

2006 Comprehensive Plan City of Wiggins, Mississippi



Working Together for a Better Wiggins

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Prepared by
Neel-Schaffer, Inc.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of the City of Wiggins Comprehensive Plan is to establish long-range policies and goals that guide overall physical growth and future development in a coordinated and unified manner. As a statement of long-range general policies, the plan expresses Wiggins' desire to affect the physical form of its destiny. By approaching that future in a coordinated and unified manner, Wiggins seeks to preserve, promote, protect and improve the public health, safety, comfort, good order and appearance within its jurisdiction.

Section 2: Authority

The City of Wiggins exercises authority granted by the state under Title 17, Chapter 1, of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, for the total incorporated area under its jurisdiction, in the interpretation, administration and evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan. Consistent with Title 17, Chapter 1, all land development within the incorporated area of Wiggins' jurisdiction will be consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan.

In addition, all land development regulations enacted or amended will be consistent with the plan. Land development regulations existing at the time of adoption of the plan which are not consistent with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update will be amended so as to be consistent.

Section 3: Integration of Smart Growth Principles

The City of Wiggins acknowledges that appropriate, thoughtful community planning will help the city grow and develop as a safe, efficient, attractive, livable, healthy community. The city also recognizes that "smart growth" policies will help the city achieve and maintain those qualities. A goal of this comprehensive planning process is to educate the citizens of Wiggins on the fundamentals of smart growth, as described herein, and secondly, to identify options for integrating smart growth principles into the visions and policies that will guide future decision-making.

Figure 1. Mississippi Code of 1972

Section 17-1-1 Definitions.

"Comprehensive plan," a statement of public policy for the physical development of the entire municipality or county adopted by resolution of the governing body, consisting of the following elements at a minimum:

- i. (i) Goals and objectives for the long-range (twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) years) development of the county or municipality. Required goals and objectives shall address, at a minimum, residential, commercial and industrial development; parks, open space and recreation; street or road improvements; public schools and community facilities.
- ii. (ii) A land use plan which designates in map or policy form the proposed general distribution and extent of the uses of land for residences, commerce, industry, recreation and open space, public/quasi-public facilities and lands. Background information shall be provided concerning the specific meaning of land use categories depicted in the plan in terms of the following: residential densities; intensity of commercial uses; industrial and public/quasi-public uses; and any other information needed to adequately define the meaning of such land use codes. Projections of population and economic growth for the area encompassed by the plan may be the basis for quantitative recommendations for each land use category.
- iii. (iii) A transportation plan depicting in map form the proposed functional classifications for all existing and proposed streets, roads and highways for the area encompassed by the land use plan and for the same time period as that covered by the land use plan. Functional classifications shall consist of arterial, collector and local streets, roads and highways, and these classifications shall be defined on the plan as to minimum right-of-way and surface width requirements; these requirements shall be based upon traffic projections. All other forms of transportation pertinent to the local jurisdiction shall be addressed as appropriate. The transportation plan shall be a basis for a capital improvements program.
- iv. (iv) A community facilities plan as a basis for a capital improvements program including, but not limited to, the following: housing; schools; parks and recreation; public buildings and facilities; and utilities and drainage.

Smart growth is a philosophy on planning and development that emerged in the early 1990s. The proponents of smart growth include a range of public and private agencies, planning advocacy organizations and professional associations. The following is the Smart Growth Network's description of this concept:

Smart growth recognizes connections between development and quality of life. It leverages new growth to improve the community. The features that distinguish smart growth in a community vary from place to place. In general, smart growth invests time, attention, and resources in restoring community and vitality to center cities and older suburbs. New smart growth is more town-centered, is transit and pedestrian oriented, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities. But there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. Successful communities do tend to have one thing in common--a vision of where they want to go and of what things they value in their community--and their plans for development reflect these values. (source: www.smartgrowth.org)

The following are the Smart Growth principles that were developed by the Smart Growth Network and have been further explored in five publications of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Smart Growth Network:

1. Mix land uses;
2. Take advantage of compact building design;
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
4. Create walkable neighborhoods;
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas;
7. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities;
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices;
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective; and
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Throughout this plan, references will be made to smart growth and the principles listed here. Further information on smart growth may be obtained from the following sources:

- ✦ Smart Growth Network, www.smartgrowth.org; and
- ✦ International City/County Management Association, www.icma.org.

Sense of Place

The characteristics of a location that make it readily recognizable as being unique and different from its surroundings and that provides a feeling of belonging to or being identified with that particular place.

Source: *General Plan, Scottsdale, AZ*

Section 4. History and Population

Wiggins, Mississippi, is located in the northern central region of Stone County, approximately 34 miles north of Gulfport, Mississippi, and approximately 35 miles south of Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

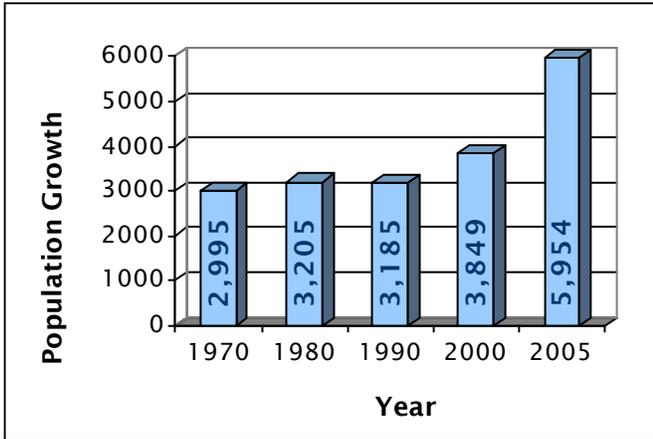
In its early history, the land was rolling forests covered in virgin pine. In 1896, the destiny of this rural forestland was changed by the introduction of the railroad. The Gulf & Ship Island Railroad made it possible to transport goods to and from the area and led to the emergence of the timber industry, sawmills, and the settlement originally known as Niles City.

In 1904, the area was incorporated and named Wiggins after an early pioneer, Wiggins Hatten. At the time, the land was a part of Harrison County, which was created in 1841 from portions of two Mississippi Gulf Coast counties—Hancock and Jackson.¹ It was not until May 10, 1916, that Stone County was created from the northern portion of Harrison County.²

Today, Wiggins is a growing city with a high quality of life. Wiggins' residents describe

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Figure 2. Population growth since 1970



Sources: *Census of Population & Housing, US Census Bureau, 2000; and Stone County Mississippi Local Area Population Projections, Brian Richard, 2006*

the city as quiet and peaceful place with a small town atmosphere. Residents enjoy the low crime rate, friendly people and centralized geographic location. Citizens and local officials desire to maintain these qualities as the city continues to grow.

From the mid-20th century to 2000, Wiggins saw slow and modest population growth, gaining less than 900 persons since the 1970 census. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many Gulf Coast residents, as expected, sought housing north of the three coastal counties. As a result, Stone County has experienced a sharp population increase since October 2005. The population in the county is expected to continue to increase in years to come.

The population of Wiggins is expected to increase by a slower rate than the rest of the county. Much of the county's growth is expected to be in southern Stone County, around and to the east of the McHenry community⁴. The Census Bureau estimated the July 1, 2005 population in Wiggins to be 4,463, and the post-hurricane population was estimated to be approximately 5,954.^{3,4}

Figure 3 compares the Census 2000 demographic characteristics of Wiggins to Stone County and the State of Mississippi.

Figure 3. Comparison of Population Characteristics

	Wiggins	Stone County	Mississippi
Total Population	3,849	13,622	2,844,658
% Male	46.9	49.6	49.1
% Female	53.1	50.4	50.9
% 18 years and over	71.6	73.2	74.3
% 65 years and over	11.1	15.1	12.2
Race			
% White	67.6	79.4	61.3
% Black or African American	31.5	19.2	36.8
% Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1.1	1.2	1.7
Average Household Size	2.66	2.72	2.62
% High School Graduate or Higher	72.6	74.8	72.9
% Families below poverty level	22.3	14.5	
Median household income	26,597	30,495	32,397

Source: *Census of Population & Housing, US Census Bureau, 2000.*

Section 5. The Planning Process

The process to update the Wiggins Comprehensive Plan began in March 2006. Initial meetings were held with the Planning Commission, the Mayor, and Board of Aldermen to create a tentative plan development schedule and to appoint members to a steering committee. The following are the members of the Wiggins Plan Steering Committee:

- ✦ Gabrielle Alexander,
- ✦ Sherwood Beckham,

- ✦ Frank Foster,
- ✦ Sue Harmond,
- ✦ Shelby Kennedy,
- ✦ Jeffry Peters,
- ✦ Tim Purvis,
- ✦ Nina Shaw, and
- ✦ Johnene Thames.

The steering committee convened for the first time in late March to learn about the project and assist with planning the public kick-off event. Thereafter, the committee was given the task of identifying goals, objectives, policies, and projects that should be included in the comprehensive plan. The committee met monthly to discuss plan topics and to organize public involvement events.

The first public event held to kick-off the planning process was an afternoon open house held on April 20, 2006 at the Wiggins Depot. The event was held from noon to 7 p.m. Participants were given *Post-It-Note* pads and pens and asked to write down the civic issues that were important to them. Posters labeled “Transportation,” “Land Use,” “Community Facilities,” and “Identity” were displayed in the room so that residents could place their *Post-It-Note* ideas under the appropriate categories.

Below is a sampling of the comments received from Wiggins residents:

- ✦ “Need senior condos or patio homes;”
- ✦ “Wiggins is wonderful and other folks out of town who visit or drive through should know it. Let’s clean-up everywhere!”
- ✦ “Develop a community plan that will enhance downtown Wiggins so it will draw more people to shop—improve parking, upgrade storefronts. More crafts, antiques and interesting shops.”
- ✦ “Require landscaping of new businesses opening in city and county.”
- ✦ “Improve recreation: bike trails, bike-friendly roads, nature trails, trail going to Flint Creek Water Park, bicycle access to all the schools in town.”
- ✦ “Skate park for youth.”
- ✦ “Build more sidewalks.”

The *Post-It-Note* comments were distributed to city officials and to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The steering committee used the comments to develop goals, objectives and programs to be included in the comprehensive plan.



During the kick-off event, participants were also asked to complete community surveys to gain residents opinions on schools, recreation, shopping, beautification, health care, and maintenance of public facilities. After the kick-off event, surveys were made available at City Hall and the Stone County Public Library. Copies of the survey and survey results appear under Appendix A of this plan.

The next public event was a three-day open house held June 26, 27 and 28, 2006, in the Neel-Schaffer comprehensive plan studio and office in downtown Wiggins. At this event, residents were invited to view the 64 ideas and proposals that were generated from the *Post-It-Note* event.

The proposals were listed under six categories: “Civic Pride,” “Community Facilities,” “Infrastructure,” “Land Use,” “Transportation,” and “General.” Participants were given green and red labels and asked to place the green labels on proposals they agreed with and place the red labels on the ideas they disagreed with or did not support. Residents were also encouraged to write in additional topics. At the end of the three-day open house, more than 2,000 red and green

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labels had been placed by participants, along with 34 new ideas.

Additionally, each resident was given three stars to place next to the three ideas or concepts they felt were the most important for the future of Wiggins. Appendix A contains the tally of all the “votes” by category. The issues that were supported by residents are listed under Figure 4, and the issues that were considered the most important for Wiggins are listed under Figure 5.



When incorporating the “votes” from the open house into goals and objectives (see Chapter 2), recommendations were modified to reflect the actions that could be taken by the city in addressing each issue. Many of the issues that received both positive and negative votes could be appropriately addressed in a community forum or dialogue, through a public education process, or by seeking the advice of experts.

After the three-day open house, the draft plan was prepared and made available for a two-week public review period. Copies of the plan were placed at Wiggins City Hall, the Stone County Courthouse, the Stone County Public Library, and at Neel-Schaffer’s Comprehensive Plan Studio and Office.

Information on the public hearing and additional public comments will be included here.

Figure 4. Ten Favored Ideas

Ideas Most Supported by Community Residents:

1. Promote community pride among property owners to encourage owners to maintain clean, attractive private properties.
2. Ensure that city-owned properties are clean, attractive, well-maintained and set a good example for property maintenance.
3. Continue to maintain landscaped areas in public medians and along public streets, and identify new areas for additional landscaping and beautification.
4. Enforce litter laws and have monthly clean-up days to promote a clean city.
5. Identify locations and seek funding for a greater variety of recreation opportunities for young families, including skating rinks, bowling alleys, movie theaters and swimming pools.
6. Celebrate the uniqueness of downtown Wiggins, encourage downtown property owners to repair and maintain buildings, and maintain a clean, attractive, pedestrian-friendly downtown.
7. Seek funds to convert the Pickle Field to a city park with playgrounds, walking trails and sports fields.
8. Hold community and cultural events in Blaylock Park, such as movies, music and holiday events.
9. Identify locations and seek funding for additional recreation facilities to promote quality youth activities, such as skate parks, bicycle paths and basketball courts.
10. Allow liquor sales in the county to encourage chain restaurants, such as Chili's and Outback Steakhouse, to locate in the area.

