



Town of Abbeville, Mississippi

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# Comprehensive Plan

## May 14, 2015

Adopted by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen on July 2, 2015

Prepared by:



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **Introduction**

### ***Purpose of the Plan***

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to serve as a policy guide for the orderly physical and economic development for Abbeville. The plan brings together information to enable the user to make more informed decisions regarding the future of the community. The future is considered to be a 20 to 25 year horizon.

Generally, a comprehensive plan is a compilation of data that describes and supports policies affecting the way a community will develop and function in the future. The Town of Abbeville, Mississippi recognizes that a comprehensive plan is a valuable asset in effectively competing with other entities in the quest to achieve a higher quality of life for the community.

### ***How to use this Plan***

#### **Overview**

This comprehensive plan is a tool to assist with public policy and decision making. It is important to understand that this plan is only a policy statement and does not have the force of law. Because it is not law, the Town of Abbeville may deviate from the provisions of the plan without any certain penalty. Doing so without good reason is not advisable, however, from the standpoint of achieving consistent application of this plan.

Comprehensive planning is not a fortune telling exercise, but is a best estimate of what the future may hold for a community. Comprehensive planning does not attempt to replace market forces of supply, demand, and price but to shape and channel those forces by establishing certain rules for development and conservation. A comprehensive plan should contain policies that foster growth that enhance the community, rather than “no growth” policies. For example, haphazard growth is unsightly and wasteful of space and public facilities, which results in higher public costs and property tax increases.

Regulations should be consistent with a plan’s policies, goals and objectives, the land use plan map and the other plan elements. Even though there is generally not an exact identity between the land use plan map and the zoning map, the two should mirror each other as closely as possible. The goals and objectives element provides written, consistent policies addressing how the community should develop. The plan enables the legislative body to make decisions on development matters that arise, using a unified set of general, long-range policies.

#### **Implementation Devices**

There are three primary devices commonly used to implement comprehensive plans: a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and a capital improvement program. Other devices include official maps and specific development plans.

These devices, as well as any comprehensive plan, should be reviewed periodically to account for changes that may have occurred in the community.

## Existing and Future Conditions

### *Where Abbeville is now and how will it grow?*

#### Population

A community's population and change in population over time is one of the most basic indicators of many community aspects. Changes in population over time broadly indicate quality of life issues for a community, among other things. Broad interpretations of declining population include a lack of employment opportunities, struggling economy, less than desirable school system, lack of services and quality of life issues. Increasing population characteristics indicate just the opposite. For Abbeville, though, population has remained virtually flat over time, with an increase of just 20 persons since 1990. However, the United States Census Bureau estimates that Abbeville has grown by an additional 22 persons from 2010 to 2013.

**Table 1 – Population Comparison 2000 to 2010**

<b>Total Population</b>						
	<u>2000</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>%</u>
White	397	93.9%	378	90.2%	-19	-4.8%
Black	24	5.7%	37	8.8%	13	54.2%
Other	<u>2</u>	0.5%	<u>4</u>	1.0%	<u>2</u>	100.0%
Total	423		419		-4	-0.9%
<b>Voting Age Population</b>						
	<u>2000</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
White	315	93.2%	272	89.2%	-43	-13.7%
Black	21	6.2%	32	10.5%	11	52.4%
Other	<u>2</u>	0.6%	<u>1</u>	0.3%	<u>-1</u>	-50.0%
Total	338		305		-33	-9.8%

Source: 2000 & 2010 PL 94-171 Summary File Mississippi

Table 1 indicates select racial and age composition for the Town of Abbeville. Abbeville is a predominately white community with a small decline in total population. Although the sheer numbers are small, the town has seen a decrease in its number of white residents and an increase in black residents.

#### **Comparison to the Surrounding Area**

From the period of 1990 to 2010, Abbeville has experienced only a very minor population increase of 5%. This is in contrast to the degree of population growth experienced by the remainder of Lafayette County. Oxford indicates the greatest proportion of change over the period, but some of that population increase is

attributable to annexation. Table 2 shows the increases in population as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Table 2 – Population Comparison to the Surrounding Area**

	1990 <sup>1</sup>	2000 <sup>2</sup>	2010 <sup>3</sup>	% Chg. 90-10
Lafayette County	31,826	38,744	47,351	48.8%
Abbeville	399	423	419	5.0%
Oxford*	9,984	11,756	18,916	89.5%
Taylor	288	289	322	11.8%

\* Annexation has aided in Oxford's population increase.

1. 1990 CPH-2-26 - Mississippi

2. Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data - Table DP-1

3. 2010 Census Summary File 1 - Table DP-1

**Table 3 – Median Age for the Town of Abbeville and the State of Mississippi**

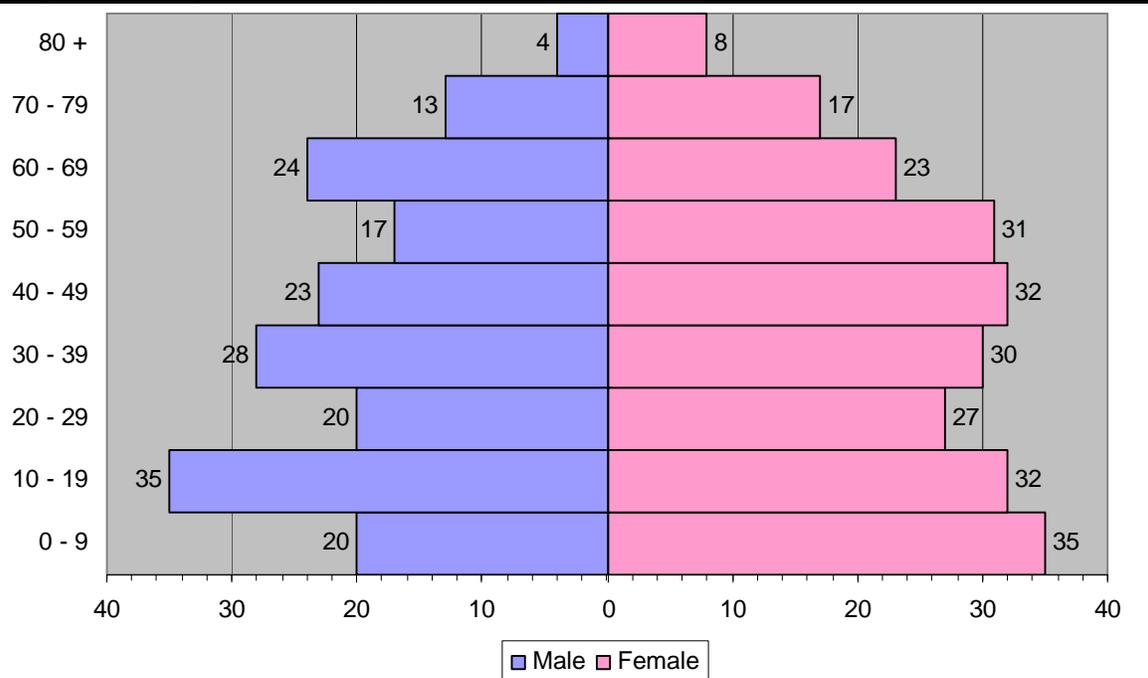
	Median Age	
	2000	2010
Town of Abbeville	37.5	37.7
State of Mississippi	33.8	36.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau for year noted.

A comparison of census data as shown in Table 3 indicates the population for Abbeville is slowing aging. The median age in Abbeville is older than that of the State as a whole. However, the state wide population is getting older at a faster rate than that of Abbeville.

Figure 1 (following page) illustrates the age distribution as found in the 2010 Census for Abbeville in what is called an age-sex pyramid. An area with a younger population will have the bars of the chart form more of a triangular or pyramidal shape. The shape of the current population's age groups is more rectangular which indicates an almost equal distribution in the age ranges of the population. The exception being the age groups in the 70 and above age ranges. This data also indicates that the 10 to 19 age group is the largest of the groups.

**Figure 1 – Age Groups by Sex**



Source: 2010 Census Summary File 1

The Town of Abbeville needs, as a long term goal, to increase the Town’s population. A community’s population equates into market opportunity for prospective businesses as well as labor force for prospective employers. Additionally, an aging population brings positive qualities to the community. For example, retirees are more likely to volunteer for community service, as they have time to do so.

**Housing**

Abbeville is experiencing an increase in housing units but not to the same degree as other areas of Lafayette County. For comparison purposes, Abbeville’s housing stock increased by 18.4% during the 1990 to 2010 period, while the housing stock in Lafayette County, Oxford and Taylor increased by approximately 82%, 138%, 34% respectively. Table 4 indicates the change in housing units over time as well as the tenure and occupancy changes over time for Abbeville.

