

HOMEGROWN

Henagar

2023 Comprehensive Plan



WELCOME

Acknowledgments

CITIZENS OF HENAGAR

The City of Henagar is grateful for the hundreds of citizens and visitors that assisted in this process by taking the time to fill out and submit surveys, and attend public meetings.

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor

Lee Davis

Joy Dixon
Tara Kirby
Angie Davis
Jeff McCurdy
Winston Busby

City Clerk: Lora Corbin
Assistant Clerk: Alicia Wooten
City Event Coordinator: Sherry Edmonson





Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Big Ideas	14
Parks & Recreation	18
Land Use & Mobility	34
Placemaking	48
Economic Development	64
Action List	74

Introduction

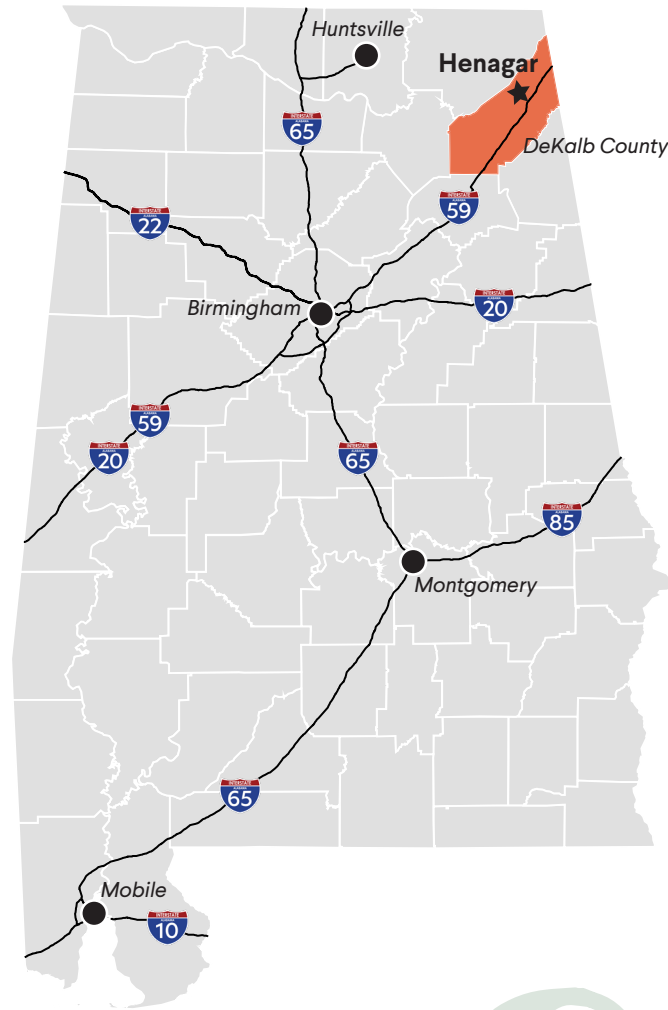
Welcome to Homegrown Henagar! This document was developed with the support of the city and its citizens. The city's dedication to planning for the future initiated this process and the outcomes are a result of the community's involvement the planning process.

Henagar has an important resource in its small group of engaged and action-oriented citizens, staff, and community leaders that have been collectively working behind the scenes to engage and improve their community in every way they can.

This process and final plan has been built to support this group with short and long-term guidance and continued assistance in their efforts to shape the future of Henagar for the better.

Now is an important time for Henagar to celebrate its efforts and recent impactful successes as it organizes its strategic next steps to become a city that shapes its future on its own terms.





About Henagar

A small rural community of roughly 2,300 people located atop Sand Mountain in DeKalb County of Northeast Alabama, Henagar is situated around the intersection of Alabama Highways 40 and 75. The city is located just a 10-minute drive from the regional Interstate-59 corridor and a 25-minute drive from the nearby cities of Fort Payne and Scottsboro. Henagar is also conveniently positioned near Lake Guntersville and Little River Canyon National Preserve as well as the larger metropolitan centers of Huntsville and Chattanooga.

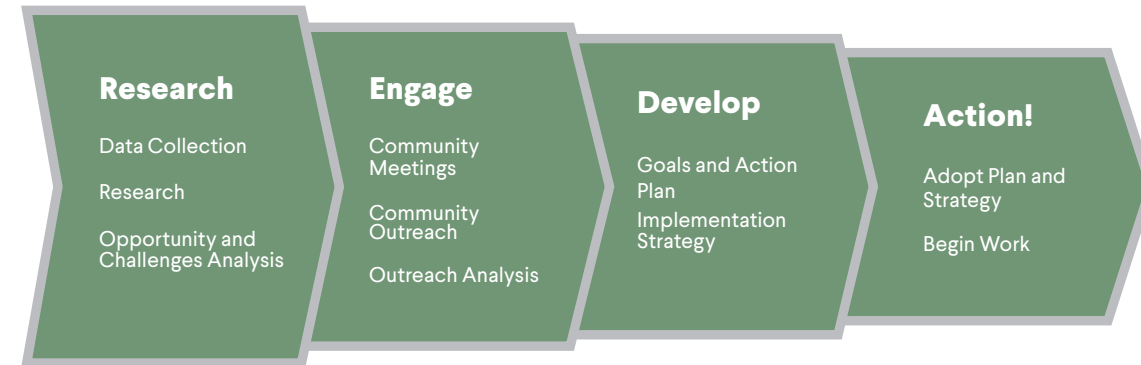
Henagar's identity is rooted in the farmland sprawling across its rolling terrain. The city's long history of farming crops, notably potatoes, has given rise to generations of resilient, hard-working people who cherish their traditional agricultural heritage. Originally settled by European-descended migrants in the 1850's, the area that is now



Henagar has grown from a once sparsely populated and entirely agrarian town into a rural community with a diversified economy and quality amenities for its residents. Agricultural fields are now interspersed with small and large industrial plants helping to power the economy and commercial centers providing places to eat and shop. Henagar Park, the pride of the city, includes many amenities such as a swimming pool and a community center that are uncommon for a rural town of its size. Henagar loves to celebrate its people and heritage with regionally popular events such as the Sand Mountain Potato Festival and Christmas at the Cabin. With potential new industrial and retail developments interested in the city, a progress-focused administration, and a plan for the city taking shape, the people of Henagar are optimistic about the future and committed to making it a better place to live, work, and play for generations to come.

Plan Process

Comprehensive planning is an important tool for communities to articulate desired land use patterns to ensure a safe, pleasant, and economical environment for residential, agricultural, and commercial activities. A comprehensive plan provides the overall foundation for all land use regulation in the City



Phase 1: Research

This phase involves data collection and the analysis of the existing conditions and context of the city. We look at historical trends, and synthesize any previous plans the city has completed, as well current and future initiatives.

Phase 2: Public Engagement

Input and participation from the local community is one of the most important phases of the planning process. Community meetings, workshops, focus groups, and open houses are a few of the methods that were used to provide opportunity for the public to be involved.

Phase 3: Strategy Development

The data and input is prioritized and organized and emphases for the plan are defined. The strategic focus areas of the plan are then developed and an implementation strategy is defined.

Phase 4: Action

The final phase is characterized by a transition from planning to action. The momentum gained in the process is captured in the implementation plan so that the locality can begin working on specific projects.

Building a Future ~ Preserving the Past

Principles

- Retain small town charm
- Encourage economic growth
- Protect natural resources
- Reinforce quality of life
- Stand out in the region

Goals

- Expand park and trail opportunities
- Define housing opportunities
- Create economic opportunities
- Explore concepts for town center

Community Participation

City plans are created for the city, by the city. To ensure that a plan for the future addresses the wants and needs of the community it is critical that the community is engaged and empowered to shape the plan. Community engagement occurs throughout the entire process of developing the plan. Not only does engagement occur throughout the entirety of the plan, but there are also several different methods of engagement. Below are a few of the methods used in the planning process.



Public Surveys

The first method of engagement involved an online community survey. The survey asks many general questions for residents. The goal of the survey is to gather as much input as possible on a variety of topics from the city.

Community Meetings

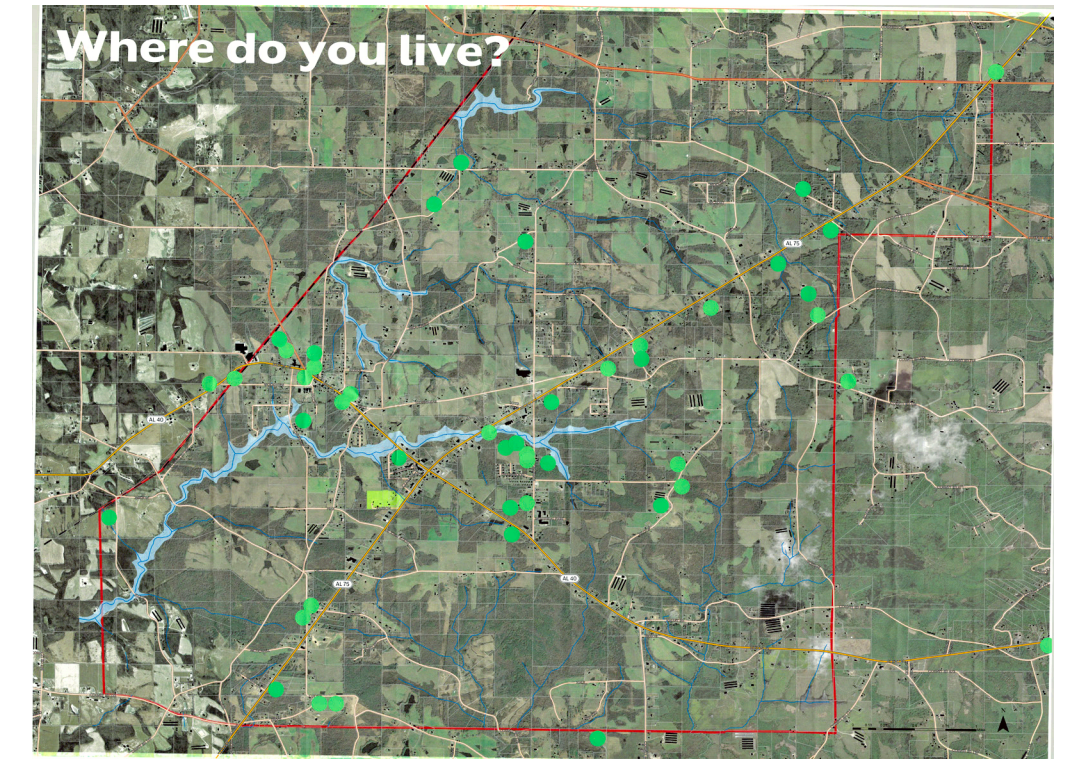
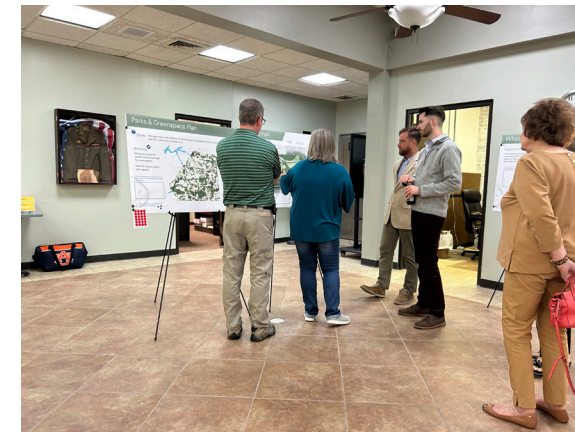
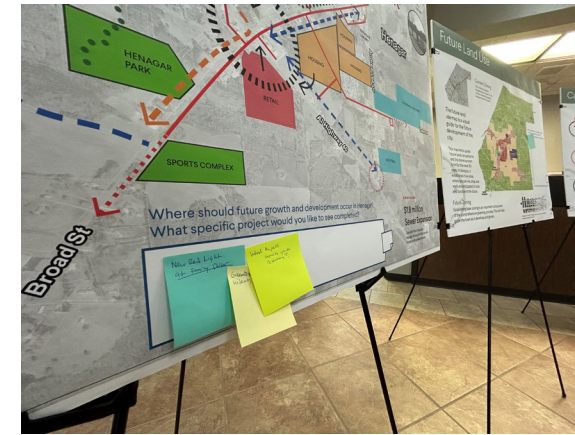
Several community meetings were held during the master planning process. These involved open houses and a workshop in partnership with the local high school.

