

2017-2022

City of Livingston Comprehensive Plan



**Addendum to
"Comprehensive Community Master Plan"
By Goodwyn, Mills, and Cawood
Completed in 2009**

Division of Economic Development & Outreach
University of West Alabama
2017-2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BACKGROUND

The City of Livingston now has a population of approximately 3,466 according to the 2015 U.S. Census estimate, which is app. an 85.5% increase from the 2010 U.S. Census. In addition, the University of West Alabama, which is located in Livingston, educates 4,000 students. Based on the 2014 American Community Survey, home ownership in the county was 70.2% with the median value of owner-occupied housing units at \$72,500. The median household income is \$14,426, while the median family income is \$38,542. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the population is African American, and thirty-eight percent (38%) is white. The City has a relatively high poverty rate compared to the national average and the state-wide average of 19.2%, with thirty-nine percent (39%) of families living below the poverty line.

Livingston currently has three industrial parks that are home to eight industries. The McDowell Industrial Park is adjacent to the interstate and has 100 acres available for new industry with all utilities. Energy Services South, LLC and Prystup Packaging Products' corporate headquarters are located in the North Industrial Park, as well as American Solutions for Business, H & S Logistics, and Southwest Paper Sales, LLC. The South Industrial Park is home to Trinity Lightweight, City of Livingston Recycling, and Gulf Coast Energy Services. The labor force of Sumter County is 5,304 with an unemployment rate of 7.0%. Sumter County and Livingston are designated a Renewal Community, a Favored Geographic Area, and an Enterprise Zone, which assists in economic development and expansion through the provision of federal tax incentives for business located, locating, or expanding in the designated areas. In 2012, Livingston received its designation as an Alabama Community of Excellence (ACE).

The University of West Alabama, which is located in the heart of Livingston, has made great strides over the past 8 years including a US Dept of Education grant for the Rural Teacher Initiative, the expansion of the Applied Manufacturing Technology Program, the establishment of the Tutwiler Scholars Program and the UWA CARES Program, the creation of the Division of Economic Development and Outreach for economic and workforce development and outreach opportunities and initiatives, the approval of the University Charter School by the Alabama Public Charter School Commission, among many others.

UWA and Livingston have many amenities and resources for its students, community members, and the surrounding area: Jaycee Park; Lake LU and the Sumter County Nature Trails; Black Belt Museum; UWA Theatre; UWA recreational and athletic facilities including rodeo arena, disc golf course, Black Belt Garden, and Student Union Building; public and private hunting and fishing lodges; restaurants; emergency services; Ruby Pickens Tartt and Julia Tutwiler Libraries; Sumter County Chamber of Commerce; Livingston Career Center (located in Land Hall on campus); Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation; art galleries and classes including painting with Sheila Hull and mosaics with Monica Moore; and other civic organizations. Soon, Livingston and Sumter County will add a new Hampton Inn (or hotel of similar quality), County Hospital, and new restaurant.

VISION

Livingston is a great, safe, and progressive place to live in the historic Black Belt region of Alabama and serves as the hub for education and workforce development.

2010 – 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS COMPLETED

- Developed a business incubator for the community and county in partnership with UWA located in downtown Livingston
- Developed a well-designed and interactive community website.
- Made all city sidewalks handicap/ADA accessible
- Added and improved lighting at the I-20/59 interstate exchange
- Developed Gateway signage in to the City

2017 – 2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- Recruit higher paying and higher skill jobs
- Strengthen and maintain the University and City partnership
- Develop regional partnerships.
- Increase emphasis on recreation and wellness.
- Provide for diversity in housing stock and revitalization of neighborhoods.
- Continue restoration of downtown and historic neighborhoods as an historic core for the community.
- Improve signage and lighting at major intersections and downtown
- Provide excellent public safety, services and community facilities
- Expand downtown core.
- Create a seamless connection between the University campus and downtown district.
- Development of the University campus near downtown and develop with more regional access in newer portion of campus.
- Encourage mixed-use development from University of West Alabama to I-20/59
- Promote the preservation of historic neighborhoods through policy and design guidelines.
- Promote improvements to housing and neighborhoods through infill and traditional neighborhood developments, combined with revitalization of neighborhoods consistent with overall city development goals.
- Implement a well-developed system of parks and greenways.
- Promote well designed gateway districts as entrances to the community.
- Continue expansion of infrastructure consistent with the land use plan.
- Plan US-11 as a signature corridor through the community.
- Provide for development, expansion and integration of current industrial parks.
- Promote new planned residential developments and conservation of natural areas.
- Develop Downtown Development Plan
- Acquire property for a new industrial park and to expand current industrial parks
- Increase the number of healthy food options including possible food trucks

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

In order to grow and achieve greater success, the City of Livingston, its citizens, and its businesses and organizations must work together. This Comprehensive Plan provides goals, strategies, recommendations, and a timeline for six key areas: Connections, Transportation and Streets, Housing, Economic and Community Development, Neighborhoods and Districts, and Community Facilities and Services. This new Plan is informed by the Sumter Renaissance (Economic Development) Plan – *See Appendix A: Sumter Renaissance*. Sumter Renaissance used five key pillars for its framework: Infrastructure, Site Selection, Education & Workforce Development, Livability, and Leadership Development & Civic Engagement. This Plan should also guide the City, Livingston Alive, the Chamber, and various organizations in accomplishing their goals and moving the city forward in a unified effort. A brief Assessment of the City was conducted prior to completing the Plan – *See Appendix C: Community Needs Assessment*.

- City Limits and Growth
 - Annexation has external city boundaries in the northeast part of the city.
 - Close proximity to York along US-11
- Economic and Community Development
 - Three industrial parks.
 - University of West Alabama is a major economic development engine.
 - Growing support for a regional chamber of commerce
- Land Use and Zoning
 - Concentration of uses in historic downtown.
 - University campus is a major asset and dominant land use within the center of the community.
 - Land for development land along US-11 and around the AL-28 and I-20/59 interchange.
 - Land ownership is a factor on the development of east side of the city.
 - There are potential areas suitable for long term annexation.
- Environmental
 - Flood Plain is relatively extensive along Sucarnochee River.
 - Forested areas surround the City.
- Education and Schools
 - Sumter County School System
 - University Charter School
 - The University of West Alabama
- Housing and Neighborhoods
 - Housing Authority (James Smith) has 2 complexes and other subsidized housing (section 8).
 - Most neighborhoods are sound; a few neighborhoods need revitalization and in-fill.
- Downtown and Historic District(s)
 - Downtown residential and commercial districts provide an historic city core with a county seat.
 - UWA is a historic campus with concentration near downtown.
- Transportation and Access

