Arab Thoroughfare Plan

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments

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Adopted January 14, 2014

This plan was prepared by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG)

About TARCOG

Established by a local initiative in 1968, the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) aims to identify and address common regional issues, opportunities, and challenges of Northeast Alabama's municipalities and counties. TARCOG serves as Substate Planning District Twelve and the Area Agency on Aging. The governments of five northeast Alabama counties, DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall, and the municipalities located in these counties make up TARCOG. TARCOG helps local governments by obtaining funding for local government assistance, coordinating local governments' responses to regional issues, and providing a wide range of services to the region's governments and residents. This document was prepared and designed by the TARCOG Department of Planning and Economic Development.

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
Department of Planning and Economic Development

Ms. Nancy Robertson.....Executive Director

Mr. D.C. Schafer.....Director of Economic Development

Ms. Beverly Zendt.....Director of Planning

Ms. Falguni Patel.....Transportation Planner

Mr. Scott Griess.....Associate Planner

Ms. Jo Beth Gleason.....Associate Planner

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
5075 Research Drive NW
Huntsville, Alabama 35805
(o) 256-830-0843 - (f) 256-830-0843 - (w) tarcog.us

Arab Thoroughfare Plan

Introduction

Title. The Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) proposes to prepare an "Arab Thoroughfare Plan." This Plan will be prepared on behalf of the City of Arab in cooperation with the Arab City Planning Commission.

Purpose. The purpose of the Arab Thoroughfare Plan is to provide for an orderly and efficient circulation pattern that will improve existing conditions and accommodate the City's anticipated growth which is expected to grow from a population of 8,050 in 2010 to 9,085 in 2020 and to 10,223 in 2030. Specifically, the Street Plan is intended to:

(a) Provide guidance in drafting subdivision regulations;
(b) Provide guidance in review and approval of new subdivisions and resubdivisions; and
(c) Provide guidance in transportation investments.

Description. In April of 2012, the City of Arab approved a draft of a new Comprehensive Plan. At the time, it was determined that more attention should be given to the preparation of a Thoroughfare Plan to be included as an element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Thoroughfare Plan will be designed to work in conjunction with the Arab Comprehensive Plan and, as such, will be designed to promote walkability as well as better traffic circulation. The Thoroughfare Plan will examine:

(a) the hierarchy of streets and roads;
(b) the street network and street connectivity; and to a limited extent,
(c) design improvements for pedestrian-friendly streets.

There are numerous other important issues that are addressed (at a minimum) in the street cross-section drawings within this document. These include sidewalk design, alleys and driveways, vehicle turning radii, traffic calming, off-street parking and loading, on-street and off-street bikeways, multi-user trails, wayfinding, and streetscaping. The City is encouraged to consider these issues in the future in order to make improvements to the site plan review requirements of the zoning ordinance and to the subdivisions regulations.

The Plan will include an evaluation of the arterial and collector street network including spacing for improved connectivity, traffic flow, and capacity ratios for arterials where traffic counts are available. It will include an evaluation of neighborhood street networks including internal connectivity and subdivision access. It will also include an illustrative map of the Street Plan with recommendations for network improvements, street and block segment spacing recommendations, and graphic design recommendations for street cross-sections that can be used for revision of the subdivision regulations and for review and approval of new subdivisions.

Arab has a highly irregular street network. The goal of the Arab Thoroughfare Plan is to promote regularity, connectivity, and walkability so as to enhance livability and quality of life for the city and its residents. This overall enhancement will also boost economic development, as it will attract new businesses, young people who are looking for more walkable, bikeable, and accessible street networks to city parks, shops, schools, and work, and families who are looking to relocate to the area. It will improve the overall circulation and traffic flow within the city, and make it safer for pedestrian accessibility to city amenities. Street design improvements recommended in this Thoroughfare Plan are to be considered primarily within the Intended Growth Areas, Gateways, Controlled Growth Areas, and Infill Areas referenced in the Comprehensive Plan. Finally, funding sources and financial means to enhance the City's road system will be suggested. Investing in a strong thoroughfare plan is vital to the future growth of Arab.

Definitions

Alley. A public right-of-way primarily designed to serve as a secondary access to the side or rear of those properties whose principle frontage is on some other street.

Block. A tract of land bounded by streets, or by a combination of streets and public parks, cemeteries, railroad rights-of- way, shorelines or waterways, or boundary lines of municipalities.

Cul-de-Sac. A local street with only one outlet and having an appropriate terminal for the safe and convenient reversal of traffic movement.

Road, Dead-end. A road or portion of a street with only one (1) vehicular traffic outlet.

Street. A dedicated and accepted public right-of-way for vehicular traffic which affords the principal means of access to abutting property.

Arterials. Arterial routes are heavy traffic carriers of the City and function to move intra-city and inter-city traffic. The streets which comprise the arterial system may also serve abutting property; however, their major function is to carry traffic.

Major Thoroughfares. Major thoroughfares perform the function of collecting traffic from residential, commercial, or industrial streets and carrying it to the arterials. They may perform an additional function by also serving abutting residential, commercial, or industrial property. Major thoroughfares should be designed to serve as city-wide routes providing access to inter-city arterials.

Collectors. These routes are important streets whose primary function is to collect traffic from an area and move it to a major thoroughfare or arterial while also providing substantial service to abutting land use. Typically, they should not have extensive continuity, or they may be used undesirably as major thoroughfares. Their development in new growth areas is usually dependent upon the form taken by land subdivision, whether the subdivision is residential in nature or a planned commercial, office, or industrial development.

Minor Streets. Minor streets comprise the remainder of the street system and have the primary function of servicing abutting land use. Through traffic should be stringently discouraged on these streets.

Thoroughfare Plan. The Thoroughfare Plan, prepared as an element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Arterial and Collector Network

ALDOT Class	Subdivision Class
Principal Arterials	Arterials
Minor Arterials	Major Thoroughfares
Major Collectors	Minor Thoroughfares/Collectors
Minor Collectors	Collectors
Local Streets	Minor Streets

Intended Growth Centers

Downtown	Downtown
Ruth Road North Gateway	Ruth-Eddy Scant Road at US 231
Walmart Vicinity	US 231 at Main Street North
South Gateway	US 231 at Main Street South
Cullman Road Gateway	AL 69 at Hulaco Road
Guntersville Road Gateway	AL 69 at Tower Drive

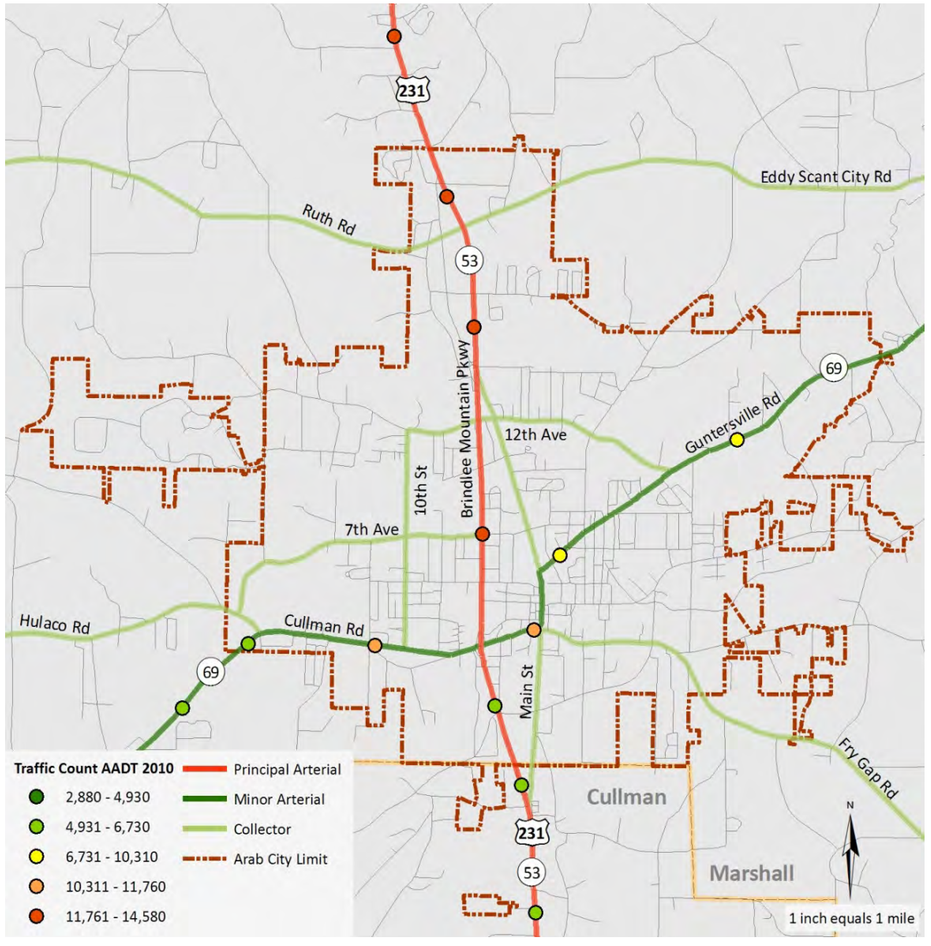
Arterials

US Highway 231	Principal Arterial	Existing Highway
AL Highway 69	Minor Arterial	Existing Highway
AL Highway 69 Bypass	Minor Arterial	Proposed New Highway
CR 418 (Ruth-Eddy Scant Road)	Minor Arterial	Near Term Potential Redesignation
CR 44 (Fry Gap Road)	Minor Arterial	Long Term Potential Redesignation

Collectors

10th Street Extension North	Major Collector	Proposed New Road
10th Street Extension South	Major Collector	Proposed New Road
Arad Thompson Extension	Major Collector	Proposed New Road
Lexington-Tower Extension	Major Collector	Proposed New Road
Sundown Drive Connector	Minor Collector	Proposed New Road

Street Network



Highway Classification and Traffic Counts

For the purposes of this study, there are four classifications of thoroughfares in the City of Arab. These classifications are as follows in accordance with classifications by ALDOT and within the City's subdivision regulations:

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local

The Arterial Network

There are two major highways connecting the City of Arab with other communities in North Alabama. These are **US Highway 231** which is classified as a principal arterial and **AL Highway 69** which is classified as a minor arterial. The heaviest traffic is on US Highway 231 from the center of the City going north to Huntsville with average annual daily traffic (AADT) ranging in the 13,000 to 15,000 range with about 2 to 3 percent truck traffic. Somewhat less is AL Highway 69 going east to Guntersville with AADT in the 9,000 to 11,000 range with 5 to 6 percent trucks. US Highway 231 South and AL Highway 69 West both have AADT in the 6,000 to 7,000 range with about 6 percent and 3 percent trucks respectively. The truck traffic going east and west is significant, particularly with the industrial concentrations on either end of the City. Improvements (4-laning) are needed for AL Highway 69 to Cullman to provide a better link to I-65 and US Highway 231 to Birmingham.

AL Highway 69 Bypass. The Alabama Department of Transportation has plans under design for a bypass of AL Highway 69 around the traditional Downtown to accommodate traffic needs, particularly truck traffic. When this bypass is completed, it will become the minor arterial through downtown and Main Street will become a major collector.