Steering Committee

A steering committee was created to reflect the community as a whole. The committee helped shape the plan and personally advocated for community participation throughout the process.

Draft Review

Before the plan was adopted a review period was created to allow the community and city leadership to review and comment on the completed plan.



Big Ideas



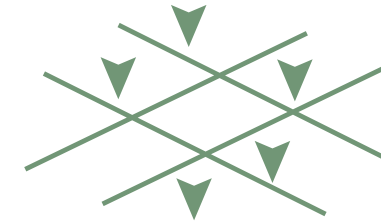
Parks & Recreation

- Henagar Park Project
- New Sports Complex
- Trail Development
- RV Park & Campground



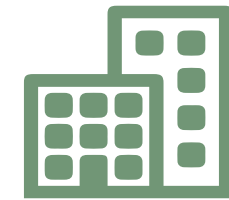
Land Use & Mobility

- Citywide Zoning
- Short-term Development Guidance



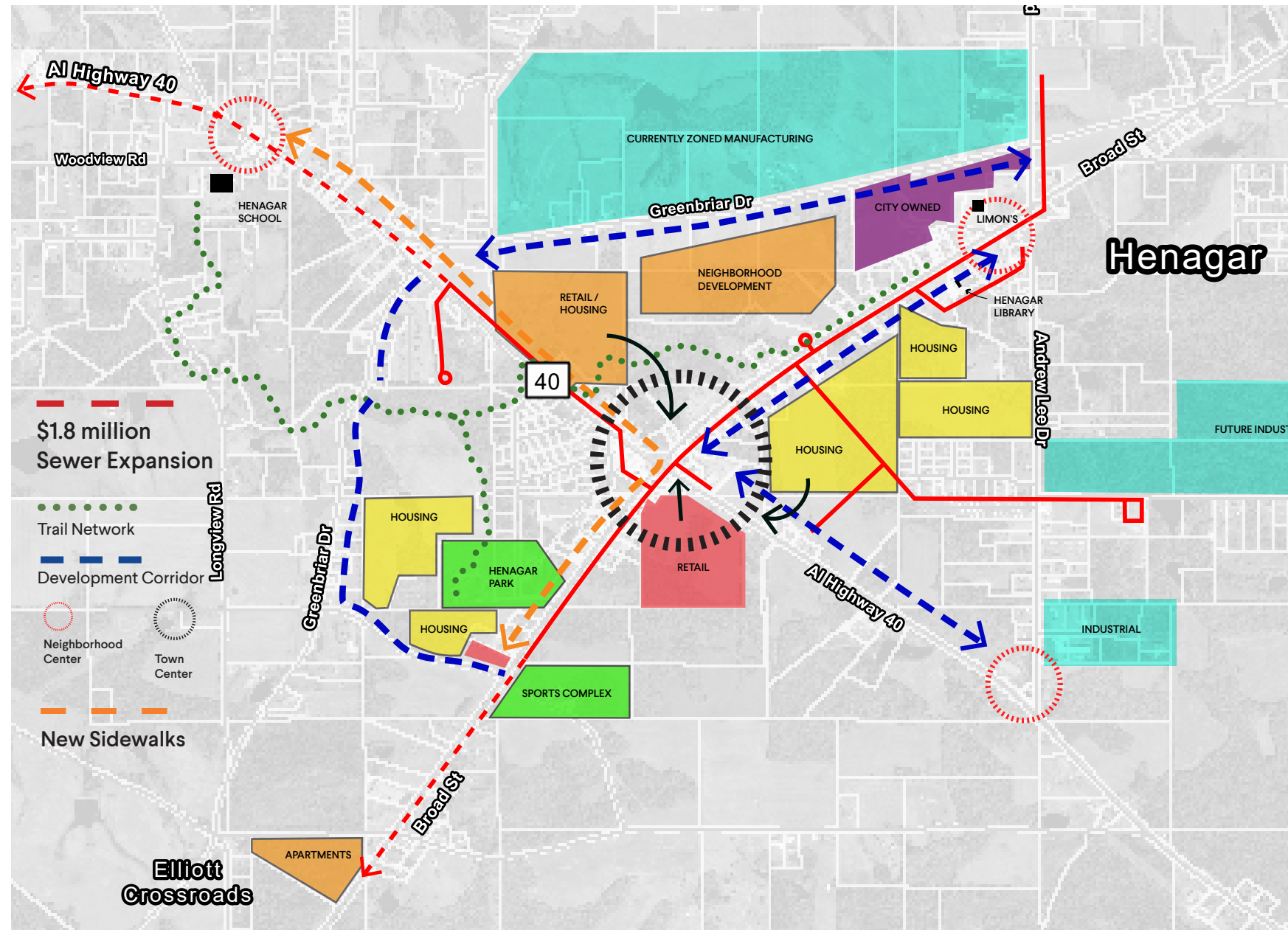
Placemaking

- Community Events
- Henagar Crossing
- Highway Corridor Proposed Actions
- Gateway and Wayfinding Signage



Economic Development

- Retail Gap Analysis
- Work From Home
- Grant Funding
- Market Your City



Achieving Our Vision



The development map on the left is a concept plan that evolved over the course of the planning process. As the city needs and input from residents increased, recommendations began to emerge as a response to the current state of the city. It has been suggested to the city that once their current water / sewer project is complete, development should be restricted to their existing infrastructure network. There is a significant amount of land within the service area that can be

developed for retail or commercial and housing. Henagar has an opportunity to provide the region with a diverse mix of housing options and create a unique city identity around the “Henagar Crossing” area, the intersection of Hwy 40 and Hwy 75. The city also owns a significant amount of property that should fit within its existing context and conform to the future land use plan that is being recommended.

CHAPTER 1

Parks & Recreation

Introduction

Opportunities for parks and recreation are one of the most important factors in determining a city's success and overall quality of life. Parks and trails are a growing demand among younger generations in selecting the places they choose to live and work. Henagar already has an existing park that is extremely popular among area residents but has expressed interest in improvements to this park that would make it a more beautiful and functional space for both everyday use and for hosting major seasonal events such as the Sand Mountain Potato Festival and Christmas at the Cabin. A major goal of the parks and recreation strategy detailed in this section is to create a cluster of recreational

facilities around an improved Henagar Park that would secure Henagar's place as a hub for sports and recreation throughout northeast Alabama. Another major goal in the overall strategy is to create a greenway trail network in the city to provide bike and pedestrian connectivity between key sites in Henagar and regionally along Sand Mountain. The park and trail improvements proposed in this section have the potential to serve as community anchors that catalyze new commercial and residential developments nearby, in addition to their core function of providing residents with spaces to gather and recreate.

Henagar Park Project

New Sports Complex

Trail Development

Henagar Park Project

Redefine Henagar Park as a premier community event and passive recreation location.

Overview

For years, Henagar Park has been the heart of the Henagar community. Home to landmarks such as the historic Henagar Cabin and the Henagar Community Center, the park attracts both local everyday visitors and regional visitors for flagship events such as the Sand Mountain Potato Festival, May on the Mountain, Halloween in Henagar, and Christmas at the Cabin. Although Henagar Park is a rightful source of pride for Henagar residents, the park's facilities and programming are in need of an update to realize its true potential as a premier outdoor space that anchors additional quality of life Proposed Actions throughout the city. By relocating the existing ball fields to an adjacent new sports complex development, Henagar Park can be redefined as a more nature-based park and optimized for hosting existing and new large-scale community events.

Proposed Actions

- Relocate existing ball fields to an adjacent new sports complex development
- Develop an on-site Rec Center with 2 courts, locker rooms, concessions, restrooms, and lobby
- Develop an Event Pavilion with a lawn outside the Rec Center for hosting concerts, movies, etc.
- Update the existing pool to competition standards and add a splash pad, pool slide, etc.
- Update the tennis courts to include 2 additional tennis courts and 4 new pickleball courts
- Update the playground and play structures
- Create a fenced dog park area
- Resurface the basketball court
- Updated pavilions with picnic tables
- Develop a network of walking trails that run throughout the park
- Enhance landscaping around the cabin to better highlight it as a landmark feature
- Create a loop road throughout the park with a secondary park entrance to provide better vehicular circulation and access

Proposed Park Master Plan



Cost

Total: \$10,275,000

- Rec Center: \$6,375,000
- 2 Pickleball Courts: \$100,000
- Pool and Splash Pad: \$2,300,000
- Event Pavilion: \$1,200,000
- Playground: \$300,000

*road costs included in individual line items

Potential Funding Sources

- ADECA
- USDA



Early concept diagramming of park programming



New Sports Complex

Develop an athletic complex to provide sports recreation to city and regional residents.

Overview

Henagar currently has just two existing ball fields, both located in Henagar Park. These include one standard size baseball field and one softball field. The limited type and number of fields available in Henagar negatively impacts the city's ability to host youth and amateur sporting events. These events, such as Little League competitions or informal pick-up games, create a stronger sense of community and bring visitors from other towns into the city where they boost the economy by spending money at local businesses. Henagar should relocate the existing ball fields from Henagar Park to a new athletic complex that is better suited to hosting sporting events. This will allow Henagar Park to become more of a nature-based entertainment space and make Henagar a premier destination for sports events throughout DeKalb and Jackson Counties.