- Proximity to I-20/59 is an important asset.
- US-11 is a major corridor that crosses the entire state.
- Major rail service is an asset and somewhat of a barrier between eastern and western portions of the city.
- Streets and Sanitation
 - Resurfacing and upgrading is an ongoing process.
- Infrastructure
 - The City and UWA have fiber
 - Water, sewer, gas, and power.
 - City of Livingston Recycling
 - Interstate, state and federal highways, and rail
- Health Care
 - Sumter County Health Department
 - Sports Medicine & Orthopedic Center
 - Rush Health Center serves Livingston
 - Sumter Health and Rehab serves the area
- Public Safety
 - Fire, Police and Rescue are city services
- Community Facilities
 - Jaycees Park located across from the University of West Alabama.
 - University recreational facilities.
 - Historic county courthouse and train depot city hall.
 - Livingston Civic Center near Lake LU
 - Ruby Pickens Tartt Library
- Civic
 - Sumter County Fine Arts Council
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Rotary Club
 - Lions Club
 - Primrose Club
 - Livingston Book Club

GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Connections: Corridors, Greenways and Open Spaces

Goal:

Improve Connections and Corridors to and from the City.

Strategies:

1. Develop and maintain gateway entrances:
 - a. Interstate-20/59 and AL-28.
 - b. Northern gateway around intersection of AL-28 and US-11
 - c. Southern gateway of US-11 at Sucarnochee River
 - d. Intersection of AL-28 S and US-11
2. Add signage and lighting to Courthouse Square, open spaces, and corridors

Goal:

Improve connections to the University of West Alabama campus.

Strategies:

1. Along Country Club Road.
2. Create new street connections on the University of West Alabama consistent with the Campus Master Plan and City Plan.
3. Encourage mixed-use developments on adjacent properties in accordance with the land use plan.
4. Develop improved sidewalk and bicycle connections/stations between the University and downtown to promote a diverse transportation network

Goal:

Establish a network of open spaces and greenways within the community.

Strategies:

1. Create a well-developed greenway system and park along Sucarnochee River extending into and connecting neighborhoods, downtown and the University campus.
 - a. Promote greenways as a major recreational amenity and asset to improve environmental conditions.
 - b. Work with Sumter County Nature Trust to manage greenway property not in the city.
2. Establish new neighborhood parks and maintain existing parks:
 - a. Establish Sucarnochee Park at the Treatment Plant – fence, lighting, demolish some buildings and cut down some trees
 - b. Neighborhoods north of AL-28 and east of railroad.
 - c. The Arcade/Courtyard, J.C. Park, Happy Hollow, Railroad Ave., and Johnson.
3. Continue improvements/access to county recreational area.
4. Promote Lake L.U. as a community recreational facility.
5. Protect existing natural and agricultural resources through conservation subdivisions and environmental preserves.

II. Transportation and Streets

Goals:

Develop new and improved city street networks and interchanges.

Strategies:

1. Develop an access management plan along US Highway-11 and AL-28 between downtown Livingston and Interstate-20/59 to the north.
2. Consider long term possibility of interchange at Interstate-20/59 and County Road-12.
 - a. Improve connection between Interstate and South Industrial Park.
 - b. Increase development in the South Industrial Park
3. Consider through traffic improvements connecting industrial areas to the interstate.
 - a. Possible interchange at Interstate-20/59 and County-12.
 - b. AL-28 between Interstate-20/59 and US Highway-11.
 - c. Consider an alternative access point on the south side of the North Industrial Park.
4. Consider improvements along AL-28 at Interstate-20/59 interchange.
 - a. Consider additional third lane–turning lane–along AL-28 between the interstate and Country Club Road.
 - b. Maintain gateways to community by tree plantings and landscaping along AL-28.
5. Improve access to areas of the community east of the railroad.
 - a. Consider new connection across the railroad to the east of US Highway-11.
 - b. Develop new and improved street network in revitalization neighborhoods.
 - c. Consider a proposed connector between Pickens Street and AL-28
6. Develop a network of complete streets within the community including sidewalks, bike paths, lighting, etc.
 - a. Add sidewalks to Pickens Street, Country Club Road, Lake Drive and Hopkins Street
7. Resurface downtown streets
8. Change parking flow and add handicap parking on Monroe Street
9. Re-direct traffic and parking on Franklin Street

III. Housing

Goal:

Promote diversified housing and neighborhood choices within the community.

Strategies:

1. Protect historical neighborhoods and homes.
2. Add additional middle-income, single-family housing
3. Promote revitalization of neighborhoods in need of major upgrades.
 - a. Make improvements to infrastructure: streets, sidewalks, lighting
 - b. Promote development of new and upgraded housing.
4. Support new and renovated student housing in proximity to the University.
5. Approve an ordinance for property maintenance and up-keep

IV. Economic and Community Development

Goal:

Develop an environment that encourages economic and workforce development with an emphasis on maintaining and improving existing business, recruiting retail and small businesses, and promoting entrepreneurial opportunities.

Strategies:

1. Expand existing industrial parks:
 - a. Promote proximity of sites close to railroad and Interstate-20/59
 - b. Consider other industrial developments consistent with the land use plan.
2. Market and promote the Black Belt Development Center, business incubator
 - a. Continue developing resources and services
 - b. Establish new partnerships and strengthen existing network
3. Develop broadband and technology to provide internet/Wi-Fi downtown
4. Increase the amount of healthy dining options within the community, especially downtown and interstate exchange.
5. Increase the number of available hotel rooms to better serve the University of West Alabama and community, near Interstate-20/59, mixed-use districts and bed and breakfasts.
6. Promote availability of recreational amenities:
 - a. Sucarnochee and Tombigbee Rivers.
 - b. Trail Systems – birding trails, Lake LU.
 - c. Hunting and fishing lodges, etc.
 - d. Develop public boat landing at Port Epes
7. Develop and expand well-designed and controlled commercial interchanges.
8. Increase commercial development around intersection of Interstate-20/59 and AL-28 and US-11.
9. Market as a retiree relocation community because of proximity to University as well as other related community facilities and services.

V. Neighborhoods and Districts

Goal:

Implement land use plan that promotes in-fill and reasonable expansion within the community.

Strategies:

1. A range of residential districts including historic preservation, traditional in-fill neighborhoods and revitalization of neighborhoods in need of improvements
2. Expand residential districts in accordance with the plan.
3. Consider future limited annexation to establish a cohesive city boundary consistent with the land use plan.
4. Establish conservation-oriented developments near and adjacent to the city limits.
5. Update the existing zoning ordinance consistent with the land use plan

US-11 District Goal:

Develop an access management and land use plan along US-11

Strategies:

1. Further develop mixed-use district along US Highway-11, consistent with University of West Alabama related developments
2. Develop a way-finding system along US-11 to provide direction to downtown, the University of West Alabama, and other community amenities

Downtown (Historic) District Goal:

Re-develop and revitalize downtown Livingston as the central cultural gathering place by working with Livingston Alive and the Chamber of Commerce.