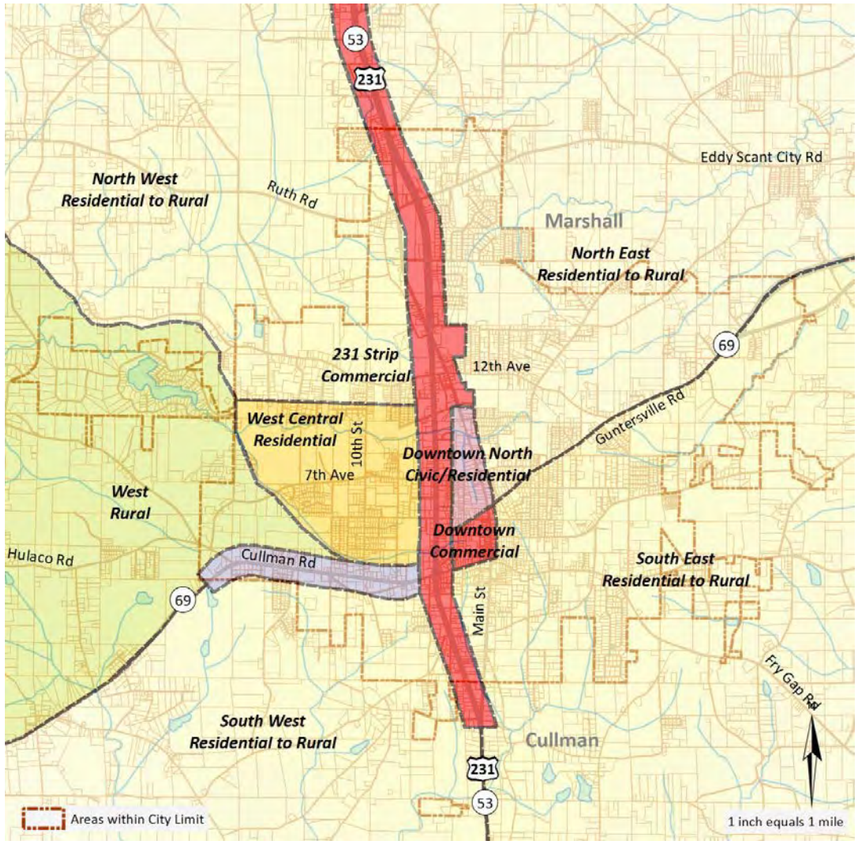
CR 418 (Ruth-Eddy Scant City Road). CR 418 connects Guntersville to Decatur by providing a link between AL 69 and AL 67 through the Northern portion of Arab. This road is currently designated by ALDOT as a collector. With additional regional growth, this road is likely to become more and more important as a minor arterial as well as serving the designated growth center at the intersection of US 231 and CR 418.

CR 44 (Fry Gap Road). CR 44 is currently designated as a collector by ALDOT and serves as such connecting the rural areas to the Southeast of Arab to the City. With additional regional growth over the long term, there is potential for this road to eventually connect to CR 166 and provide a more direct route between Arab and Albertville. If this happens, this road would serve as a minor arterial. However, there are severe topographic constraints that would need to be overcome to make this connection possible. In the meantime, this road continues to serve as a major collector.

The Collector Network

Roads and streets currently classified as collectors include: Main Street which goes through Downtown; Fry Gap Road to the southeast; 7th Avenue; 12th Avenue / Mt Oak Drive; 10th Street; Hulaco Road to the west; and Ruth Road / Eddy Scant City Road running east and west across the Northern portion of the area.

Neighborhoods and Districts



The City of Arab has its own character, and the neighborhoods and districts within the city and its surrounding areas each have their own character as well. For the purposes of this plan, the City was perceived to be made up of 10 major discernable districts, mostly neighborhoods with some commercial areas. The following paragraphs briefly describe each of the ten areas.

Downtown. Downtown is the existing, traditional downtown business district along Main Street, including the Snead State College district on South Main Street. It is the traditional commercial core of the City. Much of Arab has fairly recent construction, but the buildings downtown are considerably older. As is typical, much of the traditional business has moved to the commercial strip on US Highway 231, however, there does seem to be a thriving business community in downtown. The Alabama Department of Transportation has plans to construct a bypass of AL Highway 69 east and west just to the north and west of the downtown core to alleviate congestion caused by unsafe truck traffic currently passing through downtown.

Downtown North/Civic. This is the area situated primarily north of the traditional downtown business district between Main Street and US Highway 231. It includes a broad mix of land uses in a relatively small area including commercial, residential, institutional and governmental. A civic cluster is located in the district that consists of City Hall, the Senior Center, Recreation Center and Post Office. It consists of a mixture of traditional & conventional structures, in mostly sound condition.

US 231 Strip. This area is located along US Highway 231 from north of the City limits to just beyond the City's southern boundary. It is characterized by conventional strip commercial development with the older construction to the mid portion of the City and newer construction near and north of the Walmart at Main Street and US 231. It is flanked with strip development and Walmart to the north and salvage yards to the south. As is typical with strip commercial development, there is no architectural or design consistency that would make for a more attractive commercial area.

Northeast. The northeast area is a large area located to the east of Main Street and north of Guntersville Road. It is characterized as residential to rural with higher densities close to town gradually fading to rural as one gets farther from town. Three major schools are in this area: Arab High School, Arab Primary School and Arab Elementary School.

Southeast. The southeast area is a large area located to the east of Main Street and US Highway 231 and south of Guntersville Road. It is characterized as residential to rural with higher densities close to town gradually fading to rural as one gets farther from town. The City Park is in this area as are a few scattered industries.

Southwest. The southwest area is located to the west of US Highway 231 and south of Cullman Road. Land uses are residential rapidly transitioning to rural with one significant industrial area.

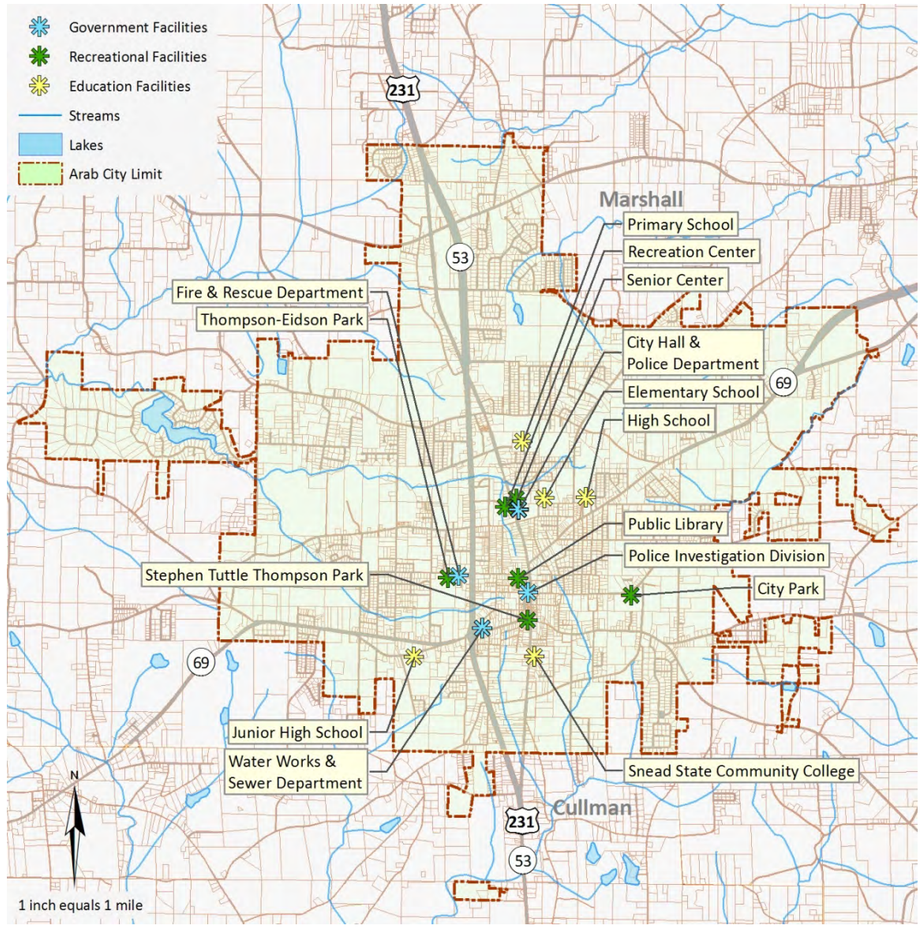
Cullman Road. The Cullman Road area is located along Cullman Road from US Highway 231 to the vicinity of the intersection of AL Highway 69 and Hulaco Road. Land Uses are mixed with residential and commercial uses along with two significant industrial areas.

West Central. The West Central area is located west of US Highway 231 between Gilliam Creek and Wolf Creek which tend to define the area. It is characterized by residential land uses.

West. The West area is located northwest of Cullman Road and West of Wolf & Gilliam Creeks. It is characterized as rural with some newer residential areas, particularly to the northern portion of the area. Much of the area is likely to remain rural due to proximity to the City and to the difficult land forms in some areas.

Northwest. The Northwest area is located to the west of US Highway 231 and north of Gilliam Creek. It is characterized as residential to rural with fairly low residential densities close to town gradually fading to rural as one gets farther from town. There are one or two scattered industries in the area.

Development Patterns and Public Amenities



The City of Arab, Alabama is located in western Marshall County at the junction of U.S. Highway 231 and Alabama Highway 69. US Highway 231 extends north and south through the City connecting the area with Huntsville to the north. AL Highway 69 extends east and west connecting the City to Guntersville and Cullman. There is no railroad or major waterway in Arab. There are some small streams and flood prone areas but no major ridgelines. Therefore, it is the arterial highways that have had an almost exclusive impact on the development pattern of Arab.

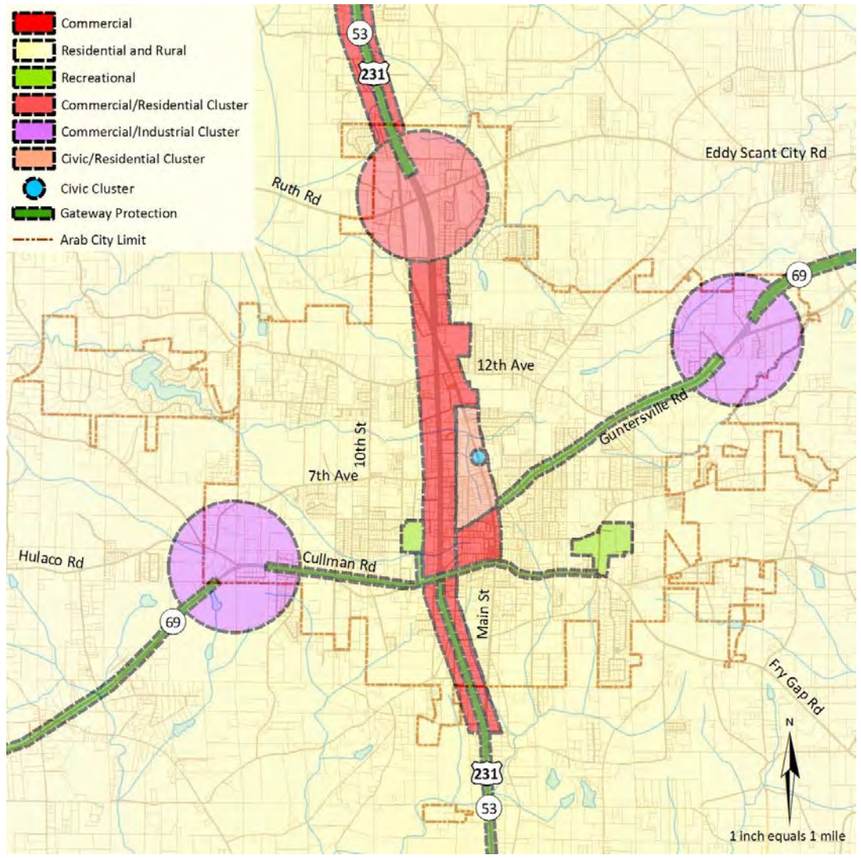
Almost all commercial development is located along US Highway 231 with residential development radiating from there and from the traditional downtown. Small scale manufacturing is scattered throughout the area as are educational facilities and recreational facilities. Governmental and institutional facilities are primarily located in the downtown area and in a civic cluster just north of downtown.