Proposed Actions

- Utilize city-owned land across the road from Henagar Park
- Develop 4 full-size baseball fields with professional lighting
- Develop a high school regulation size soccer field with professional lighting
- Develop a central concession stand with public restrooms
- Add tournament-style tennis courts

Cost

Total: \$6,050,000

- Baseball Complex: \$4,500,000
- Soccer Field: \$750,000
- 8 Tennis Courts: \$800,000

Potential Funding Sources

- ADECA

Proposed Sports Complex Master Plan



Trail Development

Develop a regional greenway trail along South Sauty Creek to connect people to community destinations.

Overview

Enhancing walkability will be a critical component of improving Henagar residents' quality of life. This will include the development of more traditional pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks as well as alternative infrastructure in the form of trails. Trails serve as a form of both active transportation and passive recreation. They promote physical fitness and healthy lifestyles, strengthen local economies, bolster property values, protect and highlight natural and open spaces, and provide safe alternatives for people to get around without a car. Trails can connect local points of interest within a community and also provide connectivity to regional destinations and networks. Henagar should develop a signature greenway trail connecting the important sites in town while also connecting to nearby regional destinations and trail networks. The South Sauty Creek Greenway will provide local connectivity in Henagar between Henagar Park, Henagar Jr. High School, and Henagar Library/ Limons. It will also connect Henagar to regional community sites along Sand Mountain, such as DeKalb County Public Lake, Sylvania High School, Powell

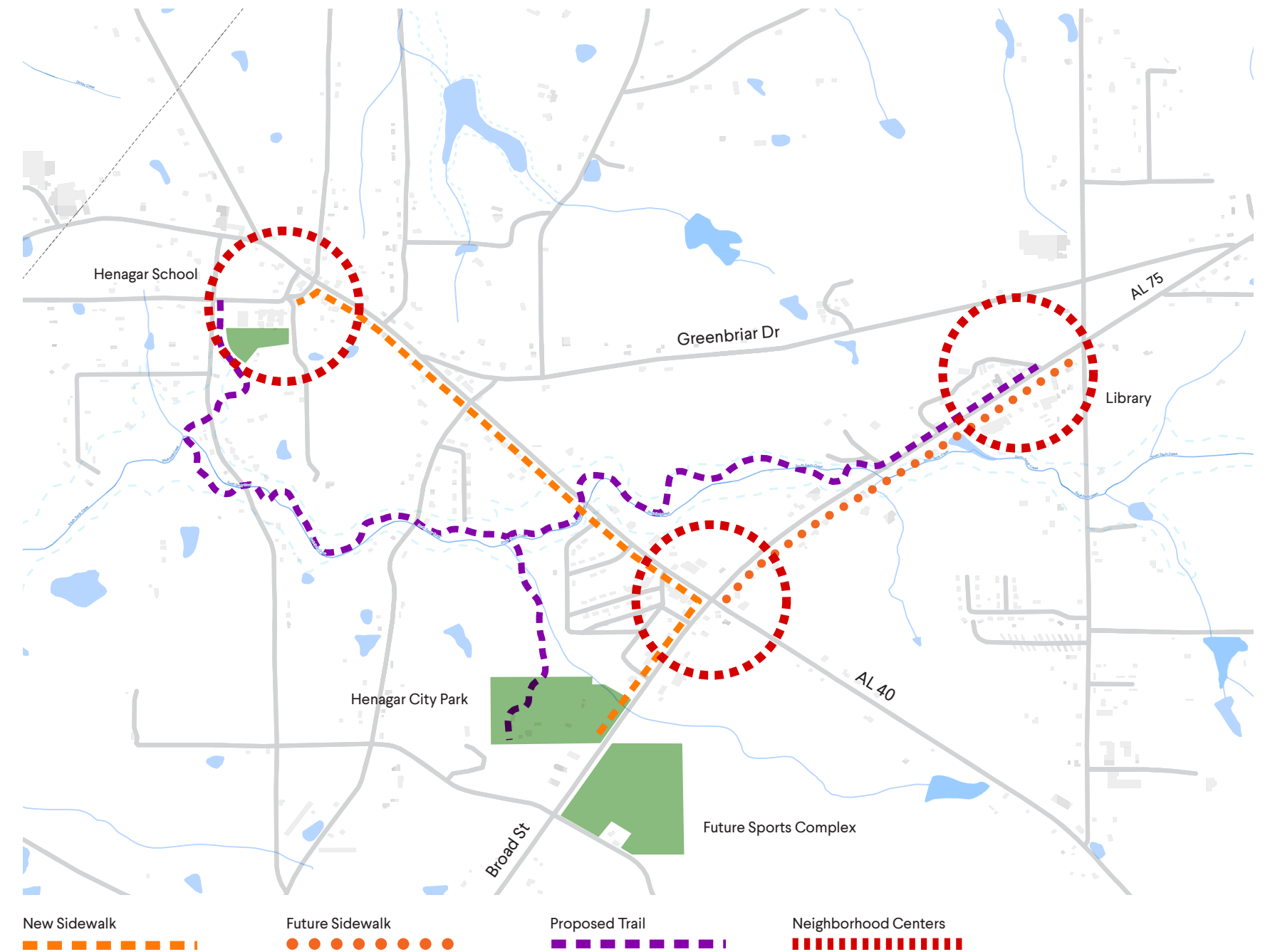
Park, Northeast Alabama Community College, and Buck's Pocket State Park. The South Sauty Creek Greenway will also link to other trail networks, including an extension of the Singing River Trail along AL-35 that provides additional trail connectivity between Scottsboro / Lake Guntersville and Fort Payne / Little River Canyon National Preserve.

Proposed Actions

- Work with Henagar landowners to develop Phase 1 of the South Sauty Creek Greenway



Concept rendering of trail along Sauty Creek

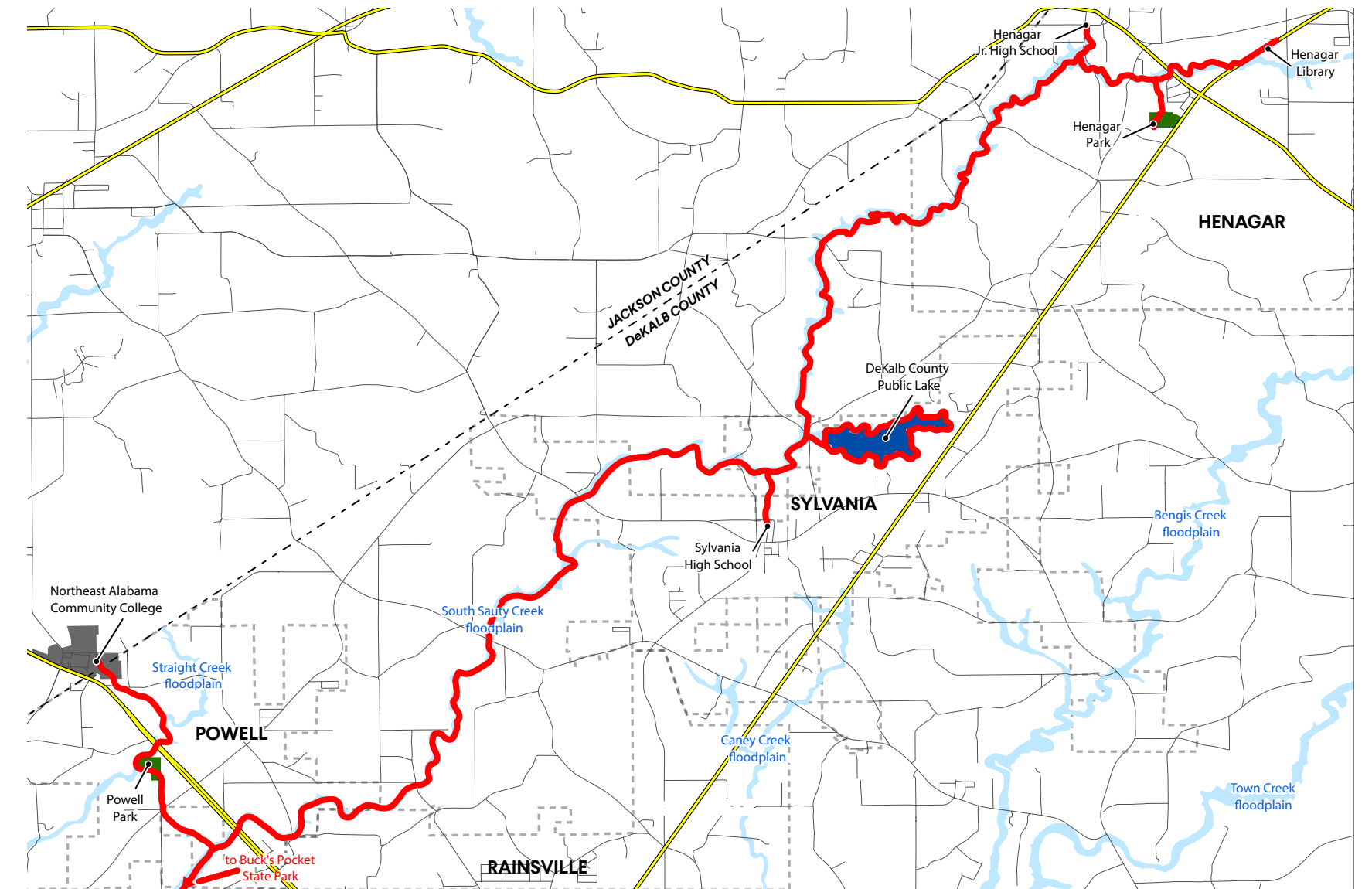


- Phase 1 to provide local connectivity between Henagar Park and Henagar Jr. High
- Work with Henagar landowners to develop Phase 2 of the South Sauty Creek Greenway
- Phase 2 to provide local connectivity between Phase 1 and the growing shopping area around Henagar Library and Limons
- Work with landowners in Henagar, Sylvania, and DeKalb County, as well as the City of Sylvania and DeKalb County Commission to develop Phase 3 of the South Sauty Creek Greenway
- Phase 3 to provide regional connectivity between Henagar and Sylvania High School / DeKalb County Public Lake
- Advocate for the Cities of Sylvania, Rainsville, and Powell to work with landowners and the DeKalb County Commission to develop Phase 4 of the South Sauty Creek Greenway
- Phase 4 to provide regional connectivity between Sylvania High School and Northeast Alabama Community College
- Advocate for DeKalb and Jackson Counties to collaborate on the development of Phase 5 of the South Sauty Creek Greenway
- Phase 5 to provide regional connectivity between Powell / Northeast Alabama Community College and Buck's Pocket State Park

Potential Funding Sources

- ADECA Grant

Regional Trail Network



CHAPTER 2

Land Use

Introduction

Land is one of a city's most valuable assets. The ways in which a city's land is used have a significant impact on its socioeconomic systems and overall vitality. It is important to achieve an efficient balance among various types of land use to ensure that all of the community's needs are fulfilled and self-sufficiency is promoted. From residential districts that provide places to live, to commercial districts that provide business services and places to eat and shop, to industrial districts that provide jobs, to agricultural districts that provide crops and opportunities for rural living, all land uses are important and all have their place in the puzzle.

