

GOALS

2016 Helena Comprehensive Plan

GOAL 1: Strengthen Helena Economically and Fiscally through the Pursuit of a more Self-contained Economy

- Policy 1.1 Develop strong marketing program using the 7 elements currently established.*
- Policy 1.2 Identify target business development (i.e. office complexes, retail, etc.) that fit Helena's market*
- Policy 1.3 Provide incentives to encourage the building out the Helena Industrial Park*
- Policy 1.4 Work with Industrial Park Property owners to improve infrastructure and appearance of Park & Park entrances*
- Policy 1.5 Work toward hiring or contracting a professional economic development officer*
- Policy 1.6 Strengthen relationships with County Commission, ALDOT, ADECA, RPCGB (EDD), and State Representatives*
- Policy 1.7 Develop a Medical Office Park to appeal to health care professionals*
- Policy 1.8 Attract a variety of doctors and dentists, not just general practitioners*
- Policy 1.9 Support expansion of existing industries and corporations.*
- Policy 1.10 Continue to support home-based businesses that do not impact the residential neighborhoods where they are located*

GOAL 2. Increase revenues to fund services and capital projects

- Policy 2.1 Explore possibility of a reasonable increase to the municipal millage rate*
- Policy 2.2 Conduct a regular review of various permit, application, and user fees charged for municipal services among cities of like size around the state and region and adjust accordingly*
- Policy 2.3 Continue privatizing and/or contracting any city services that may be costly to operate, where significant savings will be recognized.*

- Policy 2.4** *Develop a sound annexation strategy*
- Identify all unincorporated land areas that either are completely surrounded by the City (islands), lie within the police jurisdiction, or use a city service
 - Seek to expedite the annexation of those parcels which already use a city service
 - Seek annexing those parcels which would provide development potential
 - Avoid annexing parcels that would cause the city liability or cost issues

- Policy 2.5** *Examine existing Planning Jurisdiction distance to determine if it needs adjusting (increasing/decreasing) to support City’s annexation policies and future development interests*

GOAL 3. Promote Helena as a tourist destination

- Policy 3.1** *Advance Helena as a canoe/kayak recreational destination*
- Initiate a Canoe ‘Trail’ along Buck Creek and the Cahaba River with launches at Buck Creek Park, and Highway 52 West, and portages in Old Town

- Policy 3.2** *Recommend facilities that promote the legacy of Helena’s past*

- Policy 3.3** *Grow sports fields and activities to attract regional and State tournaments*

- Policy 3.4** *Maintain and develop distinctive gateways*

- Policy 3.5** *Continue to improve Old Town*
- Build sidewalk network throughout the historic district
 - Improve street network within the historic district to support efficient flow
 - Erect distinct wayfinding signs that blend into the character of Old Town
 - Encourage the development of lodging facilities in and around Old Town
 - Consider the acquisition of land for the development of additional parking in historic downtown

- Policy 3.6** *Work to establish Helena as an ecotourism destination*
- Establish historic interpretive trails and walking tours

GOAL 4: Develop a Balanced, Equitable, Efficient, and Safe Transportation System

- Policy 4.1** *Encourage the completion of local projects within the MPO’s current TIP*
- Encourage construction of the Helena Bypass
 - Construction of Phases 1 and 2 of the Helena Buck Creek/Tacoa Rail Trail
 - Widen State Road 261 from Bypass intersection to US 31.
 - Widen Highway 52W bridge over Cahaba River

- Policy 4.2** *Advocate shifting local Fiscally Constrained Roadway Capacity projects to the TIP*
- Encourage the Helena Bypass project from Highway 52 West to State Route 261
 - Support widening State Route 261 from County Road 105 to US Highway 31
 - Support widening Highway 52 from South Shades Crest Road to State Route 261

- Encourage widening Highway 52 East from State Route 261 to Johnson Street
- Recommend widening County Road 17 from State Route 261 to County Road 44

