

LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY PLAN
SMITHVILLE, MISSISSIPPI
AUGUST 2011



Prior to the tornado, Smithville was a small, full-service town. It had character and characters. Many of the buildings along Main Street stood since the early 20th century; old brick, two-story structures surrounded by large magnolia and oak trees. Alongside the businesses were two white wooden antebellum-style homes. There were two parks within the city, a playground adjacent to the Community Center and a Little League baseball field where the lights were on all summer.

There were two diners along Main Street (a major highway thoroughfare) where local men met for morning coffee and where it was hard to find a seat most any night of the week. That's where every arena of life was discussed, amid the array of local football memorabilia that covered the interior walls. It's where you ordered everything from ice cream to fish plates and invited your friends to sit at the table with you. The tornado virtually destroyed the entire Mississippi Highway 25 Main Street area, leaving only a small spattering of salvageable structures.

- A Smithville Resident

Smithville Long-Term Community Recovery Vision Statement

Smithville is the strong and resilient home of family, friends and neighbors with a long history and an exciting future, shaped by education, fitness, faith and community spirit.

LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY PLAN

SMITHVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

AUGUST 2011



TOWN of SMITHVILLE

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Ruth Whitehead

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Incorporated 1949

August 12, 2011

To My Friends and Neighbors in Smithville,

On April 27, 2011, our small town was ravaged by an EF5 tornado. The destruction was complete and left us reeling, trying desperately to make sense of a senseless occurrence. We refuse to see this as a stumbling block, however, and instead will use this as an opportunity to springboard into the future. We are resilient and determined to return—stronger than ever.

For the past ten weeks, we have been fortunate to work with FEMA's Long Term Community Recovery team. Drawing on community members to form sector groups, friends and neighbors have met weekly to plan our recovery in five areas: Education, Community Services, Economic Development, Housing, and Infrastructure. The creative exchange of ideas and devotion to rebuilding have been inspiring and have reinforced to me the quality of people we have who reside here in Smithville. Our FEMA facilitators have patiently and expertly guided us through the initial stages of rebuild planning. We are so grateful for their time and dedication.

The people of Smithville and Monroe County have risen to the opportunity given to us on April 27. We have a recovery plan in place and the enthusiasm of an entire county, some may say, a nation, behind us. I express my humble gratitude to each member of the community who has contributed to this process. I look forward to seeing our Plan in action. It is with great pleasure that I pledge my support for this effort and look forward to a full recovery for the town of Smithville.

Sincerely,

Gregg Kennedy
Mayor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>How to Use This Document</i>	
<i>Long-Term Community Recovery</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Process</i>	
<i>Milestones</i>	
<i>Recovery Projects</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Infrastructure</i>	
<i>Economic Development</i>	
<i>Community Services</i>	
<i>Housing</i>	
<i>Education</i>	
<i>The Way Forward</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Appendices</i>	<i>61</i>



INTRODUCTION

In the late afternoon of April 27, 2011, an EF5 tornado roared up Highway 25 through Smithville, Mississippi, leaving in its wake a swath of destruction a half-mile wide and five miles long. In seconds, this small town, with its rich heritage of faith, family and friendship, was leveled. Most of the homes, the town hall, police station, post office, grocery store, four churches, the much prized school and all but one local business ceased to exist. Seventeen precious lives were lost.

The community spirit, the love that Smithville's residents have for their town, however, was not destroyed. They responded with charity and concern for one another. Arising from their sense of place and of history, they spent part of the next day resetting the tombstones in the town's cemetery even as they cleared rubble from their own homes.

President Obama declared a Federal Emergency Declaration in Monroe County on April 29, 2011. At Governor Haley Barbour's request, a Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) team from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) arrived in Smithville in mid-May to assist in the planning of the recovery effort.

In the weeks following the tornado, community residents came forward to lead a long-term planning process that created a vision for Smithville's future and paves a way forward to achieve that vision. Facilitated by the LTCR team, residents formed five sector committees to tackle the daunting task of recovery: Economic Development, Infrastructure, Education, Community Services, and Housing. Each committee set goals for their work and developed a range of projects that they will undertake to reach those goals.

This Long-Term Community Recovery Plan describes the involvement of a great many community residents in envisioning Smithville's future and the work of the five sector committees in creating projects that will help achieve that vision. It is not the end of a process. It is a snapshot of a point in time in Smithville's recovery, describing what has gone before and pointing to the work still ahead.



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

At the heart of the plan is a simple guiding principle, one that arose through many discussions among Smithville residents: keep the things that have made Smithville such a wonderful place to live, work and enjoy life; build upon the strengths of the community and use the tornado to lead Smithville into a hometown for future generations.

Unlike a traditional planning document that presents broad and general guidance to a community, the Long -Term Community Recovery Plan is an action-oriented menu of key projects intended to be used for making critical decisions about next steps, about funding and about resource allocation during the implementation phase of the rebuilding process.

This plan is a guideline, not a set of instructions. Specifics of the projects here will evolve considerably as more details become known and circumstances change. However, while it is important to remain flexible, it is equally important to remain consistent with the community's vision and the overall principles in this recovery plan.

Funding will be essential to a real and concrete recovery. While Smithville officials and residents will be the primary users of this plan, the document will also be helpful to state and federal agencies, private foundations and companies whose financial support will make the projects a reality.

The feasibility of each project within the plan depends on the:

- Continued commitment of the community
- Active involvement of a project champion
- Availability of required funds

Projects that satisfy these requirements are identified in the plan with a symbol.

Legend for Project Feasibility



Commitment of the Community



Involvement of a Project Champion



Availability of Required Funds

LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY

Process	7
Milestones	8



Smithville is the strong and resilient home of family, friends and neighbors with a long history and an exciting future, shaped by education, fitness, faith and community spirit.

SMITHVILLE
CORP. LIMIT

WELCOME
TO
SMITHVILLE

ENGINE

LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY Process

When the Long-Term Community Recovery team first arrived in Smithville, they asked around to discover who the community, civic, social and institutional leaders were. They spoke with pastors, the directors of social service agencies, business leaders, community opinion leaders, elected officials and others. One conversation led to others. Team members were careful to reach leaders in every constituency within the community.

These initial interviews were unstructured conversations, although certain information was sought in each. The purpose was to build a picture of the relationships, the perceptions and the dynamics at work within the community.

There are three opinions held by residents of Smithville about the recovery effort. Some want very much for Smithville to be restored to exactly as it was before April 27th. Some hope to make some improvements to the facilities and amenities, but believe that major changes could very well destroy the hometown feel of Smithville. Still others see the disaster as an opportunity for new thinking about how the town should rebuild.

From the initial interviews, recommendations were made to the Mayor as he convened a group of key leaders, both within and outside the community, to form an Advisory Committee that would oversee the recovery planning process. The first meeting of the Advisory Committee was on June 1, 2011 and they met periodically through the planning process.

At its first meeting, the Advisory Committee identified the five sector committees and set a plan and timeline for their work. They established committees for five recovery sectors being Economic Development, Housing, Education, Infrastructure and Community Services. Each committee met very soon after and, facilitated by a member of the LTCR team, engaged in a visioning exercise that would guide their work over the following ten weeks.

The sector committees met on a weekly basis. Their experience, expertise and knowledge of the community shaped the primary objective of creating goals that would help achieve the vision of the community. Projects were developed that would help reach these goals. The result of that work is presented later in this Plan.

LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY Milestones

As the Advisory Committee and the Sector committees were engaged in their work, the LTCR team facilitated a number of significant events to further the planning process. These key milestones informed the work of the committees, reached out to and engaged the residents of Smithville, brought outside resources into the planning process and created communications mechanisms to keep the planning and implementation of the plans as transparent and visible as possible.

Carl Small Town Center, Mississippi State University, Wednesday, June 7, 2011

A representative of Carl Small Town Center (CSTC), a research and design laboratory at Mississippi State University, joined the Infrastructure Sector committee. CSTC provided technical assistance and was looking for ways to be of service. The relationship resulted in a commitment to Smithville of a fourth year studio class designing options for Mississippi Highway 25 and the municipal building complex beginning in September 2011.

Small Business Recovery and Development Workshop, Thursday, June 9, 2011

The Economic Development Sector committee hosted a Small Business Workshop in the Smithville Community Center Modular. The objectives of the workshop were to define shared concerns and opportunities for small/ community business recovery, resolve and locate answers to immediate shared questions and begin to establish a forum for small/ community businesses. Attending were the Smithville Mayor and business leaders, representatives from the Small Business Development Center, SBA and Three Rivers Planning and Development District as well as local banks.

Community Information Meeting, Monday, June 13, 2011

The Smithville Long-Term Community Recovery Advisory Committee hosted a community information meeting at the Monroe County Government Complex. More than 200 attendees packed the room to hear representatives from each of the sector committees describe the scope of their work and the initial directions in which they were moving. Residents were also invited to write comments about each sector on blank sheets labeled 'Strengths/Weaknesses' and 'Challenges/Opportunities'. These comments were incorporated in the goal-setting of each committee.

A major concern voiced by the community was uncertainty about the future of Mississippi Highway 25 which could either be diverted around the town or be widened and come through the town in the present location. The Mayor and community leaders addressed this and other issues with as much information as was, at that time, available.



*Photograph of Community Information Meeting on
June 13, 2011*



Screen Capture of the Smithville Recovery Website

Recovery Website Established, Monday, June 27, 2011

Early in the recovery planning process, it became clear that, since the community was so widely dispersed, living with relatives or others outside Smithville, an electronic communications mechanism would be extremely useful. At each event, email addresses were collected and compiled into a central database, but a broader outreach effort was required. A member of the LTCR team created a simple website based on a free Internet service. General recovery information was provided, and each sector committee had a section on the site on which they could display their goals and projects. The sectors could post the notes from previous meetings and agendas for upcoming meetings as well.

Greensburg, Peer to Peer Recovery Workshop, Tuesday, June 28, 2011

As part of the LTCR program, Smithville and State of Mississippi officials traveled to Greensburg, Kansas, to learn how town officials there recovered from a similar disaster. In May 2007, a tornado destroyed more than 90% of the small rural community. Greensburg's recovery has been so successful that it has become a model for others. Attendees included town officials from other current disasters, including those in Alabama and Missouri.

Smithville's Mayor and others learned what can be accomplished using innovative thought and careful planning. The conference included a narrated bus tour of Greensburg recovery sites, including the Kiowa County School complex, a group lunch at the Arts Center, and group discussions at the Kiowa County Memorial Hospital (KCMH).



*Photograph from Visit to Greensburg, KS on
June 28, 2011*



*Photograph of Housing Open House on
July 8, 2011*

Housing Open House, Saturday, July 8, 2011

The Housing Sector Committee hosted an open house at the Monroe County Government Complex. Twenty three exhibits were staffed by private vendors and by Mississippi and Federal government agencies. More than 75 residents interested in rebuilding homes lost in the tornado gathered information and made contacts that will benefit them as they rebuild.

LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY Milestones

Funding Summit, Tuesday, July 19

At the request of the Mayor, the Three Rivers Planning and Development District, Inc. hosted a meeting at their offices attended by potential funding agencies. They came together to share information about their processes and the requirements for them to aid Smithville in its recovery. The meeting was remarkable in the breadth of immediate commitment that agencies made to Smithville.

Agencies attending included: the U.S. Economic Development Administration; the Appalachian Regional Commission; the Mississippi Development Authority; the Three Rivers Planning and Development District; the Create Foundation; and USDA Rural Development.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration committed to assist with public water and public sanitary sewer improvements. The Appalachian Regional Commission committed to fund and provide other technical assistance for the development of a comprehensive plan and the funding of a recovery manager. The Mississippi Development Authority pledged to cover a portion of the Town of Smithville's disaster recovery costs. The Three Rivers Planning and Development District offered the technical services of an in-house CPA. The Create Foundation offered to serve as the 501(c)(3) funding agent for Smithville. USDA Rural Development suggested a possible grant for development of a business incubator.

Design Open House, Thursday, July 21

The Design Open House was held from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Monroe County Government Complex. The walls of the meeting room were covered with pictures, images and architectural drawings of possible

town facilities, amenities, neighborhoods and housing options. The projects of each sector committee were also displayed on wall charts. Community leaders and LTCR staff were on hand to engage residents as they strolled from one display to another.

Attendees were provided with sticky dots (colored adhesive labels) to show their preference for projects, concepts and images. They could affix a green dot indicating approval or a red dot indicating disapproval. Though unscientific, the resulting dot-covered walls gauged public opinion on the direction of the recovery plans. Additionally, attendees were invited to list on a blank sheet those businesses that were most important to them. Some of the top important businesses for Smithville were: a grocery store; the post office; a funeral home; a medical clinic; small factories; a hardware store; and a café.



Photograph from Design Open House on July 21, 2011



Screen Capture of the New Smithville Website

New Smithville Website Established, Monday, July 25

Since the tornado destroyed much of Smithville's informal communications avenues, a well-constructed website became necessary for the sharing of clear and constantly updated information. In addition, national attention drawn to the town provides an opportunity for the Internet to become a vehicle for fundraising to aid in the recovery. The Town Council approved the new website design and a hosting service that enables non-programmers to update the site. Town staff members add information and images frequently to the site.

John C. Stennis Institute of Government, Friday, July 29

The Community Services committee created a project to conduct a community-wide needs assessment. It was envisioned initially as assessing only the need for social services and health and fitness amenities. It was seen as a necessary precondition to some of the other projects of the committee. As other sector committees learned of the project, they asked that the assessment be extended to discover needs in economic development, education and housing.

Since the scope of the project had increased dramatically, the project's champion invited representatives from the Stennis Institute at Mississippi State University to meet and determine whether the Institute could conduct the assessment that Smithville needs. As a result of that meeting, the Institute agreed to provide a plan for their involvement.



SMITHVILLE HARDWARE CO.



GENERATORS
PRESSURE WASHERS
SALES & SERVICE

COUNTRY
CLIPPER
ZERO TURN MOWERS

KOHLER

DOLMAR
Power Products
Service Dealer



RECOVERY PROJECTS

Infrastructure	14
Economic Development	26
Community Services	36
Housing	46
Education	54



Smithville is the strong and resilient home of family, friends and neighbors with a long history and an exciting future, shaped by education, fitness, faith and community spirit.

Infrastructure Vision and Goals

A town's infrastructure is the system of structures and facilities such as roads, water and sewer lines, power, phone and cable lines that provide the basic services necessary for day-to-day life in a community. They often go unnoticed until there is an interruption of service.

The tornado damaged much of Smithville's infrastructure. The town water plant was damaged restricting the public water supply. The available service leaked from supply lines to damaged structures. The sanitary sewer treatment ponds were clogged with debris and shut down. Power poles along Mississippi Highway 25 and throughout the town were damaged or destroyed, interrupting electrical power. Natural gas leaked from services to damaged and destroyed structures. Mobile phone service was limited or unavailable due to a reduction in coverage from damaged towers.

While many of those services were quickly repaired, some repairs still need to be made. There is opportunity to improve the infrastructure in Smithville during the rebuilding process.

The Infrastructure Sector Committee came to consensus on a vision to "create a positive environment for recovery and development." They identified three goals to help achieve that vision. These goals are:

- Understand and support community development (including both residential and commercial/ industrial development)
- Identify existing land use and infrastructure (including available land for development, current infrastructure capacity, and contact information)
- Identify a planning working group and process for developing and adopting a Comprehensive Plan and a Zoning Ordinance

To reach these goals the Infrastructure Committee identified the following projects.



Infrastructure Project

Comprehensive Plan

Description



In the interest of Smithville's long-term recovery, community leaders identified the need to develop a comprehensive plan establishing long range goals and objectives for the Town of Smithville. A comprehensive plan is a document that defines public policy guidelines related to transportation, utilities, land use, recreation, and housing. Comprehensive plans typically encompass a broad range of topics over a long-term horizon.

