

City of Robertsdale

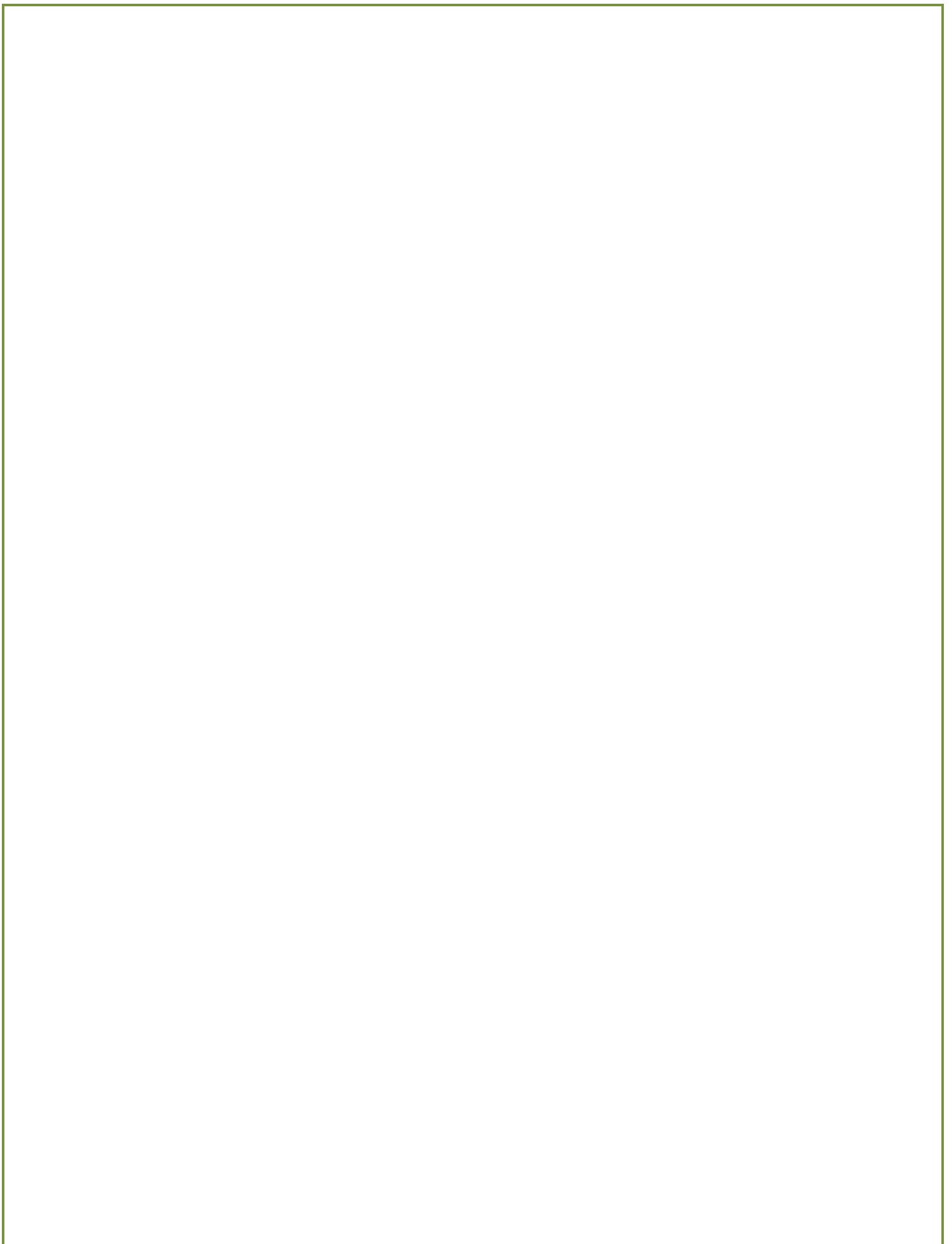


Comprehensive Plan 2025



Prepared by:
South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
2008 – 2015

Adopted:
April 27th, 2015



City of Robertsdale

City Hall

22647 Racine Street

P.O. Box 429

Robertsdale, AL 36567

Mayor

Charles H. Murphy

City Council

Joseph Kitchens

Sue Cooper

Ruthie Campbell

Paul Hollingsworth

Brent Kendrick

Planning Commission

Aaron White, Chairman

Joseph Kitchens, Vice-Chairman

Charles H. Murphy, Mayor

Samantha Sliwinski-Rockenbauer

David Kilcrease

Kristina Bentley

Jonathan Kitchens

Nancy Williams

Jenise Brocks

Special Appreciation in the development of this plan goes to: the Robertsdale Planning Commission; David Kilcrease, Building Inspector & Safety Coordinator; Shannon Ellison, City Clerk; and Greg B. Smith, City Engineer. This plan was prepared by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission from 2008 - 2015.

I, Aaron White, _____, do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the City of Robertsdale's Comprehensive Plan, adopted 2015.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 2 - Population and Economy

Chapter 3 - Housing

Chapter 4 - Transportation

Chapter 5 - Land Use

*Chapter 6 - Natural and Agricultural
Resources*

Chapter 7 - Parks and Recreation

*Chapter 8 - Downtown and Historic
Resources*

*Chapter 9 - Community Facilities and
Services*

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Known as the “Hub of Baldwin County”, the City of Robertsdale is a thriving community unique for its small town character and southern hospitality. Situated in the middle of coastal Baldwin County, it is a gateway community to Alabama’s coastal beaches with an estimated 1.3 million tourist visiting south Baldwin Alabama’s beaches in 2009 and spending more than \$500 million in travel related expenditures. Robertsdale is rich in history and developed around its agricultural assets of good farmland and convenient location to the railroad, interstate and Gulf of Mexico for transportation of goods. This agricultural history is important to Robertsdale and still influences who we are today.

The population of Robertsdale grew by 39.5% between 2000 and 2010. Its location in one of the two fastest growing counties in the state, ensures this rapid growth trend will continue into the future. Baldwin County is projected to experience a population increase of over 50% by the year 2025. Robertsdale can expect to be the center of a lot of this growth as they boast some of the finest public and private schools in the State, providing quality education in a rural hometown environment.



Photograph 1.1: Downtown Robertsdale



Photograph 1.2: Robertsdale Farmland

The City of Robertsdale is located only 28 miles across Mobile Bay from the Mobile Metropolitan area. Even with the economic recession impacting the nation, the economy of the Mobile Metropolitan area has remained fairly strong in comparison to other communities in the southeast. With the recent construction and start of operation of the steel manufacturing plant ArcelorMittal, formerly known as ThyssenKrupp, in north Mobile County and other industrial developments in the area such as the new Airbus manufacturing center in Mobile, over 5,000 new jobs have been brought to this area. As many people move to this area for the new employment opportunities, it is anticipated that Baldwin County, and communities like Robertsdale, will acquire some of this incoming population. This will impact transportation networks, school systems, public services, residential and commercial development in Baldwin County and the City of Robertsdale.

With the successful tourist industry of coastal Alabama coupled with the economic and industrial growth of the area, the City of Robertsdale can be confident that a prosperous future with steady growth and development is on the horizon. With

this anticipated growth, community leaders have identified the need to update the Comprehensive Plan for the City and coordinated this effort with the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. This Plan reflects the desired future growth and development of the City of Robertsdale as identified by the residents of the community through public workshops. It also identifies strategies and implementation schedules to achieve the desired goals of the community while supporting the projected future growth and development.

Scope and Purpose

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that functions as the long-range plan for future growth and development. It identifies the goals, objectives, and strategies of the community, determined by its residents and property owners. The Plan serves to guide the City's growth and development over the next 10 years, by addressing the multitude of issues facing the City, ranging from land use, to economic development, to housing and beyond. By setting goals and objectives, City officials can use this document to make policies that effectively provide a coordinated approach for future growth.

Though adopted by the City Planning Commission, the Plan is intended to provide guidance for future legal and policy decisions as determined by City Council and through analysis of existing and predicted conditions. The Plan also serves as the statutory basis for many of the City's land use and subdivision regulations as well as the application of zoning districts, as zoning and future land use must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan assesses Robertsdale's municipal limits and the surrounding jurisdiction one mile out from the City limits. The proposed planning period is approximately 10 years, or until 2025. The Plan contains nine chapters, each with three components beginning with the current

conditions, followed by community goals, then ending with recommendations and strategies. The chapters of the Comprehensive Plan include Population & Economy, Housing, Transportation, Land Use, Natural & Agricultural Resources, Parks & Recreation, Downtown & Historic Resources, and Community Facilities & Services. The Plan also forecasts growth trends within each of these elements and recommends strategies to accommodate the projected growth.

During the comprehensive planning process, the City hosted three community workshops under the direction of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. The workshops provided the community the opportunity to identify Robertsdale's vision for future growth and development through four planning tools: 1) Visual Preference Survey, 2) S.W.O.T. Analysis, 3) Public Opinion Survey, and 4) open dialogue. The results obtained during these planning sessions were formulated into specific goals and objectives the community would like to achieve over the life of this comprehensive plan. They also served as the foundation of the recommended growth and development strategies outlined within each community element.



Photograph 1.3: Robertsdale City Hall

Challenges of Growth

Growth brings with it increasing demands for land, infrastructure, and services. More people mean more houses, streets, utilities, schools, and community services such as police and fire protection. Growth’s demands for land are heightened by dispersed patterns of development in fringe areas, which offer larger lots but result in segregated neighborhoods that lack pedestrian connectivity to schools and commercial needs. Sprawled growth strains a City’s financial ability to provide services to these areas and often creates stressed transportation corridors.

An important challenge facing the City of Robertsdale is to determine how to effectively and equitably accommodate growth and development without adversely affecting the small town, rural character of the community. To aid in accomplishing this, development should be not only more compact and contiguous the closer to the center of the City, but it should also maximize the use of existing infrastructure and resources through redevelopment of the existing community whenever possible. This will help preserve the larger tracts of agricultural land that have been part of the City’s history and are associated with Robertsdale’s beauty.

Regional Setting

The City of Robertsdale, AL is located in the middle of coastal Baldwin County, in the southwestern portion of the State. Table 1.1 illustrates Robertsdale’s convenient location to adjacent communities and other points of interest. Figure 1.1 illustrates Robertsdale’s location in the county and its location in reference to adjacent municipalities.

The City has developed along the State Highway 59 corridor, which runs through downtown

Robertsdale and is a principle arterial north/south corridor through Baldwin County. State highway 59 and the newly constructed Baldwin Beach Express serve as strategic routes north/south routes to the popular beaches in south Baldwin County. State Highway 104 intersects Highway 59 just south of the downtown area and connects Robertsdale with adjacent cities of Silverhill and Fairhope to the west. U.S. Highway 90 intersects with Highway 59 just north of downtown and connects Robertsdale to the Florida State line and Pensacola.

Table 1.1: Distance to Adjacent Communities & Interests

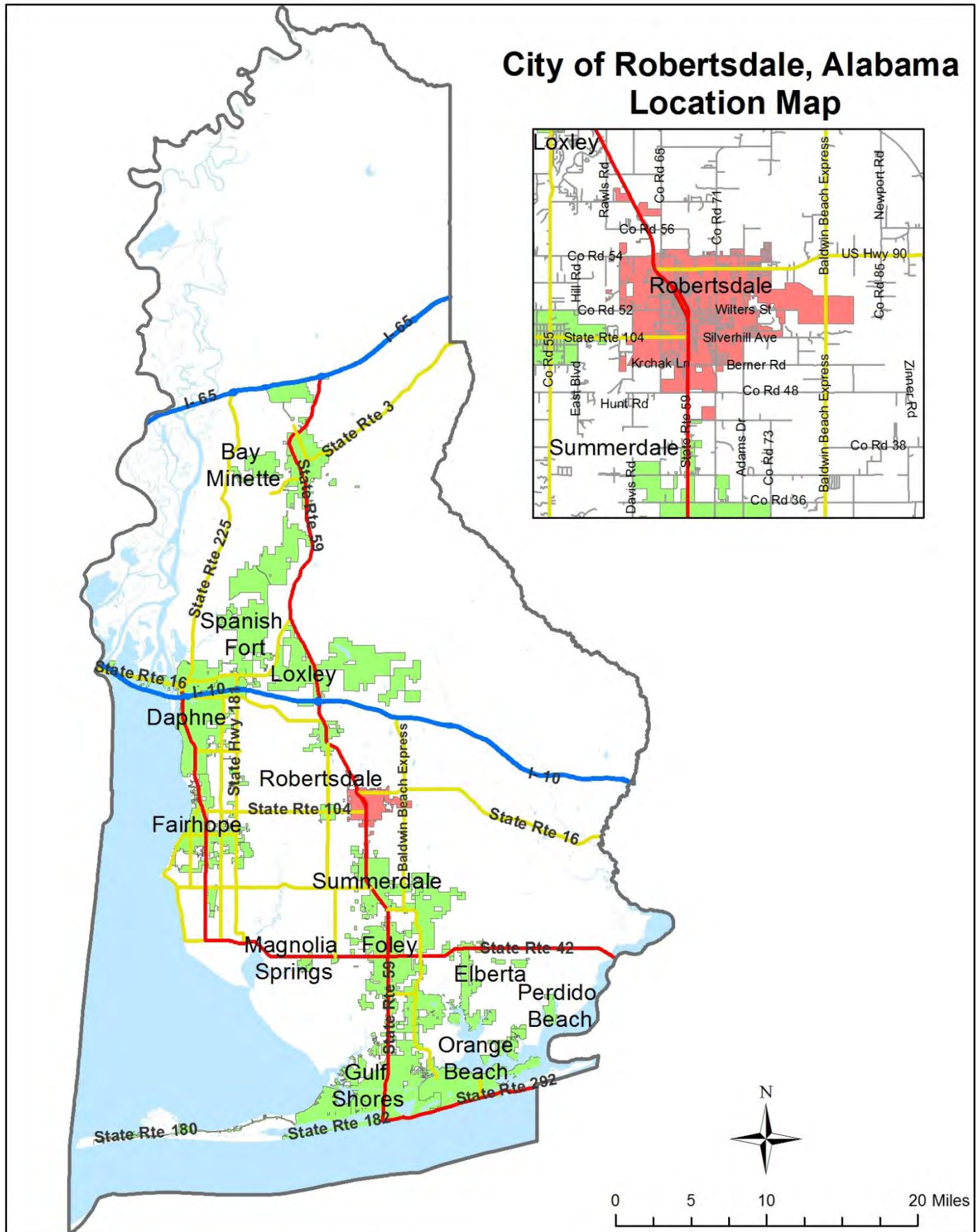
CITY/INTEREST	DISTANCE (Miles)	TIME (Min)
Silverhill	3	<5
Summerdale	5	<5
Loxley	6	<5
Interstate 10	8	<10
Foley	10	<10
Elberta	12	<10
Fairhope	13	<15
Daphne	13	<15
Point Clear	15	<15
Gulf Shores	20	<30
Florida State Line	25	<30
Mobile	29	<30
Pensacola	42	<60
Montgomery	166	<180
New Orleans	168	<180
Birmingham	254	<240

Source: U.S. Census and Google Maps



Photograph 1.4: Highway 59 South

Figure 1.1: City of Robertsdale's Regional Setting



Source: SARPC, Eastern Shore MPO

Robertsdale's History

The City of Robertsdale has a rich history that is well documented by the City of Robertsdale Public Library. The library was the source of the historical information below. The City of Robertsdale was founded in 1905 by the Southern Plantation Corporation of Chicago, Illinois. The City's current location was selected due to the area's abundance of good farmland and the recent extension of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad line from north Baldwin County to Foley, a settlement south of Robertsdale. Robertsdale was named after Dr. B.F. Roberts, an official of the Southern Plantation Corporation. Robertsdale continued to grow around agricultural land use and its railroad link to the north and south. The City eventually incorporated in 1921. In 1927, the Mobile Bay Causeway opened up along the Old Spanish Trail and rapidly changed the transportation of people and goods across the Bay. The docks and wharves along the eastern shore of Baldwin County began to deteriorate.

By 1939, Robertsdale was known as the agricultural, poultry, and shipping center of Baldwin County and in 1940, the Baldwin National Bank located within the Town. The Robertsdale Livestock Auction began in 1949, and by 1950, the population had reached the one thousand mark.



Photograph 1.5: Chicago Street 1920s



Photograph 1.6: Matthew's Furniture Store 1950s

Baldwin County and Robertsdale continued to grow and prosper over the next 30 years with increased business and industry locating in the region and increased tourism to the County's beaches, resort communities, and vacation destinations. Gulf Shores and Orange Beach have become one of the major tourist destinations along the Gulf Coast, with the main transportation link to Interstate 10 being Highway 59. Robertsdale's small town character, proximity to the coast, and good schools have made it attractive for residential growth. Robertsdale's 30 minute commute to the Mobile Metropolitan Area has also contributed to its residential growth.

By 2000, Robertsdale's population had reached 3,782 and by 2010 it had reached 5,276. This projected 39.5% increase is mirrored throughout Baldwin County, one of the fastest growing counties in Alabama.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 2 - Population & Economy

Mobile and Baldwin Counties have been fortunate to see sustained population and economic growth for many decades, even when the rest of the nation has fallen on hard economic times. The region experienced a slight decline in economic growth due to the recession however, development is steadily increasing again and recent years are demonstrating signs of recovery. The development trends experienced prior to the economic decline are expected to return to the area as Mobile and Baldwin Counties are projected to be forerunners in areas of economic success in Alabama’s future. This section of the Comprehensive Plan describes how Robertsdale’s population and economy has changed over the past several decades and forecasts population estimates and economic strategies for desired growth for the next 10 years.



Photograph 2.1: Ladies luncheon, downtown

Population Analysis

Growth Trends

The population of Robertsdale has continued to increase over the past 30 years with a total growth of 2,970 individuals from 1980 to 2010. This is a 129% increase. A 40% population increase occurred between 2000 and 2010 (See Table 2.1). The population of Baldwin County grew by 41,850 individuals between 2000 and 2010, a nearly 30% increase.

The population of the City of Robertsdale and Baldwin County has continued to increase dramatically since the 2000 U.S. Census (See Table 2.2). Each year since 2000, the population increase in Robertsdale has ranged between 2 and 7 percent, with an average percent annual increase in population being 3.43%. In Baldwin County, the annual population increase ranges between 2 and 3

Table 2.1: City of Robertsdale and Baldwin County	Decennial Census Total Population				Population Increase	Percent Change
Population Change 1970- 2010.	1980	1990	2000	2010	1980-2010	1980-2010
City of Robertsdale	2,306	2,401	3,782	5,276	2,970	129%
Baldwin County	78,556	98,280	140,415	182,265	103,709	132%
Robertsdale As % of County	2.9%	2.4%	2.7%	2.9%	-	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.2: Annual Population for Robertsdale and Baldwin County

	City of Robertsdale	Population Increase	Percent Change	Baldwin County	Population Increase	Percent Change
Census 2000	3,782	-	-	140,415	-	-
July 2000	3,821	39	1.03	141,364	949	0.70
July 2001	3,966	145	3.79	144,960	3596	2.54
July 2002	4,215	249	6.28	148,071	3111	2.15
July 2003	4,338	123	2.92	151,574	3503	2.37
July 2004	4,482	144	3.32	156,368	4794	3.16
July 2005	4,666	184	4.11	162,261	5893	3.77
July 2006	4,784	118	2.53	168,233	5972	3.68
July 2007	4,868	84	1.76	171,769	3536	2.10
July 2008	5,009	141	2.90	176,212	4,443	2.59
July 2009	5,120	111	2.22	179,878	3,666	2.08
Census 2010	5,276	156	3.04	182,265	2,387	1.32
2000-2010 Increase	-	1,494	39.5%	-	41,840	29.8%

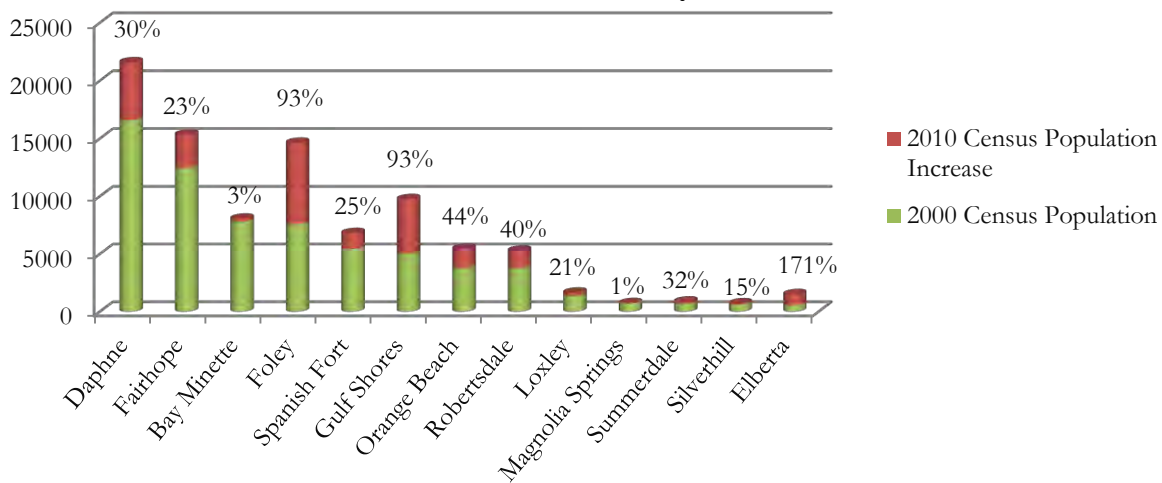
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

%, with an average percent increase in population of 2.79%.

Table 2.2 illustrates Robertsdale’s estimated population increase from 2000 to 2010 39.5% and Baldwin County’s as 29.8%. Figure 2.1 below compares Robertsdale’s growth trends with the

other municipalities located in Baldwin County as it illustrates the 2000 and 2010 population of each incorporated place in Baldwin County. The cities of Gulf Shores, Foley, Elberta, and Orange Beach have seen the most growth in population and are located in south Baldwin County closer to the coast. Robertsdale’s projected growth rate during this span

Figure 2.1: Population Growth Rates for Municipalities in Baldwin County

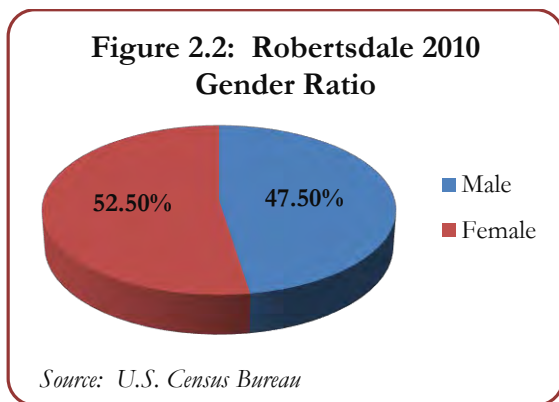


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

has exceeded the growth of Daphne, Spanish Fort, and Loxely. Magnolia Springs has had the lowest population increase at 1%.

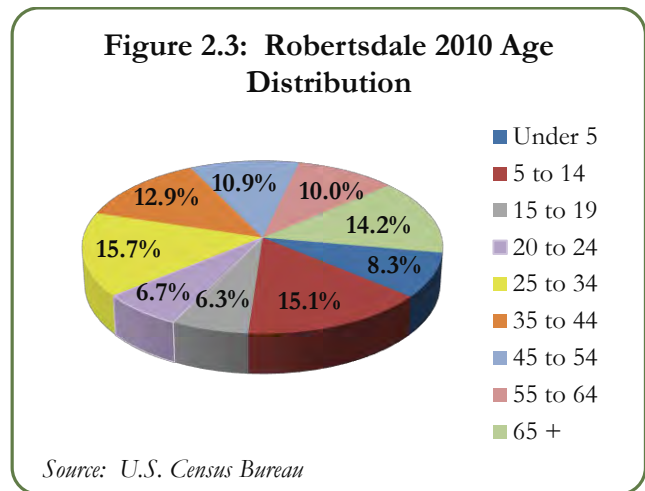
Gender and Age Distribution

According to the 2010 Census, there are 286 more females in Robertsdale than males. Figure 2.2 illustrates the gender ratio for the City. The median age of the residents in Robertsdale is 34, compared to 41 years for Baldwin County and 38 years for the State. Figure 2.3 and Table 2.3 illustrate the age composition of the population in 2010. 8.3% of the population is under the age of five. 21.3% of the population is school age, ranging between 5 and 19. Young adults within the age group 20-24 (typical college age) comprise 6.7% of the population. The work force population, ranging in age from 25 to 54, makes up 39.6% of the population. The group entering into retirement, ages 55-64, represents 10% of the population. The retired population, ages 65 and up, comprises 14.2% of the population.



When comparing Robertsdale’s 2010 population composition to Baldwin County and Alabama, age groups under the age of 34 are considerably higher than the County or State’s percent of total population. Therefore, the City’s need for adequate school systems and affordable housing for first time home buyers to accommodate this population is evident. Age groups 35 and older make up less of

the total population for Robertsdale when compared to the County. Population composition for Robertsdale’s 35 and older age groups is very similar to the State’s average indicating that future needs for social services and housing to accommodate this population is typical.

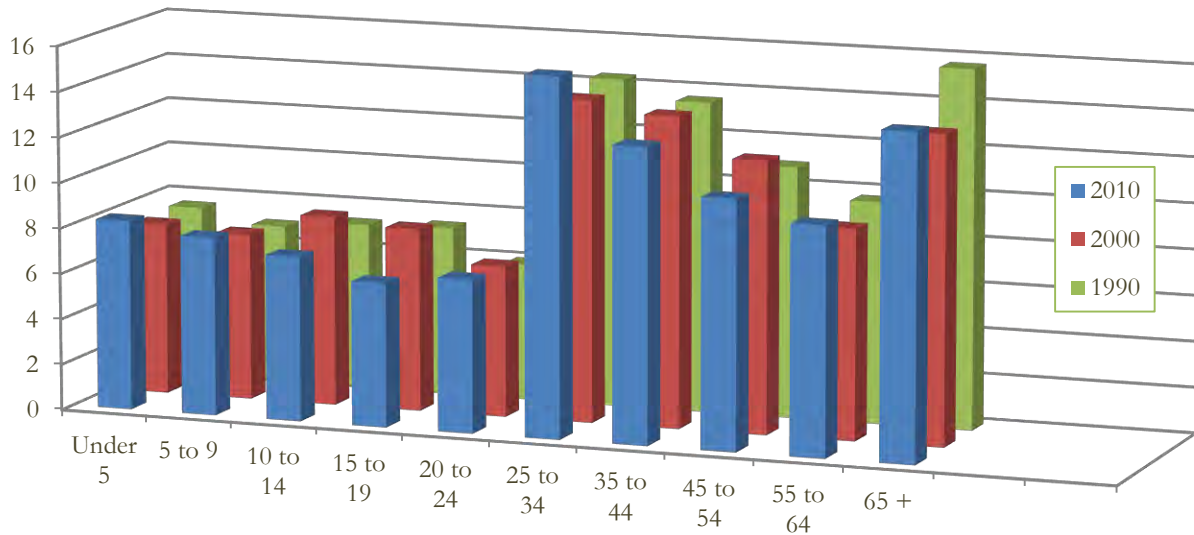


Analysis of age distribution of populations is important to determine which community services will be needed in the future. Figure 2.4 and Table 2.3 illustrate the changes in the age distribution of Robertsdale over the past 10+ years and analysis of the data suggests several trends. Even though all age groups demonstrated a significant increase due to the City’s and County’s considerable growth, a notable shift has occurred in the total percent of population between the elderly residents and young people. Contrary to national trends, the City of Robertsdale’s overall population is collectively getting younger. This is evident in Figure 2.4 and Table 2.3 where the younger age groups from the 2010 Census exhibit a higher percent of total population when compared to the 2000. In 2000, the median age was 33.6 compared to 33.8 for 2010. However, Robertsdale has a much younger median age than Baldwin County and the State of Alabama who average 38 and 41, respectively.

Table 2.3: Age Distribution of Population for Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Robertsdale					Baldwin County	Alabama
	2000 Census	2000 % of Total Population	2010 Census	2010 % of Total Population	2000 – 2010 Percent Increase	2010 % of Total Population	2010 % of Total Population
Under 5	285	7.5	438	8.3	53.7	6.1	6.4
5 to 9	275	7.3	413	7.8	50.2	6.4	6.4
10 to 14	314	8.3	382	7.2	21.7	6.5	6.7
15 to 19	302	8.0	330	6.3	9.3	6.4	7.2
20 to 24	249	6.6	351	6.7	41.0	5.2	7.0
25 to 34	533	14.1	829	15.7	55.5	11.5	12.7
35 to 44	514	13.6	683	12.9	32.9	12.9	13.0
45 to 54	450	11.9	576	10.9	28.0	14.8	14.5
55 to 59	192	5.1	299	5.7	55.8	6.9	6.5
60 to 64	156	4.1	228	4.3	46.2	6.6	5.8
65 to 74	287	7.6	374	7.1	30.3	9.8	7.8
75 to 84	167	4.4	247	4.7	47.9	5.2	4.4
85 +	58	1.5	126	2.4	117.2	1.8	1.6
Median Age	33.6	-	33.8	-		41.1	37.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2.4: City of Robertsdale Percent Distribution by Age Group



Source: US Census Bureau

Table 2.4 depicts 2010 youth population trends for Baldwin County and its municipalities, including Robertsdale. Robertsdale has the 4th highest school age population, at 21.3%, of all municipalities in Baldwin County. Robertsdale’s school age population exceeds the State’s (20.3%) and the County’s (22.1%). If you add the under 5 population of 8.3%, the total dependent population under 19 equals 29.6%. The percent of total households with individuals under the age of 18 in Robertsdale is 39.4%, which exceeds the State and County percentages and is the second highest in Baldwin County.

