

Gray's Creek Area Plan



Prepared for the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development - 1999

Prepared by:

Looney Ricks Kiss Architects, Inc.
De Leuw, Cather & Company
Toles and Associates

Revised by:

AD HOC Committee
for Gray's Creek
Summer 2001

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A DETAILED PLAN FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAY'S CREEK AREA

WHEREAS, Joint Ordinance/Resolution 2524 provides for the preparation, adoption, and recommendation of detailed plans for neighborhoods or other appropriate planning areas; and

WHEREAS, A plan has been prepared for the Gray's Creek Area located in the area bounded by Highway 64 on the north, Fayette County on the east, Wolf River on the south, and Gray's Creek and Berryhill Road on the west; and

WHEREAS, the plan provides a comprehensive growth strategy for the Gray's Creek area; and

WHEREAS, the Gray's Creek Area Plan was completed by the Office of Planning and Development with assistance from Looney Ricks and Kiss Architects, Inc. and later revised by the City of Memphis Ad Hoc Committee for Gray's Creek; and

WHEREAS, the Ad Hoc Committee for the Gray's Creek Area Plan has reviewed the revised document and found it to be consistent with current city policies; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Memphis has reviewed the recommendations of the committee and the area, and the report and recommendation of the Office of Planning and Development; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Memphis has held a public hearing on the plan and determined that the plan meets the objectives, standards and criteria for an area plan, and said plan is consistent with the public interest.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MEMPHIS that the Gray's Creek Area Plan is adopted as a guide for the future development and redevelopment of properties in the Gray's Creek Area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Memphis City Council hereby adopts the Gray's Creek Area Plan to serve as the main implement of future development in the area bounded by Highway 64 on the north, Fayette County on the east, Wolf River on the south, and Gray's Creek and Berryhill Road on the west.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy and document was adopted, approved by the Council of the City of Memphis in regular session on

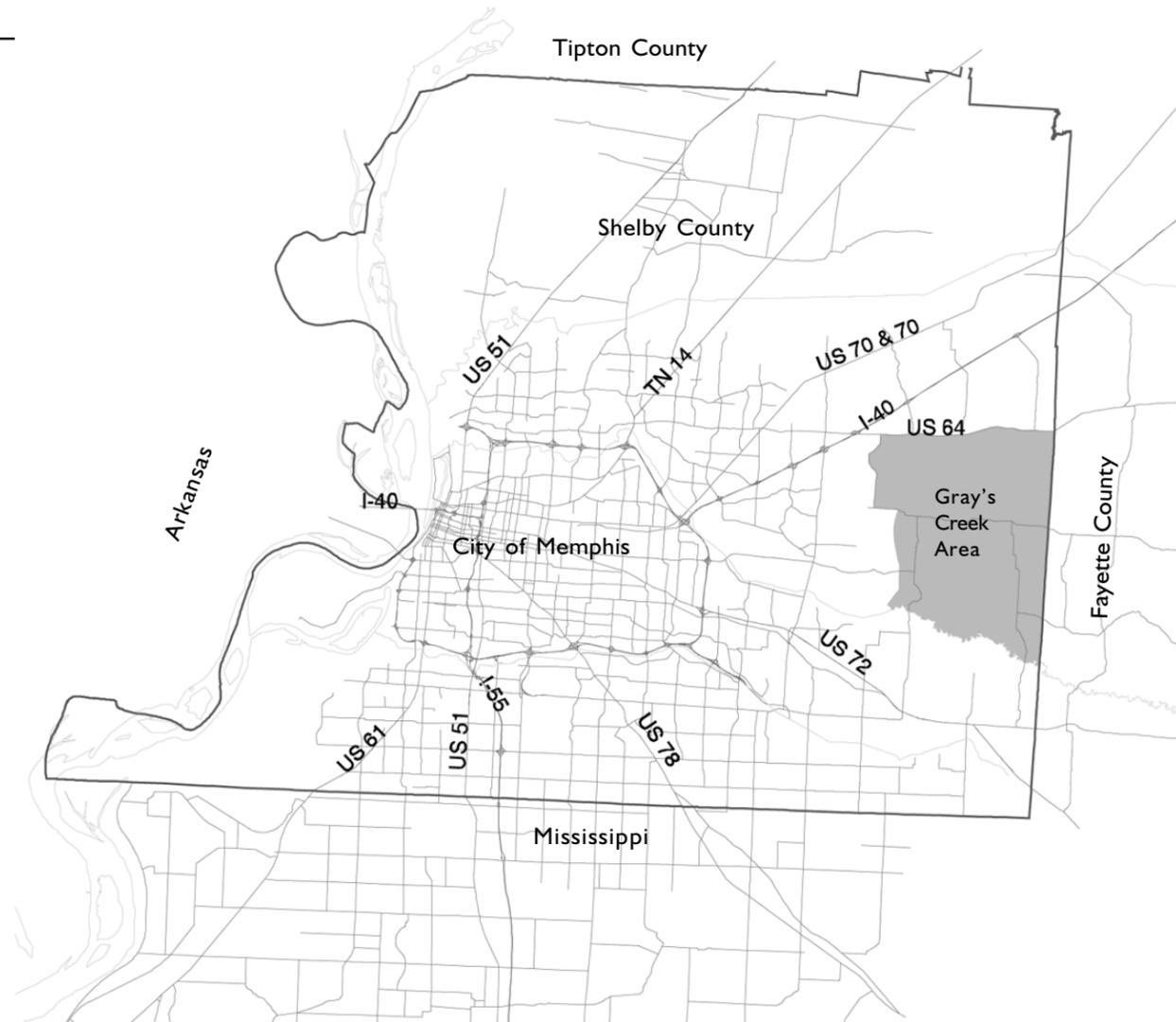
AUG 7 2001

Date


Deputy Comptroller - Council Records

“To develop a long-term plan for managing growth for the Gray’s Creek Area that will substantially preserve its unique rural character and natural resources.”

Mission Statement from Gray’s Creek Area Plan Advisory Committee



Plan Overview

The Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development (OPD) requested preparation of an area plan for the Gray’s Creek Area to be adopted by the City of Memphis and Shelby County. The plan includes a comprehensive policy for growth with strategies related to housing and commercial development, transportation, and other key issues. The study begins with an inventory and analysis of existing conditions and future land use scenarios. Special areas of concern include the provision of public services, the adequacy of the transportation network, fiscal implications, and the phasing and timing of services. The plan also

outlines special treatment for any identified environmentally sensitive areas such as waterways, wetlands, and verified aquifer recharge zones. A key component of the planning process was public participation. The process allowed meaningful involvement by all stakeholders, including residents, community organizations, land owners, elected officials, business leaders and developers. The purpose of this document is to be concise and user-friendly, but a more technical and detailed supporting document (Background Study) exists with the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development.

Committee Overview

The City of Memphis Ad Hoc Committee for Gray’s Creek has reviewed the report prepared by Looney Ricks Kiss Architects, Inc. for the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development dated 1999. The Committee consists of the following members of the community:

Rickey Peete, Janet Hooks, E.C. Jones, Tom Marshall, Ronald Harkavy, Billy Orgel, Chip Tayloe, Ben Clark, Howard Eddings, Sam Reaves, Cindy Reaves, Terry Pagliari, Ron Belz, John

Conroy, Terry Emerick, Reggie Bowlin, Venita Walker, Deon Brown, Lisa White, Mark Davis, Homer Brannon, Jimma Owens

This Committee has recommended modification to this document to promote diverse development within the subject area while preserving its natural assets. The Committee hereby recommends to the City Council of Memphis, the adoption of this modified report.