The proposed Smithville comprehensive plan would incorporate and expand upon the vision, goals, and projects of the five recovery sectors (Community Services, Economic Development, Education, Housing, and Infrastructure) established during the Long-Term Community Recovery process. The goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan would be implemented in a number of ways, including the proposed development and adoption of a zoning ordinance.

Champions

- Mayor and Board of Aldermen
- Town of Smithville Zoning Commission

Resources

- Mayor and Board of Alderman
- Town of Smithville Zoning Commission (appointed committee)
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) (potential funding resource)
- Mississippi Chapter, American Planning Association (MS-APA)
- Consultant for Comprehensive Plan (TBD)

Action Items

- Appointment of a Town of Smithville Zoning Commission (completed June 2011)
- Mayor and Aldermen authorized a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Comprehensive Plan on August 2
- Development and adoption of a Comprehensive Plan
- Development and adoption of a zoning ordinance and land use map to implement the Comprehensive Plan

Cost

Costs for development of a comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and land use map can vary greatly based upon the desired level of complexity. Suggested cost range for the proposed comprehensive plan is \$30,000 to \$50,000.

Timeline

It is anticipated that the development of the comprehensive plan will take 12 to 18 months.

Infrastructure Project

Existing Land Use and Damage Information

Description



The goal of this project is to develop a map documenting and illustrating land uses prior to the tornadoes. Initial paper mapping completed during the LTCR process will be further refined and finalized subject to County Assessor information and public input. Future additions may include tornado damage information and areas of interest for future expansion. The final land use map will be converted into a GIS compatible map that will be used in the comprehensive planning process and development of zoning regulations.

Champion

- Scott Morgan,
Chief, Smithville Fire Department

Resources

- Town of Smithville Utilities
- Monroe County Tax Assessor's Office

Action Items

- Complete initial paper mapping
(completed in July)
- Review and refine land use information
based on County Assessor information
- Collect tornado damage information from
local knowledge, aerial photography, and
utility billing data
- Convert information into appropriate GIS
layers

Cost

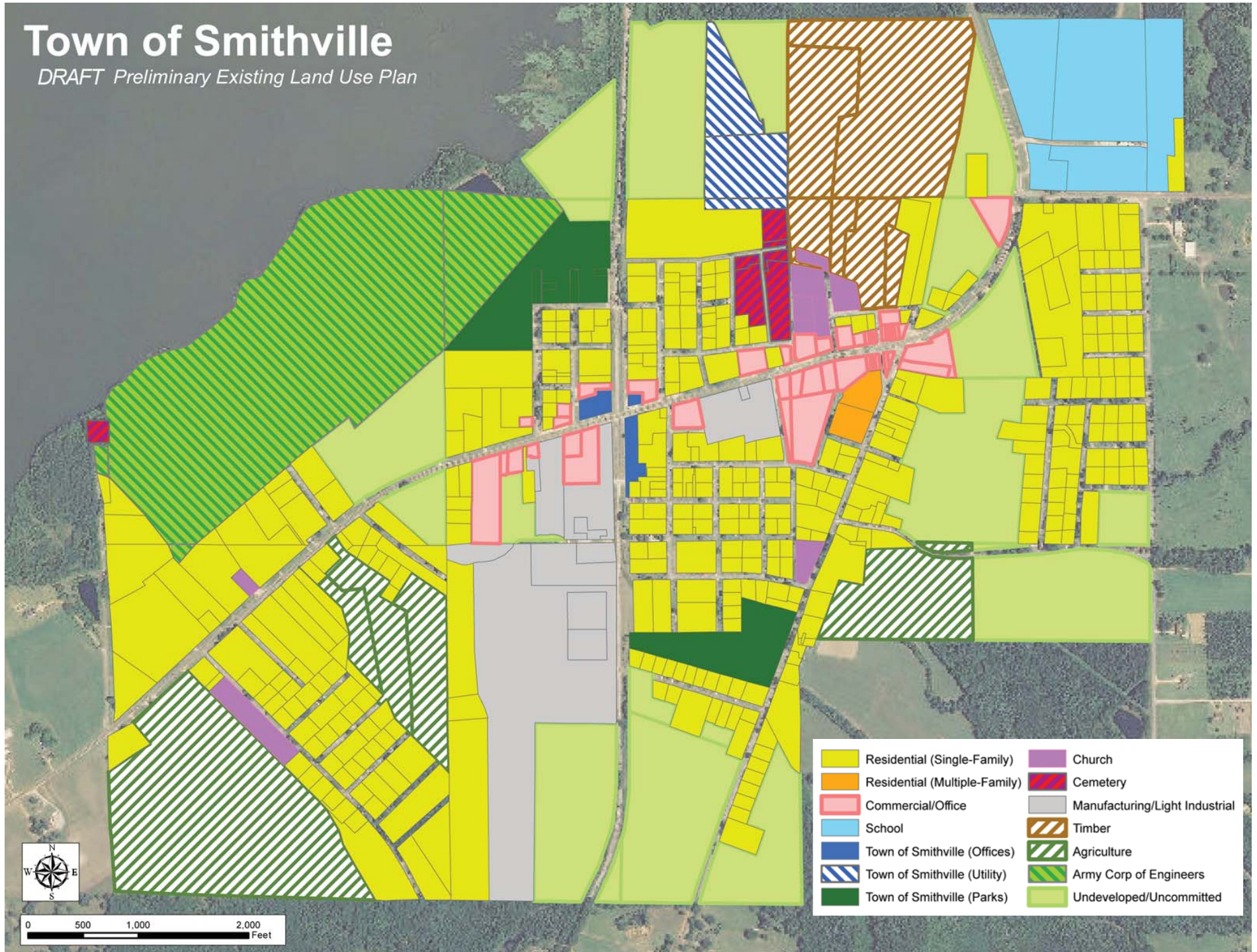
Cost estimates for acquisition and conversion of data into a GIS compatible format have not been determined. Provided a "base map" is available, the development of a land use and damage layer may be in the range of \$1,000 to \$5,000. This is based on a rough estimate of 10 to 50 hours of GIS technical assistance at a cost of \$100.00 per hour.

Timeline

The initial capture of land use information prior to the tornadoes was accomplished during the LTCR process. Review and refinement based on additional information may begin immediately and could be completed in one (1) to two (2) weeks. The collection of tornado damage information may begin immediately and should not take more than two (2) to four (4) weeks. Conversion of information to a GIS layer could be completed in three (3) to six (6) months.

Town of Smithville

DRAFT Preliminary Existing Land Use Plan



Infrastructure Project

Main Street Smithville

Description



The Main Street Smithville project is an effort to ensure that the proposed expansion of the Mississippi Highway 25 corridor (also known as the Main Street corridor), and the proposed development of a municipal building within it, presents the best possible image of the Town of Smithville. These efforts may include managing the improvements and configuration of the Mississippi Highway 25 expansion, establishing a clearly defined vision for the design of downtown Smithville, and developing a schematic design of a municipal building to be built along the corridor.

Champions

- Leah Faulk Kemp, Assistant Director, Carl Small Town Center, Mississippi State University
- Tim Coker, Assistant Chief, Smithville Fire Department

Resources

- School of Architecture, Mississippi State University
- Carl Small Town Center
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) (potential funding resource)

Action Items

- Transition from Long-Term Community Recovery process to the Carl Small Town Center fall studio class
- Connect Infrastructure Sector committee to the Carl Small Town Center fall studio class
- Assist with successful completion of design studio
- Further develop and formalize Main Street corridor plan



*Infrastructure Sector Group meeting with Carl Small Town - August 3, 2011
(photograph by Megan Bean, Mississippi State University)*

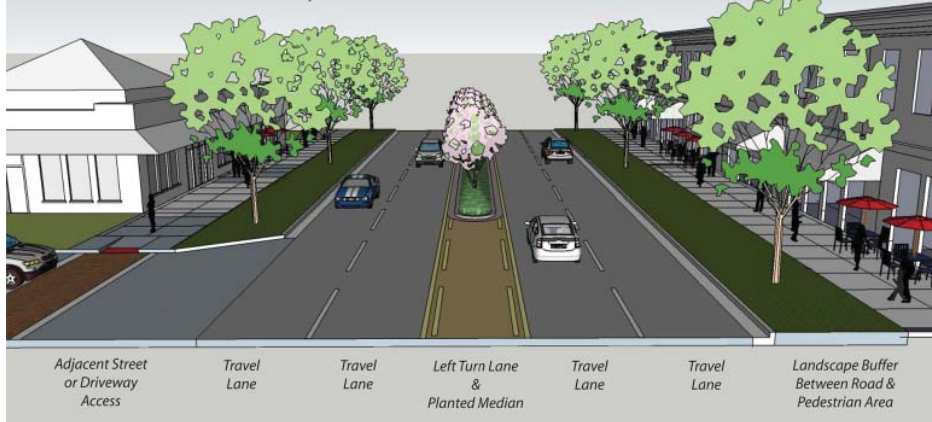
Cost

\$35,000

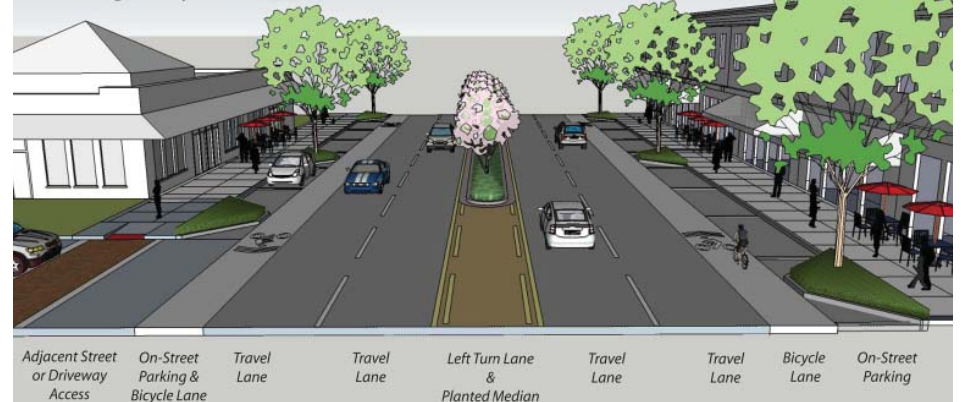
Timeline

Beginning in the Fall of 2011, technical assistance will be provided by a fourth year architectural design studio from the School of Architecture at Mississippi State University. Scope and timeline for the studio are currently being developed. Following the completion of the design studio, the Town of Smithville may seek to further develop and formalize the concepts, designs and ideas into a more formal corridor plan for managing public and private development along the Mississippi Highway 25 corridor. It also might be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan to be developed over the next 12 to 18 months.

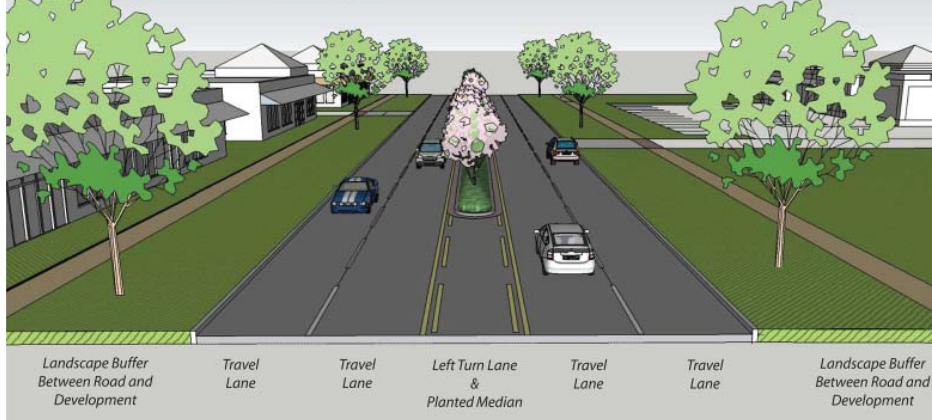
Denser Commercial Development



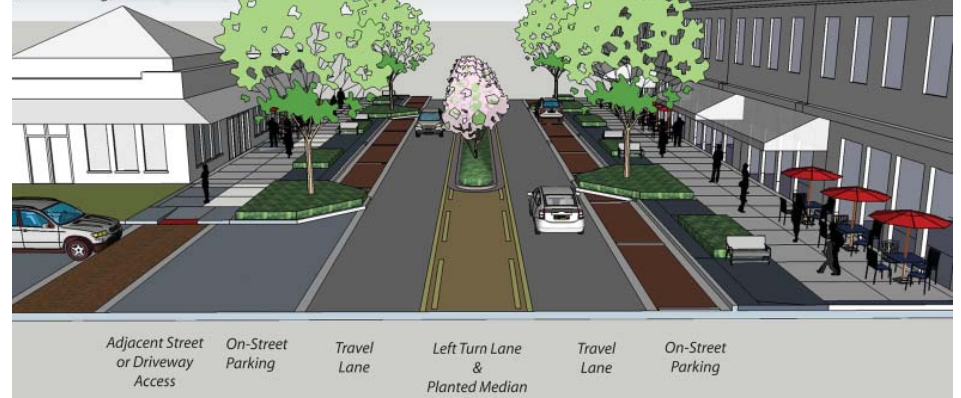
*Denser Commercial Development
(With Parking and Bicycle Lanes)*



Less Dense Commercial Development



*Denser Commercial Development
(With Parking)*



*Potential Mississippi Highway 25 Design Concepts
Based on Preliminary Information*

Infrastructure Project

Development of Zoning Regulations

Description



Prior to the tornado of April 27, 2011, the Town of Smithville had never adopted building and zoning regulations. Land use restrictions consisted of restrictive covenants in platted subdivisions, an ordinance addressing mobile homes, and minimal restrictions as set by state law.

During the disaster recovery process, community leaders identified the need to better manage development activity. Specific areas of interest included regulation of mobile/manufactured homes, establishment of building setbacks, minimum requirements for exterior brick or masonry, and establishment of building codes. The project is to develop a zoning ordinance and related land use map and to provide for its administration, enforcement and amendment, for the purpose of informing and managing development activity within the Town of Smithville.

Champions

- Gene Voyles, Chairman, Infrastructure Sector Committee
- Sam Griffie, Attorney, Town of Smithville

Resources

- Mayor and Board of Aldermen
- Town of Smithville Zoning Commission (appointed committee)
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) (potential funding resource)
- Mississippi Chapter, American Planning Association (MS-APA)
- Consultant for zoning regulations (to be selected)

Action Items

- Appoint a Town of Smithville Zoning Commission (completed June 21)
- Train Smithville Zoning Commission (planned for August 9)
- Develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan
- Develop and adopt a zoning ordinance and land use map to implement the Comprehensive Plan

Cost

Costs for development of a comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and land use map can vary greatly based upon desired level of complexity. Suggested cost range for the proposed comprehensive plan is \$30,000 to \$60,000. Suggested cost range for the proposed zoning ordinance and land use map is \$30,000 to \$50,000.

Timeline

The State of Mississippi requires that a municipality adopting a zoning ordinance do so in accordance with a comprehensive plan. It is anticipated that the development of the comprehensive plan will take 12 to 18 months. The development of the zoning ordinance and related land use map could occur concurrently with development of the comprehensive plan.

Existing Infrastructure Map

Description



In the days following the tornado, the town engineer began mapping infrastructure facilities in the damaged area of Smithville. After assessing this information, the Infrastructure Sector Committee proposed the development of a comprehensive Existing Infrastructure Map (EIM) for the protection of existing infrastructure during economic and community development recovery activities.

The EIM will be developed in a Geographic Information System (GIS) so that it will be readily available and usable by Town Officials. It will include information on parcels, surface water, road, railroad, storm sewer, public water, public sewer, cable, electric, gas, and telecommunication systems. In the long term, a fully developed EIM will serve to inform decisions related to development, housing, and community services, as well as planning in the short and long term.

