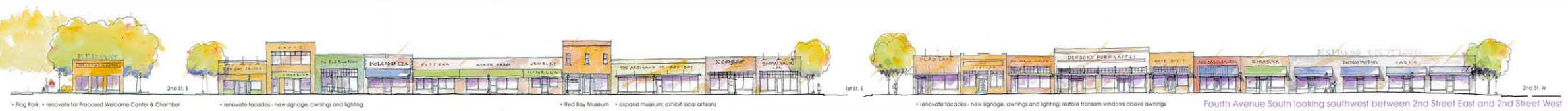


RED BAY ALABAMA

Auburn University
Urban Studio
Birmingham, AL
2008



Assets and Opportunities

Capitalize on Red Bay's location

- Capture the potential of your rural location with proximity to major regional urban centers
- Capture the opportunities associated with nearby recreation areas, abundant hunting and fishing areas, and local natural beauty
- Seek out new opportunities that can be developed because of nearby Interstate 22

Celebrate Red Bay's Strong Small Town Character and History

- Promote Red Bay's sense of community, small town friendliness and pride of place
- Create a Welcome Center in the downtown in conjunction with your Red Bay Museum and/or a local office of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
- Protect and preserve your small town character as businesses grow up along highway development at the edges of town
- Promote and strengthen/invest in your strong schools
- Promote your agrarian heritage and traditions - as well as your strong local industries

Invest in Downtown Restoration to build on existing strengths

- Downtown already has most of the amenities that are hallmarks of strong downtown potential. These include your downtown park, library, arts center, senior center, and city services
- Expand downtown as a destination for your citizens and visitors alike
- Recruit restaurants and lodging into the core historic downtown
- Create a strong plan for supporting your existing businesses and for increased retail/commercial capacity in the downtown
- Consider creating a Main Street Program
- Preserve and protect your core historic downtown buildings and character to create a distinctive place for niche businesses
- Create guidelines and incentive programs for restoration, facade improvements and new signage
- Create guidelines for new construction in the downtown that respects the scale, massing and texture of your historic buildings
- Make downtown the "trail-head" for a network of walking, hiking and biking systems
- Recruit new niche and synergistic businesses to the downtown core
- Recruit businesses/activities that keep downtown open "after dark" with a family oriented and youth oriented focus
- Promote and market the downtown
- Make downtown safe, easy to use & pedestrian friendly - initiate traffic calming in the downtown

Strengthen and/or Protect the Gateways to your Community and Downtown

- Make good impressions - make Red Bay distinct and memorable
- Make Highway 24 - east of the historic downtown a parkway rather than a "strip" with plantings that continue the heritage of highway 24's Avenue of Trees on the west side of downtown
- Protect the agrarian character of the entries along Highway 24 - in particular
- Improve the gateway at 4th Ave. South and 4th Street West
- Improve the gateway at Highway 19 and Highway 24 and plan now for the new intersection that will be coming to the south as the connector is complete

Promote Red Bay as a good place to retire

- Create good housing - in context with the downtown and in emerging new neighborhoods - that is targeted to families who are down-sizing and seeking out homes with less size, yard and maintenance (these houses are also great for young families!)
- Provide good social and recreational activities and programs for retirees
- Support good local medical access; reinforce strong relationship with medical providers in the Quad City area
- Get retirees involved in the community by seeking

out their commitment to tutoring programs, festivals, the local welcome center/museum, coffee shops and businesses

Encourage development - residential & commercial - that embraces concepts of compact growth

- Encourage development that preserves the agrarian and natural character that defines this part of Alabama and Red Bay
- Always encourage new development first within the existing infrastructure and within existing police and fire protection areas

Support your strong schools

- Preserve the relationship between your schools & downtown schools add vitality to a downtown
- Create stronger pedestrian/bike friendly connections between schools and downtown, water park and youth playing fields
- Recruit high school clubs/service organizations as volunteers for downtown activities, welcome center and as members on all city boards/councils

Create a strong system of pedestrian and bike connections

- Connect your neighborhoods, schools, parks and downtown with a system of sidewalks, greenways, bike-ways and trails
- Initiate a rail-to-trails bike trail along the abandoned rail south of town to Haleyville as a way to connect Red Bay to distinctive natural and recreational opportunities at the Damsels and Rock Bridge
- Initiate a system of "country road" (bike and equestrian) trails that connect Red Bay to the regional lakes, recreational areas and prospects of scenic beauty
- Make downtown the trail-head for a regional system of bike/hiking trails

Capture the opportunities created by your distinct local industries

- Create a downtown sales center that promotes your local products - perhaps in conjunction with a local Franklin County Chamber
- Create reasons and incentives for visitors to the Allegro Campground to "come downtown," distinctive dining, classes/entertainment, "downtown artists," etc.

