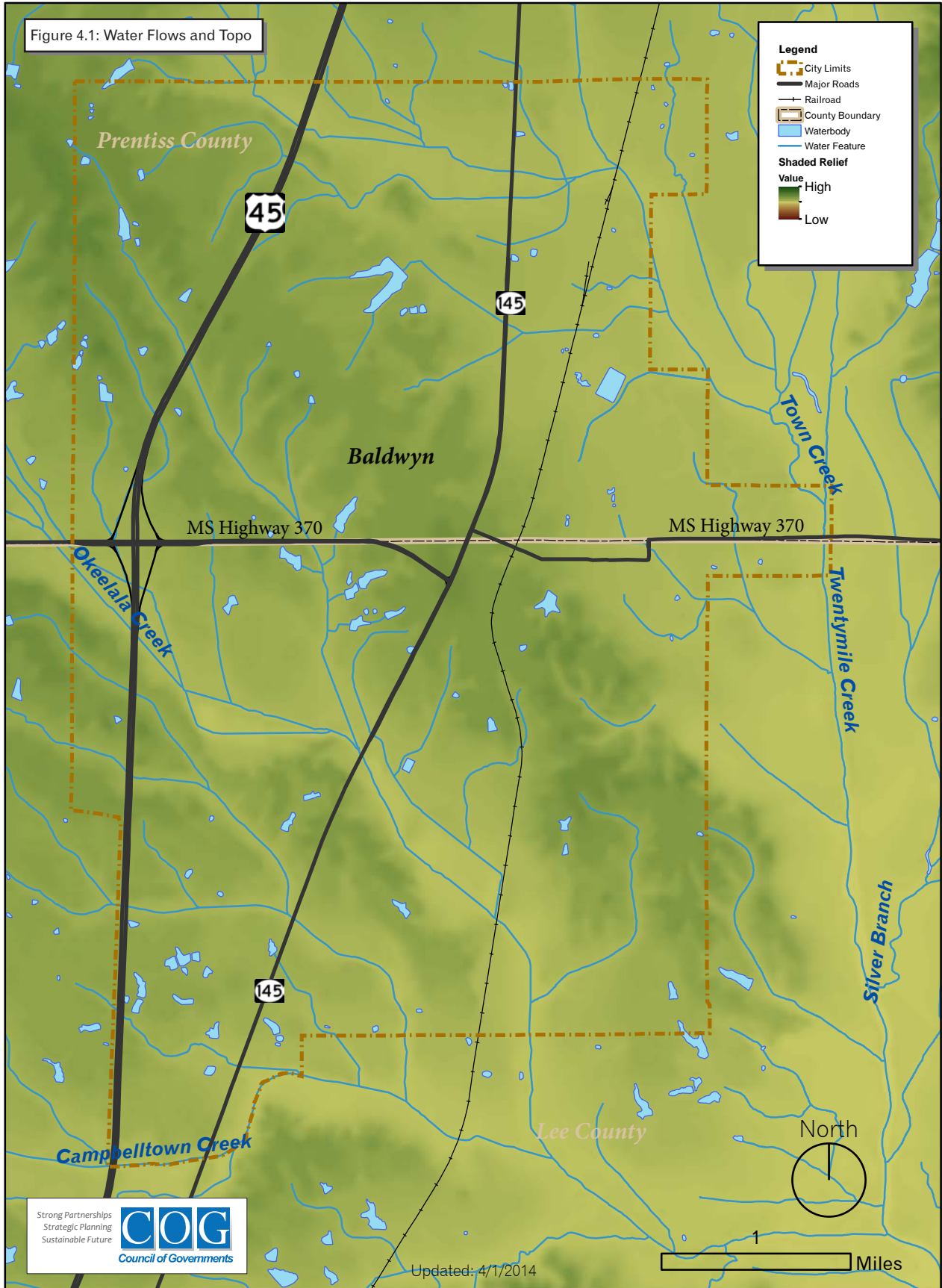
The existing water system for Baldwyn includes two elevated storage tanks, one with the capacity of 150,000 gallons and the other with the capacity of 300,000 gallons.

The city currently operates 3 wells with the capacities of 250 gpm, 220 gpm, and 362 gpm respectively.

Overall, as of the Spring of 2014 Baldwyn is operating at 73% capacity.

Currently, the city is adding a new well and an elevated storage tank near the intersection of Highway 145 South and Southwest Avenue. The tank will have a holding capacity of 100,000 gallons, and the well will have a capacity of 250 gallons per minute. Once these improvements are in service, the system will operate at





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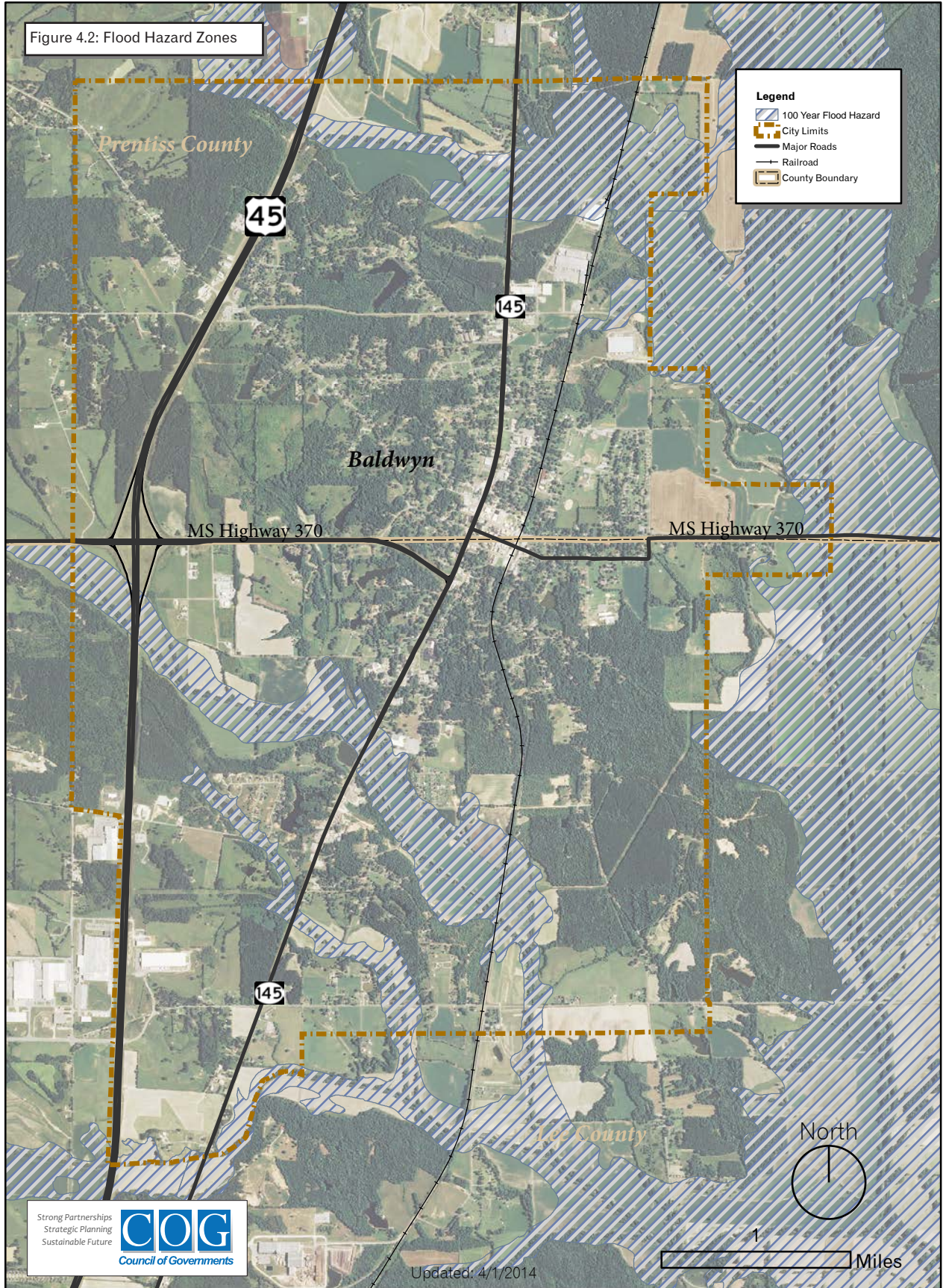







Figure 4.2: Flood Hazard Zones

**Legend**

-  100 Year Flood Hazard
-  City Limits
-  Major Roads
-  Railroad
-  County Boundary

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Updated: 4/1/2014



1 Miles

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an estimated 53% capacity overall.

Baldwyn has one additional well outside of town, which was acquired from the Ingram Water System when Baldwin assumed control.

An additional well and tank exist in the Baldwin Industrial Park for fire protection/insurance purposes. Another tank exists in the Harry Martin North Lee Industrial Park which supplies water to the industrial customers there. The water in this system is from the Northeast Mississippi Water Supply District, originating from the Tombigbee Waterway. The NEMWSD pump station at Saltillo feeds the North Lee System. It is a Tri-Plex 1,200 gpm station and is designed to operate with two pumps with a capacity of approximately 2,000 gpm. This is approximately 2.9 million gallons over a 24-hour period.

In addition, the City is currently installing backup generators at all the well locations in the city.

See Figure 4.3 for a map of the water system network.

## WASTEWATER SYSTEM

Baldwyn currently operates a lagoon system to handle its wastewater, from which overflow is released into the Twentymile Creek during rainfall events.

On an average daily basis, Baldwin's wastewater is running close to capacity. Future plans to connect all or part of the city system to the Sand Creek Regional Wastewater Authority project should alleviate this current problem. See Figure 4.4 for a map of the Wastewater Infrastructure.

## SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

Lee and Prentiss Counties are responsible for collecting the garbage in the respective sections of the city. Recycling for paper and plastic is currently offered with a station located in the Downtown near City Hall.

## NATURAL GAS SYSTEM

The City of Baldwin maintains its own natural gas system. The system covers much of Baldwin and the surrounding area, including the Harry A. Martin North Lee Industrial Park.

Due to poor pressure at the end of portions of the network on the coldest days this year, the City is currently installing an 8 inch line to connect the lines that run parallel to Highway 45 and 145 respectively. See Figure 4.4 for a map of the system.

The City also maintains the main gas transmission line to the local network, which connects to the Tennessee Valley Gas Transmission Line some fifteen miles to the northwest of Baldwin near Dumas. The City is responsible for keeping the right-of-way maintained. The

transmission line is very old and as a result, all or part of it should soon be replaced. The City should consider raising gas rates and simultaneously begin a capital expense fund for this major upcoming project.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **Goal #1: Promote Continued Development of an Excellent Wastewater System.**

Enhance and maintain a top-rate wastewater system, reduce volumes, adopt and move toward a more environmentally responsible wastewater treatment and disposal strategy.

#### **Wastewater System Objectives.**

1. Assess current conditions and create an enhancement plan with project phases.
2. Work toward connection with Sand Creek Project.
3. Push for low-flow fixtures and identify other ways to use wastewater as a resource.

### **Goal #2: Upgrade and Continuously Enhance Stormwater Infrastructure.**

Begin with problem areas. Create a more cost effective, efficient, and sustainable stormwater system on an incremental basis that will eventually become the standard for Baldwin.

#### **Stormwater Infrastructure Objectives.**

1. In dense areas of high development, including the Downtown, the goal should be to minimize new imperviousness, and mitigate what is currently there. This can be achieved by maximizing water infiltration, and by the harvesting of stormwater for irrigation, etc.
2. In less dense areas, i.e. lawns and vegetated surfaces, "soft" engineering solutions of plants and holding ponds should replace hard (and more costly/less sustainable) solutions. These include concrete channels, curb inlets, and storm sewers.
3. Incorporate vegetated ditches (bioswales) into streets and parking areas to diminish runoff and naturally filter runoff. Also, utilize topographic depressions to capture and slow the rate of runoff.
4. Incorporate a landscaping policy for native/drought tolerant plants into residential areas, parks, and other low density development areas. This will require less irrigation, as rain gardens and bioswales are very inexpensive, natural solutions that work effectively and improve curb appeal.

5. Create a stormwater management master plan that will help guide this transition to more sustainable infrastructure, with some room for flexibility. This plan will help with flood prevention and protection. It will also create and enhance a natural feel and character for the city.

6. Utilize Tombigbee River Management Resources for maintenance and new construction projects whenever possible.

**Goal #3: Upgrade Gas Transmission Supply Line.**

**Gas Transmission Line Replacement Objectives.**

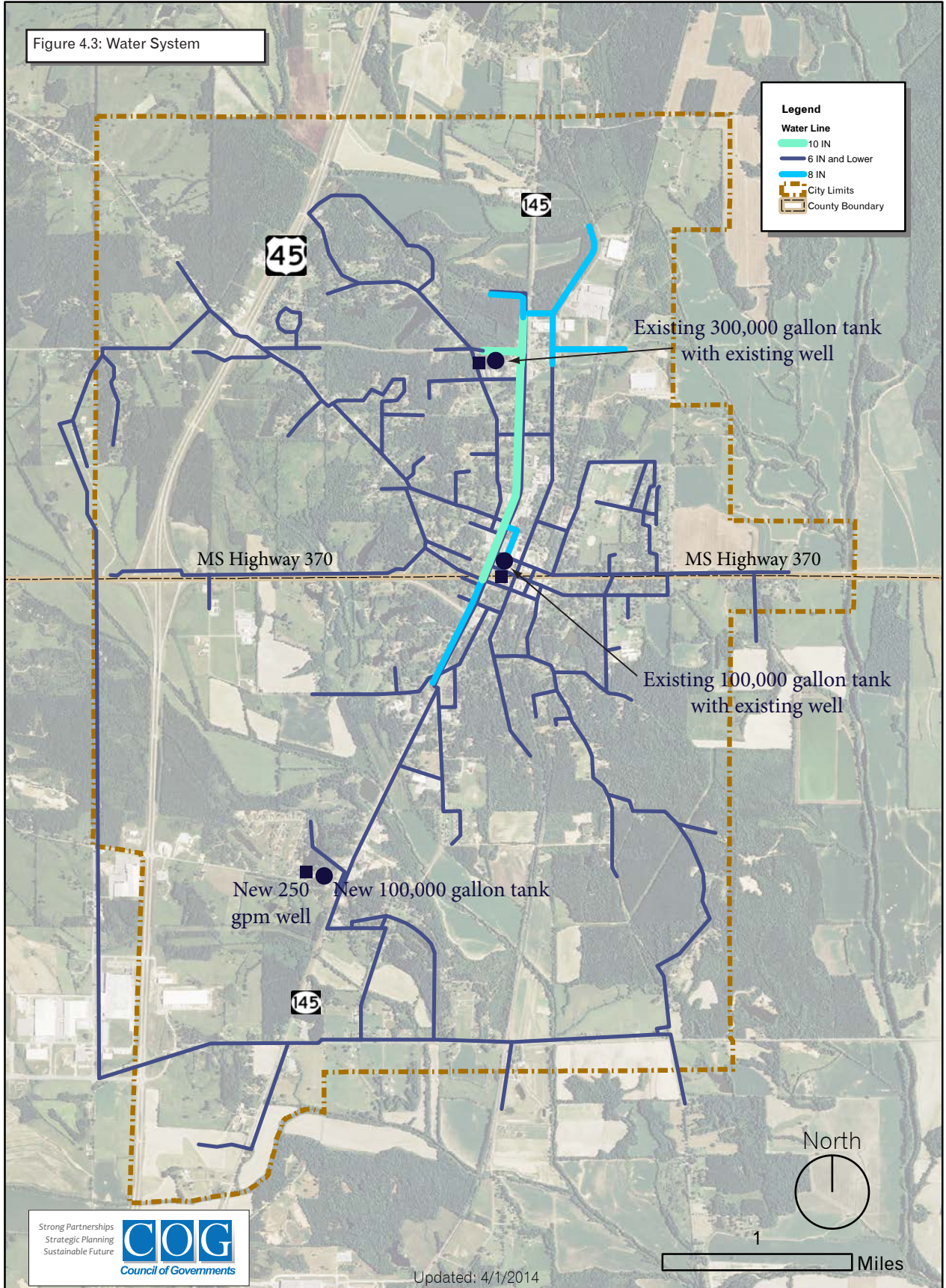
1. Increase gas rates incrementally to prepare for the major capital expense of project.
2. Develop a response plan if a major leak occurs prior to implementation.
3. Determine if a loan will be necessary to begin the project.
4. Begin the project as soon as possible to avoid a major catastrophic failure of the system.

