

Comprehensive Plan

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan illustrates and provides an overall strategy for how Enterprise intends to shape itself over time. The city has prepared this plan as a guide to making decisions regarding land use, development, zoning and capital improvements.

The plan is also intended to help Enterprise residents, property owners, merchants, builders and developers invest in the city by providing a reasonable expectation of the city's future. Throughout the planning process, the city has aimed to inform and guide decisions that will help to bring about the desired future state of the city. The plan is long-range, general, and focused on physical development. Consequently, residents today may be assured that the plan is a living document whose relevance will continue even as circumstances surely change over time.

The Enterprise Comprehensive Plan is an attempt on behalf of city officials to:

- Illustrate the ways in which the city should develop over time.
- Provide a guide to development decisions and a basis for making and revising zoning and other regulations regarding type, intensity and timing of development.
- Ensure that as development occurs, the city's most significant natural features will be preserved or enhanced.
- Protect the property values of all citizens.
- Provide a pattern for land use and development that strives for a sustainable community with a diversified tax base to support desired facilities and services.
- Coordinate land use recommendations with those for infrastructure improvements.

In response, the City Council, Planning Commission and the citizens of Enterprise intend to continually refer to this document in order to:

- Visualize what can be reasonably expected to occur in Enterprise—to provide some assurance and security regarding development investment decisions.
- Review and evaluate development proposals—to test the fit with Enterprise's vision and expectations.
- Review rezoning requests—as an essential part of determining appropriateness.
- Provide guidance regarding the adoption of development regulations and amendments.
- Identify and advise regarding priorities for infrastructure investments—roads, greenways, parks, schools and other public facilities.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the value of the city's underlying natural resource base, and its history and traditional community values. The plan will guide development by balancing growth and the conservation of important natural resources. The city's activity centers concentrate a diversity of functions at appropriate locations, structured by overall citywide open space and accessibility systems. Land uses that are located, planned and designed to be compatible with this system of critical environmental resources will be supported and encouraged to provide opportunities for creativity, efficiency, stability, image and diversity.

USING AND REFINING THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is a combination of vision, maps, development policies and design guidelines. It provides a framework for guiding public and private decisions that will affect the growth, development and redevelopment of Enterprise. The plan is based on the community's vision for its own future—a long-term vision that may not be achievable in the lifetime of those participating in drafting the plan, or even of the next generation. Nevertheless, the plan looks ahead, focuses on the physical form of the city, and strives to shape development of public and private properties within Enterprise's planning area.

As noted earlier, the plan provides a general, long-range guide to future development—to assist public officials and private citizens alike as they consider making investments that may have long-term implications for the community. To do this, the plan must be continuously monitored and renewed as changes occur in physical, social, political and market conditions. The plan will be implemented through the actions of developers and other private citizens, city staff, the Planning Commission, other boards and commissions, and the City Council. Major public actions in support of plan implementation will include adoption, revision and enforcement of various parts of the city's growth management system: development regulations, the capital improvement programming process and its relation to the city budgeting system, and decisions about the appropriateness of development proposals. Guidance provided by this monitoring and renewal process will assist the city in refining and detailing the Comprehensive Plan through consideration of amendments as needed.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a living document, to evolve and grow in response to changes in public values and to market and physical conditions. Only through continuing use, evaluation, detailing, reconsideration and amendment can the plan fully serve Enterprise, and only then can the people of Enterprise use it wisely as a creative tool as it seeks achievement of its comprehensive vision for the community.

II. CITYWIDE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The choice for Enterprise is not one of growth vs. no growth. The city has made itself into an attractive and desirable place that continues to draw more and more people and private investment every year. Unless the public investment and commitment that has created this city could somehow be reversed, growth will continue. The choice, then, is one of how development should be

channeled in a manner compatible with the vision the people of Enterprise have set for themselves and their community. That is the role of Enterprise's Comprehensive Planning process.

Comprehensive Planning provides a systematic approach to thinking about a citywide vision for the future, setting long-range goals for the physical character of the city and devising policies, programs, and projects to move the city toward fulfillment of those goals. The focal point of this process in Enterprise has been dialog between citizens and elected administrative officials. Its purpose is to reach consensus on policies, programs, and projects relating to that of physical character, responsibilities and areas of influence of city government.

