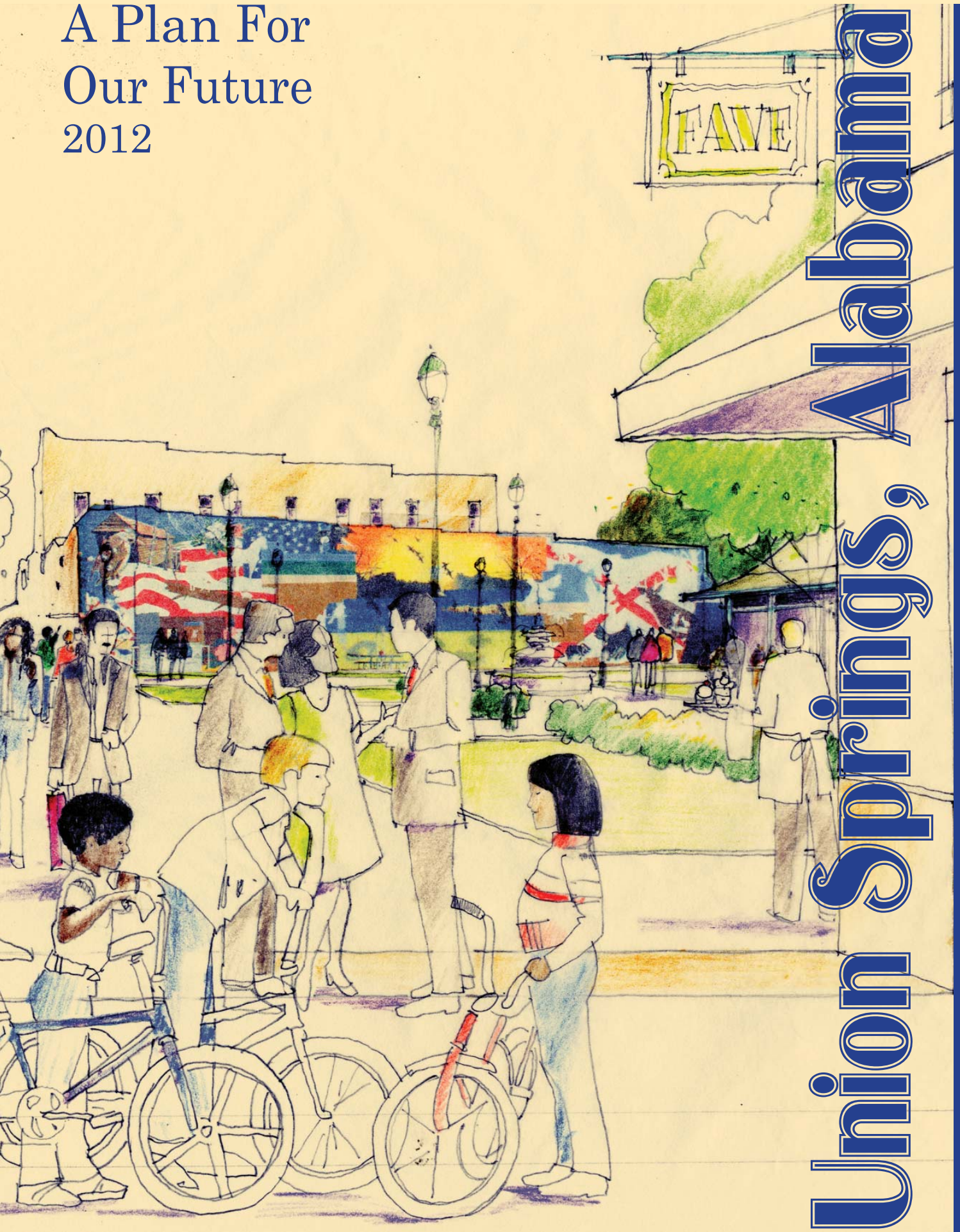


A Plan For
Our Future
2012



Union Springs, Alabama



City of Union Springs

Comprehensive Plan Update

September 2011



- a vibrant, diverse, and harmonious community working together
- an historical, cultural and recreational center
- building strong economic growth at all skill levels

Acknowledgments

The preparation of this document was financed with funds available through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Planning Fund as administered through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) and with matching funds provided by the City of Union Springs. CDBG Project Number LR-PF-PL-09-005.

For additional copies, contact
 City of Union Springs
 212 Prairie Street North
 Post Office Box 549
 Union Springs, AL 36089
 Phone: 334-738-2720
 Fax: 334-738-5068

<u>2008-2012</u>	<u>2012-2016</u>
Mayor John McGowan	Mayor Saint T. Thomas, Jr.
Council Brian Agnew James L. Anderson Cope Lawrence Louis Pugh Saint T. Thomas, Jr.	Council Brian Agnew Roderick Clark Stan Cooks Deborah Hicks-Milan J. Earl Hinson

Planning Commission

Brian Agnew, Chair
 Cathy Dickerson, City Clerk, 2010-2012
 Presetta Walker, City Clerk, 2012
 Peggy Goodwin
 John McGowan, Mayor, 2010-2012
 Myron Penn, Vice Chair
 Joyce Perrin
 Charlotte Phillips
 Bertha Coleman Poe
 Larry Stewart
 Saint T. Thomas, Jr., Mayor, 2012

*Cover Illustration courtesy of
 Cheryl Morgan of the
 Auburn University
 Center for Urban Design*

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Planning Process	
Location and Climate	
Historic Setting	
Local Government	
Demographics and Resources	9
Demographics	
Resource Inventory	
Evaluation	
Community Perception	
Community Studies.....	17
Housing	
Economic Development	
Community Facilities	
Infrastructure	
Transportation	
Land Use	
Development Strategy.....	35
Vision and Goals	
Development Concepts	
Major Street Plan	
Future Development Strategy	
Priority Actions	
Appendices (found in a separate companion document)	
A. Local Census Demographic Tables	
B. Resource Inventory	



5900 Carmichael Place
 Montgomery, Alabama 36117
 334-244-6903
 www.scadc.net



3644 Vann Road, Suite 100
 Birmingham, Alabama 35235
 Phone: 205-655-8855
 Fax: 205-655-8825
 www.skipperinc.com

Introduction

Community planning is a process in which consensus is built among citizens, local officials, businesses, industries, land owners and land developers regarding the future growth and direction of a community, town or city. Alabama communities find their authority for planning, zoning and the regulation of subdivisions in powers granted to municipalities by the State Legislature. By Alabama statutes, not only does a municipality have the right to plan for its future, but has the responsibility to do so. Within a municipal structure, it is the function and duty of a municipal planning commission to make and adopt a plan for the physical development of the municipality.

The City of Union Springs' last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1996. Since that time, the City has had moderate success with implementation of the goals and objectives identified in the plan. Still, the City has struggled with maintaining an ongoing and consistent planning oversight program.

In June 2007, the Union Springs Planning Commission began regular meetings once again in an attempt to provide consistency in development practices, protect historic resources and position the city for much-needed future growth. One of the first tasks of the newly reconvened Planning Commission was to review the

existing comprehensive plan goals and proposed action items. In doing so, it was felt that many of the goals and action items in the existing comprehensive plan have been completed or are outdated and no longer relevant. The Union Springs Planning Commission recognized the need to update the existing comprehensive or to take a larger step in creating a new comprehensive plan. Before taking either step, however, the Planning Commission wanted to gauge the expectations of citizens to ensure that the timing is right to follow through with either alternative.

Working with the South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC), Union Springs hosted three focus group meetings to determine what citizens expectations were regarding a comprehensive planning process. The SCADC facilitated the meetings, prepared a meeting summary for each meeting and prepared a final recommendation for the development of a comprehensive plan. Based on citizen comments and discussions during three focus group meetings, it was recommended that the City of Union Springs undertake a major update of all elements of the 1996 Comprehensive Plan and include new material within the existing elements of the plan, as much as possible. New elements that would be necessary included

a visioning process, a development strategy and an action plan. A comparison of the elements of the 1996 comprehensive plan and the elements desired in the proposed comprehensive plan update (now the 2012 Comprehensive Plan) is provided on Page 4.

It was also recommended that Union Springs pursue two other planning projects: (1) a downtown revitalization/redevelopment study; and (2) continued participation in the South Central Alabama Rural Transportation Consultation Process. In 2009, the City of Union Springs began work with the Auburn University Urban Studio to develop an illustrative plan for redevelopment of the City's downtown area. The Urban Studio conducted a citizen charrette and held a citizen review meeting that resulted in three primary concepts:

- Preserve, protect and capitalize on Union Springs' remarkable historic assets,
- Reinforce downtown as the heart of the community, and
- Distinguish Union Springs as a regional destination and as a "not to miss" stop en route to the beach.

Further, as a part of the South Central Alabama Rural Transportation Consultation Process, regional access and circulation was initially addressed

in a separate study in 2007. In 2009, the City of Union Springs applied for and was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Planning Fund grant to prepare a major update to their 1996 comprehensive plan. Components of the downtown redevelopment and the regional access and circulation documents were integrated into the comprehensive planning process and the 2012 Union Springs Comprehensive Plan Update.

During the CDBG application process, it was discovered that more than 5 percent of the city's population was of Hispanic origin. Therefore, advertisements and flyers were run/posted in both English and Spanish. It was also

determined and made a part of the application that one of the final products of the planning project would be a summary document printed in both English and Spanish.

Planning Process

The primary study area for the Union Springs Comprehensive Plan Update includes the 6.86 square miles of land within the city's boundaries; the secondary study area includes the city's 1.5-mile police jurisdiction. Working with planners from the SCADC, Union Springs followed a three-step process to (1) review their existing plan, (2) develop a long-range strategy for future growth and development, and (3)

propose solutions and select actions that will lead to the attainment of the public policy. The actions are compiled into a development strategy with a designated time frame. The final chapter of the Union Springs Comprehensive Plan Update outlines the details of specific development projects.

Five planning workshops were held during the planning process that were attended by members of a comprehensive plan steering committee, as well as the general public. Members of the city council, planning commission and steering committee were notified of meeting dates by letter and e-mail. The public was notified through local media and posting of

Comparison of 1996 Comprehensive Plan and 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update

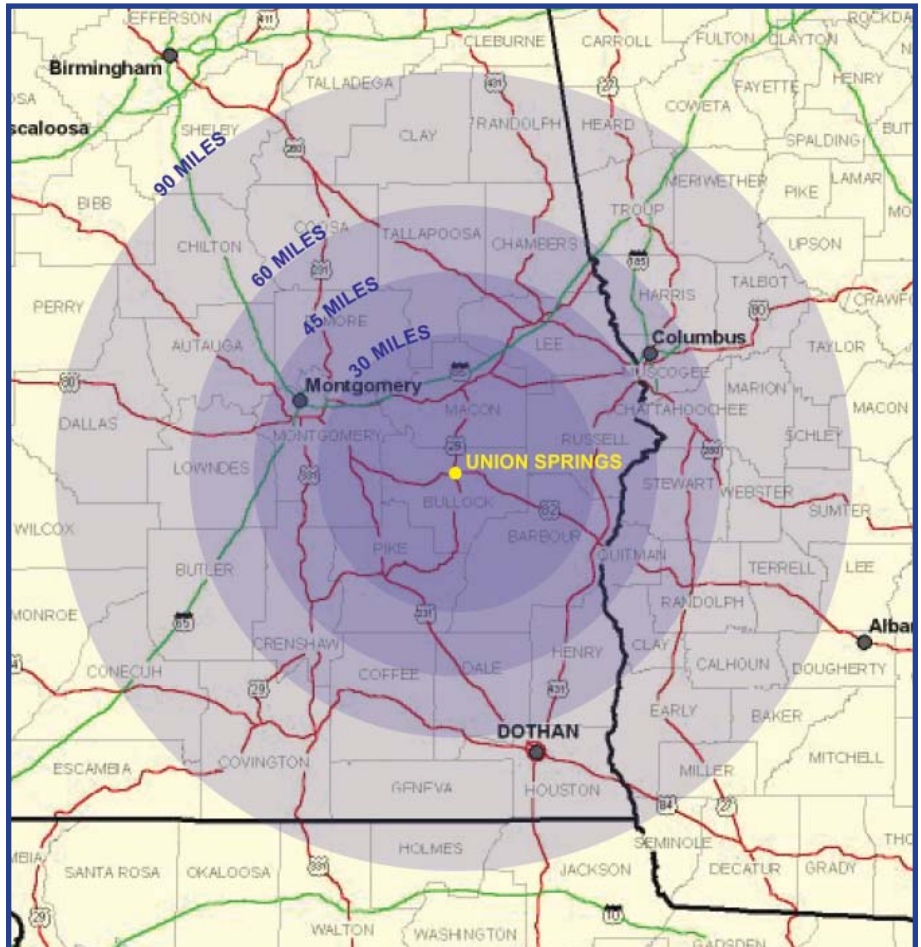
Element	Existing Plan	Expanded or New Components
Background / History / Setting	Introduction/Profile	More detail
Visioning Process	Introduction/Goals	Vision, mission statements, goals, objectives
Demographic Profile	Population	Consider surrounding areas, commuting, and regional impact
Inventory and Analysis	Profile	Re-inventory, existing land use, new analysis
Housing	Housing and Income	Housing, housing condition, housing needs, historic preservation, future residential development, financing options
Economic Development	Housing and Income, Commercial Development	Downtown revitalization, income, labor force, commercial and industrial development, ag-industry, tourism, revenue retention, physical improvements
Community Facilities	Services and Facilities	Emergency services, library, recreation, education, health services, events, historic resources
Infrastructure	Services and Facilities	Utilities, drainage and storm water management, transportation, circulation
Development Strategy	Land Use	Existing land use, future growth concept, development schematic
Action Plan	Goals and Actions	Measureable implementation schedule with time line, responsible organizations, and checklists

meeting flyers in both English and Spanish. Public workshops were approximately two hours in length and included presentations of data, community surveys, completion of individual and group exercises, and consensus-building. The City of Union Springs also conducted two open-house meetings that were held in a come-and-go format and allowed citizens to review proposals, ask questions and make comments and suggestions at their leisure. The first open house was held on Tuesday, May 24, 2011 from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM. The focus of the workshop was to review a community-wide vision, development concepts and a goal framework for the various elements of the comprehensive plan. Citizen comments from the open house were used to refine the development concept into a full development strategy. The development strategy and downtown revitalization plans were presented in a second open house meeting on Tuesday, July 19, 2011. Comments and suggestions were again used to refine the final action strategy. The final plan was then presented to the Union Springs Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee in the fifth public workshop. Following the public meetings, the SCADC worked with the Union Springs Planning Commission and City Council to finalize the plan, as well as to develop new subdivision regulations and a new zoning ordinance that would help in the implementation of the long-range goals. Public hearings were conducted prior to adoption of the Union Springs Comprehensive Plan Update as required by the *Code of Alabama*, 1975, as amended.

Citizens help guide future growth by participating in the planning process.



Regional Location of Union Springs



Location and Climate

Union Springs is the county seat of Bullock County and is located in the southeastern part of Alabama. The city is bisected by two federal highways. U.S. Highway 29 runs north-south, providing residents with regional

access to Tuskegee and Interstate 85 to the north and to Troy to the south. U.S. Highway 29's northern terminus is at Maryland Highway 99 in Baltimore, from which it runs south for 1,036 miles to Pensacola, Florida where it intersects U.S. Highway 98. East-west access to Union Springs is available via U.S. Highway 82, which connects the city to Montgomery to the northwest and to Eufaula to the southeast. U.S. Highway 82 is an east-west highway across the southern United States, stretching 1,609 miles from the White Sands of New Mexico to Georgia's Atlanta coast. The western terminus for U.S. Highway 82 is U.S. Highway 54/70 in Alamogordo, New Mexico and its eastern terminus is Interstate 95 in Brunswick, Georgia.

As a result of Union Springs' location and transportation network, there are 33 communities within a 1-hour commute, which includes the major cities of Auburn; Columbus, Georgia; and Montgomery. Union Springs is also served by a municipal airport, Franklin Field, which is located just west of the city on Alabama Highway 110. A commercial airport, Dannelly Field, is located 50 miles away in Montgomery and Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is located 137 miles away in Atlanta, Georgia.

Union Springs has a temperate climate with hot summers and cold winters. The average annual temperature in January is 51° Fahrenheit, with an average low of 35° Fahrenheit. In July, the average annual temperature is 81° Fahrenheit, with an average high around 91° Fahrenheit.

Average annual rainfall ranges from 52 to 56 inches per year and the average annual snowfall is 0.5 inches. The number of days with any measurable precipitation is 84 days as compared to 100 days for the United States. The average number of sunny days per year

in Union Springs is 214 days, as compared to 205 in the nation. Union Springs and Bullock County have a long growing season, between 221 to 240 days per year. The first frost generally occurs between November 10th and November 20th each year; with the last frost occurring between March 5th and March 15th.

Historic Setting

The following contains excerpts from historical accounts of the history of Union Springs as provided by Dean Spratlan, as president of the Bullock County Historical Society and from the history page on the Tourism Council of Bullock County at www.unionsspringsalabama.com.

The area now known as Union Springs and Bullock County was originally cultivated when Creek Indians moving westward from Georgia settled the area in the early 1700s. The first European settlers arrived in the area after the Creek Indian removal in the 1830s and gave the town its name because of the 27 springs flowing from the nearby Chunnenuggee Ridge. In 1835, Benjamin Baldwin and his son-in-law, Thomas Underwood, purchased two tracts of land upon which the City of Union Springs is now located.

On January 13, 1844, the City of Union Springs was incorporated as part of Macon County by an

act signed by Governor Benjamin Fitzpatrick. When Bullock County was created in 1866 from parts of Macon, Montgomery, Pike and Barbour Counties, voters chose Union Springs as the county seat. At the time of incorporation, Union Springs consisted of a couple of stores, a tavern, a cemetery and a church. From this humble beginning, people began coming to the area, bringing their families, purchasing the surrounding land and establishing places of trade.



Historic Downtown Union Springs
Source: Joyce Perrin



Historic Union Springs Post Card
Source: Joyce Perrin



Union Springs City Council and Fire Department, 1905

Source: Alabama Department of Archives and History; <http://encyclopediaofalabama.org>

The rich black belt soil and ample fresh water of the area attracted migrants from surrounding states and made Union Springs a prosperous antebellum agricultural center.

With no access to river transport, Union Springs conducted its trade with the market in Columbus, Georgia via the Mobile and Girard Railway Company. During the antebellum period, cotton barons built many striking mansions along the Chunnenugee Ridge. Although these homes and much of the town were spared generally from the destruction of the Civil War, the impact of Reconstruction and Emancipation led to a period of post-war economic decline.

By the late 1800s and early 1900s, Union Springs had rebounded from the aftermath of the Civil War and the town flourished. By then, Union Springs was the junction of two major railroads -- the Mobile and Girard Railroad and the Montgomery and Eufaula Railroad. These railroads helped make the city an important hub of the state, and the South. Union Springs was home to an oil mill, a planing mill, and professional offices for doctors and lawyers. Cotton mills soon followed and again made Union Springs an economic hub for the surrounding counties. The booming industry and commerce in the city made many inhabitants very wealthy, which led to the many graceful Southern mansions being built

all around Union Springs. These buildings and their antebellum predecessors now form the core of Union Springs's popular Historic District.

The Reconstruction period was followed by the migration of many of Bullock County's African Americans. Although Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1866, granting citizenship and voting rights to all native-born Americans except American Indians, only men were given the right to vote. When Union Troops withdrew from the South following Reconstruction, many of the voting rights began to be eroded with restrictive laws, such as poll taxes and written tests. As a result, the largest migration in U.S. history from the rural South to the northern states began in 1910 and continued until 1950. Bullock County African Americans began to migrate to Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, New York and many other towns and cities in the northern part of the United States.

In 1961, the United States Government filed a lawsuit against the State of Alabama, particularly Bullock County, to eliminate the hindrances to voter registration. The Court found that there had been "systematic, intentional and insidious conduct and such conduct was a clear violation of the Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution." In 1960, there were five African American voters registered. By 1966, there were 2,845 registered African-American voters.

Beginning in the early twentieth century, land originally used for cotton farming in Bullock County began to give way to other uses, particularly hunting. By the 1920s, game preserves occupied many of the sites of former cotton plantations. During that period, Lewis B. Maytag, an avid hunter and originator of the Maytag line of appliances, created a 14,000-acre hunting preserve known as the Sedgefields Plantation. This preserve and the lands surrounding it became a very popular location for bird dog field trials, which continue today.

Cultural and political changes have taken place in Bullock County and continue to change. Many of those who left the county in the 1950s are returning as retirees. This has become possible because of the courageous men and women from both races who worked together to make Bullock County a better place.

There are 47 business and homes in Union Springs that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a testament to the city's past. Reflections of antebellum era are seen in such homes as the Hunter-Anderson-Yeomens House, the oldest home in town, built in 1843, and the Bonus-Foster-Chapman House built in 1852.

From the days of reconstruction onward, the architecture of the homes built in Union Springs was as diverse as the Southern aristocrats who built them. From the intricate and ornate Queen Anne Victorians, such as the Singleton-Jones House and the Methodist parsonage, to the impressive Neo-Classical Revival styles of the Turnipseed-McLaurine House and the Rainer-Lewis House, to the Gothic and Greek Revival styles, these beautiful homes are some of the finest examples in existence of great, Southern architecture and charm. A list of historic sites found in Union Springs is provided on the following page.



