Illustrative Comprehensive Plan
Sumter County, Alabama
November 2012

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Table of Contents

About Sumter County .................................................. 4
Tourism Development .................................................. 5
   Existing County Recreational Opportunities ...................... 6
   Tour Routes .......................................................... 7
   Wayfinding .......................................................... 8
Special Projects ....................................................... 10
   Barn & Equestrian Facilities ....................................... 10
   Community Basketball or Tennis Courts ....................... 11
   Community Garden .................................................. 12
   Gateway ............................................................ 13
   Park Restroom Facility ............................................ 14
   RV/Camper Park and Camping .................................... 15
   Water Splash Pad .................................................... 16
   Self-Guided City Tour .............................................. 17
   Community Center Park ............................................ 18
   Park Playground ..................................................... 19
   Farmers’ Market ...................................................... 20
   Amphitheater/Outdoor Classroom .................................. 21
   S.W. Taylor Overlook ............................................... 22
Appendix ............................................................. 24
   'A'- Project Process ................................................ 24
   'B'- Outdoor Recreation Funding Sources ....................... 25
About Sumter County

Sumter County is located in the ‘Black Belt’ region of southern Alabama. The region, named for its dark black topsoil that lies over a limestone base, extends from the Mississippi state line in the west, to near the Georgia state line to the east, Tuscaloosa to the north and near Florida to the south. This unique geology has been key in shaping the area's history along with the modern day physical, cultural and economic landscape.

Sumter County was founded in 1832. The county covers an area of 907 square miles and has a population of 13,763 per the 2010 census. Livingston, home to the University of West Alabama, is both the county seat and largest city in the county.

The physical geography of Sumter County is dominated by the Tombigbee River that forms the county's eastern boundary. The river travels across over 100 miles of frontage along the county carrying both commercial and recreational traffic through two locks and dams and a barge port in the county. The Tombigbee River and its tributaries in the county also provide many recreational opportunities including hunting and fishing, boating, horseback riding and wildlife viewing.

Interstate 20/59 crosses the county from northeast to southwest and connecting Sumter County to Tuscaloosa and Birmingham to the east and Meridian, Mississippi to the west. US Highway 80 is a major thoroughfare connecting Sumter County to Demopolis and Selma to the east and Meridian, MS to the west. State Highway 17 runs north to south through the county and lead to Aliceville to the north and Butler to the south.

Project Narrative

This County Recreational Masterplan was completed as part of an overall county Comprehensive Planning process. Creation of the plan was a cooperative effort that include the Sumter County Commission, The Sumter County Chamber of Commerce, The Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission, The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development, The University of West Alabama, and Kelly Landscape Architects and the input of the citizens of Sumter County collected during public meetings and listening sessions held throughout the county. Research was also done utilizing federal and state information sources as well as in the field exploring the many assets located within the county. The plan that follows uses the information gathered to demonstrate opportunities and projects that will build recreation and tourism opportunities throughout the county.
Tourism Development

List of Tourist Attractions found across the Black Belt region. Numbers are represented on the map to the above.