Project Approach

- Background Research
- Base Mapping & Physical Analysis
- Charrette - Planning & Design Workshops
- Concept Plan Development
- Fiscal Impact Evaluation
- Traffic Data & Analysis
- Finalization of the Plan
- Adoption of the Plan

AD HOC Committee

- Community Input
- Committee Overviews
- Adoption of the Revised Plan

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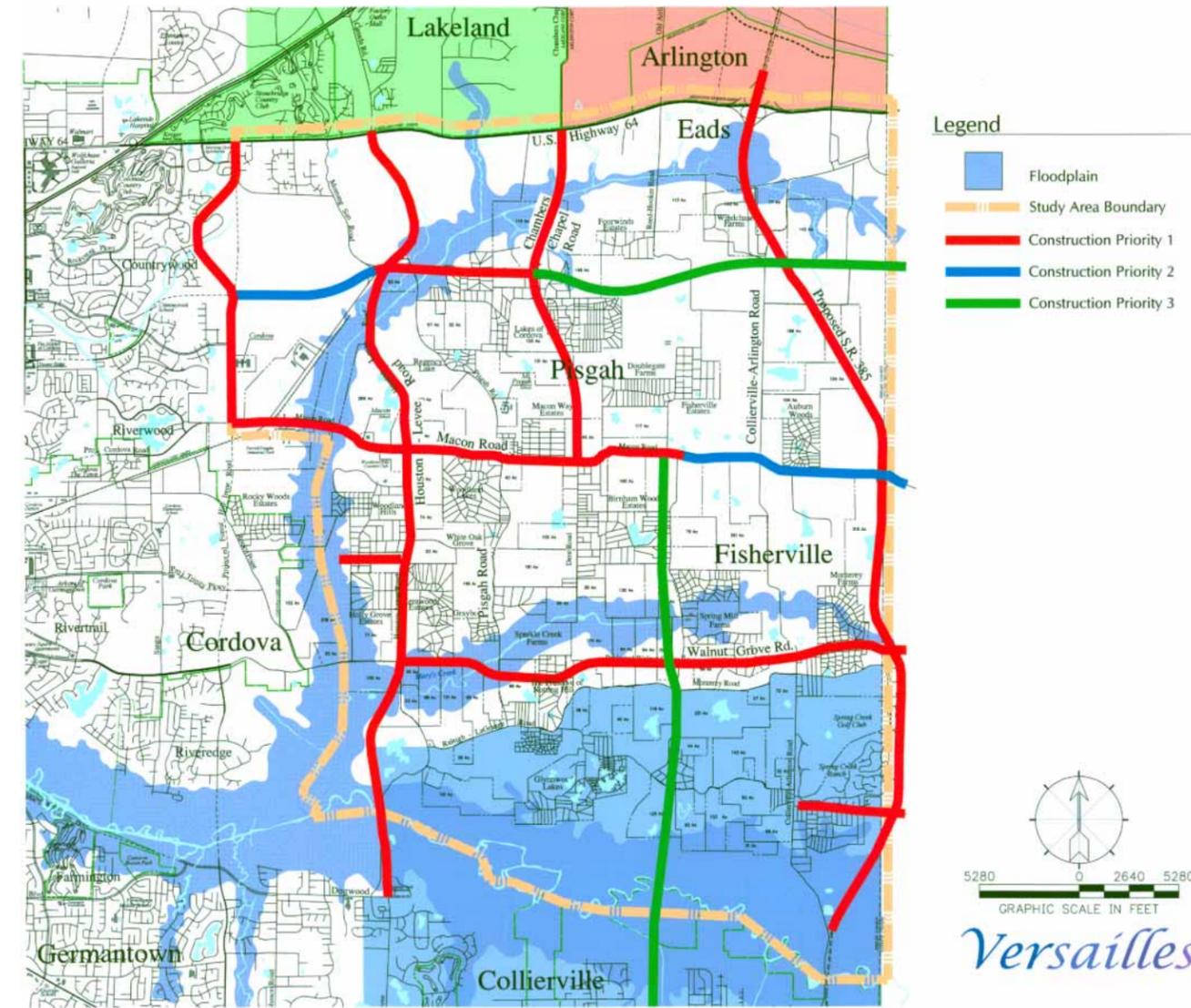
Much of the land in Gray's Creek is currently used for agricultural purposes.



The Wolf River is one of the three major waterways within the study area.



Much of the residential development is occurring in the northwest portion of the study area.



EXISTING CONDITIONS: Physical

Description of Study Area

- Land Area: 58 square miles
- Waterways: Gray's Creek, Mary's Creek, Wolf River
- Northern Boundary: Highway 64
- Southern Boundary: Wolf River
- Eastern Boundary: Fayette County
- Western Boundary: Gray's Creek, Berryhill Road

Land Uses

Gray's Creek is largely rural, with approximately 65% of the land in agricultural use and roughly 30% in residential use. Three major institutional uses are located in the study area: a high school on Berryhill Road, an elementary school on Macon Road, and Mt. Pisgah Middle School on Pisgah Road. Small commercial centers exist at the intersections of Macon Road and Pisgah Road and Macon Road and Collierville-Arlington Road (Fisherville). Several commercial centers also are interspersed along Highway 64, and an industrial area exists along Macon Road between Berryhill and Houston Levee Roads.

Roads and Utilities

The Gray's Creek Area is largely rural and the majority of the roads, except for Highway 64, are two lanes. However, future capital improvement plans call for the widening of a number of roads. Except for the northwest portion of the study area, the majority of Gray's Creek is not served by sewers. The extension of the Gray's Creek interceptor will be a catalyst for future development.

Environmental Features

Floodplains are primarily along the Wolf River, Gray's Creek, and Mary's Creek. OPD maps recognize the existence of an aquifer recharge zone in much of the Gray's Creek Area. Aquifer recharge areas are locations with soil and geological conditions which replenish the groundwater supply with rainwater to serve Memphis and Shelby County. Development in aquifer recharge areas should be closely monitored to protect the volume and quality of the groundwater in Memphis and Shelby County. Wetlands are another important environmental feature in the study area.

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EXISTING CONDITIONS: Socio-Economic

SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHICS

Households - 1990

- Total Households 1,192
- Persons per Household 3.06
- Married-couple Family Households 76.6%

Growth

- 56.8% of the 1990 residents had moved there since 1985.
- 85.9% of these new residents were from Shelby County.
- Of the 1,242 housing units existing in 1990, 50% were built between 1980 and 1985, and 41% were built since 1985.

Population-1990

- Total Population 3,658
- Median Age 35.4
- Percent Under 18 years 28.4%
- Percent African-American 18.5%
- Percent Hispanic 0.4%

Other Key Facts

- Housing Units 1,242
- Owner Occupancy Rate 85.6%
- Median Housing Value \$151,500
- Persons Living Below Poverty Level 8.2%

Note: Current data is limited to the last census survey, which was completed in 1990.