James Hunter Home, 1930

Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~unionmc/bowhunt/1310.htm>

Historic and Notable Resources

National Register of Historic Places

• The Bullock County Courthouse

Historic District includes:

1. Trinity Episcopal Church, 1909
2. Carnegie Library, 1911
3. First Baptist Church, 1860
4. Renfroe Standard Service, 1960
5. Boyd Building, 1888
6. Hembree Building, 1887
7. Farmer's Hardware, 1879
8. Pritchett Building, 1915
9. Hembree Building, 1869
10. Bullock County Courthouse, 1871
11. Bullock County Jail, 1970
12. Cochran Building, 1872
13. Jinks Building, 1897
14. Dixie Bullock Store, 1886
15. Robertson Furniture Building, 1892
16. Anderson Building, 1894
17. Hickman-Green Building, 1889
18. The Emporium, 1875
19. Masonic Building, 1885
20. Fire and Police Headquarters, 1958
21. Volunteer Fire Company, 1882
22. Poe Building, 1912
23. Reid Building, 1909
24. Garner Building, 1922
25. Allen Building, 1915
26. Smitty's Cafe, 1910
27. Carlisle Building, 1866
28. Hembree Building, 1869
29. Elmore Building, 1874
30. Bradberry Building, 1874
31. Bryan Building, 1872
32. Hendley Building 1870
33. Cohn Building, 1871
34. First National Bank, 1897
35. Sewell Building, 1888
36. Jordan Building, 1874
37. Cameran Building, 1875
38. Arrington Building, 1875
39. Macon Building, 1876
40. Pickett Building, 1898
41. Priori Building, 1905
42. Don Priori Building, 1910
43. Commercial Hotel, 1890
44. Noble Building, 1895
45. Powell Building, 1888
46. Blue Building, 1876
47. Green Building, 1880

• Foster House

• Sardis Baptist Church

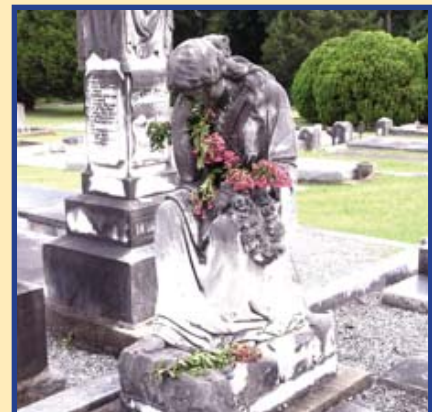
Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage

- Chunnenugee Ridge, Cunnenugee Public Gardens, 1840s-50s
- Foster-Bryan-Brown House, 1852-56
- Dr. Hogan, S.N., House, 1871-1884
- Hunter-Anderson House, 1843
- Hunter House, 1900
- Kennon-Paulk-Shanks House, 1860
- L.M. Moseley / The Homespun, 1910
- Mt. Hilliard Methodist Church, 1856
- Ranier, Sterling Price, House, 1902
- Sardis Baptist Church, 1847
- The "Yellow House," 1855
- Town Creek Missionary Baptist Church, 1834; 1970s



Famous People Born in Union Springs

- Eddie Kendricks - Singer
- Thom S. Rainer - President and CEO
- Tim Stowers - Football player, coach
- Winton M. Blount - Philanthropist
- Henry Babers - Evangelist,
- John Warren Branscomb - Evangelist,
- Seal Harris - Boxer
- Claire Rothenstihl (Smith) - Silent film and radio star
- Ben Edwards - Stage/set designer
- Lucy Feagin - Feagin School of Drama & Radio, New York
- Wes Chapman - Ballet dancer



Demographics and Resources

The review of demographics and resources in Union Springs provides an in-depth framework for making decisions for the future based on population characteristics and the presence, or lack, of physical and structural features. The resource inventory is then used to help determine the general capacity of the land in Union Springs for future development. After information regarding the available resources was compiled, it was possible to perform an analysis to determine the strengths and weaknesses of Union Springs in regards to opportunities for future growth and to identify limitations to additional development.

Demographics

As a part of the comprehensive planning process, the City of Union Springs conducted a local door-to-door census due to a reported lack of response to the 2010 federal census. The Union Springs Local Census utilized the services of four census enumerators, who had also participated in the federal census process and who were also administered the same Oath of Confidentiality that is used with the federal census. The Union Springs Local Census utilized a survey form that was an abbreviated version of the "long form" used in the 2000 U.S. Census. The Bullock County E-911 Book was used to develop a list of addresses to be surveyed. Citizens were notified of

the upcoming local census through newspaper advertisements and flyers, as well as announcements in public meetings. Local census enumerators were also available at local events and meetings and census forms were made available at City Hall.

A total of 1,997 valid residential addresses were identified for the local census, which was conducted during May 2011. Of the total addresses, survey responses were obtained from 1,597 addresses, giving the city an 80.0 percent response rate to the local door-to-door census. Of the 400 addresses that were not surveyed, the E-911 book and windshield surveys were used to determine if the structure was occupied or vacant. A total of 2,919 persons were counted in the 1,191 occupied households surveyed, which equates to 2.45 persons per household. The total number of occupied housing units

(1,440) was multiplied by the number of persons per household to derive the Union Springs Local Census population of 3,529 persons. Demographic tables from the Union Springs Local Census are available in Appendix A.

**CAN UNION SPRINGS
COUNT ON YOU?**

Union Springs Local Census Begins April 30, 2011

We Need Your Help!

The City of Union Springs is conducting a local door-to-door census (similar to the 2010 U.S. Census) to obtain a true and accurate count of the population of the city and its economic and housing resources. Information collected will support the development of a comprehensive plan for the City of Union Springs and will also be used for comparison to 2010 federal census results as they become available.

Information that you provide is confidential and your answers are protected. The Local Census Survey should take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete. Please take this opportunity to make sure that you and your household are counted in the local census!

Union Springs Local Census Enumerators (surveyors) will be going door-to-door to complete a Local Census Survey beginning April 30, 2011. The enumerators can be identified by a Union Springs Local Census name badge. If it is not convenient for you to complete a survey form at your home, you can go to the Union Springs City Hall, located at 212 Prairie Street North, to complete a survey form. Or, you can make other arrangements by contacting an enumerator at the phone numbers listed below:

Alvin Gachett at 334-339-0239
Joe C. Harris at 334-339-0245
Shirley Ann Jackson at 334-330-0246
Jaqueline M. Patterson at 334-339-0247

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the City Clerk's office at 334-738-2720.

**PLEASE HELP UNION SPRINGS GATHER THIS VITAL INFORMATION.
IT HELPS US HELP YOU!**



Local census advertisement

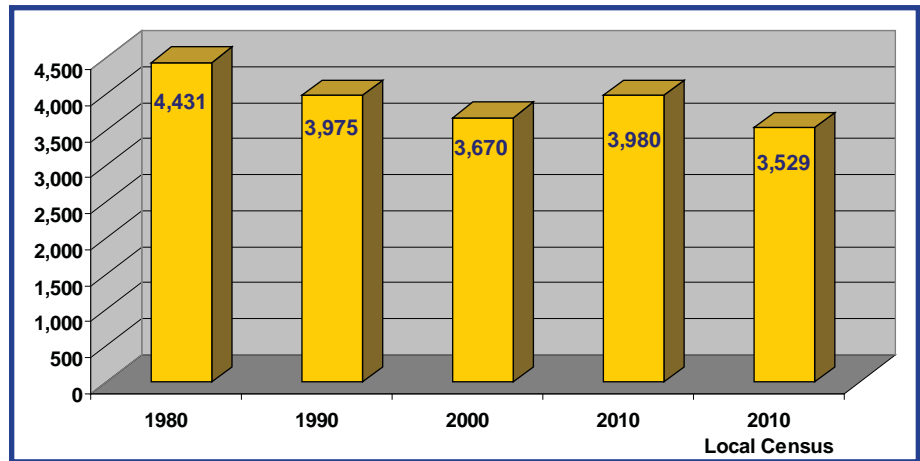


Local census enumerators working at Chunnuggee Fair

Demographic data included in this plan provides a comparison of the 2010 federal census and the local census. Additional demographic data was obtained from the U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2005-2009. The American Community Survey is an on-going and more detailed federal survey in which a small sample of an area's population is surveyed more frequently than every ten years in an effort to provide more timely population and demographic data.

According to the U.S. Census, Union Springs has a 2010 population of 3,980 people, as compared to the local census population count of 3,529 people. The 2010 U.S. Census population is an 8.4 percent increase from the 2000 population of 3,670 persons; however, the Union Springs local census indicates that the 2010 population is actually a 3.8 percent decrease from 2000 at 3,529 persons. The decrease in population is a continuing trend since 1980 when the population decreased 10.3 percent between 1980 and 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, the population decreased another 7.7 percent. In comparison, the population of Bullock County had an increase of 4.2 percent from 1980 to 1990 and another increase of 6.1 percent between 1990 and 2000 before decreasing 6.8 percent between 2000 and 2010.

Union Springs Population, 1980 to 2010



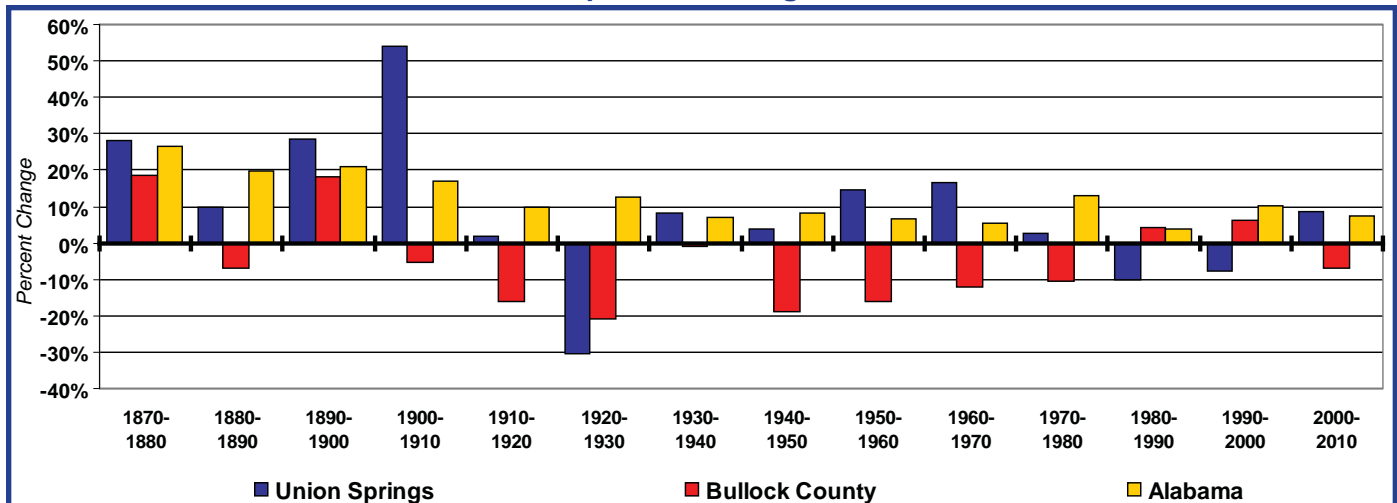
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Union Springs Local Census

In the decades between 1870 and 1920, the population of Union Springs experienced steady increases. The most significant growth occurred between 1900 and 1910 with a 53.9 increase in population. A decade later in 1920, Union Springs reached a population of 4,125 persons. After 1920, the population decreased 30.3 percent to 2,875 persons in 1930. In the following 50 years, from 1930 to 1980, the population of Union Springs again increased each decade to its highest population of 4,431 persons. Since 1980, the population decreased each decade as previously discussed.

In comparison, the population of Bullock County has experienced more decreases than increases

-- almost asymmetrically to Union Springs' growth pattern. Between 1870 and 1880 and between 1890 and 1900, Bullock County's population increased by 18.8 percent and 18.0 percent, respectively. In 1900, the Bullock County population reached its zenith, at 31,944 people. Between 1880 and 1890, and from 1900 to 1980, the Bullock County population suffered population losses each decade ranging from a 1.0 percent decrease between 1930 and 1940 to a 21.0 percent decrease between 1920 and 1930. As the City of Union Springs began to lose population in 1980, the Bullock County population began to increase from its lowest point, at 10,596 persons, to 11,714 persons in 2000. Between 2000 and 2010,

Percent of Population Change, 1870 to 2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

however, the Bullock County population suffered another loss of 6.8 percent. It stands to reason that some degree of the population shifts may be due to residents moving in and out of Union Springs.

The 2010 U.S. Census reports that the median age of the population in Union Springs is much younger than that of Bullock County and the State of Alabama. And, not only is the population in Union Springs younger than that of the county and the state, it is becoming younger while the median age of the county and state populations is becoming older. According to the federal census, the median age in Union Springs is slowly decreasing from 31.4 in 1990 to 31.1 in 2000 to its current 30.5. In contrast, the median age of the population in Bullock County has increased from 31.4 in 1990 to 35.0 in 2000, and is now 38.5 years of age. Likewise, the median age of the population of the state was 33.0 in 1990, 35.8 in 2000, and is now 37.9 years of age.

Not only is there a significant difference in the median age of Union Springs as opposed to Bullock County and the state, there is a greater disparity in the median ages of males and females in Union Springs than in the county and state. The male median age is younger than that of females in all three instances; however, in Union Springs, the median age of males, at 28.6, is 4.0 years younger than that of females, at 32.6. In Bullock County, the difference in the genders' median age is half that of Union Springs, with males having

a median age of 37.7 and females at 39.7. Likewise, in the state, the male median age is 36.4 and the female median age is 39.1.

According to the Local Census, 45.8 percent of the Union Springs population is in a 'dependent' age bracket -- either less than 21 years old or age 65 and older. This is not to say that all persons in these age brackets are dependent on someone else, but they do have the potential to have different needs and less earning potential than other age groups. The primary working age population, from 21 to 64, comprises 54.2 percent of the total population.

The age demographics from the 2010 local census and the federal census are somewhat similar. In comparison to the 45.8 percent of the population that is either under the age of 21 or older than 64, the 2010 federal census reports that portion of the population to be 47.3 percent, with 33.6 being younger than 21 and 13.7 percent being older than 64. The primary working population, age 21 to 64, is reported to 52.7 percent, which is slightly lower than the local census results. In comparison with the 2000 Census, the portion of the population that age 24 or younger has remained stable, while the age group from 25 to 64 has increased from 44.3 percent in 2000 to 46.2 percent, according to the 2010 federal census, or 48.5 percent, according to the local census. Since 2000, the population age 65 and older decreased from 14.3 percent to 13.7 percent (federal census) or 11.3 percent (local census).

According to the local census, 44.3 percent of the Union Springs 2010 population is male and 55.7 percent is female. Similarly, the U.S. 2010 Census reports that 46.2 percent of the Union Springs population is male and 53.8 percent is female. In 2000, the female population comprised 53.1 percent of the total. In comparison, only 45.8 percent of the Bullock County population was female in 2010 which was a decrease from 47.6 percent in 2000. For the State of Alabama, 51.5 percent of the population was female in 2010 and 51.7 percent was female in 2000.

The 2010 local census reports that 82.0 percent of the population is African American, 10.2 percent is White, 6.1 percent is Hispanic, 0.1 percent is American Indian or Alaskan Native, 0.4 percent is Asian, 0.5 percent is of another race, and 0.6 percent is of two or more races. The percentage for the white population is somewhat comparable to the federal census at 12.9 percent of the total population. There is a significant difference, however, in the local and federal census counts for the African American population and for the Hispanic population, as seen in the

Union Springs Population By Race, 2010

Race	Local Census	Federal Census
White	10.2%	12.9%
African American	82.0%	71.8%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.1%	0.2%
Asian	0.4%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	0.5%	12.8%
Two or More Races	0.6%	0.8%
Hispanic (of any race)	6.1%	17.0%

Source: Union Springs 2010 Local Census; U.S. Bureau of Census, 2010 Census

Union Springs Population By Age

Age Group	2010 Local Census		2010 U.S. Census	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 21	1,218	34.5%	1,337	33.6%
21 to 64	1,912	54.2%	2,096	52.7%
65+	399	11.3%	547	13.7%
Total	3,529	100.0%	3,980	100.0%

Source: Union Springs 2010 Local Census; U.S. Bureau of Census, 2010 Census

chart at the bottom of this page. Some of the discrepancy may stem from how the Hispanic population was counted in the two different census surveys. In the local census, the great majority of residents who responded that they were of Hispanic origin did not indicate their race. Therefore, persons of Hispanic origin were categorized as another race in the local census. In the federal census, the results of Hispanic origin questions are separated from race counts. This may also explain why there is such a larger percentage of persons in the category 'Some Other Race', at 12.8 percent in the federal census than in the local census, 0.5 percent.

The great majority of Union Springs residents, 82.9 percent according to the local census, were born in Alabama. Another 10.3 percent were born in the United States in another state and 4.1 percent are citizen of the United States that were born in another country. Only 2.8 percent of the residents are foreign-born, with 2.6 percent being naturalized citizens of the United States and 0.2 percent are not U.S. citizens.

According to the local census survey, 94.1 percent of the total households in Union Spring utilize English as the primary language. Of the 5.9 percent of the households who use a primary language other than English, 93.3 percent speak Spanish, 3.4 percent speak an Asian or Pacific Island language and 3.4 percent speak a language other than English, Spanish or Asian. Of those households that utilize a language other than English as the primary language, 80.0 percent have someone in the household who speaks English fluently.

There are 1,440 households in Union Springs, according to the local census as compared to the 1,461 households reported by the federal census. Union Springs households comprise approximately 39.0 percent of the households in Bullock County. The local census reports

that of the total households, 30.4 percent are single-householders; according to the federal census, 33.1 percent of the households are single-householders. This percentage is similar to Bullock County where 32.8 percent of the households are occupied by single householders. The percentage of single householders is higher in Union Springs and Bullock County than in the State, where 27.4 percent of the total households have a householder living alone.

Data from the Union Springs local census indicates that 36.0 percent of the households are headed by males and 64.0 percent are female householders. The U.S. 2010 Census reports that 45.5 percent of households have a male householder and 54.5 percent have a female householder. In Bullock County, 44.8 percent of households have a female householder, and in Alabama, the female householders make up 30.5 percent of the total households. The local census also indicates that only 26.3 percent of the households are married households (24.4 percent in the federal census), as compared to 31.5 percent in Bullock County and 47.9 percent in Alabama. Of the remaining households, according to the local census, 13.7 percent of householders are widowed, 13.5 percent are divorced, 5.8 percent are separated, and 40.7 percent have never been married.

Despite the low percentage of married households in Union Springs, the federal census reports that 62.6 percent of the households are family households and 32.1 percent have their own children under the age of 18 present in the household. Of the male householders, 2.2 percent have children under the age of 18 while 19.4 of female householders have children under 18 living with them. Of the non-family households, 37.9 percent of the householders living alone are persons over the age 65 and over.

Data from the Union Springs local census indicates that 6.5 percent of the population are disabled persons, with 23.6 percent having disabilities related to blindness or deafness and 76.4 percent being mobility related. The local census also indicates that up 2.2 percent of the population have a physical, mental or emotional condition lasting six months or longer that makes daily functions difficult. These conditions affect between 41 and 79 persons. Of the total population, a reported 1.2 percent have difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating; 1.3 percent have difficulty dressing, bathing or getting around inside the home; 1.5 percent have difficulty going outside the home alone to shop or visiting a doctor; and 2.2 percent have a difficulty working at a job or business.

Union Springs Householder Characteristics

Characteristic	Local Census		
	Survey Results	Percent	Adjusted Estimate
Total Households	1,191	73.2%	1,440
Single Head of Household	362	30.4%	438
Male Head of Household	413	36.0%	519
Female Head of Household	733	64.0%	921
Householder Now Married	285	26.3%	379
Householder Widowed	148	13.7%	197
Householder Divorced	146	13.5%	194
Householder Separated	63	5.8%	84
Householder Never Married	441	40.7%	586

Source: Union Springs 2010 Local Census

Resource Inventory

Physical resources are those conditions that are inherent to the land. As such, they cannot be easily changed. Changing the physical conditions as they currently exist for development is often costly and may present new problems in other areas. The inventory of physical resources includes topography, vegetation, hydrology, geology and soils. Understanding both the opportunities and the limitations presented by these resources is essential to cost-effective and responsible development and land uses for the future.

Union Springs is located in Township 13 North and Range 23 East of the Bureau of Land Management land survey system. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) cadastral survey program is responsible for the official boundary surveys for all federal agencies in the U.S. that together manage over 700 million acres. The Public Land Survey System (PLSS) also called the Rectangular Survey System is the foundation for many survey-based land information systems. The Township and Range survey system is also utilized in the U.S. Geological Service quadrangle maps. Union Springs is found on the Union Springs Quad map.

Union Springs is located in the East Gulf Coastal Plain physiographic region, primarily in the Black Prairie and Chunnuggee Hills Districts, although the northern part of the area lies in the Fall Line Hills District. The Fall Line Hills is the most northerly district of the Coastal Plain and is characterized by rounded hills cut by valleys with local relief of between 200 and 250 feet. The Fall Line Hills is a line of waterfalls, extending from northwest Alabama to the east central part of the state, that mark the western and northern extent of the unconsolidated Coastal Plain sediments. It is an erosional scarp formed when this area was the Atlantic Ocean shore in Mesozoic time. As the coastal

plan uplifted and sea levels dropped, terraces were created along many of the creeks and streams that drain the area. Much of the area has a "benched" appearance because of the cycles of erosion and deposition that occurred as the area was exposed and submerged numerous times in its geologic history.