Significant landmarks within the city of Arab include several churches including First Baptist Church at the North end of downtown, First Methodist Church, and Gilliam Springs Baptist Church which is located across from Walmart. Other significant landmarks include City Hall, Arab High School, and Stephen Tuttle Thompson Park at the South end of Downtown.

Major activity centers include: Downtown; the Civic Area North of Downtown which includes City Hall, the Senior Center, the Recreation Center, and the Post Office; the Walmart area at the intersection of US Highway 231 and Main Street as well as the entire commercial strip; and the City Park.

Although there is a traditional downtown, the extent of traditional neighborhoods is quite limited. There are some concentrations of apartments, but, by far, most residential development can be characterized as medium to large lot suburban transitioning to exurban and rural. Other than the areas closest to downtown, most residential development appears to be of fairly recent, i.e., post-World War II construction.

Intended Growth Areas



Commercial and Industrial Concentrations
Commercial concentrations in Arab are actually few in number. These include the downtown area, the commercial strip along US Highway 231 and a few isolated commercial land uses.

The only traditional commercial area within Arab is the downtown area. It primarily consists of a few blocks along Main Street and extends about a block to a block and a half from either side of Main Street. Most of the buildings are typical commercial brick buildings of one to two stories in height. The northern terminus of downtown is generally marked by the intersection of Main Street and AL Highway 69 at First Baptist Church, while a small corner park at the intersection of Main Street and AL Highway 69 generally marks the southern end.

North of downtown are older residential neighborhoods transitioning into commercial areas along US Highway 231. West of downtown is an area of older warehouses and a few homes. This area is planned for the re-routing of AL Highway 69 in the future which will dramatically change the character and will impact the main area of downtown as well.

The primary and only, commercial strip in Arab is along US Highway 231. The commercial strip extends along this highway for much of its length through Arab. The existing land uses are typical of this type of development. Within the strip, there is a significant commercial center at Walmart which is at the Northern intersection of US Highway 231 and Main Street.

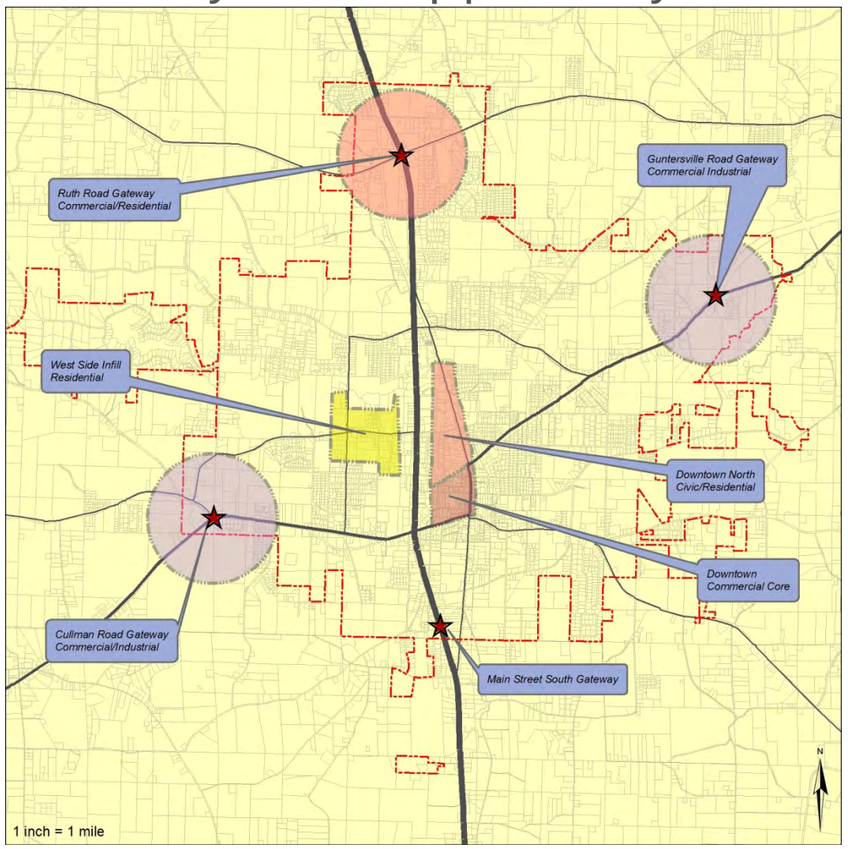
An additional growth center appears to be developing at the intersection of US Highway 231 and Ruth Road. This potential center marks the entrance to Arab from the north and should be designed carefully as a community "gateway."

Other potential centers that could be designated for future commercial growth are 1) to the east at the intersection of AL Highway 69 and Old Guntersville Road, and 2) to the west at the intersection AL Highway 69 and Hulaco Road. Both of these areas already have a core of industrial and small commercial activities and they are both positioned to act as community "gateways."

For all commercial strips and centers, attention needs to be given to design aspects to assure that these areas fit well within the community fabric. A high priority for the City should be to review and revise its guidelines and regulations for signage, parking lot landscaping and highway landscaping.

Manufacturing establishments are located at a number of points throughout the City. Most of these are light manufacturing with most activities being conducted indoors. In all cases, attention needs to be given to screening and landscaping of industrial areas. In particular, screening of the industrial areas and salvage yards to the south on US Highway 231 needs to be done to protect this gateway into the City. New industrial land uses should be concentrated and mixed with commercial uses at the intersections of Hulaco Road and Old Guntersville Road with AL Highway 69 as mentioned above regarding commercial concentrations. The Hulaco Road and Old Guntersville Road locations provide proximity to a major arterial that links to major transportation centers at Cullman and Guntersville and so are probably the best locations for new industrial development.

Gateways and Opportunity Areas



Gateways are an important design feature that help provide a sense of place and a good first impression when a person enters a community. Arab should develop attractive gateways coming into Arab on major highways with way-finding signage to public facilities. Four opportunity areas described below have gateways as an important part of their strategy to provide "definition" to Arab as a distinct community.

Downtown Revitalization Area. The traditional Downtown Area of Arab has an opportunity to renovate, redevelop and expand to the west from its current confines along Main Street between Guntersville Road and Cullman Road, as the proposed realignment of AL Hwy 69 is implemented. Downtown is the traditional center and commercial core of the City and has great potential for urban residential/mixed use, especially in its historical warehouse district. Opportunities for infill are along Main Street and its surrounding environs to the east and west, especially to accommodate Snead State College students.

Downtown North Redevelopment Area. Downtown North is generally defined as that area north of Downtown between the main commercial corridor along US Highway 231 forming the western edge and Main Street forming the eastern edge. It is characterized by its transition from the commercial core of the traditional downtown in the south-eastern area to an existing mixture of residences and businesses, an existing civic cluster including City Hall, Senior Center, Post Office and Recreation Center on the north-east, and a growing commercial area to the north. The "Downtown North" area is envisioned as an area to begin redeveloping and transitioning into the Central City Core of Arab, to become a mixture of traditional downtown businesses, restaurants, offices, apartment buildings and other higher-density residential structures befitting an urban setting. Land use is mixed commercial/residential.

Downtown South Redevelopment Area. This area is defined as land-use along South Main Street, from Fry Gap Road, passing Snead State College, down to City Park drive. This area has great potential for higher density residential infill development, especially to accommodate college students.

Ruth Road/North Gateway. The commercial and residential development occurring at the intersection of US Hwy 231 and Ruth Road provides motorists coming to Arab from the north the indication that they are arriving to a place, and is referred to as a "Gateway". As a means of making this experience a pleasant introduction to Arab, we recommend a controlled growth approach that includes making sure that adequate sewer services are available. The area encompassed by US Highway 231, Ruth Road, Old Huntsville Highway, and Haynes Road, with easy access to major roads and a growing commercial area could be utilized for higher-density and multi-family residential development as well as quality commercial development. Land use is mixed commercial/residential.

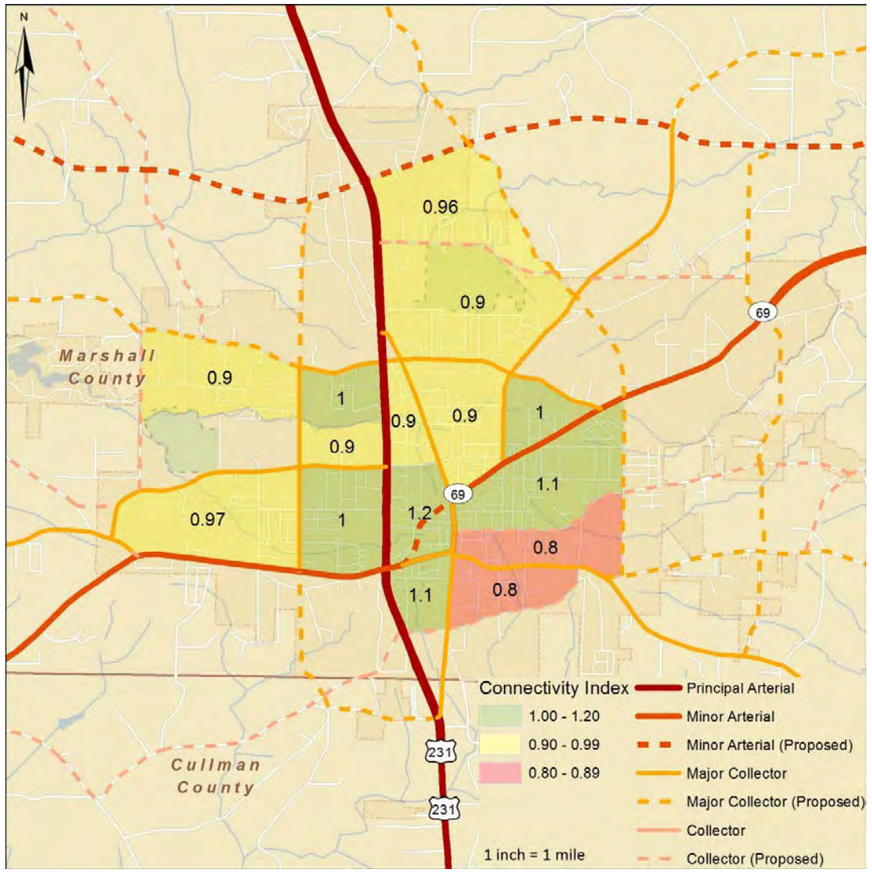
Main Street/South Gateway. The southern gateway into Arab is currently defined by salvage yards just over the city limits, where Main Street connects with Highway 231; and more salvage yards within the city limits at City Park Drive/Union Hill Road intersection of 231. Land use is commercial/light industrial.

Cullman Road/West Gateway. With its immediate access to an arterial highway, the Cullman Road commercial/industrial node is poised for expansion and further development of an area that already has some existing industrial and commercial development if adequate sewer service is available. Controlled development in this location can also provide an attractive gateway from the west. Land use is mixed commercial/industrial.

Guntersville Road/East Gateway. With its immediate access to an arterial highway, the Guntersville Road industrial node is poised for expansion and further development of an area that already has some existing industrial and commercial development, if the forced main sewer in the area can be accessed. Controlled development in this location can also provide an attractive gateway from the east. Land use is mixed commercial/industrial.

West Side Infill Area. This area is to the west of Downtown and generally within the boundaries of US Highway 231 on the east, 1st Avenue NW on the south, 12th Street NW on the west, and Northgate Drive (as extended) on the north. A good portion of this area has low density residential development, including some municipal and county agencies as well as commercial and industrial facilities. With its proximity to a major North-South corridor and a short distance to the downtown core of Arab, additional future infill development potential is very high for this area, if sewer service is made available. Land use is residential.