**Table 4 – Housing Tenure and Occupancy for the Town of Abbeville**

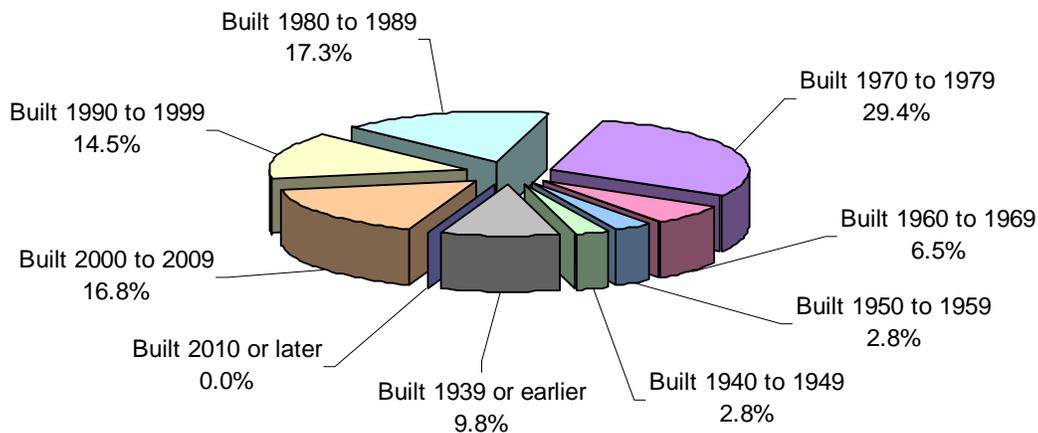
	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%
Housing Units	158		188		187	
Occupied	151	95.6%	172	91.5%	166	88.8%
Owner Occupied	130	82.3%	146	77.7%	121	64.7%
Renter Occupied	21	13.3%	26	13.8%	45	24.1%
Vacant	7		16		21	
Vacancy Rate	4.4%		8.5%		11.2%	

Source: Census 1990 CHP-1-26; Census 2000 and 2010 Summary File 1

It is apparent that vacancies are on the increase in Abbeville as measured over time. However, the 4.4% vacancy rate for 1990 is small compared to the statewide vacancy rate of 9.8% for the same period. Additionally, the housing tenure in Abbeville is transitioning toward an increase in renter occupied homes. The number of renter occupied homes in Abbeville has approximately doubled since 1990.

According to data from the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, a substantial portion of the housing in Abbeville is relatively new. The pie chart in Figure 2 indicates the age of housing within Abbeville as derived from the ACS data. While most of the town's housing was constructed after the 1960's, the Town has a substantial portion of housing (almost ½) that is nearly 40 years old or older. This indicates a need for a close watch on the condition of housing, as older houses require a higher level of maintenance. A lack of maintenance can quickly lead to a home becoming an eyesore as well as unsafe (dilapidated).

**Figure 2 – Year Structure Built**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

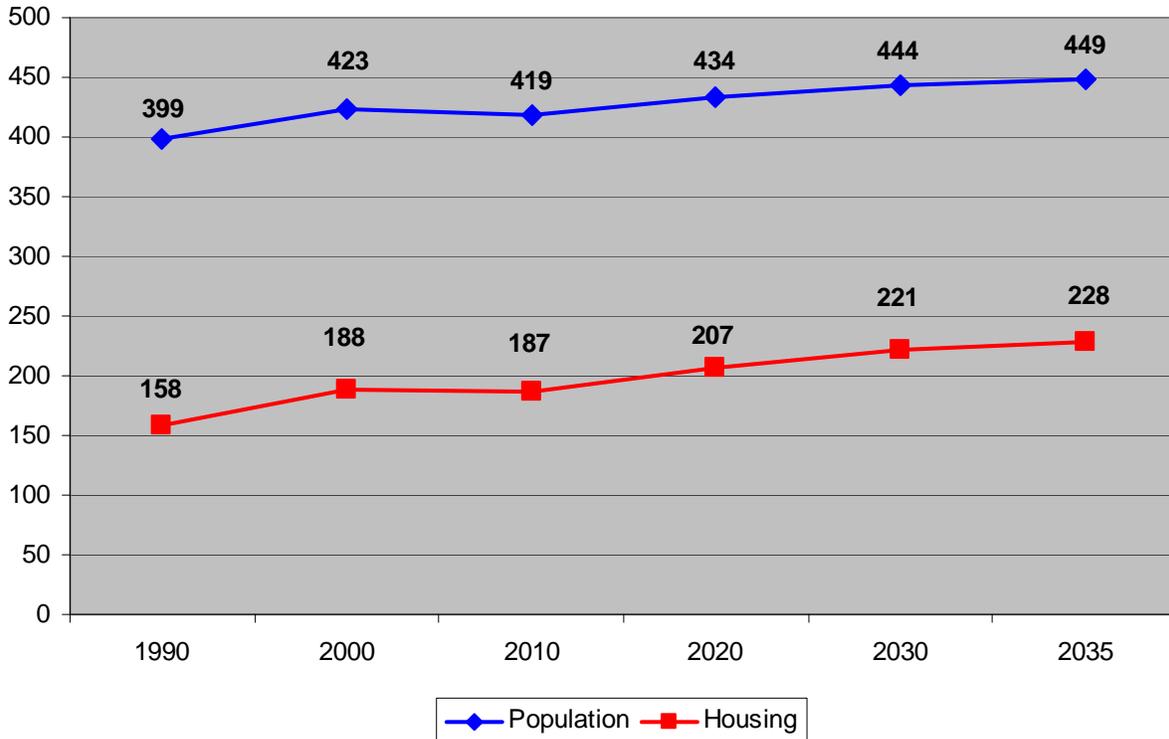
## Population and Housing Projections

A multitude of techniques exist to estimate the future population of an area. For Abbeville, the historic data reaching back to 1990 is utilized to compute a linear extrapolation to the year 2035. In essence, the projection assumes the future looks the same as the past regarding the growth trend.

The chart in Figure 3 indicates the results of a linear extrapolation of the Town's population and housing to the year 2035. The results indicate that based on the historical trends (reaching back to 1990) population and housing units for the Town will continue to increase at a modest rate.

Figure 3 below indicates growth in both population and housing, with housing growing at a greater rate than population. This disparity is the result of declining household size, a trend that is not unique to Abbeville.

**Figure 3 – Population and Housing Projections**



Source: 1990 – 2010 U.S. Census Bureau; Projections by Bridge & Watson, Inc.

Over the projection period, Abbeville is expected to increase by 41 housing units and 30 persons. It should be abundantly clear that with increases expected to be so modest, any change in circumstances could greatly impact the outcome of the projections. For example, the development of a centralized sewer system would have a significant impact on the future of Abbeville and bring about an entirely different demographic scenario for the Town.

One of the purposes for projecting population and housing demands for a community is to project the land use needs and determine the best course of action to accommodate the expected growth. For Abbeville, the growth is expected to be so modest (41 houses in 25 years) that land supply to accommodate development should not be at issue. Abbeville has ample room to grow within its current corporate limits, but this fact does not prevent the possibility of the town needing to undertake an annexation effort in the future to incorporate areas of future development.

### **Local Economics**

Economic data is reported by the Census Bureau for past decennial census periods and for various estimate time frames since the 2000 Census. Economic data is collected through the American Community Survey (ACS) program conducted by the Census Bureau, and is based on a time series of statistical estimates. For Abbeville, presumably due to its size, the ACS data contains a very wide margin of error. For example, the 2009-2013 dataset reports the median household income in Abbeville as \$37,404 with a margin of error of +/- \$21,136. Because of this and other very wide margins of error, the data is excluded from this plan to avoid any misinterpretation.

More reliable economic data, however, exists in the form of retail sales data as reported by the Mississippi Department of Revenue (MDR). Retail sales are reported to MDR and for those sales occurring within a municipality, 18.5% of the sales taxes is diverted (or paid) back to the municipality. Table 5 indicates the most recent five year trend in the data.

**Table 5 – Retail Sales History**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gross Retail Sales</i>	<i>Tax Diversion To Abbeville</i>	<i># of Taxpayers</i>
2010	\$2,187,940	\$34,596	7
2011	\$2,201,096	\$35,268	8
2012	\$6,353,052	\$83,227	9
2013	\$3,325,908	\$55,755	10
2014	\$3,467,201	\$42,447	11

*Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue Annual Reports for years noted.*

Sales tax diversions represent a significant source of revenue for Mississippi municipalities, and fortunately for Abbeville growth has occurred. The number of taxpayers is synonymous with the number of retail businesses, which has steadily increased over time. Recently, a restaurant located within the downtown area of Abbeville and it will add to the revenues realized by the town.

The sales and tax data for 2012 is nearly triple that of 2011, representing an anomaly in the data. Although the precise explanation is unknown, it is entirely possible (and not uncommon) that MDR made a payment to the town to correct a prior mistake.

In addition to retail sales, the Town's tax base is also made up of taxable property (homes, businesses, inventory, utilities, etc.). As development occurs, the Town's tax base should increase thereby generating additional revenue. With increased revenue,

additional services can be provided or improvements made in furtherance of enhancing the quality of life in Abbeville.

