

Greenwood Comprehensive Plan

City of Greenwood, Mississippi

2010 – 2040



FINAL PLAN

Adopted by the Greenwood City Council
October 19, 2010

Prepared by
the Greenwood Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
with technical assistance from:

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City of Greenwood Officials

Elected Officials

Carolyn McAdams, Mayor

Honorable Johnny Jennings – Ward 1

Honorable Lisa Cookston – Ward 2

Honorable Ronnie Stevenson, President – Ward 3

Honorable Charles McCoy, Sr. – Ward 4

Honorable Tennill Cannon, Ward 5

Honorable David Jordan, Vice President – Ward 6

Honorable Carl Palmer – Ward 7

Planning Commission

Michael Adams

Barbara Biggers

Lillian Catchings

Adlena Crockett

Donna Gary

Josephine Gray

Ruth Jones

Mary Carol Miller

Dale Riser

Tony Roberts

Charles Wright

Mable Whitker

Inspection Division

Thomas Gregory, Chief Administrative Officer

Victor Stokes, Director/Building Official

Betty Stigler, Code Enforcement Officer

William Staniel, Building Inspector

Penny Hodge, Administrative Assistant

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

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Calvin Collins
Bill Crump
Angela Curry
Lise Foy
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Juanita Spivey
Beth Stevens
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Kenneth Thompson
Howard Threadgill

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY PLAN?

Communities have the opportunity to control their destiny by mapping out their future on paper before actually moving forward with permanent actions. This gives them the opportunity to see what alternatives best suit the needs and the desires of the citizenry and the officials who have been chosen to lead them. Richard Moe of the National Trust for Historic Preservation said it best, when he noted, “Communities can be shaped by choice, or they can be shaped by chance. We can keep on accepting the kind of communities we get, or we can start creating the kind of communities we want.”

The comprehensive plan is the kind of blueprint that helps communities develop the way they want to. If properly followed it can result in a community where residents have the kind of quality of life they often travel to other areas to experience. No town, city, or county is locked into the way it has been in past or currently exists. Downtown Greenwood is a great example of how intervention reversed the course of a deteriorating neighborhood. The study of urban development in this country shows that communities can use democratic ideals and court-tested practices, as well as innovative private and public investment to create the kind of community they want. This plan, which was developed with the input of a 20-member steering committee of stakeholders in Greenwood, as well as public input, analyzes the city’s current situation, but does not let that hold it back.

The plan is a guide and that is why it is adopted by resolution. Although it is legally required to support zoning amendments, it acts primarily as a roadmap for the future. Most of the tools that implement the plan are familiar to the community – the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, sign control, code enforcement, building and housing codes, etc. Some newer policies, like mixed-use zones, and design standards are reflective of the lessons learned about the shortcomings of the biggest tool – zoning. We know now that zoning is not the best tool for creating a quality community. It was historically a blunt response to incompatible uses residing next to each other – smokestacks near homes, specifically. However, rising oil prices and an epidemic of obese Americans taught us that separating uses was not necessarily the policy for meeting ALL of our community goals.

This executive summary attempts to explain, in a concise manner, what Greenwood should do to meet its goals over the next 30 years. The recommendations are a mix of policy changes, improvements in enforcement, and projects and programs.

FINDINGS & GOALS

1. Significant Finding – The city should be consistent and diligent in enforcing regulations.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that building, code enforcement and zoning/subdivision regulations/design standards administration are under the direction of a city planner.
- Set goals and measurable objectives each budget year for code enforcement and meet them (how many structures will be demolished, etc.)
- Improve training for staff, Planning Commission and Mayor and City Council.
- Join the American Planning Association and the Mississippi Chapter of the American Planning Association (Commissioner training and publications).
- Increase fees to help offset costs of additional staff and training.
- Develop GIS capabilities by partnering with Leflore County and Greenwood Utilities.

- Be more comprehensive in enforcing property maintenance code.
- Require registration of rental property with yearly inspection and appropriate fines.

2. Significant Finding – The city needs better curb appeal.

Recommendations:

- Restrict commercial zoning to nodes around intersections of major arterials and collectors.
- Adopt and enforce Site and Design Review Standards.
- Adopt and enforce sign ordinance.
- Expand code enforcement scope.
- Clean up city-owned property (along streets and sidewalks, in parks and public spaces, etc.)

3. Significant Finding – The city should improve existing ordinances; add more master planned Future Land Use districts and planned zones to map and text plan.