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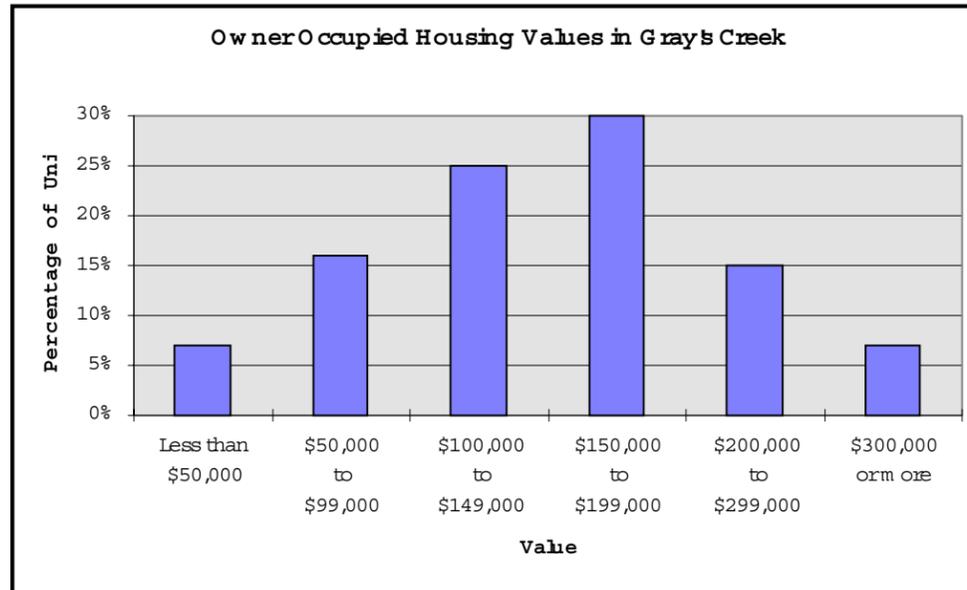
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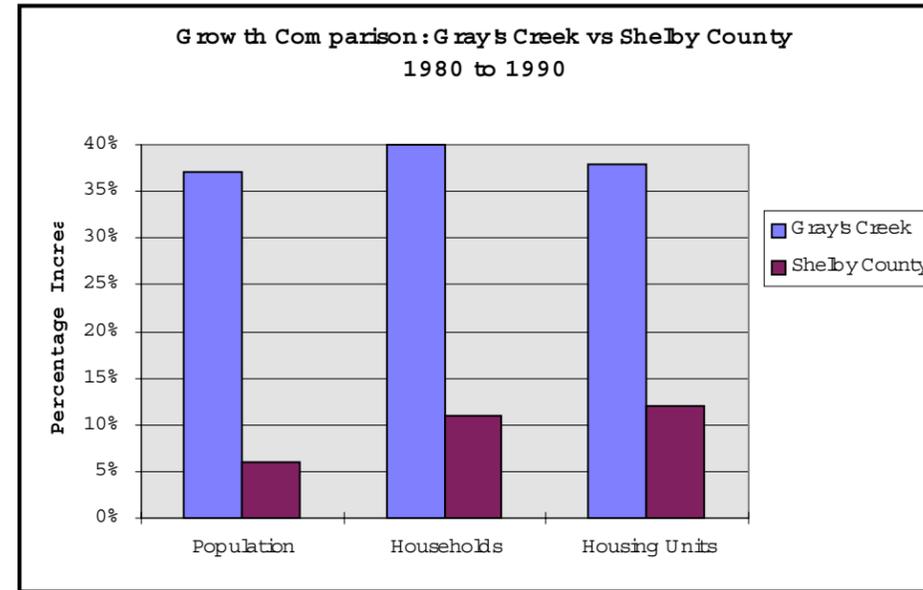
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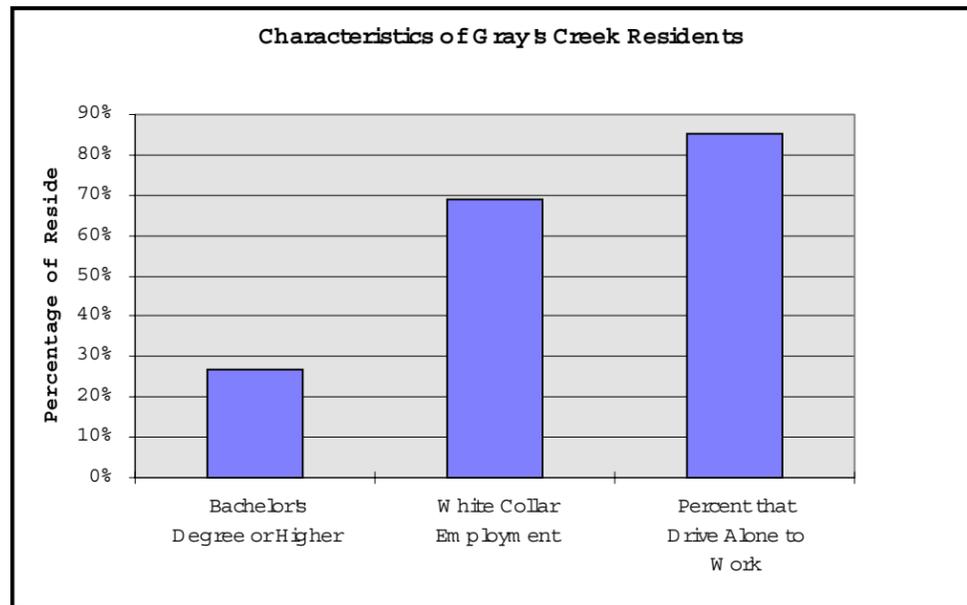
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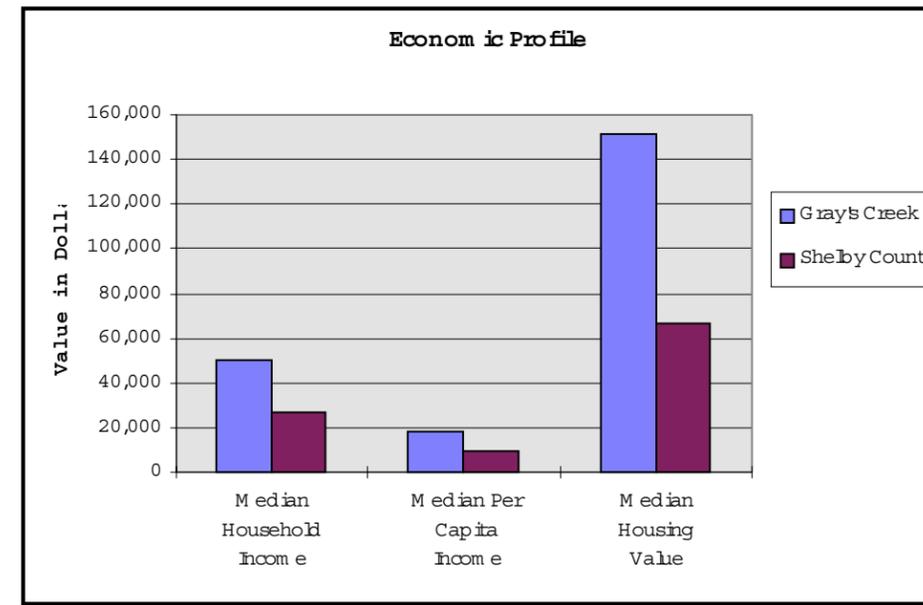
Source: 1990 US Census



Source: 1990 US Census



Source: 1990 US Census



Source: 1990 US Census

Challenges



Channelized streams



Streets fronted by the rear of homes



Utility lines and strip commercial development

Challenges

- Channelization of the waterways
- Too much unnecessary grading has occurred
- Overdevelopment and density
- Lack of support for planning which is sensitive to the area
- Rush hour traffic problems
- Potential negative impacts of future piecemeal development
- The public's feeling of not having a voice regarding development of the area
- Lack of a sense of "community"
- Limited number of roads in the area's road network

Opportunities



Existing waterways are important natural features which should be preserved.



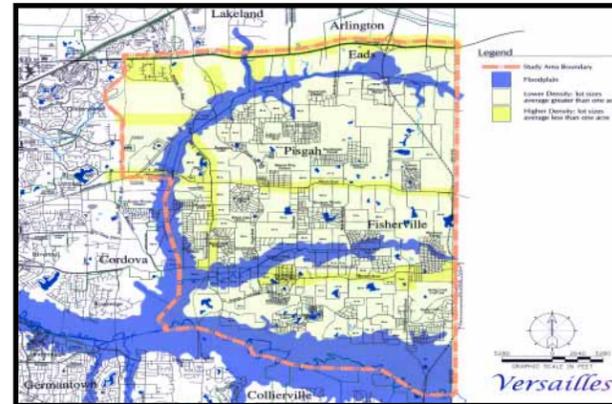
Quiet residential streets make for a rich quality of life.

Opportunities

- Maintaining rural character
- Waterways bounding the area provide a buffer
- Floodplains and wetlands support a rich habitat for plants and animals
- Good drinking water - current ample supply
- Low-density development
- Low crime rates
- Relatively low traffic levels
- Minimal commercial development
- Interesting topography
- One of the County's last remaining opportunities for development



Winding two-lane country roads are unspoiled by strip commercial development, "cookie-cutter subdivisions," and road widening, which often accompany growth.



Mature vegetation and horse rail fencing add to the rural character of Gray's Creek.



Small-scale commercial development complements the rural character in Gray's Creek.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

This Plan was developed through a highly collaborative process which encouraged the meaningful input of various constituency groups having a stake in the growth and development of the Gray's Creek Area. As part of initiating the planning process, meetings were held with the Project Steering Committee, representatives of City and County governments, residents and property owners, environmentalists and homebuilders in order to understand their diverse perspectives. These meetings enabled the planning team to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Gray's Creek as the area continues to develop.

Prior to developing specific ideas for the Plan, a three-day intensive planning and design charrette was held to further engage the participation of these stakeholder groups and the general public. A key component of the charrette was a Community Vision Survey, in which over 100 participants viewed images of various planning and development issues and rated their preferences on standardized survey forms. Through the collaborative charrette process, input from these groups was synthesized; consensus was reached on key issues; and a Concept Plan for the general growth of the area was developed. The Gray's Creek Area Master Plan is based upon the concept plan generated through this process and refined through further input from the Project Steering Committee.

The study area's various challenges and opportunities, summarized at left, were identified through focus group sessions conducted within stakeholder groups.

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Preserve & Enhance Special Assets

Preserve cultural and natural resources and use them to reinforce a unique sense of place.