Reinforce the strong history of creating projects of interest/importance to the community

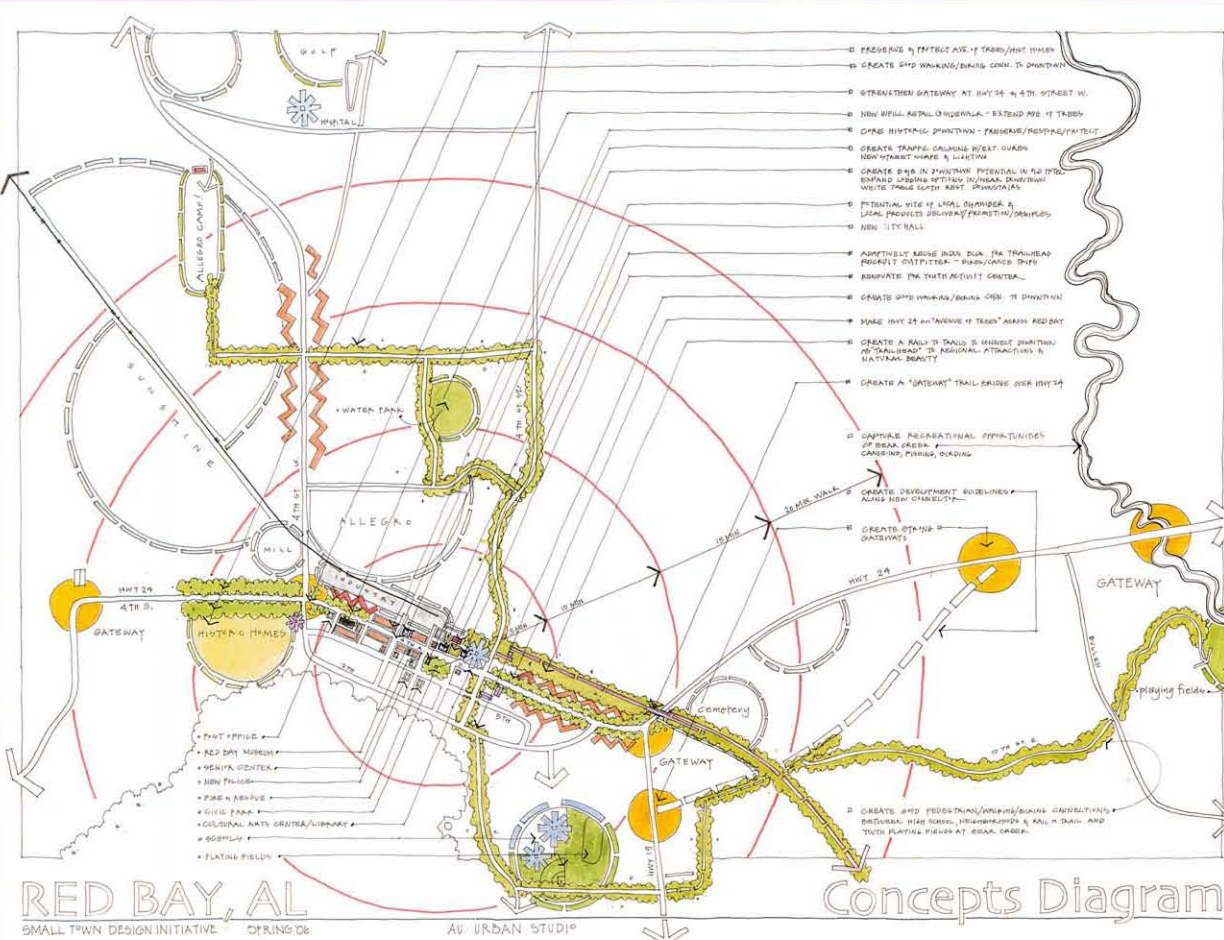
- Build on the strength of your local sense of commitment to community
- Consider the creation of a Community Development Corporation or similar non-profit to advance projects that will serve the best interest of Red Bay, your citizens and visitors
- Encourage strong public/private partnerships
- Promote strong partnerships across the region for the development of shared services and facilities, mutual support of tourism and business development