### ***Existing Land Uses***

A land use survey for the Town of Abbeville was conducted in September 2014. The methodology for the survey is commonly referred to as a “windshield” survey, whereby visual observations regarding land uses are recorded on tax maps. For Abbeville, a digital parcel map was created using a Geographic Information System (GIS), and the land use observations for each parcel were coded for mapping purposes. GIS allows for more accurate and efficient analysis of the data.

The existing land uses within Abbeville are divided into the categories as illustrated on Map 1. A brief description of each category is as follows:

#### **Residential**

*Single Family Residential* – Indicated as yellow on the map and determined as a single residential living unit of conventional (on-site) construction, designed to house only one family.

*Mobile Home Residential* – Indicated as orange on the map and determined as a single residential living unit designed to house only one family and constructed or assembled off-site and transported to the site for placement.

#### **Commercial**

Indicated as red on the map, commercial establishments are considered to be those that are operated privately, for profit, and provide merchandise or services for retail trade. Examples include banks, grocery stores, barber shops, etc.

#### **Public/Semi-Public**

Indicated as green on the map, Public/Semi-Public uses are operated primarily for the purpose of providing a public service or delivering a public utility such as fire station, school, post office, or electric power sub station. This also includes non profit organizations such as churches and cemeteries.

#### **Vacant or Agricultural**

Indicated as white on the map, Vacant or Agricultural uses relate to the use of property, as opposed to the use of structures. It includes any property that is not in urban use. For example, an agricultural producer uses property to grow his crop, but agriculture is not considered an urban use for the purposes of this plan.

#### **Street Right-of-Way**

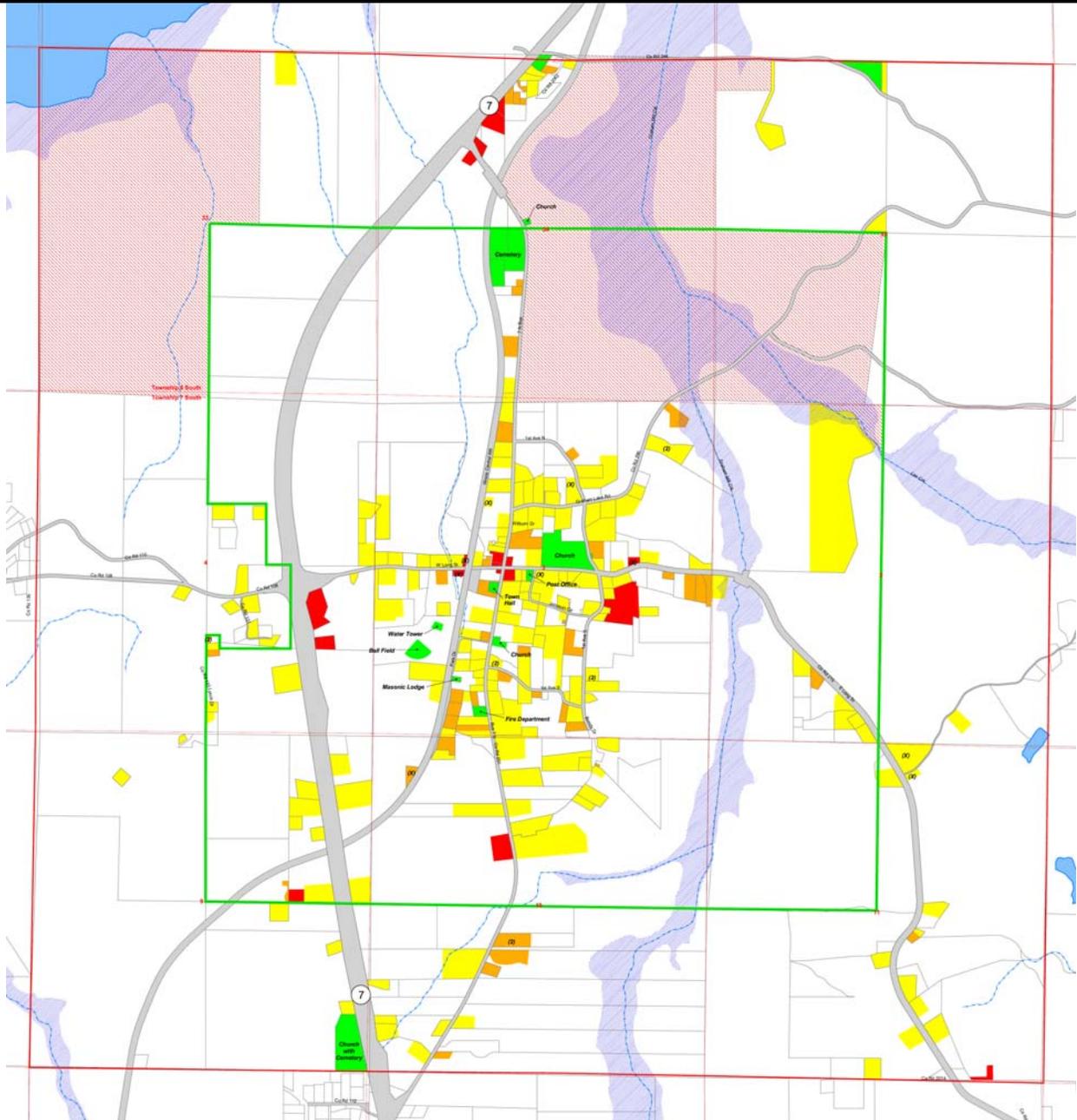
Street right-of-way is indicated in light gray on the map and is land set aside to account for those corridors necessary for transportation routes. Although in some instances there may be nothing visible on the ground, the property is set aside for a specific use.

**Preservation Area**

Indicated with a red diagonal hatch pattern, preservation area represents properties which are currently utilized for preservation purposes. This includes the Holly Springs National Forest property which is owned by the United States. While portions of the National Forrest property are allowed to develop from time to time, for the purpose of this plan it is considered to be permanently unavailable for development.

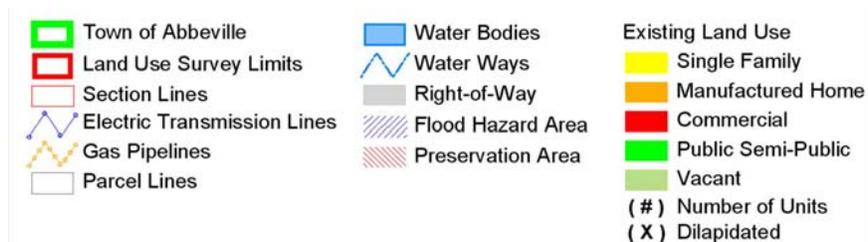
The amount of land in each of these categories is found in Table 6. Land use measurements for the specific categories are expressed in acres with a percentage of each categories composition of the town.

**Map 1 – Existing Land Uses in Abbeville**



MARIS (MSTM) data; Lafayette County Tax Assessor; Census Bureau 2010 TIGER Data; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Bridge & Watson Field Survey of Sept. 4-5, 2014

**Figure 4 – Existing Land Use Map Legend**



**Table 6 – Existing Land Use - Town of Abbeville, Mississippi**

Land Use Type	Acres	% Total	Dwelling Units
Total Area of Town Limits	2,531.0		
<u>Land Use</u>			
Residential Uses:	294.2	11.6%	176
<i>Single Family</i>	260.5	89%	141
<i>Mobile Home</i>	33.7	11%	35
Commercial	18.6	0.7%	
Public / Semi-Public	20.9	0.8%	
Forest Preserve (USA Property)	343.8	13.6%	
Right-of-Way	150.3	5.9%	
Total Developed	827.7	32.7%	
<u>Vacant Land</u>			
All Vacant Land	1,705.3	67.4%	
Constraints	591.0	23.4%	
<i>Flood Zone</i>	92.5		
<i>Wetlands*</i>	12.1		
<i>Severe Slopes (16% &amp; greater) **</i>	486.4		
Unconstrained	1,126.4	44.0%	

\* Computed as area outside of flood zone

\*\* Computed as area outside flood zone and wetlands

Source: Bridge & Watson, Inc. Land Use Survey September 4 & 5, 2014

The land use survey indicates several important facts about Abbeville. First, it indicates patterns of existing development. The existing land use patterns within the Town serves as a factor considered in developing the future land use plan (see *Map 2*), as those existing patterns will likely be continued where such continuation is logical.