Network and Connectivity



Roadways have many purposes, including providing local and regional mobility, offering access to homes and businesses, and supporting economic growth. A well-connected road network provides many alternative routes between destinations. It serves the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists better than simply widening arterial roadways. Development of a network that effectively ties together all roadway classes—arterial, collector, and local—is key.

Connectivity in a road network refers to the density of connections and the directness of links between them. It can be defined as the quantity and quality of connections in the street network. Higher connectivity results in improved travel choices, safer, less congested routes, and emergency access. It can be measured by a "connectivity index," which is a ratio of the number of links (street segments) over the number of nodes (intersections) in a street network.

Areas in the Arab vicinity were defined and evaluated to determine whether the area has a significant problem with connectivity. If the connectivity index is below "1" in an area, it indicates that improvements such as street extensions and connections should be considered. In addition, any future land development should have a connectivity index of "1" or more and should have the effect of improving the index of the surrounding area if possible. This will have the effect of improving internal circulation and promoting multiple points of entry to a subdivision or neighborhood.

In the City's developed areas, the connectivity index was calculated. Shown on the adjacent map, the areas in green represent good connectivity, areas in yellow represent weak connectivity, and areas in red show poor connectivity. These areas of concern are located along Fry Gap Road, just east of (and adjacent to) Main Street. It is important that the surrounding city have access to the downtown environs and its commercial and public amenities. This area should be looked at closely for better connectivity. The areas shaded in yellow that show moderate connectivity, are the areas surrounding the Walmart vicinity, and the subdivisions to the north and west. The dashed lines represent proposed street connectors that would connect the city and alleviate congestion and confusion.

All roadway networks should be evaluated using the measures on internal connectivity, external connectivity, and route directness. A growing number of municipalities in the country are adopting a connectivity code as part of subdivision and land development ordinances, requiring well-connected networks in new developments. The City of Arab can create a connectivity code to implement some of these principles in the local transportation network. These regulations generally require greater connectivity and future developments:

- By setting a maximum block length,
- Requiring developers to meet the connectivity ratios, and,
- By requiring pedestrian/bicycle connections, even in developments with cul-de-sacs.

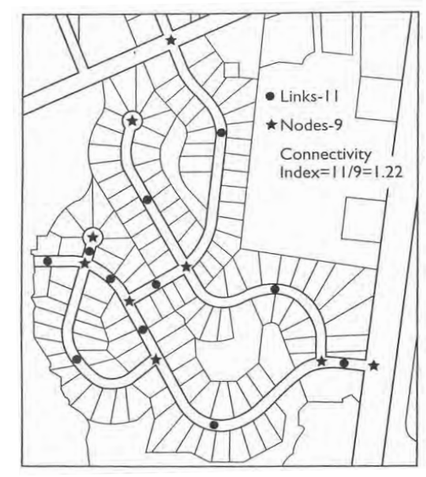
With a proposed bypass in the works, and efforts underway for downtown revitalization, good street connectivity is an important factor to enhance safety, accessibility, walkability, orderliness, definition, distinction, and town character, and will alleviate some of the congestion the town is currently experiencing.

Recommendations:

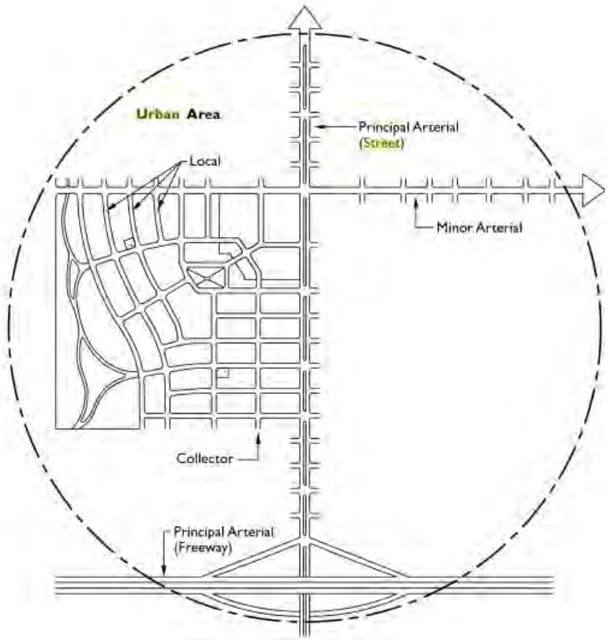
1) **Proposed new roads** are recommended for:

- 10th Street Extension north (major collector)
- 10th Street Extension south (major collector)
- Arad Thompson Extension (major collector)
- Lexington-Tower Extension (major collector)
- Sundown Drive connector (minor collector)
- CR 418 (Ruth-Eddy Scant Road)(redesignation to minor arterial)

2) **Connectivity:** Use a Connectivity Index for Arab. Currently, Arab is typically 0.9 to 1.1. **Goal is for 1.2 to 1.4**.



Block Length and Street Spacing



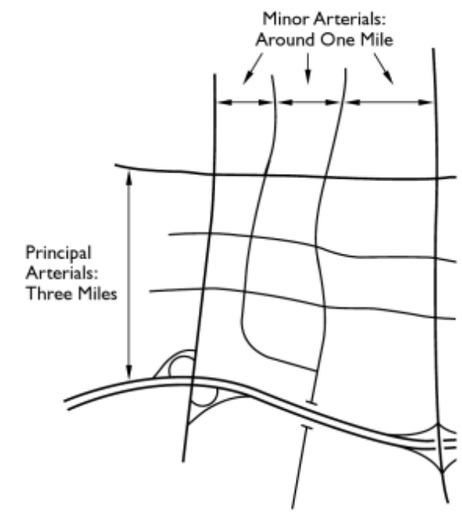
Street Types and their Relationships

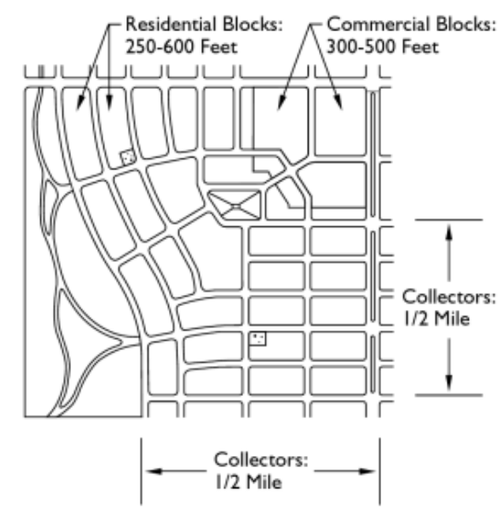
Recommendations:

Interval Spacing/Block Length

Principal Arterials:	3 to 4 miles
Minor Arterials:	1 mile
Collectors:	½ mile
Local Streets:	300-500 feet (Business Districts)
	250-600 feet (Residential Districts)

Single access subdivisions are not recommended.





Block and segment spacing: The City of Arab Subdivision Regulations currently call for street segments (block length) in residential areas to be "between 400 and 2,200 feet in length, except as the Planning Commission considers necessary to secure efficient use of land or desired features of street pattern." The Subdivision Regulations further call for "blocks along arterial streets to be no less than 1,000 feet in length (Section 4.3.1.A.)." Also, "subdivision streets that intersect an arterial shall do so at intervals of at least 800 feet," and "cul-de-sacs shall be no more than 800 feet long (Section 4.6)." Longer street segments are acceptable in areas of the city that are designated in the Comprehensive Plan for lower intensity of development. These are the "Preserve," "Restricted Growth" and "Controlled Growth" sectors designated on the "*Growth Strategy Sectors"* map in the Comprehensive Plan. The existing subdivision regulations are adequate for these areas. However, the areas designated as "Infill Growth" and "Intended Growth" that are designated in the Comp Plan (and are shown on the previous *Intended Growth Areas* map in this document) are planned for higher intensity development, and in these areas, the City should promote "walkability" and "connectivity." The above diagrams illustrate recommended block size and street segment spacing that will promote these goals for Arab. This should be considered "high priority" to the City.

Walkability

AL Highway 69 Bypass. The Alabama Department of Transportation has plans under design for a bypass of AL Highway 69 around the traditional Downtown to accommodate traffic needs, particularly truck traffic. When this bypass is completed, it will become the minor arterial through downtown and Main Street will become a major collector. Like most bypasses, the bypass has been the subject of much debate within the city, due to the de-commercialization effects on traditional and historic downtowns. However, traffic congestion along this major truck route through Arab's downtown has made it dangerous for shoppers and pedestrians who want to enjoy the historic Main Street. It is recommended that the City look at the proposed bypass as an opportunity, rather than a disadvantage. The advantages, other than safety and traffic alleviation, can be an opportunity to design existing streets to be multi-modal, for other modes of transportation, walking, biking, more pedestrian-friendly. Since vehicular congestion in these areas will be alleviated because of the proposed bypass and better connectivity standards recommended in this document, there is opportunity to incorporate ***complete streets***—shade trees, sidewalks, and bike lanes, for the visitor, shopper, pedestrian, cyclist, and student, so they can enjoy all the amenities Arab has to offer at street-level.

Walkability simply refers to the ease at which a pedestrian can circulate throughout the neighborhood and town. The primary components are distant and comfort. Shade, accessible sidewalks, and shorter block lengths for pedestrian movement, and bike lanes along transportation corridors, are what define a "complete street." Ease of movement, safety, and accessibility to other community and commercial amenities are what make a community livable.

The subdivision regulations for the City of a Arab call for street segments (block length) in residential areas to generally be "400 to 2,200 feet in length with segments along collectors and major thoroughfares to be a minimum of 1,000 feet (Section 4.3.1.A.)." Street segments (blocks) for non-residential areas are undefined in the subdivision regulations leaving the dimensions to be "suitable for the prospective use."

As aforementioned, longer street segments are acceptable in areas of the city that are designated for lower density or intensity of development. However, in sectors designated for infill growth and intended growth areas which are planned for higher intensity development, the City should promote greater "walkability" and "connectivity."

For a town its size, Arab has great potential and opportunity to become a "walkable community," offering accessibility, resources and amenities at a pedestrian-scale. The City's rich park system and recreational amenities offer great opportunity for the town to be a recreational tourist destination town for bikers, hikers, and outdoor enthusiasts, as well as offering a great quality of life to its residents. Greater access, safety, and choice in transportation, can help Arab become a place people want to live, work, play, and stay.

Recommendations:

To promote walkability:

1) **Residential street segments should no more than 600 feet.**

2) **Sidewalks should be continuous with street trees or awnings to provide shade.**

3) **Existing sidewalks should be upgraded and continuous especially within school zones.**

(The Subdivision Regulations require that "sidewalks be installed for all residential developments where the average lot size is 11,000 square feet or less and for all multi-family developments regardless of size.")

4) **Sidewalks should be installed in all cases within an Intended Growth Area designated in the Comprehensive Plan.** This is to further provide for continuous sidewalks in those areas of more intense activity.