Create a strategy for development along the new highway connector

- New development should be limited to key intersections and then under strict guidelines - businesses that do not serve through traffic should be in or near downtown
- Create guidelines for development along the connector that makes it a good gateway to Red Bay and encourages the preservation of the beauty of the countryside

Build for a Sustainable Future

- Promote new construction - retail/commercial, civic and residential - that is of the highest quality, energy efficient and consistent with the principles of sustainability
- Begin involvement in programs that protect, celebrate and appropriately promote the natural beauty, flora/fauna and distinct character of your county and region



RED BAY, AL
SMALL TOWN DESIGN INITIATIVE SPRING 08
AN URBAN STUDIO

- **Make downtown a destination throughout the day and week. Add lodging, restaurants, connections/synergies**
Historic Downtown Red Bay has good building stock, capacity for growth and exceptional location along the convergence of several major highway routes. There are already many of the important components of a strong downtown - library, civic park, senior center, museum and city services. A new bypass will take some trucks and through traffic out of downtown and create an even stronger potential for a focus on a pedestrian friendly downtown that encourage people to linger and shop. In addition, we are proposing a number of additional destinations that can attract visitors and tourists and help to build the retail potential that can be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. Most important of these is downtown lodging and eateries and the development of your potential as a trail-head for existing and proposed regional recreational activities and a local system of walking routes. Red Bay can be the anchor for day-trips and weekend get-aways that can - with Interstate 22 in place - attract visitors from Memphis, Birmingham, Tupelo and the Quad Cities.
A Main Street Program can give you capacity and resources for refurbishing historic downtown buildings, recruiting niche businesses and building service retail that serves the recreation and eco-tourism market can contribute to the potential for businesses that are needed for local residents and an enhanced day-to-day quality of life for those who have long called Red Bay home. These assets further your potential to attract retirees and young families to locate to Red Bay and contribute to a sustainable downtown economy. A new community center - designed to recall your rail and industrial heritage - and youth center in an old building next to the theater - create more places for the community to gather day-to-day, a place to host festivals and special events and the potential to foster family-friendly activities that build the 187 year old of downtown that makes retail thrive. These amenities give you the strongest potential to:
- **Build a "downtown" link with the Allegro Campground**
The Allegro Campground attracts visitors from around the country and around the world. It is important that these visitors come downtown, linger, spend money and go home telling friends and family that Red Bay is a "great place to visit." This plan proposes creating a good walking/biking route between the campground, water park and downtown; recruiting businesses that are targeted to this market segment; and creating activities downtown - like elder hostel programs, tours, "downtown dollars" and good food - that pull these visitors into the downtown. Red Bay should also consider a regular shuttle/trrolley that runs between downtown and the campground.
- **Make downtown distinct and a "place to stop!"**
Extend the beauty and character of your Avenue of Trees
Evidence of pride and historic character create the charm and beauty that encourages people to visit a community and return time and again when seeking out good places to spend time with friends and family. These same components encourage those passing through to stop for a meal, shop and linger. Your "Avenue of Trees" is one of your most distinct characteristics and must be protected and emulated as you build Red Bay as a distinct and memorable place. We encourage a local arboretum (perhaps near the water park) and replanting program to maintain your existing trees in residential neighborhoods, and a program that works with ALDOT and local businesses to create similar allees of trees along other approaches into town. Create local regulations that make the new "by-pass" a parkway to reinforce this concept.
- **Make downtown a trailhead for walking and biking with a system of sidewalks, trails and greenways**
Red Bay resides in an area of exceptional natural beauty that already hosts numerous outdoor recreational activities and opportunities. This plan identifies a number of opportunities to create local network of walking and biking routes that can connect downtown with schools, neighborhoods, recreation and industries. By creating a system of sidewalks and bike routes that are well-lit, well-signed, beautiful and safe Red Bay can encourage well-ness, a stronger sense of community and a better potential for walking downtown at lunch, evenings after other and on weekends.
- **Create a Rails-to-trails and bike/equestrian connections to regional attractions/beauty**
Downtown should also become the anchor and starting point for locals and visitors - whether in the campground or downtown lodging - to depart for day trips on a regional system of trails that can be created along the abandoned rail line that runs east from downtown toward Haleyville via Vina, Hodges and Hackleburg. Federal monies can be accessed to fund a development of a Rails-to-Trails that can give biking, hiking and walking access to the beauty of the local countryside, the nearby Damsels and Rock Bridge Canyon and the Spivey Wilderness. Similar trails across the country have had significant economic impact along their route.