Next the existing land use data indicates the amount of land within the town which is developed, vacant, and constrained with respect to future development. The significance of this data is with respect to the capacity to accommodate new development, or the projected development expected to occur within the town. As the data indicates, Abbeville contains 1,126.4 acres of vacant land which is free from identified constraints of designated flood zone, wetland areas, and severe slopes. These constraints are summarized as follows:

- **Designated flood zones** are areas that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has identified through the National Flood Insurance Program as lying within the 100 year floodplain. Designated flood zones require special measures to ensure a structure is free from the hazards of a flood event, usually increasing the cost of construction.
- **Wetland areas** are those areas indicated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory. This data indicates soils that have characteristics of protected wetlands, but a final determination must be made through an on-site evaluation. Wetland areas increase the cost of development due to permitting and mitigation processes.
- **Severe slopes** are those areas indicated by the United States Department of Agriculture as having a slope of 16% or greater. Steeply sloping lands require more grading for roadways and building lots, thus increasing the cost of development.

Other constraints very well may exist that are not easily measured. For instance, property may have a title cloud, no or poor access, or simply an owner unwilling to develop. A more complete discussion of development constraints and related mapping is contained in the Future Land Use chapter of this plan.

Another significant development constraint is the lack of centralized sewer in Abbeville. Without centralized sewer, each development site must be sufficiently sized to accommodate on site sewage disposal. At a minimum, this requires an acre of land and perhaps more depending on soil conditions and anticipated waste water volume. Soils throughout Abbeville have a poor capacity with respect to their ability to accommodate on site wastewater disposal, according to the United States Department of Agriculture soil survey data.

Although the 1,126.4 acres of vacant unconstrained land within Abbeville is more than sufficient to accommodate the projected growth, location matters with respect to marketability. In some instances, land may be available for development, but its location may not lend itself to development.

The land use patterns, vacant lands, and development constraints factor into the design of the future land use plan as discussed later within this plan.

## **Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

Goals are statements of the desires, vision, or aspirations for the community. As such, goals are not necessarily ever achieved and brought to an end. As broad statements, goals are to identify the purpose of an effort, and are not easily measured.

Objectives are statements that serve the purpose of narrowing the broadly stated goal into something more specific and measurable. Objectives are formulated to move toward achievement of the goal, and are more precise in terms of directing energies toward an action.

Policy statements then follow objectives. The stated policies serve as the basis for decision-making. Policies are very specific and are directed toward carrying out the objectives, which in turn are designed to achieve a certain goal.

In many cases, a goal, objective, or strategy may be categorized under one heading, but in fact that goal, objective, or strategy could appropriately fall under numerous headings. For instance, promoting a variety of housing types is not only a housing objective it is also a land use objective.

### ***Land Use Goals***

Goal: Provide for the orderly and logical spatial arrangement for development in the Town of Abbeville.

Objective: Avoid the creation of incompatible land uses as Abbeville develops / redevelops; remedy, over time, the existing incompatible land uses that have occurred; ensure adequate light, air and circulation, separation and open space between land uses, and prevent overcrowding; protect the value of property in the Town of Abbeville from the harmful effects of misguided development.

Policy: Zoning and other development regulations should be implemented so as to carry out the requirements of this plan.

Policy: Zoning and other land use regulations should be kept to a minimum level of complexity.

Objective: Recognize and facilitate land use and development techniques that invite and encourage economic development; reduce the financial risk typically associated with development under standard Euclidean zoning measures (zoning by use).

Policy: The zoning ordinance should include provisions for planned and mixed use developments, and offer incentives in return for development enhancements.

Goal: To enhance economic development opportunities, encourage more efficient use of land within the Town of Abbeville, and to provide more environmentally sensitive development patterns.

Objective: To eliminate the necessity for the use of septic tanks or other forms of on-site sewage disposal within the town.

Objective: To enable densification through the utilization of centralized sewer collection.

Objective: To reduce development costs associated with the necessity of providing on-site sewage treatment facilities.

Policy: The Town of Abbeville should take steps toward developing a centralized sanitary sewer collection and treatment facility.

Policy: Connections to the Towns' centralized sanitary sewer system, when developed, should be mandatory for environmental and land use efficiency purposes.

Goal: To increase the commercial base within the corporate limits of the Town of Abbeville, and to expand the tax base of the Town.

Objective: Promote Highway 7 as the primary highway commercial corridor in the Town.

Policy: Abbeville should make every effort to guide highway oriented development to this part of the Town, and to encourage such development to occur.

Policy: Abbeville should investigate the favorability of areas for commercialization along the unincorporated Highway 7 corridor and consider such area for annexation.

Objective: Encourage neighborhood and professional retail commercialization, and a sense of activity, in "historical downtown" Abbeville

Policy: Abbeville should allow development in the downtown area, specifically renovation of existing structures to original likeness and building of new structures like the surrounding.

Policy: Abbeville will investigate incentive packages to encourage the reuse of vacant commercial spaces, when possible, as opposed to constructing new spaces.

Objective: Create visually pleasing and pedestrian friendly commercial areas

Policy: At the appropriate time, determined by the degree of, and propensity for, development, Abbeville should assess the extent to which pedestrian features, such as benches and garbage cans, are located in the downtown commercial area and require the placement of additional items as needed.

Goal: To generate additional employment and economic opportunities within Abbeville.

Objective: Strengthen the employment and economic base within the Town.

Policy: Abbeville should evaluate current economic and employment trends and assess the community's ability to capitalize on one or more of those areas.

## ***Transportation***

Goal: Provide a safe means for vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation.

Objective: Provide adequate signage along the streets to regulate and direct traffic as needed.

Policy: Abbeville should review the street signage within the Town and develop a plan for replacing those signs that have become an eyesore, or to reinstall missing signage.

Objective: Increase the opportunity for pedestrian mobility throughout the Town.

Policy: The existence and condition of sidewalks should be evaluated and considered for upgrading along the collector and arterial streets.

Objective: Improve the safety and attractiveness of access to private properties.

Policy: The Town should consider establishing a curb cut policy to limit the access points along high traffic transportation routes, and improve the appearance of transportation corridors.

Objective: Ensure the reservation of right-of-way for future transportation routes.

Policy: As development occurs along the path of any planned transportation routes, Abbeville should require, as a condition of development approval, the dedication of an appropriate right-of-way corridor.

Goal: Improve the quality of the transportation system within the Town.

Objective: Enhance the Town's street network and transportation availability.

Policy: Abbeville will evaluate the condition of the streets and develop a program to systematically resurface and otherwise improve streets as needed.

## ***Housing***

Goal: Improve the quality of the housing stock in the community.

Objective: Eliminate, to the extent possible, any dilapidated and abandoned housing in Abbeville.

Objective: Encourage homeowners to maintain houses to a certain standard of safety and durability.

Objective: Ensure that new housing is built to current standards for safety, durability and functionality.

Policy: Abbeville should require at appropriate times that dilapidated or over grown properties be cleared.

Policy: Abbeville should consider establishing a building inspection and code enforcement program to achieve an adequate level of effectiveness for the benefit of public safety and community appearance.

Goal: Promote housing development in Abbeville.

Objective: Attract new housing developments to locate within the municipal limits.

Objective: Ensure a wide variety of housing opportunities are available within Abbeville in the form of housing types and housing costs.

Policy: Development regulations in Abbeville should provide for a variety of housing types consistent with market needs.

Policy: Abbeville should promote the concept of mixed-use development, particularly with regard to housing types and limited commercial development.

### ***Community Facilities and Services***

Goal: Enhance and improve the services delivered to the residents and property owners of Abbeville.

Objective: To expand the quality of services available to the residents of the Town of Abbeville.

Objective: To enhance the quality of life for Abbeville residents.

Policy: As time progress, Abbeville should evaluate increases in the level of services available to residents based upon the need for such services. This includes services related to police, fire protection, parks and recreation, street and right of way maintenance, mosquito and pest control, animal control and other services.

Policy: Abbeville should, because of its limited tax base and limited resources, seek to partner with Lafayette County or other governmental agencies for the efficient delivery of services.

Policy: Abbeville will seek to develop a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system.

Objective: Achieve maximum use and benefit of the tax dollars collected.

Policy: Abbeville will strive to maintain a low tax rate, but not at the expense of providing quality Town services.

Policy: Abbeville will assess the current use of tax dollars, and strive to direct tax dollars to the delivery of services. The purpose is to illustrate “here’s what you are paying for” to the tax payer.

Policy: Any necessary tax rate increase should be limited, if possible, for the support of a tangible service to the public.

Policy: Abbeville will continually evaluate its capital assets and formulate a financial plan for the replacement or refurbishment of said capital assets. As part of this task, Abbeville must define, by dollar amount, a capital asset.

Objective: To enhance the fire protection services within the Town.

Policy: Abbeville will examine the requirements to improve the existing fire rating and pursue improving the rating.

Goal: Provide adequate services throughout the Town in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Objective: Ensure that space is available for the expansion and extension of public services.

Policy: Abbeville should require, as development occurs, the reservation or dedication of space for public use such as additional street right-of-way, park space, or space for public buildings or utilities as needed.

Policy: Abbeville should evaluate the efficiency of all municipal operations and adjust as needed to increase efficiency and curb the increasing costs of delivering services.

