

# City of Gautier Comprehensive Plan 2030



Gautier Comprehensive Plan  
City of Gautier, Mississippi

Approved by the  
City of Gautier, MS  
Planning Commission

The 15th day of June, 2009

Adopted by the  
City of Gautier, MS  
City Council

The 16th day of June, 2009

***This Plan is advisory only. Adoption of this plan does not guarantee any zoning changes or capital funding.***



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## CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION

*The Comprehensive Plan is a document which offers guidance for a city in terms of future development, the efficient use of land, public facilities, housing and economic development. It can help guide policy decisions by city leaders and provides a basis for development ordinances and capital improvement projects. The plan is based upon input from citizens, property owners, planners, city staff and officials. The Plan is based on the cultural and historical background of the community and considers the natural and built environment.*

### 1.1 REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

Gautier is located on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in Jackson County on the West Bank of the Pascagoula River, locally known as the "Singing River." The Mississippi Gulf Coast area was explored in 1699 by Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville, sent by the King of France to claim this important coastal region. He sailed into Biloxi Bay with a small troop and established a fort in the region. It is believed the original fort was on the bluff in Gautier where a prominent landmark, the Old Place, is now located.



The earliest settler in Gautier, Jean Baptiste Baudreau, arrived on the coast in 1700 with d'Iberville on his second voyage. Prior to d'Iberville's expeditions, a priest from one of DeSoto's party visited the Biloxi Indians at the mouth of the Pascagoula River in the early 1500s.

Evidence of prehistoric populations has been found in the area and the city recently preserved a prehistoric Indian burial mound, one of a very few preserved east of the Mississippi River. The site at the end of Graveline Road is marked with an historic marker.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast has been ruled by France, Spain and Great Britain and each new flag brought the infusion of a new culture. Traces of Spanish rule may be seen at the Old Spanish Fort in Pascagoula, built in 1718 and still open for tours.

Jackson County was founded in 1812. The county's transition from Spanish to American rule was made in 1810 when it was absorbed into the Mississippi Territory and brought under the Constitution of the United States. In December 1812 Mobile County was divided into three counties: Mobile on the east, Jackson in the middle, and Hancock on the west. The northern row of townships was taken from Jackson County and added to Greene County in 1822 and George County was created from the remaining boundaries in 1910.



### **Prominent Settlers**

The Gautier family moved from New Orleans after the Civil War, established a sawmill and built several beautiful homes, some of which exist today including the Oldfields, Twelve Oaks and the Old Place. Although only a few hundred people lived in the area, the train stopped to pick up lumber at the sawmill. When it became necessary to mark the spot on a map for the train conductors, the name "Gautier" was chosen because of the sawmill owner's name on the water tower. The area was henceforth called "Gautier" on all maps of the region.

Other prominent settlers include America's first Admiral, David Glasgow Farragut who was described as having "lived on the West Bank of the Pascagoula River," commemorated by Farragut Lake in the vicinity of his boyhood home. In an interesting twist of fate, the boy who would leave Gautier at the age of ten to go to sea would come back as the Commander of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and capture the territory from New Orleans to Mobile Bay which included his boyhood home of Gautier.



John McRae, born in Scotland in 1771, migrated to Mississippi in 1817 and came to Gautier nine years later. Much of the land owned in the 19th century by John and Elizabeth McRae was reacquired by an ancestor many years later and a portion is now being used as Shepard State Park.

### **Early Growth Patterns**

Jackson County's timber and sawmill industry prospered in the early days of the county bringing about the first economic

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boom lasting from 1880 to 1910. Pecans were a big industry at the turn of the century and shipbuilding was recorded as early as 1838 when Ebenezer Clark began constructing flat-bottomed schooners for coastal trade. This and other early shipyards were precursors of the state's largest existing employer, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding (formerly Ingalls Shipbuilding and Litton Industries). In more modern times, Jackson County has continued to attract new industries and currently offers more jobs in manufacturing than any other county in Mississippi.

For much of its history Gautier was little more than an unnamed spot on a map, though it was mentioned in the Mississippi edition of the *American Guide Series* published by the Works Progress administration in 1938 under President Roosevelt. Gautier retained its rural character until World War II when many shipyard workers moved to the area to build ships for the war effort at the shipyard that was run at that time by Bob Ingalls. Litton Industries bought and expanded the shipyard in the 1960s, which began another growth spurt in Gautier.

### **Significant Events**

During the past two decades three events have challenged and changed the city in significant ways. These events are as follows: (1) incorporation of the City of Gautier in 1986, (2) annexation of a substantial land mass to the west and north into the city limits in February of 2002, and (3) the effects of Hurricane Katrina, which made landfall on August 29, 2005. Each of these are discussed briefly below and in more detail in subsequent chapters.

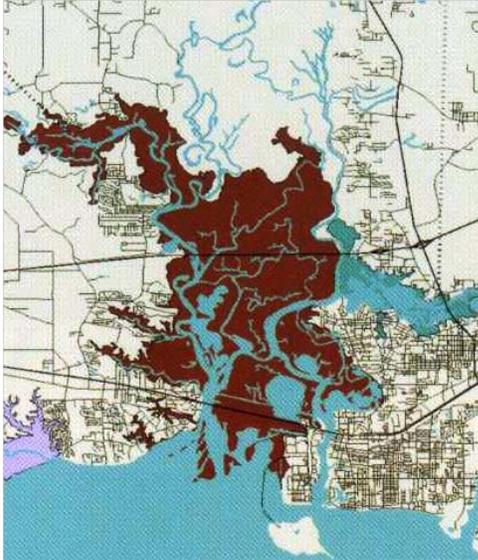
#### Incorporation

The governmental structure selected at the time of incorporation was a “City Manager” form, in which the city and city employees are directed by a professional city manager. Oversight is provided by City Council with one member elected from each ward, one member elected at large and one member elected as mayor. The mayor serves as chairman for council meetings and honorary representative of the city.

At the time of incorporation, the city added staff including a professional police force and fire department. Within ten years of incorporation a high school was built, although Gautier remains a part of the Pascagoula School District, enabling the schools to enjoy the tax support of its industrialized neighboring city.

#### Annexation

The annexation of large areas of land to the west and north of the city tripled the size of the city, increased population by approximately fifty percent and positioned the city for additional growth along the Mississippi Highway 57 (MS 57) and U. S. Highway 90 (US 90) corridors. It also placed legal requirements for expansion of city services and infrastructure to the newly annexed areas. Table No. 1 on page 24 contains population information relative to the annexation.



**Exhibit No. 1:  
The Pascagoula  
River Marsh Areas  
and Pine Savanna  
Habitat.**



### Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005. It is estimated the storm surge inundated buildings twenty feet above sea level in Jackson County. The effects of Hurricane Katrina were catastrophic to communities along the Gulf Coast; however, the geographical location of Gautier was advantageous compared to other cities that were closer to the eye of the storm and had land in lower elevations. The city has benefited from state and federal funding which paid for debris clean-up, repairs and improvements to infrastructure and buildings and facilitated several planning projects including this plan.

### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

The Mississippi Gulf Coast region is part of the Eastern Coastal Plan of the United States that encompasses portions of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. The coastal habitats include ocean-open water, salt marshes, freshwater marshes, pine savannas, swamps and sloughs, rivers and streams, bottomland hardwoods, beaches and woodlands, tidal and freshwater rivers, oxbows, tidal and freshwater marshes, pine savannas and flatwoods, upland pine forests and bayhead forests and swamps. (See Exhibit No. 1 opposite.) One of the most functionally important habitats is the coastal wetlands. In 1973 the Mississippi Legislature passed the Coastal Wetlands Protection Law which helps preserve the natural state of the wetlands and their ecosystems.

The Pascagoula River, the last major free-flowing river in North America without a dam on the main channel, flows on the eastern boundary of the city. Much of the coastal wetlands within and surrounding Gautier are a part of an estuarine system, where fresh water from the Pascagoula River meets the sea water of the Mississippi Sound. Such wetlands provide a haven

for wildlife, serve as a nursery ground for shrimp, blue crab, oysters, redfish, speckled trout, mullet and various other species and help insure the perpetuity of commercial and recreational activities associated with Coastal areas.

Preservation of the habitats at the mouth of the Pascagoula River has become a topic of interest to the community not only for the purpose of preservation, but to help promote eco-tourism for the County. The natural environment in Gautier provides numerous opportunities for birding which has become an organized event in Gautier and surrounding cities. The *Great Backyard Bird Count*, an annual natural festival, attracts many people to the area. Gautier has been the top city in the state in terms of attendance three of the last four years.

Gautier is also the location of the Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge, established in 1975 and the first wildlife refuge established under the Endangered Species Act. The refuge consists of more than 19 thousand acres protecting the endangered Mississippi Sandhill cranes and their wet pine savanna habitat. The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area, comprised of the six coastal counties, was authorized by the United States Congress on December 8, 2004. National Heritage Areas are places where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources remain which are representative of the national experience and provides an organizational structure to assist collaborative efforts to promote conservation, community revitalization and economic development projects.

The first land preservation organization in Mississippi, the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, was organized in 2000 for the purpose of protecting areas with ecological, cultural and scenic significance for future generations. The area of operation is the watershed of the Pascagoula, Tchoutacabouffa and Escatawpa Rivers which includes George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River and Stone Counties. This organization takes an active role in working with governmental entities and provides the legal structure which allows property owners to deed land to dedicate conservation easements that are managed by the Land Trust.

### **Cultural Attributes**

The historical and cultural attributes of the Mississippi Gulf region make it a unique place to live and visit. Residents of Gulf Coast communities celebrate their heritage throughout the year with numerous festivals, fairs and events. The Gautier community hosts an annual *Mullet Festival* in October that brings visitors from many places. The October 2008 event was the 18th year of the festival and was held on the grounds of the Old Place. The nautical



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connection of the community is also recognized throughout the year as citizens get behind their high school mascot, the “Gators.”

## **1.2 THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The City of Gautier Comprehensive Plan is a master plan for the future of the city which contains an inventory of current conditions, trends analysis, alternative scenarios for future growth, and specific implementation steps needed to accomplish the vision of Gautier citizens and leaders.

The Gautier Comprehensive Plan is based on the following assumptions:

- The Plan will be used as a general guide for future policy decisions and implementation steps.
- The Plan will be implemented with the use of various Ordinances and Capital Improvement budgets including the new Official Unified Development Ordinance.
- The Plan will need to be updated as market forces, limited resources, and other events occur which influence the growth of the city.
- The Plan is designed to foster quality development and improve economic viability of the city and reflects the visions of the community.
- The Plan has been written in accordance with Mississippi State Statute No. 17-1-1.

### **The Planning Process**

The general planning process for the Comprehensive Plan was comprised of eight basic steps including: (illustrated in Figure No. 1 on page 7)

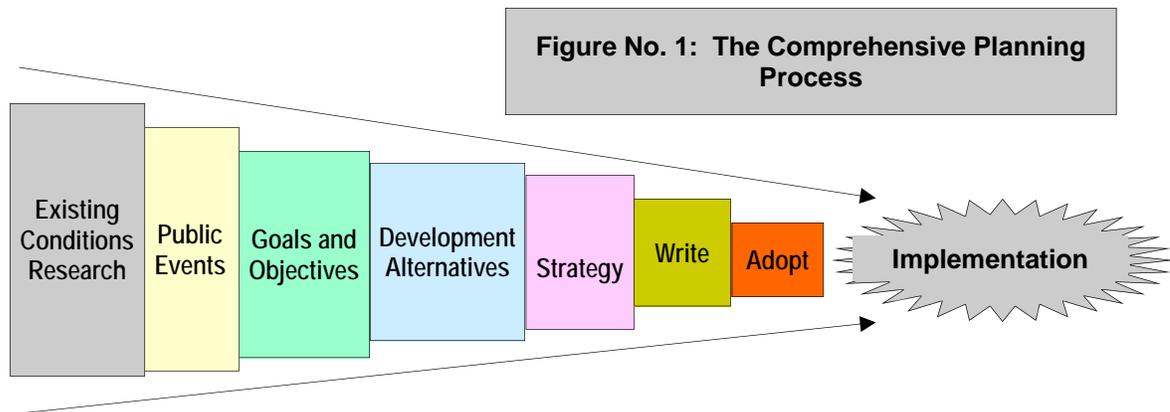
1. *Research of Existing Conditions and Trends:* Information was gathered about the economy, housing, population, infrastructure, community facilities, housing conditions and land use. Previous plans and studies were evaluated and interviews were conducted with elected officials, developers and other persons with specialized knowledge of the city and its needs.
2. *Public Participation:* Meetings were conducted, allowing citizens the opportunity to express their vision and concerns.
3. *Goals and Objectives:* Using input from the public, the Steering Committee assisted in writing the goals and objectives for the plan. Specific implementation and action steps to help accomplish the Goals and Objectives are found at the end of relevant chapters.
4. *Development Alternatives:* Alternative scenarios were prepared and reviewed to determine the best development style for the city. A custom development scenario was designed for the city which helped guide the Future Land Use Plan and Map.
5. *Implementation Strategies:* Short and long-term implementation strategies were selected which provided an action plan and benchmarks for success.

6. *Writing the Plan:* After evaluation of all of the above information and strategies, the plan was written, formatted and illustrated.
7. *Adoption:* After public meetings and review by the City Council, it is appropriate for the plan to be adopted as a policy document to help guide the future growth of the community and to form a basis for new development ordinances.
8. *Implementation:* The goals and objectives will be accomplished through ordinances, private development decisions, capital improvement projects, as well as future decisions of city staff, boards and the City Council.

### 1.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Following the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina, the State of Mississippi, with help from the federal government, funded certain planning events and the writing of certain plans to help facilitate the orderly redevelopment of coastal communities. These plans have led to an increased awareness as it relates to community character and quality of life. The following is a partial list of planning related projects initiated or completed.

- **2005**—Governor’s Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal was formed and the Mississippi Renewal Forum Charrette was conducted in several communities along the Gulf Coast which were affected by the Hurricane.
- **2006**—Gulf Coast Regional Infrastructure Program was initiated and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) were prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- **2007**—The City of Gautier received funding from Mississippi Development Authority and contracted with Neel-Schaffer Engineering to prepare a Comprehensive Plan.
- **2007**—A Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared and adopted by Jackson County, MS.
- **2008**—The Downtown Revitalization Plan was prepared and infrastructure improvement projects were programmed.



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- **November 2008—June 2009**—The final draft of the Comprehensive Plan was reviewed and approved by the city.

#### **1.4 PLAN ORGANIZATION**

The Plan is divided into seven chapters: Introduction, Community Vision, Existing Conditions, Transportation, Housing, Public Facilities and Land Use. The appendices contain a Capital Improvements Plan and sources of information used in the plan. The following Chapter contains detailed steps leading up to the adoption of the plan and the community vision.

## CHAPTER TWO: COMMUNITY VISION

*The community vision for Gautier was developed as a result of public participation events, work by the Official Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, follow-up sessions with city staff and officials and public hearings. It reflects the consensus of the community and was used to facilitate the writing of recommendations and policies suggested in the Comprehensive Plan.*

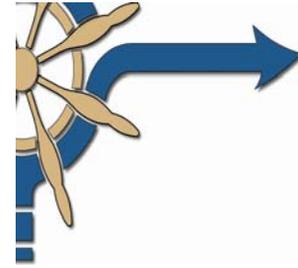
### 2.1 KICK OFF AND PUBLIC INPUT

Prior to the kickoff in the spring of 2008, consultants branded the plan "Destination Gautier" to reflect the tremendous potential of the city to establish itself as a destination for visitors and new residents.

During this same time period several public participation meetings were held to involve residents in the comprehensive planning process. The first event was a citywide kick-off held on February 12, 2008, at the Gautier Convention Center. At the kick-off participants were shown a brief presentation about the comprehensive planning process and their role in helping shape the goals and objectives of the plan.

In addition to the citywide kick-off, five ward meetings were held at the Gautier Convention Center. The meeting dates are shown in Figure No. 2 on this page and were as follows: Ward 1—February 25, 2008; Ward 2—February 26, 2008; Ward 3—March 10, 2008; Ward 4—March 11, 2008; and Ward 5—March 13, 2008. Approximately one hundred residents attended these meetings.

At each ward meeting citizens formed small groups of five to ten people and collectively worked on a group exercise. Attendees independently completed a Visual Preference Survey and a Community Survey (questionnaire). Before leaving they voted on the ideas expressed in all groups during the group exercise. A complete list of comments made by Gautier residents during the public participation ward meetings can be found in the *Public Participation, Advertising and Promotions Report*, dated April 15, 2008.



#### Public Meeting Schedule

**Kick-Off Event**  
Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>

#### Ward Meetings

*We ask that Gautier residents attend the meeting designated for their Ward. If you are unable to attend your Ward's meeting, then we certainly welcome you to attend another scheduled meeting.*

**Ward 1**  
Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup>

**Ward 2**  
Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>

**Ward 3**  
Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>

**Ward 4**  
Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>

**Ward 5**  
Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>

**ALL MEETINGS will be from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p. m at the Gautier Convention Center. Light refreshments will be served.**

**Figure No. 2: Bookmark advertising dates of Public Meetings.**  
Source: NSI

A summary of the results of each exercise is presented below.

### **Group Exercise**

Participants formed small groups of five to ten people. Each group collaborated to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the community. Comments from each small group were recorded on easel paper and posted in the meeting space. At the end of the meeting, participants reviewed the comments from all of the groups and voted on the three statements they most supported or agreed with, from each topic posted.



### Results of SWOT Group Exercise

Participants identified more than forty strengths for the City of Gautier. Approximately sixteen percent (16%) felt that Gautier's greatest strength was the ability to obtain a quality education. Other top strengths centered on Gautier's location and the city's waterways and waterfront properties. In addition, many cited the proximity to jobs and larger cities as being a major strength. Other favorable comments related to the people, the small town atmosphere and Gautier's ability to grow and expand due to the quantity of vacant land within the city limits.



Participants identified the lack of variety in business and retail as a major weakness. Seventeen percent (17%) would like to see more restaurants, shops, grocery stores, general retail and electronic stores. Fourteen percent (14%) identified the city government as a major weakness. Reasons justifying this choice included: disputes, employee turnover, city planning, leadership, politics and the lack of interest in the needs of citizens. Other major weaknesses were related to infrastructure problems and littering.

Regardless of Gautier's weaknesses, participants feel that Gautier has many opportunities. More than seventy

responses were recorded as opportunities. Gautier's greatest opportunity, according to participants, is retail and business development. Retail and business development was addressed in a number of ways and made up thirty-five percent (35%) of the votes under the opportunities topic. Eight percent (8%) of participants felt that the waterfront should be developed with marinas, shops and a boardwalk. Six percent (6%) felt the city should have more economic development to attract businesses and market Gautier. Other related comments focused on bringing in a larger variety of businesses, redevelopment or upgrade of the mall and encouraging water/theme parks.

In the final phase of the SWOT exercise, participants were asked to identify things that threaten Gautier's prosperity. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the votes identified the biggest threat to Gautier as being city government. Specific concerns identified were: poor and inconsistent leadership, dissension, lack of cooperation, politics, and the recent negative publicity



received by the city. The lack of economic development was also perceived as a serious threat to Gautier. Seventeen percent (17%) felt that Gautier needs to be marketed and that business and industrial development should be encouraged. Other comments under the threats topic were utility and tap fees, litter and the need for recycling.

### Visual Preference Survey

A Visual Preference Survey (VPS) presents pictures from similar size cities or communities around the United States arranged by category or topics. After viewing pictures of each topic, attendees chose the example that best represented what they preferred seeing, preferred not to see and what they considered to be a minimum standard for the City of Gautier. This information was useful in developing design concepts and specific improvements recommended for the City of Gautier. Eighty-nine people participated in the VPS exercise.

#### Results of Visual Preference Survey

A brief summary of the results of the Visual Preference Survey follows.

1. When viewing **highway commercial development** (See Exhibit No. 2 on page 12)
  - Forty-nine percent (49%) preferred to see a "big box" retailer with landscaping, decorative lighting and sidewalks;
  - Twenty-six percent (26%) preferred a commercial strip center with coordinating signs, sidewalks and landscaping; and
  - Fifty-eight percent (58%) preferred not to see detached commercial structures dispersed along the highway.

2. When viewing examples of **town centers** (See Exhibit No. 3 on page 13)
  - Twenty-five percent (25%) agreed upon an open structure such as a gazebo for the focal point;
  - Twenty-nine percent (29%) choose a monument as being more appropriate;
  - Twenty percent (20%) agreed that renovating the mall to include a new façade and landscaping would be preferable; and
  - Sixty-one percent (61%) preferred not to see a mall with little to no landscaping as Gautier’s town center.
3. When viewing examples of **downtowns**
  - Forty-nine percent (49%) preferred to see small shops and restaurants with outdoor seating and landscaping;
  - Thirty-six percent (36%) considered small shops and restaurants with landscaping a “minimum standard” for Gautier; and
  - Fifty-three percent (53%) discouraged a mall as the commercial element of downtown Gautier.
4. When viewing various types of **community centers**
  - Fifty-eight percent (58%) stated they would prefer to see a multi-purpose facility in lieu of traditional community centers; and
  - Sixty-eight percent (68%) preferred not to see a metal building used as a community facility.
5. When viewing styles, types and heights of **signs** (See Exhibit No. 4 on page 14)
  - Forty-five percent (45%) preferred to not see tall pole signs; and
  - Sixty-seven percent (67%) wanted smaller monument signs that blended in with storefronts.

**Exhibit No. 2: VPS: Detached Commercial Along Highway**  
*(Showing Big Box Retailer with Pedestrian Amenities)*



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## Community Survey

In addition to the SWOT exercise and the VPS participants filled out a community survey comprised of forty-three questions. The questions relate to schools, fire and police protection, recreation and entertainment, housing, community character and community facilities. Once completed, the surveys were collected and the information was analyzed for inclusion in the comprehensive plan.

After completion of the preliminary draft of the Comprehensive Plan, public meetings were held by the Steering Committee, the Planning Commission and the City Council which were attended by citizens and city staff. An open house event was held in the spring of 2009 to allow citizens an opportunity to view the Future Land Use Plan and to express their comments. The final draft plan was prepared and presented to the city for their approval.

### Community Survey Results

The community survey required responses to questions related to schools, fire and police protection, recreation and entertainment, housing, community character and community facilities. A brief summary of the survey responses follows.

1. Of the persons that completed the community survey

- More than thirty-five percent (35%) of participants lived in Ward 1, followed by almost twenty-four percent (24%) from Ward 5;
- More than fifty percent (50%) have lived in Gautier more than fifteen years;
- More than sixty percent (60%) stated they commute outside of Gautier to work; and
- More than seventy percent (70%) are planning on retiring or are currently retired in Gautier.

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### Exhibit No. 3: VPS: Focal Point for Town Center and Community Center



2. When asked to rate the quality of life in their city
  - More than fifty percent (50%) rated Gautier as a good place to live, but stated that the city has declined over the past few years.
3. When asked how often they travel out of Gautier to shop
  - Sixty-one percent (61%) go outside of Gautier up to three times a week;
  - Sixteen percent (16%) go outside one time per week; and
  - Nine percent (9%) go outside once per month.
4. When asked what future transportation plans should include
  - Sixty-six percent (66%) wanted sidewalks;
  - Fifty-four percent (54%) wanted bike lanes;
  - Thirty-eight percent (38%) wanted traffic signals at major intersections; and
  - Thirty-six percent (36%) wanted pedestrian crossings.
5. When asked what type of residential development they would like to see in Gautier
  - Fifty-nine percent (59%) wanted single-family;
  - Thirty-eight percent (38%) wanted retiree communities;
  - Thirty-three percent (33%) wanted patio/garden homes; and
  - Twenty-eight percent (28%) wanted mixed use.
6. When asked what additional public facilities they would like to have in Gautier
  - Fifty-four percent (54%) wanted community centers; and
  - Twenty-four percent (24%) wanted senior centers.
7. When asked what amenities they would like to see added to parks
  - Sixty-three percent (63%) wanted pavilions/gazebos;

**Exhibit No. 4: VPS: Tall Pole Signs versus Monument Signs**  
*(Showing Monument signs that Blend in with Storefronts)*



- 
- Fifty-four percent (54%) wanted picnic tables and landscaping; and
  - Forty-two percent (52%) wanted fitness stations.
8. When asked about whether Gautier should try to capture some of the characteristics of other Mississippi downtowns in their downtown area
- Eighty-one percent (81%) answered “yes” and
  - Seven percent (7%) said “no.”
9. When asked what characteristics they would like to see in downtown Gautier
- Seventy-eight percent (78%) wanted restaurants;
  - Sixty-nine percent (69%) wanted sidewalks;
  - Sixty-five percent (65%) wanted small shops; and
  - Forty-six percent (46%) wanted quality architecture.

**What do the results tell us?**

Gautier’s public participation process brought forth many ideas and opinions. Among the more prominent messages obtained from this process was the need for improved shopping alternatives, enhancement of parks, transportation alternatives and a commitment to strong economic development. The people of Gautier feel their city has enormous potential and would like to see it improved and promoted through positive marketing and the introduction of a wider variety of businesses and retail. They are also very proud of their natural resources and would like to see those resources used in the marketing and development of Gautier’s image.

In addition, Gautier residents expressed the need to see more cooperation within the city government. Many felt that this increased cooperation would produce many positive results, including a better image for Gautier, more community pride and better development choices.

**How was this information used?**

The results from these events were very informative and helped shape the goals and objectives component of the Comprehensive Plan. The consulting planning team also used the preferences and suggestions from the public in devising development alternatives for downtown and other areas and in framing recommendations for implementation of the goals and objectives.

**2.2 PREVIOUS CONSENSUS BUILDING EVENTS**

In December of 2006 a town hall meeting event entitled “Solutions for Gautier” was held to define how citizens would prioritize projects and goals for Gautier. The top eleven solutions put forth in order of importance were:

- 
1. Hire fulltime economic development person
  2. Lower utility bills and tap fees
  3. Clean/clear water
  4. Attract new businesses; spend our money at home
  5. Invite more businesses, department stores, grocery, restaurants
  6. Sidewalks in, to and around downtown
  7. Large sports complex for kids and adults
  8. Street lighting
  9. Public market area (garage sales, etc.)
  10. Improve infrastructure; water/sewer for future growth
  11. Better architecture and landscaping for new businesses

### **2.3 STEERING COMMITTEE**

During the period between December of 2007 and January of 2008 City Council members selected one of their constituents to serve on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Planning Commission also selected two members from their membership to serve on the committee. The purpose of the Steering Committee was to evaluate the comments of the public and the existing conditions of the community and using their expertise and familiarity with the community, write goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan.

Steering Committee members attended meetings twice each month for seven months and evaluated the material presented by consulting planners and other sources. As a result of their meetings, a set of Goals and Objectives and appropriate implementation steps were articulated for future growth of the city.

### **2.4 PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS**

#### **Planning Commission**

Mississippi State Statute assigns the initial responsibility for the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan to local planning commissions. Work sessions were held with the Gautier Planning Commission to review the plan and answer questions from commissioners. Suggestions from the members were considered in updates to the plan. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 15, 2009, recommending approval of the plan.

#### **City Council Overview**

The City Council has final authority over the adoption of policies and plans such as the Comprehensive Plan. A public hearing was held June 16, 2009, and the City Council voted to adopt the Plan as a policy guide.

## 2.5 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives have been formulated as general guidelines for the city's growth and prosperity.

### Housing and Neighborhood Stabilization

**Goal No. 1:** *Facilitate the building of new neighborhoods and the revitalization of existing neighborhoods that offer a variety of quality housing products in a safe and attractive environment for residents.*

*The objectives of Goal No. 1 are to*

- Provide housing for diverse market needs including various income and population groups;
- Eliminate unsafe and inadequate housing;
- Provide quality-built new homes;
- Build attractive new subdivisions with creative site design;
- Provide amenities for residents within residential neighborhoods;
- Promote public/private partnerships in real estate development, community development and affordable housing;
- Preserve the character and integrity of low-density residential neighborhoods; and
- Promote the efficient use of land while protecting valuable natural resources.



### Transportation

**Goal No. 2:** *Seek to establish an efficient multi-modal transportation network that serves all areas of the city and all citizens including those who are unable to use cars. The objectives of Goal No. 2 are to*

- Utilize the long-range MPO plan and federal funding to enhance the transportation system in Gautier;
- Improve the existing street system by building connecting streets and roads between key destination points especially within the downtown area;
- Control high speed traffic on major thoroughfares using traffic calming methods;



- Facilitate the planning and construction of a multi-modal transportation system including light rail and bus or van transportation;
- Promote connectivity of streets within neighborhoods by introducing pedestrian paths, bike paths and well-designed and maintained local streets;
- Provide parking to adequately meet demand and support economic vitality without sacrificing aesthetics; and
- Enhance the visual attractiveness of transportation routes with attractive streetscapes, signs and landscaping.

### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

**Goal No. 3:** *Protect the unique natural and cultural environment of Gautier thereby improving the community and its attractiveness to citizens and visitors. The objectives of Goal No. 3 are to*



- Showcase and preserve the recognizable and unique identities of the community such as the readily accessible waterfront areas, the river and the Mississippi Sound;
- Provide an interconnected system of green space, parks, greenways, and natural areas for wildlife;
- Protect natural resources through environmentally sensitive development, solid waste management, protection of water quality and wildlife habitats;
- Promote the preservation of wetlands, flood areas and the shoreline;
- Support arts and culture by developing partnerships with local schools, colleges and organizations;
- Encourage green building and resource and energy conservation practices in new and existing buildings through financial incentives;
- Protect and enhance the existing character, stability and scale of the city's older neighborhoods; and
- Protect the historic elements of the community including landmark structures, places and vistas.

### **Economic Development**

**Goal No. 4:** *Promote economic development and a positive climate for businesses which will result in a well-rounded tax base and needed services for residents. The objectives of Goal No. 4 are to*

- Capitalize on the city's location on a major east-west corridor as well as its proximity to adjacent communities;

- Enhance the visual appearance of commercial corridors with design standards;
- Promote the idea of “Destination Gautier” by promoting marine resources, unique places and the culture of the community;
- Find and promote an appropriate market niche;
- Develop incentives which will help recruit new business and revitalize underutilized and vacant commercial structures;
- Help insure that all Gautier residents have educational opportunities which will allow them to fulfill their personal and financial goals and become productive citizens;
- Become a pro-development city by offering efficient processes for development review and the use of financial tools to assist with infrastructure needs;
- Open up new areas for cultural events and leisure activities and to increase tourism and enhance the recreational opportunities for residents;
- Target specific commercial corridors for businesses which will provide needed services and shopping venues for students at MGCCC; and
- Redefine the perception of Gautier making it a unique place on the Mississippi Gulf Coast by promoting quality development, the effective reuse and rehabilitation of underutilized land and structures and by integrating natural landscapes into the built environment.



### **Community Facilities & Services**

**Goal No. 5:** *Provide infrastructure, community facilities and services that adequately serve existing and future development and that enhance the lifestyle of all residents. The objectives of Goal No. 5 are to*

- Provide a balanced network of parks, recreational and leisure facilities of varying sizes and functions which are distributed throughout the city;
- Insure that all age groups including seniors have adequate facilities, activities and services that help support an active lifestyle and age-appropriate recreational and social activities;
- Require new development to help provide for recreational venues by requiring open space or parks within each new development;
- Provide facilities and programs for lifetime learning such as libraries, community centers and programs for special population groups that may have difficulty accessing existing programs;
- Provide police and fire department facilities and equipment and funds to hire personnel to effectively protect the lives and property of citizens;
- Promote the prosperity of Gautier citizens through education, insuring that educational

facilities are safe and attractive and that the curriculum offered is adequate to prepare students for vocations, college and life challenges;

- Provide for safe disposal of hazardous waste, bulk items and solid waste; and
- Plan for and implement needed improvements to water, wastewater and stormwater facilities.