ENTERPRISE TOWN MEETING 2005

The planning process began in earnest with a Town Meeting held in the Enterprise Civic Center on a warm evening in mid-June 2005. The crowd was provided a brief overview of the city and its resources, using maps of existing physical features, including critical infrastructure as well as land use and traffic.

The participants were asked a series of questions designed to elicit comments and suggestions that would help the Planning Commission and City Council as they considered the future of their city. What follows below is a summation of the main themes of the discussion in each of several categories. More notes from the Town Meeting are provided in Appendix A.

Assets

The participants presented very positive attitudes about their city. They like the small city atmosphere and their relationship to adjacent Fort Rucker, home of the US Army Aviation Center, which supports a daytime population of about 19,000, including about 8,000 people in uniform, 7,000 civilian and contract employees, and 3,800 military family members. They praised the local schools system, their recreation department and its facilities, and pointed proudly to the number and variety of their local churches.

The "hometown" feeling of Enterprise is a very important aspect of this city, and it is clear this factor has been critical to its success. Downtown Enterprise is well cared for and provides a clear indication that Enterprise takes pride in the commercial and institutional core of the city. The city's ring road, Boll Weevil Circle, surrounds most of the more intensely developed area and provides ready accessibility between all of the radial routes that connect the core of the city with the surrounding area, including Fort Rucker, located about five miles to the east.

Local residents are fond of their local merchants and the services they provide, and are proud of their countywide cultural alliance, their low crime rate, and their medical and senior centers. They are likewise proud of the attractiveness of their city, which has led to considerable new residential construction, especially to the north and east.

Liabilities

On the other hand, the participants in the Town Meeting were clear that work remains to be done to bring the city up to the standards they would like to enjoy in their hometown. For example, the city lacks a clearly defined, attractive front door and corridor from its edges into downtown. There are abandoned homes and vehicles in some of the city's neighborhoods, and too many vacant properties and structures inside the Circle. This includes significant underutilized industrial buildings and sites, some of which are located along arterial streets that serve as the main entrances to downtown, and air quality near some industrial facilities is below local standards.

It was suggested that the downtown area itself needs work—and possibly some redevelopment action—on all sides to bring the whole place up to the high quality of Main Street itself. As that occurs, most everyone agreed that the inadequate downtown parking should be increased. Adjacent to downtown, the medical center continues to expand in a cramped location, and some people felt it needs additional facilities to provide a full range of medical services locally.

The Civic Center—and the condition of its immediate surroundings—are not up to local standards, and the city lacks an art museum and adequate venues for cultural activities in general.

Lack of sanitary sewer, and especially on the city's north side, was high on local residents' list of inadequate services. And, though people had the feeling it may be easy to get around in Enterprise, they were not satisfied with the condition of some streets and the lack of public transportation. They noted some insufficient road capacity and blind intersections in some areas, and a general lack of sidewalks and protected pedestrian crossings.

Outside Forces

There are factors not subject to local control—at county, area, state and national levels—that affect every community, each in its own way. That is certainly the case with Enterprise, which has Fort Rucker, home to US Army Aviation, located at its easterly doorstep and with facilities on the immediate north side of the city and a significant number of its military and civilian personnel and their families living, working and shopping in the community.

Almost as a demonstration of the scale of outside influences that could be visited upon Enterprise; the Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission's 2005 report was issued in the early stages of the local planning process. In that report, the commission recommended that Fort Rucker add some 1,800 military and civilian personnel.

Similarly, new industry announcements are a fairly common occurrence for Enterprise and the surrounding area. Certainly, not all of those to be employed locally as a result of such decisions will choose to live or shop in Enterprise. Nevertheless, out-of-area forces are an important factor for this community, which must be prepared with an opportunity-based plan for growth and development.

Enterprise is located close to the Gulf Coast and enjoys ready accessibility to Interstate Highway 10 and is served directly by US Highway 84 (due to be widened to four lanes to the east. This has attracted to Enterprise a significant number of retirees above and beyond those who may choose to retire in place and those who return to the city as a result of previous affiliation with Fort Rucker.

These growth factors have led to and will continue to fuel land development activity in the local area. Local residents are concerned about the impact of growth and development—and the influx of new residents—not only on the sense of community they enjoy, but the impact upon the city's land resources and physical environment, utilities such as water and sewer systems, civic and cultural facilities, schools and public safety forces.