Figure 5. Five Most Important Ideas

Five Ideas Considered Most Important to Future of Wiggins:

1. Allow liquor sales in the county to encourage chain restaurants, such as Chili's and Outback Steakhouse, to locate in the area.
2. Update water/sewer services throughout the city of Wiggins.
3. Identify locations and seek funding for a greater variety of recreation opportunities for young families, including skating rinks, bowling alleys, movie theaters and swimming pools.
4. Enforce ordinances requiring minimum property maintenance and prohibiting the accumulation of junk on residential properties.
5. Demolish old buildings/houses and clean overgrown lots.

Sources:

1. Mississippi Official and Statistical Register 2004-2008 Blue Book, 2005.
2. Statewide Historical Research Project: Stone County, Works Progress Administration for Mississippi, Idell S. Skinner, Horace V. Redfield, and Ethel Ladner.
3. Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.
4. Brian Richard (2006) "Stone County, Mississippi Local Area Population Projections."

Chapter 2: Goals and Objectives

General Description

Goals and objectives set forth guiding principles that should be used in public and private decision-making and in resolving community issues. Goals are general statements that describe an overall view or vision of what the community wants for its future. Objectives are more specific statements describing the steps the community should take to achieve its goals.

In April and June 2006, community residents attending two public forums were asked to describe their visions for Wiggins. The opinions and statements gathered at the events were used by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to form the below goals and objectives. The goals and objectives should be used by city officials in the day-to-day decision-making process, and should serve as indicators to measure the city's progress in achieving these goals.

Section 1: Land Use

General

Goal: *Allow an appropriate mix of land uses in all areas of the city to create healthy, vibrant, walkable, livable neighborhoods and communities.*

Objectives:

1. Update the Land Development Code to reflect smart growth principles, form and design issues and current land use planning trends.
2. Locate civic, institutional and commercial activity in or adjacent to neighborhoods and districts, where appropriate, instead of isolating those activities in remote, single-use complexes.
3. Establish a community dialogue to identify all issues and opinions related to allowing the selling of liquor in Wiggins.

Residential Development

Goal: *Promote the construction of high quality housing in a range of housing types, prices and densities.*

Objectives:

4. Identify locations for garden or patio homes, retiree communities and traditional neighborhoods to meet the desire for attractive, low-maintenance housing with convenient access to businesses and community services.
5. Encourage the development of independent-living and assisted-living centers to provide more housing options for elderly residents.
6. Enforce minimum property maintenance standards and prohibit the accumulation of junk on residential properties.
7. Encourage homebuilders to build new homes in accordance with the 2003 edition of the International Building Code.
8. Allow and encourage certain residential uses to be located within the central business district.
9. Seek funding for home repair and rehabilitation programs and for new affordable housing construction.
10. Support citizen groups and non-profit agencies that repair or construct homes for low- and moderate-income residents.

Neighborhoods

Goal: *Stabilize and strengthen neighborhoods to promote community pride through private property maintenance and beautification, and to provide a network for individual property owners to participate in civic issues and community decision-making.*

Objectives:

11. Establish a communication network between the city, county and neighborhood leaders to inform citizens of important community events and programs, and to provide a forum for citizens to discuss issues that affect their individual neighborhoods.
12. Assist individual neighborhoods in organizing neighborhood associations, establishing leadership structures,

Figure 6. Planning Terms Defined

- ✦ **Big-Box Retail Facilities** are large, industrial-style buildings or stores with footprints that range from 20,000 to 200,000 square feet. While most big-boxes operate as a single-story structure, they typically have a three-story mass that stands more than 30 feet tall. Single-product merchandisers generally range in size from 25,000 square feet to 50,000 square feet; general merchandise stores range in size from 80,000 to 130,000 square feet. *Source: Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington.*
- ✦ **Capital Improvement Program** is a timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements to be carried out during a specific period and listed in order or priority, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means of financing each project. *Source: Clarkdale, AZ*
- ✦ **Density** is the number of *dwelling units* found on a particular area of land. Typically, density refers to the number of dwelling units per acre (one acre = 43,560 square feet). Low density developments have fewer dwellings per acre, and high density developments have a greater number of dwellings per acre.
- ✦ **Dwelling Unit** is a building or portion thereof which is designed, arranged, or used for living quarters for one family.
- ✦ **Form-based Code** allows market demand to determine the mix of uses within the constraints of building type set by the community. The community establishes zones of building type and allows building owners to determine the uses. The look and layout of a street is carefully controlled to reflect neighborhood scale, parking standards, and pedestrian accessibility, but building owners and occupants are allowed maximum flexibility to determine how the buildings will be used. *Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
- ✦ **Hazard Mitigation** is any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property. *Source: U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency*
- ✦ **Land Use** is a description of how land is utilized; "land use" identifies or defines the activities that are conducted on land and/or within buildings or structures placed on land.
- ✦ **Traditional Neighborhood Development** describes development patterns found in older urban neighborhoods and towns. Traditional neighborhoods include a variety of residential housing types, neighborhood commercial uses that are located nearby and are in scale with the neighborhood, a network of narrow, interconnected streets that provide a safe and enjoyable walking environment, and open space that serves as both an organizing feature and gathering place for the neighborhood. *Source: Austin, TX*

initiating neighborhood programs and communicating with city and county government.

Commercial Development

Goal: *Encourage new business development that enhances the economy, character and appearance of Wiggins; promote policies and programs to sustain and improve local small businesses.*

Objectives:

13. Attract desired types of businesses to Wiggins, including movie theaters, entertainment venues, clothing and specialty stores, and restaurants.
14. Prohibit transient vendors from selling dry goods and food from tents and trucks on vacant lots, in parking lots and along roads and highways. Instead, identify new facility options, such as business incubators or farmers markets, to support local small business development in appropriate locations.
15. Upgrade infrastructure in all commercial areas to encourage new development and redevelopment. Improvements in landscaping, sidewalks, lighting and street furniture in commercial districts create more pleasant, attractive shopping districts.
16. Establish architectural design guidelines for new commercial development so that national or chain businesses can modify design plans to conform to the character of Wiggins.
17. Identify design standards that create a sense of place and convey the character of Wiggins to visitors and shoppers.
18. Encourage business owners to take advantage of Gulf Opportunity Zone (GO Zone) tax advantages to encourage new investment and job creation.
19. Develop and enforce new ordinances to require the screening of materials and equipment stored outdoors.

Downtown Enhancement

Goal: *Support existing downtown businesses and encourage a healthy mix of*

Goals and Objectives

residential, retail, cultural, service, and public land uses; celebrate the unique character and atmosphere of the downtown business district.

Objectives:

20. Assess current parking conditions and identify locations for new on-street and off-street parking facilities.
21. Locate off-street parking facilities behind existing or proposed buildings so that new surface parking lots do not break-up or disconnect the downtown streetscape.
22. Improve and upgrade infrastructure in downtown Wiggins to encourage frequent public use. Improvements in sidewalks, lighting and street furniture will project the image that downtown Wiggins is a special, respected district and provide a more pleasant, safe and comfortable place to shop and conduct business.
23. Promote downtown Wiggins as an arts and cultural center and encourage artists and art-related businesses to locate downtown.
24. Seek funds to conduct a downtown market study to determine what types of businesses or residences are needed to create a sustainable downtown and a healthy business environment.
25. Encourage the downtown merchants to organize an association to coordinate and promote downtown events.
26. Educate downtown building owners on the economic and social value of creating second-floor residences in existing downtown buildings.
27. Encourage the owners of vacant or undeveloped downtown properties to construct multi-story buildings with second-floor housing.
28. Work with utility companies to place electricity, telephone and cable television lines underground in downtown Wiggins.

Industrial Development

Goal: *Foster industrial development in the Stone County Industrial Park; identify and attract a diverse mix of light industries to locate in Wiggins.*

Objectives:

29. Cooperate with the County in providing infrastructure in the Stone County Industrial Park.
30. Enforce minimum property maintenance standards; prohibit the accumulation of junk on industrial properties.
31. Attract new industries to the Stone County Industrial Park; identify other attractive sites to locate new light industries.

Section 2: Transportation Facilities

Goal: *Maintain a safe, efficient and convenient network of streets, bicycle paths and sidewalks to provide a range of transportation options for residents and visitors.*

Objectives:

1. Provide a continuous frontage road along the north and south bound lanes of U.S. Highway 49.
2. Ensure the regular trimming of trees and shrubs at the intersections of streets to provide adequate sight distance and visibility for drivers who are turning or entering an intersection.
3. Install adequate street and pedestrian lighting along public streets and sidewalks.
4. Assess the condition of streets and roads in Wiggins; repair streets and roads that are found to be in poor condition.
5. Establish a capital improvement program to schedule and prioritize road maintenance, and to ensure that repaving schedules are coordinated with other utility and infrastructure improvements.
6. Repair and maintain existing sidewalks and construct new accessible sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to schools,

- parks, public buildings, medical facilities, and business districts.
7. Adopt a sidewalk master plan designating areas where sidewalks should be constructed; require sidewalks to be constructed by land developers at the time of new construction in designated areas.
 8. Incorporate sidewalks and landscaping into roadway designs when widening major city streets and state highways to make the city more attractive and walkable.
 9. Seek funds to construct bicycle pathways that connect major recreation areas, neighborhoods and schools with downtown Wiggins.
 10. Promote the design of walkable streets to promote a healthy community and to provide a travel option for those who cannot use or access an automobile.
 11. Establish a public transit system to provide transportation to senior citizens, youth, and those without access to a vehicle.
 12. Promote consistent and attractive sign development which provides appropriate wayfinding for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Section 3: Infrastructure

Goal: *Provide adequate water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, and recycling facilities to support the current and future needs of the growing population.*

Objectives:

1. Upgrade existing water lines to provide adequate water pressure for firefighting and to support existing and future homes, businesses and industries.
2. Allocate funds to prepare a water and sewer master plan for serving existing residents and extending service to new developments.
3. Seek funds and partnerships to place existing utilities underground; require underground utilities at all new developments.

4. Establish drop-off recycling facilities in Wiggins and investigate the costs and benefits associated with a citywide curbside recycling program.
5. Coordinate garbage and trash collection days to prevent business owners from leaving trash in public view on weekends.
6. Seek funds and identify locations for wastewater treatment facilities to replace the city's lagoon system.
7. Connect city residents who are not currently served by the city's sanitary sewer system.
8. Establish a city-wide program for collecting white goods (appliances) and household hazardous wastes.

Section 4: Community Facilities

Public Buildings, Facilities, and Lands

Goal: *Provide adequate space in community facilities for current and future needs; locate civic buildings in and around downtown Wiggins to anchor public activity in the heart of the city.*

Objectives:

1. Sustain the current condition of community facilities by providing regular maintenance and upkeep.
2. Evaluate the space needs for the City Hall offices and Police Department, and determine which offices should relocate to a new downtown facility.
3. Seek funds to expand the Stone County Public Library; identify additional parking facilities to be used by library patrons.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

Goal: *Provide a variety of parks and recreation facilities throughout the city designed to meet the needs of all age groups and activity levels; preserve scenic areas and open spaces which enhance the visual and natural environment.*

Goals and Objectives

Objectives:

4. Identify locations and seek funding for additional recreation facilities to promote quality youth-oriented activities, such as skate parks, bicycle paths, basketball courts, and football fields.
5. Seek funds to convert Reynolds Field to a city park with playgrounds, walking trails and sports fields.
6. Identify locations and seek funding for a greater variety of recreation opportunities for young families, including skating rinks, bowling alleys, movie theaters and swimming pools.
7. Maintain existing recreational facilities in good repair to reduce capital improvement costs and extend the useful life of existing facilities.
8. Identify locations and seek funding sources to establish public facilities such as community centers and museums to strengthen civic pride and provide additional meeting space.



9. Seek a location and funding source to construct a multi-use recreation facility that may be used as a shelter and for relief-staging efforts during future hazard events.
10. Identify open spaces within the city that can be used for passive recreation and tourism, to preserve scenic beauty, and to provide space for wildlife habitats.

Public Schools

Goal: *Cooperate with the Stone County School District for the improvement of school facilities to accommodate the future school age population of the city and area.*

Objectives:

11. Locate school facilities close to neighborhoods to enable children to walk or bicycle to them.
12. Coordinate land uses, street designs and sidewalk improvements around public schools to ensure the safety of students, teachers and motorists.

Public Safety

Goal: *Ensure a healthy and stable living environment for all residents by continuing to upgrade and improve facilities and equipment necessary for adequate police and fire protection.*

Objectives:

13. Monitor the annual maintenance costs for individual Police Department patrol cars and replace vehicles when continued maintenance is cost-prohibitive.
14. Provide adequate staff and continued professional training for police and fire personnel, including adding five new police officers to meet short-term needs, adding three additional firefighters and funding a full-time fire chief.
15. Renovate the existing fire station to provide a second living area on the station's second floor.
16. Identify land and funding for the construction of a second fire station, which is projected to be needed within the next 20 years.
17. Collaborate with Stone County officials to purchase a new central radio communication system for the entire county that will link individual departments.
18. Seek funds to install laptop computers in all city police vehicles.

19. Ensure adequate funding of police dispatch activities and seek funds to equip dispatch computers with mapping capabilities to assist dispatchers in directing emergency personnel to correct locations.