According to the *Encyclopedia of Alabama* website, the Black Prairie district is a unique landscape in Alabama. Bordered by the Fall Line Hills to the north and the Chunnuggee Hills to the south, this belt stretches from Gainesville, in Sumter County through historic towns such as Demopolis, Selma and Montgomery and ends at the intersection of Bullock, Macon and Russell counties. The Black Prairie is about 18 miles at its widest point and about 145 miles long. Elevations range from about 250 feet along the Fall Line Hills to more than 400 feet in the south. The Black Prairie owes its character to the underlying chalk rocks, which are easily soluble by surface and groundwater.

The land overlying the Mooreville Chalk is low and rolling and is characterized by thick black top soil and vegetation typical of a prairie ecosystem. At the northern border of the Mooreville Chalk, a resistant limestone forms the Arcola cuesta where the formation meets the Demopolis Chalk. In contrast, the land overlying the Demopolis Chalk, which is more resistant to erosion, tends to have a very thin soil horizon, and sparser vegetation. The Black Prairie's boundary with the Chunnuggee Hills district changes from east to west. In the east in Russell County, the boundary is the Enon cuesta, which is about 130 feet in height. In the central and western areas, the boundary is the Ripley cuesta, which is between 50 feet and 125 feet high.

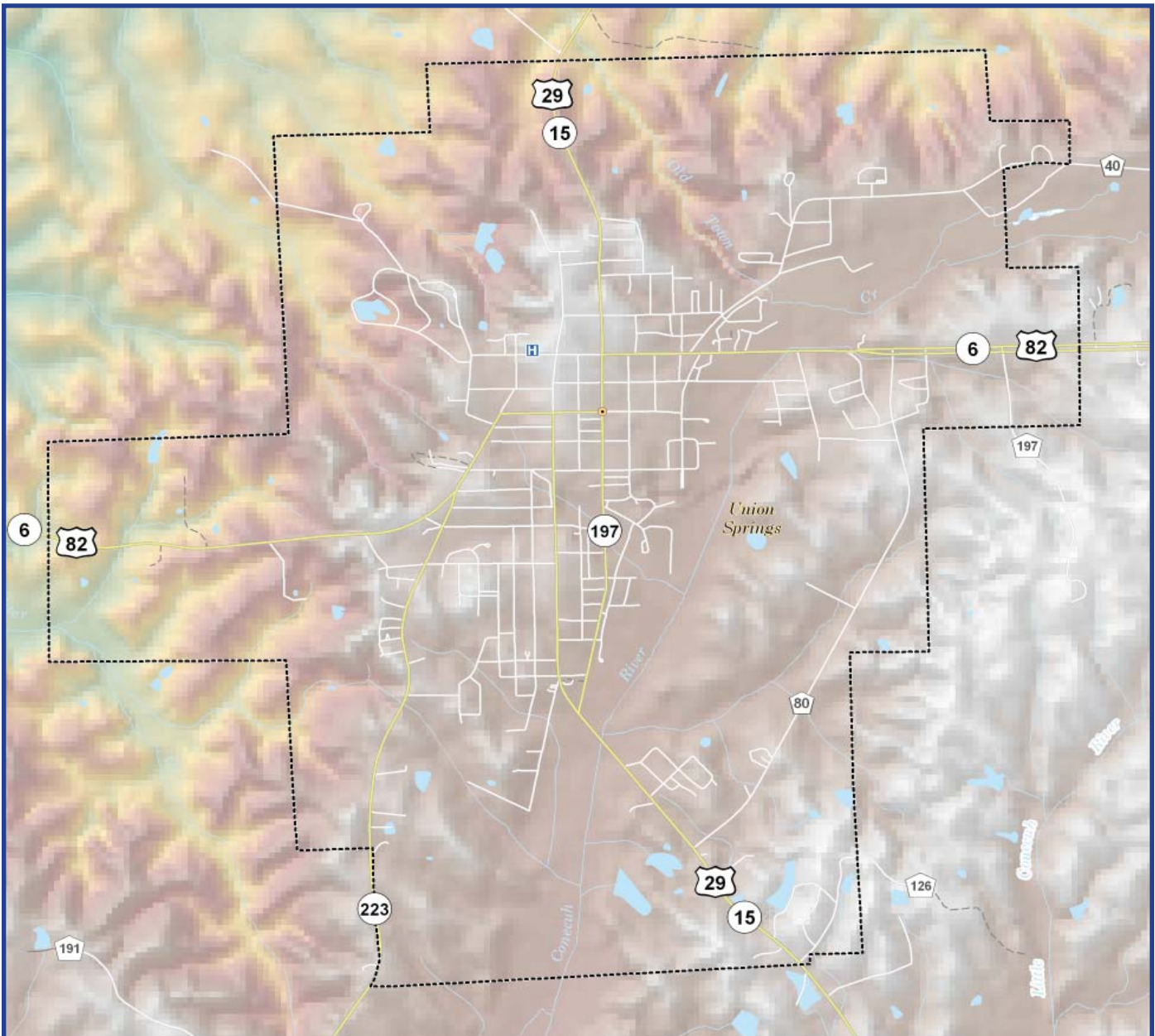
The Chunnuggee Hills district, which includes the Sand Fork, Enon, Lapine, High Ridge

and Ripley cuestas, formed on sands and sandstones. Along the 175-foot-high Lapine cuesta, in the central region, the hills reach elevations of more than 570 feet above sea level. In the western regions, the Chunnuggee Hills are very narrow and are bounded by the Ripley and Troy cuestas.

The elevation of Bullock County is between 250 feet and 750 feet above sea level and Union Springs is between 400 feet and 600 feet above sea level. The Chunnuggee Ridge, which forms the northern border of the Chunnuggee Hills district, wraps around the developed portion of Union Springs from the northeast part of the city, paralleling Peachburg Road, to the southwest part of the city, paralleling Sardis Road (AL 223). From these higher elevations, the Chunnuggee Hills stretch long fingers into the Black Prairie District. The steep slopes associated with the Chunnuggee Ridge make structural development almost impossible. Elevation and topography in the southeastern part of the city becomes gently rolling hills to level flat land. The city is bisected from the northeast to the southeast by the beginnings of the Conecuh River due to the runoff from the ridgeline. In this lower elevation area, the land becomes levels out considerably.

Forest vegetation in Union Springs is mostly loblolly-shortleaf pine, which is one of the most important forest species in the southern United States from a commercial standpoint, making up over half of the standing pine volume. Bullock County is a moderate to heavy producer of pulpwood and saw timber, producing between 112,260 to 181,363 cords pine pulpwood on an annual basis, as of 2010; and between 6.9 million and 13.5 million board feet each year. Benefits of loblolly pine forests in Alabama include the provision of animal habitats, wind and noise breaks, timber production and biomass for energy. Urban forests are located throughout Union Springs regardless of elevation.

Union Springs Physiography and Elevation



<p>Transportation ALDOT Centerline US Hwy State Hwy</p> <p>Road - Census2000 Secondary/Local Road/ Access Ramp County Route Sign Vehicular Trail Unpaved Road</p>	<p>Political City - GNIS Census2000 Populated Place Union Springs Census2000</p>	<p>NED National Elevation Dataset</p> <p>2,030 1,862 1,692 1,522 1,352 1,182 1,012 842 672 Feet above MSL</p>
<p>Social Hospital - GNIS</p>	<p>Hydrology National Hydrography Dataset Lake/Pond Swamp/Marsh River/Stream</p>	
<p>Absolute Scale: 1:24,000 0.5 0.25 0 0.5 Miles Relative Scale: 1 inch = 0.38 miles Projection: UTM Zone 16N Datum: WGS84 Date: 3/1/2011</p>		

Source: National Elevation Dataset

Bullock County lies in four of the State's 12 river basins: the Tallapoosa River Basin, the Conecuh River Basin, the Chattahoochee River Basin and the Choctawhatchee River Basin. Union Springs is split by the Lower Tallapoosa and Upper Conecuh watersheds. The primary surface water resources in Union Springs include Old Town Creek and the Conecuh River. Old Town Creek is located in the northeastern part of the city, crossing U.S. Highway 29, just north of the city limits and Peachburg Road northeast of the downtown area before flowing east out of the city. The beginnings of the Conecuh River flow into Union Springs from the east, following U.S. Highway 82, before the river turns and flows in a southwesterly fashion towards Troy. None of the surface water resources in Union Springs are listed on the State's Clean Water Act, Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies.

Union Springs lies in the Southern Coastal Plain Major Land Resource Area (MLRA 133A). The dominant soils in this area are generally very deep, somewhat excessively drained to poorly drained, and loamy. Typical land uses include timber production, cash-grain crops and forage production. Major crops grown in these soils include soybeans, cotton, corn, and wheat. Pastures are primarily grazed by beef cattle, but some dairy cattle and hogs are raised in the area.

Major concerns with soils in the Southern Coastal Plain MLRA 133A are water erosion, maintenance of the content of organic matter and productivity of the soils, control of surface water, artificial drainage, and management of surface compaction and soil moisture.

Although there are more than 20 different types of soil in Union Springs, five soil groups dominate the area's soil composition. The *Oktibbeha-Maytag* soils found in the northern part of the city are nearly level to strongly sloping soils that are moderately well drained and have a

clayey subsoil. The *Blanton-Luverne* soils, found in the north central part of the city around the downtown area, are nearly level to moderately steep soils that are moderately well-drained and well-drained and have a loamy or clayey subsoil. The *Cowarts-Luverne* soil group is comprised of gently sloping to moderately steep, well-drained soils that have a loamy or a clayey subsoil. These soils are found in the south central part of the city and are primarily occupied by residential development. The *Mantachie-Iuka-Lynchburg* soils are found along the Conecuh River in the southeastern part are Union Springs. These soils are nearly level, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well drained and have a loamy subsoil. The *Luverne-Cowarts-Blanton* soil group is primarily found in the southeast part of the city. These soils are strongly sloping to steep, well drained or moderately well drained and have a clayey or a loamy subsoil.

Maps are available in Appendix B demonstrating soils limitations for specific types of development, including roads and streets, small commercial buildings, dwellings without basements, septic tanks, paths and trails and camping. Severe limitations to development of roads and streets are present in the southeastern part of Union Springs, particularly around the Conecuh River and in the northern part of the city, west of the Chunnenugee Ridge. Soil limitations for small commercial buildings are found in most parts of Union Springs except for the central downtown area and its immediate surroundings. Other than the steeply sloped areas west of the Chunnenugee Ridge and along the Conecuh River, there are very few soil limitations to the development of dwellings without basements. Soils that are suitable for septic systems, however, are similar to those for small commercial buildings and are only found in the central part of the city. Generally, the soils in Union Springs are very suitable for

recreational development in terms of paths, trails and camping.

The USFWS National Wetlands Inventory has identified a number of small wetlands in Union Springs. Two of the larger wetland areas are located along the Conecuh River, with one found just southwest of the intersection of Prairie Street South and Martin Luther King Boulevard and another located east of Martin Luther King Boulevard but northwest of the Hicks Industrial Boulevard industrial park. Two moderately sized wetland areas are found in the northern part of the city. One is south of U.S. Highway 82 between Gibson Circle and Southern Springs Road, and the other is just east of the city limits along Old Town Creek, north of Lynn Road. Two more smaller wetland area are located in the northwestern part of Union Springs near Country Club Drive. Wetlands can function as buffers between land uses and provide a tremendous natural amenity while also serving an important ecological role in filtering water impurities and flood control. While the existing wetlands must be taken into consideration, their location and characteristics do not present undue limitations to future development.

Union Springs is underlain by two geologic formations: the Blufftown Formation located on the northern and western parts of the city, west of the Chunnenugee Ridge, and the Ripley Formation which is located in the central and southern parts of the city, southeast of the Chunnenugee Ridge. The Blufftown extends from the Chattahoochee River Valley westward into central Russell County where it is divided into two westward-extending tongues by an eastward-extending tongue of the Mooreville Chalk. In the Chattahoochee River Valley the Blufftown is mainly glauconitic calcareous fine sand, micaceous clay and marl, fossiliferous clay, gray calcareous fossiliferous sandstone, and carbonaceous clay and silt. To the west the lower tongue of

the Blufftown is gravelly sand, glauconitic sand, calcareous clay, and sandy clay and merges with the lower part of the Mooreville Chalk in southwestern Macon County. The upper tongue is mainly calcareous sandy clay and micaceous silty fine sand with thin layers of limestone and sandstone and merges with the Mooreville Chalk and the lower part of the Demopolis Chalk in western Bullock County. The Ripley Formation is light-gray to pale-olive massive, micaceous, glauconitic, fossiliferous fine sand; sandy calcareous clay; and thin indurated beds of fossiliferous sandstone. The Ripley Formation is found in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee.

Union Springs is also underlain by the Ripley Aquifer from the Ripley geologic formation, which in Alabama, is a fine-to-coarse grained micaceous, carbonaceous sand and clay layers of the Providence Sand, and sand beds of the Ripley Formation; and sand and sandy clay of the Blufftown Formation. The Ripley aquifer is a moderate to major water supply source with a sodium bicarbonate type water that is generally soft. The Ripley Aquifer generally ranges from 100 to 300 gallons per minute.

Evaluation

People are often seen as the greatest asset and strongest resource to an organization, in a program, and most definitely within a community. The Union Springs demographic profile reveal both positive and negative attributes of the city. The most obvious demographic liability is the continued loss of population over the last 30 years. The median age and the age distribution of Union Springs residents however, show growth in the working age population. The percentage of female-headed households in Union Springs is significantly higher than that of the State of Alabama, leaving an impression of instability and financial insecurity of the

city’s population. Union Springs households are often comprised of persons outside a nuclear family, such as grandparents/grandchildren or other relatives, a second family, and friends or roommates. These conditions are most often the result of financial stress in the population or a lack of safe and adequate housing resources.

Union Springs is well-served by two federal highways and two state highways. Although the city does not have interstate access, the regional circulation routes are in good condition and easily accessible by surrounding markets and provides opportunities to capture traffic and visitors from beyond the Union Springs area.

The existing natural resources and physical conditions of Union

Springs offer multiple unique and scenic assets. Care should be taken in all development efforts to ensure the protection of the existing resources and to ensure that structural development is well-built based on the underlying conditions. Due to soil limitations, it is necessary that Union Springs maintains an adequate and functional sanitary sewer system to serve current and future residents. The existing soil limitations for structural development can work in the favor of the city by hindering development sprawl and encouraging a compact and cohesive development pattern.

During the planning process, citizens were provided with opportunities to identify good and bad features about their city. These items are shown in the table below.

Union Springs Citizens Identify Assets and Liabilities	
ASSETS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation as the Field Trials Capital of the World • Health Care Facilities: hospital, nursing home • People • USA has everything you need; • Scenery; • Wildlife Within the City; • Local Businesses that Offer Unique Selection • Reasonable Real Estate • Variety of Churches • Variety of Restaurants • Walkable Community • Many Civic Organizations and Volunteers -- Community Spirit • Bird Dog Statue • Red Door Theater • Historical Churches • City Hall • Bullock County Courthouse • Coal Chute • Carnegie Library • Banks • Historic Houses • Josephine Hotel • Pauly Jail • New Businesses • Waterfall • Murals on Buildings • Home to Many Famous People • Wehle Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Cemeteries and Sculptures • City Park • Sport Complex • Shopping Center • Strong Elected Officials and Good Department Staff • Regional Access • Financially-Sound Local Government • High School Programs
LIABILITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Conditions • Need New Sewer Pipes • Need Better Pedestrian Access • Lack of Downtown Parking • Racial and Cultural Divide • Spotty Cellular Service • Unbalanced Focus on Downtown • Drug Usage • Gambling • Dog Fights • Panhandling • Poor Education Results • Neglected Historical Resources • Crime • Lack of Youth Activities • Lack of Police Protection • Lack of Local Financial Resources for Citizens • High Unemployment Rate 	

Community Studies

The 1996 Union Springs Comprehensive Plan included detailed studies on four community elements: housing and income, commercial development, services and facilities and land use. In this update to that plan, the organization of the community studies is slightly different and some new components have been added. First of all, the number of community elements has been increased to include housing, economic development, community facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and land use. Additionally, the economic development study includes an emphasis on downtown revitalization and tourism.

Prior to beginning work on the comprehensive plan update, the city worked with the Auburn University School of Architecture Urban Studio to develop an illustrative plan that focused on the redevelopment of the city's downtown. While the product of that work is a separate document, many of the findings, illustrations and recommendations from that study

are included in this plan. Also, as a part of the comprehensive plan update, a separate study was done on transportation and circulation patterns in Union Springs by the Birmingham firm of Skipper Consulting, Inc. While this study is also available as a separate report, the recommendations are also included in the development strategy of this plan.

Housing

A survey and review of various databases and other resources made available by the City of Union Springs resulted in 1,997 residential addresses located within the city limits. Of these, 124 addresses (6.2 percent) were for vacant lots. According to data from the 2010 local census, there are 1,873 housing units in Union Springs, which is a 15.8 percent increase from the 2000 U.S. Census. The 2010 federal census, however, only reports at total of 1,664 housing units, which is a 2.9 percent increase from 2000. Not only is there great discrepancy

between the federal and local censuses in the total number of housing units in Union Springs, but also in the housing occupancy data. The Union Springs local census results indicate that only 73.2 percent of the housing units are occupied, while the federal census reports that 87.8 percent of the total housing units are occupied. By the federal census standards, housing occupancy in Union Springs is higher than that of Bullock County, 83.4 percent, or the State of Alabama, at 86.7 percent, but slightly lower than that of the nation, at 88.6 percent.

There could be several factors in the discrepancies between the federal and local census results. One may be a lack of citizen response to the 2010 federal census, which is the primary reason that the Union Springs local census was conducted. Another reason may be the way in which the housing units were counted. In the local census, the database included all residential addresses. From this, vacant lots were identified separately from

Housing Occupancy

2010 US Census Location	Total housing units		Occupied housing units		Vacant housing units	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
United States	131,704,730	88.6%	116,716,292	88.6%	14,988,438	11.4%
Alabama	2,171,853	86.7%	1,883,791	86.7%	288,062	13.3%
Bullock	4,493	83.4%	3,745	83.4%	748	16.6%
Union Springs	1,664	87.8%	1,461	87.8%	203	12.2%
Union Springs Local Census	1,873	76.9%	1,440	76.9%	433	23.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, Data Profile 1 and Union Springs 2010 Local Census

housing units; however, abandoned housing units were included with the count of vacant housing units. Therefore, it is quite likely that the federal census did not obtain an accurate count of the vacant units. The number of occupied housing units in federal census is 1,461 units, which is only a difference of 21 units from the local census result of 1,440 occupied units. The discrepancy is in the number of vacant units, which was 203 units in the federal census and 433 units in the local census. As much as possible, housing data from both the federal and local censuses will be made available in this plan.

The 2010 U.S Census reports 12.2 percent of the total housing units are vacant, which equates to 203 units. Of the total vacant units, only 12.8 percent are for seasonal use while 8.9 percent are for sale, 25.6 percent are for rent, and more than half of the vacant units, at 52.7 percent, are not for sale or rent. The housing vacancy reported in the 2010 federal census is a slight decrease from 2000 when 224 units, or 13.9 percent, were reported vacant. In comparison, the local census reports that there are 433 vacant housing units in Union Springs in 2010, which amounts to 23.1 percent of the total housing stock. Additionally, according to the local census, there are 347 housing units (80.1 percent of the vacant units) that are not for sale, rent or seasonal use. The local census also indicates that 7.6 percent of the vacant units are for sale, 10.3 percent are for rent, and 2.1 percent are for seasonal use. In comparison, Bullock County has a 2010 housing vacancy rate of 16.6 percent while Alabama and the nation have housing vacancy rates of 13.3 percent and 11.4 percent, respectively.

Of the 1,440 occupied housing units in Union Springs, 53.0 percent are owner-occupied and 47.7 percent are renter occupied, according to the 2010 local census.

The 2010 U.S Census reports that 48.2 percent of Union Springs' occupied housing is owner-occupied and 51.8 percent is renter occupied. The percentage of owner-occupied housing in Union Springs in 2010 is a significant decrease from 2000 when 58.8 percent of the occupied units were owner-occupied.

According to the 2010 local estimates, more than half of the housing units in Union Springs, at 65.5 percent, are single units with 59.9 percent being detached units and 5.4 percent are attached units. In addition, another 19.8 percent are small complexes of two to four units and 13.9 percent are mobile homes. Less than 1.0 percent of the total housing stock in Union Springs is larger complexes with five or more units. According to the 2010 Census Bureau, 69.5 percent of the Union Springs housing is single units or small complexes with less than four units. The number of single units decreased from 63.8 percent in 2000 to 54.3 percent in 2010 while the number of small multi-units with two to four units increased from 10.5 percent to 15.2 percent. The number of mobile homes also increased in the 10-year period from 19.4 percent in 2000 to the 22.4 percent in 2010. The number of multi-family housing complexes with 5 or more units also increased from 6.4 percent of the total housing stock in 2000 to 8.1 percent in 2010.

The Union Springs local census indicates that the largest

percentage of the housing stock was built between 1970 and 1979, at 23.7 percent. The federal census, however, reports that the largest percentage of housing units, at 26.8 percent, was built between 1980 and 1989. Less than 20 percent of the total housing stock in Union Springs has been built in the last 20 years according to local census; although the federal census reports that 24.3 percent of the housing stock has been built since 1990.

