

CHAPTER IV: Land Use

EXISTING LAND USE

Helena comprises 20.82 square miles or 13,325 acres. Within Shelby County, Helena’s area consists of 18.26 square miles or 11,684 acres, while its area within Jefferson County comprises 2.56 square miles or 1,641 acres. Existing uses of land can be divided into the broad land use classifications of rural, residential, commercial, industrial, extraction, institutional, recreational, transportation, unfinished vacant lots, and water/wetlands. The following pages provided a brief description of these land use classifications within Helena. It should be noted that a land use classification should not be confused with a zoning classification they are not necessarily the same.

Rural land use classification is defined as land which has by and large been left undisturbed and undeveloped in relation to a built environment. This land use is typically found on the outer fringes of the city limits. The land within this classification comprises agricultural lands such as croplands, pasturelands, and forestlands. However, not all of the land here is used for agricultural purposes as large tracts of land do exist with no agricultural activities occurring. Developers may own large un-subdivided and undeveloped tracts within this classification. The only built environment found on these large tracts are barns, farmhouses, ranches, and scattered houses and manufactured homes not part of subdivisions. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 8,290 acres.



Rural Area off County Road 17



Rural Area off County Road 13

Residential land use classification is defined as land which has been subdivided and/or developed with structures such as single family dwellings, manufactured and mobile homes, apartments, duplexes, trailer parks, and senior living facilities where dwelling units within each type of structure are either owned or rented by individuals who typically consider such units their permanent residences. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 2,024 acres.



Old Cahaba Subdivision in Shelby County



Townhomes off County Road 58 in Shelby County

Commercial land use classification is defined as land which has been subdivided and/or developed to primarily carry on a wide range of business and office activities such as retail & wholesale trade; professional, scientific, & technical services; financial, insurance, & real estate agencies; information services; medical, health, & animal care; and accommodation services. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 109 acres.



Old Town Helena



Walgreens Pharmacy

Industrial land use classification is defined as land which has been subdivided and/or developed to primarily conduct the manufacture of, but not limited to, food; beverage products; apparel; wood products; paper; electricity; chemicals; petroleum & coal products; plastics & rubber products; nonmetallic mineral products; primary metals; fabricated metal products; machinery; computer & electronic products; electrical equipment, appliance, & components; transportation equipment; and furniture. Land found within this classification also contains warehousing structures for the abovementioned products. In addition, this land use classification includes tracts of land used to treat sewage such as wastewater treatment plants. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 96 acres.



ABC Polymer

Transportation/Utilities land use classification is defined as land that is used primarily as part of a local or regional linear network to distribute manufactured goods, fuel, water, wastewater, communications, and/or people via pipelines, transmission lines, roadways, railroads, airways, and towers. Such networks include areas along the way needed to support this distribution such as tank farms, substations, water tanks, airports, pump stations, tower farms, and rail yards. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 1,266 acres.



City of Helena Waste Water Facility



Plantation Pipeline Company Tank Farm



Railroad traversing Riverwoods Subdivision

Recreational land use classification is defined as land used for the operation and/or provision of services for a variety of leisure activities such as active parks which include baseball/softball fields, football fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, and basketball courts; passive parks which include open fields for general use with a scattering of picnic tables, pavilions, and/or stages; greenways and trails; golf courses; recreational centers; swimming pools; and historical/archaeological/ecological sites. This land use encompasses 446 acres.



Helena Sports Complex



Hillsboro Greenway

Institutional land use classification is defined as land used by public and quasi-public entities such as governments, religious organizations, and non-profit agencies for administrative buildings, fire stations, police stations, libraries, museums, post offices, schools, churches, and cemeteries. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 192 acres.