1. Coleman Center for Arts and Culture
2. University of West Alabama Nature Trail
3. Gainesville Historic District
4. Alcove Museum and Cultural Arts Center
5. Broadhead Memorial Park and Walking Trail
6. Bladon Springs State Park
7. Coffeeville Lake Service Park
8. Choctaw National Wildlife Refuge
9. Demopolis Bigbee Bottom Trail and Lower Pool
10. Chickasaw State Park
11. Safe House Black History Museum
12. Warrior Lake-Jennings Ferry Campground
13. Eutaw Historic District
14. Warrior Lake Damsite Park
15. Moundville Archaeological Park
16. Talladega National Forest-Oakmulgee District
17. Holmes Head Farms
18. Perry Lake Park and Barton’s Beach Cahaba River Preserve
19. Historic Selma
   - St. James Hotel
   - Bridgetender’s House
   - Edmund Pettus Bridge
   - Old Depot Museum
   - Brown Chapel A.M.E.
   - Vaughan-Smithsonian Museum
   - Sturdivant Hall Museum
   - Old Live Oak Cemetery
   - Historic Riverfront Park
   - Kenan’s Mill
20. Old Cahawba Archaeological Park
21. Black Belt Research and Extension Center
22. Paul M. Ginest State Park
23. Dallas County State Public Fishing Lake
24. Holy Ground Battlefield Park
25. Lock and Damsite East Bank
26. Jackson Family Compound
27. Lowndes Interpretive Center
28. Downtown Montgomery
   - Alabama State Capitol
   - First White House of the Confederacy
   - Archive & History Building
   - Old Alabama Town
   - Hank Williams Museum
   - Oakwood Cemetery Annex
   - Dexter Ave. King Memorial Baptist Church
   - Rosa Parks Museum
   - Civil Rights Memorial Center
29. Tuskegee Area
   - Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center
   - Tuskegee Institute National Historic site: The Oaks
   - Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site: Carver Museum
   - Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site
30. Tuskegee National Forest
   - Tsinia Wildlife Viewing Area
   - Taska Recreation Area
   - Bartram Trail
31. Union Springs Historic District
32. Three Notch Trail
33. Robert G. Wehle Nature Center
A goal of this document is to highlight ways in which Sumter county can develop tourism as a both a sustainable method of economic development and as a resource for its citizens. The graphic below highlights the existing assets and opportunities that exist in Sumter county as a basis for developing a comprehensive tourism strategy. Among the many excellent assets present in the county, Sumter County is in a position to take advantage of three unique elements that have the ability to provide a strong basis for the development of a tourism industry. These include Interstate 20/59, the Tombigbee river and several abandoned rail lines all within the county. The interstate can act as a funnel delivering tourists from across Alabama and the Southeast United States into the county and facilitates the marketing of the county to those living outside its borders. The river provides additional access to the county through recreational boating and serves as a main axis on which many tourist facilities are either currently located or can be developed. The abandoned rail line that runs north/south approximately parallel to highway 17 is a rare opportunity to develop a rails-to-trails system in the county that could also be a regional draw for tourism.
To achieve the highest possible benefit from tourism, it is important to encourage tourists to spend extended periods enjoying what Sumter County has to offer. As such, having activities that offer single and multi-day activities will encourage visitors to repeat visits and extend their stays. The graphic on this page demonstrates how developing a greenway along Highway 17 in conjunction with developing resources along the Tombigbee River can create extended recreational opportunities. The orange, pink and yellow arrows represent one day segments of boating, biking or horseback riding trips. This illustrates the possibilities for tourists to spend time in the county choosing from different recreational activities. With the development of trail and boating facilities also comes the opportunity for local entrepreneurs and organizations to benefit from creating businesses that cater to tourists such as outfitters, guide services, bed & breakfasts, lodges, hostels, restaurants, and other facilities that are needed by visitors.
Wayfinding

Wayfinding is a principle used by planners and designers to guide people through spaces in a clear and organized manner. The goal of a wayfinding system is to create an environment where people that are new to an area can successfully navigate to the destinations they are trying to reach without confusion or becoming lost.

The main tool that designers use in wayfinding is signage. A well designed signage system provides visitors with useful information as they travel including the ability to:

1. Know where you are
2. Know where you are going
3. Know the best way to get there
4. Recognize your destination upon arrival
5. Find your way back

Wayfinding concepts also go beyond basic directional signage. A comprehensive wayfinding system includes items such as pavilions that greet visitors entering an area and give information about where to go and what to see, monuments that announce entering or exiting certain areas of significance, clear concise directional signs, interpretive signage to educate visitors about unique features or historical sites in an area, and pathway marking that affirms where visitors are and where they are going (such as banners on light poles).

As well as providing clear and pertinent information, a wayfinding system should also help unify a city, county or region through the use of consistent graphics and symbols. This helps visitors recognize signs, the wayfinding elements as well as helping reinforce the ‘brand’ of the area. In Sumter County the wayfinding system can integrate elements that are unique to the area and highlight the county’s character. Examples of these types of elements include the Tombigbee River, historic structures and/or hunting and fishing.

A well planned comprehensive wayfinding system such as the one above in Norcross, Georgia, can help reinforce the area’s ‘brand’ while encouraging visitors to stop and visit.
Gateways

Gateways are large monumental elements that are used to announce entering or leaving an area or specific destination. Along with providing an aesthetic element, gateways can create anticipation and excitement for visitors as they approach a gateway or focus views in a particular direction.

Directional (Sorter)

Directional signs assist those traveling in an area to get where they want to go. Signs that clearly show people unfamiliar with an area how to get to their destination without becoming lost, creates a positive experience for tourists encouraging them to stay longer and spend more money.

Informational

Informational signs such as kiosks provide information that is useful for people in an area. Information such as maps, lists of nearby attractions and upcoming events can be included. This information is a resource that will promote an area and local events to residents and visitors alike.

Interpretive

Interpretive signage provides visitors with an added layer of information about a specific feature. These signs could highlight a unique structure, give the history of an area, educate about a unique physical feature or provide in-depth information about any other unique piece of the county’s history.

Affirmation

Providing assurance to people that they are on the right track is an important element to any wayfinding system. Through the appropriate use of color, texture, shape, pattern, size and type visual reinforcement is established to let people know they are heading the right direction and how far they have traveled.
**Special Projects**

**Barn & Equestrian Facilities**

**Project Narrative:**
For the horseback riding enthusiasts, a barn and boarding facility will allow the groups to store feed and equipment and shelter their animals during weekend outings or a scheduled get together for the recreational horseback riders and the local clubs. These facilities can serve as the base camp for the weekend outings as well as a place to call theirs with access to adjoining Corps of Engineers lands.

**Cost Estimate:**
- Barn with stalls
- Pasture with horse fence
- Water & Electrical service
- gravel driveway

Total: $175,000
Community Basketball or Tennis Courts

Project Narrative:
Community recreational facilities are a necessary part of developing local youth and promoting physical fitness. These courts will be yet another place that citizens can come together for pickup games of basketball or tennis matches. The basketball court would be proposed to utilize a large circular slab with four goals and official delineations. Lighting may or may not be an added amenity for possible extended use for both tennis and basketball.

Cost Estimate:
- Basketball pad with markings
- 4 basketball goals
- 1 tennis court
- tennis court fencing

Total: $110,000 (Basketball)
       $80,000 (Tennis)
Community Garden

Project Narrative:
Tied to the idea of a Farmers’ Market for local commerce and citizens to come together over the gardening past-time, the Community Garden will give people an opportunity to grow their own produce as well as profit from their abundance. The garden will include raised beds for best development and maintenance of soil, a shelter for stored tools, chemicals and materials as well as a rainwater harvesting cistern for good conservation.

Cost Estimate:
- 8 - wood raised beds
- 1 - wood frame shelter
- 1 - rainwater cistern
- gravel paths
- underground waterline

Total: $65,000
Project Narrative:
As visitors arrive for the first time or past residents return to their town, the Gateway will announce that you are home or welcome. Gateways might be placed in several key places to make this statement. The design might include local symbols or call upon artists to contribute to the look of these eye-catching features.

Cost Estimate:
- 1- Gateway Monument
- structural foundation & installation

Total: $50,000
Park Restroom Facility

Project Narrative:
This men’s and women’s restroom will provide the facilities for public usage while visiting the park and/or sports complex. These facilities in addition to commodes and sinks might include changing tables, ventilation, first aid, etc.. Hours for usage would coincide with the hours of usage of the park the restroom adjoins and will be proposed to be built out of readily available and constructible material for local opportunity to bid.

Cost Estimate:
- Two gender/one stall each building
- Storage/utility area
- Connection to existing on-site utilities

Total: $95,000
RV/Camper Park and Camping

Project Narrative:
Whether it be along the future rails-to-trails course, a busy travel route or slightly outside of town, a small accommodating RV camper lot with power, water and disposal facilities will draw visitors to stop and stay a while. These camping sites will be complete with restrooms or changing rooms, cooling shade, picnic tables, fire rings, water and light poles for the visitors. This might even be a lakeside location or one with a view of pastoral settings or pedestrians passing by.

Cost Estimate:
- 5- RV gravel parking pads
- 3- light poles
- 1- restroom
- Landscaping
- 7 picnic tables
- Septic or sewer tie-in

Total: $250,000
Water Splash Pad

Project Narrative:
A large concrete and outdoor interactive water feature for children and the light of heart to play and beat the heat during the Summers in Sumter County. By way of a gridded series of fountain jets, the brave can try to beat the surprising water challenge and experience the fun of playing in the water. In order to conserve the water, a recirculating filtration system will cleanse the liquid fun to conserve the water resources.