### ***Community Appearance and Spirit***

Goal: Improve the overall appearance of the community and generate a sense of community pride.

Goal: Improve and enhance the quality of life in Abbeville, Mississippi.

Objective: Eliminate, to the extent possible, all dilapidated and abandoned structures in the Town.

Objective: Maintain public and private properties in the Town so as to project a positive image of Abbeville.

Policy: Community leaders should organize periodic clean-up/fix-up events. Invite a facility to visit the event that can receive and

dispose of hazardous household waste such as paint, waste oil, tires, appliances, etc.

Policy: Abbeville should adopt and/or enforce the necessary ordinances to empower it to compel property owners to clean their property by removing unused or discarded items, mowing tall grass, removing dilapidated buildings, otherwise keeping property in a safe and presentable form.

Policy: Abbeville should maintain public property to the same standards required for private property owners.

Objective: Improve the visual appearance of the community.

Policy: Abbeville should consider the impact of signage within the Town, and adopt appropriate regulations to ensure that signage does not cast a cluttered and confused impression.

Policy: Abbeville should assess the appearance of the entrances to the Town and take measures to improve the visual impact.

### ***Utilities, Infrastructure, and Economic Development***

Goal: To provide for public facilities needed with an equitable distribution of costs associated with development or redevelopment.

Objective: Provide for the coordination and installation of infrastructure, meeting minimum standards for quality, capacity and functionality.

Objective: Minimize the burden to the existing tax base of infrastructure costs.

Policy: Abbeville should consider establishing a system by which developers bear a proportion of the expense to extend and improve the infrastructure as necessary.

Policy: Abbeville will actively seek sources of public funds to enhance and improve its infrastructure system, as well as develop new infrastructure systems.

Objective: Promote an increased efficiency in the delivery of services and infrastructure to the community.

Policy: Abbeville will promote, where infrastructure permits, a compact spatial arrangement for new development so that it is located in close proximity to existing and available services so as to avoid costly extension of services.

Goal: Stimulate and promote economic development within the community.

Objective: Provide a sense of welcome for new development.

Policy: Abbeville's development regulations and policies resulting from this comprehensive plan are not to be construed as restrictive, but are to be construed as supportive of development.

Policy: The development regulations and policies resulting from this comprehensive plan are to be construed in a consistent and fair manner. Abbeville recognizes the importance of a "level playing field" as well as the constitutional right to equal protection.

Objective: Make the public aware of the Town's commitment to attracting economic development.

Policy: Form alliances with the area Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Authorities, or other such agencies designed to attract and locate development. Have Abbeville included in the promotional programs if not already done so.

Goal: Enhance the marketability and the economic capabilities of the Town over time.

Objective: Expand, grow, or increase the economic infrastructure of the Town, including, but not limited to, its population, tax base, land resources, and labor force.

Policy: The Town of Abbeville should seek to expand its municipal limits to include the intersection of Highway 7 and Business 7, along with development that has occurred within that area.

### ***Education***

Goal: Provide support and seek to improve the educational system impacting the Town of Abbeville.

Objective: Engage Town resources to enhance and expand the educational base available to high school students.

Policy: Abbeville will explore, with the local school system, offering educational opportunities to high school students concerning the operations of Town government and public services. Students could be given the opportunity to learn either through an internship or laboratory type program, the workings of Town government.

Objective: To enhance the safety of school students within the Town.

Policy: Abbeville should examine bus routes / stops in the community and, to the extent necessary, enhance safety through the use additional signage or other means.

### ***Environmental Goals***

Goal: Create an environmentally safe community.

Objective: Establish a system of controls to protect water quality and eliminate potential health hazards.

Policy: Every effort will be made to connect new development to the Town water system. New development will be guided toward areas adjacent to or in close proximity to existing infrastructure.

Policy: Abbeville should seek to develop a centralized sanitary sewer collection and treatment system.

Policy: Abbeville should establish regulatory guidelines for storm water runoff associated with new development or redevelopment.

Policy: Abbeville will discourage development within the FEMA designated flood hazard areas. These flood hazard areas are more appropriately suited for passive uses such as walking trails or agricultural uses.

Policy: Storm water runoff from a particular site should not increase as a result of development.

Objective: Protect sensitive environmental areas through preservation techniques.

Policy: Environmentally sensitive areas may be considered to be within either the natural environment or the built environment.

Policy: Areas with characteristics such as flood plain and flood prone areas or with historical or architectural significance shall be considered environmentally sensitive.

Policy: Within the areas of environmental sensitivity, land uses should be more restricted in terms of types of uses, density, or bulk, to avoid damaging effects of development.

Objective: Protect life and property from the hazards of flooding.

Policy: Abbeville should examine the requirements of participating in the National Flood Insurance Program.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### *Town of Abbeville Services and Facilities*

As is expected based on its size, the Town of Abbeville provides limited services and facilities to its residents and property owners. The following summary provides details of the Town’s facilities and related services:

#### Town Hall

Through The use of outside funding, Abbeville enjoys a newly constructed Town Hall, within which a multitude of functions are carried out. Nearly all Town administrative functions such as the Town clerk’s office and the mayor and board of aldermen are operated out of Town Hall. The population and housing projections in this plan are not expected to create a need for any additional floor space or employees within Town Hall.

#### Fire Protection

The Town of Abbeville is covered by the Abbeville Volunteer Fire Department, with its existing station located on Business Highway 7 South within the town limits. Abbeville has a class 10 fire rating which is the highest (least desirable) possible rating. This is important because homeowner insurance premiums are based on the community’s fire rating (lower number is better), and protecting or improving the rating is beneficial to all.

**Table 7 – Homeowner Insurance Premium Savings**

Value of Coverage	Transitioning from Class 10 to Class....			
	9	8	7	6
75,000	619	1044	1373	1433
	337	607	825	0
100,000	825	1392	1830	1910
	450	810	1100	0
125,000	1032	1740	2288	2388
	562	1012	1375	0
150,000	1237	2088	2745	2865
	675	1215	1650	0
175,000	1444	2436	3203	3343
	900	1620	2200	0
200,000	1650	2784	3660	3820
	1125	2025	2750	0

 Masonry construction  
 Frame construction

Fire ratings are assigned by the Mississippi Sate Rating Bureau and are based upon a number of factors. Those factors involved in determining the fire rating of a community include the water supply, communications, code enforcement, equipment, run distance, and other attributes of the fire department. It is imperative that the Town of Abbeville work with the Fire Department and the Rating Bureau to improve the infrastructure so as to reduce the fire rating class.

Source: Mississippi State Rating Bureau, Homeowner Form 3  
 Computations by Bridge & Watson, Inc.

Improving the fire rating not only translates into a higher level of service for the community, but also into monetary savings for property owners. Suggested homeowner premiums for the various fire class ratings are published by the Mississippi State Rating Bureau. In simple terms, insurance premiums are based on the chance of loss; therefore the better fire protection equates into a lower chance of loss and likewise a lower premium. To demonstrate the differences in annual premiums based on fire rating, consider the data in Table 7 (previous page).

Table 7 demonstrates the potential savings between class 10 and classes 9 through 6<sup>1</sup>. For example a person owning a \$150,000 frame construction home would save an estimated \$2,088 per year if the Town of Abbeville were graded as a class 8 instead of class 10. The monetary aspects of fire insurance ratings are, in the case of Abbeville, significant.

Tax increases are always viewed in a negative light, but the prospect of increasing revenue (taxes) in order to improve fire services and likewise improve the Town's fire rating stands the chance of offsetting a tax increase with insurance savings. Abbeville should investigate, with the Mississippi State Rating Bureau, the improvements necessary to improve the fire rating and cost associated therewith.

To put things into perspective, if the \$2,088 in savings were converted into taxes applied to an owner occupied home, the tax rate would have to be in excess of 139 mills. Stated differently, this demonstrates that potential substantial savings could inure to the property owners of the Town if taxes were increased to improve fire protection services.

### **Police Protection**

The Town of Abbeville has an agreement with the Lafayette County Sherriff Department to provide police services. For non-emergency situations, the Town provides a Marshal service which provides patrols and a police presence inside the Town on a part time basis.

### **Planning/Zoning/Building Inspection**

Abbeville currently does not provide planning, zoning, or building inspection services throughout the Town. As part of the implementation of this plan, Abbeville should prepare limited development regulations and provide an enforcement mechanism. Enforcement could be accomplished by either hiring an enforcement officer or contracting the services through outside individuals or organizations.

In order to track development, enforce regulations, and protect the water system, a building permitting system is needed. The Town should implement a building or development permit system.

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<sup>1</sup> Below class 6 the premiums do not decrease.

## **Public Works**

The Town of Abbeville recently acquired and now operates a public water system with infrastructure throughout the town and areas beyond the corporate limits. It is important to properly maintain the water system not only for public health purposes but also for economic development purposes. The water system should be enhanced for fire protection purposes.