### **Leadership, Communication and Involvement**

**Goal No. 6:** *Seek to provide transparency in city government through the use of effective communication techniques. The objectives of Goal No. 6 are to*

- Provide additional venues where citizens ask questions and have concerns relative to city services answered by city staff and leaders;
- Receive news and information about the city;
- Encourage citizen involvement in neighborhood revitalization, community clean-up and civic minded events;
- Facilitate appropriate citizen input on processes and actions that affect the community and specifically individual neighborhoods; and
- Seek to educate citizens about the development review process and how decisions are made in accordance with adopted ordinances and standards.

### **Land Use and Community Character**

**Goal No. 7:** *Shape the urban realm of the city through the creation of distinctive commercial areas, a unique downtown, attractive gateways and corridors and the protection of existing residential neighborhoods. The objectives of Goal No. 7 are to*



- Establish a recognizable City Center for community and commercial focus;
- Promote and develop acceptable streetscape and landscape improvements at major city intersections, in rights-of-way and on future development;
- Create identifiable centers of activity with connected streets and pedestrian and bike paths connecting centers and major destinations;
- Protect low-density residential neighborhoods from commercial encroachment;
- Recognize the different types of land use and neighborhoods and develop appropriate land use standards that will enhance each type;
- Select key gateway sites and construct landmark structures which have a uniform theme;

- 
- Promote uniform and creative sign codes that will enhance commercial areas while eliminating visual clutter from roadways;
  - Create and enforce land development ordinances that will create a sense of place and reflect good design; and
  - Seek to eliminate inconsistencies in the application of the development ordinances which may benefit the interest of one individual or group over the interests of another individual or group.

Strategy for Implementation of Goals and Objectives

Specific implementation strategy and proposed action steps are presented by goal topic on the pages listed below:

Natural and Cultural Resources	Pages 45-46
Economic Development	
Housing and Neighborhood Stabilization	Pages 58-59
Transportation	Pages 77-78
Community Facilities and Services	Pages 100-101
Land Use and Community Character	Pages 128-129

The following chapter will present demographic information about Gautier, the region and the State.



## CHAPTER THREE: EXISTING CONDITIONS

*The Existing Conditions Chapter gives information about the regional context of Gautier and its history; socio-economic demographics; natural and cultural resources and presents a visual survey of the land mass. The purpose of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with basic information about the community and to provide a context for the recommendations and strategies formulated in later chapters.*

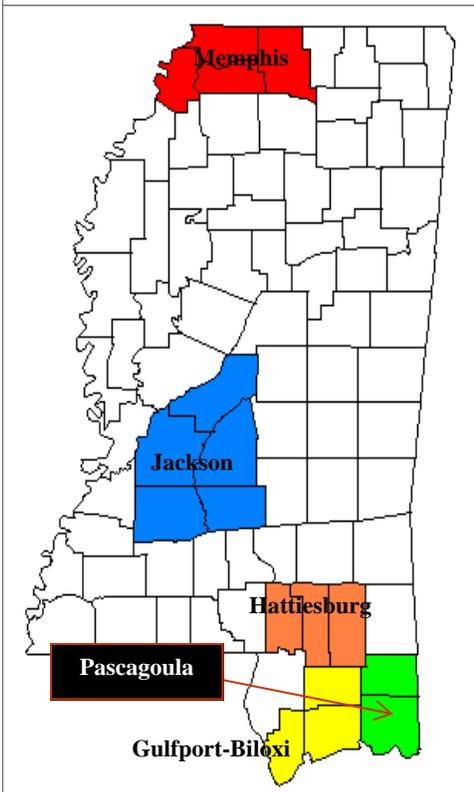
### 3.1 POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The population trends of a city, county or region are a strong indicator of its economic health and well-being. Gautier expanded its city limits during this decade which substantially increased the land mass and to some degree the population. Due to an abundance of vacant land for development and recent growth trends along the coastal areas, the city's population is expected to increase at a steady rate during the coming years. The Gulf Coast region, of which Gautier is a part, has been considered a relatively high growth area of the State; however, the loss of houses and jobs after Hurricane Katrina caused an outward migration in 2006. A more complete analysis follows and includes the regional and county context.

#### Regional and County Context

Gautier is located in Jackson County which is within the Pascagoula Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) along with George County. The Pascagoula MSA is one of five in the State and is defined by the U. S. Census Bureau as being a contiguous area of relatively high population density with an urbanized core area. The estimated population of the Pascagoula MSA in July 2007 was 152,035, a net increase of 1,471 people since 2000 at a growth rate of less than one percent (1%). This is consistent with the population growth trends in Jackson County during this period. The population of Jackson County grew from 55,522 in 1960 to 115,243 in 1990. During the decade between 1990 and 2000

**Figure No. 3: MSA's in the State of Mississippi**



Source: Wikipedia Online Dictionary

the population of the county increased to 131,420, a net increase of 16,177 people which is at the growth rate of one and one-third percent (1.3%). During the period from 2000 until July 2007 the population showed a net loss of 1,322 people. It is believed this was a direct result of the effects of Hurricane Katrina, since 2006 was the only year during this seven year period that showed a population loss. In 2006 approximately 6,272 people moved out of the county. The years prior to and after 2006 have shown modest but steady increases in population. This trend reflects growth patterns of all three coastal counties.

Jackson, Harrison and Hancock counties comprise the Mississippi Gulf Coast Area (MGCATS) and are recognized by the Federal Highway Administration as a logical data base for measuring and analyzing population trends for the purpose of planning. Historic population counts by the Census Bureau show that in 1970 these three counties had a combined population of 239,944. By 2000 the population had increased to 363,988, a net increase of 124,044. Recent studies by the Census Bureau and Claritas, a private firm, estimate that these counties lost 40,334 people immediately after the Hurricane but by January of 2006 had recaptured approximately 11,028 people. By July 2007 the population was estimated to be 345,890, a net loss of 18,098 people since the 2000 census. Based on these trends, the MGCATS study projected the population of the three coastal counties will be 379,387 by January of 2012.

### Total Gautier Population Data

In order to analyze the population trends of the city, it is important to understand that the area incorporated into the original boundaries of City of Gautier were included in the Jackson County population census figures in counts prior to 1990. Furthermore, at the time of 2000 Census, the population of the area annexed in 2002 was still included in the County totals.

<b>Table No. 1: Population of Land Area within the 2009 Gautier City Limits</b>					
<b>Area</b>	<b>1980 Census</b>	<b>1990 Estimate</b>	<b>1996 Estimate</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2007 Estimate</b>
Census Designated Place-Gautier	8,197	n/a		n/a	n/a
Original Area Incorporated, 1986	n/a	*10,088		11,681	n/a
Area Annexed, 2002	Not	*3,458	*3,750	5,014	n/a
Current City Limits, 2009	n/a	n/a	*10,077		16,096
Total	—	*13,547	*14,757	16,695	16,096
<i>Sources: U. S. Census Bureau and *Michael L. Bridge and Associates Fringe Areas Study, 1997</i>					

Therefore, none of the historic census counts for the City of Gautier have included the total population of the area within the existing Gautier city limits.

By determining the population of discrete areas known as “block groups” an estimate can be made about the historic population figures for the area within the existing city limits. Based on this estimate, approximately 16,695 people lived within areas which were within the city limit boundaries in the year 2000. Table No. 1 on page 24 shows historic population counts by aggregate block group areas. Table No. 2 below shows historic population figures for the pre-annexation city limits, the county and the three coastal counties.

The MCGATs study resulted in population projections through the year 2025 which were broken down into five year increments. According to this study, Gautier will have a population of approximately 18,413 people by 2010 and 22,788 people by 2025. Table No. 3 on page 25 shows the annual estimate population estimates completed by the Census for the years 2002 through 2007 and the population projections for future years completed by the MGCCC study.

**Discrete Area Population Projections**

Future population projections for Gautier were established by the MGCATS study by first dividing the city into discrete zones called Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) for the purpose of data collection. This information provided the base data which was compared to historical trends, amount of development activity, amount of available developable vacant land, other population projection studies and conversations with local officials and planners. Table No. 4 on page 26 gives the population projections broken down by traffic analysis zones and the map Page 27 shows the boundaries of the TAZ.

<b>Table No. 2: City and Regional Population Trends</b>			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>City of Gautier</b>	<b>Jackson County</b>	<b>Hancock, Harrison &amp; Jackson County</b>
1970	Not Incorporated	87,975	239,944
1980	Not Incorporated	118,015	300,176
1990	*13,547	115,243	312,368
2000	*16,695	131,420	363,988
Estimated 2007	16,096	130,098	345,890
<i>*Contains counts for land which was annexed in 2002. Source: U. S. Census and Neel-Schaffer, Inc.</i>			

<b>Table No. 3: Gautier Population Estimates and Projections</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Estimates and Projections</b>	<b>Source</b>
2002	16,096	<b>U. S. Census Estimates</b>
2003	16,579	
2004	16,713	
2005	16,579	
2006	16,947	
2007	16,096	
2010	18,413	<b>MGCATS Projections</b>
2015	20,503	
2020	20,843	
2025	22,788	
<i>Source: US Census, MGCATS</i>		

**Table No. 4: City of Gautier Discrete Area Population Projections**

<b>TAZ</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
109	947	997	1,085	1,173	1,321	1,449
110	2,099	2,148	2,280	2,319	2,4763	2,587
111	1	1	1	1	1	1
113	79	103	147	185	238	314
114	1,133	1,177	2,074	1,331	1,452	1,573
115	1,956	1,999	2,069	2,148	2,265	2,382
116	71	94	136	176	240	304
117	107	106	104	102	100	96
118	1,316	1,438	1,652	1,865	2,200	2,535
119	1,660	1,748	1,901	2,054	2,295	2,535
120	706	716	744	752	798	808
121	308	305	297	294	285	277
122	32	32	32	31	30	29
123	0	0	0	0	0	0
124	382	385	390	396	405	414
125	509	521	541	561	600	624
126	348	373	417	461	531	600
127	595	613	645	676	725	774
128	3,188	3,231	3,307	3,382	3,500	3,618
129	2,008	2,098	2,256	2,413	2,661	2,909
144	94	101	113	123	142	159
187	178	227	312	400	536	671
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,717</b>	<b>18,413</b>	<b>20,503</b>	<b>20,843</b>	<b>22,788</b>	<b>24,659</b>

*Source: MGCATS*

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# **MAP NO. 1: TAZ & STUDY AREA**

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## **3.2 OTHER POPULATION DATA**

### **Households, Race and Ethnicity**

According to the 2000 Census, there were 11,681 people, 4,260 households and 3,233 families residing in the area which was a part of the City of Gautier in 1999. The racial makeup of the city was sixty-eight percent (68%) Caucasian, twenty-seven percent (27%) African American, one half of one percent (0.5%) Native American and over one percent (1.26%) either Asian or "another race" not previously enumerated.

There were 131,420 people, 47,676 households and 35,709 families residing in Jackson County. The racial makeup of the County was seventy-five percent (75.35%) Caucasian, twenty percent (20.87%) African American, less than one half of one percent (0.33%) Native American, one and one half percent (1.5%) Asian, two percent (2.14%) Hispanic and over one percent (1.12%) "another race" not enumerated previously.

### **Age and Sex**

According to the 2000 Census, the Gautier population was fairly evenly distributed with thirty-one percent (31.1%) under the age of nineteen; thirty-seven percent (37.3%) between the ages of twenty and forty-four; twenty-three percent (23.3%) between the ages of forty-five and sixty-four; and over eight percent (8.3%) over sixty-five years of age. The median age was thirty-three years. For every 100 females there were 97.9 males, for every 100 females age eighteen and over, there were 94.9 males.

In Jackson County, thirty percent (30%) were under the age of nineteen; thirty-six percent (36%) were between the ages of twenty and forty-four; twenty-two percent (22%) between the ages of forty-five and sixty-four; and ten percent (10%) were over sixty-five years of age. The median age was thirty-three years. For every 100 females there were 98.2 males; for every 100 females age eighteen and over, there were 95.9 males. Table No. 5 on page 30 shows race, ethnicity and gender of persons in Gautier and Jackson County in 1999.

### **Number of Households by type**

The 2000 Census shows there were 4,260 households in Gautier in 1999, of which thirty-eight percent (38%) had children under the age of eighteen living with them; fifty-four percent (54%) were married couples living together; seventeen percent (17%) had a female householder with no husband present and twenty-four percent (24%) were non-families. Approximately twenty percent (20%) of all households were made up of individuals and four and one half percent (4.5%) of these had someone living alone who was sixty-five years of age or older. The average household size was 2.73 persons and the average family size was 3.11 persons.

Of the 47,676 households in Jackson County, thirty-seven percent (37%) had children under the age of eighteen living within them, fifty-five percent (55.7%) were married couples living

together, fourteen and one-half percent (14.5%) had a female householder with no husband present, and twenty-five percent (25.0%) were non-families. Individuals made up twenty percent (20.8 %) of all households and seven percent (7.10%) had someone living alone who was sixty-five years of age or older. The average household size in Jackson County was 2.72 persons and average family size was 3.10 persons.

### 3.3 INCOME AND POVERTY

<b>Table No. 5: Race, Ethnicity and Gender of Persons in Gautier and Jackson County, 1999</b>		
	Gautier	Jackson County
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,681</b>	<b>131,420</b>
# Households	4,260	47,676
Average HH Size	2.73	2.72
# Families	3,233	68,709
Caucasian	75.1%	75.35%
Black or African American	12.3%	20.87%
Hispanic	12.5%	2.14%
Male Persons	49.1%	49.6%
Female Persons	50.9%	50.4%
Percent 65 or older	12.4%	11.3%
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Source: U. S. Census, 2000</i>		

The income and poverty analysis gives valuable insight into the economic well-being of the community as indicated through household income, poverty levels and sources of income. The quality of life of residents and their ability to purchase goods and services is a direct result of adequate income and earnings ability.

#### Income

According to the 2000 Census, the median household income for Gautier was \$41,244. Household income is defined as the total amount of annual income generated by the household members in the workforce. This compared favorably with the Jackson County median household income of \$39,118 and was considerably higher than the State median household income of \$31,330. The median household income in the United States was \$41,994.

The median family income in 1999 for families in Gautier was \$46,833, \$45,091 for families in Jackson County and \$37,466 for families in Mississippi. Census per capita income in Gautier was \$17,525

compared to \$17,057 in Jackson County and \$15,853 in Mississippi. In 2004 the U. S. Census Bureau estimated that median household income in Jackson County had increased to \$40,418 and by 2007, the estimated household income for the County was \$43,411.

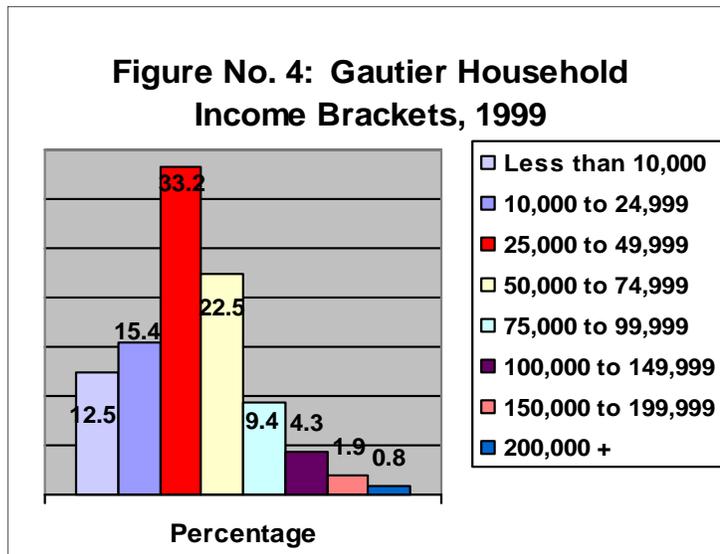
Another source of income information is the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) that uses a different methodology from the U. S. Census. Their figures indicate that in 2001 per capita personal income (PCPI) in Jackson County was \$23,246 and increased to \$34,187 in 2007, placing Jackson County as the fourth highest in the state.

In 2007 the BEA estimated that total personal income (TPI) in Jackson County was over \$3.7 trillion placing Jackson County fifth in the State and accounting for over four percent (4.8%) of

the state total. Total personal income includes net earnings, dividends, interest, rent and personal current transfer receipts by the residents of Jackson County.

Household Income Brackets

The U. S. Census Bureau has defined income categories for the population ranging from less than \$10,000 to \$200,000 or more. In Gautier, the largest bracket or thirty-three percent (33.2%) earned between \$25,000 and \$49,000 annually. The second largest bracket or twenty-five percent (25.3%) earned between \$50,000 and \$74,999 annually. Figure No. 4 opposite shows the percentage of households within each income bracket within the city.



**Poverty**

The U. S. Census Bureau has predetermined a poverty line which is the minimum annual monetary sum needed to afford basic and essential items such as shelter, clothing and food. The poverty line is adjusted annually for inflation. In 1999 an individual would be considered living in poverty if he/she had less than \$8,501 available for household expenses. A family of four who had income of \$17,029 or less would be “below the poverty level.”

The poverty status of families and individuals living in Gautier in 1999 is as follows:

- Families living below poverty level: 501 families or fifteen percent (15%), compared to the Jackson County poverty rate of ten and one half percent (10.5%)
- Individuals living below poverty level: 2,035 individuals or seventeen percent (17.3%), compared to the Jackson County rate of twelve percent (12.7%)
- Forty-seven percent (47.5%) of families living in poverty had female head of households with no husband present, compared to the Jackson County rate of thirty-four percent (34.5%)
- Thirteen percent (13.6%) of persons sixty-five years of age or older were living below the poverty level, compared to the Jackson County rate of twelve percent (12.1%)

More recent data published by the U. S. Census Bureau in 2007 indicates that eleven percent (11%) of families in Jackson County had income below the poverty level during the previous twelve month period. This is a slight increase from the 2000 Census figure of ten and one half percent (10.5%). Married couple families constituted six percent (6.4%) of these and

thirty percent (30.4%) of families living in poverty were families with female householder, no husband present.

### 3.4 EMPLOYMENT DATA

A strong local economy is needed to provide goods, services and employment to residents and to generate tax revenue that support the public services needed by residents. Jackson County has the second largest employment base in the state and is the home of major industries such as Northrop Grumman and Chevron Products. Manufacturers in Jackson County constitute

<b>Table No. 6: Largest Manufacturers in Jackson County, 2006</b>		
<b>Name of Corporation</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>*Emp.</b>
Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, Pascagoula	Naval Ships	11,750
Chevron Products Co.	Petroleum Refining	1,200
Signal International, LLS	Oil Rig Fabrications	650
V. T. Halter Marine, Inc.	Ship Building & Repair	475
Mississippi Phosphates Corp	Fertilizer, diammonium phosphate	220
*Does not include contract workers Source: Mississippi Manufacturers' Database, 2006		

twenty-three percent (23%) of industry within the state. The largest manufacturers in Jackson County and their number of employees in 2006 are shown in Table No. 6 opposite.

#### **Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Rate**

The labor force is the portion of the population sixteen years or older that is employed or unemployed but actively seeking a job. According to the 2000 Census, there were 8,778 persons sixteen years of age or older living in Gautier. More than sixty-four percent (64.8%) or 5,668 persons were in the civilian labor force. Approximately fifty-seven percent (57.8%) were employed. Two hundred forty-nine persons or approximately two percent (2.8%) were in the

armed forces. Unemployment levels rose to over twenty percent (20%) immediately after Katrina but returned to normal levels in the fall of 2006. Table No. 7 on page 33 shows recent employment trends in the coastal counties.

#### **Occupations of Gautier Residents**

According to the 2000 Census, over twenty-nine percent (29.3%) of employed individuals or 1,486 persons in Gautier worked in management, professional or related occupations. Over twenty-three percent (23.8%) worked in sales and office occupations. Sixteen percent (16%) worked in service occupations and another sixteen percent (16%) worked in production, transportation and material moving occupations. Fourteen percent (14%) worked in construction, extraction and/or maintenance occupations and the smallest percentage (0.3%) worked in farming, fishing or forestry occupations. Eighty percent (80.3%) were private wage or salary workers, fifteen percent (15.2%) were government workers, three percent (3.9%) were self-employed and less than one percent (0.6%) were unpaid family workers.

<b>Table No. 7: Recent Employment and Unemployment Rates, Coastal Counties</b>						
	Labor Force		Employed		Unemployment Ratio	
	June, 2005	June, 2008	June, 2005	June, 2008	June, 2005	June, 2008
Hancock	20,920	19,610	19,490	18,300	6.8%	6.7%
Harrison	93,610	88,340	87,000	82,670	7.1%	6.4%
Jackson	63,280	62,580	56,660	58,220	7.1%	7.0%
Total	177,810	170,530	165,150	159,190	7.1%	6.6%
<i>Source: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008</i>						

### **Jackson County Employment in 2007**

According to the U. S. Census Bureau, over sixty percent (61.7%) of persons sixteen years of age or older in Jackson County were employed in 2007. Sixty percent (60%) of persons were in the civilian labor force and seventeen percent (17.4%) of these worked

in the manufacturing industry. Over sixteen percent (16.7%) worked in the educational, health care and social assistance industry; thirteen percent (13.7%) worked in arts, entertainment, recreation accommodation and food services.

### **Economic Development Post Katrina**

The Gulf Opportunity Zone Act (Go-Zone), passed by Congress and signed into law in December 2005, provided economic development incentives within the forty-nine most damaged counties of Mississippi and other states affected by Hurricane Katrina, Rita and Wilma. Incentives included \$4.9 billion in tax-exempt private activity bonds, \$106 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and a fifty percent (50%) bonus-depreciation for property placed in service before the pre-determined deadline. Go Zone tax-exempt private activity bonds encouraged both economic recovery and growth in South Mississippi. Some of the largest employers on the Coast including Chevron, Northrop Grumman and PSL-North America received recovery assistance through the increased bond allocation.

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) was awarded a \$95 million National Emergency Grant (NEG) from the federal government to assist in temporary recovery jobs and to help provide job training. MDES has continued to partner with organizations to increase employment opportunities along the Coast using Workforce Investment Network, Job Centers, partnerships and grants to community colleges and proprietary schools.

### **3.5 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

Analysis of a community's existing educational attainment is directly related to income earning ability and employment characteristics. The educational attainment level of persons twenty-five years or older is collected during the Decennial Census. In 1999, over sixteen percent (16.7%) of Gautier residents who were twenty-five years or older had not earned a high school diploma. This compares favorably to the eighteen percent (18%) of Jackson County

<b>Table No 8: Educational Attainment of Gautier, Jackson County and Mississippi Residents, 1999</b>						
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Gautier</b>		<b>Jackson County</b>		<b>Mississippi</b>	
	<b>Popu- lation</b>	<b>%</b>			<b>Popula- tion</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>(25 years and over)</b>						
Less than 9th Grade	246	3.4	4,040	4.9	169,178	9.6
9th to 12th Grade, no diploma	959	13.3	11,704	14.1	307,852	17.5
High school graduate (or GED)	2,110	29.2	26,579	32.1	516,091	29.4
Some college, no degree	2,037	<b>28.2</b>	20,328	24.5	366,744	<b>20.9</b>
Associate degree	609	<b>8.4</b>	6,540	7.9	100,561	<b>5.7</b>
Bachelors' degree	843	11.7	8,863	10.7	194,325	11.1
Graduate or profes- sional degree	413	5.7	4,764	5.8	102,766	5.8
<i>Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000</i>						

residents and twenty-seven percent (27%) of Mississippi residents who had not earned a high school diploma at this time. During this same census year nineteen percent (19.3%) of the residents of the United States had not earned a high school diploma. Over twenty-eight percent (28.2%) of Gautier residents had some college, over eight percent (8.4%) had earned an associate degree, over eleven percent (11.7%) had a bachelor degree, and over five percent

(5.7%) had earned a graduate or professional degree. These figures are similar to those of the state; however the percentage of persons receiving an associate degree is greater than that of the state (8.4% compared to 5.7%) and the percentage of persons completing some college is considerably higher (8.4% compared to 5.7). Table No. 8 above shows educational data from Gautier, Jackson County and Mississippi.

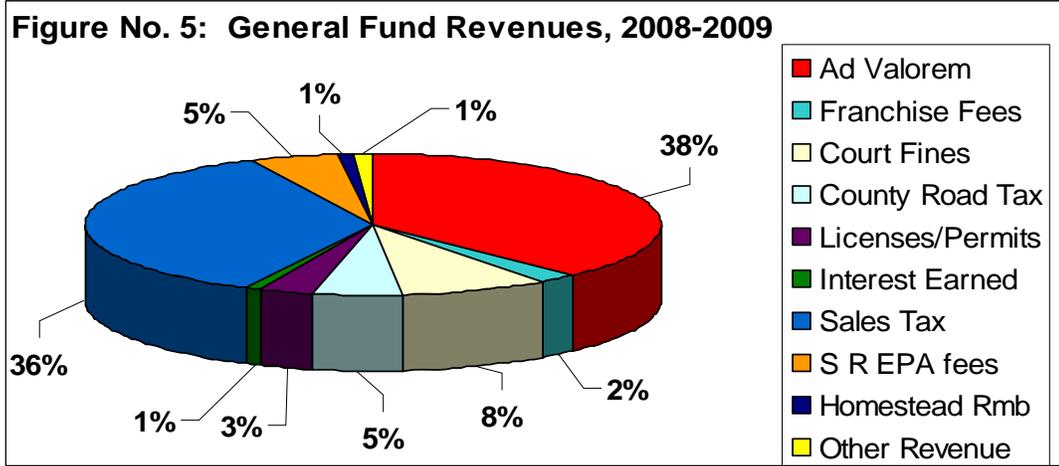
### 3.6 CITY OF GAUTIER REVENUES

The two main sources of revenue to the city are sales taxes and property taxes which contributed thirty-six percent (36%) and thirty-eight percent (38%) respectively to the city's total revenue in FY 2008-2009. This balance of revenue sources is considered healthy and will contribute to the stability of the city finances. Other funding sources for the city are (1) court fines, (2) EPA fees, (3) county road tax, (4) licenses, and (5) reimbursement from the state for a percentage of Homestead Exemption. Revenue percentages for FY 2008-2009 from each source is shown in Figure No. 4 on page 35.

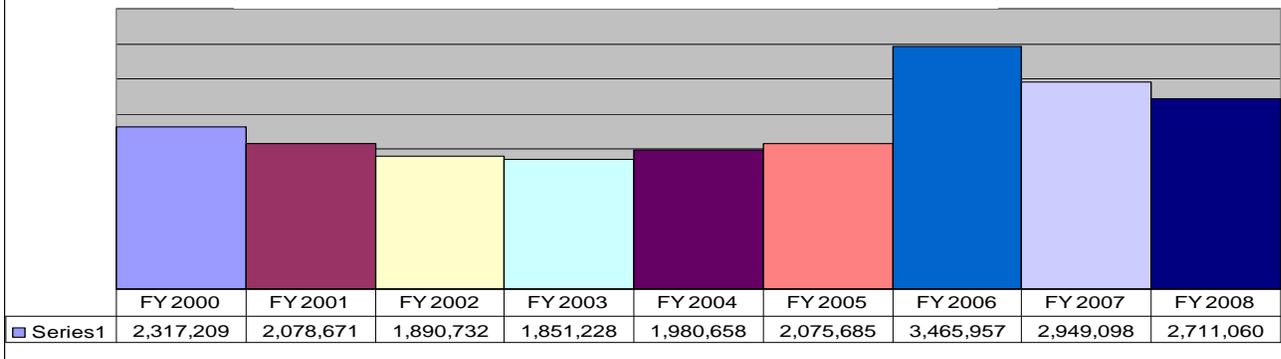
#### Sales Tax

Sales Tax collections increased over fifty-five percent (55.5%) from the Fiscal Year (FY) of 2005 to Fiscal Year 2006 due to the post-Katrina rebuilding efforts. In FY year 2007, there was a forty-five percent (45%) increase from 2005 and FY 2008 shows a thirty percent (30%)

Source: City of Gautier



**Figure No. 6: City of Gautier Revenues, FY 2008-2009**



increase. Collections during the first half of 2009 have decreased when compared to the same month in 2008. It is expected that the current recessionary period has temporarily affected sales tax revenues in the city. Figure No. 6 on page 35 shows the yearly trends from FY 2000—2008.

Property Taxes

The largest single source of revenue for the City of Gautier is from local property (ad valorem) taxes. Ad valorem taxes are paid on real property and personal property according to the assessed value. Mississippi state statute regulates the percent of assessed value in proportion to appraised value while counties and cities legislate the mileage rate. The city has a vested interest in protecting the property value of structures within its jurisdiction and will benefit greatly from new development.

**3.7 VISUAL ANALYSIS AND LAND USE PATTERNS**

The largest land mass of the city lies between I-10 on the North and the Mississippi Sound on the South. MS 57 forms a portion of the western boundary and the Pascagoula River forms the eastern boundary. Approximately twenty-five percent (25%) of the land in the city lies above I-10 and is accessible only from Martin Bluff Road or the north frontage road of I-10.

Large areas of conservation land as well as seventy miles of waterfront property place development constraints on the city, but the population is growing as vacant land is platted for new homes or developed for commercial entities. The primary commercial corridors are US 90 (east/west corridor) and Gautier-Vancleave Road (north/south). MS 57 and Gautier-Vancleave Road have access to I-10; however much of the land close to the interstate is within the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge which prohibits development. Martin Bluff Road is a major thoroughfare linking the northern and southern sections of the city.



The existing land use patterns in Gautier exhibit characteristics of a typical suburban community with low-density commercial uses along major transportation corridors. Institutional uses such as the community college and the city and county buildings are also located on US 90. Low-density residential neighborhoods and to a certain extent mobile home parks and fishing camp villages, representative of historic gulf coast residential neighborhoods, branch off of the major thoroughfares.

A casual drive through the main streets of the city does not reveal Gautier's greatest asset—its tree-lined bayous and stunning waterfront property. Unfortunately very little of the waterfront is owned by the city or is being used as a public park. Private homes and fishing camps, tucked away from the central portion of the city utilize most of the high ground along the waterways and make a dramatic statement about the beauty of Gautier. Figure No. 7 on page 37 gives a graphic depiction of the visual form of Gautier.