Champion

- Ken L. Smith, Jr.,
Operations Supervisor, ATMOS Energy

Resources

- Town of Smithville Utilities
- Town Engineer (Owen & White, Inc.)
- Smithville Telephone Company
- Monroe County Electric Power Association
- ATMOS Energy
- Mississippi one-call system
- Mississippi Automated Resources Information System (MARIS)

Action Items

- Determine map format and develop “base map”
- Convert existing mapped information into identified format
- Incorporate all available and compatible utility information
- Acquire and/or convert Smithville Utility information
- Ensure local access to information (equipment, training)
- Explore opportunities with the Mississippi one-call system and the Mississippi Automated Resources Information System (MARIS).

Cost

The anticipated project cost for technical assistance to incorporate infrastructure information into a GIS compatible format is \$46,340. Training and equipment costs for local access need to be determined.

Timeline

The initial capture of utility information began in the days following the tornadoes. Incorporation of available and compatible information, exploration of opportunities, local training and acquisition of equipment may begin immediately then continue on an as-needed basis. A more complete acquisition and/or conversion of infrastructure information should be completed within 24 months.

Infrastructure Project

Public Water System Improvements

Description



The residents and businesses in and around the Town of Smithville are served by two public water systems. Within the municipality boundaries, public water is provided by the Town of Smithville Water Systems; outside the municipal boundaries, public water is provided by a Smithville rural water system.

The goal of this project is to increase capacity and improve the reliability of both systems by adding a 200 gpm water well to the Town of Smithville water system and a 200 gpm water well to the Smithville rural system. Increased capacity would also allow room for increased economic development.

Champions

- P.R. (Randy) Hollis, P.E.,
Engineer, Town of Smithville
- Tim Coker,
Assistant Chief, Smithville Fire Department

Resources

- USDA Rural Development
(potential funding resource)
- Mississippi Development Authority
- Town of Smithville
- Economic Development Administration
(potential funding resource)



Action Items

- Identify and secure funding
- Prepare invitation to bid for project design and construction

Cost

Estimated costs to prepare an invitation to bid, design and construction are \$271,417.

Timeline

A detailed time frame has not been developed for each project, but a total span of 24 months would cover all of the work that would include design, bid phase, and construction.

Sanitary Sewer Renovation

Description



The Town of Smithville's public sanitary sewer system has a treatment capacity of 250,000 gallons per day; it routinely runs about half of that capacity. During rain events, rainwater intrusion into the sanitary sewer system dramatically increases flows. During the "wet" months of the year, increased flows due to rainwater intrusion can exceed the sanitary sewer system's rated capacity, which can have serious environmental and regulatory repercussions.

In 2010, the Town of Smithville completed a renovation to the sanitary sewer system in the southern part of town, which greatly reduced the flows from rainfall. The Town had applied for another grant for renovation to the sanitary sewer system in the eastern part of town. The grant application was in order and moving forward until all of the records were lost in the tornadoes.

This project is to continue the renovation of the eastern and central portions of the Town of Smithville's public sanitary sewer system in order to protect treatment capacity by reducing rainwater intrusion.

Champion

- P.R. (Randy) Hollis, P.E.,
Engineer, Town of Smithville

Resources

- Economic Development Administration
(potential funding resource)
- Mississippi Department of
Environmental Quality
- Town of Smithville

Action Items

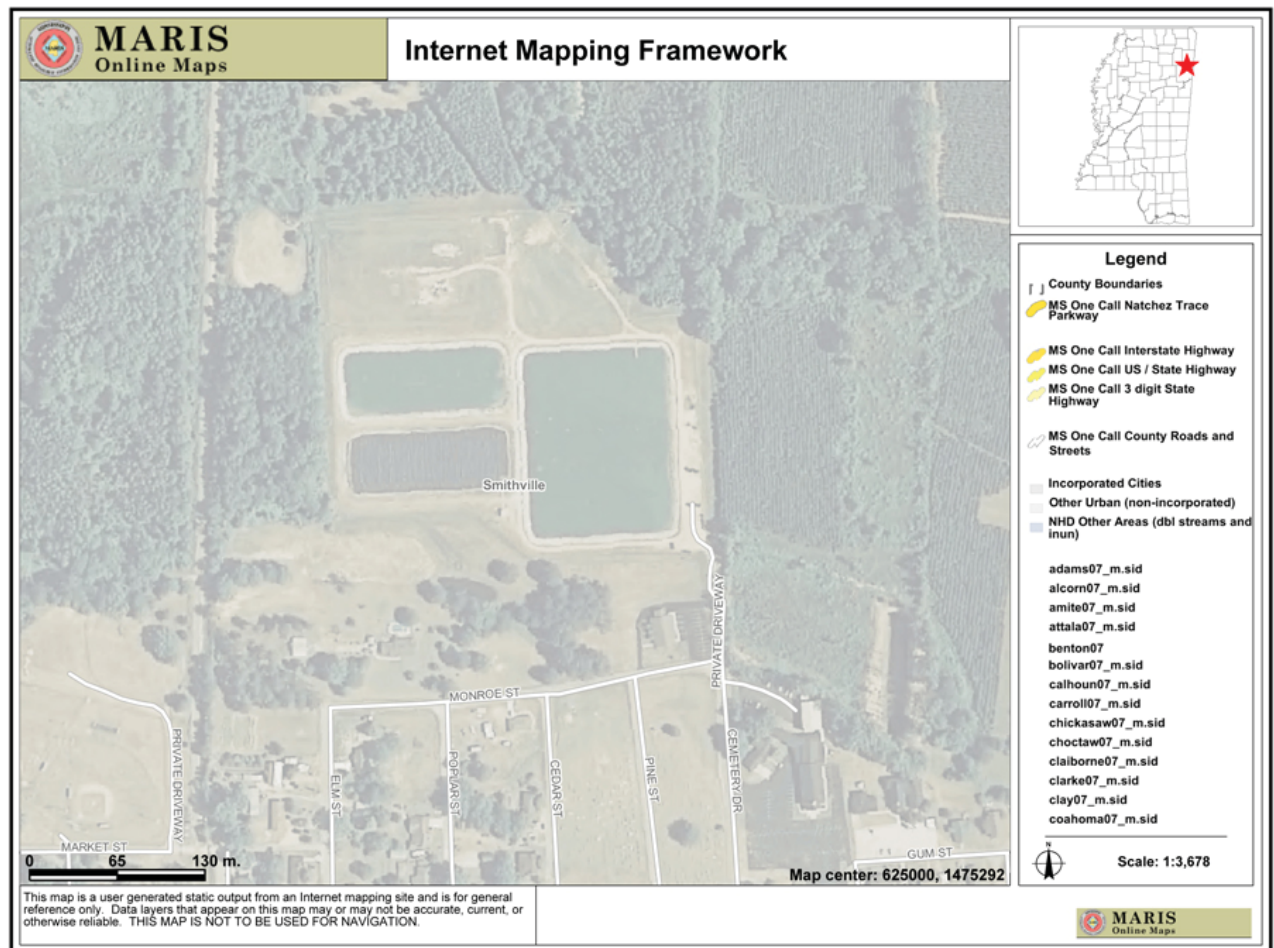
- Identify and secure funding
- Prepare invitation to bid for project design and construction

Cost

Estimated costs to prepare an invitation to bid, design and construction are \$836,972.

Timeline

A detailed time frame has not been developed for each project, but a total span of 24 months would cover all of the work that would include design, bid phase, and construction.



Infrastructure Project

Fiber to the Home

Description



The Smithville Telephone Company is in the process of replacing copper telephone lines with glass fiber cables within the 95 square mile service area certified by the Mississippi Public Service Commission, outside the Town of Smithville's boundaries. The \$7.2 million effort is funded by the American Resource and Recovery Act, and administered by the Rural Utilities Service.

The proposed recovery project will integrate with this current project to extend optical fiber connections to all homes and businesses within the Town of Smithville. It will require additional funds of approximately \$2.5 million. When complete, each home or business will have its current copper cables completely replaced with glass fibers, granting access to the highest speed Internet services available anywhere. There exists no other alternative that provides data speeds as fast as fiber.

Champion

- Roger Thompson, President, Smithville Telephone Company

Resources

- Smithville Telephone Company
- Mississippi Public Service Commission
- USDA Rural Development (potential funding resource)

Action Items

- Obtain assistance with identifying funding sources and grant writing services
- Develop detailed project cost estimates and timeline
- Secure funding for bid preparation and construction

Cost

Initial estimates for fiber throughout Smithville are \$2.5 million.

Timeline

Extension of the fiber connections to all homes and businesses within the Town of Smithville is achievable within a three-(3) to five-(5) year timeframe. No significant obstacles or challenges have been identified for the project. Detailed project timelines will be developed in the course of grant funding process.



Economic Development Vision and Goals

The tornado destroyed nearly all businesses in Smithville, both large and small. Some Smithville businesses have already rebuilt at least in temporary facilities. However, as of August 2011, the majority have not. It is important that Smithville's businesses rebuild quickly and that healthy economy be reestablished.

Recognizing this, the Economic Development Sector Committee decided on the following goals:

1. Bring back pre-tornado businesses
2. Recruit new businesses
3. Improve the overall economy of Smithville and Monroe County

What follows are the projects the committee deemed to be the next steps necessary to ensure that the Smithville economy returns to a healthy and vibrant environment for all Smithville residents. Moving forward, the Economic Development Sector Committee has agreed to transition itself into an ongoing Economic Development Organization (EDO) for the Town of Smithville. As the group responsible for the ongoing health and growth of the Smithville economy, the group will become the primary liaison with national, state, region and local level EDOs in accomplishing the goals above.



Bring Back the Pre-Tornado Businesses to Smithville

Description



The tornado swept through Smithville in a matter of minutes and took all but two businesses with it. A few businesses have been able to continue in temporary locations while others are planning permanent rebuilding efforts. Some are hesitant to return because of the uncertainty around being able to sell products with so many of the residents, potential customers being gone. The Economic Development Committee has begun outreach to the pre-tornado businesses in an attempt to understand if they will be returning and/or if there are significant barriers to their return. The committee will work with the pre-tornado businesses to identify solutions for bringing them back to Smithville.

Champions

- Brad Stevens

Resources

See Appendix Item No. 4 - Resource List for Economic Development Projects.

Action Items

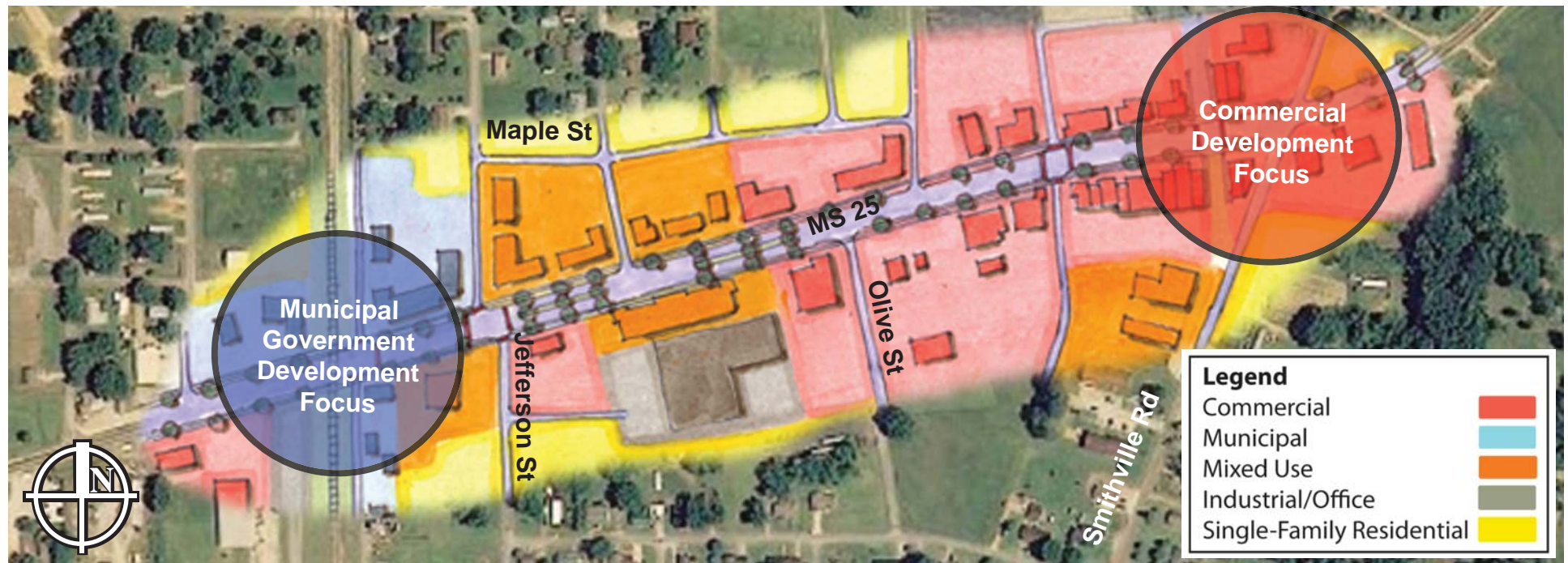
- Maintain business inventory from the Town's Occupational License data base
- Establish contact with the businesses and survey them about their intentions and roadblocks to their returning to Smithville
- Remove roadblocks

Cost

There is no cost associated with this project.

Timeline

Now and on-going



Potential Downtown Corridor Land Use Concept

Not to Scale

Economic Development Project

Establish Business Development Assistance Program

Description



This program is designed to develop an organized plan that will help establish a stable business environment for Smithville businesses to grow. The goal is to open channels of communication with Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) to gain access to any and all available economic development tools from the national, state, region and local levels.

This Business Development Assistance Program will facilitate strong businesses by introducing Best Management Practices (BMP), establishing a Town EDO, and utilizing local and regional resources such as the Three Rivers Planning & Development Corporation and the Mississippi Development Authority. A good business environment could be enhanced through the establishment of design standards for development along Mississippi Highway 25 and by the completion of a comprehensive plan, as described elsewhere in the Infrastructure section of this document.

Champion

- Economic Development Committee

Resources

See Appendix Item No. 4 - Resource List for Economic Development Projects.