See Appendix B: Livingston Alive Plan

Strategies:

1. Implement Livingston Alive revitalization program.
2. Promote downtown as a mixed-use district including housing opportunities connecting to or near downtown.
3. Expand and make better connections on both sides of US-11 (Lafayette St) in downtown.
4. Improve connections between the University of West Alabama and downtown:
 - a. Develop greenway trail, expanded park between University campus and downtown.
 - b. Incorporate directional signage; similar character to existing University signage.
 - c. Improved sidewalk system.
 - d. Incorporate dedicated bike lanes.
5. Promote in-fill of vacant structures with mixed-use structures.
6. Improve US-11 as a signature street linking Interstate-20/59 to and through downtown.
7. Support the preservation, restoration and maintenance of historic structures in the current district.
8. Improve sidewalks, lighting, and connections within the historic district.
9. Encourage the development of Bed & Breakfast(s), where they might be considered residential uses.
10. Develop Main Street as a special street connecting with the District.

VI. Community Facilities and Services

Goal:

Provide high quality healthcare and workforce development opportunities; police, fire, and rescue services; and other community services.

Education and Workforce Development**Strategies:**

1. Implement a “safe routes to school” campaign to provide for traffic and pedestrian connections.

- a. Improve pedestrian crossings along AL-28 between the elementary and middle school locations to the neighborhoods north of AL-28.
2. Partner with The University and secondary schools to support and promote workforce development training and opportunities.

Arts and Cultural Facilities

Strategies:

1. Incorporate cultural facilities into downtown that can be used as a revitalization tool bringing in regional events.
2. Develop an event space downtown for performances and events.
3. Provide attractive connections, parking, etc. of community to the campus facilities such as recreational facilities, meeting facilities, the wellness center, etc.

Other Facilities and services

Strategies:

1. Develop a multi-purpose senior center in or near downtown.
2. Consider workforce or economic development center in conjunction with the University of West Alabama on the northern segment of campus.
3. Develop healthcare providers and clinical space
4. Strive to provide the highest level of community police and fire services.
 - a. Consider upgraded facilities to support growth to the north.
 - b. Consider a Public Safety complex along US-11 housing both police and fire services

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Action Items

- These action items may change, over time; however, it is important to identify and update action items.
- Previous and current plans should be continuously updated and implemented to ensure results and take advantage of momentum.

Responsibility and Governance

- Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be a public/private initiative with assistance from volunteers and The University.
- The City of Livingston will be responsible for governing the Plan with the assistance of its units and boards, the Chamber of Commerce, Livingston Alive, local business and industry leaders, The University, and volunteers in implementing the Plan.

Priorities and Time Frame

- Priorities may be considered short term, mid-term and long term. These designations take into account the importance of a recommendation as well as a sense of time sensitivity or urgency.

Financing, Funding, and Capital Improvement Planning

- Most of the Plan strategies will be implemented by the public and private sectors; leverage and support private sector resources to accomplish the desired results.
- Plan implementation should also be seen as an investment strategy and not just spending public funds.
- Should include the use of city funds, grants, loans, other incentives and special funding generated through Sumter County Economic Development Cooperative District, Livingston Alive, Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Development Board, Housing Authority, Land Trust and other public-private develop organizations in addition to more common development authorities such as the utility board, school board, park board, etc.
- The financial plan for the city includes a five-year capital improvement program or plan, which should accompany the Plan. A draft capital improvements plan is accompanying this plan as an example.

Regulatory Tools

- These tools include zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, historic districts, design review, among others. These tools should be seen as consistent with the Plan and amended, as needed.

KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

Refer to page of 31 of the “Comprehensive Community Master Plan.”

APPENDIX A: SUMTER COUNTY RENAISSANCE PLAN

Sumter County Renaissance: A strategic plan for revitalization, renewal & redevelopment

“Sometimes all it takes is a little imagination, sometimes just a change of perspective; and all of a sudden you can see a whole new horizon of possibilities. The secret is not to ask ‘what it is’, but rather ask ‘what it could be’. “

Background: In March 2017, the Sumter County Economic Development Leadership Academy (SCEDLA) was created to work with elected officials, business and industry, educational leaders, healthcare officials, and community leaders to take an honest look at Sumter County's future. At that time, these leaders realized that in today's economic environment, successful communities and regions recognize that the process of developing an economy includes creating and expanding wealth, effectively utilizing assets and resources, and working together for a common purpose.

To help these leaders see their county from an outsider's perspective, UWA's Division of Economic Development & Outreach and the University of Alabama's Economic Development Academy joined forces to determine a Community Vitality Index Score for Sumter County based on five pillars of economic development including, site selection, education/workforce, infrastructure, population/demographics, and charm. With a score in place, the SCEDLA achieved its first step in a community economic development strategic planning process. As a result, they began to visualize incremental steps of moving their county from a “poor” rating to a “good” rating.

The Sumter County Renaissance plan resulted from their conversations and is to be used as a framework in which communities and organizations can operate within a unified structure to develop action plans towards a common purpose.

Purpose: To provide the foundation and framework for an economic renaissance in Sumter County that leads to job and population growth, new investment, renewed and sustained economic vitality, quality living for all citizens, and full participation in the global economy.

Strategies:

Infrastructure & Site Selection

1. Identify needs and implement plan for identifying new and upgrading and/or expanding all industrial and commercial sites, especially use of fiber and broadband, and marketing of available sites to key site selectors at state and regional levels.
2. Insure availability of all utilities, including expansion of natural gas availability.
3. Develop and implement plan for broadband and technology connectors and expansion in Sumter County and the Black Belt region to connect to the global economy, meet the needs of investors, and enhance the livability for all citizens.
4. Advocate and support enhancements of U.S. Highway 17, U.S. Highway 11, AL 39, and all highway connectors appropriate or required to expand industrial and commercial investment.
5. Enhance and beautify all gateways into Sumter County along with improved signage.
6. Develop and implement solutions for upgrading and expansion of 911 system and Google mapping to insure GPS applications.

7. Establish new regional economic development website along with other effective social media to promote industrial and commercial recruitment, marketing and image building.
8. Develop and maintain complete catalog, applications and understanding for all incentives for industrial and commercial development available at local, state and federal levels.
9. Develop assessment and identification of state's targeted and emerging industries and leverage for industrial, commercial, small business, entrepreneurial and job development in Sumter County and the Black Belt.
10. Plan and implement Alabama Summit on Rural Technology for April 2018.
11. Explore I-59/20 corridor development opportunities connected to expansion of the international portal at the Port of Mobile, including distribution, warehousing, logistical support and trucking.