Street Design Standards

Context-sensitive Streets:

The creation of street types that could be combined with functional classifications would allow for street designs that take into account the context of the street, that is, the adjacent land uses. There are five basic designations under this hierarchy:

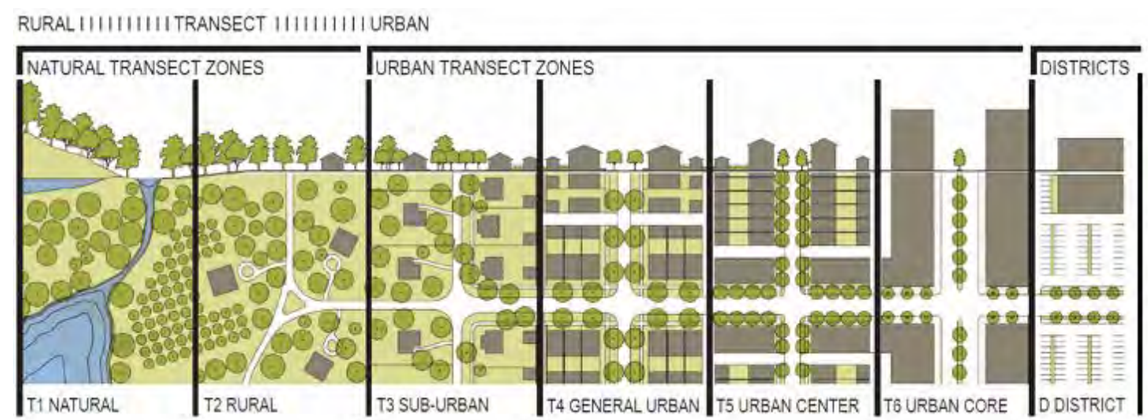
- Commercial streets – these streets are typically dominated by autos maneuvering into and out of parking lot driveways in conflict with other flows. The design goal should be to keep these movements quarterly by separating the flows using detached sidewalks and marked crosswalks, bicycle lanes, and medians/pedestrian refuges with turn pockets.
- Mixed use streets – these slower streets have wide sidewalks and parking lanes.
- Main Streets – the design goal of these streets is to encourage pedestrians to make use of adjacent land uses.
- Residential streets – the design goal is to allow people to feel comfortable in their neighborhood. This means keeping speeds low while allowing motorists to get to and from their house without undue delay.
- Industrial streets – these streets are designed for the movement of trucks and so require wider travel lanes than, say, residential roads.

It is important to keep in mind the context, various zoning districts and land uses that the individual functional street types transects. For instance, in Arab, the principal arterial, Highway 231, passes through rural to suburban, and light industrial to commercial strip development as it traverses through town. Minor arterials, such as Cullman Road and Guntersville Road (Highway 69) that runs east and west through Arab, changes character as it passes through various districts through town, from low-density rural residential, to scattered industrial. Cullman Road is a two line to the west and merges into a four-lane traveling east into town as traffic counts become heavier volume, and density and industry increases.

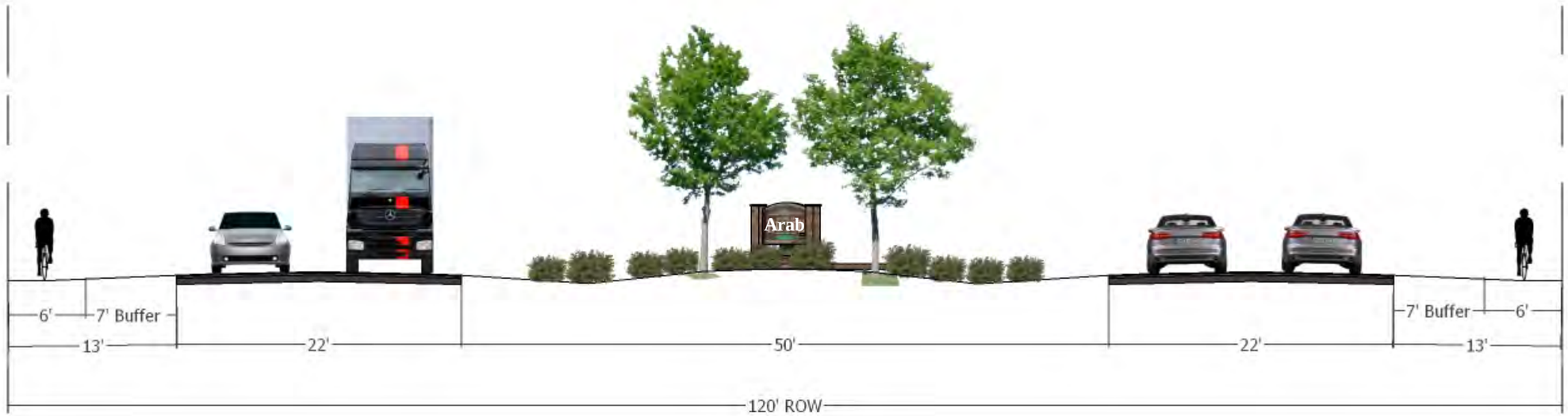
The following street type cross-sections are recommended for safer, more pedestrian-friendly streets in Arab, as traffic volume becomes alleviated through the central part of town and growth areas become more populated. These streets are located in the various existing zoning districts and are recommended to be incorporated in the intended growth centers, gateways, infill areas, and controlled sectors (as defined in the Arab Comprehensive Plan). These streets take context and character into account.

Combinations of Street Types and Functional Classification

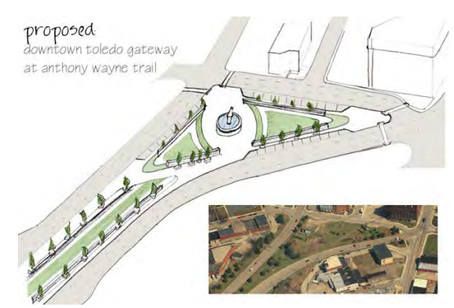
Functional Class	Street Type				
	Residential Street	*Main Street*	*Mixed-Use Street*	*Commercial Street*	*Industrial Street*
Arterial		X	X	X	
Collector	X	X	X	X	X
Local	X	X	X		X



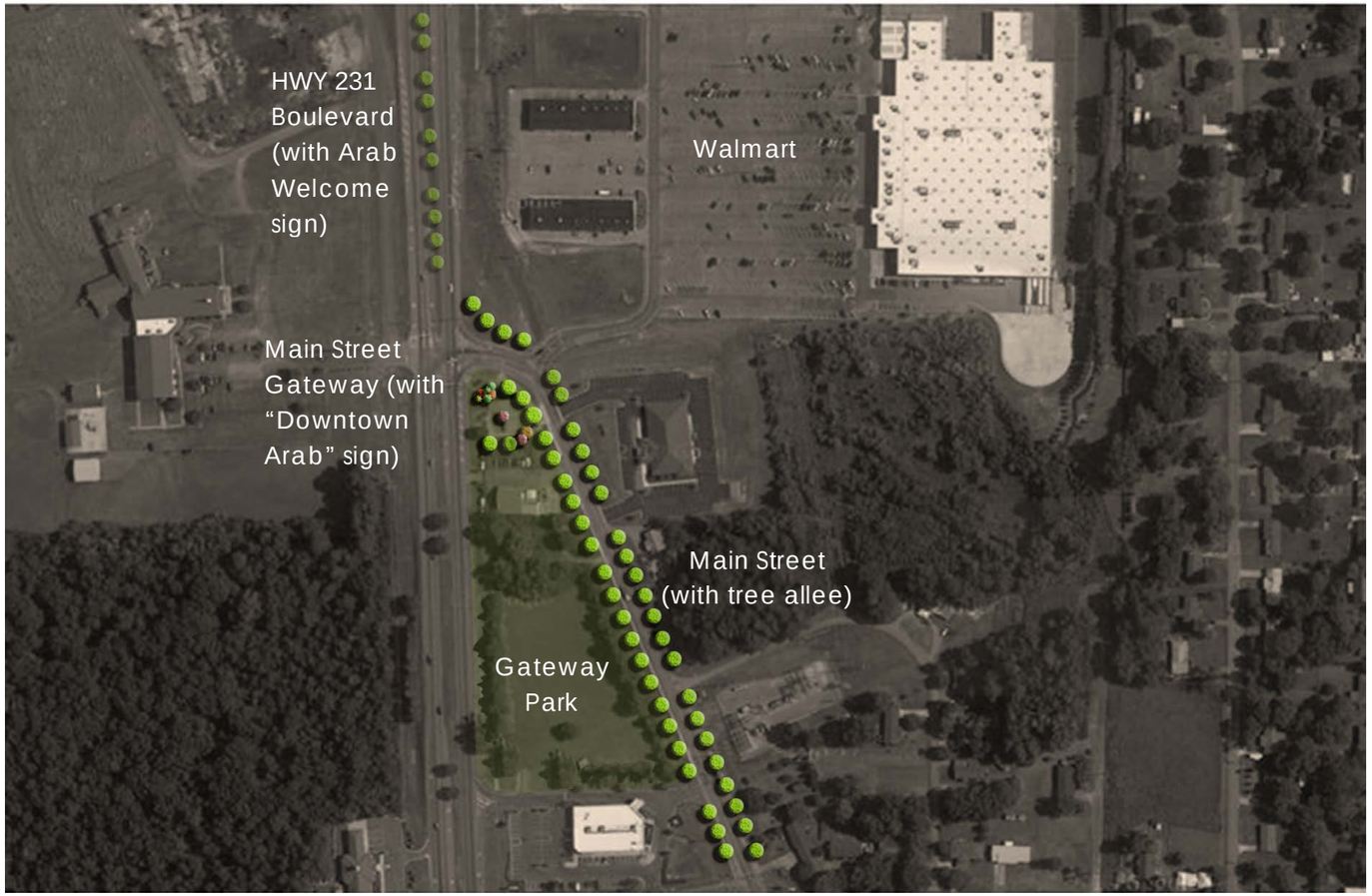
Principal Arterial - North and South Gateways

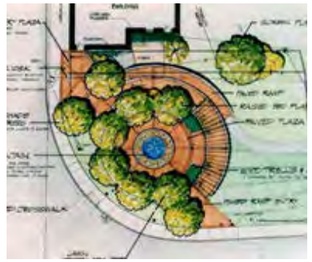


This cross-section is recommended within the North Gateway at the Ruth Road-Eddy Scant Intersection (projected to be a potential growth area), and the southern terminus along US Highway 231 at Main Street. Presently, Arab has no visually defined entry, and the northern and southern terminus/city limits have no discernible, or definable gateways. Gateways define the identity of a city. Entrances to Arab are currently characterized by strip development and salvage yards. It is recommended that the City determine and define its town limits, by creating a north and south gateway into town. This includes streetscaping and signage, landscaped medians and buffers, and traffic calming devices, slower design speeds, and street lights, as travelers come into town. These simple measures give definition and a sense of place, containment, prospect and refuge, implying that the City of Arab is more than a truck route, it is a place of value to be cherished and experienced. Additionally, as more infill develops in the downtown area, gateway improvements can also serve the purpose of calming and slowing traffic as it enters the city limits. These important gateways should include a formal allee of single species street trees either along the sides of the highway, or within the median guiding the traveler up to the entrance of North Main Street and into downtown. It may also include a small "gateway park" at the north Main Street entrance to complement and anchor Stephen Tuttle Thompson Park at South Main/Cullman Road. Welcome signage and wayfinding at this important gateway will attract visitors and pull/lure activity to the heart of downtown Arab. The following photographs and drawings are some examples of what this gateway might look like.