Street and right of way maintenance is provided by Lafayette County. The quality of streets is especially important to a community, and Abbeville should work closely with the County to develop a street resurfacing program that will prioritize the roads by need. While the streets are in relatively good condition, they, like anything else, require maintenance and the Town is better off to plan in advance for those maintenance needs.

## **Parks and Recreation**

Abbeville has a ball field located at the water tower. Although not required by expected growth, Abbeville should strive to expand its parks and recreational facilities to include at least a walking track/trail as a quality of life incentive.

## **Schools**

Abbeville is located in the Lafayette County School System and is located approximately 12 miles north of the school campus. Education, and the quality of education, is one of the critical components in determining the growth of a community. It is imperative that Abbeville and the school district work toward the common goal of creating the best possible educational system. This can be a challenge in that the school district and the Town are two completely separate political bodies.

The projected population for Abbeville is not expected to create a need for new school facilities in the future. However, the Lafayette County School District serves residents from various parts of the county located outside the Oxford School District; therefore, the impact on school facilities is a system-wide proposition, not just limited to the occurrences within the Town.

## **FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to graphically indicate the spatial arrangement of expected future development within Abbeville. Although various land uses are indicated on the map, the future land use map is to be viewed and utilized only as a general guide for development patterns.

Of great significance for the Town to consider is the fact that this future land use plan is developed based upon the fact that no central sewer system exists. Without central sewer, it is unlikely that any medium or high density development will occur, and no concentration of commercialization. The exception to this would be the occasion that the developer installed a private sewage collection and treatment facility, which is an added expense to the development process.

At the time Abbeville is able to install and operate a central sewer system, it is critically important that Abbeville update this plan to reflect the new land use possibilities resulting from the availability of sewer service.

### ***Future Land Use Classifications***

The following land use classifications are intended to provide a general description of the expected land use classifications as well as their development intensities. Unlike plans for larger municipalities, the Abbeville plan contains limited future land use classifications because of the density constraints imposed by the necessity for on site waste water disposal. Nonetheless, density, as discussed to within this section of the plan, is referring to the gross density of an area.

The following future land use types are identified on Map 2, the Future Land Use Plan:

#### **Agricultural**

Areas intended for agricultural and other limited uses are indicated in light green on the map. This classification is intended to describe those areas that have rural characteristics and possess certain constraints that inhibit urbanization in the foreseeable future. These areas are expected to remain in a state of low intensity land use which includes single family residences, agricultural and related uses. Residential development may occur at a low density of approximately one dwelling unit per two (2) acres.

#### **Low Density Residential**

Indicated in light yellow on the map, this land use category is intended to preserve existing concentrations of low density development and provide for the continuation of the same character of residential development. All residential development within Abbeville is expected to be of a low density character due to the space requirements for on site sewage disposal. This category also allows for additional residential development at densities of one (1) dwelling per acre and perhaps more acreage as necessary to accommodate sewage disposal. Development within this classification should be limited to single family homes and traditional associated uses, such as churches and public facilities.

The absence of centralized sewer service serves to significantly limit the possibility of higher density housing types such as townhomes, apartment or duplex units, or patio homes.

### **Manufactured Home Residential**

The manufactured housing land use category is not indicated as a separate future land use area on the map. Although manufactured homes are structurally and architecturally incompatible with traditional site built homes, they are single family in nature. Also, as with the low density residential district, manufactured homes will have to occur at densities of one (1) dwelling per acre and perhaps more acreage as necessary to accommodate on site sewage disposal.

At the time the town develops specific land use regulations, specific treatment should be given to the placement of manufactured housing because of the incompatible nature with traditional homes. There currently is no distinguishable pattern of manufactured home development with the town. Until development pressures increase, and sewer service becomes available for increased density, the placement of manufactured homes should be regulated on a case by case basis, giving consideration to the adjacent structure types, purpose and duration of the manufactured home, the location within the Town with respect to prominent locations, and other pertinent factors.

### **Downtown Commercial**

Indicated in light red/pink shading on the map, this is a land use classification created to accommodate a variety of commercial (retail and service oriented) and professional land uses in the central business district or downtown area of Abbeville. It includes uses to cater to the needs of the nearby residents and is not dependent solely upon traffic flows for its sustainability. Uses within this district would be conducted indoors with the exception of sidewalk or patio activities, such as a sidewalk sale or sidewalk seating at a restaurant.

Downtown Abbeville consists of little development presently when compared to larger cities. However, there is no better time than now to plan for the Abbeville 25 years from now. This is particularly true from an architectural standpoint.

People of Abbeville and Lafayette County are very familiar with the great success enjoyed by Oxford's square. Oxford's square has maintained the traditional architectural and spatial arrangement, giving the square a charming and desirable business and social atmosphere. As Abbeville grows and develops, it should seek to have downtown commercialization occur in a form that resembles the scale and nature of the existing and traditional downtown development. Although property owners can voluntarily accomplish this as development occurs, Abbeville should regulate development in a manner to accomplish this task.

### **Highway Commercial**

Indicated in red on the map, the highway commercial land use category is designed to accommodate all commercial uses, including indoor and outdoor commercial activities. As the name suggests, this land use category is located in areas where business

proprietors require high visibility or are dependent upon traffic volume as a portion of its market base. To the extent possible, land uses allowed within this district should be limited to those uses of such an intense nature as are appropriate for highway corridors, such as large scale gas stations, auto repair or dealerships, drive through restaurants, and other similar uses.

### **Transitional**

Indicated in light brown on the map, the transitional land use classification is intended to identify those areas where land use conflicts are likely to occur, lying between highway commercial and residential uses.

The placement of single family homes adjacent to high intensity commercial areas (such as the highway commercial designation) creates conflict. Residents are burdened with the glare from commercial lighting, noise, fumes and the like. Commercial property owners often face a challenge from adjacent residents in the event of further development.

This land use conflict is often mitigated by utilizing varying degrees of land use intensity to serve as a buffer. For example, multifamily housing often serves as a buffer between commercialization and higher density single family homes. For Abbeville, the utilization of density as a transition is not a workable option as there is no central sewer system to accommodate higher density development.

To mitigate this potential land use conflict, Abbeville will have to rely on case by case development review with an eye toward encouraging less intense commercial uses in the transitional area. Additionally, the use of vegetative buffers and additional setbacks should be employed in this area.

### **Preservation**

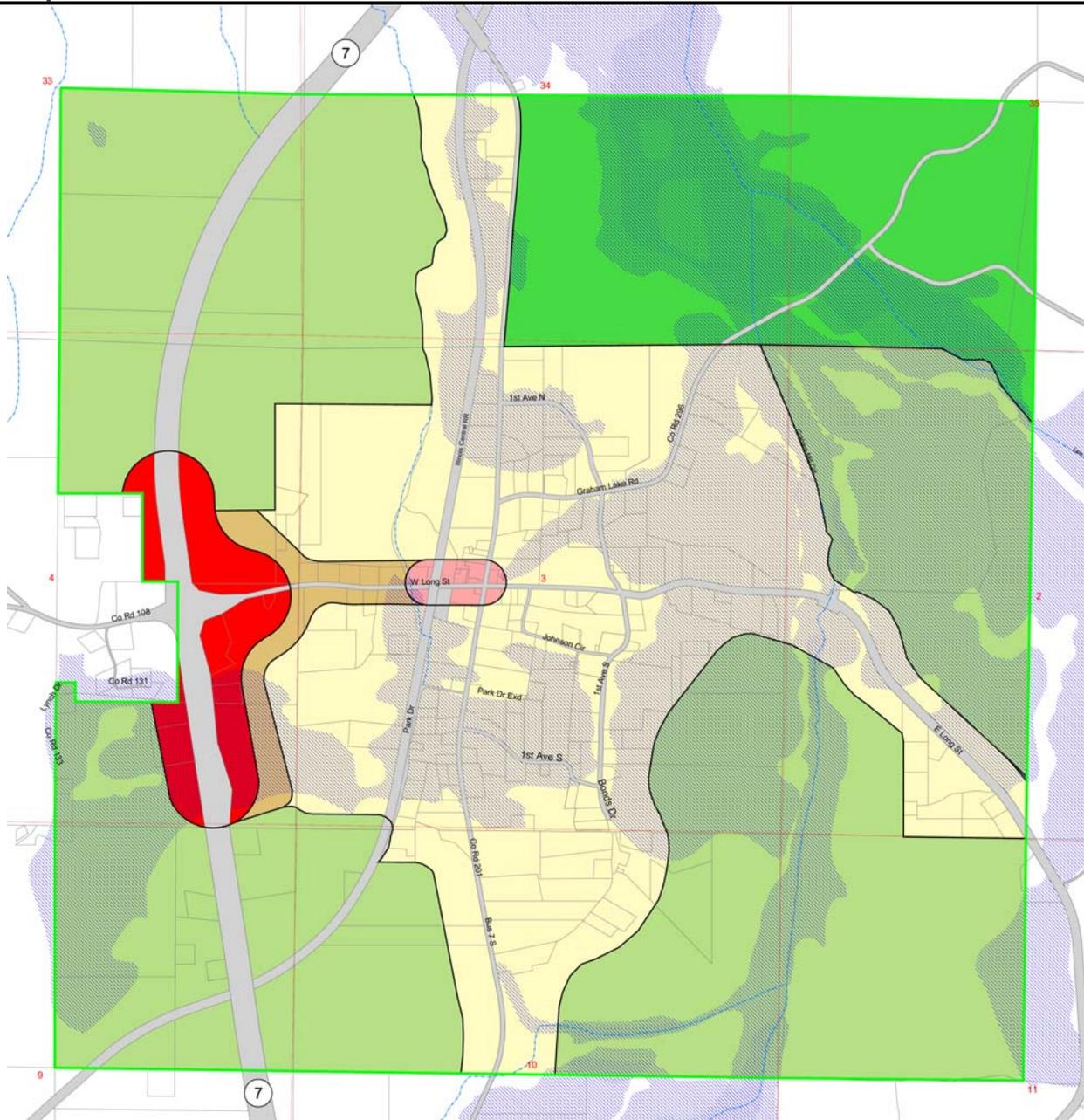
Indicated in a darker green on the map, preservation areas represent properties which are owned by the United States of America as part of either the Holly Springs National Forest or the Sardis Lake watershed area. These properties are not expected to develop as they are in the control of the United States Government.