Education & Workforce Development

1. Actively support establishment and implementation of University Charter School
2. Utilize innovative strategies and best practices learned from UCS to share with and contribute to improvements in all Sumter County and Black Belt public schools.
3. Develop county-wide goals, regional benchmarks and annual measurements for improvements at all grade levels to raise expectations and outcomes.
4. Support expansion and marketing of Alabama Career Center with the goal to become a full-time center for employment and job opportunities.
5. Maintain and leverage status as an Alabama Community of Excellence.
6. Sustain status of as an ACT work ready community, NCRC and expanded utilization of Work Keys throughout Sumter County and the Black Belt region.
7. Actively partner with and support expansion and marketing of the UWA Center for Workforce Development, including identification of growth opportunities in current and future workforce training needs, Ready to Work, and apprenticeship programming.
8. Expand and utilize effective marketing, promotional and recruitment strategies for the UWA Center for Workforce Development.
9. Identify gaps in workforce development and develop strategies to address, especially in the areas of unemployment, under-employment and out-migration.
10. Establish a one-stop entrepreneurial & small business development center that is built on a partnership among public, business and education sectors in Sumter County.

Livability

1. Leverage cultural assets to enhance economic vitality and to encourage a more inclusive, connected and blended community.
2. Market and leverage the outdoor, recreational and rural environment of Sumter County.
3. Market the livability and cultural events of Sumter County through local, regional and state partnerships, utilizing all marketing avenues available through social, print and broadcast media.
4. Establish and maintain a presence at Alabama welcome centers.
5. Develop, produce and sustain new, bold and creative marketing collateral materials for promotion and image-building for Sumter County and the Black Belt region.

6. Develop, support, encourage and execute downtown revitalization plans, especially for Livingston Alive and Downtown York through public-private partnerships. Especially focus on opportunities to create 'gathering place' in the downtown areas; and enhance "town-gown" partnerships, providing an expanded base for commercial and hospitality investment.
7. Develop and execute a public-private partnership to address health care needs in Sumter County and contiguous counties, including identified need for a financially feasible, cost-effective, sustainable critical access health care facility.
8. Develop and utilize a tourism marketing initiatives and promotion of regional events in partnership with other Black Belt counties. Encourage expansion of regional tourism (Example: Alabama Mountain Lakes Association).
9. Aggressively pursue Federal designation for the Black Belt region as a National Heritage District.
10. Explore opportunities at the Port of Epes for expanded recreational uses.

Leadership Development & Civic Engagement

1. Once finalized and adopted by the Economic Development Leadership Academy participants, advocate, encourage adoption by all appropriate local public, business and educational entities, along with timetables, assignments for implementation, benchmarks and measurements for success. Insure that all sectors are connected to the implementation process.
2. Explore development of a Black Belt regional leadership development to grow a new generation of rural Alabama leaders.
3. Encourage and sustain Leadership Sumter, and identify and engage other civic engagement programs to build the next generation of community leaders that will shape Sumter County's future and create a renaissance for the community.
4. Support and advocate the role of the University of West Alabama as the premier university in America for rural education and rural development.
5. In partnership with the UWA Division for Economic Development and local governments, encourage the restructuring, and redirection of the Sumter County Chamber of Commerce as the Economic Partnership of West Alabama, a high-impact, regional economic development agency through public-private partnerships, along with development of a comprehensive financial plan for implementation and sustainability.
6. Leverage Alabama's Bicentennial during 2018-2019 to provide economic and community development opportunities for Sumter County. Consider a county-wide homecoming initiative that identifies economic and educational leaders from throughout the nation to 'come home' and experience "Renaissance Sumter County", thus establishing a renewed 'sense of place'.
7. Design and implement an annual scorecard and vitality index to measure progress and create accountability of all partners. At least annually, hold a county-wide 'renaissance summit' to bring together citizens in the ongoing implementation process.

"Our goals can only be reached through the vehicle of a shared plan, in which we fervently believe, and upon which we vigorously act. There is no other route to success." – Pablo Picasso

Adopted January 23, 2018 – Economic Development Leadership Academy

APPENDIX B: LIVINGSTON ALIVE PLAN

OVERVIEW

Livingston Alive is a comprehensive downtown revitalization effort that is focused on improving the vitality of Livingston, Alabama's downtown district. Our effort stems from the Sumter County Renaissance Plan which places an emphasis on downtown revitalization in Sumter County towns as well as the Livingston Comprehensive Plan. Our mission is: "To create a unified downtown revitalization effort that sparks for-profit investment through a non-profit effort. This effort, and the group spearheading it, will focus on the downtown area of Livingston and will not only improve the image and vitality of the area via investment and various improvements, but also use marketing to boost utilization and attractiveness of the region."

While our downtown serves as the city's hub for service industries such as banks and insurance companies, the downtown district currently does not service the community as its central cultural gathering place, as found in other communities. With Livingston being the home of the University of West Alabama, this deficiency is noticeable and must be corrected by a dedicated push to bring businesses catering to the university community-and the community at large-into the downtown district, as well as improving connection points between campus and downtown, and promotion of current and future small business.

Over the past several months, Livingston Alive has established five committees that will guide our efforts within their respective areas of focus. Four of these committees- Funding/Organizational, Events, Promotion, and Design- follow the Main Street America model. Our hope is that our model will serve as a template for other Sumter county towns as well as those throughout the Black Belt region. In addition, we have added a Recruitment Committee to assist in business recruitment and development in the downtown area.

The main role of the Design Committee is to take a comprehensive look at the physical appearance of downtown and provide proposals to the City regarding improvements that the committee feels will improve the vitality of the downtown region. The Design Committee met December 12, 2017 to complete a walk-through of the downtown district. This exercise allowed the committee to make observations of downtown, identify areas of concern regarding its current physical appearance, and suggest possible solutions.

A questionnaire was created (as a follow-up to the walk-through and asked respondents to list other downtown areas they admired, rank and score common attributes to downtown areas and provide recommendations of how to improve those rankings/scores, name buildings in Livingston which they admire the design/style of, suggest policies/ordinances, as well as list improvements other towns have made that they were impressed by.

This strategic plan presents the findings of the survey, identifies a plan of action regarding several of the key areas of concern, and offers assistance in the execution of the plan. The Design Committee recognizes that many of these action items will require a public-private partnership, as well as funding that may or may not be available to the City and/or other entities in the current fiscal year.