Proposed Arab North Gateway – Plan View



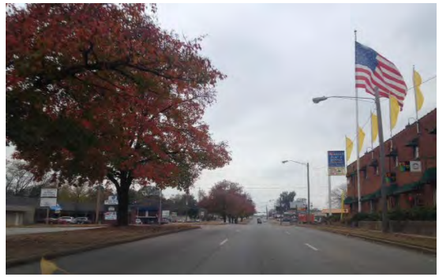


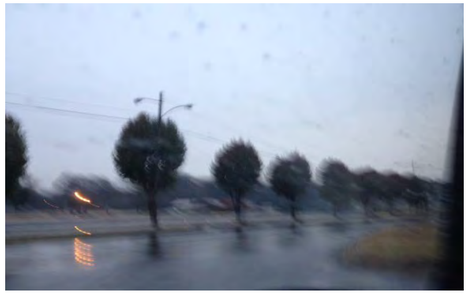






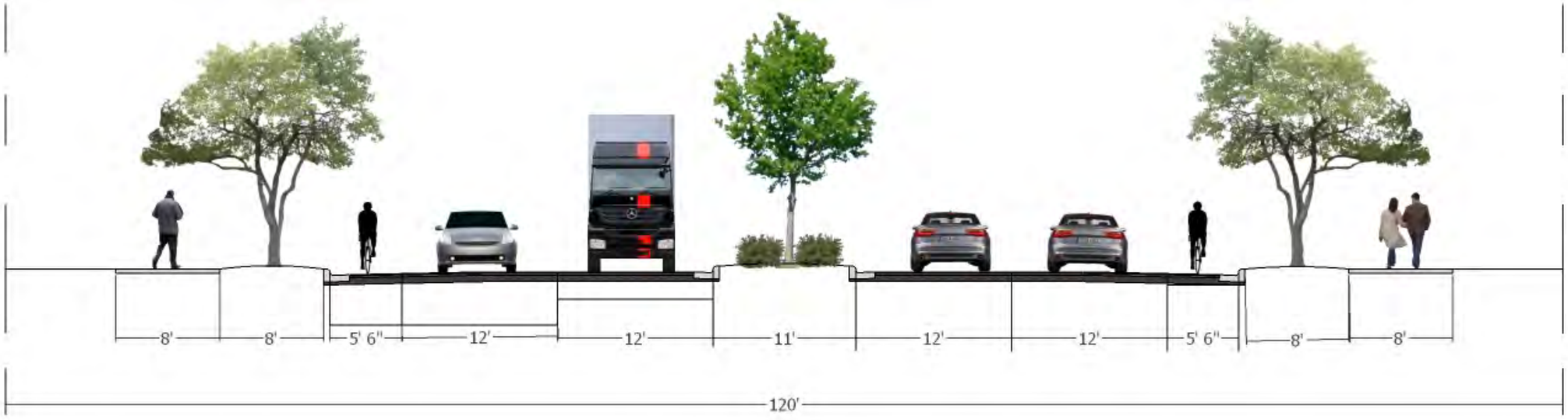




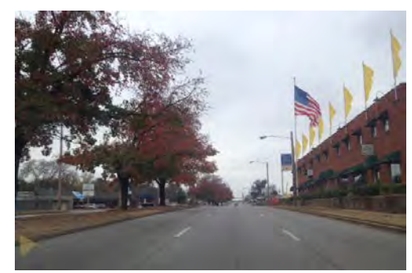




According to the City of Arab Subdivision Regulations, "Street Construction Standards," (p.35), "all areas within the limits of the proposed roadway shall have all vegetation, trees, stumps, large rocks, topsoil, and other objectionable material removed. Material not suitable for embankment shall be properly disposed of off-site. The entire limits of the right-of-ways shall be cleared, including all trees." It is recommended that the City of Arab revise and amend its subdivision regulations to include landscaping, such as shade trees, and safety regulations, such as cross-walks, pedestrian refuges/medians, and reduced speed, as you near the central part of town. Street lights, and appropriate buffer lanes for alternative means of transportation, such as pedestrian thoroughfares and bike lanes, should be incorporated as these areas continue to grow. The existing 50 foot grassed median along US Highway 231 has opportunity for street trees, future crosswalks, and pedestrian refuges. Currently, this corridor is defined by a Walmart at the north entrance into Arab, and car dealerships, parking lots, and salvage yards at the southern end. A corridor improvement program for Highway 231 should include vegetative screening and site development standards for screening and buffering along this roadway. In particular, screening of the industrial areas and salvage yards at the southern entrance needs to take place to protect this gateway into the city.

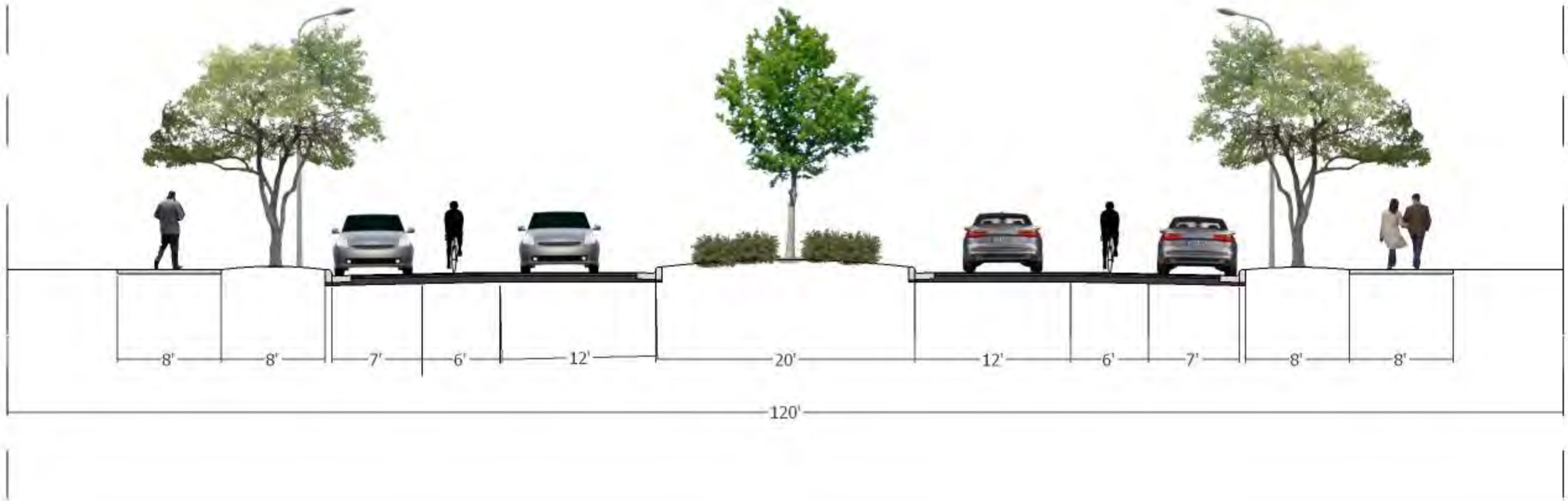
Minor Arterial - East and West Gateways



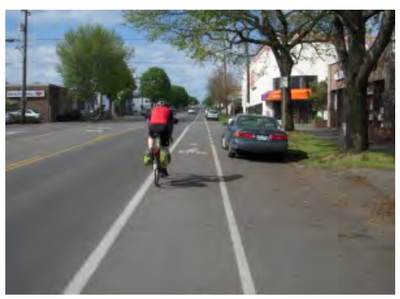
This cross-section is recommended for the Cullman Road/Guntersville Road East-West Arterial (AL Highway 69). This is a very unique thoroughfare, because it acts as a minor arterial, as the East-West route through the city, yet also acts as a major collector, collecting industrial, commercial, and residential traffic as it traverses closer into town. This particular cross-section is located at the eastern boundary of the city limits (the Guntersville Road East Gateway), and the western boundary (the Cullman Road West Gateway). These gateways should be made designated with light landscaping and small canopy shade trees to denote a boundary/threshold/gateway into town, without obstructing line of sight for travelers. Closer into town, as various land uses change, vegetated medians can become more frequent, and greater in width (where turning lanes exist), to provide for pedestrian refuges. One or two tree allee species is recommended to denote a more formal entrance into town and to define the town's identity, as well as to calm traffic.



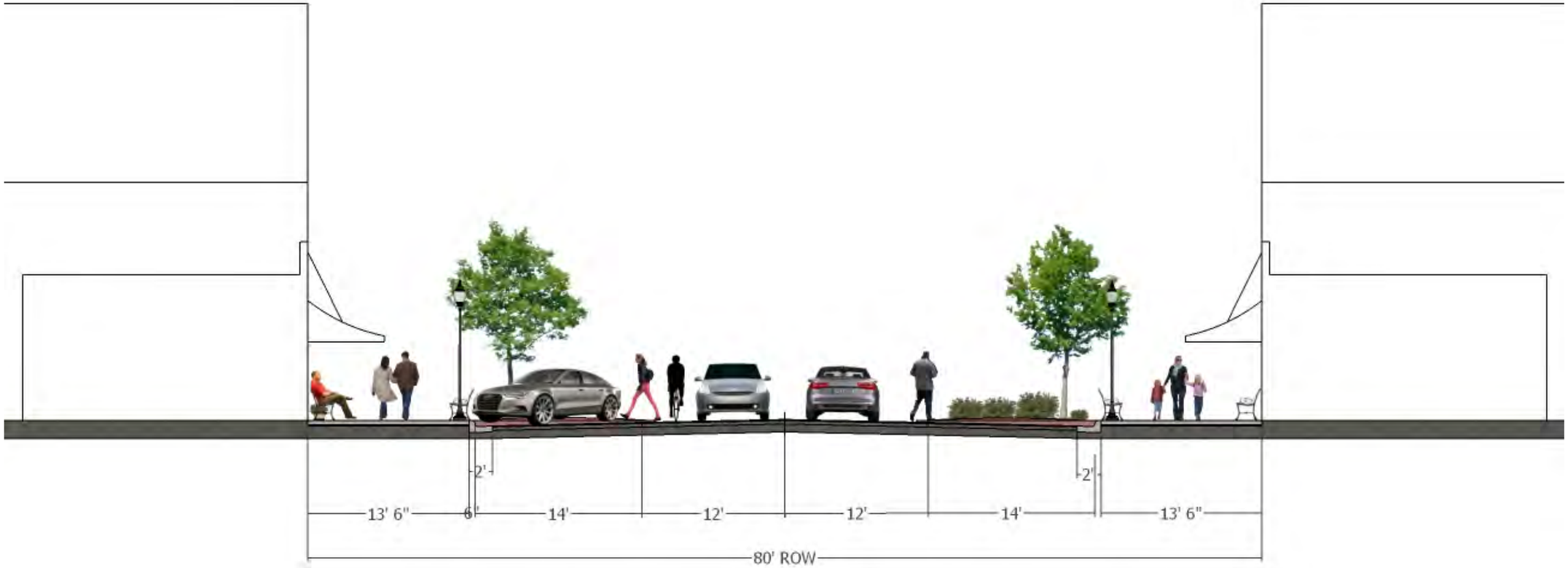
Minor Arterial - Various Zoning



This cross-section is recommended for minor arterials, specifically the east-west arterial/AL Highway 69 as movement comes closer into town, and zoning districts change. As mentioned, the character of this thoroughfare is unique, because it acts as a collector, and becomes a narrower four-lane closer into town. It provides access to industrial, commercial, residential, and school zones (Arab High School and Elementary School). On-street parking becomes more frequent on a "complete street," and is encouraged along this road in commercial and residential areas in Arab. The sidewalks located within the school district along this roadway should be upgraded and made continuous. Currently, sidewalks are in bad condition and crumbling in some areas, and are unsafe/non-continuous for school children. Bike lanes, curb cuts, crosswalks, and shade trees along this arterial will make it more accessible and safer routes from home to school.

