

2007 State of the Southern Strategy Report

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in fulfillment of Land Use Policy 11.2.1.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1990, the City and County recognized a pattern of development occurring over the last several decades. The northern and eastern parts of the community were growing and the southern part of the community had a loss of population, increased unemployment, and general stagnation. The City and County Commissions believed both Tallahassee and Leon County needed a “Southern Strategy” to reverse these trends. In December 1998, policies for the Southern Strategy Area (SSA) were articulated and adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. This strategy was established to alleviate development pressures on the northeastern part of the City and County where much growth has occurred beyond the urban core and at densities lower than the average of the community. Consequently, the strategy seeks to direct new growth to the south side, which is closer to downtown and where infrastructure is in place. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policy 11.2.1 mandates that the Planning Department triennially prepare and distribute a “State of the Southern Strategy” report. The policy states:

By 2001, the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department will prepare a “State of the Southern Strategy” report and submit it to the Local Planning Agency, the Tallahassee City Commission, the Leon County Board of County Commissioners, and City and County departments. This report will continue to be prepared every three years and will serve as one of the factors used in the annual budget submittals of City and County departments. The report will include such land use, demographic, and other data as necessary to provide elected officials, staff, and other citizens a clear assessment as to the progress being made in improving conditions in the Southern Strategy Area.

The SSA covers about 17½ square miles, comprising nearly 11% of the area within the Urban Service Area boundary. In 2001, approximately 69% of the SSA was inside City limits. During 2001-2004, voluntary annexations totaling 673 acres occurred in the SSA, raising the proportion inside City limits to 75%, where it has since remained. Previous reports in 2001 and 2004 outlined existing conditions and served as a basis for future efforts to build on the potential of the SSA (*see Figure 1*). The 2007 report uses data and analysis from the recent Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR), required by statute every seven years. Staff will be processing a Comprehensive Plan amendment to amend Policy 11.2.1 so that future SSA reports can be timed to the EAR.

This report is intended to:

- reiterate the vision of the Southern Strategy,
- establish baseline data for the SSA today,
- give comparisons to the previous 2004 report,
- outline conclusions based on the data, and
- assess progress being made on the policy requirements in the Comprehensive Plan.

I. GOAL

Goal LU 11 of the Comprehensive Plan clarifies the intent of the Southern Strategy:

The goal of the Southern Strategy is to encourage quality land development and redevelopment which results in increased population growth toward the southern part of the Tallahassee urban area, to retain and increase employment opportunities, and to attain an income mix in the Southern Strategy Area that is comparable to the remainder of the urbanized County. This goal is to be achieved through considered land development decisions, capital investments, and policies by all levels of government so as to serve as a catalyst for private sector investment in the area. Such decisions are to be based on a sound balance of social, economic, and physical development criteria that are designed to make better use of the available resources to the south, while lessening development pressure in the north and east.

Goal LU 11 and its respective objectives and policies establishes a structure whereby prospective Comprehensive Plan amendments, rezonings, and development applications are reviewed for their potential to accomplish the Southern Strategy's aspirations. The Comprehensive Plan also calls for establishing "...a business environment that supports the operation, retention and expansion of existing Tallahassee and Leon County businesses, as well as the attraction and development of new commercial enterprises...to move the local economy away from dependence on government and low wage industries to a broader reliance on high value-added enterprises..." (Economic Development Element, Goal 1C). Success of the Southern Strategy will benefit the entire community in terms of greater residential options and employment opportunities, greater availability of shopping, recreation, and educational opportunities throughout the community.

II. PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

SECTOR PLANNING

The Comprehensive Plan requires the goal of the SSA to be implemented through sector plans. The sector plans connect the broader vision for the SSA with the specific needs and desires of the neighborhoods and businesses within the area. Sector planning is intended to promote the participation of affected residents, property owners, and businesses, identify specific needed improvements and changes, and focus investment.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policy 11.2.2 states the following:

By 2004, a sector plan, or plans, shall be prepared and adopted by local government for the Southern Strategy Area. The sector plan(s) will:

- a) Be coordinated with the preparation of redevelopment plans for Community Redevelopment Area.*

- b) Include an inventory and assessment of public facilities; an inventory of housing structural conditions; and an assessment of key socioeconomic indicators.*
- c) Prioritize and focus infrastructure improvements on those facilities that serve this designated area. This should include but not be limited to roadway, utilities, schools and parks.*
- d) Encourage and provide forums for the involvement of neighborhood residents, community leaders, neighborhood business leaders, and others -- in the redevelopment and rehabilitation of this corridor.*
- e) Identify land use and land development regulation changes to achieve plan objectives, and shall address other issues as identified by sector plan participants.*
- f) Provide for follow-through in the form of a work plan, including capital improvements programming, with the intent that government projects and programs will proactively serve as stimulants to private sector investment and reinvestment in the Southern Strategy Area.*
- g) Assess options to increase home ownership.*

This policy has been implemented. The study area was divided into five sector planning areas: South Monroe, Capital Cascade (including the South Central area), Oak Ridge, Lake Bradford, and West Pensacola (*see Figure 2*). Between November 2003 and January 2006, all five plans were completed, and portions of the respective plans have since been implemented.

South Monroe

The South Monroe Sector Plan was approved by the City Commission in November 2003 and by the County Commission in January 2004. About 92% of the South Monroe Sector is within City limits; 8% is in the unincorporated area along the north side of Tram Road. The plan includes almost thirty assignments for pursuing the vision of the South Monroe area.

A Southside Community Park project at the corner of Meridian Street and Orange Avenue was conceptually approved by the City Commission in November 2003 as part of the South Monroe Sector Implementation Plan. There was an estimated additional cost of \$437,000 to convert Leon County's proposed stormwater facility into a park with amenities (playgrounds, benches, picnic tables, bathroom facilities). However, the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board did not recommend implementing the project.

Landscaping has been added along the four berms of the South Monroe Railroad bridge and collaboration continues with CSX regarding facade improvements. These improvements are intended to create a gateway/entrance both in the downtown and South Monroe and complement the Cascades Park project. The overall purpose is to develop a phased streetscape plan for the South Monroe Sector including landscaping, crosswalks, and stamping of roadway in crosswalks, sidewalks, street furniture where practical, bus shelters, street lights, street trees, landscaped medians, utility placement (remove utility

poles from sidewalk where possible) and closing open ditches. Most of the needed sidewalks are being provided through the funded Neighborhood Infrastructure Enhancement Project (NIEP).

In February 2006, code revisions were approved providing for interim design guidelines for development and redevelopment within the South Monroe Sector Area. The ordinance applies to properties south of the CSX railroad, east of Adams Street, north of Orange Avenue, and west of Monroe Street (includes properties along both sides of Adams, Orange, and Monroe). The design principles upon which review will be based include: orientation of buildings to the street, placing landscaping along the street, placing parking at the rear or side of buildings, and requiring landscaping to be used to buffer parking areas, if parking is in front of building. The ordinance also identified the process for a pre-application review with the Planning Department, requiring applicants to provide a site plan and landscape plan. The ordinance supports Objective 12.2 of the Future Land Use Element and its respective policies which seek to promote development and redevelopment through site design that accommodates pedestrians and contains a mix of compatible land uses. By requiring buildings and landscaping along the street, the new standards improve pedestrian safety by reducing exposure to automobiles and enhance the aesthetics of the South Monroe Sector.

Oak Ridge

The Oak Ridge Sector Plan was accepted by the Commissions in September 2005. The Oak Ridge Sector is unlike the other sector planning areas—about 70% of the Oak Ridge Sector lies outside City limits, even though 75% of the SSA is within City limits. The smaller portion of the Oak Ridge Sector within City limits consists of several areas that are not generally conterminous. The City/County division causes different standards and rules to apply within the Oak Ridge community, including code enforcement concerns. Community workshops revealed the following priority issues: integration of the Oak Ridge Sector with Comprehensive Plan, housing, lack of community facilities, and application of the regulatory framework. Although draft recommendations were presented to the community, there was an ongoing lack of consensus within the community regarding what to do about the priority issues identified through the workshops. Due to the lack of consensus, there was no policy direction by the Commissions to proceed with implementation.

Lake Bradford

About 76% of the Lake Bradford Sector lies within City limits. After the Lake Bradford Sector Plan was accepted by the Commissions in February 2005, staff worked on a number of implementation projects. The Lake Bradford participants had identified five priorities for the sector plan: 1) protection of Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes; 2) restoration of lands affected by landfills and sand mines; 3) development of a balanced future land use pattern; 4) providing a functioning transportation system that does not degrade the environment or the quality of life; and 5) focusing on crime and blighted areas.

The Lake Bradford Sector Plan recognizes the need for a north-south connector roadway between the land use areas north of Roberts Road and south of Orange Avenue. Staff from the Planning Department, Public Works, and City Stormwater reviewed the feasibility of extending Mabry Street and other proposed alignments. Public Works identified the extension of Appleyard Drive as another possible north-south route.

The Florida State University (FSU) intramural field complex, located on the north side of Tyson Road, makes travel patterns even more crucial for this area. The Gaines Street-Lake Bradford Road-Orange Avenue-Eisenhower Road corridor does not appear to be an attractive or realistic access route to the FSU sports complex, due to longer travel time and distance. Stadium Drive and Pensacola Street east and west of the stadium will likely provide the main east-west access routes based on student housing patterns and activity centers. To a lesser extent Jackson Bluff Road, Roberts Road, and West Tennessee Street will provide limited east-west access. Adverse effects of the north-south road can be minimized by avoiding the Seminole Manor and Mabry Manor neighborhoods, and using vacant or government lands where possible. The project would also seek to minimize any impacts to homeowners. Based upon City priority, Springhill Road has been identified as a gateway from the airport to downtown; the County has established a gateway committee. The City has funds for a gateway project along Lake Bradford Road, and owns some property along Springhill Road along with the State of Florida.

Capital Cascade

The Capital Cascade Sector Plan was accepted by the City Commission in September 2005. The Capital Cascade Sector boundaries, 99% within City limits, are based on the watershed for the proposed Capital Cascade Trail stormwater and greenway project being undertaken by Blueprint 2000 and includes the area formerly identified as the South Central planning area, Franklin Boulevard, and the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). It also includes the Providence and Bond neighborhoods.

A major theme in this sector planning process was the use of the Capital Cascade Trail and Greenway as an infrastructure enhancement project. Many of the recommendations specifically considered the development of the trail and greenway. The challenge of using the trail and greenway as a catalyst for redevelopment include neighborhood issues, incompatible land uses, public safety, and general blight in the more southern areas the trail transverses. In order for this infrastructure project to be a success the surrounding land use, safety, and compatibility issues must be addressed during the design of the trail. The recommendations also provide the link between the development of the trail and its surrounding environment that was part of the initial *Blueprint 2000 and Beyond* vision.

The Capital Cascade Sector Plan addresses the infrastructure, urban design, neighborhood aesthetics, community safety, and education priorities identified by participants, and includes over twenty strategies. The strategies vary in costs from continuing to fund ongoing stormwater projects and conducting additional zoning level analysis to larger infrastructure related projects such as: collocating a City Park at Pineview Elementary

School, completing trail linkages, improving street lighting, improving transit stops, and using design principles that discourage crime in designing the Capital Cascade Trail. Other recommendations include possibly using CRA money for redevelopment of applicable areas within the Sector Plan, possibly participating in the design of Orange Avenue west of Monroe Street, and the potential relocation of the Florida Department of Corrections Road Prison and Work Release Center.