Hurricane and Disaster Preparedness

Goal: *Ensure that Wiggins is prepared for future hazards and disaster events through proper planning and implementation of hazard mitigation plans and programs.*

20. Collaborate with Stone County officials in emergency preparedness planning and ensure coordination of preparation and relief efforts for future hazard events.
21. Seek a location and funding source to construct a multi-use facility that may be used as a shelter and for relief staging efforts and prior to and during future hazard events.
22. Establish a pre-disaster contract with local fuel service stations to ensure the availability of gasoline for public safety personnel and first responders.

Section 5: Civic Pride and Beautification

Goal: *Create and maintain clean, attractive public and private spaces in Wiggins, and celebrate and promote the city's beauty, history and culture.*

Objectives:

1. Promote community pride among property owners to encourage owners to maintain clean, attractive private properties.
2. Set a good example for property maintenance by ensuring city-owned properties are clean, attractive and well-maintained.
3. Continue to maintain landscaped areas in public medians and along public streets; identify new areas for additional landscaping and beautification.
4. Promote a clean city by aggressively enforcing litter laws and holding monthly clean-up events.

5. Celebrate the uniqueness of downtown Wiggins; encourage downtown property owners to repair and maintain buildings and maintain a clean, attractive, pedestrian-friendly downtown.
6. Hold community and cultural events—such as movies, music and holiday events—in Blaylock Park.
7. Establish welcoming gateway signs and landscaping at all major entrances to Wiggins to draw in visitors and convey residents' pride in the city.
8. Enforce property maintenance and community appearance standards addressing dilapidated buildings, overgrown lots, outdoor storage, and other public nuisances, to protect residents' health, safety and property values.
9. Promote and preserve the qualities of the community that are valued by residents, including the small-town atmosphere, the hospitality of residents, and the good environment in which to raise a family.
10. Invest in curb appeal and beautification by funding or seeking funds for beautification projects and assigning a city employee or creating a new position to handle anti-litter and beautification programs.
11. Celebrate important people and contributions to the city's history and culture, including Dizzy Dean, Boyce Holleman, pickles, timber, and other unique aspects of the community.
12. Identify and promote a community slogan that defines Wiggins and the image of the city that residents wish to project, in order to market Wiggins to regional visitors.
13. Celebrate the community's history by identifying and documenting properties with historic value. Promote historic preservation policies to conserve and protect those properties which communicate the city's heritage to visitors and future generations.

Chapter 3: Land Use Element

Land Use Vision: *A city that encourages smart growth with an appropriate mix of land uses which enhances the economy, character and appearance of Wiggins, while promoting healthy, vibrant, walkable, livable neighborhoods and communities.*

General Description

The Land Use Element contains a description of the current land uses and development characteristics in Wiggins, as well as recommendations on future land use and development patterns. This section begins with a vision statement which describes the residents' desires for future growth and development.

Included in this section are a future land use map and text describing strategies the city residents can use to achieve the overall future land use vision.

This chapter should be used to identify what land uses are desired in the city, to determine how much land should be devoted to each use, and where land uses could be located to bring the most value to the community.

Section 1: Neighborhoods

“A neighborhood is a unit that matches the daily scale of most people’s lives.”

John M. Levy, Contemporary Urban Planning

Wiggins is a community of neighborhoods. The boundaries of these neighborhoods are generally determined by the location of natural or man-made boundaries, such as roads, highways, streams and other topographic features. Many neighborhoods have an official name or description which is recognizable to persons familiar with the city.

The neighborhood is usually bonded together by the similar interests, lifestyles, age of housing, and common problems or goals. The city of Wiggins has developed over the years through a series of neighborhoods based on a period and style of residential development, along with other geographic or man-made

Smart Growth Principles

Consider the following smart growth principles related to land use:

- ✦ Mix land uses.
- ✦ Take advantage of compact building design.
- ✦ Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- ✦ Create walkable communities.
- ✦ Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- ✦ Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- ✦ Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- ✦ Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
- ✦ Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.

factors which helped the residents feel a bond or relationship.

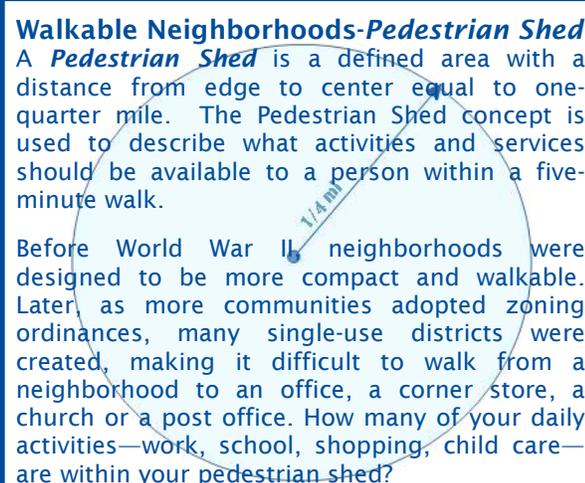
Recently, neighborhoods have begun to organize meetings and clean-up events in order to promote community pride and encourage good property maintenance and beautification. These activities should be continued and strengthened through the establishment of formal neighborhood associations supported by the City of Wiggins.

Neighborhood associations can be used as a tool to communicate residents' concerns and desires regarding land use issues, social activities, recreation, beautification, and code enforcement to other residents and to city officials. The strength of using one voice that represents a neighborhood can enable citizens to participate more in community and local government issues. The neighborhood association can also undertake programs and events that enhance the

Figure 7. Pedestrian Shed

Walkable Neighborhoods-Pedestrian Shed
 A *Pedestrian Shed* is a defined area with a distance from edge to center equal to one-quarter mile. The Pedestrian Shed concept is used to describe what activities and services should be available to a person within a five-minute walk.

Before World War II, neighborhoods were designed to be more compact and walkable. Later, as more communities adopted zoning ordinances, many single-use districts were created, making it difficult to walk from a neighborhood to an office, a corner store, a church or a post office. How many of your daily activities—work, school, shopping, child care—are within your pedestrian shed?



quality of life and value of property for all residents.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Establish a partnership between the city and area neighborhoods to support the creation of neighborhood associations and to promote a city-wide network;
- ✦ Promote clean-up and beautification programs that encourage residents to take pride in their neighborhoods and properties.
- ✦ Provide a forum for associations to address issues such as street improvements, drainage, and crime prevention.

Section 2: Residential Land Use

Residential land use is the predominant land use in the city of Wiggins. Much of the existing residential development is low-density, with individual parcel sizes ranging from 10,000 square feet to one-acre in area. Attempts should be made to attract a broader range of housing densities and styles that are more consistent with current building trends and the desires of homebuyers. The following are descriptions of the types of residential land uses found in Wiggins.

Agricultural-Residential

Agricultural-residential land uses are typically larger "estate-sized" lots located in the more

sparsely developed areas of the city where existing services and utilities—in particular sanitary sewer—will not accommodate a higher density.

The majority of agricultural-residential lands in the city of Wiggins are located at the fringes of the city limits.

Single-Family

Single family land uses are detached residential dwellings designed for occupancy by one family. Low-density single-family lands are the predominant use in the city.

In recent years, the residential housing market has seen an increase in the desire for garden or patio homes on smaller lots which require less maintenance. This is especially desirable to retirees and young professionals who desire a single-family home but wish to spend less time on yard maintenance. Further, this concept gained much public support at both the kick-off and open house public events.

As there is both a need and a desire in Wiggins for garden homes, the Land Development Code and future land use map should be modified to include moderate- and higher-density single-family residential uses.

Residents who requested garden or patio homes during public meetings also commented on the desire to live within walking distance of daily services (see Appendix A). When locating new housing developments, developers, the planning commission and board of aldermen should consider the proximity to public, retail and service land uses. Garden and patio home developments should be designed to enable residents to walk to needed businesses and services.

Residents also recognize the need for independent-living and assisted-living developments for elderly residents. According to Census 2000, 11.1% of Stone County residents and 15.1% of Wiggins residents are over the age of 65. There is a need not only to provide living facilities for the current elderly and aging residents of Wiggins, but also to relieve some of the

Land Use Element



burden placed on the so-called “sandwich generation,” which is considered to be the adult children who take care of their elderly parents at the same time they are raising a family. As an increasing number of adults find themselves in this situation, they will look to relocate to communities that have adequate services not only for themselves, but for their parents.

Multi-Family Residential

According to the Wiggins Land Development Code, multi-family dwellings are buildings which contain three or more attached dwelling units. The most common type of multi-family dwelling in Wiggins is the apartment building. Currently, multi-family uses in Wiggins are sparsely located, with two of the larger developments located in the northwestern corner of the city.

To meet the changing desires of young professionals and retirees, Wiggins should promote the development of a greater variety of multi-family residential developments, including townhouses, second-floor apartments in commercial centers, and condominiums. This will require an amendment to the city’s Land Development Code.

Manufactured Homes

A manufactured home, according to the Wiggins Land Development Code, is a structure that is built on a permanent chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling, with or without a permanent foundation. Manufactured homes are currently located in manufactured

home parks or on single-family lots scattered throughout the city.

The manufactured homes on scattered lots are typically classified as legally-nonconforming or grandfathered uses. These terms refer to land uses that were in existence prior to the adoption of the Land Development Code in 2000, but are no longer legal under the adopted code.

As a result of Hurricane Katrina, a number of manufactured homes and travel trailers have been provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and are being used as temporary emergency housing. These homes were authorized by the city through an emergency ordinance adopted immediately after the hurricane and were not intended to be used as permanent housing.

City residents desire to continue the existing policy of allowing manufactured homes in manufactured home park developments. In order to eliminate the need to use manufactured homes as temporary emergency housing, city officials should encourage the repair of hurricane-damaged homes and direct residents to agencies that assist with home repair and funding.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Adopt ordinances that allow the flexibility to develop a broader range of high-quality housing types.
- ✦ Promote the development of housing types such as patio and garden homes that are desirable to retirees.
- ✦ Adopt ordinances to allow and encourage the design of traditional neighborhoods.
- ✦ Promote the construction of independent- and assisted-living centers to provide care to aging residents.

Section 3: Commercial Land Use

Commercial land uses consist primarily of service, retail and office uses. These land uses are found primarily in downtown Wiggins and along State Highway 26, U.S. Highway 49, and Magnolia Drive. Commercial land uses in downtown Wiggins are a mix of

Land Use Map
To be added

Land Use Element

retail, service and office uses, with some more intensive auto-related uses such as gasoline sales and service stations.

A mix of commercial and residential land uses are located along Magnolia Drive, which connects downtown Wiggins with U.S. Highway 49 to the north and south. U.S. Highway 49 is characterized by more intensive commercial uses, such as automobile dealerships and manufactured home sales facilities, “big-box” retail and strip centers (see definition under Chapter 2), fast food and dine-in restaurants.



Through public meetings and surveys, Wiggins residents expressed a desire for a greater variety of commercial uses, such as clothing stores, restaurants and specialty shops. While demographics and market forces, to a certain extent, guide the type and variety of businesses that will locate to an area, the city should also ensure that existing land use regulations are encouraging to those seeking to locate a new business. The mere existence of regulations and ordinances is not itself seen as a disincentive, but as a cost of doing business. Lengthy, uncertain approval processes or unclear, outdated regulations can make the development process difficult or unpleasant. Additionally, developers have attempted to propose mixed-use developments, though the current Land Development Code is not flexible enough to allow these types of developments. The code should be modified, at a minimum, to allow residences to be located in commercial

zones and to encourage a mix of residences—townhomes, apartments and garden homes—in well-designed mixed-use developments.

Wiggins has established minimum design standards for non-residential properties. All new commercial properties are required to adhere to certain building appearance and landscaping standards. These standards can be strengthened in the Land Development Code, and should be partnered with some additional form-based standards and design guidelines. Residents especially supported a proposal to require national or chain businesses to conform to the character of Wiggins.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Encourage the design of neighborhood business districts in appropriate locations.
- ✦ Promote the development of mixed-use districts which blend retail and service businesses with loft apartments and townhomes.
- ✦ Adopt form-based development standards and design guidelines to enhance the appearance and function of new commercial developments.
- ✦ Ensure that ordinances regulating the location and approval of new commercial developments are clear, understandable, and flexible enough to permit well-designed, creative, and innovative new development proposals.

Section 4: Downtown Wiggins

“Three Rules of Urban Design:

- 1. Build to the sidewalk (i.e. property line)*
- 2. Make the building front ‘permeable’ (i.e. no blank walls)*
- 3. Prohibit parking in front of the building.”*

*David Sucher,
City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village*

Downtown Wiggins is a district full of character and history, with a mix of old and

Downtown Map
To be added

Land Use Element

new buildings, paved and bricked streets, businesses, apartments and houses. A number of residents use the central business district for daily activities. In the community survey conducted in April and May, 2006, 65% of respondents reported that they shopped, dined or conducted business daily in downtown Wiggins.

Wiggins residents are very interested in improving the appearance of the downtown area. Many buildings are in need of general maintenance and “sprucing up.” Much of the damage to downtown buildings was caused as a result of Hurricane Katrina, though there has been a delay in making repairs and improving the appearance of buildings. Most delays are due to the difficulty in scheduling a contractor and obtaining materials. Some of the problems with building appearance are due to vacancy and neglect.