**Goal #4: Proactively Expand and Improve City Water and Wastewater Capacity in Preparation for Growth.**

**Water/Wastewater Objectives.**

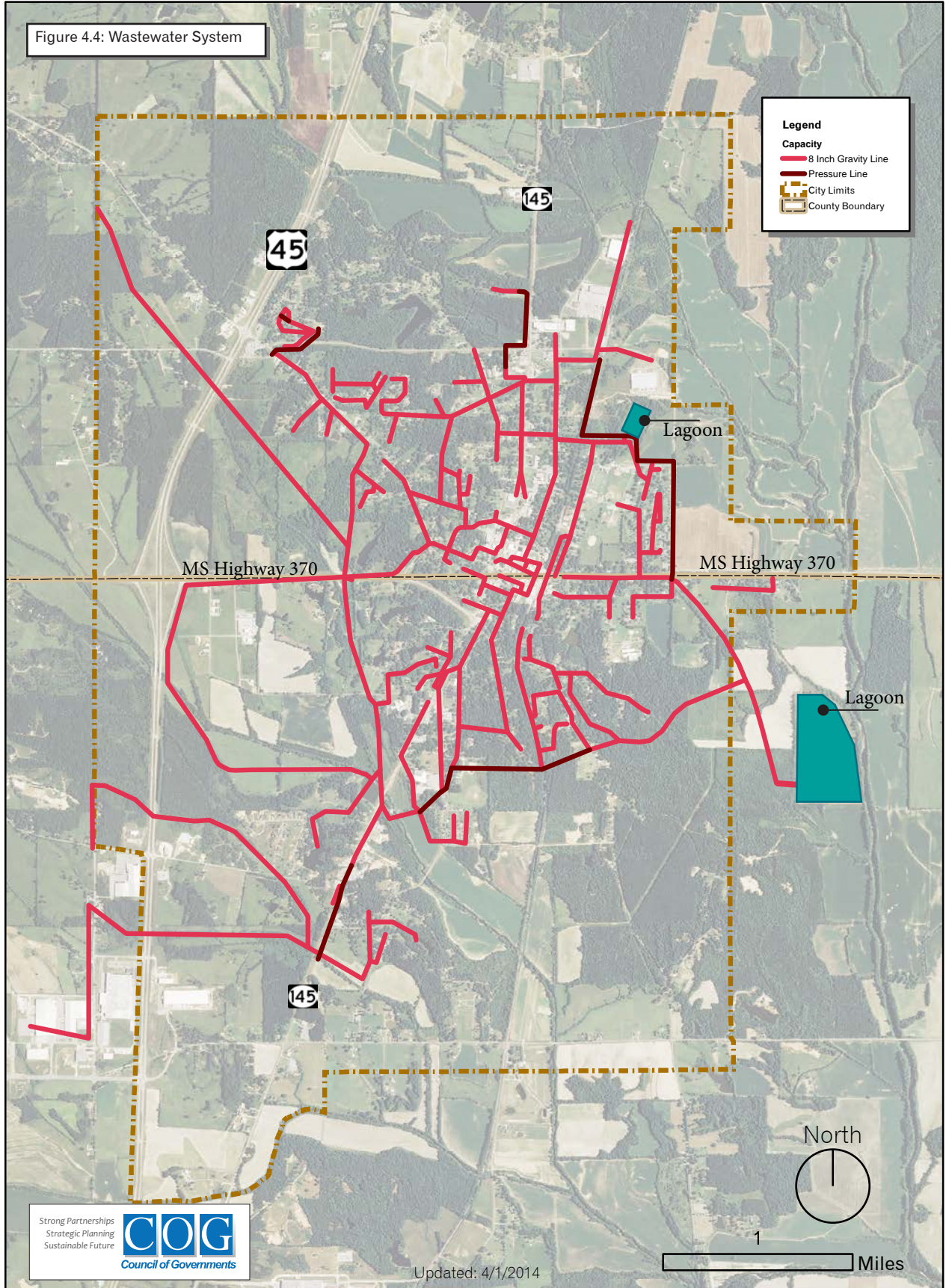
1. As part of the Sand Creek Wastewater Project, develop a ten-year wastewater plan to connect with the regional system.
2. Implement a publicly voted millage appropriation for city improvements.
3. Develop and update a ten year water/wastewater capital improvements and expansion plan.
4. Implement a quality of life fund (created from optional water bill roundup program).
5. Update current utility service policy for taxpayers outside of the city limits.

Figure 4.3: Water System



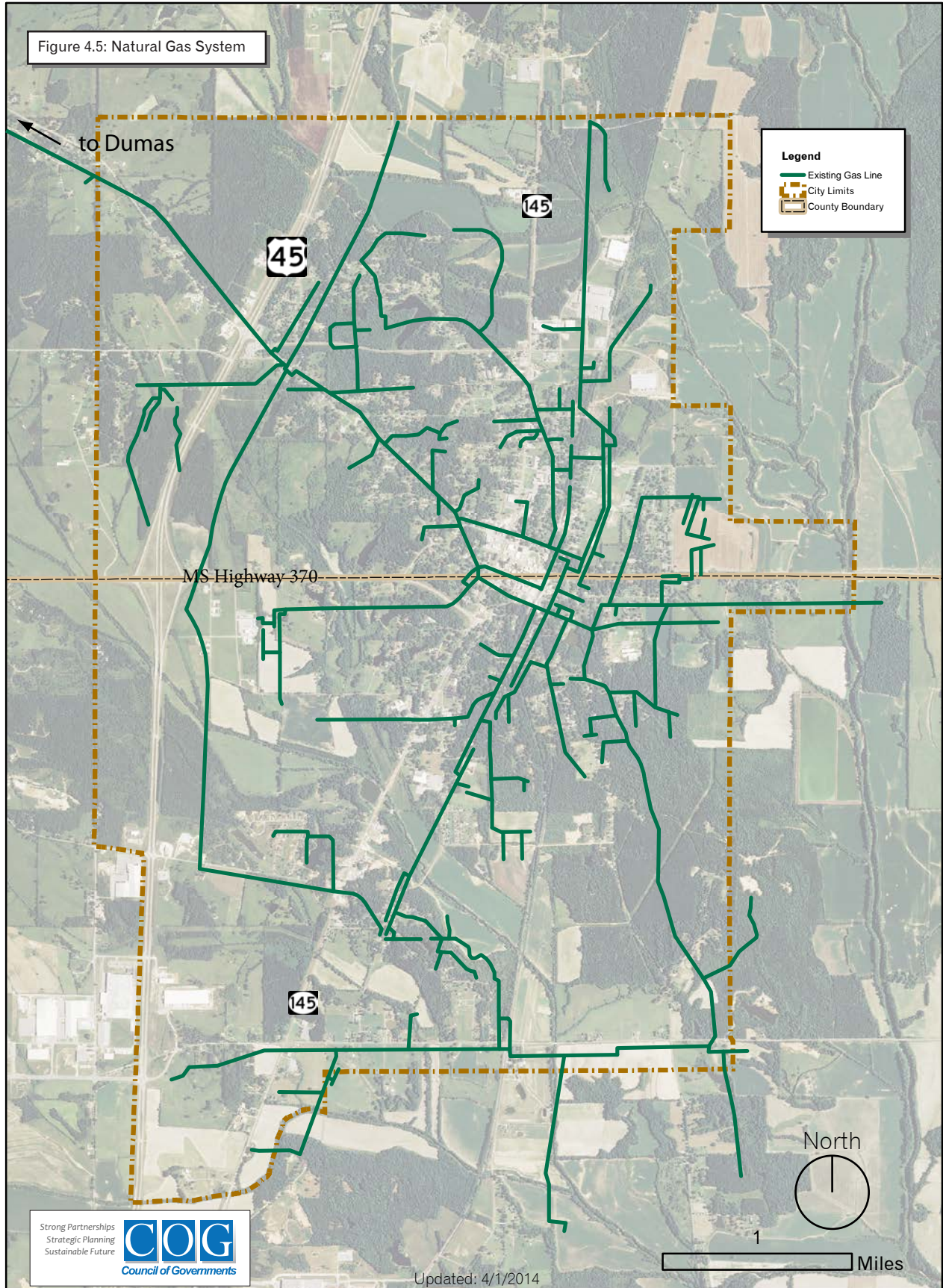
Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

Figure 4.4: Wastewater System



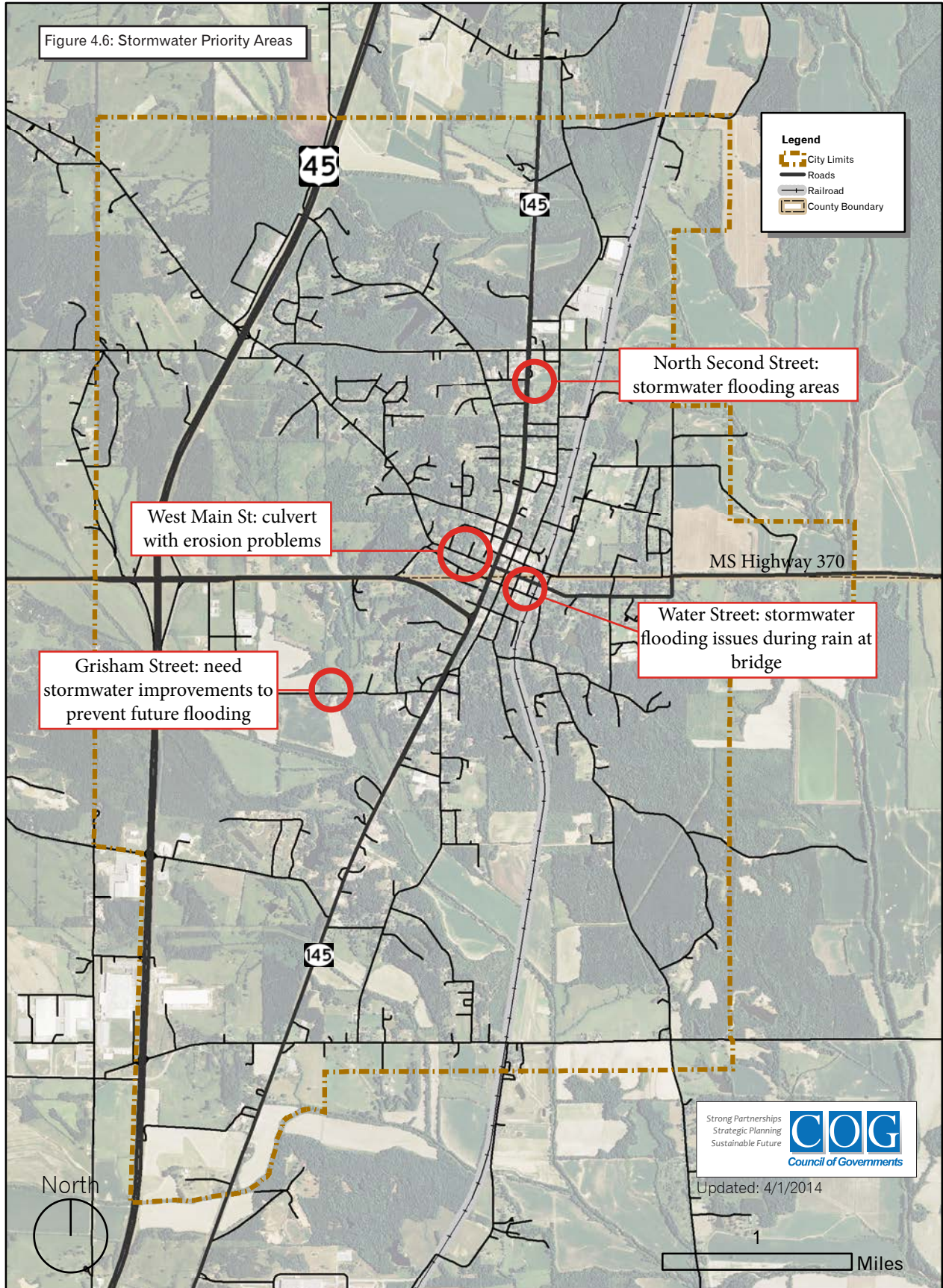
Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

Figure 4.5: Natural Gas System



Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.





*Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.*

PART V  
PARKS AND RECREATION

## VISION

In the coming years, the vision involves improving existing parks and recreation facilities, to strategically plan for new ones, and to develop a master plan which will link parks, open space, and other recreation amenities together. This vision involves new parks, trail networks, and green corridors, with trail connections to Brice's Cross Roads and eventually to the Natchez Trace. In accomplishing this vision, the overall health and well being of the residents of Baldwin will be improved. This enhanced quality of life will also help to attract new residents and visitors to the city.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

***Should the city work toward creating more parks and recreation space?***

**Yes - 166 (88%) No - 22 (12%)**

## PURPOSE

Parks, green areas, public spaces, and civic structures and properties provide value when they enhance the public realm, create memorable spaces, and promote tourism. They also serve as amenities to attract retirees and young families.

Parks are an easy way to improve neighborhoods, but they are also easily affected by their surroundings in positive and negative ways. Economic development is relating to this important aspect of community development. Parks should serve to enhance the personal health of residents and affect the long-term environmental health of the entire community. Parks can serve as an economic development tool through enhanced quality of life.

An integrative approach to ecological restoration will involve streetscapes, trails, parks, and other natural elements, and integrate these elements into efforts for community development.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Baldwin currently has two main parks (see Figure 5.1). Veteran's Park, located along Highway 145 south, is approximately 1.8 acres. Latimer Park, the city's main park and recreation area, is over 47 acres. In addition, the city has a quarter mile public walking track located on 3.5 acres in front of the police station. At Latimer Park current recreation opportunities include baseball, softball, football, basketball, and other field sports. Latimer Park has a little league football field, and fields that accommodate high school baseball and softball, little league baseball, coach-pitch, summer league baseball, and it also has a small horse arena. The City also has a small playground that was recently constructed near the Elementary School. Basketball courts are located at

the Boys & Girls Club.