Why People Choose to Live/Work/Invest in Enterprise

Location and accessibility are not the only opportunities afforded by Enterprise. When those at the Town Meeting were asked to share their own personal reasons for living, working or investing in Enterprise, the list grew quickly. Their responses can be organized into four groups.

First, Enterprise is a small city, and it has all the positive, personal attributes associated with that status—such things as strong personal values and a sense of idealism on the part of residents, and yet a relaxed attitude toward the pace of life.

Second, there is a sense of hometown pride and heritage that is quite evident here. People are not only friendly; they support one another across what in other communities could be neighborhood, racial and religious boundaries. There is a sense of service to one another that is evident in local businesses and institutions.

Third, not only is Enterprise well situated to take advantage of regional and national trends in investment, retirement and defense spending, it provides a high quality of life in a pleasant, clean environment with a gentle climate and provides an affordable, safe place in which to live, work and invest.

Finally, some residents reported moving to Enterprise because of their jobs, while others were born here or came here (and remain here) because they found it a good place to raise their families. Residents say they are supported by their churches and schools, and by the positive military presence nearby. Residents also report support and positive influence from a diverse array of neighbors who have come to Enterprise with experiences gained from living, working—or having been raised in—many other states as well as a large number of countries around the world.

Visions for Enterprise

Building from the discussions of assets, liabilities, outside influences and the reasons people are drawn to the city, the Town Meeting participants were asked to envision Enterprise as they would like it to be a decade or so from now. Following a few moments in which to think about those desired future conditions, each person was asked to share with the others one significant physical aspect of the future community that is absent from Enterprise as it exists today. The responses are organized into five types, but not according to priority.

First, local people want a comprehensive plan for the city that contains a global, overall strategy for achieving their visions of the future. In accord with this strategy, the city would utilize all its resources to create and seize a variety of opportunities. Enterprise would have legible, welcoming entrances and an improved image overall, including significant infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lands inside Boll Weevil Circle.

In general, development would be focused rather than scattered or sprawled along the main roads, and most commercial needs would be met locally. Residential growth would be channeled to balance expansion of the city to include the south and west. The significant urban forest now enjoyed by city residents would be enhanced. Downtown would continue to be upgraded to remain the heart of the community. Adjacent land uses would be compatible with one another. All this would require an expanded development management system with systematic code enforcement.

Second, Enterprise would be even easier to get around in. It would become a truly walkable city, with upgraded sidewalks within and between its neighborhoods and nearby commercial centers. Parks and recreation areas and schools would be interconnected by greenways and trails. Much of the city's traffic congestion would be resolved through selected road and street widening and vigorous access management on collectors and arterial routes. The city would be better connected to its trade area through widening of State Route 167 and US Highway 84. There would be public transportation opportunities.

Third, city facilities and services would be upgraded to lead rather than follow or react to growth and development. The sanitary sewer system would be improved and expanded to correct deficiencies on the north side, as well as serving the south and west sides of the city. The water system would be improved to increase storage capacity. City hall and the police and fire department's facilities would be expanded and upgraded as a result of a comprehensive review of their service and facility needs over the next decade. The current civic center would be replaced by a new conference center located centrally to encourage trade and activity in the heart of the community.

Fourth, there would be an increase in the number and variety of parks and recreation areas citywide accessible on foot to all parts of the city. There would be a citywide aquatic center and therapeutic recreation facilities. Enterprise would enjoy more points of recreation interest, places to go for family fun and people of all ages and abilities.

Fifth, as part of boosting the city's image as well as its content, Enterprise would have a staffed welcome center, strategically located to draw visitors deep into the heart of the city. Higher education would be expanded locally to include more education and training of local people to fill entry-level jobs.

Benchmarks for Testing the Vision

To sum up the results of the Town Meeting, participants were asked to offer a few benchmarks of success for plan implementation and to add a sense of priority to the next few years. Responses were straight to the point:

- Enterprise development will be guided by priorities that put people first.
- Those aspects of the community we value most will remain and be improved.
- Water and sanitary sewer service will be available in all parts of the city.
- There will be park and recreation facilities for all ages and interests.
- Enterprise will have many points of interest – a variety of places to go and do.
- Downtown will be revitalized and connected to its traditional edges.
- The now-vacant mills will be redeveloped as vital parts of the community.
- Enterprise will be truly walkable, with declining neighborhoods revitalized.
- There will be significant infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized property, both inside and along Boll Weevil Circle.