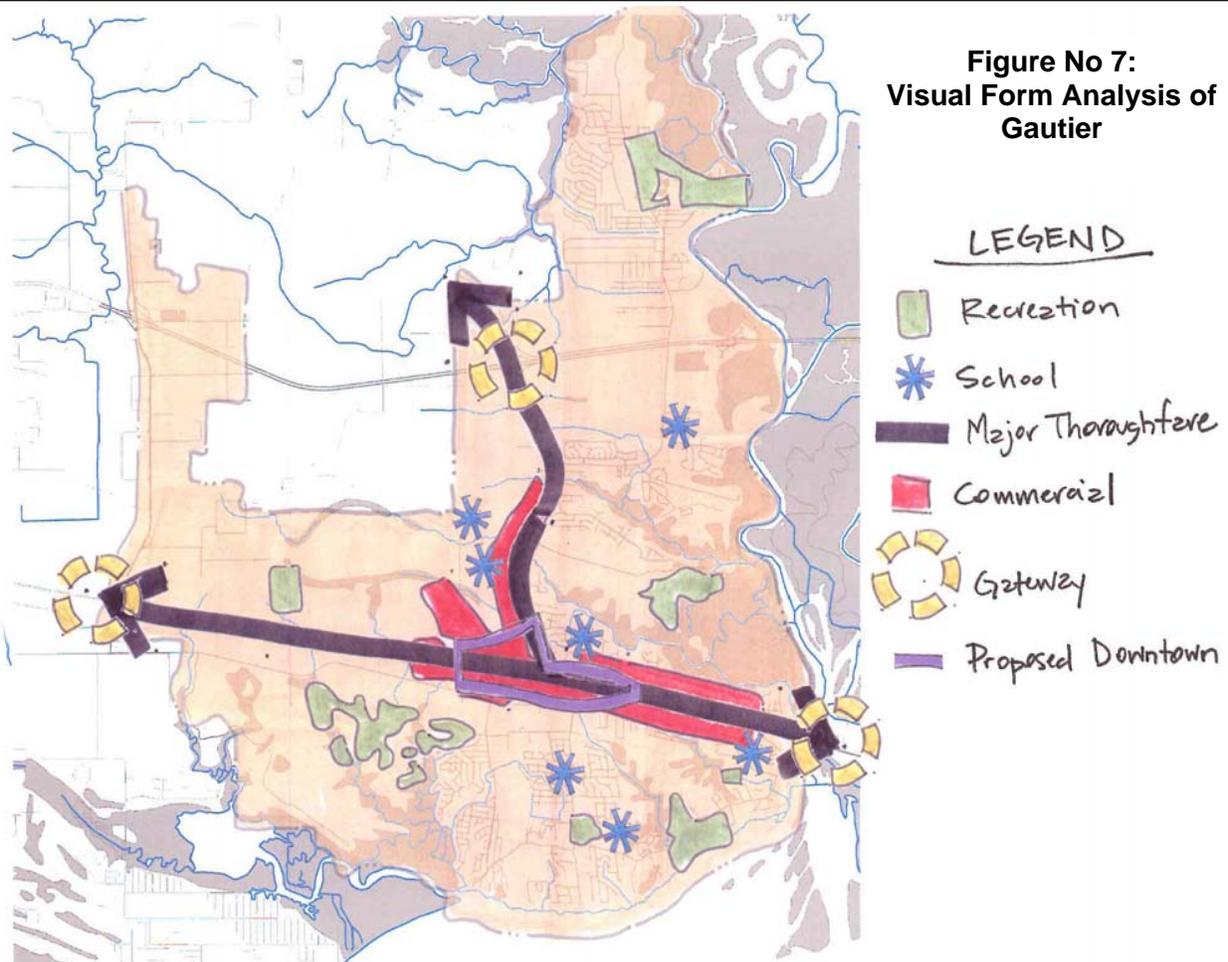
### **Identified Community Character Issues**

Gautier, like many other communities, has several large commercial sites which were developed decades ago prior to the emergence and use of uniform community design standards. The majority of commercially zoned land is located on US 90 and contains large retail stores, stand-alone businesses and several new fast food restaurants and drug stores. The older sites have very large, dated building signs and tall pole style ground signs,

some of which have been abandoned. The parking lots lack landscaping and there is very little if any landscaping used to accent properties or mitigate the negative affect of parking lots. Newer fast-food restaurants and drug stores sites exhibit the current trend of attractive corporate design which utilizes attractive signs and landscaping. Multiple access points onto commercial sites are confusing and unsightly. Most power lines are above ground except for recently platted and built residential subdivisions.

Gautier does not have an historic downtown area but has recently designated several blocks of commercial property along US 90 as the official downtown district. Plans have been prepared and projects are underway to enhance this area with pedestrian walkways, new landscaping and lighting. Ideally this area should be targeted as the highest density area which will help form a central core for the city.

Major transportation corridors carry a large amount of traffic. Some have sidewalks but do not have crosswalks or accommodations for bicyclists. Existing gateway structures need replacement or refurbishing and should be included as a part of the downtown revitalization plan or other infrastructure plans.



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### 3.8 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Preservation of the natural environment is of paramount importance and is greatly affected by the built environment. This section will cover some of the environmental factors which must be considered as development occurs.

#### **Wetlands**

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), wetlands are the transitional link between land and water that provides a unique ecosystem and habitat for a variety of species including aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals. In addition to providing a natural habitat for plants and animals, they provide a valuable role in floodplain management. When rivers overflow, wetlands absorb and slow the impeding floodwaters, mitigating the effect of flooding on communities.

One of the most prevalent threats to wetlands is that of residential and commercial development. EPA estimates that approximately 60 thousand acres of wetlands are lost each year. In an effort to conserve wetlands, several programs have been developed with other federal and state agencies. Through a partnership with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the Clean Water Act (Section 404) was passed which established environmental standards for reviewing permits for discharges that affect wetlands.

The National Wetlands Inventory is a program developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and through a partnership with the Department of the Interior and the United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.). The inventory has identified five major wetland types within the corporate limits of Gautier including: estuarine and marine deepwater, estuarine and marine wetland, freshwater emergent wetland, freshwater forested/shrub wetland and freshwater pond. The two predominant wetland features in Gautier are Freshwater Emergent Wetland (found in most areas except the southern and eastern portions of the city) and Estuarine and Marine Wetland (found mostly on the eastern portion of the city).

#### **Stormwater Runoff**

Water, though seemingly abundant and clean, is becoming increasingly threatened. We rely on aquifers, groundwater, rivers and rain to supply water for personal use

**Impervious Surface: Any non-permeable surface including but not limited to roads, parking lots, rooftops and sidewalks.**

as well as for recreational uses. Since development impedes the natural flow of water by creating impervious surfaces, drainage systems are required to control runoff.

The city controls the storm drainage system using detention ponds, roadside swales, ditches, storm drain networks, culverts, natural and manmade cross-country channels and natural creek/bayou channels that eventually discharge into the West Pascagoula River, the Mississippi Sound or Fort Bayou.

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## **Jackson County and MS 57 SMA**

A Special Management Area (SMA) has been proposed for certain land on both sides of MS 57 and includes approximately 9,300 acres and 1,400 individual parcels. The boundaries of the SMA are land south of I-10; north of the railroad track; east of Reilly Road in Ocean Springs; and west of Beasley Road in Gautier.

This proposed action of the SMA is to develop a Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) which will help protect the environmentally sensitive areas. The vision of the SMA is to provide for an efficient streamlined process for planning, permitting, economic development, conservation and overall land stewardship.

While the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is chairing the SAMP process, many other agencies and governmental entities are involved including MDEQ, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the City of Ocean Springs, the City of Gautier, and Jackson County. If initiated, this would affect the development styles of new construction within the boundary of the SMA.

### **Flood Control**

Flood zones and floodways are determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). A flood zone is a geographic area that has defined levels of varying risk and are depicted on a Community Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). Definitions of FEMA flood zone designations are shown in Figure No. 8 on page 40.

Revised flood maps have recently been developed for Gulf Coast Areas and the new flood maps for Gautier were adopted by the Gautier City Council in March of 2009. Map No. 2 on page 41 is the adopted Flood Map for the city. Adoption of the map and Flood Ordinance will enable local officials to adhere to the Federal regulations by prohibiting development in floodways and by imposing strict guidelines to those building in other zones in danger of flooding.

The zones located on the map range from low risk (Zones B, C and X) to high risk (Zones V, VE, V1-30). The V zones are typically reserved for areas that are classified as coastal. The higher the risk; the more likely a location of structure is subject to flooding.

The zone that covers the largest amount of land area in Gautier is Zone AE and is found in the northern, eastern and southern portions of the city. The next largest amount of flood land is Zone VE covering the coastal portion of Gautier. Other small areas are classified as Zones A and X500.

**Figure No. 8: Definitions of FEMA Flood Zone Designations**

<b>Zones</b>	<b>Moderate to Low Risk.</b>
<b>B, C and X</b>	Areas outside the 1-percent annual chance floodplain, areas of 1% annual chance sheet flow flooding where average depths are less than 1 foot, areas of 1% annual chance stream flooding where the contributing drainage area is less than 1 square mile, or areas protected from the 1% annual chance flood by levees. No Base Flood Elevations or depths are shown within this zone. Insurance purchase is not required in these zones.
	<b>High Risk Areas</b>
<b>A</b>	Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Because detailed analyses are not performed for such areas; no depths or base flood elevations are shown within these zones.
<b>AE, A1 and A30</b>	Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. In most instances, base flood elevations derived from detailed analyses are shown at selected intervals within these zones.
<b>V</b>	Coastal areas with a 1% or greater chance of flooding and an additional hazard associated with storm waves. These areas have a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. No base flood elevations are shown within these zones.
<b>VE</b>	Coastal areas with a 1% or greater chance of flooding and an additional hazard associated with storm waves. These areas have a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Base flood elevations derived from detailed analyses are shown at selected intervals within these zones.

**Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

**MAP NO. 2 FLOOD ZONES  
POST-KATRINA**

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## **Suitability Model for Development**

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Comprehensive Resource Management Plan (CRMP) has developed a Land Development Suitability Model to help guide coastal development which is shown on Map No. 3 on page 44. By identifying the location of flood zones, land use cover, government owned land, soil types and wetlands, a hierarchy of land suitable for development was determined. The model can be used as a guide for developers and decision-makers in the community and will ultimately help protect the natural environment while promoting development in appropriate locations. Areas shown in Red on the map are deemed to be most suitable for development.

### **3.9 Summary**

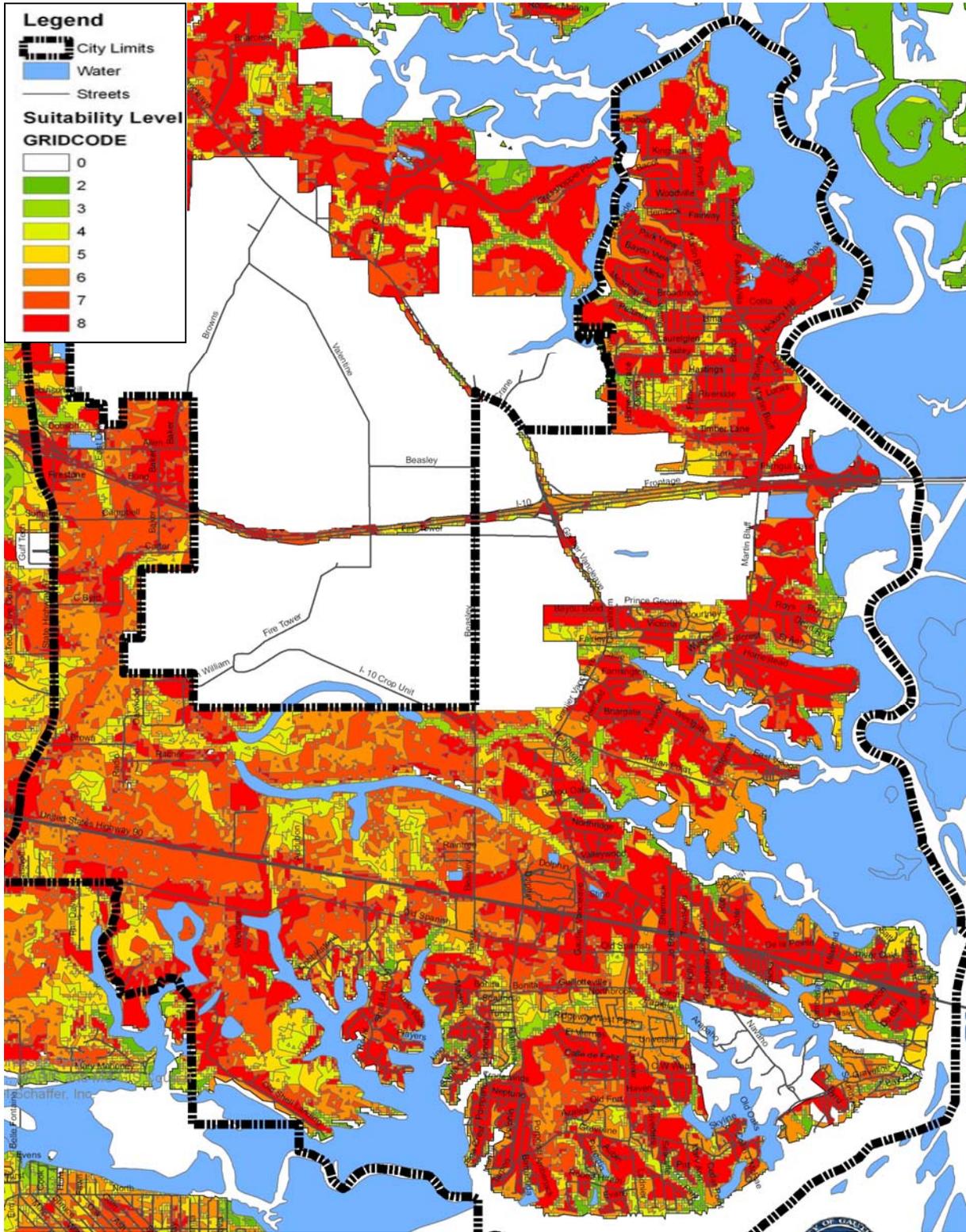
The governmental structure of the City of Gautier is relatively young but the area has deep connections to the history of the gulf coast region. Although the 2005 natural disaster slowed growth momentarily, the population of Gautier is expected to grow at a steady rate during the coming decades. The socio-economic demographics of the city is similar to that of Jackson County in terms of income, age, gender and education, although Gautier has a somewhat higher poverty rate and a higher rate of persons who have completed community college.

The income and employment of residents benefits greatly from the proximity of strong employment centers in Jackson County. This will continue to help stabilize the community and provide a positive influence in the future. The city does not have an organized entity or staff person that provides economic development services but could benefit from a chamber of commerce and financial incentives to keep and attract new businesses.

The natural environment of Gautier offers many opportunities for recreation and eco-tourism. Due to the natural constraints of the area including areas prone to flooding, wetlands, the coastal land and the bayous which are found in many areas, well-designed development will be required to allow growth to occur while protecting environmentally fragile areas.

Specific implementation actions for realization of the Goals and Objectives regarding the natural and cultural resources and economic development can be found on pages 45 and 46 respectively. The following chapters will discuss housing, transportation, community facilities and land use and will present implementation actions at the end of each of those chapters.

### Map 3: Land Use Suitability



Source: Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

**Table No. 9: Implementation and Action Steps:  
Natural and Cultural Resources and Economic Development**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>Med</b>	<b>Long</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><u>Conservation</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and policy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect environmentally sensitive areas through creative development design.</li> <li>• Use the principals of Low Impact Residential Development in appropriate places.</li> <li>• Require Conservations Subdivisions or cluster housing in environmentally sensitive areas.</li> <li>• Create a comprehensive parks and open space plan and require open space in all new development.</li> <li>• Pro-actively promote water conservation design and use low-impact design principles.</li> <li>• Allow pervious surfaces for overflow parking facilities.</li> <li>• Protect water quality ad prevent watershed contamination from land disturbance activities, use of pesticides and other non-source pollutants by maintaining vegetative boundaries.</li> <li>• Initiate the Jackson County MS 57 Special Area Management Plan.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>General</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance, policy and community cooperation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish local “Keep Gautier Beautiful” office to promote and help fund events and clean-up.</li> <li>• Identify, protect and utilize historic assets including landscapes, vistas, structures and neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Sponsor existing and new festivals and events that spotlight culture and community.</li> <li>• Protect historic structures and neighborhoods with a local historic preservation district.</li> <li>• Acquire waterfront land for additional public parks and develop in accordance with Recreational Master Plan.</li> <li>• Create a local museum to spotlight local culture, historic places and persons and events in Gautier's history.</li> <li>• Investigate the merits of a “dark sky” policy to alleviate the negative effects of excessive lighting.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Financial Incentives</u></b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of federal, state and local tax incentive programs which promote conservation.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Code Enforcement</u></b>				<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and Code enforcement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforce Flood and Stormwater Ordinances and update as needed.</li> </ul>					

*Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.*

*Table No. 9 continued on following page . . .*

**Implementation and Action Steps  
Natural and Cultural Resources and Economic Development**

Strategy	Short	Med	Long	On-Going	Comments
<b><u>Organization &amp; Staffing</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>City &amp; Business Community</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with business community to organize Gautier Chamber of Commerce.</li> <li>• Fund position for economic development staff person to work either for the City or as a part-time person with the new Chamber.</li> <li>• Structure Community Services Department to allow a “one-stop” process for applicants.</li> <li>• Consider forming and funding a Main Street Organization for the newly created downtown area.</li> <li>• Prepare market study and marketing strategy using branding and targeting specific types of businesses.</li> <li>• Create and maintain an inventory of available commercial properties working with owners to secure tenants.</li> <li>• Work with other economic development agencies such as Jackson County.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Financial Incentives</u></b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and Funding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use local tax credits, Business Improvements Districts and other financial incentives to keep existing businesses and attract new businesses.</li> <li>• Utilize targeted Tax Incentive Financing to attract business and industry or to help revitalize sites.</li> <li>• Offer Façade Improvement and Landscaping Grants to help businesses refurbish and refresh existing sites.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Design and Development</u></b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and private development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop downtown Gautier in manner that offers unique opportunities for residential, commerce, entertainment and culture.</li> <li>• Strive to attract businesses that will make Gautier and its regional shopping areas a major destination.</li> <li>• Enhance shopping venues for families by adding variety of uses and attractive development.</li> <li>• Promote Highway 57 Industrial Park within City of Gautier.</li> <li>• Acquire land for additional parks including Shepard Park</li> </ul>					
<b><u>General</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>Collaborative Efforts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the building of dormitories on the MGCC and USM college campus and the creation of retail uses which cater to students.</li> <li>• Insure that adult education and workforce training classes are available in the community.</li> <li>• Promote eco-tourism, fishing and water related recreational activities to attract day-trippers and sportsmen.</li> <li>• Work with business owners to identify and address issues that are negatively affecting the vitality of business districts.</li> <li>• Develop a community leadership program to cultivate, train and motivate new leaders of the community.</li> </ul>					

## CHAPTER FOUR: HOUSING

*Housing is an important element in the analysis of present and future characteristics of a community. The type, structure, and condition of the housing stock influences the quality of life for residents and helps determine future growth patterns. Neighborhoods play an important part in determining the vitality, stability and way of life of the residents within a community.*

### 4.1 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

While the private sector provides most of the housing for the community, municipal government oversees the building of new subdivisions and structures using zoning, subdivision regulations and building codes. Stormwater and flood regulations are also enforced by the city to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by helping with the prevention of flooding and possible damage to housing.

This chapter presents housing data collected from various sources including the 2000 Decennial Census, private studies and from local and national real estate sources. It also presents ideas to help guide future housing decisions.

#### **Housing Characteristics, Pre-Katrina**

Homes in Gautier range from small cottages to large mansions. Many have views of the water and/or access to the Mississippi Sound or the Pascagoula River. Lot sizes vary from small, irregular lots to estate size lots of one acre or more. There are several "fish-camp" neighborhoods with small homes and several mobile home neighborhoods.

There were 51,278 housing units in Jackson County at the time of the 2000 Census. The City of Pascagoula had 10,931 units, Ocean Springs had 7,072 units, Moss Point had 6,237 units, Gautier had 4,597 housing units and there were 22,441 units in the unincorporated areas of the County.

#### Types and Age

In 1999, over sixty percent (66.6%) of the city's housing units



were classified as being one-unit (single-family), detached. Two percent (2%) were either one unit, attached or two units. Fifteen percent (15%) were mobile homes and another fifteen percent (15%) had three or more housing units. By



comparison, in Jackson County over seventy two percent (72.5%) of the homes were single family, detached; three percent (3.3%) were one unit, attached or two units, attached; twelve percent (12.7%) were mobile homes and eleven percent (11.2%) had three or more units.

The 2000 Census indicates that almost one half or forty-six percent (46.3%) of houses in Gautier were built during the decade of the 1970s. Over

twenty percent (21.4%) were built during the 1980s decade, fourteen percent (14%) during the 1960s and fifteen percent (15%) during the 1990s. These figures give an indication of the growth spurts as well as the average age of the housing stock.

#### Occupancy and Tenure

A low vacancy and high ownership rate are considered positive factors when evaluating community and neighborhood stability.

At the time of the 2000 census, over ninety-two percent (92.7%) or 4,260 housing units were occupied and only seven percent (7.3%) or 337 units were vacant. Seventy percent (70%) or 2,982 housing units of the occupied units were owner-occupied with only thirty percent (30%) or 1,278 units occupied by renters.



The majority or seventy-nine percent (79.2%) of the owner-occupied units were occupied by family households and sixty-three percent (63.9%) of

these families were classified as being married households. Over twelve percent (12.8%) of the family households had persons 65 years of age or older and sixty-six percent (66.4%) had persons between the ages of 15 and 64 years of age. Over eleven percent (11.7%) of the owner-occupied housing units were female households with no husband present. The

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majority or sixty-eight percent (68.3%) of renter-occupied housing units were also occupied by family households. Over thirty-three percent (33.8%) of the rental units were occupied by married-couple families. Almost thirty percent (29.7%) of rental units were classified as being female households with no husband present.

Further analysis of the vacant units show that over forty-one percent (41.5%) were for rent, seventeen percent (17.8%) were for sale, ten percent (10.1%) were rented or sold but not yet occupied, twenty-one percent (21.4%) were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use and approximately nine percent (8.9%) were classified as being in the "other" category.

#### Housing Value

A diverse housing stock with values dispersed over a wide range is one characteristic of a community that offers housing suitable for different types of households. While it is important to have affordable housing, it is equally important to have a variety of housing products including upscale homes, which describes Gautier. In 2000, the value of owner-occupied housing units in Gautier ranged from below \$50,000 to \$499,000. The estimated median value of owner-occupied units in Gautier was \$85,100, slightly higher than Jackson County where the median value was \$80,300.

A more detailed analysis of housing value shown in Table No. 10 on page 50 indicates that the values of owner-occupied housing in Gautier is similar to that of Jackson County. Over one-half (54.8%) of owner-occupied units in Gautier were valued between \$50,000 and \$99,000, as were the majority or fifty-one percent (51.7%) of homes in the County. These values indicate the opinion of homeowners rather than true appraised market value of homes.

#### **Post Katrina Housing Data**

Although damage to housing was not as severe in Gautier as other locations closer to the eye of the storm, a large number of homes sustained damage, some severe. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) estimates that over fifty percent (52.3%) of the housing units in Gautier were damaged by the storm surge and/or sustained wind damage. In Jackson County, 27,101 single-family houses and 3,398 multi-family units were damaged.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, the major objective was to provide shelter for families who were returning back to the community after evacuation as well as those who stayed during the storm and sustained damage to their homes. Temporary shelters were initially used and mobile homes were subsequently provided by FEMA. Small mobile homes, known as *Mississippi Cottages* or *Mississippi Cottages* are still being used to provide shelter while rebuilding efforts continue.

While an accurate count of the number of homes in Gautier that have been rebuilt or repaired because of storm damage is not currently available, field surveys show a relatively small number remain damaged. Construction of new homes in both the city and county has resumed. Indication of this can be substantiated by information released in September 2007

<b>Table No. 10: Housing Values, 1999</b>						
	<b>Gautier</b>		<b>Jackson County</b>		<b>Mississippi</b>	
<b>Value Range</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than \$50,000	363	14.7	4,762	16.4	151982	28.6
\$50,000 to \$99,000	1,349	54.8	15,021	51.7	234011	44.0
\$100,000 to \$149,000	510	20.7	5,633	19.4	82508	15.5
\$150,000 to \$199,000	114	4.6	2,134	3.5	33465	6.3
\$200,000 to \$299,000	78	3.2	1,023	3.5	20681	3.9
\$300,000 to \$499,000	49	2.0	392	1.3	7009	1.3
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0.0	61	.2	1733	0.3
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0	39	0.1	902	0.2
<i>Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000</i>						

by the U. S. Census American Community Survey. According to this estimate there were 55,788 housing units in Jackson County in September 2007, a net increase of 4,110 since the 2000 Census count. As new residential subdivisions are platted and houses are built on existing vacant lots, it is expected the total number of housing units within Gautier will far exceed pre-Katrina numbers.

#### Regulatory Oversight and Constraints

There are several environmental and regulatory factors which affect new home development in the city including the prevalence of wetlands and floodplains, insurance costs and recently adopted stricter building codes. Structures in certain flood districts must be elevated adding to the construction costs. Many new homeowners are required to have windpool coverage in addition to flood coverage, adding to the cost of homeownership.

#### Current Sales and Construction Trends

A study of homes listed with local real estate brokers in the fall of 2008 reveals that homes were available at list prices from \$129,000 to \$500,000. Re-construction of homes damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina is progressing and new homes are being built in newly platted subdivisions.

## **4.2 SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS**

There are certain members of the general population that have special housing needs that must be addressed including physically or mentally challenged persons, the elderly, homeless persons and others who may need temporary group living quarters due to domestic violence or other issues. These population groups may require modified housing units, group homes,

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or institutional environments. While some of these people have the resources to take care of their needs, many will not.

Other segments of the population are not able to afford the housing products in certain communities, even communities in which they are employed. Therefore a discussion of special needs and affordability housing follows.

### **Affordability**

Housing affordability can be determined by using a ratio of housing costs to household income. It is generally accepted that a housing unit is considered affordable if housing related costs are no more than thirty percent (30%) of the occupant's income. Conversely a household is considered cost-burdened if its occupants are paying more than thirty percent (30%) of their income for housing related costs. Lending institutions have specific ratios of income to housing costs in order to qualify for a housing loan.

The starting point for analysis of affordability factors is determining the monthly housing costs for consumers. According to 2000 Census, the median monthly costs of housing for homeowners in Gautier was slightly less than Jackson County and slightly higher than the State. Monthly gross rent in Gautier was higher than both the county and the state. Table No. 11 on page 52 compares the median value, median monthly costs and median gross rent for Gautier, Jackson County and Mississippi in 1999.

This data indicates the median monthly gross rent in Gautier in 1999 was higher than that of Jackson County and the State. Table No. 12 on page 52 breaks down gross rent in Gautier into categories and shows the number and percentage of units within each category.

#### Housing as a Percentage of Income

Slightly over forty-one percent (41.2%) of Gautier residents who rented, paid between \$500 and \$749 in rent at the time of the 2000 Census. As a percentage of income, twenty-seven percent (27.8%) paid thirty-five percent (35%) or more of their income for rent making these households rent burdened.

### **4.3 NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER**

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of cities. Although Gautier's residential neighborhoods vary in size, density, housing type and amenities; each is important to the health and well-being of the community. Neighborhood character and condition must be included as an integral part of any long-range planning strategy.

#### **Life-Cycle of Neighborhoods**

Each neighborhood goes through a life-cycle from the time it is built until it is demolished or torn down and is progressing in one way or another continuously. The stages of the life-cycle have been described in many ways; however, they always correlate to the condition of the housing within the area. A report published by the Department of Housing and Urban

Development entitled “Dynamics of Neighborhood Change,” ranks neighborhoods on a hierarchy from healthy to abandoned.

*Healthy Neighborhoods*—have stable home values; a low turnover of homes; are located in what is considered a desirable part of town and have a good reputation; are socially cohesive and organized; and contain houses which are in a good state of repair.

*Neighborhoods on the Decline*—have aging housing stock with some suffering from deferred maintenance; may be experiencing a decline in the attractiveness or have commercial or industrial encroachment or cut through traffic; and need immediate attention to insure they do not move into further decline.

*Clearly Declining Neighborhoods*—have a large percent of buildings with physical deficiencies and some deteriorated buildings; probably have lower rents; have code enforcement issues; may have commercial buildings which are obsolete or vacant; higher crime; no social cohesion or organized neighborhood groups; trash and abandoned vehicles; unkempt shrubs and lawns; and streets and roads in need of repair.

*Abandoned Neighborhoods*—have prevalent deterioration, vacant and deteriorated buildings; vandalized properties; and abandoned property since owners cannot sell properties.

The trend of neighborhoods to decline and ultimately be abandoned can be interrupted through intervention and in most cases the downward spiral can be reversed. This requires vigorous intervention tactics which can result from efforts of property owners and/or governmental assistance.

<b>Table No. 11: General Housing Characteristics, 1999</b>			
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Median Value*</b>	<b>Median Monthly Costs*</b>	<b>Median Monthly Gross Rent**</b>
Gautier	\$85,100	\$785	\$568
Jackson County	\$80,300	\$811	\$522
Mississippi	\$71,400	\$752	\$439
*Median selected costs for Owner-Occupied Housing Units			
**Median Gross Rent for Renter-Occupied Housing Units			
<i>Source: U. S. Census Bureau</i>			

<b>Table No. 12: Gross Rent Analysis in Gautier, 1999</b>		
<b>Gross Rent Range</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than \$200	144	11.0
\$200 to \$299	72	5.5
\$300 to \$499	260	19.8
\$500 to \$744	540	41.2
\$750 to \$999	166	12.7
\$1,000 to \$1,499	0	0.0
No Cash Rent	129	9.8
<i>Source: U. S. Census Bureau</i>		

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## **Intervention Strategy**

Neighborhoods that display pride of ownership and have well-maintained housing stock and infrastructure are more likely to remain healthy. Neighborhood organizations which are actively engaged with property owners help build a sense of pride and give residents a sense of empowerment in dealing with issues. Such organizations should be officially recognized by the city and have a legitimate venue in which to express their needs, concerns and opinions.

Other effective intervention strategies include: (1) Timely infrastructure improvements and repair, (2) Consistent code and zoning enforcement, (3) Enhanced policing and attention to emerging problems, (4) Appropriate zoning of properties to avoid commercial encroachment, (5) Strict adherence to building codes for new and remodeled construction, (6) Use of financial incentives to encourage repair and maintenance of existing housing, and (7) Acquisition of tax forfeited properties for immediate resale and/or new development.

## **Classifications of Gautier Neighborhoods**

In order to help identify specific needs and appropriate intervention strategy, residential neighborhoods in Gautier have been placed into four categories: Reserve, Conservation, New Growth, and Focus Areas. Map No. 4 on page 54 shows specific neighborhoods by one of the following categories:

*Reserve:* Areas which are natural habitat, wetlands or areas which are to be preserved in their natural state and are primarily without manmade buildings.

*Conservation:* These areas are well-maintained, economically viable and the majority of the housing is in good condition. Conservation neighborhoods are relatively stable areas which do not need major redevelopment efforts but some structures may need minor rehabilitation and maintenance. Such areas should be enhanced and protected from physical and fiscal decline by the use of sound land use policy, design standards and ordinances that promote quality infill development.

*New Growth:* Areas which are developing or re-developing and which will be most influenced by the development principles in the Comprehensive Plan and updated Ordinances. As these areas develop, they will help define the look of Gautier. Preparation of sound land use and design standards is essential to insure quality development occurs in these areas.

*Focus Areas:* A small number of areas exhibit signs of minor physical or economic decline. The primary objective should be to stabilize these areas with efficient code enforcement and incentives for repair and re-development. City assistance may be needed in the acquisition and preparation of land for redevelopment.

## **New Neighborhoods**

New neighborhoods should strive for creative site design and amenities that will make the areas desirable for many years. Today's home buyers are attracted to new home designs,

trees and landscaping, sidewalks and walking trails, playgrounds, community pools and parks, attractive street lighting, and a variety of housing products. Traffic control with easy access to recreation, civic and shopping destinations is also important.