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Many residents and leaders want a new park to serve as an asset and advertising tool in the western part of town. This new park, along with the existing ones, should be interconnected by trails or bike lanes to provide additional value to property owners within the community.

The new park would be constructed with soccer fields, a walking track, high school football field, and several baseball fields. The new park would also offer ample outdoor gathering opportunities with pavilions and picnic tables.

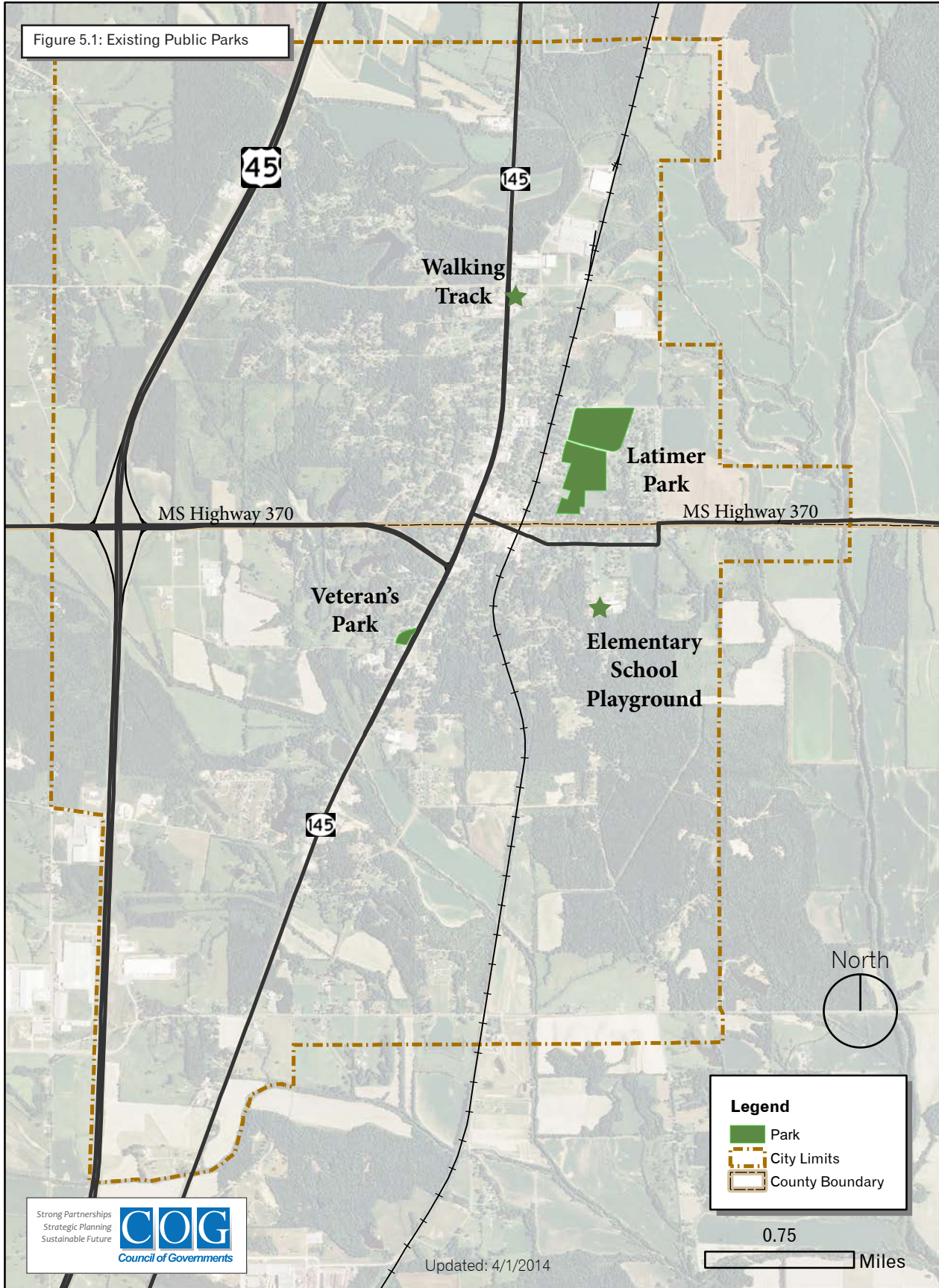
To save expenses and promote sustainability, the future design of the park network should incorporate native plants when possible and be integrated into better stormwater management practices. Construction and landscaping should be designed in a way that minimizes maintenance expenses and conserves resources (Part IV: Infrastructure Section).

Conservation areas, unsuitable for other types of more intensive development, may be good candidates for park land and public open space. For additional guidance on these locations, review the Land Use portion of this Plan.

In addition, if a new park is added near the downtown, it would serve as an anchor and a venue for public outdoor gatherings. This park does not have to be large in size, but should be well integrated with its surroundings as well as into the surrounding pedestrian network.



Figure 5.1: Existing Public Parks





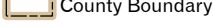
Strong Partnerships  
Strategic Planning  
Sustainable Future



Council of Governments

Updated: 4/1/2014

**Legend**

-  Park
-  City Limits
-  County Boundary

0.75  
Miles

Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **Goal #1: Plan for Expansion.**

Provide adequate parks and greenspace for a growing active population. Work to update and improve amenities in the existing parks.

#### **Greenspace Expansion Objectives.**

1. Implement a yearly strategic plan for sports events and tournaments to raise capital for parks improvements.
2. Consider the implementation of a specific sales tax to be used to support tourism, parks, and beautification.
3. Seek funding partners to enhance existing parks.
4. Develop a long range plan for parks improvement and assess usage rates, along with future use projections.

### **Goal #2: Plan For and Develop New City Park.**

Plan for development of a new city park west of downtown near Highway 45 to allow for enhanced visibility and expansion space for growth.

#### **New City Park Objectives.**

1. Conduct a study to determine the program: size, features, and the location of the park, determine entrances and visibility factors.
2. Incorporate the requests of residents, including a baseball field, soccer field, and other major amenities for tournaments.
3. Involve Baldwyn High School in the process to determine how the school will utilize and support the new facility.

### **Goal #3: Value Investment in the Park System.**

Strive to treat parklands and park system like a long-term investment that will yield returns. Market them as such and secure funding with future planning in mind.

#### **Parkland Trust Objectives.**

1. Compile contact list of donors from the private sector. Establish a non-profit entity to manage fundraising for the Baldwyn Park System.
2. Establish a committee and a fund for strategic land acquisition and improvements.
3. Utilize as much volunteer work as possible. Create a framework for after school volunteer work.

4. Utilize funding sources to aid in the development of property. (See Appendix 3 for list of available funding sources)

### **Goal #4: Create a Downtown Park Anchor.**

Create a park/ballpark venue to enhance the Downtown, form an anchor, and help establish its position as a destination. The addition of such a venue will also be an additional recreation, entertainment, and outdoor gathering opportunity in the Downtown.

#### **Downtown Park Objectives.**

1. Engage the private sector and the Community Development Foundation for site development and planning.
2. Explore the possibility of a public/private venture.
3. Conduct a study to determine the program: size, features, and location of the park.



PART VI  
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## VISION

Public facilities are integral to the health and vitality of a community. They are also key to the economy and the economic and residential development aspects of the City. The goal of this section is to accommodate for the development of the highest level of existing and new community facilities, and to look ahead and anticipate the changes that will be required.

## APPROACH

A key to successful public facilities is having key municipal personnel with deep familiarity and experience to operate those systems.

The total assessment of all these departments and their facilities are designed to serve as a basis for the capital improvements program. City officials should read the plan in depth and develop a budget based on these needs, combined with their knowledge of the facilities.

## CITY STRUCTURE

Baldwyn is composed of a Mayor and Board form of Government, and five aldermen are elected from four designated wards, with one at-large member.

The millage rate for the city is currently 33.00. Of this, the Library receives 1.12 mills, and the Fire Department receives 1.40 mills, with the remaining 30.48 going to the general fund.

The city government has 48 non-elected staff members, along with 8 elected, totalling 56 total individuals. Elected members include the Mayor, members of the Board of Aldermen, the City Clerk, and the Police Chief.

Currently, the City of Baldwin has seven departments. These departments include the Administration, the Chamber of Commerce, the Library, the Gas and Water Department, the Street Department, and the Police Department (includes Code Enforcement).

Overall, public facilities and corresponding lands cover over 122 acres. See Figure 6.1 for more information.

The City owns a third interest in the Brice's Cross Roads Museum and Visitor Center. The City also operates the Baldwin Community Center located at Latimer Park. Baldwin School System is operated independently from the City, but has a close interest with the future of the City and its facilities. Baldwin Public Housing Authority is also a separate public entity, but the Housing Board members are selected by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. There are other quasi-public facilities in the City as well. These include health care clinics, a wellness center, a nursing home, and additional public housing units operated by other entities. The locations of these facilities are well dispersed across Baldwin (see Figure 6.3 on following page).

In 2014, the City's annual expenses including all operations and ongoing projects totaled \$8,095,250. The total annual payroll totaled \$1,414,000 for the same period.

## SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Baldwin Separate School District includes all of the City of Baldwin, portions of southwestern Prentiss County, and northern Lee County (Figure 6.2).

The public school facilities consist of two separate campuses that are in good condition. The campuses total close to 40 acres.

The Baldwin Separate School District is a line district and is challenged due to its restricted tax base. It includes portions of southwest Prentiss County and northeastern Lee County. The school system is undoubtedly the single most important public facility and must be fostered and developed as an asset to continue healthy community vitality.

As a result, the city and school system should undertake aggressive efforts over the next 5-10 year period to attract students and continually improve academic standards.

Figure 6.1: School Enrollment

Grade	2009	2014	% Change
K	61	73	20%
1	76	78	3%
2	56	68	21%
3	71	54	-24%
4	81	54	-33%
5	61	57	-7%
6	76	62	-18%
7	76	53	-30%
8	82	75	-9%
9	68	69	1%
10	62	49	-21%
11	55	57	4%
12	54	64	19%
SPED	8	5	-38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>-8%</b>

Source: Baldwin Separate School District

Figure 6.2: School District Staff

Certified Staff	
Elementary	23
Middle	21
High	26
Central Office	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>

Source: Baldwin Separate School District



## PUBLIC HOUSING

The Baldwin Housing Authority is made up of two separate campuses. Prentiss Apartments are located on Fifth Street. The main Housing Authority apartments are located just north of Baldwin Elementary School on East Main Street.

In addition to these, there are a large number of public housing units per capita in the City of Baldwin. Much of this was the product of the late 1970s and 1980s when an abundance of units were constructed. As a result, the City now bears the burden of these units, which has resulted in increased crime rates and high rental (transient) populations in the City. Overall, this has had a negative effect on attempts to improve quality of life, build community, and establish positive trends in the School System and the Community. The purpose of public housing is to bring needy people in for a time, rehabilitate them to a certain level, and then move them out. However, the public housing facilities in Baldwin seem to be underperforming or not performing at all to their intended purpose.

As a result, the City should make efforts to phase out the existing public housing units. At a minimum for now, there should be a moratorium or cap on any new units, under any conditions, with a goal to reduce the overall number of units by 10% over the next ten years.

## CITY HALL

The City Hall is located at 202 South Second Street and was constructed in 1981. The building houses the Mayor and Administration, the Chamber of Commerce, Code Enforcement, the Board Chambers, and the Fire Department. The property has two large storm shelters in the rear of the building.

The City Hall is adequate for its purposes, but was not well designed and is not energy efficient. Plans should be made to renovate this facility at some point to upgrade its shortcomings.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department is located in the City hall and features four bays for existing fire engines. The facility has been added onto to make space for more equipment, but is still about half the size of necessary requirements for space. The Fire Department also supplies full time Emergency Medical Service.

The existing fire district covers just the city limits of Baldwin, with mutual agreements in place to provide back up to Departments that border the city limits (Figure 6.2).

The fire chief and assistant chief are paid a monthly salary. The rest of the department consists of approximately 12 volunteers. Additional volunteers, as well as

the addition of dual fire stations to better cover the City, would improve the existing fire rating.

The Department is currently rated at 8 with a goal to improve the rating to a 7 in the near future.

The Department currently has three fire trucks and one emergency services rescue vehicle. These include the following:

- (1.) 1,000 gallon pumper: 1991 model, with a 2-door Ford chassis and Wilson body. This vehicle is used primarily for grass fires and fires outside of the city limits.
- (2.) 1,200 gallon pumper: 2002 model, with a 4-door International chassis and Rosenbauer body.
- (3.) 1,200 gallon pumper: 2011 model, with a 2-door Freightliner chassis and a Rosenbauer body.
- (4.) EMS vehicle: 1998 Ford diesel chassis, equipped with the Jaws-of-Life.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department is currently composed of fourteen officers, with an elected Chief. The Department has 14 officers and 12 vehicles.

## HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Although not public facilities themselves, the clinics, pharmacies, nursing homes play an important public role. Northeast Mississippi Medical Center operates the Baldwin Medical Center on Highway 145 south (S. 4th Street). The clinic is open 8 to 5 and has a doctor and nurse practitioner on staff. The clinic also has 24-hour ambulance service. In addition, Baldwin has two other private clinics with family nurse practitioners. Furthermore, the city has three retail pharmacies/drug stores.

Northeast Mississippi Health Services operates the Baldwin Wellness Center located in the same building as the Police Department.

Baldwin Nursing Facility is located on Highway 145 south. It is home to 107 residents who require long-term or short-term specialized care. Baldwin Nursing Facility is affiliated with North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo, a 2006 recipient of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and North Mississippi Health Services, a 2012 Baldrige Award recipient.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **Goal #1: Create a Capital Improvements Plan to Renovate City Hall.**

#### **City Hall Renovation Objectives.**

1. Determine what improvements will be necessary to update the building to current demands and efficient energy standards.
2. Develop a five-year plan to save funding for the project. Apply for all possible grant incentives listed earlier in the economic development section.

### **Goal #2: Make Long Range Plans to Construct a Main Fire Station and a Secondary Fire Station to Maximize Service and Improve Fire Rating.**

#### **Fire Station Improvement Objectives.**

1. Conduct a study to determine most appropriate locations for both a main station and a secondary station.
2. Construct a capital budget to provide funding. Apply for all possible grant incentives.
3. Begin with a new station to the west of the municipality, and keep the existing station at City Hall until a new station location in the Latimer Park vicinity can be developed.

