

# Chapter 1: Introduction



The City of Lincoln Comprehensive Plan presents a vision of what kind of community the City would like to be in the future and identifies the steps required to move toward that vision. The Plan provides information about the City's current conditions, long-term goals and objectives, and recommended implementation strategies. It addresses a wide range of issues, including land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, the preservation of historic and natural resources, and economic development.

As a long-term guide for the community, the Plan helps City leaders make decisions about the location, scale, and quality of new development; the improvement of neighborhoods and commercial areas; the revitalization of downtown and surrounding historic areas; the extension and upgrade of roads and utilities; and the future of the City's parks, public spaces, and natural areas.

This plan is adopted to set the City's growth and development policies for the next five years

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within a long term planning horizon of twenty years. The City Planning Commission expects to consider revisions to the plan, particularly at its next review in five years. In the meantime, this plan is meant to set the City on a course toward meeting its long-term vision as articulated in detail in *Chapter 2: Vision Goals*.

## **Value and Importance of a Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan is one of the most essential documents produced by a local government. Section 11-52-8 of the Code of Alabama prescribes that every community (planning commission) prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan to guide its future growth and development. This plan must be kept up to date; it is recommended that the planning commission review the plan at least once every five years. The Plan is important because both comprehensive and it is long term. It helps to coordinate most City activities by examining them all together at

one time - a comprehensive approach. In this way, transportation is coordinated with decisions on new development, which in turn can be accommodated by planned improvements to water and sewer service. At the same time valued historic and natural resources are identified and considered. Adopting and publishing a comprehensive plan communicates the City's desires and developmental policies to the public and state, federal and private agencies. A long-term view is necessary, so that short-term solutions to respond to a crisis do not preclude the City from reaching its long-term goals.

### **The Plan as a Policy Document**

It is important for citizens to realize that while the Plan is important, it is not a regulating document. Rather, it is a policy document used by the Planning Commission and the City Council to guide decisions about such issues as rezoning proposals, the location of new roads, investments in water and sewer improvements, and the development of parks. The Plan is implemented by the City through the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations, the City Code, the Capital Improvement Program, and the annual budget.

### **A Community-Based Comprehensive Plan**

To ensure the Plan reflected the community's ideology and guide for the future, the Planning Commission focused on reaching out and engaging residents by holding public input sessions (focus groups) once a month, for 6 months. The focus groups sessions occurred from January to June 2014. These focus groups were broken into eight different areas with 8 to 10 individual pre group.

- Historic Downtown
- Recreation and Senior Services
- Utilities
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Tourism
- Transportation
- Health Care

The roles of the focus groups were to aid in the development of goals, objectives and activities to be considered by the Planning Commission.

The consultant collaborated with other City departments during 2014 to update quantitative and qualitative data for the Planning Commission to review. In addition, the Planning Commission was conducting a review of their current development standards (zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations)

The schedule occurred as follows:

### **Need to fill-in the schedule dates**

## **Plan Organization**

This Plan is organized for the convenience of both the general reader and those with questions about detailed recommendations in specific topic areas. For the general reader, the plan includes an Executive Summary, then this Introduction (Chapter 1) and a presentation of the City’s Vision and Goals (Chapter 2). Following these opening chapters are the more detailed elements of the plan. Chapter 3 presents data on population and income to provide the Planning Context. Chapter 4 gives the overall review of the Future Land Use of Lincoln through an illustrative map and text. The Future Land Use Map illustrates the City’s general pattern of development and highlights areas where some degree of change is encouraged or anticipated. Following the Plan Framework are the chapters dealing with specific topic areas, referred to as “plan elements.” All Plan chapters are listed below:

- ❖ Chapter 1 Introduction
- ❖ Chapter 2 Vision & Goals
- ❖ Chapter 3 Planning Context
- ❖ Chapter 4 Future Land Use
- ❖ Chapter 5 Environmental (Natural Systems)
- ❖ Chapter 6 Recreation and Senior Services
- ❖ Chapter 7 Transportation
- ❖ Chapter 8 Public Utilities
- ❖ Chapter 9 Economic Development
- ❖ Chapter 10 Tourism
- ❖ Chapter 11 Historic Downtown
- ❖ Chapter 12 Health Care
- ❖ Chapter 13 Community Engagement & Collaboration
- ❖ Chapter 14 Implementation



Historic Downtown Lincoln

The order in which the plan elements are presented does not imply any priority or order of importance. It is important for users of the plan to recognize that all the elements are interrelated. Each element of the plan covered in Chapters 5 – 12 contains one or more long-term goals, some of the same goals as listed in Chapter 2, as well as more detailed objectives and strategies designed to implement the goals. The strategies are the most detailed recommendations of the plan and may include recommendations for specific projects, programs, initiatives, and investments that the City might undertake.

Although each individual strategy is important in achieving the vision, it is necessary to identify priorities and responsibilities for early implementation.

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