The State and City reached an agreement in April 2004 that returned ownership of the majority of the Cascades Park site to the City, and the State provided \$4.2 million through two legislative appropriations toward the overall \$8 million cost for cleanup efforts. In November 2005, ground was broken for the Cascades Park remediation project.

West Pensacola

The West Pensacola Sector Plan was accepted by the City Commission in January 2006. Only about one-third of the sector lies within the adopted Southern Strategy Area boundaries. The West Pensacola Sector, entirely within City limits, is highly urbanized and one of the most densely populated areas in the community, comprised of a mixture of university properties, university-related retail and services, student rental housing, large apartment units, older neighborhoods, and several government owned properties. Data from Census 2000 identified the following: 65% of residents were age 18–24; 63% of residents were enrolled in college; 20% of households were families; 80% of housing stock was multifamily; 90% were renters.

Due to the proximity of Tallahassee Community College and Florida State University, the majority of investment and development proposals in the sector are focused on student or multi-family housing and other university-related uses. The neighborhoods in the sector are majority rental with mostly very low homeownership, with the exception of homes on Cactus Street. Most housing stock, either rental houses or apartment dwellings, is oriented to students as is much of the retail development. The immediate goal for the West Pensacola Sector is to provide adequate services for area residents, while preserving the remaining viable neighborhoods. Tallahassee Community College is a commuter school and Florida State has chronic parking problems. Therefore, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the sector could help induce the reduction of automotive traffic on the two primary east-west thoroughfares, West Tennessee and West Pensacola Streets. No funding source has been identified to implement the West Pensacola Sector Plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

Apalachee Ridge

In December 2001, the City adopted the Apalachee Ridge Estates Neighborhood Renaissance Plan, the first plan prepared under the Community Neighborhood Renaissance Partnership Program (CRNP), which commits to five years of active

engagement and facilitation. Apalachee Ridge Estates is located along East Orange Avenue in the South Monroe Sector Plan area (*see Figure 2*). Some of the infrastructure improvements completed during the program include the construction of sidewalks on Pontiac Drive, Coble Street, and Hardwood Street; speed humps on Pontiac Drive; bikeways; pedestrian crossings; additional street lights, fire hydrants, stop signs, and speed limit signs; and a new neighborhood wall along Orange Avenue. Neighborhood safety projects cost approximately \$350,000, in addition to the projects included in the \$40 million Orange Avenue road-widening project. The Tallahassee Police Department and City Growth Management continue to address crime and code violations, respectively, while Apalachee Ridge Estates Neighborhood Association (ARENA) continues to work with the City's Solid Waste Department to hold amnesty days and provide instructions on the proper disposal of solid waste and hazardous materials. In addition, to address flooding in the western section of the neighborhood, the City's Stormwater Division constructed a stormwater facility, upgraded the size of the stormwater sewers, and reconfigured residential driveways. These projects were completed in April 2006 for approximately \$1.9 million. ARENA also collaborated with TAPP to plant a rain garden at the Apalachee Ridge Learning and Technology Center.

In 2002, the City spent \$6.8 million for construction of a new community center in Jack McLean, Jr., Park, as recommended by the plan. Opened in 2004, the community center is one of the most frequently visited centers in the City's parks and recreation system. The plan also recommended the creation of a technology learning and resource center to provide online educational and job training opportunities. In 2001, the City purchased and renovated a house in the neighborhood for approximately \$150,000 to host the center, which opened in 2002, providing tutoring, internet access, and academic enrichment in a safe space for children during out-of-school time. In addition, the center provides meeting space for the neighborhood association, hosts community events, and engages in activities to discourage gang behavior.

Based on the neighborhood plan, the City created a program to provide small grants to income-eligible homeowners and loans to others for curb-appeal improvements. Under this program, 32 homes were painted or repaired with a total of \$62,500 in City funds. In addition, neighborhood residents took advantage of rehabilitation assistance through the City's Emergency Home Repair Program, which helped 43 homeowners with \$185,000 in repairs since 2001. The City's expenditures have also sparked capital investments and in-kind goods and services from members of the CNRP, neighborhood residents, and property owners. Members have provided free income tax preparation and help with the Earned Income Tax Credit, free flu vaccines, a bike helmet safety program, training in money management, health seminars, a disaster preparedness workshop, and a College Reach Out Program presentation. Since 2000, residents and property owners have invested over \$400,000 through housing rehabilitation projects. The rate of homeownership in the neighborhood has stabilized and property values have increased. The Planning Department has recommended to the Commission that Apalachee Ridge Estates graduate from the Community Neighborhood Renaissance program. The report *Apalachee Ridge Estates Neighborhood 2000-06* provides a more detailed description of the projects and programs that have been implemented in the neighborhood.

Providence

Providence, a southwest Tallahassee neighborhood in the Capital Cascade Sector Plan area, is the second neighborhood to participate in the Community Neighborhood Renaissance Program. The neighborhood is near FSU, FAMU, FAMU/FSU School of Engineering, FSU's Alumni Village, and Innovation Park (*see Figure 2*). The neighborhood has a very high percentage of young residents (59% under the age of 24) and a low percentage of families (35% of households). Only 7% of the residents in the neighborhood are homeowners, and 93% of the residences in the neighborhood are held for rental purposes. Contributing to the low homeownership rate is the fact that the predominant housing type in the neighborhood is multi-family apartment complexes. The conditions of the homes in the neighborhood range from well-kept homes to abandoned, boarded-up, and vacant homes. Many Providence residents have incomes well below the area median, while unemployment and poverty rates are much higher than in the rest of the City. The neighborhood also includes some retail and warehouse uses, primarily along Lake Bradford Road.

The Providence neighborhood is zoned Central Urban. The Central Urban district allows for a mixture of uses and does not necessarily lead to the preservation of residential areas. The uses along Lake Bradford Road are commercial retail uses, including convenience stores with gas pumps, personal services, uniform laundry business, and automotive related uses. There are 14 businesses within the boundaries of the neighborhood. Other uses in the neighborhood include three churches and a non-profit organization. The neighborhood has an active neighborhood association that meets monthly.

The neighborhood plan was created through community involvement and has been adopted by the Commissions and the Leon County School Board. Priority issues in the plan include the creation of a neighborhood center, crime prevention, homeownership, neighborhood cleanup, and neighborhood safety. The City of Tallahassee, under the Neighborhood Infrastructure Enhancement Program, has spent approximately \$6.2 million in roadway improvements within the Providence neighborhood. Roadways in the neighborhood with open ditches are proposed to be reconstructed to close the ditches and to add sidewalks, bike lanes, and curb and gutters.

Another proposed project is the rezoning of part of the neighborhood to maintain the residences while providing incentives for redevelopment of the area. The Planning Department has begun this project with the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In 2003, the City Commission directed staff to reevaluate the Neighborhood Infrastructure Enhancement Program's list of 56 projects valued at \$50 million to determine the consistency with specific criteria. Of the 45 projects identified, 27 are partially or entirely within the Southern Strategy Area, totaling \$22.7 million. As of

early 2007, 54% of the nearly \$4 million budgeted for the PD&E phase for the SSA projects had been spent.

FAIRGROUNDS

Leon County has proposed relocating the North Florida Fairgrounds to the “Flea Market Tract” on Capital Circle between Crawfordville and Woodville Highways. Required are approximately: 14 acres for the carnival; 10 acres for exhibitions, about half of which would be occupied by permanent buildings and paved roads; 5,000 parking spaces; and parking for 300 recreational vehicles. Except for paved roads and buildings in the exhibit area, all surfaces would be pervious. Stormwater ponds to be built on the site by Blueprint 2000 would be designed to accommodate both the future Capital Circle improvements north of the site and the requirements of the fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds board of directors has expressed reservations with moving into the Flea Market Tract. The Fairgrounds will be seeking a consultant’s help to assess the suitability and utility of the Flea Market Tract once it is evident that the County can acquire the site.

INNOVATION PARK

Innovation Park is governed by the Leon County Research and Development Authority (LCRDA), which is a special district legislatively established in 1980. The mandate of the LCRDA is to create jobs in Leon County, diversify the tax base, and enhance the research at FSU and FAMU. The LCRDA is self-funded from revenues generated by leasing operations at Innovation Park, and has authority to issue bonds. Innovation Park covers 208 acres, of which 29% (60 acres) is available for development (*see Figure 6*). The developed portion includes 15 buildings accommodating more than 45 organizations with over 1,700 employees. Eight construction projects, totaling \$37 million, are currently underway to accommodate research and development projects in Leon County. These projects include new buildings, exterior renovations to existing buildings, and interior remodeling to existing buildings.

The LCRDA collaborated with the City of Tallahassee in 2006 and provided land for the new facility for Danfoss Turbocor Compressors, Inc. to become the newest tenant at Innovation Park. Danfoss Turbocor Compressors, Inc. produces energy-efficient compressors for the air conditioning industry. The new plant has a production capacity potential of more than 100,000 compressors per year. Production is currently underway and 100 new jobs have been created.

In 2006-07, the LCRDA bonded \$3.7 million for renovations to the Centennial Building, home of FAMU’s Center for Plasma Science and Technology (CePaST), which conducts research for the U.S. Army Space Missile Defense Command Project. The facility’s 6,000-SF expansion makes it Florida’s premier plasma research facility, expected to generate some \$4 million in sponsored research per year. In 2006, the LCRDA also successfully negotiated lease revisions for FSU tenants occupying four buildings and paid off the \$ 2.5 million bond. FSU renovations to the Shaw Building totaled \$4 million, which now houses the Applied Superconductivity Center (ASC). The ASC is expected to

generate \$2 million in research grants and \$2.5 million worth of precision laboratory equipment as well as 30 research positions to Tallahassee.

In 2005-06, the LCRDA approved the site plan for a three million gallon water tank that cost \$7.5 million and issued an easement allowing the City of Tallahassee to provide a \$1 million power upgrade to the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory (Mag Lab). The 330,000-SF facility is the largest and highest powered facility of its kind in the world. In 2007, the LCRDA also negotiated a land transfer with the Florida Department of Transportation and the Florida Department of Education to secure the site for the \$14-million Materials Research Center. The new center will house programs for the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering and will be located close to the Mag Lab, allowing researchers to develop new composite materials.

A business incubator was also established in late 2006 at Innovation Park as a joint effort with the FAMU Small Business Development Center. Two firms have relocated to the incubator and others are being evaluated for the program. The Technology Commercialization Grant program began in 2005 to provide funding for start-up technology firms on a competitive award basis. A total of \$45,000 is awarded annually to three start-up technology firms.

The LCRDA has been very successful in fostering job creation over the past few years. The most prevalent challenges for furthering SSA economic development identified by the LCDRA are the lack of executive housing, the perceived quality of public schools, the lack of business amenities, and the poor access to Innovation Park because of minimal access to and from Capital Circle. Blueprint 2000 recommended creating a new entrance from Capital Circle to Innovation Park to alleviate this problem.