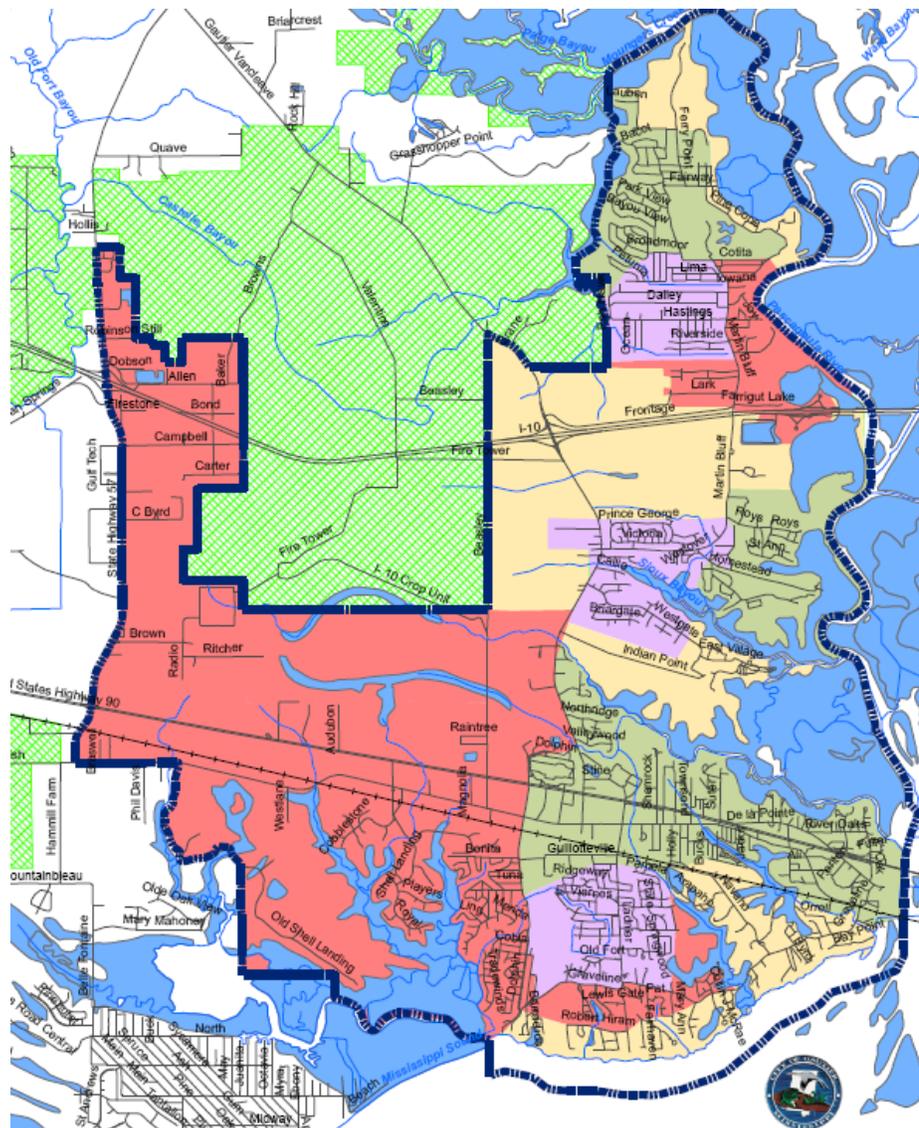
By using alternative site layout such as traditional neighborhood design, conservation neighborhoods, cluster housing and a variety of housing styles and types, neighborhoods will become more diverse in style and in housing products. A brief description of various types of housing units can be found in Exhibit No. 5 on page 64. Exhibit No. 6 on page 56 is a matrix showing the types of appropriate housing for various types of neighborhoods. Alternative site design development styles can be found in Chapter 7, Land Use and Urban Design, starting on page 103.

**Map No. 4: Map of Neighborhoods**

- Legend**
-  City Limits
  -  Water
  -  Streets
  - Neighborhood Types**
  -  Reserve
  -  Conservation
  -  New Growth
  -  Focus Area
  -  TBD



Source: Neel Schaffer, Inc.



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### **Infill Housing and development**

Infill housing is defined as new home construction in existing established areas. Many established neighborhoods contain lots and land which was passed over when the original development occurred because of size, topography or other factors. Existing large lots in desirable areas may be further subdivided into smaller lots if development regulations permit. Some types of infill development are desired; however, care must be taken to insure the new development “fits-in” contextually with existing development.

#### **4.4 IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING**

The population growth forecasts indicate that approximately 2,542 additional households will be seeking housing in Gautier by the year 2025. The characteristics of these households are likely to be diverse, mirroring trends which have been identified on the national level. Shrinking household size, persons living longer, and non-traditional or blended households will continue to drive the housing market. If Gautier is to attract new residents, it must shape the look and quality of neighborhoods with land development ordinances that allow alternative types of residential housing. The creative class and young professionals are seeking areas that offer enhanced amenities, upscale architectural styles, landscaping and natural areas.

As new homes are being built, a concentrated and sustained effort must be made to preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods, improve any substandard housing and intervene in marginal areas. Specific implementation steps are given on pages 58-59.

**Exhibit No. 5: Description and Illustration of Housing Types**

*Single-family detached*—Houses which are designed to accommodate one family or household unit, are on a separate lot and are not attached to any other housing units.



*Single-family, attached*—Houses are designed to accommodate one family or household unit but are attached to at least one other similar unit. Each unit is built on a separate lot which follows the side building footprint. Examples include row or town houses and duplexes.



*Small lot houses*—Single-family detached homes, built on smaller lots. Sometimes called patio or garden homes. Zero lot line homes are usually built on smaller lots but have a zero side yard on one side.



*Mobile Homes*—Pre-constructed homes on a permanent chassis and transported to the home site or mobile home park and placed with semi-permanent ties or skirting.



*Modular Homes*—Modular homes resemble stick-built homes but have components built in a factory, transported to a home site and assembled at the home site using the pre-constructed components.



*Condominiums*—A form of ownership, not a housing style. Although condominiums (condos) are most commonly built as multi-family units or townhouses, they may be single-family units or even a separate floor of a mixed use building. Persons who purchase condos own the internal space within their unit and a percentage of the common elements such as walls, roof, clubhouse, pool and other facilities.



*Second (2nd) Story Residential*—Apartments or condo units above first floor retail or commercial uses. Usually found in older buildings which have been converted to mixed use, although such buildings may be built in new retrofitted downtown areas or as a part of a traditional neighborhood subdivision.



*Mid Rise Apartments*—A multi-family building of two to three stories. The majority of these are built as rental units; but may be condominiums, school dormitories or assisted living facilities.



*High Rise Apartments*—A multi-family building with four or more stories. The majority are built as rental units; however, mid rise buildings with individual household units may also be condominiums. In larger cities, high-rise apartments usually contain retail or professional service uses on the first floor.



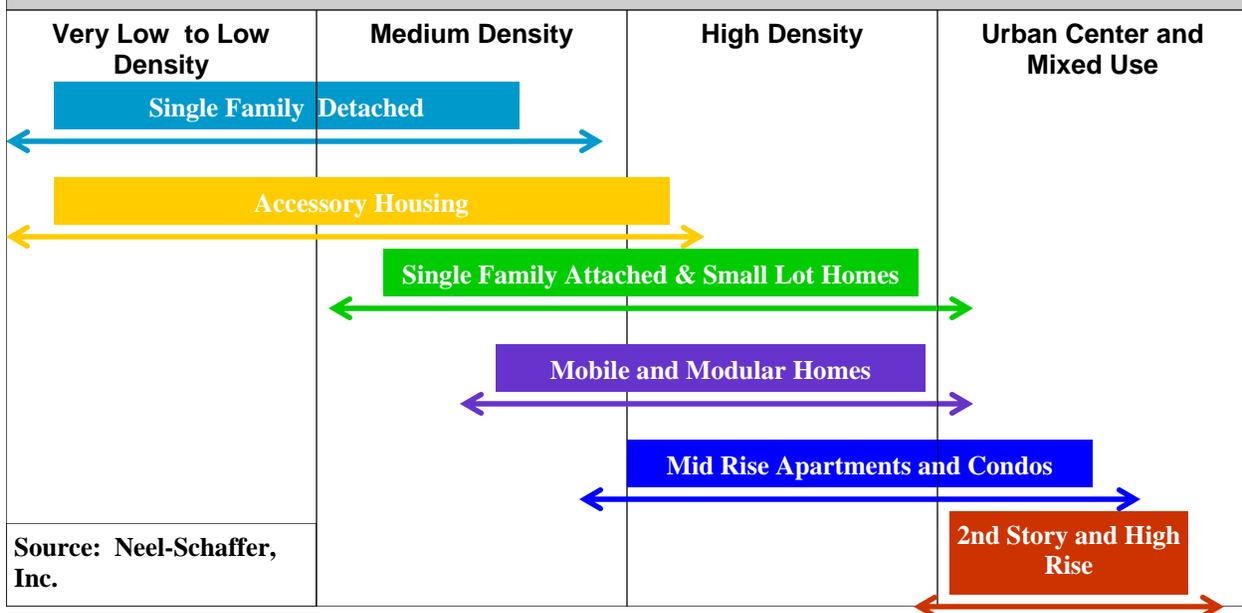
*Accessory Housing Units*—Complete household units built on the same lot as the principal house for the purpose of housing guests or extended family. May be called granny flats or mother-in-law apartments. Garage apartments are also accessory housing units.



*Specialty Housing*—May be Community Group Homes, Assisted Living, Nursing Homes for elderly or handicapped. Might also include half-way houses to teach life skills to persons immediately out of chemical dependency.



**Exhibit No. 6: Appropriate Housing Styles for Specific Types of Neighborhoods**



**Table No. 13: Implementation and Action Steps  
Housing and Neighborhood Stabilization**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>Med</b>	<b>Long</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><u>Site Design</u></b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>Land Development Ordinance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate site design guidelines in the Unified Development Ordinance that promote variety and quality in new and infill areas.</li> <li>• Use the principals of “New Urbanism” design for new development or re-development in medium and high density areas.</li> <li>• Require Conservations Subdivisions or cluster housing in environmentally sensitive areas.</li> <li>• Require open space and/or parks in new residential areas.</li> <li>• Develop standards for pedestrian lighting and landscaping in new subdivisions.</li> <li>• Develop standards for cottage, townhouse and patio home subdivisions.</li> <li>• Develop site layout requirements for various types of lots and housing products including those with detached garages and alleys.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Housing Design</u></b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize the <i>Gulf Coast Design Guide</i> for architectural designs of housing in new neighborhoods as well as existing neighborhoods where these styles would blend in with existing housing styles.</li> <li>• Create building design standards for medium to high density units such as apartments and cottages which will insure better living conditions for residents.</li> <li>• Develop building design standards for smaller homes or ranch style homes that will improve the presentation toward the street.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Financial Incentives</u></b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and Policy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and adopt financial incentives for residential rehabilitation.</li> <li>• Create small grants for neighborhood grounds improvements to be awarded on a revolving or competitive basis.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Code and Building Enforcement</u></b>				<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and Code enforcement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforce code standards consistently for all neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Insure that all new neighborhoods and homes are built to required standards.</li> <li>• Utilize a rental housing ordinance with inspection criteria to help assure safe and sanitary conditions.</li> </ul>					
<p><b><i>Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.</i></b></p>					
<p><i>Table No. 13 continued on following page . . .</i></p>					

<b>Implementation and Action Steps Housing and Neighborhood Stabilization</b>					
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>Med</b>	<b>Long</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><u>Communication</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>Policies, Efforts of various Departments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the organization of neighborhood organizations.</li> <li>• Create venues and methods which will enhance communications between residents and the city staff and officials.</li> <li>• Prepare pamphlets describing the subdivision and building processes complete with recommended site and building design requirements.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Zoning</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>Land Development Ordinance; Zoning and Subdivision Rules</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the character of all existing neighborhoods by requiring appropriate uses within each zoning district and eliminating inappropriate rezoning, special exceptions and variances.</li> <li>• Develop appropriate bulk regulations for each residential zoning district.</li> <li>• Develop reasonable housing square footage standards for neighborhoods with smaller homes.</li> <li>• Create a specific district for townhomes and patio homes.</li> <li>• Create a specific district for TNDs, Conservation Subdivisions.</li> <li>• Create specific zoning districts which will allow second story housing and mixed use buildings.</li> <li>• Protect existing single-family neighborhoods from excessive through traffic, commercial encroachment and inappropriate subdivision of lots.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>General</u></b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinances, Planning and Code Enforcement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a local land bank for redevelopment of tax forfeited properties.</li> <li>• Facilitate the building of varied residential styles and types including downtown.</li> <li>• Help eliminate blight with ordinances that control junk in yards and abandoned vehicles on residential property.</li> <li>• Create neighborhood plans for areas on a revolving basis which will allow residents an opportunity to specifically address needs in their areas.</li> </ul>					
<p><b><i>Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.</i></b></p>					



## CHAPTER FIVE: TRANSPORTATION

*The transportation planning process is one of the most effective ways to insure continued success and vitality of a community. Transportation systems affect the form, physical growth and development of the community, making transportation planning critical for the success of a community.*

### 5.1 GENERAL

The transportation system is the framework upon which the city is built. The transportation pattern system greatly influences the ease, convenience and safety of the traffic circulation in and out of the community. An efficient transportation system can improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the city while an inefficient one can result in traffic congestion, stress and even life-threatening events.

Transportation planning helps coordinate all modes of transportation including rail, automobile, pedestrian, and bicycles. It also seeks to identify and alleviate existing deficiencies and provide for future growth in accordance with the community's established goals and objectives.

#### Transportation System in Gautier

The major components of the transportation system in Gautier are summarized below:

- Vehicular: Interstate Highway 10 (I-10); U. S. Highway 90 (US 90) and Mississippi Highway 57 (MS 57).
- Pedestrian: Sidewalks are found along some collectors and arterial roads.
- Railroads: The CSX Railroad runs east and west hauling commercial freight.
- Aviation: The Gulfport International Airport provides commercial service; the Trent Lott International Airport in Moss Point caters



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to local corporate clients, charter pilots, inter-modal and air cargo transport and Ocean Springs Airport is a privately owned airport for small aircraft.

- Public Transit: Gautier does not have a public transit system. The closest location for interstate bus service is in Biloxi, MS.

## 5.2 EXISTING ROADWAY NETWORK

The city's roadways are described below in terms of their functional classification and traffic volume.

### Functional Classifications of Roadways

Roadway classifications organize streets and highways into a planning hierarchy. These classifications indicate the type of service the roadways are intended to provide, and define the role roadways provide in serving vehicle trips across the network. The classification of roadways other than interstate highways may change over a period of time due to changes in traffic generators and the resultant traffic volume. Current classifications for Gautier roads are described in the following paragraphs. Table No. 14 on page 63 gives minimum right-of-way and surface widths.

#### Interstate

Limited access highways designed for traffic between major regional areas or large urban communities. These highways extend beyond state boundaries, with access limited to interchanges located by the U. S. Department of Transportation. 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.

- I-10 traverses the northern portion of the study area in an east/west direction and runs parallel to US 90.

#### Principal Arterial

Roads that provide land access while retaining a high degree of through traffic mobility and serve major centers of urban activity and traffic generation. These roadways provide a high speed, high volume network for travel. Principal arterials in Gautier include:

- US 90—Traverses the core of the Study Area and is typified by adjacent commercial development. Prior to interstate system, it was the major east/west transportation link that united the Gulf Coast cities.
- Martin Bluff Road from US 90 to I-10 is considered a principal arterial.

#### Minor Arterials

Minor Arterials are roads that provide land access to larger schools, industries, institutions and small commercial areas not served by principal arterials and have with a lower level of through traffic mobility than do principal arterials. Minor Arterials move the traffic between collector

streets and the principal arterials and connect the various city districts. Minor arterials in Gautier include the following:

- MS 57—Commences at US 90 and travels ninety miles north through Jackson, George and Greene Counties
- Ladnier Road—The section that runs from US 90 to Graveline Road

Collectors

Roads that collect traffic between local roads and arterial streets and provide access to abutting properties are considered collectors. They serve minor traffic generators such as local elementary schools, small individual industrial plants, offices, commercial facilities and warehouses which are not

served by principal and minor arterials. Collectors are typically lower volume roadways than arterials and accommodate short distance trips. Collector roads in Gautier include the following:

- Martin Bluff Road—Section from Gautier-Vancleave Road to Fairway Drive
- Martin Bluff Road—Section from I-10 to Gautier city limits
- Ferry Point Drive—Section from Fairway Drive to north terminus
- Dolphin—Commences at Gautier-Vancleave Road and ends at Graveline Road
- Graveline Road—Section from the intersection of Dolphin Road to De La Pointe Drive
- Oak Street—Section from De La Pointe Drive to US 90
- Gautier Vancleave Road—Section from US 90 to Old Spanish Trail
- Old Spanish Trail—Entire length of Old Spanish Trail within the City of Gautier
- Ladnier Road—Section from Graveline Road to south terminus

Local Streets

Roads that are local in character and serve agricultural areas, residences, businesses, neighborhoods and abutting properties. These are the streets to which private driveways are connected. Local/minor streets generally serve low- to moderate-density residential uses. Most of the streets within Gautier fall within this classification. Map No. 5 on page 65 shows the functional classification of streets in Gautier.

<b>Table No. 14: Minimum Right-of-Way and Surface Width Requirements</b>		
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Minimum Right-of-Way</b>	<b>Surface Width Requirement</b>
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
<i>Source: Highway Capacity Manual, Transportation Research Board</i>		

## Traffic Volumes

The most fundamental and visible description of a roadway function is the volume of traffic that uses the road over a defined period of time. To standardize the number, volume is generally expressed over a twenty-four hour period, factored by both day of the week and month of the year, to produce an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) value

Underscoring its importance as a significant east/west roadway through Gautier, US 90 has the highest traffic volumes within the city. Volumes immediately west of the MS 57 intersection are 21,000, increase to 22,000 just east of the mall, peak at 35,000 immediately east of the

<b>Table No. 15: Average Daily Traffic Counts</b>		
<b>ROUTE</b>	<b>2000 TRAFFIC VOLUME</b>	<b>2006 TRAFFIC VOLUME</b>
I-10	45,000	47,000
US 90 east of Gautier-Vancleave Rd.	20,000	22,000
Gautier-Vancleave	7,200	13,000
MS 57	8,700	15,000
<i>Source: MDOT</i>		

Martin Bluff Road intersection before declining to 33,000 on the Pascagoula River Bridge. It is believed the higher volume west of Martin Bluff Road is due to thru traffic from industries located in Pascagoula. Other roadways with relatively high volumes include: Gautier-Vancleave Road (13,000 to 22,000), Martin Bluff Road (5,000 to 8,700), MS 57 (15,000) and Ladnier Road (10,000). A comparison of counts taken in 2000 and 2006 for select roads is shown in Table No. 15 at left. Traffic counts for major roadways taken in 2006 are shown in on Map No. 6 on Page 67.

## Roadway Capacity

Roadway capacity is often described in terms of the Level of Service (LOS) it offers. Each level of service represents a range of operating conditions and the driver's perception of these conditions. Roads are rated on a scale from A to F, with A representing the best operating conditions and F the worst. The LOS for a given roadway segment is typically calculated for the peak travel period and represents the "worst case". Level of service depends largely on the volume of traffic experienced by a street or highway segment in relation to the generalized roadway capacity of the facility. However, the actual level of service associated with a given volume-to-capacity ratio depends on additional factors such as local terrain, the type of roadway, lane width, free-flow speed, number of access-points and vehicle mix (percent trucks). Level of service categories are shown in Table 16 on page 69.

For the purpose of long-range transportation planning, LOS "D" is generally considered the minimally acceptable level of service with "C" or better being preferred. The projected long-range level of service for Gautier streets and highways is an important consideration in the transportation needs analysis.

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# **MAP NO. 5: ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS**

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# **MAP NO. 6: ADT MAP**

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<b>Table No. 16: Level of Service Categories</b>	
A	Free Flow: Users unaffected by others in the traffic stream
B	Stable Flow: Slight decline in the freedom to maneuver from LOS "A."
C	Stable Flow: Operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream.
D	Approaching Unstable Flow: High volumes of traffic, speeds adversely affected and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted.
E	Unstable Flow: Operating conditions at, or very near capacity. All speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform rate. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely difficult.
F	Exceeding Capacity: Point at which arrival flows exceed discharge flows causing queuing delays. Stoppages may occur for long periods of time because of downstream congestions. Travel times are also substantially increased.
<i>Source: Highway Capacity Manual, Transportation Research Board</i>	

There is a direct relationship between the design hourly capacity of a roadway and its 24-hour capacity. The design hourly capacity typically represents ten percent (10%) of the 24-hour roadway capacity. The design hourly capacity is based on factors such as the roadway's classification and lane configuration. Once the design hourly capacity is determined, the 24-hour capacity can be derived by multiplying the design hourly capacity by ten. Utilizing this methodology, the generalized 24-hour capacities (in vehicles per day) were estimated for the roadway facilities included in the Study Area Network. The 24-hour volume/capacity for specific levels of service are shown in Table No. 17 above.

<b>Table No. 17: Level of Service Volume and Capacity</b>		
<b>LOS Category</b>	<b>Volume/ Capacity (Arterials)</b>	<b>Volume/ Capacity (Freeways)</b>
A – Optimum	0.00 – 0.50	0.00 – 0.30
B – Good	0.50 – 0.90	0.31 – 0.60
C – Fair	0.91 – 1.25	0.60 – 0.80
D – Marginal	1.26 – 1.60	0.81 – 1.00
E – Poor	1.61 – 1.95	1.01 – 1.20
F – Failure	1.96 +	1.21 +
<i>Source: Federal Highway Administration NSI Manual</i>		

### 5.3 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Transportation Study 2030 (MGCATS) was recently approved as the long-range transportation plan for the Gulf Coast region. The plan includes Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties. Such plans are required for all urbanized areas, are long-range plans for major roadways and are prepared by local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's).

#### Metropolitan Planning Organization

A metropolitan planning organization is a transportation policy-making organization established to coordinate long-range transportation projects by using a collaborative process engaging

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representatives from local governments within the MPO area. This process better insures that existing and future expenditures are correctly prioritized and based on a comprehensive evolving planning process. Staff support for the Gulf Coast MPO is provided by the Gulf Regional Planning Commission. Federal funding for transportation projects is channeled through this entity.

The MPO planning process includes a number of steps which include:

- Forecasting future population and employment growth
- Assessing projected land uses in the region
- Forecasting future travel demand
- Identifying major growth corridors and analyzing detailed planning studies
- Estimating the impact of the transportation system on air quality within the region
- Developing a financial plan that covers operating costs, maintenance of the system, system preservation costs and new capital investments

### **Long-Range Gautier Projects**

Several of the needed improvements identified in the MGCATS were in the Gautier area and are shown in Table No. 18 on page 71. The MGCATS divides projects into three stages to provide for adequate funding, proper scheduling of projects, and staging based upon their interconnectivity. There are no Stage I Improvements prior to 2011 in the Gautier area. Stage II Improvements are planned between 2011 and 2020, whereas Stage III Improvements are planned between 2021 and 2030.

## **5.4 LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

While the MGCATS long-range transportation plan helps guide transportation planning for major thoroughfares, these projects are not inclusive of all improvements needed in the Gautier transportation system. Structural vulnerability of local streets is determined annually and projects are prioritized in terms of the amount and cost of work needed. Such projects usually involve overlay work, paving and work on intersections.

### **Mississippi Renewal Forum Charrette—Transportation Projects**

The planning team of Torti Gallas and Partners worked with local leaders and citizens in late 2005 to create a visionary plan for Gautier. One of the most significant recommendations of the plan was to create and strengthen vehicular and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods, focal points and nodes which were identified in the plan. Sketches of proposed enhanced local street connections were included in this plan. Several recommendations from the plan regarding transportation are given below.

- Convert Martin Bluff Road into a parkway, add an additional parkway connection to the I-10 North Frontage Road.

<b>Table No. 18: Mississippi Gulf Coast Transportation Study</b>				
<b>STAGE II IMPROVEMENTS (2011 – 2020)</b>				
<b>MGCATS ID</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Limits</b>	<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
42	I-10	MS 609 to MS 57	Improve existing 4 lane	\$25,196,720
14	Gautier-Vancleave	MS 57 to I-10	Improve existing 2 lane road	\$9,597,000
135	Martin Bluff Rd.	I-10 Frontage Rd to Homestead Rd.	Improve existing 2 lane road	\$3,704,400
328	Old Spanish Trail	MS 57 to Dolphin Rd.	Improve existing 2 lane road	\$9,601,200
<b>STAGE III IMPROVEMENTS (2021 – 2030)</b>				
136	Martin Bluff Rd.	Broadmoor Dr to I-10 Frontage Rd.	New 2 or 4 lane di- vided highway	\$3,348,750
137	US 90	Dolphin Dr to W. Pascagoula River	Improve existing 4/5 lane road	\$9,207,500
138	Ritcher Rd Ext.	Gautier-Vancleave Rd to MS 57	New 2 lane divided road	\$5,805,800
142	I-10 Frontage Rd.	Gautier-Vancleave Rd to Martin Bluff Rd.	Improve existing 2 lane road	\$2,646,000
327	US 90	MS 57 to Dolphin Rd.	Improve existing 4 lane divided road	\$23,241,000
343	Gautier-Vancleave	Martin Bluff Rd. to US 90	Improve existing 4 lane divided	\$13,716,000
357	I-10	Gautier-Vancleave Rd. to MS 613	Improve existing 4 lane road	\$21,819,840
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$149,550,110</b>
<i>Source: MGCATS</i>				

- Provide additional roadway access from I-10 frontage road to areas in north Gautier.
- Strengthen street connections between Huck’s Cove, the fish camps and De La Pointe Drive.
- Enhance De La Pointe Drive to become a “main street” of Gautier.
- Develop vacant land north of Shell Landing on the north side of US 90 as a residential mixed use center and create street linkages throughout linking the Soccer fields and the Singing River mall area.
- Create a street connection from downtown south to the waterfront at the Mississippi Sound.
- Enhance US 90, De La Pointe, Martin Bluff Road and other streets with planting strips, sidewalks and central medians.

### **Street Configurations and Design**

The location of US 90 as a major state highway that runs through the heart of Gautier has both a positive and negative influence on the community. The highway creates the opportunity for commerce and provides convenient locations for shopping and commercial destinations. It is also a high traffic corridor with a high degree of through traffic which tends to discourage persons from turning into or using adjacent commercial destinations. There are several streets which cross the US 90 at dangerous angles and need to be realigned to help prevent accidents. Additional traffic lights at key intersections would help slow down through traffic and enhance the viability of adjacent shopping destinations. Lower speed limits should also be considered for sections of the highway that serve commercially developed land, especially in the downtown area.

### **Complete Streets Concept**

Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians and motorists of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across the streets. Sidewalks, bike paths, crossing islands, boulevards, crosswalks, traffic lights and other elements are a part of complete streets. Completing streets usually requires policy decisions or a “Complete Streets” ordinance whereby the city requires that new and improved streets must include certain elements in addition to the vehicular roadway. Older, existing networks can gradually be retrofitted to become “complete” streets. The advantages are many and include:

- Increased accessibility to business and destinations
- Reduction of congestion
- A higher degree of mobility for citizens who do not drive
- Safer routes to school for children

- Encourages walking and biking for recreational and health reasons
- Provides for a more attractive, better designed roadway

## 5.5 PEDESTRIAN AND BIKEWAY SYSTEM

Pedestrian and Bikeway systems serve both a transportation and recreational function in the community. There are several components which may include sidewalks, bikeways and combination systems of which bikeways are a part. Greenways may also be included in the system but are normally for recreational use only. Pedestrian crosswalks, traffic signals, signs and handicapped accessibility should also be considered when planning pedestrian systems.

### Sidewalks

Sidewalks are a major component of a pedestrian system and serve a variety of functions in the community. They separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic, thereby facilitating better traffic flow, affording more safety to pedestrians. They allow for better circulation within residential areas and provide pedestrian access to schools, recreational areas, commercial uses, and schools. They also provide a safe area for disabled citizens to travel and for children to travel and play.

The Gautier Subdivision Ordinance requires sidewalks in new residential developments. Several arterials including Gautier-Vancleave Road and Ladnier Road have sidewalks; however, the system is incomplete and inadequate and lacks adequate handicapped ramps and crosswalks.

### Bikeways

Bicycles can be a suitable alternative to motorized vehicles for the commute to work or school if safe conditions exist. Bicycles are not allowed on sidewalks and therefore must share the roadway with the motorized vehicles. To insure the greatest utilization, the existence of bicycles on the roadway must be taken under consideration and addressed. Although some States provide bicycles and automobiles the same rights and duties on the road, every effort should be made to provide for separate facilities, signage or special lanes for safety and increased utilization.

Other cities along the Coast are looking at bike paths and greenways as a tourism draw and it is in the best interest of Gautier to join in



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those efforts. Therefore, the following recommendations provide a plan that can be accomplished through the metropolitan transportation planning process.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan**

It is important for the Gautier to begin the process of defining potential pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities for the Study Area. As funding becomes available the proposed improvements should be considered for implementation along with other transportation infrastructure improvements. The plan should incorporate the following five elements: regulation review, sidewalk inventory, identification of gaps in the existing network, location of high pedestrian traffic and assessment of particular needs and the preparation of a long term plan for implementation.

#### Regulation Review

Review of regulations helps determine the applicability and adequacy of sidewalk standards. All standards should reflect current ADA standards including: widths of sidewalks, handicapped ramps at intersections, limitations on cross slopes, and truncated domes at street crossings. Sidewalks should also reflect the walking patterns of the pedestrian community.

#### Inventory Stage

- Sidewalks—A complete inventory of the sidewalk system should be prepared. The check list of items to review should include: current condition, width, freedom from obstruction, location in relation to adjacent vehicular travel lanes and connectivity to other pedestrian systems. This inventory should establish the existence or non-existence of sidewalks, handicapped ramps at corners, obstructions, and the physical condition of the sidewalks.
- Bikeways—An inventory of existing or proposed bicycle facilities should be prepared.

#### Identification of Gaps

- Sidewalks—The sidewalk inventory should attempt to analyze areas with the greatest needs such as elementary schools, major employment centers, high-density housing and shopping destinations. Existing footpaths to schools, grocery stores, or shopping areas are very good indicators of the need for protected pedestrian walkways. Residential neighborhoods where no sidewalks exist should be considered based upon their safety and desirability. Sites such as parks, public plazas, shopping centers, underutilized right of ways or easements could be potential locations for pedestrian walkways.
- Bikeways—New bicycle facilities should be proactively incorporated into land development patterns and proposed bicycle oriented facilities and improvements should be done in a clear, systematic manner. Linking schools, community centers, recreational facilities and residential subdivisions with well-marked and accessible bikeways will enable citizens to access key destinations by bicycle.

### Preparation of Long-Term Plan

- Sidewalks—An area map showing existing sidewalks will help identify gaps in the existing system. A first draft of “connecting links” should be prepared and field inspections would identify the practicality of implementation. The “connecting links” that can be implemented should be prioritized based upon surrounding land uses, need for sidewalks, existing usage and connectivity.
- Bikeways—An area map showing vacant land, major recreational facilities, parks, large residential areas and nature areas can be used to draft a proposed bikeway plan which will connect destinations. Parking for users who drive to get on the bike path should be considered.



### Implementation Phases and Cost estimates

Finally, preparation of a long term plan for implementation is necessary to insure the success of the sidewalk and pedestrian walkway plan. The following should be considered in final plan:

- Identification of adequate and routine funding
- Regulatory changes which can have an immediate impact

Changes that are warranted or desired should be implemented after the required public hearings and adoption by the governing body. Adoption of the sidewalk plan is necessary to insure that everyone recognizes their importance and that all aspects of development (regulatory, enforcement, financial and construction) recognize their need to insure proper implementation.

All new roadways except major highways should use the “Complete Streets” policy to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle pathways are a component of the streets being built or improved.



### **Bicycle Safety and Education Programs**

Bicycle safety programs are also an important part of bicycle facility planning and federal money for bicycle safety training programs is available. TEA and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program both provide funds for bicycle safety education projects. The Children’s Bicycle Helmet Safety Act of 1994 (Title II,

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Section 203) provides funds to educate children under the age of 16 and their families on the importance of wearing a helmet.

Educating citizens on the use of the bicycle can increase participation rates and encourage the use of bicycles instead of making shorter trips by car. Funds to start a bicycle education program are available through 23 USC Section 402, with availability determined by the DOTD Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator. Grants are also available from private organizations such as the Bikes Belong Coalition. The league of American Cyclist's Bike Education program offers comprehensive training for all types of riders and situations. Educating motorists about sharing the road with cyclists should also be considered as a component of a bicycle safety program.