Survey Results:

- With respect to other towns admired, Fairhope, Alabama was the most prevalent response, with respondents citing its cleanliness and beauty, variety of businesses, walkability, and safety. Other repeat responses included Cullman, Alabama and Greenwood, Mississippi.
- Safety was the most important attribute to respondents, followed by cleanliness, beauty, ability to walk/bike to/in downtown area, gathering places, parking, and green space.
- Respondents then scored each attribute based on the current state of the downtown area. In terms of lowest score (and thus most improvement needed), gathering places ranked first, followed by ability to walk/bike to/in downtown area, green space, cleanliness, safety, beauty, and parking.
- Downtown buildings admired by respondents included the Black Belt Realty building, the Black Belt Museum building, and the Sumter County Courthouse.
- Policies and ordinances suggested by the committee included an increased emphasis on trash and garbage removal, requiring commercial property owners to upkeep their building(s), and signage consistency.
- Physical improvements in other towns that were admired included walking trails, entrepreneurial incubators, and mural initiatives.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This strategic plan will provide the City of Livingston with recommendations and solutions to issues identified above, as well as a proposed order of priority. Livingston Alive recognizes that revitalization projects do not happen overnight, and small towns often lack the resources to tackle several projects in a fiscal year. This Plan will attempt to identify projects that can be completed with minimal cost and time constraints, while showing the community that progress is being made, as well as larger projects that will require more planning and capital than may be immediately available. Having a mix of these short and long-term projects is essential to any revitalization effort.

I. UWA CAMPUS CONNECTOR

One of the primary issues the group has discussed is poor connectivity between the UWA campus and the nearby downtown district. The current physical connection paths, including sidewalks, are not adequate and many, including the sidewalk along US Highway 11, carry safety concerns for pedestrians.

The full proposal – *See Appendix A* – describes an extension of the established and extensive trail system throughout the UWA campus that would provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing connection between the UWA campus and the downtown district. This connection will boost walk/bike traffic into downtown, improve the health and wellness of the community and would increase utilization of existing businesses as well as spur small business creation.

Because the proposed path will cross a number of private and publicly controlled properties, the proposal will require a public and private partnership, or purchase of right of way by the city.

II. PRIDE INITIATIVE

The “Pride Initiative” will be a multi-faceted effort that addresses city-wide cleanliness and the beauty of existing buildings. This will include:

- Construction of garbage dumpster enclosures that hide unsightly dumpsters from public view, in particular Monroe Street and the DHR parking lot;
- Construction of residential exterior trash can enclosures with downtown and other highly visible residences receiving these at no cost;
- Require buildings, as identified by the Design Committee, to update exterior paint in colors approved by City and beautification and historical boards;
- Require small business to keep the exterior of their buildings free of trash. Fines may be levied for repeat offenders;
- Coordinate community clean-up days to rid the downtown area, as well as other areas of the City, of waste, and build pride in keeping our city clean;
- Request that the City boost litter patrols in the downtown district, as well as other highly visible areas of the city;
- Increase enforcement of residential and commercial grass-cutting and trash ordinances with an emphasis on downtown and other highly visible areas;

III. WASHINGTON STREET IMPROVEMENTS

- Improvements to visual “gateway” appeal of intersection of US Highway 11 and Washington Street, including wayfinding signage, decorative traffic light poles, brick paver cross walks, and lowering of Shell Station signage;
- Placement of street lamps and, where applicable, landscaping on the sidewalks running on the east side of Washington Street, from the intersection of US Highway 11 to Monroe Street
- Placement of street lamps in any gaps in light coverage to ensure safety;
- Explore feasibility of placing median landscaping in center of Washington Street on stretch between US 11 intersection and Monroe Street;
- Consider mural placement on Dollar General and/or other buildings facing main intersection to boost visual appeal of downtown and draw visitors in;
- Ensure all existing street lamps are operational and lamppost banners are always in place;
- Consider placing UWA logo at intersection(s) of US 11/Washington Street and/or Washington Street/Monroe Street to display town and gown relationship
- Explore feasibility of Franklin Street traffic flow reversal to allow ease of entry for Washington Street southbound traffic (highest traffic flow from University district);

IV. MONROE STREET IMPROVEMENTS

- Complete sidewalk improvements to mirror Washington Street including street lamps and landscaping both east (to Spring Street) and west (to US 11) of Washington Street intersection;
- Remove garbage dumpsters and place in enclosures;
- Explore possible façade grants to construct overhang and patio from back of University Cinema building to Pete’s Fruit Stand building, which creates possibility for outdoor seating (similar to Franklin Street possibilities);

V. ENTERTAINMENT ORDINANCES

- Allowance of patrons to consume alcoholic beverages in clearly defined outdoor areas, such as the Franklin Street overhang;

- Open container law exemptions for special downtown events, so long as patrons place beverage in disposable cups and remain inside identified areas;
- Push for Sunday alcohol sales beginning at 1 PM. As a compromise, reduce allowed bar closing time to 12 PM on Monday through Thursday;
- Implement indoor smoking ban for all city businesses

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

- Explore condemnation of “bus shop” property under the pretense of brownfield status, and explore grant opportunities to clean up property for future development;
- Explore construction of a dedicated farmers’ market space in the downtown district or repurposing of an existing building,
- Explore construction of an entrepreneurial incubator in downtown district or repurposing of an existing building;
- Establish wayfinding signage progression beginning at I-20/59 interchange to direct visitors to downtown district, University of West Alabama, as well as other interests such as Lake LU;
- Explore possibility of re-routing US Hwy 11 beginning at the Stadium Drive intersection to eliminate safety and traffic concerns at intersection near Shell station. This would allow for the Stadium Drive to Chapman Street portion of US 11 to be redesigned as a “scenic” street.

Appendix AA: UWA Campus Connector

Overview: The University of West Alabama (UWA) sits in the heart of Livingston, Alabama, a quaint rural town of roughly 3500 residents. UWA is without question the economic driver of its host community and surrounding areas. While Livingston is home to a beautiful downtown, university students, faculty, and staff do not currently frequent the downtown region.

One of the primary issues for this is poor connectivity in several respects between the UWA campus and the nearby downtown region. Though lying in the shadow of one another, they seem worlds apart in terms of connection, both physically and philosophically. Current physical connection paths, including sidewalks, are not adequate and many, including the sidewalk along US Highway 11, carry safety concerns for pedestrians.

In this summary, Livingston Alive, a group of community members in the inception stage of a downtown revitalization movement, will propose an extension of the established and extensive trail system throughout the UWA campus that would provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing connection between the UWA campus and the downtown region. This connection will boost walk/bike traffic into the downtown region, and would increase utilization of current businesses as well as spur new small business creation.

Because the proposed path will cross a number of private and publicly controlled properties, the proposal will require a public and private partnership. Thus, the proposal will be broken down by phases, including proposed scope of work and controlling entity.

PROPOSAL:

Section 1: McConnell Quad sidewalk extension.