SOUTHSIDE DRI

On, August 16, 2006, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council received an Application for Development Approval (ADA) for the Southside Development of Regional Impact (DRI) from the St. Joe Company. Although not strictly within the SSA boundary, the Southside DRI is adjoining the SSA, on the north and south sides of Capital Circle SE, between Tram Road and Woodville Highway (*see Figure 5*).

The Southside DRI is a mixed-use project on 1,625 acres and seeks approval of the following development entitlements over the next ten years (2007–2016): single family, 1,800 units; multi-family, 1,000 units, retail, 1,040,000 SF (up to 40,000 SF may be used as a recreation center or health club); office, 150,000 SF; hotel, 300 rooms; and hospital, 110 beds.

The ADA was determined sufficient by the Apalachee Regional Planning Council in August 2007. The City and County are beginning to negotiate a Development Order with the applicant that will ultimately require approval by the City Commission and possibly the Board of County Commissioners depending on annexation status. Adoption of a

related Comprehensive Plan amendment will also be scheduled for the same public hearing(s) as the Development Order.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Table 1 contains information related to the population characteristics of the SSA:

Table 1: Area demographics, 2000

	Southern Strategy Area (SSA)	Tallahassee	Leon County	SSA as ratio of Leon County
1990 Population	28,307	124,773	192,493	15%
2000 Population	31,061	150,624	239,452	13%
Black	74%	34%	29%	33%
White	22%	60%	66%	4%
Others	4%	6%	5%	12%
Percent pop. change 1990-2000	10%	21%	24%	—
Population younger than 18 yrs.	25%	17%	21%	15%
Married couple families w/ minor children	34%	57%	65%	7%
One-parent families	60%	43%	34%	22%
Median income (dollars)	\$22,955	\$34,764	\$37,000	62%
2000 Unemployment rate	16%	11%	8%	23%
Poverty rate of families	27%	12%	9%	—
Households with no vehicle	18%	9%	7%	31%

Source: 2000 Census

According to the 2000 Census, married couples headed only 34% of the families with children in the SSA, compared to 57% for Tallahassee and 65% for all of Leon County. The Southern Strategy Area accounted for only 7% of all married couple families in Leon County and 22% of one-parent families. A high prevalence of single-parent families often corresponds with a higher frequency of poverty. In 2000, 27% of families in the SSA were below the poverty level, compared to 12% in Tallahassee and only 9% in all of Leon County. The median family income in the SSA was only 66% of Tallahassee's median and 62% of all of Leon County's median for that same period. The unemployment and poverty rates in the SSA were almost double those of the City and County as a whole.

With 25% of the population under the age of 18, the SSA contained a higher percentage of minors than either Tallahassee (17%) or Leon County (21%) in 2000. The area also had a lower percentage (14%) of persons within the peak earning years of age 45-64 than either Tallahassee (17%) or Leon County (20%). The combination of a higher concentration of dependent children and a lower proportion of persons within the peak earning years suggests that the SSA has both a lower participation in the labor force as well as a weaker ability for residents to capitalize local investments. These circumstances can adversely affect the comparative stability of a community. An

established metropolitan area must have a well-developed labor market to be attractive to both households and businesses, and the SSA has a loose labor market. The SSA has consistently shown higher rates of unemployment and poverty than Leon County as a whole since 1970, with the disparity increasing over the decades. It is imperative that any prospective economic resurgence of the SSA result in a meaningful and lasting reduction of poverty and unemployment.

Table 2: Demographic changes in the SSA, 1970–2000

Characteristic	1970		1980		1990		2000	
	Southern Strategy Area	Leon County	Southern Strategy Area	Leon County	Southern Strategy Area	Leon County	Southern Strategy Area	Leon County
Population	27,287	103,047	30,260	148,655	31,203	192,493	31,061	239,452
White	60%	74%	46%	74%	34%	74%	22%	66%
Black	39%	25%	52%	25%	63%	24%	74%	29%
Others	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	4%	5%
<i>SSA population as percent of Leon County</i>	27%	—	20%	—	16%	—	13%	—
Unemployment Rate	3%	3%	7%	4%	9%	5%	16%	8%
Percent of families with children under 18 headed by one parent	19%	15%	41%	26%	51%	29%	60%	35%
Persons Below Poverty	23%	20%	30%	18%	31%	17%	34%	18%
Families Below Poverty	19%	14%	25%	12%	24%	9%	27%	9%
Median Family Income	\$6,846	\$8,961	\$11,772	\$18,916	\$21,903	\$37,000	\$25,407	\$52,962
in 2000 dollars*	\$30,383	\$39,770	\$24,601	\$39,530	\$28,858	\$48,748	\$25,407	\$52,962
<i>SSA median family income as percent of Leon County</i>	76%	—	62%	—	59%	—	48%	—
Vacancy rate	3.7%	4.7%	10.7%	8.6%	10.3%	8.0%	13.4%	7.2%
Percent owners	51%	60%	44%	56%	42%	57%	41%	57%
Percent renters	49%	40%	56%	44%	58%	43%	59%	43%

*Adjusted with CPI from Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Source: Census

Table 2 shows demographic changes of the SSA in recent decades. Over a 30-year span, the racial composition changed from 60% white in 1970 to 74% black by 2000. The table also shows a steady decrease in median family income from 1970 through 2000, relative to Leon County. In 1970, owner-occupied units were slightly in the majority; the prevalence of renter-occupied housing has continued since 1980. In addition, the SSA shows consistently higher rates of unemployment and poverty than Leon County, with the disparity increasing over time.

Longevity of residence can serve as an indicator of neighborhood and community stability. Table 3 shows the proportion of residents who lived in the same place as five years earlier: 35% for the SSA, 41% for Leon County, 49% for Florida, and 54% nationally. When the areas around FSU and FAMU are discounted due to their high proportion of students, the figure rises to 44% for Leon County. Excluding the area around the universities, the proportion of residents living in the same house as five years earlier was essentially the same in the SSA as elsewhere inside the Urban Services Area

(41.3%). The revealed preference indicates that permanence of residence may not actually be held with high regard. Leon County residents are more itinerant than Floridians as a whole, who are more itinerant than the US population as a whole.

Table 3: Residents (age 5+) living in the same house in 2000 and 1995

Area	Living in same house	Excluding areas adjacent to universities*
Leon County	41.0%	44.0%
Tallahassee (City only)	33.2%	37.0%
Inside Urban Services Area (pt.)	38.0%	41.3%
SSA (pt.)	35.0%	41.3%
rest of Urban Services Area	38.4%	40.7%
Outside Urban Services Area (pt.)	56.2%	56.2%
Florida	48.9%	48.9%
United States	54.1%	54.1%

*Does not include block groups adjacent to FSU and FAMU.

Source: Census

Table 4 shows journey to work characteristics for the SSA, City, and County. In 2000, nearly 93% of workers in Leon County used a car or truck to get to work, including 87% of workers in the SSA. Some 20.4% of SSA workers carpooled, compared with about 13.5% countywide. Of the 10.2% of SSA workers using another means to commute, around half used transit and most of the rest walked. Only 2.4% of City residents and 1.6% of residents countywide chose transit to get to work. However, the 5.2% of SSA workers using transit accounted for over 37% of transit commuters countywide. Less than 1% of SSA workers bicycle to work, but because just 0.4% of workers countywide are bicycle commuters, the SSA has one-fourth of Leon County’s bicycle commuters. Therefore, capital improvements for bicycle projects in the SSA may likely have a greater effect on commuting than elsewhere in the county, where bicycling may be more for leisure (see Table 10).

The average of all US metropolitan areas for automotive commuting was 93.4%, according to the 2000 Census. Among the 64 metropolitan areas in the US with a population density comparable to Tallahassee’s (1,700–1,900 persons per sq. mi.), automotive use averaged 93.9% among commuters, nearly the same as Tallahassee’s. Even among the 38 metropolitan areas with more than double the density (3,500+ persons per sq. mi.) of the Tallahassee metropolitan area, average automotive commuter usage was 90.3%.

The typical transit commuter spends more time going a shorter distance than does the typical automotive commuter. Only 29% of SSA transit commuters got to work in less than 30 minutes, while 81% of SSA workers using another method (car, bike, walk) had a commute time of less than 30 minutes. About one-fourth of transit users in the SSA have a commute time of one hour or longer, which is about the same proportion countywide. Local preferences regarding commuting are probably comparable to national time-preferences. Since the majority of workers’ time-preferences locally favor a shorter

duration commute, it may be unrealistic to expect a significant increase in the proportion of commuters to opt for transit if it results in less autonomy and/or a longer commute time.

Table 4: Journey to work in SSA, Tallahassee, and Leon County, 2000

	Percentage of resident workers			SSA users as share of total
	SSA	Tallahassee	Leon County	
Means of travel to work*				
Car, truck, or van	87.0	91.3	92.9	10.8%
Drove alone	66.6	78.5	79.4	17.4%
Carpool	20.4	12.8	13.5	9.6%
Transit, bicycle & pedestrian	10.2	5.7	3.9	31.1%
Transit	5.2	2.4	1.6	37.2%
Bicycle & pedestrian	5.0	3.3	2.3	25.2%
Bicycle	0.9	0.6	0.4	22.8%
Pedestrian	4.2	2.6	1.9	25.7%
Worked at home	1.3	2.4	2.5	6.0%
Time to work*				
Public transportation:				
<30 minutes	28.8	34.4	36.4	29.5%
30-44 minutes	36.4	30.1	27.8	48.7%
45-59 minutes	9.6	12.5	12.1	29.6%
60+ minutes	25.2	23.1	23.8	39.5%
Any other means:**				
<30 minutes	80.6	84.2	75.1	12.0%
30-44 minutes	14.6	11.8	18.6	8.8%
45-59 minutes	2.1	1.7	3.3	7.0%
60+ minutes	2.8	2.2	3.0	10.4%

*Workers 16 years and older. Categories may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Includes car, truck, van, bicycle, and walking.

Source: Census

IV. ISSUE AREAS

A. PUBLIC SAFETY

Neighborhoods with informal networks that promote and enforce conventional values and law-abiding behavior typically have lower levels of crime and disorder. The City's portion of the SSA accounts for approximately 17% of the City's total population, and in 2005–06 this area accounted for 17–18% of the City's recorded occurrences of crime. Therefore, relative to population, the occurrence of reported crime in general from the SSA appears comparable to that of the City at large.

During 2005–06, the incidence of violent crime reported in general appeared slightly higher from the SSA (relative to population) compared to the rest of the City, while the incidence of property crime appeared slightly lower. The SSA accounted for some 22% of the City's reported violent crimes and about 16% of its reported property crimes during 2005–06.