### **Adoption of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan**

In order to fully recognize the merits of the plan and begin to implement the recommendations, a public hearing and adoption process is needed. This will expedite the funding process and ultimately the building of the needed facilities. Gautier should continue to review and update its pedestrian walkway and bicycle facilities plan with the same regularity and commitment as the infrastructure improvement program. A strong commitment to alternative transportation modes will better insure that Gautier is addressing the future needs of all its citizens.

## **5.6 IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN**

Long-term transportation planning for arterials, collectors, highways, and freeways has been formalized by the creation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) for communities with populations greater than fifty thousand. In order to adequately plan and fund transportation projects, the city must take a proactive stance to identify and prioritize local projects as well as identify local funding sources and the required matching funds for MPO projects.

Adoption of a Complete Streets policy or ordinance as well as the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan will help begin the process for the building of a transportation network that is safe, attractive and a source of community pride.

Maintenance and improvement of local streets and the aesthetics of vehicular use areas is the responsibility of local governmental entities. The County provides financial assistance for bridge repair. While there are many financial sources available for transportation needs including transit, the city must take responsibility for initiating and overseeing the process.

Specific recommendations for implementation of transportation goals are presented in Table No. 19 on pages 77 and 78.

**Table No. 19: Implementation and Action Steps  
Transportation**

Strategy	Short	Med	Long	On-Going	Comments
<b><u>Long-Range MPO Projects</u></b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>MPO Projects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend Dolphin Drive to Suter Road.</li> <li>• Realign Martin Bluff Road in the vicinity of the Little Bend Place Subdivision.</li> <li>• Create a street connection from Beasley Street to Gautier-Vancleave Road to create an alternative north-south route and open up new area for development.</li> <li>• Improve Martin Bluff Road from Broadmoor Dr. to the I-10 frontage road with a new 4 lane divided highway.</li> <li>• Build a new 2 lane divided road from Gautier-Vancleave Rd to Mississippi Highway 57.</li> <li>• Improve Gautier-Vancleave Road from Martin Bluff Road to U. S. Highway 90.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Multimodal</u></b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Need to be Initiated and sustained.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convert the CSX Railroad line to light rail with two terminal stops in Gautier.</li> <li>• Prepare a Pedestrian Walkway and Bicycle Facilities Plan, identify funding sources to implement.</li> <li>• Build walking and bike trails and connect sidewalks.</li> <li>• Work with other entities to develop a long-term greenways plan which would provide linkages throughout the Coastal area.</li> <li>• Begin an organized acquisition policy whereby greenway land can be donated or bought for trails.</li> <li>• Provide a van or bus service for handicapped or aged individuals for transportation to the Senior Center, local medical facilities and drug stores.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>General</u></b>				<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance, Traffic and Communication</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and install way-finding signs for public buildings including the library and convention center.</li> <li>• Work with appropriate agencies to improve and maintain bridges and overpasses.</li> <li>• Mitigate the negative effects of high-speed traffic through areas where people live, work and shop.</li> <li>• Use varied widths and types of roadways in new subdivisions to help calm traffic.</li> <li>• Require other traffic calming devices in new developments including traffic tables, roundabouts, boulevards and eyebrow streets.</li> <li>• Use the long-term transportation plan to determine set-backs for new buildings along major roadways.</li> <li>• Prepare an educational component to educate citizens about the merit of "Complete Streets" and the addition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the city.</li> </ul>					
<p><b><i>Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.</i></b></p>					
<p align="right"><i>Table No. 19 continued on following page . .</i></p>					

<b>Implementation and Action Steps Transportation</b>					
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>Med</b>	<b>Long</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><u>Local Initiatives and Design</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance, policy and financial commitment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set aside matching funds for approved long-range MPO projects</li> <li>• Reduce the speed limit along US 90.</li> <li>• Extend frontage roads and local street connections along commercial areas adjacent to Highway 90.</li> <li>• Reconfigure local streets crossing Highway 90 at an angle of less than 45 degrees.</li> <li>• Develop an access management plan for major thoroughfares.</li> <li>• Extend and improve local streets in accordance with the Governor’s Charrette Plan and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.</li> <li>• Maintain a data base for incremental upgrades to streets.</li> <li>• Initiate acquisition of land for linkages between parks and commercial centers and begin staged construction</li> <li>• Initiate a “complete streets” policy whereby facilities are provided for all types of users including bicycles and pedestrians on new and improved streets.</li> <li>• Change the development ordinances to require side and rear parking in certain areas for commercial and mixed use buildings to mitigate the negative effects of parking lots along major roadways.</li> <li>• Support the use of alleys in small lot and townhouse communities to avoid the negative effects of parking pads in front of residences.</li> </ul>					
<p><b><i>Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.</i></b></p>					

## CHAPTER SIX: COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

*Providing adequate community facilities and services is the primary responsibility of local governmental entities such as the City of Gautier. Mississippi State Statute requires that a community facilities plan be prepared and used as a basis for capital improvements programs when comprehensive plans are written. This chapter will discuss information relative to city facilities, public safety, recreational facilities and programs, educational facilities and other public facilities and services.*

### 6.1 CITY FACILITIES

The City of Gautier governmental offices operate from two locations: City Hall “North” and City Hall “South”. City Hall North is located at 3330 Highway 90 and City Hall South is located at 3305 Gautier-Vancleave Road, south of US 90 and north of Old Spanish Trail.

City Hall North houses the City Council Chambers, the City Clerk, the City Manager, the Department of Administration (Personnel and Human Resources) and the Police Department. The Vehicle Maintenance facility which maintains the city’s fleet and the Streets and Drainage Departments are located behind City Hall North.

At City Hall North citizens receive a variety of services and can attend meetings with the elected officials, the City Manager, City Clerk, Director of Administration and the Chief of Police. Citizens can also discuss law enforcement issues as well as seek employment opportunities. The Personnel and Human Resource offices provide assistance as needed to employees and assists in the hiring of personnel.

City Hall South houses the Department of Community Services (Planning Division, Code Enforcement and the Building Inspector); Water and Sewer Department; Recreational Department and some Administration Personnel. It also serves as the Public Works Maintenance Compound, storing the heavy equipment owned by the City of Gautier. At City Hall South citizens may apply for

**The City of  
Gautier  
operates from two  
locations: City  
Hall “North”  
and  
City Hall “South”.**



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building permits, sign permits and demolition permits. They may also apply for water and sewer connections or disconnections, and submit plans for new subdivision approvals and zoning related applications. Water and sewer bills may be paid here and Certificates of Occupancy are also issued here; however, business licenses are issued at City Hall North.

## **6.2 PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **Police Department**

The City of Gautier Police Department was created at the time of incorporation and is the primary law enforcement agency within the city limits.

#### Facilities

The Police Department is located in City Hall North. All patrols emanate from this site and return to this site to book prisoners, complete paper work, attend meetings and training. Although the centrally located site is accessible for citizens; the size of the department and the amount of activity generated warrants a separate building. The physical layout of the community, its existing transportation network and limited interconnectivity place some constraints on public safety personnel. Consideration has been given to locating a “sub-station” on the northeastern side of the community or a separate Police Department building.

#### Personnel and Divisions

The Police Department’s total personnel strength is comprised of forty-three full-time police officers, twenty-five reserve officers (certified in law enforcement), nine dispatchers, one records clerk, and one administrative assistant. The Police Department’s personnel strength is adequate for the size and demographics of Gautier including the rates and types of crime committed.

The Patrol Division operates four patrol shifts each with seven police officers; each shift has two officers that patrol north of US 90 and two officers that patrol south of US 90. These patrol shifts respond to numerous types of requests for assistance including domestic disputes, public nuisances, misdemeanors and felony crimes and traffic accidents. They address virtually all requests for assistance within their patrol area.

The four-man Traffic Division is responsible for traffic enforcement, accidents, DUI’s, police escorts and radar enforcement. The Police Department also has a Canine Officer who is responsible for the Department’s Police canine. The canine is certified in patrol as well as drug detection, criminal apprehension, officer protection as well as search and rescue.

#### Equipment

The Police Department received twenty-five new police units as a result of the funds received after Hurricane Katrina. The additional inventory allows Police Officers to take their police units home, benefiting the Department in several ways. Police Officers can drive their units to and from work and to training and court appearances, alleviating the need for additional

**MAP NO. 7: COMMUNITY  
FACILITIES**

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parking to accommodate officer's personal cars at City Hall. The appearance of the police unit in a residential neighborhood provides the community with a sense of security. Finally, vehicles taken home tend to have greater longevity as they are not utilized as much as the continually operated units.

Mutual Aid Policy

Although the Police Department is primarily responsible for Gautier, it also provides mutual aid to the Sheriff's Office as well as the police departments of the nearby municipalities upon request. Mutual aid is provided through a State of Mississippi Mutual Aid Compact which allows communities to provide assistance to other communities within certain pre-identified circumstances without any further approval from the governing authority. The Mutual Aid Compact establishes the terms and conditions of the mutual aid to avoid any possible confusion or misunderstandings.

Crimes

The Gautier Police Department averages approximately 2,300 to 2,400 requests for service each month. The most common offences are petty larceny, malicious mischief, and property crimes. The crime rate has been fairly static except immediately following Hurricane Katrina when the community was inundated with relief and clean up workers. Felony burglary and grand larceny have increased somewhat since Hurricane Katrina, but, the increase has not been significant. A summary of police activity for 2007 is shown in Table No. 20 below.

<b>Table No. 20: 2007 Police Activity</b>					
	<b>ARRESTS</b>	<b>CALL FOR SERVICE</b>	<b>ALLEGED CRIMES</b>	<b>MISC ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ANIMAL CONTROL</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,057</b>	<b>22,868</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>6,741</b>	<b>1,045</b>
<i>Source: City of Gautier Police Department</i>					

**Fire Department**

The Gautier Fire Department's service area is its corporate limits and its primary function is to provide fire protection services to this area; however, the Fire Department will respond to Mutual Aid requests as far north as the I-10/Pascagoula River Bridge. Assistance has also been provided to Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, Fontainebleau and Vancleave. The Fire Department also participates in a Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement and Mutual Aid Agreements with the Cities of Pascagoula, Moss Point and Ocean Springs; Acadian Ambulance; Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge; and Keesler Air Force Housing Facility on MS 57.

The Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement was implemented several years ago to increase communication and cooperation, to identify available equipment and manpower levels and to

allow fire departments to cross jurisdictional boundaries for the purpose of providing necessary services. The Agreement allows the fire department closest to the emergency to address the emergency first. The Gautier Fire Department handles approximately 1,300 calls annually. Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls constitute sixty-four percent (64%) of the total calls received.



#### Fire Stations and Equipment

There are three fire stations in Gautier. The Central Station is located approximately one-half block north of the Gautier-Vancleave/US 90 intersection and is adjacent to the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.

The South Station is located at 1905 Ladnier Road and the North Station is located at 7510 Martin Bluff Road.

The Fire Department has five fire trucks, two rescue trucks, one brush truck, one pickup, a van and the Chief's car. A new truck was put in service on April 21, 2008, and the two existing fire trucks which are over twenty (20) years old were replaced with new trucks. The old trucks are utilized as backup. Engine 5 is scheduled to be replaced in 2009 when it loses its certification. The Fire Department does not have an aerial truck as the existing Gautier building stock does not warrant its purchase at this time. A ladder truck will be required whenever five or more new buildings are built with three or more stories or whenever five new, large one-story buildings are built such as another commercial mall.

#### Personnel and Divisions

The City of Gautier operates a full time Fire Department with approximately thirty employees consisting of three, nine-person platoons, the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, and Administrative Assistant.



#### Fire Insurance Ratings

The cost of fire insurance is a significant component of a community's appeal for new residences and businesses, directly affecting the cost of fire insurance. The State Rating Bureau

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determines the fire insurance rating by ranking the community's compliance with National Fire Protection Association requirements (NFPA 1710) for fire prevention and suppression factors. Factors considered include availability of water, number and placement of fire stations, number of full time fire personnel, fire fighting equipment, local code enforcement, communication systems, building inventory and other items. The fire rating effort is a dynamic process based upon ever-changing factors and may differ somewhat from one community to another, depending upon individual circumstances.

The Mississippi State Rating Bureau (MSRB) was established in 1924 by Mississippi Senate Bill No. 126 and was empowered with many responsibilities including the task of better insuring consistency between communities in ratings and applications. The MSRB utilizes a rating scale from one to ten, with a ten rating indicating the highest fire risk potentials and a one indicating the lowest fire risk potential.

The City of Gautier currently has a MSRB rating of six; however, structures located farther than five road miles from the nearest fire station are given a MSRB rating of ten. The City of Gautier's MSRB rating is based upon the following criteria:

- Existing water system: thirty-nine percent (39%)
- Fire Department: thirty-nine percent (39%)
- Fire service communications: nine percent (9%)
- Fire safety control: thirteen percent (13%)

The MSRB ratings are fairly consistent throughout Jackson County, although fluctuations may exist based upon individual circumstances. The MSRB reassesses all communities on a regular basis, usually every five years with the City of Gautier being recently reassessed. Table No. 21 on page 86 is a compilation of the current compliance status and MSRB compliance needs.

#### Department Upgrades Needed

In order to handle anticipated growth and comply with MSRB and NFPA requirements, two fire stations will be needed on the west side of the community. One is needed immediately and the second station will be needed within the next five to ten years. The NFPA 1710 requires four certified personnel per Engine Company whereas the Gautier Fire Department only operates with two personnel per Engine Company, making additional personnel a focus for the Fire Department. As part of the recent MSRB assessment, Gautier was rated based upon their actual completion of or commitment to achieve the necessary standards. During the rating process, the MSRB considered Gautier's existing conditions, their on-going efforts, their progress to date and anticipated construction time frames including potential delays.

To maintain minimum staffing and accommodate vacation, sick leave, training time and injury leave, each shift would have to be assigned seventeen personnel in order to adequately man the four stations. Minimum manning for four stations would be fourteen. This would require

<b>Table No. 21: City of Gautier NFPA 1710 and MSRB Compliance Needs</b>				
<b>Total Personnel ***</b>	<b>Fire Stations</b>	<b>Firemen Per Shift</b>	<b>Firemen per Engine Company</b>	<b>Additional Equipment</b>
<b>CURRENT STATUS</b>				
30	3	9	2	
<b>NEEDED TO MAINTAIN RATING</b>				
54**	4	17	3	New Station*
66	5	21	3	Two New Stations
<b>NEEDED TO COMPLY WITH MSRB AND NFPA-1710</b>				
69	4	22	4	One New Station
84	5	27	4	Two New Stations
* New Station includes land, building, personnel, equipment				
** Closer to Compliance with MSRB and NFPA 1710. Full compliance requires four firefighters per Engine Company.				
***Includes Chief, Deputy Chief, and Administrative Assistant.				
<i>Source: City of Gautier Fire Department</i>				

hiring twenty-four firefighters at an additional annual cost of approximately \$840 thousand in salaries and benefits.

### **6.3 PUBLIC SERVICES**

#### **Garbage Collection**

The ability to safely remove and dispose of a community's garbage in an environmentally sensitive manner on a regular basis is a formidable challenge for any municipality. Municipal solid waste management is a challenge facing every municipality across the USA. Considering its unique location, with water on two sides and sensitive flora and fauna, Gautier appears to be handling the challenge

satisfactorily and has established an Enterprise Fund as required by the State to administer costs and expenses of municipal solid waste management.

A Request for Proposals for solid waste collection services was advertised in early 2006 and the contract was awarded in June 2006 to Red River Services. The contract commenced on September 1, 2006, and ends on August 31, 2010. The contract provides that both the City of Gautier and Red River Services have the right to exercise an option for an additional two one-year terms. This option will be automatically exercised unless either party gives notice to the other ninety days or more before the expiration of the initial term. Red Rivers Services recently acquired Delta Sanitation Services and now provides municipal solid waste collection.

Weekly residential and small commercial municipal solid waste collection and residential curbside recycling service is provided. Large commercial collections are not provided through the city but must be contracted through a commercial collector. Roll-off container services is provided at the Water Tower and the Streets Department. Weekly solid waste collection is provided to all city properties.

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Delta Sanitation Services provides the collection services to the Gautier citizens and bills the city monthly. The contract provides that the collector bill the city \$9.45 per residential customer; an additional \$3.40 is charged for additional containers, if requested by the customer. The current charge is \$9.83 and \$3.56 respectively, as a result in changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The City of Gautier bills the customers \$17.00 for the collection services; the additional charge is for the disposal costs and administrative costs of contract maintenance.

Municipal solid waste, according to contract, can not be disposed of inside the municipal limits but must be disposed of in a Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) "Sub-title D" landfill facility or transfer station which transports the municipal solid waste to an approved facility. The disposal site utilized by this contract is the Pascagoula Transfer Station.

### **Animal Control**

Animal Control is a division within the Police Department and currently consists of two full-time personnel. The Animal Control Officer responds to reports of stray animals and patrols the main thoroughfares daily. They are responsible for catching and transporting stray animals to the Jackson County Animal Control Shelter located on Audubon Lane at the Singing River Soccer Complex. The shelter houses the stray animals until they are reclaimed by their owners. If animals are not claimed, they are made available for adoption or in rare cases euthanized.

Approximately seventy-five to one hundred stray animals are collected each month in Gautier and the Animal Shelter is adequate to handle this amount. The Animal Control Officers of Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, and Moss Point have a verbal mutual aid agreement with each other and all work under the auspices of the Jackson County Animal Shelter Office. The mutual aid agreement works very well as manpower and equipment are routinely shared without difficulty; requests by any of the communities for aid is readily answered and cooperation is high amongst them.

### **Water**

Through its Utility Division, Gautier (Public Water System Identification No. 0300004) provides water service for both domestic use and fire protection within the city limits and to abutting areas. The Utility Division provides water in adequate quantities to meet service demands along with producing water that meets both state and federal standards. The Division also stores water for emergency purposes and actively plans for enhancement, expansion and rehabilitation to maintain a high level of service to residents. Historical trends indicate that an average of approximately 1.6 million gallons of potable water is produced each day.

#### Existing Water System

Gautier's water system infrastructure includes:

- Eight production wells with a permitted capacity of 3,650 gallons per minute providing

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groundwater from the Upper Pascagoula and Lower Graham Ferry aquifers

- Disinfection equipment at each wellhead
- Four elevated water tanks storing one million gallons of potable water
- Approximately 140 miles of water transmission/distribution mains ranging from sixteen to two inches in diameter
- Appurtenances such as valves, backflow prevention devices, fire hydrants and flushing stations

The most recent inspection by the Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH) noted that the community water system to be “well maintained and operating properly.” No deficiencies were identified during the annual MSDH inspection.

#### Improvements to the System

In response to its obligations following the municipal annexation of February 2002, the city added a water well and installed approximately eighteen miles of new water lines to service the western and southwestern quadrants of the city. It is anticipated that by the summer of 2009, the city will serve water to approximately ninety-eight (98%) of the population. System expansion plans are currently underway to serve the remaining two percent (2%).

The City of Gautier continues to develop plans to expand, enhance and refurbish its water system. Enhancement of water supply and storage operations will be accomplished by the addition of Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system equipment at the wells and tanks in 2009. Ongoing water system enhancement planning is focused on the addition of a new water well and a new elevated water storage tank by the end of 2010. There are also plans to address water clarity and color issues with an analytical assessment and treatment concept development in 2009. During the 2009 fiscal year Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Katrina Disaster Recovery funding will be used to construct improvements to the water distribution system in the Hickory Hills area.

#### **Sanitary Sewer**

Gautier provides wastewater (sanitary sewage) collection service within the city limits and to abutting areas through its Utility Division. The collected wastewater is transported to and treated at the Gautier Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, owned and operated by the Jackson County Utility Authority (JCUA). The Utility Division provides and maintains infrastructure to collect wastewater from its customers through gravity and pressure sewer service connections. Historical trends indicate that the city transports approximately 1.8 million gallons of wastewater per day to the JCUA for treatment. The city adheres to federal and state regulations in regard to the operation and management of its facilities.

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Gautier's wastewater system includes:

- Pressure sewer collection systems with approximately twelve miles of pressure sewer mains
- Gravity sewer collection systems with approximately 135 miles of gravity sewer mains and 1,700 manholes
- Wastewater transport systems with approximately 105 sewage lift stations and eighteen miles of sanitary sewer force mains
- Appurtenances such as valves, flushing stations and ancillary infrastructure.

#### Improvement of the System

The city continually seeks to formulate plans in regard to the wastewater system for rehabilitation, enhancement and expansion to maintain a high level of service to residents. Provision for wastewater collection and maintenance of needed infrastructure for transport and treatment at the Gautier Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant is an important community service the city seeks to improve as needed.

In response to its obligations following the municipal annexation action of February 2002, the city installed approximately ten miles of new gravity sewer, approximately seven miles of pressure sewer, approximately four miles of sanitary sewer force main and ten sewage pump stations to service the western and southwestern quadrants of the community. It is anticipated that by summer 2009, the city will collect sanitary sewage from approximately ninety-eight percent (98%) of the population. System expansion plans are currently underway to serve the remaining two percent.

Enhancement of wastewater transmission operations will be accomplished by the addition of Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System equipment at key and essential sewage pump stations in 2009. There are also plans to correct inflow, infiltration in older collection subsystems and the conversion of selected pressure sewer subsystems to gravity sewer. The city also has plans to add trunk sewer force mains in an effort to more directly route major flows to large diameter gravity interceptors. CDBG Disaster Recovery funding will be utilized during the 2009 fiscal year to construct improvements to the wastewater collection and transmission systems in the Hickory Hills area.

#### **Natural Gas**

The City of Gautier utilizes Pascagoula Gas for its natural gas system. Currently, the natural gas system primarily services the area south of US 90; it also has services along Gautier-Vancleave Road and Martin Bluff Road but it does not service the Hickory Hills area. The existing service is not limited to these areas but can be extended to other areas if desired by consumers. In order to extend the natural gas system, an interested consumer should contact Pascagoula Gas to negotiate an agreement for the extension of the service area. There are currently less than 400 natural gas consumers in the City of Gautier.

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## **Storm Water Drainage**

The City of Gautier provides storm water planning and management service within its corporate limits through the Community Services Department and the Street Division. The existing citywide storm drainage system, with branches from “headwater” to “Gulf outlet,” generally features roadside swales/ditches, residential subdivision storm drain networks, culverts, natural and manmade cross-country channels and natural creek/bayou channels that eventually discharge into the West Pascagoula River, the Mississippi Sound or Fort Bayou. Noteworthy aspects of the storm water management system are as follows:

- Approximately 35 square miles of storm water within the city limits
- Approximately 10 miles of Federal/State highways and 105 miles of city streets;
- Approximately 10 miles of storm sewers and culverts
- Approximately 230 miles of drainage ways both natural and constructed

### National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

The city's NPDES Phase II Storm Water Program was approved by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in 2003 as part of a countywide storm water program prepared and funded through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP). Program implementation, including public outreach/education and enforcement of Best Management Practices (BMPs), successfully progressed through its initial five year permit period. The program is now entering its second five year permit period. The 2009-2013 program will focus on general storm water runoff pollution, illegal dumping and improper disposal of hazardous waste, erosion and sedimentation associated with construction, and leaking septic systems and sewage pollution.

### Previous Drainage Study

In addition to the development of the previously mentioned NPDES Phase II Storm Water Program, the city contracted a three phase drainage study.

1. Phase I includes Seacliffe Bayou and Graveline Bayou drainage basins.
2. Phase II includes west Gautier, ranging from about five miles north of the I-10/MS 57 interchange south to Graveline Bayou, and spanning US 90 from MS 57 to Beasley Road which drains into Graveline Bayou, Mary Walker Bayou and Fort Bayou.
3. Phase III includes the Hickory Hill area which drains into Bayou Castelle, Bluff Creek and the West Pascagoula River.

The study and resultant reports provided an overall hydrologic and hydraulic assessment of the drainage system, presented drainage structure inventory maps, identified deficiencies and recommended drainage way improvements. Key structural improvement recommendations were added to the Street Division's annual operating budget.

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### Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program

Since March 2006 the City of Gautier has been an active participant in the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MCIP), a federal program under the auspices of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District. Through multiple rounds of agency coordination and public input, the Mobile District recommended and received federal funding for several Gautier drainage improvement projects and restoration of the natural channels in the portions of Graveline Road, Robert Hiram Drive, Ladnier Road and Seacliffe Bayous.

### Effects of Growth on System

Gautier has seen some shifts in population after Katrina and a rise of residential construction. To assure storm water drainage system reliability, Gautier has pursued enhancement of in-place drainage subsystems in areas of growth. These enhancement actions target improvements to roadside swales/ditches, residential subdivision storm drain networks, culverts, and natural and manmade cross-country drainage channels. Emerging drainage challenges are addressed as their adverse impact is identified.

### Planning Future Upgrades

To effectively manage storm water runoff, preserve public safety and minimize property damages resulting from flooding, Gautier will need a citywide storm water drainage management plan that depicts an engineered drainage-system and details a prioritized list of supporting infrastructure construction/maintenance/repair projects. The engineered storm drainage system would provide adequate infrastructure to collect and transport storm water throughout the city in a manner that is cost-effective in regard to both initial construction and continuing maintenance and repair.

## **6.4 RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS**

The City of Gautier has a variety of recreational facilities available to citizens and visitors. Each of these facilities offers unique opportunities for visitors to recreate, relax, enjoy, learn and explore. These facilities are discussed in detail below and Table No. 22 on page 93 summarizes the type of facilities at each site.

### **Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge**

The Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge is one of more than five hundred national wildlife refuges administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The refuge consists of more than 19 thousand acres in four units and is a part of the Gulf Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Recreational activities at the Refuge include hiking, interpretative centers, visitors center and wildlife viewing. Approximately 30 to 50 thousand visitors experience the Sandhill Crane Refuge annually.

A three-quarter mile nature trail adjacent to the visitor center travels past savanna and bayou habitats. The alert visitor can see and hear signs of wildlife such as white-tailed deer,

raccoons, foxes, frogs and snakes. Hunting, fishing or trapping are not allowed on the Refuge. The 10 thousand square foot Visitors Center was reconstructed after damage from Hurricane Katrina. Utilization of the Refuge is expected to increase to 100 thousand visitors annually in the next three to five years.



### **Dantzler Nature Preserve**

The Dantzler Nature Preserve (DNP) was donated to the State of Mississippi in 1996 as part of the wetland mitigation requirements for the Beau Rivage Casino Development. This site was incorporated into the Pascagoula River Coastal Preserve to be managed, in perpetuity, as a natural area. Although a part of the Mississippi Coastal Preserves System comprising nearly 35 thousand acres of coastal wetland and maritime forest habitat, the DNP is a mixture of 400 acres of uplands and 470 acres of saltwater marsh. The marsh portion of the tract contains four islands of uplands totaling eleven acres, predominantly slash pine, ranging in size from less than one acre to approximately nine acres.

### **Shepard State Park**

Shepard State Park is located south of US 90 in the heart of Gautier, Mississippi. The park has 395 acres abounding with trees and wild flowers, bike and nature trails, twenty-eight developed campsites, one bathhouse, tent camping and picnicking as well as one 18-hole disc golf course. The total length of the several internal loop roads is approximately ten miles, with almost one-half being abandoned dirt roads which afford easy bike riding. Another two miles serves as a footpath for visitors.



### **Other Parks and Recreational Facilities**

The City of Gautier contains numerous parks that range in size, amenities and utilization.

- *Bacot Park* is located on Ladnier Road south of Old Spanish Trail and consists of approximately thirty acres primarily used as ball fields.
- *Frasier Park* is an old school grounds, approximately three acres in size and used primarily for passive recreation. Lights,

picnic tables, grill and a pavilion have been added to the Park.

- *Bobby Hayes Park*, located on Lima Road off Martin Bluff Road north of I-10, is approximately three-quarter acre in size and contains playground equipment and a 48 x 22 foot pavilion.
- *Buddy Davis Park*, located north of I-10 off Martin Bluff Road, is utilized primarily for ball fields.
- *Cambridge Park* is located in the Cambridge Square Neighborhood off of Martin Bluff Road. It was originally developed as a private recreational facility but was subsequently abandoned reverting back to the city.
- *City Park*, located off of De La Pointe Drive, has a public boat landing/pier, picnic pavilions, playgrounds and contains the Senior Center. The City of Gautier was recently awarded a Tidelands Grant which funded upgrades to the park including new playground equipment, additional boat trailer parking, additional car parking and a walking trail with an observation deck along the trail. The initial cost estimate for the project was \$450 thousand and the estimated completion date is August 2010.
- *The Singing River Soccer Complex*, located in the west side of Gautier on Audubon Lane, accommodates nine fields and has a concession stand and limited bleachers. An independent soccer league schedules games and administers funds. The league is comprised of teams from Gautier as well as the surrounding communities. The city provides a monetary contribution to the facility based upon the number of city participants and also maintains the facilities.
- *The River Basin Estuarine Education Center*, located on the campus of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC), provides a place for research, educational opportunities for the public and training for students in natural resources management. It also helps support the re-vegetation and long-term maintenance of coastal



habitats. This facility is the result of collaboration between MGCCC, the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory and the University of Southern Mississippi (USM).

### **Sports Leagues**



Several sports leagues operate within the city including the Babe Ruth Little League, the Dixie Youth Baseball League and Pee Wee Football League. A girl's softball league plays at Buddy Davis Park and it is administered by the league itself. Gautier makes a monetary contribution to the girl's softball league based upon the number of participants from the city.

### **Golf Courses**

- *The Mississippi National Golf Club*, located at 900 Hickory Hill Drive is a publicly owned 18-hole Golf Club. It is a par 72 course and is 7,003 yards long.
- *Shell Landing*, located at 3499 Shell Landing Road, is a public golf course located within a residential development. Shell Landing is 7,024 yards and is an 18-hole course.

### **Boys and Girls Club**

The Boys and Girls Club, located at Bacot Park, provides after school recreational facilities for youth. The City Council recently approved the construction of a new building which will be run by a private entity but is partially supported by the city.



### **Future Recreational Opportunities**

Expansion of the recreational activities is a priority for citizens, staff and city officials; however, financial resources are limited. Possible sources of financing are being explored to help new facilities and improve existing facilities. Several projects have been discussed which would greatly enhance the appeal of the city as a recreational destination. Future recreational opportunities include:

- *Waterfront Parks*. Although Gautier is located on the Gulf of Mexico and the West Pascagoula River, public waterfront access is lacking. The city is searching for public water access points and has considered several possible sites including Point Clear, a privately owned recreational facility with pool and boat

launch. The adjacent property has over 300 feet of bulkhead on the Gulf is for sale and has been suggested as a possible city park.

- *Teen Recreational Center.* The addition of a new recreational center has been mentioned as a need for youth. This facility would include areas for crafts, a game room, basketball courts, a kitchen area and training areas for gymnastics. This facility along with the expansion of other recreational programming should be further evaluated as the city plans expansion of its recreational facilities.
- *Shepard Park.* The State of Mississippi and the City of Gautier have discussed the possible donation of Shepard Park to the city; however an agreement has not been realized at this point. The park has the potential of becoming a major destination for persons who wish to camp or enjoy outdoor activities. If acquired and improved it would greatly enhance the recreational facilities of the city.
- *Singing River Soccer Complex.* This land, currently owned by Jackson County, has adequate space for additional recreational facilities. The City of Ocean Springs is in the

<b>Table No. 22: Recreational Facilities</b>											
Amenities	Bacot	Frasier	Bobby Hayes	City Park	Singing River Soccer	Cambridge	Buddy Davis	Shepard State Park	MS Nat'l Golf	Shell Landing	MGCCC
Baseball Fields	X	X					X				
Basket Ball Courts		X									
Soccer Fields					X			X			
Playground Equipment	X		X	X							
Walking Paths		X		X				X			X
Exercise Stations											
Restrooms	X	X		X	X		X	X			
Pavilions or Shelters		X	X	X			X	X			
Grills								X			
Recreation Centers				X							
Launch				X							
Concession	X				X		X				
Camping								X			
Golf									X	X	
Football Field	X										
Open Space						X				X	

**Source: City of Gautier Recreation Department**

process of building a new soccer facility on MS 57 and it is expected this will negatively affect the use of the Singing River Soccer Complex. Acquisition of the Singing River Soccer Complex by the City of Gautier would allow for further expansion and enhancement of facilities.