Policies:

1. *Protect the physical integrity and views of the area's natural waterways, including Gray's Creek, Mary's Creek and the Wolf River.*
 - Insure that development does not negatively impact stream and river edges, their immediate surroundings, or their water quality.
 - Insure that future development protects views to the Wolf River.
2. *Protect natural features, including vegetation and terrain.*
 - Adopt tree protection provisions for new development.
 - Protect wildlife habitat by acquiring property (fee simple or easements) and by agreements with property owners.
 - Regulate grading, filling and excavation of land through grading requirements.
 - Prohibit the channelization of streams and rivers.
3. *Protect the quality of ground and surface water.*
 - Limit development within the aquifer recharge areas to which do not threaten the aquifer.
 - Establish development standards to protect aquifer recharge areas.
 - Utilize proper grading methods that protect the natural terrain and drainage and discourage erosion.
 - Implement a stormwater management ordinance which addresses federal standards.
4. *Develop a system of open spaces and greenways.*
 - Utilize floodplains and utility easements for an interconnected system of greenways.
 - Develop an open space plan to prioritize key properties to be protected from future development.
 - Consider using mechanisms such as clustered housing, land trusts, conservation easements, transfer of development rights (TDR) and governmental incentive programs (i.e., conservation reserve programs) to preserve open space.

Spend Tax Dollars Efficiently

Utilize existing infrastructure and prioritize public funding for targeted growth areas.

Policies:

1. *New development will be targeted to locations where there are adequate services and facilities available to support proposed land uses and densities.*
 - Concentrate the area's limited nonresidential uses and higher-density residential uses at locations where sufficient infrastructure exists or is planned.
2. *Sewers and roads will be extended in an orderly and phased manner to insure that development is concentrated where it can be served with a full range of services in a cost-effective manner.*
 - Sewers should be limited to the northerly portion of the study area and not expand urban sprawl into most of the study area's environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains, wetlands and aquifer recharge areas.
 - Prioritize the use of existing infrastructure over the development of new infrastructure.

Sense of Community

Develop neighborhoods with streets and public gathering spaces which encourage people to walk and meet others to create a shared sense of belonging.

Policies:

1. *Increase the capacity of neighborhoods to sustain themselves through physical design.*
 - Use design elements such as pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and public spaces to encourage social interaction.
 - Encourage street interconnections rather than cul-de-sacs.
2. *Promote neighborhood interaction and social cohesiveness. Adopt zoning and subdivision amendments that encourage traditional neighborhood design elements such as:*
 - smaller front yard setbacks
 - controlled street widths
 - pedestrian-friendly streetscapes (sidewalks, street trees)
3. *Develop neighborhoods with street systems that are fully connected and provide alternative routes to all destinations.*
 - Discourage the use of cul-de-sacs. Where used, minimize their length.
 - Extend stub streets into adjacent properties.
 - Increase the number of local streets intersect-

ing with major roads.

Scenic Corridors

Preserve and enhance the visual quality of the area's key corridors.

Policies:

- Prohibit billboards within the study area.
- Carefully locate overhead utilities so as to minimize their visual impact.
- Require landscaping strips along roadsides to screen moderate and higher-density development where appropriate, utilizing native landscaping and wooden fences having a rural character.
- Encourage parkway designs for future key roads in the area to be designated as scenic corridors.

Diversity of Uses & Residents

Develop neighborhoods that encourage a mixture of uses and activities that welcome and serve citizens of diverse incomes and ages.

Policies:

1. *Broaden the range of housing types and price points to respond to a diverse market.*
 - Provide zoning districts that encourage a mixture of housing types and values.
 - Provide incentives for developments that integrate various housing types and compatible uses within single developments.
 - Encourage mixed-use development compatible with the character of the various parts of the study area.
2. *The scale and design of multi-family housing should be compatible with the study area's single-family residential character.*
3. *Non-residential uses located within or near neighborhoods will be designed to insure they are compatible with the neighborhood and do not negatively impact the neighborhood's character.*
 - Only allow commercial uses of a "convenience" nature to serve the immediate neighborhood.
 - Limit the location of commercial uses to the intersection of key roads within the neighborhood.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Mission Statement

The Steering Committee prepared the following Mission Statement:

To develop a long-term plan for managing growth in the Gray's Creek Area that will preserve its unique rural character and natural resources.

Planning Goals

- Preserve & Enhance Special Assets
- Spend Tax Dollars Efficiently
- Sense of Community
- Scenic Corridors
- Diversity of Uses & Residents

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EXISTING TREND

At present, Gray's Creek is largely undeveloped, with approximately 65% of the land in agricultural use and 30% in residential use. The emerging growth pattern is dispersed and the area lacks effective road, open space, and pedestrian networks to provide connectivity among the various developed residential and commercial areas. The extension of the Gray's Creek sewer interceptor is likely to greatly accelerate growth in the study area.

Current Capitol Improvement Plans call for Houston-Levee Road and Walnut Grove Road to be widened to six- to seven-lane roadways. A fear expressed by area residents is that the Houston-Levee corridor will become another "Germantown Parkway." Ten years ago Germantown Parkway was a rural, two-lane roadway; but as the road was widened and could handle more traffic, it attracted big box retailers, fast food restaurants, convenience stores and gas stations. If new development policies to guide growth are not put into place, Houston Levee Road is likely to follow the same path as Germantown Parkway. These same development patterns also threaten Highway 64 and Walnut Grove Road.

Under the Existing Trend, development and development submittals are occurring in a manner which is threatening the natural environment of the Gray's Creek Area. Of particular concern is the preservation of the floodplain and protection of the quality of ground and surface water. Concerns have been expressed by stakeholders over the density of development in the aquifer recharge area, as well as the alteration of the natural floodplain. Stakeholders are concerned over both the quantity and quality of groundwater with respect to the impact of future development. Policies need to be implemented which will better protect these natural features.

In summary, if an alternative growth plan is not adopted to guide future development, the Existing Trend will simply accelerate and the unique natural features and rural character of Gray's Creek will be consumed by the identified undesirable urban sprawl.

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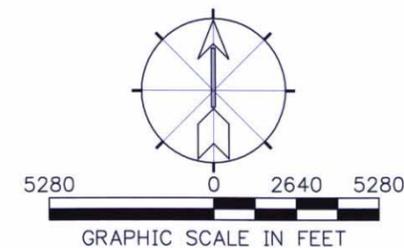
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Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Floodplain
-  Lower Density: lot sizes average greater than one acre
-  Higher Density: lot sizes average less than one acre



Versailles



"Bigger isn't always better and progress isn't always a matter of neon lights and strip centers." - Norma Stackpole, 22-year Cordova resident and real estate agent.

"Accelerated development drives the quiet out of Cordova" by Michael Erskine, *The Commercial Appeal*.



"What was once a barren, two-lane country road is now a mammoth six- to eight-lane parkway lined with retail strips, fast food joints, billboards, and hotels."

"Accelerated development drives the quiet out of Cordova" by Michael Erskine, *The Commercial Appeal*.



Roads such as Winchester, Poplar, Lamar, and Covington are major thoroughfares that were once quiet country lanes but are now jammed with traffic, billboards, and strip commercial centers. Without proactive planning, the Gray's Creek Area faces a similar fate.



Natural open space along major arterials, such as Macon Road above, would be affected by roadway expansions.



Impacts associated with new development, such as the channelization of Gray's Creek, can have negative environmental consequences.



Many new subdivisions in Gray's Creek and surrounding areas are characterized by "dead" streetscapes, caused by reverse frontage. The end result fails to offer a sense of community that the majority of new homebuyers are seeking.

IMPACT OF EXISTING TREND

A fiscal impact model was used to evaluate the 2020 buildout of the Existing Trend in the Gray's Creek Area. The model projected that future development under both the Existing Trend and Alternative Plan would produce a positive fiscal impact in which public revenues exceed public expenditures caused by growth (see *The Gray's Creek Area Background Study*, Table 3, pg. 11). The model, however, does not distinguish between different forms of development (i.e., sprawl vs. compact development). Studies have been conducted across the country documenting the costs of sprawl development, which is characterized by a relatively low-density form of development which fails to utilize infrastructure efficiently. Evidence suggests that low-density urban sprawl is a drain on the financial resources of local governments. Some of the findings are:

In a 1995 report by Robert Burchell (Center for Urban Policy Research - Rutgers University) entitled "Alternatives to Sprawl," it was found that compact development consumes 20% to 45% less land than does sprawl-type development. Likewise, infrastructure costs are lower in compact development than sprawl: 15% to 25% less for local roads and 7% to 15% less for water and sewer lines.