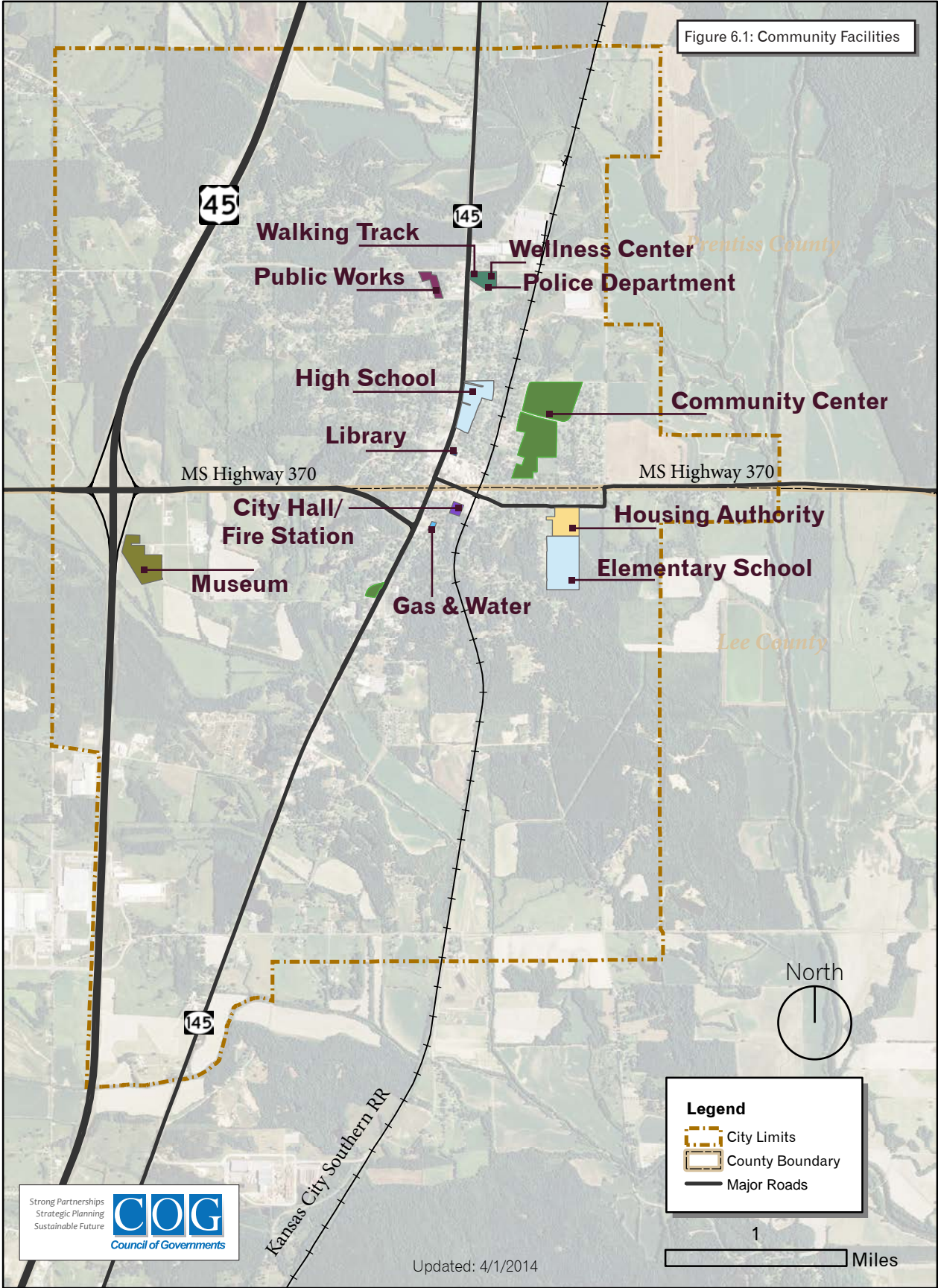
### **Goal #3: Prioritize and Proactively Improve Other City Facilities.**

#### **City Facilities Objectives.**

1. Develop a school committee to work on future growth of city schools, and how the city can assist with those objectives.
2. Work to enhance fire department capacity to improve the city rating.
3. Hold an annual work session to create a report from department heads on the status of equipment and facilities. Itemize and prioritize capital expenditures. Develop a capital replacement/improvement plan for all city equipment.

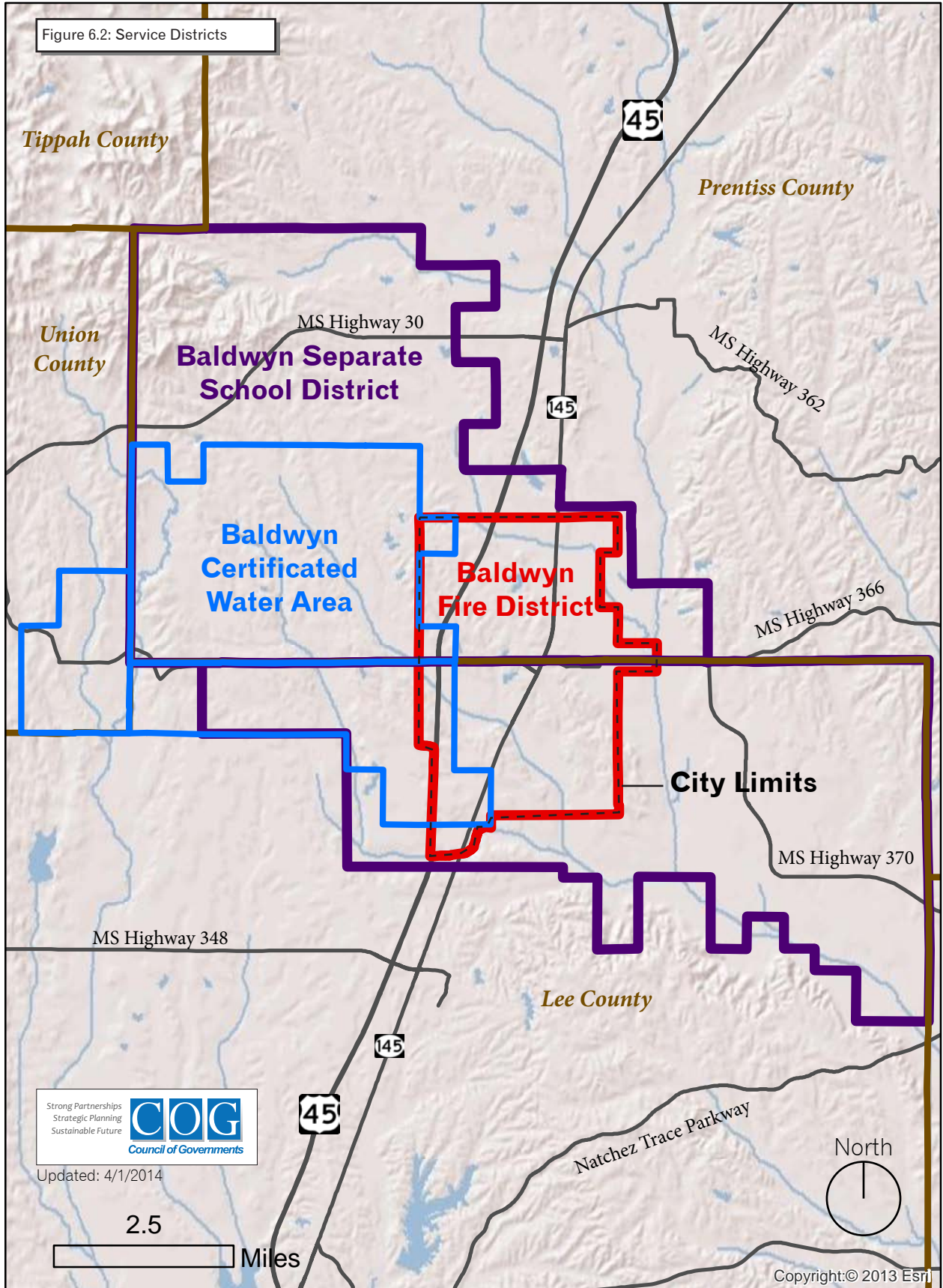


Figure 6.1: Community Facilities



Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

Figure 6.2: Service Districts



Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.



PART VII  
COMMUNITY CHARACTER

## VISION

Strive to maintain and continue to enhance Baldwin's unique sense of community, its distinct character, and its strong sense of place. The community character should be of such quality that it will attract visitors, new residents, and retirees to Baldwin in increasing proportions.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

***Should Baldwin's historic, small-town character be preserved?***

**Yes - 186 (92%) No - 16 (8%)**

***Are you satisfied with the type and quality of development in Baldwin?***

**Yes - 119 (65%) No - 64 (35%)**

***Do you believe that the quality and condition of housing in Baldwin is improving, well-maintained, or declining?***

**Improving - 64 (35%)**

**Well Maintained - 46 (25%)**

**Declining - 73 (40%)**

***Should the City try to improve Baldwin's existing neighborhoods in some way?***

**Yes - 183 (98%) No - 4 (2%)**

***Does the City need to improve its appearance through beautification, decorative signage, landscaping, etc.?***

**Yes - 160 (86%) No - 27 (14%)**

## PURPOSE

Community Character is a broad subject. It covers economic, demographic, physical, and social characteristics that make Baldwin unique. Character giving elements and indicators are as broad as the community and its residents.

Character is subjective, that is it is a matter of perception or opinion. However, objective steps and actions can be taken to influence these subjective perceptions.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

Character is what is essential to Baldwin's quality or nature, reputation, and what is distinct about it. Despite varied socioeconomic conditions, the character is not linked to wealthy neighborhoods or those of lower economic status. Character enhancements can be promoted when people take pride in their homes, properties, etc.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTER

Housing in a key aspect of community character. Housing conditions in Baldwin will be critical to attract economic base employees to the City. Housing and neighborhoods must be increasing in value for positive growth to occur.

The City can be categorized into several unique character areas which describe the overwhelming physical and socioeconomic character structures of the specific areas.

In general the physical character of the City has shifted from its original tight knit grid layout to a more auto-dominated sprawl pattern typical of American post-World War II development. After the 1970s a large amount of public housing was constructed in the City. This has had a very bad effect on the community character. These projects have lowered the property values of all the surrounding properties and neighborhoods, in addition to creating more of a transient and high-crime populace. The developers of these projects have harmed Baldwin perhaps more than any other single force. The City has to reap and cope with the consequences today.

The City has several architecturally significant areas which include surviving historic structures and homes. Primary styles include Arts and Craft, local vernacular, Foursquare, Folk Victorian, and Craftsman style.

## SOCIAL CHARACTER

Baldwin has a strong sense of community, and this should be fostered as a powerful tool to accomplish goals and the vision. Without it the City will not move forward and accomplish positive outcomes.

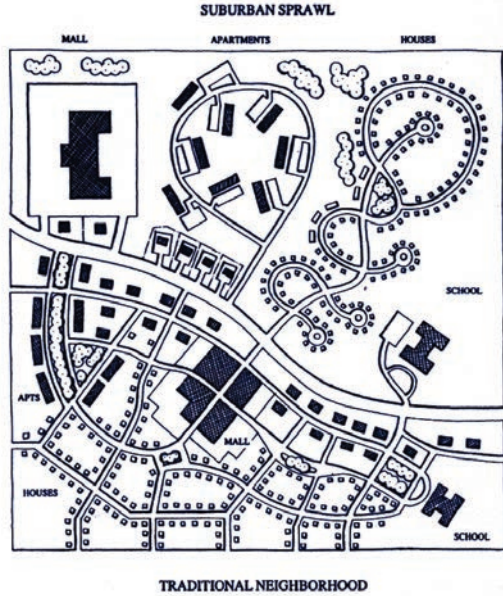
## RECOMMENDATIONS

The future direction must have a clear vision, distinct and well developed goals, and strong guiding principles. Specific policy statements will guide specific land uses, development types, and density specifications.

Character can be improved by the Downtown Overlay District concept introduced earlier, which will protect and enhance the unique character of the Downtown through design guidelines, development standards, and policy. It will allow for mixed use zoning, as opposed to



Figure 7.1



the current use of separate zones.

More specifically new housing types are strongly recommended for infill development within a half mile of the boundary of the downtown overlay district. These include:

- (1.) Village Residential houses (Smart Growth, New Urbanism), for infill applications.
- (2.) Downtown Core Residential (above businesses), for existing retrofits, new commercial construction.
- (3.) Traditional Single Family Residential homes (New Urbanism) with small lots.

In addition to infill, the overall pattern of developments should match the Transect, as was prescribed for the Downtown (refer back to Figure 2.3). Density should be at its highest in the downtown core, with lessening densities radiating outward. There should be a continuum from rural to urban and back out to rural as one moves across town.

Figure 7.1 shows the contrast between 'sprawl' development and that of a traditional neighborhood. Traditional development is desired to match and transform Baldwin's existing fabric. Not favorable existing sprawl or 'leap-frog' development in nearby communities should be warning enough to avoid this type of development in Baldwin. Many structural problems have already occurred in these relatively new developments.

In addition, this type of development is highly unattractive from a design standpoint, and property values decline sharply as opposed to traditional neighborhood developments. These patterns lose value quickly and favor auto traffic over more healthy patterns of activity (Figure 7.2).

As a result, Baldwin should implement strict subdivision standards and site plan/plat review for all new subdivision development. A sufficient bond should be provided to cover 125% of the infrastructure prior to development.

A partial list of design elements and aspects that should be promoted in all new development include:

- Side or rear loaded garages
- Sidewalks (at least 5 feet wide in residential areas)
- Usable front porches that face the street
- High architectural quality and uniqueness
- Street and yard trees, along with quality landscaping
- Avoid cul-de-sac pattern when possible, use a connecting network of streets instead
- Buried or fully concealed utilities
- Rear alleys for parking and access are encouraged

This plan seeks to encourage character in such a way that existing subdivisions are completed. The community character should include a mix of small town urban, suburban, and the above types of development.

Furthermore, new development of greenfield areas should be clustered to maximize the value of infrastruc-

Figure 7.2: Modern vs. Traditional Development Pattern.



Typical Example of Modern American Subdivision.



Typical Example of Traditional Neighborhood.

ture and utility expenses, and to minimize the impact of development in undeveloped areas.

### CASE STUDY: PLEIN AIR, TAYLOR, MS

A local resource and model for Infill and Village Residential style is the master planned community of Plein Air. The community is a dense, New Urbanist style residential neighborhood adjoining a six-acre commercial district with a central open green and a strong relationship between residential areas and downtown. The community is an infill development into the existing small Lafayette County town of Taylor.

Located near Taylor's small downtown, the community is architecturally traditional neighborhood with a vibrant town square. A major emphasis is walkability and an attempt to return to pre-automotive living. Houses are close together with front porches that encourage interaction among neighbors. Sidewalks make it easy to walk to local destinations. The neighborhood also features a farmers market that operates in the summer months.

One of the strengths of this community is the controlled infill housing growth, which is functionally integrated by sidewalk with the adjacent commercial district. Many of the homes are relatively small, ranging between 1,000 to 2,000 square feet. The homes make good use of the corresponding lots and are also generally small in size. In addition to the dense pattern, the development features back alleys, which lead to garages in the rear of houses. The purpose of this layout is to minimize street parking and get vehicles away from the front of houses. Homes generally have usable front porches which front sidewalks, and feature small front yards.

Below are some of the housing types in Plein Air. Development of this type is recommended for future infill areas in Baldwin. For a set of the plans, visit [http://www.pleinairtaylor.com/homesforsale/Plein\\_Air\\_Plans-All.pdf](http://www.pleinairtaylor.com/homesforsale/Plein_Air_Plans-All.pdf).



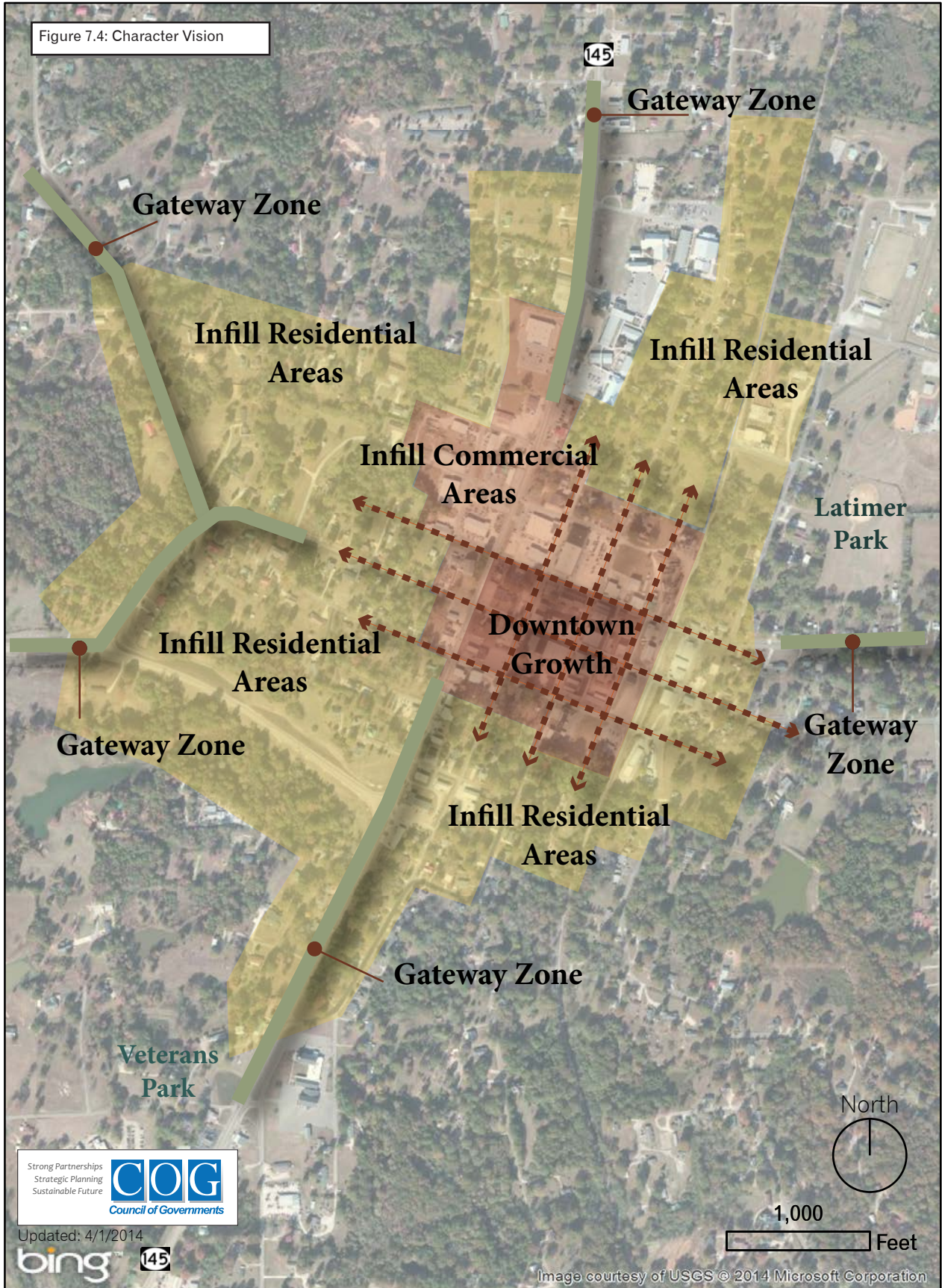
Figure 7.3: Conceptual Rendering of Plein Air at Full Build-Out.



Source: Plein Air Main Street, copyright 2007.

Source: [www.pleinairtaylor.com](http://www.pleinairtaylor.com)

Figure 7.4: Character Vision



Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.



## CHARACTER VISION

Building on the overlays concept established for Downtown, along with the infill development of Plein Air, the following strategy has been formed.

Since the character of the Downtown and the surrounding older neighborhoods are what should be emulated, all new development and redevelopment should be heavily guided by traditional design elements, especially in the infill zones (Figure 7.4). Gateways of enhanced streetscape and landscaping should influence entrances from all main roads in the four cardinal directions. Commercial and residential infill should effectively meet and overlap throughout the downtown and infill areas, with the dominant use shifting from 75% commercial in red areas, to at least 75% residential in yellow areas (Figure 7.4).

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Goal #1: Improve Future Development.

Improve the quality, function, and style of future development.

#### Future Development Improvement Objectives.

1. Create master plan and guidelines for specific infill developments near the downtown and in infill zones.
2. Utilize existing Design Guidelines for all new development. Create a house plan guide similar to that of Plein Air, in Taylor, Mississippi.
3. Establish a periodic meeting of area builders to advocate improved construction standards, and show how everyone can benefit.
4. Amend Subdivision Regulations to support an integrated approach with the Design Guidelines and to support complete streets and high architectural character.

### Goal #2: Rehabilitate Existing Neighborhoods.

Work to improve and rehabilitate existing neighborhoods, and use identified character strengths as a starting place for advancement.

#### Neighborhood Rehabilitation Objectives:

1. Start neighborhood associations in specific neighborhoods and encourage participation.
2. Educate the public on the value of community appearance and care.
3. Create programs to encourage existing neighborhood rehabilitation and infill developments.

4. Apply for facade grants to improve areas with strong character potential.

### Goal #3: Regulate and Reduce Rentals.

Reverse the negative trends of diminishing home ownership and increasing rentals. Start a plan to reduce the rental rate and increase home ownership.

#### Rental Reduction and Improvement Objectives:

1. Enact rental housing policies citywide.
2. Start a plan to clean up and remove dilapidated manufactured housing.
3. Educate the public on the value of home ownership, and how to plan for and buy a home.
4. Limit new manufactured housing to the land-lease districts and amend zoning accordingly.

### Goal #4: Phase Out Public Housing.

Systematically acquire, phase out, and remove public housing. Enact a moratorium on all new public housing projects in Baldwin.

#### Public Housing Reduction Objectives:

1. Begin by creating an inventory of all public housing in the City. Determine which are in the worst condition or most poorly managed.
2. Put a stop to all new multifamily housing in the City, whether public or for-profit, and plan to phase out 10% of the total units over the next 10 years.
3. Develop a priority acquisition fund to acquire the properties in the worst condition and systematically demolish the buildings.
4. Work with Habitat for Humanity and other humanitarian organizations to begin developing affordable housing for people who have to relocate.
5. Develop a public-private partnership to create new single family, planned infill neighborhoods on the site of former public housing and in infill areas of Figure 7.4.



**Goal #5: Utilize Educational Resources.**

Take better advantage of educational resources and use them to their fullest extent possible. Encourage continuing educational programs.

**Educational Resource Objectives:**

1. Promote existing educational and after school programs, such as the Boys & Girls Club, Youth Councils, and Interact.
2. Use churches as a venue to start programs. For instance, Mt. Nebo Church has an existing program.

**Goal#6: Enhance Baldwin's Street Appearance.**

Spearhead a comprehensive effort to systematically clean up and approve the appearance of neighborhoods, streets, and public areas.

**Appearance Enhancement Objectives:**

1. Create a long-range strategy to improve public spaces.
2. Seek funding to augment local beautification and landscaping efforts.
3. Raise awareness about keeping the city clean.
4. Develop and adopt street/public space/park programs.
5. Work with Lee County and MDOT to maintain clean roadways for improved appearance.
6. Integrate a regular schedule into city employee time allotment to ensure appropriate maintenance.

PART VIII  
FUTURE LAND USE AND POLICY

## VISION

To create and maintain a land use pattern that promotes value, beauty, development, and responsible use of the land and natural resources. At the same time, promoting development uses and types which add value.

### COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

***Would you support allowing higher density development in Baldwin to make the best use of existing developable land?***

**Yes - 171 (86%) No - 29 (14%)**

***Do you support the conservation of natural resources within the City, such as farmland and forested areas?***

**Yes - 184 (92%) No - 17 (8%)**

***Do you believe the City should regulate development within naturally sensitive areas such as floodplains and wetlands?***

**Yes - 160 (87%) No - 23 (13%)**

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

The City of Baldwin totals 7,424 acres (11.6 square miles) in size. Subtracting the existing roads and right-of-ways make the net land approximately 6,787 acres (10.6 square miles). As mentioned earlier, land use density is comparable, but lower than other nearby cities due to significant areas of under-utilized and/or vacant land within the current municipal limits.

Residential uses make up almost 30% of the municipal land. Commercial uses comprise only 3% of the total land use.

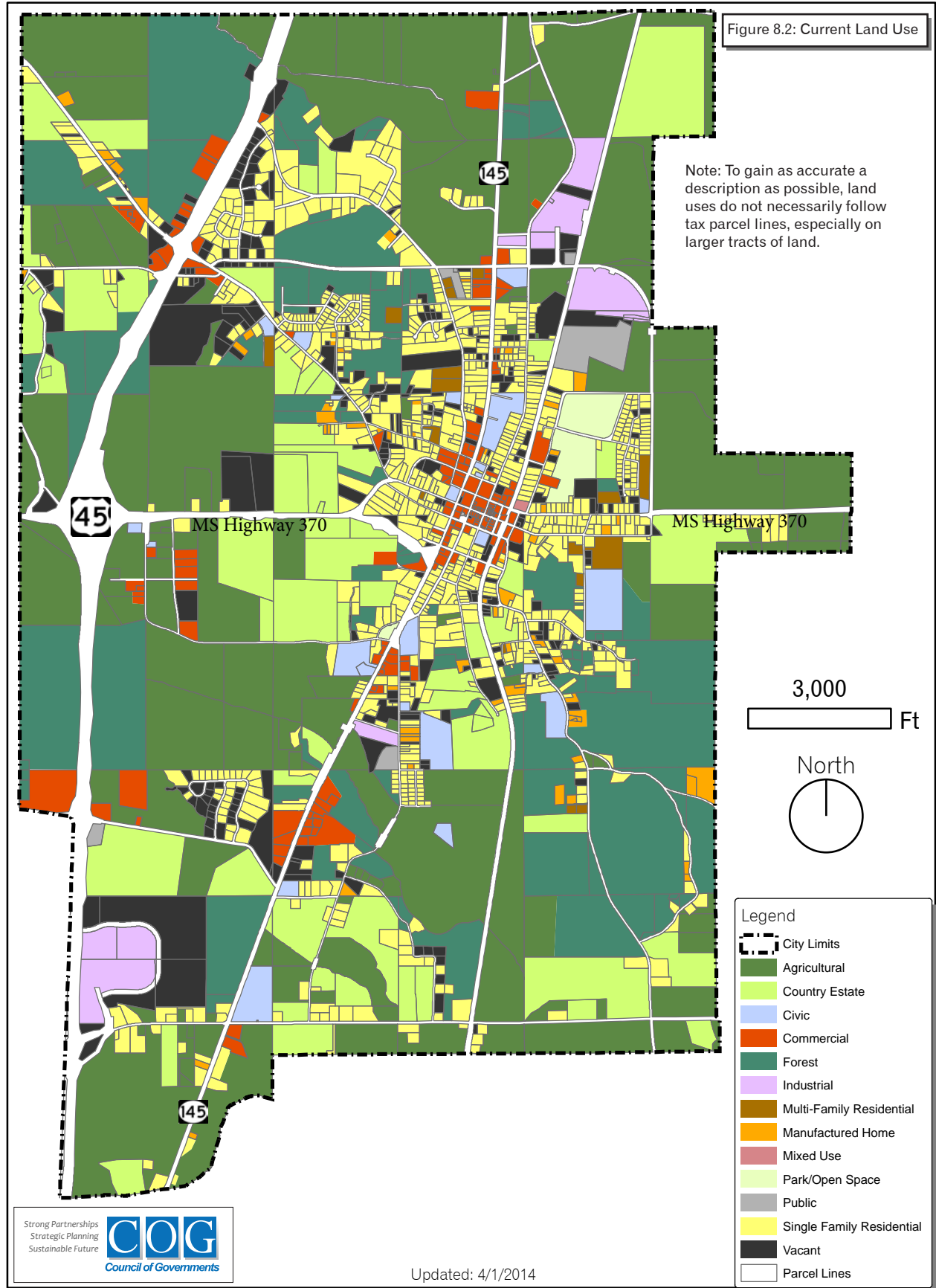
Although within the city limits, a large percent of the land is still used for agricultural purposes (38%). Another 20% is covered with some type of forest. About 6% has been classified as vacant due to its undeveloped state and lack of sufficient value for farming or forestry (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Current Baldwin Land Use Values

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Size (Acres)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Agricultural	2,573	38%
Country Estate	941	14%
Civic	127	2%
Commercial	200	3%
Forest	1,327	20%
Industrial	128	2%
Multi-Family Residential	41	1%
Manufactured Home	58	1%
Mixed Use	1	0%
Park	49	1%
Public	42	1%
Single-Family Residential	864	13%
Vacant	435	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,787</b>	

Source: Lee County Council of Governments

Figure 8.2: Current Land Use



Updated: 4/1/2014

Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment. Land Use categories are purely subjective and the opinion of the Council of Governments and were designated for the purpose of analysis for this plan.

## LAND USE CATEGORIES

### AGRICULTURAL

Agricultural land use makes up approximately 38% of Baldwin's area. This category largely consists of rural areas used for agricultural purposes, including productive agricultural lands to be preserved for future farming or ranching activities.

### COUNTRY ESTATE

Country Estate property makes up approximately 14% of Baldwin's land. Country Estate can be described as areas of estate properties ranging over five acres in size with sparse housing, typically being large-scale homesites or farmhouses. Estates may be associated with large tracts of agricultural or vacant land.

### CIVIC

Civic uses makes up approximately 2% of Baldwin's land. Civic lands are uses that consist of predominately privately owned land used for community functions such as cemeteries, churches, community clubs, etc.

### COMMERCIAL

Commercial uses make up approximately 200 acres, or about 3% of Baldwin's land. Commercial Lots or parcel contain retail sales, service, hotels/motels, and all recreational services that are predominantly privately owned and operated for profit. This includes private institutional uses (convalescent homes and rest homes in which medical or surgical services are not a main function of the institution), but not hospitals.

### FOREST

Forests cover approximately 20% of Baldwin's land. These areas are sometimes more appropriately known as 'urban forest.' Forest land is most commonly defined in regard to its cover of dense vegetation and limited access.

### INDUSTRIAL

Industrial uses cover approximately 128 acres, or about 2% of Baldwin's area. Industrial areas are reserved for manufacturing and related uses that provide employment but are higher intensity use than surrounding areas. Industrial land includes general warehousing, research and development, and storage of hazardous materials.

### MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Multi-Family Residential use covers approximately 41 acres, or about 1% of Baldwin's area. Multi-Family is defined as higher-density housing with 3 or more units on one lot.

### MANUFACTURED HOME

Manufactured homes cover about 58 acres, or 1% of Baldwin's land area. Manufactured Home areas are reserved for manufactured home residence parks and manufactured home subdivisions.

### MIXED USE

Mixed uses cover a very small area, currently less than 1% of Baldwin's land area. A mixed use district is an area that is appropriate for a mix of residential, neighborhood commercial, or non-residential uses.

### PARK

Park areas cover about 49 acres, or about 1% of Baldwin's land area. This category allows large public parks and recreation areas such as public and private golf courses, trails, or any other public usage of large areas on permanent open land.