Table 5: Reported occurrences of crime within the SSA, 2005 & 2006

Year	2005			2006		
Area	SSA (City only)	Tallahassee	SSA as percent of Tallahassee	SSA (City only)	Tallahassee	SSA as percent of Tallahassee
Total reports Crimes/Calls for service*	9,018	49,959	18.0%	8,917	52,458	17.0%
Total Crimes	2,121	11,790	18.0%	1,965	11,242	17.5%
<i>Violent Crimes</i>						
Assault **	78	405	19.3%	96	350	27.4%
Battery †	540	2,317	23.3%	517	2,370	21.8%
Homicide (incl. attempted)	6	22	27.3%	9	25	36.0%
Kidnapping/False Imprisonment	8	35	22.9%	6	33	18.2%
Robbery	59	324	18.2%	75	382	19.6%
Aggregate of violent crimes	691	3,103	22.3%	703	3,160	22.2%
<i>Property Crimes</i>						
Burglary	645	3,296	19.6%	523	2,882	18.1%
Forgery	29	197	14.7%	23	188	12.2%
Fraud	102	901	11.3%	91	933	9.7%
Theft	654	4,293	15.2%	625	4,079	15.3%
Aggregate of property crimes	1,430	8,687	16.5%	1,262	8,082	15.6%

* Includes the portions of the West Pensacola and Capital Cascades sectors outside the boundaries of the Southern Strategy Area, and uses reported information opposed to the actual occurrence of the data.

** Assault, aggravated assault, or assault on law enforcement officer.

† Battery, aggravated battery, sexual battery, or battery on law enforcement officer.

Source: Tallahassee Police Department, Crimes Analysis Unit, statistics for 1/1/05-12/31/05 and 1/1/06-12/31/06

Separate data for the unincorporated portion of the SSA were unavailable from the Leon County Sheriff's Office (LCSO). The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports indicated that during 2005–06, approximately 80% of violent crime reports and 84% of property crime reports for Leon County came from the Tallahassee Police Department (TPD), while only 20% of violent crime reports and 16% of property crime reports came from the LCSO. Therefore, since the SSA is 75% within City limits and TPD accounts for most of the crime reported in Leon County, it is not likely that, were they available, crime reports originating from the unincorporated portions of the SSA would skew the data.

In addition, incidents of student crime and violence in schools in the south are significantly higher than other areas of the county. Table 6 shows that during 2003–06, middle and elementary schools in the SSA collectively reported incidents of crime and violence with about twice the frequency as Leon County in general.

Table 6: Student crime and violence in SSA public schools, 2003-06

School	Incidents of crime and violence per 100 students		
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
Elementary			
Southern Strategy Area	3.8	11.0	5.4
Bond	8.4	13.4	1.5*
Brevard	1.1	11.9	16.4
Oak Ridge	1.6	3.9	4.9
Pineview	10.4	27.5	8.7
Sabal Palm	0.9	5.0	0.0
Wesson	2.5	2.2	*
Leon County	1.8	3.9	3.6
Florida	2.4	1.9	1.8
Middle			
Southern Strategy Area	32.0	24.0	24.5
Belle Vue	61.4	37.6	23.3
Fairview	15.9	22.6	20.7
Nims	22.9	10.7	34.1
Leon County	14.6	13.6	11.8
Florida	9.6	8.0	7.0
High			
Southern Strategy Area	11.3	9.4	18.1
Rickards	11.3	9.4	18.1
Leon County	5.9	6.5	6.4
Florida	6.6	5.4	5.0

*Wesson combined with Bond.

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Current Status of the Comprehensive Plan Requirements

In 2002, Policy 11.4.3 was deleted from the Comprehensive Plan. The policy had called for additional police sub-stations and the expansion of community policing efforts in the SSA. The policy did not accurately reflect the current programs being instituted by the Tallahassee Police Department and the Leon County Sheriff Office.

Public Safety Conclusions

- As a share of the City’s total population, the occurrence of violent crimes appears slightly higher in the SSA compared to the rest of the City.
- Incidents of crime and violence in schools in the south are significantly higher than elsewhere in the county.

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2003/2004, the City and County hired a consultant to conduct an economic analysis and develop recommendations for the SSA to better compete with other areas of the

community. The *Southside Economic Development Plan* contains some 50 recommendations, identifying specific tasks, implementing organizations, time frames, and measurements. The plan's recommendations can be generally summarized as follows: 1) use the research assets of the universities; 2) significantly improve the business climate; 3) focus on the industries of aerospace, defense/security, materials, and healthcare; 4) enhance economic development resources and approach to marketing both internally and externally; 5) redevelop the Fairgrounds, Springhill Road, and Education Quadrant; and, 6) improve image of the Southside through an enhanced cooperative effort.

Economic development and infrastructure are also interrelated issues. Without adequate infrastructure, economic development is difficult to achieve and infrastructure must adapt to changing conditions. Ongoing transportation concurrency problems in the SSA have affected the ability to initiate major development projects. The consultant for the *Southside Economic Development Plan* indicated that inadequate transportation access to the airport and Innovation Park hinders the facilities' usage. The *Southside Economic Development Plan* recommended focusing redevelopment efforts in three Southside areas: the Fairgrounds, the Springhill Road Corridor, and the Education Quadrant (the area generally between the universities and community college).

Table 7: SSA's share of building permits, 2000-06

Permit type	SSA		Leon Co.		SSA share	
	Units or SF	Value (\$1,000s)	Units or SF	Value (\$1,000s)	Percent of units or SF	Percent of value
Residential (Units):						
Single family	745	\$62,375	8,809	\$1,391,337	8.5%	4.5%
Townhouse	29	\$2,116	1,568	\$148,390	1.8%	1.4%
Multi-family	572	\$28,146	7,142	\$436,709	8.0%	6.4%
Manufactured homes	495	\$8,227	2,229	\$56,217	22.2%	14.6%
Total Residential	1,841	\$100,864	19,748	\$2,032,653	9.3%	5.0%
Commercial (SF):						
Warehouse	157,753	\$4,528	626,965	\$21,266	25.2%	21.3%
Industrial	162,095	\$3,781	777,957	\$21,159	20.8%	17.9%
Office	40,296	\$2,890	3,232,099	\$235,446	1.2%	1.2%
Stores, Shopping Centers, Restaurants	31,320	\$1,813	3,872,116	\$231,283	0.8%	0.8%
All Other Commercial	63,205	\$6,486	1,662,581	\$149,153	3.8%	4.3%
Total Commercial	454,669	\$19,498	10,171,718	\$658,307	4.5%	3.0%

Source: TLCPD analysis of Permit Enforcement Tracking System

Table 7 shows a relatively low level of permitting activity in the SSA. Combined with employment and income statistics from Tables 1 and 2, these are indicators of some of the economic obstacles in the Southside. Between 2000 and 2006, the value of the residential and commercial permits issued within the SSA accounted for only 4.4% of the total value for Leon County (5% of residential and 3% of commercial). However, the SSA accounted for 21% of the value of recent warehouse permits and about 18% of

industrial permits in Leon County, reflecting current zoning and land use patterns (*see Figures 3 and 4*).

Table 8 below highlights the type of major developments proposed, approved, or under construction within the SSA since 2005. An additional 1,345 residential units are in the development process (up from 840 in 2004), of which 7% are multi-family units (apartments), 36% are two-family or townhouse units, and 57% are single-family units (*see Figure 5*). Commercial development potential in the SSA has been affected by the lack of infrastructure, particularly roadway capacity.

Table 8: Major developments in the SSA, 2005-07

Type	Project	Size		Status September 2007
		units	SF	
Condominium	Adams Place Condominiums	180		Completed
	Baldwin Park Condominiums	82		Under Construction
	Baldwin Park Condominiums, Phase 2	88		Under Review
Institution	Comprehensive Human Services Center		32,000	Completed
Manufacturing	Jackson Cook		27,730	Completed
	Danfoss Turbocor Compressors		65,000	Completed
Mixed Use	Southbrook PUD	*	*	PUD approved
Multi-Family	Seminole Suites Phase II	96		Completed
Public	Bond Elementary School		95,892	Completed
Single Family Detached	Dry Creek Run Phase 2	42		Under Construction
	Montejo Subdivision	71		Clearing Site
	Villas at Pine Forest	111		Clearing Site
	Dry Creek Run Phase 1	98		Completed
	Villages at Wilson Green	130		Completed
	Paeonia Place Subdivision	76		Preliminary Plat Approved
	Canopy Woods	48		Site Plan Approved
	Crawfordville Trace Phase III	49		Under Construction
Single Family Detached/Town house	Pebble Brooke Subdivision	141/77		Under Construction
Townhouse	Bradford Overlook	56		Under Construction
Warehouse	Hamilton Park Lot 7		31,800	Completed
	Crossway Center		72,275	Site Plan Approved

*The approved PUD specifies a maximum of 16 DU/acre and requires commercial or light industrial uses. However, no further development plans have been submitted.

Source: *Major Ongoing & Proposed Developments in Tallahassee and Leon County, TLCPD*

There is a need for infrastructure improvements in the SSA in order to promote economic development and attract increased development and commerce. Locational factors affect a community's ability to attract and retain economic activity—during 2000–2006, the SSA accounted for 7% of the County's existing commercial floor space, 7% of its office floor space, and 25% of its industrial floor space. Improved infrastructure would enhance

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local businesses’ access to markets and also promote the SSA’s inclusion into a broader market area for goods and services. With a quarter of the County’s existing industrial and warehousing floor space, the SSA should seek to induce a mixture of low- and high-demand density businesses. New mercantile activities should complement the existing material-oriented businesses in order to encourage an economic blend that will bring about a stronger and more vibrant and diversified area economy.

Table 9: Transportation projects in the SSA

Road	From	To	Jurisdiction	Funding *	Description/Status
Gateway Projects					
Lake Bradford Rd.	Stadium Dr.	Pineview Elem. School	City	BP	Construction funded for FY 09/10
Intersection Projects					
Adams St.	At Osceola St.		City	PPL	Southbound right turn lane; TSM project
Tram Rd.	At Gaile Ave.		County	County	Realignment for 90° intersection; County funding for 09/10
Pedestrian and Street Safety/Bicycle Projects					
Campbell Connector	Jack McLean Park	St. Marks Trail	City	TIP	Construction in FY 07/08; TEA-21 project (Federal surface transportation program)
Capital Circle NW & SW	W. Tennessee St.	Orange Ave.	City/County	BP	Bike/Ped facilities included for road widening
Crawfordville Rd.	SR 61	Four Points Intersection	State	BP	Sidewalk and Bikeway facility; const. complete w/ 4-laning of roadway
Four Points Trail Head	At Four Points Intersection		City	BP	Construction funded for FY 06/07 – 08/09
Lipona Road	Pensacola St.	Pepper Dr.	City	City	Construction in FY 08/09.
Orange Ave.	S. Monroe St.	Blair Stone Rd.	County	TIP	Sidewalk and Bikeway facility complete
Tallahassee Junction Trail Head	At St. Marks Trail		City	BP	Construction funded for FY 08/09
Roadway Widening/Improvements					
Balboa Dr. & Rainbow Rd.	Ballard Rd.	Cowan Dr.	County	County	Stormwater management project to reduce roadway flooding
Capital Circle NW/SW	W. Tennessee St.	Orange Ave.	State	BP	Widen to 4/6 lanes; design underway
Capital Circle SW	Orange Ave.	Crawfordville Rd.	State	BP	2 to 4 lanes; expanded PD&E underway
Capital Circle SW	Crawfordville Rd.	Woodville Hwy.	State	BP	2 to 6 lanes; Design phase underway
Capital Circle SE	Woodville Hwy.	Tram Rd.	State	BP	2 to 6 lanes; Design-build phase underway
Eppes Drive	Bridge at Airport Dr.		City	City	Stormwater management project to reduce roadway flooding
FSU Connector Road	FSU sports complex on Tyson Rd.		City	City	PD&E set for FY 11/12
Lakeview Bridge	Lakeview Drive		County	County	Stormwater management project to reduce roadway flooding
Orange Ave.	Capital Circle SW	Wahnish Way	City	PPL	2 to 4 lanes; Design next phase for funding
Pensacola St.	Appleyard Dr.	Capital Circle SW	State	PPL	2 to 4 lanes; Design next phase for funding
Rainbow Acres subd.	Penelope Rd.	Cowan Rd.	County	County	2/3–2/3 paving project
Wahnish Way	Emory Ct.	Dupont Dr.	City	City	Stormwater management project to reduce roadway flooding
Woodville Hwy.	Tram Rd.	Capital Circle SE	State	PPL	2 to 4 lanes; PD&E next phase for funding

* TIP = Transportation Improvement Program; BP = Blueprint; PPL = CRTPA Project Priority List.