Union Springs is known for its historic housing. The local census indicates that 9.1 percent of the city's total housing stock was constructed prior to 1940 while the federal census reports that 14.3 percent of the housing was built before 1940. Many of these homes are of historical significance due to their architectural features. The Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage lists seven individual historic homes, one of which, the Foster-Bryan-Brown House, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, local historians have compiled walking tours of historic homes that feature 27 different homes, as well as various commercial and institutional structures. The majority of these historic homes are in moderate to good condition and represent a historic treasure for the city.

Both the 2000 and the 2010 Census report that the median number of rooms per unit is 5.0

Historic Homes Listed on The Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage

Foster-Bryan-Brown House, 201 Kennon, Union Springs (NRHP), c. 1852-56

Hogan, Dr. S.N., House, 117 West Hardaway Ave, Union Springs, c. 1871-1884

Hunter-Anderson House, 109 Hunter Avenue, Union Springs, c. 1843

Hunter House, 416 North Prairie Street, Union Springs, c. 1900

Kennon-Paulk-Shanks House, 117 Kennon Street, Union Springs, c. 1860

L.M. Moseley / The Homespun, 208 Chunnenugee Ave, Union Springs, c. 1910

Rainer, Sterling, Price House, 202 Chunnenugee Ave, Union Springs, c. 1902

rooms. According to both the local and the federal censuses, the largest percent of the housing units have five rooms, at 32.6 percent and 28.5 percent, respectively. Both the local and federal censuses also report significant percentage of the housing stock that four and six rooms. The local census reports that 10.6 percent of the housing stock has three rooms, 22.0 percent has four rooms, and 16.3 percent has six rooms. In comparison, the federal census reports that 19.3 percent of the housing stock has three rooms, 8.3 percent has four rooms, and 16.9 percent has six rooms.

Housing value could not be determined in the 2010 Union Springs local census due to the low response rate to this question with only 11.5 percent of the total surveys providing an answer. Data available for the U.S. Census Bureau, however, indicates that the median housing value of owner-occupied units has increased in the last decade. Median housing value in 2010 in Union Springs was \$67,900 as compared to 2000 when the median housing value was \$57,800, which is a 17.5 percent increase. Median housing value as well as increases in housing values in Union Springs, however, lags far behind that of Bullock County, the state and the nation. Bullock County experienced a 20.1 percent increase in median housing value from \$56,600 in 2000 to \$68,000 in 2010 while the state and the nation had much greater increases. Median housing value in the State of Alabama increased by 42.0 percent from \$85,100 in 2000 to \$120,800 in 2010; and the nation experienced a 55.7 percent increase in median housing value from \$119,600 in 2000 to \$186,200 in 2010.

More than half of the households in Union Springs, at 54.4 percent, do not have a monthly mortgage or contract rent payment. Of those households that do have a

monthly housing cost, 9.9 percent pay less than \$200 per month; 14.1 percent have a payment between \$200 and \$299; and 15.2 percent have a payment between \$300 and \$399. Only 6.4 percent have a monthly housing cost that is \$400 or more. Household income, however, remains as a common impediment to obtaining sound and affordable housing. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, a housing cost burden exists if housing costs exceed 30.0 percent of a household's income. In Union Springs, 43.3 percent of home owners spend 30.0 percent or more of their household income on housing costs, and 65.3 percent of renters spend 30.0 percent or more of their household income on housing costs. These population groups have drastically increased since 2000 when 21.4 percent of homeowners and 51.2 of renters spent 30.0 percent or more on housing costs. This statistic illustrates that those who rent are less likely to have the economic resources for renting, much less for constructing or purchasing single, detached units.

Overall condition of a city's housing stock can be determined in a number of ways; however, one of the most commonly used methods is the presence of basic services and household facilities.

The Union Springs local census reports that just under 70 percent of the households responding have all basic facilities in the unit, such as hot and cold piped water, flush toilets, bathtub or shower, kitchen sink with piped water, a range or stove, and a refrigerator. The 2010 U.S. Census reports that no housing units are without complete plumbing in Union Springs and only 2.2 percent are without complete kitchen facilities. The 2010 census also reports, however, that 9.0 percent of the occupied housing units are without telephone service as compared to 10.3 percent of households without a telephone in 2000. Additionally, the 2010 Census reports that 5.7 percent of the housing units are overcrowded with 1.01 persons or more per room, as compared to 12.0 percent of the housing units being overcrowded in 2000.

In recent years, the City of Union Springs has addressed many of the substandard units by implementing several housing rehabilitation projects. Additionally, the City has pursued a campaign to demolish dilapidated structures, which are both unsafe and undesirable to residents and business owners through adoption of a condemnation policy.

The Bullock County Housing Authority does offer viable, low-

Housing Needs and Issues

In a series of public meetings, citizens reviewed the City's housing goals, answered surveys, discussed options and identified specific housing issues that need to be addressed in Union Springs. In one survey, citizens were asked if there is adequate housing choice in Union Springs in appropriate price ranges; and if not, what is missing. More than half of the respondents stated that there is not adequate housing choice in Union Springs. In addition, citizens specifically identified the following housing needs and issues.

Needs:

- Sound and affordable housing
- Housing financing opportunities
- Quality rental properties
- Small townhome properties
- Comfortable modern housing
- Elderly housing

Issues:

- Protection of historic housing resources
- Little new housing
- Substandard housing/manufactured housing
- Control infill development to blend with existing neighborhoods
- Neighborhood safety
- Residential zoning and nonconforming lots

cost housing options in the form of public housing and Section 8 subsidized housing. Within the City of Union Springs, the Housing Authority manages six public apartment complexes with a total of 200 units and one Section 8 subsidized complex with 32 units. The East Central Mental Health/Mental Retardation also manages one Section 8 subsidized complex with approximately 15 units for patients. In addition to the public housing rental resources, there are privately owned housing units that are subsidized through the Section 8 program.

Economic Development

Once a thriving trade center with a dependence on farming and cotton plantations, Union Springs has suffered tremendous economic decline in the 20th century. Major factors in this downward spiral were the decline in farming in general and the cotton industry, in particular, along with development of the interstate system. As land used for farming and cotton plantations was transformed into hunting, timber and other uses, economic traffic decreased. The construction of Interstate 85 in the late 1950s to early 1960s less than 30 miles to the north further drew economic trade away from Union Springs. Development of the national interstate system also decreased reliance upon the rail system which eventually resulted in the loss of the major rail intersection junction of the Mobile and Girard Railroad and the Montgomery and Eufaula Railroad. Although the commercial framework remains in the historic downtown area, today the City of Union Springs and her residents continue to struggle with population loss, a lack of local jobs, and sporadic growth and loss within its commercial base.

Even with a long-term decline in economic activity, Union Springs is still the economic center

of Bullock County. As such, the city retains a certain amount of commercial activity due to its regional location and the location and provision of necessary services within the county, such as health care, legal resources, and personal services. In recent years, Union Springs has also begun to include tourism in long range economic development plans. Those efforts, however, have been geared more towards serving those visitors that are already coming to Union Springs rather than using tourism as a means to attract additional economic growth. This section will provide a review of Union Springs' existing economic resources, labor force, education and income levels, regional economic climate, and economic opportunities and liabilities.

It is estimated that slightly more than 10 percent of the developed land in Union Springs is used for commercial (5.8 percent) or industrial (4.4 percent) purposes. This equates to 6.2 percent of the total land area in Union Springs, with approximately 149.7 acres in commercial land uses and 112.0 acres in industrial land uses. Commercial uses vary from retail commercial to personal services, with many of the businesses being small locally-owned establishments that employ a small number of people or are home-based businesses.

The existing employers are a large draw for workers in the surrounding area. Data available from the U.S. Bureau of Census' On The Map Program estimates that there are 1,358 persons employed in Union Springs, as of 2010. This is a 38.7 percent decrease in jobs since 2002, with a decrease of 859 jobs in the city. The majority of the persons employed in Union Springs, at 54.8 percent, are age 30 to 54, while 22.3 percent are age 29 or younger and 22.9 percent are age 55 and older. Of the persons working in Union Springs in 2010, just under half are residents of Bullock County with 17.1 percent being residents Union Springs and 31.7 percent being residents of Bullock County outside of Union Springs. Montgomery County has the largest percentage of workers commuting to Union Springs, at 7.1 percent of the city's employment, followed by Macon and Pike Counties, each with 5.3 percent of the total employment. In 2002, just over half of the jobs in Union Springs were occupied by Bullock County residents. This equates to a total loss of 452 jobs being filled by Bullock County residents over the eight year time period. The immigration of employees from their home counties is shown in the table on the following page.

The U.S. Bureau of Census' On The Map Program also estimates that as of 2010, there is an

Major Employers in Union Springs

Name	Product	# Employees
Wayne Farms	Poultry Products	980
Bonnie Plant Farm	Plants	510
Bullock County Correctional Facility	Corrections	320
Bullock County Board of Education	Education	199
Bullock County Hospital	Hospital	160
Southern Springs Healthcare and Rehabilitation Facility	Nursing Home	140
Dixie Electric	Electric Cooperative	44
Amerifirst Bank	Bank	23
Community Bank and Trust	Bank	20
Total		2396

Source: Bullock County Development Authority; <http://www.bullockcountyal.com/business-advantages/existing-industries>

existing employed labor force in Union Springs of 1,059 persons, of which 21.9 percent work in the city and 78.1 percent commute outside the city for employment. Of the 827 persons who travel out of Union Springs, the majority work in either Bullock County, at 19.9 percent, or Montgomery County, at 15.3 percent. The remainder primarily travel to surrounding counties. The 2010 employed labor force is a 6.2 decrease from 1,125 employed Union Springs workers in 2002. Still, out-migration has increased since 2002 to all of the nearby counties with the exception of Barbour and Houston County.

The 2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (ACS) report that there are 3,201 persons, age 16 and older, living in Union Springs. Of these, 1,562, or 48.8 percent, are in the civilian labor force and none are in the armed forces. In Bullock County, 53.8 percent of the persons are 16 and older are in the civilian labor force; and in the state, 59.8 percent are in the civilian labor force and 0.4 percent are in the armed forces. The ACS reports that of those persons in the labor force, 9.6 percent are unemployed statewide, 15.5 percent are unemployed in Bullock County, and 24.7 percent are unemployed in Union Springs. More recent data for the state and county are available through the Labor Market Information Division of the Alabama Department of Labor. As of December 2012, the Alabama Department of Labor reports that 6.5 percent of the Alabama labor force is unemployed and 13.1 percent of the Bullock County labor force is unemployed. Although unemployment data is not available at the municipal level through the Alabama Department of Labor, it is safe to assume that approximately one-fourth of the city's labor force continues to be unemployed.

Of those persons who are employed in Union Springs, just

In-Migration for Work by County of Residence

County of Residence	2010		2002	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Primary Jobs	1,358	100.00%	2,217	100.00%
Bullock County	662	48.70%	1,114	50.20%
Montgomery County	97	7.10%	232	10.50%
Macon County	72	5.30%	103	4.60%
Pike County	72	5.30%	179	8.10%
Barbour County	58	4.30%	88	4.00%
Crenshaw County	36	2.70%	21	0.90%
Elmore County	32	2.40%	46	2.10%
Lee County	24	1.80%	33	1.50%
Coffee County	20	1.50%	61	2.80%
Russell County	20	1.50%	36	1.60%
All Other Locations	265	19.50%	304	13.70%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; On The Map, Inflow-Outflow Reports.

<http://onthemap.ces.census.gov>

Out-Migration for Work by County of Employment

County of Residence	2010		2002	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bullock County	443	41.8%	546	48.50%
Montgomery County	162	15.3%	93	8.3%
Coffee County	63	5.9%	36	3.2%
Barbour County	50	4.7%	72	6.4%
Macon County	46	4.3%	14	1.2%
Lee County	40	3.8%	20	1.8%
Elmore County	30	2.8%	8	0.7%
Pike County	26	2.5%	19	1.7%
Jefferson County	24	2.3%	19	1.7%
Houston County	14	1.3%	38	3.4%
All Other Locations	161	15.2%	260	23.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; On The Map, Inflow-Outflow Reports.

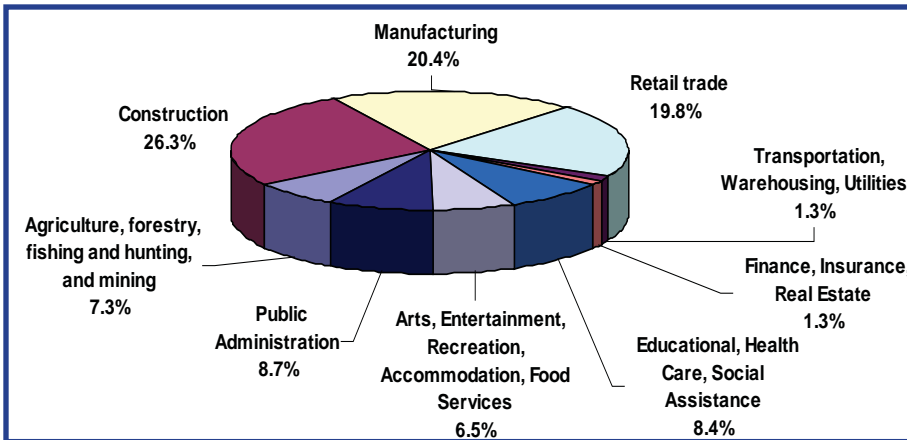
<http://onthemap.ces.census.gov>

over two-thirds work in one of three industry segments, with 26.3 percent employed in the construction industry, 20.4 percent employed in the manufacturing industry, and 19.8 percent employed in retail trade. Union Springs has a much higher percentage of the labor force working in all three industries than does the state, in which 7.50 percent work in construction, 14.2 percent work in manufacturing, and 12.0 percent are employed in retail trade. The remaining third of the employed labor force work in one of the following six industry segments: public administration, at 8.7 percent; education, health care and social assistance, at 8.4 percent; agriculture, forestry,

fishing and hunting, and mining, at 7.3 percent; arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services, at 6.5 percent; transportation, warehousing and utilities, at 1.3 percent; and finance, insurance and real estate, at 1.3 percent.

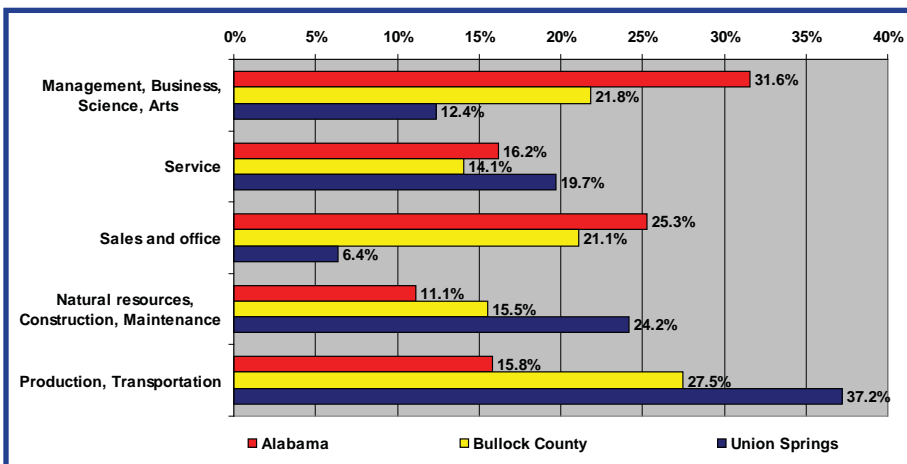
According to the 2011 ACS data, the largest portion of the employed Union Springs labor force works in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, at 37.2 percent. In comparison, 27.5 percent of the Bullock County labor force and 15.8 percent of the state labor force works in these occupations. The second largest percentage of the labor force, at 24.2 percent, works in natural resources,

Employment by Industry, 2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2011, Economic Characteristics.

Employment by Occupation, 2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2011, Economic Characteristics.

construction and maintenance occupations, as compared to 15.5 percent in Bullock County and 11.1 percent in Alabama. The largest percentage of the state labor force, at 31.6 percent, is employed in management, business, science and arts occupations, followed by sales and office occupations, at 25.3 percent. These two occupation groups employ the lowest percentages of the Union Springs labor force, with 12.4 percent in management, business, science and arts occupations, 6.4 percent in sales and office occupations. The majority of the workers in Union Springs, at 75.9 percent, are private wage and salary employees, followed by government workers, at 22.9 percent and only 1.2 percent are

self-employed. These percentages are similar for the state and Bullock County, although the percentage of self-employment increases in the larger areas. In Bullock County, 78.7 percent of workers are private wage and salary employees, 17.6 percent are government workers and 3.7 percent are self-employed; statewide, 77.4 percent of workers are private wage and salary employees, 16.6 percent are government workers and 5.8 percent are self-employed.

Union Springs workers used three methods to get to and from work according to the ACS 2011 data. These included driving alone in a vehicle, at 72.6 percent, carpooling in a vehicle, at 12.8 percent, and walking, at 14.5

percent. No Union Springs workers used public transportation, another means of transportation or worked at home. The percentage of workers who walked to work is much higher in Union Springs than in Bullock County, at 4.7 percent, or in the state, at 1.2 percent. The percentage of persons who drove alone is much higher in the state, at 83.8 percent, than in Union Springs and is also higher than in Bullock County, at 79.2 percent. The mean travel time to work for Union Springs residents is 20.9 minutes. The mean travel time for work for Bullock County is 28.3 minutes and statewide is 24.0 minutes.

Education and income levels in Union Springs do not compare well with the state, or even with Bullock County. Union Springs has a very high percentage of the population, age 25 and older, that are not high school graduates, at 40.9 percent, as compared to 28 percent in Bullock County and 18.1 percent in the state. Those persons who are high school graduates is also lower in Union Springs, at 24.0 percent, than in the Bullock County, at 34.7 percent or in the state, at 31.4 percent. In Union Springs, 16.5 percent of the population has a college degree -- either associate's, bachelor's or graduate degree -- as compared to 19.6 percent in Bullock County and 29.0 percent in Alabama.

It is not a far leap to understand the impact of the existing education levels on unemployment rates and income levels in Union Springs. Although reliable and current unemployment data is not available for the City of Union Springs, data is available for Bullock County. In recent years, unemployment in Bullock County has escalated to the second highest county unemployment rate in the state. As of December 2012, the unemployment rate in the surrounding counties is also much lower than that of Bullock County, with Macon County at 8.7 percent,

Russell County at 8.8 percent, Barbour County at 9.9 percent, Pike County at 6.5 percent, and Montgomery at 6.7 percent. While the average annual unemployment rate in Bullock County increased from 14.7 percent in 2010 to

15.3 percent in 2011, the annual average unemployment rate for state decreased from 9.5 percent in 2010 to 9.0 percent in 2011.

Income levels in Union Springs are much lower than those of Bullock County and drastically

lower than those of the State of Alabama, according to the ACS 2011 data. The median household income in Union Springs is \$23,545, which is only 54.8 percent of that of the state, at \$42,934. The median family Union Springs, at \$26,250, is less than half that of the state, at \$54,001. The per capita income in Union Springs is \$19,095, as compared to \$20,678 in Bullock County, and \$23,483 in the state. Sadly, the percentage of families living below poverty level in Union Springs is almost double that of Bullock County and triple that of the state. In Union Springs, 39.8 percent of families and 39.2 percent of all persons live below poverty level, as compared to 22.1 percent of families and 26.0 percent of all persons in Bullock County, and 13.4 percent of families and 17.6 percent of all persons in the state.

In most cases, economic development is not just a local event, but instead, is reliant upon the regional economic climate. This is especially true for smaller municipalities such as Union Springs in which area residents often travel to other areas for basic necessities such as groceries and clothing due to a lack of choice in the local retail market. Due to the regional nature and impact of economic development, the State of Alabama has established ten workforce development regions to provide a direct link to the workforce needs of business and industry at the local level. Bullock County is in Alabama's Workforce Development Region 8, which also includes Chambers, Lee, Macon and Russell Counties. The Alabama Workforce Development Program provides a number of studies that are relevant to local economic development efforts, target markets and labor force education and training.

The State of the Workforce Report V: Region 8, produced in June 2011 by the Center for Business and Economic Research as part of the Alabama Workforce

Educational Attainment	Alabama	Bullock County	Union Springs
Population 25 years and over	3,138,078	7,537	2,682
Less than 9th grade	6.10%	12.30%	18.00%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	12.00%	15.70%	22.90%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	31.40%	34.70%	24.00%
Some college, no degree	21.50%	17.80%	18.60%
Associate's degree	7.00%	5.20%	5.70%
Bachelor's degree	14.00%	8.70%	5.80%
Graduate or professional degree	8.00%	5.70%	5.00%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2011, Social Characteristics.

Bullock County Annual Average Unemployment Rate

Year	Annual Average Civilian Labor Force	Annual Average Employment	Annual Average Unemployment	Annual Average Unemployment Rate
2000	3,993	3,691	302	7.6
2001	3,931	3,574	357	9.1
2002	3,864	3,505	359	9.3
2003	3,929	3,535	394	10.0
2004	3,812	3,417	395	10.4
2005	3,695	3,394	301	8.1
2006	3,687	3,402	285	7.7
2007	3,629	3,332	297	8.2
2008	3,591	3,253	338	9.4
2009	3,688	3,167	521	14.1
2010	3,762	3,210	552	14.7
2011	3,762	3,186	576	15.3

Estimates prepared by the Alabama Department of Labor in Cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, based on referenced benchmark.