Land use decisions have the power to shape the community, its values, and its economy. The land use strategy detailed in this section is structured around the principle of balancing the preservation of Henagar's expansive agricultural areas with the promotion of strategic residential, commercial, and industrial development that revitalizes the city and respects its rural context. The future land use map has identified a 'core development area' where new growth should be focused in order to maximize the preservation of the city's scenic rural districts.

Citywide Zoning Short-term Development Guidance

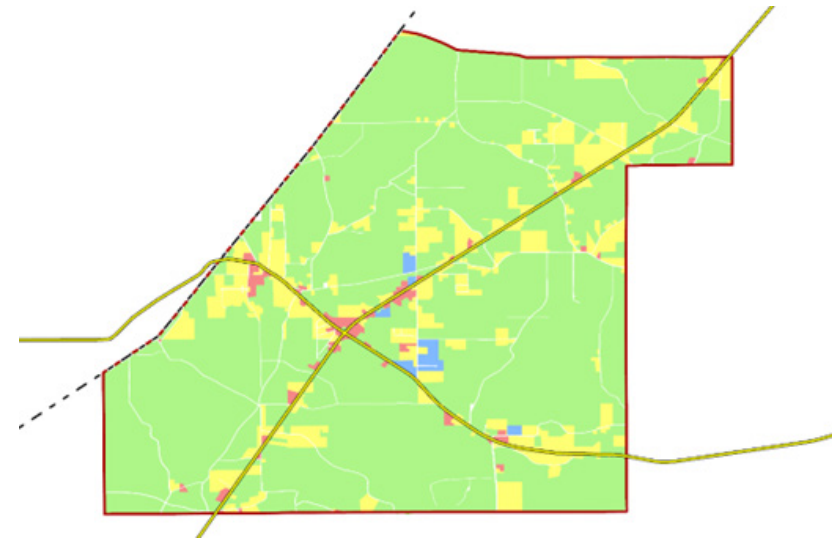
Citywide Zoning

Adopt a citywide zoning ordinance to regulate development and protect Henagar's small-town charm.

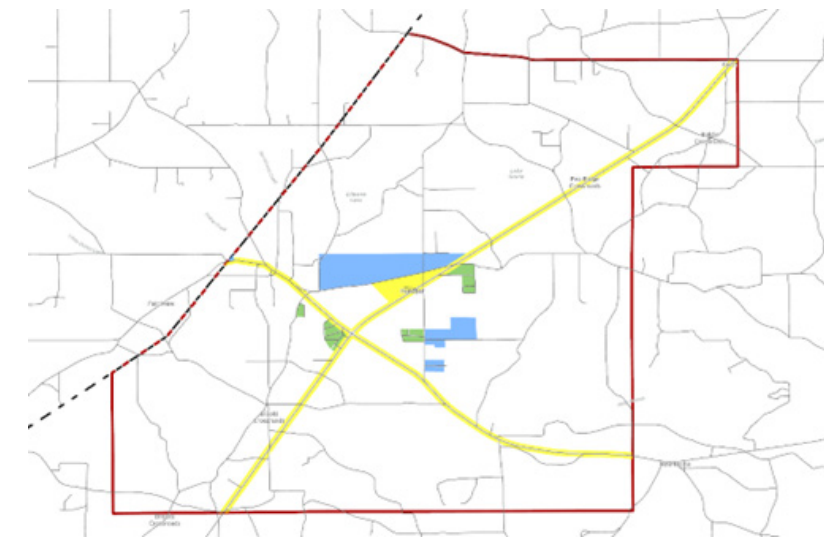
Overview

Henagar's identity is rooted in its quintessential rural nature and agricultural history. Although the population of the city has declined slightly since its peak in 2000, generating new growth and economic opportunity for Henagar is one of the city's strategic goals. Based on input gathered during the planning process, the public's highest development priority is expanding the city's job market, followed by protecting Henagar's small town charm and recruiting new retail and restaurant businesses. Roughly 2/3 of citizens also expressed support for new housing development to attract additional residents. Achieving a balance between the topmost priorities of growth and protection of small town charm will require careful coordination and planning of the city's land uses, which can only be reliably achieved with a citywide zoning ordinance that controls where and how new development can occur.

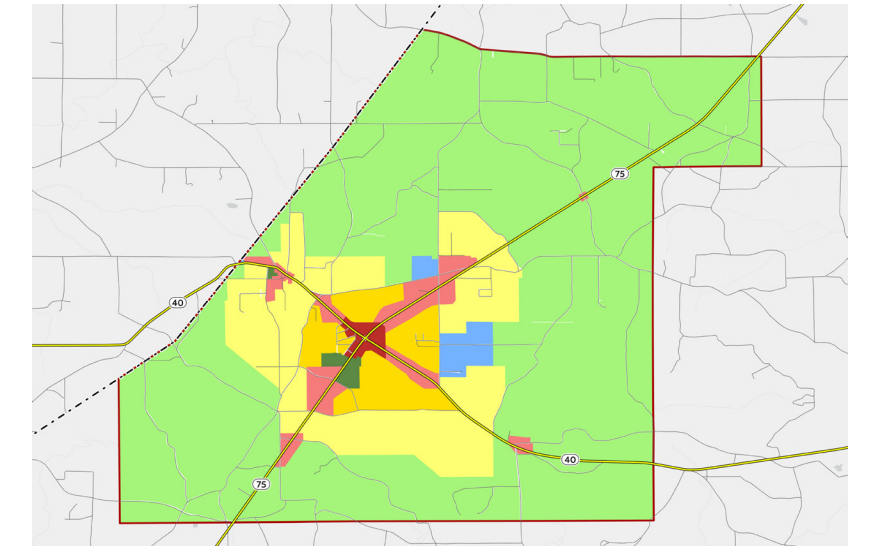
Below is a map of Henagar's existing land uses, showing commercial and institutional areas in red, industrial areas in blue, residential areas in yellow, and agricultural/undeveloped areas in green.



As Henagar seeks to build new housing and bring new businesses into town, these existing land uses are bound to change over time. Without the proper land use controls that zoning provides, there are no restrictions placed on the use of a property. This means that a heavy industrial factory could be built in the middle of a residential area or an adult bookstore could be opened next to the Jr. High School. Below is a map of Henagar's existing zoning ordinance, showing the B-1 Business Districts in yellow, the M-1 Manufacturing Districts in blue, and the R-1 Residential Districts in green.



Most of the city is unzoned, which undermines the intent of zoning controls and renders the ordinance legally unenforceable as this form of "spot zoning" is inconsistent with the legal zoning standards set forth in Alabama code. In order to have a legally enforceable tool to manage future growth patterns, Henagar will need to develop and adopt a new zoning ordinance that covers all areas within the city. A proper zoning code will provide the city with the means to regulate the type, style, and density of developments that are allowed. Zoning can protect and enhance property values by preventing the poor placement of industrial and nuisance uses as well as focus development in specific areas to limit sprawl and preserve vulnerable rural areas. The main purpose of a zoning code would be to ensure that Henagar develops in a manner consistent with the city's future land use plan. Below is a map of the future land use plan for Henagar. The Henagar Crossing central commercial area is shown in dark red. Mixed use highway



commercial areas are shown in light red. Industrial areas are shown in blue. Subdivision development areas are shown in dark yellow. Low density residential areas are shown in light yellow. Parks and open space are shown in dark green. Agricultural and very low density rural residential areas are shown in light green. This future development scenario for Henagar has intentionally maintained a compact development footprint that provides ample opportunity for new residential and business growth while balancing that growth with the preservation of the city's expansive rural areas.

“Henagar Crossing”



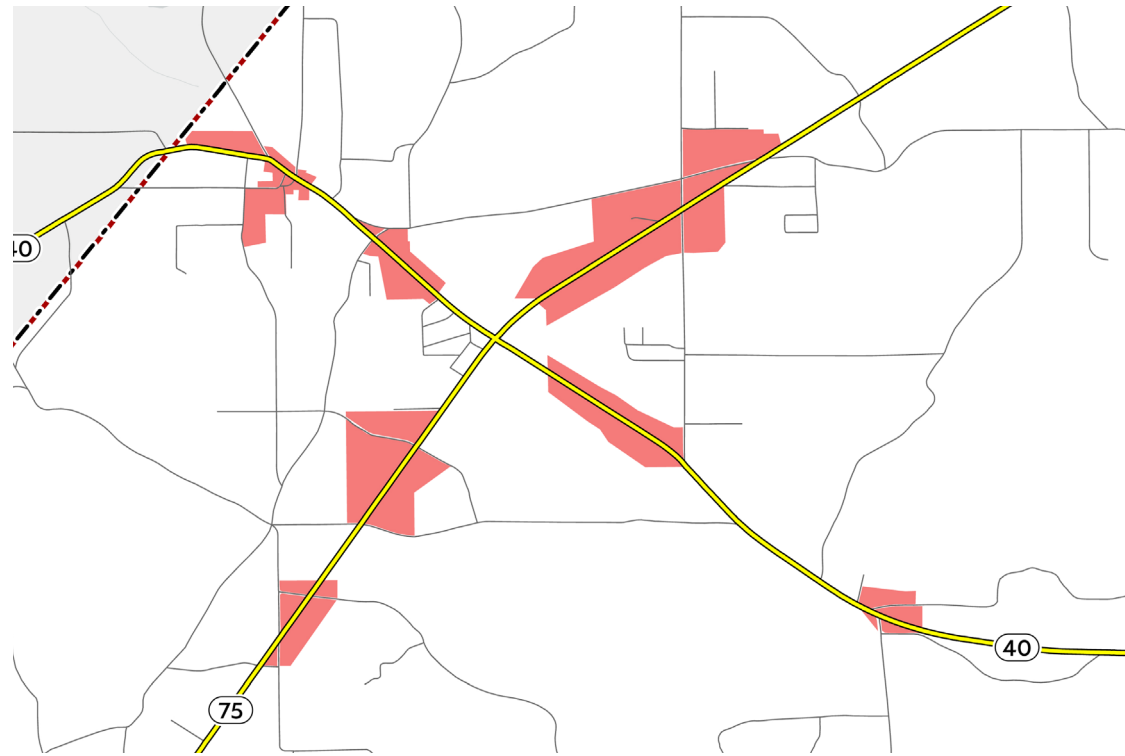
The Henagar Crossing development area is situated immediately around the intersection of Highways 40 and 75. The general intent of this future land use area is to act as Henagar's de facto town center. It will have a mixture of commercial uses such as retail and restaurants along with residential uses such as townhomes and institutional uses such as City Hall, the police department, and the fire station. It will be a walkable area that includes pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks and streetlights as well as street trees. Preferred business types in this area would be storefront shops and sit-down restaurants. New gas stations and fast-food establishments should not be developed in this area.