Source: CRTPA FY 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Plan

The sector planning process demonstrated that grassroots endorsement and community fostering are essential and redevelopment efforts must involve the area’s existing businesses, as older commercial districts may not attract traditional anchors. New

commercial development and redevelopment should generally seek to lower the barriers to entry for entrepreneurs and also avoid alienating existing businesses. For large-scale projects, it is important to recognize the possibility of substitution effects. If one activity simply draws resources away from another activity in the region, no wealth is generated.

Capital Improvements Element Objective 1.6 states: "...[t]he City of Tallahassee and Leon County shall adopt and implement revised programs and/or policies which favor the funding and scheduling of their capital improvements programs and policies for the Central Core Area and Southern Strategy Area." In the City, each entry into the CIE denotes whether or not a project is in the Central Core or Southern Strategy Area. This "check-box" still exists, but there are no specific criteria for prioritizing projects based on their location in the Central Core or the Southern Strategy Area. Table 9 details upcoming transportation capital improvements in the SSA.

The widening of Capital Circle Southwest and Southeast, all the way from West Tennessee Street to Tram Road, is a series of Blueprint 2000 transportation projects. Money for future phases was available through the 1% sales tax extension beginning in 2004. An expanded Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study has begun for Capital Circle Southwest from Orange Avenue to Crawfordville Road to determine the future widening needs and alignment: either widen the existing Capital Circle past the airport entrance or provide a new alignment north of Lake Bradford, closer to Innovation Park. The study has been underway for about a year, and two general corridors/alignments have been identified for detailed study (and for comparison to the option not to build). Woodville Highway, Pensacola Street, and the western portion of Orange Avenue are shown in the 2020 Transportation Plan's Project Priority list, but are not funded in the current 5-year Transportation Improvement Plan. City Public Works has indicated there are no City-maintained unpaved segments remaining within the SSA. There are a few unpaved public roads within the unincorporated area; additional unpaved roadways are private roads and neither the City nor County is responsible for their maintenance. Unpaved private roads within the unincorporated area can participate in the County's 2/3-2/3 Program (e.g., Rainbow Acres subdivision).*

The *Tallahassee-Leon County Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan* was approved by the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) in 2004 to assess bicycle and pedestrian needs and prioritize improvements. It is a 20-year plan to guide the development of facilities and programs to improve safety, connectivity, and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists. The CRTPA has coordinated with Leon County Schools on the implementation of the Access to Schools program recommended in the Master Plan, listing projects to improve the ability of students to walk or bike to schools. The 2006

* Two-thirds of the owners of two-thirds of the property abutting on any road or group of roads within the unincorporated area of the County may petition the Board of County Commissioners to request that their properties be improved by the acquisition of additional right-of-way or improved by paving, repaving, curbing, draining, retention, detention, or constructing sidewalks and bike walks. If the Board of County Commissioners determines that the properties will be especially benefited to the extent of the liens for such special improvements, it may approve the petition, order such special improvements to be made, and assess liens equitably against the properties abutting such roads or drainage facilities for the cost of the improvements, including administrative and funding costs.

Access to Schools priority list indicated that sidewalks have been constructed near Pineview Elementary (Lake Bradford Rd.), Oak Ridge Elementary (Ross Rd. from Woodville Hwy. to Crawfordville Rd.), Sabal Palm Elementary (Ridgeway St. from Eisenhower Rd. to Harris St.), and Nims Middle (Orange Ave. to Springhill Rd, connecting Springsax Park). Upcoming sidewalk projects on the priority list affect Pineview, Sabal Palm, Nims, Belle Vue, and Rickards. Table 10 details the projects within the SSA identified in the Cost Feasible Plan of the *Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan*.

Table 10: Bicycle and pedestrian projects within the SSA

Location	Project	Estimated cost (\$1,000s)	Proportion for bike/ped. facilities	Community priority (1 to 74)*
Lake Bradford Rd. (Orange Ave. to Springhill)	mill/resurface/restripe	386.0	10%	14
Paul Russell Rd. (South Adams St. to South Monroe St.)	pedestrian & sidewalk safety	4,806.6	40%	22
MLK Jr. Blvd. (FAMU Way to Palmetto)	pedestrian & sidewalk safety	3,255.1	40%	23
South Monroe St. (Magnolia St. to Gaile Ave.)	medians	1,672.1	10%	35
Neighborhood streets around FAMU	sidewalks	14,083.3	100%	36
Coleman St. (Walcott St. to Lake Bradford Rd.) Walcott St. (Coleman St. to Lake Bradford Rd.)	sidewalks	887.0	100%	37
Jackson Bluff Rd. (Appleyard to Lake Bradford)	sidewalks	2,266.2	100%	38
Innovation Park Trail along Roberts Rd., Iamonia St., Stuckey Ave., Gamble St.	shared-use path	940.5	100%	42
Bloxham St. (Railroad to Myers Park Dr.)	bicycle route	0.5	100%	44
Belle Vue Way (Mabry St. to Hayden Rd.)	pedestrian & sidewalk safety	3,560.3	40%	50
Palmetto St. (MLK Jr. Blvd. to South Monroe St.)	pedestrian & sidewalk safety	1,164.2	40%	51
Springhill Rd. (Orange Ave. to GF&A Trail)	pedestrian & sidewalk safety	763.8	100%	52
Wahnish Way (FAMU Way to Osceola Ave.)	sidewalks	575.5	100%	56
Ross Rd. (Crawfordville Rd. to Woodville Hwy.)	pedestrian & sidewalk safety	3,948.1	100%	67
Tram Rd. (South Monroe St. to Capital Circle)	pedestrian & sidewalk safety	11,875.2	40%	73

* Community priority is an overall project ranking based on the methodology used by the *Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan*.

Source: *Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan*.

In May 2005, the Commissions entered into a new Water and Sewer Interlocal Agreement, which replaced the 1993 agreement. Currently the Comprehensive Plan requires the City to connect residential developments on septic tanks that are greater than seven residential units and with lots smaller than one acre, and non-residential developments that are 2,500 SF or less, to central sewer by 2020. The Plan also contains policies related to the use of septic tanks and policies requiring long range infrastructure planning.

Water service exists in most areas, and is available to all City areas. Sewer service exists in many areas, and is available to all City areas, but is prioritized by need and available money. Sanitary Sewer Sub-element Policy 1.3.1 prioritizes sewer extension expenditures to environmentally sensitive areas: "...the City of Tallahassee shall place a higher priority upon serving areas that are within the Southern Strategy Area and/or areas

that may be determined to negatively impact the environmental quality of Wakulla Springs if developed with traditional septic tank systems.” Sewer service is also available in the unserved areas under the provisions of the 2005 Water and Sewer Agreement. The sector planning process revealed concerns among residents regarding initial costs and monthly fees. The SSA accounts for about 9% of the County’s septic tanks. Existing septic tanks may inhibit central water and sewer expansion.

The Infrastructure Phasing Report was accepted by the City Commission on November 9, 2005, and by the County Commission on January 10, 2006. Infrastructure phasing is the progressive extension of urban services (viz., central water and sewer) to all properties within the Urban Services Area (USA) boundary within a specified timeframe, and the planned extension of the USA boundary and such services in the future. Its objectives are to protect Wakulla Springs through the development of environmentally sound wastewater treatment regulations, and to address septic tank abatement and barriers to future utility expansion. The Commissions approved for professional geology/hydrogeology consulting services to identify areas that are more vulnerable to contamination from land surface. The consultant’s report indicated that a significant portion of the Oak Ridge sector, and to a lesser extent the southern portions of the Lake Bradford sector, are in the “most vulnerable” class regarding aquifer contamination. The Infrastructure Phasing Report recommended sewer retrofit and septic tank abatement efforts to areas of environmental sensitivity, and evaluation of any negative environmental effects associated with the installation of traditional septic tank systems, for environmentally sensitive areas where sewer cannot be extended. For such areas, nitrogen-reducing systems may need to be required.

Current Status of the Comprehensive Plan Requirements

Objective 11.3 states:

Based on the need to reduce infrastructure and public service delivery costs, enhance urban core stability, protect natural resources, and reduce economic disparity, it is intended that new development be directed into the Southern Strategy Area by making areas inside the urban core and Southern Strategy Area more attractive to development than development at the edges of the urbanized area. To accomplish this over the course of the comprehensive plan time frame, it is intended that residential densities in the Southern Strategy Area average at least two dwelling units per gross acre, and that new non-residential development average at least 10,000 square feet per gross acre.

The gross density for the entire SSA region is about 1.15 dwelling units per acre. In 2007, the effective density per developed residential acre within the SSA was approximately 4.5 dwelling units per acre, up from 4.3 in 2003 and 3.9 in 2000. For units constructed during 2000–06 in the SSA, the overall residential density is nearly 6.2 dwelling units per acre (up from 5.7 during 2000–04). Objective 11.3 calls for new non-residential development to average at least 10,000 square feet per gross acre, yielding an average floor area ratio (FAR) of at least 0.23. The FAR in 2006 of existing non-

residential uses in the SSA included offices, 0.18; retail uses, 0.11; and warehouses, 0.11. Together these three main commercial uses had a combined FAR of 0.12. The FAR of development constructed during 2000–06 in the SSA included offices, 0.18; retail uses, 0.11, and warehouses, 0.11. The three main commercial uses had a combined FAR of 0.14, reflecting a slight increase in intensity. Even apart from various factors affecting the capital market, unless the commercial real estate market in the SSA is tight for a prolonged period, the desire that new non-residential development have twice the intensity of existing non-residential development appears impractical.

From a broader perspective, however, this objective and related policies focus on attracting development to the SSA by updating the infrastructure and establishing criteria for endorsement of transportation improvements, and by establishing a differential in cost for development outside the Southern Strategy versus inside this area (by reducing fees, subsidizing the cost of infrastructure, etc.). Incentives to attract development include the City’s payment of water and sewer fees for affordable housing, the prioritization of transportation projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan, and flexibility for transportation concurrency for industrial parks in the SSA. Transportation Element Policy 1.4.1 sets roadway concurrency in the SSA at “E” for meeting concurrency requirements for minor arterials and major and minor collectors. Tax incentives can foster development by reducing business costs, but they can indirectly impede development if they reduce expenditures on public services that businesses value. It may also be unrealistic to expect incentive programs to lead to significant job creation.