Table 2.5 depicts the 2010 elderly population trends for Baldwin County and its municipalities, including Robertsdale. Robertsdale’s elderly population (age 65+) is 14.2%, which is slightly larger than the State’s (13.8%) and less than Baldwin County’s (16.8%). Only two other municipalities in Baldwin County have a smaller elderly population. Baldwin

County has historically maintained an elevated elderly population due to its coastal location and higher property values. The percent of total households with individuals 65 and older in Robertsdale is 25.3%, which is smaller than the State’s (25.5%), but less than Baldwin County’s (29.7%). The total dependent population, which is those residents under the age of 19 and over the age of 65, makes up 43.8% of Robertsdale’s total population. Robertsdale’s dependent population exceeds Baldwin County’s (42.3%) and the State’s (40.6%). The dependent population increases the need for community facilities and services such as daycare centers, recreational facilities, youth activities, nursing homes, senior citizen housing, public transit, senior services, and health care facilities. Between 2000 and 2010, Robertsdale’s total dependent population decreased by 1%.

Table 2.4: 2010 Youth Population Trends for Baldwin County and Municipalities	Total Population	Ages 5-19	Percent of Ages 5-19	Total Households	Average Size	Percent Households with under 18
Alabama	4,779,736	971,355	20.3	1,883,791	2.48	33.1
Baldwin County	182,265	40,245	22.1	73,180	2.46	31.7
Bay Minette	8,044	1,885	23.4	2,744	2.53	36.9
Daphne	21,570	4,245	19.7	8,889	2.41	31.8
Elberta	1,498	260	17.4	653	2.29	27.0
Fairhope	15,326	2,864	18.7	6,732	2.26	27.7
Foley	14,618	2,366	16.2	6,165	2.35	27.8
Gulf Shores	9,741	1,472	15.1	4,453	2.19	24.7
Loxley	1,632	299	18.3	643	2.53	34.8
Orange Beach	5,441	867	15.9	2,492	2.18	23.9
Robertsdale	5,276	1,125	21.3	1,951	2.64	39.4
Silverhill	706	154	21.8	277	2.53	28.9
Spanish Fort	6,798	1,374	20.2	2,861	2.37	31.8
Summerdale	862	160	18.6	351	2.46	33.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.5: 2010 Population Trends for Baldwin County and Municipalities	Total Population	Ages 65+	Percent of Ages 65+	Total Households	Households with Individuals Ages 65+	Percent Households with Age 65+
State of Alabama	4,779,736	657,792	13.8	1,883,791	481,075	25.5
Baldwin County	182,265	30,568	16.8	73,180	21,733	29.7
Bay Minette	8,044	1,170	14.5	2,744	772	28.1
Daphne	21,570	3,082	14.3	8,889	2,200	24.7
Elberta	1,498	302	20.2	653	230	35.2
Fairhope	15,326	3,637	23.7	6,732	2,637	39.2
Foley	14,618	3,223	22.0	6,165	2,212	35.9
Gulf Shores	9,741	1,679	17.2	4,453	1,185	26.6
Loxley	1,632	200	12.3	643	156	24.3
Orange Beach	5,441	1,043	19.2	2,492	759	30.5
Robertsdale	5,276	747	14.2	1,951	493	25.3
Silverhill	706	138	19.5	277	96	34.7
Spanish Fort	6,798	1,141	16.8	2,861	828	28.9
Summerdale	862	150	17.4	351	102	29.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Racial Composition

Over the course of the 2000’s, Robertsdale’s racial population became more diverse. Table 2.6 and Figure 2.5 illustrate the racial composition changes over the past decade. The white population in 2000 was 94.3% compared to 2010, where the white population decreased to 85.3%. The difference is primarily due to an increase in the black and hispanic populations. The black population increased from 3.3% in 2000 to 5.4% in 2010. The hispanic population increased from 1.9% in 2000 to 9.2% in 2010. In 2010, the white population in Baldwin County was 85.7% and in the Alabama it was 68.5%. Robertsdale also exhibits a slightly higher hispanic composition than Baldwin County and the State.

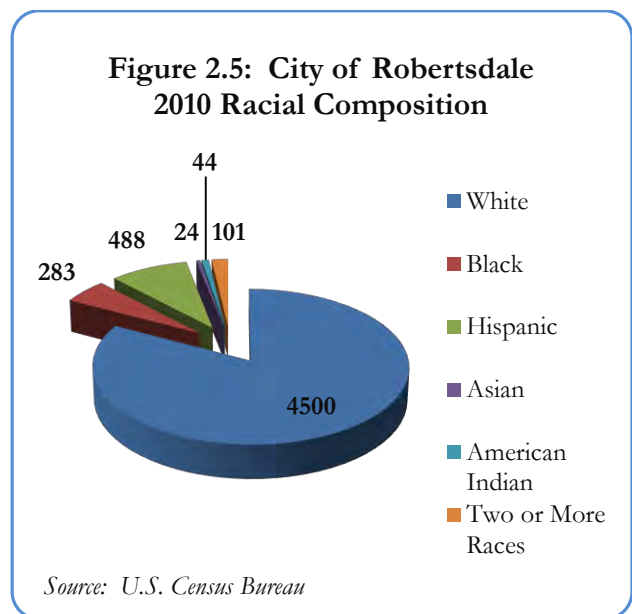


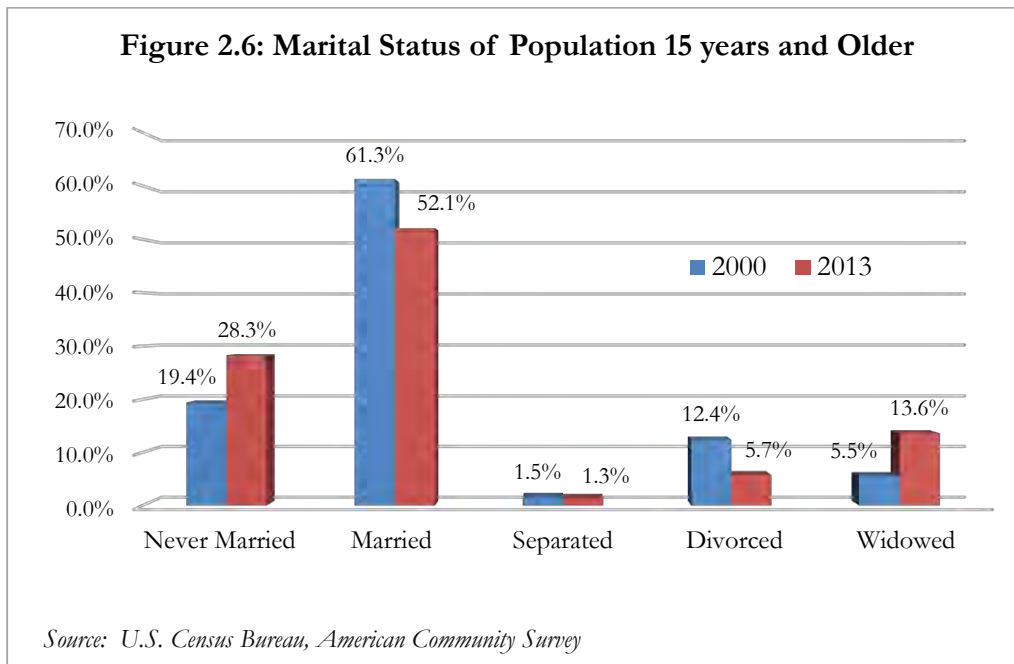
Table 2.6: General Population Characteristics By Race	City of Robertsdale				Baldwin County	State of Alabama
	2000	2000 %	2010	2010 %	2010 %	2010 %
White	3,565	94.3	4,500	85.3	85.7	68.5
Black	125	3.3	283	5.4	9.4	26.2
Hispanic	73	1.9	488	9.2	4.4	3.9
Two or More Races	40	1.1	101	1.9	1.5	1.5
American Indian	27	0.7	44	0.8	0.7	0.6
Asian	9	0.2	24	0.5	0.7	1.1
Other						

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Marital Status

Trends in marital status are important because they can influence the natural population increase of communities and impact such things as housing needs and the school-age population. Figure 2.6 illustrates the 2000 and 2013 marital status of Robertsdale’s population that was 15 years and older. In 2013, the population 15 years and older was 4,333 compared to 2000 when it was 2,377. This is a 54.8% increase from 2000. In 2013, 28.3%

of Robertsdale citizens above the age of 15 had never married compared to 19.4% in 2000. Married individuals amounted to 52.1% in 2013 compared to 61.3% in 2000. In 2013, 1.3% were separated compared to 1.5% in 2000. The divorced totaled 5.7% in 2013 compared to 12.4% in 2000. In 2013, 13.6% were widowed compared to 2000 when 5.5% individuals were widowed. In 2013, 84% of the widowed were female.



According to Figure 2.6, the percent of married individuals has slightly declined and individuals whom have never married increased by 8.9%. The number of separated and divorced individuals decreased while the number of widowed individuals doubled. The marital status trends over the past 10 years indicate that the single population of Robertsdale is increasing due to divorce and people

choosing to not marry. If you factor out the number of individuals ages 15-19, you can determine the population 20 years and older that have never been married, are separated, divorced, or widowed. These individuals are more likely to live on their own and have only one household income which requires more affordable housing.

Household Characteristics

Household characteristics of a city determine the quantity and type of community facilities and services that are needed to support the population. They guide future land use and development, including transportation. The number and type of individuals in households influences a community’s school systems, senior services, and economic development. The income of a household can also influence the commercial development of the community.

According to the 2010 Census, there are 1,951 households in Robertsdale and 1,392, or 71.3%, are family households. See Tables 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9. This percentage is higher than the County or State’s total population in family households. In Robertsdale, 36.1% of family households have children under the age of 18, as compared to 28% for Baldwin County and 28.6% for the State.

Table 2.7: 2010 Census Households By Type in Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Robertsdale	Baldwin County	Alabama
	Persons	Percent of Total Households	
Total Households	1,951	100	100
Family Households	1,392	71.3	67.8
With Own Children Under 18	704	36.1	28.6
Husband-Wife Family	1,002	51.4	47.9
With Own Children Under 18	478	24.5	18.5
Female Householder, No Husband	285	14.6	15.3
With Own Children Under 18	170	8.7	8.1
Nonfamily Households	559	27.0	32.2
Householder Living Alone	462	23.7	27.4
Householder 65 Years and Over	199	10.2	9.8
Households with Persons Under 18	768	39.4	33.1
Households with Persons 65+	493	25.3	25.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.8: Relationship of Population in Households for Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Robertsdale				Baldwin County	Alabama
	2000		2010		2010	2010
	Persons	% Total Pop.	Persons	% Total Pop.	% Total Pop.	% Total Pop.
Total Pop. In Households	3,749	99.1	5,143	97.5	98.7	97.6
Householder	1,444	38.2	1,951	37.0	40.2	39.4
Spouse	799	21.1	1,002	19.0	21.9	18.9
Child	1,235	32.7	1,603	30.4	26.8	28.2
Other Relatives	137	3.6	314	6.0	5.6	6.8
Non-Relative	134	3.5	273	5.2	4.4	4.3
Total Pop. In Group Quarters	33	0.9	133	2.5	1.3	2.4
Institutionalized	9	0.2	107	2.0	1.0	1.4
Non-Institutionalized	24	0.6	26	0.5	0.3	1.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.9: Household and Income Characteristics	City of Robertsdale			Baldwin County	State
	2000	2010	% Change	2010	2010
Population	3,782	5,276	39.5	182,265	4,779,736
Total Households	1,444	1,951	35.1	73,180	1,883,791
Family Households	1,054	1,392	32.1	51,151	1,276,440
Avg. Household Size	2.60	2.64	1.5	2.46	2.48
Avg. Family Size	3.06	3.10	1.3	2.93	3.02
Median Household Income	\$33,194	N/A	-	-	-
Median Family Income	\$39,138	N/A	-	-	-
Per Capita Income	\$16,510	N/A	-	-	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

When comparing total households with persons under the age of 18, Robertsdale again exceeded the County and State percentages with 39.4%, compared to 31.7% and 33.1%, respectively. This data reflects the higher percentage of school age children and young families in Robertsdale when compare to Baldwin County or the State. Households with persons 65 and older comprised

25.3% of Robertsdale’s total population. This is lower than the State at 25.5% and lower than Baldwin County at 29.7%. This reflects that even though Baldwin County is one of leading Counties in Alabama for retired individuals and seniors, Robertsdale also supports younger families with school age children. This supports the notion that the dependent population in Robertsdale is growing and will require more social services.

When assessing household composition, 97.5% of Robertsdale's 2010 population was in a household, compared to 98.7% for the County and 97.6% for the State. Robertsdale had considerably less individuals in group quarters when compared to the County and State. However, the most notable difference was the householder and child composition which reflected Robertsdale's higher children population and household size. As seen in Table 2.8, in 2010 children belonging to households in Robertsdale comprised of 30.4% of the total population when compared to 26.8% for the County and 28.2% for the State. 37% of Robertsdale total population was a householder compared to 40.2% for the County and 39.4% for the State. This reflects the larger household size in Robertsdale and the increased density allows for less expenditure of funds for public services when compared to the County or State.

In comparing the 2010 Census data with the 2000 Census data, the total households in Robertsdale increased by 507, or 35%. This is considerable growth and impact to the housing stock and community facilities and services when you consider that over 500 new households needed a place to live and over 500 children entered into the school system. If this growth trend continues, larger schools will be needed to accommodate the influx of children and residential development will increase the land use density resulting in smaller lot sizes. The average household size increased from 2.60 in 2000 to 2.64 in 2010. This is higher than the County at 2.46 and the State at 2.48. Therefore, household income is being distributed amongst more people reducing the per capita average.

The overall increase in Robertsdale's total population, total households, and average household size indicates that Robertsdale is growing rapidly, evolving into a younger population, and becoming more densely populated per total land

use. As this trend continues, more undeveloped and agricultural land uses will become residential and infill development and subdivisions will increase.

Population Projections

Preparing population projections are essential in determining future needs of a community and developing accurate land use forecast for future growth and development. Understanding future population growth patterns for a City can assist public and private sector planners and developers in determining infrastructure needs and identifying community investment opportunities. There are a wide variety of projection methods available to planners. The three methods utilized in this plan include the Historic Population Trend Forecast Approach, the Exponential Growth Rate Approach, and the Baldwin County Dependent Step-Down Approach. Even utilizing the most widely accepted methodologies for population projections, the future is difficult to predict. Therefore, the following assumptions provide a basis for the development of the population projections. It is assumed that the City of Robertsdale will not suffer significant, large-scale economic decline as a result of the current economy. It is also assumed that the City will have the necessary resources and infrastructure to accommodate the projected growth within the planning horizon of 10 years.

Historic Population Trend Forecast Approach

This technique relies on historic population trends for the City of Robertsdale to project three types of growth patterns (high/short-term, moderate, and low/long-term). These growth patterns are obtained by analysis of population growth trends over multiple year increments. Table 2.10 projects future population estimates for the City of Robertsdale utilizing this method. The growth patterns are calculated from Robertsdale's population changes over the past 30+ years. The

high/short-term growth pattern was determined by subtracting the 2000 Census from the 2010 Census and dividing by 10 years to reflect the decennial profile. During this growth pattern, the population increased by 1,494 individuals over 10 years, or an estimated growth of 149 people a year. The moderate growth pattern was determined by subtracting the 1990 Census from the 2010 Census

and dividing by 20 years. During this growth pattern the population increased by 2,875 individuals over 20 years, or an estimated 144 people a year. The low/long-term growth pattern was determined by subtracting the 1980 Census from the 2010 Census and dividing by 30 years. During this growth pattern, the population increased by 2,970 over 30 years, or an estimate of 99 people a year.

Table 2.10: Robertsdale Population Projections based on Historic Growth Trends	Growth Pattern	Population Projections
2015	High/Short Term Growth	6,023
	Moderate Growth	5,996
	Low/Long Term Growth	5,771
2020	High/Short Term Growth	6,770
	Moderate Growth	6,716
	Low/Long Term Growth	6,266
2025	High/Short Term Growth	7,517
	Moderate Growth	7,436
	Low/Long Term Growth	6,761

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Calculations

Exponential Growth Rate Approach

Historic exponential population growth was analyzed by comparing 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census data. The decennial percent increase was calculated and the average decennial growth rate was determined. Population projections were calculated using the average decennial growth rate of 34%. Table 2.11 illustrates these associated population projections.

Table 2.11: Robertsdale Population Projections Based on Historic Decennial Growth Rates	Population Increase	Decennial Growth Rate
1980-1990	95	4%
1990-2000	1,381	57.5%
2000-2010	1,494	39.5%
Average Decennial Growth Rate	990	34%
Projections Based on 34% Average Decennial Growth Rate	Population Increase	Population Projections
Year 2020	1,794	7,070
Year 2025	1,202	8,272

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Calculations

Table 2.12 illustrates the most recent decennial growth rate for future populations using the 2000 – 2010 rate of 39.5%. This alternative projected a high 2025 population projection for Robertsdale at 8,814.

Table 2.12: Robertsdale Population Projections Based on the 2000-2010 Growth Rate of 39.5%

Census 2000	3,782
Census 2010	5,276
Projection 2020	7,360
Projection 2025	8,814
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Calculations</i>	

Population Projection based on percentage of County

Table 2.13 illustrates projections for Robertsdale as a percentage of Baldwin County’s growth rate from 2000-2010. During this decennial period, Baldwin County grew 30%, or 15% every 5-years. The

following table will show that if this population projection proves true, the City of Robertsdale will have a total population of approximately 8,010 persons by 2025.

Table 2.13: Robertsdale Projected Population Based on Percentage of Baldwin County Growth

Year	County Population	Robertsdale Population	2000-2010 County % population Growth
2010	182,265	5,267	15%
2015	209,605	6,057	15%
2020	241,046	6,965	15%
2025	277,203	8,010	15%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Calculations</i>			

Table 2.14 provides a summary of Robertsdale’s population projections from all methods utilized in this plan. A summery for each year was calculated to provide a likely population range and average for future populations. For the purpose of making further recommendations associated with this plan,

the following population projection range for each year will be used to forecast Robertsdale’s future needs. In 2015, the range is projected to be 5,930-6,057. For 2020, the population projection range is 6,584-7,360. For 2025, the range is projected to be 7,238-8,814

Table 2.14: Summary of Robertsdale Population Projections	Population Projection Method	Robertsdale Population Projections	Average of Population Projections
2015	Historic Growth Trends	5,930 (average)	Average: 5,994
	Growth as Percentage of County	6,057	
2020	Historic Growth Trends	6,584 (average)	Average: 6,995
	Exponential Growth Trend	7,070	
	Exponential Growth Rate of 39.5%	7,360	
	Growth as Percentage of County	6,965	
2025	Historical Growth Trends	7,238 (average)	Average: 8,084
	Exponential Growth Trend	8,272	
	Exponential Growth Rate of 39.5%	8,814	
	Growth as Percentage of County	8,010	
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Calculations</i>			

Household Projections

Household projections are useful in forecasting future residential land use needs and predicting future population profiles associated with how people live together. This technique assumes that future household projections will follow the same

growth trend observed between 2000 and 2010. Table 2.15 illustrates the projected household increase over the next 10-15 years. The household projections fall within the ranges of the population projections above.

Table 2.15: Robertsdale Household Projections	Census 2000	Census 2010	Estimated Annual Increase	2015	2020	2025
Population in Household	3,782	5,726	194	5,920	6,114	6,308
Total Households	1,444	1,951	51	2,002	2,053	2,104
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SARPC Calculations</i>						

Economic Analysis

Analysis of economic population characteristics of communities allows us to compare past economic trends with current conditions in order to project future economic development strategies. The educational attainment, occupation of residents, and income characteristics help to define the labor force of a community and guide future land use development as it pertains to the placement of commercial and industrial land uses. The data is

essential in projecting future economic development actions taken by a community to increase their wealth, create jobs, raise income levels, and diversify their economy.

The City of Robertsdale has a strong and diversified economy. The City’s favorable economy derives largely from its strategic location and accessibility from the Mobile Metropolitan Area and its

geographical location along the State’s busiest tourist transportation corridor, State Highway 59, which is the main route to the Gulf Coast beaches of Alabama. The City is also host to numerous industrial and manufacturing employers. The following sections provide an overview of local economic indicators that guide future economic development.

Educational Attainment and School Enrollment

The educational attainment of a city’s residents can influence the city’s economy and affect the income and type of employment opportunities within the

community. According to the 2010 ACS U.S. Census, 78.5% of Robertsdale’s residents have a high school education or higher compared to 87.6% for Baldwin County and 81.4% for the State. Table 2.16 illustrates the type of educational attainment for persons 25 years and older in Robertsdale. The 2010 ACS U.S. Census reports 21.5% of the population, 25 years and older, in Robertsdale does not have a high school diploma compared to 12.4% for Baldwin County and 18.6% for the State. Conversely, only 16.9% of Robertsdale 2010 population, 25 years and older, has attained a Bachelor Degree compared to 26.8% for Baldwin County and 21.7% for the State.

Table 2.16: 2010 Census Educational Attainment of Population 25 Years and Older	City of Robertsdale		Baldwin County	State of Alabama
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Population 25 Years and Older	3,142	-	-	-
Less Than 9 th Grade	265	8.4%	3.9%	6.3%
9 th -12 th Grade, No Diploma	411	13.1%	8.5%	12.3%
High School Graduate	821	26.1%	29.9%	31.8%
Some College, No Degree	776	24.7%	23.2%	21.0%
Associate Degree	339	10.8%	7.6%	6.9%
Bachelor’s Degree	357	11.4%	18.1%	13.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	173	5.5%	8.7%	7.9%
% High School Graduate or Higher	-	78.5%	87.6%	81.4%
% Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	-	16.9%	26.8%	21.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Employment and Labor Force

The labor force of an area is, by definition, 16 years old and over, who are employed or actively seeking employment. Labor force and employment data provide evidence of the strength of the local economy. Table 2.17 compares the 2013 ACS U.S. Census employment status of Robertsdale, Baldwin

County, and Alabama. Robertsdale’s labor force comprises a larger percentage of the 16 years and older population than it does in the County or the State. The number of employed individuals in the labor force is also higher in Robertsdale than it is in the County or the State, while unemployment in Robertsdale remains below the County and State.

Table 2.17 : 2013 ACS Census Employment Status for Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Robertsdale		Baldwin County	Alabama
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Population 16 Years and Older	4,139	100	100	100
In Labor Force	2,962	71.6%	60.6%	59.4%
Civilian Labor Force	2,962	71.6%	60.4%	59%
Employed	2,737	66.1%	54.8%	52.6%
Unemployed	225	5.4%	5.6%	6.4%
Armed Forces	0	0%	0.2%	0.4%
Not in Labor Force	1,177	28.3%	39.4%	40.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Occupation and Industry

Occupation profiles of a community identify the occupations of the population and can influence what type of commercial and industrial developments occur within a community. Table 2.18 illustrates the occupations of the residents of Robertsdale in 2000 and 2013 to demonstrate how the occupation profile has changed. It also compares Robertsdale’s 2013 profile with Baldwin County and Alabama for a regional analysis. Between 2000 and 2013, Robertsdale’s Management and Professional category increased by 8%, while the Service category increased by .5%. Robertsdale’s Sales and Office category decreased by 2% in 2013, however, the Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance

category increased to 19.1% in 2013. The Production, Transportation, and Material Moving category decreased greatly from 25% to 11.9% from 2000 to 2013.

Robertsdale’s Management and Professional category, the highest occupation category in Robertsdale, is slightly lower when comparing Robertsdale’s 2013 occupation profile to Baldwin County and Alabama. Robertsdale’s 2013 Service category is relatively equal to the State and County. Robertsdale’s Sales and Office category is also relatively equal to that of the County and State.

Table 2.18: Occupation of Employed Population of Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and Alabama.	2000 Robertsdale		2013 Robertsdale		2013 Baldwin County	2013 Alabama
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Management and Professional	308	18.7	730	26.7	32.9	32.6
Service	272	16.5	465	17.0	17.9	16.8
Sales and Office	453	27.5	695	25.4	26.5	24.7
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	203	12.3	522	19.1	12.3	10.5
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	411	25.0	325	11.9	10.4	15.5
Total	1,647	X	2,737	X	X	X

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

The employment industry profile for Robertsdale is illustrated in Table 2.19. Educational, Health, and Social Services was the largest employment category in Robertsdale in 2013 consisting of 17.7% of the employed population. The second largest category in Robertsdale was Retail Trade at 16.8% and the third was Construction at 14.1%. These three industry categories comprise 49% of the total population of Robertsdale.

The Retail Trade category was higher in Robertsdale than in Baldwin County or the State. The Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and

Food Service category was also slightly higher in Robertsdale than in the County or the State. The County and the State had significantly higher percentages in the Educational, Health, and Social Services category than Robertsdale.

The majority of the population’s occupation within the Production, Transportation, and Material Moving category fall into the Manufacturing industry. Therefore, a significant portion of Robertsdale’s labor force is blue collar manufacturing and service industry employers.

Table 2.19: 2013 Industry Population Profile for Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Robertsdale		Baldwin County	Alabama
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, & mining	97	3.5	1.9	1.8
Construction	387	14.1	8.9	6.9
Manufacturing	257	9.4	8.9	13.7
Wholesale Trade	78	2.8	2.9	2.6
Retail Trade	460	16.8	14.6	12.0
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	183	6.7	5.1	5.2
Information	16	>1	1.3	1.7
Finance, insurance, real estate, & rental/leasing	166	6.1	6.1	5.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	147	5.4	9.9	9.1
Educational, health, & social services	484	17.7	19.6	22.2
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	314	11.5	11.2	8.1
Other services (except administrative)	66	2.4	4.9	5.2
Public administration	82	3.0	4.6	5.7
Total	2,737	X	X	X

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Income and Poverty Characteristics

The buying power, or personal wealth, of a population influences the socio-economic characteristics of that community. The ability to purchase goods, including housing, is dependent on the income of a community’s population. The

average income of a community determines what type of housing stock, retail goods and services will be afforded by the community. The population’s income and buying capacity also influences the City’s revenue, public facilities and services, and

ability to grow. Table 2.20 illustrates household income trends by income category for Robertsdale in 2013 compared to that of Baldwin County and Alabama. Robertsdale’s median household income is below that of Baldwin County, however is slightly higher than Alabama’s. This could be contributed to

a very low percentage of housing less than \$15,000 located within Robertsdale. However, Robertsdale’s population is young when compared to that of the County and these income profiles are consistent with those of new families with householders relatively new to the labor force.

Table 2.20: Household Income for Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and Alabama	City of Robertsdale		Baldwin County	Alabama
	2013		2013	2013
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Less than \$10,000	73	3.7	6.5	10.0
\$10,000-\$14,999	68	3.5	4.9	7.0
\$15,000-\$24,999	323	16.6	12.3	13.1
\$25,000-\$34,999	294	15.1	10.4	11.5
\$35,000-\$49,999	333	17.1	15.7	14.5
\$50,000-\$74,999	345	17.7	18.6	17.3
\$75,000-\$99,999	288	14.8	12.3	10.8
\$100,000-\$149,999	182	9.3	11.6	10.1
\$150,000-\$199,999	31	1.6	4.1	3.2
\$200,000 or more	11	0.6	3.6	2.6
Median (\$)	44,189		50,221	43,253

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Table 2.21 illustrates family income trends by income category for Robertsdale in 2013. It also compares Robertsdale’s 2013 data to Baldwin County’s and Alabama’s. Robertsdale’s 2013

median family income was \$53,523 which is also less than that of the County at \$60,864 and of the State at \$54,362.

Table 2.21: Family Income for Robertsdale, Baldwin County and Alabama	City of Robertsdale		Baldwin County	Alabama
	2013		2013	2013
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Less than \$10,000	55	3.6	4.0	6.4
\$10,000-\$14,999	33	2.1	2.9	4.1
\$15,000-\$24,999	200	12.9	9.3	10.4
\$25,000-\$34,999	175	11.3	8.5	10.5
\$35,000-\$49,999	248	16.0	15.3	14.6
\$50,000-\$74,999	370	23.9	20.9	19.4
\$75,000-\$99,999	256	16.5	14.8	13.5
\$100,000-\$149,999	169	10.9	14.2	13.3
\$150,000-\$199,999	31	2.0	5.5	4.3
\$200,000 or more	11	0.7	4.7	3.5
Median (\$)	53,523		60,864	54,362

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Per capita income is used as an economic indicator of a community’s standard of living and wealth. Communities with higher per capita income trends tend to have more educational, recreational, and entertainment opportunities as well as more buying capacity. Table 2.22 illustrates per capita income for municipalities in Baldwin County in 2013. Robertsdale ranks number 10 of 13 municipalities in Baldwin County in 2013 for per capita income. Per capita income for Baldwin County in 2013 was \$26,766 and \$23,680 for the State, leaving Robertsdale below both the County and State averages.

in poverty than did the County. Robertsdale also had considerably less single female householders below poverty than did Baldwin County and the State of Alabama.