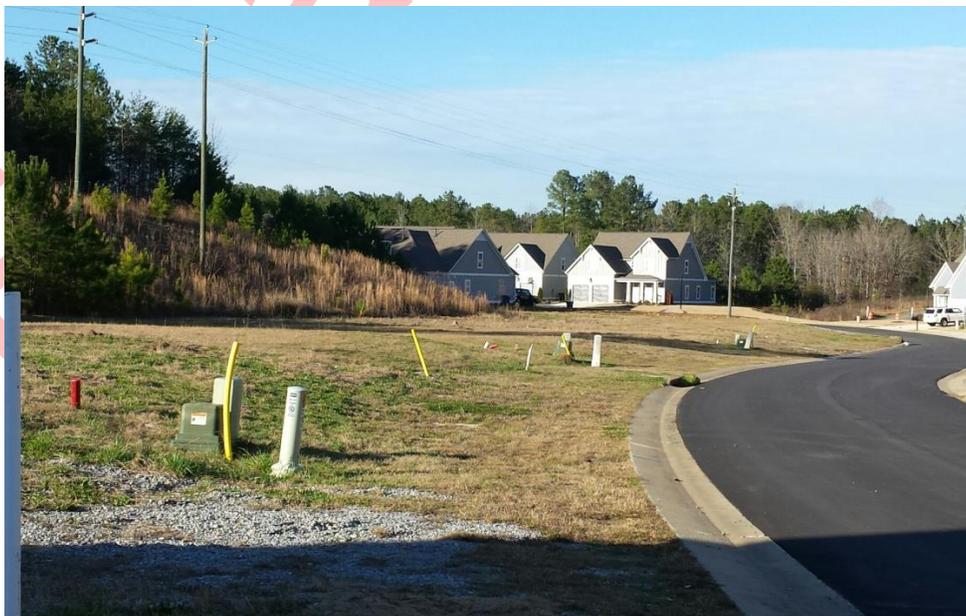
Helena Church – County Road 58

Extraction land use classification is defined as land containing facilities used for the removal of natural resources such as coal, limestone, oil, natural gas, and water from beneath the earth's surface. Removal methods include surface mining such as strip and open-pit mining, underground mining using shafts and tunnels, and drilling. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 272 acres.



Vulcan Helena Quarry

Unfinished Vacant Lots land use classification is defined as land which has been subdivided and prepared for development that includes but is not limited to clearing, grading, sewer and water line connections, and/or roadway connections, but has not been fully developed with structures. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 259 acres.