### PUBLIC

Public use areas cover about 42 acres, or about 1% of Baldwin's land area. Public is defined as any site for public or semi-public facilities including governmental offices, police and fire facilities, hospitals, and public and private schools. This area includes religious facilities and other religious activities that are of a different type and scale than surrounding uses.

### SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Single Family Residential use areas cover about 864 acres, or about 13% of Baldwin's land area. Single family uses include single family detached, or two family residential uses at typical urban and/or suburban densities.

### VACANT

Single Family Residential use areas cover about 864 acres, or about 13% of Baldwin's land area. These areas are defined by the Plan as less useful for agricultural purposes and more useful for future development. They consist of vacant areas which may be in cultivation or cleared. They generally are areas with relatively good transportation access, and are out of flood prone areas and do not consist of steep slopes.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Baldwyn has many natural resources, and as a former agricultural town, there has been a significant amount of strain on those resources over the years. However, due to its agricultural roots, many of these resources have remained in a semi-natural state, being largely free from intensive development.

Attitudes toward the value of the land have changed over the past several decades. Previously, land was viewed in terms of its development potential and marketability. If land was suitable for development, it was flattened, drained, or filled. In recent years, experience has taught us that land is complicated and that the market alone is not able to ensure adequate management and responsible use of valuable environmental resources. Proper planning should identify those areas that, because of their value as natural or cultural resources, serve a more important role than merely supporting development.

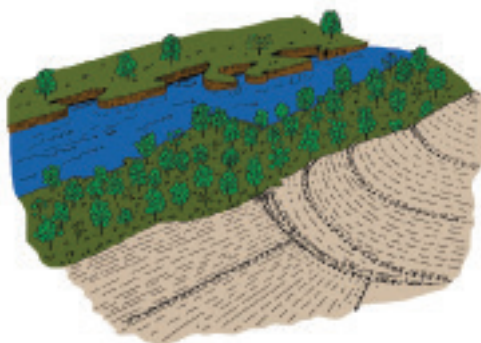
This section of the Plan will address the three major categories of natural resources: 1. soils (including agricultural areas), 2. water, and 3. forests.

### SOILS

Soil properties are important considerations for planning and development. They provide indicators of specific development costs, and should be considered early in the development process.

In terms of surface geology, almost all of Baldwyn is in the Coffee Sand Formation, with extreme western portions of the City having pockets of Demopolis Chalk.

Much of the city has rolling terrain. The elevations range from a low of 320 feet above sea level, up to 440 feet above sea level. Soils have been severely gullied or eroded in some areas of town due to improper clearing and overuse.



Above: To protect soil and prevent erosion, agricultural use of soil should allow a 25 foot buffer from any wetlands, and a 50 foot buffer from any water bodies.

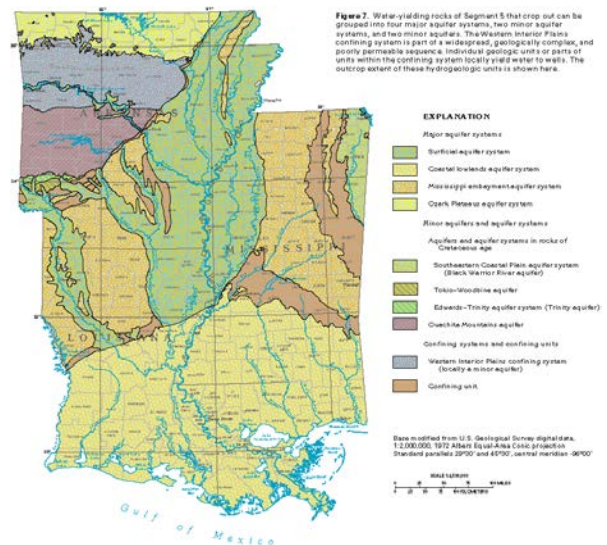


For the purposes of simplicity, Figure 8.4 shows Baldwyn's soil classes by their ability to hold water. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service defines a Hydric Soil as one that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper parts (horizons).

There are a diversity of soil types in the city limits, ranging from clay based to complex and loam based types. Before any development on a specific location, a detailed soil survey should be conducted if it is suspected that prime or unique agricultural soils are located on a given parcel, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Both unique and prime soils should be avoided for development and reserved for agricultural purposes whenever possible.

Figure 8.3

US Geological Survey Regional Aquifer Model

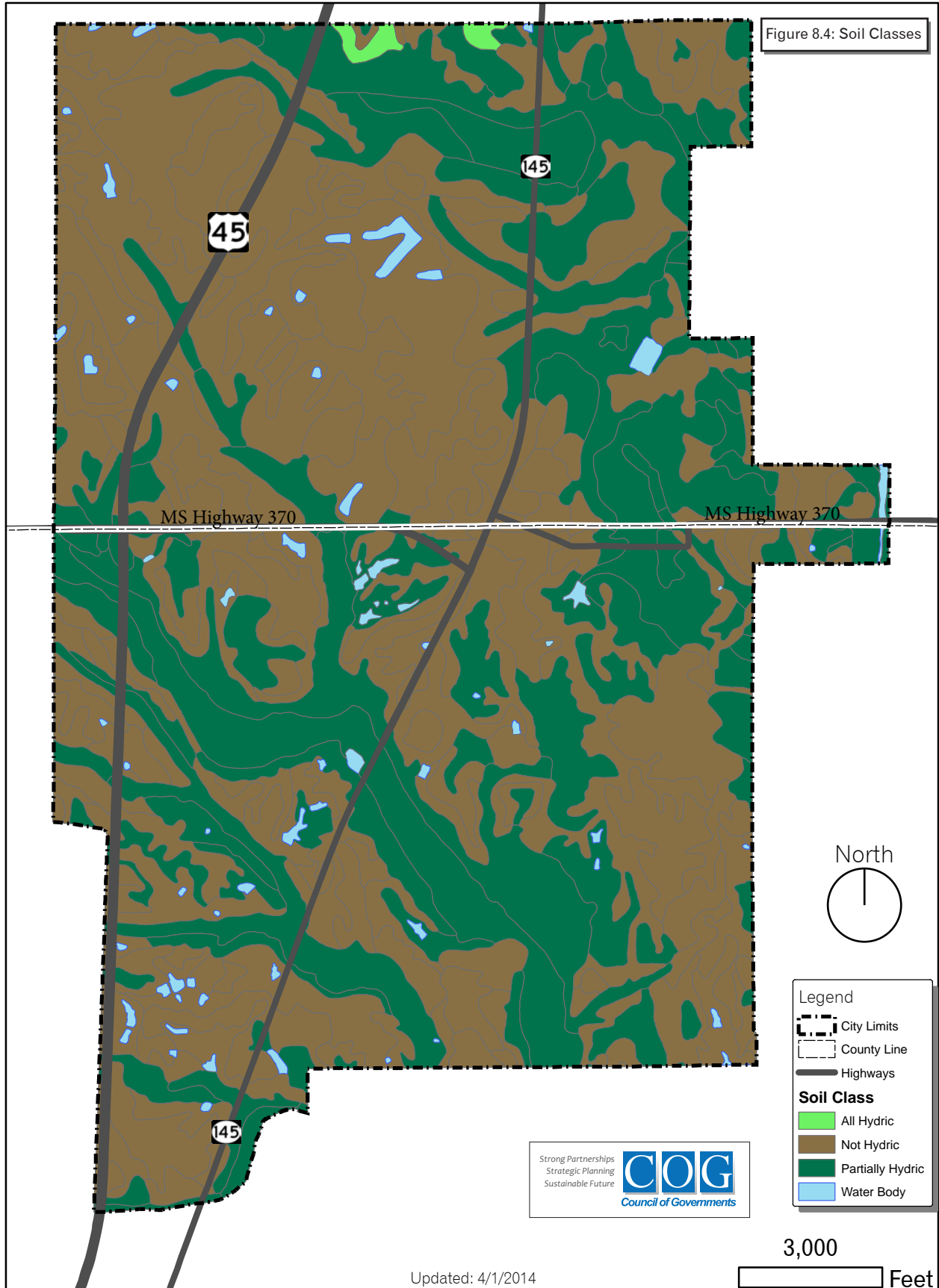


Modified from: King, P. B., and Balkman, H. M., 1974, Geologic map of the United States: U.S. Geological Survey, scale 1:2,500,000, 3 sheets; Ives, J. L., 1960, Major geohydrologic units and adjacent to the Ozark Plateau Province, Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, and Oklahoma: U.S. Geological Survey Hydrologic Investigations Atlas HA-217-B, scale 1:750,000, 1 sheet; Houston, R. L., and Wells, J. S., 1991, Geohydrologic units of the Mississippi embayment and Texas coastal uplands aquifer systems, south-central United States: U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1416-B, 19 p.

Source: USGS Groundwater System of the United States. Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. HA 730-F. [http://pubs.usgs.gov/ha/ha730/ch\\_f/F-text1.html](http://pubs.usgs.gov/ha/ha730/ch_f/F-text1.html)

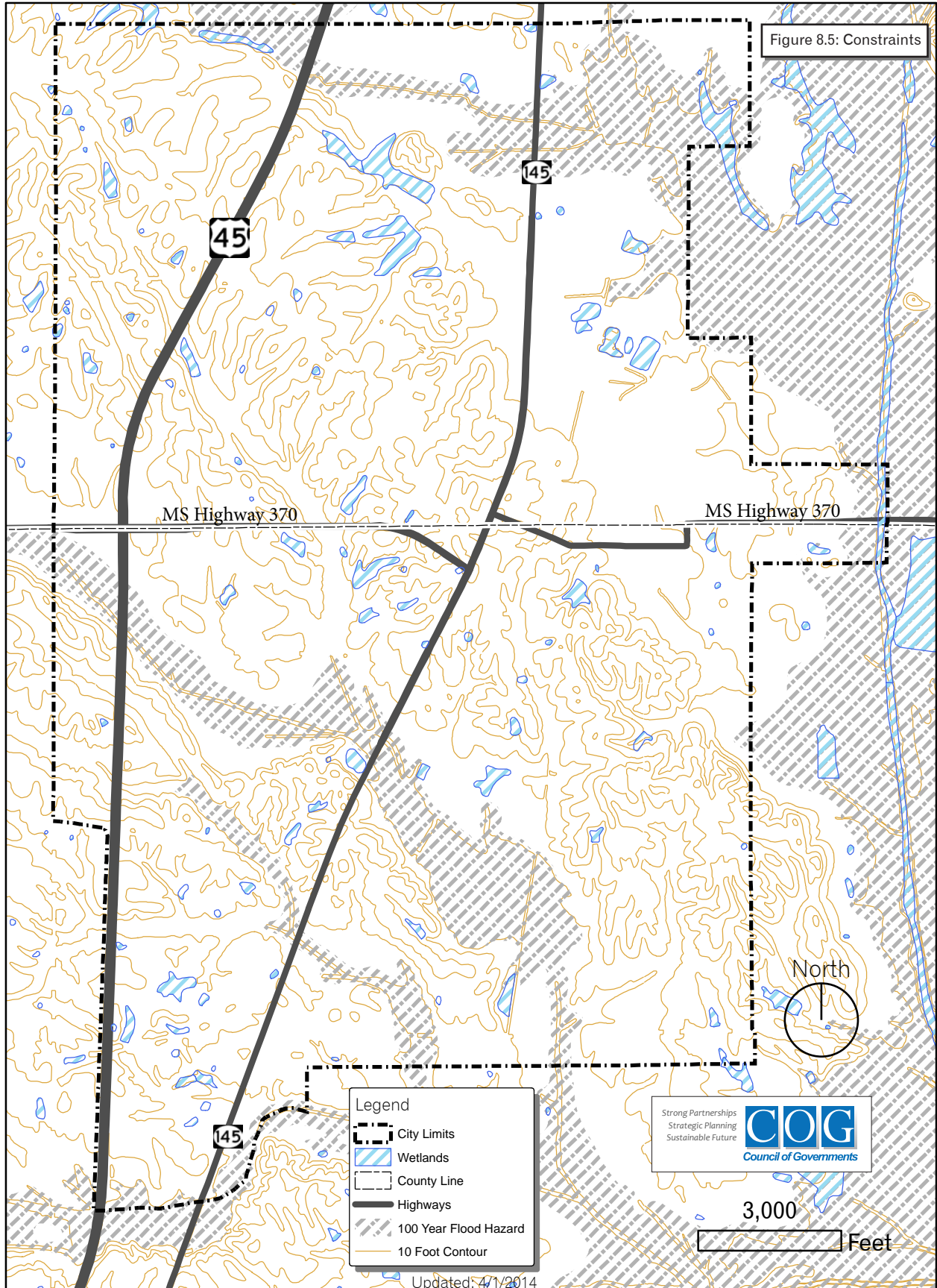


Figure 8.4: Soil Classes



Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.





Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

## THE BLACK PRAIRIE BELT

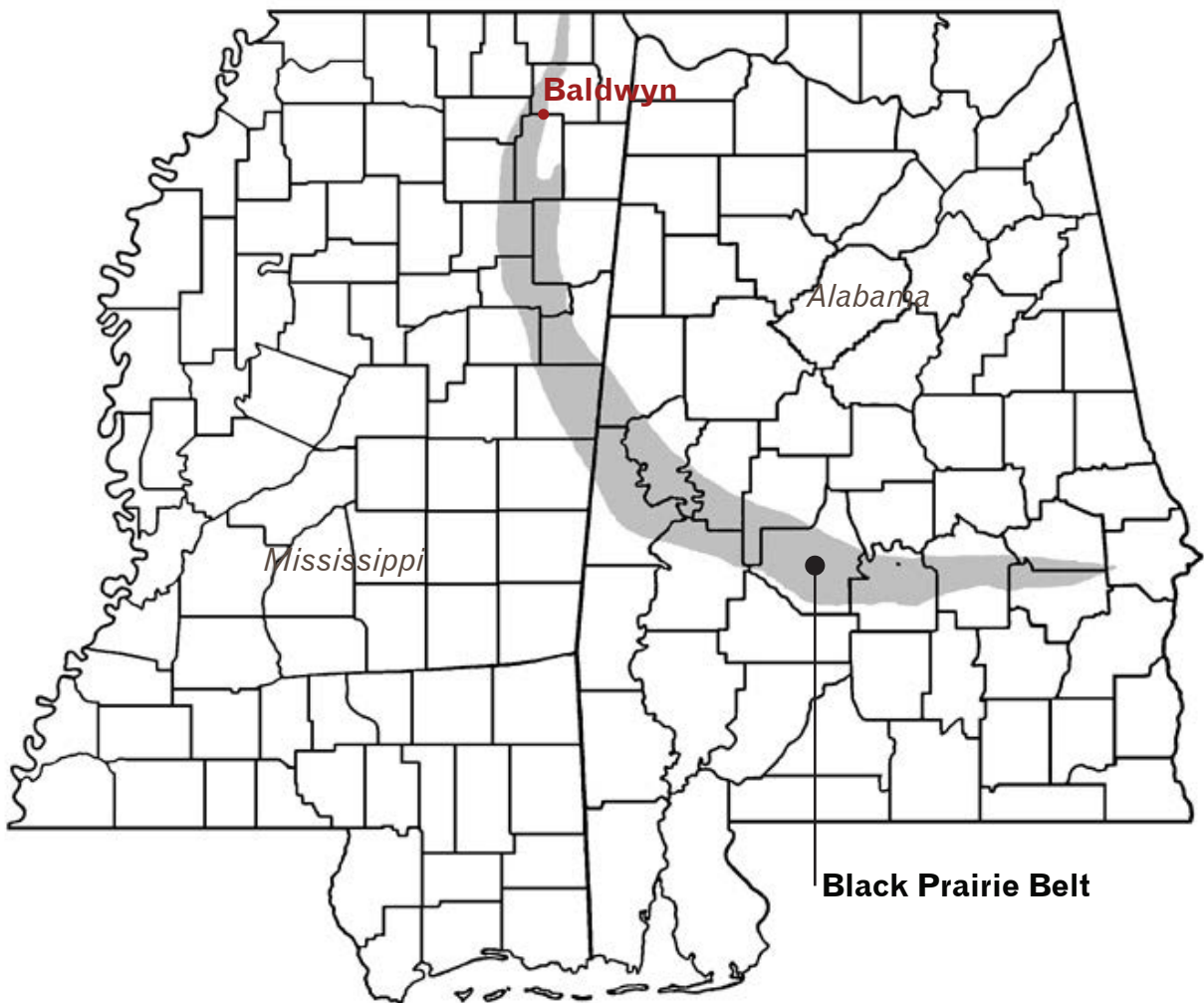
Baldwyn is located near the northern end of a significant natural region of eastern Mississippi and southwestern Alabama. The area has historically been a productive agricultural zone characterized by rich soils and prairie vegetation. The Black Prairie region has had and still holds significant historical and socioeconomic implications.