Action Items

- Build relationships with the Chambers and other business-related organizations to assure communication and coordination, and to identify needs and opportunities for collaboration and shared resources

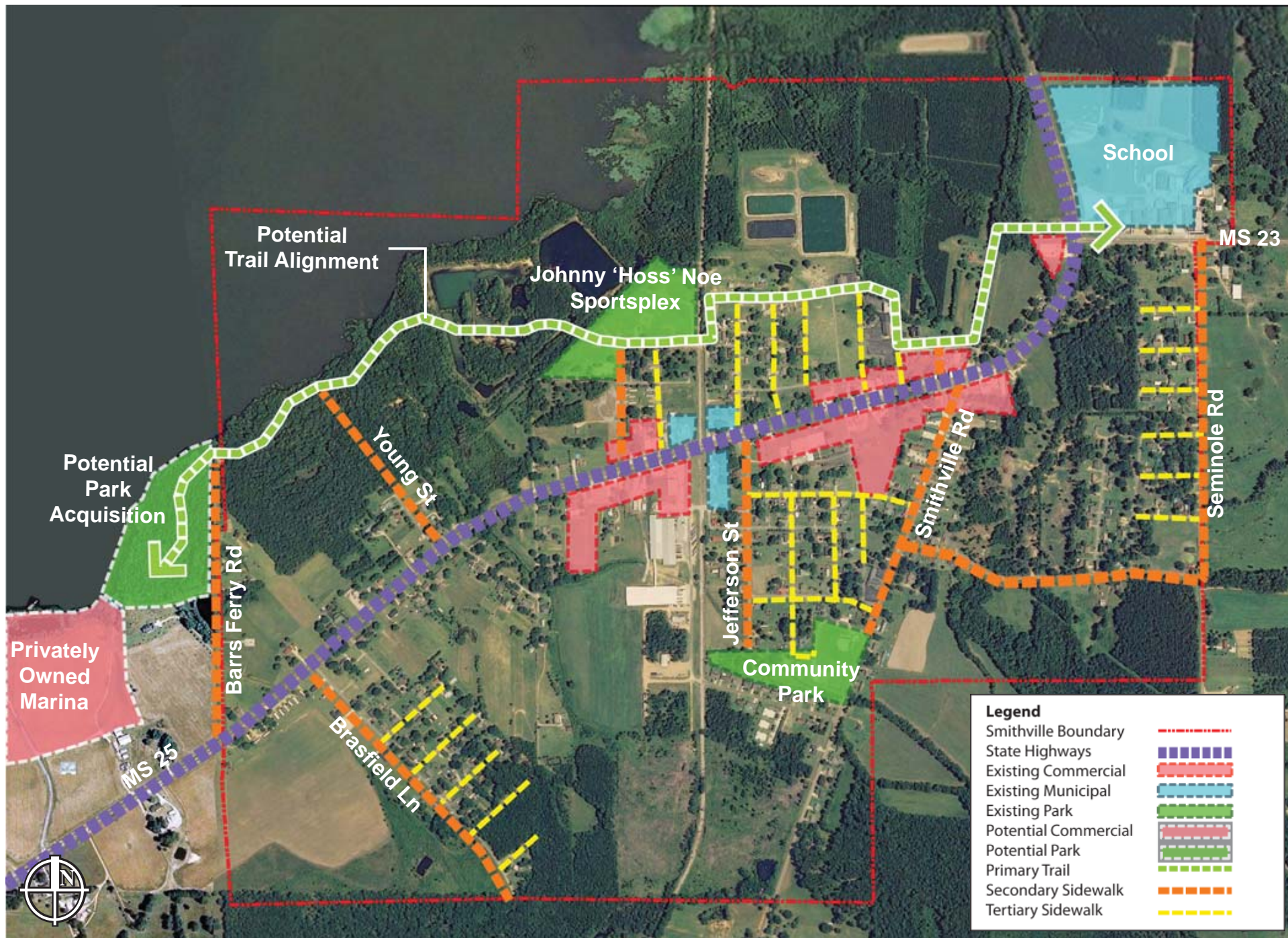
- Encourage Town Aldermen and County Commissioners to take a direct role in the process of attracting and recruiting new businesses e.g. meeting with prospects, traveling if necessary to meet prospective companies, attending economic development workshops
- Establish a committee of ambassadors to meet prospective businesses visiting Smithville and Monroe County
- Conduct periodic workshops as a mechanism for marketing Smithville/Monroe County
- Review scope and delivery of services provided by the MSU Small Business Development Center
- Respond to RFIs on site selection and RFPs from EDA-MDA-Three Rivers for companies seeking to expand or relocate to NE Mississippi
- Expand list of targeted industries to include light industry and manufacturing, and include all industries targeted by The Three Rivers EDO
- Improve utilization of The Three Rivers EDO as a national and international marketing tool

Cost

No costs are associate with this project.

Timeline

On-going



Tourism Focussed Areas and Connectivity Plan

Economic Development Project

Create a Smithville Business Incubator

Description



A business incubator is a functionally flexible brick-and-mortar facility offering a collection of business services to its tenants. The incubator concept allows small, growing businesses with normal operations out of garages and home offices to move to more structured facilities to expand their businesses and customer base. Typically, tenants pay a subsidized, low rent and share services (i.e. receptionist, copier, fax machine, and common use areas like a lobby, warehouse space, loading docks and a conference room) among themselves. The incubator facility may be owned by a local government entity, an EDO or an institution of higher learning, all of which promote economic development.

Such programs are aimed at providing entrepreneurs and start up businesses with badly needed support during their infancy, with the hope that they can quickly grow out of the need to be there. In fact, most incubators impose time limits on how long a business can stay. A Smithville Business Incubator could jump-start Smithville's recovery by providing economic support for both existing (pre-tornado) and new small businesses. Any sole proprietorship that could double in size would mean one more job in Smithville, with all of its related economic ripple effects.

Champion

- Tony Watson

Resources

See Appendix Item No. 4 - Resource List for Economic Development Projects.

Action Items

- Develop a design
- Determine location
- Conduct a feasibility study for entrepreneurs and start-up businesses

Cost

Substantial for building(s) and infrastructure to support a variety of start-ups in a diverse business environment.

Timeline

6-12 Months

Plan for resource allocation

1-3 Years

Acquire property and begin design and construction documents

Bring Back Major Employer - TownHouse Furnishings, LLC

Description



Townhouse Furnishings, LLC was a major employer in Smithville with more than 150 employees. The return of TownHouse Furnishings and possible expansion would greatly contribute to Smithville's overall recovery effort. This will mark the return of a Monday-Friday customer base that would support the other community businesses. It would also create a demand for workforce housing, and perhaps bring new families to the area to re-populate the excellent school system and revitalize church membership.

Champion

- Tony Watson

Resource

- Mississippi Development Authority (potential funding resource)

Action Items

- Assess the company's ability to sustain expansion
- Perform a needs analysis for the company to return through an expansion
- Facilitate the repair and occupation of the previously used building for the manufacturing of furniture

Cost

Townhouse is bringing all available resources to bear on their proposed expansion back to Smithville.

Timeline

Completion prior to the end of 2011.

Economic Development

Tourism

Tourism Development (Festivals, Bike Trail and Marina)

Description

Smithville has a great opportunity to expand its economic base using several features of its surrounding environment. In particular, its proximity to the Tombigbee Waterway provides the prospect of becoming a regional recreation destination, and thus the chance to capture tourism dollars from outside the community.

A marina is proposed on the Army Corps of Engineer property from Barrs Ferry Road west to the existing marina. The project would incorporate ECHO (Ecological-Heritage-Outdoors) with a historic cemetery on the site and boardwalk opportunities through native habitat. As proposed, the site will contain a full service marina with vessel repair and maintenance, a fuel station on the pier, boat slips and dry storage for boats, boat ramps and vehicle-boat trailer parking, boardwalks, observation deck, improved tent and RV camping sites with utilities, a retail food and beverage operation and a ships' store.

Blue Bluff Campground is a similar project located on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Aberdeen, Mississippi. The campground has 92 sites with electric and water hookups, scenic views of the waterway with picnic facilities, and a beach nearby. Aberdeen Lock and Dam is located right next door.

Champion

- Brad Stevens

Resources

See Appendix Item No. 4 - Resource List for Economic Development Projects.

Action Items

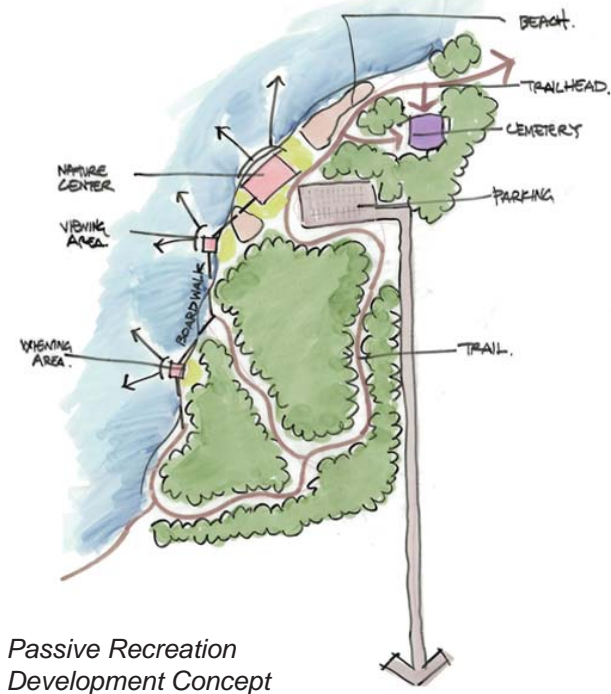
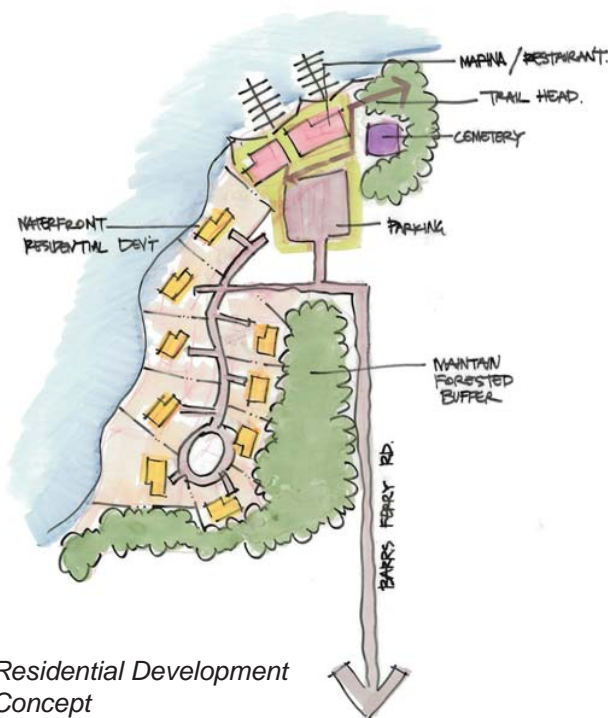
- Feasibility and needs assessments
- Land acquisition
- Master planning of resort, recreational and commercial uses.

Cost

Costs will be incurred when financing, research, and documentation is required for the plan to go forward. Land acquisition is currently estimated at \$36,000.

Timeline

On-going planning and feasibility studies. There are no time constraints for this project and planning is occurring now.



Economic Development Project

Create Information Technology/Internet-Based Business Sector

Project Description



Landline-based telecommunication service, both voice and broadband Internet, is provided to the Town of Smithville and the surrounding area by Smithville Telephone Company. The Telephone Company secured a \$7.2 million grant in August 2010 to extend fiber to all homes and businesses within its area, excluding properties located within the Town's city limits. It has proposed a project to extend this work within the city limits that will require additional capital funding of about \$2.5 million. When all projects are complete, every Smithville home and business will have access to the highest speed Internet service available.

The Town of Smithville will have an opportunity to leverage the eventual fiber network to encourage the development of businesses that rely upon the Internet for income. High-speed Internet access will allow businesses to reach customers and markets far beyond Smithville, and the ability to grow without physical relocation. A virtual office environment allows the business owner the ability to work at home and live in a safe, family-oriented community such as Smithville, close to their children's school and without the need to rent or build offices.

Residents who have Internet businesses located in Smithville will have income that they can spend in Smithville's restaurants, grocery stores and other retail establishments.

Availability of broadband, along with a good quality of life, could contribute to the overall economic health of the Smithville community and thus should be used as a selling point to attract new residents to the community.

Champion

- Shellie Thompson, Smithville Telephone Company

Action Items

- Provide guidance for starting an Internet business using the broadband network available in Smithville. This will require the research and documentation of resources needed to start an Internet business or open a virtual office.

Cost

Estimated \$2.5 million

Timeline

On-going planning and feasibility studies

Develop Smithville's Industrial Park

Description

The Smithville Industrial Park is an 80-acre site on the south side of town that is owned by Monroe County. Beginning with the 2011 Fall semester, the site will be used as a temporary site for the Smithville School and will not be vacated until the School returns to its rebuilt permanent site in the next 24-36 months.

Once vacated, all utilities and infrastructure (roads and parking lots) will remain, meaning the site will be already prepped and ready for new uses. The Town of Smithville has an opportunity to use the next two to three years to decide what kind of businesses and/or industries it would eventually like to see occupy the site and to develop and execute a marketing program to target them for recruitment.

Champion

- Mike Templet

Resources

See Appendix Item No. 4 - Resource List for Economic Development Projects.

Action Items

- Define the available property
- Identify current utilities and infrastructure
- Research possible light industry that might be interested in relocating to Smithville
- Install utilities and infrastructure for this industry
- Market/advertise the site

Cost

Advertising and marketing budget to be determined by the Community Needs Assessment.

Timeline

Planning is immediate. Implementation can begin within 24-36 months.



Potential Light Manufacturing/Office Development Concept

Not to Scale



Community Services

Vision and Goals

The Community Services Committee came to consensus around a vision for Smithville as “A community with hometown charm and big opportunities.” They identified three broad goals to help achieve that vision:

- Developing a range of services, facilities and activities to improve the community’s quality of life
- Exploring options to build a healthier community
- Establishing and promoting a community identity

As a result of the three goals being launched, the committee identified a need to broaden the understanding of the residents’ interest with a community needs assessment, explore the feasibility of building or renovating a facility to serve as a community center to host cultural and social events, develop a lending library to enhance every aspect of life in the community, offer immediate help and to direct individuals to social services and other agencies in a community resource center and lead the effort to rebuild and improve the outdoor athletic and fitness facilities of Smithville.



Community Needs Assessment

Description



The Smithville community has been involved in recovery efforts through town hall meetings and community open houses, a new website that includes information on the Long-Term Community Recovery process and a newsletter. However, despite all of those efforts, not all residents have been heard. A well-executed community needs assessment is required to broaden the understanding of residents' interest in a variety of possible facilities, amenities and services.

The Community Needs Assessment project will examine members of the community through a survey tool and/or focus groups to determine the most pressing, current and future needs in the community. The project will help the sector groups to prioritize projects, properly secure resources, and allocate resources appropriately. Projects within the Community Services Committee that will be assessed through the Community Needs Assessment include the Community Resource Center Project and the Community Complex Project. Other sector groups will be surveyed to determine what else should be included in the assessment.

The needs assessment is a very short-term project that will be completed during the summer and Fall 2011. The project will include collaboration with the schools and churches to determine the types of services currently being provided and plans for new services.

Champions

- Kim Johnson
- Marilyn Sumerford

Resource

- The Stennis Institute

Action Items

- Conclude agreement with the Stennis Institute
- Convene meeting among project champions from all sectors and representatives of the Stennis Institute to determine scope of assessment
- Aid in the assessment as required

Cost

There will be no cost for the assessment, other than marginal costs for materials, etc.

Timeline

August 2011
Begin assessment process

October 2011
Complete assessment

Community Services Project

Community Resource Center

Description



When an EF5 tornado blew through Smithville on April 27, 2011, it killed 17 members of the community, damaged or destroyed 150 homes, destroyed 14 businesses, four churches and caused extensive damage to the public school. It also caused shock and trauma to those who survived. There are currently no effective means of helping community residents find the social services available to them.

The Community Resource Center project will create a staffed resource center to offer immediate help and to direct individuals to social services and other agencies. It is intended, at first, to respond to the physiological, psychological, and psychosocial needs of residents who suffered through the tornado. The project team will collaborate with local agencies, the schools and churches to determine the types of services currently being provided and any plans for new services.

In the long-term, the project will continue to offer help and to direct the residents of Smithville to services. It will also identify gaps in services that are offered and work to help fill those gaps. If appropriate space can be identified, the Resource Center may offer services not otherwise available. Funding streams will be identified for equipment, personnel, and operating expenses.

Champions

- Almetria Poole
- Marilyn Sumerford

Resources

- Itawamba Community College
- Mississippi State University
- United Way
- U.S. Economic Development Agency
- Local churches

Action Items

- Secure location, office equipment and computers
- Coordinate efforts with the school to assure that needs of young people are being addressed
- Coordinate with other resources to assure that gaps in service are being addressed
- Promote the Community Resource Center through the Smithville website and other means

Cost

Cost not yet determined

Timeline

September 2011
Secure location and equipment

Ongoing
Establish and carry out program activities

Community Complex

Description

The building used for the community center prior to the tornado is currently being used as the Town Hall. The high school auditorium, gymnasium, and football field which were used for community functions were all destroyed, as were four of the five churches in town. In addition to hosting worship services, the churches all had social halls that were used for meals, receptions, showers, and other community events.

The Community Complex project will assess the community's need for a community complex and explore the feasibility of building or renovating a facility to serve as a community center to host cultural and social events.

