

CHAPTER I: Background

The Code of Alabama under Title 11 Counties and Municipal Corporations Chapter 52 Planning, Zoning and Subdivisions empowers any municipality to create a planning commission. Said planning commission is authorized to make and adopt a master or comprehensive plan for the physical development of the municipality and from time to time may amend, extend or add to the plan. A comprehensive plan's purpose, including any subsequent amendments or updates, is to guide and accomplish a comprehensive development of the municipality which will, based on its current and future needs, best promote health, safety and general welfare among others.

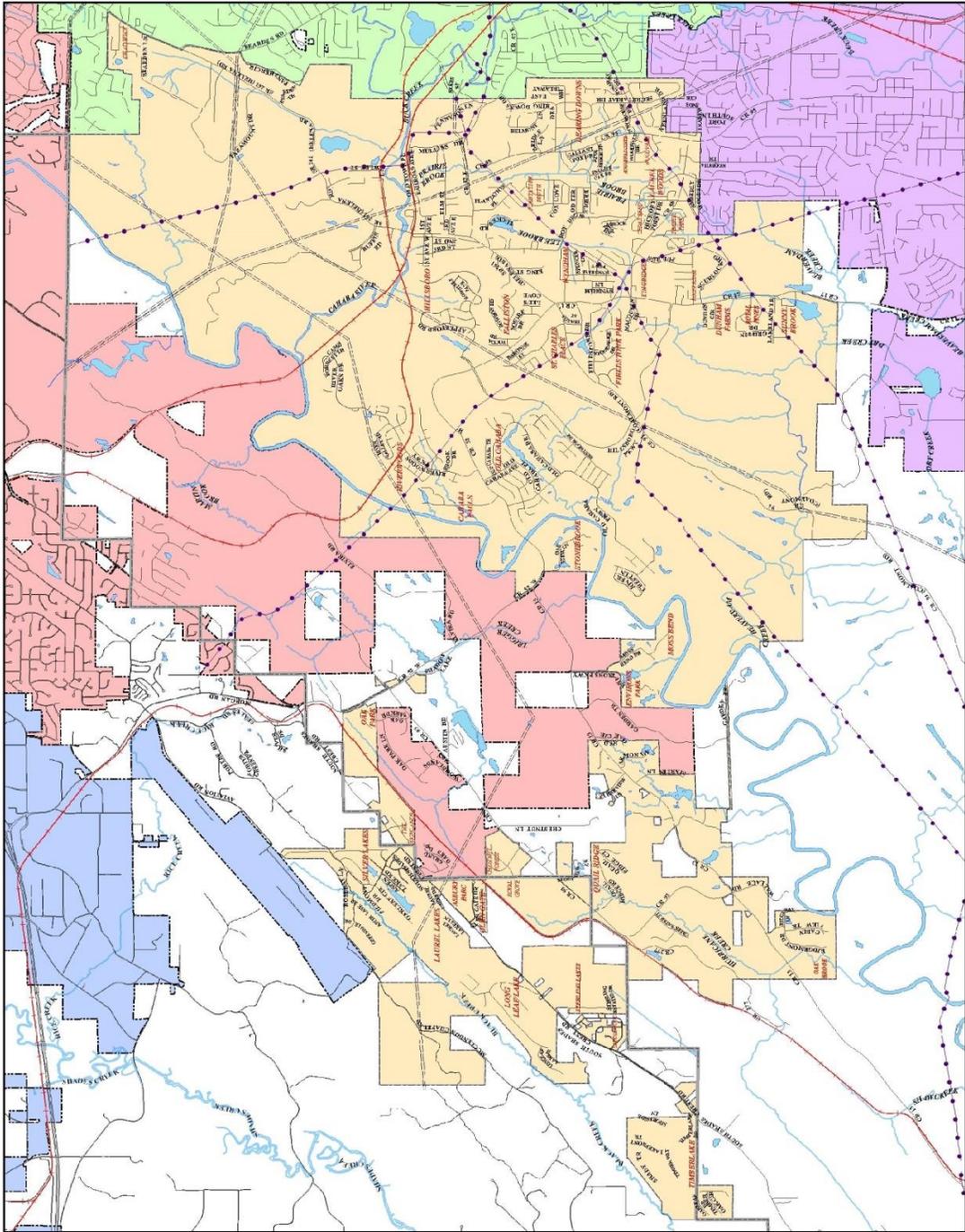
Comprehensive plans are generally meant to be updated every five to ten years. This is done in order to evaluate and strengthen the effectiveness of the Plan's policies, monitor implementation efforts and amend the plan to reflect community changes. Changes sometimes necessitate new policies and associated implementation strategies; while other changes just call for the removal of policies due to the fact their implementation has been successful.

In October 2003, the Helena Planning and Zoning Commission adopted *Creating Connections and Special Places: Helena Comprehensive Plan 2025*, the second comprehensive plan for the City of Helena in twenty five years. The plan was prepared by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) in partnership with the Auburn University Center for Architecture and Urban Studies, which developed a Small Town Design Initiative (STDI) to be intermingled within the plan. The overall theme of this plan can be summarized by its vision statement:

To preserve the small town character of Helena by encouraging connectivity and the creation of special places that will promote economic vitality, new business opportunities, attractive neighborhoods and environmental stewardship which will enhance the quality of life for all residents of Helena.

In 2011 the Shelby County Development Services Department performed an update to the 2003 Plan. Helena experienced significant changes during the time period between these two Plans. Annexation of land across the county line into Jefferson County, and a national recession that negatively impacted Helena's economy are just two of the many occurrences that have affected how the City views its goals for the future.

Since 2011 Helena has again undergone a number of significant changes. Having emerged from the recession, new commercial development has begun to take place. Once empty store fronts are now boasting new businesses and Helena's new High School graduated its first senior class in 2015. Based on building permits issued for new residential construction, housing starts have risen from a 20 year low of 17 in 2011 to 181 at the end of 2014.



**HELENA
AREA**

LEGEND

- Roadway
- Railroad
- Pipeline
- Powerline
- Water
- Helena
- Alabaster
- Hoover
- Pelham
- Bessemer

1 Inch = 3,500 Feet

NORTH

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet