

Town of Double Springs, AL Master Plan

A guide to developing local assets in Double Springs, Alabama.

Double Springs Master Plan

Prepared with the assistance of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments



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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Master Plan for Double Springs, Alabama reflects the unique development experiences of a small town in the isolated, rugged and rural heart of Northwest Alabama. Founded to serve the agrarian commercial, institutional and social needs of a sparsely populated rural county, Double Springs was designated as the county seat of Winston County, Alabama in 1884 and eventually incorporated as a municipality in 1943. From its birth until today, the town has moved forward at a gradual pace, incorporating growth organically and spontaneously into its development patterns. Historically, organic and uncoordinated development has been less problematic in towns like Double Springs with low rates of growth and high community cohesion. Of late, however, unprecedented challenges face such small towns, as jobs and population are lost and the town struggles to find appropriate solutions to critical community problems. The Double Springs Master Plan is the town's response to these challenges, proposing realistic strategies for short and long term activities designed to improve quality of life and increase opportunities for local residents.

Double Springs Planning Jurisdiction

Double Springs's Master Plan is created under the general authority of Alabama's municipalities to shape policy related to the exercise of police powers, capital facilities, and public services. Typically, such plans are prepared under the guidance of a planning commission. Early in the planning process, the Town Council of Double Springs considered the creation of a municipal planning commission to guide the planning process. However, the Council determined that the Town's existing capacity to establish a commission was lacking due to relatively little experience in the enforcement of regulatory development tools. The Council determined that the most prudent course was to prepare an initial plan, under the Council's authority, that would consider the range of development tools available to the Town and present a realistic course, well-grounded in the local community capacity. Nonetheless, the Double Springs Master Plan meets the content requirements specified in Alabama Code 11-52-8, which guide the creation of a master plan by a municipal planning commission. In addition, the Master Plan offers strategies for the implementation of additional development tools by the town as a means of increasing local regulatory capacity and public acceptance and involvement in the planning process.

Purpose of the Double Springs Plan

Double Springs's development patterns present a number of difficulties. Since the Town has grown slowly and organically within primarily rural surroundings, demand for services has been limited, meaning that there have been few difficulties offering high levels of service to residents. With concerns about economic conditions and local government financial capacity combining with challenges from population loss and the need to balance existing and future development patterns, Double Springs has a need to prioritize strategies in order to concentrate on the most efficient and effective means of solving community problems. The Master Plan provides an overview of existing conditions and trends and presents an analysis of the alternatives for future growth and development.

A Master Plan represents a significant element in the civic and political life of the community, supported by effective analysis, public outreach, and communication. The planning process provides a focal point for sharing ideas, determining common goals and objectives, and presenting strategies for moving forward. The Master Plan will provide insights into desired growth patterns and strategies, the location of new developments, the redevelopment of existing property, and improvements/expansions to existing infrastructure. The plan is an official document, adopted by the Town Council, and designed to guide decision making by putting forethought to official actions and infusing those actions with adequate public support. In addition, as the main point of reference for evaluating town decisions, the plan also provides significant guidance to private investments. Ultimately, the coordinated planning process and the resulting decisions are designed to improve the quality of life and opportunities available to residents of Double Springs.

Public Participation

In reality, the Town of Double Springs is similar to many small towns throughout Alabama. Particularly in rural settings, contention surrounds the process of planning and community development. Conflict resolution is often the first step toward building a consensus around the need for planning, and public participation provides an outlet for such discussions. Managing conflict requires an understanding of the perspectives of others and a desire to create partnerships with realistic opportunities for success. Although not all of the people will be happy about solutions all of the time, common ground often exists with respect to community vision and goals. Determining acceptable solutions that meet the demands of residents while respecting widespread community values (including, in some cases, opposition to certain actions) is a core purpose of planning. Therefore, a public participation plan was incorporated into the Double Springs Master Plan from the outset as an essential element.

The process for gathering public input into the planning process began with the identification of key local business, civic, and volunteer stakeholders, who were interviewed over the course of several weeks and asked questions concerning the growth and development patterns, challenges, and opportunities for Double Springs. Following this process, a series of public planning workshops were held to discuss the findings of research and interviews. Public hearings were held on January 28, 2010 and March 22, 2010. The results of these interviews and meetings have been incorporated into the discussion of development challenges below, as well as the background analysis and plan of action for the Town.

Development Challenges

Double Springs is confronted with a number of challenges that will have to be addressed in coming years. The most vital challenge is to find a means to overcome the economic problems, to create jobs, and to position Double Springs to provide better economic opportunities to residents. This must happen in order to stem the loss of population and stabilize growth and development. Double Springs must take stock of its current condition and the tools available to create a more appealing economic environment in order to accomplish this task. One of the most significant difficulties will be utilizing these tools to create additional opportunities for growth while dealing with resistance to change. Often, this resistance takes the form of apprehension regarding new plans and programs. A crucial challenge will be to present planning and growth policies in a manner that creates incremental opportunities for change and promotes benefits that are visible and meaningful. Such changes can be harnessed to correct or improve conditions and to increase health, safety and convenience in Double Springs. The following areas pose challenges to Double Springs' growth and development and will be difficult to address without considerable planning.

Transportation- Double Springs is located in an isolated, rural, and rugged part of northwest Alabama. Like many places, Double Springs is isolated from major transportation routes and other urban areas. As a result, growth is not a natural occurrence. Instead, without careful and strategic cultivation of opportunity, the trend in these locations is typically toward stagnation and decline. Unfortunately, there is no easy solution since the town can't be packed up and relocated to a major corridor or interstate route. In addition, the geography of Winston County and the steep slopes of southern Appalachia are not conducive to easy construction. Given these challenges, the town's options for creating new transportation opportunities are limited and Double Springs must instead focus on maximizing existing opportunities by eliminating and preventing dangerous points of conflict while promoting orderly and efficient development along streets of different types.

Density- Density of development is an issue in Double Springs for several reasons. First, more dispersed development patterns lead to increased development costs for developers, increased maintenance costs for utility companies and public works, and increased operating costs for town services. Double Springs operates public water and sewer utilities, maintains public streets, and polices the town. Keeping the cost of development and maintenance low will help to ensure that these costs do not hurt growth that could benefit the Town. Double Springs would benefit by having the greatest number of individuals living in the closest proximity. However, the idea of density and its public benefits can be unpopular, but with appropriate design of residential and commercial subdivisions, the benefits can far outweigh the sacrifices. As such, density should be encouraged to the extent that the local housing market will bear, and appropriate local codes should encourage density through such measures as provisions for preserving open space and allowing mixed-density developments.

Topography- Double Springs faces a shortage of land for development within its corporate limits. Double Springs's rugged terrain and the Town's reliance on septic tanks contribute to the lack of available land. Subdivision design standards should be explored and encouraged to promote quality developments that take advantage of Double Springs' natural beauty and terrain.

Business Development- Double Springs faces significant challenges related to the growth of new businesses and the preservation of its existing central business district. Like many small towns, Double Springs depends heavily on its local sales tax to fund local government activities and services. Much of the town's new commercial activity has been along Highway 278, creating a drain on the traditional downtown. While new businesses have sprung up lately, they have been largely homegrown and have only replaced other businesses that have closed down in recent years. Double Springs will be challenged as it tries to keep both Highway 278 and downtown healthy and viable commercial centers.

Property Maintenance & Appearance- As Double Springs looks for new growth opportunities, issues of property maintenance and appearance will become increasingly important. Many of the development opportunities in Double Springs, such as retiree attraction and tourism, are directly related to outside perception of the town's character and appearance. Double Springs' growth and development in the past has not addressed the orderly placement of buildings, the location of home occupations, and the need to maintain an attractive overall appearance. The town will be challenged to develop an effective process to educate about the need and desirability of new techniques for creating an attractive appearance.

Organization of the Double Springs Master Plan

The Double Springs Master Plan is organized into eight sections. Section One: Introduction presents an overview of the study area, the purpose of the plan, and the basic challenges facing the Town of Double Springs. Section Two: Land Use Plan presents the vision for development in Double Springs and the land use planning priorities that will be essential to achieving this vision. These chapters contain, at a glance, the most significant recommendations of the Master Plan.

The next sections describe Double Springs's development patterns, how they came to be and what they will look like going forward. Section Three: History and Natural Resources presents the history and physical geography of Double Springs. Section Four: Transportation and Land Use reviews the existing development features of the Town and discusses relationships among these. Section Five: Double Springs's Population and Economy presents current demographic and economic data important to the Town's development. Section Six: Public Services and Capital Facilities reviews the services provided by the Town and areas of concern. Section Seven: Population and Land Use Trends presents demographic forecasts for growth in Double Springs and planning

jurisdiction and a model of land development based on current land use characteristics. These sections present the factual data and analysis that underlies the conclusions and recommendation of the Master Plan.

Finally, Section Eight: Implementation closes out the plan by providing a review of the important actors and tools employed in the successful implementation of a community master plan.

The chapters of the Master Plan are organized to present recommendations and intended actions within the first two chapters, present data and analysis of existing and likely future growth patterns in succeeding chapters, and to present an overview of the implementation process in the final chapter. This organization allows for ease of reference, but each chapter's analysis and recommendations are important to the overall integrity of the Master Plan.

Existing Plans

The organization and recommendations in this Master Plan are drawn heavily from planning studies undertaken in recent years as well as new research and study. In particular, the Master Plan was greatly informed by the recommendations of the Downtown Proposal for Double Springs, Alabama by the Auburn Urban Studio, 2005. Previous plans and studies were also helpful, including the Double Springs Community Development Strategies, NACOLG, 1985 and the Community Development Plan, Muscle Shoals Council of Governments, 1974. Each of these plans contained timely recommendations for future growth and development. The current Master Plan builds upon and expands the recommendations of these plans.

Summary

The Double Springs Master Plan is intended to guide growth and development in Double Springs and the immediate planning jurisdiction for the next several years. The document updates and expands upon existing plans and proposes a continued plan of action related to efforts to create a better quality of life in Double Springs. These efforts are embodied in a community vision, which is expressed in the Master Plan along with goals, objectives and recommendations that will bring the vision into being.

SECTION TWO: LAND USE PLAN

The purpose of land use planning is to identify the features of a community that should be preserved and those that could be changed to greater benefit the community. Double Springs's community assets include history, climate, and recreational opportunities. The challenges of development include providing for safe and efficient public services, accommodating commercial and residential development, and preserving key assets. The Town has grown slowly over time, however, prevalent growth patterns may not be the most sustainable going forward. Therefore, the future land use plan presents a discussion of the means by which the Town of Double Springs can enhance community value through measures that preserve and promote features that enhance quality of life for residents.

The Vision of the Double Springs Master Plan

The Double Springs Master Plan is based on a vision that can be summarized as follows:

Double Springs, Alabama will be a place where people of all ages have opportunities to live, work, and prosper. It will be a community with a strong small town character, a good downtown area, good commercial opportunities, and a good appearance. It will use all of its assets and opportunities to create a place where the children of today can grow and succeed as adults tomorrow.

The vision of the Double Springs Master Plan will encompass the following long-term goals:

- Address needs of aging population through adequate housing, medical services, and community design.
- Create an inviting community for youth with adequate housing, playgrounds and recreation, and strong public education.
- Improve community appearance through adoption of zoning, building and property maintenance ordinances, and installing landscaping along principal highways and at key gateways.
- Redevelop downtown as a business and service district by improving parking and access, creating adequate incentives for businesses to locate and expand, and improving downtown community design.
- Promote new commercial opportunities along US 278 that conform to appropriate standards for access, parking, circulation, and design.
- Preserve existing industrial parks and continue support for county cooperative district.
- Maintain fiscal responsibility by developing a capital budget and prioritizing public improvements in accordance with the community development plan.
- Maintain and improve public safety standards by improving dangerous intersections, widening streets as needed, installing sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians in appropriate locations, and continuing support for police and fire protection.
 - Implement recommendations of the Auburn Urban Studio Plan
 - Capitalize on Double Springs' Excellent Location
 - Celebrate Double Springs's Small Town Character and Excellent History in Winston County
 - Expand the Possibilities of a Vigorous Downtown
 - Strengthen and Protect the Gateways to the Community
 - Encourage Good New housing and Neighborhoods
 - Connect Schools to Neighborhoods and Recreation
 - Promote Double Springs as a Good Place to Retire
 - Create a Downtown Civic Park, a Nature Park, and a Strong System of Pedestrian Connections
 - Create a Plan for Highway 278
 - Build for a Sustainable Future

These features encompass a variety of social and economic objectives, but the core commitment is this: **a community with these features yields a high quality of life for citizens, visitors, and neighbors.** The town is committed to these long-term goals and will seek to implement them in each development decision undertaken. In addition to these long-term goals, Double Springs has developed a number of immediate and short-term goals, which represent strategies for achieving long-term objectives.

Immediate and Short-Term Priorities

Double Springs is committed to realizing improvements in the Town's overall quality of life for residents and visitors by pursuing a vision for the community. To achieve the goals required for this vision, the Town has established strategic priorities that will be pursued in the Town's jurisdiction. These priorities will be sought using the Town's resources, including its capacity for enforcing land development tools such as subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances, municipal ordinances, and public financing.

Zoning Ordinance- Prepare a zoning ordinance for the Town of Double Springs to preserve and protect property values and guide growth in accordance with the recommendations of the Master Plan.

Building Code- Adopt and enforce a local building code to provide high quality construction throughout the town.

Subdivision Regulations- Consider the establishment of a planning commission to enforce subdivision regulations and take an active role in zoning. The planning commission should also play an active role implementing the Master Plan's other recommendations.

Improve Downtown – Expand parking, provide pedestrian access, and provide parks and open space downtown.

Town Beautification- Provide for landscaping and beautification of major transportation corridors through Town, including a major gateways initiative.

Emergency Service- Police and Fire- Maintain and expand services at a rate that improves the quality of emergency services provided by the Town of Double Springs

Community Involvement- Build community involvement in Town activities and create advisory boards and committees as necessary. Publish a Town newsletter and encourage public involvement in civic life.

Commercial Diversification- Develop a strategic plan for economic development that includes strategies for recruiting and retaining commercial opportunities for retail and service enterprises to serve the needs of the population of Double Springs and Winston County. Include strategies for marketing, recruitment, and explore opportunities for growth in activities related to shopping, daily services, and leisure.

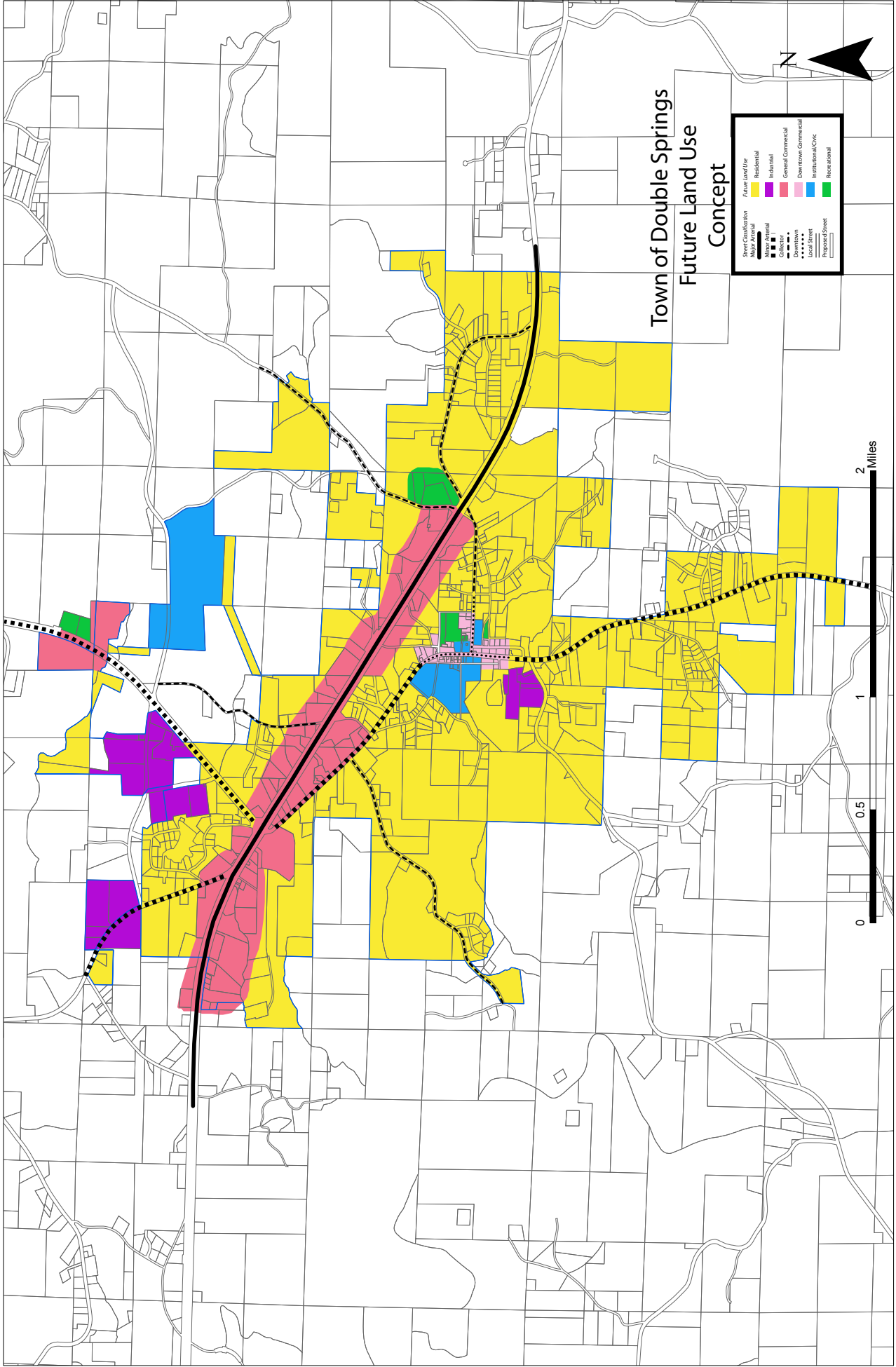
Land Development Concept

The following map presents a visual and graphic representation of the development patterns desired by the Town. This map, which serves as the future land use map for the Town of Double Springs, graphically represents the concepts and plans of the Town regarding the location of differing land uses and requirements for property improvements. The Land Development Concept is intended as a policy guide for decision makers for determining the location and extent of residential, commercial, recreational and open space as well as the necessity for certain other features of development.

Development Strategies

Finally, in pursuit of its vision and goals, Double Springs will follow established design and development principles that serve as a guide for creating developments of the type and character desirable to the Town. These principles, which are related to transportation, housing and commercial development, will be promoted as a guide for developers, for public investment and for public review of pending developments. They represent the design principles around which Double Springs will structure development in order to achieve its long-term goals. These guidelines are intended to shape development by influencing land use, zoning and other development decisions made by the Town of Double Springs.

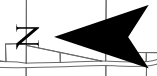
- Properties along 278 should be reserved for commercial development requiring high visibility and access. Within the constraints of local topography, strip commercial development should be avoided. Consideration should be given to multiple-family residential developments where appropriate transportation is available, such as the intersection of existing or proposed arterials and collectors. Setbacks and development patterns should prioritize mobility over direct access to adjacent property while encouraging maximum utilization of developable land. Parking should be confined to side or rear lots.
- Double Springs should continue to develop a regionally attractive recreational center at the site of the present community center.
- Properties along 195 that are not in the downtown district should be reserved primarily for residential activities including single and multiple family developments with limited commercial activities at major intersections. Outside of downtown along Highway 195, design should emphasize a balance of mobility and direct access by encouraging internal circulation and discouraging vehicles from backing onto 195 through the use of deeper setbacks.
- Properties within the downtown district should be reserved for service and retail commercial activities benefitting from high pedestrian traffic and location near the government service center. New residential development should be encouraged upstairs in downtown buildings and adjacent to downtown businesses along side streets. Setbacks and design should favor pedestrian traffic, traditional shallow setbacks, and appropriate sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting. New streets should be considered that increase the commercial space available in downtown and improve traffic circulation and parking opportunities. New parking facilities should be developed adjacent to downtown and in front of buildings and in rear parking lots. Areas should be reserved or planned for the expansion of greenways and a central park for downtown Double Springs.
- Industrial development should be contained in existing industrial parks adequately served by transportation facilities and utilities.



Town of Double Springs Future Land Use Concept

Future Land Use	
Residential	Yellow
Industrial	Purple
General Commercial	Pink
Downtown Commercial	Light Blue
Institutional/Civic	Dark Blue
Recreational	Green

Street Classification	
Arterial	Solid Line
Collector	Dashed Line
Local Street	Dotted Line
Proposed Street	Thin Solid Line



- Single-family residential development should be allowed in all other areas with sufficient utilities and sewage disposal. Where possible, promote the expansion of utilities to accommodate multiple family residential apartments and townhomes. Encourage the use of conservation design and mixed density developments in order to preserve open space and scenic views, which preserve property values and encourage efficient delivery of utilities and services.
- Higher density residential development should be promoted any place with sufficient utilities and access to transportation infrastructure.

When used all together, these principles are best practices to guide the land use and development decisions of the Town of Double Springs. Such decisions, where ever possible, should be in accordance with these principles in order to create the fundamental ‘livability’ features encompassed in the Town’s vision. Only through concerted and coordinated effort can the features that require preservation be protected and those features that require nurturing and encouragement be promoted within the Town of Double Springs.

Summary

Double Springs is a small town with clear ideas for growth and development, which are embodied in the land use portion of the Master Plan. The Town vision encompasses a community where people enjoy opportunity in a comfortable environment. Improvements to the Town’s public safety, transportation, housing, and commercial developments are planned to bring about a higher quality of life. Through the efforts outlined in the Master Plan, Double Springs will concentrate efforts toward creating a community with neighborhoods and districts of lasting value.

SECTION THREE: HISTORY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Historical Summary

Double Springs, Alabama is located in central Winston County adjacent to U.S. Highway 278 and State Route 195. The town's centrality and accessibility relative to the rest of the county is a central feature of its history. In 1819, when Alabama became a state, Winston County was organized as part of Blount and Tuscaloosa counties. In 1824, Walker County was created and included the territory of modern day Winston County. In the same year, an act of the Alabama legislature authorized the construction of the Cheatham Road, connecting Moulton and Tuscaloosa. Along this route, at the site of the present town, two natural springs were discovered running side by side. This rare natural feature endowed the community with its name.

In 1850, Hancock County was created and eight years later renamed Winston County. The county gained notoriety during the Civil War when opponents of Alabama's succession met at Looney's Tavern near Double Springs to assert the right of a county to secede from a state. Though the county never seceded, the legendary "Free State of Winston" was born.

Houston served as the town's original county seat; however, in 1883 county voters supported an initiative to move the county seat to a more central location- Double Springs. At the time, the community had around one hundred residents. The original wooden courthouse burned in 1891. The central portion of the current sandstone structure was completed in 1894. Several subsequent additions give the courthouse its distinct "I" shape. Meanwhile, construction continued around the court square, which became the commercial heart of the town. Over the years, Double Springs has continued to grow at a slow but steady pace, expanding outward with the contours and valleys of the rugged landscape.

The town was incorporated as a municipality in 1943 and in recent decades, Double Springs grew to be a significant employment center for Winston County. Much of the town's economic base came from the manufactured housing sector, which has suffered from through cycles of boom and bust. In the last decade, the town has struggled to maintain vitality. Sustainability in terms of population and economic development are paramount goals for the future.

Natural Resources

Natural resources and environmental context provide the conditions that enable or inhibit growth. Natural features such as topography and slope, proximity to water, and other site-specific development conditions will create favorable or unfavorable development circumstances. Temperate weather, clean air and topography are among the natural resources most likely to affect Double Springs's growth in coming years. The region's mountainous topography presents significant limitations to development due to steep slopes and difficult soil conditions that constrain growth. Although such conditions can be remedied with extensive cut and fill operations, these activities may present environmental risks and detract from the natural beauty of the town, thereby reducing opportunities in the future. As such, careful management of natural resources should be hallmarks of Double Springs's growth to ensure that today's development patterns preserve lasting value for the future. The following sections review these factors and discuss their relationship to existing and likely patterns of development in the vicinity.

Topography and Slope

The general relief of Winston County is characterized by irregular and elongated hills with steep slopes. The Town of Double Springs rests atop a narrow ridge in the center of the county with elevations ranging upward from 700 feet to approximate 825 feet. Areas of steep slopes fall away quickly just beyond the developed ridgeline, presenting difficulty for development due to the cost of earthmoving, soil limitations and risk of landslides. For this reason, Double Springs growth has concentrated in narrow bands along ridgelines adjacent to highways. While largely linear, presenting difficulties in providing for traffic circulation, interconnectivity, and infrastructure, this pattern offers tremendous potential to capitalize on vistas and views.

Soils

Soil formation is a complicated process involving the interaction of geologic, organic and meteorological occurrences. Soils are formed by the effects of wind, water and volcanic activity on rock, the effects of organic activities such as plant growth, and the decomposition of organic materials. A variety of soil characteristics, such as slope, permeability, and depth affect the suitability of a particular site for development. For planning purposes, soils affect the use of land for specific purposes and activities and should be examined before the location of most land uses, including residences, commercial operations, industries, as well as roads and drainage. The cost of development for housing, reservoirs, roads, bridges, and all manner of improvements are related to these characteristics. Soil examination should be an integral part of the development of preliminary plans and cost estimates for a site, and principles of soil conservation and management should be incorporated into all stages of development. Soils are classified in a number of ways, according to a variety of characteristics. There are two major soil associations in Winston County.

Group 1. These soils are shallow and moderately deep, well-drained soils on 2 to 15 percent slopes. Dominant slopes are from 6 to 15 percent. These soils have loamy surface layers and clayey subsoils. They are strongly acid. Depth to bedrock ranges from 3 to 6 feet. The soils of this group have moderate permeability and moderately rapid runoff. They have moderate limitations for urban development.

Group 2. These soils are shallow and moderately deep, well to excessively drained on 15 to 35 percent slopes. They have sandy and loamy surface layers with loamy and clayey subsoils. Some areas consist of sandstone boulders and outcrops. Between these stones the soil material is of varying depths up to 6 feet in places. They are strongly to very strongly acidic. Permeability is slow in places and rapid in others. Runoff is rapid to very rapid. These soils have severe limitations for urban development due

mainly to steep slope and depth to hard bedrock.

Wetlands and Flooding

In Double Springs, drainage features are common in the ravines and valleys of the terrain. There are few identified flood areas or wetlands, and most development has occurred well above these areas along higher slopes of the area. As much as possible, Double Springs should avoid encroachment into areas of flooding and wetlands. In addition, the Town should consider best management practices for new developments, including retention and detention of stormwater and adequate erosion control measures, in order to prevent changes to flood patterns and pollution.

Recommendations

Double Springs is a very unique place because of its geography and natural environment. The town should evaluate environmental regulations to protect slopes and wetlands. Construction requirements for sedimentation and erosion control should be incorporated into the development practices of the community. Additionally, the town should attempt to develop ridges in a manner that preserves views and prevents undue sprawl. Clustered developments and higher density apartments and townhomes can be used to preserve the natural environment. Finally, Double Springs should work to actively promote its natural resources and proximity to outdoor recreation. The town's image should promote these assets at key gateways and along main roads with appropriate signs and a clean, orderly appearance.

Summary

History and natural resources have shaped growth in Double Springs. Natural topographic challenges were overcome to an extent, but a legacy of rural isolation and difficult terrain are apparent in Double Springs. Growth has followed the path of least resistance and has largely consolidated in areas with the least natural limitation, such as ridgetops, giving the town a distinctive layout and appearance. Future growth and development should consider these limitations and the potential harmful effects to the environment and character of the Town that can come of excessive disturbance or intrusion into areas with significant development difficulties.

SECTION FOUR: TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

People inhabit places and change them to suit their needs. These changes leave impressions in the land and the built environment that frame human interaction going forward. Once established, this framework can be difficult to alter. One way to begin to understand the effects that this framework has on the human dimensions of the community is to describe existing land use and transportation patterns in order to frame a discussion of those elements that are valued within the community and those that are less valued, and therefore subject to change.

Development Patterns and Human Activity

The earliest communities were formed around the needs of people to provide specialized economic goods to one another and to improve living conditions and standards. Patterns of settlement were largely influenced by available means of transportation, which means that early cities had narrow streets, short blocks and features that allowed for the provision of every daily need within a short walk of the residence. As technology changed, cities changed. Industrialization brought changes to cities, which had possessed relatively stable development patterns for centuries. As productivity increased, ever larger workforce gathered in cities swelling population and creating overcrowding and desperate living conditions. At the same time, production methods created health and safety hazards to nearby residents from smoke, pollution and fire hazards. Although urban planning had been around since the earliest cities, providing for basic necessities like clean water and for great works of civic art, modern planning began in response to the problems of modern urban life. At first efforts were made to beautify the public spaces of cities that had grown dark from pollution and overcrowding. Planning eventually led to the separation of land uses into districts in order to prevent incompatible land uses from contaminating one another. At the same time, advances in transportation and the modern automobile allowed further commutes than previously possible. Although beneficial in eliminating immediate threats to health and safety, in many cases, these changes have resulted in detrimental community effects, which plans now seek to evaluate and overcome. All of these changes caused shifts in the development patterns of cities and towns, and depending upon the age and longevity of development, a place will reflect these changes in the layout of streets, blocks, and structures.

Development patterns in Double Springs have been shaped by a confluence of regional events, major economic factors, and transportation patterns. The Town is located in an isolated rural part of the State. Viewed from a high altitude, it is apparent that Double Springs has developed primarily as a result of intersecting transportation features-highway crossings- that provided central access to county services and employment opportunities. Patterns have evolved to take advantage of these features and created the current imprint of physical development.

The Town's development patterns have reflected rural character in low population density, large lots sizes, mixed agricultural and forestry uses, dispersed development, and little new road construction. As Double Springs grew, development occurred on large lots adjacent to major roads. Street layout was traditionally organic, with streets and roads matching land contours and the layout of agricultural and residential development. No over-arching pattern, such as "grid" or "curvilinear", was dominant in the Town's layout. Up until recently, little attention has been given to the effects of these development patterns on natural resource consumption, traffic patterns, or urban services or the town's appearance and future prospects.

Transportation Inventory and Classification

Double Springs is located at the intersection two significant highways through Winston County, Alabama. Both U.S. Highway 278 and Highway 195 serve as regional thoroughfares for the area, which does not have immediate access to an interstate highway. Aside from these main routes, several major county roads come together in the vicinity of Double Springs. Remaining streets are local streets providing access to individual properties. Since trips vary greatly in length, speed, number of stops, and so forth- streets in Double Springs and immediate surroundings need to be designed to most efficiently meet the needs of travelers. An adequate transportation plan is necessary to ensure the integrity and functionality of roadways.

Transportation plans are based on a functional classification that makes a distinction between those streets meant primarily to convey traffic at high speeds and those meant primarily to provide access to individual properties, homes, and businesses. At the highest level of the functional classification are principal arterials, which are meant to convey lots of traffic at high speeds, across long distances, and with low access to adjacent land. These are generally interstate highway and freeways, of which there are none in Double Springs. Next are arterials, which provide for regional travel for large traffic volumes at high speeds. To maintain speed and traffic volume, arterials are designed for low access to adjacent land. Highway 278 falls into this category, although within Double Springs the road also serves to provide higher access to adjacent properties. Collectors are intermediate roads that provide for medium length trips. Collectors support intermediate traffic volumes at medium speeds. They also serve to give access to arterial streets from local streets. Finally, local streets are meant to convey low traffic volumes at slow speeds. Trip lengths are meant to be very short trips, allowing a high degree of access to adjacent property.

Type of Street	Traffic Volumes	Length of Trip	Speed	Access to Property	Example
Principal Arterial	Highest	Longest	Highest	Lowest	Interstate Highway
Arterial (Major)	High	Long	High	Low	U.S. 278
Arterial (Minor)	High	Long	High	Low	Hwy 195
Collector (Major)	Medium	Long	Medium	Medium	Hwy 33; Co. Rd 53;
Collector (Minor)	Medium	Short	Low	Medium	Blake Dr.; Co. Rd. 25; Cagle Rd.; Bailey Rd.
Local	Lowest	Shortest	Lowest	Highest	

Traffic Flows and Capacity

Double Springs' major streets are Highway 278 and Highway 195. Highway 278 has been widened with a center turn lane for about half of a mile near the intersection of 278 and 195. Otherwise, all streets are two lanes throughout Double Springs. The highest traffic volumes flow through downtown Double Springs along Highway 195. The Alabama Department of Transportation classifies Highway 278 as a Rural Principal Arterial, which has an estimated 24-hour capacity of 17,800 vehicles per day. Highway 195 is classified by ALDOT as a Rural Major Collector, with an estimated 24-hour capacity of 16,600 vehicles per day. Traffic counts on both highways fall below their respective capacity estimate.

Land Use Inventory

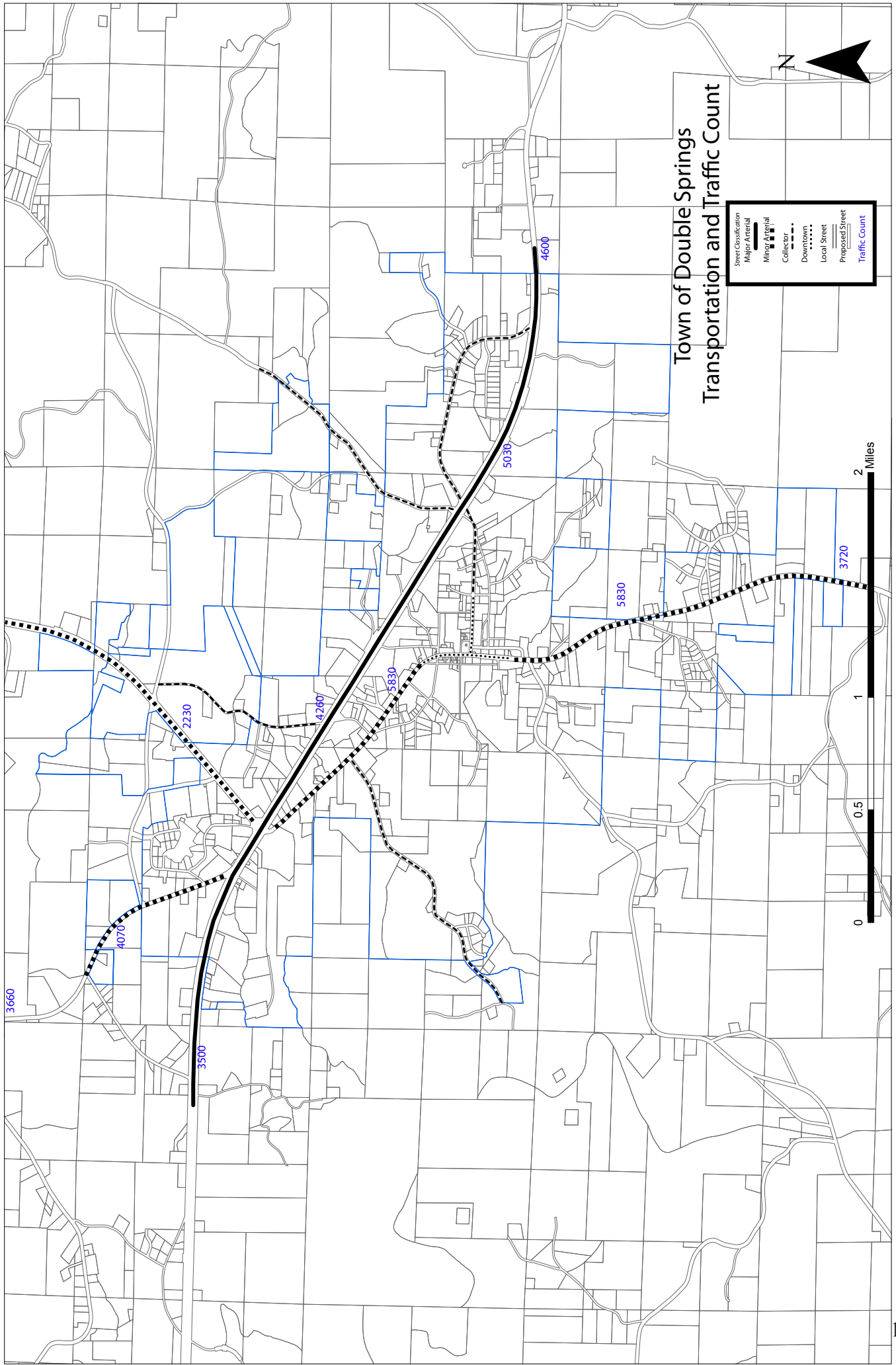
Double Springs's land use patterns reveal the development trends of its past and its place as a crossroads of a traditionally rural community. Within the corporate limits, the majority of land area is used for large lot residential development, with significant portions still devoted to open space and agriculture. Development patterns are sprawling and reveal the absence of centralized sewer treatment needed for higher density developments as well as the effects of topography on land division throughout town. [map]

Residential land uses- Neighborhoods form naturally where people have common interests. Sometimes they are single developments, large multi-site developments, or groups of similar developments. Other times, they are the result of slow construction where development has extended itself gradually. Usually neighborhoods that form naturally in a short period of time will contain families of similar economic circumstances and structures with similar visual elements, although this is not always the case. The visual elements that signal a location as a coherent neighborhood can be strong determinants of its identity. And, since the most telling characteristic of a neighborhood is the sense of identity it imparts to inhabitants and others familiar with its geographic boundaries, there can be benefits from providing cohesive neighborhood design.

Neighborhoods in Double Springs have not developed in a specific and describable design. Houses throughout town vary in age and reflect a very organic and slow growth and development. In many places, construction materials are similar throughout town because older homes were built using local materials or, in newer developments, a number of houses were built at once and reflect the economy of using certain materials in the design and construction of buildings. In Double Springs, growth has been slow and most residences were built in the latter half of the twentieth century, when a variety of building materials were abundant. Therefore, a diversity of construction materials has been used in the town. Additionally, manufactured housing has been an influential local industry and source of affordable housing, so manufactured homes are common throughout the town. Single family structures are the dominant housing type. Mixed income developments are very common, but housing unit density has been established primarily by the needs of septic systems and topographic constraints. There are only a few multiple family structures. The primary residential concern for the town is how to improve the quality and appearance of existing housing in order to improve the image of the town and make it a more inviting place for people to live.

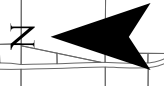
Commercial land uses- As in other areas, commercial land use in Double Springs has followed transportation patterns. Early commerce was sited downtown adjacent to Highway 195, but as Highway 278 has been improved, new commerce was developed at the intersection of 278 and 195. Commercial patterns have continued to shift toward areas of higher accessibility, higher anticipated traffic counts, and undeveloped property along 278. Today, Double Springs's major commercial activities are divided between 278, with strip commercial and intersection shopping center development patterns, and downtown. Double Springs will be challenged to manage commercial development in a way that promotes commercial diversity and new businesses throughout town, while improving the condition of downtown and preserving its place as the town's central service and small retail center.

Manufacturing land uses- Double Springs' manufacturing land uses are largely concentrated in two industrial parks. The majority of manufacturing and heavy goods storage and handling is related to Double Springs' manufactured housing industry. A few scattered light manufacturing and repair facilities are found throughout town. A private landfill is located adjacent to the town limits near Winston County High School.

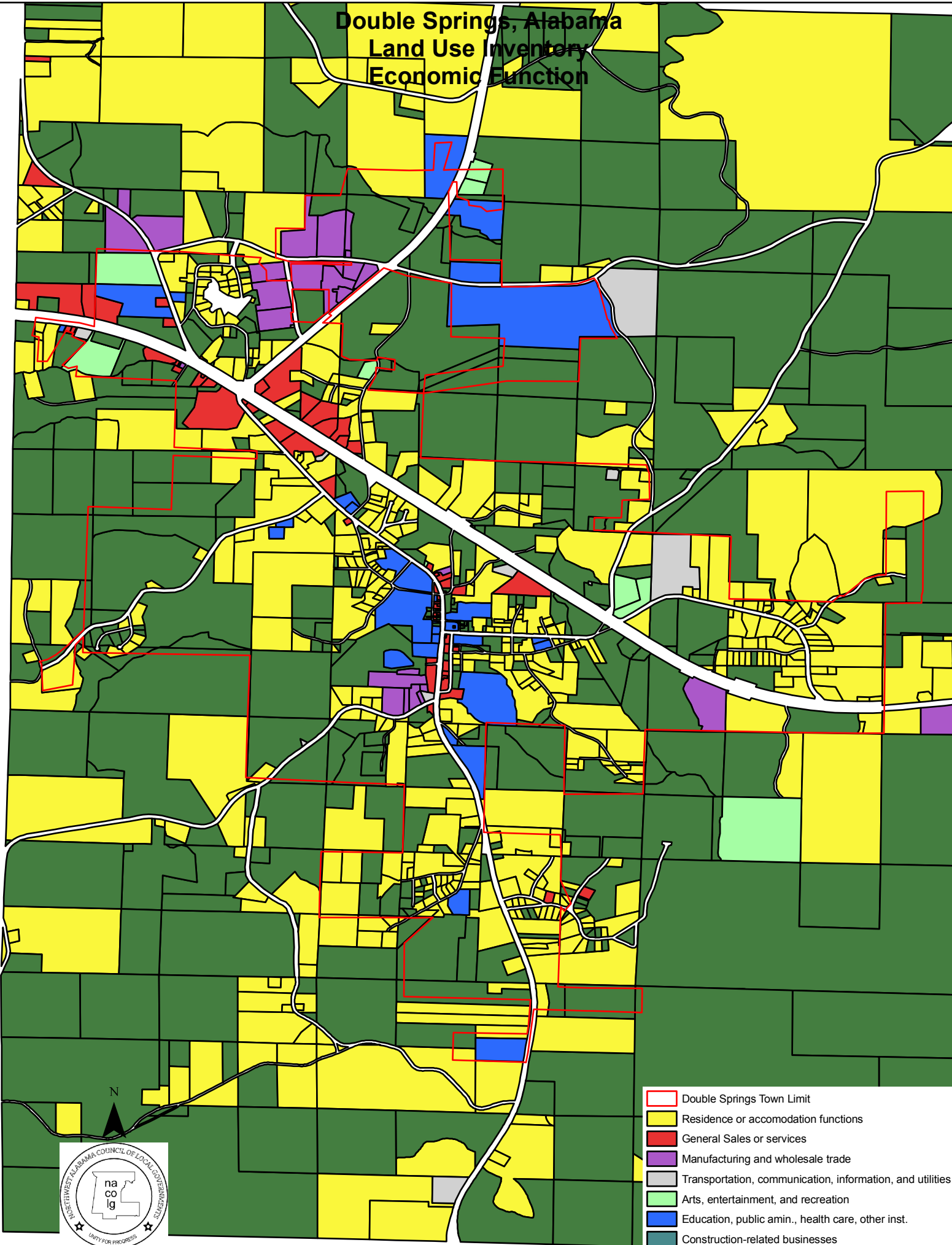


Town of Double Springs Transportation and Traffic Count

Street Classification	
Major Arterial	
Minor Arterial	
Collector	
Downtown	
Local Street	
Proposed Street	
Traffic Count	



Double Springs, Alabama Land Use Inventory Economic Function



- Double Springs Town Limit
- Residence or accommodation functions
- General Sales or services
- Manufacturing and wholesale trade
- Transportation, communication, information, and utilities
- Arts, entertainment, and recreation
- Education, public amin., health care, other inst.
- Construction-related businesses
- Mining and extraction establishments
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

December 18, 2009

Arts, entertainment, and recreation- The town owns most of the recreational property located within the town limits. Facilities are located adjacent to Highway 195 and Highway 278 and serve residents in the town and nearby. In addition, the Bankhead National Forest offers tremendous recreational resources to the public.

Education, public administration, health care, and other institutions- A relatively small portion of land in Double Springs is dedicated to education, government and utility functions. The major governmental service center is located along Highway 195 in downtown Double Springs and includes Town Hall, the County Courthouse and related buildings, the Double Springs Police Department and the Double Springs Fire Department. This district will be the location of an improved and more accessible Town Center. Planning for connectivity, parking, access and utilization of these properties will be important. New public recreation facilities should be located in the district to create an enhanced civic space. Downtown character and development patterns should be extended along Blake Road in accordance with the Downtown Plan.

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting- A large amount of property in Double Springs is currently used for natural resources related activities such as farming, forestry, and livestock. When used for active agricultural production, this property cannot be classified as vacant because it has a function and economic use. Large agricultural tracts often serve as a reserve of property for new developments in areas where suitable tracts exist. Much of the land in and near Double Springs that is used for forestry is protected or is unsuited for new development due to slope. Remaining land may be suited for new development, but reducing the agricultural and open spaces of an area can drastically change the landscape and character of the place. For this reason, development in Double Springs should be subject to sustainable development policies that address key issues such as slope development, erosion and sedimentation, and maintaining scenic appeal.

Government and Utilities uses- Government uses are largely concentrated in downtown Double Springs near the county courthouse. Utility locations are found on other town-owned property throughout Double Springs, including parks and ball fields.

Institutional and Cemetery uses- Double Springs is home to several churches, which form an institutional cluster along Highway 195 and Highway 278. A small cemetery is adjacent to this district.

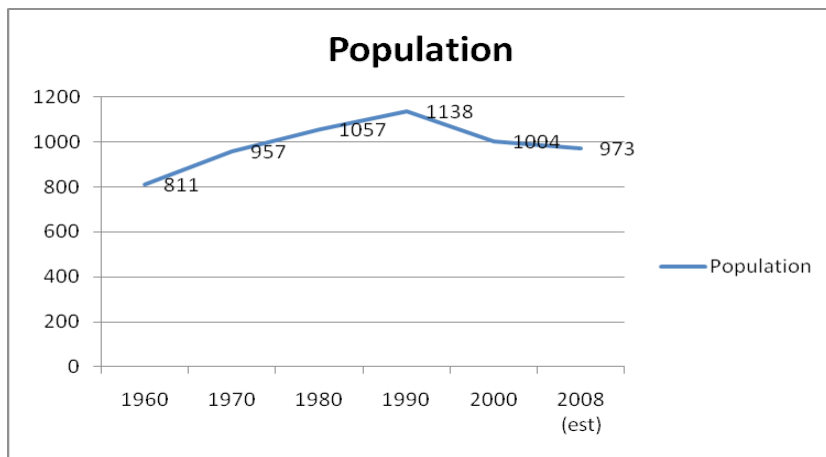
Summary

In 2007, the Town of Double Springs celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2007, but as a community, Double Springs is much older. Double Springs has occupied an important place in the rural landscape of Winston County and has had a vantage point on American history since the early 19th century. The community, although small, is tied to a much larger history by virtue of its geography.

SECTION FIVE: POPULATION AND ECONOMY

From 1960 to 2000, the population of Double Springs grew from 861 to 1004, peaking in 1990 at 1138. Population growth was highest in Double Springs during the 1960s, at a time when total employment and manufacturing employment, specifically, were growing rapidly. This trend continued throughout the 1970s and trailed off somewhat through the 1980s. Since 1990, population has shown signs of decline, and today's estimated population is 974. For the most part, changes in Double Springs' population have tracked those of the county.

Population	Double Springs	Change (Total/Percentage)	Winston County	Change (Total/Percentage)
1960	811		12520	
1970	957	146/1.8%	16654	4134/3.3%
1980	1057	100/1.0%	21953	5299/3.2%
1990	1138	81/0.8%	22053	100/0.05%
2000	1004	-134/-1.2%	24843	2790/1.3%
2008 (est)	973	-31/-0.3%	23974	-869/-0.3%



Demographics - In 2000, the population of Double Springs was about 48% male and 52% female. Median age was 38.7 years, about 3 years higher than the national median and an indication of a lower concentration of young people. Population age 65 and older in Double Springs (18.5%) was higher than nationally (12.4%) and Winston County (14.2%). Population under 5 was very similar in Double Springs (6.0%), Winston County (6.2%), and the nation (6.8%). The percentage of population aged 5 to 15 and aged 16 to 64 was lower in Double Springs than in other geographies.

Racial composition was more heavily White than countywide or nationally, with 99.0% reporting White, 0.3% reporting Black or African American, 0.6% American Indian and Alaskan Native Asian and 0.6% Some Other Race. Hispanic or Latino population was reported at 1.1% in Double Springs in 2000. The percent foreign born or speaking a language other than English at home was significantly less in Double Springs and Winston County than across the U.S.

Of population 25 and older, fewer than the national rate were high school or college graduates, although the Town's graduates were a larger percentage of its population than countywide. The percentage of the population that was married was higher in Double Springs than nationally.

Demographic Characteristics	Town of Double Springs, Alabama		Winston County, Alabama		U.S.
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
General Characteristics					
Total population	1,003		24,843		
Male	485	48.4%	12,166	49%	49.10%
Female	518	51.6%	12,677	51%	50.90%
Median age (years)	38.7	(X)	38	(X)	35.3
Under 5 years	60	6%	1,545	6.2%	6.80%
18 years and over	789	78.7%	18,955	76.3%	74.30%

65 years and over	186	18.5%	3,533	14.2%	12.40%
One race	993	99%	24,642	99.2%	97.60%
White	978	97.5%	24,177	97.3%	75.10%
Black or African American	3	0.3%	94	0.4%	12.30%
American Indian and Alaska Native	6	0.6%	114	0.5%	0.90%
Asian	0	0	32	0.1%	3.60%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	2	0	0.10%
Some other race	6	0.6%	223	0.9%	5.50%
Two or more races	10	1%	201	0.8%	2.40%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	11	1.1%	372	1.5%	12.50%
Household population	928	92.5%	24,537	98.8%	97.20%
Group quarters population	75	7.5%	306	1.2%	2.80%
Average household size	2.18	(X)	2.43	(X)	2.59
Average family size	2.75	(X)	2.89	(X)	3.14
Total housing units	486		12,502		
Occupied housing units	426	87.7%	10,107	80.8%	91.00%
Owner-occupied housing units	290	68.1%	8,091	80.1%	66.20%
Renter-occupied housing units	136	31.9%	2,016	19.9%	33.80%
Vacant housing units	60	12.3%	2,395	19.2%	9.00%
Social Characteristics	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	U.S.
Population 25 years and over	715		17,078		
High school graduate or higher	448	62.7%	10,691	62.6%	80.40%
Bachelor's degree or higher	98	13.7%	1,411	8.3%	24.40%
Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over)	94	11.7%	2,237	11.8%	12.70%
Disability status (population 5 years and over)	268	29.9%	5,678	24.7%	19.30%
Foreign born	0	0	257	1%	11.10%
Male, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	269	67.3%	6,311	64.9%	56.70%
Female, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	229	52%	6,332	61.9%	52.10%
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	10	1%	617	2.6%	17.90%
Economic Characteristics	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	U.S.
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	410	49.9%	11,367	58.2%	63.90%
Mean travel time to work in minutes (workers 16 years and over)	21.6	(X)	26.4	(X)	25.5
Median household income in 1999 (dollars)	25,865	(X)	28,435	(X)	41,994
Median family income in 1999 (dollars)	29,615	(X)	32,628	(X)	50,046
Per capita income in 1999 (dollars)	15,122	(X)	15,738	(X)	21,587
Families below poverty level	51	16.8%	956	12.9%	9.20%
Individuals below poverty level	193	20.3%	4,196	17.1%	12.40%
Housing Characteristics	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	U.S.
Single-family owner-occupied homes	198		4,106		
Median value (dollars)	61,300	(X)	60,800	(X)	119,600
Median of selected monthly owner costs	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	
With a mortgage (dollars)	581	(X)	644	(X)	1,088

Not mortgaged (dollars)	200	(X)	200	(X)	295
(X) Not applicable.					
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Summary File 3 (SF 3)					

Age	Double Springs	Winston County	United States
Under 5 years	6%	6.2%	6.8%
5 to 15 years	17.9%	19.6%	21.4%
15 to 64 years	63.8%	66.2%	66.1%
65 and over	18.6%	14.2%	12.4%

Housing- In 2000, there were a reported 426 housing units in Double Springs; 290 were owner occupied; 136 were renter-occupied; and 60 were vacant. The median value of an owner-occupied unit was \$61,300- comparable to the County median (\$60,800) but significantly less than the national median home value of \$119,600. Most housing in Double Springs (71.6%) was built between 1970 and 1990. The majority of units are single family houses. Mobile homes are slightly more prevalent in Double Springs than nationally and significantly more prevalent in Winston County. Although home ownership costs are significantly lower in Double Springs when compared to the State and the nation, owner occupancy rates are similar to national rates. Double Springs residents appeared less likely to have changed houses in the past decade. Average household size (2.18) was slightly smaller than countywide and less than the national average. Smaller household sizes are typical of older households, and a larger proportion of households are headed by individuals 65 years and older.

Subject	Double Springs		Winston County		United States
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
Total housing units	513	100%	12,502	100%	100%
UNITS IN STRUCTURE					
1-unit, detached	317	61.8%	7,485	59.9%	60.3%
1-unit, attached	11	2.1%	100	0.8%	5.6%
2 units	45	8.8%	233	1.9%	4.3%
3 or 4 units	14	2.7%	244	2%	4.7%
5 to 9 units	17	3.3%	152	1.2%	4.7%
10 to 19 units	9	1.8%	19	0.2%	4%
20 or more units	0	0	45	0.4%	8.6%
Mobile home	100	19.5%	4,189	33.5%	7.6%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0	35	0.3%	0.2v
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT					
1999 to March 2000	7	1.4%	373	3%	2.4%
1995 to 1998	21	4.1%	1,250	10%	7.3%
1990 to 1994	35	6.8%	1,381	11%	7.3%
1980 to 1989	123	24%	2,578	20.6%	15.8%
1970 to 1979	119	23.2%	3,019	24.1%	18.5%
1960 to 1969	73	14.2%	1,739	13.9%	13.7%
1940 to 1959	88	17.2%	1,530	12.2%	20%
1939 or earlier	47	9.2%	632	5.1%	15%
Occupied Housing Units	441	100%	10,107	100%	100%

YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT					
1999 to March 2000	87	19.7%	1,717	17%	19.9%
1995 to 1998	76	17.2%	2,648	26.2%	28.9%
1990 to 1994	86	19.5%	1,724	17.1%	16.1%
1980 to 1989	87	19.7%	1,696	16.8%	15.6%
1970 to 1979	51	11.6%	1,084	10.7%	9.9%
1969 or earlier	54	12.2%	1,238	12.2%	9.7%
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS					
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	0	0	51	0.5%	0.6%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	3	0.7%	30	0.3%	0.7%
No telephone service	29	6.6%	862	8.5%	2.4%
Specified owner-occupied units	198	100%	4,106	100%	100%
VALUE					
Less than \$50,000	75	37.9%	1,479	36%	9.9%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	84	42.4%	1,740	42.4%	30.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	22	11.1%	434	10.6%	23.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	15	7.6%	176	4.3%	14.6%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	0	0	179	4.4%	11.9%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	0	0	65	1.6%	6.5%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0	8	0.2%	2.4%
\$1,000,000 or more	2	1%	25	0.6%	0.6%
Median (dollars)	61,300	(X)	60,800	(X)	(X)
SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1999					
Less than 15 percent	96	48.5%	1,915	46.6%	36.5%
15 to 19 percent	32	16.2%	713	17.4%	17.5%
20 to 24 percent	14	7.1%	303	7.4%	13.9%
25 to 29 percent	16	8.1%	307	7.5%	9.4%
30 to 34 percent	10	5.1%	151	3.7%	6%
35 percent or more	28	14.1%	611	14.9%	15.8%
Not computed	2	1%	106	2.6%	0.8%
Specified renter-occupied units	148	100%	1,941	100%	100%
GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1999					

Less than 15 percent	17	11.5%	437	22.5%	18.1%
15 to 19 percent	18	12.2%	220	11.3%	14.3%
20 to 24 percent	18	12.2%	180	9.3%	12.8%
25 to 29 percent	9	6.1%	107	5.5%	10.4%
30 to 34 percent	11	7.4%	109	5.6%	7.3%
35 percent or more	32	21.6%	360	18.5%	29.5%
Not computed	43	29.1%	528	27.2%	7.5%

(X) Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrices H1, H7, H20, H23, H24, H30, H34, H38, H40, H43, H44, H48, H51, H62, H63, H69, H74, H76, H90, H91, and H94

Economy- In the 2000 Census, about 49.9% of the population age 16 and older was engaged in the workforce. Female labor force participation age 16 and older was about 45.8%. Labor force participation was lower in general and among females than statewide or nationally. The mean travel time to work was approximately 21.6 minutes, lower than statewide or nationally. Median household income was \$25,865, less than the state and nation. Per capita income was less than the national or county average. Social security income and retirement income were much more common sources in Double Springs. Families and individuals were more likely to live below the poverty level, especially in families with children and adults over age 65.

Subject	Double Springs		Winston County		United States	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Population age 16 years and older	822	100%	19,544	100%	217,168,077	100%
In labor force	410	49.9%	11,367	58.2%	138,820,935	63.9%
Not in labor force	412	50.1%	8,177	41.8%	78,347,142	36.1%
Females age 16 years and older						
	430	100%	10,052	100%	112,185,795	100%
In labor force	197	45.8%	4,858	48.3%	64,547,732	57.5%
Civilian labor force	197	45.8%	4,858	48.3%	64,383,493	57.4%
Employed	180	41.9%	4,452	44.3%	60,630,069	54%
Own children under 6 years						
	64	100%	1,813	100%	21,833,613	100%
All parents in family in labor force	42	65.6%	1,049	57.9%	12,787,501	58.6%
COMMUTING TO WORK						
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	21.6	(X)	26.4	(X)	25.5	(X)
INCOME IN 1999						
Median household income (dollars)	25,865	(X)	28,435	(X)	41,994	(X)
With earnings	301	69.7%	7,446	73.5%	84,962,743	80.5%

With Social Security income	188	43.5%	3,025	29.9%	27,084,417	25.7%
With retirement income	96	22.2%	1,513	14.9%	17,659,058	16.7%
Per capita income (dollars)	15,122	(X)	15,738	(X)	21,587	(X)
POVERTY STATUS IN 1999 (below poverty level)						
Families	51	(X)	956	(X)	6,620,945	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	16.8%	(X)	12.9%	(X)	9.2%
Individuals	193	(X)	4,196	(X)	33,899,812	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	20.3%	(X)	17.1%	(X)	12.4

(X) Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrices P30, P32, P33, P43, P46, P49, P50, P51, P52, P53, P58, P62, P63, P64, P65, P67, P71, P72, P73, P74, P76, P77, P82, P87, P90, PCT47, PCT52, and PCT53

Employment-

In 2000, manufacturing was the largest employment sector in Double Springs and Winston County and accounted for a higher proportion of total employment than in the national economy. Retail trade, information and finance sectors accounted for a smaller concentration in Double Springs than elsewhere. Education, health and social services were more heavily concentrated in Double Springs than in Winston County at large.

Subject	Double Springs		Winston County		United States	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Employed civilian population 16 years and over	382	100%	10,646	100%	129,721,512	100%
OCCUPATION						
Management, professional, and related occupations	97	25.4%	2,083	19.6%	43,646,731	33.6%
Service occupations	47	12.3%	1,091	10.2%	19,276,947	14.9%
Sales and office occupations	82	21.5%	2,303	21.6%	34,621,390	26.7%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	6	1.6%	173	1.6%	951,810	0.7%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	42	11%	1,457	13.7%	12,256,138	9.4%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	108	28.3%	3,539	33.2%	18,968,496	14.6%
INDUSTRY						
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	18	4.7%	450	4.2%	2,426,053	1.9%
Construction	33	8.6%	763	7.2%	8,801,507	6.8%
Manufacturing	112	29.3%	3,610	33.9%	18,286,005	14.1%
Wholesale trade	6	1.6%	278	2.6%	4,666,757	3.6%
Retail trade	31	8.1%	1,299	12.2%	15,221,716	11.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	18	4.7%	845	7.9%	6,740,102	5.2%
Information	2	0.5%	85	0.8%	3,996,564	3.1%

Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	6	1.6%	358	3.4%	8,934,972	6.9%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	12	3.1%	274	2.6%	12,061,865	9.3%
Educational, health and social services	83	21.7%	1,534	14.4%	25,843,029	19.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	16	4.2%	462	4.3%	10,210,295	7.9%
Other services (except public administration)	19	5%	402	3.8%	6,320,632	4.9%
Public administration	26	6.8%	286	2.7%	6,212,015	4.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrices P30, P32, P33, P43, P46, P49, P50, P51, P52, P53, P58, P62, P63, P64, P65, P67, P71, P72, P73, P74, P76, P77, P82, P87, P90, PCT47, PCT52, and PCT53

Population Projections

Population projections are useful for understanding the trajectory of change in a community. Unfortunately, Double Springs population trends have shown steady decline in recent decades, in large part due to severe economic difficulties. If measures are not taken to adjust course and encourage growth, Double Springs population can be expected to decline further. Using simple projection methods based on 1990 and 2000 Census counts, Double Springs' population is forecast to decline by between 120 and 135 people in the 2010 Census and to fall to around 750 by 2020. The effects of this loss will be felt across the board- affecting housing vacancy, local business and retail environment, and public budgets and services.

Recommendations

Double Springs' demographic and economic patterns reflect a troubled local economy. Population loss continues to be a problem as working age people leave the community in search of greater economic opportunity. In order to change these patterns, the town of Double Springs must take an active role in shaping the image of the town, supporting the county's economic development and industrial recruitment efforts, and creating business and community development strategies that entice new industries, such as retirement and recreation, and residents to the area. Perhaps the most important recommendation of the Double Springs Master Plan addresses these conditions: Embrace a positive vision for the future of Double Springs, one which actively promotes the town's assets, and seeks new solutions to the town's difficulties.

Summary

Double Springs' population and demographics provide an overview or snapshot of the number and distribution of residents, households, and employment in the Town and the immediate vicinity. This cross sectional view is important for understanding what the town's future development may appear to be. Of the above demographics, the most troublesome are concerned with education levels and incomes. The Town will strive to promote educational attainment and provide local jobs in order to increase the Town's standard of living. The Town will continue to plan for improving these opportunities.

SECTION VI: PUBLIC SERVICES AND CAPITAL FACILITIES

The availability of public services within the Town and nearby unincorporated areas has shaped the patterns of development in Double Springs. While demand for public services is generally high where rapid new development is occurring, creating challenges for planning new infrastructure, many small towns like Double Springs face a very different challenge- meeting maintenance and operation requirements, keeping working public utility systems, and striving to improve the quality of services for existing residents. These challenges are made all the more difficult by strained budgets and low staffing levels. One of the key challenges faced in Double Springs today is how to continue to provide high quality services within the bounds of the Town’s limited resources. Incorporating amenities and higher quality services will be integral to creating value within Double Springs’s future developments.

Water Facilities

The Town’s water supply is provided by the Town of Arley and the City of Haleyville through interconnections on Highway 278 and Highway 195, respectively. The system serves approximately 2250 customers in Double Springs and nearby unincorporated areas. It is served by two 500,000 gallon storage tanks that serve residents, business, and industry. The town’s water and sewer systems are owned and operated by the town, with the mayor serving as water department superintendant and the council as the governing body.

The highest priority for the water system presently is to re-route a water main along Highway 278. A portion of the main line in this area makes several sharp turns, reducing pressure and flow and affecting distribution to the north of town.

Wastewater Facilities

The Town of Double Springs provides sanitary sewer service primarily to commercial and industrial customers. The treatment facility is permitted to treat 1.5 million gallons per day, which is sufficient to meet the anticipated future demands of the town. The system serves approximately 14 industrial and commercial customers and 57 residences. Remaining residences are served by on-site septic disposal systems. The town eventually desires to provide service to all households, but the extension of additional facilities has been cost prohibitive.

Streets, Sidewalks, and Drainage

With the exception of Highway 278 and Highway 195, the Town is responsible for street maintenance in Double Springs. Typical of many small towns, streets are narrow and without curbs or sidewalks except in downtown. Still, connectivity between uses downtown could be improved by extending sidewalks north and south and by the addition of pedestrian facilities on the east side of Highway 195 and the south side of Blake Drive. Storm water runoff drains through ditches adjacent to roadways and is generally sufficient. Improvements are needed a block west of Highway 195 downtown, where new impervious surfaces appear to be increasing runoff volume and velocity and leading to erosion.

Schools

There are three schools in Double Springs- Winston County Elementary School on Old School Road, Winston County Middle School, and Winston County High School. The middle and high schools are just outside of town on County Road 24. The schools are significant employers and traffic generators.

Winston County School System- Double Springs Schools		
School	Average Daily Membership, 2007-2008	Faculty and Staff, 2007-2008
Winston County Elementary	425.7	50
Winston County Middle School	361.6	30
Winston County High School	302.9	36
Total	1090.2	116

Parks, Open Space and Recreational Opportunities

The Town of Double Springs offers a number of parks and recreation opportunities that are available to residents of the town as well as non-residents. Seymour Durbin Park, located north on Highway 195, has baseball and softball fields and hosts youth leagues for boys and girls and t-ball. The Double Springs Community Center and Tourist Information Center hosts youth basketball leagues, a free community weight room, the community library, and the town’s senior center. The senior program is one-of-a-kind in the State, having an aquatic center for low impact exercise, as well as rental space for events. Willow Run Park is located behind the community center and features tennis courts, playground equipment, a pavilion and walking trails. The town has recently purchased property to expand these facilities. The town also maintains Looney’s Tavern, the famous site of the historic meeting of Winston County delegates who opposed succession. A mile long walking trail is available at Looney’s Tavern.