	2013	Rank (Hi-Low)
Orange Beach	\$38,067	1
Fairhope	\$34,199	2
Spanish Fort	\$33,841	3
Daphne	\$32,117	4
Magnolia Springs	\$27,165	5
Gulf Shores	\$26,853	6
Loxley	\$24,112	7
Foley	\$22,794	8
Silverhill	\$22,410	9
Robertsdale	\$20,330	10
Summerdale	\$20,012	11
Bay Minette	\$17,459	12
Elberta	\$16,807	13

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Table 2.23 illustrates the number and percent of individuals below the poverty level in Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and Alabama in 2013. Poverty statistics in Robertsdale were significantly lower than those of the State in all categories. Robertsdale’s poverty statistics were also lower than Baldwin County’s in some categories. Robertsdale had fewer children, individuals under the age of 18,

	City of Robertsdale	Baldwin County	Alabama
	Percent	Percent	Percent
All Families	7.7	10.3	14.3
With Children Under 18	13.1	18.6	23.1
With Children Under 5	9.9	18.8	25.1
Female Householder Family, No Husband	18.5	32.2	38.0
With Children Under 18	23.8	42.8	48.8
With Children Under 5	79.2	60.8	55.5
All People	10.6	13.9	18.6
18 Years and Older	9.6	11.7	16.0
65 Years and Older	9.7	5.5	10.8
With Related Children Under 18	13.5	21.3	26.7
Unrelated Individuals 15 Years and Older	27.2	22.8	31.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Community Goals

To ensure that Robertsdale’s Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Robertsdale were asked to participate in three separate visioning workshops. Three community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and the Public Opinion Survey. The community goals identified in this section were formulated in cooperation with the City and residents of the community. The input provided from the city and residents, combined with in-depth analysis and projections from our planning staff, create the foundation for the proposed recommendations and strategies found throughout this plan.

During the community workshops, many comments were collected regarding population growth and economic development. Overall, the vast majority of the survey respondents wish to preserve the rural, small town feel of Robertsdale, while encouraging minimal growth and development in a controlled and guided way. The following goals were identified by the residents of the community to achieve by 2025:

- Maintain small town, rural atmosphere.
- Increase commercial development, especially the number of local quality retail shopping opportunities, restaurants, hotels, and grocery stores.
- Have well managed population growth and development.
- Increase the business/professional/medical industries and employment opportunities

within Robertsdale, including more tech jobs; higher salaries and incomes.

- Accomplish successful industrial development within industrial park without increased pollution; more aggressive efforts by community leaders to achieve industrial development.
- Create a centralized business district as opposed to commercial development continuously expanding north and south along State Highway 59, including identifying existing commercial infill properties downtown and along State Highway 59. Have aesthetically attractive commercial and industrial lots with improved building facades, adequate landscaping and more pedestrian friendly streetscaping.
- Support and preserve the local agricultural/farming community.
- Revitalize the downtown district with commercial and mixed use development that will take advantage of the local coastal tourist economy.

Recommendations and Strategies

The recommendations and strategies below were formulated in combination with the property owner’s input from the surveys conducted at the multiple community workshops, and with analysis of the current and projected population and economic statistics. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will

achieve its identified goals and be closer obtaining their vision for Robertsdale's future:

- Actively seek a diversified local economy with an employment base that surpasses the needs of the local labor force in order to provide employment for the surrounding areas and stimulate local economic growth. Expand technical and professional industries and increase business and manufacturing/production industries.
- Promote the preservation of large tracts of agricultural land and agricultural land uses by providing tax incentives to these land uses and encouraging properties to participate in farm land trust for the lifelong conservation of the large tracts of undeveloped/agricultural land within the municipal limits and the planning jurisdiction. Promote agri-tourism industries such as self-harvest farms and orchards, recreational corn mazes and hay rides, roadside markets and festivals.
- Promote the development of tourist and recreational attractions based on the natural resources of the area such as Equestrian Trails.
- Examine Robertsdale's Land Use document to determine if the size and density of lots within the residential zones support larger residential lots used in combination with agricultural land uses in order to preserve the small town, rural atmosphere. If necessary, make amendments to the Land Use document to support larger residential lots. Increased densities and smaller lots should be more localized to the center of the City, near downtown, to promote pedestrian access and encourage infill development.
- Partnering and coordinating of Robertsdale's leaders with other regional agencies and governments to foster an increase in commercial and industrial development in Robertsdale that will foster a diversified local economy to bring more high income jobs to the community. Work closely with Industrial Development Boards, Chamber of Commerce, Business Associations and other state and local agencies to promote the benefits of locating in Robertsdale.
- Continue to update Robertsdale's Land Use document to encourage commercial infill of existing commercial lots as opposed to continued new commercial development along State Highway 59 creating urban sprawl.
- Seek grant funding opportunities through state and federal agencies for economic development, for improvements to infrastructure that would support economic development, and for community rehabilitations that improve the aesthetics and appearance of buildings, districts, and corridors and foster economic development.

Chapter 3 - Housing

A City requires a diversity of housing types and densities to accommodate all socioeconomic groups of a community. The housing supply of a community must support existing and forecasted housing demands to ensure the resident's quality of life and the vitality and growth of the City. A community must foster continued maintenance, rehabilitation, and new construction of their housing stock to maintain the City's sustainability. The intent of this chapter is to provide an inventory of the housing stock in the City of Robertsdale and to assess the type, age, and value of the existing housing supply. This chapter also projects future residential development trends within the City and formulates future housing supply needs to accommodate the City's future population. This Chapter also lists housing goals and objectives obtained from the multiple community workshops. Recommendations and strategies are proposed to accomplish these housing goals and objectives and respond to future housing growth.

The City of Robertsdale prides itself on being a wonderful place to live and the residents are passionate about preserving the small town, rural character of the community. With new growth and development comes the additional responsibility of protecting existing residential areas from encroachment of incompatible land uses, increased traffic congestion, and increased stress and damage to utility and storm water drainage systems. This Chapter emphasizes the importance of planning for future growth and development without compromising the character that makes Robertsdale unique.

Housing Inventory and Analysis

The housing stock plays a critical role in a City's economy. Housing is typically the largest land use in a community and the community's largest capital asset. The housing stock also influences the people that live in a community. Housing costs are the single largest expenditure for most people and are typically the largest and most valuable asset they own. A community's housing stock directs commercial and industrial development of a region and can be the main determining factor for developers when they are selecting locations for economic development.

HOUSING FACTS

Total Number of Housing Units (2010): 2,164

Age of Housing (2010 Census)

- 15.6 percent of residential buildings were built before 1960
- 56.1 percent of residential buildings were built between 1960 and 2000
- 28.3 percent of residential buildings were built after 2000

Housing Construction Trends

626 new single-family housing units built between 2002 and 2012 according to Building Permit Data.

Number and Type of Housing Units

Based on data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, Robertsdale’s housing supply has grown considerably since 2000. Table 3.1 illustrates the number and type of residential dwelling units in Robertsdale in 2000 and 2013. The housing supply increased 616 units, from 1,523 in 2000 to 2,139 in 2013. This is a 33% increase. Single family units make up around 66% of the total dwelling units in 2013. In 2013, around 35% of Robertsdale’s population lived in duplex, multi-family, or manufactured/mobile homes. Between 2000 and 2013, the percent of duplex, multifamily, and mobile/manufactured homes increased by 10%. As illustrated in Table 3.1, there have been a slight change in the percent composition of the types of residential dwelling in the community.

Robertsdale’s housing units increased by 591 units between 2000 and 2010. Therefore, Robertsdale has increased its housing stock nearly 30% since 2000.

**TABLE 3.1:
Number and Type of Dwelling Units in
Robertsdale in 2000 and 2010.**

<i>Type of Dwelling Units</i>	2000		2013 (Estimate)	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Single Family Units	1,081	69.5%	1,433	66.3%
Duplex & Multi Family	213	15.5%	440	25.0%
Mobile Homes	229	15.0%	266	8.7%
Other	0	0%	0	0%
Total	1,523	100%	2,139	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**TABLE 3.2:
Annual Single-Family Residential Unit
Building Permits in Robertsdale**

Year	Total
2002	58
2003	77
2004	91
2005	99
2006	87
2007	67
2008	55
2009	35
2010	25
2011	13
2012	19
TOTAL	626

Source: City-Data.com

Table 3.2 illustrates the residential building permits for new single- family housing units in Robertsdale from 2002 to 2012. There were 626 new housing units built in Robertsdale during 2002 – 2012.

Occupancy Status

Occupancy and vacancy status of a community’s housing stock can be influenced by many factors including the housing market, the economic climate of the region, and housing trends such as insurance and property taxes. Vacancy rates in a community can indicate areas for housing rehabilitation or neighborhoods in economic decline that are in need of stabilization. Increased vacancy rates over a period of time can indicate regional shifts in population and economic trends. A high housing vacancy rate is also associated with increased health and safety risks of neighborhoods including increased crime rates.

Table 3.3 illustrates occupancy and vacancy statistics for municipalities in central Baldwin County to demonstrate the housing trends from a regional standpoint. Robertsdale has a fairly low

vacancy rate and percentage compared to other communities its size.

Table 3.4 illustrates the occupancy status for Robertsdale’s housing units in 2000, 2010, and 2013 according to data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. Robertsdale saw a surge on new homes

from 2000-2010 with an increase of 591 housing units. The vacancy rate stayed relatively stagnant during this time, starting in 2000 at 8.2% and finishing at 9.8% in 2010. However, the 2013 American Community Survey estimates a slight decline in housing from 2010 to 2013. This could be a direct result of a poor national housing market.

TABLE 3.3: 2010 Regional Housing Statistics for Robertsdale Area

Municipality	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units	Vacant Housing Unit %	Vacancy Rate- Home Owner %	Vacancy Rate- Renter %
Daphne	10,113	8,889	1,224	12.1	5.0	16.4
Fairhope	7,659	6,732	927	12.1	4.2	13.8
Foley	7,359	6,165	1,194	16.2	7.2	15.5
Bay Minette	3,101	2,744	357	11.5	3.2	13.3
Spanish Fort	3,250	2,861	389	12.0	2.1	17.9
Robertsdale	2,164	1,951	213	9.8	3.5	10.6
Loxley	737	643	94	12.8	4.9	4.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 3.4: Robertsdale’s Occupancy Status for 2000, 2010, and 2013

	2000			2010			2013 Estimate*	
	Total No. of Units	No.	%	Total No. of Units	No.	%	Total No. of Units	No.
Occupied	1,573	1,444	91.8	2,164	1,951	90.2	2,139 (+/- 202)	1,948
Vacant		129	8.2		213	9.8		191

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,, American Community Survey

Housing Tenure

Housing tenure data for a community can provide insight into the socioeconomic status of an area as well as indicate what types of population live in that community. For example, a high concentration of renters can indicate an increased population of young singles and couples, where as a high concentration of home owners indicates a more settled and mature population with families and children. Tenure data can also reflect the built housing stock as well. A high concentration of renters is usually associated with more multifamily dwellings and increased densities, while having

more home owners indicates less dense single family dwellings.

Table 3.5 illustrates tenure for Robertsdale’s housing units in 2000 and 2010. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of occupied housing units increased 569 units between 2000 and 2010. This is a 41% increase in ten years. The percent of rental property increased from 22.8% in 2000 to 39.5% in 2010. Conversely, the percent of owner-occupied housing units decreased between 2000 and 2010.

TABLE 3.5: Robertsdale’s Housing Unit Tenure for 2000 and 2010

	2000			2010		
	Total No. of Occupied Units	No.	%	Total No. of Occupied Units	No.	%
Owner Occupied	1,382	1,067	77.2	1,951	1,180	60.5
Renter Occupied		315	22.8		771	39.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Housing Age

The age of the housing stock can provide an indication of potential deficiencies in the quality and safety of dwelling units and identify areas in need of rehabilitation. Older residential units may be constructed to lesser building standards than are currently required and be eligible for public funding assistance for modernization activities. The age of a city’s housing stock also identifies the community’s historic neighborhoods and homes that are potentially eligible for historic preservation through federal, state, or local agencies.

stock is new having been constructed within the last 25 years. 67 % of Robertsdale’s housing stock has been built since 1990.

Around 17% of Robertsdale’s housing stock was constructed between 1960 and 1989 (25 to 55 years old). Typically, this group of housing begins to show signs of deterioration and needs rehabilitation. These neighborhoods may also qualify for public funding for rehabilitation assistance through grants obtained by the City. Community Development Block Grant and HOME Grant Programs provided by the state offer such assistance.

The age of Robertsdale’s housing stock is illustrated in Table 3.6. The majority of Robertsdale’s housing

TABLE 3.6
Age of Robertsdale’s Housing Units

Year Built	Number	Percent
2000 or later	605	28.3
1990 to 1999	837	39.1
1980 to 1989	123	5.8
1970 to 1979	167	7.8
1960 to 1969	72	3.4
1940 to 1959	222	10.4
1939 or earlier	113	5.2
TOTAL	2,139	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

15.6% of Robertsdale’s housing stock is 50 years old or more. Typically, for residential property to qualify for historic significance with federal or state historical agencies, a property must be at least 50 years old or more and have maintained a lot of its historical structural integrity. Therefore, less than 15% of Robertsdale’s housing stock would potentially qualify for historical preservation at this time. Most of these historic structures are located in residential neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the downtown area. One neighborhood is located west of downtown, the other is located to the east of downtown. A historical structure survey should be conducted by the Alabama Historical

Commission on both areas and the downtown to identify properties potentially eligible for historic preservation if desired by the community.

Housing Values

The cost of housing in a community is influenced by many factors including the community’s location to employment opportunities, recreational opportunities, and transportation. The cost of housing within a community also influences the type of population that lives there. Table 3.7 illustrates regional housing value trends of municipalities centrally located in Baldwin County adjacent to Robertsdale’s planning area.

According to data from the 2013 American Community Survey, Robertsdale’s median housing value in 2013 is \$125,800 and the median monthly mortgage is \$1,188. The median monthly rent for non-owner occupied housing is \$821. In comparison to other municipalities in central Baldwin County, Robertsdale’s housing stock is lower to moderately priced indicating a balanced housing inventory that is not over priced or showing signs housing market decline. The housing values in Robertsdale reflect the City’s location in the County, Mobile’s metropolitan area, and the beaches along the Gulf.

TABLE 3.7: 2013 Regional Housing Value Statistics for Robertsdale Area

Municipality	Median Owner-Occupied Housing Values (\$)	Median Owner-Occupied Housing Monthly Mortgage (\$)	Median Renter-Occupied Monthly Rent (\$)
Spanish Fort	207,900	1,644	1,076
Fairhope	243,400	1,624	997
Daphne	180,000	1,588	995
Foley	162,600	1,188	710
Robertsdale	125,800	1,188	821
Loxley	116,300	1,144	831
Bay Minette	112,100	958	615

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Figure 3.1 illustrates the increase in the value of owner-occupied housing units in Robertsdale over the past 30 years. In 1980, the median value was \$35,300. In 1990, the median value increased to \$44,200. It nearly doubled to \$84,800 in 2000. The median value increased again dramatically by 2013 as it increased to \$125,800.

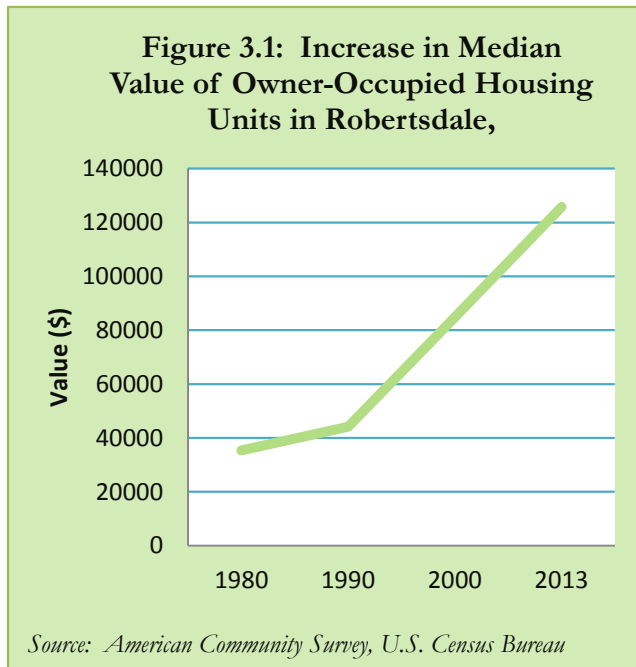


Table 3.8 illustrates the change in housing values within the City of Robertsdale between 2000 and 2013. Robertsdale’s housing market experienced a great deal of success during this time as most of the housing values saw a drastic increase. In 2000, over 60% of the housing stock’s value was below \$50,000. In 2013, the majority of Robertsdale’s housing stock increased to above \$100,000.

Table 3.9 illustrates the change in monthly mortgage costs for owner-occupied housing units between 2000 and 2013. Monthly mortgage costs nearly doubled during this time. In 2000, over 10% of the housing units had a monthly payment less than \$500. In 2013, only 4% of the housing units had a monthly payment less than \$500. In 2000, the majority of housing units had monthly payments

within the \$500-\$699 range. In 2013, the majority of the housing units had a monthly payment within the \$1000-\$1,499 range. In 2000, there was only 2.8% of monthly mortgage payments in excess of \$1,500. In 2013, 21.6% of the monthly mortgage payments were over \$1,500. The increase in monthly mortgage payments reflects the success of the housing market in Baldwin County and in Robertsdale during this time coupled with the new construction of larger, more expensive, single family homes within the City.

TABLE 3.8: 2000 and 2013 Housing Values for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units in Robertsdale

Value (\$)	2000	2013
Less than 50,000	60.7 %	5.9 %
50,000-99,999	36.8 %	23.3 %
100,000-149,999	1.8 %	44.4 %
150,000-199,999	0.7 %	7.5 %
200,000-299,999	0 %	16.1 %
300,000-499,999	0 %	3.0 %
500,000-999,999	0 %	0 %
1,000,000+	0 %	0 %
Median (\$)	84,800	125,800

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau,

TABLE 3.9: 2000 and 2013 Monthly Mortgage Costs for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units in Robertsdale

Monthly Mortgage (\$)	2000	2013
Less than 300	1.2%	0%
300-499	8.7%	4.1%
500-699	40.9%	4.8%
700-999	33%	10.8%
1,000-1,499	13.2%	58.6%
1,500-1,999	2.8%	21.6%
2,000+	0%	0%
Median (\$)	696	1,188

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3.10 illustrates the change in monthly rent for specified non-owner occupied housing units in Robertsdale between 2000 and 2013. In 2000, more than 50% of all monthly rental payments were within the \$500 range. In 2013, 5% of the monthly rental payments were within the \$500 range and 29% were within the \$500-\$749 range. In 2000, there were no rental payments in excess of \$1,000. However, in 2013 there were 21.5% of monthly rental payments in excess of \$1,000. Interestingly, there was a 10.8% decrease in the amount of monthly rental payments below \$200 between 2000 and 2013. The median rent nearly doubled from \$390 in 2000 to \$821 in 2013.

However, historic population and household trends coupled with analysis of building permit data can be used to project future housing needs and estimated growth of the housing stock.

Projected Population and Household Growth

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this document, the estimated population range for 2025 is 7,237-8,272. The 2010 U.S. Census reported 2,164 households in Robertsdale. Chapter 2 of this document discusses household projections in more depth, but assumes that future household projections will follow the same growth trend observed between 2002 and 2012 (the most recent decennial data) and continue to increase at the same pace. For 2020, the projected number of households is 2,794. For 2025, the total number was 3,109. These household projections fall within the ranges of population projections thus supporting Robertsdale’s projected 2025 population range of 7,237-8,272.

TABLE 3.10: 2000 and 2013 Monthly Rent for Specified Non-Owner Occupied Housing Units in Robertsdale

Monthly Rent (\$)	2000	2013
Less than 200	10.8%	0%
200-299	14.6%	1.7%
300-499	29.5%	3%
500-749	27.0%	29.3%
750-999	9.8%	44.4%
1,000-1,499	0	21.5%
1,500+	0	0%
Median Rent (\$)	390	821

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Projected Housing Needs

According to the U.S. Census, there were 2,164 housing units in Robertsdale in 2010. The most recent decennial data from 2002-2012 shows building permits were issued for a total of 626 residential units. This constitutes an average of 63 new housing units per year. If you assume future housing starts demonstrating historic growth trends and increase by an average of 63 housing units per year, it is possible to project the number of future housing units Robertsdale can anticipate by 2025. Table 3.11 illustrates the future housing unit projections based on an annual increase of 63 units.

Trends in Residential Development

Expansion of the housing stock in response to population growth often occurs in cyclical fashion. These cycles are reflections of various factors both within the community and in the region. Residential construction in a community is influenced by many elements including economic growth levels, real estate prices, interest rates, insurance rates, and a community’s zoning and subdivision regulations.

Type of Housing Unit

According to the 2013 ACS U.S. Census, of the 2,139 housing units, 1,433 were single family, 440 were duplex and multi-family and 266 were mobile homes. The percentage of the total housing units is then determined for each housing type. Table 3.12 illustrates the percent of housing unit types for Robertsdale in 2013.

Future residential growth should utilize infill development techniques where possible to prevent residential sprawl away from the community’s core of commercial areas, schools, and pedestrian/public transit access. Creating isolated residential neighborhoods only adds stress to the public infrastructure including roads, water and sewer, and City services. However, meeting the housing demand is typically left up to the private sector, though the city should have an active role in determining the type of housing, the density, and where the housing will be located. It is important to consider the overall goal of the community when planning for future housing needs. In order to maintain the rural, agricultural character, new housing should be directed toward the center, more dense part of the City. The city should also try to avoid further subdivision of large agricultural parcels on the outskirts and fringe area. These parcels should be reserved for very low density agricultural uses. If not inside city limits this cannot be “controlled”. If annexed, it is automatically given R-1 zoning, unless rezoned otherwise by the city council

Affordable Housing

The availability of affordable housing is an issue that has received a considerable amount of attention over the past decade in Baldwin County. It can be very difficult for a community to balance the need of providing affordable housing options for residents of all income groups while simultaneously

TABLE 3.11: Future Housing Unit Projections for Robertsdale

Housing Unit Projections	Number of Housing Units
2010 Total	2,164
Projected new units from 2010-2020 (63 per year)	63
2020 Total	2,794
Projected new units from 2020-2025 (63 per year)	63
2025 Total	3,109

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau , Building Permit Data
Calculations: SARPC*

TABLE 3.12: Percent of Housing Unit Type in Robertsdale

Type of Housing Units	2013 ACS Census	Percent of Total Units (2013)
Total Housing Units	2,139	100%
Single Family	1,433	67%
Duplex and Multi-Family	440	21%
Mobile Homes	266	11%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau , Building Permit Data
Calculations: SARPC*

attempting to manage growth at an appropriate level. This is made increasingly difficult with the rise in property values associated with tourism and access to natural resources, such as Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. However, housing markets are influenced by many factors including supply and demand, especially within a regional area. Due to

the mobility of the workforce, the access to Interstate 10, and the willingness of people to commute considerable distances to their jobs, Robertsdale will continue to appeal to families in Baldwin and Mobile Counties from all income levels as desirable place to live. Robertsdale's moderate property values coupled with the economic growth of Mobile's metropolitan area will continue to attract new residential developers.

The affordability of a community's housing stock is based on a comparison of the household income to the median household income within the community. Households with the greatest potential need of requiring financial support for housing are those that are below 80% of the community's median family income and paying more than 30% of gross income towards housing costs.

According to 2013 ACS U.S. Census data, at least 10% of Robertsdale's population was below the poverty level. Therefore, Robertsdale's population demonstrates a need for affordable housing options. However, Robertsdale's current property values are reasonable and moderate compared to the rest of Baldwin County and there are currently many affordable housing properties, both single family and multifamily units, available to serve this population.

Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes are considered a housing option for some low to moderate income households. Within Robertsdale's municipal limits, manufactured homes are only allowed in Manufactured Home Residential District (R-MH) zoning district according to the City of Robertsdale's Zoning Ordinance.

Multifamily Housing

It is estimated that in 2013 there were 440 duplex and multifamily dwellings in the City of

Robertsdale. This constitutes over 21% of the total housing stock of the city. The City allows duplex construction in Medium Density Two-Family Residential District (R-2) zoning district and multifamily development in Limited Multi-Family Residential District (R-3) zoning district. Duplex and Multifamily dwellings provide housing options for low to moderate income households in addition to young singles and couples. They also provide housing for temporary populations associated with temporary employment, such as construction or tourism industries.

Substandard Housing

The structural integrity of Robertsdale's housing stock was assessed during a windshield survey conducted by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission in 2008. Housing units were marked as either standard, deteriorating, or dilapidated. Standard housing units are those in need of no major repairs and are well maintained. Deteriorated units are those showing signs of needed repair and rehabilitation such as poor roofs, flaking paint, or cracking foundations. Dilapidated units are those considered not economically feasible for repair and present a health and safety issue to the community. Data from the field survey indicated that less than 0.3% of Robertsdale's housing stock was considered dilapidated, less than 3% was considered deteriorated, and the remaining 96% of the housing stock was considered standard. Therefore, Robertsdale's housing stock is in good structural integrity with less than 4% needing rehabilitation or demolition. Rehabilitation and demolition of substandard housing units can be accomplished through a combination of private investments and government funds.

Community Goals

To ensure that Robertsdale's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Robertsdale were asked to participate in three separate visioning workshops. Three community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and the Public Opinion Survey. The community goals identified in this section were formulated in cooperation with the City and residents of the community. The input provided from the City and residents, combined with in-depth analysis and projections from our planning staff, create the foundation for the proposed recommendations and strategies found throughout this plan.

During the community workshops, many comments were collected regarding housing and residential development in Robertsdale. Overall, the residents are pleased with the quality of living in their community and neighborhoods. One quality that most residents appreciated about Robertsdale is the small town, rural character of the community. Other items related to housing that were considered strengths include: the city's location to Mobile and other incorporated areas for employment; the friendly people that live in the community; the ability to farm land and live in the City; the City's control of subdivisions; and the available property for future growth. However, some suggestions were made on how conditions could improve. The main concerns of the survey respondents pertained to residential growth and the potential adverse effects it could have on community's public infrastructure, services and facilities. They also expressed concern that the rural, small town character would be compromised with excessive growth. The following goals were identified by the residents to achieve by 2025:

- Maintain the small town, rural character of Robertsdale.
- Support and increase the opportunities for public transportation from Robertsdale through Baldwin County and to Mobile County.
- Encourage and support agricultural land use that allows for residential living within the City.
- Adopt and implement subdivision regulations that protect existing neighborhoods from encroaching incompatible land uses. Support infill residential development to prevent pockets of residential sprawl.
- Successfully manage residential growth to prevent an adverse effect on public infrastructure and services.
- Encourage the rehabilitation of deteriorated structures and demolish dilapidated structures that are a health and safety hazard to the community.

Recommendations and Strategies

The recommendations and strategies below were formulated in combination with the property owner's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple community workshops, and with analysis of the current housing stock in Robertsdale. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified

goals and be closer to obtaining their vision for Robertsdale's future:

- Promote a choice of rural, suburban, and urban living environments and housing types to accommodate all household incomes. This includes anticipating and planning for future land requirements associated with future population projections and projected housing types.
- Preserve and maintain the rural, small town character of Robertsdale by implementing subdivision regulations that will not: result in environmental degradation; adversely effect rural/semi-rural areas; impair working agricultural operations.
- Protect the quality of life in existing and new neighborhoods by implementing land use regulations that will: ensure the separation of incompatible land uses; preserve and/or create open spaces and landscaped areas; promote the connectivity of roads, schools, parks, and open spaces; require, where feasible, the installation of sidewalks throughout the development; and prevent stress on the existing public infrastructure and public services.
- Require, through building codes and inspection, a high quality of construction for residential structures that meets all flood and hurricane specifications. This includes issuing code violations for existing properties that are not in compliance. Encourage developers to locate new utilities underground to prevent damage during tropical storms and hurricanes.
- Identify and preserve historical houses and neighborhoods within the City of Robertsdale through the establishment of a local Residential Historic Review Commission and Ordinance under the direction of the Alabama Historic Commission.
- Increase the diversity of the housing stock by encouraging all types of housing development, including affordable housing units such as duplexes and multifamily apartments.
- Ensure, through site plan review and/or subdivision plat review, that high-density developments have a design and scale compatible to adjoining residential developments and are buffered from different residential densities.
- Encourage rehabilitation of deteriorated properties and require demolition of dilapidated structures. Seek assistance for this effort from state and federal housing grant programs including, but not limited to, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)-CDBG and HOME Programs.
- Prevent, through land use enforcement, the development of land that is not suitable for residential development such as floodplains and wetlands.
- Maintain the public infrastructure at a level needed to continue adequate service to existing and new residential dwellings. This includes correcting existing deficiencies in infrastructure and upgrading or constructing new infrastructure to

accommodate new developments. Deny new development if the infrastructure is not in place to support it without compromising the service to existing housing. Continue to require that all new development be connected to the City's existing public water and sewer lines at the developer's expense.