Policy 4.3 *Continue making Helena a pedestrian friendly community*

- Prepare and adopt greenway and sidewalk master plans
- Complete the Hillsboro Trails
- Interconnect existing populated areas with sidewalks and trail system
- Initiate Construction of the Buck Creek Greenway Trail
- Develop plans for the creation of additional greenways throughout Helena

Policy 4.4 *Add projects to the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)*

- Ruffin Road extension project from its current terminus to the Helena Bypass
- Railroad crossing warning gates at State Route 261 north of Buck Creek
- Buck Creek/Tacoa Trail beyond Phase 2

Policy 4.5 *Prepare a Master Street Plan*

- Designate existing arterials and collectors
- Specify new arterials and collectors
 - Helena Bypass
 - Ruffin Road extension
 - Flemming Parkway extension
 - Roadway between County Road 91 and County Road 17 in the Beaverdam Creek area
 - Roadway between Old Cahaba’s River Crest Trace and County Road 91 close to the Beaverdam Creek area
 - Hillsboro Parkway extension to Helena Bypass
 - Roadway between Riverwoods Subdivision and Helena Bypass
 - Roadway between Aviation Road and McClendon Chapel Road
- Incorporate greenway and sidewalk master plans within document

GOAL 5: Provide an Efficient Arrangement of Community Facilities and Services

Policy 5.1 *Encourage the Shelby County Board of Education to expand all Helena Schools*

- Expand Helena Elementary School
- Expand Helena Intermediate School
- Expand Helena Middle School
- Expand Helena High School

Policy 5.2 *Supply an ample number of fire stations adequately covering Helena*

- Build new Fire Station Number 1
 - Acquire land in area near the Helena Municipal Building
 - Build facility to house an engine company, a ladder company, a rescue truck, a reserve engine, and personnel quarters and offices
- Build Fire Station Number 4
 - Acquire land in Hillsboro South area

- Build facility to house engine company
- Acquire new engine for station
- Build Fire Station Number 5
 - Acquire land in Hillsboro North area
 - Build facility to house engine company
 - Acquire new engine for station

Policy 5.3 Use the Helena Municipal Building exclusively as an administration building

- Build a combined police administration and courts building
 - Acquire land in area near the Helena Municipal Building
 - Build a facility to house the police department including expanded offices, E-911, Explorers rooms, and increased jail space; and courtrooms
- Build new Fire Station Number 1
 - Acquire land in area near the Helena Municipal Building
- Redesign the layout of the building and grounds
- Build a state-of-the-art public library to serve Helena’s growing population
- Relocate Helena Senior Center
 - Dedicated space within the Helena Community Center to accommodate Senior Center
 - Repurpose or demolish existing Senior Center Building to provide additional public safety facilities. *(See Policy 5.2 & 5.3 above)*

Policy 5.4 Supply an ample number of parks to accommodate all residents

- Expand facilities at existing parks on city-owned land
 - Add passive activities such as trails and pavilions on city-owned abutting the south side of Joe Tucker Park
 - Add soccer fields at the Helena Sports Complex
 - Add an additional four field baseball/softball diamond at the Helena Sports Complex
- Construct parks to meet the needs of a growing community
 - Build Hillsboro Park
 - Construct Sports Complex (south)
 - Construct Sports Complex (west)
- Expand existing tennis facilities

GOAL 6: Protect the Environment and Improve the Quality of Helena’s Resources

Policy 6.1 Preserve wetland areas for future generations

- Acquire Ruffin Swamp through donation, payment, conservation easement, or long-term lease
 - Build a Ruffin Swamp interpretive center with boardwalks and signage
- Continue to strictly enforce regulations within the Cahaba River/Buck Creek (CRBC) Conservation Overlay District
- Research using treated wastewater as a secondary water source for watering parks
- Manage development on the east side of the Cahaba River so as not to overburden the wastewater treatment plant
- Require the use of package plants by new subdivisions west of the Cahaba River