A book by Philip Langdon (Harper Perennial) entitled *A Better Place to Live: Reshaping the American Suburb* projected that the average annual costs for vehicles is approximately \$8,720, because the average suburban family needs to have at least two cars. This cost can be attributed to sprawl development and segregated land uses which require dependency on the automobile.

There are also quality-of-life issues associated with sprawl which cannot be conveyed with facts and figures. Home buyers around the country have expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of a "sense of place" and "sense of community" in new residential and commercial strip center developments. Many prospective homebuyers say they would prefer neighborhoods clustered around a small downtown, neighborhood center or other public space which encourages walking and social interaction. In most conventional suburban areas developed since 1945, different land uses are segregated, forcing people to drive to every destination. However, when residential and non-residential uses are mixed together, people can walk or ride a bicycle to get from place to place. Even those preferring to use automobiles can greatly reduce trip lengths with mixed land uses.

Gray's Creek Area Plan

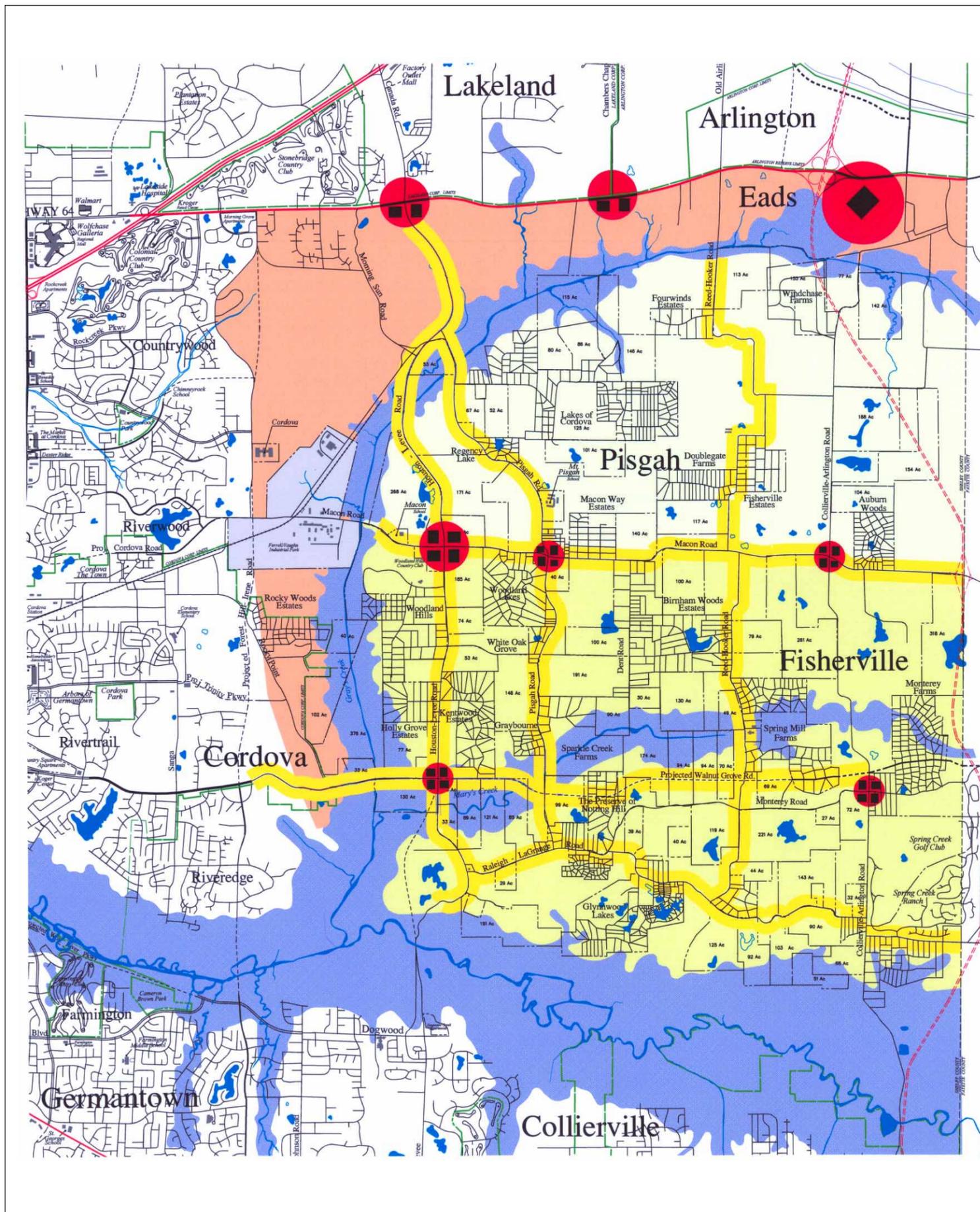
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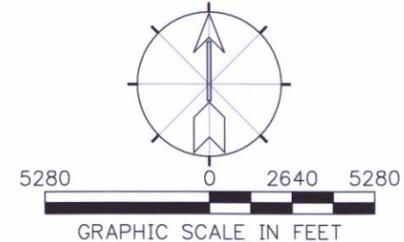
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- Legend**
- Floodplain
 - Higher Density - 1/4 acre lots or smaller (4-8 units / acre)
 - Moderate Density - 1/4 acre lots or larger (4 units / acre or less)
 - Low Density - 2 acre lots or larger
 - Regional Commercial Center
 - Community Commercial Center
 - Neighborhood Commercial Center
 - Residential Corridor



Versailles

The City Council and County Commissions should designate the following roads as "Residential Corridors".

1. Chambers Road other than at its intersection with highway 64
2. Pisgah Road
3. Forrest Hill Irene Road
4. Reed Hooker Road
5. Houston Levee Road from the Collierville town limits to Highway 64 with the exception of the four corners at the intersection of Walnut Grove Road and Macon Road and the corners at the intersection of Highway 64.
6. Macon Road from the Fayette County line to the industrial developments to the west with the exception of the corners of the intersection of Collierville Arlington Road.
7. The entire length of Raleigh LaGrange Road.
8. Walnut Grove Road from the Fayette County line to Sange Road with the exception of the four corners of Houston Levee Road and the corners of Collierville Arlington Road.

It is recognized that some of the above extend outside of Versailles by should nevertheless be included as residential corridors. It is strongly recommended that under no circumstances should any of these roads be allowed to have commercial strips. There must be a recognition that the major roads need to be smaller in width and the residential development along these roads must be handled in a tasteful fashion so that people will not have a problem living on major streets. Also recognizing that the corners above suggest would have residential neighbors the following are suggested.

1. All commercial and office developments shall be limited to a .25 FAR.
2. All commercial developments must provide a minimum 50 foot landscaped buffer along the street.
3. All commercial developments should have a minimum 50 foot landscaped setback from any residential neighboring property.

ALTERNATIVE PLAN: Overview

The Alternative Plan seeks to accommodate growth and provide a diversity of housing types, while preserving and enhancing the natural features and rural character of the Gray's Creek Area.

Growth Pattern
Conventional urban sprawl growth patterns are characterized by isolated pods of development which provide little connectivity between residential areas and between residential and commercial concentrations. Important environmental features which could be valuable assets to enhance an area's quality of life are often overlooked in the development process. A keystone of this Alternative Plan is the development of effective road, pedestrian and open space networks which respect the area's unique natural features and link together the various residential and commercial areas. These networks, in effect, form the skeleton of the Plan and provide for the connectivity often absent from conventional suburban growth patterns.

Infrastructure
Roads and roadway design often determine the character of an area. By emphasizing a connected street network, the Alternative Plan attempts to distribute traffic evenly throughout the study area, rather than concentrating vehicles on a few selected roads. A balanced street network and traffic flow reduces the need to have a few six- or seven-lane roads which would attract strip commercial development, are pedestrian unfriendly, and have a negative impact on rural areas. The extension of utilities, like roads, impacts the development character of an area. In order to maintain compact development patterns where appropriate and limit the intensity of development in environmentally sensitive areas, the Alternative Plan recommends that sewers not be extended into the southern and eastern portions of the study area (see Wastewater Management Map, sheet 21). Flexibility should be afforded for locating community and neighborhood centers.

Environmental Features
The Alternative Plan is responsive to existing environmental features. A 26-mile-long, interconnected greenway is recommended along the study area's waterways. In addition, the Alternative Plan proposes preserving the rural character and low density in the aquifer recharge area to protect the groundwater supply for Shelby County.