- Identify undeveloped lots within existing residential neighborhoods that would be suitable for residential infill of single family and multifamily developments. Encourage developers to consider these target areas for future residential development.
- The City of Robertsdale should seek government programs that support this income group and provide funding for housing public assistance such as HUD's HOME Program through the Alabama Department Economic Development and Community Affairs.
- The City should actively seek assistance through the CDBG, HOME, and Federal Rehabilitation Loan Program to aid in this effort.
- The City of Robertsdale should identify target areas to focus rehabilitation activities of substandard houses and demolish those that are a danger to the community.
- The City should continue to allocate sites for manufactured homes, as they are one type of affordable home for low to moderate income residents. The City should also consider design standards associated with the installation of manufactured homes to encourage their compatibility with stick-built homes in the area.

Chapter 4 - Transportation

All residents and businesses of a community depend on its transportation network to connect them to their region. The type, quality, and location of these transportation networks are key components that influence quality of life and sustainable local economy. An adequate transportation system that provides for safe and expeditious movement of persons and goods is vital to the growth of a community.

There is a significant relationship between transportation and land use. New development or changes in existing land uses, whether incremental or sudden, directly affect the safety and functionality of roadways and the demand for additional transportation facilities. On the other hand, creating new or improving existing transportation corridors can have a significant distribution effect on the type and timing of development within a community and/or region. Therefore, it is essential that communities exercise sound and innovative transportation planning solutions to accommodate growth and development.



Photograph 4.1: State Highway 59, north bound to downtown. Source: Google Earth

The transportation network of Robertsdale includes streets and highways, sidewalks, bicycle paths, signage, lighting, parking, and traffic signalization. This chapter identifies and evaluates the current elements of Robertsdale's transportation system as they relate to traffic flow and connectivity of land uses. It also identifies and evaluates alternative modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit. Lastly, recommendations and strategies are proposed to accomplish community identified transportation goals and to address identified problems or deficiencies in the current transportation network.

Current Transportation Network

The City of Robertsdale has developed along a north-south axis in the south-central section of Baldwin County. A large percentage of the City consists of rural residential property, including large tracts of agricultural land, and a commercial corridor that extends along Alabama Highway 59. This Highway serves as a major north-south traffic corridor for the City. It also serves as a major tourist transportation corridor to and from Alabama's beaches along the Gulf Coast. East-west access to and through the City is provided by U.S. Highway 90 (minor arterial) to the north and Alabama Highway 104 (minor arterial), to the south.

The existing transportation network for the City of Robertsdale currently provides adequate means of transportation and linkage throughout the City and to adjacent municipalities for its residents with only minimal traffic congestion, delays, and safety concerns. However, the current network will not accommodate the pressures of the ongoing growth and development of Robertsdale and Baldwin County for much longer, without causing significant traffic and safety problems.

Interstate 10 access, only eight miles to the north, and the newly constructed Baldwin Beach Express make it more feasible for residents of Robertsdale and municipalities further south to pursue employment in Mobile and other surrounding municipalities, which has increased commuter traffic on Alabama Highway 59. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission projects a population increase for Baldwin County of nearly 60% by the year 2025 to a total population of 277,203. The population projections formulated in this Plan for Robertsdale estimate the 2025 average population to be 8,024, with a possible population as high as 8,272. If this growth trend continues, traffic along many of the State, County, and local roads will exceed the roadway capacities unless improvements to the transportation network are made.

Road Classifications & Volumes

The functional classification system separates streets by a hierarchical system based on street function. The classification system is used to balance traffic movement and accessibility on different roadways. The classes of roadways in Robertsdale range from Principal Arterial, emphasizing the movement of large volumes of traffic movement, to local streets, emphasizing access to adjacent properties. Robertsdale’s traffic circulation network is comprised of a fairly well-linked system of arterial, collectors, and local streets that provides reasonably efficient access. Below is a description of each road classification. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 illustrate the current functional classification of the highways and roadways in Robertsdale.

Arterial Highways

Alabama Department of Transportation defines these roads as the most important in the state. They are designed to carry significant high-speed long-

distance traffic. When improvements are necessary substantial federal funding is usually available.

Collector Highways

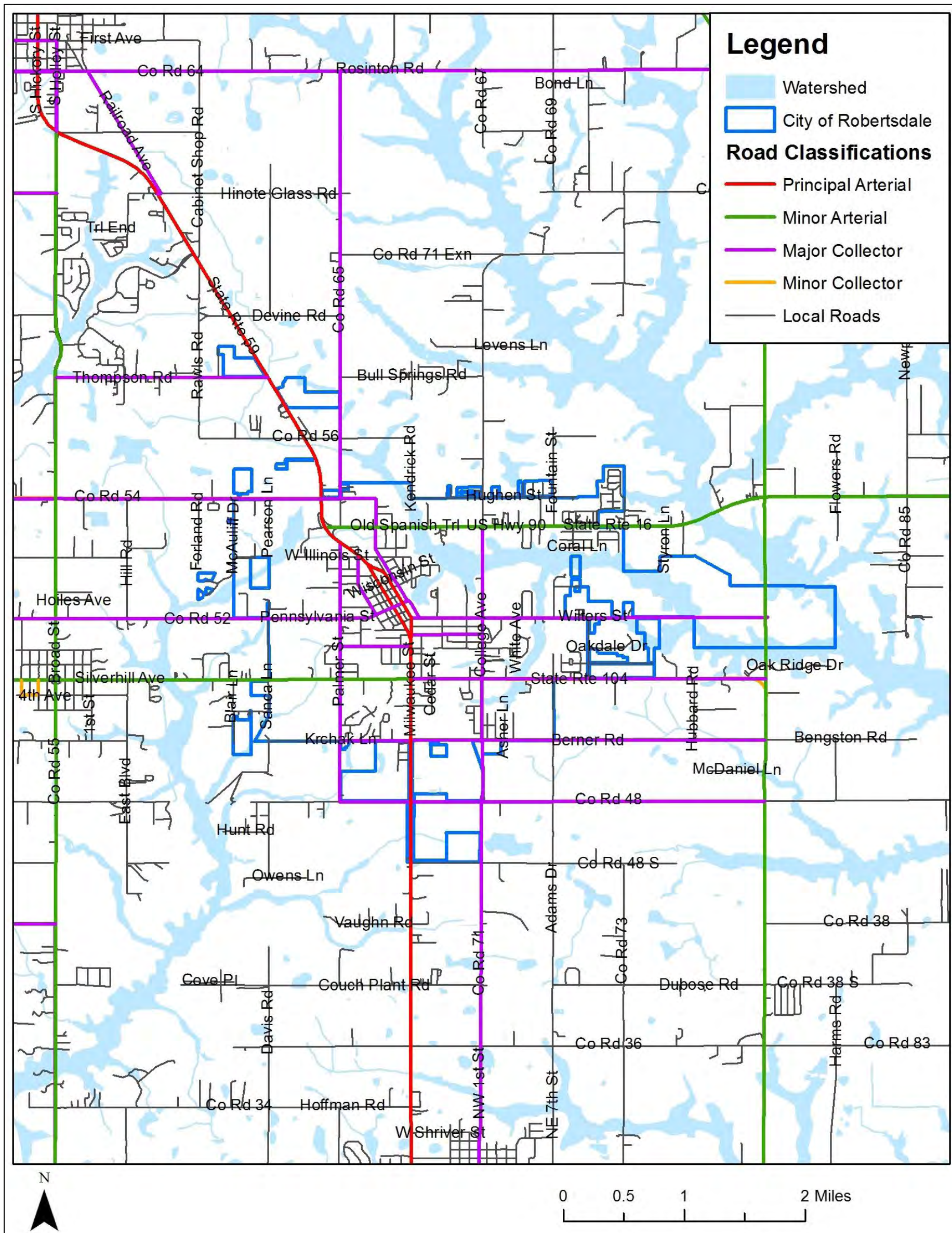
These are defined by ALDOT as roadways that collect and distribute traffic to the arterial roads. Generally, they serve places of lower population density.

Local Roads

These are defined by ALDOT as all roads not in the first two categories. They generally carry low volumes of traffic and serve local transit needs.

Table 4.1: Functional Classification of Roads in Robertsdale	
Highways or Roadways	Functional Classification
Alabama Highway 59	Principal Arterial
Baldwin Beach Express	Minor Arterial
U.S. Highway 90	Minor Arterial
Alabama Highway 104	Minor Arterial
County Road 54	Minor Collector
<i>Source: SARPC</i>	

Figure 4.1: Current Transportation Map
City of Robertsdale, Alabama



Source: South Alabama Regional Planning Commission & Eastern Shore MPO

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Average Daily Traffic Volumes

In order to determine the performance of a transportation facility within a network, daily traffic volumes are assessed to determine a Level of Service, LOS. Levels of Service categorize roads based on traffic, congestion, and delays. Using traffic counts, a LOS is assigned to roadways based on their current ability to serve or exceed their capacity. Table 4.2 illustrates the different LOS categories assigned to roadways.

A	Highest LOS which describes primarily free-flow traffic operations at average travel speeds. Vehicles are completely unimpeded in their ability to maneuver within the traffic stream. Stopped delay at intersections is minimal.
B	Represents reasonable unimpeded traffic flow operations at average travel speeds. The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is only slightly restricted and stopped delays are not bothersome. Drivers are not generally subjected to appreciable tension.
C	Represents stable traffic flow operations. However, ability to maneuver and change lanes may be more restricted than LOS B and long queues and/or adverse signal coordination may contribute to lower average travel speeds. Motorists will experience noticeable tension while driving.
D	Borders on a range in which small increases in traffic flow may cause substantial increase in approach delay and, hence, decreases speed. This may be due to adverse signal progression, high signal density, extensive queuing at critical intersections, and inappropriate signal timing.
E	This is the beginning of an inadequate network, with long queues causing excessive delays.
F	This represents traffic flow characterized at extremely low speeds. Intersection congestion is likely at critical signalized locations, with high approach delays resulting in more traffic demands than signal capacity.
<i>Source: Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)</i>	

Average daily traffic counts were obtained from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Table 4.3 illustrates the average daily traffic counts of five roadways in Robertsdale from 2009 to 2013. These volumes represent average daily traffic volume at particular locations within the City of Robertsdale’s planning jurisdiction. Comparing maximum roadway capacities with actual volumes identifies current problems. The maximum roadway capacities were determined using the Mobile Area Transportation Study’s model of roadway capacities by functional classification. It was determined that

the City of Robertsdale’s transportation corridors are currently operating between an LOS of A and an LOS of F. It should be noted that the LOS shown in Table 4.3 were determined using only traffic counts and does not take into account driver perception. Perception of a driver is a critical factor in determining whether or not a roadway is functioning properly. If a driver perceives that there are unnecessary delays or that a roadway is overcrowded then that roadway is not operating at an adequate LOS.

TABLE 4.3: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Counts on State and U.S. Roadways in the City of Robertsdale from 2009-2013

Location of Traffic Counter	Capacity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	LOS
AL 59 Between Kendrick Road and CR 54	36,600	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	22,710	A
US90 between CR71 and Francis Street	23,200	8,510	8,530	N/A	N/A	6,000	A
AL Hwy 59 S South of Michigan St, Southbound	15,500	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	25,860	F
AL59 between Michigan and Wisconsin Streets, Northbound	15,500	21,020	20,230	N/A	N/A	19,730	F
AL104, .9 miles west of CR65	23,200	6,960	6,970	N/A	N/A	7,090	A

Source: Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)

Principle Arterials

Alabama Highway 59

Alabama Highway 59 is the major transportation corridor in Robertsdale and in Baldwin County. It is a four-lane corridor with a middle-turn-lane, except downtown where it separates into two directional corridors a block apart. In downtown Robertsdale, Highway 59 has a LOS of F indicating that traffic moves freely with minimal stops and congestion. The portion of Highway 59 south of AL-104, also currently functioning at LOS of A,



Photograph 4.2: Highway 59, northbound to County Road 104.

which represents a stable traffic flow but with some moderate restrictions on the ability of drivers to maneuver within the traffic stream. Congestion on this portion of roadway is contributed to commercial development, the Silverhill corridor, residential neighborhoods accessing the highway, and traffic from the High School. Congestion will only intensify with the inevitable growth of the community. Highway 59 also serves as a major hurricane evacuation route for Alabama’s Gulf Coast, therefore adequate emergency planning for county-wide evacuation is necessary.

Minor Arterials

Baldwin Beach Express

The recently constructed four-lane Baldwin Beach Express also classifies as a minor arterial. This new express route provides a strategic connection between Interstate 10 to the north and the Foley Beach Express to the south. Along with providing a safe and quick travel route for locals and tourists visiting the region’s gulf coast beaches, the Baldwin Beach Express also provides quick and efficient means of transportation for residents of Baldwin County who work throughout the region,

particularly the City of Mobile. This route also provides a hurricane evacuation route to the Alabama Gulf Coast region. Baldwin County's long-term goal for the Baldwin Beach Express is to construct a northern extension from Interstate 10 to Interstate 65 near the South Alabama Mega Site.



Photograph 4.3: Baldwin Beach Express.

U.S. Highway 90

U.S. Highway 90 is the main eastward corridor in the Robertsdale city limits as well as planning jurisdiction and connects to Highway 59 just north of the downtown. It is an undivided two-lane road. It is primarily developed with commercial, institutional, and governmental land uses at the intersection with Highway 59. Land uses become predominantly residential east of the Highway 59 intersection. Even though the roadway experienced a slight decrease in traffic volume since 2009, the current Level of Service is category A, and therefore, currently accommodates a high traffic volume. However, as residential development continues eastward along this corridor, congestion, safety, and access delays will become problematic.

State Route 104

State Route 104 is an east-west collector road running through south-central Robertsdale. It is an undivided two-lane road and connects Robertsdale as a main corridor to Silverhill and the Eastern

Shore communities. The roadway is developed with residential and agricultural land uses. The level of service is A indicating congestion and delays are minimal.

Collector Streets

There are several major collector streets located in and around the City of Robertsdale. Most of these roads are county maintained roads that funnel traffic from local streets to larger streets such as principal and minor arterials. Over the recent years, Robertsdale has seen an increase in roads classified as collector streets due to increased traffic volumes throughout town.

Local Streets

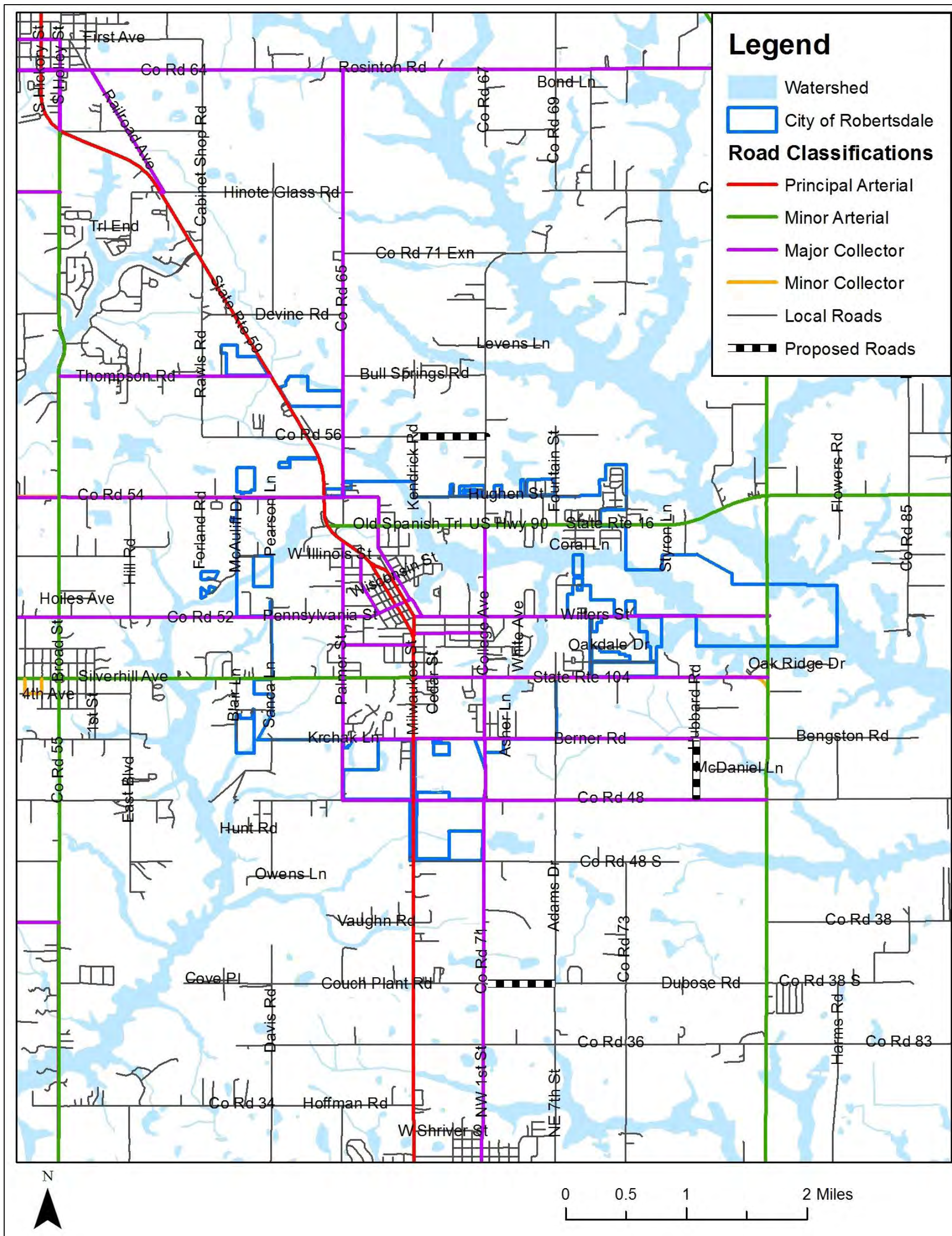
All other roadways in Robertsdale are local streets. Robertsdale’s local streets serve residential areas and are in good to fair condition with some in need of minimal repairs. Very few unpaved roads were identified during the land use survey of the community. Most repairs include typical patching and drainage improvements. Some problems exist due to flood prone areas which create safety and access concerns. The local streets exhibit fairly good connectivity, however several dead-end roads and cul-de-sacs were identified. Congestion and delays were not observed during any portion of the land use survey on any local streets.

Future Road Projects

There are several transportation improvements currently proposed for Baldwin County through the Alabama Department of Transportation, South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, or Baldwin County that will effect Robertsdale’s transportation system. See Figure 4.2, Future Transportation Map, for an illustration of these roadway improvements.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Figure 4.2: Future Transportation Map
City of Robertsdale, Alabama



Source: South Alabama Regional Planning Commission & Eastern Shore MPO

THIS PAGE WAS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Parking

The parking facilities in Robertsdale are predominantly associated with the on-site land use they serve. The downtown area supports pedestrian access to commercial uses and also possesses on-street parking for the local businesses. There are currently enough on-street parking spaces available downtown to adequately accommodate the businesses and their customers. However, not all of the buildings are occupied and with future economic development and revitalization of the downtown area, improvements may be necessary. Transit services are also limited in Robertsdale and possibly necessitate additional municipal owned parking lots or parking decks.



Photograph 4.4: Grocery store and parking lot in Robertsdale. Source: Google Earth

Pedestrian/Cyclist Access

The Land Use Regulations of the City of Robertsdale currently addresses the construction standards and conditions for sidewalks. The City also adamantly encourages the installation of sidewalks with all land use development. The City has taken an aggressive effort to install new sidewalks along many of the City’s major transportation corridors. The most impressive of these efforts is the Rails-to Trails initiative which transformed the old railroad corridor to a

pedestrian/bike path that connects residential neighborhoods north of downtown to those to the south. The corridor runs parallel to Highway 59 to the east. The City extended this effort down Highway 90 along the residential neighborhoods resulting in connectivity of those remote, rural area neighborhoods to the downtown. This outstanding effort by the City to provide alternative means of transportation to their residents has been a huge success locally and throughout the region. The community utilizes the sidewalk network year round and continues to applaud and encourage this City improvement.



Photograph 4.5: Rails-to-Trails north of Honeybee Park.

Public Transit

Robertsdale is fortunate to be the localized host of the Baldwin Rural Area Transportation Service (BRATS), which provides multiple transit programs to connect people throughout Baldwin County and to Mobile County. The facility is located north of Highway 90 behind the police station. BRATS’ mission is to provide transit services to protect the environment, conserve energy, and promote a strong economy. They provide multiple routes including Dial-A-Ride, Work Routes, Historic Routes, and Health/Medical Routes. The Baylink

Route connects Baldwin County communities to downtown Mobile. A list of all routes and schedules can be found on the Baldwin County Commission website.

Another transportation program is available to Baldwin County residents through the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. The commuter service is called the Ride-Share Program and it functions to link individuals throughout Baldwin, Mobile, and Escambia Counties that share similar commuter routes throughout the region. The program identifies commuter groups for carpool and provides individuals with a ride home in the event of an emergency. Information about this program can be found at the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission’s website.

Streetscaping

Streetscaping includes street furniture, lamp post, trees and vegetation, signage, curbing, paving materials, awnings and canopies, and other aesthetically pleasing corridor improvements. A successful streetscape provides visual interest, draws people in, and creates social meeting places for community interaction. Robertsdale has made great efforts over the past few years to incorporate some streetscaping into their downtown area, specifically in Honeybee Park. However, many



Photograph 4.6: Streetscaping and courtyard abutting downtown.

improvements are still necessary throughout the downtown and along Highway 59.

Gateways

The north and south gateways into the City are lined residential and commercial development. The north gateway into the City is well defined with an impressive patriotic flag display and a welcome sign. The south gateway also has a welcome sign. Both the north and south gateways into the City are lined with billboards and signs to appeal to Gulf Coast vacationers. Additional improvements are necessary to these two corridors in order to be more appealing to residents and tourists.



Photograph 4.7: North gateway into the City.

Community Goals

To ensure that Robertsdale’s Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Robertsdale were asked to participate in three separate visioning workshops. Three community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and the Public Opinion Survey. The community goals identified in this section were formulated in cooperation with the City and residents of the community. The input provided from the city and

residents, combined with in-depth analysis and projections from our planning staff, create the foundation for the proposed recommendations and strategies found throughout this plan.

During the community workshops, many comments were collected regarding the transportation network of Robertsdale. Overall, the vast majority of the survey respondents preferred two-lane landscaped roads with pedestrian and streetscape amenities such as sidewalks, crosswalks, lamp post, street furniture, and visually attractive signage. Wide, multi-lane roadways without trees and landscaping and visible utilities were strongly disliked by survey participants. The following goals were identified by the residents of the community to be achieved by 2025:

- Improve traffic congestion along Highway 59. This includes access management of local streets to Highway 59.
- Improve the streetscape of the main transportation corridors with more trees and vegetation and landscaped medians. This also includes sidewalks, lamp posts, and street furniture.
- Improve pedestrian and bicyclist access throughout the City by creating greenbelt corridors that link neighborhoods and commercial areas together. This includes creating bike paths along Highway 59, Highway 90, and County Road 104 that would create connectivity to adjacent municipalities.
- Improve existing on-site parking facilities as well as on-street parking downtown. This includes improving the curbing, adding landscaped medians, putting in more shade

producing landscaping, and improving lighting with attractive lamp posts.

- Improve infrastructure and road quality with routine maintenance to address pot holes, unpaved roads, and drainage issues associated with flood prone areas.
- Create a walkable centralized community around the downtown area that will link downtown with neighborhoods, Highway 59 businesses, schools, government, and parks.
- Require all residential subdivisions to have a sidewalk network that connects the neighborhood with the City's sidewalk network.
- Improve City gateway corridors with landscaped medians, trees, and other attractive amenities.
- Preserve the rural atmosphere of scenic country roads within the planning jurisdiction of Robertsdale.

Recommendations and Strategies

The recommendations and strategies below were formulated in combination with the property owner's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple community workshops, and with analysis of the current transportation network. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer obtaining their vision for Robertsdale's future.

A future transportation map is also proposed that identifies future road extensions of local streets. Figure 4.2 illustrates the proposed future transportation network of Robertsdale. The proposed road extensions will provide increased connectivity throughout the community, promote economic development and growth, and shift traffic volumes off of Highway 59 reducing congestion and delays. However, with each extension, neighborhoods and areas will be impacted, therefore timing and balance of these extensions should be adequately planned to prevent adverse conditions. Below are recommendations and strategies for achieving the goals identified by the community in combination with accommodating future growth and development:

- Conduct an Access Management Plan of Highway 59 through Robertsdale. This plan will identify the areas with the highest accidents and congestion and propose solutions such as additional traffic signals. If current growth trends continue, additional traffic signals will be needed along State Highway 59, Highway 90, and possibly County Road-104, by 2025. Robertsdale should also consider an Access Management Plan for Highway 90 intersection with the Baldwin Beach Express.
- The City should apply for state and federal funds for improvements to Robertsdale’s transportation system. ALDOT, ADECA, and other agencies have programs for street enhancements, gateway improvements, tree/landscaping installation, sidewalk and trail improvements, street furniture, etc.
- Establish a Gateway/ Roadway Beautification Committee made of volunteers from the community responsible for identifying areas in need of improvements. The Committee

should work with City Council and City Staff to provide suggestions for improvements and aid in project support such as in-kind contributions for grants.

- Accomplish a connected street network by amending subdivision regulations to require that all new streets connect with existing streets instead of the installation of cul-de-sacs and dead-end roads. The connectivity of the existing network can be achieved through the extensions proposed in the future land use map.
- Provide local traffic with alternatives to Highway 59. This can be achieved by improving a continuous north/south corridor on both the east and west sides of Highway 59. These corridors would serve local school and residential traffic and alleviate access management problems along the congested portion of Highway 59.
- Amend subdivision regulations to require that all new developments, especially residential, install sidewalks that connect the new development with the City’s sidewalk network to ensure linkage to parks, schools, and commercial uses.
- Implement the *Walking School Bus Program*, which is a traffic mitigation strategy in which students who live in the immediate area of the elementary school are provided with a chaperoned walk to and from school. This will reduce morning and afternoon school traffic.
- Decrease the speed limit through the downtown area and install traffic calming techniques such as pedestrian crosswalks,

curb extensions, and speed bumps throughout the downtown area to create safe pedestrian access. Currently, traffic speeds through downtown along Highway 59 making access to Bumble Bee Park or adjacent residential neighborhoods uncomfortable and dangerous.

Highway 59 by land use development within Robertsdale.

- Work with adjacent municipalities and environmental and recreational funding agencies to create a Greenbelt Bikeway/Pedestrian Network that connects Robertsdale to other municipalities throughout the County. This includes the creation of a Citywide Bike/Pedestrian Plan that connects major transportation corridors throughout the County with local municipal sidewalks, parks and bike paths.
- Amend the Land Use Ordinance to encourage shared parking facilities between businesses to minimize the amount of impervious surfaces while also ensuring parking needs for an area are still met.
- Establish Rural/Scenic Route corridors for preservation and enhancement that have significance to the character of the community. Standards for protection could include preservation of old trees and their canopy, increased setbacks for development surrounded by natural vegetation, limiting overall development to prevent the need for future road widening.
- Consideration of limiting individual access on to Highway 59 and prohibiting any type of high-density residential or commercial development adjacent to Highway 59. This would prevent a decrease in the LOS of

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 5 - Land Use

Land use planning is the orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities, and services with an intent to securing the physical, economical, and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban communities. The Land Use Chapter establishes the physical plan for future development of the City of Robertsdale. This Chapter also designates the appropriate locations for future land uses and guides future growth and development of Robertsdale for the next decade.

The Land Use Chapter will identify and assess the current types and densities of land uses within the City of Robertsdale such as residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, government, and recreational. This chapter will also project future land use densities based on current and historic development trends and propose a future land use configuration of the City that will guide future land use management and regulations. This chapter will also identify recommendations and strategies that will guide the City in achieving their desired future land use goals.

Existing Land Use Inventory

Robertsdale's 2010 land use development patterns are illustrated on Figure 5.1. A land use category has been assigned to all parcels within the City of Robertsdale's planning jurisdiction and municipal limits. The primary source of this information is a field survey conducted by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. This field data was then converted to a GIS database and used to create the current and future land use maps in this chapter. The data was then cross-referenced with the Baldwin County Revenue Commission 2010 parcel data for accuracy. The maps divide land use activities into several categories which include the following:

LAND USE FACTS

The City of Robertsdale's planning jurisdiction is currently over 15,000 acres, including right-of-ways

Residential development is currently the largest land use category in Robertsdale with over 7,900 acres of the total planning area. The residential land use category has increased over 30% in the past 20 years.

Agricultural land use is the second largest land use category in Robertsdale with 6,367 acres or 39% of land being farmed, forested, or used for livestock in the planning area.

Commercial land uses have increased approximately 4% since the previous comprehensive plan. This land use category is projected to continue to expand and grow due to the development of the Baldwin Beach Express and continued development along Highway 59.