LOCATION

Red Bay, named for local red clay and the bay tree, is in the North-west corner of Alabama along the Mississippi border just to the north of the newly opened Interstate 22 that runs between Memphis, TN and Birmingham, AL. The rugged county side of Franklin County has remarkable beauty and incredible recreational opportunities with nearby Bear Creek Reservoir, the Natchez Trace, Bankhead National Forest and established areas of hunting, fishing and camping. Regional shopping, colleges and entertainment are less than an hour away in the Quad Cities area - Florence, Muscle Shoals, Tusculumbia & Sheffield - along the Tennessee River. And, Red Bay is already a destination for those seeking exceptional recreation vehicles at the Allegro Manufacturing plant.

PROJECT HISTORY

This project was initiated in 2005 by Auburn University's Urban Studio as part of an Appalachian Regional Commission Flex-5 Grant that was focused on capturing economic potential and quality of life for Franklin County. Red Bay is home to Allegro Campers and Sunshine Organic Dog Food as well as a number of other thriving industries. There is an intact historic downtown and a number of existing indicators of strength along with some remarkable opportunities for building on these inherent assets. Our town hall meetings confirmed strong leadership and a confidence that Red Bay has the "can-do" spirit and evidence of pride in their hometown that are the most important indicators of a community's ability to succeed.

We challenge Red Bay, as you approach your 100th anniversary celebration in 2007, to create a program of downtown reinvestment that will allow you to build your strength as a great small town and to take a leadership role in anchoring the exceptional recreational and tourism opportunities of Franklin county and Northwest Alabama.