- In the very short-term (Summer and Fall 2011), project teams will assist in soliciting input from members of the community through the community needs assessment. This will include collaboration with the school and churches to determine the types and capacities of facilities being built.
- In the long-term, the project team will determine where gaps exist and identify partners to help fill them. Long-term goals may include site identification, facility planning identification of funding partners, and fundraising.

Champion

- Marilyn Sumerford

Resource

- Resource not yet determined

Action Items

- Provide input to the scope of the needs assessment
- Survey existing facilities and possible locations for a new Community Complex
- Determine optimum size and configuration of a new Community Complex
- Determine appropriate construction funding and operating budget

Cost

No initial cost. The cost of construction and operations is yet to be determined.

Timeline

September 2011	Participate in needs assessment
Spring 2012	Determine next steps



Community Services Project

Lending Library

Description



After the tornado destroyed most of Smithville, the community expressed interest in including a lending library in plans for the rebuilding of the town. Although Smithville has never had a lending library, the community has been requesting one for years under the firm belief that a strong library would enhance every aspect of life in the community. It could serve as a center for life-long learning for everyone in Smithville.

An agreed upon vision is that the library would include, in addition to a book loan program; computer use and training, interlibrary loaning, newspaper/magazine access, a summer reading program, pre-school reading programs, local history center, genealogy programs, senior reading club, and a presentation room. In the short term, the lending library could be temporarily housed in a portable building or church. Over the long term, a permanent library could be established in the Community Center or municipal building as part of the Tombigbee Regional Library System.

Champions

- Kathleen Davis
- Robin Christensen



Resources

- Tombigbee Regional Library System
- U.S. Economic Development Administration (potential funding resource)

Action Items

- Petition the Regional Library System for a branch in Smithville
- Establish a temporary library in a shared location

Cost

A temporary library would be volunteer-driven in the short term. Construction costs for a permanent facility are yet to be determined. Operating costs for a small branch library are around \$30,000 per year.

Timeline

September 2011
Petition the Regional Library System

Fall 2011 – Spring 2012
Determine plans and begin establishment of a temporary library

Branding Smithville

Description



The Branding Smithville project is designed to create an identity for the new, emerging town as: “A Community with Hometown Charm and Big Opportunities.” As a comprehensive plan is put in place, a Branding Team will work to ensure that the zoning plan, building codes, public amenities, visitor and tourist features and other elements of the town all work together to create a niche identity for Smithville. The goal is that the name ‘Smithville’ will become synonymous with a community that is a good place to live, to do business and to visit.

The Branding Team will explore all avenues to build the town’s brand. Projects that will work towards brand identity might include:

- Restoring historically significant buildings such as Nabor’s Hardware and the wall that displays the OshKosh, B’Gosh sign, a major Smithville landmark
- Installing church chimes that will ring at pre-programmed times during the day
- Insuring that the comprehensive plan includes greatly expanded parks and recreational areas, including areas along the waterway
- Insuring that the comprehensive plan includes the creation of a town center, with a park and a gazebo large enough to act as a band stand or speaking platform
- Defining and offering incentives for the creation of small businesses that support the brand, including bed and breakfast hotels, ice cream shops and watersports, hunting and fishing businesses

Champions

- Susan Harp
- Wes White

Resources

- The Town Council
- Faith-based organizations
- Economic Development Recovery Sector Committee
- Community Services Sector Committee

Action Items

- Identify the “look” for the future rebuild
- Present suggestions to be incorporated into the comprehensive plan and the zoning and building codes/ordinances
- Sell this niche identity to all other Sector Groups and Committees for incorporation into their work
- Create a VISUAL Plan for the CityCenter
- Offer design assistance to all new builds and committee projects
- Keep an Overall VISUAL Plan at City Hall

Cost

Cost not yet determined.

Timeline

Fall 2011

Identify the most effective niche identity

Spring 2012

Assure identity elements are included in the comprehensive plan

Ongoing

Identify and incorporate a variety of branding elements in the Housing Resource Center



Community Services Project

Parks, Walking Trails, Ball Fields

Description



Smithville had very nice summer ball facilities including four lighted fields. The community also had a nice walking track and a tree-shaded park. The tornado destroyed all of the summer league ball facilities. In the aftermath, the temporary town hall was placed where park playground equipment once stood and the medical clinic will be rebuilt where the only walking track in the community once lay.

The champion of the Parks, Walking Trails, Ball Fields project will lead the effort to rebuild and improve the outdoor athletic and fitness facilities of Smithville. It will assure the construction of new walking track or trails, especially along Smithville Pool of the Tenn-Tom waterway. It will restore the summer league ballfields so that they are adaptable and versatile enough for all sports, including soccer. It will research and construct at least one family playground. It may also consider and construct other athletic and fitness facilities as identified. Finally, it will provide for the maintenance of all facilities.

Champion

- Sam Carpenter

Resources

- Monroe County Road Manager (potential funding resource)
- KaBoom (potential funding resource)

Action Items

- Secure approval from Town Aldermen for ball field renovation
- Secure funding from FEMA Public Assistance and other sources for ball fields
- Secure services of the County Road Manager for the construction of the walking path
- Find funding and build at least one playground

Cost

Not yet determined

Timeline

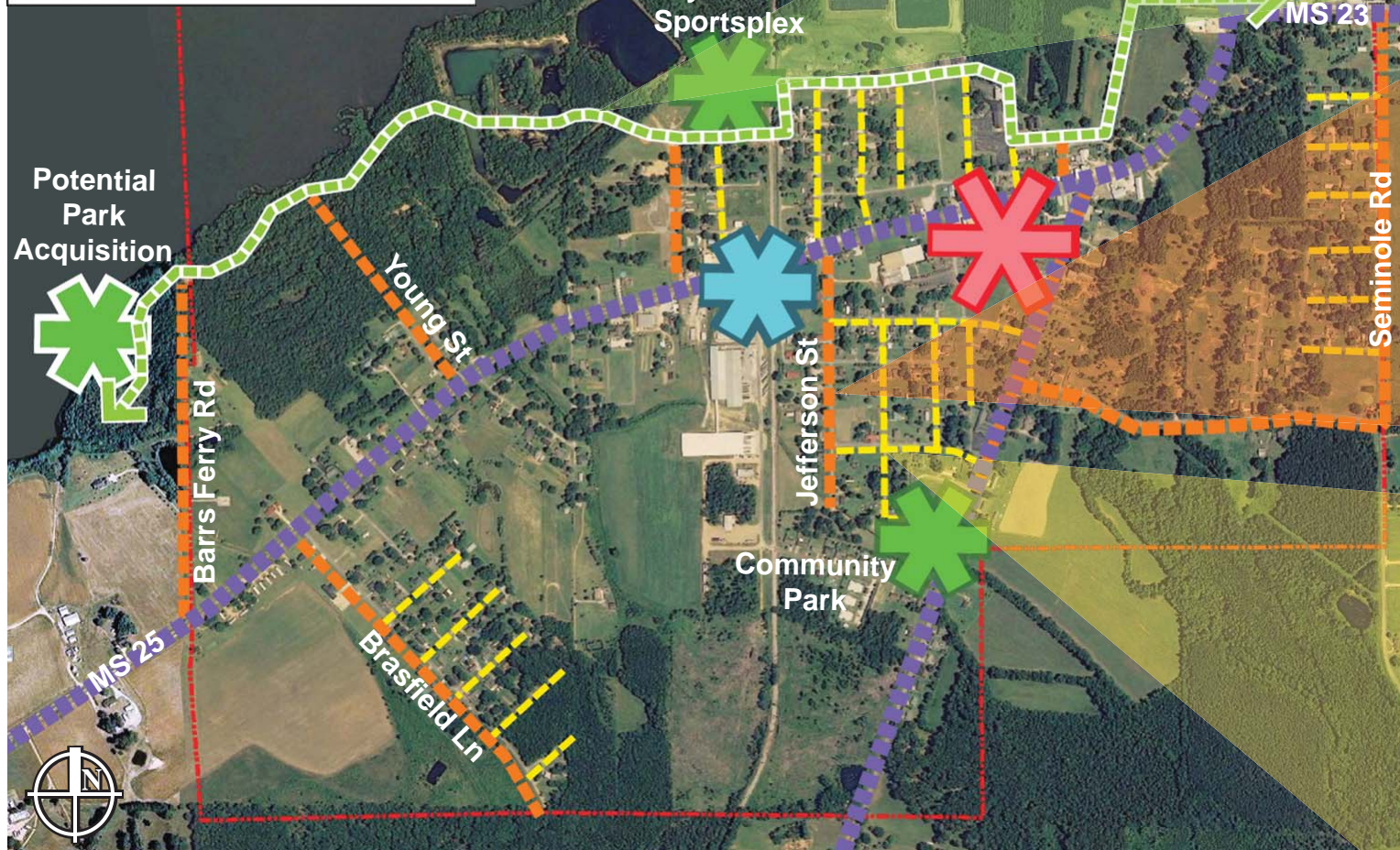
August – September 2011
Construct ball fields and walking paths

October – November 2011
Seek funding and construct at least one playground

Ongoing
Continue to develop the walking/bike trail and other amenities

Legend

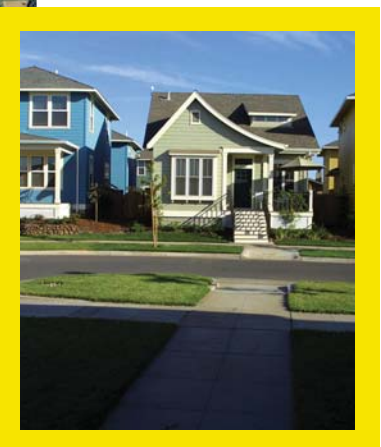
Smithville Boundary	
State Highways	
Existing Commercial	
Existing Municipal	
Existing Park	
Potential Commercial	
Potential Park	
Primary Trail	
Secondary Sidewalk	
Tertiary Sidewalk	



8' Wide Multi-Use Trail



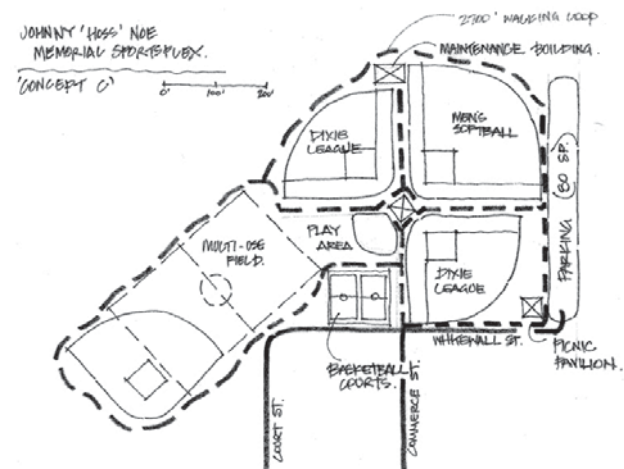
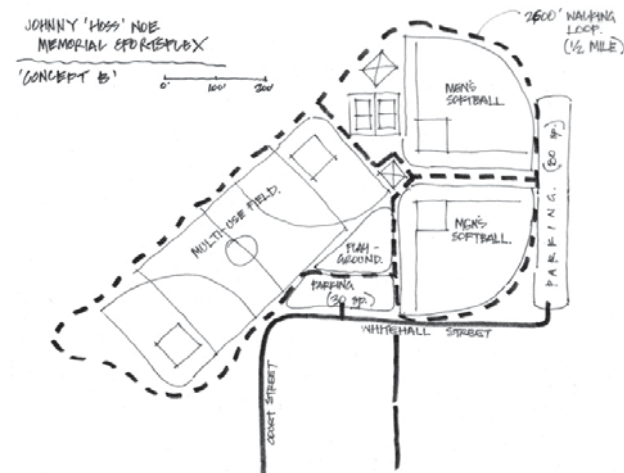
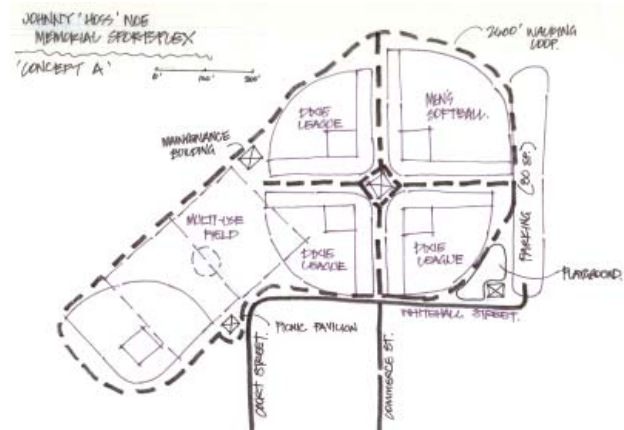
Sidewalks and Shared Lanes for Bicycles



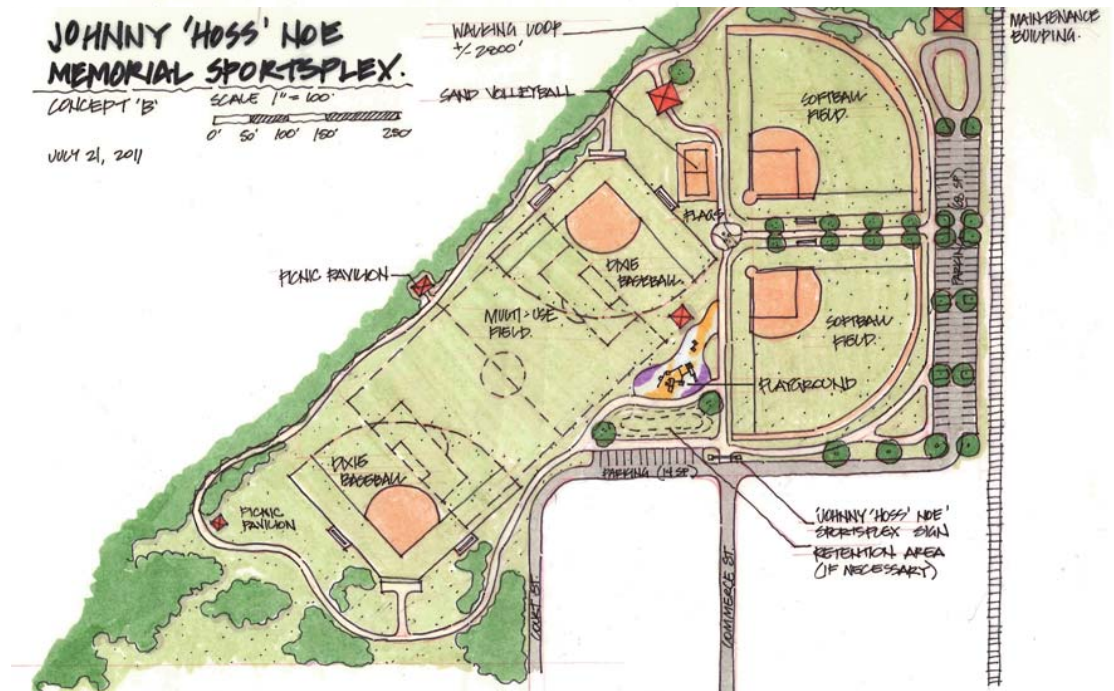
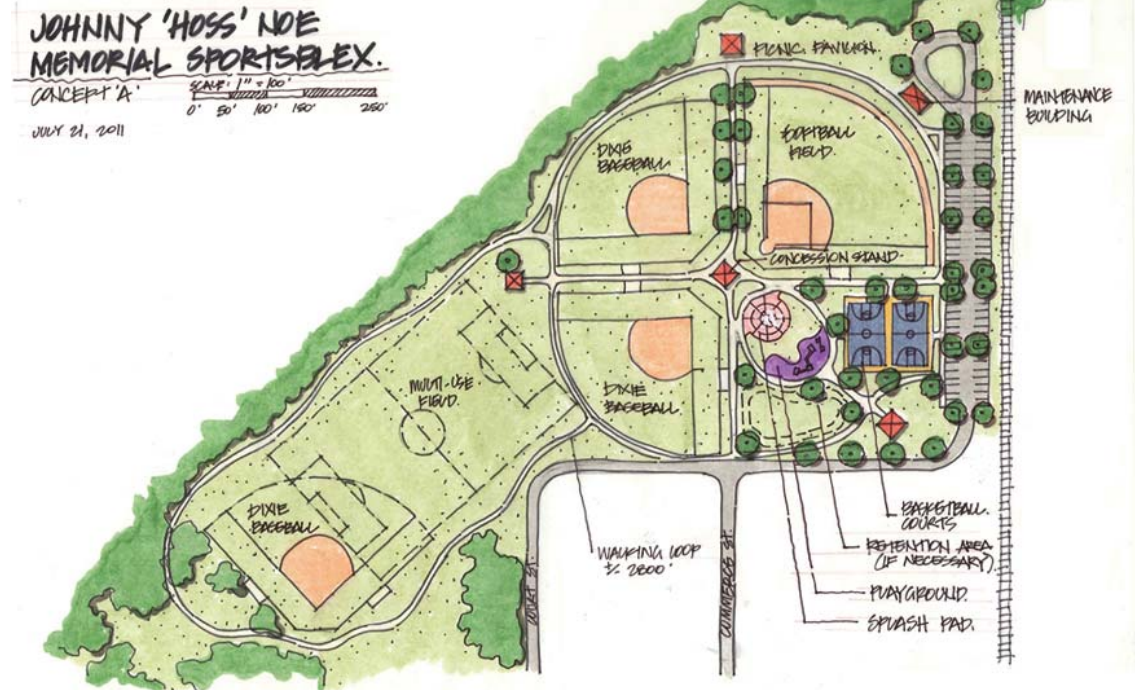
Sidewalks