- Policy 6.2** ***Endorse actions which positively affect air quality in Helena***
- Encourage the use of the CommuteSmart Program by residents
 - Encourage the completion of the LRTP highway projects, especially the Helena Bypass, to alleviate congestion and vehicle idling
 - Support the addition to stations and stores within Helena of public alternative fuel vehicle fueling stations such as E85 ethanol, biodiesel, liquefied petroleum gas (propane) and electric.
 - Explore alternative fuel vehicles and equipment when replacing aged City vehicles and equipment
 - Seek and recruit industries to Helena that have no emissions

- Policy 6.3** ***Support actions to further the protection of Helena’s land resources***
- Update and strengthen the Helena Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations
 - Conserve wildlife habitats and establish new ones through the creation of passive parks, bird watching areas, and wildlife corridors
 - Develop a cemetery protection plan to identify, document, and maintain the various graves

GOAL 7: Cultivate Helena as a livable city that preserves its small town charm

- Policy 7.1** ***Continue developing Helena as a walkable community***
- Develop a greenway and sidewalk plan
 - Connect neighborhoods, commercial areas, parks, and community facilities with sidewalks and greenways
 - Concentrate high density residential development within existing and future mixed use cores and villages
 - Encourage the use of mixed use cores and village rather than strip commercial development
 - Promote the clustering of activities to create dynamic places for different types of people at various times
 - Mixed use cores and villages should have places to live, work, shop, and play with activities available throughout the day
 - Promote Helena as a safe place to walk to school
 - Add call boxes to greenways
 - Encourage a “Walking School Bus” Program whereby parents volunteer to walk neighborhood kids to /from schools
 - Add solar lighting in trail tunnels

- Policy 7.2** ***Enhance the use of villages and mixed use cores***
- Continue to protect the character of Old Town while cultivating its use as a cultural and entertainment destination enjoyed equally by residents and visitors alike
 - Further develop the Crossroads area as a pedestrian friendly place that provides pedestrian access from surrounding neighborhoods and encourages walking within its boundaries.

GOAL 8: Preserve and strengthen the stability, and quality of Helena's neighborhoods

Policy 8.1 Utilize homeowners associations to improve communication and gain support for City projects

- Establish process for City to work with Homeowners Associations

Policy 8.2 Revitalize Old Neighborhoods

- Continue to improve the conditions of distressed properties within existing neighborhoods
 - Increase and diversify the housing stock of the existing neighborhood and the area between Vulcan lands and State Route 261
 - Establish a schedule for upgrading and repairing existing streets within established neighborhoods
 - Extend Lawley Street to State Route 261 at its intersection with Ruffin Road
 - Provide sidewalk connectivity from existing residential neighborhoods to nearby commercial development.
 - Close the Cunningham Drive railroad crossing to vehicles.
 - Build Buck Creek Park between the railroad and Buck Creek to include active and passive activities.
- Protect the integrity and character of Old Town
 - Continue to enforce B4 Business Renaissance District zoning regulations and strengthen said regulations as needed
 - Expand B4 District westward toward 3rd Street and southward toward Highway 52 East to protect area around core from new construction that would take away from the architectural character related to size and scale
 - Complete sidewalk network to allow pedestrians access to the Old Town core
 - Make the Helena Bypass a truck route keeping trucks out of Old Town.

GOALS ACCOMPLISHED FROM PREVIOUS PLANS

- * Construct the Helena High School bringing in jobs for teachers and support staff

- * Change garbage collection process & make recycling program mandatory
 - Provide required garbage carts (32 gallon, 68 gallon, and/or 95 gallon) to residents and retool or replace garbage trucks to be able to use such
 - Maintain current garbage fee as the base fee for a 32 gallon cart
 - Add surcharges for each larger sized cart and any additional carts
 - Provide recycling carts to households and select businesses and charge a minimal monthly base recycling fee

- * Enact a program to send emergency emails related to criminal activity, hazardous conditions, and weather conditions to homeowners association presidents