Controlling entity: University of West Alabama

From the midway point of the current McConnell quad sidewalk, a pathway of similar width and design will run southeast for a distance of roughly 120 yards, before ending in a cross walk at the corner of School Street and Chapman Street. The pathway will then cross the School/Chapman Street intersection and run down the west side of Chapman Street, by widening and leveling current sidewalk from 5 to 12 feet, for a distance of 100 yards.

Section 2: North Street Crossing

Controlling entity: City of Livingston

At the end of the section of Chapman Street controlled by UWA, the pathway will cross North Street *at a 45 degree angle* in front of the Touch of Home Bakery, ending on property owned by the Masonic Lodge. This is a distance of roughly 15 yards.

Section 3: Masonic Lodge section

Controlling entity: Masonic Lodge

City of Livingston will need to either purchase right of way or secure legal easement from Masonic Lodge that will allow pathway to continue towards downtown, for a distance of roughly 50 yards. This will require the repositioning of two power poles, as well as the repositioning/removal of Touch of Home Bakery's storage structure, tallow disposal, and trash receptacle.

Section 4: Sumter Investments, LLC parking lot renovation section

Controlling entity: Sumter Investments, LLC c/o Steve Springer

The parking lot currently being used as overflow parking by the Touch of Home Bakery is owned by Sumter Investments, LLC, whose tenant is Dollar General. This parking lot is in need of repair and with proper upgrades could be a true asset to the downtown region. Proposed upgrades would include repaving, implementing attractive landings with flora and fauna, cleanup of unsightly waste, and the pathway extending through the property until reaching the current retaining wall. This would be a distance of roughly 35 yards.

Because of the projected cost of improvements to this section, and its importance to this proposal, this might require the City of Livingston purchasing the parking lot property and conducting these improvements, with funding stemming from a larger grant. Again, improvements to this area will make a large impression to visitors dining at the Touch of Home Bakery or passing by, and enhance the aesthetics of the entire downtown.

As a temporary solution for this section, a cross walk across the parking lot can easily be painted with permission from Sumter Investments, and would allow the remainder of the project to move forward.

Section 5: Library and "Arcade" section

Controlling entity: City of Livingston

Current retaining wall between Sumter Investments parking lot and City of Livingston “public library” lot would be removed and the pathway would extend up the hill for a distance of roughly 30 yards. This slope would be ADA compliant and would be devoid of stairs or steps. The pathway would then cross Monroe Street (roughly 20 yards), entering the “DHR” parking lot before curving into the city-owned “Arcade,” a breezeway between two buildings that is a popular gathering area for the community, which is where the proposed pathway would end. The stretch from the end of Monroe Street to the start of the Arcade is roughly 40 yards. Existing brick entrances to Arcade will be modified as needed to allow multiple pedestrians to pass through simultaneously.

Design specifications

- Pathway will be approximately 12 feet wide at all points, to allow dual biking/walking traffic.
- Consistent with the design used throughout the UWA campus, light poles will be placed on the left side (will facing south) every 20 yards, unless established lighting exists.
- A security phone kiosk, consistent with those used on the UWA campus, will be placed along the pathway near the Library and Arcade section.
- Pathway will be ADA compliant
- Safety of pedestrians is of the utmost importance, and additional LED lighting in low-light areas will be added as needed.
- In the Sumter Investments parking lot section, Crepe Myrtles will be planted in the landing beds along the sidewalk
- Trash receptacles will be removed along the route or placed in receptacle landings, which serve to keep receptacles out of sight.

Pathway Summary

- Proposed pathway is most feasible of options and would utilize main established pathway through UWA Campus, which currently begins at Hoover Apartments, continues to the Student Union Building, proceeds south to Gilbert Hall, Young Dining Hall, and ends in McConnell Quad.
- Proposed pathway would be safest option, preventing students from biking/walking down side of heavily used US Hwy 11.
- Pathway and associated improvements would greatly improve aesthetics in downtown region.
- Pathway would complement an established, extensive trail system throughout the UWA campus, including the Lake LU nature trails, the “loop” trail system, Black Belt Nature Trails, and internal campus pathways and trails. This trail system exceeds five miles in length.
- Pathway would clearly connect UWA campus and downtown from a philosophical sense as much as a physical sense.
- Livingston Alive, along with city and university outlets, will promote use of the trail system and encourage UWA students, faculty, and staff to bike or walk into downtown. This promotion will benefit small business in the downtown region, and as utilization increases, will spur small business growth.
- Proposed pathway length is roughly 415 yards.

APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The following is a community assessment that was created by the consultants at the beginning of the planning process. As the progress has progressed, the assessment has been updated so that it will be an accurate reflection of the community at approval. This assessment was created in order to determine the recommended actions as part of the Comprehensive Community Master Plan.

Population and Demographics

According to the 2007 U.S. Census Estimate, Livingston has a population of approximately 3,000. In addition, the University of West Alabama has a current enrollment of approximately 2,300 students. Statistics show the population of Livingston has been declining slowly over the past twenty years. At the time of this analysis, in April 2009, the unemployment rate for Sumter County is 12.5 percent according to the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations. Sumter County's unemployment rate is notably higher than the state's unemployment rate of 8.9 percent. Also, Livingston has a notably higher percentage of families living below the poverty level, 39.4 percent, compared to 12.5 percent for the State. Livingston's median family income is \$22,500 which is also significantly lower than the state average.

It is uncertain whether the population of Livingston will continue to steadily decline. The University of West Alabama is an invaluable asset to the community, but recently the city has apparently not seen much in growth of the community from the University. Recent news is that the proposed U.S. Steel Plant, about nine miles from Livingston in Epes, has been temporarily suspended because of the slumping economy. Livingston might experience some growth with the influx of jobs and people to the facility as the economy improves and plans for opening the plant resume.

Economic and Community Development

Livingston relies primarily on industry and warehousing for jobs. Currently the community has two developed industrial parks that are home to ten industries. The city is actively pursuing occupants for the McDowell Industrial Park is planned for development directly adjacent to the interstate, and has over 100 acres available for new industry. The North Industrial Park is home to light industry and has good access to US Highway-11 and Interstate 20/59 via Alabama Highway-28. The South Industrial Park is located south of downtown Livingston off of US Highway-11 near the Sucarnochee River. Access to US Highway-11 is excellent, however access to Interstate-20/59 is limited. Trucks must either travel through downtown Livingston, or south along US Highway-11 to York to access the interstate system. Both industrial parks, North and South, have rail access.

In 2002, Sumter County was designated as a Renewal Community through the Federal Renewal Community Program, which assists in economic development and expansion through the provision of federal tax incentives for businesses located, locating, or expanding in the designated areas. Livingston has been able to take advantage of these incentives.

Livingston industries rely on both rail and truck transport for movement of goods and products. The city has annexed to exit 17 on Interstate-20/59 so that the city has a better connection to the interstate infrastructure. A few commercial businesses have moved out to the Interstate, but most retail is still concentrated along US-11 and in downtown Livingston.

Sumter County has recently formed a county-wide Chamber of Commerce located in Livingston. The Chamber will provide ribbon cutting ceremonies, seek industry to come to the area, plan citywide sales to help businesses, arrange tours of homes, and guide business. The Chamber's goal is to draw more industry and jobs, and to help those already existing. As of this report in June 2009, the Chamber has 68 members and is well ahead of projections in terms of recruiting members and establishing their presence in the county. To show their support with the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Livingston has provided the Chamber office space in the old city hall building located downtown along US Highway-11.

The University of West Alabama is another major employer in the community. Throughout the year through sporting events, conferences and other events the University brings many visitors to Livingston. However, Livingston only has one major facility to house many of these visitors. As a result, many of those visiting the campus are forced to stay in surrounding communities.

Livingston's retail base is located downtown and sparsely along US Highway-11 near the University campus. Recently, Livingston has seen an increase in retail activity near the Interstate at exit 17. Upcoming plans for this area include the addition of another lodging facility, fast-food restaurant, new service station and re-opening of a previously closed service station.

Land use, Ownership and Zoning

In Livingston, most commercial land use is concentrated downtown, along US-11 and at exit 17 on Interstate-20/59. Downtown, the commercial usage is predominately service oriented along the courthouse square and more retail oriented on the streets leading to and from the square. Many of the structures downtown are older, with few newer structures along the periphery where the retail oriented commercial is located. There is a scattering of vacant properties throughout downtown, especially in properties fronting on the Courthouse. It also appears that many of the second-story spaces are unoccupied around the square; very few second-story residential or commercial was noted. Most of the newer commercial land uses are along US Highway-11 leading north from downtown. This retail based commercial has relocated further to the north to be within closer proximity to the University of West Alabama campus as well as easier access by automobile. This development is fragmented requiring people to ingress and egress along US Highway-11. There are also several interspersed pockets of multi-family residential along US Highway-11.

Developments around exit 17 along Interstate-20/59 are mostly oriented toward motorist, including fast-food restaurants, service stations and hotel. Currently plans are under development for an additional fast-food restaurant, new hotel, and additional service station. One of the previously closed service stations has undergone extensive renovations and plans to re-open soon. Also, the city is actively attempting to receive funding for road improvements along a segment of AL-28 between the Interstate and Country Club Road. If funding is secured and those improvements are made, land use in that area of town could change.

Located to the northwest of downtown is a historic residential neighborhood, this neighborhood contains several historic houses, some dating to the mid-19th century. Three houses in this area of the

community are listed on the State Register of Historic Places. Newer residential development is located primarily north of the downtown, especially Country Club Road and the northern segment of AL-28, between US Highway-11 and Interstate-20/59, as well as the southern segment AL-28 to the east of the railroad line. Much of the multi-family housing is located along US-11, near the University campus, including one of the public housing developments in the community. These units are segregated and not well connected to any shopping or activity other than by automobile. There are two mobile home communities' northeast of downtown, and these areas also seem to have an inadequate housing stock. Industrial development in Livingston is concentrated within the industrial parks. The North Industrial Park is located north of downtown, just east of the US Highway-11 and AL-28 northern intersection. There is another industrial park to the south of town, just off of US Highway-11 that is home to Gulf Coast Energy, an alternative energy researcher and producer. The future McDowell Industrial Park is located directly adjacent to the Interstate, and is actively being marketed for businesses. Residential and institutional development is not in close proximity to industrial development.

Streets and Transportation

The major transportation corridor is Interstate-20/59 which passes across the northwestern portion of the city. To the east/north along Interstate-20/59 is Tuscaloosa, and Birmingham where the two interstates separate, and to the west/south is Jackson and Meridian, Mississippi. There have been preliminary discussions within the state Department of Transportation about an I-85 extension from Montgomery to the Alabama, Mississippi state line and there is potential that the new interstate might connect to I-20/59 near Livingston.

US Highway-11 provides excellent access for Livingston and connection to the surrounding communities to the north and south. Major east and west connections are provided for along AL28 which intersects and joins with US Highway-11 Downtown and diverges approximately 2 miles to the north. At their divergence, AL-28 provides access back to Interstate-20/59. Congestion is not an issue.

The grid system in Livingston is relatively intact, and for the most part, downtown's sidewalks and those connecting to UWA are in good condition. These sidewalks seem to be utilized by both citizens and students.

Utilities

Livingston has a separate utilities board. Most of the structures in the city limits have water and sewer.

Housing and Neighborhoods

Housing conditions vary in Livingston from historic homes to middle-age proto-typical developments; there is very limited new development in Livingston. The historic neighborhoods are an important sector of the housing market in Livingston, primarily located within walking distance of downtown and the University of West Alabama. There are a few areas where housing conditions are in need of improvement and a revitalization program, to include utility, streets, and access to neighborhood business and community facilities. The primary areas of concern with housing are the mobile home community's northeast of downtown. Rehabilitation and upgrading of sub-standard housing is important to the overall housing condition and market.

There are a few vacant lots available in and near the core of the city and within and adjacent to the downtown district that would be ideal for infill development, particularly along Lafayette Street. Potential housing development includes in-fill opportunities in and near the city core as well as new housing connected or near existing development.

Public Safety

The City of Livingston is served by a full-time fire department staff with some part-time and student employees as well as a full-time police department. Police Headquarters is located in the old city hall building on US Highway-11 downtown. The Fire Department is housed in a facility north of downtown along US Highway-11 directly across from the University campus.

Currently, the fire department is actively pursuing grants to construct a new, larger facility at the same location along US Highway-11. Plans also include relocating the Police Headquarters in the same facility with the Fire Department.

The city employs three paramedics and five certified Emergency Medical Technicians and provides Advance Life Support Ambulance service with two transport units.

Medical Services and Hospital

The nearest emergency and hospital facility to Livingston is located in York, approximately 10 miles south along US Highway-11. Hill Hospital, a 33 bed facility, has made many improvements over the past few years to serve the residents of Sumter County. Other larger hospitals within a sixty-mile radius of Livingston include: DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa, Bryan W. Whitfield Memorial Hospital in Demopolis, and Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center, Rush Foundation Hospital, and Riley Memorial in Meridian, Mississippi.

The Sumter County Health Department operates a facility along US Highway-11 in Livingston on land leased from the University. The Health Department provides assistance for the county and community as well as providing additional services as needed.