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Division.

<http://www2.dir.alabama.gov/LAUS/CLF/cntybyyear.aspx?area=000011>

Income	Alabama	Bullock County	Union Springs
Median Household Income	\$42,934	\$31,955	\$23,545
Median Family Income	\$54,001	\$41,702	\$26,250
Median Nonfamily Income	\$23,864	\$21,164	\$21,771
Per Capita Income	\$23,483	\$20,678	\$19,095
Persons with Income Below Poverty Level			
All Families	13.4%	22.1%	39.8%
All People	17.6%	26.0%	39.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2011, Social Characteristics.

Development Program, analyzes workforce supply and demand issues for Region 8 and presents implications and recommendations. Many of the findings outlined in the summary of the report, listed below, address the educational needs of workforce development and have a direct impact on future economic development efforts in Union Springs:

- Region 8 had a 9.4 percent unemployment rate in January 2011, with 10,442 unemployed. An underemployment rate of 23.7 percent for 2010 means that the region has a 34,379-strong available labor pool that includes 23,937 underemployed workers who are looking for better jobs and are willing to commute farther and longer for such jobs.
- Skill and education requirements for jobs keep rising. Educational and training requirements of high-demand, fast-growing, and high-earning occupations demonstrate the importance of education in developing the future workforce. In the future, more jobs will require postsecondary education and training at a minimum.
- The importance of basic skills generally and for high-demand, high-growth, and high-earning jobs indicates a strong need for training in these skills. For Region 8 the pace of training needs to increase for technical, systems, and two basic (science and mathematics) skills. The scale of training should be raised for basic and social skills. Ideally, all high school graduates should possess basic skills so that postsecondary and higher education can focus on other and more complex skills. Employers should be an integral part of planning for training as they can help identify future skill needs and any existing gaps.
- From a 2008 base, a worker surplus of 7,650 for 2018 and a

worker shortfall of 1,169 for 2025 are expected. This will demand a focus on worker skills through 2018, after which both skills and the expected shortfall must be priorities through 2025. Worker shortfalls in critical occupations will also need to be addressed continuously. Strategies to address skill needs and critical occupation shortfalls should aim to raise worker productivity and increase labor force participation and might include: (1) improvements in education and its funding; (2) continuation and enhancement of programs to assess, retrain, and place dislocated workers; (3) focus on hard-to-serve populations (e.g. out-of-school youth); (4) lowering the high school dropout rate; (5) use of economic opportunities to attract new residents; (6) encouragement of older worker participation in the labor force; and (7) facilitation of in-commuting.

- Improving education is important because (i) a highly educated and productive workforce is a critical economic development asset, (ii) productivity rises with education, (iii) educated people are more likely to work, and (iv) it yields high private and social rates of return on investment.

Workforce development must view all of education and other programs (e.g. adult education, career technical training, worker retraining, career readiness, etc.) as one system. Funding to support workforce development may require tax reform at state and local levels and should provide for flexibility as workforce needs change over time and demand different priorities. Publicizing both private and public returns to education can encourage individuals to raise their own educational attainment levels, while also promoting public and legislative support for education.

- Higher incomes that come with improved educational attainment and work skills will help to increase personal income for the region as well as raise additional local (county and city) tax revenues. This is important, especially for a region whose per capita income is below the state average.
- Together, workforce development and economic development can build a strong, well-diversified Region 8 economy. Indeed, one cannot achieve success without the other.

In 2011, a retail analysis was conducted for the Bullock County

Economic Development Needs and Issues

In a series of public meetings, citizens reviewed the City's economic development goals, answered surveys, discussed options and identified specific economic development issues that need to be addressed in Union Springs. Citizens stated they are inclined to support local merchants, but that adequate shopping and services are not available. In addition, citizens specifically identified the following economic development needs and issues.

Needs:

- More retail establishment to meet resident needs
- Better education results
- More local jobs
- Welcome center
- Refurbishing Prairie Street store fronts
- Restaurants
- Additional parking downtown

Issues:

- Attracting new businesses: retail and manufacturing
- Developing a skilled labor force
- Developing a Main Street Program
- Increased tourism efforts
- Developing a local business district at U.S. Highway 29 and U.S. Highway 82
- Residential zoning and nonconforming lots

Development Authority by the Center for International Business and Economic Development located at Troy University. The report states that Bullock County and Union Springs residents and businesses have had to cope with many challenges when it comes to retail opportunities. Some of these challenges are found in leakage, the outflow of residents commuting to metro areas for work, disposable income as it relates to a low income level, and small rural population to name a few. Based on the data collected, the immediate population most likely would not support additional retail and commercial businesses based solely on local income levels and current roof top numbers. However, opportunities do exist in expanded services to meet local demand as well as opportunities to attract visitor and tourism dollars to the area.

The report further states that, all totaled, the numbers for Bullock County's retail are positive. The county is reaching its potential sales ability based on current demographics, with the exception of a couple of sectors. This is important as the county moves forward in planning its targeted retail strategy because attention must be paid to those customers simply passing through the county and visitors if retail numbers are going to increase. Also, attention should be paid to gaps in what is available in the county and what is desired by residents—which could be done with a simple survey in local businesses.

Community Facilities

Union Springs is fortunate to have a wealth of community resources, facilities and attractions to serve area residents. Community facilities include those features that are beyond the basic necessities of utility services and that help define the quality of life within an area. These features may include



Bullock County Courthouse

governmental structure, safety and emergency services, libraries, cultural resources and amenities, education system, communications, and recreational facilities.

Union Springs is the county seat of Bullock County and is home to the Bullock County Courthouse, which was built in 1871 during Reconstruction and renovated in 1992. The City of Union Springs has a mayor-council form of government, with the mayor and council members each serving four-year terms. The Union Springs City Hall is located on North Prairie Street, directly across the from the Bullock County Courthouse.

The Union Springs City Council meetings are recorded and aired live on a local television station, providing an opportunity for most all interested citizens to remain aware of local events, issues and actions taken by the city council. City Council members are assigned to seven committees to provide oversight of city activities. The council committees are (1) Finance; (2) Police and Fire; (3) Streets; (4) Cemeteries and Sanitation; (5) Tourism, Promotion, Historic Preservation and Extension Service; (6) Commercial and Industrial Development; and (7) Recreation, Parks and Special Events. The City of Union Springs operates the following departments: administration, natural gas, police, public works, and water.

The City has an annual operating budget that is generally between \$2 million and \$2.5 million. Primary city expenditures include public safety, public works and general



Union Springs City Hall

government costs. Public safety includes law enforcement salaries, vehicles and equipment, building maintenance, continued training and education, and prisoner care. Public works includes employee salaries, sanitation services, vehicles and equipment, street materials and lights, sidewalk maintenance and solid waste disposal. General government costs include administrative salaries, operating expenses and utilities, fees, legal advertisements, election expenses, and property insurance.

Over half of the city's revenues come from taxes collected, including sales taxes, and property, alcohol, and gasoline taxes. Secondary sources of revenue for Union Springs includes licenses and permits and charges for services. Licenses and permits include building permits and inspections, business licenses, and vehicle license fees. Services for which charges are applied include garbage fees, landfill fees, and cemetery fees.

Citizens of Union Springs are served by a municipal police department of 21 employees, of which 13 are sworn police officers. The remaining police department staff are civilian dispatchers and support personnel. The city police department, located at 305 Prairie Street North in downtown Union Springs, operates with an average annual budget around \$97,000 which includes salaries and benefits, building maintenance and utilities, vehicle maintenance, and prisoner care. The ratio of police officers per 1,000 residents in Union Springs is 3.25 as compared to 2.41 officer per

1,000 residents for the state. The number of police officers in Union Springs has fluctuated between 9 and 13 officers since 1990.

City-data.com reports that Union Springs had a crime index of 298 in 2009 which is higher than that of the United States average at 280. Crime data is interpreted in many different ways depending on how it is being used and how the data was originally collected. For the purposes of this study, crime data available from annual reported produced by the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center is used. The 1995 Crime in Alabama annual report explains that in October of 1975, Act 872 passed both houses of the Alabama Legislature creating and establishing the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center (ACJIC) which is commissioned to collect, store, retrieve, analyze, and disseminate criminal justice data. Inherent in ACJIC is a “uniform crime reporting system for the periodic collection and analysis of crimes reported to any and all criminal justice agencies within the state.” (Act 872, Section 9, 1975) With the passage of this bill, mandatory reporting was required of law enforcement agencies in Alabama. Prior to 1976, law enforcement agencies participated in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) on a voluntary basis. According to

the 1995 report, there was a 185 percent increase in uniform crime reporting (UCR) in the 20 years since the mandatory submission was required.

Crime data is divided into one of two major categories: Part I Index Crimes or Part II Offenses. Part I Index Crimes are deemed more serious and/or most frequent. The Part I Index Crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Part II offenses include non-aggravated assaults; forgery and counterfeiting; fraud; embezzlement; stolen property; vandalism; weapons; prostitution and commercial vice; sex offenses; narcotic drug laws; gambling; offenses against the family and children; driving under the influence; violation of liquor laws; drunkenness; disorderly conduct; vagrancy; and other offenses not identified as Part I Index Crimes.

According to the ACJIC reports, the total number of crimes reported in Union Springs has experienced several increases and decreases in the last 20 years as shown in the chart below. Most notably, between 2005 and 2010, there was a 71.0 percent decrease in crime with the number of index crimes (Part 1) dropping from 21 to 3. Between 2010 and 2011, however, the number of crimes more than doubled from 72 to 167, most of which were Part II

offenses. Still, the number of Part I crimes increased from 3 offenses in 2010 to 21 offenses in 2011.

Other safety and emergency services include the Union Springs Volunteer Fire Department and RCS Ambulance Service. The Union Springs Volunteer Fire Department is partially funded by appropriations from the City of Union Springs. There is one fire station located at 303 Prairie Street North. The fire department is manned by 20 volunteer fire fighters. RCS Ambulance Service is located at 1431 Conecuh Avenue East.

Union Springs citizens are also served by the Bullock County Hospital, located at 102 West Conecuh Street near downtown. The Bullock County Hospital is 54-bed short-term acute care facility providing general medical and surgical services with a staff of 156 persons. The hospital has approximately 1,738 admissions annually and serves 8,849 outpatient visits each year. There are six physicians associated with the hospital; four special in internal medicine, one in pediatrics and one in physical therapy. Services available include pediatrics, an adult medical surgical unit, emergency services, radiology, mammography, x-ray, CT and ultrasound, physical therapy, home health services, alcohol and drug addiction treatment, adult psychiatric services, and geriatric psychiatric services for ages 55 and older. Also associated with the Bullock County Hospital are the Gateway Behavioral Unit and the Bradford Addiction Program. The Gateway Behavioral Unit is a mental health provider that can treat bipolar disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias, panic attacks, personality disorders, schizophrenia and other mental health practitioner disorders. The Bradford Addition Program takes a continuum of care approach to

Crime in Union Springs, 1990 to 2011

Year	Part I Crimes	Part II Offenses	Total Crimes	Percent Change
1990	57	261	318	
1995	43	221	264	-17.0%
2000	34	162	196	-25.8%
2005	21	227	248	26.5%
2010	3	69	72	-71.0%
2011	21	146	167	131.9%

Source: Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center, Annual Crime Report, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2011.

treating adults with alcohol and drug dependency.

Other healthcare facilities in Union Springs include Associates Home Health Services, East Central Mental Health Center and Southern Springs Healthcare. Associates Home Health Services provides home health aid, nursing care and physical therapy. East Central Mental Health Center provides comprehensive mental health care, and intellectual disabilities and substance abuse services to the citizens of Bullock, Macon and Pike Counties. The Union Springs facility is located at 202 Abercrombie Street South. Southern Springs Healthcare is a privately-owned 123-bed nursing home facility located at the eastern boundary of Union Springs at 745 Southern Springs Road.

Education in Union Springs is provided through the Bullock County Board of Education which administers four schools. Union Springs Elementary School, located at 211 West Conecuh Street, serves grades kindergarten through fourth. South Highlands Middle School, located at 700 Bernard Street in Union Springs, served the fifth through seventh grades. Bullock County High School, located at 911 Sardis Road, serves eighth through twelfth grades. Also available to high school students is the Bullock County Career Technical Center, which is located at 304 East Blackmon Street. Career and Technical programs available at the Bullock County Career Tech Center include business and marketing education, health science, agriscience, horticulture, agriconstruction, cooperative education, early childhood education, career explorations, family and consumer science and automotive technology.

The schools have a combined enrollment of approximately 1,700 students. Average daily attendance is generally upwards of 96 percent

and consistently higher than that of the state. Unfortunately, the number of students qualifying for free and reduced meals is much higher than that of the state due to the low income levels of the area. In Bullock County schools, those qualifying for free and reduced meals is usually higher than 90 percent, as compared to 50 percent for the state. The Bullock County School System has around 220 employees, of which 4.5 percent are administrative staff, 47.7 percent are teachers, 7.7 percent are certified support positions such as librarians and counselors, and 40.0 percent are support personnel.

In addition to the public school system, education is available through two nearby Christian-based private schools. Conecuh Springs Christian School (CSCS), is located on Hicks Industrial Boulevard in Union Springs, and Macon East Academy is located on Alabama Highway 110 just past the Bullock County Line in eastern Montgomery County. CSCS is a private parochial school serving kindergarten through 12th grades. CSCS is a member of the Alabama Christian Education Association and the American Association of Christian Schools. Macon East also serves kindergarten through 12th grades. Macon East states that it is a college preparatory school committed to providing students with a safe, nurturing environment that promotes academic achievement, patriotism, and belief in God through Christian values. Post-secondary education opportunities are also available with eight four-year institutions, four technical colleges and three junior colleges within a 50-mile radius of the city.

Union Springs is home to one of 14 Carnegie Libraries built in Alabama in the early 1900s. The Union Spring Library, built in 1911, is one of two of the Carnegie Libraries that is still in use as a



Union Springs Public Library

library. Of the original 14 libraries, six are no longer standing, six are still standing but used for other purposes, and two – in Union Springs and Eufaula – remain in use as a public library. The Union Springs Library, located at 103 Prairie Street North, provides an anchor to the downtown district. Today, the Union Springs Public Library has an operating income of approximately \$58,000 and houses more than 13,000 volumes of adult, young adult and children's books. The library also has 260 audio material, 70 video materials, 81 state licensed databases and hold subscriptions to 29 periodicals and two newspapers. The library has 16 computers available for public use and offers wireless internet use, as well. Additionally, the Union Springs Public Library offers summer reading programs and monthly career resource training, as well as number of other community outreach events and programs.

Union Springs is served by one local newspaper, the Union Springs Herald, and three newspaper from nearby Montgomery and Columbus. The Union Springs Herald is a weekly newspaper with a circulation of approximately 2,400 print copies distributed at 15 location in Union Springs and mailed to subscribers. The newspaper also maintains an online edition and posts news on social media websites. The Union Springs Herald has been printed since 1866 and is believed to be the third oldest newspaper in Alabama. The Herald is a

member of the National Newspaper Association and the Alabama Press Association.

Telecommunication service is available from the Union Spring Telephone Company (USTC) which offers voice, video and data. The USTC has been in operation since 1955, and in 2002 became one of the first rural telephone companies in the United State to add fiber connections. The USTC has a 900 square mile service area extending to Barbour, Bullock, Macon and Pike Counties with approximately 1,800 fiber customers. Current statistics for USTC indicate that over 93 percent of customers have the ability to connect to the internet via a high-speed connection.

Union Springs has a local cable channel, TV-23, that provides community updates and specials focusing on the people and places

in and around Union Springs. Although there are no broadcast stations located in Union springs, there are eight television broadcast stations located in the nearby cities of Columbus, Montgomery, Opelika and Troy that are accessible to residents. Cable television is available around the city through Union Springs Telephone Company. Various satellite providers are also available, including Dish Network and DirecTV. There are also no local radio stations in Union Springs; however, radio reception is available from area wide stations including 16 FM stations and 13 AM stations.

Union Springs offers a wide variety of cultural historical and recreational amenities that are enjoyed by residents and attract visitors on a continual basis. The City of Union Springs currently

owns and/or maintains five recreational facilities, including Ed Mac Farrior Little League field, Montgomery Street Park, a walking trail on Hardaway Avenue, the playground at Union Springs Elementary School, and a converted Armory building used by the YMCA, known as the Union Springs Recreational Facility. Montgomery Street Park is a two-acre recreation park consisting of one lighted basketball court and a playground. The walking trail is a picnic and passive recreational site located downtown. The Union Springs Recreational Facility is located in the old National Guard Armory on U.S. Highway 82 and houses the city's YMCA program. Youth programs available at the Recreation Center include aquatics, baseball, basketball, cheerleading, softball and t-ball; adult programs include aerobics, nutrition classes, swimming, walking, water aerobics, and weight lifting. It is estimated that there is approximately 135 acres of recreational property in Union Springs. Parks are located on Blackmon Avenue, Conecuh Avenue, Holcombe Avenue, and Holcombe Street. The City of Union Springs has approximately \$185,000 in recreational expenses each year, which is a considerable shortfall of the revenues realized through participation in recreation programs. Shortfalls generally range from \$30,000 to \$50,000 each year.

Additionally, Union Springs and Bullock County are home to numerous bird dog field trials each year. Bullock County Field Trials begin in November and continue to March. Union Springs also hosts the National Amateur Free-For-All Championship in February of each year, which is the largest event of this type in the country. The field trial events bring numerous visitors to the area and are a primary source of recreation for those residents who are involved.

Community Facilities Needs and Issues

In a series of public meetings, citizens reviewed the City's community facility goals, answered surveys, discussed options and identified specific community facility issues that need to be addressed in Union Springs. While there is an inherent pride in their city, citizens identified features that they are not satisfied with and recognized areas that need improvement. Additionally, citizens specifically identified the following community facility needs and issues.

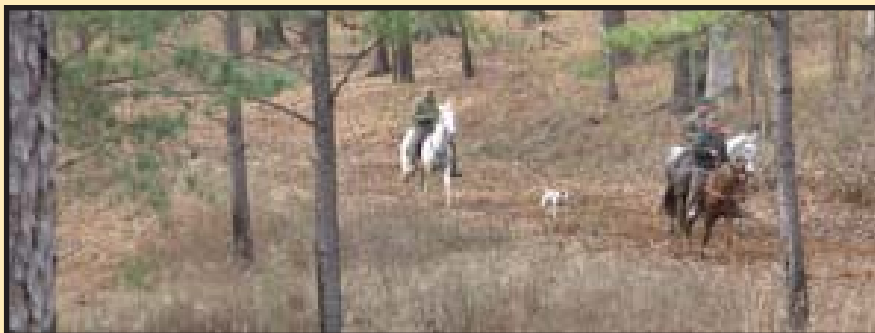
Needs:

- Better police facilities
- Better fire protection facilities and equipment
- Better education results
- Activities for youth and young adults
- Recreation for elders
- Skill training/education
- Good jobs with benefits
- Stronger school system
- Develop recreation area near pool
- Civic center
- Animal control

Issues:

- Poor appearance around the city
- High school drop-out rates
- Street conditions
- Promotion of, and access to, unique features
- Loitering
- Safety in schools

Field Trials



Infrastructure

Union Spring's infrastructural system consists of a network of water, sewer, storm drainage, electricity, natural gas, and solid waste services. The Union Springs Utilities Board oversees the city's water, sewer, and natural gas systems. The City of Union Springs contracts with Waste Management, Inc. for solid waste collection and disposal services. Storm water management is addressed in concert with road improvements within the City's Public Works Department. The majority of the city is supplied with electricity by Alabama Power, although some parts of the city are served by Dixie Electric Cooperative/PowerSouth.

The Utilities Board of the City of Union Springs provides public water service to approximately 1,450 residential and 145 commercial customers. The average demand for water is 1.2 million gallons per day (GPD), with a peak demand of 2.3 million GPD. The city obtains its water from four wells which have a combined capacity of just over 2.5 million GPD and a pumping capacity of 1,870 gallons per minute. The quality of water provided is considered good and does not show signs of high levels of contaminants. The Utilities Board has four elevated tanks that provide storage for the system. The four tanks have a combined storage capacity of 1.5 million gallons, are in excellent condition and are maintained and serviced regularly. The distribution system is comprised of approximately 170,000 linear feet of water service lines. Approximately 38 percent of the water lines are characterized as undersized, meaning that these lines are less than 6 inches in diameter, which contributes to low water pressure. Poor water flow and pressure affect fire protection capabilities. The Utilities Board is working with city officials to replace the undersized and deteriorated

lines as funds become available. Local officials have stated that the existing water system is more than sufficient for its existing needs since it was improved in order to serve the Bullock Correctional Facility (a state prison) when it was constructed in the late 1980s. Any new significant growth or industrial development, however, could place a strain on the existing water facilities.

The Utilities Board provides sanitary sewer service to approximately 1,200 residential customers and 200 commercial customers, which includes all residents of the city. The Union Springs system is the only municipally-owned public sewage system in Bullock County. The collection and treatment capabilities of the system are provided by two treatment plants serving different parts of the city and are operated independent of one another. Plant No. 1 is a 750,000 million gallon per day (MGD) trickling filter plant that is currently treating 400,000 gallons per day (GPD) of effluent, which is about 53 percent of the plant's total capacity. Constructed in 1959, Plant No. 1 serves the northern two-thirds of Union Springs. Recent improvements at Plant No. 1 include a \$735,000 project to install headers to address problems caused by the infiltration of storm water into the collection lines. Built in 1969, Plant No. 2 is a 1.5 MGD active sludge plant operating at 63 percent of its total capacity. Plant No. 2 was recently upgraded to include new clarifiers and an equalization basin to better accommodate the wastewater generated from the Wayne Farms poultry processing plant. These improvements are expected to provide treatment to future Wayne Farms expansions, as well as future commercial and industrial growth within the plant's service area. Although the city's sewer collection and treatment system is

sufficient to meet existing needs, there is an ongoing program for the replacement of older sewer collection lines to ensure long-term compliance and functionality.