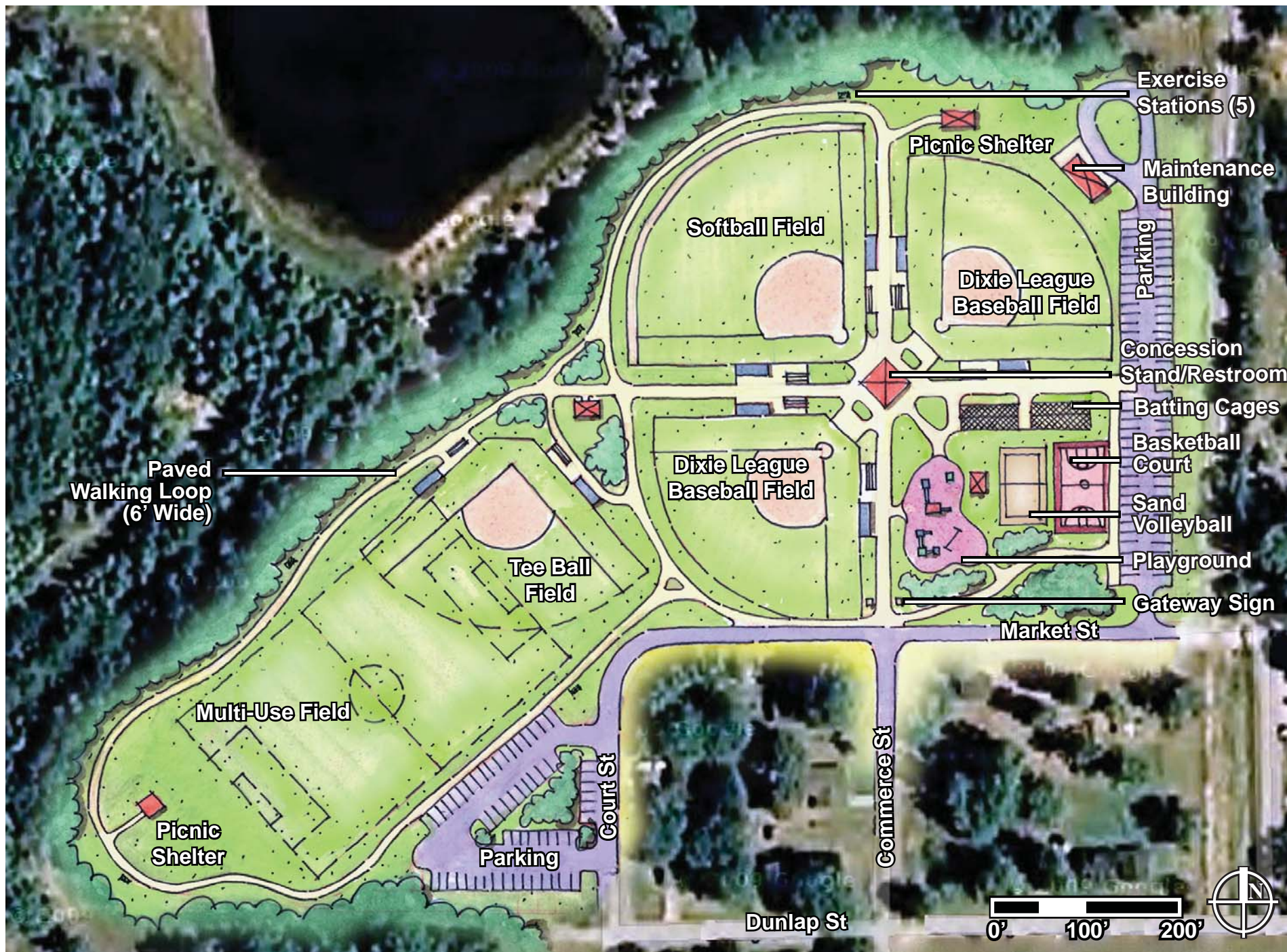
Pedestrian Connectivity Diagram - Not to Scale

Sportsplex Conceptual Diagrams



Sportsplex Schematic Designs





Housing Vision and Goals

The tornado destroyed more than 80% of the housing stock in Smithville. Coupled with the loss of almost all the businesses and all of the industry, the families who lost their homes are faced with the difficult decision of whether and how to rebuild.

The Housing Sector Committee came to consensus around a vision for Smithville as a community that is full of life, well designed and safe. It has family-oriented Christian values, is a good place to raise children and serves the needs of older residents. They then identified three goals that would help achieve that vision:

- Good quality housing for home owners and renters
- Appropriate housing for seniors and for those with special needs
- Neighborhood design that incorporates best practices



Housing Sector Group Meeting - June 1, 2011

Housing Resource Center

Description



The Housing Resource Center will provide an immediate source of information on a wide variety of issues that residents interested in rebuilding require. Over time, it will then become a resource for families interested in relocating to Smithville.

The HRC will be established in three phases.

- In the short-term, it will be located in a donated office or social service agency and will consist of a rack of brochures and information made available to residents interested in rebuilding or potential new home owners moving to Smithville. The information provided will include federal and state agencies that provide financial support or technical assistance in areas such as energy efficiency and insurance regulations. Information will also be available about local lenders, real estate agents and building contractors that have been approved by the Town of Smithville. The resources of the HRC will be promoted through fliers posted around town and information on the Smithville website.
- In the mid-term, the HRC will move to a shared location with other town or community resources and will hire part-time staff assistance to promote its offerings outside Smithville.

- In the long-term, the HRC will be housed in the municipal center and will provide an even greater array of resources, including workshops and other events of interest to families building or remodeling in Smithville. Permanent staff might be considered as support allows.

Champions

- Mary Ann Carlisle
- Charles Coggins

Resources

(resources are potential funding resources)

- Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
- Mississippi Insurance Department
- Mississippi Home Corporation
- Habitat for Humanity
- ATMOS Energy
- Home Builders and Remodelers Association
- Local banks, real estate agencies and construction contractors

Action Items

- Gather initial resources for the HRC
- Establish temporary location
- Promote through the website and fliers
- Consider options for increased visibility and permanent location
- Identify a staff person, 10-15 hours a week, to promote and maintain the HRC

Cost

No initial cost in the short term. Possible costs in permanent location and for part-time staff.

Timeline

September 2011

Establish temporary HRC and promote on website

September 2011

Gather resource material

Spring 2012

Consider move to more permanent location

Housing Project

Best Practices in Housing

Description



After more than 100 homes were destroyed by the tornado, many of the lots left behind will likely be put to different uses than before. New neighborhoods will certainly take shape in very different ways as new types of dwellings are introduced, including garden homes, attached townhomes and possibly multi-story apartments. Knowledge of the latest neighborhood development practices that support sustainability will improve the quality of life of Smithville.

The Best Practices project will provide resources and assistance as the town engages in a comprehensive planning process. Team leaders will gather and marshal information about sustainable communities, walkable communities and smart growth initiatives that can help shape the comprehensive plan and the new zoning plan for Smithville. The team will become the spokespeople and advocates for neighborhood design that reflects the needs of families in the 21st century, altering in positive ways the existing housing patterns that were designed more than 100 years ago.

Champions

- Jimmy Lenderman
- Shellie Thompson
- Scott Cox

Resources

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Mississippi Energy Department
- Smart Growth America
- The New Urban Network
- Home Builders Association
- Smithville Housing Resource Center

Action Items

- Gather information about sustainable communities from the resource partners listed above
- Participate in the Smithville comprehensive planning process
- Contribute information and support to the Housing Resource Center

Cost

There is no cost associated with this project.

Timeline

Fall 2011
Gather information

Spring 2012
Participate in comprehensive planning process

Ongoing
Assure that best practices are incorporated in the design and implementation of neighborhoods in Smithville



Homes within 1/4 mile walking distance

Street trees provide shade for sidewalks

Home front streets with garages in less prominent location

Variety of housing types and lot sizes available

Mixed-use housing options with office or retail on first floor and residential on second floor

Crosswalks are easily identifiable and ramps are accessible

Site Specific Example of Potential Neighborhood

Not to Scale

Housing Project

Streetscaping and Beautification

Description



When the tornado destroyed homes and businesses, it also obliterated the community's magnificent trees and foliage, its gazebo and other aesthetically pleasing elements of the community.

The Streetscaping and Beautification project seeks to replace those assets and improve the visual landscape of Smithville on an ongoing basis.

- In the very short-term, project teams will finish cleaning up trash and debris from the public rights-of-way and other community locations so lawn crews can keep the vegetation in check.
- In the mid-term, (Fall 2011 through Spring 2012) project teams will plant trees on both public and private property, erect welcoming signage, illuminate important town features, and provide other visual enhancements to Smithville.
- In the long-term, project teams will become involved with the development and implementation of the town's comprehensive plan, assuring that beautification elements such as streetscaping, landscaping and other similar amenities are incorporated into the rebuilding of Smithville.

Champions

- Judy Stevens
- Scott Cox
- Susan Harp

Resources

(resources are potential funding resources)

- Homebuilders and Remodelers Association of Northeast Mississippi
- Soil and Conservation Commission Mississippi Department of Forestry
- Northeast Mississippi Community College
- Local tree farmers and nurseries
- Local builders and building supply companies

Action Items

- Continue the debris removal effort
- Construct welcome signs at all entrances to Smithville
- Identify sources of trees
- Determine distribution, planting and maintenance plan for trees

Cost

Minimal cost for sign construction may include sign production and lumber for installation. The cost of trees has not been determined. Donated materials, including lumber and trees, and volunteer time will be used as much as possible.

Timeline

Fall 2011

Construct entrance signs, continue debris removal, and plant trees

Ongoing

Continue beautification installation and maintenance



Locations of Proposed Gateway Features



1. Potential Gateway Signage on School Property at MS 25
(Approaching Smithville from North)



2. Potential Gateway Signage along MS 23
(Approaching Smithville from East)



3. Potential Gateway Signage along Smithville Road
(Approaching Smithville from West)

Housing Project

Special Needs Housing

Description



Prior to the tornado, the need for those residents requiring access and functional needs in housing was only partially met by one existing housing complex. This facility was handicap-accessible, and alarms were available for occupants to summons assistance in emergency situations. Yet, it was obvious there were needs for potential occupants who require more active care. Since the tornado, a number of Smithville residents who have special needs for housing but had been accustomed to living in their own houses are now without a home and will be unable to build back to their accustomed level of accessibility.

The Special Needs Housing project will identify the needs for a variety of special housing, including for individuals needing wheel chair-accessibility, those with visual or hearing challenges, and those facing challenges of cognitive developmental delay. The aim is to fully satisfy the housing needs of families in the Smithville community, with special emphasis on those affected by the tornado.

Once the needs are identified, the project will seek to work with existing facilities to bring them up to a level of support that will satisfy those needs. If that cannot be accomplished, the project will seek an operator, either a faith-based organization or a for-profit company, with expertise and experience in this area and enable them to acquire or build an appropriate facility in Smithville.

Champions

- John Clingan
- Teresa Snow

Resources

- Existing owners of apartments in Smithville
- Faith-based or for-profit providers of special needs and assisted living housing and services
- U.S. Economic Development Administration (potential funding resource)

Action Items

- As part of the community needs assessment project, assess the current and potential need in Smithville
- Encourage local providers to meet special housing needs
- Participate in Smithville's comprehensive planning process to assure inclusion of special needs housing
- Consider and attract as necessary alternate sources of special needs housing

Cost

This project has no costs associated with it.

Timeline

Fall 2011

Assess the need in Smithville

Spring 2012

Identify possible providers, both locally and outside Smithville

Mississippi Certified Retirement Community Research

Description



The EF5 tornado that destroyed 80% of the housing stock in Smithville displaced many older residents from homes that their families had lived in for generations. Many of these older residents have decided not to rebuild in Smithville and the community may be losing a significant segment of its senior population. This would be unfortunate for a town that is shaped by a strong sense of family.

Assuring that Smithville has a strong senior presence to add perspective and vitality to the community is a high priority in the recovery effort. The Mississippi Certified Retirement Community project will seek to understand the requirements and benefits of becoming a MCRC, and will attempt to shape the preparation of Smithville's comprehensive plan so that the requirements can be met. At a later date, if appropriate, project leads will apply for certification as a MCRC and will set up the mechanism to ensure compliance with the ongoing requirements of certification.

A major goal of the project is to assure that Smithville has as many amenities and facilities as possible that suit the needs and desires of seniors and retirees. Providing age-appropriate amenities might be more important to Smithville's full recovery than whether or not it leads to formal certification.

Champions

- Kevin Crook

Resources

- State of Mississippi; Certified Retirement Community Agency

Action Items

- Research the potential benefits of certification
- Research and compile a list of certification requirements
- Assure that these requirements are addressed in Smithville's comprehensive plan

Cost

The project has no costs associated with it.

Timeline

Fall 2011
Research requirements and benefits

Spring 2012
Participate in comprehensive planning process



Education Vision and Goals

In meeting after meeting, community members labeled Smithville School as a community pillar, a place where legacy is celebrated. Because of its excellence, education in Smithville became an institution attracting outsiders into this cozy little town. The school the community cherished so dearly was severely damaged in the wake of the tornado.

Smithville School faculty, staff, and parents were invited to participate in creating the vision for the rebuilding of their icon. A group of more than ten school supporters met weekly to move the Smithville School recovery effort forward. The group delved deeper than rebuilding the walls of the school and began investigating projects to enhance teacher instruction and student learning. The group envisions Smithville School as high performing, with accessible technology and enrichment activities for all students, where every child learns to his or her maximum ability and whose graduates confidently compete in college.

The group agreed to work on one short-term goal and two long-term goals.

Short-Term

- Attend to the emotional needs of the students

Long-Term

- Provide options to increase accessible technology and enrichment for all grade levels
- Develop a strategy to achieve and maintain “High Performing” status



Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program

Description



Smithville community members characterize Smithville School as central to community life. Both athletic and academic programs are recognized for their roles in the school's success. Effective classroom instruction is fundamental to the academic accomplishments of the students. The Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Project is a program that pairs experienced and successful teachers with newly appointed teachers or with teachers who will benefit from one-on-one development activities.