### **Environmental Constraints**

Indicated with a blue cross hatch pattern on the map, this area is a cumulative representation of flood plain, potential wetland areas, and areas of steep slope. Although development is usually permissible in these constrained areas, any development should be carefully monitored.

Each constraint type will carry differing considerations at the time of proposed development. Flood hazard areas will require elevating structures above the flood levels. Potential wetland areas will require additional investigation (by the developer) and potential mitigation. Areas of steeply sloping terrain will require substantial grading to install roads and building pads.

**Map 2 – Future Land Use Plan**



Source: MARIS (MSTM) data; Lafayette County Tax Assessor; Census Bureau 2010 TIGER Data; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Figure 5 – Future Land Use Plan without Sewer Legend**



### Development Constraints

While there are numerous choices for potential development sites within the Town of Abbeville, there are several natural constraints to development such as flood zones, wetlands and steep slopes. These constraints have a direct impact on whether or not a property can be developed, how it is to develop and the cost of development. Development constraints are discussed in more detail below.

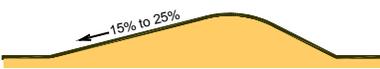
### Flood Hazard Areas

Flood hazard areas are defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as part of the National Flood Insurance Program. Generally speaking, a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program must adopt and enforce a flood ordinance. That flood ordinance contains various requirements and limitations for development within designated flood hazard areas, one of which include a requirement that structures be elevated above the flood level. As a result of either raising the site or raising a structure to achieve the required elevation, the cost of the project may increase to a point the project is not affordable. Not to mention development within a flood hazard area is generally discouraged for obvious reasons.

### Slopes

Abbeville is comprised of rolling hills. There are, however, some areas where the slope of the ground is significant enough to command attention. For a frame of reference, consider the illustrations in Table 7 below which provides a sense of the magnitude of various slope gradients.

**Table 7 – Slope Restrictions on Land Development**

<u>Slope Category</u>	<u>Illustration</u>	<u>Development Concerns</u>
Less than 10%		No additional building restrictions
10% to 15%		Site preparation techniques should be utilized to minimize grading and site disturbance, particularly on highly erosive soils.
Greater than 15%, Less than 25%		Building and site preparation should utilize specialized site design techniques and approaches to control soil erosion and pollution.
25% or Greater		Generally unsuitable for development. Land disturbance should impact the smallest possible area. Disturbed areas must be heavily guarded against erosion.

Source: Bridge & Watson, Inc.

The significance of slope is two-fold. First, there is a potential negative impact to the environment. The environmental impact is that of increased soil erosion. The steeper the slope, the faster the runoff, and the greater potential for soil erosion. This situation is further worsened by the fact that development of these sloped areas will require the removal of protective vegetation through heavy grading.

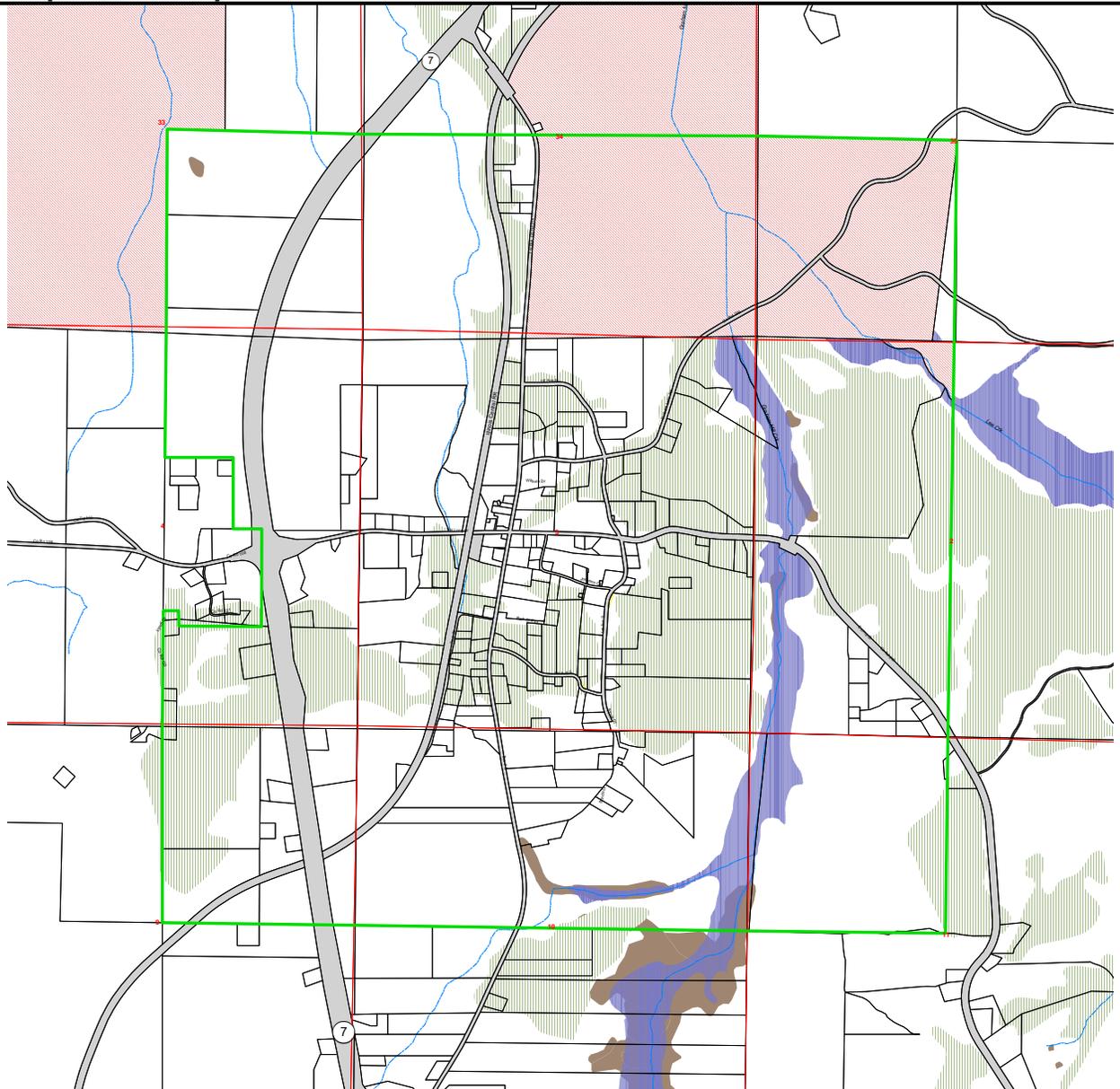
Secondly there is an economic impact to developing areas of moderate or steep slope. The economic impact of developing steeper sloping soils is that construction is more expensive. Because of the degree of slope, additional grading is required to make way for roads and building footprints. While for a low density single family development the additional grading may not be significant, it will become significant for larger developments for uses such as industrial buildings. Additionally, excessive slope can serve as a constraint to the design of certain on-site wastewater treatment facilities.

Abbeville does contain territory within one of these constraint categories. With proper management, development can occur within the areas of less constrained sloping lands. The attributes of the slope should be incorporated into the design of the development to create uniqueness.