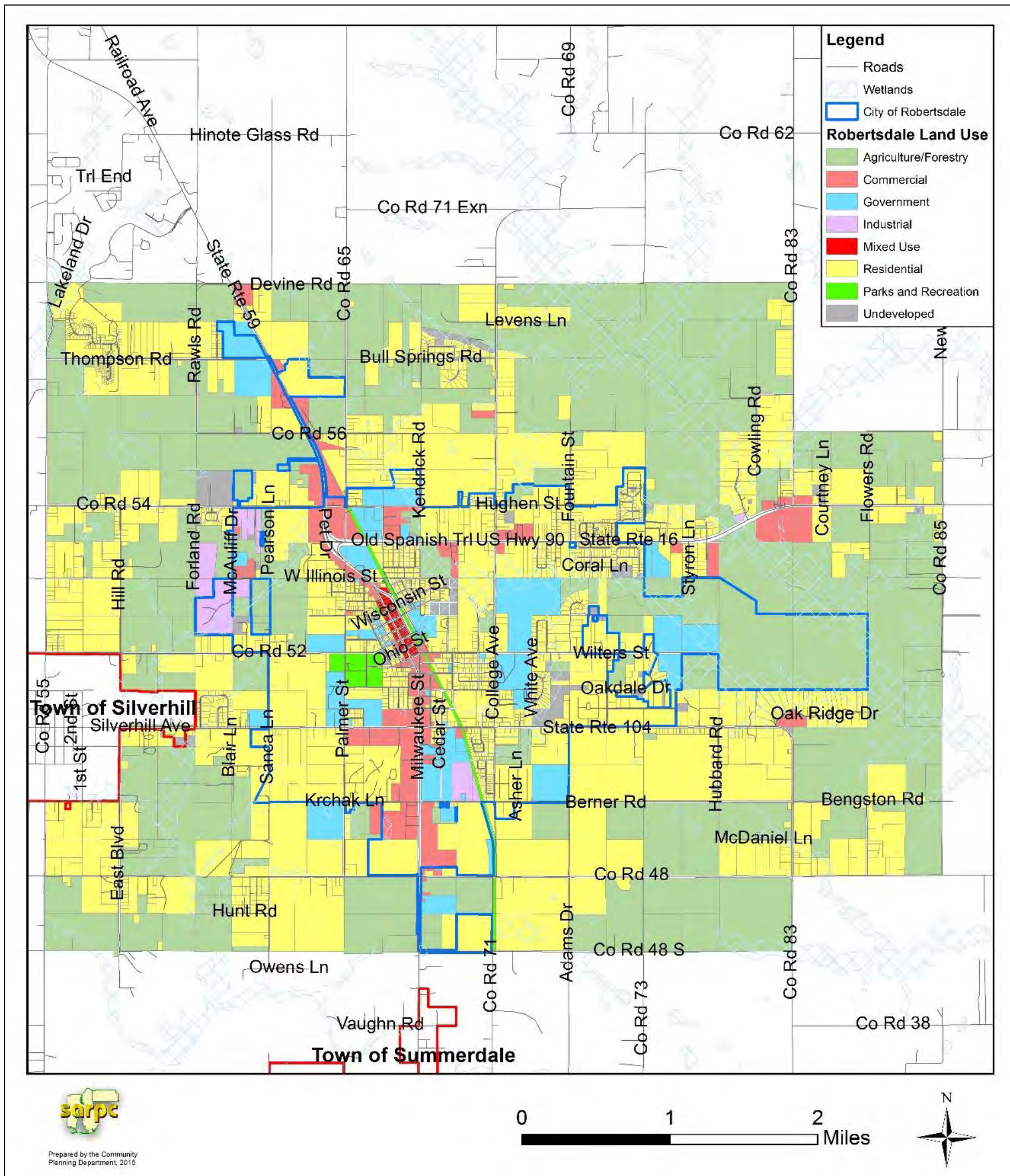
As of 2010, over 3% of the City's planning area, approximately 472 acres, categorized as undeveloped and currently available for future growth.

The residential build out analysis estimated that an additional 379 to 750 housing units could be constructed on undeveloped or agricultural land zoned for residential use. Based on historical development trends of 76 new houses per year, it could take an estimated 5 to 10 years for this to occur.

The City currently possess close to 146 acres of parks, trails, and recreational property for public use.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Figure 5.1: 2010 Land Use for the City of Robertsdale



5-3

Source: SARPC

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Agriculture/Forestry – All parcels that are farmed or forested. This includes croplands, timberlands, and livestock.

Undeveloped – All parcels that do not have structures on them and are not used for agriculture.

Single-Family Residential – All parcels that have single-family structures.

Duplex Residential – All parcels that have two to four dwelling units per lot.

Multi-Family Residential – All parcels that have five or more structures per lot.

Manufactured Home – All parcels that have mobile or manufactured homes on individual lots or in parks.

Institutional – All parcels that have a school, hospital, nursing home, or church.

Parks and Recreation – All parcels that have parks, open space, trails, recreational space and facilities.

Government – All parcels with City, County, or Federal structures. This includes police and fire facilities, post offices, libraries, court houses, and City and County buildings.

Commercial – All parcels within the planning jurisdiction that have commercial structures and/or uses. This includes banks, offices, gas stations, restaurants, and retail stores.

Industrial – All parcels with light or heavy industrial structures and uses including industrial parks, warehouse and manufacturing operations.

Table 5.1 presents a summary from 2009 of the approximate acreage contained in each of the land use categories listed above within the planning jurisdiction and municipal limits of the City of Robertsdale. Robertsdale’s Planning Jurisdiction is currently 15,337 acres. As illustrated in the table, the largest land use category in Robertsdale was

**TABLE 5.1:
Total Acreage of Land Use Categories in the
City and Planning Jurisdiction of
Robertsdale as of 2009.**

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Agriculture/Forestry	10,107	66
Undeveloped	472	3
Single-Family Residential	3,189	21
Duplex Residential	5	<1
Multi-Family Residential	94	<1
Manufactured Home	427	3
Institutional	240	2
Parks and Recreation	79	1
Government	204	1
Commercial	377	2
Industrial	143	<1
Total	15,337	100

Source: SARPC

Agriculture/Forestry, with a total of 10,107 acres. This was 66% of the total municipal limits and planning jurisdiction. Robertsdale has historically been a farming community and clearly continues to support this type of use within its jurisdiction.

Single-Family Residential was the second largest land use category totaling 3,189 acres, or 21% of the total developed area. Robertsdale’s rural character and convenient location to great public schools and areas of employment has stimulated single-family residential growth within the City and planning jurisdiction.

Duplex residential and multi-family residential land uses constituted less than 1% combined of the total developed planning area. The manufactured home

category totals 427 acres, or almost 3% of the developed area.

Institutional land uses comprised over 2% of Robertsdale's developed planning area, or 240 acres. The community's dedication to improved school facilities has led to an increase in the amount of land devoted to support these facilities.

Robertsdale also has many churches throughout their planning jurisdiction and municipal limits, which categorized as institutional.

Robertsdale had 79 acres of parks and recreational property which accounts for almost 1% of their total developed land. The amount of parks, trails, and open space within the planning area adequately serves the current population needs of the City. Robertsdale began efforts of expanding this type of land use over a decade ago with their Rails-to Trails initiative and the construction of the new ball field and splash pad.

The government land use category also represented 1% of the total developed area, or 204 acres. The City has improved their public facilities with the construction of a new police department. The City also has a new post office. Land situated on the northeast side of the Highway 59/Highway 90 intersection has developed in recent years with these types of land uses. Baldwin County has also increased their amount of public facilities and service locations within Robertsdale's planning area.

Commercial land use constituted 2% of the total developed land area, or 377 acres. This land use has continued to grow and expand along the Highway 59 corridor and Baldwin Beach Express.

Industrial land use represents less than 1% of the total developed area, or 143 acres. The City has demonstrated commitment to expanding this land use with the development of the Robertsdale

Industrial Park on County Highway 54, west of Highway 59.

Undeveloped land comprises over 3% of the total developed area. This totals 472 acres currently available for new construction. Some of these lots are located within residential neighborhoods while others are located in commercial areas.

Historical Land Use Patterns

The previous Comprehensive Plan that was completed in 1994 for the City of Robertsdale, identifies the land use pattern for the City at that time. The land use categories identified in the previous Plan are slightly different from the categories used today; however, comparisons and correlations can be made between the two land use inventories. Analysis of the historical inventory in comparison to the current inventory allows identification of land use categories that have shown an increase and decrease over the past 20+ years. It also establishes historical growth trends and patterns that can be projected forward to guide development plans and future land use projections.

According to Robertsdale's previous Comprehensive Plan, the total planning area in Robertsdale in 1994 was 18,467 acres. Therefore, the City's planning area has decreased by over 3,000 acres between plans. The City of Robertsdale has annexed land into their municipal limits over the past 20+ years, particularly acres to the northeast along Highway 90 towards the Baldwin Beach Express corridor.

The following land use categories were used in the 1994 land use inventory: residential (included all types); commercial; industrial; public/semi-public (this included institutional, park/recreational, and government land uses); resource production and

extraction (included agricultural lands); and undeveloped. Table 5.2 presents a summary of the 1994 land use inventory categories and their associated acreage.

The largest land use category in Robertsdale in 1994 was Resource Production and Extraction (Agriculture) land uses which constituted approximately 56% of the total planning area. Residential land use was the third largest category comprising over 18% of the total planning area. Over 20% of the planning area in 1994 was undeveloped which makes it the second largest land use category in 1994.

Table 5.3 illustrates a land use inventory comparison between the historical land use inventory of 1994 and the current land use inventory of today and identifies changes within similar types of land uses.

**TABLE 5.2:
City of Robertsdale 1994 Historical Land Use Inventory and Total Acreage of Land Use Categories**

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Residential	3,388	18
Commercial	318	2
Industrial	192	1
Public/Semi-Public	319	2
Resource Production and Extraction	10,417	56
Undeveloped	3,833	21
Total	18,467	100

Source: SARPC

TABLE 5.3: Comparison and Analysis of Robertsdale’s Historical 1994 Land Use Inventory to Robertsdale’s Current Land Use Inventory.

Land Use Category	1994 Land Use Inventory % of Total Planning area	2009 Land Use Inventory % of Total Planning Area	% Change of Planning Area Composition
Agricultural (Resource Production & Extraction 1994 category)	56	66	+10%
Residential (Includes all residential categories)	18	26	+8%
Public/Semi-Public (Includes: Government, Parks/Recreation, and Institutional)	2	3	+1%
Commercial	2	2	0%
Industrial	1	1	0%
Undeveloped	21	3	-18%

Source: SARPC

The amount of undeveloped land within the planning area decreased by over 18%. This coupled with an increase in all other land use categories, with the exception of one, indicates Robertsdale's successful effort to reduce urban sprawl with infill development on undeveloped lots over the past 20+ years.

The Public/Semi-Public Land Use category increased by 1% from 1994 to present. This is the result of the City's successful efforts to increase parks, trails, and recreational space within the City over the past 20+ years. The increase can also be attributed to the amount of new city, county, and federal public facilities within the community as well. More and more Baldwin County associated facilities and services are locating in Robertsdale.

Commercial property remained stagnant at 2% since the 1994 land use assessment and residential property has increased over 8%. Even with the substantial growth Robertsdale has experienced, agricultural land uses increased over 10% over the past 20+ years.

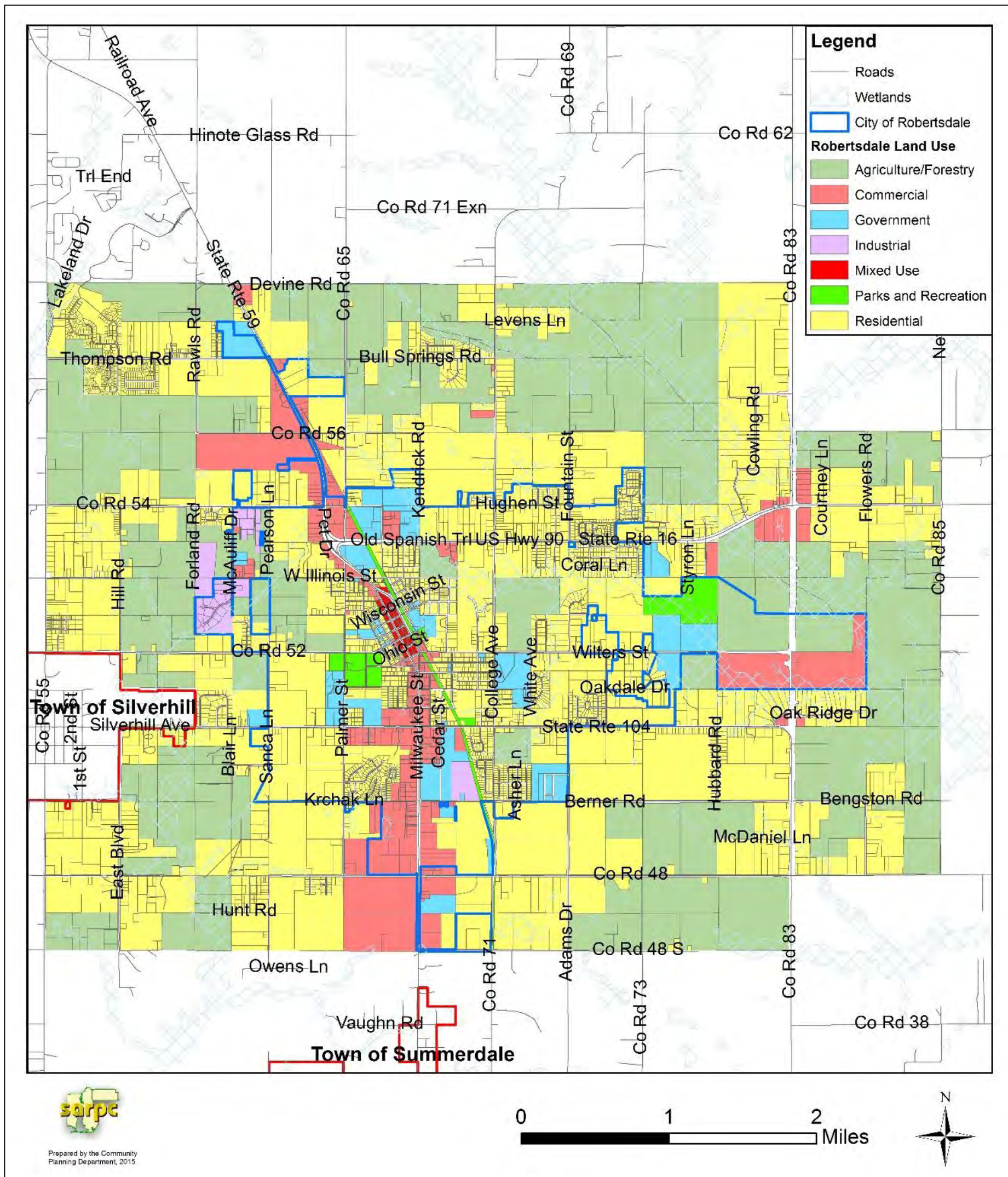
Future Build-Out Analysis & Projections

The physical characteristics of the land help mold the location, density, and types of development that occur. Soil characteristics, drainage patterns, and topography influence if land is acceptable for development. Robertsdale's topography is generally flat and doesn't present substantial development restrictions associated with slope. There are two main drainage areas identified by FEMA as 100-year floodplains. One is located in the northeast at Rock Creek and the other in the northwest at Silver Creek. However, the City is classified as an area of minimal flooding. Most flooding issues can be resolved through storm water management as well as better practices and engineering at the site plan review

level. The soil surveys indicate well-drained soils that are highly suitable for agricultural land uses which are consistent with Robertsdale's historical land use development patterns and future goals associated with agricultural preservation.

Figure 5.2 illustrates the 2025 future land use development pattern projected for the City of Robertsdale. This proposed development pattern was based on a build out analysis for the City of Robertsdale and its planning jurisdiction. The build out analysis was formulated using the existing land use inventory, historical land use growth patterns, and future population projections for the City of Robertsdale. The build out analysis and projected future land use development pattern did not include future annexations or expansions of municipal or planning jurisdiction limits. Although this action is anticipated in the future, many of these expansions are initiated by property owners and private developers and it is difficult to predict these actions 10+ years in advance. Therefore, this build out analysis only assess the current land inventory. In addition, a Mixed Use category was added to the land use inventory. This category includes all parcels where more than one type of compatible land use could be present. An example would be an apartment above a retail store. This land use type was projected to occur throughout downtown Robertsdale between northbound and southbound State Highway 59. Although the City currently has a mixed use zoning classification, no downtown properties are currently utilizing this zoning opportunity, therefore it did not appear on the 2009 land use map.

Figure 5.2: Future Land Use for the City of Robertsdale



5-9

sarpc
 Prepared by the Community Planning Department, 2015

Source: SARPC

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Table 5.4 presents a summary of the approximate acreage contained in each of the land use categories projected on the future land use map. The future land use acreage was projected based on current and historic growth trends and future land use requirements estimated according to future population and housing projections.

**TABLE 5.4:
Future Projected Acreage of Land Use
Categories illustrated on Map 5.2 in the City
and Planning Jurisdiction of Robertsdale.**

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Agriculture/Forestry	6,361	41
Residential	6,916	45
Mixed Use	20	<1
Parks and Recreation	146	<1
Government	494	3
Commercial	1,197	8
Industrial	217	1
Total	15,351	100

Source: SARPC

Note that while both the 2009 Land Use Inventory in Table 5.1 and Future Projected Total Acreage in Table 5.4 incorporate the same spatial Planning Jurisdiction, the Future Projected Total Acreage is 14 acres larger. This could be the result of numerous factors such as dissolved/reduced right-of-ways, change in GIS geometry calculations, previously uncalculated parcels, ect.

Future 2025 population projections, discussed in Chapter 2, for the City of Robertsdale range between 7,238 – 8,272 with an average estimate of 8,084. This is an additional 3,117 new residents in the City of Robertsdale by 2025. According to the 2010 Census, the average household size is 2.6 individuals. If the City continues to demonstrate

this household average into future population projections, then over 750 new housing units will be needed in Robertsdale to accommodate the influx of new residents.

According to future housing projections discussed in Chapter 3, there will be an additional 63 new housing units per year in Robertsdale in 2025. This projection is based only on historical building permit data and projecting past and current development trends into the future. This projection does not consider future population projections for the City. When conducting a future build out analysis for future development, population projections and housing projections must be assessed to ensure enough land is allocated to accommodate the range of projected growth.

Current land requirements, defined in the Land Use Ordinance for residential development within the City of Robertsdale range from 12,000sf for R1-Single-Family to 8,500 sf for R3-Multi-Family. If you compare historical land use patterns with the current land use pattern, residential development land uses in Robertsdale are typically single-family developments with less than 1% of housing being duplex or multi-family units. If the City continues this same trend, anywhere from 100 to 200 additional acres of undeveloped or agricultural land will be converted to residential development. Care will have to be taken to preserve the agricultural land uses that define Robertsdale’s small town rural character that so many residents value as an asset to their community.

The 2009 agricultural land use category was decreased by 25% in the 2025 future land use inventory. Most all 2025 development land use categories received some portions of this acreage. The former agricultural land was allocated in a way to have no impact to the rural character of the community while supporting and increasing

commercial, industrial, and residential development opportunities where appropriate.

The commercial land use category has increased by nearly 6% of the total planning area by 2025. This is a direct result of increased commercial growth throughout Robertsdale, particularly along State Highway 59.

There also has been an introduction of a new land use category, mixed use. Mixed use provides an opportunity for multiple uses, primarily residential and commercial uses. These mixed uses allow communities to provide a wide range of uses in a relatively small area. In Robertsdale, for example, approximately 20 acres of the downtown area between the northbound and southbound U.S. Highway 59 corridor have been categorized as Mixed Use. However, some new commercial development was allocated along the Baldwin Beach Express, which was completed in 2014. Residential development was allocated additional acreage along Baldwin Beach Express corridor, as well.

The industrial land use category remained relatively constant. However, the city currently has available land for development and adjacent lands acceptable for industrial land use expansion.

The parks and recreational land use category only slightly increased. The city currently has adequate acreage within this category to accommodate future population projections according to standards developed by the National Park and Recreation Association.

The institutional land use category was combined to join the government land use category. This allowed for a public/semi-public group that allows for similar scoped service uses. This group increased slightly to allocate future lands for expansions of

city facilities and services in addition to any future development needs by County or Federal entities.

Based on the projected future land use inventory of Robertsdale illustrated on Map 5.2, the City of Robertsdale can accomplish all desired future growth and development needs within their current municipal and planning jurisdiction boundaries. This includes expanding residential land uses to accommodate future population needs, increasing commercial and industrial development, and preserving the rural character of the community all without increasing the cost of public services provided by the City that are typically associated with annexations of properties into municipal limits.

Community Goals

To ensure that Robertsdale's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Robertsdale were asked to participate in three separate visioning workshops. Three community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and the Public Opinion Survey. The community goals identified in this section were formulated in cooperation with the City and residents of the community. The input provided from the City and residents, combined with in-depth analysis and projections from our planning staff, create the foundation for the proposed recommendations and strategies found throughout this plan.

During the community workshops, many comments were collected regarding the future development of Robertsdale. Overall, the residents are pleased with the growth and development Robertsdale has experienced over that past decade. Many expressed support for the expanding residential, industrial, and commercial development

that has occurred. However, some voiced concern over the amount of residential development occurring within the City and the fast rate at which it is being developed. Some felt the City is growing too fast and losing its small rural character. Some expressed concern for the loss of agricultural tracts of land that have been long associated with Robertsdale and its history and voiced concern over Robertsdale's continued loss of its agricultural lands to housing subdivisions.

On the Public Opinion Survey, when asked to list the reasons for living in Robertsdale, the answer with the most responses was the "small town atmosphere and rural character". This response also ranked the highest in respondent's priority of importance. Other items listed as Strengths of Robertsdale include: strong church community; plenty of parks and recreation; leaders that accept and encourage growth; the growing industrial park; the strong farming community; and available land for future growth.

When asked to list future opportunities for Robertsdale, survey respondents identified the following that pertain to land use: the Baldwin Beach Express with future commercial and residential development; the ability to plan and guide future growth through regulatory documents and City leaders; the expanding industrial land uses; and improvements to the downtown area through revitalization and rehabilitation. When asked to list their favorite place in Robertsdale, 90% of survey respondents selected a park/ recreation or government land use.

However, some suggestions were made on how conditions could improve. The main concerns of the survey respondents pertained to too much growth too fast; the over saturation of affordable, high density housing; the loss of agricultural land uses to residential subdivisions; and too much

sprawl development into rural lands. The main concern was the potential loss of the rural, small town character of Robertsdale with excessive growth. The following goals were identified by the residents to achieve by 2025:

- Maintain the small town, rural character of Robertsdale.
- Support and increase the opportunities for residential, commercial, and industrial land uses in Robertsdale. Allow new commercial development along the Baldwin Beach Express in a balanced way that does not compromise the City's main Highway 59 commercial corridor.
- Improve and revitalize the downtown area to increase occupancy rates and commercial businesses.
- Successfully plan and model the future growth of Robertsdale in a way that increases the local quality of life without compromising the core assets and values of the community. Update the Land Use Ordinance to accomplish this.
- Encourage and support agricultural land use that allows for residential living within the City. Encourage residential developers to consider lands that are undeveloped as opposed to seeking out large agricultural tracts of land for residential subdivisions.
- Adopt and implement subdivision regulations that protect existing neighborhoods from encroaching incompatible land uses. Support infill residential development to prevent

pockets of residential sprawl into agricultural lands.

- Successfully manage residential growth to prevent an over-saturation of high density affordable housing that compromises the small town rural character of Robertsdale.

Recommendations & Strategies

The recommendations and strategies below were formulated in combination with the property owner's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple community workshops, and with analysis of the current and proposed future land use inventory in Robertsdale. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer to obtaining their vision for Robertsdale's future.

- Promote a choice of rural, suburban, and urban living environments through density regulations associated with residential land uses. Encourage conservation of large tracts of land through subdivision regulations. This includes anticipating and planning for future land requirements associated with future population projections, projected housing types, and the need for additional commercial land uses.
- Preserve and maintain the rural, small town character of Robertsdale by implementing subdivision regulations that will not: result in environmental degradation; adversely effect rural/semi-rural areas; or impair

working agricultural operations. Provide tax incentives to local farmers and land owners that lease to farmers to keep the agricultural industry in Robertsdale strong. Encourage local farmers to be active with local agri-tourism initiatives to increase support to this industry.

- Protect the quality of life of existing and new developments by implementing land use regulations that will: ensure the separation of incompatible land uses; preserve and/or create open spaces and landscaped areas with each new development; promote the connectivity of roads, schools, parks, and open spaces; require, where feasible, the installation of sidewalks throughout the development; and prevent stress on the existing public infrastructure and public services.
- Encourage through land use regulations infill development of undeveloped lots as opposed to urban sprawl to support the conservation of rural lands within Robertsdale planning area.
- Increase the diversity of residential land uses by encouraging multi-family residential land uses to locate in the more densely populated center of the City. Discourage multi-family development in the more rural, less dense planning area where agricultural land uses and rural character can be encroached upon. This also decreases the strain of public infrastructure and public service cost.
- Ensure, through site plan review and/or subdivision plat review, that all types of land use developments have a design and scale compatible to adjoining properties and are buffered from different incompatible land

uses and adverse impact due to encroachment.

- Prevent, through land use regulation enforcement, the development of land that is topographically not suitable for development such as floodplains and wetlands.
- Maintain the public infrastructure at a level needed to continue adequate service to existing and new developments. This includes correcting existing deficiencies in infrastructure and upgrading or constructing new infrastructure to accommodate new developments. Deny new development if the infrastructure is not in place to support it without compromising the service to existing housing. Require that all new development be connected to the City's existing public water and sewer lines at the developer's expense.
- Rezone agricultural and residential land adjacent to the Baldwin Beach Express to commercial land uses.
- Encourage downtown mixed use development opportunities through tax incentives and state and federal grant opportunities.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 6 - Natural and Agricultural Resources

The City of Robertsdale has an abundance of significant natural and agricultural resources within its planning jurisdiction. The Natural and Agricultural Resources chapter provides an inventory and assessment of these natural and agricultural resources and proposes recommendations and strategies to preserve their character. Natural resources include the City's topography, hydrology, soils, wetlands and natural habitats and wildlife. Agricultural resources include local farms, orchards and nurseries. The purpose of identifying these resources is to help the community recognize areas that need to be protected or characteristics that would limit future development. By incorporating this information into land use decisions, the City can better guide future land use development.

Natural Resources

Topography

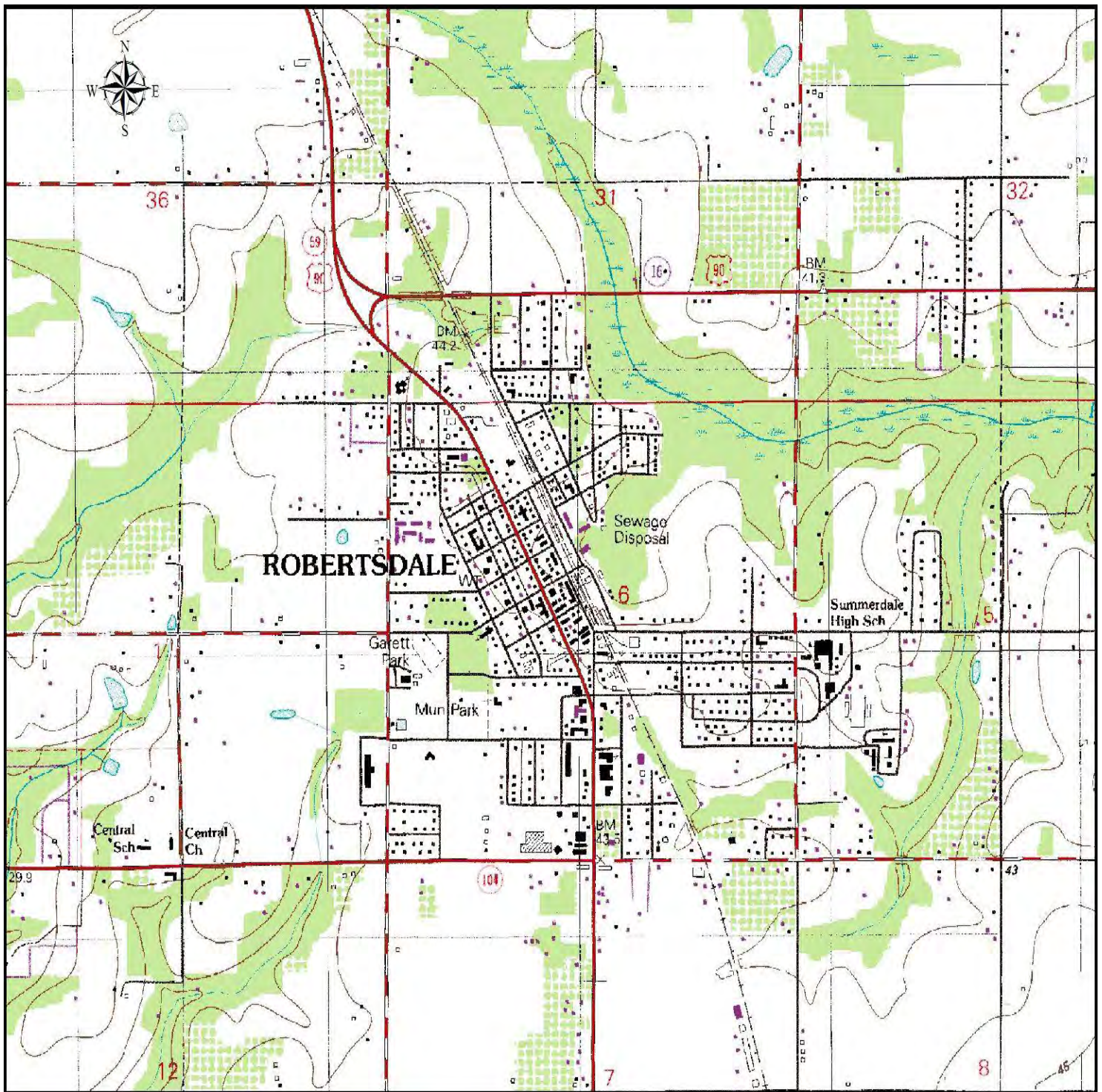
The topography of Robertsdale refers to the surface features of the land which is reflected in the hills and valleys of the region. It is defined as the change in elevation above sea level. Slope is an indication of the steepness of the land's surface and can influence suitability for development. Slopes in excess of 15% can place limitations on septic tank installation and operation, increase the cost of construction of roads and buildings, and increase surface runoff and erosion. The topography of Robertsdale, like most of southern Baldwin County, is characterized by low rounded hills and large expanses of nearly level terrain. The slope is subtle in most places and very little of the land is limited in development potential due to topography, see Figure 6.1.