Champion

- Chad O'Brian, Smithville School Principal

Resources

- Monroe County School District
- Mississippi Department of Education

Action Items

- Appoint Advisory Group to develop mentoring curricula
- Determine criteria for identifying mentors
- Identify funding source for conferences, training sessions and materials

Cost

Anticipated yearly costs may include \$2,000.00 for stipends for conferences, training sessions and materials.

Timeline

On-going

After-School Enrichment Program, Special Project for the Enrichment of Arts and Recreation (S.P.E.A.R)

Description



Children who participate in after-school programs generally demonstrate improved test scores, have better than average social skills and tend to participate less in mischievous activities. After school enrichment programs have proven beneficial for children, families and the community. Currently, there are no art-related classes offered to the elementary students.

This project proposes to develop an after school program that could provide an avenue for introducing Smithville students to art, drama, dance, gymnastics, crafts, music, languages, and intellectual clubs (i.e. chess, reading, etc.) earlier in their schooling. The program could bring in qualified volunteers to teach age-appropriate classes to Smithville School students, providing significant benefits at minimal cost.

Champions

- Deborah Kuykendall, Smithville School Parent
- Darlene Rutledge, Smithville High School Teacher

Resources

- Smithville School PTO
- Smithville Community Services Sector Committee
- Smithville Parks and Recreation Function
- School Based Community Involvement Center (Proposed project)
- Supplemental Education Services (potential funding resource)

- Pepsi Refresh Project (potential funding resource)
- Wallace Foundation (potential funding resource)

Action Items

- Identify location for S.P.E.A.R. program
- Identify Program Coordinator
- Identify funding source for Program Coordinator (If determined this is not a volunteer position)
- Identify volunteers knowledgeable in subjects to be offered in the program

Cost

Costs are primarily dependent upon the location chosen to house the program and on if the Program Coordinator is not a volunteer position. Tentatively, costs associated with some activities may be passed along to participants.

Timeline

Fall 2011

Identify location for S.P.E.A.R. program, Identify Program Coordinator

Spring 2012

Pilot three after-school activities

Summer 2012

Expand after-school curriculum

Fall 2012

Kick-off S.P.E.A.R. program

Education Project

School Based Community Involvement Center (SBCIC)

Description



The School Based Community Involvement Center assists Smithville School in developing strong, innovative, collaborative partnerships in the community among parents, retirees, businesses and community service organizations. These partnerships could enhance the quality of instructional services provided to students through the use of volunteers. The SBCIC would provide Smithville School with a formal method of recruiting and organizing community volunteers. This project also provides for the development of a teacher resource room.

Champions

Patti Boozer, President, Smithville School Parent Teacher Organization

Resources

- Smithville School Parent Teacher Organization
- Community Services Sector Committee
- Smithville area faith-based groups
- S.P.E.A.R. Program (Proposed project)
- Monroe County United Way (potential funding resource)

- Gilmore Foundation (potential funding resource)

Action Items

- Identify location for resource room (Space identified for portable school 7/2011)
- Stock resource room with supplies
- Develop job description for Volunteer Coordinator
- Identify Coordinator

Cost

Volunteer Coordinator Salary \$10,000

Timeline

Phase I

- Secure sponsor/funding for resource room
- Secure funding for Volunteer Coordinator
- Resource Room operational by August 15, 2011

Phase II

- Hire a Volunteer Coordinator by September 1, 2011



Distance Learning Initiative

Description



Prior to the tornado, Smithville School students were bused, carpooled and/or drove alone from Smithville School to Hatley, Hamilton, or the Advanced Learning Center in Becker. By incorporating distance learning technology into Smithville School, one Smithville teacher will be able to instruct students from all four schools in one setting. This alternative provides students with a no-commute option to learning with students from multiple campuses. The Distance Learning Initiative is a low-cost energy saving alternative to the current system.

Champion

- Debra Kuykendal,
Smithville School Parent

Resources

- Hatley High School
- Hamilton High School
- The Advanced Learning Center
- Monroe County School District
- Mississippi Department of Education
(potential funding resource)
- Gilmore Foundation
(potential funding resource)
- USDA Rural Development
(potential funding resource)

Action Items

- Survey area schools to determine their interest in participating in the Distance Learning Initiative
- Complete an assessment of best practices related to high school distance learning programs
- Determine the number of classrooms in the newly remodeled Smithville High School that should be equipped to accommodate distance learning classrooms
- Identify funding sources
- Secure equipment and installation services



Cost

Cost is dependent upon numerous variables. Cost determinants rely heavily on the reconstruction choices for Smithville School.

Timeline

Phase I (To be completed by Fall 2012)

- Complete an assessment of best practices related to high school distance learning programs
- Survey area schools to determine their interest in participating in the Distance Learning Initiatives
- Identify funding sources

Phase II (To be completed by Summer 2013)

- Determine the number of classrooms in the newly remodeled Smithville High School that should be equipped to accommodate distance learning equipment
- Determine equipment needs
- Secure equipment and installation services

School Based Trauma Counseling

Description



Children and adults suffer traumatic reactions for weeks and months after a disaster. Helping children avoid or deal with emotional problems in the wake of a disaster is especially challenging. Children's reactions to the disaster and to the loss of life as they once knew it can severely affect their learning. The School Based Trauma Counseling project creates the opportunity for qualified mental health professionals to provide free on-site trauma counseling services to any Smithville School student.

Champions

- Renee Harris, Smithville School Nurse

Resources

- Region III Mental Health
- Monroe County School District

Action Items

- Identify counseling staff
- Identify location for counseling services to be housed
- Publicize the availability of free counseling services to parents

Cost

There are no significant direct costs related to this project.

Timeline

School Based Trauma Counseling will begin on August 15, 2011 and will continue until it is determined that the on-site service is no longer being utilized.



Photograph by Jane Cantrell

THE WAY FORWARD

FEMA Long-Term Community Recovery has released a comprehensive guide profiling more than 400 recovery assistance programs, which identify many potential sources of funding and technical assistance. Although primarily developed for use by elected and appointed officials from municipal/county government agencies and for resource development professionals from nonprofit agencies, many business owners and other individuals find the guide very useful. The profiles include brief descriptions and contact information for four types of programs:

- Disaster-specific recovery programs
- Disaster-applicable recovery programs
- Non-governmental and corporate giving programs, national in scope
- Non-governmental and corporate giving programs, Mississippi specific

Many Smithville residents have worked long and hard developing the creative and far-reaching plans embodied in this Long-Term Community Recovery Plan. Their ongoing commitment and the help of many others will insure that the projects they have identified and described will help achieve the community's vision for Smithville.

As Smithville recovers and rebuilds, projects described in the Plan will continue to evolve, requiring further planning, design and analysis. New projects may be identified and developed. The work of these volunteers would be immeasurably aided by the presence of a dedicated staff person to facilitate and coordinate their work. A Recovery Manager could bring new perspectives and an additional source of energy to the recovery process.

It would be important to find a Recovery Manager with experience in other disaster recovery settings, or someone who is familiar with the Smithville Long-Term Community Recovery process. The Manager should be a seasoned facilitator, able to work directly with project champions, helping them move projects forward. The Manager should also be able to identify sources of funding and develop strategies to achieve the objectives of the recovery plan. Finally, the Manager should have the ability to coordinate the work of the project champions with the Mayor, Town Board of Aldermen, planning consultants and, as required, construction managers.

Smithville has a long and treasured past and an even more vibrant future. The volunteer leadership, well supported, will help achieve the vision of Smithville as the strong and resilient home of family, friends and neighbors with an exciting future, shaped by education, fitness, faith and community spirit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The volunteers of Smithville's Long-Term Community Recovery Planning teams and the residents of Smithville, Mississippi thank the following individuals and agencies for their invaluable help as we created a vision and committed ourselves to rebuilding Smithville for future generations.

Governor of Mississippi, Haley Barbour
State Representative Donnie Bell, Mississippi District 21
U.S. Senator Thad Cochran, Mississippi
U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, Mississippi
U.S. Representative Alan Nunnelee, Mississippi Congressional District 1
State Senator Hob Bryan, Mississippi District 7

American Planning Association – Mississippi Chapter
Appalachian Regional Council
Carl Small Town Center, Mississippi State University
Economic Development Administration (EDA)
Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Gilmore Foundation
Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
Mississippi Development Authority
Mississippi Department of Transportation
Mississippi Home Corporation
Mississippi Insurance Department
Mississippi State University
Monroe County
Monroe County Chamber of Commerce
Monroe County School District
North Mississippi Industrial Association
Small Business Association
Three Rivers Planning & Development District, Inc.
United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development

ESF#14 Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) is coordinated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and is one of 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESF) authorized in the National Response Framework that guides federal response to disasters with significant impacts. LTCR offers short-term, on-site technical support and assistance to help communities identify opportunities, create partnerships and optimize resources.

APPENDICES

Appendix Item No. 1	Temporary Gateway Signage Concepts	62
Appendix Item No. 2	Municipal Government Complex	63
Appendix Item No. 3	Design Open House Boards and Notes - July 21, 2011	64
Appendix Item No. 4	Resource List for Economic Development Projects	72



Smithville is the strong and resilient home of family, friends and neighbors with a long history and an exciting future, shaped by education, fitness, faith and community spirit.

APPENDIX

Item No. 1

Temporary Gateway Signage Concepts

The Housing Sector Group requested potential design concepts for temporary gateway signs. These were the ideas that were developed as options.



APPENDIX

Item No. 2

Municipal Government Complex Concepts

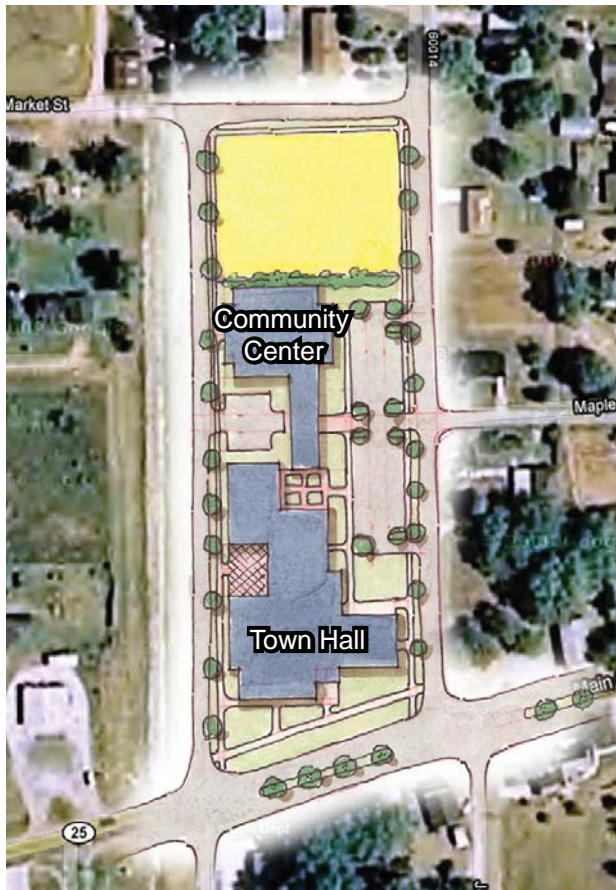
Mayor Gregg Kennedy requested design concepts for a governmental complex along Mississippi Highway 25. The ideas below are conceptual in nature and should be considered as such. These concepts present the layout of buildings on a potential site and do not consider a detailed program for a shared-use municipal facility.

Considerable thought into the amount of parking required for the facility is necessary.

Program elements discussed included:

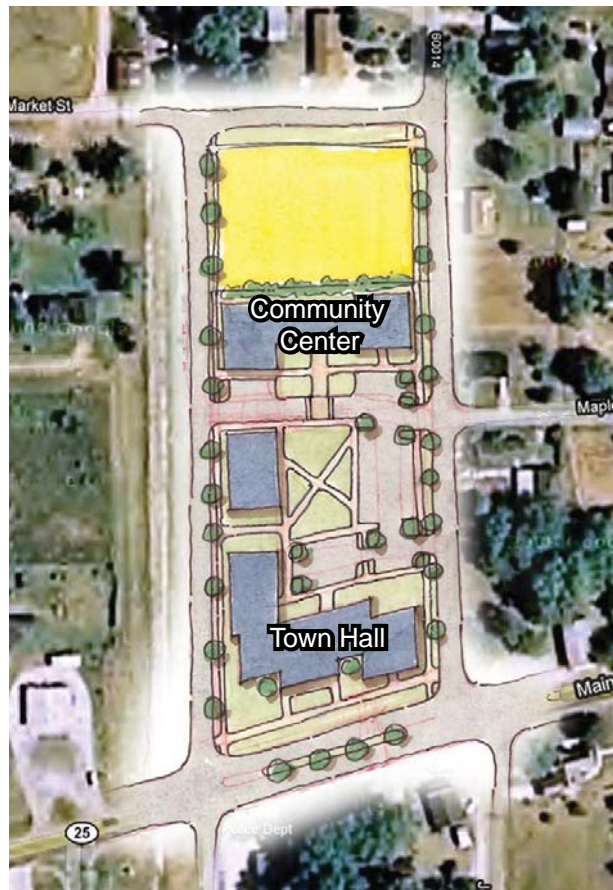
Typical city offices, police and fire department facilities, post office, library, resource center, space for incubator businesses, other professional offices, and a community center.

Concepts Not to Scale



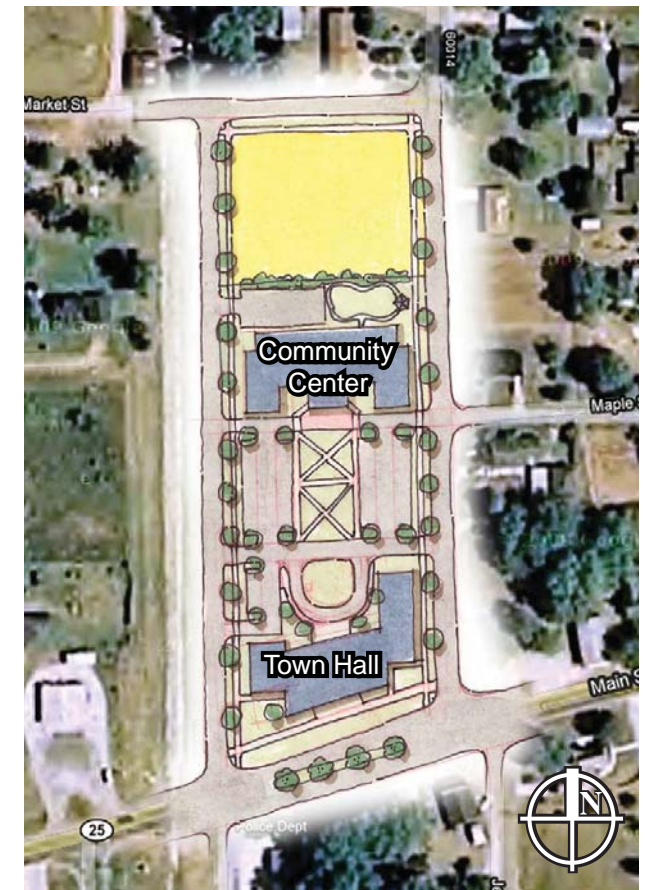
Concept A

Town Hall / Municipal Offices	22,800 sq ft
Community Center	14,500 sq ft
Parking	50 spaces



Concept B

Town Hall / Municipal Offices	22,800 sq ft
Community Center	14,500 sq ft
Parking	50 spaces



Concept C

Town Hall / Municipal Offices	15,000 sq ft
Community Center	15,000 sq ft
Parking	30 spaces

APPENDIX

Item No. 3

Design Open House Boards and Notes

July 21, 2011

Summary of Comments

Attendees at the Design Open House were provided with small colored adhesive labels (sticky dots) to show their preference for projects and images. They could affix a green dot indicating approval or a red dot indicating disapproval. They also were invited to list potential businesses that they thought important to Smithville's recovery on a blank sheet and to affix dots to businesses submitted by others.