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Respondents in the Community Vision Survey highly rated this major road which looks, feels, and functions like a parkway with a median, rather than a wide arterial lined with strip commercial development.



New commercial development that was concentrated in mixed-use centers rather than sprawling along arterials received high scores from participants in the Community Vision Survey.



Areas of higher density residential development should utilize pedestrian-friendly design, resulting in a stronger sense of community. This image received high scores in the survey.



Residential development should be designed to respect natural features and protect open space. (Photo courtesy of Randall Arendt.)



By preserving and linking valuable open spaces, recreational amenities such as greenways can be established to serve the local population for generations to come.



Neighborhood-scale mixed-use commercial development should complement and reinforce the rural character of Gray's Creek.



Well-designed neighborhood parks can serve as an amenity for new homebuyers and have been proven to increase real estate values.



Compact development which preserves open space through conservation easements is an effective alternative to urban sprawl. (Photo courtesy of Randall Arendt.)



Classically designed and appropriately located civic buildings, such as a post office, can provide both convenience and a sense of community for mixed-use centers.

ALTERNATIVE PLAN: Residential and Commercial

Residential Development

The various densities of residential development recommended in the Alternative Plan are based on existing development patterns, the road network, environmental features, and the existing and planned extension of utilities. More urban densities (4-8 units/acre) are recommended along Highway 64 and west of Gray's Creek. These areas will soon be served by sewers and are also located near large concentrations of commercial development. Denser housing in close proximity to major roads and mixed-use Commercial Centers reduces the distance that residents have to travel to services and allows people better access to future transit. To the south and east of Houston Levee Road, the densities should gradually become lower in response to environmental constraints and the lack of sewer service and other infrastructure needed to support higher densities.

Commercial Development

The Alternative Plan encourages future commercial development to occur in compact mixed-use Commercial Centers rather than sprawling along major arterial roads. The Plan designates a series of neighborhood, community, and regional centers in Gray's Creek. Regional and Community Centers, which represent larger-scale commercial areas, are designated in the northern and western portions of the study area at specific intersections along Highway 64 and Houston Levee Road. The Plan anticipates that these areas will be attractive to retailers and office users due to access and visibility. Multi-family housing and public uses might also locate in these Centers. The Plan also locates the Regional and Community Centers in close proximity to targeted areas of higher density residential development.

Neighborhood Centers, which represent smaller-scale commercial development, are located at major crossroads in areas east of Houston Levee Road in the southern half of the study area. By designating Neighborhood Centers in these crossroad locations, the Plan is attempting to limit the scale of commercial development and preserve the rural character and natural features of Gray's Creek. More detailed information on the design, scale, and land use characteristics of these mixed-use Commercial Centers is included on sheets 14, 15, and 16.

Gray's Creek Area Plan

Memphis & Shelby County Office of Planning & Development

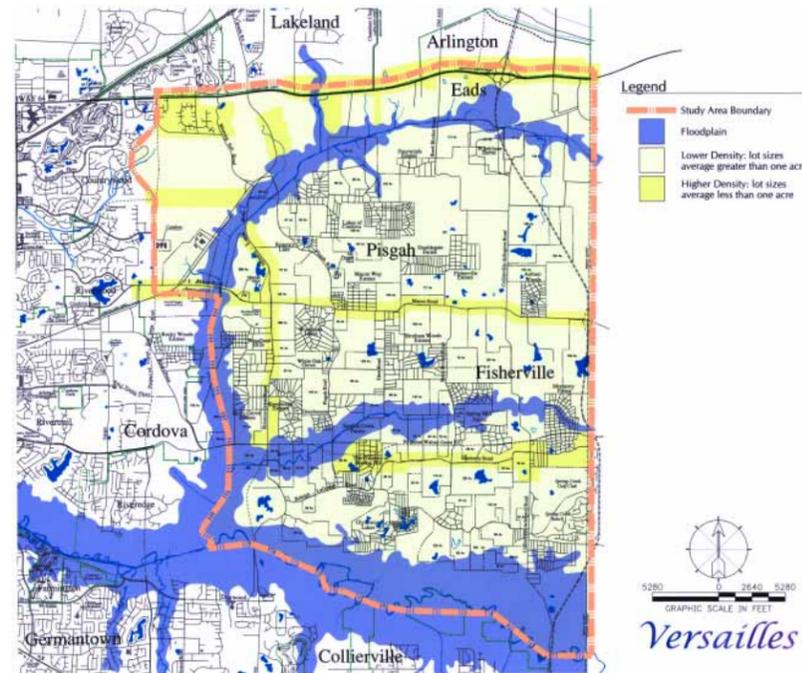
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Existing Trend



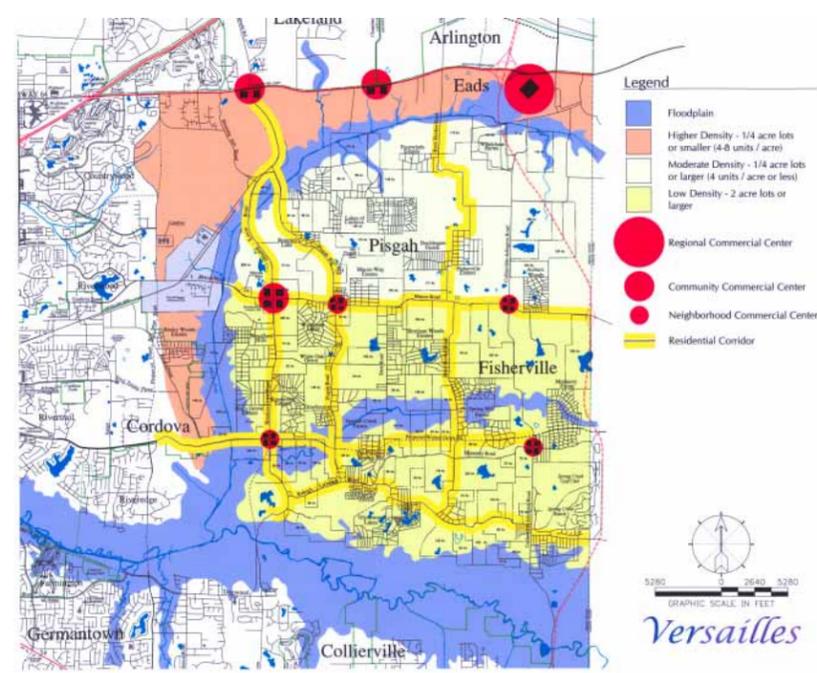
Characteristics of Existing Trend

- Commercial strips develop along arterial roadways.
- Auto-oriented environment unfriendly to pedestrians.
- Development patterns do not respect environmental constraints or inherent character of an area.
- Lack of choice in housing types to support the full market needs of the community.
- Lack of common open space network.
- Area takes on urban character of development to the west.

Impacts of Existing Trend

- Increased cost of providing infrastructure and public services as a result of piecemeal, leapfrog development patterns.
- Increased vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion due to a few major roadway corridors, unconnected street network and overly segregated land uses.
- Development patterns that consume open space and destroy the unique rural character of the area.

Alternative Plan



Characteristics of Alternative Plan

- A mixture of commercial, office, institutional and higher-density residential uses are concentrated in compact Regional, Community and Neighborhood Centers.
- Community design emphasizes pedestrian-friendly streets.
- Development densities respect environmental constraints.
- Wider variety of housing types to meet the full range of market and lifestyle needs of the community.
- Area preserves a portion of its rural character and remains unique within Shelby County.
- Interconnected greenway system along the natural waterways.

Impacts of Alternative Plan

- Fiscally responsible, cohesive growth patterns which coordinate development approvals with the extension of infrastructure and utilities.
- Reduced vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion due to street patterns which maximize connections.
- Development patterns that preserve valuable open space and preserve the rural character of the area.

COMPARATIVE SCENARIOS

The Gray's Creek Area of Shelby County is experiencing tremendous growth pressures. It is surrounded on three sides by rapidly growing municipalities: Arlington and Lakeland to the north, Memphis to the west, and Germantown and Collierville to the south. It is part of the reserve annexation area of the City of Memphis and comprises approximately 58 square miles of relatively undeveloped land. It has remained in this largely undeveloped state due to a lack of infrastructure. However, expanded infrastructure will soon be phased in by the City of Memphis and many developers are anxious to begin projects.