Residents commented during the three-day open house on the need to tear down dilapidated buildings. This should be approached with caution in the downtown area as, once historic structures are torn down, the community loses an irreplaceable part of its history. A priority in downtown Wiggins should be to commission a survey of historic resources, and to seek advice on how to conserve buildings that have historic or cultural value.

Wiggins has a growing arts sector. Residents favor proposals to make downtown Wiggins an arts and cultural center and to try to attract artists and art-related businesses. There are a number of tools a city can use to accomplish this, including partnering with local banks to offer low-interest loans for the purchase and rehabilitation of downtown buildings, seeking funds to establish museums and galleries, and assisting with the promotion of the arts industry.

These types of downtown programs are best planned and implemented through an active merchants association. At one time, Wiggins had a merchants association, and those members were absorbed by the local chamber of commerce, which is an active, city-wide business association.

The downtown merchants association should be revived, either as a subgroup of the chamber of commerce, or as a stand-alone association. Vibrant, successful downtowns do not “just happen,” they are the result of the hard work of many individuals who share a common vision and goal. Planning events, coordinating signage and landscaping, encouraging other business-owners, collaborating on promotions, and seeking outside funding for programs are some of the ways an active merchants association can positively impact a downtown.



Downtown Land Use and Housing

Business and property owners have expressed a desire to integrate residential uses into the central business district. There are currently some apartments and houses in downtown Wiggins, though the apartments are located in first floor storefronts. While having occupied storefronts, as opposed to vacant storefronts, can be beneficial in a struggling downtown, every attempt should be made to attract the retail and service businesses that make the downtown a complete district.

Tourists and visitors to Wiggins will be more interested in walking past storefronts filled with things they can purchase, rather than looking into the window of a person’s home or office. If the goal for the downtown area is to make it a special district that draws regional visitors, then attracting specialty shops, coffee shops and eateries should be a priority task.

Parking

On-street parking is offered throughout the central business district, and one public parking lot is located north of Pine Avenue. The parking capacity is ample for the uses that are currently conducted in downtown Wiggins, and the availability of on-street parking is vital for the health of the district.

Some property owners may wish to construct additional off-street parking facilities when planning new developments. New off-street parking facilities should be located, where possible, behind buildings or in the interior of blocks, so the lots do not break-up the downtown streetscape. Visitors to a downtown will walk farther, especially in the heat of the summer, if their walk is filled with interesting storefronts, rather than separated by long, paved parking lots.

Accessibility

Downtown Wiggins should be a district that can be enjoyed equally by persons with disabilities. This is always a challenge in historic downtown districts and will be especially challenging on a sloping street such as Pine Avenue. Because Wiggins has not adopted and does not enforce a building code, many of the elements that make a building accessible are not regulated by the City.

Business owners and contractors should be educated on the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, and should ensure that elements such as door widths, ramps, entrances, and exits are not a danger or impediment to a disabled person.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Encourage the maintenance and repair of downtown buildings.
- ✦ Promote the development of housing in appropriate locations downtown.
- ✦ Promote artists and art-related businesses.
- ✦ Identify appropriate locations for new parking facilities that do not break-up the downtown streetscape.
- ✦ Undertake projects to make downtown Wiggins accessible to all persons.

Section 5: Industrial Land Use

Industrial lands in Wiggins are located along the northern and southern sections of the city, adjacent to the railroad. The principal use of land in this district is for industries which can be operated in a relatively clean and quiet manner and which will not be a nuisance to adjacent residential or business districts. This area should also be used for warehousing and wholesaling activities with limited contact with the general public.

The industrial area locations should utilize, as much as possible, natural buffers such as streams or major topographic breaks to protect other areas of land use in the vicinity. They should be located within reasonable proximity to residential areas and major traffic routes, so as to minimize commuting time for employees. Industrial areas must be of sufficient size to accommodate proper development and future expansion.

Wiggins should be careful to consider the special needs of an industry and its impacts when creating or expanding heavy and light industrial districts. Suitable industrial districts should be served by major transmission lines for electric power and have access to railways and major transportation routes. Service streets should be able to handle the weight of heavy trucks, and development standards should also require sufficient parking and space for loading and unloading. Precautions should be taken to prevent fires and other hazards.

Wiggins is also receiving new types of light industrial and manufacturing uses which can be compatible in commercial and mixed use areas. Though access to transportation is an important consideration in locating new industrial facilities, new light industries do not bring many of the nuisance issues of heavy and hazardous industries, such as noise, vibrations, odors, dust, and the presence of combustible materials. Special consideration should be given to the nature of proposed industrial and manufacturing uses and any potential benefits or impacts associated with locating those businesses in the heart of the city.

Section 6: Recreational/Open Space Land Use

Recreation is one of the top issues in Wiggins today. Residents overwhelmingly desire improvements to existing recreation facilities, expansion of parks and recreation areas, and the development of new facilities throughout the city for the types of activities residents desire. Currently, recreational land uses in the city are located in three areas: Blaylock Park between College and Pine Street, Reynolds Field—also referred to as “Pickle Field”—and Flint Creek Water Park on Highway 29 North.

The residents of Wiggins desire additional recreational facilities for all age groups and activity levels. The following recreational needs were identified by residents in public visioning sessions:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| skate park | basketball courts |
| volleyball court | skating rink |
| movie theater | public pool |
| neighborhood parks | bowling alley |
| putting greens | dog/pet park |

Some of these recreational facilities can be publicly funded, and the city and county should identify funding sources and suitable locations for those facilities. Facilities such as movie theaters and bowling alleys are typically funded privately. The city should ensure that suitable lands are available and appropriately zoned for those types of facilities.



It is important that the recreational facilities be easily accessible to the residents of Wiggins and equally distributed throughout the city. Additional information on recreational needs in Wiggins is included under Chapter 6 of this plan.



Section 7: Public/Semi-Public Facilities and Lands

Public land consists of areas occupied by educational and governmental facilities or land which is owned by federal, state, or local units of government. Semi-public areas include land which is occupied by privately-owned uses that are generally open to the public, such as churches, cemeteries, lodge halls and similar uses. Recreational facilities are also included in this category.

The majority of public facilities and lands are located in downtown Wiggins along North First Street and State Highway 26. Semi-public facilities may be found throughout the downtown and within the city’s residential districts. Public buildings, including city hall, the public library and community meeting spaces, should be located in the heart of the city—downtown Wiggins—to anchor public activity in the city center and to ensure the vitality of that area. These facilities also should have adequate space for current and future needs and be accessible to pedestrians and people traveling by bicycle or automobile.

Recreation Facilities Map
To be added

Section 8: Growth Areas Outside the City Limits

All of Stone County is experiencing new growth. While a limited amount of new growth is occurring at the fringes of the city limits, the majority of the new developments are planned for southern Stone County. Currently, major residential developments are proposed or imminent both to the west and to the south of Wiggins. Additionally, smaller new and infill residential developments are being planned in the Big Level community, east of Wiggins.

Wiggins currently has an ample supply of vacant or undeveloped land—more than 1,300 acres—outside the city center. Large tracts of undeveloped land are located in the southern portion of the city on both the east and west sides of Highway 49. Vacant tracts of land, ranging from one to over ten acres in area, are located both east and west of the downtown area along major roadways and adjacent to the city limits.

There are smaller—less than one acre—parcels of vacant land located on scattered sites throughout the city. Much of the post-hurricane development in Wiggins has been in the form of infill development on those smaller, individual parcels, though larger-scale developments and residential subdivisions are being constructed where there is available vacant land.

Section 9: Decision-making

It is difficult to anticipate changes in development trends, market forces and the future desires of individual property owners. When land use proposals conflict with the comprehensive plan and future land use map, it will be necessary to amend these documents prior to or concurrent with amending the Land Development Code and zoning map. Though it is important to understand the impact of the change in policy, it is also important for the city to be flexible to changes in area conditions and to be able to accommodate amendments that could yield high-quality, creative development proposals that could benefit a neighborhood and surrounding community.

Proposals will also be made that the city finds in conflict with the comprehensive plan, and which are not considered to enhance a neighborhood or community. In this situation, decision-makers should be able to identify the underlying principles in the plan that are not flexible to time or market forces, and to identify development options that would be consistent with those principles.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Establish clear development review procedures so that all individuals involved in the process—developers, land owners, neighbors and other stakeholders—receive timely and accurate information and consistent, fair decisions;
- ✦ Amend the Land Development Code to establish the standards and procedures necessary to provide the information to city staff and appointed and elected officials needed to make development decisions.

Chapter 4: Transportation Element

Transportation Vision: *A city with a safe, efficient, convenient network of streets, bicycle paths and sidewalks which enables the easy movement of people and goods; a city that uses design, landscaping and lighting features that make the streetscape more attractive and accessible to everyone.*

General Description

The purpose of a transportation system is to allow for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within and through the city of Wiggins. As the pattern of the transportation system greatly influences the ease, convenience and safety of the traffic circulation in and out of the community, it is probably one of the most important planning elements which affects the form, physical growth, and development of the community.

The Transportation Plan will coordinate with all modes of transportation including rail, automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle to alleviate existing deficiencies and provide for future growth in accordance with the community's established goals and standards.

Section 1: Existing Street System

Much of the existing street system in the city of Wiggins is based on a grid street pattern, though the continuity of many streets is broken by dead ends, ninety-degree turns or cul-de-sacs. Residents have expressed that the quality and maintenance of existing streets and sidewalks should be a priority issue both in the short-term for repairs and maintenance, and in the long-term for planning capital improvements, new streets and pedestrian ways.

Several obstacles hinder the smooth flow of traffic on major thoroughfares. These include the following: at-grade railroad crossings, offset street intersections, inadequate sight distances, dead-end streets, and inefficient and obsolete street layouts in older areas. Many of the street improvements needed in Wiggins involve the following:

- ✦ Widening, repaving, and realigning streets;
- ✦ Providing additional links to integrate the traffic circulation system;

“Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance, allowing independence to those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young. Interconnected networks of streets should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and conserve energy.”

Source: Charter of the New Urbanism

Smart Growth Principles

Consider the following smart growth principles related to the transportation system.

- ✦ Create walkable communities.
- ✦ Provide a variety of transportation choices.

Walkable Communities—

Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn and play, and therefore a key component of smart growth. Their desirability comes from two factors. First, locating, within an easy and safe walk, goods (such as housing, offices and retail) and services (such as transportation, schools, libraries) that a community resident or employee needs on a regular basis.

Second, by definition, walkable communities make pedestrian activity possible, thus expanding transportation options and creating a streetscape that better serves a range of users—pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and drivers.

To foster walkability, communities must mix land uses and build compactly, and ensure safe and inviting pedestrian corridors.

Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers draft report, Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities.

Existing Street System Map
To be added

Transportation Element

- ✦ Improving poor intersections;
- ✦ Adding traffic signals, where appropriate;
- ✦ Providing curbs, gutters and proper storm water drainage; and
- ✦ Improving lighting.

Solutions to these existing problems require detailed planning and design. If traffic circulation in the future is to be improved, not only must these issues be corrected, but equally important, they must not be permitted in new areas.

Section 2: Sidewalks, Bikeways and Public Transportation

Construction and maintenance of sidewalks and bikeways were widely supported issues for the residents of Wiggins. Residents expressed concerns with the maintenance and repair of the few existing sidewalks and strongly supported the construction of new sidewalks throughout the city.

Many residents of Wiggins choose to walk, though they must do so along the edge of roadways instead of along sidewalks. In order to accommodate the transportation needs of city residents, the existing sidewalk system should be extended to the neighborhoods, schools, recreation areas, and shopping districts throughout the city.

Residents also consider the construction of a bicycle path an essential part of the city's transportation plan. A bicycle pathway could not only provide circulation for residents to schools, recreation and shopping districts, but also could draw travelers and tourists at Flint Creek Water Park to downtown Wiggins. The Wiggins Bikeway Plan is shown on page 31 of this plan.

The bikeway plan represents the segments of a bicycle path that could eventually connect all areas of Wiggins to the downtown. The first segment to be constructed should be the section between downtown Wiggins and Flint Creek Water Park, followed by the connections from downtown neighborhoods to Stone High School. The City should obtain cost estimates for the purchase of land and the design and construction of the pathway. By including this

project in a *capital improvement program*, the city can prioritize and budget the cost for new sections on an annual basis until the full pathway is completed. The City of Wiggins should also apply for grant monies that are made available through different agencies that support transportation and recreation projects.