Preferred Projects

- Ball Fields, Walking/Bike Paths and Playgrounds
- Bring Back TownHouse Furnishing
- Establish Business Development Assistance Programs
- School-based Community Involvement Center
- Streetscaping and Beautification
- Mississippi Certified Retirement Community
- Lending Library

Top 10 Desired Businesses

- | | |
|-----------------------|----|
| • US Post Office | 41 |
| • Grocery Store | 30 |
| • Funeral Home | 22 |
| • Medical Clinic | 16 |
| • Small Factories | 15 |
| • Town Hall | 12 |
| • Martial Arts School | 11 |
| • Hardware Store | 11 |
| • Café | 10 |
| • Library | 9 |
| • Fitness Center | 9 |

Most Appreciated Images

- Drawing of central boulevard with on-street parking
- Picture of a tree-shaded downtown street
- Picture of walking and bike trails
- Picture of lighted ball fields
- Drawing of four baseball fields and a soccer field
- Pictures of a lending library
- Picture of an indoor swimming pool

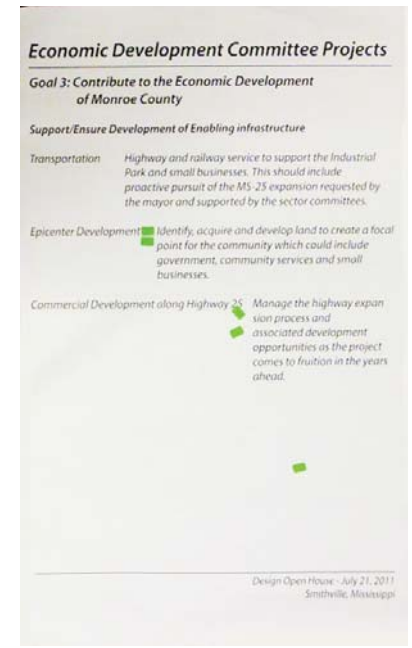
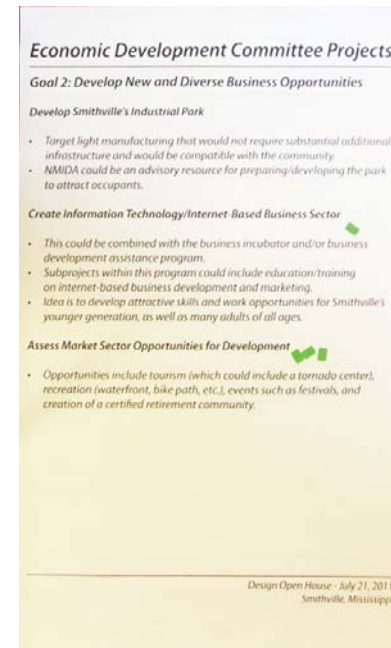
APPENDIX

Item No. 3

Design Open House Boards and Notes

July 21, 2011

Following are photographs of most of the boards that were presented and notes that were collected at the Design Open House at the Monroe Government Complex in Amory, MS on July 21, 2011.



Economic Development Section



Community Services Section



APPENDIX

Item No. 3

Design Open House Boards and Notes

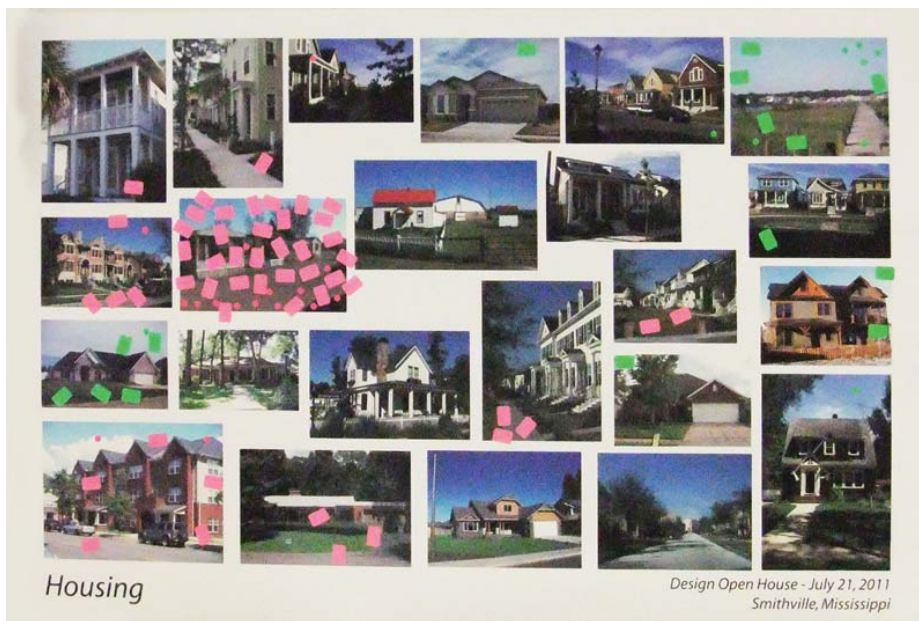
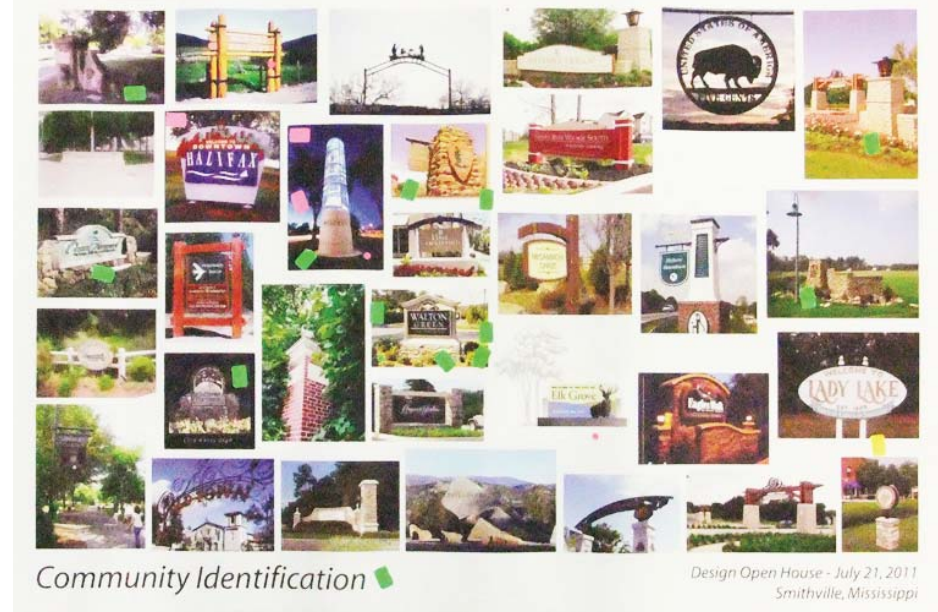
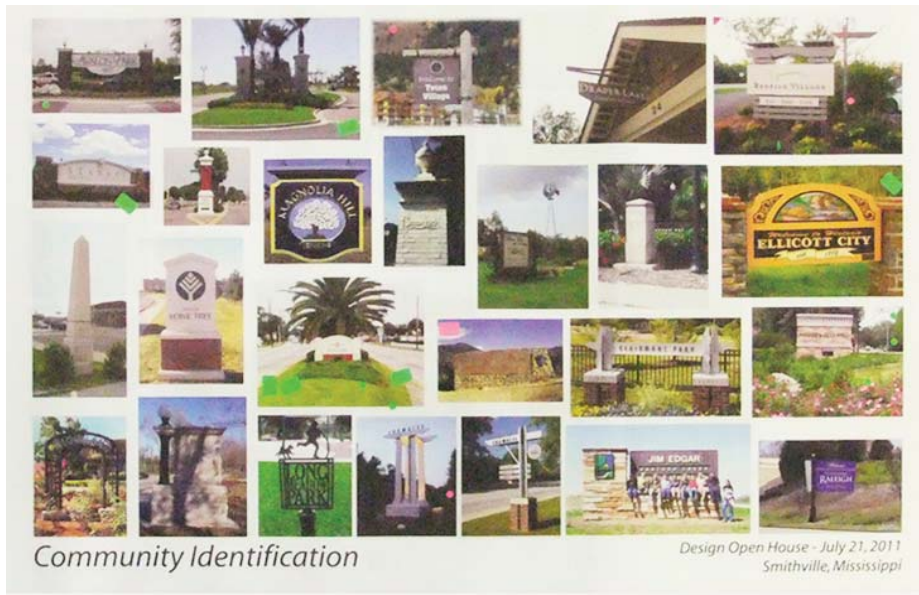
July 21, 2011



Education Section



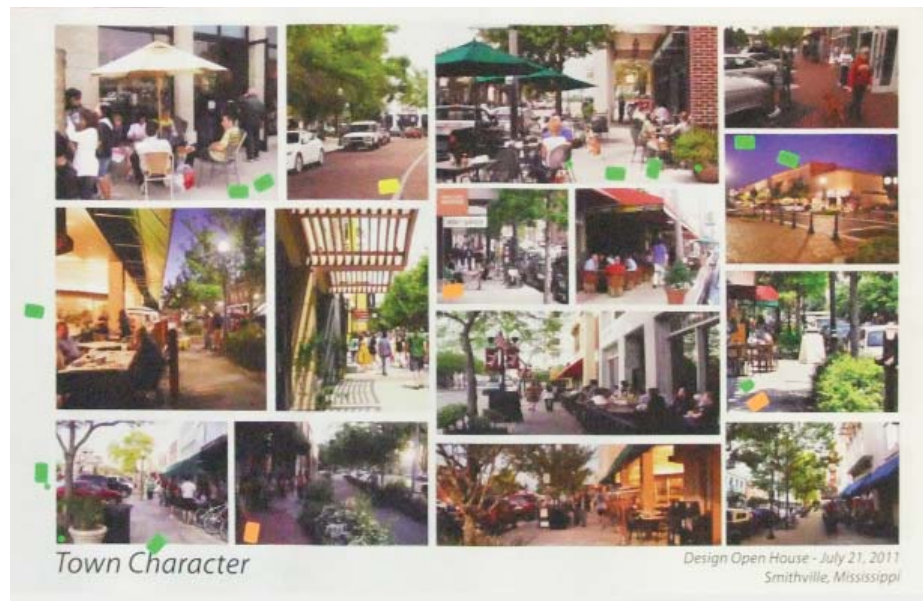
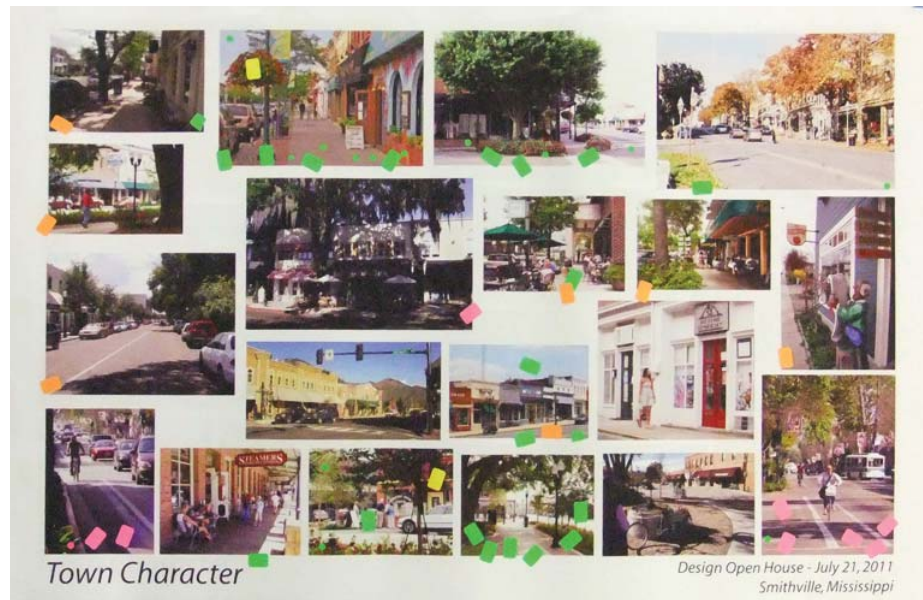
Housing Section



APPENDIX

Item No. 3

Design Open House Boards and Notes July 21, 2011



WHAT BUSINESSES?

- WALMART, CAFES (like PHIL'S)
- McDONALD'S, RYAN'S, BARTOLLO
- LIBRARY, FITNESS CENTER, DIET, CHEAP
- HARDWARE
- GROCERY STORE (Kroger, PIGGY WIGGY)
- FACTORIES (SMALL)
- LAUNDRY MAT
- MEDICAL CLINIC
- TOWN HALL, POLICE DEPT, COMPTON
- BOWLING ALLEY, SKATE PARK
- CAFES w/ SNACK BAR
- PUTT-PUTT / WATER SLIDE
- U.S. POST OFFICE
- FUNERAL HOME
- EE PICKLE
- Martial Arts School (Brown's)
- P+B Mini mart (gas, wi-fi, grill)

WHAT OTHER BUSINESSES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SMITHVILLE?

- Youth Center
- DAYCARE
- Summer Shop - Dinner Cntr on Waterway
- Antique Store
- RECYCLE CENTER (cars, plastic, etc)
- ICE CREAM SHOP
- Starbucks Coffee Shop
- Subway
- Develop CAMPS (e.g. Camps for kids on Waterway)

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE DOWNTOWN?

- WINTER PARK, FL
- SANTA BARBARA, CA
- SOUTH BEACH, FL
- PROVOST, VT
- OCEAN SPRINGS, AL
- Ocean Side, CA
- Black Mountain, NC
- Franklin, TN

SCHOOL IDEAS

- UPDATE ELECTRICAL (DROPS, LIGHTING, FIBER OPTICS)
- WHAT WILL SMITHVILLE SCHOOL LOOK LIKE NOW & IN THE FUTURE?
- MORE ROOM!
- SAFE PLACE, MORE CLASSROOMS
- WATERFRONT DEV'T
- MARINA w/ HOOSIER BOATS
- DEVELOPMENT (LANDS w/ BOAT SLIPS)
- BOARDWALK
- WATER LEVEL IS CONTROLLED

VETERAN'S PARK / MUSEUM NONDE COUNTY

- LAKE
- GATHERING SPACE
- MUSEUM
- NEED PRIVATE DONORS / IDENTIFY CONNECTIONS
- CIVIL WAR TO CURRENT DAY
- JEAN KUTKENDALL 256-9145

APPENDIX

Item No. 4

Resource List for Economic Development Projects

- Town of Smithville Economic Development Committee <http://www.smithvillems.org/>
- Monroe County Chamber of Commerce (County-EDO) <http://www.gomonroe.org/>
- Monroe County Electric Power Association, Amory, MS 38821
- Three Rivers Planning and Development District, Inc. (Regional-EDO)
<http://www.trpdd.com/>
- NMIDA-North Mississippi Industrial Development Association (Regional-EDO)
<http://www.nmida.com/>
- Stennis Center, Mississippi State University Starkville, MS <http://www.stennis.gov/>
- Franklin Furniture Mississippi State University Starkville, MS <http://www.ffi.msstate.edu/>
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Mississippi State University Starkville, MS
<http://www.msusbdc.org/>
- MDA-Mississippi Development Authority (State-EDO) <http://www.mississippi.org/>
- Appalachian Regional Council, www.arc.gov/
- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) <http://www.tva.gov/>
- Alabama-Mississippi Rural Tourism <http://www.almsruraltourism.com/>
- Economic Development Agency (Federal EDO) <http://www.eda.gov/>
- USDA <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>



Photograph by Richardson Photography

RESILIENT



MSW
LS