## 6.5 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The public schools located in Gautier are a part of the Pascagoula School District. Gautier has four elementary schools (K–5), one middle school (6–8), and one high school (9-12). The schools have seen a slight decline in enrollment in the past five years. During the 2002/2003



school year the total school population was 3,145 students, whereas in the 2006/2007 school year, the total school population was 2,825 students.

The School District is recovering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina and moving toward normalcy once again. It is expected that student enrollment will reach pre-Katrina levels soon, however, the loss of houses and jobs has contributed to the student population shifts and declines.

As adequate housing, infrastructure, and employment opportunities return, so will the students. Table No. 23 gives the base enrollment figures and projections of anticipated future enrollments.

<b>Table No. 23: School Enrollments for Gautier Schools</b>						
<b>TAZ</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>BASE</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
129	College Park	430	431	433	436	501
127	Gautier Elementary	172	247	263	280	307
114	Martin Bluff	360	368	383	395	414
116	Singing River Elementary and Gautier High School	1,266	1,279	1,299	1,322	1,462
128	Gautier Middle	737	746	761	776	803
120	MGCCC	3,439	4,039	4,537	5,120	5,760
120	USM	Not known				
	<b>*TOTALS</b>	<b>6,404</b>	<b>7,110</b>	<b>7,676</b>	<b>8,329</b>	<b>9,247</b>
<i>* Totals do not include projections for USM Gautier campus. Source: MCGATs Study</i>						

The allocation of classrooms and all school facilities are annually reviewed to determine the most efficient environment to address the educational needs of the students. Additional school wings or shifting of classrooms may be necessary in the future depending on changes in student population.

The Gautier High School football team has always played varsity games at War Memorial Stadium in Pascagoula, Mississippi; however a new stadium will

has been constructed in Gautier and will become the site of home games during the 2009-2010 school year. It is expected this facility will be a source of community pride for many years into the future.

**Colleges and Community Colleges**

Gautier is home to the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Jackson County Campus, and a teaching site of University of Southern Mississippi both located on the same campus at the intersection of Gautier-Vancleave Road and US 90. Students can complete their first two years of an undergraduate degree at MGCCC; complete their four year undergraduate degree at USM or receive industry-specific skills in one of several two year vocational programs offered by the community college.

MGCCC boasts a strong workforce development program through on-going training partnerships with industries such as Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding and Chevron Texaco. Additionally, MGCCC promotes the community by partnering with local industries such as WLOX TV, Chevron Texaco Pascagoula Refinery and Keesler Federal Credit Union for ventures such as the Veteran’s History Project.

The campus and the services these schools offer are a vital part of the Gautier community. The MGCCC community college in Gautier has been steadily increasing in enrollment. Projections for future school enrollment has been prepared based upon the historical growth of MGCCC and conversations with school administrators. Table No. 24 gives historic and projected enrollment figures.

Both facilities are commuter colleges with the greatest intensity of students and faculty between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Prior to and after those hours, the campus population decreases dramatically. An interest in building school dormitories has been expressed by citizens in the Gautier community who see this as a positive addition to their city and a way to build a stronger customer base for local restaurants and businesses. It would also add a residential dimension to the proposed downtown district.



**Table No. 24: MGCCC  
Historic and Projected  
Enrollments**

YEAR	TOTAL	YEAR	TOTAL
1987	2,361	1997	3,168
1988	2,714	1998	3,244
1989	2,778	1999	3,010
1990	2,978	2000	3,086
1991	3,146	2001	3,260
1992	3,132	2002	3,439
1993	3,110	2003	3,771
1994	3,158	2004	3,750
1995	3,175	2005	3,052
1996	3,010	2006	3,576

*Source: Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College*

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## Public Library

The public library is located adjacent to the community college and was officially dedicated as the “Kathleen McIlwain Public Library of Gautier, MS” but is commonly referred to as the “Gautier Library.” It was constructed in 1978 and renovated in 1994. The library is a part of the Jackson-George Regional Library System (JGRS) which consists of eight facilities located



throughout Jackson and George Counties. Other libraries within the Regional System include: East Central, Lucedale, Moss Point, Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, St. Martin and Vancleave.

According to national standards, the Gautier library is considered a small/medium library which is a function of its size, the population served and the number of holdings.

Holdings are defined as being any available item at the library including books, magazines, tapes, DVDs, computer facilities, class and/or meeting spaces or instructional workshops. The library is approximately 95 hundred square feet and has approximately 30 thousand items in its jurisdiction. There are twelve public computers available for public use and wireless internet service is available to customers.

The Gautier Library is open six days a week from 9 a. m. to 8 p. m. Monday through Thursday and from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. Friday and Saturday. There are four full time employees, two part-time employees and one part time volunteer.

### Users

Over 1,300 people a week visit the library, with adults comprising the largest component of users. A Library Visit Survey reveals that there are between seven to eight thousand library card holders in the Gautier area. Considering the proximity of the Pascagoula, Vancleave, Moss Point and Ocean Springs libraries, allocating estimates is very difficult; however, considering the amount of usage, the number of holdings, operational hours, educational facilities and services, it is readily recognizable that the library is extensively utilized.

### Financial Support and Facilities

Legislation was passed on the State level in order for the City of Gautier to lend financial support for this library. The annual budget for total operation of this facility for fiscal year 2008 was \$305,543. This included salaries, utilities, general supplies, retirement, library materials, unemployment compensation and other expenses.

### Friends of the Library

The Gautier Friends of the Library is a group of people interested in the support and improvement of the Library, its services and facilities. Friends help the library in many ways from volunteering with special projects to being a voice for the library in the community. The

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most recent project was financing for installment of wireless Internet service in 2008.

## **6.6 THE GAUTIER CONVENTION CENTER**

The Gautier Convention Center, located on Library Lane adjacent to the Gautier Library, is owned and maintained by Jackson County. Currently, one full-time staff person coordinates the scheduling activities of the building. The facility has two large meeting areas and a kitchen that can be utilized for meal preparation. The center is used in a variety of ways including community meetings and as a voting precinct.



## **6.7 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

Jackson County recently adopted a Disaster Preparedness Plan and the City of Gautier is currently using this as an umbrella plan. Since the city is prone to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes and flooding, it is important for the city to develop its own official disaster preparedness plan which would address local concerns. Department directors have held informal discussions about aspects of appropriate emergency response to disasters; but a formalized written plan could address improvements to facilities and infrastructure in addition to emergency response.

The Central Fire Station was recently retrofitted to handle higher winds and flooding. Consideration should be given to additional shelters and fallback sites for emergency personnel and hardening of infrastructure and facilities.

## **6.8 IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN**

The City of Gautier has participated in various long-range planning projects and upgrades for community facilities and services and has achieved some degree of success; however, many projects remain, some unfunded. As the city continues to grow and become more concentrated, infrastructure systems will need incremental upgrades and new facilities will be needed. This initiative will require a concentrated on-going effort to insure initiation and success.

Initial priority must be given to providing adequate facilities for the Police Department and the Fire Department, improvements to water and wastewater systems and to recreational facilities. Specific recommendations follow in Table No. 25.

**Table No. 25: Implementation and Action Steps  
Community Facilities and Services**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>Med</b>	<b>Long</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><u>Fire and Police Services</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Grants, Loans and Bond Funds</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build additional fire stations as needed to meet MSRB compliance.</li> <li>• Budget funds for additional personnel and equipment needed to achieve acceptable standards for the community.</li> <li>• Build separate facility for Police Department.</li> <li>• Build police substations as needed.</li> <li>• Utilize modern technology such as surveillance cameras and a mobile command center to assist police officers.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Water and Wastewater Facilities</u></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Grants, Loans and Bond Funds</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve water distribution system in Hickory Hills area.</li> <li>• Install SCADA at water wells and tanks to improve system operations.</li> <li>• Construct new elevated water storage tank to enhance water system storage and distribution operations.</li> <li>• Improve water clarity and color.</li> <li>• Extend water distribution system to non-served areas within the city.</li> <li>• Construct water distribution system enhancements.</li> <li>• Extend wastewater collection system to non-served areas within the city.</li> <li>• Improve wastewater collection and transmission systems in the Hickory Hills area.</li> <li>• Install SCADA at sewage pump stations to improve wastewater system operations.</li> <li>• Construct wastewater collection and transmission systems enhancements.</li> <li>• Identify and correct wastewater system inflow/infiltration.</li> <li>• Construct new water well to enhance water system supply.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Gas and Other Utilities</u></b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Private Entity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the availability of natural gas service to all residents of the City.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Disaster Preparedness</u></b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Various Agencies and funding sources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a city-wide Disaster Preparedness Plan.</li> <li>• Determine location and make ready emergency shelter, including areas north of Interstate 10.</li> <li>• Devise a plan for strategic placement of equipment and fall-back areas should extensive flooding occur.</li> <li>• Create alternative routes to Hickory Hills area in case of a needed evacuation or to accommodate traffic should blocking of Martin Bluff Road occur.</li> <li>• Storm-harden water and sewerage systems.</li> </ul>					
<p><b><i>Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.</i></b></p>					
<p><i>Table No. 25 continued on following page . .</i></p>					

**Table No. 25: Implementation and Action Steps  
Community Facilities and Services**

Strategy	Short	Med	Long	On-Going	Comments
<b><u>Parks and Recreation</u></b>	X	X	X	X	<b>Various agencies and funding sources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a Parks and Recreation Plan and begin to incrementally stage improvements.</li> <li>• Adapt an existing building or build a new teen center.</li> <li>• Acquire the Singing River Soccer Complex and upgrade as needed.</li> <li>• Staff the Senior Center and provide regular programs for citizens.</li> <li>• Initiate action to acquire Shepard Park and make feasible improvements that would help promote revenues for the city.</li> <li>• Acquire waterfront land for greenways, park facilities and a public marina.</li> <li>• Require neighborhood parks and/or open space in new developments to be maintained by the Homeowners Association.</li> <li>• Identify and promote revenue generating acuities programs and facilities.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Stormwater and Drainage</u></b>	X	X	X	X	<b>Grants, Loans and Bond Funds</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve localized storm water drainage in areas of population growth.</li> <li>• Continue to make improvements to these key drainage structures identified in the drainage study.</li> <li>• Prepare a city-wide Storm Water Drainage Plan.</li> <li>• Implement drainage improvements recommended in the Storm Water Drainage Plan.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>General Policy</u></b>				X	<b>Policies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek funding early in the planning stage to ensure that needed projects are built when needed.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of special assessments and Business Improvement Districts (BID) for special projects and to help maintain facilities within specific areas.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Other Facilities</u></b>		X	X	X	<b>Grants, Loans and Bond Funds; various agencies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand City Hall Facilities</li> <li>• Support the expansion of the existing library and the building of a new library in a more accessible location.</li> <li>• Build or adapt an existing building and outside gathering areas in the proposed downtown district to be used for community gatherings and functions.</li> <li>• Promote events for the Gautier Convention Center.</li> </ul>					
<p><b><i>Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.</i></b></p>					



## CHAPTER SEVEN: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

*The study of land use provides an opportunity to observe patterns of growth, identify vacant land mass and integrate resource management into the development processes. Population and economic trends help predict future needs for various land uses.*

The City of Gautier guides the development of land through zoning, subdivision regulations, building codes and a floodplain ordinance. In addition, certain state and federal regulations, designed to protect the environment and prevent flooding, help guide development.

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of existing land use patterns, alternative scenarios for future development and suggest growth strategies that will benefit the city in future years. Urban design principles which will enhance the character of development and help define Gautier as a destination will also be addressed. Models for several types of residential and commercial development are also included.

### 7.1 EXISTING LAND USE STUDY

A windshield survey method was used to identify existing use of land. Planning teams traveled throughout the entire city, marking property maps to indicate the existing use of each parcel. These maps and notes were used to create an existing land use map.

#### Existing Land Use Categories

The existing land use study categorized land depending upon the use of parcels at the time of the survey. Thirteen general categories were used and are shown on Map No. 8 on page 105.

A brief description of each category follows:

Conservation—Areas that have been set aside as nature only areas. These include nature preserves and conservation areas.



**Existing Land Use  
Categories**

1. Conservation
2. Recreation
3. Very Low to Low  
Density Residential
4. Medium Density  
Residential
5. Marine/Fish Camps
6. Mobile Home Areas
7. High Density  
Residential
8. Commercial Office
9. Civic
10. Commercial Retail
11. Industrial
12. Vacant

Land within floodways or the 100 or 500 year flood zones are shown as conservation areas.

Recreation—Areas currently being used for active or passive recreational activities such as parks, playgrounds, soccer fields and baseball or softball parks.

Low Density Residential—Land with the lowest density residential uses, primarily single-family, detached dwellings. Some low-density residential areas may include a very limited number of two-family attached homes and churches or civic buildings.

Medium Density Residential—Land with smaller lots and/or a mixture of housing styles which may include single family detached, two-family homes, townhouses or condominiums. Churches, civic buildings and clubhouses may be located within these areas.

Marina/Fish Camps—Land adjacent to rivers and waterways that provide boat marinas and/or small cabins or mobile homes for recreational use.

Mobile Home Park—Land that is being used as a mobile home park.

Mobile Home—Platted areas being used for mobile homes and scattered single-family homes.

High Density Residential—Land that contains multi-family apartments. These areas may contain neighborhood amenities such as recreational facilities.

Commercial Office—Land that is used primarily for professional or general offices.

Civic—Public and Quasi-public uses including churches, schools, city buildings, the library and convention center and other non-recreational properties.

Commercial Retail—Land that is used primarily for high intensity retail uses including big box stores, the mall and strip centers.

Industrial—Land that is used for manufacturing, storage facilities, assembly or processing of materials.

Vacant—Land with no habitable structure.

# **MAP NO. 8: EXISTING LAND USE**

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## 7.2 ALTERNATIVES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The underlying development pattern for Gautier has already been established and will continue to influence future growth; however, a planned strategy can guide the city to a more cohesive land use pattern. Two different scenarios were developed so the community could choose the best one for Gautier. They are: (A) Existing Trends and (B) Growth Centers.

### **Existing Trends Scenario**

The Existing Trends Scenario is based on the continuation of current trends and policies in Gautier as reflected by the zoning map and existing development. It would continue promoting the development of commercial and employment land uses along major travel corridors as well as industrial uses along established rail corridors. These corridors offer maximum visibility and accessibility to more intensive land uses.

#### Advantages of Using Existing Trends Model

- Commercial areas are highly accessible by automobile.
- Minimal changes are required to the existing development policies.
- It maximizes the existing highway and arterial street system.
- It mirrors a familiar development pattern.
- It is permitted by current Zoning Ordinance.

#### Disadvantages of Using Existing Trends Model

- It promotes homogeneous commercial development rather than concentrated centers.
- It does not differentiate a town center.
- It does not offer any opportunity for mixed use districts.
- It encourages sprawl and dilutes the impact of commercially zoned property.
- It complicates access management for major corridors with multiple curb cuts along major thoroughfares.
- It has the potential of adverse effects on the environment because of sprawl.
- It does not distinguish Gautier from any other city which has a similar development style.

### **Growth Center Scenario**

The Growth Center Scenario is based on the identification of areas where a concentration of commercial, civic and higher density residential should be strategically located throughout the city. The intensity of these areas and the uses permitted would determine the specific location. Low density residential neighborhoods would continue to be protected through the use of residential zoning districts.

#### Advantages of Growth Center Model

- It establishes a hierarchy of commercial and mixed use areas with appropriate uses, scale

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and architectural character for each district.

- It stabilizes existing residential areas by limiting commercial intrusion.
- It creates more attractive transportation corridors with non-commercial uses located between major destinations.
- It has the potential of increasing property values of commercial and mixed use nodes by limiting excessive commercial zoning and allowing more intensive use on these sites.
- It creates interesting destinations within the city.
- It allows land owners more choices in land use in certain mixed use districts.

#### Disadvantages of Growth Center Model

- Is not fully supported by current zoning regulations.
- It would require policy changes and intervention by city leaders.
- It could require downzoning of certain vacant land from commercial to other categories.
- It will require time to get community buy-in.
- It must be accomplished incrementally and in consultation with property owners.

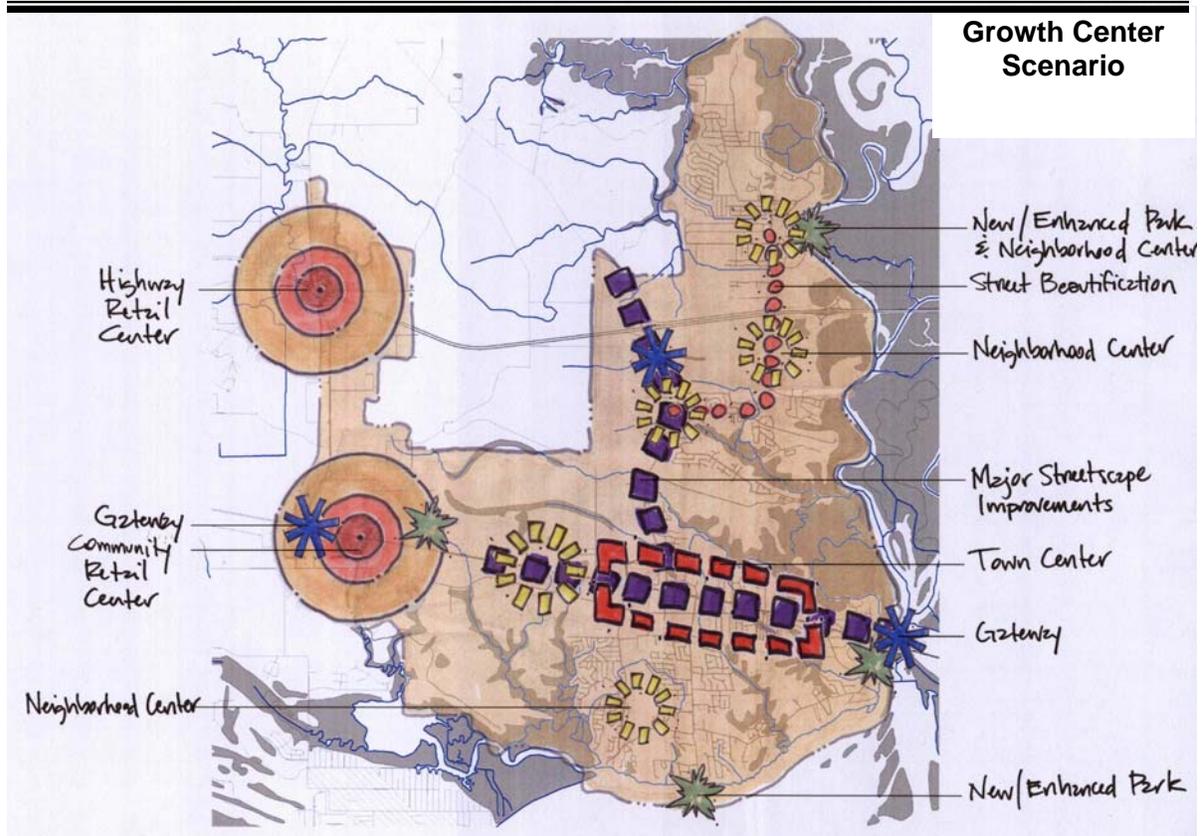
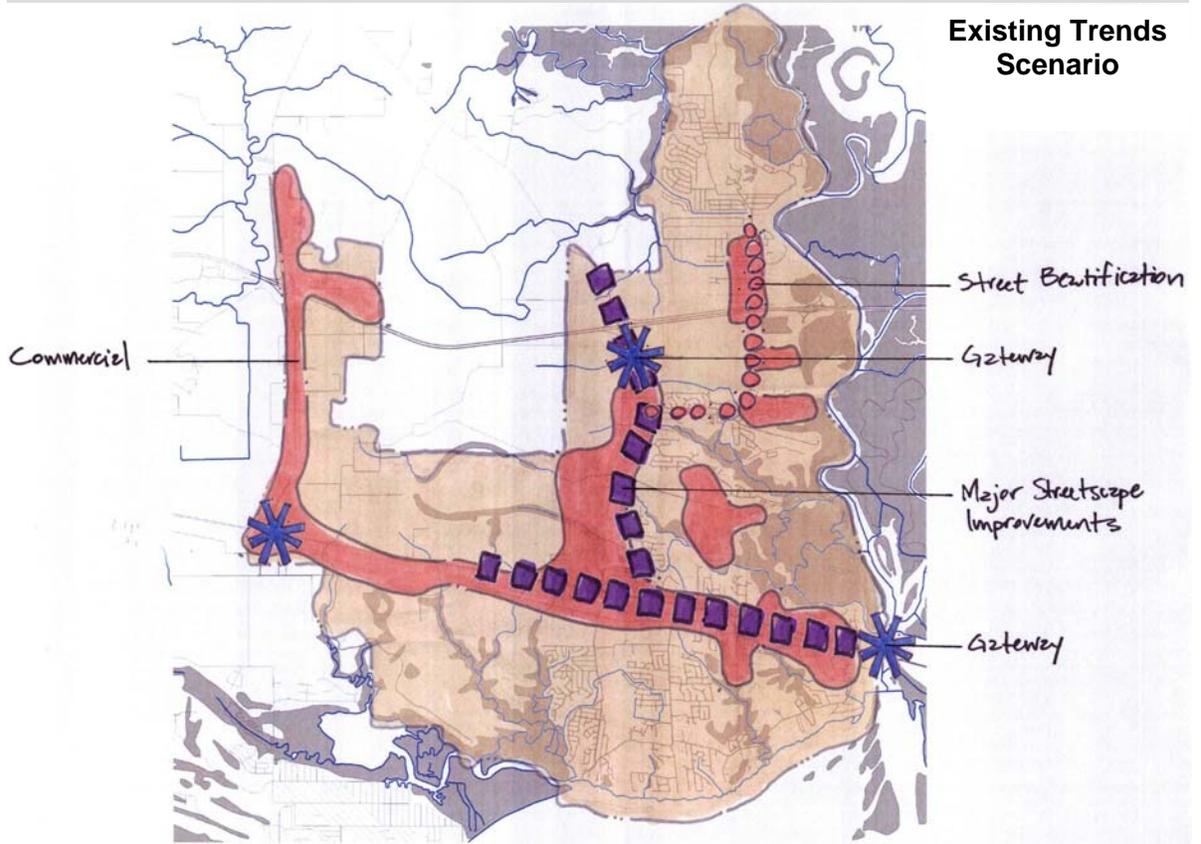
Each of these models are illustrated in Figure No. 9 on the following page.

#### **Gautier Growth Strategy**

Because all cities are unique, a custom growth strategy was created that reflects the preferences and the culture of Gautier. The Gautier Growth Strategy combines characteristics of both the Existing Trends Scenario and the Growth Center Scenario. This strategy helped shape the drafting of the Future Land Use Map.

- Existing commercial areas along major arterials would remain; however certain key areas were identified where higher density commercial would be appropriate. Specifically, regional scale commercial areas would be located near the MS 57 and US 90 intersection and close to the MS 57 exit off of I-10.
- Most of the existing neighborhood scale commercial areas would remain; however, certain prominent intersections and other areas were selected where neighborhood commercial could be expanded.
- Three different mixed use areas would be created including: downtown, recreational commercial, and mixed use residential. Each of these districts has a slightly different purpose but all three allow a mixture of compatible land uses.

**Figure No. 9: Existing Trends and Growth Center Development Scenarios**



### 7.3 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The ultimate decision of how land will be used is largely dictated by market forces; however, the future land use plan can assist by showing areas where concentrated growth is expected to occur and other areas that should remain low density residential. All types of land uses and combinations of uses were considered when the map was prepared including various types and scales of commercial, very-low to high density residential, various types of mixed use districts, civic, recreational and conservation land.

The FLU map does not dictate how land can be used; it simply suggests the most likely or most desirable use of land without delineating specific boundaries. Table No. 26 below describes the distinction between the Future Land Use and Zoning maps.

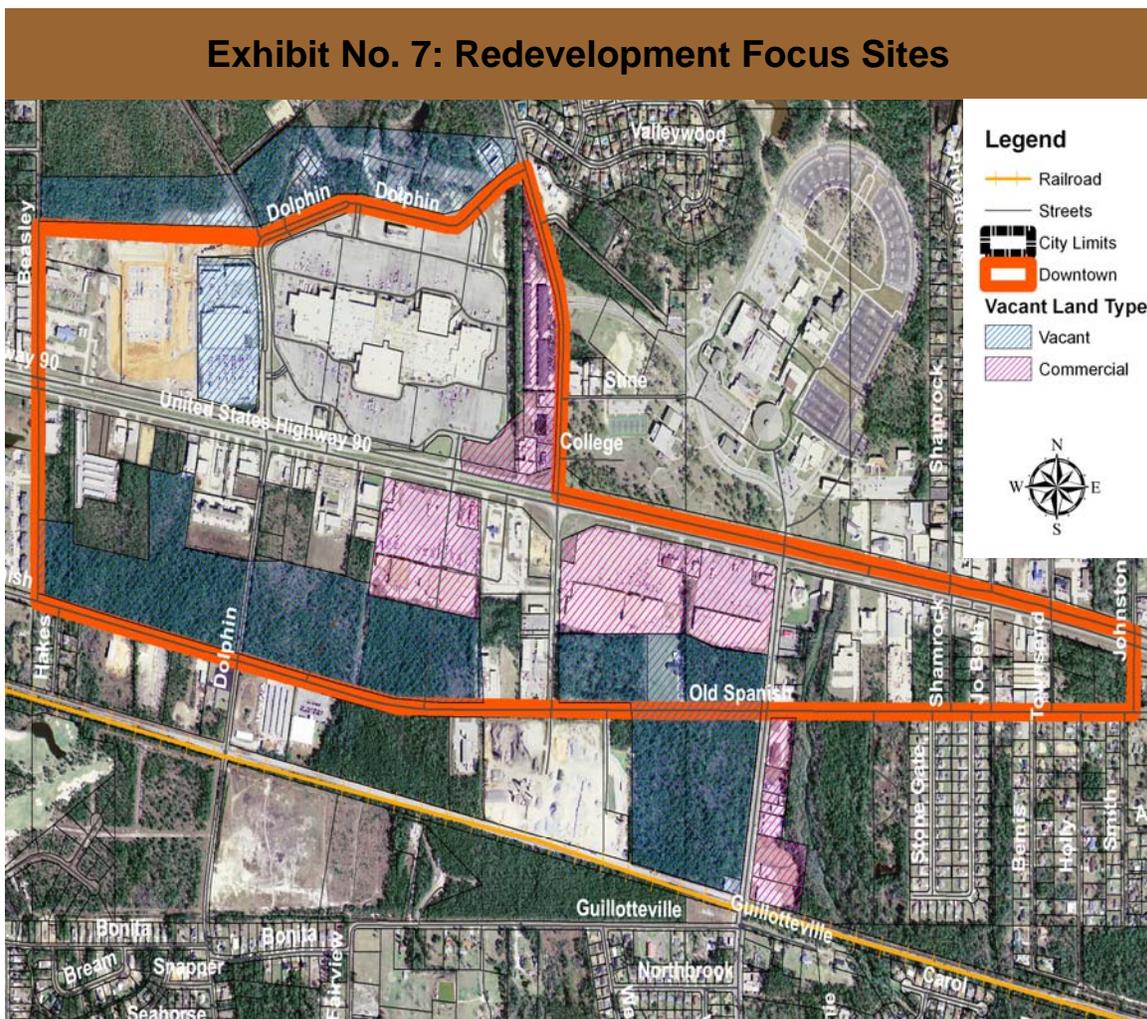
<b>Table No. 26: Comparison of FLU and Zoning Maps</b>	
<b>Comprehensive Plan and FLU</b>	<b>Zoning Ordinance and Map</b>
Provides guidance to future policy decisions.	Provides specific regulations that are the law.
Does not dictate the use of land or related decisions, but gives a broad general vision.	Does dictate the use of land and gives other restrictions on setbacks, height, and size.
Describes conditions desired in the long-term future, not necessarily in the immediate future.	Dictates what is allowed today.
Includes recommendations that involve many different entities, agencies and groups of people.	Deals with development issues under direct City control.
Contains generalized land use categories.	Shows specific zoning districts.
FLU is a conceptual map with generalized boundaries.	Shows parcel-specific zoning classifications.
<i>Source: Neel-Schaffer, Inc.</i>	

#### Issues and Challenges

Several specific land use, design and related issues were identified during the field studies and public participation phase of the planning process. Those considered to be most important to the future viability of the city are: (a) low density commercial strip development along major thoroughfares; (b) no discernable downtown area; (c) over-capacity parking lots with no landscaping; (c) residential neighborhoods at risk due to encroaching commercial uses; (d) abandoned mobile home parks; (e) recreational vehicle parks being used for permanent housing; (f) limited public waterfront sites available for recreation; (g) limited land for local parks; (h) industrial uses not properly buffered from other uses; (i) excessively deep front setbacks for commercial uses along US 90; (j) lack of existing definable downtown district; and (k) lack of cohesive long-term land use planning and/or implementation.

Some of Gautier's commercial districts face challenges to their long-term health and viability. Vacant buildings, abandoned signs and vast expanses of unused parking lots, a recognized sign of blight, may stymie revitalization efforts. Exhibit No. 7 on page 111 shows the location of proposed redevelopment sites which have great potential to both the owners and the city. These parcels were identified because they possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- They possess the potential of offering greater financial return to the owner;
- They are located in areas where more intense or higher density uses are appropriate;
- They may have large underutilized parking areas which could contain outparcels;
- They may have older structures or improvements needed to the site; and/or
- They are located at key intersections or within or close to downtown.



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Land use challenges are not limited to commercial areas. To meet the changing desires of young professionals and retirees, a greater variety of medium to high-density housing products including townhouses, second-floor apartments in downtown and multi-family units is needed. Neighborhood site design has become very important to today's sophisticated buyer. Parks, open space, recreational facilities, landscaping and imaginative lot layout has widespread appeal to homebuyers.

### **Future Land Use Categories**

The Future Land Use Map (Map No. 9) shown on Page 115 is a visual depiction of the proposed Gautier Growth Strategy. It has sixteen categories of land use. Exhibit No. 8 on page 114 lists possible uses within each district.

The following is a summary of the land use categories on the map:

Conservation—Flood prone areas or wetlands in the public domain where future development is either prohibited or limited. Portions of some of these areas may have limited use as greenways.

Recreational—Land which has been set aside for recreational purposes such as parks, open space, or sports venues. The FLU map does not distinguish between the various types of recreational uses or show where future recreational areas will be located. Exhibit No. 13 on Page 132 describes several types of recreational or park facilities.

**Density = Number of units/ total land acreage.**

Very Low Density Residential/Agricultural—Areas with one acre or larger lots and which contain single family residential uses. Very low density residential neighborhoods should ideally be located adjacent to low density residential areas. The overall gross density is one (1) dwelling unit per acre.

Low Density Residential—Areas with lots between 9,600 square feet and one acre which contain single family residential dwellings and low-impact civic uses such as small churches or clubhouses and neighborhood parks. Gross density is 4.5 dwelling units per acre.

Medium Density Residential—Areas with lots between 7,200 square feet and 9,600 square feet which contain single-family detached homes. New areas of medium density may include single-family attached homes (2,400 square feet), patio homes (5,000 square feet), two-family homes (10,000 square feet) or single-family detached homes (7,200 square feet). Neighborhoods with townhomes, patio homes or duplexes should also have open space, parks and other recreational amenities to mitigate the higher density. Gross density is between 6 to 8.7 dwelling units per acre.