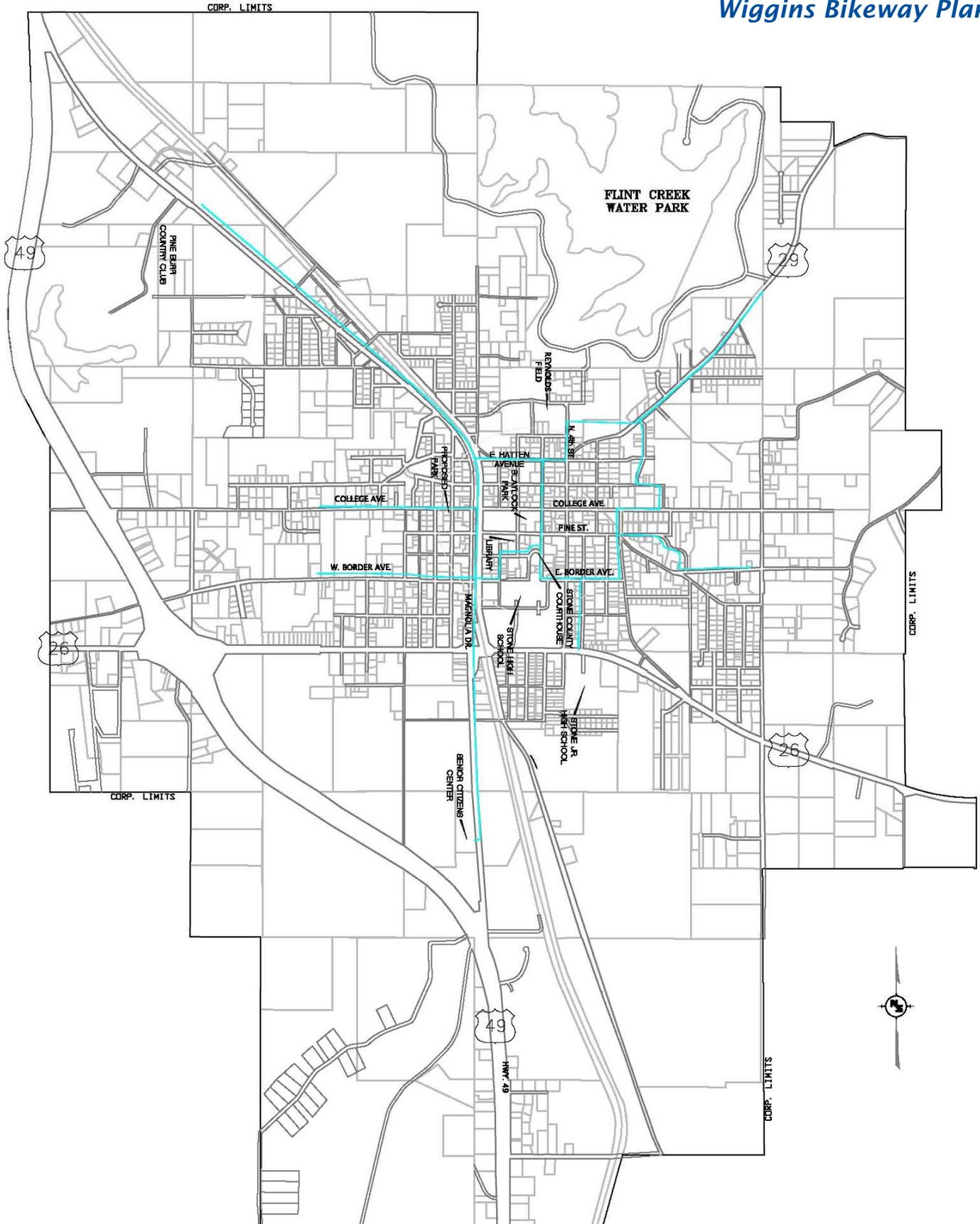
Another issue that was raised by city residents is the lack of a public transportation system for senior citizens, youth and for those without access to an automobile. Currently, there is an on-demand bus service for senior citizens in Wiggins. Information should be gathered on potential demand for an expanded public transportation system, associated costs, and availability of a funding source.

Section 3: Elements of Transportation Planning

One of the basic elements of transportation planning is coordination with land use planning. Planning for streets is guided primarily by the Land Use Plan, which provides the basis for street location and design. Where to place streets and thoroughfares is determined, in part, by the nature and density of land uses. These areas, depending on the size and intensity of development, determine the volumes of traffic a given major street should carry. Street design, including such factors as width of right-of-way, paving, and where and how access is permitted, is based on anticipated volumes of traffic and the desired speed of traffic.

When changes are made to the land use plan, appropriate modifications should be made to the transportation plan. Efforts should be made to coordinate the location and proximity of driveways to and from businesses in order to maintain the efficiency of the roadway. Where possible, parking lots serving adjacent commercial developments should be connected or be accessible from a secondary roadway in order to reduce traffic conflicts on major roadways.

Wiggins Bikeway Plan



Transportation Element

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) —

Context sensitive solutions use innovative and inclusive approaches that integrate and balance community, aesthetic, historic and environmental values with transportation safety, maintenance and performance goals. Context sensitive solutions are reached through a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach involving all stakeholders.

Source: California Department of Transportation.

Principles of CSS—

- ✦ Balance safety, mobility, community and environmental goals in all projects;
- ✦ Involve the public and stakeholders early and continuously throughout the planning and project development process;
- ✦ Use an interdisciplinary team tailored to project needs;
- ✦ Address all modes of travel;
- ✦ Apply flexibility inherent in design standards; and
- ✦ Incorporate aesthetics as an integral part of good design.

Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation

One of the more recent concepts in the planning and design of transportation systems is the use of *context sensitive solutions*. This concept reflects an understanding that our streets and roadways not only serve to move people and goods, but also help define the physical environment of our neighborhoods and communities. By working with local officials and community stakeholders to define the desired function and appearance of a roadway, engineers can design transportation systems which more closely reflect the values of a community.

Wiggins officials should learn about context sensitive roadway design and request design solutions—accommodating the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians, complementing adjacent land uses and public spaces, and incorporating planting strips and street furniture—that will produce the greatest benefit to the community.

Functional Classification System

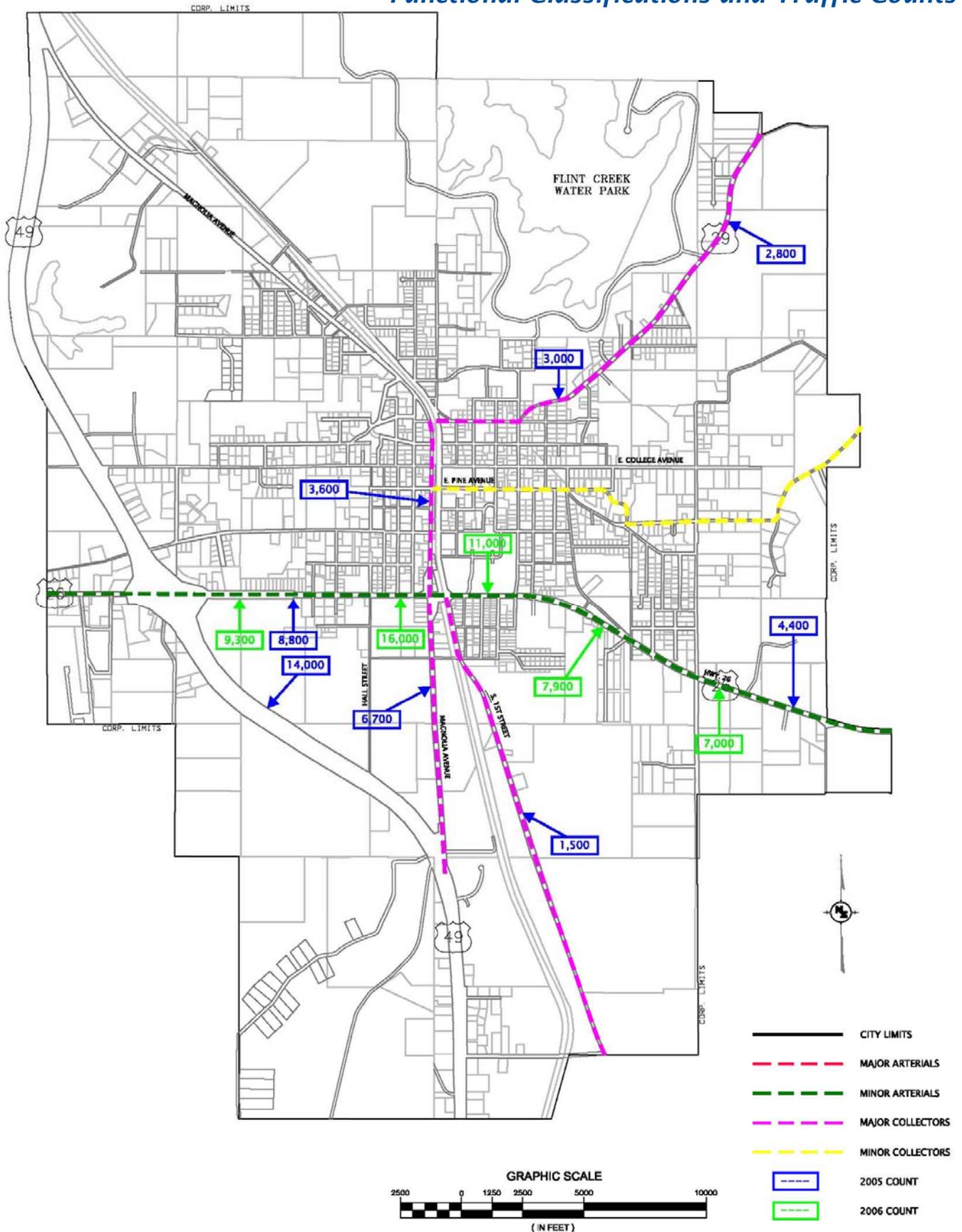
The traditional method of planning for future streets and improvements to existing roadways involves designing the street in terms of its

use. The following are descriptions of the functional classifications of roadways in Wiggins, as described under Section 17-1-1 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended:

1. Local or Minor Streets serve the primary function of providing access to abutting properties. These are the streets to which private driveways are connected. Local/minor streets generally serve low- to moderate-density residential uses.
2. Collector Streets connect local/minor streets and major thoroughfares. They serve two functions: providing access to properties along the collector street, and circulating traffic within residential neighborhoods. Collector streets “collect” traffic from local/minor streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it into the arterial system.
3. Minor Arterials (Major Thoroughfares) move the traffic between collector streets and the principal arterials of the city and connect the various city districts. Two basic types of major thoroughfares are recognized. The primary thoroughfare extends for a longer distance and carries a substantial volume of traffic across the city. The secondary thoroughfare—carrying a lesser volume of traffic—extends for shorter distances of approximately one to four miles. The major thoroughfare serves high-density residential areas, high-traffic commercial areas, and industrial uses.

Major thoroughfares should be located along the edges of neighborhoods. They should neither penetrate nor divide neighborhoods, as this intensive traffic activity both disrupts the family-oriented neighborhood life and is likely to cause depreciation in property values.
4. Principal Arterials are high-speed, limited-access, grade separated roadways designed to move large volumes of traffic substantial distances throughout the city. Expressways serve the same function but are not designed to such high standards as freeways. On expressways, relatively

Functional Classifications and Traffic Counts



Transportation Element

few intersections at grade are permitted, and these are controlled by traffic signals. Both freeways and expressways have median dividers and no access from abutting properties.

5. **Interstate Highway** Federal-Aid Interstate Highways are roadways which are functionally classified as freeways. Interstate highways are the highest level of arterial. They are characterized by full control access, high speed design, and high level of driver comfort and safety. The interstate network is also part of the national defense system.

Figure 8 shows minimum right-of-way and surface width requirements for each corridor classification.

Surface conditions

In the discussion of functional classifications of existing streets which follows, reference is made to the surface conditions of the roadways. The surface conditions described in this section were based on the following criteria:

Good: Streets rated as being in good condition have a smooth paved riding surface which have no noticeable structural defects such as cracks, ruts, or displaced or buckled joints.

Fair: Streets rated as fair have relatively smooth, paved riding surfaces, but have one or more noticeable defects such as minor cracks, ruts, intermediate bleeding, minor raveling, slightly faulty joints, or apparent repeated patching.

Poor: Streets rated as poor have a rough surface and are either paved or unpaved. Paved streets with a large amount of cracking, rutting, patching, raveling, or faulting are rated poor and all unpaved streets are classified as poor.

Figure 9. Road and Street Mileage by Functional Classification

Classification	Miles within the City Limits
Interstate Highway	0
Principal Arterial	10.14
Minor Arterials	5.23
Collectors	7.01
Local and Minor Street	39.87

Section 4: Wiggins Streets and Roads

Interstate Highway

There are no interstate highways within the City of Wiggins.

Principal Arterial

U.S. Highway 49: Approximately 4.92 miles of Highway 49 lie within the city of Wiggins. Highway 49 originates in Gulfport, Mississippi, and extends through Wiggins, Hattiesburg and Jackson to Yazoo City, Mississippi. Beyond Yazoo City, Highway 49 branches west through Indianola and east through Greenwood, eventually terminating in Clarksdale,

Figure 8. Minimum Right-of-Way and Surface-Width Requirements

Classification	Minimum Right-of-Way	Surface-width Requirements
Interstate Highway	180 feet	84 feet minimum
Principal/Major Arterial	120 feet	28-84 feet
Minor Arterial (Major Thoroughfare)	100 feet	24-60 feet
Collector	70 feet	24-48 feet
Minor Street	50 feet	22-28 feet

Mississippi. As shown on Map 7, the 2005 average daily traffic count was 12,000 north of Wiggins and 14,000 south of Wiggins. The surface condition is classified as good.