Highway Commercial

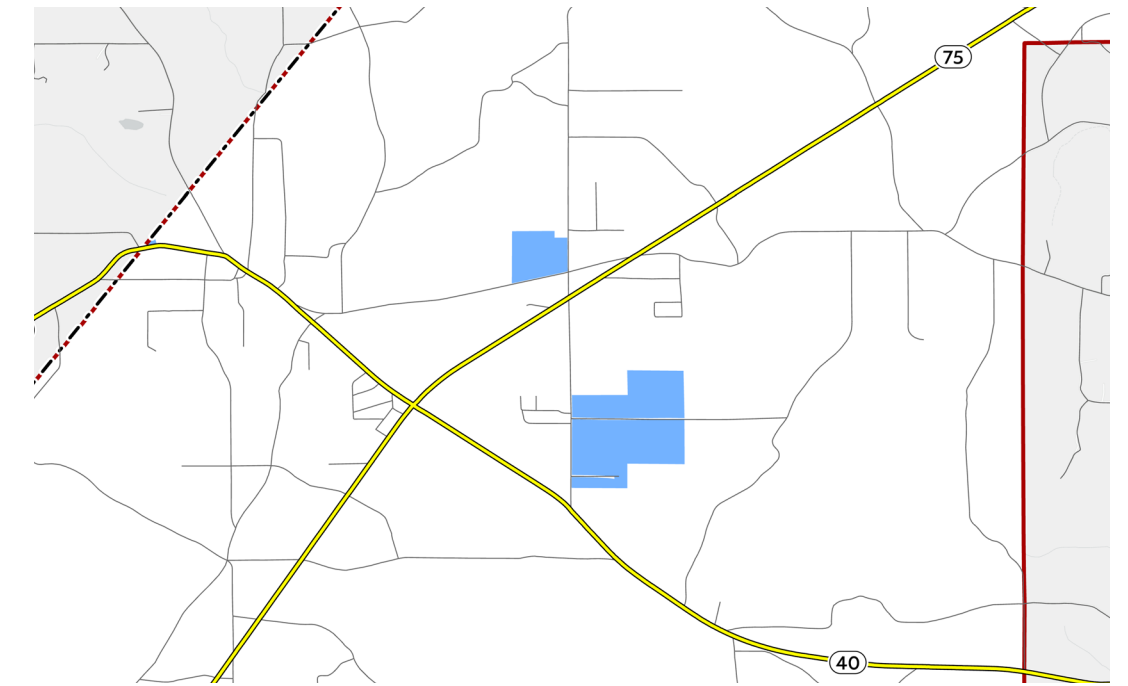
The highway commercial development areas are situated along Highways 40 and 75 on the outer edges of the Henagar Crossing district and at other important intersections and sites farther out from the crossroads. The general intent of this future land use area is to provide space for business development of non-pedestrian-oriented companies such as fast-food establishments, tire shops, big box

stores, supermarkets, etc. These areas can also include institutional uses such as Henagar Library, churches, funeral homes, etc. Although these areas are not generally meant to be developed as walkable districts, basic sidewalk connectivity should be provided in strategic locations to connect key sites like Henagar Jr. High and the Henagar Library to the Henagar Crossing district.



Industrial

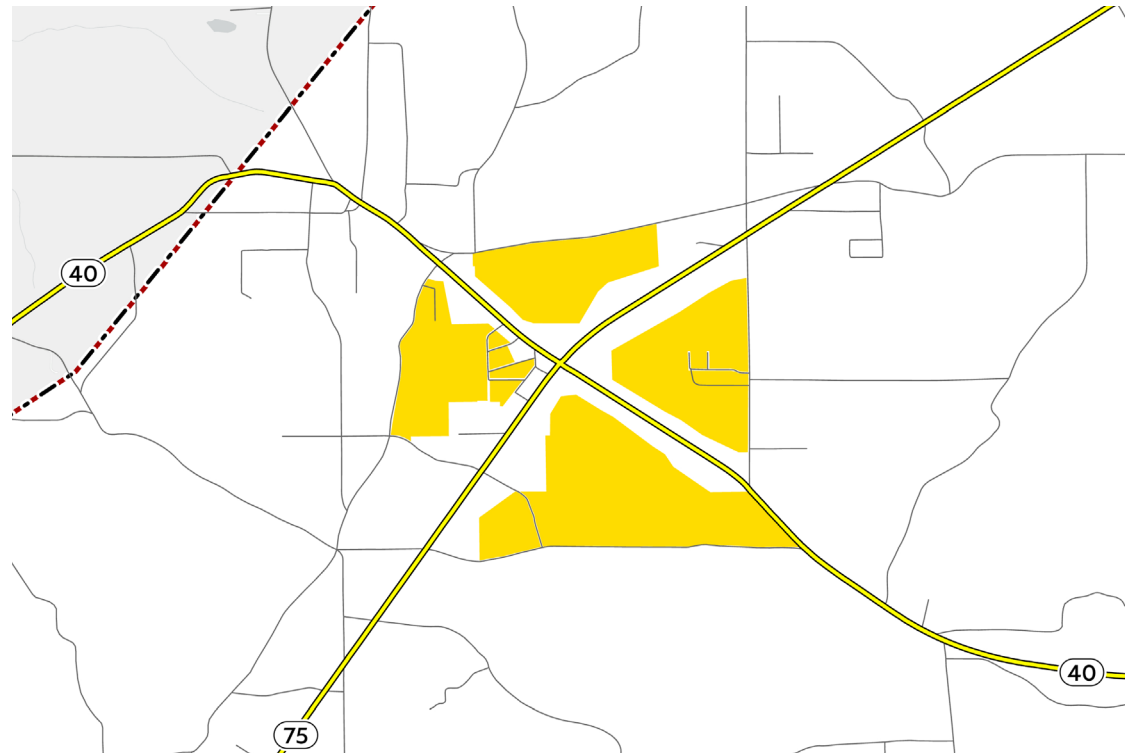
The industrial development areas are located at existing industrial sites in Henagar. New industrial development in the city should take place in expansions around current industrial sites to prevent plants and factories from being scattered around and encroaching on sensitive residential and agricultural areas. Co-locating industrial sites will allow for the plants to share infrastructure such as roads, water, and sewer systems without costly expansions of Henagar's infrastructure to various parts of the city. These industrial areas can include manufacturing facilities as well as warehousing, self-storage, and office uses.



Subdivision (Medium Density Residential)

The subdivision development areas are situated at the city's core around the Henagar Crossing district. The general intent of this future land use district is to provide for new housing development in line with the development priorities established through public input. Similar to Henagar's existing subdivision, new neighborhood developments should ideally occur in the area around the intersection of

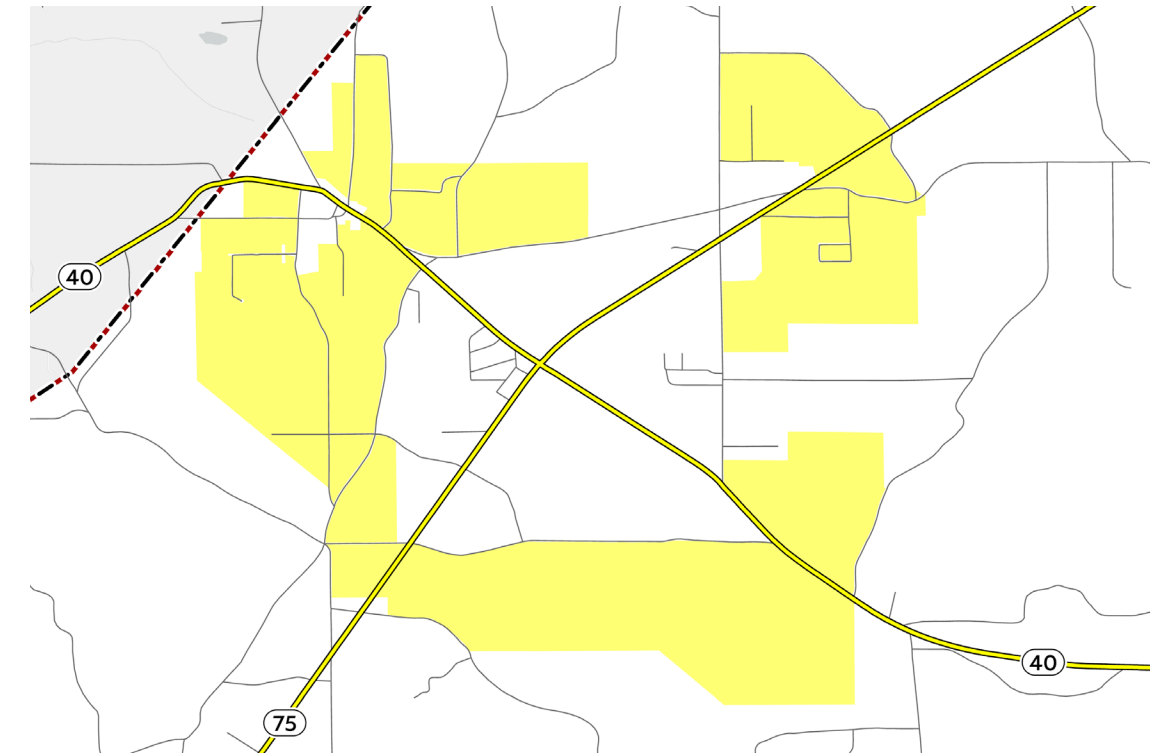
Highways 40 and 75. This ring of moderate density will help support commercial development in the Henagar Crossing area while keeping subdivision construction to a confined space that doesn't require substantial expansion of water/sewer infrastructure or eat away at random swaths of the city's agricultural land.