Recommendations:

- Add more planned zones; begin to shift from straight zoning to encouraging more planned zones. In addition to standard land use classifications in the Future Land Use Plan, add Master Planned Commercial (C-4 zoning), and mixed use classifications and zones (Traditional Neighborhood Development, Central Business District mixed use (PUD zoning), Neighborhood Mixed Use (PUD or C-4 zoning), historic district overlay for residential areas, environmental overlay for sensitive environmental areas and flood zones, and a redevelopment area.
- Allow more density to help curtail urban sprawl, protecting prime agricultural lands, and encouraging redevelopment in existing neighborhoods and commercial corridors.
- Extend Historic Preservation District to provide local protections to additional commercial and new residential districts.
- Change zoning ordinance to permit existing smaller non-conforming lots with narrow widths to retain “urban” look, promote affordability, and encourage walking and biking.

4. Significant Finding – Look at zoning on map and in text.

Recommendations:

- Rezone the areas around and near Greenwood Leflore Hospital as medical office zones to reserve this area for the growing medical facilities needs. Will also improve the curb appeal of this section of Highway 82.
- Allow significant densities only with a planned (PUD) development, where common space is dedicated and design is reviewed.
- Possibly rezone certain areas to encourage redevelopment where there are too many non-conforming uses. .
- Overlay all agricultural land within the city limits for master planned communities.
- Rezone downtown area to encourage mixed uses – retail and office on first floors and residential on upper floors. Encourage residential development with a view of the rivers.

5. Significant Finding – Improve circulation system; appropriately balance auto, pedestrian, and biking.

Recommendations:

- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy to consider alternative modes of transportation.
- Construct bike lanes with new roadway development/work with MDOT to do this for state road development. Identify/stripe/sign bike lanes on existing roads.
- City should construct/rehabilitate sidewalks with a priority on sidewalks that are in the most disrepair or in areas that have significant foot traffic.

- Conduct a sidewalk/trail inventory and develop a plan for improvements.
- Adopt Site and Design Review Standards that require sidewalks to be constructed as part of any new residential subdivision, or new or rehabilitated commercial, multiple-family, institutional, and industrial building.
- Allow use of golf cart-type vehicles on local streets to cut down on automobile use.
- Pursue the 4-laning of Highway 7 to better connect Greenwood to Interstate 55.

6. Significant Finding – Public facilities improvements are needed

Recommendations:

- Develop a separate parks and recreation department when funds permit to be able to improve on existing park system.
- Accept donations from developers in PUDs in lieu of land set asides, and use for general open space/parks land acquisition and/or development of existing parks.
- Consider passage of an additional 1% tax on restaurants and hotels to benefit public improvement and economic development projects
- Review any annexation plans carefully, weighing all costs and benefits. Encourage the redevelopment of areas that are deteriorating/dilapidated already in the city limits.
- Develop a comprehensive annexation plan for the future – timing, financing, etc.

7. Significant Finding – Some areas in the city are deteriorating and need redevelopment.

Recommendations:

- Develop strategic redevelopment plans (using student labor like that done for Baptist Town). Work with Main Street, MSU Landscape Architecture School, Carl Small Town Center, Mississippi Development Authority and others to design redevelopment strategies.
- Identify and log all vacant/abandoned buildings/lots and develop specific plans for encouraging their reuse/redevelopment.
- Identify state-owned properties and make them available for redevelopment.
- Pursue funding for homeowner reconstruction and new affordable housing development through programs such as HOME, HOPE VI, CDBG, AHP, etc.
- Encourage the involvement of neighborhood associations in partnering for redevelopment.
- Adopt a redevelopment overlay zone to encourage renovation in deteriorating areas.

8. Strategic Goal: Promote Economic Development through effective Marketing & Development

Recommendations:

- Make full use of the natural resources and cultural heritage to promote Greenwood as a destination of choice for visitors, especially the Tallahatchie and Yazoo Rivers.
- Insure that the education system is of the highest quality possible.
- Continue the downtown renaissance and expand redevelopment to other areas of the city.
- Adopt design standards and enforce them vigorously to achieve greater curb appeal as quickly as possible; partner this with a strategic clean up and landscape plan by the city.
- Adopt sign standards; amortize existing signs that would not be in conformance.
- Tie analysis from First Impressions, asset mapping, Greenwood Cultural Plan, and strategic plans from Main Street, Chamber of Commerce, and Greenwood Leflore Carroll Economic Development Foundation together into one strategic plan.
- Promote local entrepreneurship and use of good agricultural lands for food farming.
- Improve the local public schools.
- Look at re-opening the C&G rail line from Greenwood to West Point.
- Continue improvements to the airport and the industrial park.

- Balance industrial development with nature and heritage tourism.
- Take full advantage of the City's shores, by zoning for and encouraging development of residential uses with a view of the rivers.