Union Springs is located along the upper tributaries of the Conecuh River. The Conecuh River and Slaughter Creek are two flood zones in the area. Conecuh River's 100-year flood plain encompasses 521 acres, while the 500-year flood plain entails 547 acres. There are 45 houses and several businesses located near the Conecuh River flood zone. Moderate to heavy rains lead to periods of standing water that generally flood surrounding buildings, yards and streets. Slaughter Creek is situated in the western part of Union Springs and flows to the Tallapoosa River. The creek's 100-year and 500-year flood plains contain 51 and 53 acres, respectively. Union Springs has attempted to mitigate flooding problems with local funds as the primary financing source and have been successful in alleviating many of the problems. Still, some parts of the city do not have an engineered storm water drainage system. Most of the existing drainage problems are located in some of the older parts of the city. In planning meetings, citizens recognized the drainage improvements of recent projects, but also identified areas where storm drainage is still an issue. These areas include: (1) a residential area generally bounded by Alabama Highway 223 to the west, Locke Avenue West to the north, Prairie Street South to the east and Levy Avenue to the south; (2) the downtown commercial and institutional area, generally bounded by Chunnenugee Avenue to the north, Martin Luther King Boulevard to the east, Blackmon Avenue to the south, and just past Baskin Street to the west; and (3) an undeveloped and recreational area located north of U.S. Highway 82 and east of Peachburg Road.

Transportation

Union Springs' transportation system consists of a network of highways and streets, one airport, and a limited number of sidewalks. Franklin Field is a publicly owned airport located on Alabama Highway 110 about five miles northwest of Union Springs. The airport is managed by the Franklin Field Airport Authority. The airport property encompasses approximately 50 acres at an elevation of 300 feet above sea level. The airport has one runway that lies in a northwest to southeast direction and is 3,660 feet in length. The runway is constructed of asphalt or bituminous concrete and has a weight-bearing capacity of 15,000 pounds. The airport has lighting from dusk to dawn and can accommodate 11 single engine aircraft. The Airport Authority has discussed plans to increase the capabilities of the Franklin Field Airport with an expansion of the runway to 5,500 feet and an expansion of the airport property by an additional 400 acres. The expansions would allow the airport to accommodate corporate jets.

In addition to the Franklin Field airport, commercial airports are located in nearby Montgomery and Atlanta, Georgia. Montgomery Regional Airport (Dannelly Field) is less than one hour from Union Springs. This regional airport is serviced by Delta Connection, U.S. Airways Express and American Airlines. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is less than two hours from Union Springs and is located off of Interstate 85 south of Atlanta. Hartsfield-Jackson is the world's largest and busiest airport and is a major transfer point for flights to and from smaller cities. It is also an international gateway to and from the United States. It is equipped to handle triple simultaneous landings and offers more than 200 nonstop destinations. Hartsfield-Jackson is serviced by 24 domestic airlines

and six international airlines.

There is no existing rail or water transportation service currently available in Union Springs. As with commercial air service, however, commercial shipping via both water and rail is available within an hour's drive. Railway service is available in Montgomery to the northwest and in Columbus, Georgia to the northeast. The Alabama State Docks are also located on the Alabama River in Montgomery. The Alabama State Docks are accessible to the Port of Mobile via the Alabama River. The Port of Mobile is just four hours south of Union Springs when travelling on Interstate 65.

Union Springs' road network is comprised of two federal highways, two state highways and about 27 miles of local roadways. About 92 percent of the local roads are paved and the remaining 2.2 miles are unpaved. Unpaved routes directly impact only 15 houses and about 42 persons. The unpaved roads are properly maintained by the City and become deficient only during excessive rainfall. While the majority of the paved streets are in good condition, age and weather have taken their toll. As a result, some streets are in need of repaving.

Union Springs is provided with regional access through a network of state and federal highways. U.S. Highway 29 runs north-south, connecting to **Tuskegee** and Interstate 85 about 25 miles to the north and to Troy and U.S. Highway 231 about 35 miles to the south. U.S. Highway 82 runs east-west, connecting to U.S. Highway 231 between Montgomery and Troy about 30 miles west of Union Springs and to Eufaula about 40 miles to the east. State Highways 110 and 223 also provide north-south access, with AL 110 connecting to East Montgomery northwest of Union Springs and AL 223 connecting to Banks and Troy southwest of Union Springs.

Interstate 85 provides access to Atlanta, Georgia and points beyond before its northern terminus with Interstate 95 in Richmond, Virginia. Interstate 85 also provides access to Interstate 65, which runs north-south from Chicago, Illinois to Mobile, Alabama.

All transportation networks have some form of classification of its streets to categorize the hierarchy of movement in the system. The roadway network developed for the Union Springs study area was based on the functional classification system prepared by the Alabama Department of Transportation. The components of this network are arterials, collectors and local streets. Each type roadway provides separate and distinct traffic service functions and is best suited for accommodating particular demands. Their designs also vary in accordance with the characteristics of traffic to be served by the roadway. The current classified roadways in Union Springs are as follows (all roadways not listed are considered as local streets):

Rural Minor Arterial

- U.S Highway 29 North
- U.S Highway 82
- Alabama Highway 223

Rural Major Collector

- U.S. Highway 29 South
- Alabama Highway 197 (US 29 Truck Route)
- Peachburg Road

Rural Minor Arterial

- Hicks Industrial Boulevard

Daily traffic volumes, as indicated by traffic counts at various locations on the roadway network, reflect current travel patterns and how well the network is serving the travel demand. Traffic count information was collected from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) for the primary roadways in the Union Springs area. Traffic volume is expressed by ALDOT as the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT). The

vast majority of travel in the Union Springs area takes place on the major routes previously described. Traffic volume is highest on U.S. Highways 29 and 82 in the central part of Union Springs, with 2011 AADT at just under 10,000 vehicles per day. U.S. Highway 82, east of the downtown area, has experienced the most significant increases in traffic volume, with 14.4 percent and 15.0 percent increases between 2003 and 2011. Roadways which have significant portions of their daily traffic attributed to truck traffic include U.S. Highway 82, with 12.6 percent to the west and 9.5 percent to the east, and U.S. Highway 29, with 7.2 percent to the south and 6.8 percent to the north. The results of this comparison of existing daily traffic volumes on the major roadways in the Union Springs area with established standards for operation found that all roadways currently operation at acceptable levels. No major roadway was found to be deficient in daily travel capacity and sufficient capacity exists for future growth.

Throughout the public planning process, truck traffic was continuously brought forward as an area of concern by area residents. As a follow-up to comments presented at public involvement meetings related to truck traffic, field observations were conducted to determine the validity of such comments. The observations conducted in the field on the current truck routes by the study team are summarized as follows:

- Truck traffic observed in the downtown Union Springs area does cause congestion based on the size and number of trucks coupled with the zig-zag movement required to stay on the established truck routes;
- Turning trucks at the intersection of U.S. Highway 82 and U.S. Highway 29 frequently require stopped vehicles to backup from the intersection to

provide sufficient distance for turning movements; and

- Pedestrians are frequently intimidated in the area by the presence of large vehicles.

Union Springs does not have a transit system or any other form of public transportation available for general use. In fact, the only public transportation in the area is that provided to patients by the East

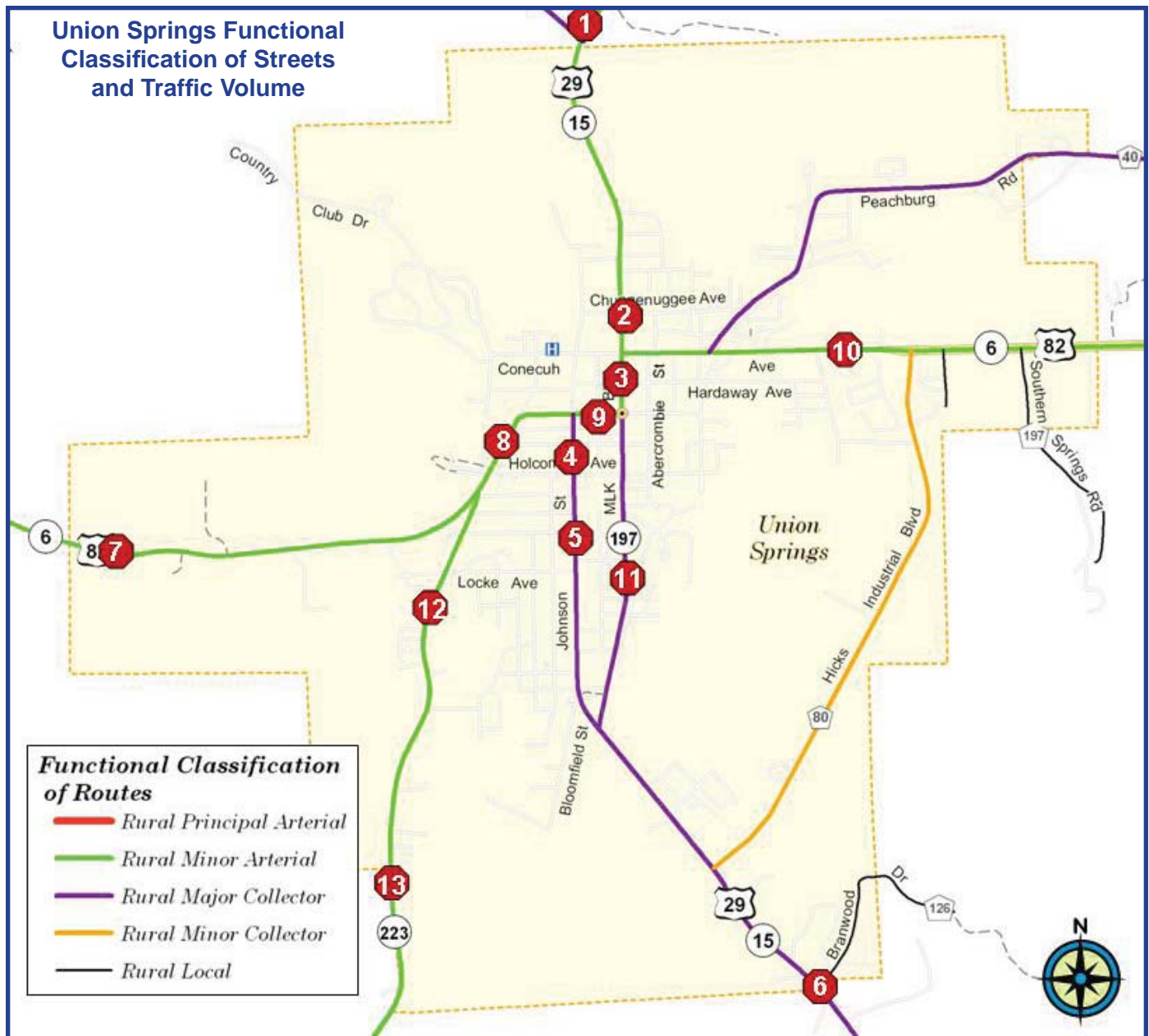
Central Mental Health Agency and for the transport of seniors to nutrition sites. Also, Union Springs has only limited facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. Sidewalks are found in several parts of the city, but there are no off-road pedestrian paths/trails that can be used to move about within the city.

Traffic Circulation Concerns/Issues

Through comments received at public involvement meetings, field observations conducted by the study team and a review of traffic volumes on major roadways in Union Springs, areas where traffic circulation concerns and issues are located were identified. A brief discussion of those locations where traffic circulation concerns were identified and the nature of those concerns are briefly described.

- U.S. Highway 82 at its intersection with U.S. Highway 29 was identified both by the public and through observations as an area of circulation concern due to truck turning traffic and lack of access management guidelines for future development;
- Conecuh Avenue at Hicks Industrial Park Boulevard was identified as an area of circulation concern based on the lack of traffic control, no west bound turn lane for vehicles turning into the industrial park and intersection sight distance;
- Blackmon Street at its intersection with Baskin Street was also identified as an area of concern due to the current alignment, access management for adjoining properties and alignment;
- South Prarie Street at its intersection with MLK Boulevard was identified as a potential improvements location due to its alignment that encourages vehicular and truck traffic along Prarie Street to the north and access management for adjoining properties;
- The segment of South Prarie Street from MLK Boulevard north to Blackmon Street is currently marked as a four lane undivided facility which does not fit with the character of the adjacent land uses (older historic homes);
- The route of Blackmon Street from Baskin Street to MLK Boulevard and the continuation of that movement along U.S. Highway 29 to U.S. Highway 82 is deemed as one of the major circulation issues in the area due to the turns required to travel in and through the Union Springs area (especially for truck traffic); and
- Intersections along North Prarie Street in the downtown area provide an environment that is unclear to and difficult for pedestrian traffic to have full access of the area.

Union Springs Functional Classification of Streets and Traffic Volume



Functional Classification of Routes

- Rural Principal Arterial
- Rural Minor Arterial
- Rural Major Collector
- Rural Minor Collector
- Rural Local

Map #	Route	Location	2003 AADT	2011 AADT	% Change 03 to 11	Commercial Vehicles (% of AADT)	Heavy Trucks (% of AADT)
1	US 29	0.1 mile N of CR23	2,240	2,561	14.3%	282 (11%)	6.6%
2	US 29	0.05 mile N of Conecuh Ave	3,236	3,360	3.8%	269 (8%)	5.1%
3	US 29	betw Hardaway & Blackmon	8,400	8,175	-2.7%	899 (11%)	6.8%
4	US 29	0.07 mile S of US82 West	4,330	3,880	-10.4%	310 (8%)	2.4%
5	US 29	0.414 mile S of US82 West	4,110	4,230	2.9%	381 (9%)	5.4%
6	US 29	at Branwood Drive	3,090	3,180	2.9%	382 (12%)	7.2%
7	US 82	1.54 miles E of AL110	4,220	4,826	14.4%	869 (18%)	12.6%
8	US 82	0.28 mile N of AL223	5,940	6,830	15.0%	1,025 (15%)	9.5%
9	US 82	0.104 mile E of US29 South	9,140	8,244	-9.8%	907 (11%)	6.8%
10	US 82	betw Ellis & Cooper St	8,770	9,337	6.5%	934 (10%)	6.5%
11	AL 197	0.63 mile N or US29	3,360	3,408	1.4%	409 (12%)	7.8%
12	AL 223	0.503 mile S of US 82 West	5,080	4,550	-10.4%	273 (6%)	3.2%
13	AL 223	1.774 miles S of US82 West	3,830	3,674	-4.1%	404 (11%)	5.8%

Land Use

Land Use is the study of what has been built upon the land and the patterns formed by that development. Land uses and land forms help us locate where we are, or orient ourselves, within the built environment by providing visual clues and landmarks. Clusters of similar land uses form districts and/or neighborhoods, as well as providing a sense of entering or exiting a district, such as a downtown area. Together, a community’s varying land uses form a pattern of development that is usually reflective of the underlying topography, natural resources and structural circulation routes.

The South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC) conducted a windshield survey of existing land uses in April 2011. The resulting existing land use map is provided on the following page. Approximately 60.6 percent of the land in the city is currently developed while the remaining 39.4 percent is vacant lots or undeveloped land. Most of the undeveloped area is in large tracts in the outlying areas, particularly in the southwestern part of the city. There are, however, numerous vacant lots in the more densely developed residential areas.

The great majority of the developed land, at 56.2 percent,

is used for residential purposes, with 50.4 percent in single family residential development and 5.8 percent in multi-family residential land uses. Residential land uses are found throughout the city. The most densely developed residential areas, however, are found in the area between Baskin Street South and Martin Luther King Boulevard. Multi-family residential development is generally found on large lots in outlying areas of the city such as Peachburg Circle, Bluff Circle, and Bloomfield Court. Sadly, most of the multi-family development is not within walking distance of the downtown commercial clusters.

Approximately 10.2 percent of the developed land is used for commercial and industrial purposes, with 5.8 percent in commercial uses and 4.4 percent in industrial land uses. Commercial development is primarily clustered along U.S. Highway 82 and U.S. Highway 29, which are the development spines of Union Springs. Commercial development is also concentrated in the historical downtown area, which is generally bounded by Blackmon Avenue, Powell Street, Chunnenugee Avenue, and Baskin Street. A larger commercial area extends from downtown to the east to include Conecuh Avenue East and Baskin Street South.

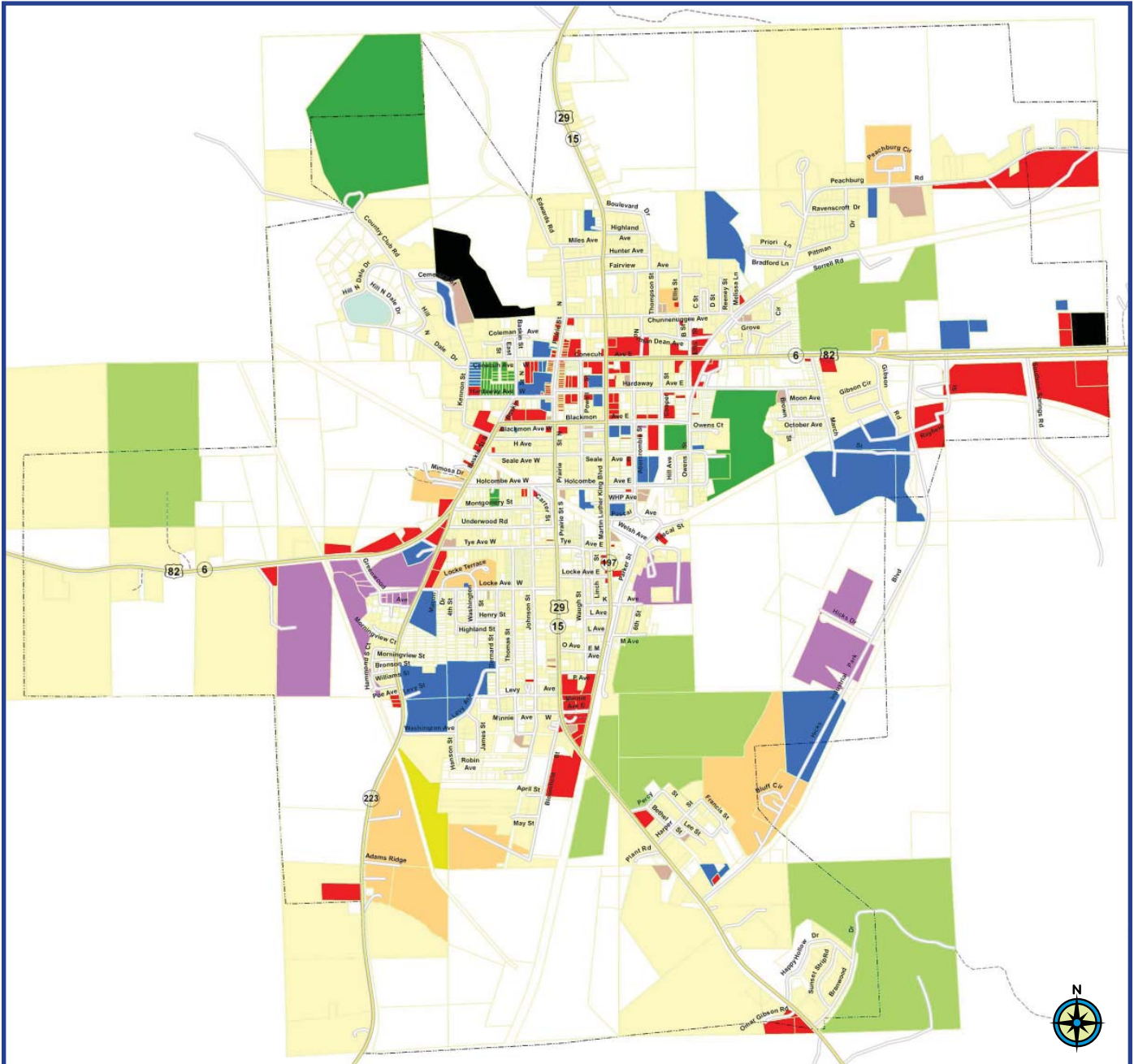
Industrial land uses are generally found in the southern part of the city along U.S. Highway 82 to the west and between Hicks Industrial Boulevard and Paschal Street to the east.


















Institutional and recreational land uses make up the remaining 13.0 percent of the developed land uses. Institutional land uses include government buildings, libraries, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, schools and similar type land uses. Recreational land uses include parks, ballfields, golf courses and trails. Both institutional and recreational land uses are located sporadically throughout the city, most often to serve resident needs in proximity to their homes. There is no distinct pattern to the lot sizes of either institutional or recreational land uses, with lot sizes being dependent upon the specific use.

In surveys conducted during the planning process, citizens were asked about land use conflicts and difficulty in accessing land uses. The majority of the responses indicated that citizens did not experience any conflicts or nuisances due to neighboring land uses and did not have access issues to most areas. Some citizens, however, responded that there was insufficient buffering between agricultural and residential land uses.