Policy 11.3.3 states:

By 2004, establish a Tax Increment Financing district in the Southern Strategy Area for the purpose of encouraging reinvestment. This district need not include the entire Southern Strategy Area. Local government may stimulate reinvestment by all means provided by law, including public-private partnerships.

In August 1998, the City established the boundaries for the Greater Frenchtown/Southside Community Redevelopment Area and established the Community Redevelopment Agency. In June 2000, the City Commission adopted the redevelopment plan and established the trust fund covering the Greater Frenchtown/Southside CRA. The ability to collect tax increment financing (TIF) began in 2001, following adoption of the redevelopment plan and establishment of the trust fund. The Greater Frenchtown/Southside CRA has been collecting TIF since 2002, and consists of three distinct geographic areas, covering approximately 1,455 acres. About 45% percent of the Greater Frenchtown/Southside CRA is located within the SSA. The Southside portion of the CRA is approximately 850 acres, of which 78% (some 660 acres) is within the boundaries of the SSA.

Policy 11.3.5 states:

By year 2002, develop landscape and streetscape programs for the Southern Strategy Area. Promote the Southern Strategy Area as a focus area to receive available moneys for landscaping of public areas and streetscaping of roadways. Develop several highly visible landscape and streetscape pilot projects to showcase the type of public improvements that emphasize the assets of the Southern Strategy Area.

Sources of money exist, but have not yet been allocated for any prioritized, specific landscaping projects. A barrier to implementation is the need for maintenance and irrigation. The County is reviewing the availability of funding through the County Tree Bank Program. The County's Orange Avenue widening project has been designed with extensive landscaping and sensitivity to adjacent land uses, and should be considered an accomplishment under this policy. Possible enhancements to South Monroe and South Adams are being considered through the South Monroe sector planning effort. The South Monroe Sector Implementation Plan recommended the creation of gateway enhancements at the South Monroe Street Railroad Bridge. The City obtained permission from CSX Transportation, Inc. to landscape the four berms of the railroad bridge. CSX submitted a land lease to the City giving permission to use their land for that purpose.

Policy 11.3.8 states:

Areas within the Southern Strategy Area that are designated as type B areas will only be permitted to take advantage of concurrency flexibility reflected in Transportation Objective 2.3 and accompanying policies. Areas designated as type B will not be permitted to take advantage of other SSA policies or benefits as outlined in the adopted SSA Comprehensive Plan Policies.

This policy became effective in 2002. The policy's intent was to address the short-term effects of the lack of roadway capacity on economic development, to allow additional transportation concurrency flexibility in the SSA for new light industrial business parks. Transportation Objective 2.3 cited in Policy 11.3.8 seeks to "...promote the development of a major business park(s) in the Southern Strategy Area." The western portion designated as Type B is within the Airport DRI, and the eastern area designated as Type B is the site of the prospective Southside DRI. However, the Southside DRI is planned as a mixed-use residential project rather than a business park, therefore the policy is inapplicable to the project.

Policy 11.4.1 states:

Where environmentally, economically and geographically practical, new heavy infrastructure land uses such as waste water treatment plants, airports, correctional facilities, and power plants which serve larger than neighborhood areas, shall be located in areas outside of the Southern Strategy Area. This policy does not apply to public facilities such as

schools, parks, greenways, trails, and other recreational uses that would enhance the desirability of residing in the Southern Strategy Area.

On October 11, 2006, the City Commission approved a contract with a private developer to purchase power from a 38-MW renewable energy facility starting in 2011. The energy will come from a biomass-fueled generating unit to be built and operated by Biomass Gas & Electric (BG&E). The purchase contract will include an option to increase the amount purchased to 75 MW pending satisfactory demonstration of reliable and economical operation of the 38-MW facility. The approved renewable energy purchase from BG&E provides resource diversity and projected cost savings to the City. The contract also makes possible the City's purchase of gas derived from biomass. FSU has submitted a request to the Board of Trustees to sublease a 21-acre parcel within the SSA on Roberts Avenue (near Innovation Park) to BG&E for construction and operation of the two biomass units. BG&E is negotiating with FSU to conduct research activities relating to alternative energy.

Policy 11.4.2 states:

By 2002, the City and County shall identify and schedule landscaping improvements to enhance the visual appearance of publicly owned institutional land uses in the Southern Strategy Area. Enhanced landscaping requirements shall apply to all existing City and County institutional facilities as well as to all new institutional facilities and to expanded or improved institutional facilities.

A process for implementing this policy was included in the 2001 report. A landscape designer was hired and various locations were identified. The landscape designer concluded there would be critical problems with implementation due to additional costs required for properly planting the landscaping and the need for irrigation in order to maintain these improvements.

Objective 11.5 states:

Identify key economic assets which provide employment in the Southern Strategy area and, by 2002, develop programs or actions to help assure their continued viability as a part of the area's economic base.

The 2001 report inventoried and mapped the economic assets. In 2002, this identification process was enhanced by mapping vacant parcels over five acres in size, accompanied by information regarding these parcels that could be used to help market them, and thereby to promote development in the SSA. The *Southside Economic Development Plan* also identified action steps to enhance the small business community.

Economic Development and Infrastructure Conclusions

- The lack of transportation capacity is an impediment to additional economic development in the SSA. Four portions of Capital Circle within the SSA have ongoing improvements to increase capacity from two to four or six lanes.
- There are limited sizeable properties that are vacant in the SSA. In 2006, of the 1,800 vacant parcels within the SSA, only around 300 of those parcels were larger than one acre and fewer than twenty of those were 25 acres or larger. With limited ability to subdivide the remaining acreage, future development will likely focus more on redevelopment. The time and cost associated with land acquisition, assembly, and site preparation can be the largest barriers to redevelopment and the marketing of housing in a diverse price range.
- The entire SSA could potentially be served with central water and sewer. In the unserved areas outside the City limits, property owners generally either do not want or are unable to pay for the service.
- There are at least twenty business assistance or business incentive programs available in the SSA. The most favorable business incentive programs are demonstrably linked to quality jobs and advancement opportunities; encouraging recipient companies to fill a certain percentage of new jobs with local people; linking incentives to company investments in technology and human resource development; encouraging companies to offer health care insurance for employees; insisting that strong environmental management and compliance records be kept; targeting companies important to key industry clusters, and analyzing the costs and benefits of all incentives packages to ensure the best decision possible.
- About one-third of the households in Leon County that do not own automobiles are found within the SSA (see Table 1 in Section III), yet there are areas of the SSA not served by transit. Also, there are several community priority projects in the Cost Feasible Plan of the *Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan*, but they are not funded. It is important to encourage transportation priorities for the SSA proportionate to the demand by which the adult public uses those methods to get to work or school. Since the typical public transit commuter travels a shorter distance but spends more time commuting than the average driver, effective transportation strategies for this area are a key to increased mobility and prosperity.
- In 2006, the three major commercial uses in the SSA (office, retail, warehouse) had a combined FAR of 0.12. Objective 11.3 calls for new non-residential development to average at least 10,000 square feet per gross acre, yielding an average floor area ratio (FAR) of at least 0.23. Unless the commercial real estate market in the SSA is tight for a prolonged period, it may be impractical to expect that new non-residential development have twice the intensity of existing non-residential development.
- It can be difficult for entrepreneurs to start new businesses that create jobs when they must pay for costly impact studies and regulatory requirements. Increased taxes that adversely affect costs per employee create an environment that hinders job creation. The City and County have adopted the Targeted Business Pilot Program, which reimburses certain businesses based on criteria related to job

creation and salaries. This program is not exclusively for the SSA, but it places extra emphasis on locating in the SSA.

- In order to truly “encourage quality land development and redevelopment” in the Southern Strategy Area, it is imperative for this effort to be genuine and homegrown. Otherwise, implementation will yield artificial or fleeting results. Transferring money from one level or form of government into the area creates no wealth and can at best only “serve as a catalyst for private sector investment in the area” and at worst may give only a superficial and momentary appearance of recovery.
- Although the objectives and policies of the Southern Strategy generally deal with improving the long-term marketability of housing and commerce in the vicinity, the tactical linkage between some of the remedial measures and the overall goal may not be viable. Certain policies that call for more current expenditures (11.1.1, 11.3.5, 11.3.6), increased regulatory constraints or counter-regulatory favoritism (11.1.1, 11.2.2, 11.2.4, 11.3.2, 11.3.3, 11.3.8), and policies that expect the market to operate unprofitably or against individuals’ preferences (11.1.1, 11.1.2, 11.2.2) may fail to engender the long-term regional marketability of housing and commerce. In order to “attain an income mix in the Southern Strategy Area...comparable to the remainder of the urbanized County” the most cost-effective and least intrusive option is to facilitate an environment conducive to steady personal income growth and thrift. This direction requires the least amount of policy formation and is most compatible with individuals’ choices.

C. HOUSING AND SCHOOLS

The Comprehensive Plan policies focus a great deal of attention on housing in the SSA. Tables 11 and 12 show housing characteristics for the area:

Table 11: Housing within the SSA, 2000

2000 Housing Characteristics	Southern Strategy Area (SSA)	Tallahassee	Leon County	SSA as percent of Leon County
Number of Units	13,478	68,417	103,974	13%
Percent constructed since 1980	33%	48%	55%	8%
Homeowner occupancy rate	41%	43%	57%	9%
Renter occupancy rate	59%	56%	43%	16%
Vacancy rate	14%	8%	7%	25%

In 2003, the value of developed residential property in the SSA amounted to \$42.61/SF, only 68% as high as the County’s overall value of \$62.86/SF. By 2007, this ratio had fallen to 52%, when the SSA developed residential property value amounted to \$51.31/SF and the County’s overall value was \$98.89/SF. Similarly, in 2003 the average market value of owner-occupied units in the SSA was 50% as high as the County’s overall average market value, but by 2007 the SSA average market value was only 36% as high as the overall County value. The variability in the market value of owner-occupied residences in the SSA increased during 2003–07, while it fell for the County

during that time. This means that the variation in prices for owner-occupied units in the SSA has become slightly wider since 2003, while it has slightly narrowed for the whole county.

Table 12: Housing value in the SSA, 2003 & 2007

Housing value and variability	Southern Strategy Area (SSA)		Tallahassee		Leon County		SSA as percent of Leon County	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
Developed residential property value (\$ per bldg. sq ft)	\$42.61	\$51.31	\$58.34	\$99.43	\$62.86	\$98.89	68%	52%
Average market value of owner-occupied unit*	\$58,810	\$65,188	\$113,827	\$174,703	\$117,679	\$179,234	50%	36%
Relative variability in market value among owner-occupied units* (CV)†	50.2%	51.9%	57.8%	58.9%	68.4%	65.7%	NA	NA

*Single-family detached, mobile home, townhouse, or condominium.

† CV measures the degree to which one data set varies from another. The larger the percentage, the greater the variability of the data.