U.S. Highway 26: Approximately 3.38 miles of this roadway are within the city limits. As shown on Map 7, the 2006 average daily traffic count was 4,700 west of Wiggins and 7,000 east of the city. Daily traffic volumes within the city limits range from 7,000 to 16,000. The highest traffic volumes occur between Hall Street and Fourth Street (11,000 to 16,000 vehicles per day). Highway 26 provides a straight link to Poplarville and Lucedale. The surface condition ranges from fair to poor.

State Highway 29: This principal arterial enters the city limits of Wiggins from the northeast direction. Approximately 1.52 miles of this roadway are within the city limits. In 2005, this highway registered an average daily traffic count of 2,800 at the northeast city limits. Where Highway 29 intersects with Hatten Avenue and Fourth Street in Wiggins, the 2005 average daily traffic count was 3,000. Highway 29 provides a straight link to New Augusta. The surface condition ranges from fair to poor.

Hatten Avenue: Approximately 0.32 miles are inside the Wiggins city limits. Hatten Avenue is a paved road that becomes State Highway 29. The surface condition may be described as good.

Collectors

There are three collector roadways within the Wiggins city limits; they are as follows:

Magnolia Drive (Old U.S. Highway 49): Approximately three miles lie within the city limits. Old U.S. Highway 49 runs south until the point it intersects with Highway 49. In 2005, the average daily traffic count for Magnolia Drive was 3,600 north of Highway 26, and 6,700 south of Highway 26. The surface condition may be described as fair to good.

College Avenue: Approximately 2.5 miles of this collector are within the city limits.

College Avenue enters Wiggins from the west direction to the point where it intersects with McGregor Road. The surface condition is considered fair.

Border Avenue: Approximately 1.51 miles of this collector are within the city limits. Border Avenue enters the city limits from the west at Highway 49 and extends east to Stone High School. The surface condition ranges from good to fair.

Local (Minor) Streets

There are approximately 82 Local or Minor streets within the Wiggins planning area. The local or minor streets can generally be described as being in poor to good condition. There are approximately 39.87 miles of local streets and roads in the Wiggins city limits. No traffic counts were available for these minor streets.

Figure 9 shows the total number of miles in each functional classification.

Section 5: Maintenance

Maintenance responsibilities for streets and highways within the Wiggins planning area are shared by the City of Wiggins, the Mississippi State Highway Department and Stone County. The City of Wiggins maintains all streets and roads located within the city limits, with the exception of highways and roads maintained by the state.

Mississippi State Highway Department maintains all highways and roads within the planning area designated as Federal Aid Secondary or Federal Aid Primary Highways and Roads. All roads located outside the Wiggins corporate limits are the responsibility of Stone County.

Section 6: Problem Areas

Wiggins, like any growing city whose original beginnings were more rural than urban, will find that streets and roads become increasingly more congested as new development occurs. The problems in Wiggins are not of such magnitude that corrective action cannot be easily

Transportation Element

accomplished within a time frame. Some of the problem areas are listed below.

1. **Congestion** - At the intersection of Hall Street and Highway 26 there is a major problem with traffic during business hours. At the intersection of Highway 26 and Highway 49 there is poor visibility. At the intersection of Iowa Street and Highway 26 there is congestion at the beginning and end of the school day. There are also some congestion issues at First Street and Highway 26.
2. **Unimproved Streets** - There are streets that are now part of the City's street inventory that need paving. Also streets with increasing traffic counts may require widening or operational improvements.
3. **Drainage** - The lack of curbs and gutters poses a problem to proper stormwater drainage in the area. Wiggins could eliminate drainage problems with curbs and gutters in high runoff areas of the city.
4. **Traffic Signalization and Stop Signs** - Generally, traffic signalization is good in Wiggins. However, there are certain areas where traffic signalization is needed, including the intersection of Hall Street and Highway 26 and the intersection of Highways 26 and 49.

Section 7: Current Plans And Programs

The following eight roadways are scheduled to be resurfaced during 2006:

1. James Avenue,
2. West Pine Avenue,
3. South Vardaman Street,
4. Madison Avenue,
5. East Cavers Avenue,
6. East Hatten Avenue,
7. Stevon Moore Street, and
8. Woodland Drive.

Section 8: Plan Recommendations

In addition to the current plans, the following recommendations were made in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan:

1. Construct curbs and gutters along the minor arterials and collectors to help eliminate drainage and storm water problems.
2. Provide a traffic signal at the intersection of Hall Street and Highway 26 to alleviate the traffic congestion and reduce the chance of an accident.
3. Continue segments of Sargent Street to connect Highway 26 to North Magnolia Drive.
4. Extend McGregor Avenue north to connect with Highway 29 for the purpose of providing additional access to Flint Creek.

Section 9: Street and Infrastructure Improvement Program

The City of Wiggins should establish a capital improvement program to assist with identifying, prioritizing and budgeting capital improvements, specifically for the city's transportation and infrastructure systems. Priority projects identified during public meetings include the following:

1. Pave gravel streets and roads where needed.
2. Assess the condition of streets and roads; repair streets and roads that are found to be in poor condition.
3. Repair and maintain existing sidewalks.
4. Adopt a sidewalk master plan. Annually budget for the construction of new sidewalks. Require developers to construct sidewalks at the time of new construction in areas included in the sidewalk master plan.
5. Provide traffic signals along Highway 26.
6. Widen Hall Street from the east frontage road to Highway 26.

7. Seek funds for the construction of bicycle lanes and bicycle trails according to the Wiggins Bicycle Pathway Plan shown on page 31.
8. Construct curbs and gutters along minor thoroughfares and collectors.

Chapter 5: Infrastructure Element

Infrastructure Vision: *A city that promotes a high quality of life for all residents—current and future—by constructing and upgrading infrastructure to meet residents’ basic water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste and communication needs.*

General Description

The provision of infrastructure facilities such as water, sanitary sewer, stormwater drainage and solid waste collection is one of the most basic functions of a municipality. The quality of these systems can impact the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life for all city residents and visitors.

In Wiggins, improving and upgrading the city’s infrastructure systems is a priority need recognized widely by city residents. The first step should be an assessment of existing conditions and a prioritization of improvement needs. The second step should be the identification of possible funding sources, or the coordination of these projects with a citywide *capital improvement program*. Below is a general evaluation of these issues as they were identified by residents and city officials.

Section 1: Water System

Currently, all Wiggins residents receive water through the City’s water system. Two major lumber mills—Coastal Paper and Hood Industries—have individual wells for fire protection in addition to the connection to the City’s water system.

The water system consists of three interconnected tanks ranging in size from 75,000 to 150,000 gallons. At present, 40% of the overall capacity is used to serve residents and businesses. With the increase in population projected to occur within the next 5 to 10 years, city officials are pursuing grant monies to replace the oldest tank, which has a capacity of 75,000 gallons, with one that will hold 250,000 gallons.

In addition to providing potable water to businesses and residences, the City of Wiggins provides water for firefighting purposes. Many of these water lines do not meet current water

Smart Growth Principles

Consider the following smart growth principles related to infrastructure.

- ✦ Take advantage of compact building design.
- ✦ Create walkable communities.
- ✦ Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- ✦ Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
- ✦ Encourage community and stakeholder

pressure standards for firefighting. The City should inspect and upgrade water lines to protect the health and safety of residents and visitors.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Upgrade water lines to provide adequate pressure for firefighting and for local residents and business owners.
- ✦ Evaluate deficiencies in the existing water system and fund improvements and extensions to the system in the city’s capital improvement program.

Section 2: Sanitary Sewer System

Sanitary sewer is provided to Wiggins residents through the Wiggins Water Department for \$8.00 per month. However, the sanitary sewer lines have not been extended to all areas of the city. Areas that were annexed in the early 1990s have not yet been connected to the City’s system. These residents, located in areas along Woodland Drive and U.S. Highway 49, are still using individual private septic systems.

Wastewater is currently treated in two lagoons. The east lagoon, located off Cedar Grove Road, is in good condition but will need to be upgraded within the next 30 to 40

years. The west lagoon, located off U.S. Highway 49, has reached its capacity and is currently being upgraded.

Before the upgrade, the size of the west lagoon was insufficient to process the 158,000 gallons of wastewater it received daily. To upgrade the lagoon, a sludge cell, two blowers and four bioblocks were added to the existing components. Bioblocks provide extra nutrients to the microbes which break down waste.

As part of the upgrade process, sludge was dredged from the bottom of the lagoon cells and placed into the newly constructed sludge cell. The remaining upgrade components—blowers and bioblocks—are used to increase the efficiency of the system. These improvements will allow the lagoon to handle the current daily flow of wastewater.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Connect existing city residents to the city's sanitary sewer system.
- ✦ Evaluate deficiencies in the existing sanitary sewer system and fund improvements and extensions to the system in the city's capital improvement program.
- ✦ Seek funds and identify locations for new wastewater treatment facilities.

Section 3: Stormwater Management System

Under the Clean Water Act, Congress mandated the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to develop regulations to regulate stormwater discharges that affect our nation's waterways. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) responds to complaints and enforces the U.S. EPA's requirements in Wiggins and Stone County.

The City of Wiggins should strengthen existing regulations in order to educate citizens and developers in the appropriate practices for controlling erosion and sedimentation. These practices, known as Best Management Practices (BMPs), are outlined in MDEQ's Planning and Design Manual for the Control of Erosion, Sediment, and Stormwater.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Adopt and enforce ordinances that protect the quality of area waterways and drainage systems from erosion and sedimentation.
- ✦ Evaluate the city's drainage system and identify improvements to be included in a capital improvement program.

Section 4: Solid Waste and Recycling

Solid Waste and Rubbish

Solid waste and rubbish disposal is provided to all residents of Wiggins. Solid waste is considered to be normal household waste, such as food waste, paper, and other non-hazardous items. Rubbish is considered to be tree branches, leaves and other yard debris.

The City of Wiggins contracts with Lil' Haulers Waste Services to collect residential and small commercial business solid waste. Residents are charged \$11.00 per month, and small commercial businesses are charged \$18.00 per month for this service. The material is then hauled to the Pecan Grove Landfill, which is managed by Waste Management in Harrison County.

Because they produce a larger volume of solid waste, large commercial facilities are encouraged by the City to obtain a dumpster and contract individually for waste disposal. Business owners obtain contracts through the various disposal companies that operate in Stone County.

Rubbish is picked-up each week by City-owned trucks. The rubbish is then hauled to Diamond Disposal in the Magnolia community of Perkinston. Residents have no direct costs associated with this disposal contract.

Other Solid Waste Services

The City of Wiggins does not currently collect large appliances—also known as “white goods”—household hazardous wastes or recyclables. The City should investigate ways to fund these types of programs and research the potential benefits to city residents.

Infrastructure Element

White goods collection is considered to be an essential service in a community. Usually, this service is provided county-wide and city residents are able to utilize the program at little or no cost. Neither Stone County nor the City of Wiggins offers residents white goods collection services. Therefore, city and county residents have no way of disposing of large appliances. The City should work with county officials and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to fund a white goods collection program.

Household hazardous wastes include batteries, paints, household chemicals and cleaning supplies, electronics, and fluorescent light bulbs. These items are not currently allowed in municipal solid waste landfills and, therefore, must be disposed of in alternative ways. Collection of these items can, over time, increase the economic feasibility of disposing of them properly. The City should consider working with county officials to create a collection storage site for these items, and seek grant funds through MDEQ for funding household hazardous waste collection events.

Additionally, a study should be conducted to determine the costs and benefits of curbside or drop-off recycling programs. For cities that offer drop-off recycling bins, the transportation costs are typically the greatest expense. As more individual recycling companies are established in southern Mississippi, the cost of recycling programs will be reduced. Recycling is considered to be a “quality-of-life” issue by those who enjoy such programs in other cities. As a result, people who are considering relocating or retiring to the Southeast will seek out cities that provide similar quality-of-life services.

The lack of white goods, household hazardous waste, and recycling collection programs encourages illegal dumping and littering. If no disposal sites are available to city or county residents, these items often will be dumped illegally on public or private properties, or along ditches or roadways. Wiggins and Stone County officials should collaborate to establish these programs in a location convenient to all residents.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Collaborate with other agencies to establish white goods, household hazardous waste, and recycling collection programs in Wiggins.

Section 5: Wireless Communications

Telecommunications

There are currently two telecommunication towers that provide cellular telephone service within the city of Wiggins. Both of the towers are located within industrial zones. Wiggins’ current Land Development Code does not allow telecommunication towers. The city must determine the zoning districts within which towers should be located and outline standards for the location of these towers. The standards should both allow for adequate communication coverage and protect the visual environment in and around the city’s neighborhoods.

New telecommunication towers should be designed to blend in to the natural and physical environment when located in or near residential viewsheds. Stealth towers—towers designed to look like other physical or natural features—should be encouraged. Also, locating telecommunication antennas on tall buildings, inside church steeples, and atop water tanks should be considered.