The Black Belt is a subdivision of the East Gulf Coastal Plain physiogeographic province. It forms a region extending from McNairy County in extreme southern Tennessee, south through east-central Mississippi, and east to Russell County, Alabama, near the Georgia state line. The region is approximately 310 miles long and up to 25 miles wide, but narrowing at its northern and eastern extremes. The entire region is underlain by Selma Chalk formed from Upper Cretaceous marine deposits. Depending on the exact consistency of the parent material, the chalk weathers into a variety of soil

types which supports a many wildlife habitats ranging from prairie to forest. Areas of prairie are typically on well drained, slowly permeable, alkaline soils, whereas the oak-hickory forest of the Black Belt are associated with strongly acidic soils.

Source: *The Black Belt Prairie in Mississippi and Alabama*. Joe MacGown, Richard Brown, and JoVonn Hill.

Figure 8.6: Black Prairie Region



Source: Mississippi Entomological Museum, <http://mississippientomologicalmuseum.org.msstate.edu/habitats/black.belt.prairie/BlackBeltPrairie.htm>

## WATER

An aquifer is the formation of soils or rock with the capability of storing large volumes of water. An aquifer can be composed of consolidated material such as limestone rock or unconsolidated material such as sand and gravel. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has mapped the State's aquifers and their associated recharge areas. The definition of a significant aquifer is one that has a saturated thickness of greater than forty feet, and a transmissivity (potential water yield) greater than 4,000 feet per day. Baldwin is located on the western edge of the Southeastern Coastal Plain Aquifer System, known as the Black Warrior River Aquifer (see USGS Regional Model).

Hydrology consists of interactions between surface and groundwater. Wetlands often occur as a transitional area between surface water and dryer upland areas. Baldwin has a number of these areas as defined by the National Wetlands Inventory (Figure 8.5).

Baldwin's surface water includes some 45 miles of creeks, tributaries, and streams, along with 92 acres of natural and man-made lakes, ponds, and lagoons. These areas, and their tributary watersheds, were identified to assess potential impacts of land use on water quality. Identification of water resources was conducted with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) using available MARIS and USDA datasets (Figure 8.7).

Baldwin has some 225 acres of federally classified wetlands. Wetlands are generally termed as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetations typically adapted for life in saturated soils." Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. They are typically areas of poorly drained soils characterized by permanent or temporary soil saturation and occasionally standing water. These areas perform many functions, including water purification, water storage, flood storage, erosion prevention, and biological productivity. Therefore, wetlands are an important resource for the overall environ-

Figure 8.7: Natural Resource Inventory

<i>Land Characteristic</i>	<i>Acreage (aggregate)</i>	<i>%</i>
Total City Land	7,458	
Steep Slopes (greater than 12% grade)	2,139	29%
Wetlands	225	3%
100 Year Flood Plain	976	13%
Forested Areas	1,276	17%
Lakes and Ponds	92	1%
Streams and Creeks (in miles)	45	

Sources: Estimated from USDA, ESRI, and MARIS GIS Data, Lee County Council of Governments.

mental health of a community.

General wetland areas were identified with GIS using the National Wetlands Inventory, developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, using the most recent available data.

## LAND USE CONTROLS

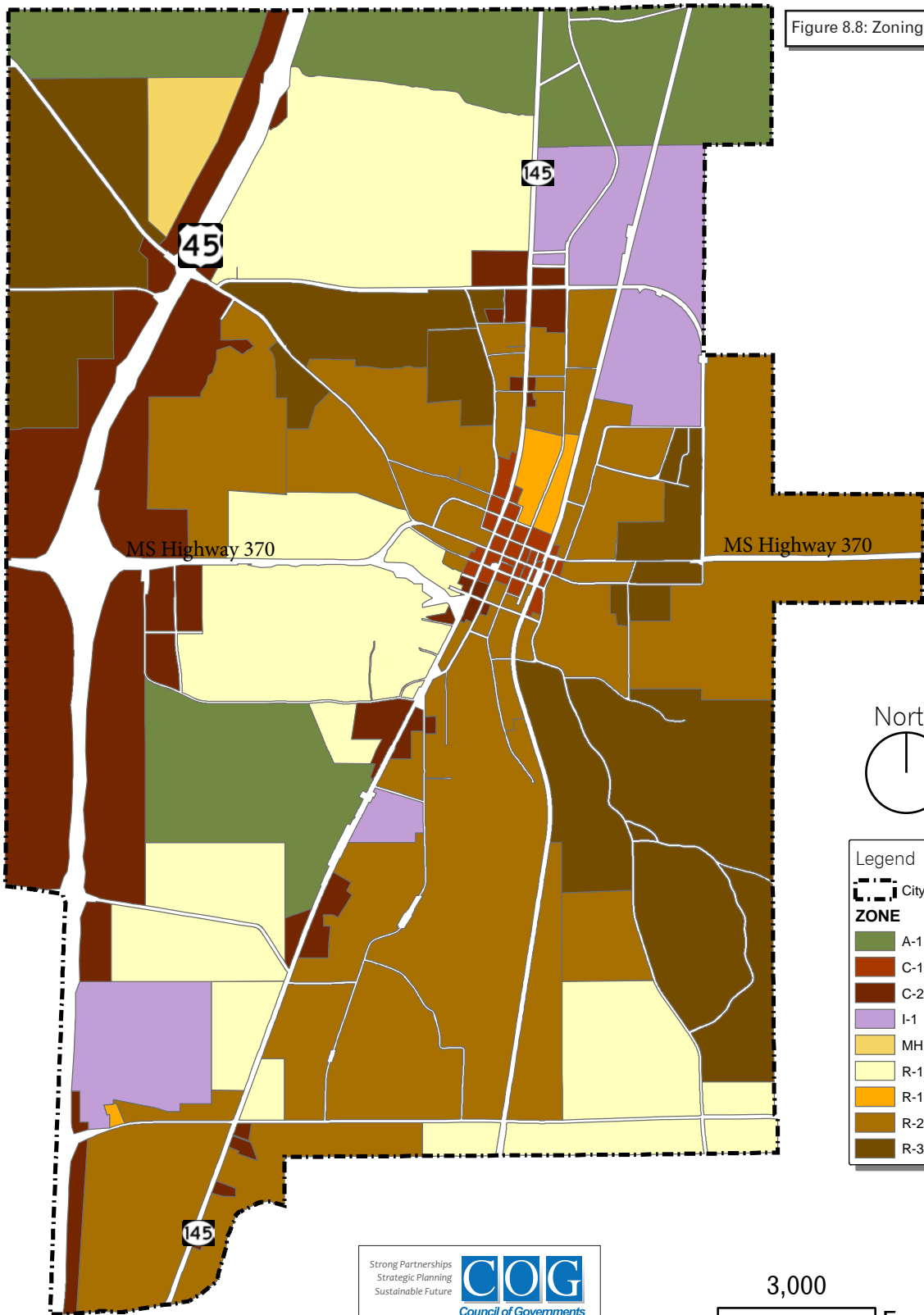
Zoning is currently divided into 9 districts, which were last defined in the 2002 Baldwin Zoning Ordinance and are briefly summarized below:

**A-1 General Agricultural District:** The objective of this district is to preserve land areas suitable for eventual urbanization when the need and availability of community facilities warrant its development and to govern development of undesirable lands such as floodplains. The types of uses, area and intensity of development permitted in this district are designed to protect agricultural and open space uses until urbanization is warranted and appropriate changes and districts can be made. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the district is 0.75 per acre.

**R-1 Large Lot Residential District:** The R-1 Large Lot Residential District is established as a district in which the principal use of land is for single family dwellings. The regulations of this district are intended to discourage any use which, because of its character, would be detrimental to the residential character of this district. The regulations of this district also are designed to encourage the wise use of land and natural resources, with the aim of reducing sprawl and the costly provision of infrastructure to serve dispersed development. The maximum Units Per Acre (UPA) for this area is 3.6.

**R-1A Small Lot Residential District:** The R-1A Small Lot Residential District is established as a district in which the principal use of land is for single family dwellings and related recreational, religious and educational facilities normally required to provide the basis elements for a balanced and attractive residential area. The residential areas are intended to be defined and protected from the encroachment of uses not

Figure 8.8: Zoning



Updated: 4/1/2014

Note: This map is for planning purposes only and is not intended to be used for construction or assessment.

performing a function appropriate to the residential environment. Internal stability, attractiveness, order and efficiency are encouraged by providing for adequate light, air and open space for dwellings and related facilities and through consideration of the proper functional relationships of each element. The maximum UPA for this area is 10.9.

**R-2 Medium Lot Residential District:** The R-2 Medium Lot Residential District is intended to accommodate duplexes and condominiums, not exceeding two units per building in areas where services and utilities are adequate. These districts may also serve to transition from commercial and multi-family areas to single-family areas. The maximum UPA for this area is 5.1.

**R-3 Mixed Use Residential District:** The R-3 Mixed Use Residential District is established as a district in which the principal use of land is for mixed use of single-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings. The regulations for this district, however, are intended to discourage high concentration of multi-family dwellings and any other use, which, because of its character would interfere with the basic mixed use residential nature of the areas included in this district. This district, and the multi-family developments allowed in it, should be located so as to not interfere with or damage environmentally sensitive lands and to insure that adequate open space and recreational facilities are located nearby, or within the district itself, to serve the needs of the persons who are or will be living in the district. Concentration of large amounts of R-3 zoned property in one area where services and utilities are not adequate shall not be allowed. The maximum UPA for this area is 17.4.

**MH Manufactured Home District:** The MH Manufactured Home District is established as a district in which the principal use of land is for manufactured homes. The regulations for this district, however, are intended to discourage any other use, which, because of its character, would interfere with the basic manufactured home nature of the areas included in this district. This district and the manufactured homes allowed in it should be located so as to not interfere with or damage environmentally sensitive lands and to insure that adequate open space and recreational facilities are located nearby, or within the district itself, to serve the needs of the persons who are or will be living in the district. Concentration of large amounts of MH zoned property in one area where services and utilities are not adequate shall not be allowed. The maximum UPA for this area is 8.7.

**C-1 General Commercial District:** C-1 General Commercial Districts are generally intended to be located within the central business district and along artery streets. The district provides goods and services to residents of the community. Because these commercial uses are subject to the public view, which is a matter of important concern to the whole community, they should

provide an appropriate appearance, ample parking, controlled traffic movement, and suitable landscaping, and protect abutting residential areas from the traffic and visual impacts associated with commercial activity. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the district is 1.50 per acre.

**C-2 Highway Commercial District:** C-2 Highway Commercial Districts are generally intended to be located on major thoroughfares, and to provide goods and services to residents of the community and region. Because these commercial uses are subject to the public view, which is a matter of important concern to the whole community, they should provide an appropriate appearance, ample parking, controlled traffic movement, and suitable landscaping, and protect abutting residential areas from the traffic and visual impacts associated with commercial activity. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the district is 1.20 per acre.

**I-1 General Industrial District:** The I-1, General Industrial District is established as a district in which the principal use of land is for industries which can be operated in a relatively clean and quiet manner and which will not be obnoxious to adjacent residential or business districts and for warehousing and wholesaling activities with limited contact with the general public. The regulations are designed to prohibit the use of land for heavy industry, which should be properly segregated, and to prohibit any other use which would substantially interfere with the development of industrial establishments in the district. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the district is 2.50 per acre.

**Planned Unit Developments:** Planned unit developments shall function as "overlay" districts in all districts, provided that an application for planned unit development and master land use plan is submitted, reviewed and approved. The purpose and intent of these planned unit development regulations is to promote innovative design in development by providing flexibility in regard to permitted uses and bulk regulations. These regulations are designed to promote the development of attractive, desirable communities of place, where residents and visitors can work and live in a development pattern that integrates residential and non-residential uses in a design that is accessible to pedestrians and encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation and shared parking and offers greater convenience to the residents of the City of Baldwin.

**Note:** It is in the intent and policy of the City of Baldwin to encourage planned unit developments because of the extensive planning that is required prior to development. Planned unit developments allow the City of Baldwin to plan for large areas and to manage the impacts of growth on the provision of services and infrastructure.



Figure 8.9: Current Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Acres	%
A-1 (General Agricultural)	808	12%
R-1 (Large Lot Residential)	1,348	20%
R-1A (Small Lot Residential)	38	1%
R-2 (Medium Lot Residential)	2,144	31%
R-3 (Mixed Use Residential)	1,152	17%
C-1 (General Commercial)	40	1%
C-2 (Highway Commercial)	807	12%
I-1 (General Industrial)	450	7%
MH (Manufactured Home)	78	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,865</b>	

Source: Lee County Council of Governments.

Figure 8.10: Development Constraints on Vacant and Agricultural Parcels

Land Characteristic		% of Total
Total Available Vacant Land (vacant & agricultural)	3,008	100%
Steep Slopes (greater than 12% grade)	531	18%
Wetlands	44	1%
100 Year Flood Plain	712	24%
Lakes and Ponds	16	1%
<b>Net Developable Land</b>	<b>1,705</b>	<b>57%</b>

Note: Forested Parcels and Parcel Segments are not included in Agricultural or Vacant Land Estimates.

## CURRENT ZONING COMPARED WITH ACTUAL LAND USE

Currently, most of the municipal land is devoted to residential zoning classifications (Figure 8.9). However, many of these areas are underdeveloped, or not developed at all, leading to a very low density in many areas of the city. Using the land use classifications developed earlier, 3,008 acres of the most developable lands were selected, including all agricultural and vacant classified parcels in the City.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Begin to promote a more dense, more responsible land use pattern to improve the quality of life, health, and well being. As Baldwin remains attractive to growth and areas are filled in, outward expansion will eventually be necessary, especially to the west. At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, there exist significant opportunities for infill growth, which will take advantage of existing infrastructure, and be a tool to rehabilitate neighborhoods and commerce in existing areas. Overall, these measures can be summarized by:

- (1.) More Dense Development Patterns and Infill
- (2.) Complete Streets and Walkability, along with access

to safe, adequate recreational space

- (3.) Support a mix of uses and allow for flexibility, while promoting high development standards.