Low Density Residential

The low-density residential development areas are situated in a secondary ring around the core subdivision areas. The general intent of this future land use district is to provide additional space for construction of new housing developments, but at a generally lower density and with less infrastructure than the subdivision areas. A lower density outer ring of housing will also help provide a buffer and

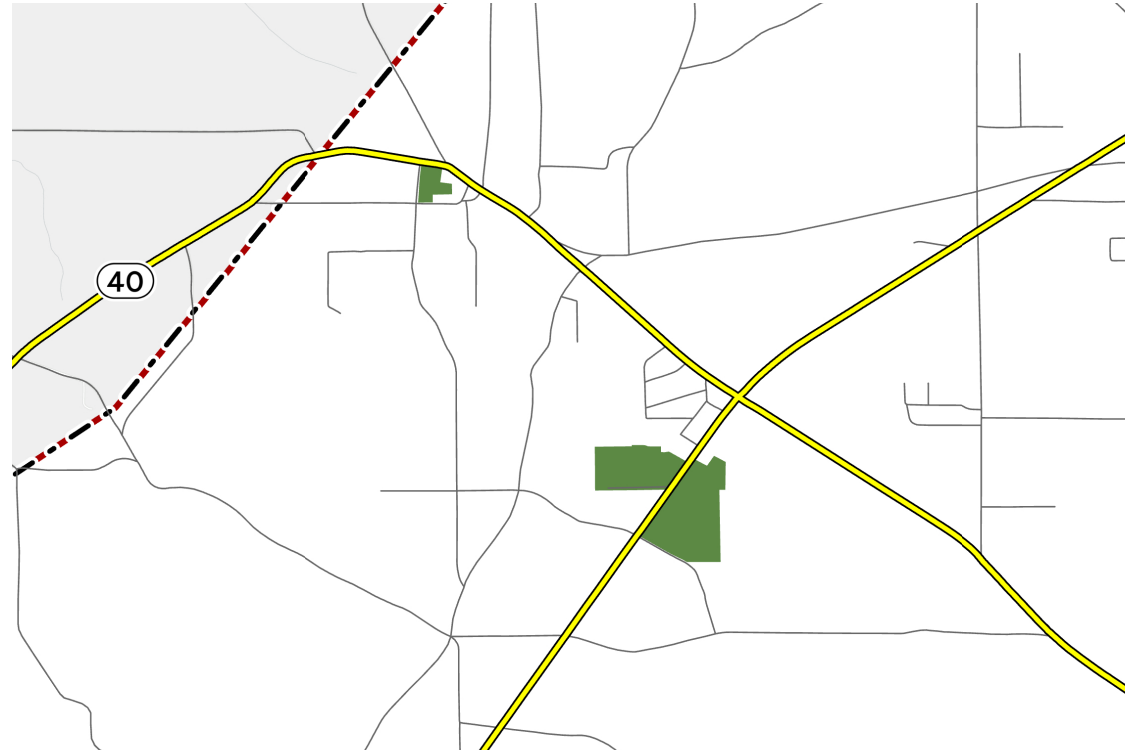
natural transition between the more intensely developed core of the city and the outlying agricultural areas. Although development of subdivisions can be considered in these areas, it would require costly expansions of the city's water/sewer infrastructure. As such, the low-density residential areas are better suited for homes that would utilize septic systems. These areas also have less need for sidewalks.



Parks & Open Space

The Parks and Open Space areas include Henagar Park, the future Henagar RV Park/ Campground, and the future Henagar Sports Complex. The general intent of this future land use district is to preserve and expand natural areas for recreational use. The park, RV campground, and sports complex should be co-located in order to create a recreational hub in the city with complementary uses

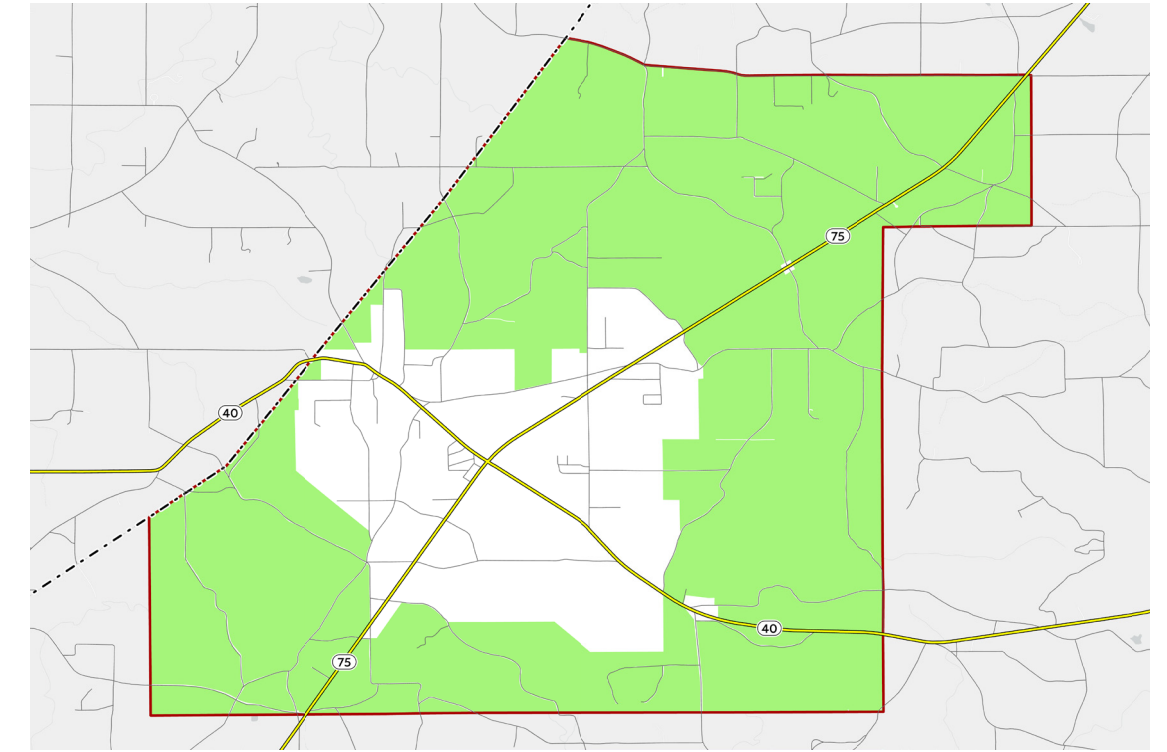
that support one another. Having these recreational assets adjacent to one another will have a compounding effect that amplifies their popularity and usage, further supporting the adjacent Henagar Crossing district. The inevitable regional popularity of this recreational hub could additionally support the development of new neighborhoods in the subdivision areas immediately around it.



Rural / Agricultural

The Rural and Agricultural areas as designated comprise 75% of Henagar's area. They are situated outside of the city's core development footprint. The general intent of this future land use district is to preserve the farmland and rural housing areas that are central to Henagar's identity and small town charm. These areas can include active farmland, passive fields, very low-density rural estates, and

natural forested areas. This is the only part of the city where commercial chicken houses should be allowed. In order to address potential concerns over rural zoning, regulations in the agricultural zoning district should be more relaxed than the requirements in the city's business, industrial, and residential districts.



Short-term Development Guidance

Nurture land use decisions that promote the city's vision.

Overview

Although there is no official Development Authority in Henagar, city officials have managed to effectively arrange and support informal land use and economic development initiatives at a grassroots level. City employees have personally organized the acquisition of land for the future sports complex and are engaged in ongoing efforts to bring one of the state's first medical cannabis manufacturing plants to Henagar, among other ongoing development efforts. Henagar officials should create a consolidated development guidance checklist to augment their informal process with a clear structure that better defines the steps and considerations to be made as new developments are pursued. If Henagar adopts a new citywide zoning ordinance, it should also create a streamlined development approval process that simplifies regulations into a development cheat sheet. This cheat sheet would lay out the requirements that determine the terms of development approval in one place, reducing administrative headaches for both developers and the city.

Short-term Development Guidance

Create a development guidance checklist to assist city officials' internal decision making.

Determine a short list of the highest and best uses for a property based on:

- The property's designation on the future land use map
- The property's proximity to the city's existing water and sewer service areas
- The types of businesses or housing identified on the economic development target list

Try to determine the feasibility of the desired development identified in the previous step

- Define any physical site constraints (slopes, floodplain, wetlands, etc.)
- Understand and outline potential returns on the development

- Assist in the development of a favorable site plan for the property as needed

Assist in marketing the property for the desired development to investors

- Post the property, desired development specs, and example site plan on real estate sites
- Work with a local Realtor to advertise the opportunity to potential developers

Post-zoning: Business Friendly Development Process

Create a streamlined development approval process and cheat sheet to reduce red tape and development costs once zoning regulations are enacted

Clearly communicate the city's expectations for a development prior to the submission of an application for development

- Compile all relevant local codes and development goals into separate cheat sheets for the various future land use categories
- Publish the cheat sheets on the city's website and include the relevant cheat sheet in any requests for concepts/proposals posted by the city

Optimize efficiency of municipal decision-making mechanisms following the submission of an application for development

- Create and publish a decision tree/ flow chart of the development approval process to standardize decision making and increase transparency
 - Include a list of required documentation and the person/ entity responsible for each action
- Designate a single point of contact in the city's offices to simplify communications with developers and shepherd the project through the approval process

CHAPTER 3

Placemaking

Introduction

Establishing a unique sense of place is an important factor in attracting people to spend their time and money in a community. Placemaking aims to create vibrant public spaces that enhance people's connection to and enjoyment of the city by fostering a cohesive community identity and communicating it in various aspects of the city's built environment. It helps to build up a sense of pride within the community and demonstrate progress. Placemaking also serves as a form of economic development

by creating a 'cool' factor that attracts new visitors and businesses to previously underutilized spaces. This section outlines a number of initiatives that can elevate Henagar's unique sense of place, including public art installations such as murals, landscaping improvements such as street trees and sidewalks, and thematic gateway and wayfinding signage around town.

Community Events

Henagar Crossing

Highway Corridor Proposed Actions

Gateway and Wayfinding Signage

Community Events

Strategically market and celebrate community events.

Overview

Life in Henagar revolves around community, and the city loves to bring together and celebrate the people of the area with a good old-fashioned festival. Throughout the year, the city hosts numerous widely popular and well-attended community events that bring visitors far and wide to town to share in the merrymaking and neighborly spirit of Henagar. These events showcase Henagar to a wide audience and present an excellent opportunity to market the city and its progress while promoting its businesses at a regional scale. Community events in Henagar include May on the Mountain Bluegrass Festival, the Sand Mountain Potato Festival, Halloween in Henagar, and Christmas at the Cabin. The Sand Mountain Potato Festival is the city's marquee event each year. A treasured tradition in Henagar since 1983, this Independence Day festival highlights the town's potato farming past and draws large crowds for its parade, live music performances, and fireworks display. Henagar should continue to support and publicize all its community events at an administrative level and enhance Henagar Park as a gathering and event space since it serves as the focal point for all of these events.

Proposed Actions

- Hire a local photographer/ videographer to professionally document events as a form of PR
- Relocate ball fields in Henagar Park to sports complex to shift the park's focus to a nature-based gathering and event space that better supports the city's popular community events



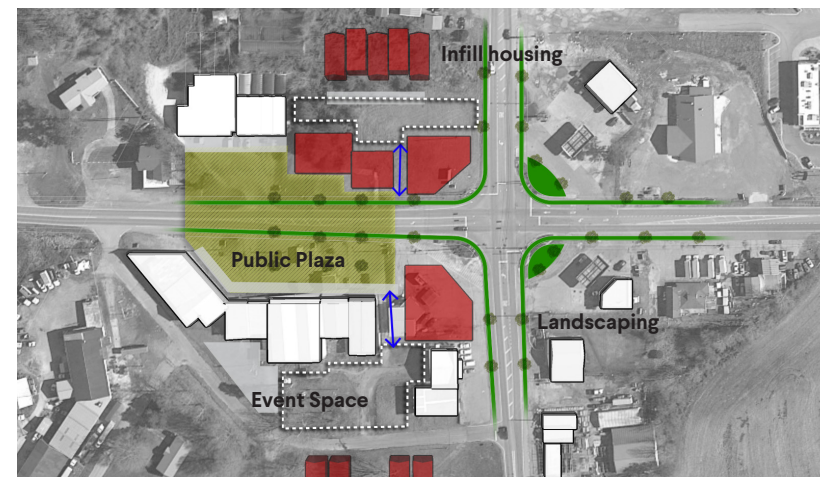
Henagar Crossing

Create a unique experience and sense of place at the intersection of Highways 40 and 75 through improved development, walkability, and streetscapes.