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The strategy for Enterprise is based on the strong value system of local residents and the positive attitudes and responses they shared with one another during the Town Meeting.

Major Elements of the Concept

Creating and seizing upon opportunities community-wide begins with the city core and the overall image of the city. The strategy builds on the value of the city's physical setting, and appropriately places commerce, industry and institutions in locations that will be accessible to the community and its trade areas. It accounts for the need to improve accessibility of all kinds and to protect the city's traditional streets while continuing to build networks. In addition, the strategy focuses attention on upgrading the city's sanitary sewer system and its water system, while it builds its civic and recreation facilities and expands its public safety facilities and services.

The development concept builds upon the citywide vision by enhancing the physical organization of the Enterprise with a series of activity centers that support, and are supported by, the city's neighborhoods. The various types of these activity centers—commercial, light industrial, civic, institutional and recreational—of this concept are intended to serve as magnets for activity and development to support the city core and the residential neighborhoods of Enterprise in ways that will positively affect the quality of life, the natural environment and the local and regional transportation networks.

[See attached Strategic Development Concept 2005 Map]

The major elements of the development concept are:

- An overall, global strategy that will guide planning and design for development and conservation of Enterprise.
- Enterprise will be a legible city—its edges and districts will be clear and visitors will be readily able to find their destinations. The gateways to the city will be well defined and the main corridors through town will reflect an appropriate overall image.
- Downtown, especially Main Street, will clearly be the acknowledged city center and home to its best retail and office addresses, as well as the civic heart of the community.
- Neighborhoods across the city will be planned, designed and built to provide a sense of place and focus. They will display the positive results of a high degree of interaction and communication among and between residents and their elected officials.
- The city will have a plan and program for annexation of territory adjacent to the city that supports its planned image, health safety and welfare.
- Development and conservation planning and design will be managed using an overall system of regulation and public investment in accord with the Comprehensive Plan.
- The city's commercial development will be organized mostly into activity centers at logical intersections of arterials and collector streets and along corridors designated for such uses. Access to these and all arterials and collectors will be managed carefully to conserve their capacity.
- Industrial developed will be directed primarily to existing industrial parks and toward redevelopment of sites used previously for industrial purposes rather than toward new, perimeter locations.
- Residential development will be encouraged toward vacant property and redevelopment sites within the city's ring road and toward the southern and western sides of the city to take advantage of existing infrastructure.
- The medical center will be encouraged and assisted in its expansion to serve the Enterprise trade area with state of the art medical services.
- Enterprise-Ozark Community College will be encouraged and assisted to expand to provide broader educational opportunities to students from the regional trade area with the goal of preparing people for entry-level job training and to encourage them to continue with higher education.
- Fort Rucker and its personnel will continue to be recognized and supported as an integral part of the enterprise community.
- The city's water and sanitary sewer systems will be upgraded to support growth and development in all planned areas of the community.
- City Hall and the facilities of the police and fire departments will be expanded to meet the needs of the growing population of the City of Progress.
- Arterial and collector streets will be upgraded to meet the needs for mobility, which will be balanced with the need for accessibility through careful management to conserve public resources.
- Regional highways will be upgraded to four lanes, including US 84 to Dothan and SR 167 to Troy.
- The quality and capacity of the city's street system will be upgraded through improvements to intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- The city's pedestrian network will be expanded through construction of sidewalks to provide access between neighborhoods and nearby shopping opportunities. In addition, a greenway and trail system to interconnect neighborhoods with the city's major

park and recreation facilities.

- The city's "green infrastructure," consisting of its park and recreation system, in combination with its lakes, ponds, streams and floodplains, augmented by major portions of its tree cover, will be conserved and respected by the development management system.
- The city's park and recreation system, including passive and active parks and outdoor recreation system, will be enlarged, expanded and focused on the needs of neighborhoods to meet the needs of the city's growing population. Improvements will include therapeutic recreation facilities and a citywide aquatic center.
- Enterprise will have a Conference and Civic Center to draw participants from the region to the heart of the community.

Conclusion

The development concept is designed to build on the spirit of the people of Enterprise, their history and their successes. The intent is to capitalize on the spirit of the city, to build upon its traditions embodied on Main Street and in its institutions in combination with the physical advantages of the city's location and setting. The concept gives physical expression to the citywide vision and provides a general, overall framework for the Land Use and Transportation elements as the next chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