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Developed Land
Single Family Residential	1,289.0	50.4%
Multi-Family Residential	149.7	5.8%
Commercial	149.7	5.8%
Institutional	196.7	7.7%
Industrial	112.0	4.4%
Recreational	135.3	5.3%
Agricultural	401.7	15.7%
Timber	125.1	4.9%
Developed Area	2,559.1	100.0%
Undeveloped Area	1,664.9	39.4% of total

Existing Land Use, 2011



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  Agriculture |  Cemetery |  Municipal Limits |
|  Single Family Housing |  Church |  Parcel Boundary |
|  Multi-Family Housing |  Recreation |  U.S. and/or State Highway |
|  Commercial |  Timber |  Local Street |
|  Institutional |  Water |  Unpaved Road |
|  Industrial |  Undeveloped | |

Development Strategy

The Development Strategy for Union Springs is constructed of three interrelated parts that build upon one another in the form of a pyramid. And, like a pyramid, if one of the parts is missing or not functioning, the other two parts will begin to disintegrate as well. The first part is the vision for the long-term growth and development of the community. The second part includes graphic representations of the physical development concepts and strategy. The third part is the implementation of both the mental vision and the physical development plan through coordinated actions of local leaders, citizens, industry, businesses, and civic and religious organizations. Each person and entity in Union Springs has a responsibility to assist in the future growth and development of their community.

Vision and Goals

A vision outlines what a person, company, or community wants to be. It concentrates on the future and is a source of inspiration. In terms of comprehensive planning, the vision statement provides guidance for all other policies and plans that are developed. If they are not instrumental in attaining the vision, then either those policies and plans are not in alignment with the vision, are not necessary to attain the vision, or the vision needs to be revised to reflect the desired policies and plans. Citizens

of Union Springs began working on a vision for the city through communications with friends and neighbors, written exercises and lengthy public discussions. As they discussed their current strengths and weaknesses and transformed those into ideas for what they want to become in the future, the citizens of Union Springs continued to focus on the following three components of their long-range vision:

- **a vibrant, diverse, and harmonious community working together**
- **a historical, cultural and recreational center**
- **building strong economic growth at all skill levels**

Citizens were able to extend the vision concepts to the process of reviewing and updating goals from the 1996 comprehensive plan. Together, these goals form a goal framework that was utilized in outlining the proposed development strategy and implementation schedule. The goal framework establishes the broad outcomes that are expected to be attained through the development of implementation strategy. The goal framework, as shown on the following page, helps stakeholders understand how each of the plan's individual elements impacts the other element, and to minimize duplication of efforts and, even more importantly, to minimize the risk of stakeholders unknowingly working at odds with

one another.

Change will not come overnight to Union Springs; nor will change occur just because the citizens of Union Springs have reaffirmed and expanded on a vision for the future and completed a comprehensive plan. Positive change will only occur as a result of one person and one action at a time. But, when all citizens remain steadfastly accountable for their actions regarding the health and vitality of their city, great changes can and will occur.

The development strategy outlined here is a culmination of the general development concepts, citizen comments and suggestions, and information gained through the review and analysis of the existing conditions and resources. In the 1996 comprehensive plan, goals were established for each individual element of the plan and objectives and actions were developed to attain the goals. During the 2012 comprehensive plan update planning process, Union Springs citizens identified goals that remain relevant and modified or added new goals as necessary. A goal framework was developed and is provided on the following page.

This update goes a step further than the implementation plan included in the previous document. A development strategy has been developed. As it is used here, a strategy is an elaborate and systematic plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

Goal Framework		
<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract new retail and manufacturing businesses. • Establish a Main Street Program. • Creation of local jobs that match citizen skill levels -- Reduce unemployment. • Increase the median and per capita incomes for Union Springs residents. • Constantly and continuously promote local shopping. • Improve local financing opportunities for new businesses. • Increase the number of minority owned businesses. • Coordinate commercial activities with City functions and with tourist attractions. • Actively pursue tourism as a viable means of local economic development. 	<p>HOUSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace substandard housing with affordable housing units. • Preserve historical homes. • Ensure affordable rental opportunities. • Establish and maintain an energy and weatherization program assistance. • Investigate public and private property maintenance assistance programs and opportunities. • Carefully promote infill residential development as a means to provide affordable housing while improving and maintaining neighborhood character. • Create safe neighborhoods and developments that cater to the unique needs of seniors. 	<p>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure efficient access to and adequate level of services for low and moderate income residents. • Improve the educational attainment level of the citizens. • Pursue stream restoration projects as feasible. • Develop neighborhood recreation and meeting places that include playgrounds and parks. • Maintain library facilities while investigating increased access with mobile units. • Increase and promote cultural resources and opportunities. • Increase and improve regional recreational opportunities. • Promote city sponsored events to Union Springs population and as tourism events. • Provide E-911 service.
<p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute a formal capital improvement program as part of City's annual budget. • Conduct and maintain an updated assessment of infrastructure with prioritized improvement projects for inclusion in the City's capital improvement program. • Conduct preliminary preparations to increase water capacity as needed, including removal of Bullock County prison from system. • Investigate options for drainage improvements that utilize natural resource areas as amenities. • Coordinate repairs to all infrastructure systems to minimize construction disturbances and increase efficiency of money and labor. 	<p>TRANSPORTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petition ALDOT for upgrades to US Highway 82 and Alabama Highway 10 to improve access to Union Springs. • Instigate full utilization of airport through improvements and marketing for tourism. • Investigate public transportation for both local service and regional commuting. • Develop a trail system as a means of alternative transportation. • Improve signage on routes leading to Union Springs. • Develop a consistent citywide signage system. • Designate a scenic route through Union Springs to encourage tourism and shopping. • Pursue development of truck routes as feasible. 	<p>LAND USE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that natural resources and limitations to development are primary considerations in all future development. • Maintain neighborhood boundaries and definitions • Encourage the development of affordable housing. • Ensure that new development and infill development is in character with surrounding structures already in place. • Resolve zoning issues regarding setbacks and small lots. • Establish guidelines for structural development in areas with natural resource limitations, particularly those with high erosion potential. • Eliminate building in floodplains by utilizing these areas as community amenities.

Development Concepts

Review of the goal framework and community discussions led to the creation of primary development concepts. Development concepts are graphic tools utilized to illustrate ideas in a generalized format. The development concept illustrations, shown on the following page, are deceptively simple to clearly convey the concept ideas. In actuality, each development concept includes several development projects that will take considerable time and effort to implement. These actions are outlined in the Union Springs Development Strategy. Concepts for Union Springs' development include:

- Downtown Revitalization,
- Delineation of a Historic/Cultural Resources District,
- Improved Circulation,
- Gateways,
- Image Corridors,
- Local Commercial Development,
- Neighborhood Reinvestment,
- New Residential Development,
- Neighborhood Activity Centers,
- Infrastructure Improvements, and
- Utilization of Natural Systems.

Downtown Revitalization

As evidenced by the proposed development concepts, all life revolves around a center. A state revolves around a capital and a county around a county seat. Even the quality of a baseball or a golf ball can be gauged by the quality of its center. The same is true for a city. A quality downtown center of activity must be developed to attract and retain quality businesses, services and residents.

The downtown revitalization concept serves to protect and improve historic resources by building an active shopping area and nuclear activity center. The ideas developed in the planning process conducted with the Auburn University Center for Urban Design are reinforced with this concept. These include (1) preservation of and capitalizing

on historic assets, (2) downtown is the heart of the community, and (3) distinguish Union Springs as a regional destination.

Delineation of a Historic/Cultural Resources District

It is recognized that there is a much larger historical area than just the downtown center. Residents have expressed a strong desire to remain vigilant in the preservation and protection of the surrounding residential structures as they are of the commercial area. The historic homes are a major drawing card for tourism and one of the many unique features that sets Union Springs apart from other small towns in the southeast. It is rare to find a concentration of historic homes like that of Union Springs in areas other than urban cities. For this reason, it will be necessary to guard their preservation yet not infringe on the individual rights of property owners.

Improved Circulation

Union Springs residents have expressed grave concerns over traffic patterns throughout the city, particularly in regards to conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles, and large trucks. Union Springs is fortunate to be located at the junction of two federal highways that are heavily travelled for commuting, material moving and leisure driving. Residents want to ensure that (1) visitors have a pleasant trip to and from Union Springs and are encouraged to stop and spend time in the city, and (2) that truck traffic can utilize roadways easily and efficiently so that commercial traffic continues to be encouraged through Union Springs. To do so, it is proposed that commercial truck traffic be re-routed prior to the smaller downtown streets and that eventually a southern bypass be constructed from Alabama Highway 223 to Hicks Industrial Boulevard to further accommodate commercial traffic. Local pedestrian and vehicular traffic can then be accommodated in the downtown area without conflict with the commercial

traffic. An additional part of the improved circulation concept is to develop a clear system of wayfinding to guide travellers into and around Union Springs with minimal confusion.

Wayfinding is the organization and communication of our relationship to space and the environment. When visiting a strange new place, viewers need to be able to find their way to their destination. A good wayfinding system will allow them to reach their destination easily and quickly. A good wayfinding system should not only guide a traveler to a destination, but lead them to areas that you want them to visit. Successful wayfinding design allows people to: (1) determine their location within a setting, (2) determine their destination, and (3) develop a plan that will take them from their location to their destination. The design of wayfinding systems should include: identification and marking of spaces; grouping spaces; and linking and organizing spaces through both architectural and graphic means.

Gateways

As evidenced by the proposed development concepts, all life revolves around a center. A state revolves around a capital and a county around a county seat. Even the quality of a baseball or a golf ball can be gauged by the quality of its center. The same is true for a city. A quality downtown center of activity must be developed to attract and retain quality businesses, services and residents.

A municipal gateway is more than an entrance. It is a combination of structural and natural clues to inform a traveller that he or she has arrived at a place, whether that place is the City of Union Springs or an activity center or district within the city. Gateways convey a lasting image, and therefore, should be safe, inviting and interesting.

Attractive gateways are not simply a matter of aesthetics. More importantly, the economy of the city is tightly linked to its physical character, and its image must be enhanced and maintained to remain competitive. Gateways do not necessarily coincide with the corporate limits of the city. Major gateways are proposed at U.S. Highway 29 North, just south of the corporate limits, at the intersection of U.S. Highway 82 and

Hicks Industrial Boulevard, and at the intersection of U.S. Highway 29 South and Hicks Industrial Boulevard. Interior gateways are proposed at the intersection of U.S. Highway 82 West and Alabama Highway 223, at the intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Prairie Street and at a later date at the intersection of Alabama Highway 223 and a proposed new extension of Hicks Industrial Boulevard.

Image Corridors

Union Springs’ major roadways are proposed to be transformed into image corridors that set the tone for the city. They should be unique to Union Springs and reflect the city’s individual assets, attractions and even its history. The proposed image corridors include U.S. Highways 29 and 82, Alabama Highways 110 and 223, and Prairie Street along with all roads in the downtown area.

Union Springs Development Concept



Development of the image corridors must consider not only the roadway, but also the following: ease and clarity of access to that roadway; relationships between the route and adjacent land uses; relationships between the type of roadway in the corridor to structural development; other users of the roadway; and, the safety of all travelers.

Together, the corridor elements translate a message to the traveler. Union Springs must work to ensure that the translation means, "Welcome, we are a special place." To do so, Union Springs must make certain that development along the corridor is aesthetically-pleasing, appropriate for the area and inviting. Further, each of the proposed image corridors must portray its own unique assets while meshing with the overall image for Union Springs.

Local Commercial Development

Currently, Union Springs has very little cohesive retail resources other than the downtown area. Instead, individual or small groupings of commercial establishments have cropped up haphazardly around the city. It is the desire of residents to transform these occurrences into attractive local commercial centers that facilitate vehicular traffic and efficient ingress and egress. These areas are vital to house retail and service businesses that may not be suited to the downtown environment due to traffic and use patterns, but yet are essential in providing residents with shopping choice and opportunities to shop locally.

Neighborhood Reinvestment

Unfortunately, many of Union Springs' older neighborhoods have fallen into disrepair over a number of years. Additionally, many of the undeveloped lots are too small to accommodate even a modest house and still meet all zoning requirements. It is essential that Union Springs reinvest in these older neighborhoods to ensure that

they remain safe and viable housing choices for residents. Reinvestment can come through individual and/or group efforts

New Residential Development

Opportunities exist for new housing development in both existing neighborhoods and in what is now undeveloped open areas. To do so, however, will take creative thinking. Union Springs has neither the local financing nor the population base to support traditional residential development. Some of the lots in existing neighborhoods are too small to build upon and still meet the City's zoning requirements. In these areas, it would be possible to look at alternative requirements if the lots were developed in conjunction with one another to ensure that while grouping housing units closer together could still result in adequate access and open space for all units if combined. Further, there are many precedents for community groups working together to construct quality housing units at a lower cost than traditional construction. With these types of local initiatives, it may be possible to further attract higher-end more traditional housing development in the future.

Neighborhood Activity Centers

An activity center is a focal point within a distinct area or district, that serves as a formal or informal gathering place. Activity centers can often incorporate several functions into one place and can serve a variety of population segments. The activity centers development concept is based on the need to define and promote existing activity centers or to create new activity centers in strategic places to serve defined neighborhoods. Activity centers give people a reason to go to a location -- something is happening there!

The nodes shown on the Concept Diagram are all based on existing facilities and sites. The development concept is to expand and define these sites and facilities

into a system of coordinated activity centers that can function both independently and as part of a greater whole.

Infrastructure Improvements

By and large, Union Springs infrastructural systems are in decent condition. The water and sewer systems are adequate but like most aging system, they are constantly in need of ongoing repair and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. Union Springs has a quality communications structure with telephone and internet services. Road conditions and storm drainage are the two area that need the most significant improvements. Improvements to the City's road system are costly and cannot be done by average citizens on a volunteer basis. Therefore, the City must continue to look for, and maximize, outside funding sources. One option, however, is to reroute heavier traffic patterns to roads that are maintained by the state and federal governments, leaving smaller and less expensive roads for city maintenance.

Utilization of Natural Systems

Union Springs has a wealth of natural resources that are presently going untapped. By using these natural resources more effectively, the City and citizens could provide amenities that would be beneficial for residents and also help to attract and support tourism. Low-lying flood prone areas are not suitable for structural development, but they are inherently suitable for recreational development, such as parks and gardens. Storm drainage needs can also be addressed through the utilization of natural systems by developing rain garden areas that detain stormwater and help in minimizing flooding. These areas could also become aesthetic amenities for both residents and visitors. And, what better way to see those sites than while walking or bicycling on paths that are constructed along flood plains that connect to the City's more popular destinations.

Major Street Plan

The Major Street Plan for Union Springs will serve as a city wide guide to transportation needs (new and improved streets). It gives the City the ability to require right of way reservation in undeveloped areas, identify streets that will be used to move primary traffic, and establish a street classification system. The Major Street Plan was developed to be consistent with both the Short and Long Term Transportation Strategies for Union

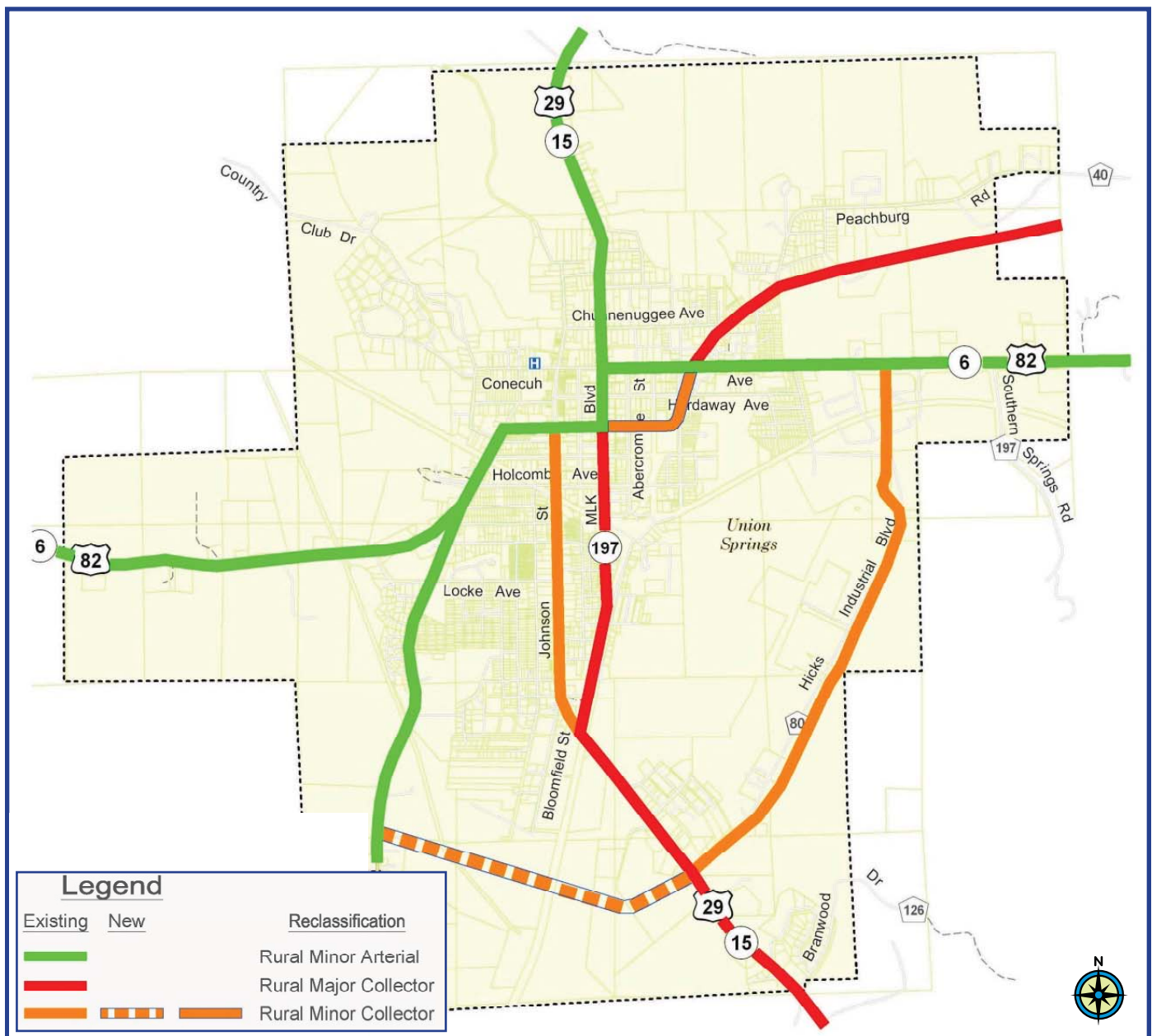
Springs. The typical design period for a major street plan is twenty-five years with annual reviews and complete updates every five years

If a major street plan does not exist for an area, then the traveling public determines which streets will be major by using the most convenient streets to meet their daily travel needs. A major street plan identifies the streets that can safely accommodate larger volumes of traffic and identifies where future streets should be construct

and which existing streets should be improved. Unplanned street development results in costly redevelopment projects that burden the public not only in taxes but also in construction inconvenience and in the alteration of existing neighborhoods.

The Major Street Plan for Union Springs is shown below and incorporates changes in the city's circulation system. The city's existing minor arterial road are U.S. Highway 82, Alabama

Union Springs Major Street Plan



Highway 223 and U.S. Highway North. These roads will continue to function in the same manner. In the plan, U.S. Highway 29 is rerouted to Alabama Highway 197 and functions as a rural major collector road. The other rural major collector road is Peachburg Road. Rural minor collector roads include Prairie Street, from the intersection with Hicks Industrial Boulevard to Blackmon Street, and Hicks Industrial Boulevard. It is also proposed that at some point in the future, Hicks Industrial Boulevard be extended to intersect with Alabama Highway 223 to further facilitate truck traffic.

Development Strategy

The graphic illustration on the following page portrays the proposed future land use patterns as a base to the map. The future land use designations are overlaid with development strategies that take the conceptual idea a step further. The future land use patterns indicate a strong central business district as an economic anchor for city. The historic central business district should continue to develop in a structurally dense fashion with a pedestrian scale. Options for parking should be investigated off of main streets in vacant lots behind buildings using alleyways for pedestrians paths to stores and offices. In order to develop and maintain a strong central business district, it would be helpful to integrate residential uses above and/or behind store fronts to further support the commercial establishments located in downtown.

Local commercial areas - those that necessitate vehicular travel - are planned along U.S. Highway 82 east of the downtown, around the intersection of U.S. Highway 82 and Sardis Road, at the intersection of Blackmon Street and Baskin Street, and at the intersection of Prairie Street South (U.S. Highway 29) and Martin Luther King Boulevard

(U.S. Highway 29 Truck Route). The proposed local commercial areas should be developed with extreme care to cluster shopping opportunities that, in turn, attract more retail growth and to minimize traffic conflicts.

There is no new acreage planned for industrial development. Instead, the focus needs to be on attracting small industrial or manufacturing companies that can effectively locate in the existing industrial park. Care should be taken to concentrate any new industrial development in these areas to minimize conflicts with surrounding land uses in other locations.

The major institutional land uses in Union Springs are the hospital, government buildings, schools, and churches. Presently, these institutional land uses are nicely integrated with surrounding land uses and do not present any conflicts to be resolved. It is expected that this trend will continue into the future.