Cost Estimate:
- 40’ concrete slab
- 5- water jets
- Filtration system
- Landscaping

Total: $150,000
Self-Guided City Tour

Project Narrative:
Visitors will find it easy and informative to pick up a full-color brochure and follow the map of town with homes and noted sites to go and see. While touring the town, visitors will happen upon smaller markers than the well placed town maps and these smaller markers will tell the story of what they are in the presence of in greater detail while on tour. Historic homes and places may have scheduled times for receiving the public throughout the year and commemorate the times in history when events and famous visitors may have frequented the preserved homes or even ruins.

Cost Estimate:
- 3-wayfinding maps
- 10-markers
- Brochure Printing
- Design

Total: $50,000
Community Center Park

Project Narrative:
This would be the central place where the citizens go to be in each other’s company to relax, recreate or worship. A large pavilion placed next to an open lawn will serve as the place for the community to come together. Commemorative holidays throughout the year can be celebrated and citizens honored in this space that is central in the community.

Cost Estimate:
- Pavilion on concrete slab
- Concrete sidewalks
- Flag poles
- Landscaping
- Electrical service

Total: $150,000
A multi-generational playground sighted in an existing park or on a city block near the heart of the community will serve as the place where families can enjoy being outside. Sidewalks connect the playground to adjoining sidewalks and/or neighborhoods so there is ease of access for all. Play elements in this park may include swings, balance elements, structures with climbing apparatuses and slides.

Cost Estimate:
- 3 element playground
- 4’ width walk
- Under drain
- Safety Surfacing
- Landscaping

Total: $125,000
Farmers’ Market

Project Narrative:
This will be the place where local gardeners and farmers can bring their goods from the fields to town to sell and buy vegetables and flowers from their farms. Citizens will find this to be a great place to go to see friends, meet others and hear what is going on in the community. The Farmers’ Market might consist of covered display bins or tables with walkways and a parking lot. Growers who bring their goods to market will find ease of unloading and parking for easy set up and restocking.

Cost Estimate:
- 6- stands with shed roof
- Gravel parking
- Gravel walk path
- Split rail fence
- Light Poles

Total: $75,000
Amphitheater/Outdoor Classroom

Project Narrative:
An amphitheater or outdoor classroom is a great way for outdoor assembly for formal or informal events and educational activities. This space might serve the community well for sunrise services, musical & theatrical performances, skits and endless possibilities. When designed and built with sensitivity to the setting, they can be very low maintenance to keep up and very park like when not in use serving as a space for reading, sunning or picnics. When placed along the banks of a river, the backdrop scenery can be powerful and add to the character of the amphitheater/classroom itself.

Cost Estimate:
- Stone Terraces
- Stage
- Landscaping

Total: $125,000
Project Narrative:

The SW Taylor Overlook is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers park that was built in the 1970’s along the banks of the Tombigbee River. The 62 m/l acre park currently contains a parking area, restrooms, a pavilion, scenic overlook and a historic cemetery. The site is currently closed to the public. As such, the Tri-County Trail Riders horseback riding group has identified this site as a potential opportunity to develop an equestrian park. Such a facility could provide an opportunity to provide a unique destination for both local residents and equestrian enthusiasts throughout the region. The conceptual masterplan shown was developed to illustrate the potential of this site for such a use and as a tool for discussions regarding the property with the Corps of Engineers.

Features shown in the plan include:
- Office and caretaker residence
- RV and trailer parking
- Guest Cabins
- Barn & Stables
- Open air pavilion
- Stage
- Tent camping lawns
- Amphitheater
- Horse riding trails
- Walking trails
Appendix

‘A’- Project Process

Turning an Idea into Reality:

All successful construction and development projects have a common factor: Planning. Projects that proceed along all stages of completion with a well thought-out plan for success become projects that the entire community can be proud of. Completing a project is much like taking a family vacation, careful planning of what to do and how to pay for it helps to create an enjoyable journey even when the inevitable ‘bumps in the road’ occur.

During all of the phases of project completion, it is important to have the input of a team of design and construction professionals that can help move the project through its stages. Landscape Architects, Architects and Engineers that have a wealth of experience and knowledge can serve as the county’s trusted advisors to help develop projects that serve the county’s needs, and are completed on time and within budget.

The graphic below illustrates the main steps in turning a concept in the Comprehensive Plan into a built project.