Overview

Henagar is centered around the intersection of the two highways that run through town. This point receives more traffic than any other part of Henagar, making it the de facto face of the city. The area contained in roughly a ¼ mile radius around this intersection is home to the city's highest concentration of businesses, City Hall, the fire station, the police department, Henagar Park, and the city's only subdivision. Despite being the focal point of the city, the existing development conditions at and around this intersection undercut its importance as Henagar's defining place. Although good progress has been made with landscape beautification on three of the intersection's four corners, there are a number of other factors holding this area back from realizing its full potential as a vibrant rural commercial crossroads. The four corners of this intersection are valuable and underutilized real estate. The space suffers from a lack of definition due to the absence of buildings to frame the space on any of the four corners.

One corner is entirely undeveloped, two of the corners are wasted on unimaginative gas stations, and the fourth corner is taken up by a vacant store at the back of a large parking lot that is being used by a single food truck for a brick-and-mortar restaurant located just 400 feet away. In order to harness the full economic and placemaking potential of this



Concepts for Henagar Crossing area

intersection as the crossroads of Henagar, the city should improve the streetscape and development/ site design standards at and immediately around the crossroads.

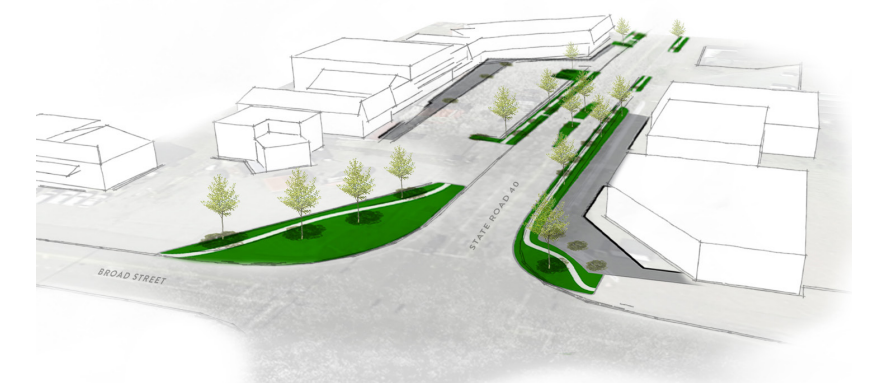
The intersection already has some streetscape Proposed Actions in the form of landscape plantings. These plantings should be expanded with the addition of an identical planting bed on the undeveloped fourth corner to match the other three corners. Curb and gutter Proposed Actions with sidewalks should be extended along both sides of the highways roughly 1,500 feet in each direction from the intersection to support the future development of this core area. These Proposed Actions should include street trees throughout and landscaped medians in the striped-off center lanes leading up to the crossroads.

Proposed Actions to the development and site design standards immediately around the intersection must include both short-term tactical enhancements and long-term redevelopment strategies. Examples of lower-cost short-term design solutions to enliven the crossroads could include pop-up markets or some kind of art display on the northern corner of the intersection, reusing the building on the western corner of the intersection as a coffee shop, and conversion of the gas station on the southern corner of the intersection into a restaurant or sandwich shop with outdoor patio seating. Long-term redevelopment opportunities should be considered for any property fronting the highways within roughly 750 feet of the intersection. These long-term redevelopment opportunities should include commercial buildings fronting the sidewalks/ roadway at least on the northern and western corners of the intersection, but

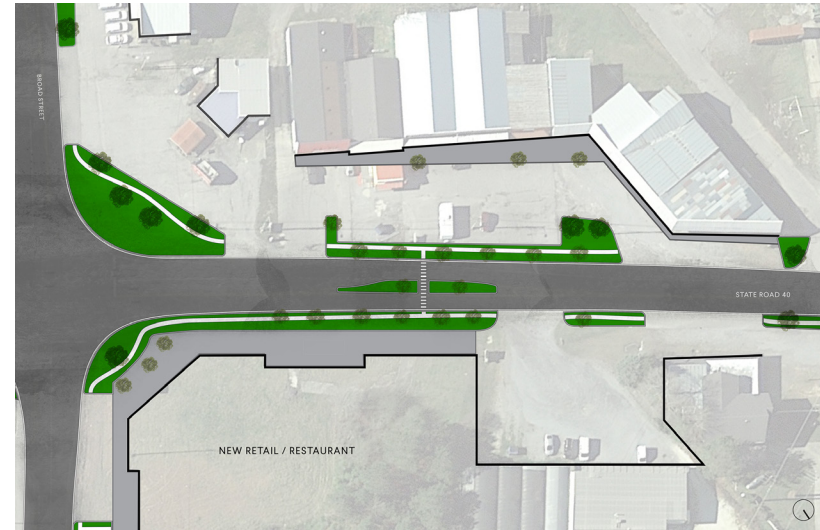
potentially on all four corners. Residential buildings on the highways within 1,500 feet of the intersection should be redeveloped for commercial uses. Similar to the existing subdivision behind the western corner, housing options should be built out around the intersection to provide a critical mass of support for the crossroads area as the heart and activity center of the Henagar community.

Proposed Actions

- Landscape the undeveloped fourth corner of the crossroads to match the landscape plantings on the other three corners
- Identify and implement short-term design solutions to anchor the undeveloped corner of the intersection (art installation, etc.)
- Identify and implement a medium-term reuse of the western corner of the intersection (coffee shop, etc.)
- Identify and implement a medium-term reuse for one of the gas stations at the intersection (restaurant w/ outdoor patio, etc.)



- Construct curb and gutter with sidewalks on both sides of AL-40, approximately 1,000 ft each direction.
- Construct curb and gutter with sidewalks on both sides of AL-75 from the future campground/ Henagar Park to First State Bank.
- Plant street trees wherever curb and gutter/ sidewalk are added
- Construct raised planted medians in the striped-off center turn lanes leading up to the intersection
- Develop crosswalks for pedestrians on each of the four sides of the intersection stoplights
- Identify and pursue funding to support a façade redevelopment of the existing strip mall area on the west side of the crossroads
- Work with developers to build residential properties on the highways within 1,500 feet of the intersection as commercial
- Work with developers to construct a retail/ restaurant development fronting the sidewalks on the undeveloped northern corner of the intersection
- Work with developers to redevelop the western corner of the intersection with a retail/ restaurant development fronting the sidewalks
- Retrofit the city's existing subdivision behind the west corner of the crossroads with sidewalks
- Prioritize new housing subdivisions in the area immediately around the crossroads with sidewalk connections to commercial developments along the highways



Conceptual Cost Estimates

Street Trees

- Cost per street trees: \$850
- Suggested spacing: 80 feet apart
- Half a mile (both sides): \$56,000

Decorative Lighting

- Per Light Pole: \$15,000
- Suggested spacing: 160 feet apart
- Half a mile (both sides): \$495,000



Henagar Crossing Concept

This conceptual rendering reimagines the Henagar Crossing area as a pedestrian friendly environment with enhanced landscaping, restaurants, and small shops that could be an economic driver for the city. There are also opportunities to create a unique identity for Henagar through the use of creative placemaking ideas, such as the painted crosswalks.

Murals

Quick, easy changes that can make a big impact in the city are good ways to make visible progress.



Concept of mural on the side of the Police building

Mural by Louise Jones <https://ouizi.art/>



Pop-up Event Space

Another strategy to activate space in the crossroads area is to designate spaces that can host temporary events, like a pop-up farmer's market or food trucks. Are there places around town where a community movie night could be held?



Highway Corridor Proposed Actions

Optimize the safety, efficiency, and aesthetics of Henagar's highways for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Overview

Highways 40 and 75 are the most important roads in the city. Improving these arterial roads is important because they set a lasting first impression of Henagar for 99% of people visiting or traveling through the city. For most non-residents, the highways will be the only perception they ever have of Henagar's business and residential environments. Although they are the face of the entire Henagar community, the lackluster and unkempt conditions along much of these highway corridors betrays the quality rural lifestyle found in the homes and farmland dotting Henagar's many scenic rural backroads. Henagar should implement highway improvement measures to improve traffic efficiency, increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and provide general beautification.

Proposed Actions

- Implement the 2022 TAP Grant award to construct a sidewalk along Highways 40 and 75 from Henagar Park to Henagar Jr. High

- Enact and consistently enforce a municipal ordinance requiring front yard maintenance/ cleanup for all properties along Highways 40 and 75 within city limits
- Construct curbs-and-gutters with sidewalks on both sides of AL-75 from Henagar Park to First State Bank
- Construct curbs-and-gutters on both sides of AL-40 from Cadence Bank continuing through the intersection
- Install street trees and pedestrian level street lights with a historic inspired design on both sides of the highways wherever curb-and-gutter/ sidewalk are made
- Street lights extending from the main intersection to City Hall and Henagar Park should be first priority for lighting installation
- Implement a longer-term sidewalk extension on the western side of AL-75 from Henagar Park to the Furniture Shoppe at Lacy Rd
- Implement a longer-term sidewalk extension on one side of AL-75 from First State Bank to Henagar Library and Limons Restaurant
- Identify and implement a tactical short-term placemaking

project for the historic Alamo-style structure at the intersection of AL-40 and Weaver Rd (statue garden, flea market, seating area, etc.)

- Identify a location for a Henagar-themed mural on Highway 40 and commission an artist from DeKalb County to design and paint the mural
- Possible locations include the Farmers Telephone Cooperative building, City Hall, the Silver Tractor Parts building, etc.
- Identify a location for a Henagar-themed mural on Highway 75 and commission an artist from DeKalb County to design and paint the mural
- Possible locations include 17999 AL-75, the police department building, the Stop to Save Supermarket, the Post Office, etc.



Gateway and Wayfinding Signage

Implement new city signage as an important early project to demonstrate progress.

Overview

As part of the comprehensive plan, the City of Henagar developed a new city logo and brand identity through a participatory workshop process. Three potential logos/brands were presented to Henagar residents, who were given the opportunity to vote and select their favorite option. A definitive majority consensus among the public developed around the final version, which was adopted by the city council as Henagar's official seal and brand identity. Implementing new gateway and wayfinding signage will be one of the best means to publicize and promote this new brand identity while identifying Henagar as a modern and forward-looking community. Signage is the most visibly prominent method to communicate a cohesive brand identity for the city to the general public, both residents and passersby. It is the first thing that people will notice as they enter the city and sets a first impression of the community's quality. Gateway and wayfinding signage in Henagar should incorporate the city's new logo and color scheme. In general, ground-level monument signs are preferred to pole-mounted pylon signs, especially for gateways.