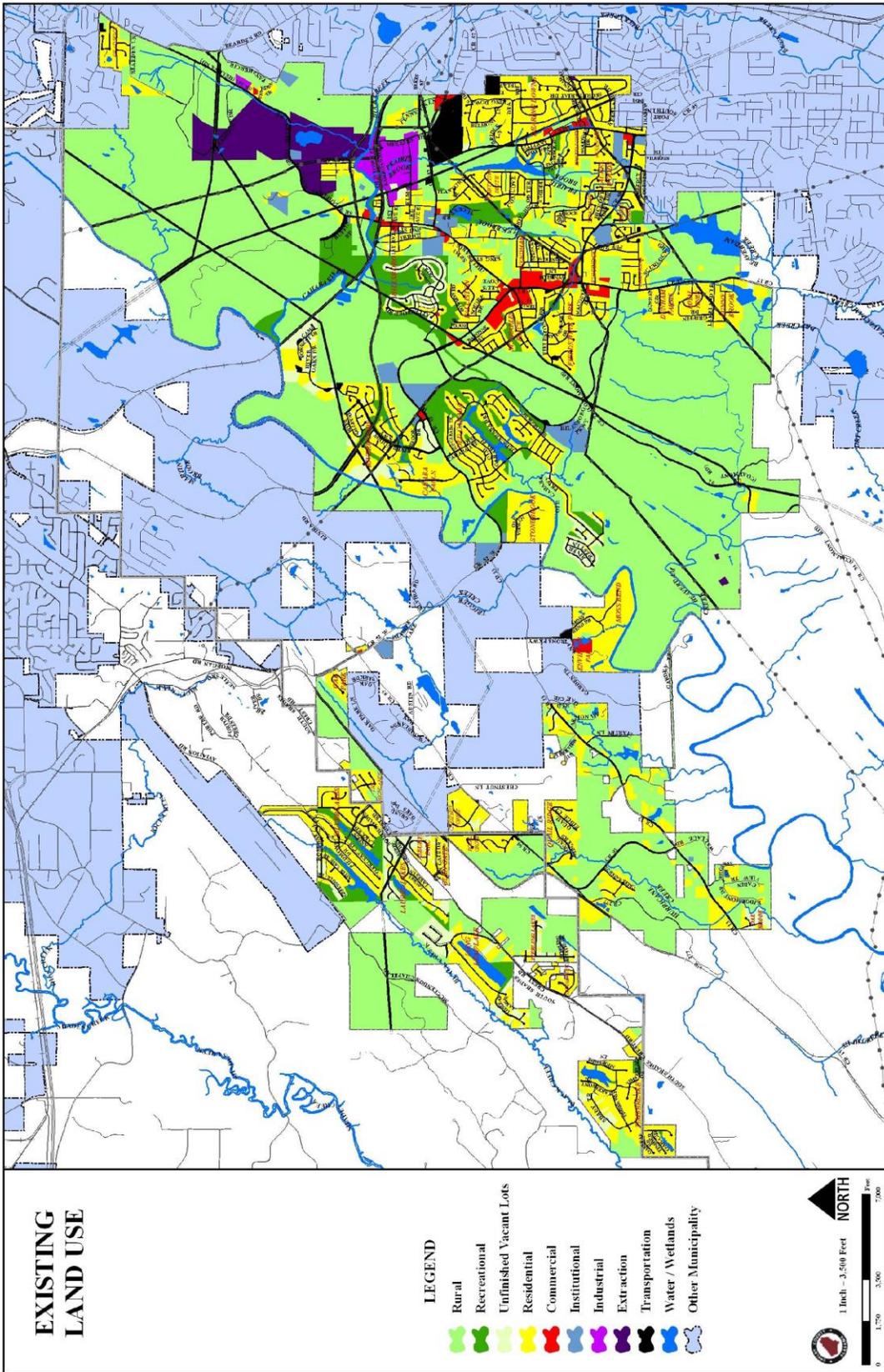
Hillsboro Subdivision

Water/Wetlands land use classification is defined as land which is either permanently covered by water year round such as a river, lake, or pond; or has substrate that is non-soil and is inundated/saturated by water during the year, supports predominantly hydrophytes, and/or the substrate is predominantly un-drained hydric soil such as swamps. Within Helena, this land use encompasses 370 acres.



Lake in Old Cahaba Subdivision

Table 15 HELENA LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS <i>Summary Table</i>		
Rural	8,290	Agricultural/Undeveloped/Large Lot Residential
Residential	2,024	Subdivided or Developed for Various Styles of Residential Use
Commercial	109	Developed for a Wide Range of Business and Retail Use
Industrial	96	Developed for Industrial and Manufacturing Use
Transportation	1,266	Roadways, Pipelines, Transmission Lines, Railroads, Waterways, etc.
Recreational	446	Developed for a Variety of Leisure and Sports Activities
Institutional	192	Public and Quasi-Public Uses
Extraction	272	Used for the Removal of Natural Resources from Beneath the Earth
Vacant	259	Subdivided Land Prepared for Development but Not Yet Developed
Water/Wetlands	370	Land which is Permanently Under Water or Saturated by Water



FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

As the landscape of Helena continues to change between updates of the Helena Comprehensive Plan, so too will the Future Land Use Plan need to change to reflect newly annexed areas, as well as changes to development and transportation patterns.

Land uses are divided into the broad land use classifications described in the previous section. The descriptions of these classifications are same as the depictions found in the Existing Land Use section with the exception of mixed use and unfinished vacant lots. Mixed use is a land use where multiple compatible uses coexist within compact areas to encourage pedestrian movement within the compact area as opposed to automobile movement within the compact area. These mixed use areas are found in Old Town, Helena's historic downtown, which has maintained a mixture of residential and commercial uses in a unique architectural setting throughout Helena's history. This development pattern should be continued on vacant lots in this area in order to preserve its unique characteristics and a cornerstone of "sense of place" in Helena. This mixed use neighborhood a few blocks wide, bounded on the north by Buck Creek and on the south by Helena's civic area.

Another mixed use area is located at the intersection of Helena Road (Hwy 261), Coalmont Road (CR 91) and Highway 52W. This area currently contains the majority of Helena's "modern" commercial establishments including Crow's Corner and Helena Market Place shopping centers as well as a number of eating establishments, gasoline stations and other service related businesses. While this area was formerly designated as a mixed use center, it has become a more traditional commercial node for the City.

Other mixed use areas include the village center at Riverwoods and numerous village centers within the Hillsboro development with the largest one being at the intersection of CR 52 and Hillsboro Parkway. Hillsboro Parkway would traverse three mixed use centers. The proposed Helena Bypass and proposed connector roadways will create the potential for mixed use areas at major intersections such as the one which would be located where the bypass would intersect SR 261. A southern proposed connector paralleling Beaverdam Creek between CR 91 and CR 17 would justify mixed use centers at these intersections.

Mixed use areas to the west of the Cahaba River would be located at opposite ends of CR 93 with a couple located on South Shades Crest Road. Some of these centers are located within unincorporated areas, so in order to fulfill the intent of these centers, annexations will need to occur. Terrain and adjacent cities would limit the acreage of these centers.