Open areas and parks contribute to a high quality of life, providing a diversity of opportunities for individuals to enjoy healthy and pleasant activities. Proximity to a park increases the likelihood that an individual will enjoy the rewards of recreation. Recent research indicates that the benefits of parks include both healthier populations and higher property values, which translates into monetary value for owners as well as prosperity for local governments. The greatest benefits are to be had for properties

within walking distance, usually considered a quarter of a mile, of a park. Unfortunately, existing parks in Double Springs are not conveniently located for pedestrian access. Existing facilities are motorist and event-oriented. Increasing the accessibility of parks and open spaces will require concerted efforts on the part of the Town, including investment in green infrastructure, parks and recreation planning and the development of new parks in strategic locations such as downtown.

Library

The Double Springs Public Library is located in the community center and serves Double Springs and the surrounding area. The library provides services beyond the corporate limits to residents in nearby parts of Lauderdale County. Because of this wide service area, standards for maintaining and expanding library holdings should not be based solely on the needs of the Town's population. The Double Springs Library should continue to operate and grow as a regional public library.

Emergency Services

Police protection is provided within the municipal boundary and the police jurisdiction by the Double Springs Police Department. Likewise, the Double Springs Fire and Rescue Squad provides fire protection to the area. The Town currently operates at an ISO rating of 5 for incorporated areas and 9 for unincorporated areas. Emergency services are an essential part of Double Springs' public services both inside and outside of Town. The priority for the town is to maintain and improve upon the existing level of service, requiring commitments to new equipment and for updated development standards that require new developments to meet minimum requirements for fire protection.

Recommendations

The Town of Double Springs should persevere to maintain and improve the quality of local services, which are a cornerstone of the town's quality of life. The health, safety, and welfare of residents depends on clean water, sanitary disposal of waste, safe streets, and well equipped and trained emergency services. In addition, the quality of life of residents is greatly affected by the town's recreational and educational opportunities. The town should continue to support local police and fire. Additionally, efforts should be undertaken to expand recreational opportunities. Additional street and roadway improvements should be considered in order to improve pedestrian access to high traffic areas, particularly downtown.

Summary

Double Springs is a small town with clear goals and priorities for development. Chief among these is maintaining and improving existing services within the Town's direct authority, such as recreational opportunity, local emergency services, and the local public library. Extending sewer infrastructure throughout the Town and adjacent territory will be a significant challenge for Double Springs, but sewer service is essential for sustainable growth and development given the Town's considerable geographic constraints. Likewise, Double Springs has tremendous unexplored opportunities for growth in service and retail commercial activities related to strong local recreational opportunities. Exploring strategies for improving these opportunities will be an important part of efforts to shape growth in the future.

SECTION VII: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Double Springs Master Plan will be accomplished only with the assistance and support of local government, civic, and business organizations working together to achieve the vision set forth in the plan. An analysis of existing land use and conditions and an inventory of the goals and objectives of the community have led to a vision for the Town that can be obtained through concerted action on the part of community leaders to implement the Master Plan. The success of this vision depends largely upon the willingness of Town leaders to embrace the Plan recommendations and to work together for progress in Town. To this end, the Master Plan has been adopted by the Town of Double Springs as the official guide to future development. It will continue to be widely publicized in the Town's interactions with diverse groups, including land developers, civic organizations, and business associations. Only through such coordination can implementation become a reality and the benefits of the community's goals and vision begin to accrue to citizens and visitors. The chapter that follows, first, briefly summarizes the roles and responsibilities of various agencies, groups and organizations within the development context of the Town of Double Springs and then describes the available tools for implementing the Master Plan.

Agencies, Organizations, and Responsibilities

Various mechanisms exist in the community for coordinating development activities. These should be utilized to their utmost in the implementation of the plan. The Double Springs Town Council will retain primary responsibility for reviewing and recommending actions concerning development within the Town and will serve a vital role coordinating the activities of commercial, residential and industrial developers, local, state and county government, as well as others. Other actors, both public and private, also have significant roles to play within the community and their choices will affect the outcomes of development and the shape of the community. Ongoing education and outreach is necessary to educate the public and members of the local government, including elected officials, administrative staff and appointed officials, as to the role of these entities in the development process.

Planning Commission

A local Planning Commission can play an integral role in the development process through its oversight of land development. The Commission would have responsibility for enforcing the Town's subdivision regulations, which would require development to proceed in accordance with the Plan and under conditions and requirements conducive to orderly, efficient growth. The Commission would also play an important advisory role, which should not be overlooked. Although not empowered with extensive regulatory authority outside of subdivision and zoning, the Commission's advisory role would be a powerful tool for coordinating interests and communicating community values. Within a community, no other entity is as strongly charged with representing the community vision and the recommendations and requirements of the Plan to the public. A Planning Commission should be considered to continue to review regulations and to ensure that the Master Plan is implemented.

Implementation Tools- *Ability to Plan, Subdivision Regulations, Zoning Recommendation to Town Council, Strong Advisory Role*

Town Council

The Town Council plays a central role in the process of community development through its zoning authority, oversight of other municipal ordinances, and control of public budgeting. The Council (upon recommendation from the Planning Commission where one exists) determines land uses through zoning, directs building construction through building codes, and directs public investment toward the priorities established in the plan, including control over the acceptance of streets and other public utilities. The use of these tools should be guided by the values embodied in the Master Plan above other considerations.

Implementation Tools- *Legislative Authority (Zoning Ordinance, Municipal Ordinances, Building and Housing Codes, Capital Improvements Budget, General Police Powers), Public Interaction*

Office of the Mayor

The Mayor of Double Springs is the Town's chief executive, responsible for maintaining the smooth operation of Town departments. Additionally, the Mayor also serves as the Town's representative to the public, various organizations and individuals, and other local, state and federal government entities. In each of these roles, the Mayor plays a key role in the implementation of the plan by representing the plan recommendations, and the community values embodied by these, in day-to-day Town operations, legislative initiatives, and interactions with others.

Implementation Tools- *Executive Authority, Public Interaction*

Town Staff and Administrators

These individuals are at the heart of plan implementation by overseeing the day-to-day tasks of running the government and services of the Town of Double Springs. Their decisions regarding the proper course of action sustain Town operations, which are essential to the quality of life of citizens. Their interactions with members of the public provide an opportunity to educate the community regarding the elements of the plan and an opportunity for ongoing public feedback concerning the Town's expressed goals and objectives.

Implementation Tools- *Enforcement Authority, Frequent Public Interaction, Strong Advisory Role*

Zoning Board of Adjustments

The Zoning Board of Adjustment plays a limited but very important role in the development process by its powers of dispute resolution, approval of conditional uses, and ability to grant variances under narrowly defined circumstances. Understanding the authority of the Zoning Board of Adjustments involves understanding the source and limitations of ZBA authority. Ongoing education and outreach is necessary to educate the public and the members of the Board, as well as other officials, as to the nature of the ZBA.

Implementation Tools- *Dispute Resolution, Approval of Conditional Uses, Variances*

Business Council

The Business Council is an important local entity due to the central role that commercial activities play in the economic health of the community. Members' diversity and deep investment in the health of the community give this organization a central position as a conveyor of information and ideas to and from various sectors. Likewise, these features give the organization a strong voice in development proposals and an important role to play in promoting the interests of the Town and, concurrently, the interests of the commercial community.

Implementation Tools- *Strong Advisory Role, Constituency/Membership, High Public Profile, External Presence and Representation*

Local Industrial Development Authority

The Winston County Industrial Development Authority is another group that benefits from an understanding of the values embodied in the Master Plan because of its dedication to improving the economic opportunities of the region. The Town of Double Springs shares these goals. As the county's representative for industrial and economic development, this organization's external activities should reflect the strong commitment of the Town to shared goals.

Implementation Tools- *High Public Profile, External Presence and Representation*

Civic Organizations and Community Institutions

These organizations include local volunteer and community action organizations, as well as local institutions such as libraries, churches, and volunteer fire departments. Much of the vitality of the community is vested within these groups, which embody much of the spirit and soul of the Town of Double Springs. It is vital that these groups and organizations be connected to the process of community development and that the shared community values that they represent be preserved in the physical, social and economic environment.

Implementation Tools- *Constituency/Membership, Public Visibility, Public Service and Volunteer Activities*

The Development Community

Finally, this broad group includes those individuals responsible for the great majority of improvements and expansions occurring within the Town of Double Springs. These individuals and groups invest in the residential, commercial and industrial capacity of the Town for a variety of reasons. While their needs must be recognized and met, community values must be preserved and advanced. Very often, however, the needs of a narrow group, individual or entity can be advanced to the detriment of the community. In most cases, those responsible would otherwise be willing to comply with community standards, had these been adequately related and communicated. Ongoing outreach and education is required to engage the diverse development community in the process of implementing a community vision.

Implementation Tools- *Private Capital Investment*

Implementation

The Master Plan contains guidance for development decisions made by the Town of Double Springs. General guidance regarding town goals is found in each section. Meanwhile, while Section II of the Master Plan contains more specific intermediate and long-term recommendations that are actions the town should take to specifically implement the plan. Full implementation of the plan will require multiple stages across a lengthy timeframe. It will also require concentrated efforts to maintain steady administrative and review policies, as well as high levels of public commitment to the community vision.