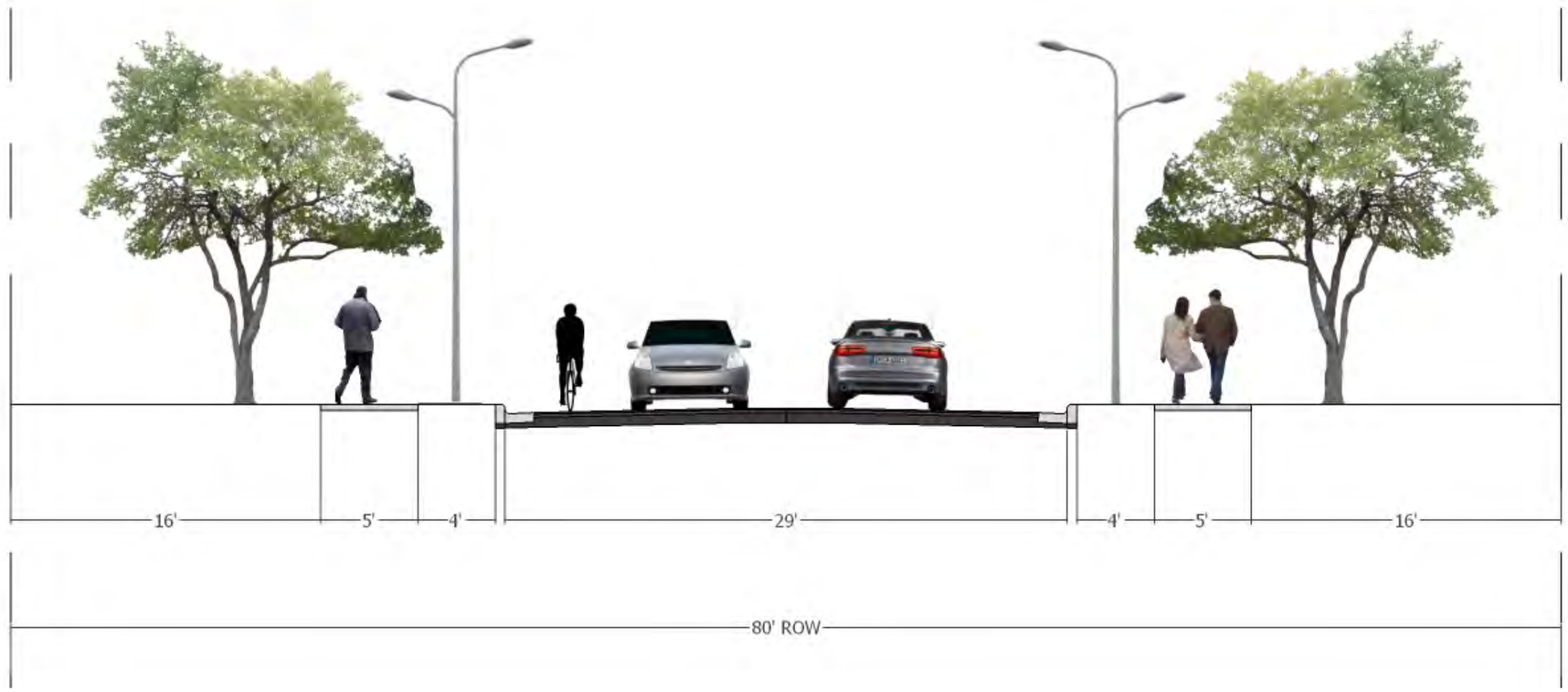


Collector – Central Business District

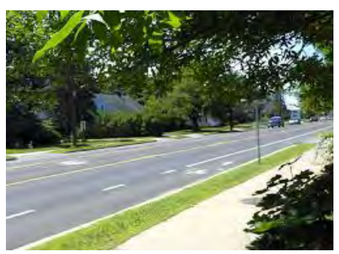
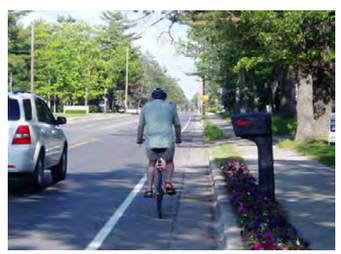
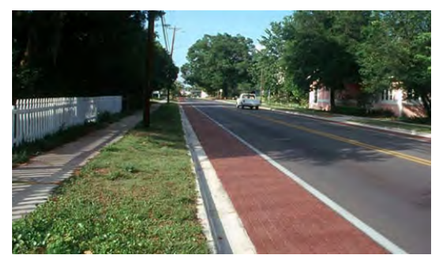


According to the existing subdivision regulations (Section 4.3.2), "pedestrian ways or crosswalks, not less than 10 feet wide, may be required by the Planning Commission through the center of blocks more than 800 feet long where deemed essential to provide circulation or access to schools, playgrounds, shopping centers, transportation, or other community facilities." The Thoroughfare Plan recommends the implementation of these pedestrian crosswalks and sidewalks in the infill areas, and future growth centers of higher density and mixed use. These areas should be designed and developed with the pedestrian shopper in mind. It should be framed by one species of street tree with small, sparse canopies at storefronts, as building edge gives definition to the street.

Collector – Various Zoning

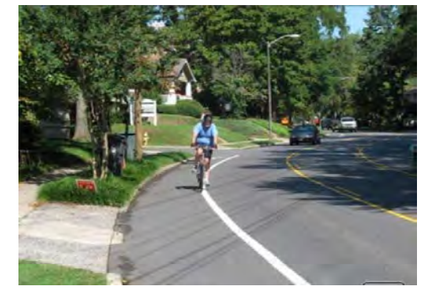


This cross-section is recommended for all other collectors. Minimum pavement width is shown here for a two-lane segment of a collector. Provide for alternative modes of transportation, as collectors provide access to numerous local activities. Provide shade trees for comfort, ease of movement, and safety, within civic, institutional, and residential areas, with schoolchildren in mind. It is also recommended, that the entire length of Main Street be enhanced to include allees of one species of streets trees (where tree lines do not exist), to attract and lure visitors with a more formal promenade into the heart of downtown. This would help define and capture the character of Arab as a true "Tree City," which it has been designated.

Local - Medium Density Residential

This cross-section is recommended for a medium density residential street in a traditional neighborhood, to promote greater walkability. Single-family detached building types should predominate, with homogenous setbacks. The 50-foot right-of-way and minimum pavement width of 25 feet is shown and in keeping with the existing Arab Subdivision Regulations. However, AASHTO recommends a minimum pavement of 26 feet for emergency vehicle access and operation in this type of residential street, where on- street parking might exist. This street type belongs on short blocks and between the edge and center of the neighborhood. It is a low-volume traffic area (no more than 250 vehicles per day). Sidewalks should be 5 foot in width, on both sides of the street, and continuous. Multiple species of shade trees can be used here.



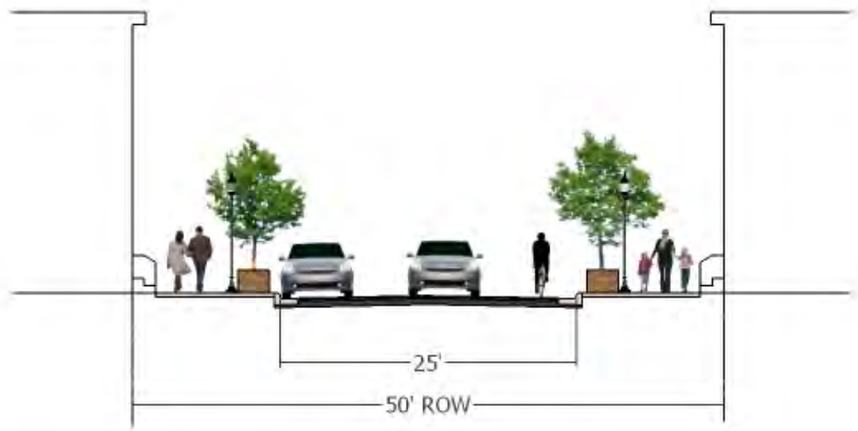
Local – High Density Residential

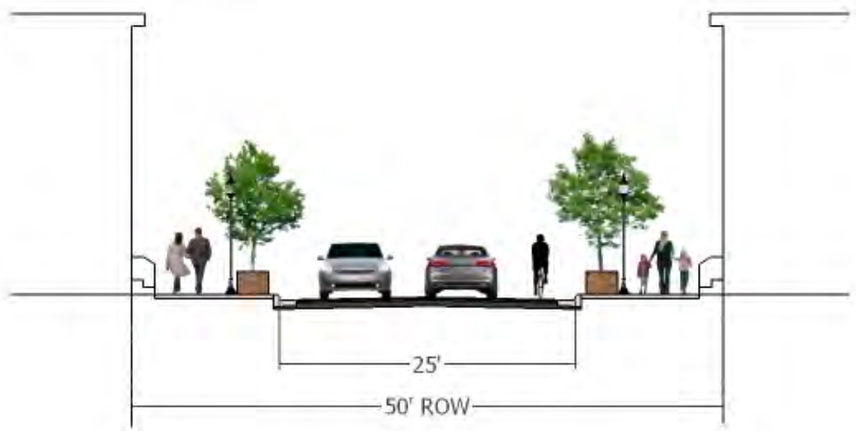
This cross-section is recommended for new local roads in high density multi-family residential districts in the intended growth areas. On street parking on one side of the street only should be encouraged. Single species shade trees are recommended. Living and accessibility for cross-generational families. This type of housing begins to appear in a more urban setting. Building enclosure – the relationship of streets and buildings – defines the urban space and should be encouraged here for pedestrian safety. Existing subdivision regulations call for 25 foot minimum pavement width in these areas. Although it should be noted that AASHTO recommends a minimum pavement width of 26 feet for emergency vehicles.

Local – High Density / Mixed Use

This kind of street is intended in new growth centers and infill areas, such as live/work districts located in the downtown. Zoning can be mixed-use, with residential on second story, and small businesses on the first story. Setbacks should be minimal to give street definition and a sense of containment and enclosure. Designed for pedestrian access. Defined by one or two tree species.

Local - High Density Woonerf





This is the narrowest of the urban street types. Residential building types and live/work units should front a woonerf. It is a pedestrian-dominant street that can be considered in the central part of town. Planters, trees, benches, bike racks, and other non-vehicle-oriented elements should be introduced in the street environment. Most of the area between the buildings is paved with the traveled way of a different material. Bollards are useful to define the vehicle path. This type of development is encouraged in infill areas in downtown Arab.

Financing

Many of the improvements recommended in this report can be accomplished by means of public-private partnerships. Enhancements to existing streets will be accomplished in two ways:

- City initiated large street/streetscaping improvement projects that should be funded by both city sources and grant funding.
- Site based improvements that occur with new development projects on a site by site basis. Such improvements can include the provision of new sidewalks and landscaping improvements within the public ROW. These development standards work best where substantial tracts of undeveloped property are available along existing city streets.

Development standards that promote walkability and connectivity should be incorporated into the city's subdivision regulations so that new streets, whether constructed by the city or by a developer, are constructed in accordance with this street plan.

Lastly, the city should aggressively pursue grant opportunities that will promote the overall street plan. Below is a suggested list of some of the grants that are available for planning (downtown revitalization), infrastructure, and streetscaping improvements. **While new road construction projects are not usually competitive, infrastructure projects that promote or can be linked to economic development are very competitive.** Additional information relating to potential grants has been attached.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) - The EDA is an agency in the United States Department of Commerce that provides grants to economically distressed communities to support projects that will attract investment, generate new employment, help retain existing jobs, and stimulate industrial and commercial growth. **http://www.eda.gov/programs.htm**

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) – The Appalachian Regional Commission awards grants and contracts from funds appropriated to the Commission annually by Congress. ARC provides funding to state and local agencies and governmental entities (such as economic development authorities), local governing boards (such as county councils), and nonprofit organizations. ARC provides funds for basic infrastructure services, including water and sewer facilities that enhance economic development opportunities. **http://www.arc.gov/funding/ARCGrantsandContracts.asp**

Department of Housing and Urban Development/Community Development Block Grant Program (HUD/CDBG) - The Community Development Block Grant Program is a program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development administered at the state level by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). This program provides funding for a variety of projects to include: infrastructure extension/rehabilitation, housing rehabilitation, neighborhood and downtown revitalization, street and drainage improvements, community planning activities, (comprehensive plans, downtown revitalization plans and regional plans) and business development projects that create or retain jobs. . **http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/ced/cdp/Pages/CDBG.aspx**

Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) – The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a new program of the Federal Highway Administration administered by ALDOT. Funds may be used for projects or activities that are related to surface transportation to include: construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation; and construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs. **https://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/enhancement_section.htm**

The table below summarizes the key recommendations in this report and identifies potential funding sources to accomplish specific actions.