Sources: 2000 Census, 2003 and 2007 Leon County Property Appraiser

As shown above, owner-occupied units within the SSA have a much lower average value per square foot than the remainder of Leon County, and an average market value only half as expensive as Leon County in general. In 2000, the SSA had accounted for 16% of all housing units in Leon County. By 2006, due to development elsewhere in the County, its share had dropped to 12%. During 2000–06, the total number of housing units in Leon County increased by about 16%, while the number of units within the SSA increased by 12% during that time. Only 10% of all single-family detached homes in Leon County are located in the SSA. The SSA also has 6% of Leon County’s townhouses and condominiums, 16% of multi-family units, 16% of manufactured homes, and 26% of the County’s units in manufactured home parks. The area also has slightly more renters than Tallahassee but a much higher percentage than Leon County. In 2000, there was also a vacancy rate of 14% for the SSA, double the rate for Leon County.

Table 13: Residential density in the SSA, 2003 & 2007

Residential type	Density (DU/acre)		Proportion of residential units	
	2003	2007	2003	2007
Single family detached	2.9	3.1	42.1%	43.9%
Multi-family	16.8	15.5	32.2%	31.4%
Mobile/manufactured home	2.3	2.4	8.3%	8.4%
Mobile home park	4.3	3.9	8.2%	6.4%
Duplex, Triplex, and Quad	8.5	9.0	6.0%	6.0%
Townhouse and Condominium	15.4	16.5	3.0%	3.8%
<i>Total Residential in SSA*</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

*Includes <0.2% other types of residential units (religious, custodian, etc.).

Source: Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department

Students use a sizable portion of our community's available housing. According to the 2000 Census, 21% of Leon County's population consisted of college students. The combined enrollment of Florida State, Florida A&M, and Tallahassee Community College was 66,030 students in 2006, up 1.1% from 2005. Although FSU's planned enrollment annual growth rate for the 2007/08 to 2012/13 timeframe is 1–2%, fall enrollment increased by nearly 3,000 students from 2003 to 2006, or around 2½% per year. FAMU's fall enrollment decreased by around 1,100 students from 2003 to 2006, or about -3% per year.

Students apparently are choosing to live in single-family homes and duplexes scattered across the community. The call for more residential units in the SSA is partially attributable to the increased demand for student housing outside the immediate area of the two universities and the community college. Allowing a higher density land use category to be applied in a broader area would help the university area better accommodate the growing student population by encouraging nearby redevelopment and development. A 2004 Comprehensive Plan amendment expanded the area in which the University Transition land use category can be applied, about half of which lies within the northernmost portion of the SSA.

About 46% of the SSA's acreage was affected by the Comprehensive Plan reform effort implemented during the 2006-1 amendment cycle. Over 5,100 acres of property in the SSA were redesignated from Mixed Use to some other category. However, 90% of this amount (4,600 acres) went to either the Suburban or Urban Residential 2 categories, resulting in no net change in maximum prospective density. Some 190 acres went out of Mixed Use into Residential Preservation in the SSA, resulting in a net decrease in maximum density for those areas. However, the change of 253 acres from Mixed Use to University Transition resulted in an overall net increase in maximum prospective density in the SSA, yielding a net increase of 3,700 potential units for the SSA due to Comprehensive Plan reform. There have also been three separate Comprehensive Plan map amendments approved in the SSA since 2003 to lower maximum prospective density by going into the Residential Preservation category. However, these amendments were initiated to reflect established single-family neighborhood development in Meridian Park, Crawfordville Trace, and Oak Ridge South.

Housing choices can be very closely connected with public school quality. Neighborhood schools are often a primary consideration for all but the youngest and oldest homebuyers and renters. Table 14 shows basic information on schools in the SSA. With the merger of Bond and Wesson and closing of Brevard, there are now only eight public schools in the SSA (*see Figure 6*). In 2007, Nims Middle was an "F" (or failing) school by current FCAT standards; only Sabal Palm Elementary and Fairview Middle had a grade higher than "C." Moreover, Brevard, Oak Ridge, and Sabal Palm had the highest regular expenditures per pupil in 2005/06 among elementary schools in Leon County; Nims, Belle Vue, and Fairview had the highest regular per pupil expenditures among middle schools.

Table 14: Public schools in the SSA

School	Enrollment		Capacity		Capacity used		Subsidized lunch		School grade*	
	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	2004	2007
Elementary										
Bond**	296	647	562	784	53%	83%	94%	89%	B	D
Brevard†	461	—	760	—	61%	—	90%	—	C	—
Oak Ridge	564	483	811	677	70%	73%	90%	86%	C	C
Pineview	517	574	743	667	70%	86%	82%	80%	A	C
Sabal Palm	667	815	770	704	87%	99%	88%	90%	C	B
Wesson**	278	—	539	—	52%	—	97%	—	C	—
Middle										
Belle Vue	606	570	792	731	77%	78%	75%	76%	C	D
Fairview	912	796	865	939	105%	93%	53%	51%	B	B
Nims	566	382	967	841	58%	41%	79%	79%	C	F
High										
Rickards	1,318	1,204	1,808	1,777	73%	70%	41%	43%	C	C
All schools										
SSA	6,354	5,360	8,911	7,331	71%	73%	70%	65%	—	—

*The School Grade "A" indicates that the school is meeting higher performing criteria in reading, writing and math for current year. The School Grade "C" indicates that the school is meeting minimum higher performing criteria in reading, writing, and math for current year.

**Bond and Wesson combined at a new facility in 2006 on the site of the former Bond Elementary.

†Brevard closed after 05/06, its attendance zone was absorbed into Sabal Palm, Pineview, and Riley.

Sources: Leon County Schools, Florida Department of Education

The table indicates capacity is available in the schools. Only two of the schools in the SSA used more than 87% of capacity in 2006/07, which was the overall countywide capacity usage for Leon County schools that year. It also shows that, with the exception of Rickards High School, more than half the students in each of these schools get subsidized lunches, which is an indicator of poverty.

Current Status of the Comprehensive Plan Requirements

Objective 11.1 states:

In conjunction with the efforts to redirect development and focus population growth toward the southern part of the Tallahassee urban area, a wide range of housing opportunities, both in terms of type and price, will be directed toward the Southern Strategy Area. Components of this effort will be phased.

Related policies call for this to be done by maintaining the supply of affordable housing, improving the quality of the existing housing stock, increasing home ownership opportunities, and developing higher end housing lacking in this area.

There are at least ten programs the City and County implement in the SSA and throughout the rest of the community designed to fill these housing needs. Waivers of water and sewer impact fees were implemented for the cost of connection to City water and sewer facilities for eligible low and moderate-income citizens. For each residential

unit receiving an exemption, the City pays into the appropriate sewer and water systems fund, road impact fee fund, and the water and sewer tap fee fund the amount waived, from a general fund account set up for the purpose. This account is renewed annually in the amount of \$500,000 (pursuant to Part II, Code of Ordinances, Chapter 25–Utilities, Article V-1, Systems Charges).

The City’s Water Utility has developed a program to help income-eligible homeowners within the City Limits, who have City sewer available but are still using private septic tanks, to connect to the City sewer system. An estimated 500 homes throughout the City may be in this situation, and while this program is citywide, it will address this public health issue in the SSA. Eligible residents can benefit from the Water and Sewer Fee Waiver program, and will get Community Development Block Grant money for the cost of running the sewer line to the home and demolishing the septic tank on the property. Where appropriate, this program will also connect a home to the City water system.

The Bethel Community Development Corporation (CDC) has also worked extensively in the SSA, developing new, affordable infill housing in the Bond Community and in the Providence neighborhood. The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services has given money to the Tallahassee Chapter of Habitat for Humanity for the acquisition of property on which to build homes for very low-income homebuyers participating in their sweat equity program. Habitat has recently developed small subdivisions on Yuma Road and adjacent to Roberts Avenue within the SSA. Habitat continues to look for sites within the area suitable for construction of several homes in close proximity.

Policy 11.1.2 states:

Long term housing policy shall focus on increasing the amount of moderate and upper income housing in the area as a proportion of total housing stock. Strategies shall include, but need not be limited to, improving public infrastructure, improving public safety, and encouraging increased employment opportunities in the Southern Strategy Area.

Between 2003 and 2007, the ratio of the overall value (on a \$/SF basis) of developed residential property in the SSA to the overall County value declined from 68% to 52%. Similarly, in 2003 the average market value of owner-occupied units in the SSA went from 50% as high as the County’s overall average market value in 2003 to just 36% in 2007. These measurements indicate that housing values in the SSA apparently have not reflected “an increase of moderate and upper income housing.” However, the variability in the value of owner-occupied residences in the SSA increased during 2003–07, while it fell countywide during that time. This means that the variation in values for owner-occupied units in the SSA has become slightly wider since 2003, while it has slightly narrowed for the whole county. Increased price variability within the SSA means greater appeal to a broader market of potential buyers. Although there may not have been a significant increase in “the amount of moderate and upper income housing” since 2003, the overall market value of owner-occupied housing in the SSA has broadened,

supporting Objective 11.1 and its call for “ a wide range of housing opportunities, both in terms of type and price.

Policy 11.3.7 states:

The City and the County will work with the Leon County School Board to adopt a Southern Strategy policy statement for public schools by the year 2000. This policy statement will be based on the identification of problems and opportunities associated with the provision of public schools in the Southern Strategy Area, and will include a work plan to establish and maintain public schools as a positive force in assisting the City, the County, and citizens at large in achieving the long-term community health of the Southern Strategy Area.

In 2005, State legislation passed mandating concurrency requirements for public schools. The concurrency requirement means that the local government must have adequate school facilities in place or under actual construction within three years of approving development generating new students. By 2008, each local government must adopt a public school facilities element and an updated interlocal agreement to implement school concurrency. If adequate school capacity is not available, a developer may enter into a binding agreement with the local government to commit to pay for mitigation proportionate to the demand for public school facilities created by the development. Since public schools in the SSA are generally under capacity, prospective development in the SSA would not be adversely influenced by such exactions.

In August 2006, the City, County, and School Board adopted the Public School Concurrency and Facility Planning Interlocal Agreement as a required precursor to the mandatory Public School Facilities Element. The Interlocal Agreement establishes: 1) a Coordinating Committee as the oversight body for implementation of school concurrency; 2) a process for City and County participation in the School District’s educational plant survey, and incorporation of the 5-year district facilities plan into the comprehensive plan; 3) a process for City and County involvement in the process of school siting, potential school closures, and significant renovations and expansions of school facilities; and 4) the school concurrency service areas and level of service standards for school concurrency throughout the District.

Under the 2006 interlocal agreement, the Commissions and School Board are required to conduct an annual joint meeting. The agreement specifies the processes for school siting coordination between the City, County, and School Board. The practical effect of the adopted interlocal agreement and the proposed Public School Facilities Element is the sharing of policy statements affecting public school development by the School Board and its affected local governments. As a result, the City and County will become more involved in School Board decisions concerning the planning, funding, location, and construction of schools and in the allocation of school capacity. The School Board will have more input, and to some extent, control over growth and development location and allocations.