Gray's Creek has a unique opportunity to be developed in a manner that preserves portions of its unique rural character and natural resources in a fiscally responsible manner. Residents, property owners, the business community and government officials must make critical decisions today about how they want this area to appear and function in the future. Unmanaged growth, as projected in the Existing Trend, will add one more chapter to the continuing story of urban sprawl. The Alternative Plan, however, would provide a new model for development that would accommodate future growth, while preserving and enhancing the unique character of the Gray's Creek Area. This model could set a precedent for managing future growth in the region.

The Alternative Plan is not an attempt to stop growth. Instead, the plan outlines strategies for accommodating new growth and shaping it in a more desirable pattern, while maintaining the character of the Gray's Creek Area. In fact, both scenarios could accommodate approximately the same number of residential units and the same amount of non-residential square footage. The major difference between the two trends is the physical form and density allocation that future development would take. Key advantages of the Alternative Plan are the fiscal and environmental benefits of compact growth patterns, efficient traffic flow provided by an interconnected road network, an enhanced sense of community and the ability for Gray's Creek to preserve a portion of its rural character, thus remaining unique within Shelby County.

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LAND USE & COMMUNITY DESIGN:

Residential Densities

The following principles should be used to determine the density ranges for an area:

- Higher Density: 1/4-acre lots to 1/8-acre lots**
- Locations where adequate infrastructure, primarily roads and sewers, exist or are planned.
 - Close proximity to mixed-use Commercial Centers to discourage long commutes, or in close proximity to major roads accessing mixed-use Centers.
 - Should generally not have to gain access to major roads or mixed-use Commercial Centers by traveling through lower density areas.
 - Should not locate in environmentally sensitive areas (wetlands, floodplains, or aquifer recharge areas).
 - Should not be designated in areas where a lower density single-family pattern is already well established.
 - Areas of slight change in existing topography should be considered for higher density developments.

- Moderate Density: 1/2 acre lots to 1/4 acre lots**
- Locations where adequate infrastructure, primarily roads and sewers, exist or are planned.
 - May serve as a transition between higher and lower density areas.
 - Should not be designated for areas where significantly higher or lower density development patterns exist.
 - Should not locate in environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains or wetlands as determined by testing.
 - Areas of moderate change in existing topography should be considered for moderate density developments.

- Lower Density: Average 1-acre lots or greater** (Lot sizes may be less than 1 acre if cluster option exercised. See sheet 17 for details)
- Lots should not be less than 1 acre for locations in the confirmed aquifer recharge area where sewers exist or are planned.
 - Lots should not be less than 2 acres for sites which do not have access to sewers and which are not located in environmentally sensitive areas.
 - Lots should not be less than 4 acres in environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains or wetlands and where sewers do not exist and are not planned.
 - Areas of significant change in existing topography should be considered for lower density developments.

Note: See the Existing Conditions map on Sheet 2 for an estimated approximate location of the aquifer recharge area, and see the Waste Water Management Map on Sheet 22 for the proposed sewer service area. See the map attached to Gray's Creek Area Background Study for a delineation of wetland areas.

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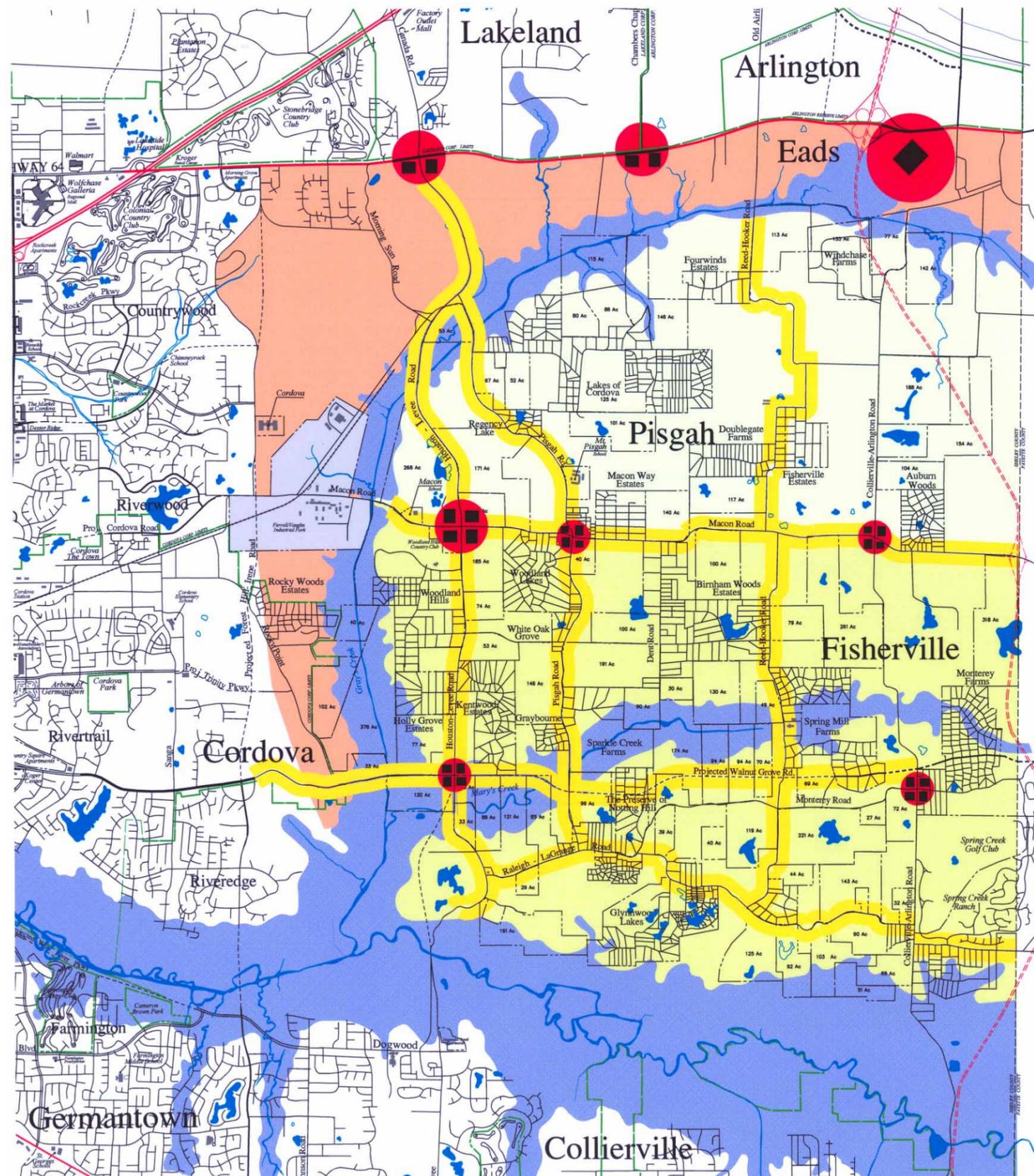
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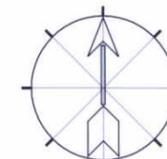


Legend

- Floodplain
- Higher Density - 1/4 acre lots or smaller (4-8 units / acre)
- Moderate Density - 1/4 acre lots or larger (4 units / acre or less)
- Low Density - 2 acre lots or larger
- Regional Commercial Center
- Community Commercial Center
- Neighborhood Commercial Center
- Residential Corridor

The Memphis City Council and the Shelby County Commission should consider new residential estate zoning classifications for the purposes of allowing greater flexibility for design management. The suggested residential estate zoning classifications are as follows:

- RSE - 2 (2 acre lots or larger)
- RSE - 4 (4 acre lots or larger)



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GRAPHIC SCALE IN FEET

Versailles

Ø Inappropriate



Residential streetscapes dominated by garages should be discouraged in the Gray's Creek Area. 79% of the respondents to the Community Vision Survey said this image was inappropriate. Appropriate alternatives include rear garages, alleys, and front-access garages that are recessed beyond the main facade.



Uninviting community entries and excessively wide roads in residential areas are a poor investment, encourage speeding, are unattractive and discourage pedestrian activity.



Reverse frontage development that results in blank wall screening along major roads should not be permitted. 83% of survey respondents rated this image inappropriate.

☑ Appropriate for Gray's Creek



One approach to avoid "reverse frontage" is to create an access road parallel to the development's main road. In low density areas the strip of land between the roads should be well-landscaped. 78% of respondents to the Community Vision Survey rated this image appropriate.



The use of rear alleys or well-designed parallel access roads is an alternative to the unattractive trend of reverse frontage.