Proposed Actions

- Install new monument gateway signage (similar to concept on opposite page) at the four major highway entrances.
- Install signage at City Hall and Henagar Park that matches the gateway signage.
- Hire a designer to develop a citywide signage plan with a unique rustic-style design hierarchy for gateway and wayfinding signs throughout the city.
- The signage plan should include a study of primary, secondary, and tertiary entrances with appropriate signage for each.
- A list of prominent locations in town should also be studied and agreed upon by the city to be included in wayfinding signage with historical and informational markers included.

Cost

- Per Sign: \$15,000



Concept of city entry signage

CHAPTER 4

Economic Development

Introduction

Henagar has millions of dollars in untapped market potential. Residents often have to travel to nearby cities like Fort Payne or Scottsboro for dining and shopping or to find items beyond the most basic staples that can be found in Henagar. The promotion of new and improved business concepts in Henagar would help to capture a portion of that lost economic activity and improve the city's municipal budget through additional tax revenue. Economic development is ultimately about improving the local quality of life through expanded commercial options for residents as well as expanding the local job market

at commercial and industrial businesses. The economic development strategy outlined in this chapter is founded on grassroots and collaborative methods that empower local residents and officials to act as advocates for the city by directly engaging desired companies and industries in business recruitment efforts without the need for an economic development "middleman". Henagar should take a holistic approach to economic development, realizing that unconventional efforts such as housing development, community events, and creative placemaking are also powerful drivers of economic growth.

Retail Gap Analysis

Work From Home

Grant Funding

Market Your City

Retail Gap Analysis

Support business development through proactive grassroots strategies

Overview




Understanding what types of businesses the city needs and what types of businesses the city has enough of is critical to support the city’s homegrown economic development initiatives. Retail gap analyses can empower city officials to become amateur business recruitment experts and support grassroots economic development strategies. A retail gap analysis is an in-depth look at market supply and demand in a city that takes stock of existing economic conditions to determine which business types are oversupplied and which business types have room for additional growth based on local demand. A retail gap analysis was conducted for Henagar as part of the comprehensive planning process. This gap analysis identified several potential areas for business growth in the city. The largest retail gaps in Henagar included \$3.4 million in unmet demand for car dealerships, \$2.9 million in unmet demand for department stores, and \$1.5 million in unmet demand for building materials, garden equipment, and supply stores. Overall, Henagar has a net retail gap of roughly \$4.3 million annually.

The City of Henagar should use the data from the retail gap analysis to help compile a list of business types to target for recruitment in order to help fill local unmet demand and grow the economy. Public input from the planning process should also be taken into account when creating this list. According to hundreds of responses to the online survey, the business types most wanted by Henagar residents were dine-in restaurants, retail, and grocery stores. The city’s target list should then be published in local media as a press release to better market opportunities in Henagar to existing and potential businesses in the region.

Proposed Actions

- Use the retail gap analysis and public input to compile a short list of the new business types that the city most wants (including industrial recruitment goals). Ideal companies for each of the business types should be identified (Tractor Supply Company for retail, Jefferson’s for dine-in restaurant, etc.)

- Publish a press release in local and regional media to publicize the city’s target list to area businesses.
- Share the target list with the DeKalb County Economic Development Authority and the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) to assist in recruitment and economic development
- Create a one-pager recruitment sheet highlighting favorable demographics and development opportunities in Henagar to share directly with the companies identified on the city’s recruitment target list
- Contact property owners at closed or vacant business establishments and work with them to advertise potential property sales or leases for new businesses in existing buildings
- Consider the placement of temporary signage at possible business locations in the city to advertise for potential new businesses

	Henagar Business Outlook		2023
	Mayor Lee Davis	DeKalb County, Alabama	
Population: 2,500 Median Household Income: \$50,000			
<p>Welcome to Henagar! We are a rural hub of DeKalb County, Alabama at the crossroads of 2 state highways. We are a 10 minute drive from the I-59 corridor and are conveniently located midway between the growing Huntsville and Chattanooga metro areas. With 12 miles of highways, 4 miles of sewer lines, and several planned infrastructure expansions, we support numerous restaurants and businesses, many mid to large size industrial and advanced manufacturing facilities, and a city-owned industrial park. Our local market is under-saturated, with the demand to support millions of dollars per year in additional business. See the figures below for some of our largest untapped market potentials or contact us for a copy of our full Retail Market Profile to learn how Henagar can support your business!</p> 			
RETAIL GAP	\$3.4 million <small>AUTO DEALERS</small>	\$1.3 million <small>GAS STATIONS</small>	\$1.5 million <small>GENERAL MERCHANDISE</small>
	\$600k <small>ELECTRONICS & APPLIANCE STORE</small>	\$500k <small>MISC STORE RETAILERS</small>	\$500k <small>SPORTING GOODS, HOBBY, BOOK & MUSIC STORES</small>
TOTAL	\$11.1 million		 <small>ANNUAL UNMET LOCAL DEMAND</small>
<small>Call or Email for business inquires</small>		<small>(256) 657-6282</small>	<small>henagarcitychamber@gmail.com</small>

Work From Home

Work from home economic development serves everyone in the community

Overview

The coronavirus pandemic has drastically altered the workforce landscape in America, even as the public health crisis has largely subsided. One of the pandemic's most lasting impacts has been the surging popularity of hybrid and work from home models. Another result is that many people are leaving more costly urban areas for more rural small-town communities with a lower cost of living. Henagar must position itself to take advantage of this trend by providing the resources needed by transplanted professionals to fully participate in the modern digital economy while choosing to call Henagar home. In order to successfully compete for such workers, Henagar will need to improve its telecommunications infrastructure and provide housing options attractive to this demographic. Provision of high-speed broadband internet and housing options such as apartments and garden homes will be critical in capitalizing on the work from home trend in Henagar.

Proposed Actions

Improve broadband/ high-speed internet access in the city

- Apply for a Broadband Accessibility Grant through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

- Continue to invest in the digital resources available at Henagar Library
- Pursue a potential small co-working space development in the city

Increase housing options

- Continue to support housing development through grassroots efforts
- Consider promoting USDA housing grants in the city

Invest in businesses, places, and events that provide a rural quality-of-life attractive to people looking to relocate to a small rural area

- Continue to promote the expansion of restaurants and businesses in the city
- Continue to improve the marketing of existing community events and social opportunities at Henagar Community Center
- Continue to improve and expand parks and recreation opportunities in the city

Market Your City

Publicize Henagar, its ongoing efforts, and its successes to a wide audience.

Overview

City marketing is a useful tool that can help build awareness of Henagar for residents, businesses, and travelers alike. It is important for the city to share its ambitions and accomplishments not just with its current residents but with the broader region. People and businesses are attracted to dynamic places that are 'on the move' and tend to disfavor static places that remain unchanging. Research has shown that places perceived as thriving or 'cool' were proactively engaged in demonstrating progress in their community, no matter how small the steps. Something as small as painting colorful crosswalk designs or hanging lights at a popular spot can generate excitement and a sense of momentum that can be captured and translated into larger more impactful improvements. In order to build that excitement and momentum in Henagar, the city should begin with low-hanging fruit: lower-cost smaller-scale projects that are highly visible during everyday life. Such projects can spark a general buzz about the community and spotlight Henagar as 'a city on the move' to people and businesses considering investing or locating in the town. This can only be successfully achieved, however, with an effective marketing strategy to share the city's progress, especially the small early steps, with a regional audience.

Proposed Actions

- Plan a quarterly press release in local media to highlight the city's unique offerings, community events, business developments, and general accomplishments (no matter how small!)
- Work to get any larger scale accomplishments such as a new sports complex, new industry, etc. published in statewide media articles
- Develop a social media photo contest at all community events to better document and promote the sense of community in Henagar
- Use seasonal decorations (hay bales, Christmas trees, etc.) with banners on the north corner of the 40/75 intersection to market upcoming events and celebrate the seasons

Grant Funding

Apply for and monitor economic development and community improvement focused grants and loans.

Overview

Financing the improvements needed to support the development of new housing and businesses is tricky for a city of any size. This is especially true in Henagar, with its limited municipal budget and administrative capacity. In order to successfully implement the projects and goals identified in this plan, the city will need to secure sustainable funding through a variety of resources. This could include a restructuring of the city's taxes, pursuit of bond funding, and applying for grant/ loan opportunities as appropriate. Although grant funding opportunities vary from year to year, the following list of grant programs has been identified as possible opportunities for Henagar to apply for. This list is not exhaustive, so city officials should conduct ongoing monitoring for additional grant funding opportunities that may arise. City officials may choose to perform grant writing efforts in-house or contract with a professional grant writer to assist in these efforts. All funding pursuits should be communicated with regional economic development organizations such as DeKalb

County Economic Development Authority or TARCOG who may be able to sponsor or assist in the development of application materials.

Potential Grant Opportunities

Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant

- Purpose: Identify resources to finance community facility needs from public and private sources
- Amount: \$150,000

Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program

- Purpose: Purchase, construct, and/ or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment, and pay related project expenses (police stations, child care centers, community centers, medical clinics, etc.)
- Amount: varies

Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program

- Purpose: Construct, enlarge, extend, or otherwise improve essential community facilities
- Amount: varies

Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund

- Purpose: Improve broadband access in rural areas
- Amount: varies

Proposed Actions

- Consider a slight increase in the city's sales tax to help fund community improvements
- Work with Polymer Industries to annex the remaining portion of the factory site
- Use additional municipal revenue from the Polymer Industries annexation to help leverage bond financing for various proposed community improvements
- Consider hiring a part-time grant researcher/ writer
- Coordinate any economic development or grant funding initiatives with DeKalb County Economic Development Authority and TARCOG

Action List



Parks & Recreation

► Henagar Park Project

Redefine Henagar Park as a premier community event and passive recreation location.

► New Sports Complex

Develop an athletic complex to provide sports recreation to city and regional residents.

► Trail Development

Develop a regional greenway trail along South Sauty Creek to connect people to important community destinations.

► RV Park & Campground

Support a private or public development of an RV park & campground in the city.

Land Use & Mobility

► Citywide Zoning

Adopt a citywide zoning ordinance to regulate development strategies to protect Henagar's small-town charm.

► Short-term Development Guidance

Unofficially nurture land use decisions that promotes the vision of the city.

Placemaking

► Community Events

Strategically market and celebrate existing community events.

► Henagar Crossing

Create a unique experience and sense of place at the intersection of Highways 40 and 75 through improved development, walkability, and streetscapes.

► Highway Corridor Proposed Actions

Optimize the safety, efficiency, and aesthetics of Henagar's highways for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

► Gateway and Wayfinding Signage

Implement new city signage as an important early project to demonstrate progress.

Economic Development

► Retail Gap Analysis

Increase city businesses through proactive grassroots strategies

► Work From Home

Work from home economic development serves everyone in the community

► Grant Funding

Apply for and monitor economic development and community improvement focused grants and loans.

► Market Your City

Publicize Henagar, its ongoing efforts, and its successes to a wide audience.