This Plan, if followed, will promote the growth and development of the City. While current population projections indicate a stable growth rate, to change this and accelerate, several steps are proposed in Section I: Economic Development. If these measures are implemented and successful over time, new growth pressure will make changes to the Zoning Ordinance necessary.

If the assumption is made that there will be a 10% growth over the next 10 years in residential population, and assuming that each person will need one dwelling unit, then there will need be approximately 330 new housing units constructed (see Figure 8.12). This table shows that there is plenty of land capacity within the existing designations for future residential development.

Based on the availability of greenfield sites within the city, which are already sufficiently zoned to meet the short-term growth needs, there should be primary focus on promoting infill development and redevelopment of parcels during the next five years. As mentioned in the Downtown Section of the Plan, there are also 14.7 acres in the Downtown which represent core development areas.

Figure 8.11: Current Zoning of Developable Areas on Vacant and Agricultural Land

Net Developable Land Area by			Net
Zoning District	Acres	%	Developable
A-1 (General Agricultural)	600	19.95%	340
R-1 (Large Lot Residential)	538	7.83%	305
R-1A (Small Lot Residential)	2	0.03%	1
R-2 (Medium Lot Residential)	1,046	15.24%	593
R-3 (Mixed Use Residential)	178	2.59%	101
C-1 (General Commercial)	3	0.04%	2
C-2 (Highway Commercial)	368	5.36%	209
I-1 (General Industrial)	273	3.98%	155
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,008</b>		<b>1,706</b>

Source: Lee County Council of Governments.

Figure 8.12: Residential Projections for Developable Areas with Existing Zoning

Growth Projections for R Zones: 10% Population Growth	New Units			
	Needed	Acres	Available	Difference
R-1 (Large Lot Residential)	330	92	305	213
R-1A (Small Lot Residential)	330	30	1	(29)
R-2 (Medium Lot Residential)	330	65	593	529
R-3 (Mixed Use Residential)	330	19	101	82

Source: Lee County Council of Governments.

\*Note: Assume that all new units will be in one category for each scenario. Only 330 total units will be needed if the population grows by 10%.

No changes are recommended to the current zoning outside of the Downtown Area, except that Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), along with residential and commercial clusters, be promoted. However, changes are recommended within the proposed Downtown Overlay District (Figure 2.4, Proposed Downtown Overlay, Downtown Section). For all non-commercial areas within the Proposed Overlay, a new zoning designation of “Village Residential” should be created. For all downtown commercial areas defined in Section II, a designation of “Downtown Commercial Mixed Use” should be given. These districts are defined on the following pages.

Modification of these core existing land use categories will ensure that the best use of existing infrastructure and available land happen without having to incur costs for future unnecessary development.

Mixed-Use and Village Residential districts should be added to the Zoning Code. This will not only give more teeth to the existing Design Guidelines but will also expand the scope and realm of Downtown development.

The proposed definition of these recommended zones are as follows:

**Downtown Commercial Mixed Use:** The proposed mixed-use Downtown Commercial Mixed Use District would support mixed-use buildings that in general have retail uses on the ground floor and residential and office space on upper floors. In addition, tourism related businesses, restaurants, and entertainment establishments, as well as compatible live-work units, and medium and higher density residential uses. When considering secondary uses, the District is designed to remain at least 75% downtown commercial in character. The district would place a heavy emphasis on harmony with the Baldwin Design Guidelines and future Complete Streets Program. Strong integration with public open space and walkable amenities is encouraged. Buildings should occupy at least 75% of the lot area in this district. A building height of 3 stories (or 35 feet) should be allowed. An FAR of 2.3 should be the maximum allowed. An UPA of 6 should be the minimum, with an UPA of 8 being the maximum allowed for residential uses.

**Village Residential District:** The proposed Village Residential District would support a range of housing types, such as single family residences, patio homes, townhouses, and live-work units. Commercial uses should be allowed in neighborhood node areas, as well as in mixed live-work structures. When considering secondary uses, the District is designed to remain at least 75% residential in character. The area would encompass tight to zero lot lines and strongly encourage planned and cluster developments. The district would place a heavy emphasis on harmony with the Baldwin Design Guidelines and future Complete Streets Program. Strong integration with public open space and walkable amenities is encouraged. The land area of a lot must be at least twice that of the gross footage of buildings on

it. A maximum building height of 3 stories (or 35 feet) should be established. An UPA of 6 should be the minimum, with an UPA of 8 being the maximum allowed for residential uses.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Goal #1: Conserve Valuable Resources.

Guide the proper and best use of the City’s available land, reduce costs associated with land use, and reinvest these savings to strengthen the long term position of the City.

#### Resource Conservation Objectives.

1. Update the current Zoning Ordinance to allow for a wider range of uses and mixed development.
2. Develop a new zoning map for the City with updated classifications.
3. Modify the zoning ordinance to accommodate transects and/or overlay districts for specific growth areas.

### Goal #2: Add Value Through Land Use.

Any new land uses and zoning alterations must add value. Promote creative/innovative growth for improved efficiency of land use with a configuration that conserves valuable agricultural and open land, with a physical layout that enhances the public realm and thus adds value to each property that fronts it.

#### Land Use Value Creation Objectives.

1. Amend Zoning Code to promote infill and Planned Unit Developments.
2. Create Village Residential and Mixed-Use zoning classes and districts.
3. Preserve valuable open space and retain it in strategic locations.
4. Amend Zoning Code to allow for mixed-use, live/work clusters.
5. Adopt standards to promote traditional neighborhood design in new neighborhoods.

### Goal #3: Promote Creative Mixed Use Development.

Promote a mix of uses, with properly scaled residential and commercial development. Promote creative patterns of development that encourage stronger community functions and are more supportive of a healthy lifestyle.



### **Creative Mixed Use Development Objectives:**

1. Promote Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) in zoning to encourage the future creation of mixed-use, live/work clusters.
2. Revise subdivision regulations to place layout design standards on new streets that promote better street parking, connectivity, and walkability.
3. Revise subdivision regulations to require sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities in all new development.

### **Goal #4: Plan Ahead for Growth and Resource Demands.**

Make suitable accommodations for City expansion as land availability diminishes.

#### **Future Growth Planning Objectives:**

1. Implement growth and development policies for new construction that occurs outside the city and is serviced by city water/sewer.
2. Perform an annexation study to determine when and if annexation will be necessary.
3. Define a future growth area for expansion, consider what uses would go there, and determine what the infrastructure requirements would be.
4. Work with Lee and Prentiss Counties to implement a long range annexation/growth plan.

### **Goal #5: Encourage the Conservation and Proper Use of All Environmentally Sensitive Areas.**

#### **Environmental Areas Conservation Objectives.**

1. Adopt local buffers for development and land use along individual streams, wetlands, and water bodies.
2. Adopt a clearing and grading ordinance to prevent unnecessary land clearing and earth filling that is conducted without a permit.
3. Develop and adopt a city landscape ordinance to require tree planting and replacement for all new development.
4. Encourage the preservation of suitable farmlands in the City through applied zoning.
5. Modify the Zoning Ordinance to provide stronger zoning restrictions for lands unsuitable for development.
6. Watch development in floodplains and use discretion.



# CONCLUSION

The recommendations of this Plan have been sought out and painstakingly developed to assist Baldwyn in developing into a model community that has a vibrant and a growing economy, is a quality place to live, work, and to raise a family, and continues to improve its already strong sense of community character.

As with all plans, this one is only as good as its implementation. Implementation is not easy, nor does it happen overnight. However, we believe that there is potential to accomplish all the goals that it outlines.

To help with this process, the following steps should be used.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

**(1.) A Planning Committee should be established by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to implement the Plan and help guide current steps to the Vision.**

**(2.) The Planning Committee is responsible for the implementation of the program and must report to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen at least once per year.**

**(3.) Follow smaller step-by-step goals to achieve each of the major goals outlined in the Plan.**

**(4.) Follow dates in the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to complete its objectives. Annually repeat and constantly work on refining and achieving goals.**

**(5.) Encourage partnerships with private companies to implement sections of the Plan and delegate pieces of the Plan to more specialized companies.**

**(6.) Engage public involvement and practice transparency of Plan execution with the public.**

**(7.) Publish reports on accomplishments that have been completed from the Comprehensive Plan and list the priorities of execution of pieces of the Comprehensive Plan in the upcoming year.**

**(8.) Keep the media informed of current Plan implementation efforts, and explain to them how and why specific steps are being undertaken. Keep the broader Vision at a prominent place in all discussions.**

# APPENDIX

## **APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

Below are summaries of the major goals developed in each section. Refer to individual sections for the full version of each.

### **SECTION I: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

1. Create a better climate for economic growth and lower the associated development costs.
2. Strengthen existing economic assets.
3. Make Baldwyn into more of a healthcare center.
4. Promote policies that encourage innovation to start new and retain existing business.
5. Create a non-profit redevelopment corporation.
6. Create a rewards program to help support local businesses.

### **SECTION II: DOWNTOWN**

1. Improve downtown appearance.
2. Increase and maintain investment in the downtown and its surrounding area.
3. Carry out practices to attract more visitors and shoppers to the downtown.

### **SECTION III: TRANSPORTATION**

1. Reduce transportation related costs, while improving transportation efficiency.
2. Increase mode options to help decrease expensive auto trips.
3. Adopt a complete streets policy.
4. Use transportation improvements to increase economic growth.
5. Expand the transportation network.

### **SECTION IV: INFRASTRUCTURE**

1. Promote continued development of an excellent wastewater system.
2. Upgrade and continually enhance stormwater infrastructure.
3. Upgrade the main natural gas system supply line.
4. Plan to strategically expand and improve the city water and wastewater capacity to allow for future growth.

## SECTION V: PARKS AND RECREATION

1. Plan for expansion and upgrades of parks. Develop a trail network to connect existing park areas.
2. Prepare for future needs and for the possible future development of a new city park.
3. Work to make long term investments in the city park system and treat the parks like a long term investment.
4. Create a smaller park in or near the downtown to serve as an anchor and to create an additional reason for people to spend time downtown.

## SECTION VI: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. Create a capital improvements plan to renovate city hall.
2. Make long range plans to construct a main fire station and a secondary fire station to increase coverage and improve the city's fire rating.
3. Plan to continue the improvement of other city facilities.

## SECTION VII: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

1. Improve the quality of future development.
2. Rehabilitate existing neighborhoods.
3. Regulate and reduce rentals.
4. Phase out low quality public housing.
5. Utilize education resources.
6. Improve Baldwin's street appearance.

## SECTION VIII: FUTURE LAND USE AND POLICY

1. Conserve Baldwin's land resources and make wise decisions to that will enhance land values.
2. Create land use patterns and zoning that will add value.
3. Promote creative mixed use development in key areas, instead of the existing separation of uses.
4. Plan ahead for growth and resource demands and use annexation and infill to meet needs accordingly.
5. Encourage the protection and proper conservation of all environmentally valuable areas.







## APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE SUMMARY

### 2014 COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Below are selected questions from a Community Survey conducted for residents and/or business owners of the City of Baldwin. Also included were parents of children in the Baldwin School System. Surveys were limited to one per person and remain confidential. The Survey was used as a tool to gauge public interest and support on a variety of topics related to the plan.

The following were ranked from least to most important. Below is the score of those categories selected as “most important”:

**Shopping Opportunities:** 35

**Crime / Safety:** 111

**Parking:** 43

**Preservation of Historic Buildings:** 41

**Property Maintenance:** 58

**Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Speeds:** 78

**Would you like to see Baldwin to grow in population?** Yes (184), No (17)

**Would you support allowing higher density development in Baldwin to make the best use of existing developable land?** Yes (171), No (29)

**Would you support the City annexing undeveloped land to prepare for future development?** Yes (167), No (35)

**Would you support the use of the City funds to expand water and sewer lines to encourage future growth and development?** Yes (180), No (19)

**Should Baldwin’s historic, small-town character be preserved?** Yes (186), No (16)

**Do you support the conservation of natural resources within the City, such as farmland and forested areas?** Yes (184), No (17)

**Do you believe the City should regulate development within naturally sensitive areas such as floodplains and wetlands?** Yes (160), No (23)

**Are you satisfied with the type and quality of development in Baldwin?** Yes (119), No (64)

**Do you support the City taking action to assist in recruiting new industry and other new development?** Yes (182), No (4)

**Would you support the City making long-term improvements to streets to improve access and prepare for future growth?** Yes (174), No (13)

**Which of the following improvements do you think is the greatest priority for the long-term benefits of Baldwin's streets and thoroughfares? (Circle one)**

Paving/Drainage (103)    Beautification (35)    Improved Accessibility (27)    Street Signage (7)

**Do you consider it important to make Baldwin friendlier to bicycling and walking?** Yes (164), No (20)

**Do you believe that the quality and condition of housing in Baldwin is improving, well-maintained, or declining? (Circle one)**

Improving (64)    Well-Maintained (46)    Declining (73)

**Should the City try to improve Baldwin's existing neighborhoods in some way?** Yes (183), No (4)

**Should the City work toward creating more parks and recreation space?** Yes (166), No (22)

**Does the City need to improve its appearance through beautification, decorative signage, landscaping, etc.?**  
Yes (160), No (27)

**Would you support the City adding additional parking spaces downtown?** Yes (173), No (13)

## **APPENDIX C: AVAILABLE INCENTIVES**

**Below is a list of agencies through which funding may be available. This list is a reference for potential sources of assistance that may be available for the many financial needs addressed throughout this Plan. It is by no means a comprehensive list.**

### **STATE INCENTIVES THROUGH MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:**

- Airport Revitalization Revolving Loan Program
- Business Incubator Loan Program
- Capital Improvements Revolving Loan Program (CAP)
- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)
- Development Infrastructure Program (DIP)
- Economic Development Highway Program (EDH)
- Economic Development Marketing Grant Program
- Energy Investment Program
- Freight Rail Service Projects Revolving Loan Program (RAIL)
- General Obligation Bonds
- HOME Investment Partnerships Grant Program
- Housing Revolving Loan Program (HRL)
- Industrial Access Road Grant Program
- Local Industrial Development Revenue Bonds
- Mississippi Business Investment Act Program (MBI)
- Mississippi Major Economic Impact Authority (MMEIA)
- Rural Impact Fund Grant Program (RIF)
- Self-Help Program

### **OTHER STATE INCENTIVE SOURCES:**

- Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC)
- Mississippi Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D)
- Mississippi Department of Archives and History
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
- Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT)

- Mississippi Forestry Commission
- Mississippi Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Three Rivers Planning and Development District
- Northeast Mississippi Planning and Development District

**FEDERAL INCENTIVE SOURCES:**

- Federal Government Grants Clearinghouse
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- EPA Brownfields and Land Revitalization
- EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)
- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- U.S. Fire Administration
- USDA Rural Development
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Tennessee Valley Authority Economic Development (TVA)