High Density Residential—Areas with multi-family units, assisted living facilities and residential condominiums. Such land uses should be buffered from adjacent uses and should have

adequate spacing between buildings. Open space, playgrounds, and community centers should be required to offer recreational opportunities for residents. Gross density will depend upon spacing of buildings not to exceed 10 to 15 dwelling units per acre.

Mobile Home Residential—Areas used for mobile home parks or mobile home subdivisions. Civic uses and limited neighborhood retail may also be appropriate as well as community recreational uses.

**Impact = The combined affect of additional traffic, noise and other factors on adjoining property. (Relates to function and scale of buildings and size of lots.)**

Low Impact Commercial—Areas which provide convenience shopping for the day-to-day needs of consumers and which are located close to residential neighborhoods. These are located at key intersections on arterial and/or collector streets. The size and scale of commercial buildings should relate to the surrounding buildings. An example of an existing neighborhood center in Gautier is located at Martin Bluff Road and Bluff Point Drive. Exhibit No. 14 on page 133 shows examples of basic design principles for these areas.

High Impact Commercial—Areas that cater to vehicular traffic, contain larger buildings and have a greater impact on adjacent areas. Retail stores in these areas offer a wider range of goods than a low-impact center and serve the entire community. They may include big box and strip retail centers, restaurants, fast food and/or office uses. High impact commercial areas require infrastructure to support heavy traffic and should be located near intersections of arterial streets on major thoroughfares. High impact commercial centers may be located adjacent to regional centers or one to two miles apart. They are not appropriate within residential areas but may exist as a commercial corridor where the design of such a center complements or enhances the function of the roadway and adjacent areas. The Lowe’s Home Store is an example of a high impact commercial area.

Regional Scale Commercial—Large commercial centers which provide a wide selection of merchandise and have the potential of becoming shopping focal points of the community. Major anchor stores in regional centers serve a regional market. Such centers may also contain governmental, financial, cultural and/or recreational facilities. Regional centers should have immediate access to major arterial networks and freeways. The Singing River Mall is considered a regional center. Exhibit No. 15 on page 134 shows examples of basic design principles for high impact commercial and regional scale development.

**Mixed Use= Buildings and/or concentrated areas with residential, commercial, civic and recreational uses that are well coordinated and connected.**

Mixed Use Residential—Mixed use residential neighborhoods offer a variety of housing types and sizes with lots scaled accordingly. They also have a core area accessible to the main entrance for compatibly scaled commercial and civic uses. The most applicable development

## Exhibit No. 8: Summary of Future Land Use Categories

<b>Very Low Density Residential Areas</b>	<b>Low Impact Commercial Areas</b>
<p><i>Suggested Land Uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Single-family detached residential uses;</li> <li>B. Public and quasi-public uses, such as churches and schools; and</li> <li>C. Appropriate accessory buildings</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Very large lots, abundant setbacks, low traffic, adjacent to other residential areas.</p>	<p><i>Suggested land uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Retail and services that do not require the outdoor storage of goods or equipment;</li> <li>B. Banks, convenience stores, barber and beauty shops, neighborhood restaurants;</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Neighborhood Scaled Buildings, buffered from residential uses.</p>
<b>Low Density Residential Areas</b>	<b>High Impact and Regional Commercial Areas</b>
<p><i>Suggested Land Uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Single-family detached and limited attached residential;</li> <li>B. Public and quasi-public uses, such as churches and schools; and</li> <li>C. Appropriate accessory buildings.</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Large lots, abundant setbacks, low traffic, buffering between other uses.</p>	<p><i>Suggested land uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Indoor and Outdoor retail uses with limited outdoor storage;</li> <li>B. Regional malls, big box retailers;</li> <li>C. Light Industrial campuses and corporate offices;</li> <li>D. Neighborhood and Community Scaled Buildings.</li> <li>E. Limited High-Density Residential.</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Regional or community scaled buildings; landscaped perimeter and parking; pedestrian walkways.</p>
<b>Medium Density Residential Areas</b>	<b>Town Center Area</b>
<p><i>Suggested Land Uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Single-family detached residential, townhouses, and patio homes residential</li> <li>B. Public and quasi-public uses, such as churches and schools; and</li> <li>C. Appropriate accessory buildings.</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Small to medium size lots, smaller front and side setbacks than low or medium residential; open space in new subdivisions; street trees.</p>	<p><i>Suggested land uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Various types of retail and service businesses, such as specialty shops and restaurants;</li> <li>B. Anchor businesses, such as grocery stores, that draw residents to the district;</li> <li>C. Public uses, such as city, county, state and federal offices, public parks and community centers;</li> <li>D. Higher density residential uses, including condominiums and second-floor apartments;</li> <li>E. Arts-related businesses, museums and cultural centers; and</li> <li>F. Offices and employment centers.</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Pedestrian friendly with outdoor amenities, flowers and wide sidewalks; Taller buildings than other commercial; Excellent architectural design; Unobtrusive signs.</p>
<b>High Density Residential Areas</b>	<b>Recreational Mixed Use Areas</b>
<p><i>Suggested Land Uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Multi-family residential, condos, and/or assisted living;</li> <li>B. Neighborhood parks, playgrounds and open space</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Large tracts with campus-like layout of apartment buildings; day care center and recreational facilities for residents.</p>	<p><i>Suggested land uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Single family, townhouses, patio homes and mixed use buildings;</li> <li>B. Marinas and public parks;</li> <li>C. Restaurants, specialty retail;</li> <li>D. Any other uses that complements the character of the existing district.</li> <li>E. Recreational vehicle parks, small structures or rental cabins.</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Small scale uses designed to encourage pedestrian traffic between uses; adaptive uses for existing structures, small signs and landscaping with waterfront views for some of the businesses.</p>
<b>Mobile Home Residential Areas</b>	<b>Recreational (See Page 115)</b>
<p><i>Suggested Land Uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Mobile Home Parks or subdivisions</li> <li>B. Modular homes and small houses</li> <li>C. Neighborhood parks, playgrounds and open space</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Cohesive subdivision or mobile home park with paved drives, landscaping, community centers. Buffered from less intense areas.</p>	<b>Industrial (See Page 117)</b>
<b>Residential Commercial Areas</b>	
<p><i>Suggested Land Uses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. All types of residential and commercial except for big-box stores, with each type being located in a separate sub-district to avoid conflict.</li> <li>B. Planned Unit Developments, Traditional Neighborhood or Conservation Neighborhood models.</li> </ul> <p><i>Design Characteristics:</i> Cohesive site plan with outstanding architectural and landscaping design.</p>	

# **MAP NO. 9: FUTURE LAND USE**

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model for this type of neighborhood is the Traditional Neighborhood Model (TND) although other types of models can be used that include specific areas for non-residential uses. If the TND model is not used, commercial uses should be located along the highway or arterial streets with higher density residential adjacent and low density residential away from busy arterial streets. Exhibit No. 16 on page 135 shows examples of basic design principals for a TND. Gross density of the area would depend upon the type of housing units built.

Town Center—The downtown area of the city should be distinctive from other commercial areas and contain higher density and more intense compatible uses. Pedestrian accessibility and connectivity between buildings is essential. Not only are uses mixed; but buildings may also contain a mixture of uses with first floor retail and/or offices and residential apartments or condos above the first floor. Civic uses including public parks and plazas should be integrated into the design scheme. Limited high density residential uses may be allowed including high-rise apartments, and townhouses. Exhibit No. 20 on page 138 shows examples of basic design principles for town centers.

Recreational Commercial—Areas where a mixture of land uses including marinas, fish camps, small scale retail and restaurants as well as various types of residential uses are appropriate. These areas are different in character and scale from the other commercial areas in the city and are categorized differently to validate this difference. Recreational Commercial areas have great potential to become regional recreational destinations not only for persons who want to use the marinas but for those who want to visit unique retail shops and restaurants

Civic—Land on which institutional or civic uses exist including schools, colleges, libraries, and the Convention Center. Some existing civic uses are not delineated but are included in other land use categories. Exhibit No. 17 on page 136 gives tips on design principles for these certain civic areas.

Industrial—Land on which existing and proposed industrial uses is located including the proposed industrial park on MS 57. Industrial uses include manufacturing, warehousing and light assembly. Development guidelines for industrial areas are as follows:

- Generous buffering should be used between industrial and other uses.
- Heavy industrial uses should be concentrated together and away from other uses.
- Industrial parks should be developed with a uniform design plan including internal streets and attractive landscaping and building layout.
- Other light industrial uses that do not require outside activities and which do not have the potential of becoming a nuisance may be integrated into more intensive commercial areas.

## 7.4 GATEWAYS AND CORRIDOR DESIGN ELEMENTS

Attractive transportation corridors promote economic development and should be enhanced with uniform lighting and landscaping. Gateways into the city should have landmark structures with landscaping welcoming persons into Gautier. Gateway markers with consistent design themes or constructed of similar types of material would reinforce the positive identity of Gautier.

### Streetscape Standards

New streetscape elements are planned for sections of US 90; however, all major arterial streets need a plan that coordinates the type and species of trees, lighting fixtures and other features that are to be placed along the corridor. Such a plan would help promote beautification and insure that all new development adheres to the streetscape plan.

### Underground Utility Lines

Unsightly utility poles and lines add confusion and visual clutter to the environment. Whenever possible new development should utilize underground utility lines. Existing lines along prominent commercial corridors and downtown areas should be buried.

### Signs and Wayfinding

Appropriately scaled signs which are professional designed and installed are a major component of good urban design. The height and size of signs should reflect both the width and type of road they face as well as the size of the business they advertise. In recent years strip centers have moved toward a more sophisticated and cohesive style which includes one or two monument or pole sign containing the name of the center and individual business signs on each storefront.

The City of Gautier has recently made changes to their sign regulations; however, additional updates may be needed to bring the sign requirements up to the urban design criteria the public has indicated they desire.

### Exhibit No. 9: Gateway and Corridor Design Elements



**From left to right:** Gateway at the entrance of the community with arm mast light and landscaping; prominent intersection with pedestrian lighting, wide brick sidewalk and prominent crosswalk; wayfinding sign to assist in finding civic destinations.

*Source: Neel-Schaffer, Inc.*

It is important that wayfinding signs are placed at key intersections to direct persons to civic buildings such as City Hall, the library and the Convention Center. These are in addition to the signs on the actual properties themselves.

## 7.5 TREE PRESERVATION AND LANDSCAPING

Tree preservation and landscaping greatly enhances the aesthetics of the city and has numerous other benefits including:

- Moderates stormwater runoff and erosion
- Provides shade in the summer and softens the harshness of concrete and asphalt
- Enhances property values
- Makes commercial properties more appealing and inviting to customers
- Helps screen uses that may be unattractive to the public eye
- Defines the coastal community with species indigenous to the area

Installation of landscaping along public streets is one of the most important aspects of a streetscape design. While the city currently has a Vegetation Ordinance that protects significant native trees and requires landscaping on non-residential development sites, additional requirement should be considered including landscaping along major streets, at the entrance to residential subdivisions and on other sites.

## 7.6 CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Communities that encourage continuous pedestrian and bike connections between residential areas, shopping and civic uses are becoming the norm rather than the exception. In addition, ample walkways from parking areas to building entrances and within and between developments are an important aspect of connectivity as is connectivity of vehicular and pedestrian traffic within residential areas.

### Exhibit No. 10: Landscaping and Connectivity



**From left to right:** Commercial car wash with landscaped front yard; trees adjacent to service station help buffer from street traffic; multi-purpose bike path used instead of sidewalks to connect residential to schools and shopping. *Source: Neel-Schaffer, Inc.*

## 7.7 EXISTING ZONING ORDINANCE

A comprehensive study of the existing Zoning Ordinance was conducted to compare land use, the Future Land Use plan and the proposed development models with the Zoning Ordinance. The Official Zoning Ordinance (See Existing Zoning Map on Page 121) divides the city into thirteen (13) districts shown below:

1. Agricultural, AG	8. Highway Commercial, C-3
2. Single Unit Residential, R-1	9. Planned Industrial Park, I-1
3. Single Unit Residential, R-1A	10. Industrial, I-2
4. Multi-Family Residential, R-2	11. Wetlands
5. High Density Residential, R-3	12. Public Lands District, PL
6. Neighborhood Commercial, C-1	13. Planned Unit Development, PUD
7. Community Commercial, C-2	

### Zoning Classifications

Agricultural, AG—Provides for areas with undeveloped land, low density residential and agricultural. The minimum required lot size for single family homes is 20,000 square feet.

Single Unit Residential, R-1—Provides for areas of low-density, single family dwellings and related recreational, religious and educational facilities. The minimum required lot size for single family homes is 9,600 square feet.

Single Unit Residential, R-1A—Provides for areas of medium population density with the primary use of land to be single-family dwellings. The minimum required lot size for single family homes is 7,000 square feet. *(Note: No land in the city is zoned R-1A.)*

Multi-Family Residential, R-2—Provides for areas of medium to high population density with the principal use of land to be single-family dwellings and multi-family units.

High Density Residential, R-3—Provides for areas with the principal use of land to be modular homes and mobile home residential areas.

Neighborhood Commercial, C-1—Provides for commercial areas where retail stores and personal service businesses no larger than 2,400 square feet may be located. Front setbacks of forty (40) feet are required.

Community Commercial, C-2—Provides for areas where retail stores, personal service businesses, and general offices may be located. Larger and more varied types of businesses are allowed than in the C-1 classification. Fish Camps and Marinas are also permitted. Front setbacks of forty (40) feet are required.

**MAP NO. 10:  
EXISTING ZONING MAP**

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Highway Commercial, C-3—Provides for areas where more intensive and larger retail businesses which serve the needs of the motoring public are appropriate. The minimum front setback is forty (40) feet.

Planned Industrial Park District, I-1—Provides for areas where light manufacturing, warehouses and limited retail may be built in accordance with an overall development plan. *(Note: No land in the city is zoned I-1.)*

Industrial, I-2—Provides for areas where more intensive industrial uses such as production and assembly plants may be located.

Wetlands District—Areas which are intended to provide protection of federal and state protected wetlands and wildlife habitat. *(Note: No land in the city is zoned as Wetlands.)*

Public Lands District, PL—Any land and/or buildings owned by the federal, state, or local government that is being used for governmental functions including recreation, education and public buildings. Land which is no longer owned by a public entity must be rezoned.

Planned Unit Development, PUD—Provides for creative site design using clustered housing, open space areas and protection of natural features of the landscape. This zone also allows residential and commercial uses.

### **Existing Zoning Issues**

A comparison of each zoning district, uses permitted and bulk regulations were analyzed as well as the zoning classification of land. Certain issues were identified and recommendations were developed that would benefit the city in achieving quality growth as well as benefit the property owners by allowing more flexibility in the use of land. Any future changes in zoning should include consensus building among the property owners as well as the general public.

#### Text Issues

- The Zoning Ordinance has dated terms and confusing language in some places which can lead to conflicting interpretations.
- It does not reflect land uses and development styles which have evolved during the past ten to fifteen years.
- The lack of qualitative standards, such as design guidelines and performance standards makes the work of the Architectural Review Commission and city staff challenging.
- The specific district standards and uses therein need revision as well as setbacks in some commercial districts.
- The terminology used for some districts is misleading. For instance the multi-family district should be “high-density” while the district for modular homes should be “medium-density.”
- Town homes, patio homes and zero lot line homes are not adequately provided for.
- There is no provision for overlay districts where architectural and urban design standards can be enacted.

- 
- The Public Land District describes ownership rather than use. It is recommended that the term “Civic” or “Institutional” be used rather than “Public Land” so that land being used for a public or quasi-public purpose could remain in this zone regardless of ownership.
  - There is a lack of tables, charts and graphics to give the reader a general understanding of the document and make interpretation easier for the layperson.

#### Procedure and Process

- The process and procedures for development makes time needed for development review and permits lengthy.
- The Community Services Director is not adequately empowered to make routine decisions about zoning which leads to a long review process by the Planning Board and City Council.
- The use of the Special Exception clause to allow incompatible uses is problematic because it has the potential of inadvertent “back-door” rezoning. Such decisions have the potential to be considered as “arbitrary and capricious” in a court of law. All land uses which are appropriate in each district should be listed as either “Permitted” or “Conditional.” Special Exception clauses may be used to allow pre-determined types of commercial uses such as offices and businesses within residentially zoned districts but the use is granted for limited periods of time. Use variances, special exceptions or any other process which allows deviation from the permitted, conditional or special exception uses enumerated within each district is not legal in the State of Mississippi.
- The legal test for rezoning as found in State Statute should be included in the Ordinance and used to frame the legality of land use decisions.

#### Zoning of Property along Major Corridors

- Most of land adjacent to US 90 and MS 57 including vacant land is zoned Highway Commercial (C-3). New zoning districts should be considered in these areas that may have the potential of a greater economic return to property owners such as high-density residential, mixed use residential and commercial.
- A very narrow strip of land on both sides of Martin Bluff Road north of I-10 has been zoned commercial, splitting the zoning of parcels. Very little of this land is actually being used as commercial. Existing commercial areas and areas targeted for commercial growth should have the entire parcel zoned commercial.
- It appears that most of the commercial zoning districts along MS 57, US 90 and the North frontage road of I-10 do not follow property lines. Zoning districts should follow property lines to avoid possible conflict with the use of a property owner’s land.
- There is a lack of intermediate zoning districts to buffer between C-3 Highway Commercial and Agricultural and Low Density Residential districts.

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### Districts Zoned for Mobile Home Parks or Mobile Home Subdivisions (R-3)

- Two areas in the city zoned R-3 contain a combination of mobile homes, modular homes and small homes. A new zoning district should be considered for these areas that would respect the current uses while allowing construction of homes smaller than those required in the R-1 district.
- There are two R-3 districts which are now vacant land and should be considered for rezoning to another commercial or residential category to reflect land use trends of the corridors on which they are located.
- Viable existing R-3 trailer parks should remain zoned R-3, the current zoning classification.

### Large Lot Subdivisions

Existing large lot subdivisions and areas with a concentration of larger lots are currently zoned R-1-Single Family Detached, which requires a minimum lot size of 9,600 square feet. This allows further subdivision of lots into smaller lots which may not be desirable in some areas. A new large lot zoning classification is needed for non-agricultural areas in order to impose a minimum lot size of one area or more.

### Wetlands and Public Land Districts

There is no land shown on the Official Zoning Map as wetlands. The category should be eliminated. The public land category was discussed in the Zoning Text section.

### Certain areas zoned C-2 Community Commercial

There are several historic sites including the Old Place located within or adjacent to residential areas which are zoned C-2 Community Commercial. Several of the uses allowed by right in the C-2 zoning district are not desirable for these specific historic areas. These tracts should be considered for rezoning to a residential classification or to the new Institutional (Civic) district.

Several areas containing fish camps, marinas and recreational vehicle (RV) parks are also zoned C-2. The C-2 district allows some uses which are not appropriate for the small scale development found in these neighborhoods and would be disruptive to the character of the area if located there. Many property owners have expressed a desire to have their neighborhood "remain the same." A new zoning district should be considered which would allow the current land uses, add new uses which would complement the existing uses and eliminate the uses not wanted in these areas.

### Suburban Strips

While suburban strips are the places where most Americans shop, they do not represent the ever evolving shopping destination that current shoppers are attracted to. Vibrant, more diversified markets are demanding shopping destinations that integrate public services, entertainment and culture, parks and recreation.

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Suburban strip shopping centers represent incredible economic vitality, but typically lack a sense of place or community. They are increasingly plagued by problems of commercial sprawl, deterioration, inefficiency, visual blight and traffic congestion. Developers are responding to these issues by creating new types of commercial centers that have an upscale and town center look. These design principles are also being used to redevelop existing strip centers and malls to help them become multidimensional destinations.

Revitalization of underutilized suburban strips and adjacent property especially those located within the downtown area of Gautier is vital to the economic health of the city. A long term strategy should be devised that will help property owners refurbish and beautify this core area along with adjacent commercial areas. Exhibit No. 18 on page 137 offers suggestions on revitalization of existing suburban strips.

#### Mixed Use Districts

A minimum of two different mixed use districts should be created in the text which would allow certain properties to be rezoned after consensus is reached among property owners.

- Town Center—The newly created downtown area offers a great opportunity for the creation of a unique mixed use district. Standards for Community Commercial (C-2) and Highway Commercial (C-3) are not appropriate for a town center or downtown area.
- Recreational Mixed Use—Areas which already contain marinas and other compatible uses should be considered for a new mixed use district that would allow low to medium density residential, restaurants, marinas and low intensity commercial.
- Residential Mixed Use—Areas along major thoroughfares which offer opportunities for various types of residential as well as limited commercial, civic and recreational uses.

### **7.8 IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN**

The land use of Gautier is similar to most small cities with the majority of developed land being used for low-density residential. Since most of the platted subdivisions and commercial areas were developed during the 1970's and 1980's, they have attributes that were common during that time.

During the past two decades, the style of commercial districts has changed from the old suburban strip model to the new neo-traditional model which incorporates pedestrian amenities and a mixture of uses. Residential neighborhoods have also changed with more narrow streets, sidewalks, roundabouts, recreational facilities and a variety of housing sizes and styles. Many cities are taking steps to be sure they are prepared to accept such developments.

With the current funding for a new zoning and subdivision ordinance, Gautier is in an excellent position to instigate positive change in the character of their commercial and residential areas. The city has already begun the process of reviewing which changes are appropriate for Gautier

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and work has begun on a new Unified Development Ordinance which will include zoning, subdivision regulations and the tree preservation and landscaping ordinance. This is the first step in implementation of the land use goals and objectives.

Other implementation steps must be instigated over the long-term. Several of these are listed in Table No. 27 on pages 128 and 129.

**Table No. 27: Implementation and Action Steps  
Land Use and Community Character**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>Med</b>	<b>Long</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><u>Zoning</u></b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and policy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt new Unified Development Ordinance to help implement the community's vision.</li> <li>• Define zoning boundaries for the new mixed use districts and the regional centers.</li> <li>• Guide appropriate development to each of the above named districts.</li> <li>• Identify residential development styles which are suitable, practical and achievable in Gautier and incorporate these into the regulatory ordinances.</li> <li>• Create estate zoning district and rezone large lot development areas in select areas and with permission of property owners.</li> <li>• Re-zone lots as appropriate to R-1A with permission of property owners.</li> <li>• Create overlay districts for main corridors using enhanced sign, landscaping, architectural and streetscape requirements if these elements are not a part of the base zoning district.</li> <li>• Add language to the Zoning Ordinance that would allow the creation of local Historic Districts.</li> <li>• Consider using architectural design overlays and/or Smart Code in more urbanized areas.</li> <li>• Eliminate back-door rezoning and variances that tend to sabotage the intention of the base zoning district.</li> <li>• Discourage development that does not reflect good design or is not in compliance with the district requirements.</li> <li>• Create neighborhood overlay districts in the Zoning Ordinance for those areas which lack sufficient restrictive covenants.</li> <li>• Make appropriate incremental changes to Development Ordinances as needed.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Subdivision Ordinance</u></b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and private development choices</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise the requirements for new subdivisions to not only bring engineering standards up to current requirements and to allow Conservation Subdivisions, Traditional Neighborhood Districts, clustering and lot averaging.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Landscaping</u></b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and strict enforcement.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise the Tree Ordinance to require more robust landscaping of commercial sites and parking lots and to protect existing trees.</li> <li>• Prepare and implement a Streetscape Plan that includes species, number and sizes of street trees.</li> <li>• Incorporate pedestrian connections, natural landscaping and hardscaping in all new projects.</li> </ul>					
<p><b><i>Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.</i></b></p>					
<p><i>Table No. 27 continued on following page . .</i></p>					

continued from page 127 . . .

<b>Implementation and Action Steps Land Use and Community Design</b>					
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>Med</b>	<b>Long</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><u>Site Design</u></b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>Land Development Ordinance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish zoning districts and site design for various types of structures that will enhance the city and reflect the preferences of citizens.</li> <li>See Housing Chapter Implementation Steps</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Other Design Opportunities</u></b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bury utility lines along major commercial corridors and in the downtown area.</li> <li>Require the use of natural building materials on all non-residential structures.</li> <li>Expand the sign regulations to exclude billboards in certain areas and reinforce maintenance standards.</li> <li>Establish gateway entrances with permanent landmark structures and landscaping.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Financial Incentives</u></b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and adopt financial incentives for rehabilitation of structures and enhancement of parking areas.</li> <li>Adopt ordinance with tax abatement for a limited time to persons who rehab older structures.</li> </ul>					
<b><u>Code and Building Enforcement</u></b>				<b>X</b>	<b>By Ordinance and Code enforcement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice vigorous enforcement of local codes and ordinances and expedite removal of abandoned and dilapidated structures.</li> </ul>					
<p><i>Recommended timelines for implementation are given as being either short (immediate to 3 years); medium (3–6 years) and long (6+ years). Some strategies will require on-going or staged implementation.</i></p>					

## Exhibit No. 11: Model for New Low Density Residential

### FLU Areas where appropriate

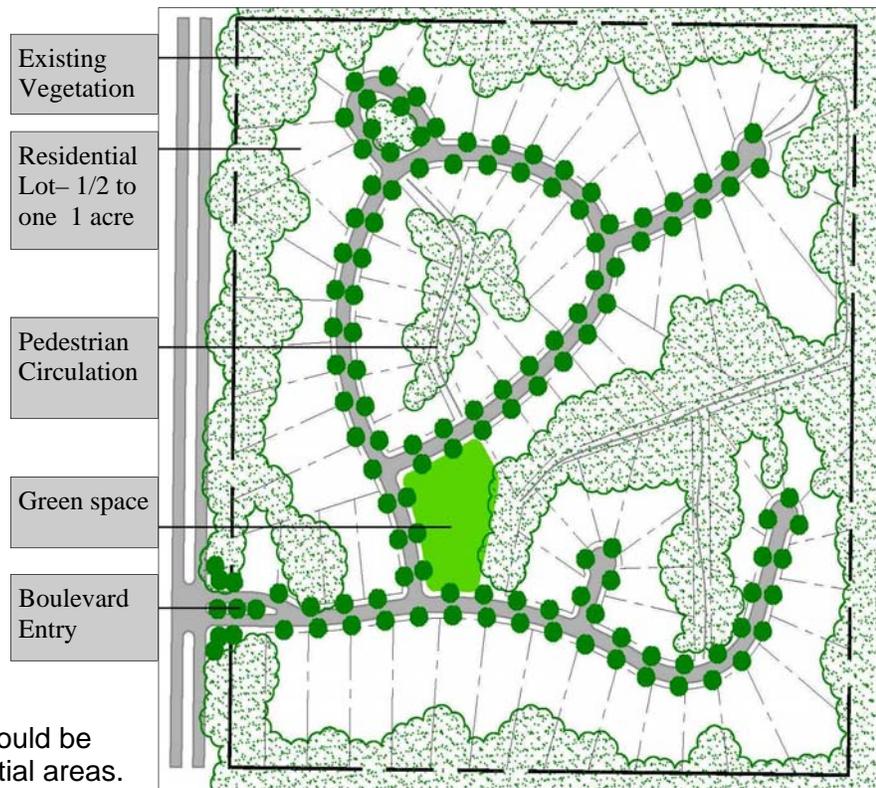
Low and Medium Density Residential

### Desirable

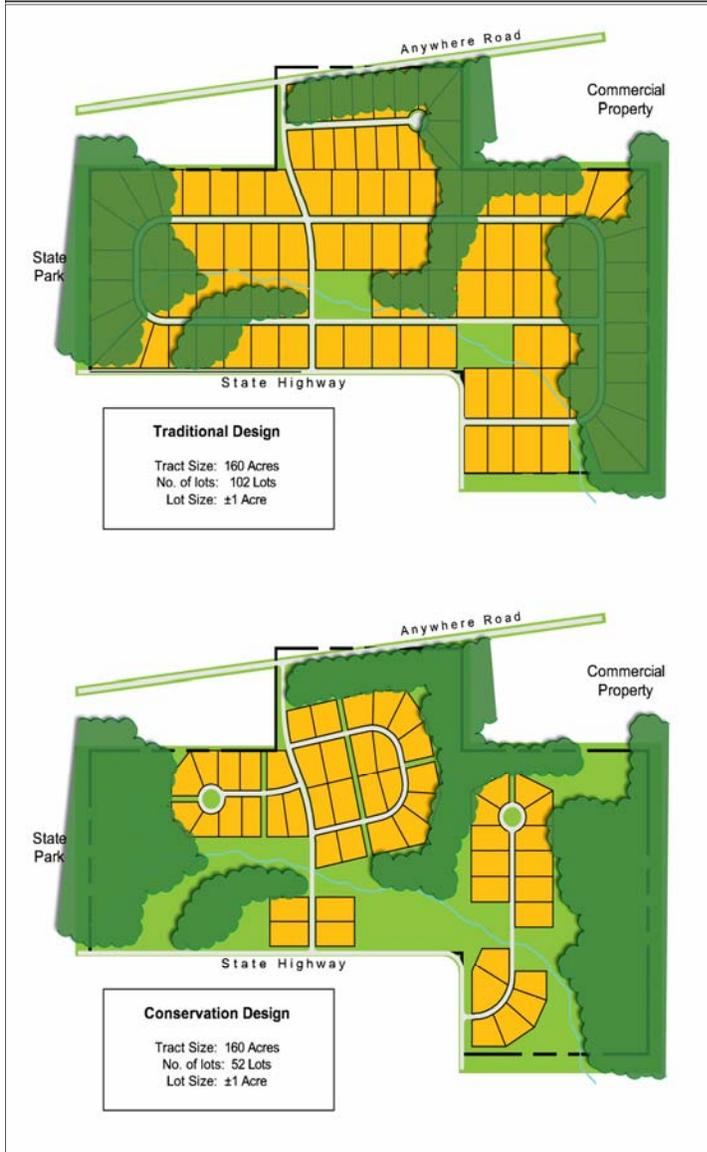
- Subdivisions should have large lots and natural areas for passive recreation and natural areas.
- If appropriate, small scale services and retail should be placed along major arterials on the perimeter of the development.
- Commercial areas should be buffered from residential areas.
- Pedestrian access should be provided between recreational uses and houses.
- Backyards should face natural areas or another back yard and not the street

### Key Attributes

- One main street with loop or short streets off of main street
- Attractive entrances with divided street to channel traffic
- Suitable entrance signs and streetscapes
- More intensive recreational activities, schools, and commercial located close to the entrance of the subdivision
- Open space areas preserved as natural areas within the development
- Other recreational amenities such as walking trails, swimming pools, lakes and/or club houses
- Preservation of natural landscaping with new trees planted along all streets and on individual lots



## Exhibit No. 12: Model for Conservation Development Subdivisions



### FLU Areas where appropriate

- Any residential districts and when environmental site features should be preserved
- Areas with a concentration of wetlands and/or flood land that can be preserved as conservation areas while building on the “high ground”

### Key Attributes

Conservation Subdivisions seek to protect existing natural resources by allowing design flexibility that enhances the marketability of development while minimizing infrastructure needs. Natural resources such as wetlands, streams, lakes, woodland and water recharge areas are preserved while houses are clustered around short cul-de-sac streets and loop streets. The natural attributes of the site are used in various ways including greenways, natural parks, active and passive park land. Conservation land can be held by a conservation trust or held by deed in common by the community organization. This model is appropriate anywhere wetlands, flood land or other types of natural resources exist which should be protected and preserved. Much of the land is kept in a natural state.

The drawing compares the layout of a typical subdivision and a conservation subdivision.