Hydrology

Hydrology refers to the distribution of water on the surface of the land, in the soil, and underlying rocks. Creeks, streams, and other water bodies ultimately flow to drainage paths within a specific watershed. A watershed is defined as the land area that drains into a specific low point. Robertsdale is located within the Perdido Watershed and the Mobile Bay Watershed. Mobile Bay drains the fourth largest watershed in the U.S. in terms of flow volume. At 43,662 square miles, the Mobile Bay watershed is the sixth largest watershed basin in the U.S. Tributaries of the Mobile Bay watershed include Dog River, Fowl River, Fish River, Halls Mill Creek, Magnolia River, Mobile Bay, Polecat Creek, and Waterhole Branch. The Perdido watershed encompasses an area of 1,250 square miles and is located on the Alabama and Florida state line. Tributaries of the Perdido watershed include Big Lagoon, Tarkiln Bayou, Bridge Creek, Marcus Creek, Bullshead Branch, Turner Creek, Hurst Branch, Eightmile Creek, Tenmile Creek, Elevenmile Creek, McDavid Creek, Coffee Branch, Hollinger Creek, Brushy Creek, Rock Creek, Wolf Creek, Negro Creek, Styx River, and Blackwater River.

Within Mobile and Baldwin Counties, all types of land developments occur within the watersheds from single-family development to heavy industrial. Therefore, it is important to consider watershed conservation when determining planning issues as it is difficult to separate downstream effects from upstream causes.

Figure 6.1: USGS Topography Map of the City of Robertsdale, Alabama



Source: United States Geological Survey (USGS)

Population growth and land use modification threaten the quantity and quality of drinking water, alter natural wetlands, and increase human exposure to geologic hazards. The watershed approach to planning calls for the understanding and appreciation of the impacts certain activities will have on other resources in and connected to the watershed.

Wetlands

Wetlands represent the interface between aquatic and terrestrial environments. Wetlands provide a variety of functions which include to: filter excess nutrients and contaminants from runoff before they enter surface waters; provide temporary storage for flood waters; provide erosion control through river bank stabilization and shoreline protection; provide habitat for water-dependent plants and animals, some endangered. Wetlands are defined based on the presence of a combination of three indicators: plant species, soil types, and hydrological surface patterns.

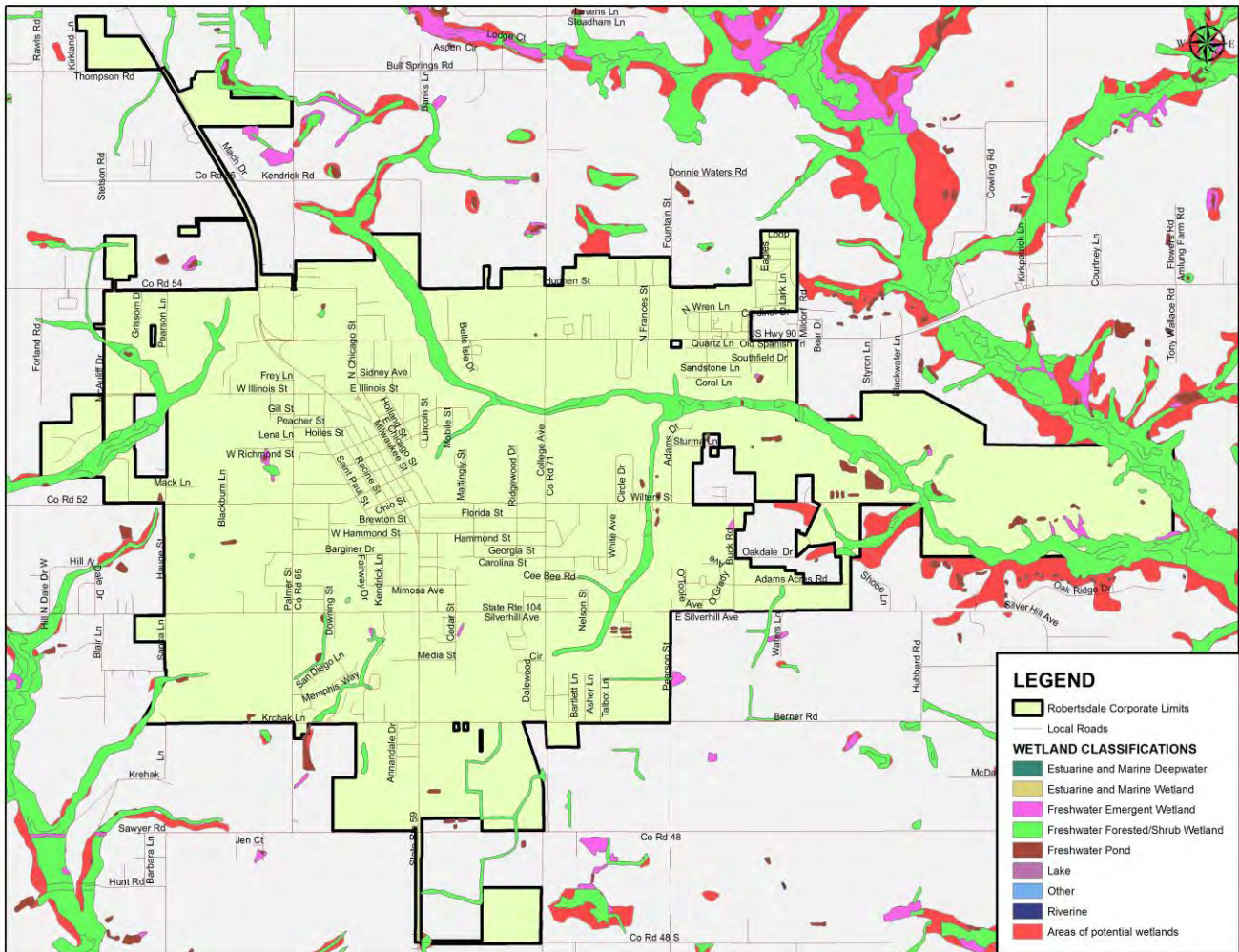
It is estimated that there are approximately 470 square miles (380,000 acres) of wetlands in Baldwin County. Three types of wetlands are found in Robertsdale: Riverine, Depressional, and Flat. Riverine wetland areas are characterized by relatively high productivity and support a wide variety of wildlife. Dominant water sources are overbank flow from the channel or subsurface hydrologic connections between the stream channel and adjacent wetlands. These areas are important for water storage and flood control. Depressional wetlands occur in topographic depressions and are often termed “Grady ponds”. Isolated wetlands, such as Grady ponds, are critical natural resources because of their contribution to habitat and ground water recharge. The dominant water sources include rainfall, groundwater discharge, and overland flow from adjacent uplands. Elevation contours are closed thus allowing surface water

accumulation. Flat wetlands are located in areas where the main source of water is precipitation. They occur on areas with little or no topographic gradient and depend partly on groundwater discharge.

Many wetland systems in Baldwin County have been adversely affected or lost due to infill for construction, runoff from construction activities and poor land use development, and insufficient sewer systems. Communities in Baldwin County are realizing more and more the recreational and economic benefits wetlands provide their communities. Due to the increased development throughout Baldwin County in the last 20 years, many City and County officials are working closer with environmental agencies to preserve this natural asset.

The wetlands found in the planning area of Robertsdale are classified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as primarily “Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland”, which are part of the Palustrine System that includes all non-tidal wetlands that are dominated by trees, shrubs, mosses or fungi, and woody vegetation that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions. Figure 6.2 illustrates the different types of wetland classifications found in Robertsdale and the surrounding area, including areas where wetlands could potentially be located, as identified by the Baldwin County Digital Wetland Map.

**Figure 6.2: Generalized Wetlands Map
City of Robertsdale, AL**



Source: United States Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) 2001/Baldwin County Planning and Zoning

Soils

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining agricultural productivity and the best and most cost efficient locations for new development. Factors such as drainage, erosion, land use, and watershed management are affected by soil types. Robertsdale has approximately 27 different types of soil, but soils are grouped according to common characteristics such as formation, parent material, slope, and degree of erosion. These soil groups are called associations. The one soil association present throughout the Robertsdale area is the Marlboro-Faceville-Greenville Association. This association

consists mainly of large areas of well-drained soil with very little slope. The soils in this association are well suited for agriculture and development.

Wildlife Habitat Preservation Areas

One of the most predominant natural features of Robertsdale is the abundance of open space and farmland. Unfortunately, open space and agricultural land is often the most vulnerable to development pressures and as a result, Robertsdale has experienced a steady decrease in these types of natural resources over the past 20 years. As these naturally wooded areas and agricultural fields

continue to disappear, precious wildlife is lost or displaced.

There are currently many natural wildlife habitat preserves, trails, and management areas in Baldwin County within a short drive from Robertsdale. Below is a brief inventory of these resources:

- Upper Delta Wildlife Management Area
- Gulf State Park
- Meaher State Park
- Weeks Bay Nature Preserve and Trail
- Blakely State Park and Trail
- Perdido River Wildlife Management Area
- Mobile-Tensaw Delta WL Holland Wildlife Management Area
- Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge and Trail

Within these preserves, many of the following plant and animal species can be observed, all of which are listed on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Threatened or Endangered Species list:

- Alabama Beach Mouse
- West Indian Manatee
- Bald Eagle
- Gulf Sturgeon
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle
- American Burrying Beetle
- Gopher Tortoise
- Eastern Indigo Snake
- Red-Cockaded Woodpecker
- Piping Plover
- Alabama Red-Bellied Sea Turtle
- Peregrine Falcon
- Wood Stork
- Perdido Key Beach Mouse
- Alabama Sturgeon
- Heavy Pigtoe Mussel
- Flatwoods Salamander

Agricultural Resources

Agriculture within Robertsdale and Baldwin County is a dominant feature of the landscape and an important economic resource. According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Baldwin County has over 900 farms with a total area of 165,565 acres. While much of the agricultural industry is related to the production of cotton and food items, the major products are sod and plants. Alabama ranks third in the nation in turf grass and sod production and 16th in greenhouse and nursery production. Currently, Baldwin County is the number one sod producer in Alabama.

Robertsdale was founded primarily because of the abundance of a particular fertile soil type suitable for farming which influenced Robertsdale's early development as an agricultural center in Baldwin County. Today, Robertsdale's agricultural industry is still flourishing, even while other communities throughout the state are losing a lot of their local farms.

Agricultural land use is not just important to Robertsdale's economy, it is also important to the rural character and image of the community. Many of the buildings and commercial uses are indicative of agricultural uses and architecture. Residents are passionate about the abundance of farm land and open space in Robertsdale and they want to ensure that future development does not sacrifice the rural, small town feeling that they know and love. Despite the local support for agriculture and farming, the number and acreage of farms has been decreasing over the past few decades. Factors such as high operating costs, low product prices, globalization, and encroaching development are major threats to local farms and agricultural land uses. In order to fight decreasing profits, farmers, not only in Alabama, but nationwide, are recognizing the need to diversify their farm products and supplement their income. Many are exploring the idea of agri-tourism. Agri-tourism is defined as a commercial enterprise at any agricultural location, including

horticultural and agri-business operations, conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental tourism income for the owner. In Alabama, four agencies have joined together to form the Alabama Agri-Tourism Partnership which will develop and market a state-wide agri-tourism database and directory. Some examples of agri-tourism include:

- Farmers' Markets
- U-pick Operations
- Tours
- Petting Zoos
- Corn Mazes
- Camping
- Trail Rides
- Nature Walks
- Special Events
- Barn Dances
- Farm Vacations/Farm Bed & Breakfast
- Conference Facilities
- Christmas Tree Farms
- Winery/Nursery Tours

Some forms of agri-tourism are already well established in Alabama, including fairs and festivals, but there are many more opportunities available. Robertsdale's location on Highway 59, with the large number of tourists passing through on a daily basis, is an ideal location for agri-tourism ventures. Agri-tourism in this area would not only provide excellent economic advantages, but would also help prevent the loss of precious agricultural land and open space. There are currently five Agri-tourism establishments in Baldwin County belonging to the Alabama Agri-Tourism Partnership and on the Alabama Agri-Tourism Trail:

- W&E Kichler & Sons – Elberta
- Fairhope Alpacas – Fairhope

- Oak Hollow Farms – Fairhope
- WAB Farm – Fairhope
- Perdido Vineyards – Perdido

It is urgent that Robertsdale takes whatever steps it can to ensure the City maintains its agricultural industry. Doing so will ensure a stable tax base and maintain the community character cherished by residents. It will also preserve agricultural soils, a significant natural resource, for future use.

Community Goals

To ensure that Robertsdale's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Robertsdale were asked to participate in three separate visioning workshops. Three community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and the Public Opinion Survey. The community goals identified in this section were formulated in cooperation with the City and residents of the community. The input provided from the city and residents, combined with in-depth analysis and projections from our planning staff, create the foundation for the proposed recommendations and strategies found throughout this plan.

During the community workshops, many comments were collected regarding the natural and agricultural resources of Robertsdale. Overall, citizens do not want to lose the small town atmosphere that currently exists in Robertsdale. The following goals were identified by the residents of the community to achieve by 2025:

- Protect the natural resources of the community, including wetlands, streams, and natural habitats, from over development.

- Preserve the open space and agricultural land uses of their community that are vital to their rural, small town character.
- Farmers want more local support from the City and the County to continue to own and operate farms and agricultural land uses.
- More diversified tourist economy that takes advantage of the Highway 59 corridor and utilizes the products and services of the local residents.

Recommendations and Strategies

The recommendations and strategies below were formulated in combination with the property owner's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple community workshops, and with analysis of the current transportation network. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer obtaining their vision for Robertsdale's future:

- Consider water quality management when making City decisions. Utilize natural drainage patterns and take preventative measures to minimize surface and groundwater pollution.
- Consider an aquifer study to determine current and future service capabilities, especially with projected population growth. Densities, land uses, and future development should be regulated to permit maximum recharge and protect the water quality.

- Protect the quality of surface water and groundwater by implementing more restrictive storm water management regulations that support more environmental friendly techniques.
- Preserve the ecological and hydrological functions of wetlands by protecting them from development. Explore the adoption of a local wetland ordinance to accomplish this.
- Implement a natural resource buffer for wetlands, streams, and any other ecologically significant resources. Typical buffers are between 25 to 50 feet and they restrict any development from occurring within their boundaries. Habitat buffers between developed land allow animals to move back and forth from shelter to water and feeding areas without leaving the cover of natural vegetation. They also provide pollution buffers to prevent adverse impact to sensitive areas.
- Provide local incentives to support local land owners to keep natural areas and open spaces from being developed by using conservation easements. State and federal agencies offer grant opportunities for these activities.
- Protect farms and agricultural uses from other land uses and activities that adversely impact capital investment in agricultural land, improvements, equipment, and livestock.
- Explore the purchase or transfer of development rights from farms to permanently protect agricultural land and compensate land owners for the equity in

their land. This can be achieved with tax incentives and Farmland Conservation Easements where the farmer sells the lands development rights for perpetuity and receives compensation for the restrictions placed on the land.

- Encourage local farmers to establish a Farmland protection Committee to serve as the liaison between the City and local farmers to advise on the needs of the farming community and the opportunities from local, state, and federal entities.
- Support the economic vitality of the local agriculture by having annual festivals and events based on the agricultural resources of the area. Examples include an annual Spring Planting Festival and a Fall Harvest Festival.
- Become a member of the Alabama Agri-tourism Partnership and work with local farmers to increase agri-tourism activities.

Chapter 7 - Parks and Recreation

Adequate parks, open space, and recreational opportunities are vital to the quality of life in communities by providing citizens of all ages with enjoyable activities and settings in which to spend leisure time. The City of Robertsdale has taken a very active role in improving their parks and recreational facilities over the past ten years. In 2010, 21.3% of Robertsdale’s population was of school age and 14.2% was over the age of 65. These age groups depend on the parks and recreational services the City provides for quality of life. The median age in Robertsdale in 2010 was 33.8. Younger populations are also more active in outdoor activities such as sports, walking, and bicycling. The City’s residents are fortunate to have wonderful, new facilities and equipment for all types of outdoor activities and age groups.

The first part of this chapter inventories all parks, recreational facilities, and services in Robertsdale as well as assesses the condition of those facilities with regard to improvements that may be required in order to meet the future needs of the community. The second part of this chapter identifies the community goals associated with parks and recreation that were identified by the residents during the community workshops and projects future needs and improvements based on these goals in combination with proposed growth.

Facilities, Services & Events

The City of Robertsdale’s Public Works Department operates and maintains the parks, facilities, and services. Local schools also provide numerous recreational facilities and services to local residents. Below is an inventory of all the facilities, services, and events provided by the City of Robertsdale.

Honeybee Park

Honeybee Park is located in downtown Robertsdale, along Highway 59 North. The park is located on and adjacent to the former Bay Minette -Fort Morgan Railroad right-of-way and is the primary focal point of the Bike and Walking Trail. The park provides landscaped open spaces and park amenities such as park benches, water fountains, a bus-stop, lamp posts, and large trees for shade. The park connects the downtown to a residential neighborhood to the east. The sidewalk network connects the park to multiple neighborhoods to the northeast, north, and south.



Photograph 7.1: Honeybee Park.



Photograph 7.2: Honeybee Park next to train depot.



Photograph 7.3: Honeybee Park near downtown.

The park provides a wonderful public meeting place for City events or social gatherings. It abuts the downtown area and provides downtown merchants and customers with a place to have lunch or take an afternoon walk. The south end of the park abuts the Senior Citizens Center.

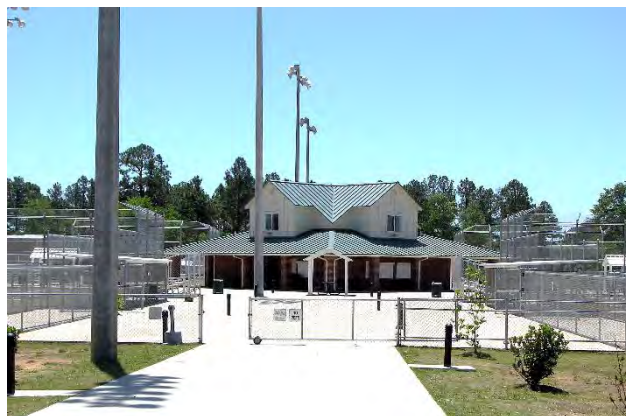
Garrett Park

Garrett Park is Robertsdale’s oldest park complex. With the latest upgrades and renovations, this park facility has become one of the leading parks in Baldwin County for softball and baseball games. Garrett Park was purchased by the City in 1939, and was named in honor of Dr. Amos Garrett. Garrett Park is located west of downtown Robertsdale at the southeast corner of Pennsylvania St. and Palmer St. It is adjacent to residential areas on the north, south and east sides. It is 33 acres and contains three baseball fields, a batting cage, one men’s



Photograph 7.4: Playground at Garrett Park.

softball field, four tennis courts, youth and adult soccer fields, a concession stand, bathrooms, a pavilion, parking, as well as the Robertsdale Kid’s Park. The Kid’s Park is a fenced area that contains a splash-pad, swings, slides, mazes and other climbing features designed for young children.



Photograph 7.5: Baseball fields at Garrett Park.



Photograph 7.6: Pavilion at Garrett Park.

Anna Belle Beverly Park

The Anna Belle Beverly Park is located on East Chicago Street just east of the Senior Citizens Center. The property is approximately 0.8 acres. The park has a small pavilion, a playground with swings and slide, as well as other various playground equipment.

Bike and Walking Trail

The Robertsdale Bike and Walking Trail follows the old railroad corridor that generally runs north and south along the east side of Highway 59. The

former railroad corridor has been converted to a bike and walking trail through the Rails-to-Trails Program. Rail trails are former railway lines that have been converted to paths designed for biking, equestrian, and/or pedestrian use.



Photograph 7.7: Rails-to-Trails Pedestrian/Bike Path.

The Robertsdale trail is used primarily for biking, walking, and jogging. It runs east of the downtown area into Honeybee Park and provides a pedestrian connection for neighborhoods from the north and south to downtown. It is currently 1.7 miles long and extends from County Road 54 southward to East Silverhill Ave. The trail provides easy pedestrian access to three adjacent or nearby parks, Baldwin Brothers Park, Honeybee Park, and Anna Belle Beverly Park. The trail also runs adjacent to



Photograph 7.8: Rails-to-Trails Pedestrian/Bike Path.

the Police Station, Post Office and the Senior Citizens Center. The trail meanders through wooded areas and open green spaces and along the trail there are amenities such as lighting and benches. The trail ties into Robertsdale’s sidewalk system and connects trail users to the elementary and high school. The City has recently acquired another mile of the railroad right-of-way to the south of the existing trail. Additionally, the City is currently expanding their sidewalk network throughout the community, all of which will be tied to the Bike and Walking Trail, in order to increase the City’s overall pedestrian/bicyclist connectivity.

J.W. Clark Softball Complex

The J. W. Clark Softball Complex was built in 2005 for girls softball. The complex is located on the southwest corner of Pennsylvania St. and Palmer St. The complex sits on 8 acres and contains four softball diamonds, two batting cages, a concession stand/press box, restroom facilities, and parking.

Kid’s Splash Park

The Robertsdale Kid’s Splash Park is home to a fun splash pad with 21 individual water features and a restroom facility. This facility is located at the Southeast Corner of Pennsylvania Street and Park Avenue. The Splash Park is opened daily from 10:00 am until 8:00 pm.



Photograph 7.9: Kid’s Splash Park.

Gordon Coley Memorial Park

The Gordon Coley Memorial Park is a park dedicated to honoring the men and women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The park is located at 22884 Highway 59.

Baldwin County Coliseum

The Baldwin County Coliseum is an impressive new building that not only serves the City and County as a public facility for various functions, but also serves as an emergency storm shelter during tornados and hurricanes. The facility is owned by the Baldwin County Commission and is leased to the Baldwin County Cattle and Fair Association. It is located on Fairground Road, just east of Robertsdale High School. It serves as the location of the annual Baldwin County Fair as well as many local and regional events such as rodeos and community events.



Photograph 7.10: Baldwin County Coliseum.

Baldwin County Fair

The Baldwin County Fair was moved in 2008 from its previous location at Garrett Park to the newly constructed Baldwin County Coliseum. The new facility offers ample air-conditioned exhibit space and the largest open-air arena in the southeast. The fair takes place each fall, and festivities include a circus, heritage displays, contests, rides, food, exhibits and rodeos.

Rotary Club Rodeo

The Robertsdale Rotary Club puts on and sponsors an annual rodeo that features professional cowboys and cowgirls competing in various rodeo events such as bareback and bronco riding, steer wrestling, calf and team roping, bull riding, and barrel racing. This event is held in the spring, at the Baldwin County Coliseum open-air arena.

Baldwin Brothers Park

The Baldwin Brothers Park is located at the southeast corner of Highway 59 North and Wilters St. It also adjoins the Bike and Walking Trail on the east side. This was previously the location of Baldwin Supply Company. The property was donated to the City of Robertsdale by Mrs. Carmelita Baldwin in 1989 and was named in honor of Joe, George and Bill Baldwin. The park is landscaped and features a wooden pergola and swing.

Tennis Court Facility

The Tennis Court facility is located at 18845 East Silverhill Ave in west Robertsdale. There are 4 lighted, fenced, hard surface asphalt courts constructed on this site in 2014. A sidewalk is also located on site that directly connects this facility with the Robertsdale Bike and Walking Trail.



Photograph 7.11: Robertsdale Tennis Courts.

PZK Civic Center

The PZK Hall is a community center for the City and for private events. The 10 acre property was acquired by the City in 1992, from PZK Hall, Inc. It is located at the northwest corner of Highway 104 and Palmer Street, just south of Garrett Park. The building contains a small kitchen, a hardwood dance floor, a stage and restroom facilities. It has a capacity of 549 and large open grounds for outdoor events. Renovations are currently underway to renovate the facility with a new kitchen/food preparation area and updated restrooms.

George P. Thames Senior Citizens Center

The Senior Citizens Center is located south of Honeybee Park along East Chicago Street. The center was built in 1987. Open five days a week, the center provide activities, programs and services that enhance the lives of senior adults in the community. It is also available for City and private functions and has a capacity of 94 people.

Honeybee Festival

The Robertsdale Honeybee Festival takes place in Downtown Robertsdale at Honeybee Park, and festivities include a parade, food, fundraisers, and arts and crafts vendors. The annual fall event was started 19 years ago by a group of local beekeepers to celebrate the importance of bees in Robertsdale's agricultural economy. By carrying pollen between plants, honeybees are a vital part of the fertilization process for many commercial crops. Without bees, many popular local foods such as cotton, peanuts, soybeans, corn, and local fruits would not be available.

Recreational Services

Many local youth and school sports programs utilize the recreation facilities. These include tennis teams, youth baseball leagues, youth softball leagues, men's

softball leagues, the youth and adult soccer leagues, as well as the Summer Youth Sports Camps.

Classifications & Level of Service

Park classification and the level of service standards provide communities with a method of assessing their current park and recreational inventory and projecting improvements based on future growth. This method is based on the National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) guidelines which consider the type, use, size, and service area of parks and recreational facilities. Future demand for park and recreational facilities is based on comparing projected populations with recognized level of service standards and responding to changing trends. Future needs are also directly influenced by population characteristics of the community. For example, communities with more children require more outdoor recreational opportunities close to home within a comfortable walking distance. Communities with more seniors can benefit from having more passive parks near residential areas, senior centers, and transit to accommodate their activities.

Park Classifications and Types

The following park classifications were based on the NPRA standards and modified to accommodate Robertsdale's current park and recreational inventory as well as future goals for improvements.

- Mini Parks – Mini parks, or “pocket parks,” serve a limited or concentrated population, usually a neighborhood, residential district, or commercial area and provide an urban green space within a densely developed area. Amenities might include a walking path, landscaping, park benches, and picnic tables. The service area is usually less than ¼ miles radius. The desirable size of the park is 2 acres

or less. The NPRA suggests 0.25-0.50 acres per every 1,000 in population.

- **Neighborhood Parks** – Neighborhood parks serve residential neighborhoods in developed areas and are intended to receive a high level of use. They typically have a landscaped walking path that can withstand the impacts of heavy foot traffic and should be connected to the community's sidewalk network. Citizens should be able to walk to this park without crossing a major arterial street. They are places where neighbors can gather, children can play, and people can engage in recreational activities. Amenities might include an open grass lawn, playgrounds, basketball courts, pool, tennis court, pavilions, etc. The service area is usually less than ½ miles radius. The desirable size of the park is between 5 and 20 acres. The NPRA suggests 1.0-2.0 acres per every 1,000 in population.
- **Community Parks** – Community parks are large parks intended to serve the entire community and meet the recreational needs of multiple neighborhoods. They provide more specialized and community organized recreational services and opportunities. They should be located adjacent to major arterials or other collector streets to provide easy vehicular and pedestrian access. They should be connected to linear trails and greenways throughout the region and developed around the natural resources of the community. Amenities include sports complex, ball fields, basket courts, tennis courts, playgrounds, splash pads, pavilions, disc-golf course, etc. The service area is usually a one to two mile radius. The desirable size of the park is 25 to 100 acres. The NPRA suggests 5.0-8.0 acres per every 1,000 in population.

- **Regional Parks** – Regional parks are large recreational areas usually developed around an area's natural resources and they serve entire regions, including several municipalities. They may be county, state, or federally operated, but should connect to smaller community parks via greenways or trails to create regional linkage. Amenities include sports complex, ball fields, tennis courts, pool, playground, hiking trails, mountain biking trails, ATV trails, camping facilities, disc-golf course, etc. The service area is usually at least five mile radius or more. The desirable size is 50 acres or larger. NPRA suggest 20.0 acres per every 1,000 in population.
- **Linear Parks, Greenways and Trails** –provide linkages between other parks and/or points of interest. The service area and size varies from neighborhood greenways to regional pedestrian, bicyclist, and equestrian trails.

Levels of Service

Parks and recreational facilities within a community affect the character of the community and the quality of life of the residents. Therefore, having adequate types of facilities to serve the growing population is necessary for successful community growth and development. The National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) recommends Level of Service Standards associated with park and recreational facilities for communities in order to achieve an adequate number and type of facilities per population. Table 7.1 illustrates these recommendations.