Existing multi-family housing is sufficient to meet the current and near-future needs of Union Springs residents. Therefore, no additional multi-family residential development is included on the future land use map. Instead, housing development should be directed toward infill development on vacant lots in existing housing areas. In doing so, creative housing options should be employed to provide a wide range of housing choice at affordable prices. This could result in clustered housing, such as garden homes, patio homes, townhomes and duplexes that are still individually owned. It is expected that agricultural and estate residential development will occur naturally over the next couple of decades in the outlying areas of the city where there are larger undeveloped lots.

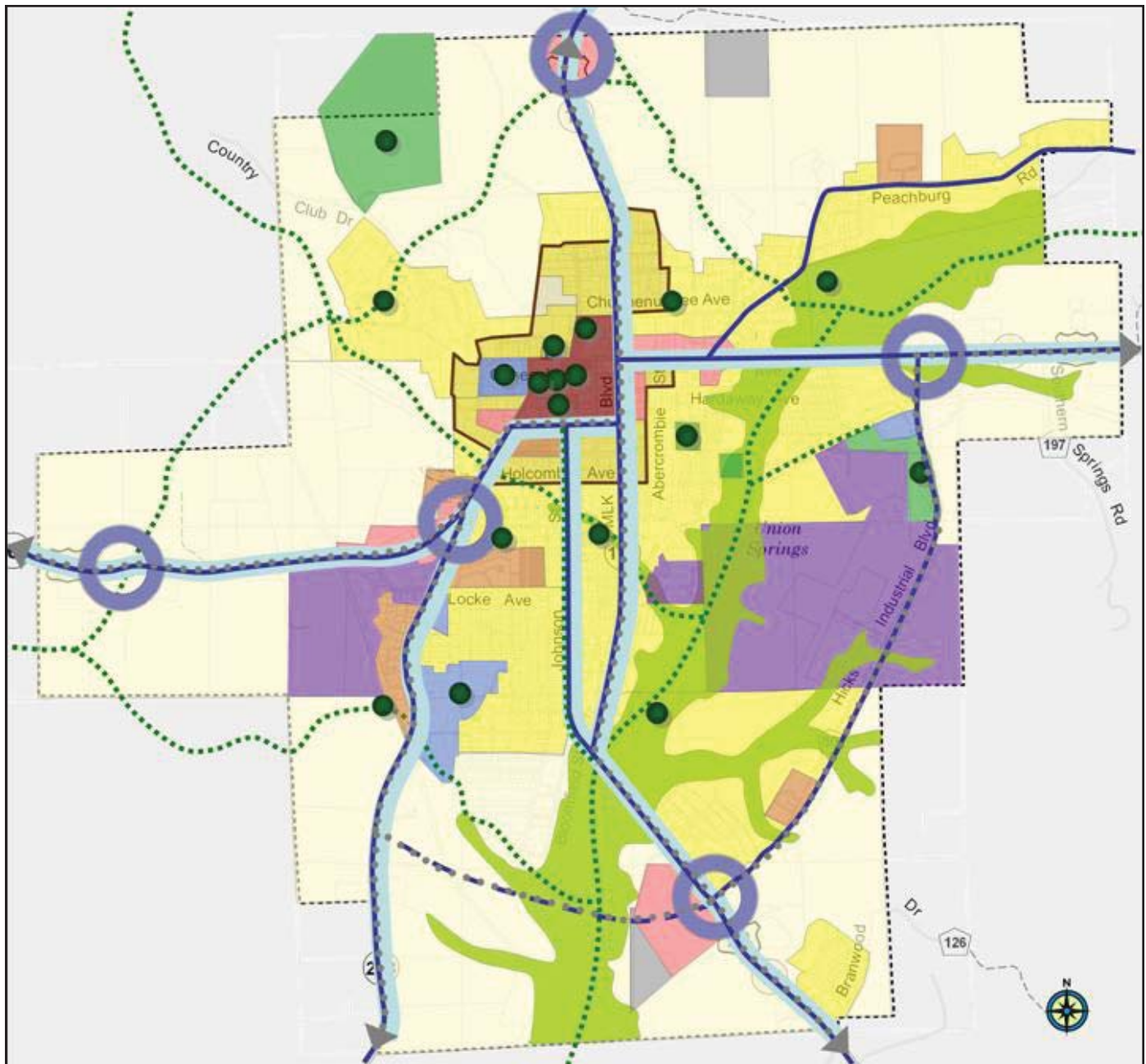
The future land use map places a strong emphasis on recreational development within the flood plains

of the Conecuh River. By using these areas for recreational uses, they become of integral value to city and her residents rather than just wetlands or flood prone land that is not suitable for development. Recreational development should be geared toward maximizing and showcasing the City's natural and unique features for the enjoyment of all.

Future development strategies and showcased on the following pages along with recommended actions for implementation and illustrations of similar strategies and development in other areas. Physical development strategies shown on the map include:

- Develop image corridors along U.S. Highway 82, east and west, U.S. Highway 29, north and south, Martin Luther King Boulevard, and Sardis Road;
- Establish gateways at the intersections of U.S. Highway 29 South and Hicks Industrial Boulevard, U.S. Highway 82 East and Hicks Industrial Boulevard, U.S. Highway 82 West and Sardis Road, and on U.S. Highway 82 West and U.S. Highway 29 North at or near the existing corporate limits;
- Expand the existing downtown into a larger historic and cultural resource center;
- Constantly and continuously create neighborhood and citywide activity centers that engage citizens with civic activities and with one another;
- Safeguard and judiciously utilize existing natural resources areas for a balance of natural drainage and recreational development;
- Construct a trail system for bicyclists, pedestrians and even equestrians with linkages to major destinations throughout Union Springs.

Union Springs Development Strategy



**Union Springs
Future Land Use and
Development Strategy**
September 2011

- Infrastructure**
- Primary Circulation
 - New Road
 - Truck Route

- Land Use**
- Estate Residential / Agricultural
 - Low Density Residential
 - Medium to High Density Residential
 - Downtown Mixed Use
 - Local Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Major Institutional
 - Recreational
 - Major Utility

- Development Strategies**
- Gateways
 - Activity Centers & Destinations
 - Historic Cultural Resource Overlay
 - Image Corridors
 - Natural Resource Conservation
 - Trail System

Gateways and Image Corridors

- Signage and Wayfinding
- Facade Improvements
- Clarity and Definition
- Infill Development
- Building Condition
- Landscaping and Aesthetics
- Zoning Overlay

Recommended Actions:

1. Adopt and enforce zoning ordinance with overlay districts for image corridors on U.S. Highway 29 and 82, AL Highway 223 and MLK Blvd.
2. Develop a master street tree - urban forestry plan to preserve local character and natural resources.
3. Develop attractive and scale-appropriate gateways at all decision points that invite travelers to Union Springs.
4. Install screening and landscaping as necessary to produce desired image.
5. Transform Prairie Street South (US 29) into a three-lane boulevard with bicycle lanes.
6. Develop and install a full-scale wayfinding system that welcomes, leads and directs visitors into, around and through Union Springs.
7. Pursue structural rehabilitation and/or condemnation, as necessary, to improve structural appearance.

Gateways and image corridors make strong statements about the quality of a city. And, they do it over and over again.



Downtown Redevelopment

- Merchant Recruitment
- Preservation of Downtown Retail
- Zoning Overlay
- Redevelopment Improvements
- Visual Context
- Street Furniture and Amenities

Recommended Actions:

1. Work with Alabama Historical Commission to develop, support and implement a Main Street Program.
2. Continue to promote downtown reinvestment long-term.
3. Promote mixed use development that encourages high activity levels both day and night.
4. Protect/promote historic resources through local/state/federal preservation programs.
5. Increase opportunities in downtown for cultural and performing arts.
6. Develop a downtown urban park and activity center in existing vacant lot to anchor downtown.
7. Outline and implement a downtown aesthetic improvement program.
8. Make sidewalk improvements to promote safety of pedestrians.

Transform downtown into an active city center where people go to meet; then shopping, eating, and entertaining are a natural follow up.



Historic Preservation

- Preservation of Historic Commercial and Residential Resources
- Promotion and Tourism
- Zoning Overlay Zone
- Historic Preservation Review
- Distinct Historic Districts

Recommended Actions:

1. Conduct an inventory of all historic resources beyond those listed on historic registers.
2. Actively encourage adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, particularly historic structures.
3. Adopt and enforce zoning ordinance with overlay districts for historic preservation.
4. Join forces with tourism efforts to promote visitation of historic and cultural amenities.
5. Build awareness of local history to citizens through tours and active engagement.
6. Include location of events in promotion of historic resources.
7. Pursue geocaching as a means to draw visitors to Union Springs.
8. Constantly promote local history of Union Springs to residents and visitors alike -- keep the history alive.

Historic preservation is just saving old buildings -- it's also invigoration by adaptive reuse of existing structures.



Note: Actions are not listed in chronological or priority order due to factors and events that can impact implementation.

Local Commercial Development and Incubation

- Access Management
- Property Maintenance
- Establish Value in Concise Districts
- Landscaping and Aesthetics
- Small Business Owner Mentoring
- Small Business Incentives

Recommended Actions:

1. Investigate feasibility of incentives for small businesses and entrepreneurs similar, but on a smaller scale, to those provided for industries.
2. Encourage non-profit organizations to implement a small-business mentoring program.
3. Work with educational organizations to provide business training for new business owners.
4. Carefully plan placement of commercial districts to facilitate access to and from shopping areas.
5. Cluster similar commercial establishments together to promote increased shopping.
6. Encourage local shops that offer local products that cannot be found elsewhere.
7. Ensure that commercial areas are safe and aesthetically pleasing to encourage additional visits.

Commercial and retail incubation can be public and private. One business in bottom picture is a storage center and kitchen facility for caterers and bakers.



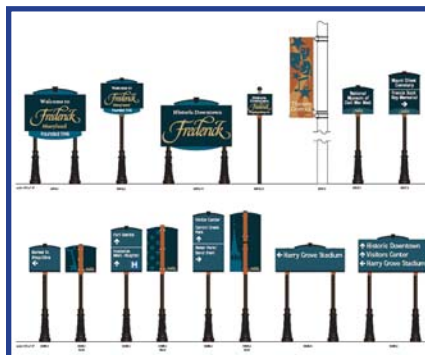
Tourism

- Inventory of assets
- Communication Network
- Wayfinding and Signage
- Promotional Materials
- Build Word-of-Mouth Experiences
- Hospitality Training

Recommended Actions:

1. Promote Union Springs as a destination, not just a pass-through by developing day-trip maps from nearby locations.
2. Develop small-scale, local lodging facilities including small inns and bed and breakfasts.
3. Support and implement a wayfinding system that guides visitors into and around Union Springs.
4. Utilize recreational resources to attract experience-seeking tourists.
5. Develop a full-range of promotional materials including brochures for state visitor centers, websites, and e-mail lists.
6. Develop and conduct a hospitality-training workshop on a semi-annual basis to ensure quality visitor experiences.

Celebrate what you have and make sure that others can find it through an effective wayfinding system.



Maintain and Expand Industrial Development

- Improved Access and Circulation for Truck Traffic
- Industrial Recruitment
- Labor Force Development
- Airport Improvements

Recommended Actions:

1. Continue industrial recruitment to maximize land available in industrial park.
2. Continue development of airport facilities to improve accessibility and promote economic development.
3. Broaden industrial recruitment efforts to include small, locally-owned manufacturers and/or artisans, such as hand-crafted furniture.
4. Re-route major truck traffic by re-numbering U.S. 29 Truck Route as U.S. 29. Maintain Prairie Street South as a local road.
5. As needed, extend Hicks Industrial Boulevard across U.S. Highway 29 to Alabama Highway 223 (Sardis Road) to facilitate truck traffic.

Cluster comparable businesses for shared resources and transportation access. Consider several smaller industries to one large one.



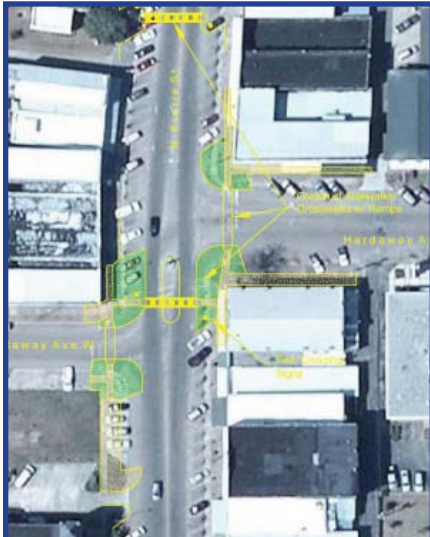
Access Management

- Alignment of US 82 at Blackmon Street
- Convert US 29 to a local connector from MLK to US 82.
- Reconstruct alignment of US 29 and AL 197 (MLK) for major traffic flow
- Improve pedestrian environment
- Improve turn radii, as necessary to accommodate truck traffic
- Traffic Signalization
- Future industrial connector road

Recommended Actions:

1. Reconstruct alignment of Baskin and Blackmon Streets for major traffic flow and access to adjacent property.
2. Convert U.S. 29 to a major collector with three lanes plus bike lanes.
3. Reconstruct intersection of US 29 and AL 197 for major traffic flow and access management.
4. Improve turn radii at AL 197 and Conecuh Street to accommodate truck traffic.
5. Realign Blackmon Street at Owen Street and improve route to handle truck traffic to minimize truck traffic through downtown.
6. Investigate need for traffic signalization at Owen Street and Conecuh Street to accommodate re-routed truck traffic.
6. Construct west bound turn lane on U.S. Highway 82 at Hicks Industrial Boulevard and reconfigure for sight deficiencies. Investigate need for traffic signalization.

Ensure that all major roadways are both easy to travel and safe for pedestrians.



Residential Reinvestment

- Downtown Mixed Use Development
- Place Destinations
- Neighborhood Centers
- Preservation of Historic Resources
- Infill Residential Development
- Improved Circulation

Recommended Actions:

1. Discover and promote heritage of individual neighborhoods.
2. Continue implementation of community clean-up programs.
3. Preserve small-town atmosphere through active watch of neighborhood events.
4. Institute active condemnation program to eliminate substandard housing units.
5. Utilize abandoned and undeveloped lots to construct community food gardens and neighborhood recreational areas.
6. Pursue formation of a community development corporation or other non-profit organization to assist with affordable housing construction and renovation.

Non-profit reinvestment in housing and local amenities, like a community garden, can transform a blighted area.



Labor Force Development and Training

- Increase Vocational Training
- Adult Continuing Education
- Local Internship Program
- Retail Business Incubator
- Industrial Training/Retraining Opportunities
- Emulate federal CCC/WPA Programs

Recommended Actions:

1. Work with county school system to increase vocational training and offer partnership to potential industries as additional incentive to located in Union Springs.
2. Encourage continuous opportunities for adult education and re-training.
3. Recognize accomplishments of both students and adults on a continual basis.
4. Partner with nearby post-secondary education institutions to bring vocational and/or business training to Union Springs.
5. Consider incentive program for educational training to those who donate their time and labor to city projects.

Always invest in your people as your greatest resource.



Note: Actions are not listed in chronological or priority order due to factors and events that can impact implementation.

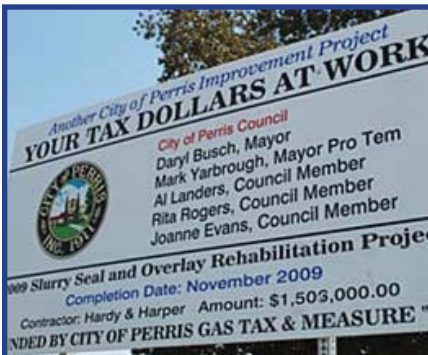
Utility Upgrades and Expansion

- Stormwater Drainage Remediation
- Road Improvement Program
- Promote Internet Systems
- Sewer Improvements
- Expand Water System, as necessary

Recommended Actions:

1. Make necessary street repairs and maintain continuous road improvement program.
2. Continue development of airport facilities to improve accessibility and promote economic development.
3. Proceed with contingency plans for expansion of water system.
4. Coordinate necessary sewer line replacements with road improvement program.
5. Investigate alternative storm drainage systems.
6. Utilize existing internet capacity to promote economic development.
7. Build community awareness by promoting all city improvement projects with signage, conversation and presentations

Not all storm drains have to flow underground as these bio-retention basins show. Be sure to take credit for your improvement projects.



Recreation and Trails

- Trail Arteries to Regional Destinations
- Planned Recreational Improvements
- Neighborhood Connections
- Trail Access to Local Shopping
- Trail Variety
- Multi-Use Trails

Recommended Actions:

1. Promote recreational growth as a tried-and-true form of economic development.
2. Institute a local volunteer program for park maintenance and construction.
3. Encourage recreational overnight accommodations such as camping and RV parks.
4. Construct pedestrian and bicycle pathways from neighborhoods to parks to commercial areas -- linkages.
5. Develop neighborhood centers for recreational and conversational pursuits, keeping the ever-watchful eye on the neighborhood.
6. Develop trail system that will eventually connect to regional and statewide trails.
7. Carefully utilize natural resource areas not suitable for structural growth for recreation development.

Recognize and act on opportunities to infuse community with a variety of recreational amenities whenever possible.



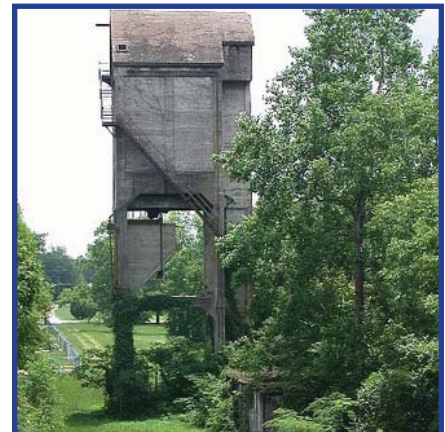
Natural Resource Conservation and Utilization

- Stormwater Remediation
- Trail Opportunities
- Neighborhood Amenities
- Planned Recreational Improvements
- Showcase Existing Natural Features and Resources

Recommended Actions:

1. Encourage individual conservation of natural resources, such as water, through learn and make workshops.
2. Identify and designate natural resource areas.
3. Utilize existing floodplains and low-lying areas as a means to retain and filter storm water.
4. Join forces with tourism efforts to promote unique character and quality of natural resources.
5. Coordinate natural resource preservation with community amenities and facilities.

Place emphasis on the conservation of natural resources at home and as community amenities.



Note: Actions are not listed in chronological or priority order due to factors and events that can impact implementation.

Priority Actions

Immediate

- Adopt and enforce zoning ordinance with overlay districts for image corridors, gateways, and historic preservation. on U.S. Highway 29 and 82, AL Highway 223 and MLK Blvd.
- Develop and install a full-scale wayfinding system that welcomes, leads and directs visitors into, around and through Union Springs.
- Make necessary street repairs and maintain continuous road improvement program.
- Promote recreational growth as a tried-and-true form of economic development.
- Coordinate necessary sewer line replacements with road improvement program.
- Install screening and landscaping as necessary to produce desired image.
- Make sidewalk improvements to promote safety of pedestrians.
- Investigate feasibility of incentives for small businesses and entrepreneurs similar, but on a smaller scale, to those provided for industries.
- Promote Union Springs as a destination, not just a pass-through by developing day-trip maps from nearby locations.
- Continue industrial recruitment to maximize land available in industrial park.
- Reconstruct alignment of Baskin and Blackmon Streets for major traffic flow and access to adjacent property.
- Improve turn radii at AL 197 and Conecuh Street to accommodate truck traffic.
- Realign Blackmon Street at Owen Street and improve route to handle truck traffic to minimize truck traffic through downtown.

One to Two Years

- Investigate alternative storm drainage systems.
- Build community awareness by promoting all city improvement projects with signage, conversation and presentations.
- Pursue structural rehabilitation and/or condemnation, as necessary, to improve structural appearance.
- Develop, support and implement a Main Street Program.
- Outline and implement a downtown aesthetic improvement program.
- Encourage non-profit organizations to implement a small-business mentoring program.
- Develop small-scale, local lodging facilities including small inns and bed and breakfasts.
- Develop a full-range of promotional materials including brochures for state visitor centers, websites, and e-mail lists.
- Investigate need for traffic signalization at Owen Street and Conecuh Street to accommodate re-routed truck traffic.
- Utilize abandoned and undeveloped lots to construct community food gardens and neighborhood recreational areas.
- Work with schools to increase vocational training and offer partnership to potential industries as additional incentive.
- Consider incentive program for educational training to those who donate their time and labor to city projects.

Three to Five Years

- Continue development of airport facilities to improve accessibility and promote economic development.
- Develop a master street tree - urban forestry plan.
- Utilize existing floodplains and low-lying areas as a means to retain and filter storm water.
- Encourage recreational overnight accommodations such as camping and RV parks.
- Carefully utilize natural resource areas for recreation development.
- Develop contingency plans for expansion of water system.
- Develop attractive and scale-appropriate gateways at all decision points that invite travelers to Union Springs.
- Promote mixed use development that encourages high activity levels both day and night in downtown.
- Encourage shops to offer local products that can't be found elsewhere.
- Develop and conduct a hospitality-training workshops
- Broaden industrial recruitment efforts to include small, locally-owned manufacturers and/or artisans, such as hand-crafted furniture.
- Construct west bound turn lane on U.S. Highway 82 at Hicks Industrial Boulevard and reconfigure for sight deficiencies. Investigate need for traffic signalization.
- Pursue formation of a community development corporation or other non-profit organization to assist with affordable housing construction and renovation.

A Plan For
Our Future
2012

Union Springs, Alabama