Housing and Schools Conclusions

- Combined projections from Florida State, Florida A&M, and Tallahassee Community College indicate an additional 7,100 students by 2010, with some 4,700 projected to need off-campus housing. Students apparently are choosing to live in single-family homes and duplexes scattered across the community. However, the change of 253 acres from Mixed Use to University Transition due to Comprehensive Plan reform in 2006 resulted in an overall net increase in maximum prospective density in the SSA. The Student Affairs Advisory Committee has recommended tasks needed in the Lake Bradford, South Monroe, and West Pensacola sector planning areas encouraging higher concentrations of student population proximate to one or more campus.
- Older residential areas can have difficulties when attempting to develop housing. Newer communities generally offer larger lots, better infrastructure, and higher quality services. However, central city and inner ring suburban areas can capitalize on their assets by renovating existing structures to housing demands. Adaptive reuse can capitalize on unique architecture and the desire to recapture the impression of community that may appear in close-knit neighborhoods. Around ten City and County programs can help in the purchase, construction, rehabilitation, or emergency repair of housing. Because a great deal of the substandard housing is in the SSA, a large portion of the money for these programs is spent in the SSA. All of the money for housing assistance in both the City and unincorporated area comes from the State or Federal government, except the Affordable Housing Trust Fund that uses City money to give low interest loans for affordable housing projects.
- The variation in market prices for owner-occupied units in the SSA has become slightly wider since 2003, while it has slightly narrowed for the whole county. Increased price variability within the SSA means greater appeal to a broader market of potential buyers. The high concentration of dependent children and low proportion of persons within the peak earning years (age 45-65) has been a demographic impediment for attracting a broader range of housing available to purchase in the SSA.
- Public schools in the SSA generally have capacity available, but are costlier to operate on a basis of money spent per student. The recent state mandate for school concurrency indirectly makes new development less expensive for areas that have available capacity.
- Obstacles to construction of new housing can shut off the filtering process (where construction of one new unit typically resulted in about 2½ moves among existing units). Rather than causing rents and values to rise through more regulation or counter-regulation, removing obstacles and increasing production would help flatten pricing.

D. ENVIRONMENT

The Conservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes protection requirements for environmentally sensitive areas in the Southern Strategy as well as the

rest of the community. The information included below is focused on the location of conservation and preservation areas, the safety of the ground water, surface water quality, and the effect of stormwater.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The major environmentally sensitive areas in the SSA are wetlands and 100-year floodplains (mainly Black Swamp and Gum Swamp, as well as the 100 year floodplains associated with the Bradford Brook Chain of Lakes and Campbell Pond); Bent Golden Aster and gopher tortoise habitat; and native forest areas associated with longleaf pine and wiregrass communities. There are also closed basins and may be areas prone to karst features (sink holes). Most of the environmentally sensitive areas are located south of Orange Avenue, mainly because these areas have not developed as quickly as other portions of the SSA. A generalized map (*see Figure 7*) showing the locations of the conservation and preservation areas is attached. Conservation and preservation areas are the specific environmentally sensitive areas listed in the Comprehensive Plan as environmental areas to remain unchanged. The adopted *Tallahassee-Leon County Greenways Master Plan* provides general locations of other areas of environmental significance.

The Blueprint 2000 initiative directs that revenues be spent for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Most money is spent for passive stormwater storage, habitat protection, and greenway connections. Projects in the SSA include the Black Swamp acquisition, and greenways enhancements along the western and central drainage ditches. In 2004, some 17 acres near the Kissimmee St./Mill St. intersection were acquired for stormwater storage and greenway connection. The City of Tallahassee applied for and received funding in 2005 to help purchase 105 acres of environmentally sensitive, flood-prone land north of Lake Bradford. However, this project did not succeed because City staff was unable to reach agreeable terms with the property owners. The City also applied for and received funding in 2006 to help purchase 26.4 acres of environmentally sensitive, flood-prone land along both sides of North Ridge Road south of Springsax Road. This acquisition project is ongoing.

Ground Water Quality

Tallahassee and Leon County are situated over one of the largest and cleanest sources of groundwater in the world—the Floridan Aquifer. The City of Tallahassee’s Water Quality Division constantly monitors the water in the aquifer, the source of our drinking water, watching for potential contamination. To further protect the water supply, the City and County enforce an aquifer protection program to guard against potential sources of groundwater contamination that could originate in our area. The City also enforces a backflow prevention program which helps prevent accidental contamination at the City’s water wells. To monitor the quality of the community’s water, the City operates and maintains its own water quality-testing laboratory, which performs daily analysis of drinking water quality. More than 570 water samples are tested each month. The biggest

threats to contamination have been past disposal practices, many of which have been changed or are monitored under present disposal rules.

The Leon County Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (LAVA) project was developed in 2007 by Advanced GeoSpatial, Inc. The primary purpose of this project is to provide a science-based, water-resource management tool to help minimize adverse effects on groundwater quality, including focused protection of sensitive areas such as spring sheds and groundwater recharge zones. The consultant's product consists of a probability map displaying zones of relative aquifer vulnerability across the Leon County study area. The LAVA model will be useful for the SSA, which has many flood-prone and karst-sensitive areas.

Surface Water Quality

Both the City and County maintain a surface water quality-testing program that routinely samples for water quality in area lakes. The five major water bodies in the SSA, collectively covering some 330 acres, are tested under the City's program: Campbell Pond in the eastern part of the SSA; and in the western portion, Lake Cascade, Lake Hiawatha, Lake Bradford, and Grassy Lake, comprising the Bradford Brook Chain of Lakes. The County also has a comprehensive water quality-testing program, but to avoid duplication of the existing City program, testing is done in lakes in other parts of the County. The Bradford Brook Chain of Lakes consists of "black water lakes" that have low oxygen levels, and are very susceptible to stress. Human activities in the drainage basins (development, land clearing, etc.) tend to affect these lakes more than other lakes that might be better able to assimilate external influences. Increased development will need to address carefully any potential effects on these water bodies if the present water quality is to be maintained.

Since 1990, the City's Stormwater Division has biennially prepared a water quality and biology assessment that includes these water bodies, most recently in 2005. During 2001–2004, the Trophic State Index (TSI) trend for Lake Bradford and Lake Cascade was generally stable, and showed improvement for Lake Hiawatha and Campbell Pond. Although heavily used by local residents for fishing, Campbell Pond has no perennial inflow or outflow; the inflow comes from the surrounding drainage basin.

Stormwater

Since 1999, there have been several Comprehensive Plan map amendments to increase open space acreage in the SSA for stormwater detention and attenuation (e.g., Alberto Recovery). The City's Stormwater Management Division has collected information on 204 structures flooding within the SSA. Of these, 136 (67%) were within mapped 100-Year Flood Hazard Areas. The City has addressed about 30% of these problems already through its Stormwater Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and another 30% are being addressed by ongoing Capital Improvement Program projects.

Many structures were added to the flooding list following the extraordinary rains experienced in the summer of 2001. During Tropical Storm Allison, more rain fell in 24 hours than in any storm that has occurred in Leon County in a period of record dating back to 1885. In some areas of town, rainfall exceeded the 100-year event volume. Of the 79 structures in the SSA not addressed with a CIP project, 71% flooded during this rare event. The City's Public Works Department has remarked that most of the unaddressed problems are not chronic flooding problems, and may be flooding that occurs so infrequently that it would be uneconomic to pay for additional level of service for community flood protection. Since 2006, the City's Public Works Department has built a stormwater pond on approximately half of a 9.2 acre greenway acquisition on Mills Street adjacent to the St. Marks Trail. This pond is designed to capture runoff from the new school in the Bond neighborhood, as well as infrastructure improvements in this area.

Due to budget constraints, as one considers flooding problems it is important to keep in mind the relationship between storm severity, frequency, and affordability. The cost of managing severe rainfall is inversely proportional to the probability of occurrence. The more improbable an occurrence becomes, the less financially feasible it becomes for a community to provide services to manage it. Nevertheless, the flooding of homes and businesses is a devastating event for those affected by it. Hence, if there are reasonable ways to address even non-routine flooding, they are considered. However, it is possible the majority of the problems not addressed may rank on a lower funding priority than other more severe and more frequent problems in the community.

The County Public Works Department has stated that stormwater problems in the unincorporated area are generally limited in scope due to the topography, but opportunities to address concerns are pursued as they arise. The construction of the Lake Henrietta treatment facility improved the capacity available for retrofit in the unincorporated area.

Parks and Recreation

The SSA has 13 public parks with a combined area of 420 acres (*see Figure 6*). The SSA parks level of service amounts to nearly 15 acres per 1,000 population, or three times the countywide adopted level of service of 5 acres per 1,000 population.

The sales tax extension gave \$5 million for the new recreation center and pool at Jack L. McLean Jr. Park, representing a substantial amenity for south side residents. The City's Parks and Recreation Department has made significant improvements within the last two years to the Silver Lake City Park adjacent to North Ridge Road south of Springsax Road, including a parking area, landscaping, a floating fish pier, and other related facilities (e.g., picnic benches, trash cans, etc.). This department is also currently funding recreational improvements to the Lake Elberta City Park east of Lake Bradford Road and south of Gaines Street. These improvements will include a recreational trail around the stormwater lake, a parking area, and other related facilities (e.g., picnic benches, trash cans, etc.). Blueprint 2000, using a Florida Communities Trust grant, in 2007 acquired a

three-acre parcel on the northwest corner of Lake Bradford and Orange Avenue as part of the Capital Cascade Greenway project. This is part of a larger project to acquire several properties for this greenway project.

Current Status of the Comprehensive Plan Requirements

Policy 11.2.5 states:

Concurrent with promoting economic growth in the Southern Strategy Area (SSA), the local government will continue to promote actions leading to restoration and maintenance of surface water quality in the SSA lakes through the implementation of ongoing water quality studies as mandated by Conservation Policy 2.1.7. These studies will identify pollution problems and formulate a plan for resolving these issues. It is not the intent of local government to promote development or redevelopment of the SSA at the expense of the natural environment or water quality of this area.

The City maintains two monitoring stations on the Bradford Chain of Lakes. Trophic State Index (TSI) consistently remains approximately 40 from year to year (the Florida Department of Environmental Protection classifies a TSI under 59 as “Good”). Turbidity and conductivity are low. Both these readings are indicators of water clarity and the amount of suspended particulate matter, often pollutants, in the water. The Lake Bradford Sector Plan includes recommendations to help preserve the Bradford Chain of Lakes as a community amenity.

Environmental Conclusions

- Many of the lakes in the SSA are “black water lakes” and by their nature cannot assimilate impacts as readily as other types of lake systems.
- Surface water quality in the SSA remains good, mainly because of limited development in the drainage basins.
- Most of chronic flooding problems have been addressed or will be addressed.
- Recent unusual storm occurrences are low frequency floods. The cost of managing severe rainfall is inversely proportional to the probability of occurrence. The more improbable an occurrence becomes, the less financially feasible it becomes for a community to provide services to manage it.
- There have been several Comprehensive Plan map amendments since 1999 increasing open space acreage in the SSA for stormwater detention and attenuation.
- Since 1990, the City’s Stormwater Division has biennially prepared a water quality and biology assessment that includes SSA water bodies. Major expenditure of capital funds should be coordinated with such studies regarding water quality problems and potential mitigation methods.