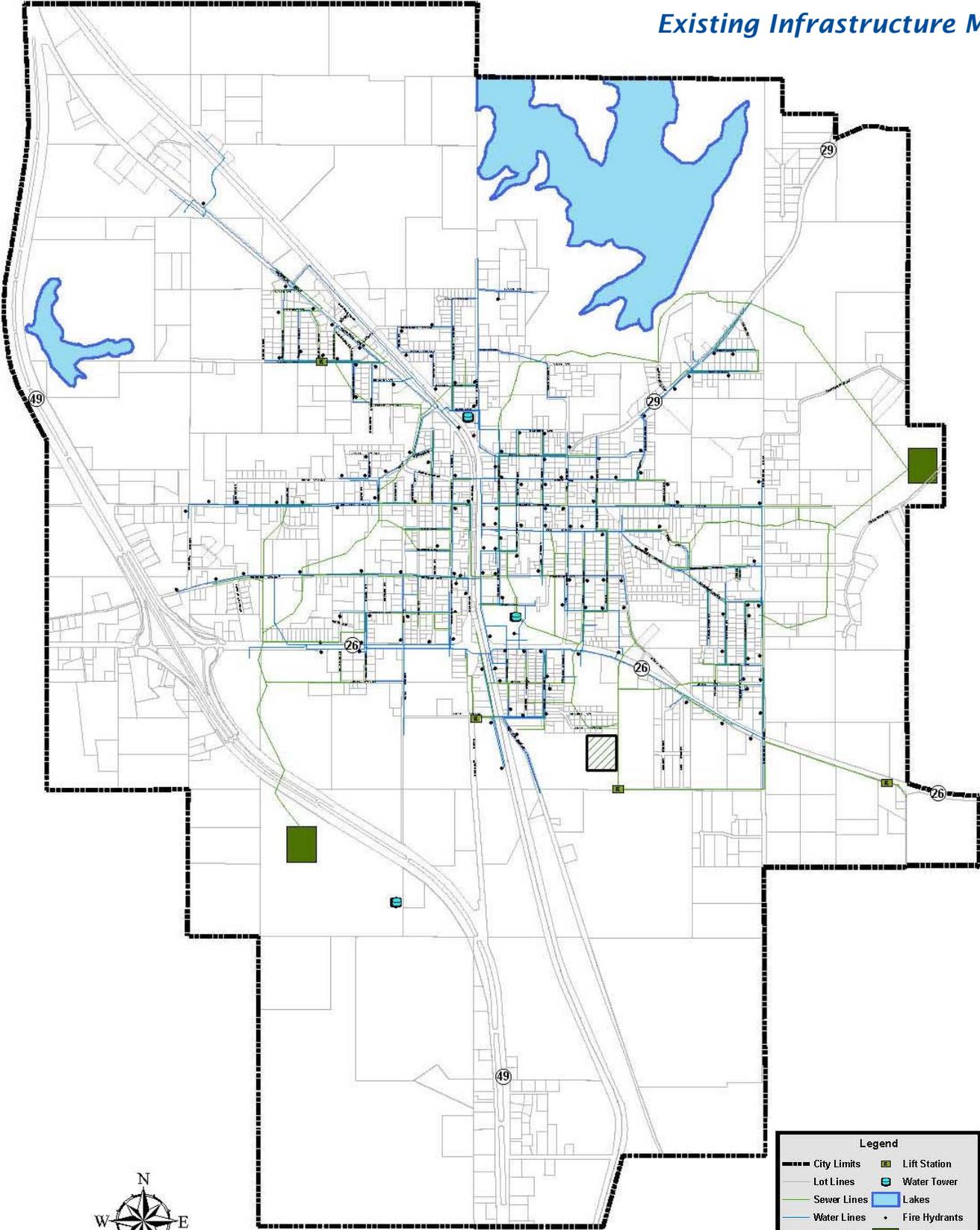
Wireless Technology

As technology improves and evolves, Wiggins should make every attempt to use it to the city’s advantage. Many cities are using wireless internet technology—also known as “hot spots”—to attract businesses, customers and residents to downtown areas. City officials should research this technology and evaluate the benefits of its use in drawing activity to downtown Wiggins.

Action Steps:

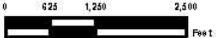
- ✦ Adopt an ordinance regulating telecommunication towers and facilities.
- ✦ Research other successful downtown wireless internet “hot spots” and identify how such programs could benefit local businesses and residents.

Existing Infrastructure Map



Legend

	City Limits		Lift Station
	Lot Lines		Water Tower
	Sewer Lines		Lakes
	Water Lines		Fire Hydrants
	Railroad		Lagoons
	Abandon Lagoon		



Sources: Sewer information—Batson and Brown, Inc. Consulting Engineers April 1980
 Water information—Batson and Brown, Inc. Consulting Engineers April 1984



Chapter 6: Community Facilities Element

Community Facilities Vision: *A city that provides ample space for community and civic events and abundant recreation opportunities to meet the basic needs of its residents, and locates public buildings and facilities around the downtown district to anchor civic activity in the heart of the city.*

General Description

Community facilities are public and semi-public facilities that provide a wide range of community services. The maintenance and operation of these facilities is the responsibility of governmental entities at the federal, state, county, or municipal levels. Some services are also provided by quasi-public and private agencies.

A survey of existing community facilities was conducted to evaluate the current and future needs of the city of Wiggins. A full inventory of existing community facilities appears under Appendix B.

Section 1: Existing Community Facilities

Civic Buildings

Civic buildings and facilities are operated by public entities, and include such facilities as Wiggins City Hall/Police Department/Water Department, Wiggins Fire Department, the Stone County Public Library, and the Stone County Courthouse.

City Hall/Police Department/Water Department

Three entities—Wiggins City Hall, Police Department and Water Department—are housed in one building, located at 117 North First Street. There is not adequate space for all activities that are conducted in City Hall. Long-range plans include either the construction of a new city hall facility or the construction of a new police department. The existing city hall facility would then be renovated to house the remaining departments.

Additionally, the building housing the Planning and Building Department, located behind City Hall, should be renovated to provide adequate office, storage and public reception space for

Civic Buildings and public gathering places require important sites to reinforce community identity and the culture of democracy. They deserve distinctive form, because their role is different from that of other buildings and places that constitute the fabric of the city.

Source: Charter of the New Urbanism

Smart Growth Principles

Consider the following smart growth principles related to community facilities.

- ✦ Take advantage of compact building design.
- ✦ Create walkable communities.
- ✦ Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- ✦ Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- ✦ Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- ✦ Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
- ✦ Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.

the existing staff. In the future, as development activity continues to grow and this department is expanded, additional space will be needed to house administrative assistant and building official.

Wiggins Fire Department

The Wiggins Fire Department is located at 140 North Magnolia Drive. The building is adequate for the department's current staffing level, though it will need to be expanded to meet future needs. In the near term, the second floor of the building should be renovated to add an additional living space

for a second on-duty firefighter. Additionally, a second fire station may be required within the next 10 to 20 years. A location in the southern portion of Wiggins should be identified to locate this facility. A full description of current and future operating needs for the Wiggins Fire Department is included under Section 2 of this chapter.

Stone County Public Library

The Stone County Public Library is ideally located in downtown Wiggins at 242 Second Street South. Library officials have identified adjacent land areas where the facility can be expanded and additional parking spaces may be constructed.

Libraries provide a range of reading and learning materials free of charge, contribute to lifelong learning and literacy, and are used by many to gauge a community’s quality of life. The expansion of the library should be considered a vital component of improving the quality of life in Wiggins and Stone County.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Locate public facilities/civic buildings downtown and around the neighborhoods and communities they serve; design civic buildings to reflect the identity of the surrounding neighborhood.
- ✦ Evaluate the space needs for the City Hall offices and Police Department; and determine which offices should relocate to a new downtown facility.
- ✦ Renovate the Wiggins Fire Station to create an additional living area on the second floor.
- ✦ Seek funds to expand the Stone County Public Library and provide additional parking facilities.

Health and Medical Facilities

Health and medical services in Wiggins include the Stone County Health Department and three clinics: the Wiggins Family Practice Clinic, affiliated with Hattiesburg Clinic; The Wiggins Medical Clinic; and the Stone County Medical Group. Residents who responded to surveys commented on the desire for additional doctors

and specialists in Wiggins, an after-hours primary care clinic, and improved care facilities at Stone County Hospital.

Parks and Recreation Areas

Parks and recreation offerings in Wiggins are limited. Blaylock Park and Flint Creek Water Park are the only parks available for general use. Hood Field contains four fields for baseball/softball and one field for T-ball. Reynolds Field contains practice fields for football, baseball, softball and soccer. Additionally, there are three soccer fields at Jerry Fairley Field, located outside Wiggins in Stone County.

The following is an inventory of the number of players and teams for city and county sports, according to the Stone-Wiggins Recreation Department¹:

Figure 10. Players and Facilities by Sport

Sport	Number of Teams	Number of Players	Number of Fields
Baseball	33	389	4
Basketball	14	126	0
Cheerleading	10	40	0
Football	10	160	0
Soccer	33	283	3
Softball	13	151	1

One element in providing a high quality of life for community residents is providing adequate places for all types of recreational activities. There is a need to expand and improve facilities for organized sport activities, including those listed above.

In addition, residents desire additional youth recreation areas for activities such as skateboarding, which currently occurs on sidewalks and streets in and around downtown Wiggins. Young families also desire adequate public space for bicycle paths, tot parks, playgrounds, and neighborhood parks.²

Community Facilities Element

Facility expansions are currently being considered in Wiggins and Stone County, including adding two new tennis courts, four new soccer fields and two new baseball fields. The County is also seeking a location for a skate park for youth.¹ The City should seek, both on its own and in partnership with Stone County, additional land and funds to construct a variety of recreational facilities for all ages and activity levels.

One recommendation is for the City and County to seek a location and funding source to construct a multi-use recreation facility that may also be used as a shelter and for relief staging efforts during future hurricanes and hazard events. Wiggins and Stone County are well-situated to provide shelter and relief staging at times when hurricanes strike the Mississippi Gulf Coast. A well-planned recreation complex could provide the space and services needed for this secondary use.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Improve and expand existing sports facilities.
- ✦ Seek locations and funding for additional community and neighborhood parks and recreation facilities.
- ✦ Seek a location and funds to construct a multi-use recreation facility that can be used as a shelter and for relief staging efforts during the next storm or hazard event.

Schools and Educational Facilities

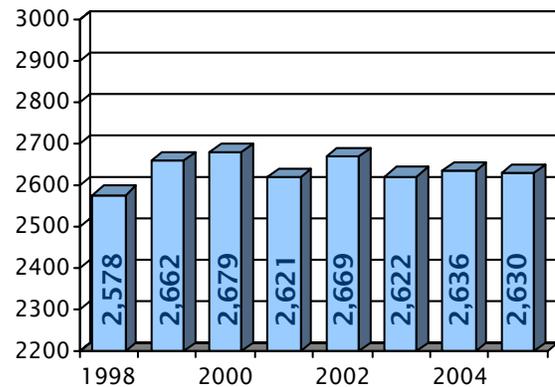
All of Stone County, including the city of Wiggins, is located within the Stone County School District. Figure 11 shows the student populations and capacities at each school in the district. The school district is currently

considering the potential population increase as a result of Hurricane Katrina, and what effect it could have on education services.

While any potential developments within the city of Wiggins may have a minor impact to school district facilities, potential developments in Stone County could have a major short-term impact. This is because, though the amount of vacant or developable land in Wiggins is limited, there is a substantial number of acres of developable land in Stone County.

Figure 11 shows that the capacities of the schools in the district are between 83% and 99%.³ The Stone County School District has sought input from professionals in the education and architecture fields to determine the possible impact of future population growth to the district's schools.³

Figure 12. Fall Enrollment by Year



Even using a conservative estimate of the increase in school age children as a result of near-term housing development, the school district could experience an increase of

Figure 11. Educational Facilities

<i>Educational Facility</i>	<i>Sq. Ft. Building</i>	<i>No. of Classrooms</i>	<i>No. of Students in 2000</i>	<i>No. of Students in 2006</i>	<i>School Capacity</i>	<i>Grade Range</i>
Stone Elementary	76,255	66	820	780	824 95%	K-5
Perkinston Elementary	56,878	35	480	542	650 83%	K-5
Stone Middle School	81,708	46	606	665	719 92%	6-8
Stone High School	115,269	75	736	740	748 99%	9-12

Impact Fees

Current state legislation—the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended—does not allow communities to establish funding mechanisms such as *impact fees* to pay for service issues created by new development. *Impact fees* are fees to new developments that are required in order to receive services.

Using impact fees, a city or county could calculate the proportion of the cost required to provide new facilities or expand existing facilities in order to provide service to a new development. This fee must be paid by the developer, and is usually passed on to the purchasers of new homes in the development.

Source: Nelson, Arthur C., “Growth Management,” *The Practice of Local Government Planning*, Third Edition, edited by Hock, Charles J., Linda C. Dalton, and Frank S. So.

approximately 1,000 students, or 38% of the student population. This increase would require the construction of a new kindergarten through 8th grade school in southern Stone County, and the expansion of Stone County High School.³

This is of great concern to the Stone County School Board, as bonding capacity and funding constraints could make the school district ill-equipped to handle the short-term increase in student population. The slower, more stable population increases that the county experienced prior to Hurricane Katrina made planning and budgeting for growth more manageable. A sudden increase of 38% of total student enrollment in one to three years could have a major impact on the district’s ability to provide enough space and the current level of service to its students.