In higher-density areas, shorter blocks and closer setbacks encourage more pedestrian activity.

General Design Principles

Principle: Design Review Guidelines should be regulated by private covenants to remove governmental involvement.

Strategies: Revise street standards to:

- Preserve character through planning of main street and tributes
- Increase green areas for each lot
- Encourage families to "adopt" a tree or plant trees to honor family members
- Establish "Pet parks"
- Encourage interaction among home owners through the use of smaller streets, block parties, and neighborhood associations
- Establish paths for different modes of transportation, i.e. bike paths, skating paths
- Establish open spaces and greenways
- Establish specialty commercial districts
- Major development should be kept on Highway 64
- Allow creativity in development, style and size of homes
- Develop clusters of community and neighborhood centers
- Development of natural streams and small lakes



This image showing a sidewalk, fence, and trees, was rated appropriate by 85% of survey respondents. Sidewalks should be included in most new residential and commercial developments for safety, convenience, and recreational purposes.



Residential streets should be no wider than necessary and should include sidewalks and street trees when at urban densities. 72% of survey respondents rated this image appropriate for Gray's Creek.

**LAND USE & COMMUNITY DESIGN:
Residential Design Principles**

Roads

Principle: Conventional street designs (wide and unconnected) are inefficient and unattractive.

Strategies: Revise street standards to:

- Limit street widths to the minimum necessary for movement and access
- Require connectivity unless natural or man-made features make it prohibitive
- Prohibit reverse frontage lots unless there is a solid, year-round buffer to include indigenous evergreen plant materials.

Blocks

Principle: Long block lengths discourage pedestrian activity.

Strategy: Limit block lengths to not exceed approximately 600 feet in areas developed at urban densities (2 units per acre or higher).

Streetscapes

Principle: Streets lacking a safe and attractive walking environment discourage pedestrian activity.

Strategies:

- Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes should be required for areas urban density areas of 2 units per acre or higher
- Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes should include sidewalks, curb and gutter, streetlights, and planting strips with street trees

Public Space

Principle: Developments lacking inviting and usable public spaces discourage passive recreation, social interaction, and a sense of place.

Strategies:

- Require the provision of small parks/squares bound by public streets throughout a neighborhood
- Design parks/squares to serve as focal points for surrounding lots and to enhance the value of surrounding properties
- Avoid the placement of community open spaces in the rear of homes where public access is too limited

Buildings

Principle: Streets dominated by front garages decrease the aesthetics of neighborhoods.

Strategies: Minimize the visual impact of garages by:

- Recessing garages from the front of the house
- Positioning garages so the front does not face the primary street
- Providing alleys or lanes for rear access

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Hypothetical Site Plans for Gray's Creek

LAND USE & COMMUNITY DESIGN: Residential Design Principles

Higher Density (4 or more units per acre)



Areas of slight change in existing topography should be considered for higher density developments.



Parkways and boulevards can lead people through residential areas along a series of "green streets." 73% of survey respondents rated this image appropriate.

Moderate Density (2-4 units per acre)



Areas of moderate change in existing topography should be considered for moderate density developments.



Parks situated in the middle of residential areas provide "green" gathering places and a balance to denser lot areas.

Lower Density (1 unit per acre or less)



Areas of significant change in existing topography should be considered for lower density developments.



Residential developments that respect natural features can preserve permanent open space, which reduces infrastructure costs, preserves wildlife habitat, and balances open space with denser lot areas.

Based on the availability of infrastructure, environmental constraints, existing development patterns, and other factors, the Alternative Plan for Gray's Creek identifies areas of higher, moderate, and lower density. The hypothetical site plans for the different density categories illustrate how recommended design principles can be incorporated into future developments.

Each plan respects existing environmental conditions, maximizes street connections, and provides usable open space. By minimizing cul-de-sacs, the site plans create more integrated neighborhoods rather than isolated pods of development. Fewer cul-de-sacs result in more street connections and a more balanced traffic flow in the study area. With higher densities, networks of alleys allow garages to be located behind homes, contributing to a more pedestrian-friendly environment in which front porches are the predominant features on the street. The site plans create usable open space by making these areas focal points to be used by residents for passive recreation and community events.

The illustrative site plans also offer advantages from a regional perspective. By respecting existing environmental conditions, the designs preserve the natural features and create opportunities for systems of interconnected greenways and trails. With respect to infrastructure, those compact development patterns provide utilities in a more cost-effective manner than conventional suburban developments.

These alternate designs are just one way new developments in these different density categories could develop. They also represent how individual developments could be designed, as well as how multiple developments could be integrated. Future development plans should attempt to incorporate the residential design principles proposed in this Plan, while being responsive to the unique features of each site.

The Planning Department should consider the existing topography in recommending the density of proposed residential developments. This principle should help to preserve natural site features and enhance the natural characteristics of the site such as mature trees by minimizing required grading.

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Ø Inappropriate



Frequent curb cuts, front parking lots, and excessive building setbacks along major roads contribute to strip development and perpetuate urban sprawl. 85% of survey respondents rated this barren streetscape inappropriate for Gray's Creek.



Parking lots which do not utilize landscaping to soften the visual impacts and lessen stormwater runoff are inappropriate. 92% of survey respondents rated this parking lot image inappropriate.



Large footprint buildings should have facades which break up the massing, be mixed or lined with smaller-scaled buildings, and front onto pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.

☑ Appropriate for Gray's Creek



Cross streets which provide access into mixed-use Commercial Centers should have on-street parking and provide for a pleasant pedestrian environment. Although this vista is terminated by a large retail building, the flanking buildings and streetscape soften its visual impact.



Buildings with different uses should frame the street and create the feeling of a comfortable "outdoor room." Such spatial enclosures can only be created when street widths and building setbacks are minimized.



Commercial buildings should be human-scaled and relate to the street and sidewalk, which is particularly important in Neighborhood Centers and Community Centers. This building would serve as compatible infill development for Neighborhood Centers such as Fisherville. 73% of Community Vision Survey respondents rated this image as appropriate for Gray's Creek.



Corner buildings should have at least two front facades visibly exposed to the street and should be designed to respond to these more prominent locations. Human-scale storefronts, signage, and lighting are appropriate for mixed-use Commercial Centers.



Landscape screening softens the visual impact of parking lots and allows such an edge to be pedestrian-friendly. This treatment is especially needed for Regional Centers which typically require a large supply of parking.



This image illustrates how to successfully integrate automobiles and pedestrians. In this efficient layout, convenient on-street parking actually helps define a comfortable pedestrian space along storefronts.

LAND USE & COMMUNITY DESIGN: Commercial/Mixed Use Design Principles

Streets

The street network should maximize connectivity, accommodate mixed-use development, and emphasize pedestrian activity. The three general types of streets are described below (see sketch on upper left side of sheet 16):

Major Roads - Mixed-use Commercial Centers should develop at intersections of major roads. Development should not have direct entrances on roads of 4 lanes or greater.

Cross Streets - Should intersect the major roads perpendicularly and provide for:

- Primary access to mixed-use Commercial Centers
- Interconnection between major roads and parallel streets
- On-street parking and access to parking lots

Parallel Streets - Should function as a secondary street system paralleling the major roads and provide for:

- Interconnection among adjacent properties and cross streets
- On-street parking and access to parking lots

Public Spaces/Streetscapes

Greens, courtyards, plazas and streetscapes shall be designed to enhance surrounding buildings. Public spaces should include sidewalks, landscaping, pedestrian-scaled lighting (no greater than 12 ft.), trees, benches, trash receptacles and other appropriate furnishings.

Circulation and Parking

Parking lots in mixed-use Commercial Centers should be located to the rear of buildings. When sufficiently screened, side parking lots are a less desirable alternative. Landscaping, walls and fences shall obscure views of vehicles from public rights-of-way. On-street parking should also be used to satisfy parking requirements.

Buildings

Buildings should be set back a minimum of 0 feet and a maximum of 25 feet from the adjacent street ROW and should front directly onto a cross street, a parallel street or a public space. Buildings should relate in scale and design features to surrounding buildings (with the exception of pre-existing buildings which deviate from these community design principles). Expansive and unbroken facades without windows and door openings should be avoided. Commercial franchise developments should include upgraded prototypical plans consisting of superior aesthetic attributes in the study area. Base level "boiler plate design prototypes should not be accepted. The Office of Planning and Development shall have full authority to review prototypical designs for approval"

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