Timeline	Action	Funding
Short Term 1-5 years	Amend Subdivision Regulations to permit/require landscaping enhancements within the public right-of-way* (page 15)	City of Arab
	Amend Subdivision Regulations to adopt street cross-section recommendations for all classifications of new streets (pages 13-23)	City of Arab
	Amend Subdivision Regulations to require block dimensional configuration that supports walkability and connectivity (pages 10-11) in intended growth sectors to include requirements for: • Maximum block length • Desired connectivity ratios • Pedestrian/bicycle connections • Recommended street spacing intervals* (page 10-11)	City of Arab
	Amend Subdivision Regulations to require sidewalks and related landscaping for all residential development (page 11)*	City of Arab
	Provide Gateway improvements that define the entry to the city at US Hwy 231 and create a positive first impression of the city – should include street trees, "City of Arab" monument signage, lighting, pavement enhancements and landscaping (page 13)	City of Arab/Merchants Ass. Partnership, TAP
Medium Term 5-7 years	Install continuous sidewalks, street trees, and bike lanes within intended growth areas, infill areas, and on existing roads within school districts (A pedestrian and bicycle plan should be considered to connect the city and the existing park system).	City of Arab, ALDOT
	Provide Gateway improvements to the eastern city limits boundary (AL Hwy 69 and Old Guntersville Road) – should include minor landscape enhancements and monument signage (page 16)	City of Arab
	Install traffic calming enhancements that improve safety along principle and minor arterials: slower designated speeds, street lights, pedestrian refuges /medians (page 17)	City of Arab, TAP
Long Term (7-10+ years)	Proposed New Roads: 10th Street Extension (Major Collector) Arab Thompson Extension (Major Collector) Lexington- Tower Extension (Major Collector) Sundown Drive Connector (Minor Collector) (page 9)	City of Arab CDBG TAP EDA ARC Private Developers
	Install Central Business District Improvements: pedestrian crosswalks, landscaping, and parking "bump outs" (page 18)	City of Arab, TAP, CDBG

***Indicates regulatory updates that can be undertaken by the City or by means of a paid consultant**

Bicycle/Pedestrian Funding Opportunities

	NHS	STP	HSIP	SRTS	TEA	CMAQ	RTP	FTA	TE	BRI	402	PLA	TCSP	JOBS	FLH	BYW
Bicycle and pedestrian plan		X				X						X	X			
Bicycle lanes on roadway	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X					X	X
Paved Shoulders	X	X	X	X	X	X				X					X	X
Signed bike route	X	X		X	X	X									X	X
Shared use path/trail	X	X		X	X	X	X			X					X	X
Single track hike/bike trail							X									
Spot improvement program		X	X	X	X	X										
Maps		X		X		X					X					
Bike racks on buses		X			X	X		X	X							
Bicycle parking facilities		X		X	X	X		X	X							X
Trail/highway intersection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								X	X
Bicycle storage/service center		X		X	X	X		X	X				X	X		
Sidewalks, new or retrofit	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X					X	X
Crosswalks, new or retrofit	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X						X	X
Signal improvements	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Curb cuts and ramps	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Traffic calming		X	X	X									X			
Coordinator position		X		X		X							X			
Safety/education position		X		X		X					X					
Police Patrol		X		X							X					
Helmet Promotion		X		X	X						X					
Safety brochure/book		X		X	X	X	X				X					
Training		X		X	X	X	X				X					

Key

NHS – National Highway System
STP – Surface Transportation Program
HSIP – Highway Safety Improvement Program
SRTS – Safe Routes to School Program
TEA – Transportation Enhancement Activities
CMAQ – Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program
FLH – Federal Lands Highway Program
BYW – Scenic Byways
BRI – Bridge
402 – State and Community Traffic Safety Program
PLA – State/Metropolitan Planning Funds
TCSP – Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program
JOBS – Access to Jobs/Reverse Commute Program
RTP – Recreational Trails Program
FTA – Federal Transit Capital, Urban & Rural Funds
TE – Transit Enhancements

Source Alabama Department of Transportation website: https://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/doc/ALDOT_Bike_Ped_Executive_Summary.pdf

Projects and Programs

Table 1 on the following page provides a matrix of sources for financing transportation improvements according to allowable activities under each funding source. The purpose of this table is to serve as a quick guide while looking for a funding source to cover a specific transportation activity.

Keys:

The following are the program keys for Table 1:

- TAP – Transportation Alternatives Program
- RTP – Recreational Trails Program
- FH – Forest Highways
- PLHD – Public Lands Highways Discretionary
- PLHAP – Public Lands Highways Administration and Planning
- SRTS – Safe Routes to School
- HSIP – Highway Safety Improvement Program
- CMAQ – Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
- ER – Federal-aid Highway Emergency Relief Program
- USDA-CF – USDA Rural Development Housing & Community Facilities Programs
- ADHS – Appalachian Development Highway Program
- LARP – Local Access Road Program (ARC)
- CDBG – Community Development Block Grants
- AL-IARB – The Alabama Industrial Access Road and Bridge Program

Projects and Programs Table

Project Type	Programs													
	TAP	RTP	FH	PLHD	PLHAP	SRTS	HSIP	CMAQ	ER	USDA-CF	ADHS	LARP	CDBG	AL-IARB
Acquisition of Easements or Right of Way	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		
Parking			✓	✓						✓				
Sidewalks	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Crosswalks	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Signal Improvements	✓					✓	✓	✓						
Spot Improvements	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Curb Cuts and Ramps	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Paved Shoulders	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Other Safety Improvements							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Bicycle Lanes	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					✓	
Bicycle Paths / Trails	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	
Shared Paths / Trails	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	
Hike / Bike Trails	✓	✓												
Highway / Trail Intersection	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓						
Bike Racks on Buses	✓							✓						
Bicycle Parking	✓					✓		✓						
Bridge Construction / Improvements	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Highway / Rail Road Crossing						✓	✓		✓					
Traffic Calming						✓	✓	✓						
Maps						✓		✓						
Safety Education / Material	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓						
Coordinator Position						✓		✓						
Training	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓						
Landscaping & Beautification	✓												✓	
Environmental Mitigation	✓							✓						
Transportation Planning			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	
Signage			✓	✓		✓	✓							
Emergency Repairs									✓				✓	
Road Construction									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Resources

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP):

- FHWA Guidance for Transportation Alternatives Program http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/guidance/
- State TA Program Details and Contact Information http://www.enhancements.org/stateprofile

Recreational Trails Program (RTP):

- FHWA Guidance for Recreation Trails Program http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/guidance.htm.
- State RTP Program Details and Contact Information http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/ced/Recreation/Pages/default.aspx

Federal Lands Highway Programs:

- FHWA Guidance for Federal Lands Highway Program http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/plh/.
- State FLH Program Details and Contact Information from Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division http://www.efl.fhwa.dot.gov/.

Safe Routes to School Program:

- FHWA Guidance for Safe Route to School Program http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/guidance/.
- State SRTS Program Details and Contact Information http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/find-state-contacts/alabama http://saferoutestoschool.crdl.ua.edu/

Highway Safety Improvement Program:

- FHWA Guidance for Highway Safety Improvement Program http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/
- Intersection Safety Guidance and Manual http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ):

- FHWA Guidance for CMAQ Program http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/

Federal-aid Highway Emergency Relief Program:

- FHWA Emergency Relief Program Manual http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/erm/er.pdf

USDA Rural Development Housing & Community Facilities Programs:

- USDA Guidance for Community Facilities Program http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HCF_CF.html

ARC - Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS):

- ARC Guidance for Appalachian Development Highway System http://www.arc.gov/adhs

Resources (cont'd):

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):

- HUD Guidance for CDBG Program http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs
- State CDBG Program Guidance http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/ced/cdp/Pages/CDBG.aspx

The Alabama Industrial Access Road and Bridge Program:

- ALDOT Guidance for Industrial Access Road and Bridge Program https://www.dot.state.al.us/adweb/Industrial%20Access.htm

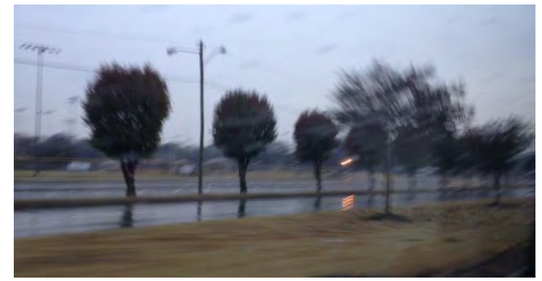
Innovative Finance Resources:

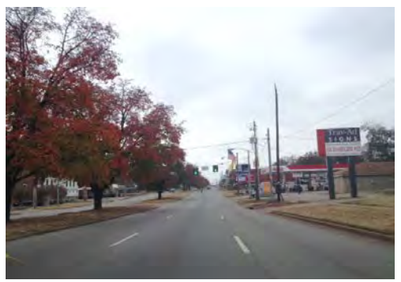
- AASHTO Finance http://www.transportation-finance.org/

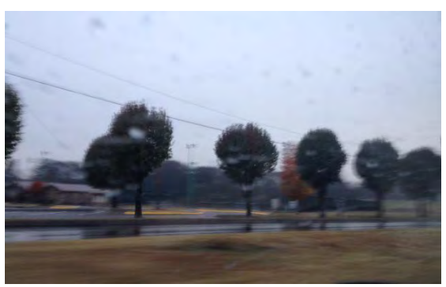
Advocacy Groups and Non-Profit Organizations:

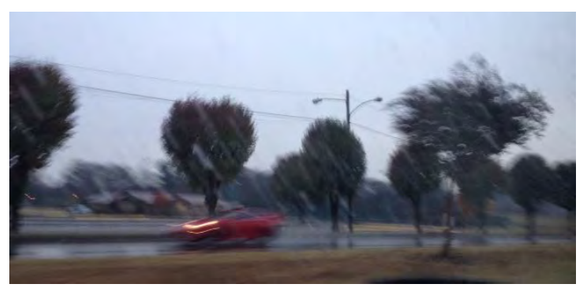
- Traffic Calming Resources http://www.trafficcalming.org/
  http://www.stopspeeders.org/index.html
  http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/speedmgt/traffic_calm.cfm
- Pedestrians and Bicycle Information Center http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/
- America Bikes – Advocating for Positive outcomes for bicycling in the Federal Transportation Bill http://www.americabikes.org/index.html.
- People for Bikes/ Bikes Belong Coalition http://www.peopleforbikes.org/
- The League of American Bicyclists http://www.bikeleague.org/index.php
- Active Living Resource Center http://www.sustainable.org/living/education-training-and-lifelong-learning/196-active-living-resource-center-library
  http://activelivingresearch.org/
  http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/events-resources/resources/active-living-resource-center
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy http://www.railstotrails.org/index.html
- National Recreational Trails http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/
- Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/index.htm

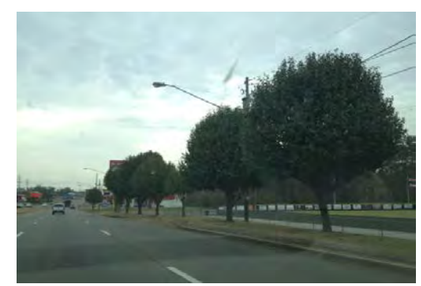

Silverdale Rotary
GATEWAY
PARK
A KITSAP COUNTY COMMUNITY PARK











Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
Department of Planning and Economic Development

Ms. Nancy Robertson.....Executive Director

Mr. D.C. Schafer.....Director of Economic Development

Ms. Beverly Zendt.....Director of Planning

Ms. Falguni Patel.....Transportation Planner

Mr. Scott Griess.....Associate Planner

Ms. Jo Beth Gleason.....Associate Planner

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
5075 Research Drive NW
Huntsville, Alabama 35805
(o) 256-830-0843 - (f) 256-830-0843 - (w) tarcog.us