**Table 7.1: National Park and Recreation Association’s (NPR A)
Suggested Level of Service Standards for Communities**

Park Type	Suggested Service Area	Suggested Size	Suggested Community Needs
Mini / Pocket Park	Less than ¼ mile radius	2 acres or less	0.25-0.50 acres per 1,000 population
Neighborhood Park	Less than ½ mile radius	5 to 20 acres	1.0-2.0 acres per 1,000 population
Community Park	1-2 mile radius	25 to 100 acres	5.0-8.0 acres per 1,000 Population
Regional Park	5+ mile radius or more	50+ acres	20.0 acres per 1,000 population
Linear Park, Greenways, and Trails	Varies	Varies	1 mile per 1,000 population

Source: The National Park and Recreation Association (NPR A)

The city currently has one mini park, Anne Belle Beverly Park. This park is approximately 2 acres in area. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the city of Robertsdale’s 2010 population was 5,276. The NPR A Level of Service standard for pocket/mini parks suggests 0.25 to 0.50 acres per 1,000 persons. To accommodate the 2010 population, Robertsdale should currently have between 1.3 and 2.6 acres of pocket/mini parks. To accommodate the 2025 projected population estimate of 8,084, Robertsdale should contain between 2.1 to 4.2 acres of pocket or mini parks.

Robertsdale currently has one neighborhood park, Honeybee Park. Honeybee Park is approximately 6 acres and serves the downtown and abutting residential neighborhood. The NPR A’s Level of Service standard for neighborhood parks suggests 1 to 2 acres per 1,000 persons. To accommodate the 2010 U.S. Census population, Robertsdale currently needs between 5.3 and 10.6 acres of neighborhood parks. To accommodate the 2025 projected population estimate of 8,084, Robertsdale should

contain between 8.4 and 16.8 acres of neighborhood parks.

Garrett Park and J.W. Clark Softball Complex are classified as a community parks and are approximately 41 acres. They serve the entire Robertsdale area as they are the location for almost all the local sports activities. The NPR A’s Level of Service standard for community parks is 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 persons. The City currently meets the NPR A recommended acreage of 26.4 to 42.2 acres of community parks. To accommodate the 2025 projected population estimate of 8,084, Robertsdale should contain between 42.0 and 67.1 acres of community parks.

Robertsdale has an impressive sidewalk/trail system through their community that is currently being extended. It connects many residential neighborhoods to the downtown area, municipal buildings, parks, and schools. Robertsdale’s Rails-to-Trails project started downtown at the former train depot, and now stretches over 9 miles.

The NPRA’s Level of Service standard for trails is 1 mile per 1,000 persons. To accommodate the 2010 population, Robertsdale currently needs 5.3 miles of trails. To accommodate the 2025 projected population estimate of 8,084, Robertsdale should contain 8.4 miles of trails.

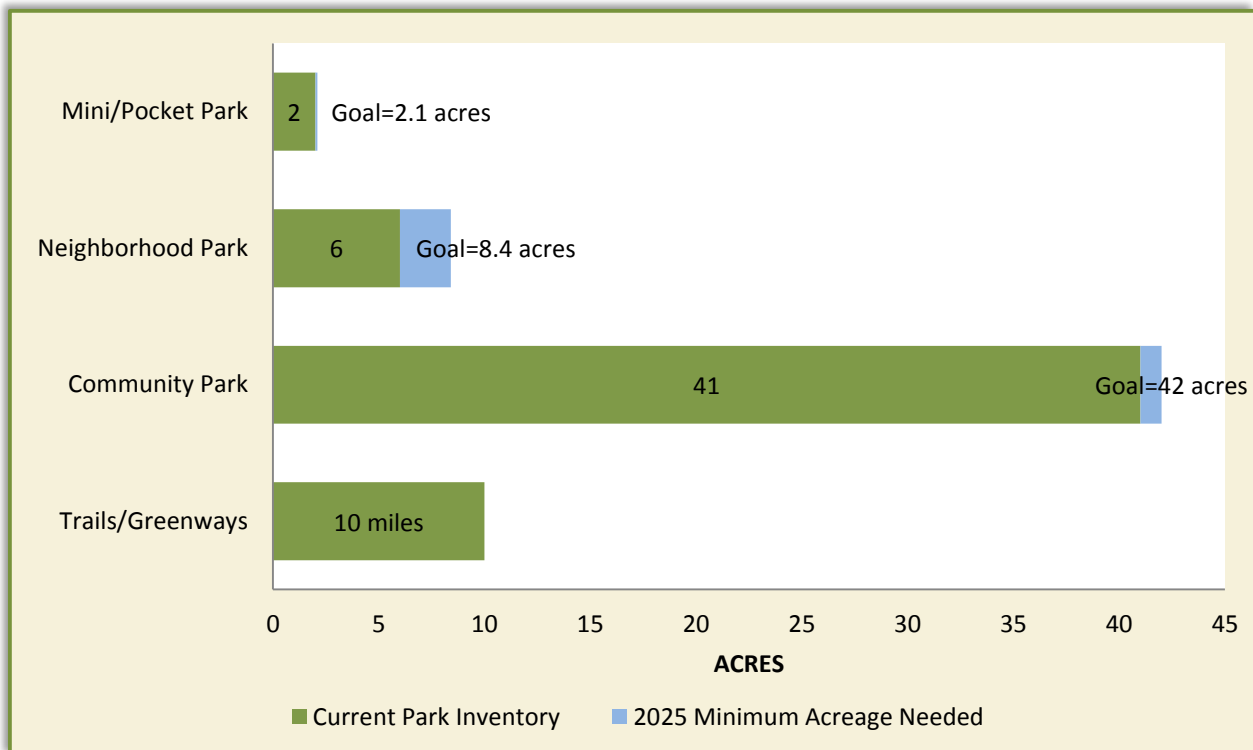
Figure 7.1 illustrates the City’s current park inventory, along with the amount of acreage Robertsdale will need to accommodate the projected population of 8,084 by 2025, as suggested by the National Park and Recreation Association.

The City of Robertsdale currently does not have within their planning jurisdiction a district or regional park. These types of parks are typically owned by larger cities, counties, state, or federal governments and are usually based around natural resources for preservation of wildlife and habitats. There are many natural resource based regional parks and preserves in Baldwin County. The

Natural Resources section of this plan identifies these areas for their regional significance and benefits to the County, State, and Robertsdale.

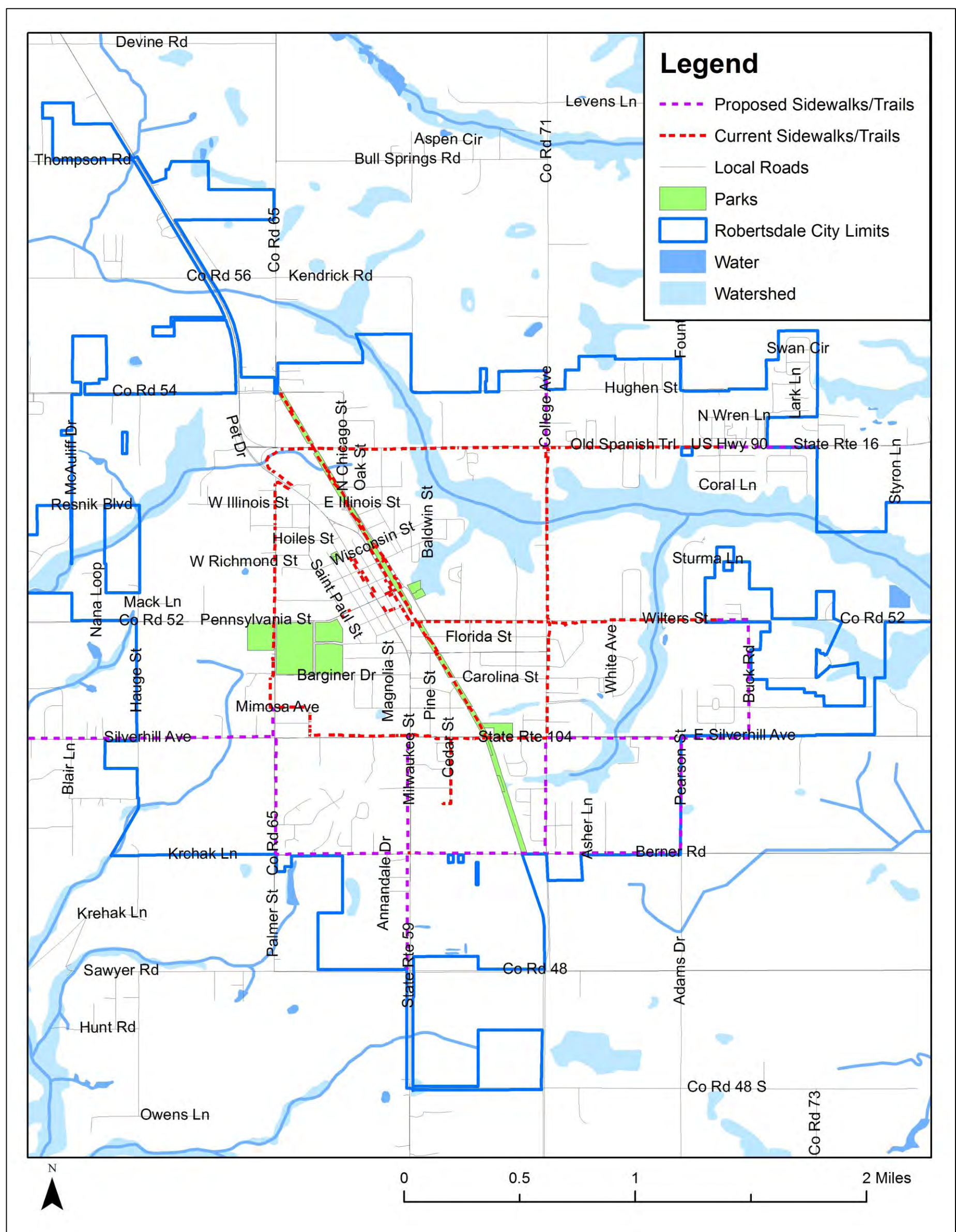
Robertsdale, Baldwin County, and many other municipalities within the county have expressed the desire for the creation of a county-wide network of wildlife-greenway corridors. Baldwin County is rich in wetland and threatened and endangered species habitat which is ideal for conservation areas that could support greenways for low impact public use. Robertsdale could expand its existing biking and walking trail to ultimately connect to the Baldwin county proposed corridors, thus drastically increasing the resource-based recreational opportunities for local residents and protecting precious natural resources. Figure 7.2 illustrates these greenway corridors that are within or immediately adjacent to Robertsdale’s planning jurisdiction.

Figure 7.1: Park Acreage Inventory & National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA’s) Suggested Park Acreage Needs for Robertsdale by 2025



Source: The National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA)

Figure 7.2: Area Sidewalk/Trail Map of the City of Robertsdale, Alabama



Source: SARPC & City of Robertsdale

7-9

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Community Goals

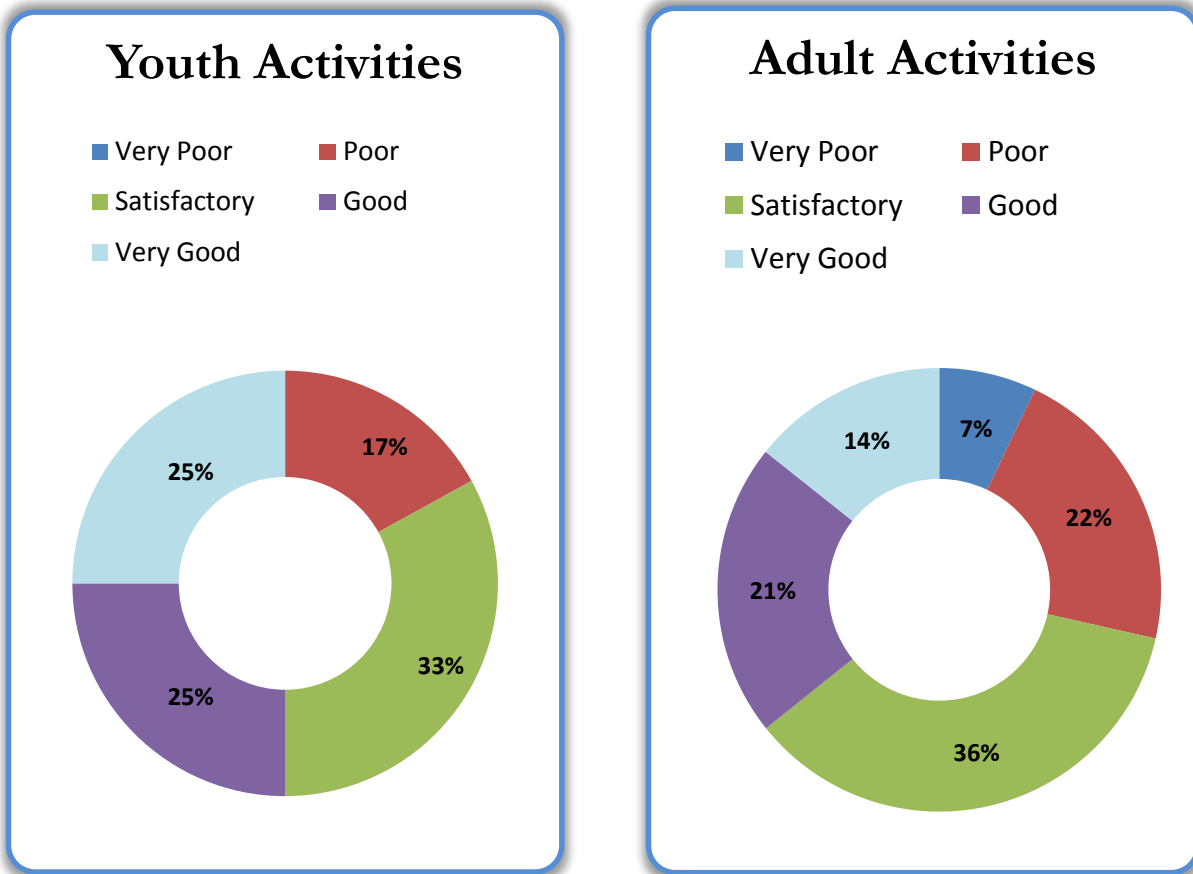
To ensure that Robertsdale's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Robertsdale were asked to participate in three separate visioning workshops. Three community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and the Public Opinion Survey. The community goals identified in this section were formulated in cooperation with the City and residents of the community. The input provided from the city and residents, combined with in-depth analysis and projections from our planning staff, create the foundation for the proposed recommendations and strategies found throughout this plan.

During the community workshops, many comments were collected regarding park and recreation in Robertsdale. When asked what their favorite place is in Robertsdale, 66% of the respondents named the parks and sidewalks. Overall, the vast majority of the survey respondents were pleased with their current park and recreational facilities, but believe the City needs more parks and services, especially for adults.

The following goals were identified by the residents to achieve by 2010:

- Development of regional greenway or connection to regional greenway, within Robertsdale's planning jurisdiction that connects to the existing sidewalk network.
 - Improved maintenance and amenities at parks and recreational facilities, such as a swimming pool.
 - Create more community events and festivals to utilize parks and recreational space, stimulate the local economy, and help bring local residents together.
- More park and recreational facilities, including extension of the current sidewalk network throughout the City.
 - More diverse recreational activities for the family, youth, adults, seniors, and persons with special needs. This includes providing activities for those that cannot participate in sports, see Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: Community Response to Activities Currently Available to Youth/Adult Populations in Robertsdale



Recommendations & Strategies

The recommendations and strategies below were formulated in combination with the property owner’s input from the surveys conducted at the multiple community workshops, and with analysis of the current park and recreational facility inventory in Robertsdale. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer obtaining their vision for Robertsdale’s future:

- Acquire through donation to the City or through purchase between 2.1 and 4.2 acres of land to be converted and used for mini/pocket parks throughout the City’s more densely developed commercial areas, especially the downtown area. This acreage will accommodate the 2025 average population projection of 8,084 and meet the National Parks and Recreational Association’s community standards.
- Acquire through donation to the City or through purchase between 8.4 and 16.8 acres of land to be converted and used for neighborhood parks throughout the City’s

more densely developed residential areas. This acreage will accommodate the 2025 average population projection of 8,084 and meet the National Parks and Recreational Association's community standards.

- Extend the City's current pedestrian and bicycle sidewalk/trail through residential and commercial areas to improve connectivity to residential areas. This acreage will accommodate the 2025 average population projection of 8,084 and meet the National Parks and Recreational Association's community standards.
- Upgrade existing parks and recreational facilities through continued maintenance and installation of new equipment, services, and amenities to accommodate future population growth and diversity of population need.
- Collaborate with Baldwin County and adjacent municipalities for the creation of regional greenways and extend current pedestrian and bicycle trail network to connect to these greenways for regional linkage. Figure 7.2 proposes potential trail extensions by the City of Robertsdale that would link to future greenways.
- Research and pursue potential funding sources for park and recreational acquisitions and improvements such as ADECA Recreational Trails Program and ALDOT Transportation Enhancement Program.
- Encourage greater utilization of existing recreational facilities and parks by providing more diverse services and social events. Examples include: youth and adult arts and

crafts classes; educational and hobby classes; exercise classes; card and bingo games; luncheons and dinners; and sports and game activities for disabled youth.

- Explore the incorporation into future park facilities the concept of passive recreational areas, such as open space preservation and wetland conservation areas, for nature trails and boardwalks.
- Encourage Robertsdale's agricultural resources and history with the creation of agriculture themed festivals and annual activities. Examples include a Spring Planting Festival and a Fall Harvest Festival. At the Spring Harvest Festival, vendors could sell seeds and seedling plants, farm equipment, and gardening and landscaping equipment. At the Fall Harvest Festival, vendors could sell produce, plants, and farming and gardening equipment. Both events could feature guest speakers from the local Farmers Association, demonstrations by local farmers, and educational material appropriate to the activities of the season. Additional activities could include cooking contest (best pie or jam), hay rides, annual activities could include Farmers' Markets, U-Pick Operations, Corn Mazes, Trail Rides, and Barn Dances. All of these activities support the local economy and Baldwin County farmers, increase tourism, and celebrate Robertsdale's agricultural history.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 8 - Downtown and Historic Resources

Robertsdale is a city rich in historical assets which have influenced the cultural heritage of the community. A rich heritage establishes a City's unique sense of place, fosters civic pride, and gives communities their own identity. Safeguarding a city's heritage encourages knowledge of and respect for the community's character, history, and culture while guiding future development.



Photograph 8.1: Downtown Robertsdale along Highway 59 north.

The architectural past that previous residents have left behind reflects the physical and social development of the City of Robertsdale, and encompasses its founding in the eighteenth century, its development in the nineteenth century, and its maturation in the twentieth century. Robertsdale's historic buildings, structures, and sites are physical representations of generations past. The distinctive design of historic buildings makes them important symbols of the community, gives the area a unique image, and avoids the anonymity and uniformity that often comes with typical new construction.

For all of these reasons, preservation of Robertsdale's historic assets must be a priority for residents and City officials. Studies have shown that preservation of historic and cultural buildings and sites enhances the quality of life by making the community a more attractive and desirable place to live. Historic preservation not only increases resident's pride in their community, but it also encourages economic growth by increasing property values and stimulating new business. Rehabilitation of an existing building typically cost less than new construction, stimulates rehabilitation of surrounding structures, and inspires improved and compatible design quality for new infill buildings.



Photograph 8.2: Downtown Robertsdale from Honeybee Park along Highway 59 north.

Downtowns and historic neighborhoods also provide for a healthy mix of residents, allowing low-income, moderate-income, and higher-income families to live in close proximity. Older neighborhoods usually have a social structure in place including churches, playgrounds, social agencies, and neighborhood groups. Generally located adjacent to downtown, these

neighborhoods keep people in close proximity, and often in walking distance, to the things they need such as work, shopping, and schools.

Benefits of Historic Preservation and Revitalization

Preservation and revitalization of a community's historic resources, particularly downtown areas, have proven economic and social benefits for the community. Some of the benefits are listed below.

- ***Creates Jobs While Protecting the Environment*** – Revitalization activities create jobs for construction workers, architects, skilled craftsmen, engineers, and designers. Dollars earned by the local labor force are spent within the community and cycle through the local economy. Revitalization of existing buildings results in a recycling of a community's infrastructure and conservation of natural resources. Through rehabilitation, instead of new construction, existing infrastructure can be utilized instead of installing new facilities. This saves time and money for the developer and prevents new growth strains on city resources without losing the economic benefits of growth. It also prevents community sprawl into undeveloped lands.
- ***Increases Property Values*** – Conservation and revitalization of historic resources fosters community pride and appreciation of local heritage. This effort increases and stabilizes local property values thus increasing the resale and market values. The Alabama Historic Commission has determined that restored historic properties are worth more, appreciate faster, and retain more of their value than most new construction.
- ***Vehicle for Heritage Tourism*** - Tourist are drawn to the historic resources of a community

for their unique architecture, individual character, and personal history. In downtown areas, building facades cultivate the merchant's distinctive identity, goods, and services. This creates visual interest and diversity that attracts tourist to the area which is unique and specific to the community. Restored historic properties and downtown areas that are well promoted become a fixture of local heritage generating a local tourist economy that multiplies the city's revenue.

- ***Spawns Historic Revitalization of Area*** - Most historic properties, including downtown buildings, are owner occupied. When revitalization efforts begin, adjacent property owners become motivated and inspired to invest in their own properties. Property owners will begin to take pride in their individual building facades and actively promote an aesthetically attractive streetscape to draw in customers and/or increase their property values. Investors are also attracted to this revitalization movement and will begin to purchase vacant lots for infill development.
- ***Build the Local Economy*** - Preservation and revitalization of historic resources can enhance the business recruitment potential of a community. Companies continually re-locate to communities that offer workers a higher quality of life, which is typically associated with communities that value and restore their historic resources and downtown areas. Revitalization of historic areas attracts new businesses to those areas and encourages entrepreneurship. The new businesses generate increased sales tax and create local investment opportunities.
- ***Creates New Housing Opportunities*** - Revitalization of historic areas, especially downtowns, encourages mixed use development where a variety of housing options, such as apartments, condominiums,

and lofts, are in close proximity to retail shops, restaurants, banks, and office buildings. Mixing these types of uses creates an area vibrant with people and street activity beyond the typical work day, into the early evening hours and weekends. The activity encourages future development and attracts more businesses and vendors. The diverse housing opportunities that are created appeal to moderate income populations and supply the downtown labor force with pedestrian friendly housing opportunities.

Inventory of Robertsdale's Historic Resources

A historic resource can take one of many forms including architecturally and historically significant buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. Robertsdale's historic resources serve as visual reminders to the community's past and offer clues to the people and events which have shaped the patterns of development. These resources are irreplaceable and therefore it is vital to protect them from demolition, deterioration, and the intrusion of incompatible structures and land uses. Below is a list of Robertsdale's historic sites with the exception of single family homes and neighborhoods.

- Downtown
- Robertsdale Elementary School
- Elsanor School
- Old Public Library
- Train Depot
- Episcopal Church Downtown

Many of these buildings may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or on the Alabama Historical Commission's Registry. These listings provide official recognition of historic resources that are worthy of preservation and may provide eligibility for tax incentives.

However, the listings do not directly prohibit alteration or destruction of the resource. The most effective method of preservation occurs at the local level. Local governments can adopt historic preservation ordinances to prevent demolition as well as establish architectural and/or historic review boards to oversee proposed changes.



Photograph 8.3: Downtown Robertsdale from Honeybee Park along Highway 59 north.

Robertsdale's downtown area is situated in the center of the City's municipal limits and is bordered, to the east and west, with Highway 59, north and south bound. The location of the downtown in reference to Highway 59 allows for continuous exposure and interaction of downtown business with through traffic from this major transportation corridor through Baldwin County.

Downtown Robertsdale is positioned on a traditional grid layout which forms the heart of the City. Most of the downtown buildings are still intact and possess many of their original architectural features of interest. Two historic train depots are located along the railroad tracks on the eastern side of the highway. One of the depot buildings was restored by the city while the other remains relatively untouched. Along Highway 59 north bound, there are seven commercial buildings that span several blocks. Most of these buildings remain relatively unchanged and every effort should be

made to preserve and revitalize these structures. Photograph 8.4 shows these buildings.

The buildings along Highway 59 south bound are not as old as those along Highway 59 north bound or within the interior of the downtown area. A lot of the buildings along Highway 59 south bound have developed over the past five decades and consists of a variety of building styles. Every effort should be made to enhance the appearance of this corridor and guide future growth to encourage infill development that is complimentary to the historical integrity of the downtown area.

Photograph 8.4 above illustrates the absence of green stripes, trees, and adequate landscaping and streetscaping in the downtown area. The City should research state and federal funding opportunities for downtown revitalization efforts to remedy this problem. The installation of intersection improvements with fixtures of visual interest would improve the aesthetics and walkability of the downtown area. Encouraging individual property owners to invest in building façade improvements through local tax incentives is another option the city has for local improvement solutions. The City should also consider obtaining a downtown parking study to determine if



Photograph 8.4: Buildings in downtown Robertsdale along Highway 59 north.

additional parking is needed to accommodate current and future needs and where acceptable locations for these facilities should be located.

A regional project that will affect Robertsdale, and its downtown area, is the expansion of the Foley Beach Express (FBE). Until recently, the limited access road began south of Robertsdale. However, Baldwin County and the Alabama Department of Transportation have extended the FBE northward to I-10. Motorist now have an opportunity to choose a higher speed, limited access road that bypasses all the towns along Highway 59. This new extension will eliminate beach traffic from I-10 and most of Baldwin County's traffic that passes through Robertsdale. Consequently, Robertsdale's current commercial corridor along Highway 59 will lose much of the current through-traffic and some of the revenue this traffic generated. However, not everyone will choose the bypass and prefer to experience the historic scenic route through the County along Highway 59. Robertsdale has an opportunity to become an interesting stop along the scenic route and the health of its downtown plays a major role in that opportunity.

Community Goals

To ensure that Robertsdale's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Robertsdale were asked to participate in three separate visioning workshops. Three community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and the Public Opinion Survey. The community goals identified in this section were formulated in cooperation with the City and residents of the community. The input provided from the city and residents, combined with in-depth analysis and projections from our planning staff, create the

foundation for the proposed recommendations and strategies found throughout this plan.

During the community workshops, many comments were collected regarding Robertsdale’s historic resources and downtown area. Overall, the vast majority of the survey respondents wish to preserve and restore the historic resources of the community, especially the downtown area. The residents would like to see improved building facades, more green strips with trees and landscaping, more parking, improved streetscape, and reduced traffic speeds to increase walkability. Many recognize the opportunity of the Highway 59 tourist corridor and would like to preserve Robertsdale’s local history while promoting a local tourist economy downtown that takes advantage of this opportunity. Results from the community survey showed that 85.7% of the participants would support policies to preserve and revitalize the downtown. Survey respondents identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the downtown district of Robertsdale and their results are illustrated below:



Photograph 8.5: Train depot in downtown Robertsdale along Highway 59 north.

Downtown Strengths

- Location of downtown along HWY 59 corridor
- Adjacent to Honey Bee Park
- Intact inventory of historic downtown buildings
- City’s central core

Downtown Weaknesses

- Deteriorated buildings
- Vacant buildings
- Not enough parking
- No green strips with trees and landscaping
- Junky alleyways
- Cost to rehabilitate historic buildings
- Speeding traffic through downtown

Downtown Opportunities

- Revitalization of downtown area
- Available property for commercial/retail use
- Improve the appearance/streetscape of downtown
- Provide more diverse housing opportunities
- Tourist traffic along HWY 59
- Highlight City’s history

Downtown Threats

- Exhausted infrastructure due to growth
- Not enough funding for projects
- Development without regards to historical integrity or aesthetics

Recommendations and Strategies

The recommendations and strategies below were formulated in combination with the property owner's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple community workshops, and with analysis of Robertsdale's historic resources and downtown district. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will be closer to achieving their goals for downtown revitalization through preservation and revitalization of their natural resources.

- Develop an inventory of properties within the City of Robertsdale having historic or architectural significance, eligible for designation on the State and/or National Registers. Explore funding opportunities for the preservation and restoration of these properties. Encourage property owners of these historic resources, including residential structures, to support and engage in preserving Robertsdale's historic integrity and unique heritage through participation with state and federal agencies.
- Establish a Main Street, or Downtown Committee for the purpose of preserving and revitalizing the downtown area. This Committee is charged with the tasks of identifying future goals, recommending strategies, and implementing plans and programs for the historic preservation and economic redevelopment of the downtown district. Responsibilities would include: working with the Chamber of Commerce to promote the downtown revitalization efforts and recruiting new merchants; assisting the

city with exploring and obtaining grant opportunities to fund revitalization efforts, including the Downtown Revitalization Plan; working with the city to establish downtown historic preservation through state or local ordinance; and working with downtown merchants to establish design guidelines to guide future development and revitalization efforts.

- Develop a Downtown Revitalization Plan. Concepts of the Plan should include future design and layout of the downtown area, including options for future parking facilities. Particular attention should be given to the form and character of the interior of the downtown to create a "town center" with a solid street façade and public green space for assembly. A traditional "town center" design would establish the "heart" of the city of Robertsdale and could be the future location of civic buildings. Traditional Neighborhood Development and Smart Growth concepts should also be employed within the Plan to accomplish community goals identified in this Comprehensive Plan.



Photograph 8.6: Downtown Robertsdale along Highway 59 south.