### **Wetlands**

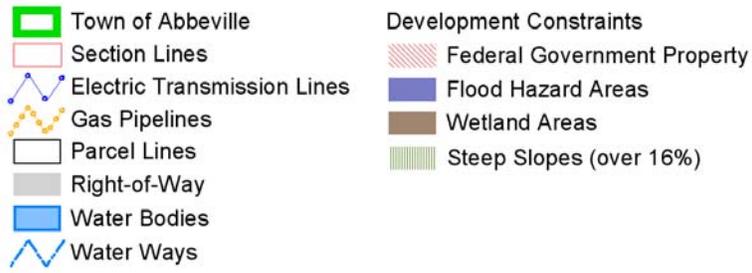
The low lying lands inside and around the flood hazard areas have many pockets of areas designated as potential wetlands. These wetlands pose a constraint to development as they are protected by law. Limited development may occur in these areas through the appropriate permitting and mitigation procedures with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Development is not encouraged in wetland areas.

**Map 3 – Development Constraints**



Sources: MARIS (MSTM) data; Lafayette County Tax Assessor; Census Bureau 2010 TIGER Data; FEMA DFIRM for Lafayette County Published November 26, 2010; USDA NRCS Soils for Lafayette County Published December 24, 2014; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wetlands dated October 1, 2010

**Figure 6 – Development Constraints Legend**



## TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### *Definition of Street Classes, Right-of-Way, and Improvements*

#### **Existing Roadways**

The existing roadways in Abbeville can be divided into functional classifications, as follows (illustrated on Map 4):

*Minor/Local Streets* .....Serves the primary purpose of accessing property.

*Collector Streets* .....Streets that convey traffic between the minor/locals and arterial streets, or serve the purpose of linking local streets to arterial streets.

*Arterial Streets* .....Roads that carry traffic into and away from the community.

Abbeville is served by one arterial highway, State Highway 7, which serves the town North and South. Highway 7 is maintained by the Mississippi Department of Transportation. Most traffic enters and leaves Abbeville via one of the four collector streets that run through the Town. Once inside the Town, the local streets adequately move traffic to its destination. Streets in Abbeville do not appear to be overburdened by current daily traffic volumes. For the duration of this plan, the streets in Abbeville should require nothing more than routine maintenance over the next several years.

Sidewalks are an important part of the transportation system. Sidewalks provide the means for pedestrians to safely move about the Town. Abbeville should evaluate the necessity and functionality of installing a sidewalk system. As with many cities, it is likely necessary to prepare a plan for the systematic installation of a sidewalk system.

#### ***Transportation Improvements***

Given the level of development that is expected to occur over the next 20 years, no significant road construction or widening is necessary to accommodate traffic. As development takes place, there may be a need to construct and/or extend existing local streets. The determining factor will be the extent to which vacant parcels, which front existing streets, are developed.

As development occurs, streets must be constructed or improved to accommodate traffic. This will include the width of the right-of-way, travel surface, drainage method, sidewalk, and other technical specifications necessary to make the street safe, functional, and durable. As a guide for this review process, refer to the following comments:

#### **Minor Streets**

Minor streets, also referred to as local streets, serve the purpose of accessing property and typically do not carry through traffic. Minor streets are intended to have lower speed limits and therefore may be narrower in travel surface and right-of-way.

The rural nature of the existing development in Abbeville lends itself to the continuation of a more rural type of roadway cross section

Minimum Right-of-Way: 60 feet, but variation required depending on adjacent slope

Minimum Paved Surface Width: 20 feet for travel way, plus an additional width for bike lane and curbing if required.

An important design element along streets where pedestrians will be mixed with automobiles is to provide some separation between the two. This is achieved by placing the sidewalk at the edge of the right-of-way and creating a space between the sidewalk and the curb. From a psychological point of view, pedestrians are more comfortable using the sidewalks when there is some barrier between them and passing traffic. This is achieved by requiring street tree plantings, or on-street parking along the sidewalk side of the street. Because of the low density nature of the development in Abbeville, the need for sidewalks along minor streets is limited. Nonetheless, these same principles apply to sidewalks along other streets in the Town.

### **Major / Collector Streets**

Major or collector streets serve as means to move traffic from local areas to arterial highways. Because of higher traffic volumes and higher speed limits, these roadways are typically wider to allow for more separation between pedestrians and automobiles. Where on-street parking is desired, additional pavement width is necessary.

Minimum Right-of-Way: 68 feet

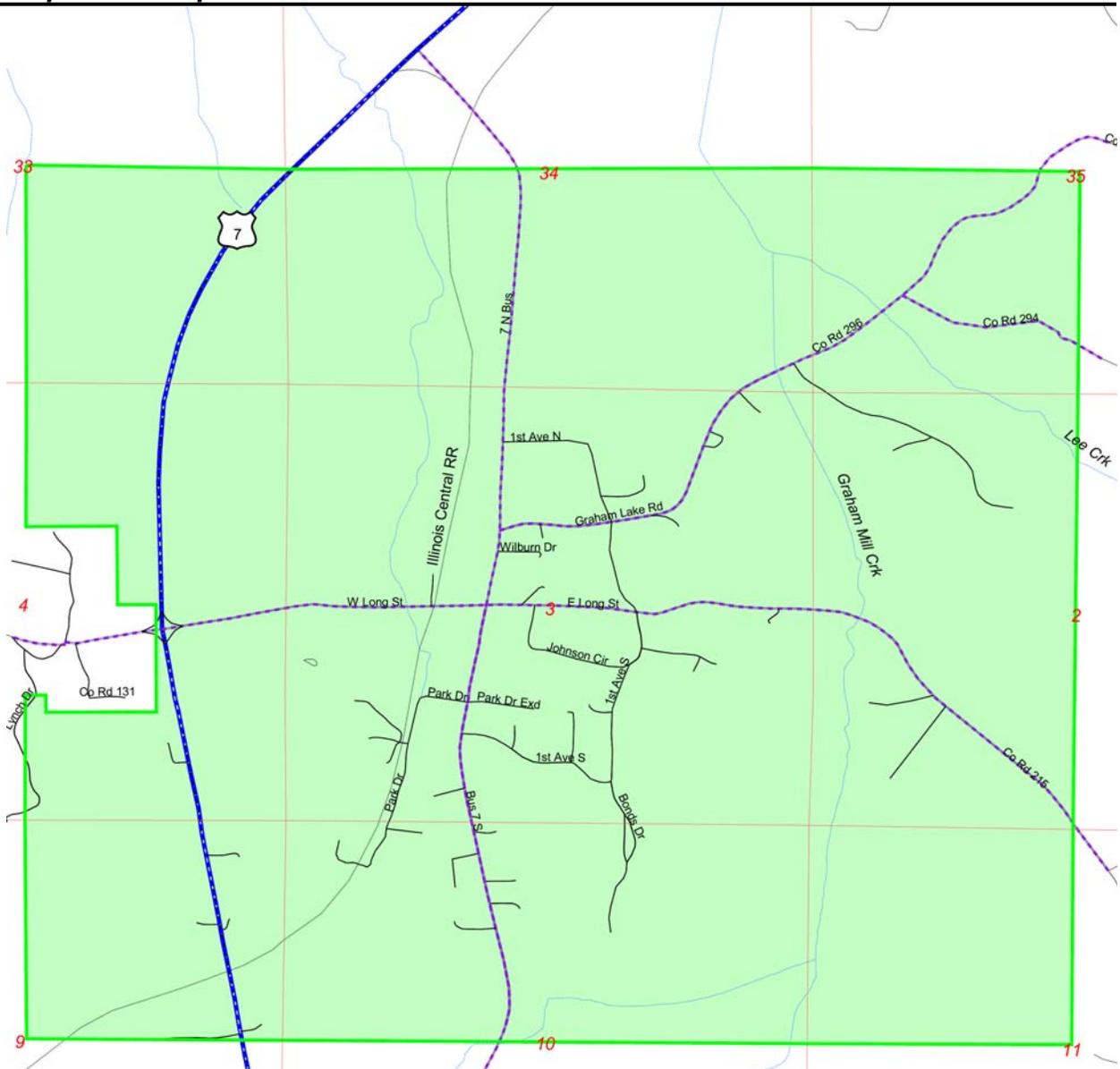
Minimum Paved Surface Width: 22 feet for travel way, plus an additional width for bike lane and curbing if required.

Sidewalks are needed on both sides of the street due to expected traffic volumes. As with minor streets, providing a visual and physical separation between pedestrians and passing automobiles will create a more user friendly atmosphere.

### **Arterial Streets**

Arterial streets in Abbeville consist of only Highway 7. Over the horizon of this plan, it is not anticipated that an arterial street will be needed to accommodate development. Any arterial street construction that may occur would be under the jurisdiction of the Mississippi Department of Transportation. The design of the roadway and required right-of-way will be determined by state and federal highway construction guidelines; therefore, it is not necessary to specify cross sectional details.

**Map 4 – Transportation Classification Plan**



Source: MARIS (MSTM) data; Census Bureau 2010 TIGER Data

**Figure 7 – Transportation Classification Plan Legend**