Many communities across the nation use growth management tools such as impact fees and developer exactions to pay the costs of providing services to new developments. Although impact fees are not currently permitted under state law, there are communities in Mississippi that are working to amend the Mississippi Code to specifically enable this type of funding mechanism.

Wiggins and Stone County should participate in future discussions regarding the establishment of impact fees, and should monitor the progress of any proposals through the state legislature.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Partner with the Stone County School District to identify funding opportunities for capital school improvements.
- ✦ Consider the impact of adding new school children to area schools when making development decisions.

Stone County Industrial Park

The Stone County Industrial Park consists of approximately 80.3 acres in southern Wiggins, off Industrial Park Road. The land is owned by Stone County and controlled by the Stone County Board of Supervisors.⁴

The entities currently located in the Stone County Industrial Park include the Stone County Correctional Facility and several retail and automotive businesses located along Highway 49. There are several other sites available in the park for industrial development.

There are two other industrial parks in Stone County. The “south park”—located two miles south of Perkinston—is controlled by the Stone County Economic Development Partnership. The park contains existing industrial businesses and lands that will be developed in the near future by industrial entities. There are approximately 40 usable acres remaining in the south park.⁴

Additionally, Stone County recently purchased land for a new industrial park to be located along Old Highway 49, south of Wiggins. A new National Guard Armory will be built in this newly created park, and the remainder of the land will be used for industrial sites.⁴

Section 2: Public Safety

Police Department

The Wiggins Police Department currently has a staff of 15 full-time and 5 part-time officers. Five of those officers were added after Hurricane Katrina. The department has a

Community Facilities Element

short-term need for an additional five officers, due to the increase in call volume.⁵

The city is divided into four police beats, and the department's goal is to have one officer on duty for each beat. Currently there are three officers on duty during the night shift. Also, police officer salaries are, on average, \$4,000 per year lower than those of other municipalities in the region. The department identified a need for police officer pay rates to be more competitive in order to hire and maintain qualified, trained officers.⁵

In addition to police officers, the department employs three full-time and six part-time dispatchers. The department identified a long-term need for additional dispatchers and better dispatch equipment, including computers with mapping capabilities.

Additionally, there is an animal control officer in the department's staff. Due to the volume of animal-related calls—five to 10 per day—the department needs to have an officer on-call seven days-per-week and a facility to house the animals that are captured.⁵

The Wiggins Police Department is also in need of additional space. The department identified a need for expanded office space, storage rooms, municipal court facilities, and evidence storage. Currently, municipal court hearings are held in the council chamber. On most hearing days, due to the high volume of hearings, there are often not enough seats for attendees.

City prisoners are not housed at the Wiggins Police Department. The City budgets approximately \$35,000 per year for prisoner housing. Through a contract with Stone County, the City pays \$20.00 per day to house prisoners at the Stone County correctional facility. The City should monitor the amount budgeted for prisoner housing and adjust the annual budget as housing costs or prisoner numbers increase.⁵

The police department identified capital equipment purchases that may be required within the next 10 to 20 years. The department currently has a fleet of eleven vehicles, receiving two new vehicles as recently as April

2006. Eight of the department's vehicles have been driven over 100,000 miles, and over \$40,000 was spent on vehicle maintenance in the previous year.

The department has six in-vehicle laptops—funded by a grant—which allow officers to access jail files, photographs, medical histories, and other information while they are responding to calls. The department's goal is to place laptops in the remaining vehicles. The department also identified a need to upgrade communication radios with panic buttons and global positioning system capabilities.⁵

Action Steps:

- ✦ Evaluate staffing and salary needs to ensure that the department has the resources it needs to provide superior public services.
- ✦ Evaluate equipment needs to enhance the performance of existing personnel and to minimize repair costs for obsolete equipment.

Fire Department

The Wiggins Fire Department is operated from the fire station at 140 North Magnolia Drive. The city has three paid firefighters—all emergency medical technicians—who work 24-hour shifts, with 48 hours off between each shift. The firefighters respond to all related calls within the city. In addition, Wiggins firefighters respond to automobile accidents and emergency medical service calls in Stone County.

There is a short-term need to hire three additional firefighters, which would provide two firefighters per shift. If building and fire codes are implemented in Wiggins, the City should determine staffing needs for trained inspectors to administer the codes.

Currently, the capacity of the existing fire station is adequate. If staffing is increased, as desired, to two firefighters per shift, the second floor of the station should be modified to create an additional living area. Within the next ten to 20 years, the department anticipates a need for an

additional station in the southern portion of Wiggins.⁶

Wiggins currently has a Class 7 fire rating. To earn the next level—a Class 6—the city must comply with additional staffing requirements. For example, under the Class 6 rating, a team of two firefighters would be required to enter a fire scene, with two firefighters and volunteers standing by. The benefit of improving fire ratings is a reduction in property insurance rates for city residents.

The Fire Department recently purchased a rescue truck and has three fire engines. The vehicles comply with state requirements, though a new engine will be needed within the next 20 years. The department also wishes to purchase a flatbed truck to haul hoses and generators.⁶

To address communication needs, the City and County should consider purchasing a new county-wide radio system to link all public safety professionals. It is anticipated that this would require the construction of two new towers with radio equipment and the purchase of new radios for all participating departments. Two supporting reasons for this proposal are the repair costs required to maintain the existing system, and the need to cover existing “dead” areas in the county where there is no radio signal.

Several issues have been identified by the Fire Department that should be discussed or addressed to maintain and strengthen fire-related services in the city. The first is the consideration of building and fire codes as a minimum fire prevention/protection measure. If fire codes are implemented, the City would have to designate a fire inspector, as the City currently uses the county’s fire inspector. As Wiggins’ population increases, so should the fire department’s manpower increase. The second need is to ensure that at least two ambulances are being made available in Stone County. At times when only one ambulance is available in the county, there is no back-up service if the ambulance is at an accident scene or transporting a patient.⁶

Action Steps:

- ✦ Evaluate the public safety benefits of adopting building and fire codes, and evaluate the staff and budget needs to administer the codes.
- ✦ Engage in a county-wide first-responder/public safety dialogue to communicate staffing, facility, equipment, and operating needs and to budget for/collaborate on/share resources to protect the public.

Section 3: Hurricane and Disaster Preparedness

Wiggins, due to its proximity to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, is both affected by severe storm events, and well-situated to provide shelter and relief staging to more heavily-impacted areas along the coast.

Stone County recently adopted a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for the purpose of eliminating, mitigating and minimizing the impacts of disasters on city and county residents.⁷ The following are the primary types of hazards identified in the plan that could potentially impact Wiggins and Stone County: hurricanes and coastal storms, thunderstorms and tornadoes, flooding and potential flood events, wildfires, and manmade hazards such as hazardous material spills. The plan also contains a list of goals, objectives and strategies that will minimize the impacts of these hazards to local residents.

Additionally, city personnel identified issues that should be addressed before the next disaster or storm event that will make Wiggins better able to meet local needs. To ensure that public safety professionals can perform their duties during a hazard event, the City should pursue a pre-disaster contract with area fuel service stations. For an event similar to Hurricane Katrina, the Fire Department estimated that the City would need 8,000 to 9,000 gallons of gasoline to deliver needed public services to the population. Such arrangements and standard operating procedures should be made before

Community Facilities Element

the next disaster event to ensure that the public is adequately protected.⁶

Another option would be the creation of a fueling station for city vehicles. The station could include a 10,000 gallon fuel tank that could be filled on a regular or emergency basis. The benefits would include the possible savings in bulk fuel costs and the availability of gasoline in emergency situations. The City should investigate the initial costs for a fuel tank and concrete spill protection area to determine the potential benefits of this option.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Pursue a pre-disaster contract with area fueling stations to coordinate the distribution of fuel to public safety personnel during hazard events.
- ✦ Investigate costs associated with installing and maintaining a vehicle fueling station.

Sources:

1. Patrick Bonney. (2006). Stone-Wiggins Recreation Director. Personal Interview. April 17, 2006.
2. Public comments received at kick-off meeting (April 20, 2006) and Open House (June 26-28, 2006).
3. James Morrison. (2006). Stone County School Superintendent. Personal Interview. August 22, 2006.
4. Nell Murray. (2006). Stone County. Personal Correspondence. August 30, 2006 and September 5, 2006.
5. Buddy Bell. (2006). Wiggins Police Chief. Personal Interview. April 17, 2006.
6. Allen Ray Hatten. (2006). Wiggins Fire Chief. Personal Interview. May 12, 2006.
7. Stone County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Adopted July 2006. Coordinated by Raven James; prepared by Nell Murray, Nichole D'Andrea and the Stone County Hazard Mitigation Committee.

Chapter 7: Civic Pride and Beautification

Civic Pride and Beautification Vision: A clean, attractive city with well-maintained public and private spaces; a city that celebrates and promotes its beauty, history and culture, while preserving the “small town” atmosphere and cherished aspects of the community.

General Description

Civic pride simply refers to a pride in one’s city or community. Civic pride can be expressed in the care we take in maintaining our properties, in designing attractive public spaces for the use and inspiration of the community residents, and in holding public events which celebrate the pride we feel in our community.

The residents of Wiggins desire to live in a beautiful, clean and well-maintained city. This can be achieved through designing public events and programs, investing public and private funds, and by promoting the special qualities of Wiggins to fellow residents and visitors.

Section 1: Civic and Cultural Events

Civic and cultural events can serve not only to express the residents’ pride in a community, but also to educate citizens, forge relationships across social and geographic boundaries, enhance economic activity, and provide activities for residents.

Festivals are a part of Wiggins’ history and culture. From 1937 to 1939, an annual Pickle Festival was held in Wiggins. The event, which drew thousands of attendees, included such activities as the crowning of a king and queen, tap dancing, a fiddling contest, and an anonymous wedding.¹ At open house meetings in April and June, residents discussed reviving the festival, even though the American Pickle and Canning Company shut its doors in the mid-1980s.

Wiggins still holds festivals and events that foster civic pride. Pine Hill Day is an annual street festival held on Pine Avenue in Wiggins. The 2006 event was the festival’s ninth consecutive year. The April festival energizes downtown Wiggins, where the streets are lined

“ . . . good cities—beautiful, as well as safe and efficient—will arise only when it is the city itself that assumes the obligation for its own destiny.”

Source: John Reys, Town Planning in Frontier America

Smart Growth Principles

Consider the following smart growth principles related to community facilities.

- ✦ Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- ✦ Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- ✦ Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- ✦ Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.

with food and craft vendors. Other festivities include an annual car show, Spring Fling, and the semi-annual Bluegrass Festival that is in its 28th year.

Residents are currently planning for regular events in Blaylock Park, starting with a movie night in the park. This and other types of entertainment, including concerts and plays, were requested by residents attending open house meetings.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Continue Pine Hill Day as a valued civic event;
- ✦ Celebrate the cultural and historic value of the Pickle Festival through documentation and commemorative events;
- ✦ Establish a downtown events committee as a stand-alone committee or as part of

the Economic Development Partnership or Arts Council to plan and carry-out cultural and entertainment events in Blaylock Park.

Section 2: Appearance and Beautification

Property Maintenance

Wiggins residents overwhelmingly support programs to promote the maintenance of both public and private properties and to enforce minimum property maintenance and community appearance standards.² It is believed that by encouraging individual property owners to take more pride in their neighborhoods and community, owners will take more care in maintaining clean, attractive private properties.



Local civic groups should continue to take the lead in organizing neighborhood and community-wide clean-up events, and in publicizing the community's anti-litter campaigns. The City can support these efforts by enforcing property maintenance ordinances, and by setting an example in maintaining clean, attractive public properties.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Continue to enforce maintenance ordinances on private property.
- ✦ Ensure that public buildings and properties are clean and attractive to set an example for good property maintenance.

- ✦ Establish and strengthen neighborhood networks to plan clean-up events and promote pride block-by-block.
- ✦ Conduct an aggressive anti-litter campaign through partnerships between the city and local civic groups.

Beautification

The residents of Wiggins also desire a beautiful and attractive city. The city currently has many landscaped areas in public medians and at street intersections, and residents would like to identify additional areas for landscaping and beautification. Residents also desire to incorporate sidewalks and landscaping into plans for new roadways and changes to existing roads and highways.

Wiggins has ordinances to regulate the appearance of commercial buildings and the landscaping at commercial sites. These ordinances should be enhanced, and design guidelines should be established to provide developers with a better idea of the character of Wiggins and its standards for the appearance of buildings and yards.

Another goal of Wiggins' residents is to identify areas that are "gateways" to the city and to beautify those areas with welcoming signs and landscaping. This could be the first phase in identifying designs and locations for *wayfinding signs*, which are signs that help travelers and visitors find their way to city landmarks, government buildings, shopping areas, and special districts.

Action Steps:

- ✦ Incorporate landscaping and sidewalks into plans for road improvements.
- ✦ Strengthen design standards in the Land Development Code.
- ✦ Establish gateway and wayfinding signs to greet and inform visitors to Wiggins.

Sources:

1. "Pickle Festival Draws Thousands." Pines, Pickles, People, and Pride. Stone County Enterprise. April 1, 2004.
2. Public comments received at kick-off meeting (April 20, 2006) and Open House (June 26-28, 2006).