Funding:

Each step of the project process requires funding. From Comprehensive Plan to project completion, planning how to fund a project is as important as planning the built elements. As one step of a project is being completed, locating the funds for the next step should be underway. For example, while a masterplan for a piece of work is being developed the fund raising for completing the construction documents and construction of a first phase should be underway. The planning documents (Comprehensive Plan and Masterplans) are valuable tools for identifying costs, funding sources and completing projects within budget.
Partners and Indian Tribes in each State.

Eligible lands under the program are:

- NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners and organizations that support wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance.

Overview:

The Alabama Bass Federation Inc. is one of the fifty-one states and international federations that make up the amateur arm of The Bass Federation, Inc. Alabama is one of the largest state federations, with over one thousand members in clubs across the state. Alabama Federation members are grass roots anglers, dedicated to the future of Bass fishing. We promote "catch and release" and are very protective of the natural resources surrounding our sport.

Every year, the Alabama Bass Federation Inc. conducts five Bass tournaments. Our one-day qualifying tournaments are traditionally held the first weekend of March, April, May, and June. The two-day State Championship is held on the first Friday and Saturday in August. We average 260 anglers in our qualifying tournaments and the top 50 from each qualifying tournament are eligible to compete in the State Championship.

Alabama Ornithological Society

1962 Old Federal Rd
Shorter, AL 36075
Contact: Eric Souehren, President
Website: http://www.aoabirds.org/
Mission: To foster a greater knowledge of birds and to promote conservation of our shared gifts and a productive regional economy.
The purpose of the Alabama Ornithological Society is to help identify, manage, and protect nesting sites of Alabama's birds. Priority is given to projects involving natural history or field research involving ornithological research, or environmental issues that impact birds, and those performed in Alabama or by individuals or institutions affiliated with Alabama. Preference is also given to graduate students (outstanding undergraduates may also apply) or others not having access to normal mainstream funding.

Alabama Wildbird Conservation Association

5240 Dickson Hill Rd
Greenville, AL 36037
awca@globalmails.com
Website: http://users.alaweb.com/aubinwood/sablo/
Blackbelt Community Foundation

500 Lauderdale Street
Selma AL, 36702
Contact: Florence Williams, Field Services Representative
Website: 334-874-1126 334-874-1311
Mission: To support community efforts that will contribute to the strength, innovation, and success of Black Belt citizens and communities.
Grants: http://www.blackbeltfoundation.org/index.html
The Black Belt Community Foundation manages research projects of an ornithological nature that are clearly applicable to Alabama birds. Priority is given to projects involving natural history and field research involving ornithological research, or environmental issues that impact birds, and those performed in Alabama or by individuals or institutions affiliated with Alabama. Preference is given to graduate students (outstanding undergraduates may also apply) or others not having access to normal mainstream funding.

Alabama Highway Conservation Program

Contact: Dr. Cindy McCay MCDOT Office building (205) 678-2822
Website: http://www.ahcprogram.org/index.html
Mission: The Alabama Highway Conservation Program is an organization that impartially represents Alabama’s highway interests. Whether you are a weekend pleasure rider, horse breeder, hunter/farmer, veterinarian or feed dealer, you have common interests in horses, their promotion and welfare. We have joined together to enact fair and effective regulation affecting horse use, improve state equestrian facilities, increase public awareness and support for Alabama’s horse industry. Whether you are a horse breeder, trainer, farrier, veterinarian or others not having access to normal mainstream funding.

Alabama’s Ars Virginiae, the state bird, is the state’s only native bird species; it is a state symbol and a source of pride for Alabama citizens. The bird's presence symbolizes the beauty and diversity of Alabama’s natural resources and helps to promote the state’s tourism industry. The state bird is a symbol of the state’s natural heritage and is a representation of the state’s commitment to preserving and protecting the environment for future generations.

Alabama’s state bird is the eastern kingbird, and it has been the state bird since 1994. It is known for its bright yellow plumage and is found throughout Alabama. The bird’s long, pointed wings allow it to hover in the air, and it is often seen perching on telephone poles, power lines, and other high objects.

Alabama’s state bird is a symbol of the state’s natural beauty and diversity, and it serves as a reminder of the importance of protecting and preserving Alabama’s natural resources for future generations. The eastern kingbird is a resilient and adaptable species that thrives in various habitats, from urban areas to rural landscapes.

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