RECREATIONAL CONNECTIONS

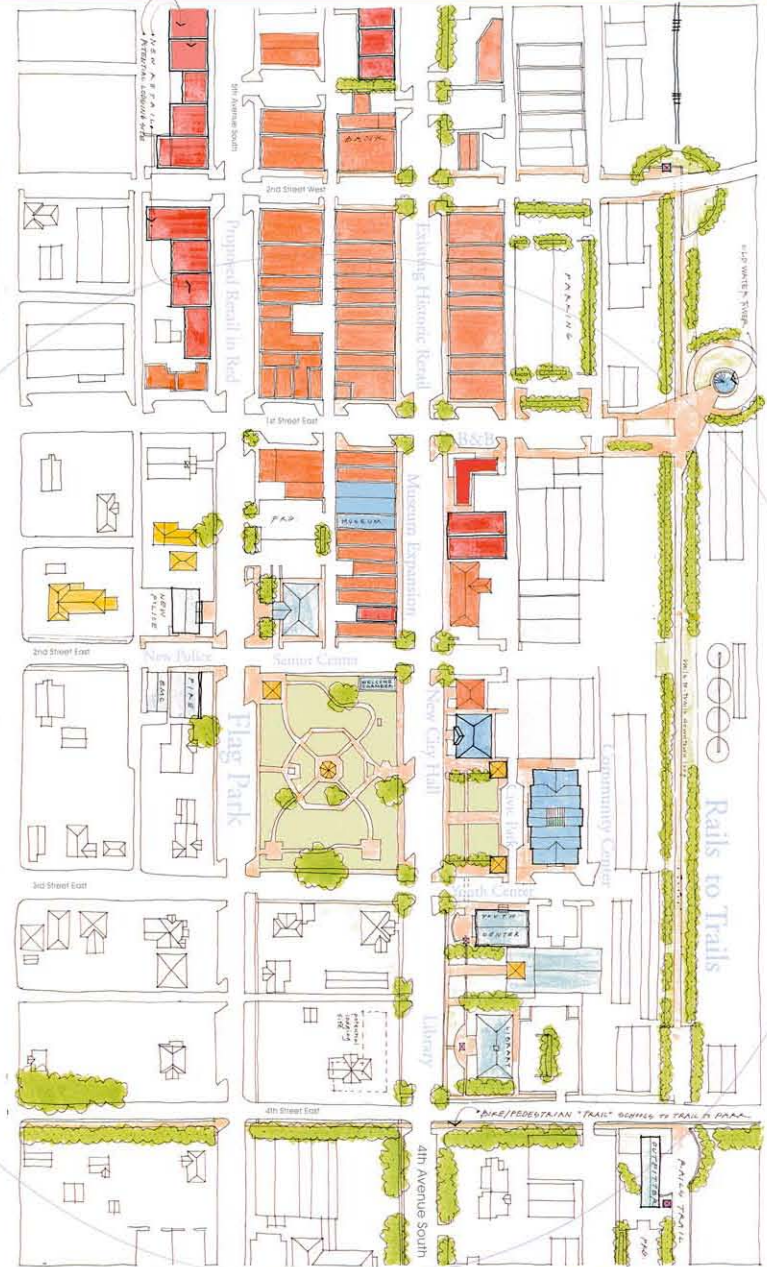
Franklin County has extraordinary natural beauty and opportunities of location that can make recreation a significant component of the local economy. Within an easy drive for residents of Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama the area is rugged, steeped in wildlife and poised to attract not only the traditional hunters and fishermen, but also hikers, nature enthusiasts, canoeist, bird watchers and campers. Red Bay, in the Freedom Hills at the western edge of the county is within twenty miles of the Natchez Trace, Bay Springs Lake, the Freedom Hills Wildlife Refuge, Thomas Wildlife Management area, Cedar Creek Lake, Little Bear Creek Reservoir, Rock Bridge Canyon, the Damsels and the Coon Dog Cemetery. The Spivey Wilderness is less than an hour away as is the Tennessee River.

Red Bay can position itself to be a starting point for information, tours, excursions and equipment gear for those accessing these amenities. Work to recruit an outfitter that is located in the downtown with safe day/overnight parking, instruction, guides, maps and information. Partner with local lodging, eateries and businesses to build synergies around this target market.

In addition, the community should take a leadership role in protecting and preserving the quality and character of the local countryside to provide long-term quality of life and economic sustainability for this industry.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the Mayor, Jeff Reid; City Clerk, Linda Holcomb; and the entire city government for your support of this project. In addition we appreciate the coverage by local TV and the Red Bay News; attorney John Benn provided web reporting; The Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments, Keith Jones, Director and Ben Farmer, offered back ground information; maps and have pledged local support for the advancement of the plan. Cheryl Morgan, Graham Professor of Architecture and the Director of the Urban Studio led the design effort.



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN RED BAY

Downtown is the figurative and literal "heart of the community." As a rail and industrial town Red Bay has strong evidence of the value of this concentration of business, retail and local services. We encourage you to preserve and protect the historic downtown and make it the true center of activity that anchors your great small town. Establish or follow the principles of a Main Street Program that builds on synergies; economic attraction of the distinct marketplace provided by a historic downtown; the leverage power of a unified economic, marketing and promotion strategy; and the advantages of unified management of the downtown as a single retail/commercial market place. Successful shopping centers follow these principles. So should a downtown that expects to thrive.
A Main Street Program provides capacity and a national support office to provide the structure needed to foster downtown revitalization. Capitalization and resources for incentive programs can come through the community reinvestment funds of banks, grants, donations and fun-raising in the local industrial community. A beautiful, healthy and thriving downtown is good for everyone's business.

Entrepreneurial Spirit Outdoor Recreation Historic Downtown Avenue of Trees Natural Beauty