### Advantages to Developer

- Allows development in areas that would otherwise be overlooked
- Appeals to today’s market by providing scenic, natural areas
- Cost effective by concentrating streets and Infrastructure



## Exhibit No. 13: Types of Parks

### Neighborhood Parks

- Serve the needs of the immediate neighborhood
- Range in size and configuration; usually one to five acres in size
- May contain green space with benches, paved walking trails, playground equipment and/or water features
- Owned and maintained by Homeowners Association if access is limited to residents of that neighborhood
- Should be required in all new residential neighborhoods

### Neighborhood Common Ground or Open Space

- Serves the neighborhood of which they are a part
- Can be easily integrated into planned residential development
- Owned in common by residents and for the benefit of residents
- May contain land with undisturbed natural attributes
- May contain lakes, walking trails, or other passive recreational facilities
- Sometimes used as a part of low impact development with natural drainage

### Community or City Parks

- Designed to serve the needs of more than one neighborhood or the entire city
- Usually contain a minimum of ten acres
- Baseball, softball, and/or soccer fields or passive activities

- Recreational opportunities that are not feasible or desirable at the neighborhood level
- Should be located on major arterials or streets of high capacity
- Should not be located in residential areas because of the noise, traffic and lights which could be intrusive
- Shorelines are ideal for city parks because they define the city's character.
- May be passive parks with pavilions or benches
- May incorporate marinas or boat launching areas
- Natural attributes of the area should be preserved.

### Regional Parks

- Often operated at the state or federal level and offer a variety of uses such as hiking, biking, equestrian trails, picnic facilities, play areas, camping, or other special uses

### Greenways or Linear Parks

- Corridors of open space, greenways and trails with pedestrian and bike surfaces
- Can become pedestrian networks between other parks and neighborhoods and between major destinations
- Can be located on remnant land that is unsuitable for other uses
- May be preserved in a conservation trust, deeded to adjacent neighborhoods, or held by private entities
- Often created as "Rails to Trails"



From left to right: Multi-use community park, playground, neighborhood walking trail, waterfront with pier and boat launch. **Source: Neel-Schaffer, Inc.**

## Exhibit No. 14: Model for Low Impact Commercial Sites

Commercial areas which serve local residential neighborhoods should fit into the character and ambience of the communities of which they are a part.

### Buildings

The overall scale of the building should be relatively small and the architectural character of the center should be enhanced by using natural building materials such as stucco, brick or masonry. Mixed use buildings with retail and professional offices are encouraged in community commercial zoning districts.

### Parking

If possible, buildings should be built closer to the street or sidewalk with parking located on the sides and behind the building. This encourages pedestrian traffic and helps soften the impact of paved areas. Parking lots should be attractively designed with landscaping and walkways.

### Lighting and Amenities

Integrate lighting that helps pedestrians without projecting glare on adjoining residential properties. Amenities such as benches, landscaping, outdoor art or water features are desirable.

### Signs

Signs should be relatively small, monument style rather than pole signs. Individual business entities should place their signs on their individual business locations rather than on the front monument sign to avoid a cluttered look.

### Internal Circulation

Internal circulation and common access points should be used allowing adjoining businesses to share access lanes and drives. Minimal curb cuts are advised to prevent accidents and danger to pedestrians.

### Pedestrian Circulation

Sidewalks are desirable, connecting the retail shop or shopping center with residential neighborhoods.

Pedestrian crosswalks and internal sidewalks should be clearly delineated.

### Buffering

Adjacent residential neighborhoods should be protected from incompatible uses in neighborhood commercial centers by the use of appropriate rear and side setbacks and landscaping buffers.



From left to right: Brick Office Building; Automotive center with side parking and a landscaped front yard, a low monument type sign and buffering along the side of a building.

Source: Neel-Schaffer, Inc.

## Exhibit No. 15: Model for High Impact and Regional Commercial Sites

Strip centers or shopping centers should have an integrated design scheme which will enhance the community. Internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation must be well-planned and include walkways, sidewalks and internal streets with landscaping.

### Buildings

The scale of the building is much larger than low impact sites; but should still exhibit excellent architectural character. Outparcels should be included along major thoroughfares which mimic downtown design with minimal parking in front.

### Parking

In most cases, parking will be in the front of buildings; but parking areas should be broken up into discrete areas with generous landscaping within the interior and on the perimeter of the parking areas.

All side, front and rear yards not occupied by buildings or parking should be landscaped.

### Lighting and Amenities

Unified lighting throughout the site is desirable that enables safe passage for shoppers but does not project into the sky or onto other parcels.

Outdoor seating areas such as benches, small

green areas, outdoor serving areas should be included in the design scheme. Outdoor art such as statues and water features is desirable.

### Signs

Taller and larger signs than in low intensity commercial areas are appropriate; but the identity of the shopping center should be placed on the entrance sign with individual businesses having their signs on the front of their building.

### Pedestrian Circulation

Buildings on out parcels should have pedestrian connections from street sidewalks or trails.

Pedestrian crosswalks should be clearly marked with brick pavers or attractive paving material. Sidewalks or dedicated pedestrian lanes should be built as a part of the parking lanes from all areas of the parking lot to the front door.

### Buffering

Buffering is not needed between businesses; but may be required if the commercial use abuts less intensive uses, especially residential areas.



From left to right: Fast Food Restaurant with excellent design features; integrated signs on individual store fronts, well planned outdoor landscaping and a brick crosswalk within a shopping center.

*Source: Neel-Schaffer, Inc.*

## Exhibit No. 16: Model for Traditional Neighborhood Development

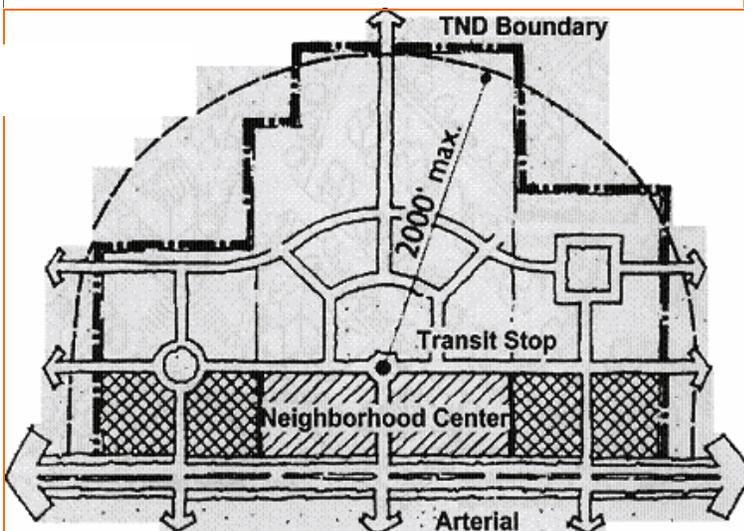
### FLU Areas where appropriate

Medium Density Residential and Planned Unit Development districts.

### Key Attributes

A TND is a compact, mixed-use, pedestrian oriented community with distinctive sub-areas for specific land uses. The core area contains higher density residential uses such as townhouses, multi-family as well as the civic spaces and limited commercial. Single family homes are located in another sub area to minimize intrusions. The street pattern is a modified grid, with a high degree of connectivity. Short blocks, walking paths and sidewalks are used to encourage walking. The type of housing used and the overall density can vary greatly from one community to another and depends upon the requirements of local ordinances.

- Civic spaces and landmarks serve as focal points of the development.
- Neo-traditional street pattern and housing styles are used.
- Multi-family uses are adjacent to the sidewalk and single-family housing have a small front yard.
- Sidewalks are required and walking paths and bike paths supplement pedestrian facilities.
- The core retail area may have taller buildings.
- Various types of street configurations and widths are used including an entry boulevard.
- Vistas and streetscapes are utilized to add interest.
- Front entry driveways are discouraged. Alleys provide access to housing units.
- Plazas, courtyards, and open space are used to provide public space.

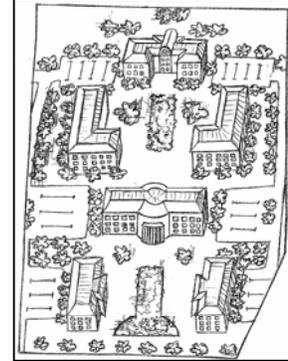


Source: Internet images of Celebration Florida

### Exhibit No. 17: Model for Civic Uses

The following development guidelines are applicable to certain civic uses such as large churches, public buildings, schools, colleges and other uses that help define the identity of the community.

- Civic uses should be highly visible and accessible and display superior architectural character.
- Such uses may be integrated into the new town center and should fit into the overall architectural character of the district.
- Stand-alone civic buildings such as the existing City Hall should have outdoor parks or plazas for community events as well as landmark features.
- Institutional campus uses such as colleges should have a master plan which includes buildings, landscaping, internal street systems and plans for future development.
- Institutional campus uses should offer features which can be used by the general public similar to the walking trail on the MGCCC campus.
- Generous setbacks around the campus use are encouraged to insulate adjacent areas from noise due to outdoor activities.



### Exhibit No. 18: Model for Low Impact Residential Subdivision

Low Impact Development (LID) is an approach to site planning, design and development that help reduce the impact of stormwater runoff. It seeks to handle stormwater as close to the source as possible, preserve natural drainage systems and open space and incorporate small-scale controls that replicate natural processes to detain and filter stormwater.

- Minimize land disturbance by using clustering, open space and conservation development
- Reduce Impervious Surfaces by using minimum concrete, narrower streets, shared parking and driveways
- Use permeable paving whenever parking or drives are needed



From Left to Right: Church driveway uses alternative paving, residential driveway with minimal concrete; wide swale along a residential street instead of a gutter or ditch; sidewalk and deck across low areas instead of filling in. *Source: Neel-Schaffer, Inc.*

## Exhibit No. 19: Principles to Reinvent Suburban Strips

Michael D. Beyard, Senior Resident Fellow of the Urban Land Institute has co-authored a book “Ten Principles for Reinventing America’s Suburban Business Districts.” Seven are presented below:

1. Anticipate Change—The market for retail real estate is changing. Developers should consider the elderly, singles, two incomes, single parents and immigrants when developing business districts.
2. Know the Market—Revitalization and development plans should be guided by an understanding of where the strip fits into the overall regional marketplace.
3. Tame the Traffic
  - Use wide medians and innovative turns
  - Consolidate entrances/limit curb cuts
  - Separate through and destination (local) traffic or provide secondary road network
4. Prune back Retail Zoned Land—Not every major arterial should be lined with retail.
  - A surplus of retail-zoned land makes it too easy to abandon old centers and keep extending the strip.
  - Scale the amount of retail-zoned land commensurate with the size of the market
  - Structure zoning to encourage other types of development (i.e. mixed use).
  - Maintain some low-density, auto-oriented areas
5. Pulse the Development
  - Use key intersections to create walkable cores
  - Plan and zone higher densities to facilitate vertical mixed use (3 stories and above) and to achieve pedestrian concentrations that create an active street
  - Direct public investments into these zones
  - Use creative financial incentives to help



with infrastructure costs

6. Create a Place
  - Well-designed development has more value than a “stand-alone” building surrounded by a parking lot.
  - Use varied designs, facades and landscaping, sidewalk dining, interactive displays, wide active sidewalks
  - Introduce “townscape” elements like narrow secondary streets, street furniture and signage
  - Sleeve big boxes and parking garages with active retail
  - Diversify character with a mixture of uses such as new forms of housing, recreation, culture and entertainment
7. Eradicate the Ugliness
  - Provide a place that people enjoy being
  - Require architectural excellence, underground utilities, mature trees and shrubs, appropriate lighting, attractive signage, creative parking
  - Place retail and restaurant facilities close to and parallel to arterial roads with parking behind, above and beside
  - Encourage buildings that enclose intersections
  - Zoning and regulatory mechanisms must have by-right development standards that allow/require these features.

*Source: Trupi Kalbag and Dennis Madsen, Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development of Georgia Institute of Technology, Community College, Inc. “A 12 Step Process to Reinvent the Suburban Strip.” Presentation from the Governments and growth Workshop, 2006.*

## Exhibit No. 20: Model for Town Center

The following design recommendations are suggested for the town center district:

- A centralized “core area” within the downtown district should be selected that can have public sidewalks, shops built to the sidewalk and other elements of a downtown area. Many cities which did not have an historic downtown or have a small downtown are designating areas along well-traveled roadways as their “downtown.” New zoning regulations require small scale buildings with parking in the rear and sidewalks and other streetscape elements are built by the city. Business owners purchase the parcels and build stores and offices.
- An alternative option or perhaps in addition to the “core area” would be a private shopping destination with the design attributes of a downtown. Many developers are creating “lifestyle shopping centers” that exhibit these characteristics. The centers borrow design ideas such as internal streets with streetscape improvements, parallel or angle parking in front of stores, wide sidewalks, pedestrian areas with benches, outdoor serving areas, and an abundance of landscaping. The front façade of buildings offers windows where goods are displayed for shoppers to view as they walk along the sidewalk. Outstanding architectural building design with coordinated but distinctive styling of each store mimics articulated store fronts of older downtown areas. These types of centers are replacing malls and become major destinations for shoppers. The Renaissance Shopping Center in Ridgeland is one of the best examples of this type of development.
- The downtown area should contain a public park and or plaza that can be used for community fairs and outdoor activities.



**New Shopping Center with downtown attributes and a retrofitted downtown district.**

**Note:** All photos are of the new Renaissance Center and the newly created overlay Jackson Street district in Ridgeland, MS. **Source:** *Neel-Schaffer, Inc.*

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## **APPENDIX A: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN, 2009-2014**

Historically, as communities throughout the country grew and developed, needs arose that were not the responsibility of any one citizen group or area of the community. The larger community or city had to plan, find financing and monitor the progress of capital improvement projects. Capital improvement projects are determined as a result of feasibility studies, public support, approved financing strategies, and/or bond authority approval. They differ from typical annual maintenance programs in that capital improvement program projects are large scale, affect large areas of the community, are beyond the community's ability to fund in a one or two year budget cycle, and have a planned life span of twenty years or greater. Most communities develop a capital budget which is separate from the general budget.

The capital improvement projects discussed in this section have been identified through interviews with city staff, leaders and through the public participation meetings process which allowed citizen input into the needs of the community. They are categorized as Roads and Bridges, Public Facilities/Buildings, Recreational and Public Utilities. Potential and on-going funding sources are also identified.

### **A 1.2 ROADS AND BRIDGES**

Average costs used in preliminary budgeting estimates help provide an estimated funding level needed to implement a capital improvement program for roads and bridges. The projects are usually further sorted into improvements funded by local dollars and those funded by State or Federal dollars. The projects funded by State and Federal capital improvement programs are larger components of transportation networks whereas local funding addresses local community needs. Table No. 28 on page 140 gives the average costs for the Gautier area. The major road and bridge projects for the general area have been identified by the MGCATS plan and were itemized in the Transportation Chapter and in Table No. 29 on page 144. A brief analysis of each project follows:

#### **MGCATS Transportation Projects**

1. Gautier-Vancleave Road from MS 57 to I-10 improvement will help resolve projected 2030 capacity deficiencies, serve as an evacuation route, and address safety issues.
2. Martin Bluff Road improvement from I-10 Frontage Road to Homestead Road is designed to relieve capacity deficiencies and address safety issues.
3. Old Spanish Trail improvement from MS 57 to Dolphin Road is designed to provide significant congestion relief to US 90.
4. Martin Bluff Alternate from Broadmoor Drive to I-10 Frontage Road will provide significant traffic relief on Martin Bluff Road.

<b>Table NO. 28: Typical Mississippi Transportation Improvement Costs</b>	
<b>IMPROVEMENT TYPE</b>	<b>TYPICAL COST</b>
Widening (Two additional lanes)	\$4,100,000/mile
New two lane road	\$1,900,000/mile
New four lane road	\$7,300,000/mile
Reconstruction	\$1,100,000/mile
New Interchange	\$20,000,000/each
Traffic Signal	\$130,000/each

5. Improvement of US 90 from Dolphin Road to the West Pascagoula River is designed to relieve congestion and have a regional impact on traffic.

6. Ritcher Road Extension is planned as a new roadway to provide congestion relief to US 90 and add additional access to Gautier Schools.

- 7. US 90 from MS 57 to Dolphin Road will address significant roadway congestion, address safety concerns, and have a major impact on the transportation network.
- 8. Improvement of Gautier-Vancleave Road from Martin Bluff Road to US 90 will provide significant regional connectivity.
- 9. Improvement of I-10 from MS 613 to Gautier-Vancleave Road will relieve traffic on the urban east west arterials throughout the Gulf Coast.

**A 1.3 PUBLIC FACILITIES/BUILDINGS**

The following projects and possible funding sources have been identified as immediate needs for the City of Gautier:

- 1. New fire station to provide service to developing areas.
- 2. Emergency Shelters above I-10.
- 3. North City Hall expansion. This will provide short-term relief to the crowding problem. Long term, the city is considering the propriety of relocating personnel to consolidate their operations and use City Halls North and South more efficiently. Discussions have occurred on the propriety of constructing a new City Hall building or renovating the existing facility for utilization by all or some departments of the city.
- 4. Community Centers needed to enhance existing parks and/or neighborhoods. These should be strategically placed to afford accessibility to all citizens.
- 5. Library facility on the north side of the city or expansion of the existing facility.

**A 1.4 RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND CONSERVATION**

The following improvements have been identified for improvements to current recreational facilities and for additional facilities:

- 1. Playground enhancements and amenities to existing parks. Such amenities include picnic tables, restrooms, pavilions and a KABOOM Park.

**TABLE NO. 29: Mississippi Gulf Coast  
Transportation Study Costs**

**STAGE II IMPROVEMENTS  
(2011 – 2020)**

<b>Road</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
I-10	MS 609 to MS 57	Improve existing 4 lane	\$25,196,720
Gautier-Vancleave Rd.	MS 57 to I-10	Improve existing 2 lane road	\$9,597,000
Martin Bluff Rd.	I-10 Frontage Rd. to Homestead Rd.	Improve existing 2 lane road	\$3,704,400
Old Spanish Trail	MS 57 to Dolphin Rd.	Improve existing 2 lane road	\$9,601,200

**STAGE III IMPROVEMENTS  
(2021 – 2030)**

Martin Bluff Rd.	Broadmoor Dr to I-10 Frontage Rd.	New 2 or 4 lane divided highway	\$3,348,750
US 90	Dolphin Rd. to West Pascagoula River	Improve existing 4/5 lane road	\$9,207,500
Ritcher Rd Ext.	Gautier-Vancleave Rd. to MS 57	New 2 lane divided road	\$5,805,800
I-10 Frontage Rd.	Gautier-Vancleave Rd. to Martin Bluff Rd	Improve existing 2 lane road	\$2,646,000
US 90	MS 57 to Dolphin Rd.	Improve existing 4 lane divided road	\$23,241,000
Gautier-Vancleave Rd.	Martin Bluff Rd. to US 90	Improve existing 4 lane divided road	\$13,716,000
I-10	Gautier-Vancleave Rd. to MS 613	Improve existing 4 lane road	\$21,819,840
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$127,884,210</b>

*Source: MGCATS*

2. Walking trails in existing and new parks. These should be a part of the Public Facilities/Buildings mentioned in A 1.3.
3. Acquisition of Shepard State Park and improvements to the Park which will provide both revenue and recreational opportunities.
4. Public Marina, launch pad and/or beach or a waterfront park with access to the Mississippi Sound or the Pascagoula River.
5. Acquisition and enhancements to the Soccer Field Complex. A city owned and managed facility would provide the land needed for additional recreational facilities.
6. Recreational Teen Center for after-school and summer activities for the city's youth.
8. Sports Complex for indoor and outdoor sports activities to be located on the Soccer Field area or Shepard Park, if either are acquired by the city. (Grant—\$250 thousand)
9. Estuarine Plant Nursery Addition to Pascagoula River Basin Estuarine Education Center. Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, (CIAP—\$500 thousand).
10. Coastal Land Conservation in the area of Hickory Hills and Bayou Castelle. City of Gautier, (CIAP—\$125 thousand).
11. Coastal Land Conservation in the area of Point Clear. City of Gautier, (CIAP—\$652 thousand).

#### **A 1.5 PUBLIC UTILITIES**

Currently, the city has multiple water and wastewater capital improvement projects under construction. Many of these projects are awaiting contracting actions in both design and planning. Table No. 30 on the following page shows these projects within a time frame of zero to six years.

#### **A 1.6 POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

Funding for major transportation projects is usually provided from federal, state and required matching local funds. Funding sources are broken down by Federal/State; Maintenance and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities below.

##### **Federal/State Funds**

1. Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). \$286 billion nationally has been authorized by Congress for fiscal years 2004-2009. This legislation includes several categories of funding, under which many proposed projects could be eligible for Federal funding assistance.
2. National Highway System (NHS). This category covers all Interstate routes and a large percentage of urban principal arterials. The Federal/Local funding ratio for arterial routes is 80/20. The Interstate System although a part of NHS, will retain its separate identity and will receive separate funding at a 90/10 ratio.

<b>Table No. 30: Public Utilities Capital Improvements Program (0 to 6 years)</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Status</b>
CDBG Katrina Disaster Recovery Water System Improvements in Hickory Hills	Enhance water distribution system piping.	\$1,400,000	Funded; Construction scheduled in 2009
CDBG Katrina Disaster Recovery Wastewater System Improvements in Hickory Hills	Convert pressure sewer to gravity sewer collection system and improve sewage pump stations.	\$2,200,000	Funded; Construction scheduled in 2009
Water and Wastewater System SCADA	Install SCADA at water wells, water tanks and sewage pump stations	\$100,000	Funded; Construction scheduled in 2009
New Water Well	Construct new water well	\$400,000	Under design; awaiting funding
New Elevated water storage tank	Construct new water tank in city's western quadrant	\$1,200,000	Awaiting funding
<i>Source: City of Gautier Consulting Engineer. 2009</i>			

3. Surface Transportation Program (STP). The STP is a block grant funding program with subcategories for the States and Urban Areas. These funds can be used for any road (including NHS) that is not functionally classified as a local road or rural minor collector. The State portion can be used on roads within an urbanized area and the urban portion can only be used on roads within an urbanized area. Subcategories of the STP fund are as follows.
  - STP greater than 200 thousand population
  - STP less than 200 thousand population
  - STP Flexible, Hazard Elimination, and Enhancement
  - The federal/local funding ratio is 80/20
4. Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FTA funding is provided for annual operation and maintenance costs of the transit system. Funding levels may vary dependent upon variables such as fare revenue and annual federal appropriations. Approximately fifty percent (50%) of the annual cost of operation has been provided by this funding. Capital funding for equipment and other capital improvements are provided on a funding ratio of 80/20.
5. Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program. These funds can be used to replace or repair any bridge on a public road. The funding ratio is 80/20 percent.

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6. System Maintenance and Operation. The maintenance and operation of the transportation system was considered in the development of the plan and staged program. Typically, maintenance costs are applicable to the system as a whole. Where possible, maintenance projects are identified individually; however, it is not possible to develop project specific maintenance schedules for other than the near term.

### **Maintenance Programs**

1. Interstate Maintenance Program (IM). This Federal funding category is intended to “rehabilitate, restore, and resurface” the Federal Interstate System. One eligible Federal Interstate highway (I-10) lies within the City of Gautier.
2. Federal Bridge Replacement Program (FBR). This Federal funding category is intended to provide funding to any bridge on a public road. Funding under this program was \$20.4 billion for fiscal years 1998 through 2003.
3. State of Mississippi Overlay, Maintenance and Operations Program. A variety of both Federal and State funds were used to implement the Statewide Overlay, Maintenance and Operations program including Surface Transportation Funds, National Highway System Funds, General Mississippi Trust Fund Monies and State of Mississippi General Funds.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

1. Surface Transportation Program (STP). Ten percent (10%) of each State’s STP funds are set aside for Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA’s). Per 23 U.S.C. Section 109 (a) (35) these include:
  - Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists, and preservation of abandoned railway corridors.
  - Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing programs. Ten percent (10%) of STP funds are set aside for appropriate uses as per 23 U.S.C. Section 152 including surveys of hazardous locations, projects on any publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail, any safety-related traffic calming measure, and improvements to railway crossing that take into consideration bicycle safety.
2. Recreational Trails Program. 23 U.S.C. Section 206 specifies that from each State’s allocation, thirty percent (30%) must be used for non-motorized trails, and forty percent (40%) for a combination of motorized and non-motorized facilities.
3. Federal Lands Highway Program. 23 U.S.C. Section 204 has eligibility for pedestrian and bicycle projects under various categories in conjunction with roads, highways, and parkways. Priority for funding projects is determined by the appropriate Federal Land Agency or Tribal government.

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2. National Scenic Byways Program. 23 U.S.C. Section 162 (c)(4), funds may be used for “construction along a scenic byway of a facility for pedestrians and bicyclists”.
  3. Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants. TEA—21 Section 3037 grants are available to support projects including bicycle-related services which are designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from employment.
  4. The National Highway System. Land adjacent to the National Highway System Highways can be used to create bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

**A 1.7 COUNTY, REGIONAL AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS**

1. Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP). Established by Section 384 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to assist producing states and their coastal political subdivisions in mitigating the impacts from Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas production.
2. Donations from Neighborhood Partners, Businesses and Individuals. Public-private partnerships or contributions from private sources can often help with specific projects.
3. Revenue from Sports and Recreational Venues. City-run sports venues often result in a profit which can help with maintenance and upgrades to facilities.

**A 1.8 LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR ALL PROJECTS**

Any costs not covered by Federal, State or regional programs are the responsibility of the local government. Most federal/state grants have a requirement for a percentage of matching funds from local sources. Local funding can come from a variety of sources including property taxes, sales tax, user fees and special assessments. Various types of bonds can be issued including general obligation bonds, revenue bonds and school bonds which are subject to restrictions placed on the bonding capacity of the municipality and/or the school district. Each of these potential sources is important and warrants discussion.

1. Property Taxes. Property taxation has historically been the primary source of revenue for local units of government in the United States. More than eighty percent (80%) of all tax revenues at this level come from this tax. Property is not subject to Federal government taxation, and State governments have shown in recent years an increasing willingness to leave this important source of funding to local governments.
2. General Sales Taxes. The general sales tax is also an important revenue source for local governments. The most commonly known form of the general sales tax is the retail sales tax. The retail sales tax is imposed on a wide range of commodities and the rate is usually a uniform percentage of the selling price.
3. Tax Increment Financing (TIF). A tool using future gains in taxes to help finance public improvements in that area or district. When a public project such as a road, school, or hazardous waste cleanup is carried out, there is an increase in the value of surrounding

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real estate, and often increases new investment opportunities (new or rehabilitated buildings, for example). This increased site value and investment creates more taxable property, which increase tax revenues. The increased tax revenues are the “tax increment”. Tax Increment Financing dedicates that increased revenue to finance debt issued to pay for the project. TIF is designed to channel funding toward improvements in distressed or underdeveloped areas where development would not otherwise occur. TIF creates funding for public projects that may not otherwise be affordable to localities.

4. User Fees. User fees are fees which are collected from those who utilize a service or facility. The fees are collected for the purpose of paying for the cost of a facility, financing the cost of operation and/or generating revenue for other uses. Water and sewer services are the most commonly known public improvements for which a user fee is charged. This method of generating revenue to finance public improvements has also been employed to finance the cost of public parks, transit system and solid waste facilities. The theory behind the user fee is that those who directly benefit from the public improvement pay for the cost of the public improvement.
6. Special Assessments. Special assessment is a method of generating funds for public improvements, whereby the cost of a public improvement is collected from those who directly benefit from the improvement. In many instances, new streets and sidewalks are financed by special assessment. The owners of property located adjacent to the improvements are assessed a portion of the cost, based on the amount of footage they own. Special assessments have also been used to generate funds for general improvements within special districts, such as a downtown business district. In some cases, these assessments are paid over a period of time rather than as a lump sum payment.
7. General Obligation Bonds. These bonds are issued by local governments upon approval of the voting public. The State of Mississippi limits the bonding capacity in accordance with their revenue from Property Taxes. As bonds are retired, new GO Bond Issues may be voted on.
8. Revenue Bonds. Funding for public facilities which produce revenue such as local water facilities or wastewater treatment plants may be able to utilize revenue bonds whereby the bond debt is retired by the future revenue stream from the facility.
9. School Bonds. Issued by local school districts upon approval of the voting public and used exclusively for improvement of school facilities.
10. Business Improvement and Neighborhood Improvement Districts. Similar to special assessments; the property owners in predetermined “improvement districts” may elect to collect additional taxes which go to the neighborhood organization charged with

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certain responsibilities such as enhancing landscaping, building parks or any improvement the organization believes will enhance the area. Unlike special assessments these additional taxes continue as long as property owners wish.

### **A 1.9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The City of Gautier has millions of dollars in capital improvement projects planned for the community in the next twenty years and has employed a full-time grants coordinator whose primary mission is to seek and secure funding for capital projects. This chapter has identified certain projects which are either planned or should be considered by the city to improve the quality of life of its citizens.

Other sections of this Comprehensive Plan have identified regulatory changes that can be implemented which will help prevent unplanned growth or illogical growth patterns which cause the need for major capital improvement projects. Proper planning with appropriate regulations and procedures will assist the community in limiting its capital improvement costs while maximizing development potential.

Although the City of Gautier has been successful in securing Federal and State grants the city should initiate a formal capital improvements plan process which should be re-examined on an annual basis in order to prioritize capital projects and identify reliable on-going funding. This will help formalize the process of planning in a systematic way and offer assurances to citizens and potential developers and investors in the community. An on-going process will assist the decision makers in improving the annual and long term budgeting process; it will also minimize unforeseen conditions that could raise havoc on a budgeting process.

Table No. 31 on page 149 gives an overview of Capital Improvement Projects which have been programmed for completion in the near future.



**TABLE No. 31: Capital Improvement Program**

PROJECT	SCOPE	COST	STATUS
<b>ROADS AND BRIDGES</b>			
Martin Bluff Road	Improve existing 2 lane	\$3,704,400	Awaiting Funding
Martin Bluff Road to Homestead Road	New 2 or 4 lane div hwy	\$3,348,750	Awaiting Funding
Old Spanish Trail	Improve existing 2 lane	\$9,601,200	Awaiting Funding
US 90	Improve existing 4/5 lane road	\$9,207,500	Under Design
Ritcher Rd. Ext.	New 2 lane divided road	\$5,805,800	Awaiting Funding
I-10 Frontage Road	Improve existing 2 lane	\$2,646,000	Awaiting Funding
US 90	Improve existing 4 lane	\$23,241,000	Under Design
Gautier-Vancleave Road	Improve existing 4 lane	\$13,716,000	Awaiting Funding
Martin Bluff Road Realignment	Improve geometrics of road	\$2,500,000	Under design
Martin Bluff Road/ Gautier-Vancleave Road, Phase I	Improve existing intersection	\$900,000	Under design
Hurricane Katrina Sign Damage Assessment	Replace/Repair Damaged Signage	\$180,000	Awaiting MDOT approval
CDBG Streetscape Project Pedestrian/ Bikeway Plan	Lighting, landscaping and walking trails on Hwy 90	TBD	Under Design
Graveline Road/Ladnier Road	Milling, Overlay and Misc Road and Bulkhead Repair	\$1,537,000	Awaiting MDOT approval
Dolphin Road/Gautier-Vancleave Roads	Milling, Overlay and Misc Road and Signal Repair	\$2,103,900	Awaiting MDOT approval
Old Spanish Trail	Milling, Overlay and Misc Road Repairs	\$1,784,000	Awaiting MDOT approval
<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND BUILDINGS</b>			
City Hall Expansion	Expansion of building	TBD	Construction
New Fire Station	Provide for fire protection	TBD	Awaiting Funding
<b>RECREATIONAL FACILITIES</b>			
City Park Expansion	Educational/ecotourism	\$448,367	Construction
KaBoom	Redevelop parks	TBD	Awaiting Funding
Recreation Center	Construction of new center	TBD	Awaiting Funding
Park Facilities	Provide additional facilities	TBD	Awaiting Funding
<b>PUBLIC UTILITIES</b>			
Sewer Pump Stations Transmission Line Enhancements	Provide sewer improvements to lift stations in Hickory Hills	\$2,600,000	Construction
Water Transmission Line Additions	Provide water improvements to Hickory Hills area	\$2,000,000	Construction

**Source: Neel-Schaffer, Inc; MGCATS**



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