- Explore the establishment, through state or local ordinance, a Downtown Historic District that delineates district boundaries and sets design guidelines to direct and guide future downtown growth and development. The intent of this district should be to preserve downtown historic resources while fostering economic development.
- Implement a marketing plan for the downtown area and actively recruit new businesses and developments through local incentives. Recruitment incentives could include special lease rates for new or targeted businesses, direct mailing or advertisement of downtown revitalization efforts, and receptions for prospective merchants. Tax incentives could also be considered for rehabilitation efforts, or conversely, fines for boarded or dilapidated properties. A downtown newsletter could also be created to promote and advertise merchants, services, revitalization efforts and events and distributed throughout the region.
- Promote tourism and advertise Downtown Robertsdale as a leisure time destination with unique atmosphere and quality dining and shopping unlike what is found in large big box stores and malls. Robertsdale's location along Alabama's coastal transportation corridor gives the downtown great exposure and is an economic opportunity that could increase local tourism to the City. The City should capitalize on Robertsdale's heritage through economic development via tourism initiatives such as specialty retail stores, a museum featuring local history, or a regional art gallery.
- Improve downtown's image and attractiveness through rehabilitation of downtown building facades, streetscapes, and open spaces. This includes installing trees and landscaping, street furniture, signage, and widening sidewalks to include a green strip. This also includes installing sidewalk and street treatments that produce traffic calming effects that are pedestrian friendly. Conversion of vacant lots to green space and pocket parks should also be explored. The City should pursue funding for downtown improvements from State and/or Federal agencies such as ADECA, EDA, and ALDOT.
- Establish an attractive gateway and downtown transportation corridor along Highway 59, north and south bound, into the downtown district. This should include installing landscaping, streetscaping, and signage to attract residents and tourist to the downtown. The City should pursue gateway and corridor improvements through grant funding from state and/or federal agencies such as ALDOT, ADECA, and EDA.
- Install downtown intersection improvements, one on Highway 59 south and one on Highway 59 north, that implement sidewalk/crosswalk systems to connect the downtown to neighborhoods to the east and west. These improvements would draw attention to the downtown and invite the public in, decreasing the perception of isolation the current downtown feels. The improvements would also increase the aesthetics of the downtown while encouraging traffic to slow down creating pedestrian comfort. Linkage between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods would also be improved by designating appropriate pedestrian crossings.
- Increase the downtown housing stock and its diversity to include multi-housing and mixed

use development. Additional residential opportunities that should be encouraged include townhomes, condominiums, studios and flats, and apartments over retail and service uses.

- Increase the number of annual downtown events such as art walks and festivals, music in the park, folk and music festivals, spring plant sales, sidewalk sales, and history and food fairs. This would increase local revenue for the City and merchants, promote and advertise downtown businesses, and foster future economic development. Downtown merchants could extend their hours of operation into the evening for these events.

Chapter 9 - Community Facilities and Services

A community requires a wide variety of facilities and services to ensure basic health and safety needs are met, to maintain a high quality of life, and to promote a sustainable economy. The intent of this chapter is to provide an inventory of community facilities and services currently offered in the City of Robertsdale and to identify services and facilities needed to accommodate the City's future population and business activities. The current condition, use, and capacity of existing facilities and services were assessed. Based on community feedback through the public workshops, community goals and objectives were identified related to community services and facility needs. Any services or facilities that are in need of expansion or rehabilitation to meet community needs or projected growth are also identified. Recommendations and strategies are proposed to accomplish community goals, service and facility deficiencies, and future growth.

The following are community facilities and services located within the City of Robertsdale and its associated planning jurisdiction. Some facilities and services are authorized and financed by the City of Robertsdale and some by Baldwin County. Others are owned and operated by private entities or quasi-governmental entities. It is important to note that all entities, regardless of their type (public/private, profit/nonprofit), must comply with the provisions of this Comprehensive Plan and submit, for approval by the Planning Commission, all plans of construction and development, per regulations outlined in 11-52-11 of the Code of Alabama.

Community Buildings and Spaces **Robertsdale City Hall**

The Robertsdale City Hall is a single story brick structure located at 22647 Racine Street. The building houses the Council Chambers, the Mayor's office, the City Clerk's office, Utilities office, Revenue office, Court Clerk/Court Magistrate, Accounts Payable, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resources, Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer, and the Planning & Safety Coordinator. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 p.m. The structure was renovated in 2006 and adequately accommodates all City staff, therefore there is no immediate need for expansion or rehabilitation of the structure.



Photograph 9.1: Robertsdale City Hall

Robertsdale has its own municipal court that handles misdemeanors and traffic violations that occur within the city limits and police jurisdiction of Robertsdale. Court is held at 4:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month with the exception of September, November, and December.

The City of Robertsdale functions under a mayor and five council members elected at large. The City

Council meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. Meeting times for the 1st Monday is 6:00 p.m. and the 3rd Monday is 8:00 a.m. at City Hall. The City of Robertsdale also has an appointed nine member Planning Commission and a five member Board of Adjustments. The Planning Commission meets the 4th Monday of the month and the Board of Adjustments meets, if needed, the 2nd Tuesday of the month. The Mayor, City Clerk, and the various department heads administer day-to-day operations of the municipality. As of 2015, the City has 120 full-time employees.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works building is a single story facility located at 22650 East Chicago Street. The building houses the offices of the City’s Electric Department, the Water Department, the Sewer Department, the Natural Gas Department, the Sanitation Department, the Street Department,



Photograph 9.2: Department of Public Works

the Parks and Recreation Department, the Landscaping Department, and the Purchasing Office. The Public Works Department currently employs 50 people within the nine sub-departments which all have offices located within the Public Works building. The facility also houses various types of heavy equipment used for street repair, landscaping, and general construction activities including track hoes, back hoes, bull dozers, dump

trucks, garbage trucks, electrical bucket trucks, and light duty vehicles. The facility was built in 1978 and adequately accommodates all the above referenced City Departments with no immediate need of expansion or rehabilitation.

Robertsdale Public Library

The City of Robertsdale has one public library, located on Pennsylvania Street. The 6,600 square foot structure was constructed in 1992 and houses a collection worth approximately \$707,135. The library is currently staffed by two full-time employees, two part-time employees, and one regular volunteer. The hours of operation vary by day, but the library is open 52 hours per week and is closed on Sunday.



Photograph 9.3: Robertsdale Library

Other programs/services offered by the Robertsdale Public Library include the following:

- 23,519 Books
- 3,048 Audio Books
- DVD’s & Videotapes
- Magazines & Newspapers
- Books on Tape & CD’s
- Large Print Books
- Music CD’s
- Public Access Catalog
- Computer Lab with Seven Terminals
- Free Public Internet Access
- WiFi
- Word Processing

- Reference Services
- Interlibrary Loan Service
- Computerized Card Catalog
- Alabama Virtual Library
- Community Announcements Board
- Photocopying
- Preschool Story Hour
- Summer Reading Program

Baldwin County Library Cooperative, Inc.

The Baldwin County Library Cooperative (BCLC) is located in Robertsdale at 2743 Milwaukee Street. The BCLC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership network of all public libraries in Baldwin County with a mission “to improve library services throughout Baldwin County and to ensure all citizens access to information resources adequate to meet their professional, educational, and recreational needs. BCLC will work together with member libraries and through outreach services to fulfill this mission.” The most visible service provided by the BCLC is the bookmobile, which makes 39 stops within Baldwin County every two weeks. These stops include nursing homes, community centers, assisted living facilities, schools and day cares. The facility includes the following: 15,582 books, 464 audio materials, 134 video materials, and 10 serial subscriptions. Hours of

operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:30.

Robertsdale PZK Hall

The PZK Hall is a public assembly facility located at 17993 State Highway 104. It is owned by the City of Robertsdale and can be rented for public or private events. The facility includes a structure with a capacity of 549 and a large lawn of over two acres for outdoor events. The facility has 30 banquet tables and 160 chairs. The facility is available without charge to the Robertsdale Senior Citizens Club and the Central Baldwin Chamber of Commerce.



Photograph 9.5: Robertsdale PZK Hall



Photograph 9.4: Baldwin County Coliseum

Robertsdale Senior Center

The George P. Thames Senior Citizens Center is located at 22651 E. Chicago Street across from Honeybee Park. It is owned by the City of Robertsdale and can be rented for public or private events. It has a maximum capacity of 94 persons.



Photograph 9.6: Robertsdale Senior Center

Baldwin County Coliseum

The Baldwin County Coliseum is a large facility that serves both the City and County functions such as the County Fair and Robertsdale Rotary Rodeo. It also serves as an emergency shelter for natural disasters such as tornadoes and hurricanes. It was built in 2008 and is located at 19477 Fairground Road behind Robertsdale High School.

Robertsdale Post Office

The United States Post Office in Robertsdale is located at 18145 Highway 90. It is a new structure built in 2001. The facility offers post office boxes and is open six days a week.



Photograph 9.7: Robertsdale Post Office

Central Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

The Central Baldwin Chamber of Commerce is a new facility located at 23150 Highway 59. The Chamber serves the communities of Summerdale, Silverhill, Loxley, and Robertsdale.

Baldwin County Central Annex

The Baldwin County Central Annex is located at 22251 Palmer Street. It houses many of the County Departments and serves County facilities and services in the central part of the County, including Robertsdale. The facility was recently renovated and there are no immediate needs for expansion or rehabilitation.

Robertsdale Parks and Public Spaces

The City of Robertsdale has several parks and recreational spaces throughout its municipal limits. These properties are maintained by the City of Robertsdale Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Division. The Park and Recreation Chapter of this Plan assesses the City’s current inventory and identifies future needs to serve the growing population.

In the Parks and Recreation Division there is one supervisor who oversees all the park, landscaping, and recreational needs for the city and three full-time laborers who perform various jobs, such as grass cutting, lining ball fields, and beautification of the city.

Public Safety

City of Robertsdale Police Department

The City of Robertsdale Police Department is an 8,500 square foot facility located at 23335 North Chicago Street. The Robertsdale Police Department employs a total of 26 personnel. The Police Department is divided into four main divisions. The four divisions consist of Administration, Patrol, Investigations, and Communications/Corrections.

Administration consists of the Chief of Police and his or her Administrative assistant.

Patrol is managed by a Patrol Lieutenant and two corporals. This division consists of six sworn police officers and K-9. These officers work 12 hour shifts. All officers have been APOSTA certified. Several have received specialized training in Tasers, firearms, accident reconstruction, K-9, radar, and self-defense. This division also contains two seasonal crossing guards and Animal Control Officer. All sworn officers are required 12 hours of continuing education a year and the average officer receives 24 hours.

Investigations are managed by a Lieutenant and consist of a corporal, warrants officer and administrative assistant. They handle Felony and misdemeanors cases, track sex offenders, serve warrants and follow up on domestic violence cases. These officers have received specialized training including but not limited to crime scene management and interview and interrogation techniques. Warrant Officer also covers shifts in Patrol when needed.

Communications/ Corrections are managed by a Lieutenant and assisted by a Chief Communication Officer and Chief Correction Officer. They have seven additional officers. These personnel are crossed trained as communication officers and correction officers. Communication officers have been NCIC certified. Several of the Corrections officers have been certified jail management. The remaining corrections officer will be attending training.

The Robertsdale jail consists of eight cells divided into two separate holding areas. A total of 32 inmates can be housed in the jail. The jail contains a laundry and kitchen. The jail currently meets the

needs of the population. Therefore, there are no immediate needs for rehabilitation or expansion.

The current City of Robertsdale police vehicle fleet consists of twenty vehicles. This includes ten cars, four sport utility vehicles, one truck, one van, one trailer, two four wheelers, and a golf cart. Of these vehicles five are unmarked. Eight are marked units with equipment required to perform the everyday duties.

The Robertsdale Police Department relies on surrounding cities and agencies for back up assistance. The Police Department has computerized records and uses the CAD system to communicate with State and County Departments. The Robertsdale Police Department receives most of its funding through the General fund as well as State and Federal Law Enforcement Grants when available to purchase equipment.



Photograph 9.8: Robertsdale Police Department

City of Robertsdale Fire Department

The Robertsdale Volunteer Fire Department is located at 22575 St. Paul Street, behind City Hall. The Fire Station is a 7,800 square foot facility that houses 2 Type 1 fire engines, 1 Type 1 fire engine/tender, 1 Type 6 wildland engine, 1 support van, 1 service truck, 1 command/rescue truck. The facility also utilizes a Kubota UTV also kept at the facility.

The Fire Department personnel are all volunteers and include 20 firefighters and 12 fire explorers. Six of the firefighters are trained E.M.T.s. The personnel receive specialized emergency training through courses offered by the Alabama Fire College, the National Fire College, in-house training drills, and other educational institutions.

The Department provides 24 hour coverage, seven days a week for fire protection, and emergency medical services in the City. The firefighters not only serve the residents of Robertsdale, but also aid other communities in the surrounding areas when needed.

Public Works

The City of Robertsdale maintains many of the community's services and utilities through the Department of Public Works which includes the following: the Electric Department, the Water Department, the Sewer Department, the Natural Gas Department, the Sanitation Department, the Street Department, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Landscaping Department, and the Purchasing Office. Some of these services are funded from general tax revenues and others are funded from user fees. Below is an inventory and description of all community services and utilities, some of which are owned and operated by the City.

Roads and Sidewalks

The Street Department is responsible for all streets, sidewalks, signage, drainage, and right-of-way maintenance. There are over 40 miles of paved streets within the municipal limits, all maintained by the City. The State Highway Department and Baldwin County maintain Highway 59 and State Highway 104. The Transportation Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan identifies the current transportation network and projects future needs. Robertsdale currently accepts new streets constructed as part of a subdivision under its

Subdivision Regulations. Approval must be obtained from the Planning Commission and City Council. All new streets constructed to required standards and approved for acceptance into the City by the City Council are maintained and improved by the City. The City funds maintenance and improvements with general tax revenues in addition to support from Baldwin County and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

In the Street and Sanitation Division of the Public Works Department, there is one supervisor and sixteen full-time employees and one part-time employee. They perform various jobs including garbage pickups, street repairs, drainage improvements, grass cutting, weed eating and beautification of the City. There is also a full-time mechanic who services and repairs all City vehicles, three full-time meter readers who maintain and repair water and electrical meters and who also do meter readings. There is also one full time general maintenance employee who performs various jobs throughout the City including repairing and maintaining all the City's buildings.

Water

The availability and quality of drinking water influences a community's future growth and development. The Perdido Watershed is the primary source for the City and surrounding area. The City of Robertsdale is the public water supplier for all residents of the City and most of the City's planning jurisdiction. The system currently serves an estimated 3,311 people. The average water demand is approximately 200 gallons per day (GPD) per customer for a total use of 685,000 gallons per day (MGD).

In the Public Works Department, Water/Sewer/Natural Gas Division, there is one supervisor who is responsible for the entire water, sewer, and natural gas service for the entire city.

Ten full-time employees are responsible for the daily operation and maintenance, which includes installing and repairing all lines. They are also responsible for the operation and collection of samples for the wastewater treatment plant.

Robertsdale's water infrastructure consists of four groundwater wells, three water treatment facilities, two elevated storage tanks, one ground storage tank, 427 fire hydrants, and over 80 miles of water lines in the distribution system. The water distribution system covers approximately 15-square miles. There are interconnections with the cities of Loxley, Silverhill, and Summerdale.

The groundwater wells are located behind City Hall, behind Robertsdale High School, along Highway 59 North and at the City Ball Park. The wells at the Ball Park and City Hall pump to the treatment facility located at City Hall. The well behind the High School pumps to the treatment facility located at the High School. The City Hall well has a capacity of 271 gallons per minute (GPM). The Ball Park well has a capacity of 498 GPM. The High School well has a capacity of 1221 GPM. The Highway 59 North well has a capacity of 1,500 GPM. Total capacity equals 3,512 GPM.

The water treatment facilities are located on St. Paul Street behind City Hall, on Berner Road behind the High School, and lastly is the newly constructed Julius Childress Well Tank. Each water treatment facility consists of an aerator, lime addition equipment, chlorine addition equipment, a wet well, and two high-service pumps. The City Hall storage tank has a capacity of 200,000 gallons, the High School storage tank has a capacity of 500,000 gallons and the Julius Childress Well Tank holds 1 million gallons. Total capacity equals 1.7 million gallons. The maximum water level elevation of each tank is 274-feet mean sea level (msl).

The water distribution system currently consists of approximately 62-miles of water lines. The majority of the distribution system is constructed of PVC pipe. Pipe diameter ranges from 2-inch to 12-inch. Robertsdale's water distribution system is connected to three surrounding municipalities: City of Loxley, Town of Silverhill, and the Town of Summerdale. The East Central Baldwin County Water provides water service to properties outside of the City's service area, some of which are located within the City's planning jurisdiction.

In 2001, utility records from the Public Works Department indicated that 76% of the City's water customers were located within the City limits, while 24% were located in the planning jurisdiction. The total number of water customers is 3,311 which equates to a population served of approximately 8,608 if you assume an average 2.6 individuals per connection.

Population and housing projections estimate 2,104 households within the City of Robertsdale by 2025 compared to 1,444 in 2000. If the persons per household stays at 2.6 in Robertsdale, this equates to a future service base of 5,470 just in residential properties alone by 2025. This is what the current water system serves today which includes residential and non-residential connections. Population projections discussed in Chapter 2 forecast an average population in 2025 of 8,084, which is consistent with above and only reflects residential water connections. An additional amount of water is required for emergencies such as breaks in lines or fires.

The current water storage capacity does adequately meet the needs of the population based on average consumption rates per customers and requirements for emergencies. Therefore, the City is not currently in need of additional water storage facilities. However, the water system is in need of additional

distribution lines and connectivity and upgrades at treatment facilities to improve capacity and meet the needs of the future water customers and population forecasts.

Sewer

The availability of a public sewer system also influences future growth and development of a community. Developers often seek to annex into municipalities because of the lack of infrastructure in unincorporated areas of the County. Therefore, having adequate public sewer infrastructure in place to accommodate future growth will encourage development.

The City of Robertsdale operates the City's wastewater system. It consists of 46.6 miles of gravity sewer lines, 8 miles of force mains, 25 lift stations, over 971 manholes, and one wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater collection system covers approximately 7 square miles. The wastewater treatment facility is located west of the City at 20325 County Road 52 and has a discharge of 0.87 MGD. The permitted receiving stream for treated wastewater is Rock Creek. The treatment process consists of three sieve screens, two aerobic and facultative basins with clarifiers, a 3.5 acre sludge lagoon, an ultra violet disinfection system, and a cascade aerator.

In 2015, utility records from the Department of Public Works indicated that the total number of wastewater customers was 2,654 which equates to a population served of about 6,900 if you assume an average 2.6 individuals per connection. The average dry weather sewer flow is 240 gallons per day per customer. The average wet weather sewer flow is 940 gallons per day per customer. This significant increase between dry weather and wet weather is due to infiltration and inflow of stormwater and groundwater during storm events.

The Robertsdale Sanitary Sewer System has experienced problems over the years that have resulted in inflow and infiltration. The wet weather flows to the wastewater treatment plant currently exceed it's the plant's capacity. These problems can be attributed to the age of the system, old piping material, low lying interceptors, and the effects of hurricanes that damaged sewer lines and manholes. The City is currently undergoing improvements to their sewer system to repair some of these problems, including one low lying interceptor.

Population and housing projections estimate an increase of more than 500 additional households from 2000 to 2025. Some of these new families will occupy existing structures and others will occupy new residential structures requiring connection to the sewer system. Residential building permits from 2002 to 2012 indicate new construction of 626 new single and multi-family residential dwellings. The average annual number of residential building permits for Robertsdale in this ten year period is 63. If this trend continues, there will be an additional 940 new structures over the past 15+ years. If persons per household stays at 2.6, the sewer system will need to accommodate a housing population of over 8,084 by 2025. This does not include commercial or industrial land uses, which could increase the customer base by at least 20%. Therefore, there is a need for expansion and upgrade of the City's sewer system to resolve the current problems with the treatment plant's capacity as well as accommodate future population estimates.

Electricity

The City of Robertsdale provides electrical service to the residents of the community. Alabama Power supplies Robertsdale with electricity which allows them to distribute approximately 86,000,000 kilowatt hours to their 3,084 customers. The City's electrical substation is located adjacent to the City's

Public Works Department, behind Honeybee Park on Chicago Street. Much like the water and sewer systems, the electrical system and service area will expand to accommodate future residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. The installation of underground electrical wires would lessen the occurrences of power outages during hurricanes and tropical storms, which frequently impact the City.

Gas

The City of Robertsdale provides gas service to its residents within the City's planning area. The City purchases gas from Rivera Utilities and distributes approximately 173,000 cubic feet to its service area. The number of current natural gas customers is currently 2,144. The number of natural gas customers has continued to steadily decline over the past years with the majority of residents and business owners using electricity. However, recent hurricanes have created an interest in natural gas again due to their underground infrastructure.

Solid Waste Management

The City of Robertsdale's Sanitation Department is responsible for garbage pick-up within the City limits for a nominal monthly fee. The City of Robertsdale transfers the solid waste to Magnolia and MacBride landfills located in Baldwin County. Magnolia landfill is located in the adjacent Town of Summerdale and MacBride Landfill is located in the adjacent City of Loxley. These landfills are owned and operated by Baldwin County's Solid Waste Department. The Solid Waste Department is located in the Baldwin County Central Annex Building in Robertsdale. Both of these landfills meet all required state and federal requirements and can currently accommodate the garbage collected from the City of Robertsdale.

Recycling services are currently available through the Baldwin County Solid Waste Department. Neither the City of Robertsdale, nor Baldwin County, have curb side pickup for recyclable items at this time. However, the County provides several convenient locations throughout Robertsdale's planning jurisdiction for drop-off. The locations for recycling drop off are the Baldwin County Central Annex, Robertsdale High School, Silverhill Little Hall, Magnolia Landfill, and the Loxley Public Works Building. Items currently accepted include: cardboard, newspaper, magazines, phone books, plastic bottles, milk jugs, detergent containers, soda bottles, aluminum cans, and scrap aluminum. The Department currently does not recycle glass.

Health Care Facilities

There are three hospitals within a 15 mile radius that serve the City of Robertsdale. The South Baldwin Regional Medical Center is located in Foley, approximately 11 miles from Robertsdale. This 112 bed facility has approximately 68 active physicians and offers over 30 health specialties on-site. The facility also has an emergency room and provides typical services such as critical care, and labor and delivery. Thomas Hospital is located in Fairhope, approximately 13 miles from Robertsdale. This facility is part of the South Alabama Infirmity System which operates over five hospitals in Baldwin and Mobile Counties with the main office located in Mobile. This facility currently has over 200 physicians on staff and provides typical services including critical care, emergency, and labor and delivery. Mercy Medical Corporation is approximately 14 miles from Robertsdale in Daphne. This facility is a faith based institution and currently provides typical health services with a focus on senior services such as assisted living and hospice. Emergency ambulance service is provided throughout the Robertsdale area by several private agencies who transport to any of the above facilities.

Air transportation is also available to severe critical care facilities in Mobile and Pensacola.

There are currently 4 nursing homes and 8 assisted living facilities located within or in close proximity to the Robertsdale planning area. Robertsdale Health Care Center is a nursing home located on Highway 90. Other nursing homes include the Golden Living Center in Fairhope; Mercy Medical in Daphne; and the Montrose Bay Health Care Center in Fairhope. The Summer Place is an assisted living facility within Robertsdale located on Devine Road. Other assisted living facilities within the planning area include: Oakland Place in Fairhope, Westminster Village in Spanish Fort; LiveOak Village in Foley; Carroll Place in Fairhope; the Gardens of Daphne in Daphne; Huntington at Homestead Village in Fairhope; and Catherine's Place in Daphne.

The Baldwin County Council of Aging is located on Palmer Street in Robertsdale. This agency provides many health and social services to the elderly including health care screenings, social service classes and programs, transportation services, and meal delivery service.

Educational Facilities

The City of Robertsdale has a total of nine public and private elementary, middle, and high schools. These schools have a current enrollment of approximately 3,700 students and employ over 300 teachers. Public educational facilities are administered and maintained by the Baldwin County Public School System. The Baldwin County School System includes 45 school campuses, 30,000+ students, 3,400 employees, and boasts the highest per pupil expenditure of all county school systems in Alabama. Table 9.1 provides a listing of all the educational facilities within the City of Robertsdale in 2009 along with enrollment levels

and design capacity. Currently, all public school facilities located within Robertsdale's planning area exceed minimum standards for quality education. All facilities are currently below the maximum teacher-to-student ratio and are not at full capacity. Therefore, there are no current needs for expansion. All public school facilities are fairly new constructions and are in good repair. There are no current needs for major rehabilitation or new construction of facilities.



Photograph 9.9: Robertsdale High School

Colleges

There are currently no colleges located within Robertsdale's city limits, however there are over six higher education facilities located less than an hour from the City. Both the University of South Alabama-Baldwin County and Faulkner State Community College have campuses in Fairhope, located 13 miles from Robertsdale. Another Faulkner State Community College campus is located 23 miles away in Bay Minette. Bishop State Community College is located 26 miles away in Mobile. The University of South Alabama is located 34 miles away in Mobile. The University of West Florida and Pensacola State College are located approximately 36 miles away in Pensacola, Florida.

Table 9.1: K-12 Educational Facilities in the City of Robertsdale, 2009

	<i>FACILITY</i>	<i>ADDRESS</i>	<i>GRADE</i>	<i>ENROLLMENT</i>	<i>TEACHERS</i>
<i>ELEMENTARY</i>	Robertsdale Elementary School	19150 Wilters Street	K-6	800	70
	Elsanor Elementary School	23440 US HWY 90	K-6	250	23
	Rosinton Elementary School	19757 CO. RD. 64	K-6	300	24
<i>MIDDLE</i>	Central Baldwin Middle School	4545 State HWY 59	7-8	650	44
<i>HIGH</i>	Robertsdale High School	State HWY 59	9-12	1,228	78
	South Baldwin Center for Technology	19200 Anderson Lane	9-12	n/a	17
	St. Patrick Catholic School	23070 State HWY 59 N.	PK-8	188	17
	<i>PRIVATE</i>	Central Christian School	17395 HWY 104	PK-12	315
Faith Presbyterian Christian School		18632 Berner Rd.	PK-12	64	7

Community Goals

To ensure that Robertsdale's Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and desires of the residents, it is important that the community play an active role in its development. During the comprehensive planning process, residents of Robertsdale were asked to participate in three separate visioning workshops. Three community participation methods were used to collect input: the Visual Preference Survey, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and the Public Opinion Survey. The community goals identified in this section were formulated in cooperation with the City and residents of the community. The input provided from the City and residents, combined with in-depth analysis and projections from our planning staff, create the foundation for the proposed recommendations and strategies found throughout this plan.

During the community workshops, many comments were collected regarding community facilities and services. Overall, the residents of Robertsdale are pleased with the public services the City currently provides. The City schools and low crime rate continued to rate at the top of all responses as strengths of the community. Other items related to community services and facilities that were considered strengths include were: city employees and elected officials; the Senior Center; the utility system; City services; on-going effort to cleanup parts of the City; the City's property; and subdivision regulations and enforcement. However, some suggestions were made on how facilities and services could be improved. The main concerns of the survey respondents pertained to growth and the potential adverse effects it could have on community's services and facilities. The following goals were identified by the residents to achieve by 2025:

- Maintain the exceptional quality of public schools in Robertsdale.

- Reduce crime rate in Robertsdale.
- Employ more police officers and fire fighters.
- Increase local medical services.
- Improve drainage infrastructure.
- Update zoning regulations.
- Increase landscaping throughout City.
- Implement more restrictive sign regulations.
- Improve the visual appearance of the City.

Recommendations and Strategies

The recommendations and strategies below were formulated in combination with the property owner's input from the surveys conducted at the multiple community workshops, and with analysis of the current facilities and services in Robertsdale. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission formulated the following recommendations and strategies to establish the framework for future actions and provide a means to evaluate progress. By implementing the recommendations and strategies below, the City will achieve their identified goals and be closer obtaining their vision for Robertsdale's future:

- Increase the storage capacity of the Water System to accommodate current emergency needs as well as projected future growth. This can be accomplished, in part, with grant funds from one or more state and/or federal agencies.
- Repair the infiltration/inflow problem associated with the Sewer System and

- increase the sewer treatment plant's capacity to accommodate future growth. This can be accomplished, in part, with grant funds from state and federal agencies.
- Conduct a Current Inventory and Needs Assessment of the City's Water and Sewer Infrastructure to determine deficiencies with either system and what upgrades are necessary to foster and stimulate growth.
 - Conduct Current Inventory and Needs Assessment of the Public Works Department to identify current and future needs associated with supplies, equipment, trucks/vehicles, and specialized training. Develop long-term budget goals to purchase any needed inventory.
 - When economically feasible, install underground electrical utilities during new installation projects and substantial rehabilitation projects and repairs to lesson the occurrences of power outages and adverse effects associated with tropical storms and hurricanes.
 - Seek assistance from the Alabama Department of Community Affairs (ADECA)-Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety (LETS) Program for support to the City's Police Department. Potential grant funding could include new equipment, patrol cars, and specialized training.
 - Seek funding from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for any needed new equipment, fire trucks, or training for the City's Fire Department.
 - Improve the visual appearance of City property with landscaping, infrastructure improvements, signage, lighting and street furniture. This can be accomplished, in part, with grant funds from agencies such as the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) Corridor Enhancement Programs and the ADECA.
 - Work closely with the Baldwin County Board of Education to monitor the effects that the City's growth is having on the local schools' capacity to ensure an adequate teacher-to-student ratio. Maintain exceptional quality of education through continued monitoring and support.
 - Update the City of Robertsdale's Land Use Ordinance to amend zoning and subdivision regulations.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.