9. Strategic Goal: Become a Healthy and Green Community

Recommendations:

- Review the city's built environment to ensure that it represents at least some of the components of "healthy zoning," food planning (like protection of prime agricultural lands), walkable/bikeable development pattern, community gardens, food stores selling healthy foods in neighborhoods, community supported agricultural programs, sidewalks, bike lanes, sufficient amount of parks and recreation programs, etc.
- Secure grants from organizations like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Mississippi State Department of Health to help plan for a healthier community.
- Reduce the amount of impervious surface allowed in developments (adopt standards that encourage narrow local streets and the use of permeable parking areas, among others).
- Permit and promote more density in areas already paved, allowing more retail space to be constructed in areas where parking has been overbuilt (Highland Park, Greenwood Mall).
- Encourage more, but smaller, parking lots in an effort to bring people closer to their destination. Use landscaping liberally in between these smaller lots.
- Allow and clearly mark on-street parking where appropriate.
- Adopt and enforce Green Infrastructure Plan for the community.
- Adopt and enforce Smart Growth policies that limit sprawl.
- Plant trees and native plant materials on city property and in public rights of way.
- Absolutely forbid clear cutting of trees and inappropriate land grading for development in non-agricultural areas. Restrict clearing to the minimum area needed for the building footprint, construction access and setbacks. Trees to be kept should be clearly marked.

10. Strategic Goal: Get Results through Effective Administration

Recommendations:

- Increase fees to offset costs in Planning and Building Department.
- Work with Leflore County on zoning of land immediately outside of Greenwood in an effort to restrict sprawl development.
- Require all development outside the city limits requesting city services to meet development plan, subdivision regulations and building code requirements and to initiate annexation (so the city will not inherit public facilities that will be very expensive to bring up to city standards).
- Require developers to construct at least one lane of projected improvements in collectors and arterials when their development fronts that road where needed.
- Improve the attractiveness of the city and develop a plan for becoming the destination of choice for residents, businesses, and visitors in the New Economy, thereby improving sales and property tax revenues.
- Take advantage of Mississippi Valley State University and Delta State University expertise when needing technical assistance for community planning and development.
- Add more planned development Future Land Use districts and encourage planned commercial, residential and mixed-use areas.
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INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Plan for the City of Greenwood is the city's blueprint for the economic, social and physical development for the future. A comprehensive plan is defined by Mississippi state statute to include four elements – land use, goals and objectives, transportation, and public facilities. Its primary purpose is to help a city be proactive in managing its growth and development. The plan does this in the following four ways:

- It helps **coordinate** the city's activities with other entities,
- It is the **legal** foundation for implementation ordinances like the zoning ordinance,
- It is **educational**, telling the community and developers where the city is going, and
- It provides **guidance** by helping with interpretation of implementation ordinances through clearly stated goals and objectives.

Unplanned growth is unsightly and results in incompatibilities in land use and poor design that can hurt property values and the general form and function of the city. It also can result in higher public costs; planning helps coordinate and time needed capital improvements.

This plan replaces the city's latest plans, which were adopted by the Mayor and City Council in 1963, 1970, and 1978. The City's Planning Commission was established in 1959 and Boards of Adjustment for both Zoning and Housing Codes were established in 1973 and 1978, respectively.

Recognizing that Greenwood faces new challenges and opportunities, the Mayor and City Council directed the Greenwood Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to review, revise and update the City's planning and development goals, policies and implementation ordinances. The new Greenwood Comprehensive Plan tracks the major community changes over the past decade, assesses prospects for future development, and sets forth the community's vision for the next 30 years. It provides new goals and directions for development policy, and it provides revised development regulations and other planning tools to carry out these new directions.

The plan was developed in accordance with generally accepted planning principals and is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides introductory and background analysis related to planning and development issues within the city. Chapter 2 sets forth findings and issues and outlines the city's important goals, objectives, and policies, which are designed to be the starting point for action plans. Chapter 3 spells out the recommended general development plan and Chapter 4 gives recommendations for implementation.

In order to receive input from residents, the city conducted public meetings. The results of the input received from the meetings are listed in the Appendix. Education about the plan and the process was given at the hearings and was aided by excellent coverage from the Greenwood Commonwealth, local television stations, and meetings and speaking engagements at various civic organizations in Greenwood.

It was clear the citizens of Greenwood realize that the city is at an important juncture in its history. The common threads running through comments made at the public meetings are outlined herein.

The Comprehensive Planning process took about one year to accomplish. The Plan was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee with input from the community at large and the assistance of a city planning consultant.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I, Shelly Johnstone, AICP, do certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

1. The statements contained herein are true.
2. All information is presented in a manner that is accurate and unbiased.
3. The work was prepared according to the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct as well as AICP Technical Standards of the professional practice of planning.
4. Compensation was not based upon a specific finding, professional opinion, or approval by a regulatory body.

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May 18, 2010