Livingston is also served by three physician offices, one an affiliate of Rush Specialty Hospital in Meridian, and three local dentists.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

The City of Livingston operates several park and recreation facilities. Jaycee Park, the largest, has over 40 acres of outdoor recreational facilities including 5 baseball fields, 2 tennis courts, 2 playground areas, and a swimming pool. Citizens are also encouraged to use the recreational facilities at the University of West Alabama which include: a basketball gymnasium, tennis courts, soccer fields, weight lifting room, walking trail, and rodeo facility. Many private and public ponds are located close to Livingston, and Lake L.U. is located on the University campus. The City is also located near the Tombigbee and Sucarnoochee Rivers, making the area a prime spot for many boating and fishing activities. Sumter County is well known for its hunting grounds, with several public and private hunting grounds throughout the county. Livingston residents enjoy the sporting events of the University, including football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, and rodeo.

Private recreation and entertainment is limited, such as a movie theater, skating rink, etc. These types of facilities will likely need to be a part of a regional destination initiative or a less expensive small scale community type facility.

Senior Facilities

Senior services are important to the city's future growth. Especially in relation to the universities opportunities in health care issues.

Schools and Higher Education

Public K-12 education for Livingston is provided through the County Board of Education. The county operates three schools that serve the Livingston area:

Livingston Elementary School (K-4)

Livingston Junior High School (5-8)

Livingston High School (9-12)

Livingston Elementary and Junior High Schools are located on the same campus at the intersection of US Highway-11 and AL-28. Livingston High School is located between the University of West Alabama campus and downtown. Recent discussions have indicated that the county will construct a new high school at a location between Livingston and York. If those plans proceed, the existing Livingston High School will be vacated and several opportunities for the facilities re-use could be considered.

Between Livingston and York along US Highway-11 is Sumter Academy which is a private K-12 school. Sumter Academy draws students from all over Sumter County.

The University of West Alabama is located in the center of Livingston and offers degrees at the associate, bachelors, and master levels. The campus encompasses 595 acres all within the city. The University is well-known for its teacher education program; the College of Education has many partnerships with counties in the Black Belt to improve the education systems in those counties. The Regional Center for Community and Economic Development is also housed at UWA and provides economic development opportunities to areas throughout the Black Belt. The Bell-Brown Career Technical Center provides worker training for Livingston.

Arts and Culture

The Sumter County Fine Arts Council presents a series of programs each year. The Sucarnoochee Folklife Festival is an annual April event sponsored by the University of West Alabama. The best musicians, artists, storytellers, and cornbread chefs in the Black Belt gather in the courthouse square. Activities at this event begin with the Sucarnoochee 5K River Run. The event holds a Cornbread Cook-off and folk crafts from around the region are emphasized.

In nearby York is home to the Coleman Center for Arts and Culture, founded by the City of York, Sumter County Public Schools, the University and other local institutions. The center seeks to nurture and facilitate partnerships between artists and community, and strives to create the vision and the means for a creative and sustainable society. The center's mission is to enrich lives by integrating art into education, civic life, and community development throughout the Black Belt. The Coleman Center

provides a space for town forums and also houses the city library. The last three years have seen major growth for the Coleman Center with the addition of the Frances Hightower Hill Artists in-Residence program and artist run programs; current projects include Black Belt Designs and York Art Here. Past projects include the Ala-Miss Book Center and Municipal Workshop. The Coleman Center obtains lots of good publicity for the area, and many of Livingston's citizens are involved with the Coleman Center.

Community Facilities and Public Buildings

The City of Livingston maintains several facilities and structures around the city. City Hall is located east of downtown in the renovated Rail Depot. It houses the administrative aspects of the city as well as the council chambers. The structure that previously houses City Hall is now Police Headquarters and the office for the Sumter County Chamber of Commerce. The Fire Department is located north of downtown along US Highway-11.

The Ruby Pickens Tartt Public Library, located downtown, is a jewel within the community. The library contains over 31,000 volumes for all ages and offers citizen's free public internet access on two computer stations. The library also offers homework assistance as well as talking books and a video selection.

The City also has a Civic Center on the western shore of Lake L.U. along Country Club Road. The building is very well utilized by the community. The facility is designed for 300 people and includes a full kitchen.

Downtown

The courthouse square downtown is the central focus of Livingston. The Sumter County Courthouse, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is the centerpiece and well maintained. The buildings around the courthouse square are generally well-kept, however several could use needed improvements.

There are a few vacant lots on the LaFayette Street (US Highway-11) across from the Courthouse. Infill on these lots would provide an opportunity to have a continuous building frontage along the courthouse square. Currently one lot is owned by the County and is used for a farmer's market, however plans call for the construction of a new courthouse annex at that location.

Parking in the downtown area seems to be adequate, although there is some congestion around the Post Office. Streetscaping in Livingston is good, and sidewalks are in good condition. LaFayette Street is not as attractive, with vacancies and a few deteriorated buildings. Surrounding residential areas are in good condition and have a variety of historic homes.

A very positive aspect of Livingston is the relationship between downtown and the University of West Alabama. Many businesses have remained close to downtown because of University's location. A college campus offers many opportunities for restaurant and recreational retail development. Livingston High School is also within walking distance of downtown, as is the public library.

Historic Properties and Districts

Livingston is an historic city, with an excellent inventory of historic commercial and residential properties, with many properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. There are already three houses in the downtown area already listed on the State Register as well as Saint James Episcopal

Church. The County Courthouse, constructed in 1902, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Also, there is a historic marker at the Bored Well outside the Courthouse stating the significance of the well in the early development of the community. In the later 19th century, Livingston's Bored Well became a national destination for its healing and clean waters. The site of the well is covered by a public pavilion.

There is an excellent opportunity to establish and develop one or more districts and take advantage of the tools that can protect these properties and help finance their revitalization. Studies have indicated that such designation will tend to increase the values of these properties and neighborhoods. This should be an important part of the city's marketing efforts.

Located on the University of West Alabama campus is the county-owned Alamuchee-Bellamy Covered Bridge, which was built in 1861 and moved to the campus in 1971. The bridge was originally constructed over the Sucarnoochee River on the main state road leading from Livingston to York. It is maintained by the Sumter County Historical Society. The bridge is one of the oldest existing covered bridges in Alabama.

Livingston is also home to Sumter County's oldest cemetery, Myrtlewood. Some of the markers date back to the early 19th century.

Natural Resources Special Areas and Appearance

Livingston is a well-kept city, in an attractive rural setting. The Sucarnoochee and Tombigbee Rivers provide excellent opportunities for recreation and community definition. Most of the length of the Sucarnoochee River in Livingston cannot be accessed because of elevation changes or it is bounded by private property. The natural forested areas and creeks provide an opportunity to define the character of the city. Because of the rural and natural character of the area, Livingston is a well-known location destination for hunting and fishing.

The corridors leading into the city from all directions should be considered an asset in addition to their potential commercial or industrial development. The City has an excellent to maintain gateways for the community, especially along the US Highway-11 and AL-28 corridors.